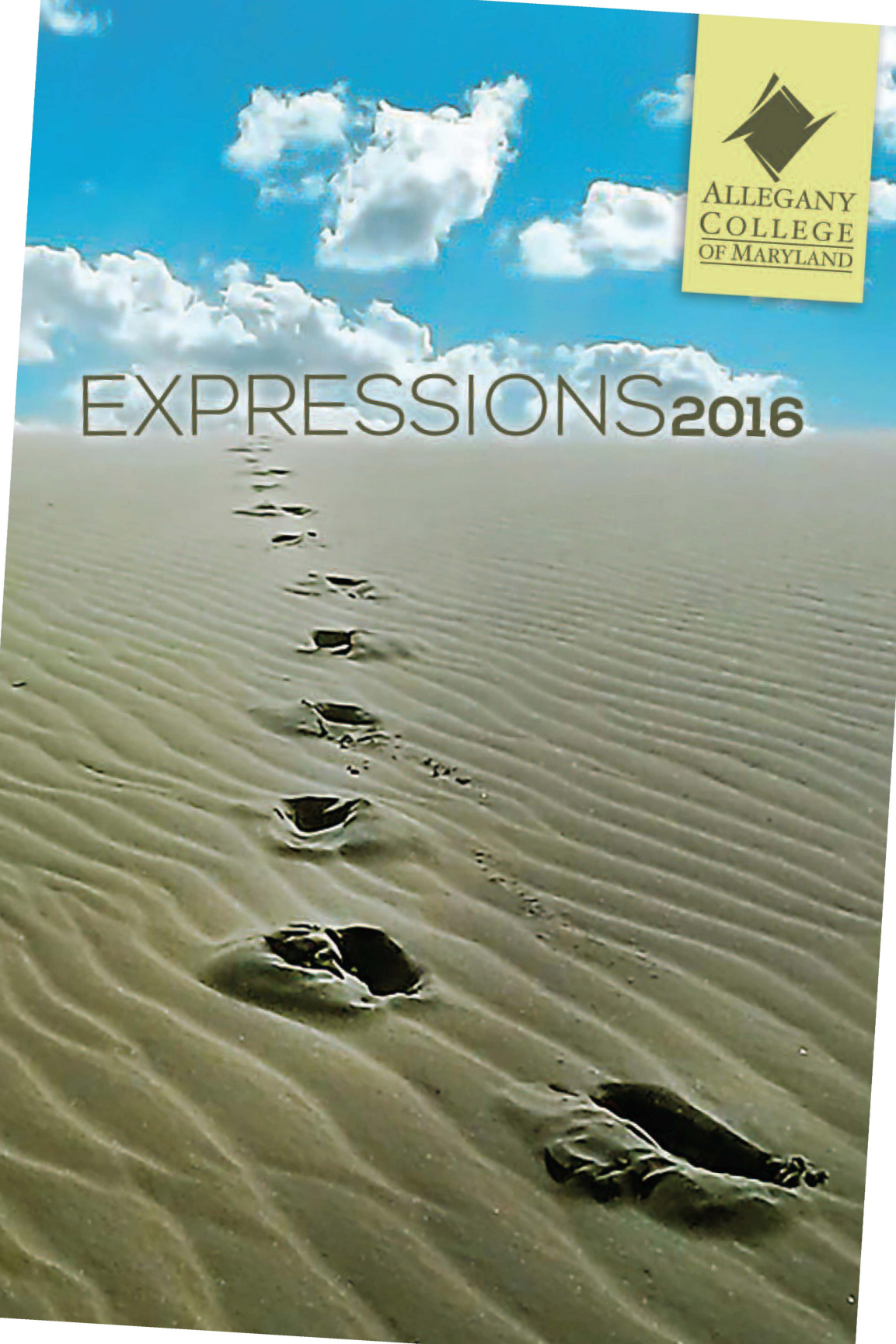




ALLEGANY
COLLEGE
OF MARYLAND

EXPRESSIONS 2016



EXPRESSIONS**2016**
ALLEGANY COLLEGE  MARYLAND

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ARTWORK FEATURED ON COVER:
“Finite Footsteps” by Maria Hite

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STUDENT EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

As I sit on the couch in my apartment, preparing myself to write this introduction, I'm forced to come to terms with how hard it is for me to start any bit of writing or project. I tend to just make myself write nonsense or ramble on until I can find a coherent train of thought. Coincidentally, I'm writing an introduction for a magazine that is a collection of works by students who got past that point (thankfully).

Now it falls on you, the reader, to move past the beginning.

We've all struggled with many beginnings: the beginning of class, the beginning of a relationship, the beginning of a career, a moment, a book, a life. Sadly, these things always have endings. Refrain from thinking of endings now; instead think of all the beginnings that are left for you to experience. Allegany College of Maryland is just the beginning for you, whether you are led to a career, a furthering in education, or the beginning of a new adventure. If you find yourself muddling through the vast expanses of the universe and coming to terms with your inherent insignificance, remember that you are only at the beginning. This is where you start in life; this is where you set sail. You don't need to know everything, where you fit into the cosmic scheme of things or where to begin, just go. Live life without fear of endings. As you set sail through the rest of your life (and this magazine), remember this quote from America aphorist John Shedd:

A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.¹

—Charolette Hasoncup

¹ Shedd, John A. *Salt from My Attic*. Portland: Mosher Press, 1928.



Chairs on Deck at the Lake | *Leah Mallow*

Essay by Carlin Riley

MEMORIES FOR NOW

What I am thinking of is a place. I used to go to this place every summer as a child and many of my family members would come. I still remember the place very distinctively which is strange because I can barely remember what happened yesterday. I remember the feel of the soft sand and shells beneath my feet. The shells were often sharp so you had to watch where you stepped. I remember the cold chill of the ocean every time I stepped into the water. I remember the blazing sunlight hitting my face and feeling its warmth. I often didn't wear sunscreen because I hated the smell of it. It smelled like salt water, barbeques, and tanning lotion. I remember watching the sunset every night with my family. We would be sitting on the back porch enjoying the last rays of light kissing our skin as the sun, ever too quickly, descended below the horizon. The sunset would cast purples, yellows, oranges, and reds across the sky and the clouds. I remember the sounds of the ocean and the splashing of the waves.

I haven't been to this place in many years but I still remember everything. The summers I spent there are some of the happiest moments of my childhood. I remember the barbeques we had every night and the dinners and the desserts my grandmother would always make. I remember that there was a cart on the beach that was owned by a local family and they would always serve delicious lemon-shaved ice but I also remember that the last summer I went they added peach shaved ice and since my favorite fruit is peaches I naturally had to try it. I think I preferred the lemon. I remember the smiles on people's faces as well as their laughter. I remember playing in the sands with my little brother and my cousins while all the adults were chatting. There were colors everywhere. The bright umbrellas all stuck out of the ground everywhere, casting reds, whites, yellows, and blues throughout my field of view. There were swim suits in every

color imaginable. I remember my mother wearing a swim suit of such bright yellow that it was nearly as bright as the sun. If I looked around, I would be nearly blinded by all the colors. I remember the smell of the ocean. It was always a salty scent I loved. I remember as a child you could usually tell when a storm was coming if you could smell the salt water from a distance. I grew up not too far from the coast of Georgia. I miss the smell of the salt water in the air. I haven't been able to smell anything like it since I moved to Maryland a few months back.

We would always rent the same white house with blue shutters and tile gutters every summer. It had seven bedrooms, three bathrooms, two living rooms, and a huge kitchen/dining room. It also had a pretty nice pool but we would spend most of our time in the ocean. I have been to many places like this in Florida but none of these places were as nice as this place. Those places also don't share as many happy memories. These are some of the happiest memories I have. I hope to share them with a family of my own some day but that time will come eventually. I am content with keeping these memories to myself for now.

Essay by W. A. Yeager

THE RAVEN

In my youth, I remember thinking like a storm. The troubles I faced, I didn't know how to calm in my mind. We all go through life experiences that can be tragic or blissful, damaging or liberating. I didn't know of a way to express what I felt or had gone through. The confusion and lack of guidance left me feeling like a sleeping volcano. There had to be some way to relieve the pressure.

At that time I had no desire to form the words I needed to convey what I was thinking. Who was really listening anyway? The world was confusing and I needed an escape. My great escape came with six metal strings stretched across a wooden body. The body's smooth finish allowed my wandering hands to glide over it in admiration. Its shape contoured to my shape. The green clear coat over a sanded hardwood body comforted my eyes. The name "Raven," engraved in white, spoke to me. As the very first chord vibrated through the strings and found its way to my ears, I thought it sounded like a piece of mind or peace of mind, both one in the same. On clear channels I would play notes and chords ringing with gratitude for life. I played distorted when I wanted the walls to shake with my own anger.

I didn't need words for someone to understand me. People listened without ever knowing what I was saying. I could let the anger leach from my hands into this guitar and The Raven accepted it. I could lose myself in time, playing melodically, reliving happy memories in my head and The Raven would transform those feelings into beautiful vibrations. When I was angry The Raven could roar louder than I ever could. When I was sad The Raven would cry for me. The Raven would gladly share my happiness with whoever was around to listen. I may have never known peace without it.

Making music taught me how to let go. I remember sitting in my bedroom. The room was as cluttered as my mind. I was thinking about a friend who had died. I was too young to know what to do with that kind of pain. I played until my fingers bled. I felt that hurt and confusion leave my body, vibrate through strings, and come out of my amplifier as music. As I evolved into the later stages of life so did my guitar. It carried the weight of regret, despair, and sadness. It held on to love and dreams so that I might never forget. We aged and carried scars. We merged with other sounds, and other souls. We progressed through life with a feeling of invincibility. No one had to understand: The Raven knew me.

Now I have children. My youngest son Marrok loves the sound of the guitar. Ever since he was barely able to hold his own head up he took to the sound as if hereditary. He smiles at just the word *guitar*. His eyes light up when I play. I don't know whose joy is more intense, his or mine. I know that when he grows and becomes a storm within himself, The Raven will be waiting for him. If he ever feels overwhelmed by the world, he will be able to express himself without words. I'll know what he's saying without him ever having to say a word. The Raven isn't just a guitar for us; it's a gateway to enlightenment, a shield to protect us, and a dream catcher.



Ukulele | *Roger Vogel*

Three Poems by William Ziler

MADE BRAND NEW

Such beauty I see
when you stand next to me.
Like glossy pearls you shine –
oh how I wish you were mine!
Wherever you are,
whether near or far.
My unending love
for you will be enough.
You ignite such a spark
as your current makes its arc.
I would climb the highest tree
just to set you free.
My heart beats like a pounding drum,
and my body becomes numb.
How great it is to feel-
 something so real.
When I am here with you
my wandering soul is made brand new.

THERE IS

There is hope for the ones who have survived,
and those who have thrived.

The road has been long-
now they have their own song.

There is love for those with open hearts,
And it's been there from the start.

They, the open-armed, can't be broken down;
in them joy is always found.

There is safety for the ones who make it through.
They are all here to stay,
and they stand tall today.

THEY SAY

They say it won't be this way forever
that it will get better,
but they can't guarantee
a way for you and me.
So many lives are shattered
because husbands and wives are battered.
The weakest always fall
while the strongest ones stand tall.
The ones who strike will crash and burn,
and lose it all in turn.

Essay by Julia Wiland

CHANGING ROLES

When I was growing up, my favorite times were the days my Grandma Esther would stop by my house to pick me up in her blue Dodge Colt. I absolutely loved staying overnight with her because, unlike my immediate family, she never complained about my being in the way or getting on her nerves. Finding Fruity Pebbles cereal in the cupboard and Klondike bars in the freezer always made me feel special considering I knew they had been purchased just for me.

Occasionally, on our visits, we would walk the railroad tracks, carefully using the rail as a balance beam. While I was balancing on the rail, she would walk beside me and hold my hand to steady me just in case I would slip off the edge. I can remember her hand feeling rough from years of varnishing old furniture and helping my pap work at their church.

Soon the tracks would take us to the News Station where Grandma would give me money to pick out penny candies from the display case. I would have a huge bag of candy for just one dollar. My favorite candies were little wax bottles filled with sugary juice. I had to break off the top piece of wax to drink the juice. Grandma and I would drink almost all of these little bottles on our walk back from the store. She would rinse the inside of the bottles when we arrived back at her house. Carefully, she would set them out to dry on a paper towel, so later we could melt the wax to shape it into a ball. After completion, the two of us would toss the ball back and forth while Grandma played Marty Robbins records. Time seemed to pass so quickly when we played because every moment was enjoyable, singing along to “White Sport Coat.”

During warm spring days, we would extend our walk and pack a lunch to have a picnic by the creek in the woods close to her house. The two of us would

rest on a green glider swing that someone had placed close to the stream to eat our packed lunch. Grandma Esther always had rye bread for our tuna salad sandwiches. Nobody at my own home liked rye bread, so it was a special treat to have my favorite bread. I could never figure out why Grandma's tuna salad tasted so much better than my mother's.

While eating lunch one day, I could hear faint music playing in the background. Clearly, I remember being scared by the distant music because I had no idea where the melody was coming from. The music seemed creepy, not like any type of music from a radio station, but maybe it just seemed that way because I was afraid. Because we were deep in the woods, I could not understand who would be around playing the melody. Grandma comforted me by placing her arm around my shoulders to explain that the sounds were coming from the old silk mill that was relatively close to where we had stopped to eat. Apparently, the silk mill had been abandoned for several years, so teenage children would break in to hang out and drink alcohol; then they would leave the place littered with trash. The owners played a radio to deter vandals from breaking windows to get inside. Still shaking with fear, I remember Grandma would take my sweaty palm to assure me we would be okay. She went on to explain that even if people were in the building, they would be more scared of us because they would not want to risk getting caught. After I realized that I had nothing to be afraid of, I began to stop shaking.

Unfortunately, our relationship is so much different now. Grandma's health is deteriorating from her recent stroke. Most days Grandma does not want to consume food, almost as if she is giving up. Instead of eating tuna on rye together, I try to encourage her to take small bites of pureed meat so she will be able to regain some of her strength. Instead of drinking wax juice bottles together, I help her hold her cup of thickened hot tea while she tries to sip the drink without spilling any on her blouse. Instead of us walking on the railroad tracks, I walk behind her wheelchair to push her down the nursing home halls.

My heart actually hurts when I visit Grandma Esther, because since her stroke, she cannot talk to me about the great times I remember so vividly from my childhood. I realize those days are gone forever. As I was growing up, Grandma was everything to me. I always felt so secure as well as comfortable when we spent time together. I never worried about anything because she took all my worries away, such as the time when I was worried about the music. I wish we could get some of those good times back or just reminisce. Instead, with tears running down my cheeks, I just hold her cold hand until she falls asleep in her bed.



Sit | *Lynette Marie Huff*

Essay by Addison Mallery

MIRROR

I grab it from the drawer, and hold it up to my face to see how my make-up looks. My make-up is always an important part of the day to me, as I want to look my best. The mirror is such a convenience: I can just grab it when I need to see what I look like, even though sometimes it is hard to find because I have so much stuff in my drawer. I keep my makeup in this drawer and other things like Chap Stick and Band-Aids, things I need at an easy convenience.

The mirror is very small and has a little handle to hold so it is easier to use. Whenever I hold it in my hand I can feel the striped pattern in the plastic on the handle. The mirror itself is not that easy to see into because it has some scratches on it and is very cloudy. It looks like there is a storm in the mirror, and I am guessing it is just because my great grandma used it so much. On the back of the mirror is a little ocean scene, in which one of the fishes has fallen off. When I rub my finger over the back of the mirror, I feel many different textures; I feel glitter in the sand, some old glue which once held a fish on, and a rough pattern on the sea horse. I can tell this mirror was hand painted as there is green seaweed painted on and it's all different shapes and sizes, and some has chipped off.

I remember when she gave the mirror to me. I was in my great grandma's house, sitting in her spare room. We had just got done watching the wheel of fortune and trying to play along, and she knew every answer! She was cleaning out her "junk drawer" and I was watching to see if there was anything I would want. She pulled out an old hairbrush, some old make-up and some other things I cannot remember. I opened one of the makeup compacts and it was a very red blush; holding it up to my nose it smelt awful, like some strong scented flowers. I could just picture her putting it on and her cheeks as red as a rose.

She pulled out the mirror, and was amazed she still has it, even though it was missing a fish from the ocean scene on the back. She showed it to me and I told her how pretty it was. She then asked me if I would like to have it because she had no need for it anymore. I was so thrilled not because of what it was but because it was once hers and was something I could always cherish.

My great grandma has to be my biggest role model in life. I want to grow up and be just like her. She gives so much to others even at her older age. When I grab this mirror out of the drawer, which is not very often because it's not for practical use, I remember how much she means to me and how when she was my age she was sitting here using this exact mirror. This mirror reminds me of all the good times I have had and will still have with her. There are many different things she has given to me over time but this is one of my favorites because I can keep it forever, even though I imagine in time the rest of the fish will fall off and it will just be an ocean. This mirror is not one I would run out and buy, but it is now my favorite because when I see it so much comes to my mind. It's as if I can look into the mirror and see her when she was a child. This comes together with all the stories she has told me over time, and all the memories we have made together.

I sit at my dresser and I do my make-up. When I reach in the drawer and I see the back of the mirror and the pretty ocean on it, I think of her automatically. I rub my hand over it and feel the fish on it, and the space where the fish is missing. The missing fish makes it more exciting; I wonder how she lost the fish. I wonder if maybe she was running late and dropped it, or if she was sneaking doing her make-up and her mom walked in so she hurried and set it down. I have asked her before but she can't remember. Her memory is as clear as mud, but maybe one day something will remind my great grandma and she will be able to tell me, and until that day I will dream of all the different possibilities.

One day as I was cleaning out my drawer because some make-up had spilled, I saw the mirror, and it made me start to think. I thought about sitting on her couch one day and asking her to tell me her favorite childhood stories; she told me one about her pet chick which was my favorite. I should write them all down so that I never forget. She told me one that came to mind when I saw the ocean on the back of the mirror. She told me that her parents had tickets to board the Titanic, but they were delayed getting there and missed the ship. She told me how she was so thankful because she would have lost her parents, but how neat it was they had tickets to board. I wonder where there tickets are; if I had them, they would be like the mirror.

One day when I have my own family, and I have a little girl, or a granddaughter, I will give her this mirror. When she asks about the mirror I will tell her all about my great grandma, and how I was sitting on her bed when I received the mirror. I will tell her of how I always kept it in my drawer and the memories I have had with it. I hope she can enjoy it as much as I have. Maybe this can be passed on and on, but if not I enjoyed getting it passed down to me.

Essay by Mark L. Wilson, Jr.

THE BLACK PT CRUISER

We all need transportation, ways to get from here to there. For years I depended on my mother to drive me everywhere in her black PT Cruiser, the small van/car hybrid, seemingly larger inside than outside, Tartus-like in its proportions. I remember the coffee smells from my mother's morning brew of Maxwell House, and I remember her smile as we drove to stores, just spending time together.

The driver of the car, my mother, the woman who raised me, who gave me life: I owe that life to her. Considering her other burdens, she could have gotten an abortion or given me up for adoption; in many ways I believe she may have been better off if she had, but she chose to have me. I am who I am because of her love and the love of my father, even through his various issues. Instead of snuffing out my flame, she helped it burn. The napalm of her teaching and strength gave me hope that my flame could become an inferno. Burning bright like a perpetual supernova, my future came closer with each second, all because of her teaching me to never give up and to fight through all odds. Those odds were increased because of my dearly departed father. He had his problems but somewhere behind it all he remained.

Indeed I am her son, but in the end I know I have been a weight, a burden added to that of my father. A chain, I bound them together, even when her heart was heaviest because of it. For the benefit of the water within, the woman held the cracked bowl together, all so the fluid within could feel secure. I am that water, and I am full of the regret of a broken heart, and a mother who did not deserve her pain.

That car, so familiar and comforting. We traveled everywhere in it. I remember the annoying beeping due to unbuckled seatbelts as we drove,

beeping every few seconds like a fly continuing to circle around you even when it knows there is nothing for it there. My favorite place was the flea market a few miles from home. Hunting her prey in her mind, my mother parked that black transporter on the gravel-covered parking lot, the entrance in sight. We would always find something worth interest and purchase, from movies to jewelry, to antiques and classic video games. That large building, three entrances and dozens of rooms and hallways full of vendors begging to be examined and their wares considered: so often we went there, enjoying our time as we browsed and procured, like birds of prey observing their surroundings before choosing their desired trade. We left knowing we had spent time together and it was pleasing and humbling to know that God had chosen me to be born into a family with a matriarch with a heart like hers. The wheels spun round and round, like time itself. Light passed through the clear windshield and the world surrounding us moved beneath us.

All the happy memories are intact, but light only exists in the presence of darkness, and the darkness of my memories and fears are intact as well. I recall a day. A day filled both with fear and sadness as well as relief. Emotions so mixed, the vibrant colors of a color wheel culminating in a brown mud of combined feelings so contradictory that wars have started over topics less convoluted than that day's thoughts. My father, scars and surgeries like words in a novel, his knee newest of all. His addictions causing more trouble than any pain. Bills unpaid, hurtful savage words exchanged and tears fallen, a lifetime movie I thought would never end. His knee, replaced, swollen, and hurting, his physical therapy ignored and his blood clotting, a grenade with a jiggling pin. He saw a chance to get his fix, my loving father suppressed by his sick and addicted mind, like tar trapping a mastodon, pulling it down to an inky demise. He rose from the recliner and the pin was pulled from the grenade in his knee. My rightfully begrudging mother and he got into that reliable black chariot and

the horses neighed as the key was turned and they drove away. Just a few seconds later and the grenade detonated, as if the disapproving hand of God was saying “enough!” A blood clot like a guided missile on a collision course hit my father’s ambivalent heart, stopping it in its tracks. His mind went blank and his eyes rolled as he fell to the side on my mother’s shoulder.

I see her rocketing him to the hospital, fear in her eyes and adrenaline pumping, a jackhammer pounding in her own chest.

A day passed; his mind was lost, wandering a dark valley. His lungs were being artificially inflated. There was no hope and the choice was clear. My father was a good man, but also a troubled one; his addictions caused us more pain than any surgery ever could and our souls tired from the fears of a future in debt, pain and abuse. My mother, tired of the pain, yet still worried about her husband, lost long ago to us, was unable to make a choice.

So I made the choice; the plug was pulled and the timer started. Such pain before and pain after us, we sat and waited as my addicted, abusive, loving, encouraging, conflicted and disabled father lay dying before me, before us. I know his faults were not all his doing; still, he could have stopped them. But in that moment it was my father, not the monster who tried to breathe. His heart beat its last and his eyes glazed, a shell now vacant. I closed his eyes and prayed God would take him. Now it was just my mother shocked and me attempting to be strong. The pain of a father lost, a friend gone, and yet the relief of an abuser gone, my mother and I said our goodbyes. We boarded her black vessel and made our way home, to a short time of loss, a lifetime of missing him, and a future bright with the promise of tomorrow, all in that black PT Cruiser.



Lady with Feathered Fingertips | *Leah Mallow*

Two Poems by Antania Cannady

THOUGHTS

Doors repeatedly closed she can never figure out why
 Never anybody's fault
 Nothing is ever good she loves to be alone but hates
 To be lonely
 She tries to survive in a world that she's not a part of
 Killing herself hoping a better version of herself
 Will be born
 The version she hopes exists
 The version without harm
 The version that will win
 The version that loves to love
 The version that doesn't cry
 Of hate and frustration
 The version that feels everybody will leave
 The version that doesn't long for something she can't have
 The version that doesn't have to fight so hard to breathe

She just wants to get out of this place,
 It's dark and she's crying
 And what's worse is that she doesn't even know why
 She's trying to save herself
 She can save every soul she meets
 But she can never heal herself.
 Someone save her.
 Someone save me.

140 CHARACTERS

This poem will be
the worst ever created
For a limit to my words
is a sword through my tongue
a gun to my throat
and a halt to my song



Bad Tenants | *Susan Coughenour-Silbaugh*



Joker 1/2 Face Dissolving | *David Linaburg*

Essay by Robert E. Smith

THE POLITICS OF FEAR

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Land of the free and home of the brave. Liberty and justice for all. These are fundamental qualities of the United States of America. Why, then, is this nation, as democratic as it may appear, slowly falling into authoritarianism? I maintain that this process is occurring due to the development of an unhealthy political culture, a culture which can largely be summed up in the words of the great comedian George Carlin:

Maybe it's not the politicians who suck; maybe it's something else. Like the public. That would be a nice realistic campaign slogan for somebody: "The public sucks. Elect me." Put the blame where it belongs: on the people. Because if everything is really the fault of politicians, where are all the bright, honest, intelligent Americans who are ready to step in and replace them? Where are these people hiding? The truth is, we don't have people like that. Everyone's at the mall, scratching his balls and buying sneakers with lights in them. And complaining about the politicians.¹

And then:

The things that matter in this country have been reduced in choice, there are two political parties, there's a handful of insurance companies, there are six or seven information centers, but if you want a bagel there are 23 flavors because you have the illusion, the illusion of choice.²

¹ George Carlin, *Napalm & Silly Putty*, (New York, Hyperion, 2001).

² George Carlin on *Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher*. Episode aired May 16, 2001.

Americans face the illusion of choice, where the most significant decisions have been reduced in number of choice. Conversely, the number of *non*-significant decisions have increased with this choice. Unfortunately, many Americans don't truly vote their values nor do they understand the policies proposed by politicians, because if *we* were more vigilant citizens, then the US would not currently be in this unhealthy political situation, where the *politics of fear* rules.

Let's be clear though: America is still a nation where people are predominantly free, much more so than most countries around the world. However, there are certain areas where our freedoms have been infringed upon. The greatest example of this has been with the media and the press.

An example of media bowing down to government involved Cenk Uygur's tenure as a primetime anchor on MSNBC. Critical Uygur was very popular among viewers, but he was eventually taken off air when he refused to accept a (higher-paying) demotion. He claims that the move to demote him was politically motivated, saying:

I got pulled in, and they told me, "Hey, listen. We were just"—or, it was actually one specific person, the head of MSNBC. He said, "I was just in Washington, and people in Washington tell me that they're **concerned** about your tone." I was like, "Whoa!" . . . It is corporate media... It's not just MSNBC. You think that the CNN hosts can aggressively challenge government officials? I don't think so!³

It would be one thing if Uygur was the only one who experienced such challenges, but he certainly is not! Jessica Yellin, who worked for ABC and MSNBC, reported on the White House in relation to the events in Iraq from 2002-2003. This is what she said in an interview with CNN's Anderson Cooper:

³ Cenk Uygur on *Democracy Now!*. Episode aired July 22, 2011. Retrieved online October 30, 2015 http://www.democracynow.org/2011/7/22/rejecting_lucrative_offer_cenk_uygur_leaves

YELLIN: *When the lead-up to the war began, the press corps was under enormous pressure from corporate executives, frankly, to make sure that this was a war presented in way that was consistent with the patriotic fever in the nation and the president's high approval ratings.... And my own experience at the White House was that the higher the president's approval ratings, the more pressure I had from news executives—and I was not at this network at the time—but the more pressure I had from news executives to put on positive stories about the president, I think over time....*

COOPER: *You had pressure from news executives to put on positive stories about the president?*

YELLIN: *Not in that exact.... They wouldn't say it in that way, but they would edit my pieces. They would push me in different directions. They would turn down stories that were more critical, and try to put on pieces that were more positive. Yes, that was my experience."⁴*

Now how do we know these journalists were telling the truth? Well, we may never be able to verify these experiences with 100% accuracy. However, when one understands the media-government connection, the answer is clear. Just put this into perspective: In 1983 there were fifty companies that owned 90% of the media, but by 2011, that number was reduced to only six companies: General Electric, News Corp., Disney, Viacom, Time Warner, and CBS.⁵ Let's take a look at General Electric (GE). On top of its controversial

⁴Michael Calderone, *CNN's Yellin: Network execs killed critical White House stories*. (Politico, May 29, 2008). Retrieved November 24, 2015: http://www.politico.com/blogs/michaelcalderone/0508/CNNs_Yellin_Network_execs_killed_critical_White_House_stories_.html

⁵Vic Bishop, *The Illusion of Choice: Ninety Percent of American Media Controlled by Six Corporations*. (Global Research, August 29, 2015). Retrieved November 24, 2015: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-illusion-of-choice-ninety-percent-of-american-media-controlled-by-six-corporations/5472690>

history, GE is one of the largest government contractors for the US. How is GE expected to put heavy criticism on government, while it's profiteering by working for the government? Sounds like a conflict of interest.

You may be wondering, "how is this related to politics?" The answer, my friend, is that the media has everything, absolutely *everything* to do with politics. This has been made clear ever since the advent of televised debates.

In the 1960 Presidential Election, John F. Kennedy was vying for the presidency against Richard Nixon. When they participated in the first ever televised US Presidential Debate, it is said that those who saw the debate on television thought Kennedy won the debate, while those who heard the debate over the radio thought Nixon won. From this example, we know that the way media and information is presented, regardless of intent, has a significant influence on the general public. This is why the media must be held accountable with the highest of scrutiny by "We the People."

Regrettably *we* Americans, by and large, fail at being vigilant citizens. It is why, for example, our presidential debates have become thoroughly planned out, exclusive, slander sessions, when the reality is that they should be a platform for *different* policies to be debated by *multiple* qualified candidates.

Probably the saddest thing about our population, excluding the fact that many do not understand our electoral system, is that they do not know who all of the qualified⁶ presidential candidates are. Let alone, many do not actually understand the policies of the mainstream (Republican and Democratic) candidates. Rather they just pick up on the rhetoric they are smothered with by the media and campaign ads.

To be fair, the common person is not entirely at fault. The time to research the various candidates is not available for everyone. This is where the media

⁶ A qualified presidential candidate is one that is not only constitutionally eligible to run for presidency, but also has ballot access in enough states to theoretically win an electoral majority in the general election.

steps in. It provides voters with election coverage that it deems “relevant” for voters. Unfortunately, rather than providing an education service to the public, election coverage has become the combined equivalent to sports news and celebrity news—where broadcasters are only concerned about the popular candidates with a *chance* of winning. But that’s just it: deciding who is to be included or excluded in this discussion is to decide who are legitimate and illegitimate candidates.

Similar to the media, the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) only cares about the major party nominees in election coverage. It argues that in the General Election Debate it cannot include the hundreds of people who are running for president, which is why it has its polling qualification of 15% for all debate participants. Now, obviously, just anyone who happens to file his or her candidacy with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) cannot be included in the debates. A debate among hundreds of people is inconceivable. However, why doesn’t the CPD simply include candidates who have done the work to have ballot access in enough states to theoretically be able to win an electoral majority? Let’s keep in mind that there have been elected presidents that were not on the ballot in every state. Most notably was Abraham Lincoln—arguably America’s greatest. He was in fact only on the ballot in Northern States, and of course with the North being more populated he won the general election with those states alone.

With that ballot access requirement alone (in addition to being constitutionally eligible to run) the total number of participating candidates in debates would be reduced to around five people! That doesn’t seem like a crowd, as the CPD purports it to be. Did America not just witness the eleven-candidate Republican Presidential Debate? How is having only half that number of candidates in the General Election Debates a difficult task for the CPD to overcome? More importantly, how can we claim to be the ideal model Republic, yet fail to beat our European counterparts, among others, at providing multi-candidate presidential debates? Should we be proud that we

are only one political party away from being a one party state? The United Kingdom had SEVEN candidates included in their Leader Debates in 2015. Does anyone else see a red flag? Did we not endure two wars to become independent from Great Britain on the very grounds of democratic values? Why is it that *they* have more choice in deciding who leads their nation?

We never have to worry about our presidential elections being faced with cases of election fraud—they are already rigged! Remember the significance of the first televised debate? It was not much later when, after the repeated refusal of candidates to agree on debate rules, the Republican and Democratic Parties replaced the League of Women Voters as the sponsor of the debates. This bipartisan sponsorship was founded in the CPD, a private entity that *supposedly* is regulated by the FEC.

The 1992 Presidential election is the only time the CPD has allowed an alternative candidate in the debates. Billionaire Ross Perot, a man taken at the time as a more serious individual than Donald Trump is now, was included in the televised debates and consequently received over 20% of the popular vote. Due to Perot's success, the CPD excluded him from the 1996 General Election Debates. It's no wonder that the most respected journalist in Western History, Walter Cronkite, said the following:

The debates are part of the unconscionable fraud that our political campaigns have become. Here is a means to present to the American people a rational exposition of the major issues that face the nation, and the alternate approaches to their solution. Yet the candidates participate only with the guarantee of a format that defies meaningful discourse. They should be charged with sabotaging the electoral process.⁷

⁷ Walter Cronkite quote; Retrieved from Open Debates on November 24, 2015: <http://opendebates.org/news/crtics.html>

As if what was done by the CPD in 1996 wasn't bad enough, in 2012 they went as far as to arrest Green Party presidential nominee Dr. Jill Stein and her VP ticket Cheri Honkala to keep them from entering the Hofstra University debates, even though Stein had ballot access in enough states to theoretically win an electoral majority. What's worse is that Stein was arrested for simply *showing* up at the campus! The powers at be are so terrified of alternative voices, that they went as far as to have the Secret Service forcibly escort Stein and Honkala to an undisclosed dark site, where they were shackled to chairs for eight hours.⁸

The authoritarian actions by the CPD are a clear representation of what could come of America in the future. Not to mention, it displays how much of an illusion of choice we have in the presidential elections. Even a former director of the CPD, House Rep. John Lewis, thinks we should open up the debates:

The debate commission should be broadened to include third party members and independents and others, or it should be replaced. The two major parties are becoming so much alike, and the American people know it. They want more choices. Maybe, if we let other people participate in the debates, people will start believing that politics matter.⁹

So how can America reform its crooked electoral system? Well, it has to start with changing the debates, but this can only be done by taking REAL action. The moment that people stop going to the mall, scratching their balls, and buying sneakers with lights in them, all to just simply *complain* about the political system, change will occur! Okay, maybe not exactly like that, but you

⁸ *Green Party Candidates Arrested, Shackled to Chairs For 8 Hours After Trying to Enter Hofstra Debate*; (Democracy Now, October 17, 2012). Retrieved November 24, 2015
http://www.democracynow.org/2012/10/17/green_partys_jill_stein_cheri_honkala

⁹ Congressman John Lewis quote; Retrieved from Open Debates on November 24, 2015
<http://opendebates.org/news/crtics.html>

get the point: the moment people are enlightened about the rigged debates, the government-media connection, and other issues, people will have a reason to act. Once we realize that we are being deprived of voter choice, we will demand them! This will require more action than a simple blog post or tweet. It will require grassroots movements, protests, writing to elected officials, contacting local media, and getting vocal.

The greatest hurdle we face is the *politics of fear*. This is expressed through the voting of the lesser of two evils- choosing the least worst candidate of the political duopoly. Isn't the lesser of two evils *still* evil? Why vote for one of the major candidates when one of the third party candidates may better represent you? You would not be alone in voting a third way. In fact, only 21% of voters identify as Republicans and 29% identify with Democrats.¹⁰ So why should the other 50% have to submit to the choice of mainstream candidates? If that 50% of people voted for a Libertarian, Green, or for some other candidate, imagine how differently our nation would be operated. There would likely be fewer authoritarian policies and wars, less debt, less unemployment, fewer environmental catastrophes, less bailing out of big banks, less control of the media, and of course fairer elections among other measures.

Once people are not afraid to truly vote their values, things will change for the better. Until that happens, the rest of us vigilant citizens must take action to enlighten the rest of the nation on ALL of the qualified candidates and their solutions to repair America.

¹⁰ *Americans Declares Independence*; (Green Party of the United States, June 2015). Retrieved November 25, 2015



Colorful Eagle | *Alec Mason*



Cat-Querade | *Alexandra Edwards*



Fallen Autumn Leaves | *Lynette Marie Huff*



Colorful Life | *Susan Coughenour-Silbaugh*



Mask of Dionysus | *Beth Hiliker*



Melanie's Yellow Rose | *Roger Vogel*

Essay by Abigail Lane

DECEPTION BY LOVE

As Judges 13:3 informs us, during an oppressing time in history, there lived in the land of Zorah a man named Manoah. Manoah's wife was barren, and longing to conceive a child. One day, an angel appeared before Manoah's wife and informed the fortunate woman she would conceive and bear a child named Samson, hand-picked of God to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines. Centuries later, there lived a poet, Robert Browning. In 1842, Browning published several unique poems, one being "Porphyria's Lover," which questioned and contradicted readers' values. Although in background these tales could not be more different, I propose similarity: that Browning's "Porphyria's Lover" relates to and perhaps mimics the biblical tale of Samson, the Nazarite, by utilizing hair as a symbol of humiliation and eventually death.

Numbers Chapter 6 in the King James Version of the Bible provides the purpose, rules, and guidelines for taking the sacred Nazarite vow. *Literature Online* notes Nazarite derives from the Hebrew word nqr, which is simply defined as "consecrated one" ("Nazirite"). Beginning in Numbers 6:2, the Holy Scriptures states the vow is fundamentally purposed for one who aspires to "separate themselves unto the LORD," by removing all fleshly ambitions and the satisfaction of a conventional lifestyle to please the LORD. Continuing through Numbers 6:3-8 the Bible declares three distinct requirements of this sacred vow, the first rule being anything of the grape vine, such as grape juice, raisins or grapes, and even wine were to be abstained from (6:3-4). Dead bodies are also required to be avoided (6:6), for if one did in fact come in contact with a corpse he was required to shave the hair off his head and begin the process again (6:9). The third task, one which will be a main focus, is the requirement of an unshaven head; in order to be holy unto God, a true Nazarite "shall let the

locks of the hair of his head grow” (6:5). Although this vow may be taken by anyone who wishes, both male and female, some mentioned in the Bible are required to. One such is this child named Samson.

At the time of Samson’s birth, the Israelites turned their backs on God, revolted from his direction, and were placed in the hands of a cruel multitude known as the Philistines (Judges 13:1). This army, remembered for its Goliath and its victories, was once again ruling over the nation of Israel. Beginning in Judges 13 God begins to raise yet another judge, although something was special, unique, and sacred about this child: he would be a Nazarite all his life.

Samson began his life unlike most other children; he was unable to go to any family member’s funeral, for he was not allowed near a dead body, unable to eat a grape off the vine, and unable to shave the hair off his head. This vow is what supplied Samson with great strength, strength enough to kill 1,000 Philistines in one battle. As he grew and began seeking a wife, Samson noticed a “woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines,” the same group of people Samson was to deliver Israel from (Judges 14:1). Although Samson’s parents begged against marriage to a woman of an opposing tribe, Samson got married anyway. During the subsequent celebration, Samson proposed a riddle to thirty men attending his great feast, a riddle so confusing no man could understand. These men, who could not think of a single valid solution, begged Samson’s wife to deceive Samson into revealing the answer. Once Samson discovered his wife’s betrayal, his “anger was kindled” and he returned home, leaving his wife for a year (14:19). During this time Samson’s wife remarried, kindling Samson’s anger even more, causing him to burn the wheat harvest of the Philistines. The Philistines, hearing of this horrific deed, decided to kill Samson’s ex-wife and ex father-in-law. In response, Samson took revenge yet again for killing his first love and slaying 1,000 more Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey (15:15).

Thus ends a chapter in one of history's most dysfunctional marriages. The confusion and turmoil that dominated Samson's life causes me to think of Browning's "Porphyria's Lover."

Similarities begin as Browning's mysterious well-known poem portrays a gloomy evening where depressing moods relate to Samson's upsetting heartbreak. "The rain set early in to-night," begins Browning, illustrating a storm brewing (line 1). The fierce winds begin to blow, the lake waves in constant turmoil, trees begin to fall, all while Porphyria's lover watches and listens from inside a small cottage (lines 2-5). Sitting alone with no companion in sight, Porphyria's lover is characterized as lonely with "heart fit to break" (line 5). Both Samson and the lover were experiencing turmoil caused by the solitude of having no lover in their lives, and the settings of both the Biblical tale and the poem are pictured as chaos.

Shortly following, both Samson and Porphyria's lover are introduced to a companion. Samson meets a woman of the "valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah," another Philistine but yet a woman he loved (Judges 16:4). In Browning's poem we read that in walked the beautiful Porphyria, soaked from the downpour of rain beyond the closed door. As she begins removing her wet articles of clothing, her shawl, gloves, and hat, allowing her beautiful "yellow hair" to dangle romantically over her shoulder, Porphyria begins calling to her lover, expecting to hear him speak in return (line 18). Although she hears not a word, she decides to try again. Ever so slowly she puts his arm around her, uncovers her shoulder to bare skin, lies against him, brushes her long, beautiful hair against his cheek, and murmurs her love (lines 16-20).

Reading through the poem I begin to relate back to Samson's story as his relationship with Delilah, yet another Philistine, begins to form. Their love and romance is blooming before their eyes, but Delilah becomes curious and begins to question what causes her lover's great strength. To Delilah's dismay, Samson

just teases her. Porphyria also tricks her lover: “too weak, for all her heart’s endeavor/to set its struggling passion free/from pride” (lines 22-24), she murmurs love but remains too weak to give her all. Perhaps she is prideful of her beauty, or of her status in life, or simply does not fully love him, but something prohibits her from displaying all her love. As Porphyria teases her lover in demonstrating only a portion of her love, Samson teases Delilah, lying three times about where his great strength lay. Samson and Porphyria alike feel passion, perhaps even love for their partners; both lovers though are desperately anxious to receive knowledge of every part of Samson and Porphyria’s being. Delilah longs for an answer, while Porphyria’s lover desires all Porphyria’s love, not partial, but her everything.

Although Porphyria and Samson may not put forth full effort in their relationships, considerable risks are taken by both. Browning’s poem continues: “for love of her and all in vain/ so she was come through wind and rain,” Porphyria’s lover luring her at this point to a small cottage (line 30). She travels through great turmoil, as does Samson to romantically connect himself with a woman of a different tribe. As Porphyria faces the fear of abandonment in the storm, or injury at the falling of trees, Samson risked being rejected by his family and possibly the whole tribe of Israel for betraying its wishes.

Delilah, still frustrated with lies, and Porphyria’s lover, confused with Porphyria’s so-called love, finally receive the answers and love they desire. After Delilah nags for days, constantly questioning Samson’s strength, he reveals the great mystery, which is his hair. Why has he been so powerful? Why has the Lord been with him through every battle? How could he have slain thousands of men? Simply, a razor never came in contact with his hair. Reading this passage, I can’t help but question why he would reveal this great secret. Bruce Herzberg notes in answer that “Samson may long to be ‘an ordinary man,’ one who can exercise free will, fall in love on his own, and choose not to be an

instrument of death” (236). Perhaps Samson was tired of the pressure, distressed because the whole nation of Israel depended on his strength and guidance. Similarly, in “Porphyria’s Lover,” Browning notes that Porphyria’s lover discovered “Porphyria worshipped” (line 33) him. Therefore, Porphyria finally entrusts her lover with every ounce of love she possesses. This becomes a problem. Catherine Ross notes there is a “difference in social status between the lovers” (71), and unfortunately for Porphyria, sexual passion is not accepted especially among lovers of different statuses in life. I believe Samson and Porphyria longed to live ordinary lives, one free of separate classes, fame, and of the constant oversight.

It is unfortunate for Porphyria and Samson that, by relinquishing themselves to their lovers’ demands, they are required to pay a price. As Porphyria’s lover comes to the conclusion that Porphyria worships him, he contemplates what to do. Desiring to capture the moment, causing it to be never ending, he grasps her hair and with it “[winds] three times her little throat around/and strangle[s] her” (lines 39-40). Porphyria dies, her lover gaining what he desired most, her complete love. Strangled by what caused her beauty, Porphyria’s hair symbolizes death: what once made her beautiful and gave her a connection romantically with her lover eventually destroys her. As for Samson, once Delilah is informed of the mystery, while Samson is sleeping a man from her tribe shaves every lock of hair on Samson’s head and gouges out his eyes. What once provided Samson with strength to single handedly slay thousands, is now taken from him. While being made a spectacle of laughter at a feast of 3,000 Philistines because of his weakness and blindness, Samson begs God for forgiveness, asking once more for strength. God, granting his request, gives Samson strength enough to cause the two pillars he is standing between to crumble, causing the building to collapse, killing him and the multitude of men (Judges 16:30). As with Porphyria, his hair and all his strength brings death.

Samson and Porphyria, similar in many ways, are eventually brought down by their hair. Although both take risks, perhaps in longing to be ordinary people they only make themselves spectacles of humiliation and cause their own deaths by what created their uniqueness.

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Pine Needles | *Lynette Marie Huff*

Essay by Brooke Barbe

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Stuttering is a speech disorder/impediment which usually appears in the early childhood years. There are other terms used to describe stuttering, such as stammering or maybe just disfluency in someone's speech. When somebody stutters, it usually sounds like they just can't quite get a word out, such as "H-H-How are you doing?" Other stutterers may be able to get words out just fine; however, they drag certain words out longer than usual when trying to say them. According to the Stuttering Foundation, "more than 70 million people worldwide stutter, which is about 1% of the population. In the United States, that's over 3 million Americans who stutter."

My name is Brooke, and I am one of the 70 million people in the world who has to live with a stutter every day. See, I started to stutter or have "disfluency" in my speech when I was just five years old. I was in a tragic car accident involving members of my family and very close friends, and the crash seems to be the only plausible cause that may have triggered my stutter. Doctors and family have no explanation. Perhaps I suffered from a slight case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), and with it being at such a very young age, maybe the outcome of having PTSD could be stuttering. However, as the Stuttering Foundation states, "there is no reason to believe that emotional trauma causes stuttering."

When I was a young child of course I didn't let it get to me. I mean, I had no idea what it was to stutter. I assumed as a young child I still had growing to do, and I needed to develop better speaking skills and better grammar. Unfortunately, I was wrong. As I got older, reached puberty, entered middle school and high school, it began to just get worse and worse and . . . worse. I felt as if I had tried everything to make that stupid affliction go away.

I went to speech therapy many different times and to many different places. My mother had discovered a computer program which helped me immensely. But to me it felt like I was the only teenager in the world who had to do anything like that. I just gave up on it. Later, during high school, my father had printed out a book and put it in a three-ring binder for me to read every night. Reading it in general was supposed to help me, but also the techniques in the book were supposed to help me, too. Once again I had that “I’m stupid” feeling. I would get so upset and just stop trying. I figured this thing that I hated so much was never going to go away.

Going through middle school and high school being labeled “that girl who stutters” was rough, indeed. Looking back, it never made sense to me, and that’s what I still don’t understand. I was cheer captain for two years. I had to start cheers in front of hundreds of people and never once stuttered. But as soon as I would get up in front of a classroom full of my friends whom I’d known for years, I couldn’t get my words out.

“Why me?” I’ve said, thought, and cried multiple times. My friends and especially my family have always told me it makes me “unique,” but that just didn’t make me feel any better.

But the day came when I questioned myself and thought if this thing isn’t going to go away, why should I fight it? Why shouldn’t I just try to embrace it? So, that’s what I’ve been attempting to do.

By using certain techniques from speech therapy, my computer program, and the giant paper book in my binder, I found that applying those techniques in real life actually helps. Who would’ve thought? When I know I’m going to get stuck on a word, I will say a different word that is similar to the one I wanted to say. Sure, it’s still difficult because I can’t always say exactly what I want to say. I have to take a deep breath before almost every sentence, because that is the one thing that helps me enormously. I try not to think before I speak,

meaning that I don't think about what words I'm going to get stuck on so that way I just say what I want and hope for the best. I don't have to "plan out" what I can and can't say when using that technique.

Although the stutter has improved greatly and has become easier to deal with throughout the years, it truly is still a struggle every single day of my life. I've learned that it does not make me any less of a person, it does not make me stupid, and it should absolutely not stop me from doing anything I want to do. I am 18. I have two jobs where I interact with people all day, every day at work. I go to college and talk in front of people when it's necessary. I realize that right now I do stutter, and I must deal with it.

Some people stutter only as a child and young adult, some will outgrow it, and some people will stutter the rest of their lives. I have hoped that I will one day outgrow this. "Approximately 5 percent of all children go through a period of stuttering that lasts six months or more. Three-quarters of those will recover by late childhood, leaving about 1% with a long-term problem" states the Stuttering Foundation. I hope to overcome and defeat this obstacle in my life. I am determined to do so. I can't wait for the day when I can look at myself in the mirror and say "you've finally beat it." I plan to become a registered nurse after college, and my goal, by the time I do become a nurse, is to forget that I ever even stuttered in my previous years. However, if I can't beat this, which I know is very possible, I will not let it stop me from pursuing my dreams.

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Three Poems by Dajuan Warren

WHAT IS A KING?

The male ruler of an independent state, especially one
who inherits the rule.

Rule, you see, is right of birth.

That's the dictionary definition

But the true kings are humans

 No matter the sex.

That's the rule.

At one time I wanted to be the king, but for no reason other

Than to be

The people's hero;

But what is a King to a God?

Now I'm grown, I'm a god.

I say and continue to say

Poetry. I will prepare, I will bring, I will manufacture

This Poet God.

In my lines I will make my own history.

I will make history.

THE DREAMER

It's a lonely life when no one
Cares for you
Loves you
Talks to you
I used to dream about nothing
But Darkness
Cause it was trapped in my blood
My veins

I would quit this job a long time ago
But I'm too addicted to the words
I knew would know me.
It took so long
I'd started to forget my purpose
(I think it was to make life worth it.)

Damn it's a shame
I'm starting to forget my name.
Yet I'm still dreaming
About to be the Poet God,
Live in my favorite Cartoon
Have super powers
Become immortal
And that's just the start.

But those are just dreams
Coming from a dreamer
Who was once a nightmare's creator.
Now I realize life is so much balance
of a God and a Devil
Mother of Light
Father of Dark.

Still, maybe I knew it true.
I write.
I'm the balancer,
I write.

EYES OF THE POET GOD

In my right eye I see hate
In my left eye I see love
In my right eye I see black
In my left eye I see white
In my right eye I see pain
In my left eye I see joy
In my right eye I see bad
In my left eye I see good
My right eye is yin
My left eye is yang
My middle eye is Shiva.



Diverge | *Brianna Swisher*

Essay by Gretchen Geist

THE SILENT VOICE OF CONTROL

All people are unique and each one of us has special talents. My talents and abilities are different from others'. I cannot sing. When I think I am singing to myself someone will hear my doggy wailing tune and will say to me "don't quit your day job to pursue a music career because you will starve." I have two left feet so I don't dance for fear of falling on my face. At my wedding reception my husband and I "danced" by swaying our shoulders and our hips while going in tight, tiny circles. I am not an athlete either. I can't run very long or jump well over obstacles for that matter. I can't climb ropes or do push-ups. If someone forced me to do them all over again like the gym teachers did in high school, yes, I could do them but I wasn't good at any of them.

What I am good at is training and starting young horses. I am patient with the horses and I never push the horse further than what he or she is able or comfortable to do. I am also good at raising calves. I pay attention to each one and can spot a calf that is starting to get sick and treat the calf before it gets worse. The calf mortality rate at the farm that I worked was 2:100. That is, I would lose only two calves out of one hundred.

If each person is different with various gifts and talents, then why do people tend to think that animals, in this case horses, wouldn't have different talents? Each horse has different abilities that makes it unique, so why do horse trainers who train in only one discipline seem to think that every horse bred at their facility will be happy with the profession chosen for them? This was the case for the horses at the fancy stable that I worked at for one and one-half years. This elite stable bred and raised an Arabian/Dutch Harness cross for saddleseat. This isn't just any normal stable. This horse stable would be considered a Ritz Carlton in our worldview for horses. Constructed of wall to

wall brick with inlaid mahogany, the amenities of the heated stable included twenty-two spacious stalls, an indoor riding arena, tack room, break room, restroom, wash bay, and living quarters. The whole place sparkled from excessive cleaning, and everything had a place and everything was in its place. The stable itself was breath taking, but what took place on the inside was dark and ugly.

I was a stable hand so I was around all twenty-two horses six days a week. Each of the horses and their personalities I had gotten to know. I knew which horses should be in the same pasture and which should not. When the horses were in the pastures I could see different disciplines of riding in each one and not just saddleseat. I watched a mare the color of a newly minted penny dance sideways with her neck arched in pride with perfect body conformation, all qualities for dressage. A tall slender bay mare with a narrow blaze and four white stockings would have made a beautiful jumper since she seemed to jump everything in her path effortlessly. A sixteen-hand beautiful bay gelding with lots of muscle would be a great barrel horse since he could outrun all the other horses and yet turn around outdoor waters and trees without touching them.

All of these horses would've been much happier doing what they loved to do and not be forced to do saddleseat, just because, in the human universe, one person trains for one discipline. With these thoughts and the vibrant images of magnificent horses in my mind, I moseyed back to the stable to continue my chores. As I neared the entrance of the open doors leading to the stable, I heard the familiar sound of the whip cracking. I went past the back stalls and turned left to enter the indoor riding arena where another Arabian/Dutch Harness mare was in training for saddleseat. This mare tried her best, but when she failed to do what the trainer wanted, she got whipped repeatedly. The trainer couldn't get the mare into the right body frame so the trainer started whipping the horse again. This time, out of fear and pain, the mare kicked out multiple

times and reared, which the trainer saw as rebellion. The trainer started whipping her again with each blow of the whip getting harder. At this point I saw the whites of the horse's eyes due to fear and pain.

I often questioned the trainer, "why not train a horse for a discipline which the horse will love and enjoy?" Each time the answer was the same: "we train saddleseat and every horse here is a show horse in the making." Most of the horses were not happy being forced to do saddleseat and would often voice it through body language; since horses can't talk, and the trainer couldn't read the body language, the trainer saw the bucking and rearing as bad behavior, and would use the whip to "correct" the horses. This was abuse, not training.

Making a person or an animal do what they aren't happy doing is a form of control. Abuse, whether intentional or not, happens whenever a person tries to control through manipulation. Parents will often manipulate their children into sports or career choices using positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement and punishment to get what they want. In China, young girls are taken from their parents by the age of three, and spend their lives with a trainer to become Olympic gymnasts whether or not they have the ability and desire.

If we can acknowledge one another's abilities and talents and acknowledge that all animals have different abilities, we would see less abuse. If the trainer would've taken the time to get to know each of the horse's personalities and interact with each one, the trainer might've paired the horse with a discipline that would've captured the potential of the horse. If parents would listen to their children's voice about what they would like to do in life instead of parading the old line "my son/daughter is following in his father's/mother's footsteps," I believe the world would have more Albert Einsteins.



Lonely Stretch | *Susan Coughenour-Silbaugh*

Essay by Marilyn Peck

MAX'S MAD FAILED STATE WASTELAND

In the 1970's the news topics many Western people were hearing about included gas rationing, the enduring threat of nuclear war, and outlaw biker gangs. From this political and pop-cultural backdrop emerged a new hero, Max Rockatansky, the eponymous rogue cop protagonist of the *Mad Max* film franchise. The action film genre is easy to reject, because of its utilization of stock characters (the rogue cop, the lone cowboy, etc.), pithy one-liners, and (often excessive) explosions; but closer examination of the world of *Mad Max* reveals a complex exploration of end time fears and an idea of what rebuilding society after catastrophe might look like.

The franchise's first offering, *Mad Max*, introduces audiences to a small group of Main Force Patrol Officers tasked with maintaining order on the perimeters of Australia's vast outback, in a time of empty coffers and extremely limited resources. These circumstances allow outlaw bikers and other semi-organized crime groups to operate with relatively free reign, riding into small towns on the periphery of civilization to rape, murder, and generally terrorize people before rushing off to hide in the outback. Max's world is recognizable to modern audiences because there are diners, police officers, and train stations; Max has a job, a boss, a family, and lives in a pleasant house outside of a city. However, there are characteristics that show, some subtle and some overt, how fragile this setup really is; a few small scenes show the police station and the courthouse, which could both be mistaken for derelict buildings. The viciousness and audacity of the criminals paired with the disrepair of public buildings tell us how fragile Max's world is, but this world is still something audiences recognize as familiar.

In the second film, *The Road Warrior*, conditions have deteriorated to full on failed state status. Agnieszka Szpak, writing in the *Chinese Journal of International Law*, discusses how a

failed state is the last phase of state collapse. One is dealing with this phase when the erosion of the public, social and economic order . . . leads to a lack of effective central power controlling the whole or at least majority of the territory and on the other hand minimal order very often limited only to the capital city and various groups fighting for the control over the population. . . . [O]ne may add the following: deficit of internal order (the power is grasped by bands, clans, and warlords). (252)

Szpak is writing here, specifically, about conditions in Somalia since the 1990's, but her assessment perfectly fits the nuclear wasteland setting of *The Road Warrior*. A montage and narration at the second film's beginning shows that the atomic bombs have dropped and social order is a thing of the past. After the murder of Max's family in the first film, Max seeks and finds revenge before driving off into the Outback at the film's close. *Road Warrior* Max is seen with a companion dog, both struggling to find fuel and food, sharing portions of canned dog food and scavenging gas from wrecked vehicles. He encounters a dying man who barter a tank of fuel in exchange for returning his body home to his tribe. The man's tribe, a group of oil rig operators, is relatively safe, enclosed behind the walls of their compound. However, the treasure of fuel that it possesses has brought them to the attention of the psychotic, yet eloquent, Lord Humungus. The technicians of the oil rig have developed a plan to travel thousands of miles safely to Australia's sunshine coast, where there are rumors of clean water and the ability to grow food. The inhabitants of the compound work well together; their group has both male and female leaders and warriors, as well

as young people and elderly. They are a fragment of the old world that has managed to maintain itself thus far but that safety is merely temporary. Lord Humungus's followers are vicious and evil to outsiders when acquiring resources, but are united in loyalty and love for each other and their leader. Although they are despicable they are still human, caught up in the necessity of survival like everyone else. Max has performed deplorable acts as well, but still clings to an old moral code that includes honoring a bargain and the dead's last rites. *The Road Warrior* explores a world that has completely disintegrated socially, with survivors utilizing what leftover technology and resources they can scavenge. Both factions of people represent the end of the old order, but show that development of a new society "must focus on a bottom-up solution rather than imposition of institutions from the outside" (Szpak 256). In the case of *The Road Warrior*, there are no existing structures to impose from the outside.

The world might have been shattered, the survivors left to scavenge and salvage whatever resources they could, but the world does not stagnate. The third and fourth films in the series, *Beyond Thunderdome* and *Fury Road*, respectively show the creation of towns and mini-states with new technologies and developing alliances. A further development in these films is religions and cults that arise from the culture of the post-apocalypse. This world still has roving bands of psychos and highway robbery but a new order is emerging from the chaos; some of those roving bands have organized.

In *Beyond Thunderdome* there are two main settlements: Bartertown and the Waiting Ones. Bartertown has laws and a justice system, food, water, and electricity generated from methane derived from the feces of hundreds of pigs. State failure "paradoxically [has] proved to be a boon to the development of civil society groups" (Szpak 256); chaos orders itself, and eventually the post-apocalypse survivors focus violence towards the maintenance of order. When Max arrives in Bartertown with nothing to barter but his skills he becomes involved in the political maneuverings of Aunty Entity, the town's founder. Max

must battle in the Thunderdome, a public spectacle used to discourage violence and settle arguments. Being sentenced to the Thunderdome is the penalty for public fighting, as the emcee Dr. DealGood tells Bartertown's citizens, because

[f]ighting leads to killing, and killing gets to warring. And that was damn near the death of us all. Look at us now! Busted up, and everyone talking about hard rain! But we've learned, by the dust of them all... Bartertown learned. Now, when men get to fighting, it happens here! And it finishes here! Two men enter; one man leaves.

Aunty Entity, being a survivor, knows that violence cannot be regulated into non-existence. Redirecting violence, however, is possible, and doing so makes society function. The system upon which Bartertown operates is brutal, but much less so than the circumstances outside of civilization. Furthermore, this system is agreed upon enthusiastically by the town's inhabitants, and because of the rule of law in Bartertown there are other benefits of civilization. The camera follows Max through a throng of people in a market area, where there are political slogans (implying free speech and association), aesthetic and cosmetic improvements to buildings, and even branding and marketing for the Atomic Cafe.

The Waiting Ones consist of children in their late teens and younger, living in a water filled oasis. They recite their history in a communal setting everyday, describing how they survived a plane crash when escaping the bombing of the cities. The Waiting Ones are hunter gatherers with art, history, shared rituals, and a hope that a messianic Captain Walker, for whom they mistake Max to be, will return one day and take them to the fabled city of Tomorrow-morrow Land. Max is more visibly disturbed by this society than any others he encounters in his adventures because the children were too young to understand any of the events that led to their presence in the desert. They have no understanding of how resource rich they are, of the madness that surrounds

them in the desert, and they are clueless regarding their own vulnerability. Yet they have done more than survive: they have created the one society in the franchise born of hope and not violence and terror.

In *Fury Road*, Immortan Joe leads the Citadel, which maintains its power through the exchange of water, milk, produce and women to other settlements called Gas Town and the Bullet Farm. Bartertown and *Fury Road's* Citadel remain violent cultures, but have systematized violence into a system of right and wrong, which is antithetical to the outlaw biker gang from the first film. These violent cultures are organized and able to defend themselves, unlike the refinery inhabitants. After four films the geography of Max's wasteland is becoming more populated with nodes of order and civilization, although the map is far from crowded and safety is always relative. The first *Mad Max* film showed one man, a law enforcement officer, pitted against a band of insane outlaws. There was no indication of the larger political context of a world on the verge of nuclear war, but the use of violence at the state level trickled down, eroding both societal order and the supply of resources. Each successive film explores the deterioration and rebirth of human organization. The action film genre is full of examples of films easily dismissed as spectacle; *Mad Max* distinguishes itself because of its complex exploration of the impact of world events on the individual and its examination of the how societies are perpetually reborn and shaped by their access to resources and their occurrence in a historical framework.

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Watch 1/2 Pic, 1/2 Pencil | *David Linaburg*

Essay by Rebecca Ford

A MOTHER'S BREATH

Last year was a milestone year for me. I turned the “Big 5-0” and began to take inventory of my life. I reflected on accomplishments from the past fifty years that I was particularly proud of or had simply loved making. I asked myself if there had been any significant or life-changing events that directed my course to whom I had become thus far.

I grew up as a middle child in a large family with two older sisters and two younger brothers. I took my role as middle child very seriously and was excellent at finding ways to instigate trouble in order to annoy my siblings, like reading love notes from my sisters’ boyfriends and putting pretty doll clothes on my brothers’ G.I. Joes. I can’t say that I know the point when they forgave me and finally recognized my imagination and talent at causing their tribulation. As disturbed and angry as I made them, most of my goals as the attention-seeking middle child had been met during those times, and now those memories are funny and worth recalling.

The years of growing up, trying to find where I fit in, and who I was meant to be were comparable to the hours of struggling through pain and contractions while in labor with my first child. Overnight, at age twenty, my world changed. Life was not all about me anymore because now there was a little one who was much louder and disruptive than I had ever been to my siblings. Did I resent her as my siblings had me? To be honest, of course I did! That was only at first though. I really did not know this little intruder yet. Up until this time, she had only been a growing and moving lump in my belly. Now she entered my life as a forceful little stranger who demanded my time, my sleep, and my efforts for her every waking moment. However, my frustrations and bewilderment turned into one of the deepest and strongest loves I have ever felt. When it finally hit me that

I adored this screaming, red-faced creature, I was overcome with emotion and revelation that I never knew existed.

Motherhood is an eye-opener many women get after falling in love with their new baby. Maybe it is not that way for every woman, but I wish it was. Suddenly everything matters, not just the little things like where the baby will sleep or what she will eat. Now it matters that not everyone covers their mouth when they cough. It matters that some people never wash their hands! Some people drive too fast and dangerously. Others are too loud and opinionated when not even asked for advice. My life was no longer about me; it was all about her and keeping her happy and safe.

The first time I realized just how connected I was with our newborn was when I was nursing her in those early few weeks. Professional baby advice indicated that my baby would need to be fed once every four hours. Unfortunately, my new daughter had not received that memo and decided once every two hours would be satisfactory in her terms. I was feeding the little dictator, making sure her belly was filling enough that I might luck into a peaceful two-hour stretch of sleep, when she began to choke. Her little face turned bright red and she sputtered. Her body was wracked with coughing as she struggled to breathe. I lifted her upright and held her against me, trying to straighten her airway and make her breaths come easier. As quickly as she had begun to choke, she recovered, sighed, and laid her head on my shoulder with her soft little breaths returning to normal. It was then that I noticed I was out of breath. I had not been choking like her, but realized I had not breathed once the entire time that she was unable. Somewhere along the way, despite the sleepless nights and days, regardless of the soreness I still felt from childbirth, I had breathed with my baby and bonded.

As I think back on those early days of motherhood, I realize my emotional responses have not changed much since then. When one of my children is

happy, I celebrate with that child. The joy and gladness become my own. The child's victories are my victories. The smiles upon the face of that child become the smiles in my heart. The connection goes the other way too, and it strikes me deeper than any physical pain I've ever felt. If one of my children is in pain, or dealing with difficulties, then I am hurting too. My chest tightens and I feel defeat. It becomes my own and won't get better until the child recovers.

Being a mother is like riding a never-ending roller coaster with my children. The high points are the peaks and victories along the way, but the downward rush of wind as we descend into the hard times takes away my breath and rearranges my stomach closer to my throat. If I am lucky, the lowest points go quickly and we begin to climb, and then I can breathe again.

As I leaned forward to blow out the candles on my 50th birthday cake, I looked up to see the faces of my children, illuminated by the glow of candles. I had come a long way from being a bratty middle child who enjoyed annoying my siblings. My greatest life changing events were now surrounding me and these are my proudest accomplishments from the past 50 years.

Essay by Megan Ruby

AUDITORIUM

At first it was a large, loud place where great and exciting things happened, a place I only visited when the necessity presented itself. Then in time it turned into a near-silent sanctuary. When I first arrived, the place was a joke because of its molded oatmeal, asbestos ceiling, the scent of dust and neglect, and the words scraped in to the seats' wooden, numbered arms and painted beige, metal backs, proclaiming for future generations who loved whom and who sucked eggs. Its doors were ramshackle boards coated in chipping red paint that matched the scratchy, folding seats that formed three rows and faced a dimly-lit stage that had certainly seen better days. Three years later, everything was torn out and restored in hues of blue that disappeared into the blackness when the better and brighter stage lights grew faint. The scent of age was replaced by the scent of new and unfamiliar and the oatmeal ceiling turned into uniform grey tile.

I remember the beginning in orientation, when eager chatter buzzed through the crowd of my peers, most of whom I had only met the previous year. That initial burst of noise had fizzled to a cynical hum by the time senior year had rolled around. I remember performing in a disorganized choir of twenty on a set of rickety risers under blazing hot stage lights in the spring and winter. I did that for two years until the kooky, optimistic woman who taught the choir, who had spikey grey hair and reminded me of robins and was shaped like a pear, who claimed she wouldn't retire until my class graduated, did exactly the opposite. The year following her retirement, the choir tripled in size and switched to a monochromatic wardrobe for the sake of professionalism. The new teacher was a squat young man with a hot temper and a round face set with beady brown eyes who blended in with the students and told us that we were hopelessly awful at our art. He reformed the choir as he saw fit and began calling us a chorale, a word I

didn't know the meaning of until a few seconds ago when I looked it up to find that it's just a more pretentious word for what we already were.

I remember watching one of my closest childhood friends from the darkness of the crowd as he performed jubilantly in school plays that I never missed, even when we drifted apart and he grew bitter and cruel of tongue and mind because the girls he threw himself at and disrespected refused to date him. He was a gangly, animated fellow with rectangular glasses and blonde hair that began receding at the grand old age of fifteen who had boundless enthusiasm and talent for theatre and was unintentionally funny. In elementary school, he and I drew comics named after candy together, designed rollercoasters that would puree a person if they were to exist, and laughed at the fantastic schemes of imaginary people. We grew back together for our final year of high school when we talked about video games and wrote stories over lunch while I tried to explain that his misfortune in his romantic endeavors was his own doing. As I did so, I noticed that his large blue eyes seemed to glaze over under his thick eyebrows as he held his tongue, waiting to rebut and assure me that it was the girls' faults.

I remember the beginning of my final year of high school, when the time of the annual play traded seasons and the entire chorale sat in the auditorium and passed the class period chatting and doing other schoolwork. I remember feeling heavy with depression and light with apathy as I sat alone in the vast room with a book clenched in my hands that I wasn't reading while my classmates talked amicably in scattered clumps. I didn't have any friends in chorale and I envied the community that I had never quite adhered to. When we actually were in the classroom, which was far too small and cold for the number of people in it, we had assigned seats that were a blessing and a curse that nobody but friendless me followed. I sat beside a skinny junior girl who had long, frizzy brown hair, pale blue eyes, wore the same sweater every day in

different colors, and smelled like roller-skating rinks, a girl with whom I had never acquainted myself, though she had been in chorus for years. We rarely spoke to each other in the frigid classroom because we were both people who were polite but blatantly socially awkward. For reasons I can't quite place presently, I was positively hell-bent on befriending her. I suppose that I grew exhausted from the crippling anxiety-fueled loneliness that had arrested me for the majority of my years in the class; I wanted desperately to have at least one friend. My strange attempts at befriending her began when the time of preparation for the play came in the start of fall, when I noticed that, like me, she sat alone in the auditorium most of the time. Her only friend in the class was a genderfluid individual who only came to class on rare choral rehearsal days, had brown hair that matched his eyes, talked to everyone and no one at the same time, sang songs from emo bands on solo day, and laughed at his own jokes and those of the girl. The girl always arrived at the auditorium before me and I took advantage of this by sitting right beside her every day we were there. I couldn't bring myself to even say hello most of the time, but she never asked me to leave and she was never offended by my involuntary antisocial tendencies. As time passed, we started getting more comfortable in each other's company and started having conversations that made me realize that there were people at my high school who were like me. I was truly astonished and thrilled to have found someone who was so similar to me. It frightened me sometimes how alike we were, how she said things I thought as I thought them as if she were reading my mind. Our friendship grew throughout the school year.

I remember my final chorus concert, when more people were in tears on stage than not as they bid farewell to the fifteen seniors in the chorale. The entire event passed in an overwhelming, sweat-scented blur of saline and choked-up speeches under too bright stage lights where we stood in uncomfortable dress shoes. I said goodbye to a nice girl from Kyrgyzstan; she was to return to her home country the morning after.

I remember graduating on the stage and the thunderous cheering emitted from the dark, relative-filled audience as each person was called upon to receive a symbolic, disappointingly empty red diploma folder that looked like the cover of a small, leather-bound book. I recall having to focus every ounce of my energy into not knocking off my cap or my head out of sheer clumsiness and helping pin orange ribbons to purposely oversized gowns. This ceremony we performed in memory of a deceased classmate, who passed during the boiling July before my tenth grade year at the hand of his best friend in a game of incorrectly-played Russian roulette. My flamboyant, overweight friend, who talked to me about his favorite bands with such vivacity in his wide blue eyes that I occasionally wondered if he was a search engine, spitting out seemingly endless facts and opinions, shamelessly did his signature pose for the people of the audience, biting his index finger between his front teeth and turning tail. A blind classmate who I always saw walking the hall with his grey and red collapsible cane in hand, tapping back and forth across the floor in front of him with his fluorescent blonde head down, took his ceremonial diploma and made his way to center stage without assistance, just as I'd seen him practice by himself after everyone else had left rehearsal the day before. He then spread out his arms to embrace the roar of applause. That was the night I saw my friend, Kayla, for the last time as she took pictures with her friends as they all beamed with excitement for what would come after. I hadn't anticipated that the next time I would see her, I would be shaking with fear of mortality in a party of weeping, black-clad individuals who all stood, not knowing what to do, around the heavy, wooden box she lay in, looking both unmistakably like and entirely unlike herself. I recall just being glad for the ceremony to be over, glad to escape the burning yellow lights, the cold white metal chairs, and the hundreds of staring eyes whose owners I couldn't see, glad for my final performance to be over.

INSPIRATIONS



Brooke Barbe

A Day in the Life

My submission is something I wrote based on the true story of my life. It means very much to me that no other people can hear me out and experience what it's like first hand.

Susan Coughenour-Silbaugh

Bad Tenants

These two furry kids decided they needed a home.....WITH ME! They managed to get in my house and stashed walnuts from my trees in the walls. Daily they would wait for me to come out and sit on my deck with my camera. Wasn't long I realized they were watching what I was doing and they started taunting me in the corner of this gutter. One day I pointed the camera to them and they started posing. For a short time they had their photo moments but it wasn't long before I had to serve their eviction notice. They moved into a tree until the weather changed and they weren't seen much anymore.

Colorful Life

These flowers were found in a local store, standing proud among its many fallen neighbors. Catching my eye, I immediately realized it would take a beautiful photograph. The colors are bright and beautiful and stood as if it were posing waiting for its moment. I brought them home and made them proud.

Lonely Stretch

Quite often I grab my camera and ride around looking for photos and photo documenting changes in things I might find fascinating. This

particular spot caught my eye as it looks like you drive off the end of the earth and one lonely tree stands on the side of the road as if it is waving “hello”. This particular day we had storms and it took on a different appearance. Instead of a friendly feel it seemed lonelier and sad, almost creepy. I think it is one of the more interesting photos I have taken.

Gretchen Geist

The Silent Voice of Control

I have chosen to write on a topic that conveys to all people from all walks of life. In some way or another people have witnessed abuse whether intentional or not. I have highlighted several points in my essay using myself, horses, and children to get my point across.

Maria Hite

Finite Footsteps

Anticipation was building as my older brother’s wedding day neared. News that they were not only getting married but throwing a week long beach party to celebrate left me feeling beyond ecstatic. They rented a beachfront 13-bedroom mega home in Corolla, North Carolina, a luxurious vacation destination only accessible by dune buggies driven on the beach. Motivated to leave this experience with tangible, photographic documentation, I spent a significant portion of the week fiddling around with my Cannon Rebel T1i. The ocean side mansion happened to be positioned near the foot of the largest sand dune in the area. Once a day I hiked through the sinking, beige earth to take in the panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean, Currituck Sound, and fresh sandy mirages. While atop the dune, the world I had known seemed to be a distant memory and this





unfamiliar, secluded and magnificent landscape was all that that needed to exist. Reluctantly, I turned back towards reality but not without a final look over my shoulder. My untouched footprints were only visible for a few minutes until the breeze gently filled them in again with granular cement.

Lynette Marie Huff

Fallen Autumn Leaves

I was walking from one class to another at ACM when I came upon the leaves on a rainy afternoon. They were oddly sad and lovely at the same time.

Pine Needles

This was a venture for a photography class at ACM with Mr. Bone. The assignment was to go out on the grounds and shoot something of interest to me. Looking up, the needles made a remarkable pattern.

Sit

This was taken in Lancaster, Ohio; it's the state I live in now. While taking a walk downtown with camera in hand, I came upon the empty seats and tables and thought it looked inviting with the gathered leaves along the wall. I imagined myself sitting there while sipping an espresso much like they do in European countries.

Addison Mallery

Mirror

My inspiration for my paper came from my great grandma. She is 92 years old, and the most giving person I have ever met. She inspires me and everyone around her to be a better person, and to do more for others



Marilyn Peck

Mad Max's Failed State Wasteland

I like to think there's more to action movies than explosions and car chases.

Roger Vogel

Melanie's Yellow Rose

A simple image of a yellow rose on a rainy afternoon in Cumberland.

Ukulele

I have always felt that musical instruments have an aesthetic beauty even when not being played.

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