

MAKING HISTORY

VOLUME 4 - SPRING 2011



“Stairs and Shadows” photo by Katie Kiesler

“MAKING HISTORY”

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Volume 4 - SPRING 2011

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WHAT WE ARE:

The Catalyst is a student-run creative journal of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse English Club publishing prose, poetry, photography, art, music, and all other creative works by the students and faculty of UW-L. Each semester, the student editors pick a new theme and accept submissions about and outside the chosen theme.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

2011 has been a year filled with change in nearly every corner of the world. This issue of The Catalyst contains an eclectic mix of those international, national, local and personal contributions to our collective "history." I was excited to see the diversity and personality of submissions, and I hope you see that reflected in the following pages. As always, happy creating!

- Elizabeth Fleig

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.” -Ralph Waldo Emerson.



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Panoramic view of the Grand Canyon

Patrick Moriearty



To stand upon the edge of this stupendous gorge, as it receives its earliest greeting from the god of day, is to enjoy in a moment compensation for long years of ordinary uneventful life.

John Stoddard, 1898

Unconscious History

Lauren Ihrke

The loud crashing sound of something heavy coming in through his front window was what alerted Aariz Patel of the going's on outside of his house. In an instant, he was on his feet. His wife had sat bold upright in the bed and moved to get up, but he held up a hand to stop her. The last thing he wanted was for her to get hurt by the vandals outside of their house.

He left the bedroom and made a beeline toward the front stairs that would take him up to his daughters' bedroom. Until he was sure that they were safe, he was completely unconcerned with what had come through the window. Approaching their door, Aariz was careful to slow his pace so as not to scare them. Even if they were possibly in danger, his daughters were both under the age of ten; he didn't want them to know that anything was even happening.

Their bedroom door was already cracked open as Aariz approached, because although Kiah — his five-year-old — had announced that she was too old to sleep with a nightlight, but she still had nightmares when the door was latched. Kiah was also the one still sleeping soundly when he peered through the door. Bahiya, who was nine, was lying silently in her bed, her eyes wide.

There was a split second where Aariz was unsure whether he should check the rest of the house or comfort his daughter, but as he sadly noted that this was not the first time someone had destroyed their property while they slept, he opted for the latter. The people who did damage to his house at night were not robbers; they were young men — children really — whose parents couldn't, or wouldn't, control them enough to keep them from enacting violence against the Muslims down the street.

As he sat lightly on the edge of Bahiya's bed, Aariz could feel tears begin to prick at the edges of his eyes. The look on her face was something he had wished to avoid completely as a father, but was something he saw far too often as of late. Leaning forward, he placed

a kiss on her forehead, gently rubbing the scratch that had been left by a rock another child had thrown at her at school when she spoke to her sister in Urdu on the playground.

"Are they coming to hurt us, Abba?" she whispered, fear glowing in her eyes.

Aariz smiled as best he could, trying not to pay any attention to the overwhelming pain in his heart. "Of course not, Bahiya, Nishi," he answered. "Just go back to sleep. Someone's had an accident. That's all. We'll sort it out in the morning." The lie weighed heavily on his tongue, and it was obvious that Bahiya did not believe a word of it.

The look in Bahiya's eyes told Aariz that she didn't fully believe what he was saying, but she also didn't fight him on it. Nodding vaguely, she laid back in her bed, a troubled look on her face. Aariz didn't want to think about what might be going through her head. With this happening so closely with the rock throwing at school, he was worried about the affect it might be having on his daughter. He knew that children were incredibly vulnerable, and he didn't want this to be the childhood event that she remembered for the rest of her life.

He waited until Bahiya's body completely relaxed before he rose from the bed. Taking one quick look at Kiah's bed to make sure that she was still asleep, he crept back over to the door and soundlessly exited the room.

Leena — his wife — was waiting at the bottom of the stairs as he descended, her face grave. "Are the children alright?" she asked before he had even reached her. Her voice was strained and tight, showing how hard she was trying to keep her emotions under control.

Nodding with a sigh, Aariz folded his wife in his arms, resting his chin on her head. "They are fine," he assured her. "Kiah didn't even wake up, and Bahiya just fell back to sleep." He tried to keep his voice even, like the event hadn't had any effect on him. He wanted to seem as though everything was under control — like he had a plan. After

all, he was the man of the house. He should be able to protect his family from these sorts of things.

There was a pause between the couple while they were both lost in their anxious thoughts. Then, Leena took a deep breath. "The entire front room is full of glass. I couldn't even take a step in. The brick they threw broke the vase my parents gave us on our wedding day."

For a moment, Aariz didn't answer; not because he didn't have an answer, but because he didn't trust his voice. When he recovered, he cleared his throat. "Let's go to bed. There's nothing more that we can do tonight anyway. It's too late. I'll see about the damage in the morning."

Gently, Aariz turned his wife and moved them toward the bedroom, steering her by the waste. She did not look as though she wanted to go back to bed, but — just like Aariz — she could think of no other solution. It was the middle of the night, and if they did not go back to bed, they would simply sit up all night, waiting for businesses to open so that they could call someone to come fix their window.

They crawled back into bed, and Aariz pulled his wife into his arms, listening to her even breathing as she eventually fell asleep. He knew that he would not sleep again that night. His brain was fully active, thinking paranoid thoughts. Every sound he heard, he was sure it was the perpetrators back to do more damage. He was afraid for his family.

~*~

Aariz was up before dawn the next morning. Just as he had thought, sleep had eluded him the rest of the night. While he waited to wake up his family for prayer, he went to the living room to survey the damage.

Just as Leena said, glass littered the floor, and the fine vase her parents had given them — their prized possession when they had had nothing — lay in pieces on the floor. Passing a hand over his face, he

took a deep breath, trying to compose himself. He couldn't stop the thoughts that ran through his head, telling him that this was somehow his fault — that he should have been able to protect his family.

Pushing the thoughts away, Aariz fetched a broom and waste basket, and began to do what he could to remove the glass. At five, he gathered with his family — packed into their small kitchen this morning — to lead them in prayer. Then, when they had finished, his wife distracted the girls and got them ready for school, while he continued to clean.

To his surprise, not long after he had gone back to work, there was a knock at his door. When he opened it, one of his neighbors stood there. He was an awkward, kind man that Aariz had spoken to on rare occasion. In one hand, he held a covered dish, while the other nervously scratched at his head. "I hope I wasn't interrupting your prayer time," he let out awkwardly, after greetings had been exchanged. "I was going to come over earlier, but I wasn't sure." As he spoke, he shifted from foot to foot, choosing his words carefully.

"You're not Paul," Aariz assured him, forcing a smile in hopes to ease his neighbor's nervousness. "Please, come in." Behind him, Leena entered to see who was at the door so early.

Paul turned to her with the same forced smile. He held the dish out to her. "My wife sent this over with me so that you wouldn't have to cook." He resisted mentioning why she would have little time to cook.

Thanking him graciously, Leena took the dish and disappeared back into the kitchen to feed her daughters. The meal had been just what she had needed after such a chaotic morning.

When she was gone, the two men fell into silence. Paul cleared his throat a few time, shifting from foot to foot again. Aariz simply stood still and silent, unsure of what he should do.

Then, Paul cleared his throat again, and met Aariz's eyes. "I work in construction, you know," he said, still avoiding verbally acknowledging what had happened. "I build houses and work in a supply yard."

Aariz raised his eyebrows. "I did not know that," he said, already leading the way to the living room.

"Yeah," Paul said, quickly following. "We have some pretty good quality windows." He stopped speaking as they entered the living room. His jaw practically dropped as he surveyed the scene. For once though, he wasn't at a loss for words. Turning to Aariz, he squared his shoulders, looking almost angry. "What happened here last night is absolutely unacceptable," he said. "Now, I've already been on the phone with Rick and John, and they both agree that something needs to be done. Action needs to be taken."

"Now, we have a pretty good idea who's behind this. Schaffer's kid has been a pain since he hit puberty, and he's even been in trouble at school before for this sort of thing. I think if we confront his parents—"

Aariz held up a hand to stop Paul's words. Taking a deep breath, he surveyed the room. "I do not want to speak of these things," he said simply. "I want to fix my window and get my daughters to school."

Paul quickly nodded. "Sure, sure," he said, moving to carefully pick his way across the room to the window. He pulled out a tape measure as well. "Just let me get some measurements and we can figure out which ones you like most."

As Paul worked, Aariz watched him closely. He did not know the man very well — had only spoken to him on rare occasions. The livid speech he had given was out of character though. Even upon first meeting the man, anyone could tell that his awkward shyness all but overcame him in every situation. For him to speak the way that he had indicated how strongly he felt.

Suddenly, Aariz felt an intimate friendship with Paul that had never been there before. He hardly knew him, yet here he was willing to fight for his foreign neighbors. It gave him hope that these incidents weren't the opinion of the majority.

By the time Paul had been present for a half an hour, the window had been measured, and the two men were talking about which style window would work best with the room. As they spoke, Leena lead Bahiya and Kiah into the room. Both were dressed and ready for school.

Aariz looked at the clock then felt his face sag in surprise. "I had no idea of the time!" he exclaimed.

Paul began getting ready to leave. "I've got all that I need anyway, if you're sure of that style." He moved toward the door as he spoke.

Curiously, Aariz turned to watch him. "But we haven't begun talking about prices yet," he pointed out, moving to pick up his own coat. He had taken the day off of work to deal with the situation, but his daughters still needed to get to school.

Pausing in the doorway, Paul looked at the edge of the living room that was still in sight, then the two young girls waiting to be taken to school. He shook his head. "Don't worry about the price," he said.

The shock that overtook Aariz was such that the words made no sense to him. Then as the offer and the generosity dawned on him, he rushed forward and clasped Paul's hand in his. "No my friend, I could never accept it. It is too generous."

Paul only held up a hand. "Being a member of the community means being welcome and feeling safe." Since we've failed you there, let us make it up to you this way." He spoke low so that no one else could hear his words. "Please. I want to."

For a moment, Aariz simply studied Paul's face. When it became obvious that he would not budge on the point, he shook the hand that

he held vigorously. "Thank you," he said several times with feeling. "Your kindness means more to me than you know. You are obviously a great man, and a great friend!" They were the only words he could come up with to express his gratitude.

The family watched Paul leave before Aariz took his daughters' hands in his and lead them to the car. He buckled Kiah in then moved to the driver's seat. Settling himself into his seat, he put on his own seatbelt before starting the car and backing down the driveway. He felt strangely light after the meeting, like the weight of dread from the incident had never been there at all.

Then after they had been driving in silence for a few minutes, Bahiya broke his thoughts. "Abba?" she chimed, waiting to continue until she was sure she had his attention. "Why were you so kind to that man?"

Frowning lightly, Aariz peered at his daughter in the rearview mirror, wondering about the reason for her odd question. "Because he's very nice, dear. He's our friend."

To his surprise, Bahiya shook her head, looking very grave. "No, he's not," she said. "He's just like the rest of them. He hates us. He probably helped them break the window."

Aariz pulled up in front of the school and put the car into park before turning in his seat to stare at his daughter with question. "Why would you say something like that? Mr. Dillinger is a very nice man. He was a big help to me today."

Again she only shook her head. "They're all the same. They just want to hurt us."

"No, they're not," Aariz insisted, his voice firming. "One mistaken person does not control all of them. Most of our neighbors are our friends." He felt himself almost growing angry, but not at Bahiya. He was angry at the very thought for plaguing her mind.

Bahiya sighed as if the situation was hopeless, and then opened her door. "I'm going to be late," she said softly.

~*~

The next morning, as Leena set out the breakfast things for herself and her family, Aariz was telling his wife more about the work that Paul did, almost giddy about the new friendship. He nearly ignored the food in front of him while he spoke, and he completely missed the sour looks of his eldest daughter until she interrupted him.

"Why do we live here?" Bahiya asked suddenly.

Misunderstanding the question, Leena answered her daughter simply. "We moved here because of the job your father took. It was the nicest neighborhood we looked at. You remember how much you loved the park around the corner." Aariz watched his daughter closely, fearing her thoughts from the previous day.

"Why don't we live in India? Ajja said we could live with them until Abba found a job." Bahiya's face was completely lacking of emotion.

"We left India when we got married because it was so hard to find a job, Nishi," Aariz said patiently. "If we were there now, we would probably be living in a slum. You wouldn't go to such a nice school, or have so many toys."

Bahiya reached up to rub her scar absently. "A slum would be better than this," she muttered.

Beside him, Leena's face filled with wild surprise. "Bahiya!" she let out in astonishment. "Do not joke of such things! To live in a slum is to live every day in despair! You could not imagine how horrible it is! You should be more thankful for what you have!"

Bahiya's eyes fell to the table at the scolding and she lapsed into silence, but Aariz knew the thoughts were still there. If he did not find

a way to show her the true kindness of her home soon, the thoughts may be cemented in her mind.

~*~

That night, Aariz and his wife sat in their newly constructed living room, whispering in worried voices, while their daughters slept upstairs. The newly found biases in Bahiya's words were greatly worrying them. Bahiya had been born in the US, and since her birth, they had not been back to India — their grandparents had always come to them. What she knew of the country, she knew only through stories.

What worried them was that she suddenly showed such a strong love for India — a place she'd never been, and such a strong hate for her friends and neighbors, because of the two incidents she had been involved in since moving into their new home a few months prior.

Before Aariz had taken his new job at the hospital in this city, they had been living in a predominantly Muslim neighborhood. Bahiya and Kiah had been in a school with children who spoke the same languages and practiced the same faith. Now they were in a very white bred neighborhood with predominantly Christian neighbors. Bahiya didn't seem to be taking the change very well, even if most of the neighbors were just as welcoming of them as they were of other new neighbors.

"We need to talk to her about it," Leena insisted, reaching across the space between them to clasp his hand in hers. "She's assuming that all Americans are like those in the incidents, and it will lead her to evil thoughts and actions. We need to explain it to her before that happens."

Aariz sighed. He knew that she was right, but couldn't help thinking that his daughter was too young for a conversation such as this. He didn't want to believe that she was already old enough to be involved in such things. His thoughts moved to the idea that they may have been better off if he hadn't taken the new position. The hospital he

had worked at before had been a free clinic. Working conditions were poor, and the pay was equal. The apartment they had lived in was too small for them, and they never had the money to pay for the simple things the girls needed for a good education.

Now they were living in a very nice house, in a very nice neighborhood, Aariz was practicing medicine the way he had always wanted to, and the girls were getting a great education. Yet, Bahiya wasn't happy, and this greatly worried him.

Finally, he let go of his thoughts, and faced the fact. "I will talk to her after school tomorrow," he said, trying to make himself sound stronger than he currently felt.

Leaning forward again, Leena gave his hand another gentle squeeze. "We will talk to her together," she assured him with a soft smile.

~*~

As Aariz came back into the main lobby area of the doctor's office where he practiced, he smiled broadly at the secretary. Moving over to her desk, he leaned against the counter asking, "Any messages for me while I was at lunch, Miss Jacques?"

The young girl working behind the counter usually had a bright smile plastered on her face all day. Even when faced with the most annoying patients, who could be rude, obnoxious, or insulting, she matched them with a smile and a kind word. Today, however, as Aariz asked his question, her smile faltered. "You got a call from the school, Dr. Patel," she said. She sounded like she was afraid she would be punished for what she said. "They want you to come pick up Bahiya."

Instantly, Aariz's memory flashed back to the day that Bahiya had gotten the scratch on her forehead. Bahiya had been so upset after the incident that they had sent her home. He feared that something similar had happened today.

Then, Miss Jacques continued after a moment's pause. "They said you needed to talk with them about some misbehavior at school."

"Bahiya? Misbehaving?" Aariz asked in amazement before he remembered the patients waiting around him. "Thank you, Miss Jacques," he said, lowering his voice. "If you would, either reschedule my patients or get them in to see another doctor. Thank you very much."

In a few minutes, Aariz had exited the hospital and was on his way to the school. While he drove, he thought about the information he had been given. Bahiya had never been in trouble at school before. She was always perfectly behaved. First the negative thoughts and words at home, and now some misconduct at school. He was beginning to grow rather worried.

When he walked into the principal's office, he looked around and spotted Bahiya sitting in one of the chairs with her things, looking very downtrodden. She was staring at the floor with a pensive face, and her legs slowly swung back and forth beneath her.

He was also surprised to see a boy in the room with a cut up arm, who was sitting on the other side of the room, looking even more upset. Surely his Bahiya would not be violent? It must be something unrelated, he told himself.

Without saying a word to Bahiya, Aariz followed the secretary's silent gesture to go into the principal's office. He was dumbstruck when he opened the door and saw Paul sitting in one of the two chairs opposite the principal's desk. The principal gave him an emotionless smile and rose from his desk. "Hello, Dr. Patel. This is Paul Dillinger." Paul looked up at Aariz with a sad smile as the principal spoke.

Nodding, Aariz moved to sit in the open chair. The events were beginning to make him feel almost dazed. "We know each other," he said. "We're neighbors."

The principal's eyebrows rose. "You are? Maybe then your children's fight was a continuation of some squabble they had at home?"

"Fight?" Aariz's daze was growing. He had the same feeling he got when he started watching a movie when it was half way through. The confusion was growing with each word spoken.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Patel," the principal quickly said, giving him an apologetic smile. "Mr. Dillinger and I had been discussing before you arrived. I'm afraid I've just gotten ahead of myself.

"Your daughter and his son got into some sort of fight today, though neither of them is telling what it was about. Your daughter pushed his son down, and he's suffered a scratch on his arm."

Paul let out a nervous laugh. "It's really nothing," he said in an attempt to keep the peace. "He's barely even cut. Just some playground nonsense, I'm sure."

Slowly, Aariz nodded, though he knew it was something more. He could think of no words to say for the situation. He was overcome by confusion at his daughter's actions.

"Anyway, Bahiya will have to serve some lunch detentions, but other than that, we wanted you both to come in so that you were fully aware of the situation."

In the next two minutes, the meeting was over. As he closed the door behind him, Aariz put his hand out to stop Paul. "I'm so sorry about this," he said as heartfelt as he could. "I don't know what's gotten into Bahiya lately, but this is unacceptable."

Paul frowned, and then sighed. "The window smashing has obviously taken its toll on her," he said softly. Then he added as assurance, "It won't last. Bahiya's too bright to think this way for long."

Aariz forced a smile then walked over to get Bahiya. They walked to the car in silence. Bahiya still had her head hung, looking more moody now, while Aariz tried to think of a way to break the silence.

The best he came up with was, "Why would you do something like this?" He did his best to keep anger from his words.

Bahiya's answer came completely unsurprised. She had been waiting for his question. "He made fun of the fact that I leave class to pray every day." She sounded like she was still angry.

A sigh escaped Aariz's lips. He had known it would come down to something like that. "He just doesn't understand, Bahiya," he said softly. "You could've tried to explain it to him. You should never resort to violence."

"Just like with those people who broke our window?"

As quickly as possible, Aariz pulled his car over to the side of the road, put it in Park, and turned to his daughter. "Those people who broke our window were wrong. You going and doing things that are also wrong isn't justified by what they did. Don't even think that you can harm someone because you were harmed yourself."

He was practically panting by the time he was finished speaking, but he quickly reigned it in. He did not want to scare Bahiya.

When he looked back at her again, there were tears in her eyes. "But what if they don't stop if we don't fight back?" she asked, sobs building in her chest.

Aariz could feel tears coming to his own eyes. He turned off the car, then got into the back seat, pulling his daughter into his arms. For a long time, he said nothing. He only calmed her. Then, when her breathing had evened he took a deep breath.

"When your Momma and I came to the US, I held so much hate in my heart. I was just like you are now. I was afraid if I didn't fight back, the abuse would increase.

"Do you know what I found out though? All that time I thought the hate would protect me from their insults, but it didn't. The insults still hurt. But the hate also drove away my friends. Nice people like Mr. Dillinger and his family — like the boy you pushed today.

"So, then I put away my hate, and I started treating people with love, even when they were mean to me. They were mistaken, that's all. So I loved them for their mistake. When I did this, the insults didn't hurt as much anymore, because I knew they were just making a mistake. And when I did this, some people would listen to my reasons and see their mistake. They might even apologize."

"This is why I tell you to use your words. Mr. Dillinger's son didn't understand why you need to pray while in school, but I bet he would if you explained it to him. He is a nice boy, like his father. Don't lose his friendship because of hate."

Bahiya stared up at her father in amazement as he spoke. She couldn't believe his words. Then, she said, "But if they don't stop being mean, what can I do? What if they're only meaner?"

"Then you tell someone — an adult," Aariz said with feeling. "If you ever feel in danger, you tell someone."

The two spoke for some time before Aariz finally got back into the driver's seat. When he did, he wiped a tired hand over his face. While he prepared to start the car again and continue on his way home, a thought popped into his head, making him shiver from head to foot: "Is this hate the history we leave for our children?"

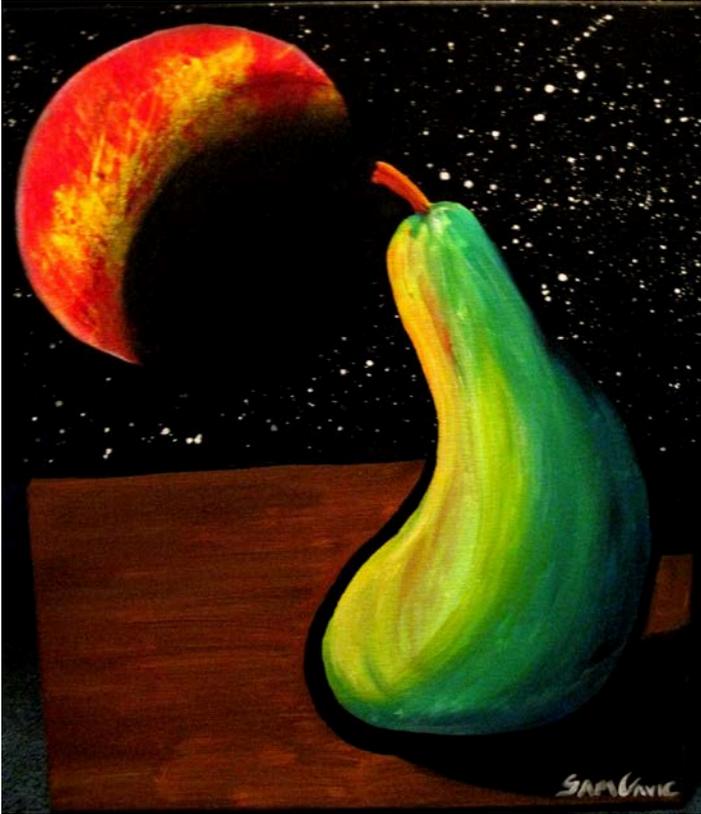
Fruit 1
Sam Gavic



A representation of the simplicity of how life used to be (the pear represents simplicity) and the moon in the background shows what we have accomplished as a society and myself as a person. I generally have some sort of abstract elements to represent the ambiguity for the future.

Fruit 2

Sam Gavic



A direct response to a physics class I took. Space blows my mind, as satisfied as we are as a society, there is a lot we don't know. There is also a lot we think we know but know one cannot be sure. "Every body knows that nobody really knows." -John Legend

King of Kings
Sam Gavic



From a historical standpoint, this painting reminds me of the struggles of one of the most powerful conquerors in the Earth's history... Alexander the Great. It reminds me of how success is measured- Land? Money? Recognition? One thing Alexander never had was love. Something I will never take for granted. Archetypes like Alexander serve as a reminder for the future

Knower
Sam Gavic



The owl is commonly known as the mascot for knowledge. There is also a religious affiliation to the painting. The owl is the knower of all, similar to a god. Knowledge used to be something of great importance, but our society has become infected by consumerism. Progress is necessary to attain more knowledge. Look into its eyes and you can see how far we have come; look again and dream where we can be in the future.

Space Suit
Sam Gavic



This is my criticism on modern society. It is called Space Suit because it is a play on words. The robotic-ness of our CEO's constantly doing the same thing, having no humanitarian concern. You could say this is a portrait of Bernie Madoff. Making history? Probably. Good? A good lesson learned.

Homeless Minstrel

Professor David Secchi

<https://soundcloud.com/mystified/homeless-minstrel>

Oh My Davide

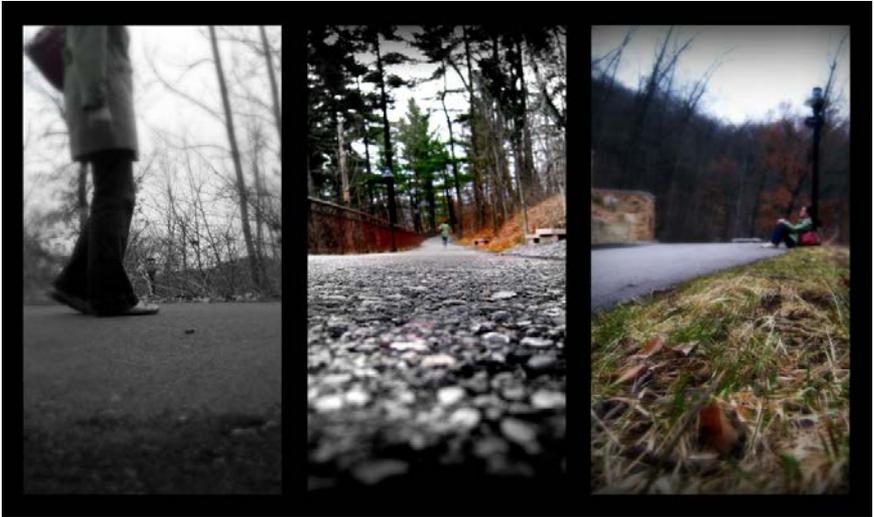
Professor David Secchi

<https://soundcloud.com/mystified/ohmydav>

Atop The Eiffel Tower
Katie Kiesler



Decisions
Katie Kiesler



Greater Beauty

Susan Gyorfi

Author Susan Gyorfi takes Wilfred Owen's classic World War I poem, "Greater Love," and adapts it for modernity with a feminine twist. Gyorfi includes a section that further examines the two poem's connection.

Your teeth so straight, are not so white

As most these women will soon no longer be tight

This image you present; a stunning view

Although, cosmetic surgery should not be the how-to,

How-to, you cannot wash this mess out with shampoo

For the tummy is the evidence rounding in sight

s your stick figure makes you thrive

Their pee sticks show so does their insides

Grow, and grow your name gets out

These women's aching pain and stretch marks make them pout

But unlike your quick pill bailout

They've never felt so much alive

You have no follower as close or true.

Some people wish you would just get a clue

For your smooth skin bleeding glitter not so smooth cannot show

As bright of wisdom these women glow

To you it may just seem like extra cargo
Although, you do have the strength to carry it too

Is it an extra X or Y

It happened to you, you would probably cry.

But for these women who have also scored

Either or, they already have victory in their core

No folklore, many of these women play an encore

And possibly, someday you'll find the courage to see why their beauty
is so much greater from the inside

Wilfred Owen's poem "Greater Love" compares the love between soldiers and the love between the soldier and a woman. This poem emphasizes the greater love between soldiers rather than the love between a soldier and a woman. The theme to Greater Beauty compares the beauty of a model in the media and the beauty of a very pregnant woman. This poem emphasizes the greater beauty seen in a pregnant woman rather than the beauty seen in a model currently in the media. These poems are abstract. They do not allow the reader to immediately understand the comparisons clearly. These emphasized comparison themes are proven through multiple formal devices within each poem.

Both poems are half rhyme poems. Both poems have four stanzas with six lines in each stanza. The first five lines rhyme as a rhyming poem is thought to, however, the last line sounds out of place. It rhymes with the beginning two lines, although, the three lines in-between the first two and last one loses the rhyme for the last line. The space in the poem relates to the physical space in-between the woman and the soldier in "Greater Love" creating a loss of love. In

“Great Beauty” the extra middle three lines in each stanza symbolize the physical pregnant belly the model lacks and in this lacking is not as beautiful as one may first perceive. The slant rhyme in each poem emphasizes this imperfection of love or beauty by being imperfect itself. Some ending line rhymes are the exact same as in the first two lines in both poems; red, dead, and white, tight. However, not every line has exact rhymes. In the third stanza of “Greater Love” line one, “Your voice sings not so soft” which rhymes with the last line of the stanza, “Now earth has stopped their piteous mouths that coughed.” This is again shown in “Greater Beauty” in stanza three. The first line, “You have no follower as close or true,” rhyming with the last line, “Although, you do have the strength to carry it too.” Even though these line endings rhyme, they have different spelling. Although the woman and soldier both love the soldier, the love from the soldier is greater. Also, even though both women seem beautiful, there is still a physical difference and a greater beauty of being pregnant.

The authors were able to further the comparison of similarities and differences by utilizing word repetition. The words repeated in “Greater Love”; wooded and woer, rolling and rolling, dear and dear, and pale and paler. In “Greater Beauty”; How-to and how-to, grow, and grow, smooth and smooth, and you and you. When pulled out of context from “Greater Love,” the words provide evidence for the poem’s theme when compared; “wooded rolling dear pale, to woer rolling dear paler.” This shows the reader that the bottom line is the soldiers have a greater love for each other than the soldier and the woman. In “Greater Beauty,” I had difficulties trying to find words to fit Wilfred Owen’s form. However, writing in a modernist style I felt it best to leave the reader open ended. The poem allows the reader to ask him or herself how to define beauty; “how-to grow smooth you.” “Smooth” is referring to the model, and “you” referring to the reader. The poem does not want to tell the reader to be beautiful you have to be pregnant. By adding these words of repetition the reader is asked to see what he or she thinks is personally beautiful. Is the model beautiful or is the reader him or herself beautiful? The reader is not only asked what beauty is to him or her, but left with the question of how he or she can become beautiful on the inside or beautiful on the outside.

When the repetition of words within the poem is left in context, even though they are the same word, they are utilized as opposites. In stanza three from "Greater Love," "And though your hand be pale, paler are all which trail" shows the same word meaning more for the soldier than for the woman. The same word demonstrating them both as lovers, yet emphasizing the love of soldiers as greater. The upper case P on the next line shows a higher importance than the lower case p stuck on the line behind. This illustrates the love of a soldier is on another level that the woman cannot touch. Repetition similar to this In "Greater Beauty" is shown in the first stanza, "Their pee sticks show so does their insides Grow, and grow your name gets out." The first grow is the pregnant belly and the second grow is the model becoming more popular. These two words show they are both beautiful and expanding in life. The uppercase G recognizes a higher importance than the lower case g in the word grow. Also, the first grow is taking the next step to the next line where the second g is just following and making little effort. The multiple meanings of these same words emphasize the poems themes by showing the difference in the similarity of either love or beauty.

Double meanings within the lines of the poem also show the differences in views of love or beauty depending upon which character's view point you relate the line to. This is shown in "Greater Love" in the very last line of stanza four, "Weep, you may weep, for you may touch them not." One way to read this is to see the woman crying for her soldier whom is fighting across seas. Another interpretation is of the woman weeping for she will never be able to experience the love these soldiers share. In "Greater Beauty" line three of the last stanza offers a double interpretation, "But for these women who have also scored." When inferring this line it is assumed both women have had sex, as well, the pregnant woman has gained a point as if in winning a game for becoming pregnant. Both of these underlying interpretations in each poem prove a greater love or beauty in a similar situation.

Through multiple formal elements including each stanza, slant rhymes, out of poem word repetition, in poem word repetition, and double meaning phrases Wilfred Owen was able to emphasize a

difference between the love of a woman and the love of a soldier. In “Greater Beauty” the greater beauty is acknowledged with a pregnant woman compared to a model. Due to the same use of formal elements utilized in “Greater Love,” “Greater Beauty” was able to replicate a strong emphasis of difference in similarity.

Being a Part of History

Elizabeth Holloway

I will start my writing with an apology. I don't know how to do good creative writing. I love to read it, know it when I see it, and admire those who can produce it. My writing tends to be pedantic, instructional, or helpful but overly-detailed commentary. I would blame this on a lack of imagination or an obsessively practical nature, but I don't think this is true. You see, I have a "hobby" that was born of imagination and is not the least bit practical. I am a private pilot, which means I have had the privilege of sharing the sky with birds and others fortunate enough to have learned to fly. I don't feel particularly grandiose about it, but I sometimes humbly realize that I am a tiny little part of aviation history.

Many pilots have written eloquently of their experiences. John Gillespie Magee, Jr., an American who served in the RCAF in World War II, famously wrote, how he had,

"... slipped the surly bonds of earth, and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings." ,

and he had

". . . climbed and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things you have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence..."

I can't write poetry, but Magee's expression is right on. Every pilot that I know has felt joy in flight.

Imagination has always been the fuel of flight. This year, 2011, marks the "Centennial of Flight" here in La Crosse. On October 19, 1911, the first powered aircraft landed here on the Mississippi River. The plane had two wings and was equipped with pontoons to allow landings on water. It was a Curtiss "hydroplane" piloted by 30 year old Hugh Robinson. The plane had two wings and was equipped with pontoons to allow landings on water. He was on a publicity flight for Curtiss to fly from Minneapolis to New Orleans, a distance of 1900 miles. Before the flight, Robinson said, "I have no idea how long a flight to New Orleans will take." However, the flight had been

dreamed up and planned with the information available. As it turned out, imagination wasn't enough to get him to New Orleans. Robinson abandoned the flight in Rock Island, Illinois after his funding ran out. Aviation was, and always will be, a rather expensive "hobby", but no pilot I know would willingly give it up.

Everyone knows the famous names and stories of aviation: Charles Lindbergh, Wiley Post, Amelia Earhart, Chuck Yeager, or Dick Rutan. The names themselves speak to our imagination and wonderment at flight. There are the thrilling and frighteningly brave pilots who fly into battle. Their stories are part of "history" with a capital "H". History! However, there are thousands of lesser known stars of the flying world, the more ordinary civilian pilots, who nonetheless inspire us.

One of the best stories of imagination and sheer pluck in flying comes from 1966. Two brothers, Rinker and Kernahan Buck, ages 15 and 17 at the time, flew a Piper Cub that they had rebuilt across the country from New Jersey to California. Their story is chronicled in *Flight of Passage*, a book I read last winter, and which I highly recommend. The Buck brothers made history at the time for being the youngest pilots to make a transcontinental flight, but they didn't do it for publicity. They did it just because they could. It's a great story of daring and confidence, but it is just one of many that can be found in our (small "h") history of aviation.

My personal part in aviation history is not so dramatic or compelling. I started dreaming of flight when I was a fifth grader. I read a book about Amelia Earhart. Then I read another about Wiley Post. Then (after being admonished that it wasn't a "girls' book"), I snuck a book about World War I flying "ace" Eddie Rickenbacker off my older brother's bookstand and devoured it in one night. My imagination was fired! Although I didn't achieve my dream until I was in my 30s, it never left me. In 1993, I passed my checkflight and became a licensed pilot.

Being a private pilot is a privilege. It is a privilege to share the sky with those who came before me and those who'll come after. There are approximately 600,000 private pilots in the United States. I don't know what percentage of them is female, but I suspect it's a small

fraction. Although I have male cousins and uncles who have flown airplanes for careers, military service, or sport, my mother tells me that I am the first female pilot in our family. This is history, too. Anne Morrow Lindbergh wrote,

“There are no signposts in the sky to show a man has passed that way before. There are no channels marked. The flier breaks each second into new uncharted seas.”

This is true of our lives, my life and the lives of my students, family, and friends. I wonder to what part of “history” or “History” will each of us contribute as we move into our uncharted future.

Arched Euphoria
Ky Weaver



People in Action
Meg Kohlmann

"Louder," says Action
Word hides from confrontation
Action shows Courage.

"Oh say can you see?....."

Jim A. Jorstad

Jim Jorstad in Madison, WI, documenting the protests against the 2011 Budget Repair Bill





Untitled

Elizabeth Vieth

I have been to the state Capitol before, as a child, a student, an educator, and now a film maker. It is here that I found thousands, hundreds of thousands of children, parents, students, teachers, and many others. I was surrounded by my friends and families of Wisconsin.

What can we learn as the public descended on the Capitol in early 2011? On two Saturdays, I documented the crowds in and around the Capitol. I learned a great deal about the people of Wisconsin, from La Crosse, Green Bay, Wausau, Milwaukee, and all points in between. The emotion was intense and inspiring. As I walked through the thousands of peaceful protesters, I found grandparents, blue and white collar workers, some union others non-union, police, firefighters, and pilots, all unified to preserve what Wisconsin holds so dear- our democratic future.

Over the years I have taken thousands of photographs and filmed countless hours of interviews and events. What I saw and heard at the Capitol made even me pause to collect my emotions. Inside the rotunda I stood in front of Bob La Follette's statue. I looked up and gazed upon the thousands of protest banners and posters. I listened to the loud chants and music. Each of these scenes, each of these single images made me stop and realize- history was being made. At one point on the Capitol grounds, a person on the loudspeaker said, "Let us all join in singing the Star Spangled Banner." There I was, surrounded by Wisconsinites, singing in unison, against a backdrop of snowfall- the song that defines our country

I left the Wisconsin protests with one lingering memory. As I was about to leave the Capitol I met a young woman putting on her snow gear to head outside- back into the snow and 14 degree chill. She said, "Thanks for documenting all of this...it is so important." I politely said, "Thanks, it's important for us to capture these historic moments."

I asked what this meant to her. She said she was a teacher from Wausau. She hesitated, looked up at me and said, "I just received my non-renewal letter....." She paused and looked down and lingered not

knowing what else to say. In a moment I was out the door, never to see her again. It was at that moment things came into clear focus. I wondered what our legacy will be for Wisconsin. The time is not only for balancing the budget, but to closely examine our priorities. Perhaps it is a time to ensure we have the appropriate checks and balances in place. Perhaps it's a time to prevent moving too far to the right or too far to the left. Maybe right now, we need to be somewhere in the middle. It is a time to be civil and collaborative. It's what Bob La Follette would want. It is what we need. It is time to remember our Wisconsin family- the family that took you to see the Capitol for the very first time, and the same family that stood shoulder to shoulder as you sang the national anthem. "Oh say can you see...."



Carly Frerichs in Minneapolis, MN, taking action against Arizona's SB1070 law



The Diary of Pilar Marquez: The Eficiencia Practice

Kat Klima

June 20, 2099

Ay dios mio! What a shuttle ride. It took us seven days of cramped, uncomfortable faster-than-light travelling to get here. I bid farewell to the pilot and crew and am officially on a bench in the Stars on Búsqueda. My name is Pilar Marquez and I received a scholarship from the National Institute of Extraterrestrial Knowledge and Research Studies (NIEKRS) to conduct research on this pretty little planet called Búsqueda. No human has ever really been here before. As far as I can see, though it is absolutely beautiful here. It's all beaches, shoreline, and mountains as far as the eye can see. I am lucky too. The molecular compound of the air here is such that I don't need to wear a tacky bubble around my head like my friends do for their studies. Ha, losers.

June 21

After trekking across twenty miles of coast, I finally found the big city of what I found out to be called Eficiencia. Everywhere you can see posters, murals, flyers, and billboards dedicated to the city's motto: Efficiency! The people here all dress in light gray, every building is slate grey, and every car, bus, purse, briefcase, plate, and tablecloth is gray. The only things that aren't gray in this city are the babies' clothes. They are frequently garbed in colors that would do an arcoíris shame. I started talking to the locals today. The first was a man in his early twenties. He told me all about differential equations and radians and derivatives and statistical significance of the means and standard deviations of chi square tests. I nodded and smiled politely. When he was finished on his rant, I asked him what he did for fun.

"Fun? What is this fun? We people of Eficiencia are efficient. Efficiency! Efficiency! Efficiency! Anyway, the dependent and extraneous variables of the null hypothesis are quite tricky because..."

I left after that. My next stop was the nearest bar. I asked the bartender for the house special. He nodded, disappeared under the counter for a few seconds and handed me a glass of gray liquid. I took one sip and my taste buds sang its praise.

“What is this?!” I gasped, astonished.

“Our house special. It’s nice, don’t you think?”

“Si, claro que si. Es buena. I met a man today and he talked about was math,” I complained.

“Ah, well you see, math is irrelevant. It is all made up by some crackpot ‘mathematician’ with no love for cooking. Now, you see the best temperature to make hyderbadi briyani is 375 degrees. You have to make sure to buy fresh cumin. The boxed kind will just not do. Also the chicken must be simmered at...”

“Thanks! I should really get going!” I said as I dashed out the door.

Why can’t people talk to each other? Frustrated, I wondered the streets for awhile until one of the gray buildings caught my eye. It had arches and murals (with the city motto, of course) and statues and fountains and marble spiral staircases. It had an almost magnetic pull to it. I scurried up the smooth spiral staircase and threw open its doors. It was a library! A rush of nostalgia came over me; libraries reminded me studying back on earth. Feeling at home, I sauntered over to the nearest stack and looked at the titles. However, once I got a little closer I noticed that while every book was a different color, they were all the same size and had the exact same title: The Efiencian Practice. Confused, I opened to the first chapter.

Chapter One: A History of Efficiency

First and for most, one must remember efficiency, efficiency, efficiency! In order to become a galactic power, we must be efficient. Our ignorant, ignoble neighbors on earth still participate in leisurely activities. This, as Efiencian studies have shown, is not only detrimental to citizens’ mental state but also causes economic recessions. Entertainment is banned for the benefit of the citizens. Clearly, this...

I skipped to the next chapter.

Chapter Two: The Base of Efficiency

We can dedicate our planet's preeminence to Rafael Silva, the creator of the EAT (Efficiency Aptitude Test). The EAT enables parents to know exactly what their children should study to be the utmost effective Eficiencian. The categories range from Mathematics to Medicine to Art. Rather than wasting time and energy studying subjects that are difficult for children, they will study only what they are able to excel in. This creates...

And then, the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Efficiency in Education

Once children have taken their EAT, they are forbidden to wear colored clothing. It is not efficient. We Eficiencians are a sole body of people working toward the greater good. We are a machine of effective effort. All together, now, all together. After children are given their first pair of grays, they are required to commence their education immediately. For the next twenty years they will study every aspect of their "talent" and nothing else. When they have completed their education, they will be masters of their subjects, fully able to begin working towards...

I flipped to one of the last chapters.

Chapter 38: Earth's Lack of Efficiency

One of the most inefficient aspects of Earth's educational systems is choice. Earthlings are allowed to elect their field of study. During their younger years, students are also required to learn about a variety of subjects. Even in University, they are allowed to specialize in completely opposite subjects such as Physical Therapy and French. Our aptitude tests have shown that the brain cannot handle the concurrent studies of such opposing information due the cerebral...

Horrified, I slammed the book shut.

June 30

I've spent the past few days on the beach, trying to avoid the people here. I needed time to think after reading that book. Before I came here, I hated studying anything but Extraterrestrial Life. My high school and university mandated that its students study a wide variety

of subjects to make them more well-rounded individuals. While I took classes in Spanish, Art, and History, I never really paid attention nor did I care. All I knew was that I wanted to study about the Stars. But this place is not at all what I expected it to be.

July 1

I decided to give this place more chance. Good thing too: it's Eficiencia's Citywide Celebration Day! The entire city is about, hustling and bustling from shop to shop. I thought since everyone was in such a wonderful mood, I'd hit the bars for some celebration of my own. I found a new one this time. This one was obviously a bar for the upper class (the doorway was made of gold leaf and green marble). I stepped inside and the noise from the crowd deafened my ears. It was as though everyone was shouting at the same time. I fought through the calamitous dissonance and found my way to a chair. I screamed my order to the bartender and listened to the crowd with my hands over my ears.

I heard one man's conversation in Spanish,

"Hijo de puta esta bebida es horrible que..."

Another talking about chemistry,

"Clearly, the alkaline aliphatic hydrocarbon is amorphous and the antiferromagnetism..."

And a woman about Literature,

"The rhetorical devices utilized by Guillermo del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Biedma in La jornada diaria includes asyndeton, anaphora, synecdoche..."

And a teenager about art,

"No! No! No! Christelangelo was most certainly not from the Haroque period! His technique was characterized much more by the Menenaissance. And Rიცicasso was not a neo-fundamentalist but rather, he had many different periods of style like the blue period, and..."

Everyone, everyone in that bar was talking. But they weren't looking at each other. It was as though they were talking to themselves, just to other people. The dialogue was in their head and everyone else in the bar had the pleasure of hearing about it. There was no intimacy. No men hitting on women. No TV blaring some sporting event. No alcohol to blame for this idiocy. It was a society void of entertainment and pleasure, just like the book had said. More importantly, it was a society free from conversation. No one could really speak intelligently to another person about anything but their specialty. So Chemistry spoke to Spanish who yelled to Sociology who complained to Music. It was an infinite cycle of madness. I want to go home. The next shuttle back to earth isn't due back to Búsqueda for another twenty years. Lord, help me.

A Frog Leapt From a Swamp

Carissa Bennett

A frog leapt from a swamp,
a mutated, sickly thing.
He landed with a thud
and winked his single eye at me.

A fly lazily buzzed by,
and I'm sure he would've tried
to eat it if he could but
he had no tongue that I could see.

That swamp must've been
a dumping ground of toxicity,
morphing a lovely little frog into
a green monster of mystery.

Then he wondered where to go,
his wet eyeball rolling around
like a marble in a stream it seemed,
twisted legs ready to flounce about.

Sudden as a lightning strike

a car careened past,
making him one with the pavement,
his life not meant to last.

That sad excuse for a frog
became a stain upon the road
and into froggy heaven
his tiny soul had flown.

Humanity had given him
a really raw deal,
stealing the life he could've lived
with no chance in hell of survival.

Dream Eavesdropper

Carissa Bennett

His midnight whisperings,
that raw subconscious content
drips into my ears.

I swivel around to search for the sound.

He sleeps yet speaks,
I'd love to hear what he says
when he's unaware that I'm near.

His eyes boiling in dreams unbeknownst to me.

What does he see as he sleeps peacefully?

Perhaps he whisks me to the moon
And we weightlessly walk
And eat fried purple cheese pie
And talk about galaxies alive inside our minds.

Or does he freeze time
And live in an iced inarticulate world,
Able to wander where he pleases,
Staying long enough to witness an alien invasion or

Jump into a hot air balloon and leave everything behind.

But as I tuck a pillow underneath his head,
he rolls over and says my name in a chant.
He savors the word as if it tastes of ambrosia
and to my surprise it is followed by
“I love you sugar pie.”

I delightedly sigh and lie down beside him.
My heart a supernova’s light magnified twenty times
right before it dies,
leaving behind a nebulous legacy for a thousand years.

I tuck myself in next to him tight
and wish him a silent goodnight
as he continues to dream a little dream of me.

Dream Eavesdropper
Carissa Bennett



A Global Perspective...

Yuki Taira, a Japanese student studying in La Crosse, sent us this short piece about his experience with the Japanese earthquakes of this Spring

On March 11th, 2011, Japan was hit by an earthquake. This earthquake is the largest ever in Japanese history. Not only earthquake, but also, Japan got damage by a tsunami and radiation emissions. Over 16,000 people died, over 160,000 people still living in shelters now. They could not eat, use a electricity. My family is safe, however, I still worry about them since there are still aftershocks happening. In addition, after the earthquake, the Japanese economy is going to decrease, and some of company will be bankrupted. Thus, I pray for Japan. The earthquake is a problem not only for Japan, but the whole of the world will feel the damage a lot.

Charred Hope
Ky Weaver



Crossing the Berlin Wall

Carol Miller



Photographer Carol Miller included this background on the photograph "Crossing the Berlin Wall, 2010"- "I took this while in Berlin during a Fulbright German Studies Seminar in June, 2010. You can see the Berlin Wall plaque underneath the bike tire. The two brick line and plaques run throughout Berlin indicating the outline of where the wall used to exist. Today, bicyclists cross over it without a thought."

House in Merton

Becky Franzel

Beside a field, where fireflies dance
Through dandelions and ox-eyed daisies,
Lies a path, long and lonely,
Buried beneath a band of burdock and stinging nettles,
Leading to a house long since forgotten –
Weary-eyed windows recalling the warmth of
Late night television flickering against the glow of a fireplace,
Tales of knights slaying dragons illuminated by a fading flashlight
Long past bedtime–
Gray, chipped smile of a sloping porch still stained by spit tobacco,
Littered with sunflower shells and the memory of a rocking chair
That creaked every time the wind picked up –
A fresh padlock on the door

Nobly guarding the secrets of another lifetime.

Malibu Birds
Eric Skadson



Erapocolypse

Blake Auler "Hyphon" Murphy

Heir Apparent had always heard whispers of the dimly lit zeitgeist from the ones with the eyes sunk low by the time they had seen. Now, in his era the children were born knowing they were oppressed. Heir thought, it's in the blond hair and blue eyes of that young daughter of a military family that makes her special. Makes it unique that she is the one to try to start the children's peace movement. How in this era are we to shovel these children onto the Crusade boat? What will be their vessel?

We still hear it at the liquor store, but now it's hidden in our horror movies. Spells are coded into the announcements at department stores. Fuck your corporate plug even if you make the demise more tangible. All of us know we are lied to, some really just prefer to stay within the pop up tent that lie is. There are no walls.

We sit here again amidst a moments falling apart. Same as it ever was. You saw him with the sign, the bible. The neon illumination at the entrance to a place you can be saved, or at least wed, to and by guys that look like Elvis. The plastic around you will not be edible in your fantasy of the petrol economy collapsing overnight and your being stuck in a city most likely set to eat itself. This depiction is not new to you Heir. That is what makes it astonishing, that you could be so numb, yet have your lizard brain in full swing. What a dangerous place.

So, for us, probably like it did for them, this really feels like the end.

There are so many thinking this way. Then again, we attract what we project and seek. To err is human, to not see a studies failure in sample size is being willingly delusional.

What? You haven't heard? We are all going to die.

The Discarded
Eric Skadson



Viejo y Sabio
Hannah Heyn



The Passage of Time

Jessica Haugen

I walked across an empty street
I felt its pathway on my hands and feet
I felt the earth of better days
As I rewound to recollection's haze

Oh, taken thing, where have you gone?
I'm growing old, for I need something more to lean on
So, tell me when can blind men see?
And deaf can hear, when pain will be set free

From ancient oak, there hung a swing
Collecting thoughts and sights of better things
Is Hope a name we used to love?
Is this the place that I have long dreamed of?

Oh, taken thing, where have you gone?
I'm growing old, for I need something more to lean on
So, tell me when can blind men see?
And deaf can hear, when pain will be let free

If humanity could open unwilling eyes
Life's subtlety of time has spread its wings to the sky
This could be extinction of everything but low
So why don't we travel somewhere only we know?

Let us create a path, uncovered and unknown
And fill the trees with memories, the earth with how we've grown
For footsteps are the unfilled pens, with which we choose to write
The footsteps of our memories are candles we must light

Over the Rails

Sarah Pedretti

It felt as though I had just swallowed a gigantic wad of mint gum as my eyes slowly moved from the gated ticket window to the small blue sign nailed to the wall just on the right. How in the world was I supposed to know that this small Indiana train station didn't open their ticket window during the week days? Of course the website where I bought my ticket couldn't have mentioned this small detail when it told me to pick up my ticket here. I looked around at the seven other people who had arrived early for the Chicago train. Four business men and a woman stood around reading the newspaper in their black and gray suits and dress skirt, a few of them drinking coffee from Starbucks's cups and large thermoses. A young couple, a little older than me, were sitting and holding hands in the two chairs by the window. Their whispers and giggles seemed out of place in the quiet flipping of newspapers. They were both wearing green and the woman had placed little four leaf clovers in her wild black hair. I had forgotten that it was St. Patrick's Day. That meant that I had one more thing to be wary about when I got to Chicago: drunk people. Not that I needed anything else because this was my first time riding a train and well, traveling alone.

I reached into my sweatpants' pocket and pulled out my phone to check the time. 6:40AM flashed through the little screen on the scratched up front of my old blue flip phone. I had 20 minutes to figure out how to get on the train. I swung my backpack up onto the back of my old over-sized high school sweatshirt and reached down to grab my large black suitcase. Maybe there's another window somewhere else, I thought. I walked around the corner into a larger sitting area with green curved lounge couches where the sound of humming floated to my ears. On the far left couch sat an older woman resting with her feet on her suitcase. She was bobbing her head slightly as if listening to an ipod, and her short blond hair shifted back and forth across the side of her just starting to wrinkle face. I redirected my steps over to her couch.

"Excuse me, Ma'am."

Her eyes opened and lifted to mine. She smiled; her crow's feet etching a frame around her brown eyes. She reminded me of my best friend's mom who had driven me here three days ago. I started to relax and my knotted stomach untied itself a little.

"Do you happen to know if there is another ticket window where I can get my train ticket?" I asked and pointed to the corner where the closed window was.

"Oh, is it your first time traveling on the train?"

I nodded, and she swung her legs down and stood up straightening her blue cotton shirt and flipping her hair back off her shoulders.

"Well now, you can call me Doris. And what's your name dear?" she asked.

"Katie," I smiled holding out my hand which she gently squeezed. "I was just visiting my best friend at Notre Dame over spring break. Her parents drove me down on their way to a conference, but now I have to get back home."

Doris's eyes lit up. "Oh how fun! I remember the days of spring breaks and warm beaches." She clapped her hands together and sighed. "There was this one break that me and my girlfriends road tripped all the way to Phoenix, Arizona and... oh, but of course we need to get you safely on the train, don't we?"

I almost asked her to continue when I remembered my time frame, so I gave another nod and turned my head as a bearded man in blue overalls walked by catching my eye. Doris saw him too. "Now that would be your conductor, Katie," she said, pointing to his back as he rounded the corner. "Once you get on the train, he'll come around, and you'll buy your ticket straight from him."

She patted my shoulder as to reassure me, but her words only made my sinking feeling come back. There wasn't another window then. I looked back into her smiling face, "But I've already bought my ticket. From on-line."

Her smile faltered and a crease moved between her eyebrows. “Hmm... well, that does present a problem.” She paused, then her eyes turned back to focus on mine. “I’m sorry my dear, but I think we’ll have to go to the conductor about this.” I was guessing that this would be the case. Doris gathered her bags together, and we set off back into the main waiting room.

The St. Patrick’s Day couple was gone and only one of the business men was left packing his newspaper away into his brown briefcase. I grabbed my phone back out of my pocket: 6:47AM. The business man stood up, pulled on his jacket and walked out the side door with his briefcase. “It looks like everyone is getting ready to board; the conductor might be on the platform,” Doris said indicating that I should follow the gentleman out the door. I rolled my suitcase across the carpeted floor and walked into the cold wind. Wiping the tears from my eyes that had gushed to life by the gusts of cold wind, I looked up to the platform. To my surprise, there stood close to twenty people. Only half wondering where all the people came from, I lugged my suitcase up the stairs in search of the conductor. Once on top, Doris stopped to resituate her luggage, and I told her that I was going to look towards the front of the train. Winding my way through the groups of people who were unusually quiet, I passed the missing St. Patrick’s Day couple; they were still holding hands but now also quiet.

“Have you seen the conductor?” I asked the young woman. She turned and glared at me, then simply bounced her black hair back and forth making the four leaf clovers dance.

I walked on and reached the end of the platform with no conductor in sight. There were only two chatty birds that flew over head and landed on the ledge of one of the columns supporting the overhang. I sighed and turned back thinking, he’s probably already on the train. Everyone was now boarding through the recently opened door, and Doris waved for me to hurry. I lined up between Doris and the business woman I had seen earlier and squeezed through the door and down the small isles. The way people took their seats and whispered quietly reminded me of riding the school bus in middle school. This thought encouraged me somehow, and I chose a seat behind a trio of high schoolers wondering why they weren’t in school

or if they were commuting to a school in Chicago. Doris took the seat across from mine.

“The conductor is probably getting the train ready for departure,” she said watching me chew my bottom lip. I stopped abruptly wondering when I had started. “It’ll work out fine, Katie,” she added with a smile.

Doris is right, I thought returning a small smile and sitting back in my seat to stare at the head rest in front of me. I just need to relax a little and trust God. But I hate waiting, I thought sighing. To get my mind settled a little, I started to look around the train. The train was nothing like I was expecting since I had only seen inside them in movies like Harry Potter and The Chronicles of Narnia. Of course thinking back, I shouldn’t have expected them to be like that since those movies were both set on long distance trains in Great Britain. The train was instead like a large coach bus with blue cushioned seats. My suitcase barely fit in the seat with me and I had to sit with my feet on top of it. I tried to rehearse what I would say when the conductor came to give me a ticket while digging through my backpack for my receipt that I had thankfully printed out from the computer when I had bought my ticket online. I finally found it hidden in my back laptop pocket full of random loose papers. I sighed and sat back looking at the printed sheet. The paper didn’t actually say all that much about which tickets I had bought, but it had my identification number on it. That was all that I needed to pick up my ticket, but I didn’t know if it would be enough to argue my case with the conductor.

I turned to ask Doris if she thought I would need more than the receipt when movement and talking further up the car caught my attention. There came the conductor with his ticket punching machine and apron full of change. My heart started pumping harder. “Doris? How much will it be if I need to buy another ticket?” I asked. Did I even have any change? Dad told me to bring some; where did I put it? I wondered.

Doris, who had been rummaging through her purse, looked up and followed my gaze to the slowly approaching conductor. “Well, it depends how far you’re going, dear. It will probably be around ten dollars though,” she said.

I watched him moving closer stopping at each person. His rough voice rang out asking how far each person was going and giving a price; then the clip and swish his ticket machine rung through the car. I kept taking deep breaths and praying to God that it would all work out. I need to relax; I need to relax, I kept repeating in my head. Then he was there. "How far?" he asked without looking at me ready to punch it into the machine.

"Um... Sir," I started and tried to swallow nonexistent saliva. "I bought my ticket online a few weeks ago, and it told me to pick it up at the ticket window here, but I didn't know that it wouldn't be open on the week days 'cause you see, I'm not from around here."

His eyes slowly moved from the machine's screen to me. I quickly held up my receipt, hoping beyond hope that this would work. "This is the receipt that I printed from online. Here is my identification number," I said pointing to the numbers that I had scribed in pink ink on the top. His already somber face frowned even more as he took the paper. There is no way that this is going to work, I thought, already reaching for my small change bag in the front pocket of my backpack. I looked up with one small gleam of hope that he would accept it, and after his eyes searched the paper for awhile, he "harrumphed," whipped the paper back at me, and moved on to Doris. My eyes went wide, and I looked to Doris. She gave me another smile and winked. I sat there for a minute looking at the paper in my lap. It had worked!

After the conductor left Doris said, "Wonderful performance Katie! I was worried for a second that he wasn't going to believe you."

"Yeah so was I," I laughed a little; my stomach again untying itself from the knots that had formed.

It wasn't until the train started moving that I truly believed that I had nothing more to worry about. I would get off at the Chicago stop, hop in a taxi, and drive to union station. My body relaxed into the seat, and I stared out the window as Doris pulled out a People magazine. The high schoolers started throwing little pieces of paper at each other over the seats and laughing. In the other isle two seats back, I heard a woman ask her seat partner which station she was getting off at.

“Oh, I’m just going to the third Chicago stop; not that far,” the woman answered.

My stomach dropped. “There’s more than one Chicago stop?” I bolted straight in my seat and turned to Doris; my eyes widening.

Her surprised eyes met mine. “You didn’t know that dear?” she asked. I shook my head surprising myself as tears started to form in my eyes. “Well, where are you going again?”

I took a deep breath to calm myself, and told her Union Station was where my next train left from.

“Oh, well that’s perfect!” Doris said a smile forming; “I’m getting off at the exact station that you will need to get off at too.”

Wow, God really has my back, I thought, and smiled wondering at his goodness. Then I remembered what my best friend said before I left: “Katie, remember to be careful ‘cause people start drinking at like nine in the morning on St. Patrick’s Day.” Great, I thought and started to imagine what people would be like who were drunk on a train. Can someone get drunk on a train?

An Evening in Paris

Katie Kiesler



The Path

Lily Van Driessche

One girl laughs while the other girl cries.
Have we been living our lives as lies?

I write you letters and we' keep in touch,
Did you know that I miss you this much?

I miss the days of the cold winter winds.
We stayed inside all day, keeping warm through our grins.

We talked about life and how we'd grow old
As thoughts of our futures began to unfold.

You'd tell me your dreams and I'd tell you mine.
We were the perfect friends with nothing but time.

But now we have strayed.
We have gone off our path.
She wishes you'd stay,
And help her face the wrath.
The wrath of the wind wants to carry her away.
You run after her in tears, begging to let her stay.

I wake up from my dream and everything is fine.
When will I remember my happiness is mine?

You Aren't Me

Lily Van Driessche

Be yourself.
That's what they always say.
Love yourself.
That's easy for you to say.

You aren't me.
You don't feel the way I do.
So for once try to see,
How much we envy you.

We envy the girl with the golden smile.
She's always had a boy—never waiting our long while.

Sometimes we cry
Or even cut ourselves.
But no matter how hard I try,
They will never see my true self

New

Lily Van Driessche

You're so scared to lose, but ready to try.

Wipe your eyes—you are alive.

You go so fast just trying to forget.

But you always look back—you always regret.

Will I ever change? Will I ever forget?

I get ready to jump into the new or the old.

I won't take the easy way out—I want to grow old.

I want to change for the better—not for worse.

I will prove them wrong and lift this curse

Inspiration, Illuminations
Ky Weaver



Sand on the Mediterranean

Katie Kiesler



Departure

Kyle Larkin

It was Christmas in Iraq. We brushed the sand off of our crusted uniforms and applied sanitizer from miniature bottles to our filthy hands as we got in the serving line for dinner. It was a lukewarm meal, prepared hours earlier and delivered in plastic totes to our small patrol base in Samarra. It consisted of stale bread, a meat amalgamation that somewhat resembled ham, soggy green beans that our stray dog, Jessi, wouldn't sniff at, some sort of potato-based side dish, processed milk that didn't need to be refrigerated, and a couple of mass-produced pies that were still frozen.

We hadn't sat down for an actual meal together since leaving Kuwait a few weeks earlier, and the holiday dinner gave us temporary relief from our exhaustive routine. We were singing Christmas carols, drinking nonalcoholic beers that taste something like urine probably does, and shooting star-cluster parachute flares into the sky from the grenade launcher attachments on our rifles. We were celebrating the holiday with our brothers, the only family we had in that heartbroken country.

We'd moved into what used to be a hotel (codenamed Casino) on the Tigris River that had been occupied by US forces for just over a year. Days after the previous unit left the city we realized that they'd essentially kept to themselves, resulting in a chaotic city with an excessive amount of weapons and a huge web of insurgents from Syria, Jordan, Iran and Egypt to use them. Samarra is a city of about 200,000 people. Aside from our platoon of forty soldiers there was a slightly larger Patrol Base further into the city with nearly a hundred troops, but they weren't infantry. The guys we replaced were actually stationed at a nearby base and only doing two week rotations at Casino, with a month-and-a-half between shifts since the city was so dangerous, but we were sentenced to spend the entire following year in that shithole without any replacements.

We averaged about 3 hours of sleep the first few months in country, which turned us all into mechanical, sleep-deprived ghosts.

Eventually our platoon was split into two twenty-man teams—the first patrolled the city multiple times each day either in trucks or on foot, while the second group would alternate twelve hour over-watch shifts at positions we'd set up on various rooftops in the vicinity of Casino. There were a few impulsive, naïve firefights during our first month of the war, but nothing serious came of them. Aside from this, we all had to spend a minimum of four hours each day filling and hauling sandbags in full body armor to reinforce our building. Since the soldiers before us were only in Samarra for short rotations, they didn't care about running water and basically used Casino as a bivouac shelter. Eventually we got water running from a pipe in what used to be a bathroom of the hotel which allowed us to take cold showers once every four days. We also acquired a satellite phone and had the chance to use it for twenty minutes once every two weeks.

Despite these circumstances, we looked forward to the holiday as a source of normalcy. A few guys had the good fortune of calling their families on Christmas, and we ardently listened to their stories about the holidays back home in Wisconsin; Todd Olson, my squad leader and the father figure of our nine man group, told us about his four boys and some of the wrestling matches they'd won at recent varsity meets. The convoy arrived with our food and mail after his stories, so we unloaded the trucks and set up a serving line.

During Christmas dinner we casually went over the plans for our patrol later in the night while scraping clean the decorative holiday paper plates that were delivered with the food. We did weapon and ammo checks with full stomachs, put on our body armor and night vision goggles, and went over the mission one last time. Twenty of us moved out from Casino shortly after 10p.m. in single file columns on each side of the street, with about 10 meters in between each soldier to minimize our casualties in case of grenade attacks or explosions. I was two men behind Sergeant Bomkamp, my team leader, who led the patrol down our side of the street; Sergeant Olson was point-man on the opposite side.

Samarra was overrun by packs of wild dogs and a few followed us, barking constantly and giving away our position, so we shot them and

moved on. A brief firefight broke out in an alley toward the beginning of our mission after some suspicious men darted between buildings after the citywide curfew, but none of us were hit. Two other times our patrol was shot at, but in the maze of buildings we couldn't find where it was coming from and continued our mission.

About four hours into the patrol we were near the center of the city, only a mile or so from Casino, and came up on what we called the Golden Mosque. It was one of the most famous Shiite mosques in the world, with its construction dating back to the tenth century, and I thought to myself how beautiful the gigantic, yet intricate, golden teardrop bulb could be at night, especially next to the slender, towering minarets that were covered with elaborate hand painted designs. Thousands of Muslims made pilgrimages to this particular mosque yearly until it was blown up by suicide bombers in a Sunni attack just weeks after our unit left Samarra. This wasn't the first time we saw the Golden Mosque up close, but seeing it lit up at night was intimidating every time.

We were used to the prayers led over loudspeakers for the entire city to hear during the day, but something very peculiar happened that night. As we walked along the high walls surrounding the mosque a man's voice came over the speakers—not a melodious, prayer-like voice, but a normal, though somewhat rushed, speaking voice. He only said a few words and then things went silent. We stopped the patrol, but after failing to get any information from our interpreter, who barely understood English, we had no choice except to move on.

We rounded the corner and began walking up a divided street with a grassy median. It was after 2a.m., and after patrolling with our heavy rucksacks and body armor for so long we were exhausted, trying desperately to stay focused. I remember seeing some graffiti spray painted in huge letters on a wall we were nearing, but my night vision goggles were fogged up from the sweat on my face. I mentioned this into my radio, flipped up my optic for a better look, and just began to make out the first word (which was strangely in English) when the explosion shook the whole city, throwing me backwards. It was on my side of the street, maybe 50 feet ahead of me, and instantly the

smoke cloud rose above every surrounding building. A massive roadside bomb had been buried, intended for a vehicle convoy judging by the size of it, but they couldn't pass up the opportunity to go after troops in the open.

It was impossible to see anything with the thick cloud of smoke and dust that encompassed the entire block. There was a clusterfuck of yells and random gunshots as we tried to assess the casualty situation. I ran to the front and Todd Olson was injured badly – his legs were mangled and blood was spurting out of his femoral arteries onto the wall and sidewalk. We applied tourniquets to his upper thighs and radioed for an evac humvee to get him the hell out of there. Within five minutes the truck arrived, but it was extremely dark and we had trouble loading Todd onto the stretcher. There was blood everywhere and some of the soldiers who helped lift him felt their fingers sink through what was left of the flesh on his legs until they touched the bone. He screamed for the first minute or so after the attack, but once shock set in he just moaned and repeatedly asked what happened. Once we got him on the stretcher we loaded him into the back of the truck and it sped toward a base equipped with a helicopter pad.

I felt helpless. We were right in the middle of the city, in plain sight of everyone, as our rookie, lieutenant Platoon Leader argued with our Platoon Sergeant about whether or not we should shoot up the surrounding buildings and windows. Before we left I took one more look at the graffiti, which I'd forgotten about, and saw giant, childlike handwriting that read: "HAVE A BLOODY CHRISTMAS AND MISERABLE NEW YEAR" in vivid, blood-red paint. We made our way back to Casino.

People had Todd's blood all over their hands and arms, their uniforms, his blood on their faces, but somehow he was the only soldier seriously injured in the attack. Sergeant Bomkamp, the point-man on my side of the road, was standing almost directly on top of the bomb when it went off, but due to the way it was buried he wasn't hurt—all of the shrapnel shot toward the opposite side of the street.

After we took off our gear, still wide-eyed, our Platoon Sergeant held a de-briefing and said that Todd would definitely live, but that he would lose both of his legs. He had seen situations like this before in Bosnia and other places as a medic with the Special Forces, and claimed that we had applied the tourniquets quickly enough after the attack to assure that Todd wouldn't bleed out.

This was the turning point of our deployment because we could no longer ignore the vague, horrific possibilities that we refused to acknowledge—something actual and specific had happened. Sure, we felt strange and uncomfortable when we filled out our wills, some soldiers barely out of high school deciding what to do with all of their worldly possessions, and also during the cliché, “not everyone in this room will make it home” speeches, but this was something different that we couldn't have prepared for. After the briefing we were still in shock and sat completely silent for a while – nobody talked except for sporadic remarks concerning Todd, statements that were meant to offer some optimism but eventually trailed off into a mumble while they looked at the floor in futility.

I thought about Todd's family and imagined him back home with them, but I kept picturing him in a wheelchair. Things would never be the same for them after this and it devastated me to think about them hearing the news. How would they adjust to a disabled father? Could they? I closed my eyes but couldn't stop seeing his face.

Eventually we tried to get some sleep, but within an hour our Platoon Sergeant called another meeting. We trudged into the briefing room, figuring that he called us for a new mission, but were wrong. Todd had died. A small piece of shrapnel pierced his abdomen during the attack and he died before they made it to the hospital. After the reassuring initial briefing, this absolutely crushed us. Our lieutenant had already made the horrendous mistake of personally calling Todd's wife (which was strictly against proper procedure) and telling her that he had been injured but would survive. Some of us were crying silently; others were staring into space, still with blood splattered on our clothes. Nobody knew what to do. We tried to manage some sleep for about two hours when one of our over-watch

positions took fire; our period of mourning was over. We mounted the gun-trucks and shakily headed for the shootout.

When we got back I stripped off my gear and lay on my bunk. I looked up at our whiteboard—342 days left in country.

We would like to thank Iraq veteran Kyle Larkin for sharing his incredible perspective on the Iraq war. Thank you for all you've done Kyle!

Summertime Again
Aarynn Deutsch

<http://youtu.be/T9hbmVLeYFA>

Summertime Sunset from Acadia National Park, Maine
Elizabeth Fleig



UNIVERSITY *of* WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE