

OUTLET

BYU-Idaho Art +  
Literary Journal

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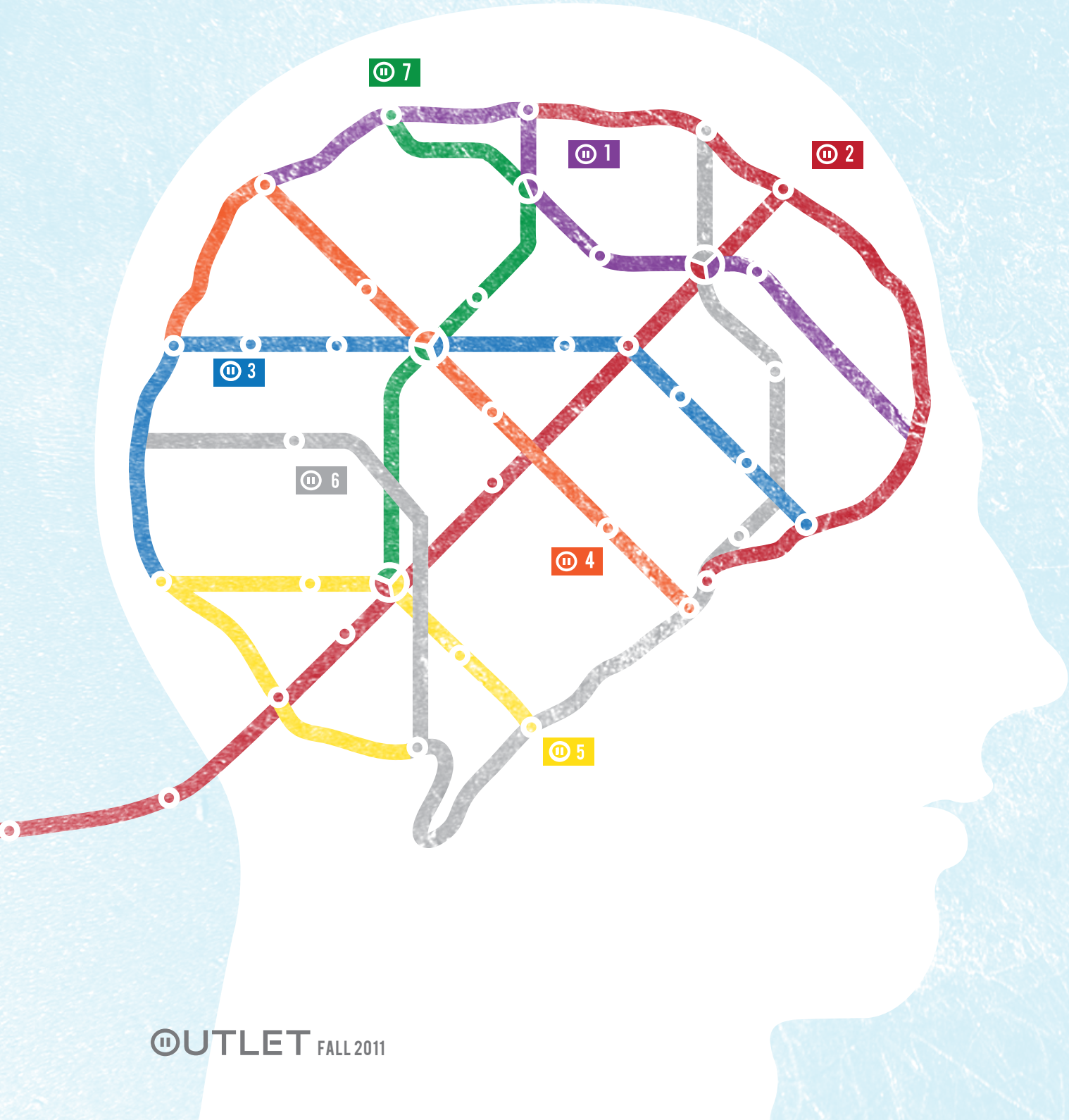
OUTLET



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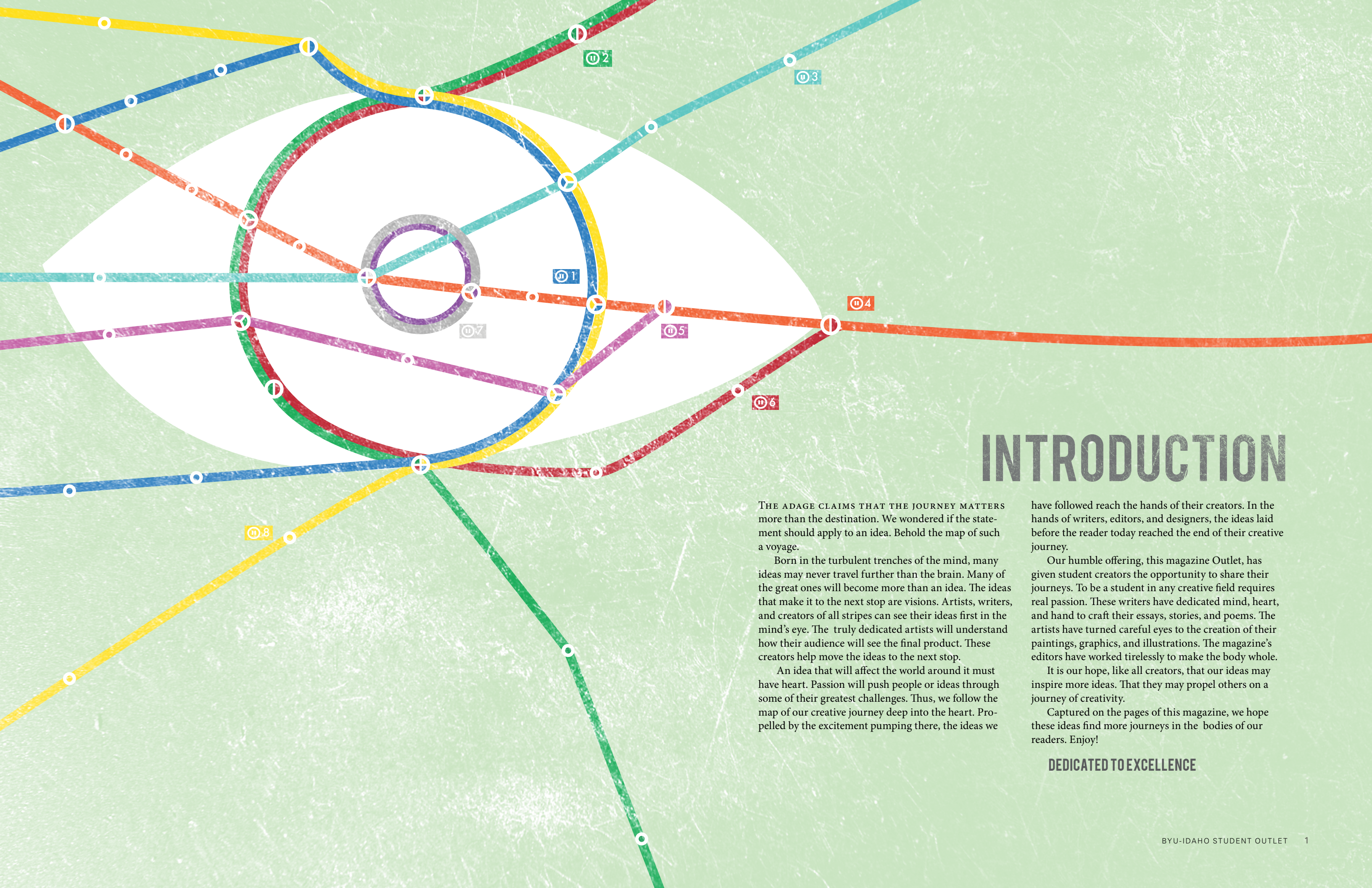
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# INTRODUCTION

THE ADAGE CLAIMS THAT THE JOURNEY MATTERS more than the destination. We wondered if the statement should apply to an idea. Behold the map of such a voyage.

Born in the turbulent trenches of the mind, many ideas may never travel further than the brain. Many of the great ones will become more than an idea. The ideas that make it to the next stop are visions. Artists, writers, and creators of all stripes can see their ideas first in the mind's eye. The truly dedicated artists will understand how their audience will see the final product. These creators help move the ideas to the next stop.

An idea that will affect the world around it must have heart. Passion will push people or ideas through some of their greatest challenges. Thus, we follow the map of our creative journey deep into the heart. Propelled by the excitement pumping there, the ideas we

have followed reach the hands of their creators. In the hands of writers, editors, and designers, the ideas laid before the reader today reached the end of their creative journey.

Our humble offering, this magazine Outlet, has given student creators the opportunity to share their journeys. To be a student in any creative field requires real passion. These writers have dedicated mind, heart, and hand to craft their essays, stories, and poems. The artists have turned careful eyes to the creation of their paintings, graphics, and illustrations. The magazine's editors have worked tirelessly to make the body whole.

It is our hope, like all creators, that our ideas may inspire more ideas. That they may propel others on a journey of creativity.

Captured on the pages of this magazine, we hope these ideas find more journeys in the bodies of our readers. Enjoy!

**DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE**



# There is no physical evidence of my bleeding heart anywhere to be found.

WRITTEN BY: Kaylie Ferguson & DESIGNED BY: Mark McCann

WHITE WALLS, WHITE SHEETS, WHITE-HOT tears tumble down cheeks as pale as the unopened notebook paper that sits next to me. It has only been three days since my parents dropped me off in this alien world known only as college, and I am already beginning to crack like the white plaster ceiling of my apartment. I peer down at my torso, surprised not to find a crimson stain between the wrinkles in my shirt. There is no physical evidence of my bleeding heart anywhere to be found.

Pinching the bridge of my nose between my fingers, I will my pain to flow from my body and into my escaping tears. “You don’t have time to cry,” I chide myself. “You’ve got work to do.”

I open my eyes and the images of my family and home fade away, replaced by a list. As it unrolls in my mind’s eye, it travels farther into my brain until it disappears from sight. Taking a deep breath, I start chipping away at that list—the eternal list of homework. At least it serves as a welcome distraction.

I live at my desk and eat essays for breakfast. By the time lunch rolls around I decide to taste a few math assignments and come to the conclusion that I despise the flavor. Homework has a strange aftertaste to it as well, and I consider avoiding it all together. Grinning ear to ear, I try to slip it beneath the table, thinking of feeding my homework to the dog. However, I pause when a well-known voice enters my mind.

It’s good for you! The voice says. If you don’t feed your mind, how can you expect it to grow strong and healthy? With a heavy sigh, I swallow the remainder of my homework and start on the next plate.

So many plates . . .

Gray-sky, gray graphite streaks across my textbook, gray thoughts that forever lead me to dead ends. I rack my brain for answers to equations that resemble a child’s doodling more than a math formula. It has been two weeks. Two weeks since I have last seen my family . . . or had a social life for that matter. Over the passing days, homework has become less and less of a distraction and more and more of an enforced lifestyle.

It is Saturday night, and I sit alone in my apartment. The only thing that breaks the silence is the occasional car zipping beneath my window and the click-clack-click of my fingernails striking the keys of my computer.

Finally, able to take no more, I leap up from my desk and prowl around the confines of my room. After pondering my decision for a whole ten seconds, I snatch up my cell phone and issue the command to my fingers to dial Mom’s number. They pause, however, hovering over the keypad of my phone. With a heavy sigh, I snap my phone shut, deciding that the best course of action would be to practice my argument before I present it to the judge.

“Listen, Mom,” I say. “I know that college might be a great experience for some people, but this is just too hard for . . .” I falter. “I mean—it’s all so overwhelming and frightening . . .”

Suddenly, my anger deflates and I sink onto my bed. “Too hard? Too frightening?” I murmur, echoing my previous comments. “What had I expected college to be like?” Resting my head in my palms, I wonder, “Am I really going to give up because college is hard?”

Hard. I shudder as the word hits the lake of memories in my mind. Ripples travel over the surface, stirring feelings and conversations that had been lying on the sandy lake bottom, cold and forgotten. One voice floats

above the rest, calling out to me through the caverns of time, full of love and hope. You can do hard things, it cries. You can!

I rose with the dawn that morning, never allowing the stony expression carved into my face to crack. I took my time as I buttoned up my shirt and slipped into my petticoats and skirt. At last, the clock struck seven o’ clock. With my head held high, I allowed my parents to escort me, along with the rest of the youth in our ward, onto the bus without a fight. I had already done my fair share of fighting, but in the end, it was all in vain. I lost the war. I was on my way into exile.

“You’ll have fun!” Dad promised. “You’re lucky that you get to go on trek, so be grateful for the opportunity.”

“Lucky?” I laughed humorlessly. “Be grateful? Dad, I have to go spend a week pulling a handcart in a skirt. We’ll have no running water, and I’ll have to sleep on the ground.”

There is no physical evidence of my bleeding heart anywhere to be found.

My argument sounded shallow, even in my own ears. However, I couldn’t bring myself to admit the real reason why I didn’t want to participate in the trek: my fear of leaving home, a fear of deserting all that I knew to be familiar, and instead surrendering myself to change and unknown obstacles.

Gravel crunched beneath the tires as the bus pulled onto the shoulder of a road tucked away somewhere in the Idaho foothills. Stepping from the bus, I bid a silent farewell to life as I had known it and followed the Edinburgh Ward Handcart Company into the wilderness.

Dust swirled in my mouth and nose. Sweat slid down my face, mingling with the tears that slipped from my eyes as I groaned with the very effort of putting one foot in front of another.

When the sun finally retired to its bed behind the mountains, an audible sigh rippled through the youth. Our first day was over! Ever so slowly, we peeled ourselves away from our handcarts.

Silence filled the camp as everyone began to massage their muscles with grimaces that contorted their dirt-streaked faces. Taking my soiled apron in both hands, I wiped away the remains of the dust and sorrow on my cheeks as best I could.

After dinner we all searched for a patch of field not covered with cow pies. While meandering over the dying grass, I met the gazes of several other girls, recognizing my hopelessness in their own eyes.

Deep in the bushes, the crickets began strumming out their lively tune in an attempt to raise our spirits. But their cheerfulness was lost on me, for my anxiety was as dark as the surrounding forest.

Trying to find a comfortable position, I rolled onto my back—and gasped.



Perhaps there is no physical evidence, but I feel it there, warming my soul.

Struggling for words to describe the sight, tears of an entirely new emotion welled up in my eyes. Millions of tiny stars were sprinkled across the night sky, each taking their turn to wink at the defeated girl lying in a pasture. Heaven, it seemed, was close enough to touch.

"Be brave," I heard an internal voice whisper. "Everything will turn out alright. You'll see. Heaven is watching over you."

Those words snuggled into my soul, making a permanent residency for them in my heart.

With each passing day, our trek grew more demanding, both physically and emotionally. At times I would pull my bonnet on, despite the raging heat, to hide my tears from everyone around me. Waves of fear would wash over me, threatening to overcome. But deep within, that voice of reassurance pressed me onward, feeding me with the hope that this trial would not last long.

Late Friday night, we sat huddled around the dying camp fire, listening to the cries of a lone wolf ascend from the surrounding trees up to the imperial moon. The bishop stood before us, waiting patiently for our attention.

"Tomorrow morning," he announced when the group had settled down, "we will reach the city of Placerville." Smiling slightly, he continued, "It is our final destination."

On Saturday morning, I rose with the dawn. A grateful, albeit weary, smile never fell from my face. Enjoying the crisp mountain air and the fresh scent of the pines, I laced up my boots for the last time. With our handcars all packed, we hit the trail.

I ran into Placerville and straight into my mother's open arms, my head held high, laughing with the sheer joy of triumph.

Taking my grimy, callused hands in her own petal-soft ones, Mom exclaimed, "See, Sweetheart, you can do it! You can do hard things! If you can do trek, you can do anything!"

White clouds rise into the sky, soaring far beyond their expected potential. White flowers bloom in forgotten corners of campus, bringing joy to those who happen upon them. White pages in a book wait patiently to be filled with new life. For new dreams to be accomplished. For new trials to be conquered.

I walk to class, stepping into the pools of light provided by the street lamps. Each step I take, I remember another assignment I must complete, another project that is due. Smiling, I add it to my list of adventures for the day and put it temporarily from my mind. Peering down at my chest, I am surprised not to see a glow shining through the wrinkles in my shirt. Perhaps there is no physical evidence, but I feel it there, warming my soul. ■

# EVERYONE WILL LOVE YOU

WRITTEN BY: Amelia Owen DESIGNED BY: Katie Turner\*

I REALLY DO NOT WANT TO DO THIS. IT IS RIGHT between ripping my toenails off and pulling teeth on the list of things I would like to do. If I had it my way, I would be at home finishing the laundry or at the store buying onions for tomorrow's dinner. Instead I am surrounded by the clowns stumbling about as they prep to enter the ring for their mid-show performance. I linger at the back of the ensemble, away from the tent entrance flap, towards the rear wooden beams holding the seats of the audience sitting above me.

Why did I agree to do this? I've refused Jim's pleas before, what made this time different? This wasn't a new request; it hadn't caught me off guard. I prepare myself, defending against almost weekly attacks, always ready with some reason: I haven't done that since college, and that was years ago. I've developed a new phobia of heights. After a fall down a flight of stairs, my balance hasn't been quite the same. Sorry, I have to wash my hair tonight. I have to rearrange my sock drawer. Maybe this time I simply ran out of excuses. Maybe I was tired. Maybe I wanted that old feeling of glory. Whatever the reason, in the end, I agreed to my first performance since college. I agreed to do something I had vowed I'd never do again.

The final cheer from the audience signals the end of the clown's routine, applause vibrating down the wooden supports to where my sequined body stands paralyzed with anticipation. Move to the entrance. It's time to shine. Clear the mind. Focus. Remember the breathing method. No, forget that. Just remember to breathe. Support the diaphragm. Listen for the cue. Shoulders back. Head up. Big smile. Everyone will love you.

It's just how I remember it: the lights searing down on me, the scream of the crowd. I can't bring myself to look at them. I'll lose my cool. They always threw me off guard, their eyes staring, wondering if I'll mess up and plummet to my death. I wonder that enough for the both of us, thank you. I smile and wave at the crowd I won't look at, focusing on the tent behind them, the ladder in front of me, the ladder beneath my feet. Each rung brings me towards almost certain death, and I'm fighting the urge not to turn and run. The last time I walked the wire, I fell thirty feet and broke both my femurs. And my confidence. I don't know if I'll get it back.

Climb the ladder. Hand, foot, hand, foot. Up and up. Keep that smile. Pull yourself onto the platform. Wave to the crowd. Don't look down. Walk to the end. Was the rope always this thin, always this long? Stop that. Focus. You will do this. Deep breath. Support the diaphragm. Listen for the cue. Shoulders back. Head up. Big smile. Everyone will love you. ■



# Fireflies

AUTHOR: Stephanie Fullmer DESIGNER: Betsabe Ruiz

## I CANNOT KEEP STILL. THE BOUNCE OF MY SEAT FUELS MY ANXIETY

as the carriage makes its way along the Missouri roads. Fields fly past my window; yellows and purples of wild flowers dapple them and the surrounding hills. The woods are flushed with vibrant greens and rich browns. The colors run together in my vision as the carriage sways from side to side. The scenery brings to me days long past, and I cannot help but remember.



Every summer I visited with my grandparents. Every summer I went to see him. We met four years ago in 1893, the summer of my fourteenth year. There is a field not far from my grandparents' house that was our little secret. I had narrowly escaped the house and another tireless conversation and decided to go for an evening walk. The breeze was inviting, and the fireflies danced through the air around me. I saw a worn path meander into the trees and decided to follow. The yellow light from the fireflies lent a hazy view of the path ahead. I walked for a long while, not caring about where I was headed or how long it would take me to return.

The path suddenly ended, and a small meadow opened up before me. I had never seen anything more beautiful in my life. Fireflies were everywhere, floating lazily around the edges of the field. The moon shone bright and full in the center of the trees, casting shadows against the pale emerald floor.

But more beautiful still, in the center of the field lay

a young man fast asleep. I was at first frightened and turned to leave, yet a strong curiosity drew me closer. There was innocence splayed across his face, and although he exceeded me in age by a few years, he seemed no more than a boy. I could not help but sit by his side and watch his sleeping face. I was entranced. I stopped myself from shaking him awake several times; I never understood why I did not.

The amber lights seemed to grow dimmer as I watched his face, and I felt as one asleep. Indeed I woke the next morning in a cloud of mist and found that the boy had vanished. My summer dress of blue and white would have to be furiously scrubbed. I took the path back, at the end of which I received a dire scolding. My grandparents did not believe me or my fairytale of some angelic boy in a field of fireflies. That night I defiantly opened my window and peered out into the trees in search of the truth. I knew all too well that it could have been a dream, but holding onto the fantasy proved

more exciting. I sat in my long blue nightgown on the window seat, watching the trees sway in the wind.

A light caught my eye in the trees on the fringe of the garden but was gone before I could make sense of it. I felt restless and so decided to pursue this questionable light. When I reached the place I thought I had seen it, there lay a yellow rose on the path. My heart sputtered in my chest, but I could not refuse my excitement. I laid my inhibitions behind me and hurriedly followed the path to the meadow. Upon entering the clearing, I found that my memory had not done it justice. The moon was brighter still, and the dance of the fireflies went on unhindered by the wind. He stood there waiting for me, a bright gleam in his eye. Not a thing could have prevented me from approaching him. As I drew near, I could not help but smile at him.

“Boy, what is your name?”

He smiled in turn, ducking his head in a bow as he offered his hand.

“I am Peter.”

I curtsied as elegantly as I could in my nightgown.

“And I am Lily,” I said as I placed my hand in his. We glided through the clearing in graceful circles, drifting among the fireflies, joining their dance. His eyes were aglow, never once straying from mine until we fell to the ground in exhaustion. I lay staring up at the stars, feeling the ground quiver beneath me as my mind continued to spin. Peter's laughter broke through the silence like the tinkling of bells, and soon both of us giggled beneath

the night sky. Each night after the first was similar yet somehow more enchanting. The days of that summer were filled with walks in the woods, chasing fireflies, dancing under the moon, and lying beneath the blanket of stars. The summers passed quickly, each more enjoyable than the last. Each time we would meet in our field again, and it was as if nothing had changed. I grew older with each passing year, but Peter did not change. He remained the same as the day I first encountered him in our meadow. Never once did I think to question why.



I am finally eighteen. I am as old as Peter. I shake myself out of my reverie to find the carriage has stopped. I hurriedly push open the door, ignoring the hand of the driver, and race towards the house. Dust follows me in small puffs and around the bottom of my new summer dress. The scolding will be well worth it. I make quick pleasantries with my grandparents before racing up the stairs to my bedroom to find it there on my desk. I pick up the delicate yellow rose, caressing its soft velvet petals and taking in the intoxicating scent. I almost turn to retrieve my bags from the floor but catch the white of paper beneath the rose. *I'll be waiting.*

I smile to myself and tuck the note into the front of my gown. I set to placing everything in its rightful place, trying to enliven the room with colorful fabrics of blue and green. I place the rose in the vase that always





sits on the windowsill, the best place for the summer breeze to carry the wonderful scent.

After a well-deserved bath, I slip into my white evening gown. The tightness of the bodice makes me look shapelier than I am; I cannot help feeling slightly embarrassed. I would change if not for my grandmother's insistence that I wear this tonight. I peer closer at my reflection, noting the hollowness of my cheeks and the length of my auburn hair. I have changed, even from a year ago. I can only hope Peter can see it too.

I make my way down the oak staircase and reach the landing to find that a second carriage is in the drive. My heart begins to quicken; it feels nothing similar to how Peter can make it quicken. My mood is immediately dampened. I have waited all year to see Peter, and even now I will not be allowed out until after dinner. Upon entering the dining room, I find that everyone is seated. The guests are friends of my grandparents, who often visit with their son Michael. The empty chair is conveniently beside his. He stands awkwardly to wait for me to be seated and nearly trips trying to get back into his. I suppress a giggle and turn my attention to the conversation.

There is not much that captures my attention from what can be said between adults. After trying to follow a discussion on how harvesting has really changed in the past century, I focus on the food itself. Plates of roasted duck and mashed potatoes are served first. The smell almost causes my stomach to grumble, and I dive in before giving it another chance to embarrass me. Flavors explode in my mouth, and I remind myself to slow down when I see my grandmother giving me a strange look.

I take a sip of the bitter wine, letting its flavors cascade over my tongue and down my throat. As I set the glass down, I catch a movement to my left. Turning my head quickly, I find Peter's eyes on mine, peering at me through the window from the balcony. I am momentarily frozen, captured by the beauty of his visage. His auburn hair lies elegantly on his shoulders and shines dully in the soft light.

I come back to myself only to realize that a smile is on my face, and the dinner party has gone quiet. Blood floods my face, and I turn once again to the food without explanation. The conversation starts to build again, and I slowly release the tension in my shoulders. Sneaking a glance at the window, I catch the edge of Peter's green coat just as it disappears from the balcony.

When I am satisfied, I excuse myself and wander out onto the balcony. I search the surrounding woods but know that Peter has already returned to the meadow. In the past, whenever I am restrained to the house, I have found Peter on more than one occasion looking after me. Sometimes while gazing through the window, I have seen him wandering the grounds, and even before I fall asleep I feel him close. I only have a few minutes of rest before I hear someone clear his throat behind me. For a split second I think it could be Peter, but find Michael standing awkwardly behind me.

"H-hello, I'm Michael. We met a few years ago, but I don't expect you to remember that." He fidgets with the front of his jacket, looking everywhere but at me.

"Yes, I remember you. We met at the picnic our families had a few years ago."

He looks directly at me for the first time, then briefly smiles at my remembrance.

"Well, Miss Lily, I would quite enjoy a walk in the garden. Would you like to join me?"

He looks extremely nervous as he offers me his arm, and I return the smile. As I draw closer to him, the strangest feeling comes over me. It takes me a moment to realize I have never accepted any other arm but Peter's. I take an unsteady step back and see a hurt and puzzled expression cross Michael's features.

"I-I'm sorry, I cannot accept your invitation."

It is my turn to be awkward, and before he responds, I walk around him and hurry into the house. I follow the hall back into the living room and turn to ascend the stairs but pause when I hear urgent talking coming from the dining room. I creep towards the cracked door, treading as softly as I can. I have never heard my grandparents speak so lively, and curiosity steals over me.

"They should be walking in the garden by now," Michael's mother whispers excitedly.

"Yes, how perfectly this has all turned out!" my grandmother replies.

My grandfather jumps in, "I do believe it all worked out for the best; I wouldn't be surprised if we held the wedding here next summer."

I run up the staircase, unable to listen any further. Tears stream down my face as I throw myself down onto the bed. I do not understand how they could speak of me so. I pull the crumpled note from my dress, dripping tears onto its surface and blurring the ink. I sit up and try to collect my feelings. I shouldn't be crying right now. Pulling off the white gown, I quickly change into my light blue dress. It's his favorite. Clutching the note tightly, I make my way silently down the stairs and

out the door to the back. My tears are drying but could come again quickly.

The familiar path leads me through the ancient trees. They whisper among themselves as the wind passes through them, rustling my hair and dress along the way. Before I know it, the glowing meadow opens up before me, revealing the dance of the fireflies and my Peter. I rush to embrace him but see anger in his countenance. I pull my outstretched arms back, unsure of how to react.

"Are you angry with me?" I ask feebly. I can almost feel the tears coming as my vision blurs.

The anger turns to sadness as his eyes search my face. He turns to face the open sky, struggling with something unseen.

"No, I couldn't be angry with you, Lily. I saw the carriage tonight, and I know what that means." I turn my face away, not knowing what to say.

"They will take you away, and everything we have will be lost. You will be married to a man you'll never love, have children and soon grow old. You have wondered why I have no home." He turns to me then, a fierce look in his eye.

"I ran away for this precise reason. I could not be tied to someone I had no affection for. I was of that mind, until I found you."

Before I have time to respond, he wraps his arms around me. I'm enveloped by his embrace, and the tears finally come. I do not know how to make this right, and I realize what truly will be lost by this union.



“Peter, I love you and would marry you if I could. How do we make this right?”

He pulls himself back to peer down into my face. His eyes are pools whose depths I will never reach. His lips are on mine, moving with a passion I have never known before. Without speaking, we begin to dance, twirling and spinning dizzily, trying to make the world around us disappear.

We fall to the ground, arms entwined and leaves tangled in our hair. The ground moves and the stars blur, and I hope in vain for the dawn to never come. We stare for hours into the heavens before the veil of daylight starts to trickle from the horizon.

“There is something we could do, if you are willing,” Peter’s eyes are inches from mine as he leans over me.

Before I can speak he disappears from my vision, and I push myself up from the ground to face him. “I will do anything,” I eagerly reply.

“Then follow me.” I am tugged to my feet and follow Peter down a new trail. The fireflies create a halo of light around us, urging us onward. He clutches my hand tightly as we twist and turn through the trees. The light steadily climbs in the sky until there are a scarce number of stars twinkling above us. Finally Peter stops in front of me and turns to block my passage.

“I wish there was another way to be with you, Lily, but believe me when I say this is the only way. I would run to the farthest reaches of the earth to be with you, but I cannot leave.” When I receive this message with a quizzical frown, he continues, “Before you is where I lie. I exist because of this place. Do you feel ready for the truth?”

I have never been more frightened than in this moment, but I force myself to nod. I do not understand what Peter means, but I trust him with my life. He gives me a serious look before turning and pulling me to the edge of a pond. A bush of yellow roses grows wildly across the pond, reflecting yellow points onto its face. Through all of my explorations, I have never seen this place before. The sight of it only manages to jumble my thoughts. I turn to question him, but he shakes his head and points to the water. As I watch the surface, it starts to change. I see movement, but it does not appear to be coming from within the water.

A person travels on the water as though moving pictures were flashing across its surface. It is dark in this otherworld, but a moonbeam pierces his face, and I gasp. This must be a vision of what happened long ago. I watch as Peter runs through the woods, racing ahead blindly to get away from his life of bondage. A hill comes before him, but he notices too late and falls. A rock meets his temple and he rolls into the water. He does not come back up. I feel arms around me before I realize I am screaming. I turn to the water again, but the image has disappeared. The arms release me when I’m quiet, and I turn quickly to Peter again.

“Why didn’t you tell me this before?” I ask quietly.

“Why didn’t you tell me you are...”

“Dead?” He finishes my sentence with a look of disgust.

I can feel his unease and know he has regretted showing me this. His features are twisted in pain, but I can find no voice to comfort him.

“I feared you would hate me, and I see now I had

reason to fear. I know I can’t ask this of you; I am sorry for ever bringing you here.” He walks past me to the water’s edge, peering into its depths and beyond. I know that he will leave me now, unless I stop him.

“Know this,” he somberly says without turning, “I loved you since that day we met, when I awoke to find a beautiful girl lying beside me. I have been here too long and selfishly wanted you to stay with me.”

He turns and steps towards me with tears in his eyes. My heart skips a beat, and I feel my chest tighten with sorrow. I love him, yet I am afraid.

“I love you, Lily, and always will.” He kisses my forehead quickly before turning to the water again. He slips his right foot into the water, causing no ripple or disturbance. I feel him drifting away from me with each step he takes into the water. It is nearly up to his chest now, and I cannot stand by.

“Wait! Please, let me go with you.” He pauses in his descent and turns to me.

“Do you really want this?” He asks after searching my eyes for the truth. He makes his way slowly back to the bank. Before he steps out I leap into his arms, spraying water everywhere and sending ripples across its surface. I look into his eyes for a time and know there is no other way.

“Yes, this is what I want. I love you, and nothing else matters.” I pull myself up to reach his lips, and the warmth flows through my veins. He smiles at me, no trace of uncertainty left in his eyes.

“Okay, let us go.” He gives me one last smile before we make our way deeper into the water. My body trembles, but I know this is right. The water is nearly up to my shoulders, and Peter turns to face me. He suddenly laughs, and I give him a nervous look.

“I’m just glad you wore that dress; it’s my favorite.” He pulls me into his arms and says, “Take a breath.” The water envelops us as we fall into its depths, bodies tangled together, sinking into darkness.



The moon shines into the clearing where the trees sway and the fireflies dance. A boy dances with a girl in a beautiful blue dress, twirling in circles across the clearing, wrapped in each other’s arms. They fall to the ground and stare into the heavens, the stars twinkling above and the fireflies glowing below. ■





# A Forgotten Man

By: Cathi Williams  
Designed by: Ruby Pama

In 1961, parents didn't worry about their children being nabbed by strangers. Living eight miles from the nearest town, my siblings and I explored, unfettered, the countryside of our youth.

Countless evergreen trees guarded the uninhabited acres separating the small number of houses within their stewardships. Instead of remaining a tow-headed trio, we were at the age when differing likenesses of ancestors were evident in each of us. I was ten, the baby of the family. The slight bump on the bridge of Mom's nose, along with Dad's fair complexion and puppy-dog eyes, were included in my inheritance. Kay, two years older, took on Mom's soft features and gentle beauty. Larry, sandwiched between the two of us girls, favored Grandpa Williams' angularity and Dad's humor. "Ooh, I hate this," Kay grumbled through gritted teeth. Watching the deluge cascading from battleship-gray skies, she emitted a sigh. "It happens every time summer vacation starts." Undisturbed by the typical pattern in the Pacific Northwest, I answered, "Let's do that rabbit jigsaw puzzle." "Might as well," she said with an edge in her voice that proved her unwilling acceptance. Larry, with his nose buried in science fiction, was oblivious to the weather and everything else. Wednesday morning's clear sky had us primed for adventure. We were undaunted by the chill in the air. Side by side, the three of us picked around the puddles in our driveway. Barney, heedless of the fluid-filled hollows, weaved in and out between us. At the end of the driveway, nose to the ground, she tracked a scent in an easterly direction. "Good choice, Barn Barn, we'll follow you," I

said to our black-coated mutt. Dad's discovery of the dog in our barn several years before dictated her name, and her place as a beloved family member was well established. At the crossroads in a quarter mile, she angled off to the south. The first in a series of hills loomed two miles ahead. The dips in the road between rises severed the ribbon of white-striped asphalt, which narrowed to nothing on the hills farther distant.

A hint of steam rose from the damp pavement in the warm sun, emitting a faint odor of road dirt into the clean air. Any trace of pleasant smells was obliterated when we passed Shelkey's mink farm. "Peeew," I gasped. We all sucked in fresh air after we got by it. (A few years later, Larry got a job at the mink farm after school. He reeked so bad when he got home that Mom made him take off all but his underwear and socks on the back porch before he could come in the house to take a bath.) Nearing the base of the first hill, our brother pointed to the left. Intrigued by a gap in the trees, he suggested, "Hey, why don't we go down there?" "Yeah," Kay and I enthused in unison. Before we even turned onto the lane, Barney had either sensed our intentions or shared Larry's curiosity. She was well on her way. Tall grass encroached upon what had long ago been a car-width dirt road. The underbrush alongside was thick with nettles. Steering clear of those stinging fiends wasn't a lesson we needed to relearn.

Partway into the mile-long walk beneath a canopy of trees, I said, "It's like an enchanted forest." The earthy scent of the wet forest added to the sense of mystique. The dog kept her lead as we started up a faint trail that rose to the right. It banked to the left before flattening out at the top. A fifty-foot expanse of natural turf lay between us and the front of a small cabin. A hatchet leaned against the woodpile neatly stacked against the side of the weathered shingle exterior.

A small shed sat kitty-corner to the right face of the cabin. No power lines ran to the structure, but traces of smoke wafted from the thin chimney. "Whoa,

look what you found, Barney!" I marveled aloud. Her tail waved like the winning flag in a race as she ran up to the door. We followed, and Larry called out, "Anybody home?" Our collective ten feet stood before the door in anticipation as he knocked. A couple of minutes passed before the door creaked slowly inward. An old man dressed in tattered overalls and a brownish plaid shirt faced us. His clothes hung on him loosely, matching his sagging skin. The frayed strings in his faded leather lace-up boots were untied. His once-average height was shrunk to my size by his bowed spine. As surprised to see us as we were him, he tried a smile. "Hi," we chorused with returning grins. Barney joined in with the kind of tail wag that shifted her whole back end from side to side. Kay assumed leadership by saying, "I'm Kay. This is my brother Larry, and little sister Cathi." His yellow-toothed smile now full-fledged, the old guy lifted his bony, large-veined right hand slightly as he said, "Burt Parks." He let the hand fall back to his side and cleared his throat before going on in a seldom-used voice, "Don't get much company." He turned slightly, extending that same hand inward. "Wanna come in?" I reached down, resting my fingers on Barney's soft black hair. "Do you want her to stay outside?" "Naw. Never met a dog I didn't like."

Following the slow steps of the solitary character into his simple lodging, I asked, "How long have you lived here? We didn't even know there was a house back here."

The unmistakable smell of the wood stove led my eyes to the only source of heat in the small cabin. Bits of bark littered the floor in the front of the stove, and a few sticks of kindling protruded from a bucket. A rickety-looking chair sat next to a small rectangular wooden table. Burt motioned us to the gray wool army blanket covering the metal-framed cot where he slept. Easing himself into the lone chair, Burt reached out to pat Barney as she nosed up to him. "Good dog," he said, as she settled at his feet. "Born here in '58." Burt's eyes assumed a faraway look when he added, "Wife's been gone pertinear 40 years."

Larry repeated, "'58." His voice punctuated the first two digits as he went on, "You mean 1858?"

Burt chuckled, "That's right, son. Guess I been aroun' a spell." "You sure have! We don't know anybody old as you," burst innocently from my mouth.

"Nope, I reckon not," he laughed. Kay piped in with, "The trail looks too skinny for a car. How do you go anywhere?" "Got everything I need on this here place," his

raspy throat proclaimed. Scanning the one-room cabin prompted me to wonder, "Where's your refrigerator?"

"Wanna see my 'frigerator? Come on outside."

"Okay," I consented. The three of us sprang up from the bed as Burt exerted himself to rise from the chair. We paced ourselves, so we wouldn't overrun him as he ambled to the door.

"An old man dressed in tattered overalls, faced us."

Kay and Larry were behind him, and I was slightly to his right side. A wood slat with a nail in the center served as Burt's door latch. With the hand nearest me, he turned the slat from a horizontal to an upright position. He then used his left hand to pull inward on the vertical wooden handle. The growth on the palm of that hand became visible to me as he lifted it. I dropped back out of his view and raised my left hand to my brother and sister. My face contorted as I pointed at my palm, then toward his. When he shuffled through the doorway, both palms faced us. The base of the growth in the center of his hand was nearly two inches in diameter. It tapered to half that size as it extended outward an inch and a half. It hurt just to look at the inflamed purple cyst. Turning to my siblings, I mouthed, "Ouch. Poor guy." They shook their grimaces in agreement.

Barney flanked Burt as we followed toward the cabin's backside along a worn path. Branching off from it, another foot-trodden trail ran through the field to our right. A small orchard lay on the other side. A tiny outhouse sat to the rear of the cabin. Burt leaned down and lifted the lid off a two-foot square wood box, exposing wet sand. The inside of the box was lined with tin. He plunged a hand into the grains. Raising his head to grin at us, he pulled out a pint-sized Mason jar nearly full of ripe salmon berries.



*"I'm sorry to say that  
thoughts about Burt faded  
with the coming of winter."*

After brushing sand from the top with his other sleeve, he twisted open the gold-colored ring and removed the thin lid underneath.

Holding the jar toward us, he offered to share the fruits of his land. I don't think we should eat up your food," Kay said. "A man likes to give what the land and the good Lord provides," was his answer. My brother stepped forward to accept Burt's generosity. I followed, popping a small handful of the almost-sweet berries in my mouth. "Mmmm," escaped from my lips as juice dribbled down my chin. "You have yummy berries. Thanks." "Yeah, thanks," Larry echoed.

Kay was to my left, and Burt extended the jar to her. "Okay, thank you," she said as she reached into the jar, taking out a few of the gumdrop-shaped fresh fruits.

When the jar, now emptied of a third of its contents, had been tucked again into its sandy nest, Larry asked, "What about running water?" "Got a spring out back of the fruit trees. Runs all the time," Burt laughed. He doubled over with the coughing fit that followed. "You don't sound so good," I said. "How do you go to the doctor?" "Don't need no doctor," was his firm reply. "The good Lord can have me when he wants me." Kay sprang another question. "Don't you get lonely out here?" "Get used to it. Had an ol' hound," another distant look crossed his face, "but she's long gone." He paused before adding, "Glad you brought your pooch along." I responded to that with, "Barney won't let us go anywhere without her, and we wouldn't want to."

His smile saturated his eyes as he affirmed, "Glad you kids came to see me." "We get the whole summer off. We can come see you again," I said. "That'd be mighty nice," he replied while scratching Barney's ears. She wagged with pleasure as we said our goodbyes. Every week or two that summer we frequented our hermit friend's primitive and peaceful surroundings. In the fall, we got busy with school and preteen preoccupations. I'm sorry to say that thoughts about Burt faded with the coming of winter. On a spring day, Larry and I set out for Burt's. Kay was busy crafting a topographical map for a school project. The sun's rays peered out between clouds, and Barney was quick to figure out our destination.

We trotted most of the way there to keep up with her. My cheeks must have matched the crimson flush I saw in Larry's when we reached the cabin door. I knocked. We waited. No answer. Wondering aloud, I said, "Where could he be? He's always here." After a brief pause, I answered myself with, "Maybe he's at the spring or in the orchard." "Maybe," repeated Larry with a hesitant voice. "Let's go look." My brother was ahead of me with his hands jammed into the front pockets of his jeans as we trudged Burt's narrow path through the field. We both called his name as Barney helped us search among the fruit trees and around the spring. No Burt. "Maybe he's in the outhouse," I offered. "I got a bad feeling," Larry returned. "Yeah, I know what you mean. But," I urged, "let's go see." Nearing the little structure, I quit breathing through my nose. I called out, "Burt?" as I knocked on the outhouse door. We waited. No answer. Back at the cabin, Larry knocked. We waited. Still no answer. His gentle nudge on the door revealed a vacant room. The blanket was smoothed over the cot, and the empty chair was in its customary spot. Barney didn't even cross the threshold. The absence of the aroma of wood smoke confirmed our fears.

We adopted Burt's ambling pace home. Even Barney was subdued. With a crumb of hope, we returned to the cabin the following week. Still no Burt. That was a mystery we never solved. Had Burt met his end somewhere around the spring or the orchard, and we just hadn't seen him? Maybe he died in the outhouse. We never had the desire to open that door; the pull of life was far stronger than our need to discover death.

A half-century stands between our memories and the paths trod by our childish feet. Decades of development absorbed the free and open landscape of our younger years. The grassy lane, the enchanted forest, the humble cabin, the sustaining orchard, and the kind and gentle recluse are all consumed by the past. Only stories remain to lend credence to the short season of friendship we shared with an otherwise forgotten man. ■



WRITTEN BY: Edo Azran  
DESIGNED BY: Lorraine Engebretsen

OFF-COLOR, DRYING, TORN AND FRAYED,  
a faded rainbow of old, worn books  
sits on its shelf—motionless.  
The gritty spines, which seem to crumble  
under the stroke of my delicate fingers,  
whisper softly to me  
that they have lasted through the ages.  
Ennobled, distinguished, applauded,  
they innocently sit,  
confidently postured.



# (The Title of This Poem)

By: Paul C. Hartley  
Designer: Sarah Jarvis



(Words were supposed to be written here on this page, but nothing came to mind.)

(Each stanza was to be concrete while the words ebb and F

lo

o o

w i n

g i n

g

bounced

from

one

rock

to the next

cascading down,

in

pure

melodious

song

(Yet the unspoken this, and that, filled the space. Rolling and engulfing.)

# Moments

AUTHOR *Cassandra Hulse*  
DESIGNER *Elise Burgess*

RED BALLOONS POUR  
into the living room,  
pecking the carpet,  
Yellow streamers hang from  
the ceiling like seaweed,  
Blue icing cakes your lips, like a clown's face.  
Crimson medal handle bars glint in the warm sun,  
A shiny gold bell rings over the boys' laughter,  
Electric blue racing stripes peek behind the pedals.  
The brick wall shades the splintered picnic benches,  
Bumblebees poke along the blossoming  
flowerbeds, The Sky reflects in the water  
jugs lounging by the lunch baskets.  
Captured in a wrinkled, torn album,  
Tucked away on a cracked shelf,

Pictures:  
Faded by time,  
But cherished forever.





# A DATE WITH MY LIFE

AUTHOR *Kathryn Keller*  
DESIGNER *Elise Burgess*

ALL I EVER DO IS WAIT  
for Life to walk through the door  
and introduce himself to me,  
grinning like an idiot,  
saying, "Let's grab some dinner."

I would go, of course-  
to dinner, that is.  
Yes, like a lost child,  
I would go.

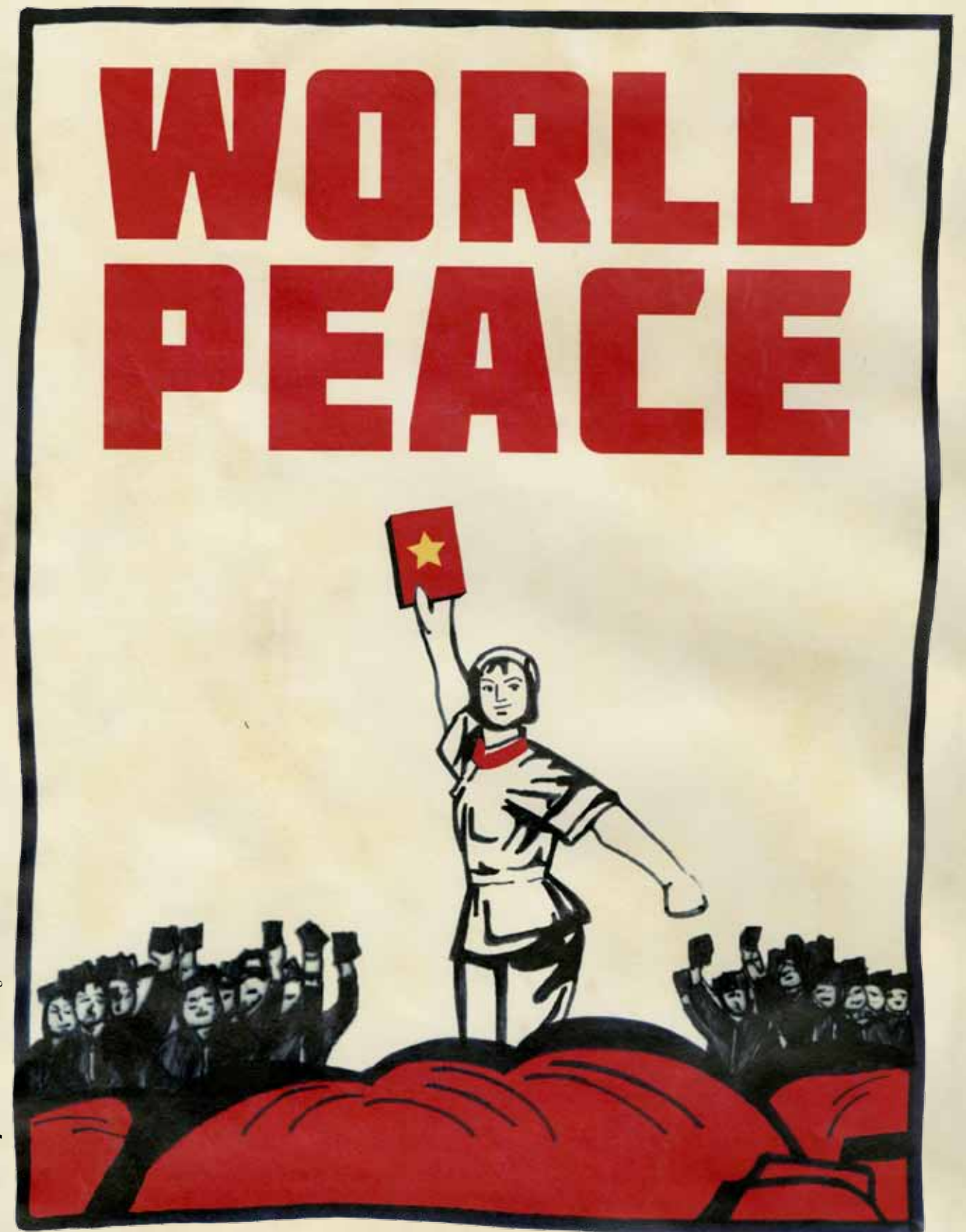
I would hold Life's hand  
and look through wide eyes  
at strange dreams  
composed of my possibilities.

We would discuss our hopes and aspirations,  
and he would assure me that  
we could be great together-  
if I was willing to give him a chance.

And knowing myself, I would be unsettled  
by the uncertainty of it all.  
I would probably choke on my chicken milano,  
while he gazed at me across the table.

Then I'd say, I don't think I'm ready."  
His smile would begin to fade, and  
he would say, "I've heard that before.  
But, how will you know if you never try?"

But by the time I'd finished by cheesecake,  
I'd know.  
We'd leave together,  
and Life, he'd be mine from then on.



author: **Mary Keelin Davis** designer: **Betsabe Ruiz**



# WE SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT COMING.

Why else would they have a population so big?

One kid per family was just a cover up. As a kid in school we always joked around about world domination. No one ever really thought anyone would get it. Those Chinese, they got it. They created world peace. I for one never thought that world peace was possible. When I was a little kid growing up, my dad was one of those difficult but funny men. When Christmas and his birthday came around, my family was always puzzled on what to get him. Every year we would ask what he wanted, and every year he gave the same answer.

**“All I want is world peace,” My dad would humbly say with a grin on his face.**

Of course he knew this wasn't possible, but he liked to say that he was a man of few needs and less wants. We all denied that -- he wanted so much. But I guess that is the American way. Maybe that is why the Chinese attacked. Either way, my dad always said he would only be happy and content to settle down once he got world peace. Like any child, I wanted to rebel against my father. It was like some driving force in me. Not like the Star Wars force, but the sort of force where you want to prove someone wrong. Even though I knew the idea of world peace meant happiness for all, I would not let myself accept it!

“World peace could never happen...” I would try to explain to my dad. “If we had world peace, we would have no anger, no problems and no wars. We could not kill, so we would all starve, because where is peace found in killing a cow or a chicken or even destroying a grapevine? Plus, you wouldn't need the police, army, security guards, lawyers, or psychiatrists because there would be peace in the world. And those jobs only exist when there is no peace. So they would lose their jobs. And who is happy without a job? Who is happy with a job? But if no one had jobs, nothing would happen, and we would all be miserable. So, obviously, world peace could not happen.” I would end this clearly won argument with a smile and lean back in my chair. Victory was almost in my hands, and I was about to take my victory lap when my dad would just smile at me in return. He never said anything -- not ever. He just sat there staring at me with

that smile. Somehow I knew I had lost. I understood that he knew something that I didn't, and I was completely missing the mark. That smile reached into his eyes and shone like a father's only can after teaching something very dear to his children. But he would never tell me the lesson. Oh no, this I had to learn on my own, the hard way.

So I learned that world peace does exist. In 2020 the Chinese defeated the world. No one was expecting it, but we should have been. Those Chinese never made enough noise. Why would they spend so much time making toys, electronics and things to send to other countries? They were all spies and we didn't even know it. Of course they wanted to overtake us. We all thought they were communists. I never thought communists were allowed to have such big dreams.

January 1, 2020, the Chinese declared war on the United States. Within a few weeks World War III was on its way, involving every country. Even the Swiss joined in this time. I don't think they had a choice. By the time the Swiss joined, Russia, Germany, England and Japan were already under Chinese control. I was only twenty then. I was a college student, and with all the other college students we thought we knew and understood everything. Many of my friends joined the war. Within days of America's coming under attack, thirty other countries were involved. Most countries at first were against America. I guess they thought that China invading America was a good thing, that it would restore some sort of power equality and turn everyone communist. By the end, I bet they all regretted that decision. None of them ever thought China was going to turn on them.

All of my college friends enlisted. Most of them were males. Something about your country being attacked turns everyone patriotic. Sort of like how on the Fourth of July all of the sudden everyone starts listening to country music: because it's the only thing patriotic out there. Just a few hours before China sent the first missile over, I was sitting in my history class. People were debating the issues and effects of health care. But once that missile landed, it's like everyone stopped hating each other and came together.

**But we don't have to worry about health care or people hating each other anymore. No more war now either. Now we have world peace. It's amazing, too!**

There are no health care issues -- we all have too much peace to be sick. We are required to meditate for at least seven hours a day. It's wonderful, unless you fall asleep. You fall asleep and they zap you. But that's peaceful too. They tell you so. You might think that seven hours is a long time. I used to think that. The only thing I could ever imagine spending seven hours on when I was twenty was sleep and a good marathon of The Office. But no. See, when you have world peace, the days are longer. You know how when you're little time goes by so slowly? But when you get older, you just never have enough time anymore? Well, the Chinese figured that rushing around is not very peaceful, so they just made the days twice as long! I remember the time when the sun used to set at nine in the summer and rise at six. But I have to agree, it's much more peaceful for the sun to set at forty and rise at zero. It makes much more sense, too. See, the Chinese blew up the sun. It was pretty exciting. I remember that day. My friend Sal and I were sitting outside, chained to a wall.

“Hey, shouldn't the sun be setting by now?” Sal asked. He looked up towards the mountains, where the sun was still in the middle of sky -- shining as bright as if it were noon, when it should have been at least eight by then. I followed his line of sight, and nodded my head.

“Yes sir, it should be. It's about eight or so. I wonder if we have been lost in a state of delusion.”

Sal and I had been chained to the wall for a few weeks by then. We were protesting the recent law of sending all our clothes to our troops and going nude everywhere. I had morals; Sal had fears -- of nudity, that is. I never did understand how he managed with showers. I guess that is why he was always buying those ski masks. Well anyway, about that sun blowing up. We had gotten pretty good at knowing and understanding our surroundings. We knew when the sun would set and when it would rise. We even got to know some of the animals that roamed around. I swear that the squirrel that lived in the tree next to where

we were tied felt remorse for us. I was sure of it too, that one day the squirrel, which we had named Bushy for obvious reasons, came down and placed a nut in my mouth after my stomach growled louder than a hissing train.

Sal brought it up. “Remember when that squirrel fed you that nut?” We had both agreed that we just were in a state of delusion, when BANG! The sun disappeared. The Chinese blew it up. Now, think about how you would blow up the sun. Think about what it would look like. All pretty, full of colors and fire swarming around the world, right? Nope, you are as wrong as Global Warming is right. It was nothing like that. It was peaceful. The sun just slipped away, like the sky was a slide and the sun was one of those energetic little kids who keeps on going down the slide and climbing back up to do it again. But this time, the sun didn't come back up for another slide. It just stayed down.

I never thought world peace would be so dark either. When I was a teenager, my dad's new job stationed him in Antarctica, so he took the whole family. We lived there for a few years, but after just a week we all got depressed. See, the sun does something funny to a person: It makes you happy. For some reason, the risk of skin cancer makes people happy. But when the Chinese got rid of the sun and it was dark all the time, we were happy! The Chinese told us to be happy. Plus, you didn't have to look at the ugly folk anymore. Sure, it also meant that all the super models disappeared, but with world peace, you're too peaceful to need artificial beauty to make you happy.

In 2020 when the Chinese took over, they gave us world peace. I never thought world peace was possible, but it is. That is what they tell us. When they took over they came to my house and took my dad with them. My family thought we had lost him, and we felt lost. But then a few months later, he was one of the commanding officers in the new world peace government.

**It turned out I wasn't Irish after all. I'd been Chinese all along. No wonder my dad knew WORLD PEACE COULD EXIST.**





# BOY meets GIRL

WRITTEN BY: Autumn Pearce  
DESIGNED BY: Breanna Tervort

THE SAGES HAVE SAID THAT THE COURSE OF true love never did run smooth; and even while contrasting the highly structured, chaperoned Victorian style of courtship with the lazy, come-easy modern dating style, you can't help but believe that this old philosophy does ring true to all ages. Whether your setting finds you in a chandelier-lighted ballroom or on a college sofa, it has never been easy to find the right one.

With all the hoops to jump through, you wonder how people ever got married then or now. In Victorian days, a gentleman never spoke to a lady without a proper introduction. "If he was introduced to a lady at a party for the purpose of dancing, he could not automatically resume their acquaintance on the street. He had to be re-introduced by a mutual friend" ("Courtship"). Just getting to speaking terms required more effort than any half-hearted lover would be willing to submit. Today the obstructions of getting to know someone have changed their forms. Young people are allowed to go out together and talk all they want, but they often basket this liberty with the ungracious habit of texting while they are on a date. Or simply in getting acquainted with an individual, lovers today are too often content to just text each other in place of actually speaking. As a result, they surrender the advantage they have over past generations. In both eras, the simplest levels of association are fettered by the acceptable customs of the day.

Another sharp contrast between the Victorian Era and our own reveals itself in the

attitude of teenagers toward dating—an attitude which infects the later years of a person's dating life. It is becoming more and more common for girls and boys in middle school and sometimes even younger to have relationships. The exposure to such strong emotions at an early age often dissolves their power and importance and, consequently, modern college dating is quite unrestrained with any sort of social or moral convention. On the other hand, in the Victorian Era, girls were forbidden to even make an appearance in society until they were seventeen or eighteen years old. Prior to that time, they were not permitted to keep company with gentlemen. And even after turning that age, they were never allowed to venture forth unaccompanied. "A girl was under her mother's wing for the first few years of her social life... [her mother] usually served as her chaperone, as a single girl was never allowed out of the house by herself, especially in mixed company" ("Courtship"). Young people in both eras suffered from the attitudes of their societies. In the old days, young people were not granted any trust at all. In these days, they are trusted too much.

Once the acceptable age had been reached and the proper introductions given, a Victorian couple's fight for love was far from over. There were no emotionally drenched "Define The Relationship" talks in those days. They couldn't just go out and "have a talk." Their communication happened through subtle nods and smiles; and such simple salutations

were administered only to the one lady or one gentleman who was preferred above the others. These rules were strictly observed. "It is only the contemptible flirt that keeps an honorable man in suspense for the purpose of glorifying herself by his attentions in the eyes of friends" (Hill). The rules were likewise strict for gentlemen:

As soon as a young gentleman neglects all others, to devote himself to a single lady, he gives that lady reason to suppose that he is particularly attracted to her, and may give her cause to believe that she is to become engaged to him...A gentlemen who does not contemplate matrimony should not pay too exclusive attention to any one lady. (Hill)

The parallel to our own society is almost too keen. The status quo today definitely flirts past the coercion of courtesy. The "one night stands" of today dance about like our own modern Minuet. Flirting was far from forbidden in the old days:

Ofttimes, in courting, flirting would come into play and was permitted as long as it was decent and followed the guidelines of courting etiquette. Ladies often used their fans to convey a message of interest to a gentleman. She would use it, just the same, to show her disinterest.... (Hunt)

How far we have spiraled away from the previous age—for a lady to go from a flick of her fan to a full-on emotional embrace.

The differences between these two eras are stark and strong. One is a society dominated by rules; the other, a flippant age of freedom. One author argued, In nothing does the present time more greatly differ from [the Victorian Era] than in the unreserved frankness of young women and men towards each other. Those who speak of the domination of sex in this day...have not stopped to consider that mystery played a far greater and more dangerous role when sex, like a woman's ankle, was carefully hidden from view, and therefore, far more alluring than today when both are commonplace matters. ("Courtship")

There are appeals to the traditions of both eras. But one cannot help but wonder if we have lost something of worth in love's shift from law to lawlessness. •

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# Affective Choices

## Individuation In Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown"

Written by: Natalie Skoien    Designed by: Bree Tervort

SINCE PUBLICATION, THE SHORT STORY "YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN" HAS PUZZLED its readers. D.M. McKeithan says, "There is somewhat less certainty as to its meaning" when compared with Nathaniel Hawthorne's other stories (93). In response, countless critics have examined Brown's character, the vast array of symbolism, the woodland journey, and the overall significance of the story itself. Walter Paulits analyzes Brown's character and, unlike some critics, refrains from categorizing Brown as either good or evil. Instead he proposes that "'Young Goodman Brown' is an allegorical presentation of ambivalence" embodying both good and evil (578). This interpretation refrains from initially condemning Brown as evil in his decision to enter the woods but avoids the fact that Young Goodman Brown ultimately chooses evil over good as he "[rushes] onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil" (Hawthorne 7).

Addressing symbolism, Thomas Walsh explains that "the reader can never be certain about what actually happened in the forest," but there are "three set symbols: first, Faith [Brown's wife] ... represents religious faith and faith in mankind; second, Brown's journey into the forest represents an inward journey into the black, despairing depths of his soul; third, the devil represents Brown's darker, doubting side" (332). These symbols are fundamental in developing an understanding of the story's basic idea. McKeithan explains that "the theme of the story has been variously stated as the reality of sin, the pervasiveness of evil, the secret sin and hypocrisy of all persons . . . or the demoralizing effects of the discovery that all men are sinners and hypocrites" (93). Paul Hurley believes this "pervasive sense of evil ... is not separate from or outside its protagonist; it is in and of him. His 'visions' are the product of his suspicion and distrust ... Goodman Brown's dying hour is gloomy because the evil in his own heart overflows" (411). Though applicable, this interpretation somewhat overlooks Brown's initial regret for his perhaps naively wicked act when, after entering the woods, he "[exchanges] his slow pace for a full stop" and exclaims, "Too far! Too far!" (Hawthorne 3).

I propose that Young Goodman Brown's nightly journey is not driven by his ambivalence, perceived evil persona, or naturally sinful state, but it is driven by the human necessity to embark on "the most important and lifelong task imposed upon any person," the Jungian concept of individuation (Jung 3). Applying Jungian individuation as a guide, I will discuss how Young Goodman Brown's desires, isolation, and destructive behavior culminate in his spiritual consequences, thereby demonstrating more fully the magnitude with which choices affect our lives.

Young Goodman Brown's solitary woodland journey draws many parallels with Carl Jung's theory of individuation. Frieda Fordham, an expert on Jungian psychology, says that individuation "is 'the process of forming and specializing the individual nature ... [and] ... the development of the psychological individual'" (1). In essence, it is the process by which a person develops his or her identity. Fordham also writes that "individuation can take a pathological or a religious, i.e. mystical form" (2). Young Goodman Brown never provides his wife or the reader with a concrete explanation as to why he travels into the woods that night. Perhaps it is a journey motivated, not by the physical world, but by an inner desire for self-discovery, and the events that

take place therein are certainly of a religious and mystical nature (Fordham 2). Adept readers do not come to the conclusion that Brown emerges bright and happy from his individuation experience, but Fordham also writes that "the natural process does not always go smoothly ... The environment helps or hinders the natural individuation process" (2). The fact that Young Goodman Brown "recognized a score of the church-members of Salem village famous for their especial sanctity" at the midnight witchcraft meeting does not convey the idea of a positive environment and certainly provides a credible reason for the bleak attitude Brown adopts. As stated in my thesis, I will discuss three key principles of individuation that Young Goodman Brown embodies in his quest for personal identity: a curiosity and desire for secrets, physical and spiritual isolation, and destructive behaviors. Furthermore, I will discuss how these principles are supported by Brown's spiritual consequences.

A key individuation concept that Young Goodman Brown exhibits is that of the desire for personal secrets. Roger Tinnell, quoting Carl Jung, writes that there is a "necessity of personal secrets on the 'road to individuation' ... and that the 'need for a secret is in many cases so compelling that the individual finds himself involved in ideas and actions for which he is no longer responsible. He is being motivated by a *dura necessitas*'" (92 – 3). Tinnell also writes that "[Jung] does discuss ... [that] there is no better means of intensifying the treasured



feeling of individuality than the possession of a secret which the individual is pledged to guard" (92). The nature of these secrets can prove destructive, as in the case of Young Goodman Brown. Brown rationalizes, "after this one night, I'll cling to [Faith's] skirts and follow her to heaven. With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified ...on his present evil purpose" (Hawthorne 2). After all, what harm is there in a little curiosity? If Brown's journey is one of individuation, a plausible reason for it is a curiosity or desire to be especially privy to the devil's secrets. Brown, after entering the woods, soon decides his desires were ill-founded and attempts to reason with the devil: "having kept the covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples, touching the matter thou wot'st

"TOO FAR!!  
TOO FAR!!"

of" (Hawthorne 3). The Oxford English Dictionary defines "scruple" as, "a doubt ... or hesitation in regard to right or wrong" ("scruple"). Brown's previous confidence is shaken, and he realizes that, in reality, he will not be able to "cling to [Faith's] skirts" (2). However, Goodman Brown continues on his journey because the devil begins to further entice him and unfold secrets on his ears. First, the devil provides a false pretense when he says, "If I convince thee not, thou shalt turn back. We are but a little way in the forest yet" (Hawthorne 3). Brown continues on his errand tentatively trusting the devil who, "when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it" (King James Version, John 8.44). The devil informs Brown of his extensive acquaintance with New England and says, "The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen of divers towns make me their chairman; and a majority of the great and General Court are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and I, too—But these are state secrets" (Hawthorne 3). Note the use of

the interjectory dash. Implying emphasis, this dash significantly alters the reading of the last phrase. The devil adds this emphatic statement knowing that it will stir Young Goodman Brown's curiosity and entice him even further. This curiosity and desire for sinful secrets is certainly a plausible reason for Brown's journey. He enters the forest so that he "might be [a partaker] of the mystery of sin (emphasis added)" (Hawthorne 11). The mystery Brown discovers, however, drastically changes his secular and spiritual life.

The individuation process is just that, individual. An important detail is that Brown goes into the forest alone. If he brought his wife along, the plot and conclusion would necessitate a complete change. Duane Bidwell writes, "Jung suggests that individuation ... is a solitary experience" (18). Before beginning his individuation journey, Brown must leave his wife behind and, despite her pleading, he replies, "My love and my faith ... of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee" (Hawthorne 1). In the forest Brown finds that "it was all as lonely as could be; and there is ... peculiarity in such a solitude" (Hawthorne 2). In taking leave of his wife, Faith, Brown not only leaves her behind, but he leaves his spiritual faith as well. Interestingly, even the devil takes leave of Goodman Brown at the turning point in the story, suggesting that none can facilitate individuation except those whose experience it is. Brown's spiritual battle between good and evil cannot be won by the devil or by faith but by himself alone. Unfortunately, having left faith behind, evil prevails when Brown cries out, "My Faith is gone! ... There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name" (Hawthorne 7). As previously stated, this reference to faith refers much more to Brown's spiritual faith than to his wife. The Oxford English

Dictionary defines "faith" as the "inducement to believe or trust" ("faith"). This definition explains Brown's newly adopted view of humanity because Brown's loss of faith echoes his loss of trust in mankind and deity. Thomas Walsh agrees that "one cannot contemplate such thoughts about evil, which by their very nature undermine all belief, and at the same time keep one's faith" (333). When Brown leaves behind his wife and his faith, he opens the door for sin and its consequences which, in due course, completely overwhelm him.

Destructive behaviors are yet another component of individuation that Brown exhibits. In explanation, John Dirkx writes, "Through this ongoing journey, we learn to become more fully who we are as persons. ... Without ... dynamic forces, our lives are less meaningful. We may even experience their potentially destructive force in the form of personal pathologies such as obsessions, compulsions, addictions, depression, or other forms of an essentially divided life" (19). In short, humans experiencing individuation have a tendency to engage in destructive behaviors. Teenagers typify this idea. Teens, trying to define themselves and their place in the world, often have a tendency to deliberately disobey their parents. The same is true with Young Goodman Brown. The reader questions almost immediately why Goodman Brown is drawn to the forest because a general sense of misgiving pervades the opening scene. Faith whispers, "Pr'ithees put off your journey until sunrise ... A lone woman is troubled with such dreams," and on his way to the woods, Brown reflects, "There was trouble in [Faith's] face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done to-night" (Hawthorne 1 – 2). Although his wife felt uneasy and asks him not to go, Young Goodman Brown continues on his journey. Critic Thomas Walsh observes that "as [Brown] proceeds deeper into the forest ... he bemoans the fact that his action will break Faith's heart ... [and]

he asks himself why he should quit his faith. But, nevertheless, he moves on (emphasis added)" (332). Mankind has a curious tendency to disregard what he or she consciously or unconsciously knows to be right, and Young Goodman Brown follows this same pattern. Brown knew beforehand that the devil would be in the woods that night, as Hawthorne notes that "the sudden appearance of his companion [was] not wholly unexpected" (Hawthorne 2). Shamefully, it is revealed that Goodman Brown had, in fact, engaged in a preconceived covenant with the devil, an obvious example of Goodman Brown's tendency toward compulsive destruction (Hawthorne 3).

Hawthorne compares the appearance and expression of Young Goodman Brown with the devil and writes that "the second traveler [the devil] ... [bore] a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features" (Hawthorne 2). A person's expression reflects, to some extent, his or her character. It follows, then, that the devil's expression is an outward manifestation of his character. The Oxford English Dictionary defines "devil" as "a human being of diabolical character ... a malignantly wicked or cruel man ("devil"). Goodman Brown's acute resemblance to the devil indicates that he has adopted a cruel, wicked, destructive, or devilish expression. Seemingly, Young Goodman Brown aligns himself physically with the devil, and his spiritual alignment follows at a later point in the story. During his woodland walk with the devil, Brown shamefully admits that he is the first among his family to keep such company and he says, "We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness" (Hawthorne 3). This confession, in combination with the covenant, reveal to the reader that Goodman Brown sought this wickedness and knew (or thought he knew) what he was getting into. Brown's commune with the devil was preconceived and driven by destructive impulses that are a natural part of the individuation process.

Thus far, this paper has discussed three key elements of individuation: the desire for secrets, physical and spiritual isolation, and destructive



behavior. As heretofore demonstrated, all three are exhibited by Young Goodman Brown. I will now discuss the consequences Brown encounters as a result of his choices and behaviors thereby addressing the overarching theme of the extent to which choices can influence our lives.

Young Goodman Brown encounters two basic consequences for his choices: the first being fire, the second being ice. The initial, yet subtle, reference to fire comes as Brown walks alongside the devil through the forest. Hawthorne writes, “As they went, [the devil] plucked a branch of maple to serve for a walking-stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with the evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them, they became strangely withered and dried up as with a week’s sunshine” (5). The withering of the branch at the devil’s touch conveys the idea of heat and flame in connection with his presence. Later, after the abrupt end of the witch meeting, Brown “staggered against a rock, and felt it chill and damp; while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew” (Hawthorne 11). Again, a subtle, but clear message is conveyed the disappearance of the devil’s hellfire signals the return of dew to the forest. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the phrase “playing with fire” as “to trifle with dangerous matters, especially at the risk of moral disaster or emotional distress” (“fire”). Brown plays with fire and literally receives it as a consequence. For Brown, the end result is as the dictionary predicts: moral disaster and emotional distress. According to Robert Frost’s poem “Fire and Ice” and Dante’s *Inferno*, fire is the allotted consequence for sins of desire. Frost dedicates the first half of his poem to fire. It reads:

*Some say the world will end in fire,  
Some say in ice.  
From what I’ve tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favor fire. (Lines 1 -- 4)*

Critic John Serio draws a logical comparison between this poem and Dante’s *Inferno*. He writes that “the poem reflects the same system of ethics that Dante employs to classify the sins and punishment of hell” (218). He then says that in Dante’s *Inferno* “[sinners] in the upper circles ... let passion sway their reason ... Frost [like Dante] associates fire with the senses [because] the verbs [Frost uses (such as taste, desire, and hold)] are sensuous” (219). Therefore, it follows that sins of desire are passion-driven because man’s reason is swayed. He is motivated by “*dira necessitas*,

which he himself cannot comprehend” (Tinnell 93). Brown’s sinful, passion-driven desires result in a fiery consequence. Critic John Neary says, “These journeys [such as individuation] always are, or at least include, a descent to Hades” (244). Hades, the mythological representation of the devil and hell, is, in essence, the end result of Brown’s journey. As Brown approaches the witch meeting, he finds himself in a “canopy of fire” with “the mass of foliage ... blazing high into the night and fitfully illuminating the whole field” (Hawthorne 10, 8).

Brown’s second consequence is ice. This time, however, it is not a physical consequence but an emotional and spiritual consequence. The story’s conclusion attributes Brown’s icy heart to his experience and the person he becomes in the forest that night. In *The Integration of the Personality*, Jung states that the individuation process is “by no means a question of fictitious dangers, but of very real risks upon which the fate of a whole life may depend. The chief danger is that of succumbing ... If we do, we may come to a standstill” (90). Brown, rather than resisting and conquering his individuation temptations, succumbed and was thrown into a state of neurotic phobia, depression, and hate. Once again, Frost and Dante offer an explanation for this spiritual consequence. The final five lines of Frost’s poem read:

*But if I had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice. (Lines 5–9)*

Serio compares these final five stanzas to Dante’s *Inferno*: “Ice evokes the frozen punishment awaiting the worst sinners at the constricted bottom of Dante’s hell” (218). He goes on to say, “Those in the ninth circle are frozen in ice ... punishment for their icy hearts ... When Frost speaks of hatred ... the emphasis here [is], as in Dante ... on ... the bitter coldness of hatred” (219–20). Brown’s heart fills with this cold hate because he loses faith in mankind. This loss of faith is echoed in the devil’s vindictive cry: “There ... are all whom ye have revered from youth. Ye deemed them holier than [you], and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness and prayerful aspirations ... Yet here are they all in my worshipping assembly” (Hawthorne 10). Brown’s journey, which initially began rather optimistically, ends in misery as he utters, “There is no good on earth; and sin is but a

name. Come devil; for to thee is this world given” (Hawthorne 7). In accordance, the devil exclaims, “Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness” (Hawthorne 7, 10). Unsurprisingly, Young Goodman Brown’s hate-filled mind and heart leads, not to happiness, but to misery. Hawthorne, describing Goodman

Brown’s tainted demeanor the day after the witch meeting, says, “A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate, man did he become from [that] night ... an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear” (11). Brown’s loss of faith and trust in mankind and deity allow his heart to become like ice, filled with hate toward all aspects of worldly life. The Oxford English Dictionary defines “icy” as a figurative description of “demeanor, character, speech. To cause to become frigid or cold ... in manner” (“icy”). This description closely describes Brown’s interminably depressing demeanor and resonates in his tombstone’s inscription: “His dying hour was gloom” (Hawthorne 12). After this dramatic night, Brown becomes a literal definition of his name, “Gloomy, serious ... [and] dark” (OED “brown”).

The Young Goodman Brown at the story’s end is completely different from the Young Goodman Brown at its beginning. As Frieda Fordham explains, the individuation process is the “development of the psychological individual” (1). Brown’s experience is just such a process, but various reasons, such as the environment, his choices, and behaviors, render the outcome unfavorable.

The common experience of individuation, as described by Carl Jung, deeply affects a person’s life either positively or negatively. Brown’s sinful desires, isolation, and destructive behaviors culminate in his consequences and his tragic ending. This paper’s analysis of “Young Goodman Brown” demonstrates the extent to which personal choices can change lives and reports that every choice, for good or for bad, has an appropriated consequence. ■

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# little or BIG

Written By: Heather Baird  
Designed By: Katie Turner

"Jenna? Jenna? Can you hear me?" There was panic in Travis's voice.

All I could manage was a grunt.

"I've just called your mom. She's going to watch Addy while I take you to the hospital."

I moaned. "Don't-want to go."

"We have to go. Honey, you just had a seizure."

I shut my eyes. No-no. A bitter taste. I'd bitten my tongue. It hurt to swallow.

The next twenty minutes were exhausting. I heard my mom's voice as she pulled Addy from the car and whispered "Call me" to Travis. After that, every bump in the road felt pronounced, and I stumbled twice as Travis led me into the hospital. It wasn't until the emergency room nurse called out, "Pamela, I need a gurney out here immediately!" that I sensed fully the seriousness of the situation. I looked down at my clothes. My gray stretch pants were stained red with blood.

Time sped up then. I found myself being wheeled through the arterial hallways of Jefferson Regional Hospital with Dr. Waddell walking beside me as I stared up at the lights above my head.

"We'll have to do a c-section right away," he said. "Travis, there won't be time to change. Stay here. I'll send the nurse out as soon as I can."

I shut my eyes. The doors banged a couple of times. The nurses strapped me to humming monitors, then murmured to each other through pursed lips as they scurried back and forth between the closets and tables. There was only one thing I heard clearly before the IV went in and darkness resumed. It was from Dr. Waddell. "Let's not lose them both."

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I could see the leaves being tossed in the October gusts like lettuce in a giant salad. We were at Porter Park, two-year old Addison and I, and she was on the swings. Though it had taken place on a day five months

earlier, the scene came back to me so clearly, so easily, as the voices in the hospital room became more distant.

"Push me again, Mama."

I smiled, then backed up and pushed my hands against the stiffness of her back until she and the swing beneath her gained enough momentum to lift her little two-year old body parallel to the ground. The highest reach of her toes heavenward lasted for only one exhilarating moment before gravity pulled her back to me.

"What a big girl you are, Addy! You were in the clouds!"

She giggled and cried, "Again! Again!"

I drew the sleeves of my striped sweater down over my fingers as a chill ran down both of my arms. My daughter would have liked to spend the winter slipping down icy slides and pushing around a snow-covered merry-go-round until she became frozen solidly to the metal bars. No matter what protests and pleas she mustered later, this would probably be our last autumn visit to the park. I rubbed my hand over the gentle roundness of my abdomen. Maybe we will come back in April—after the baby is born.

Our second baby. An unexpected and frightening gift. My epilepsy medication made it dangerous to carry children at all, but during the long hours of Addy's birth, I had had a grand mal seizure. It had been a miracle either of us survived. For four months afterwards, the seizures continued. We were compelled to hire a neighbor to sit with me at home until Travis came home from work. I had to crawl around the floor, fearful of falling on the new baby at any moment. Travis and I had been in the process of resigning ourselves to only one child when a missed period had turned things upside-down again.

A kid with tousled brown hair and freckles came running up to a smaller blond boy sitting on one of the swings beside us. "Hey, Mike! Wanna ride over to the

store and get some pop?"

"Yeah!" The two boys ran off to where they'd left their bikes leaning against the trunks of a couple of shedding maples.

Addy began kicking her feet wildly. "I go too, Mama! I ride bike!"

"No, Sweetie. You're too little to ride a bike. Don't you want to keep swinging?"

She remained silent for the next two pushes, then she suddenly began to cry. Her sobs grew in intensity each moment.

"What's wrong, Sweetheart? Are you hurt? Do you want to get down?" I reached protectively for her and brought the swing to a sudden stop.

As her little chest convulsed, the only words she could get out were "I big."

"Yes, you are a big girl."

She twisted her head from side to side and frowned.

"No, I little."

"You're little?"

"No! I big! I little! I--"

More tears piled up and overflowed the lower rims of her eyes. I slipped her tiny frame from the swing and held it to me, then let out a slow breath of understanding. How confusing life can be.

Once she calmed down, I covered Addy's precious hand with mine. We crunched leaves as we walked the three blocks home. She stomped on each leaf with a firm

## "No! I big! I little! I--"

step while I replayed in my mind conversations she and I had shared the week before. Too big to use a pacifier, too little to pour her own cereal. Big girl using the toilet, little girl drinking out of a sippie cup. I made myself a mental promise to speak more carefully in the future. But how could I explain it? Was she little or big?

\*\*\*

A baby's high-pitched cry sounded in another room. My fingers inadvertently crimped the edges of the hospital blankets. As the noise faded, my mind began to grope its way through the haziness until another image gradually sharpened. A tall man dressed in a gray suit was speaking – it sounded like Darren Gage. The details soon revealed the Sunday School room at the church on a day four months earlier. As the chairs and chalkboard became clearer, his voice grew louder.

"How is it that the Nephites could become so rebellious after having literally decades of peace and happiness following the visit of the Savior?" Brother Gage peered over the top rims of his glasses. "Yes, Tim?"

I looked over to see Brother Rogers scoot his generous behind to the edge of his seat, causing it to creak loudly. "Well, I think back to Helaman twelve when it says men are considered less than the dust of the earth because even the dirt obeys its Maker. The Nephites had





let go of their hold on the Savior and fallen back into what they really were – sinful human beings who didn’t amount to much without their faith.”

Brother Gage nodded, his silver sideburns bobbing. “Right. Remember King Benjamin’s counsel for us to always keep in mind our own nothingness. How’s that for a self-esteem talk?”

A low chuckle went in waves across the room, but I didn’t join in. As Brother Gage continued to explore 4th Nephi, I flipped the pages of my scriptures until I reached a familiar verse in Romans: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ–”

I tapped the worn eraser of my marking pencil against my bottom lip as my mind seesawed back and forth between the concept of nothingness and the idea of divinity. There were certainly days when I felt like dirt, days when I blew up at Addy or got into a screaming match with my husband or felt guilty for staying home from church just to enjoy some alone time.

But there were also days when I remembered a neighbor’s birthday with a homemade cake or received an important insight from my scripture study, days when my toddler acted so polite at the dentist’s office that the receptionist smiled her flawless smile and said, “What a good daughter you’re raising.”

I sighed and rubbed my palm against the tautness of my silk maternity blouse.

So who am I? Dust of the earth–or joint-heir? One of the parable’s five unprepared virgins or candidate for the Celestial Kingdom?

Little–or big?

Brother Gage turned toward the chalkboard and began to write. “Next week, we’ll get some insight into Mormon’s views as he says–”

\* \* \*

“It’s okay, kiddo,” a smooth voice said. “I’m just going to check your blood pressure again.”

I turned my head toward the voice.

“That’s it. Just relax.”

My arm went limp as she wrapped the stiff cloth

around it. The band began to squeeze. I slowly opened my eyes to see a plump, gray-haired woman bending over me. Her eyes met mine and she smiled.

“Your husband will be happy to hear that you’re waking up. You’ve been pretty out of it for the last few days, missy.”

As the pressure grew, my eyes fluttered closed again. I could see myself standing at my kitchen sink. My husband was sitting at the dining room table on my right, and I was filling a pitcher with water.

“Do you think God is okay with me getting my tubes tied?” I heard myself asking.

Travis set Addy’s plate of mashed potatoes and chicken down in front of her. She reached for her fork.

“Prayer, Daddy?” He didn’t seem to hear her.

“We’ve thought about it, Jenna, prayed about it. I think it would be crazy to ignore the doctors on this one.”

“I know. There’s no commandment saying how many kids a good Mormon family has to have. But I can’t help thinking there’s some divine number out there. Like, ‘true’ Latter-day Saints have seven or more children, and mediocre ones have six or less. Kind of a Celestial minimum that only the really in-tune people know about.”

Travis chuckled. “I guess the bishop’s not gonna make it.”

“Okay, so maybe the limit is five. It’s just–why do we have to stop? Most people now just have one or two, and that’s all that they want. We want more kids. Do we just need to have more faith?” My voice broke. “We promised the Lord we’d keep having kids until He said to stop.”

“Maybe that’s exactly what He’s telling us.”

I sighed as I reached for the brown potholders on the kitchen counter. As I put out one hand to open the oven door, everything in my range of vision, the stove top, the sugar and flour cans, the Anne Geddes calendar hanging on the wall, all blurred and darkened.

A thick, dark line. Pain. Head throbbing. Jaw. Oh, oh, sore. What–was it? Tired. A line. Carpet. Line of carpet. I was–the dining room carpet. I was lying on the carpet.

“Jenna? Jenna? Can you hear me?”

\* \* \*

My eyelids stuck, draped over my eyes like two thick plastic tarps. I struggled to peel them back again. The first sight that met my gaze was a huge vase of purple irises on a tray table near the foot of the hospital bed. In the middle of the bright petals stood a stark white card bearing the words “With Sympathy” scrawled across the top in dark lettering.

My heart contracted at the sight of those words, and I turned away. The dimly-lit room was crowded with furniture; a second table stood on my left, several machines with wires stood on my right, an oak wardrobe dominated one corner, a large television took up the other corner, and a large blue recliner lay behind the machines with a rumpled blanket draped over it. I was alone in the room.

I reached automatically for my belly, dragging a tube along with my hand. Underneath the thin white sheet I could feel it–the large bump had been replaced by a flabby, empty, shrunken mound. I thought of the blood, of the words “You just had a seizure,” and “Let’s not lose them both.” I felt small. I felt like something insignificant, one small woman with a large emptiness inside. A forgotten body swallowed up by the huge stomach of Jefferson Regional.

Beyond the door, I could envision nurses rushing around, busy, needed. Beyond the walls were mothers, driving kids to music lessons, taking them to McDonald’s, shopping at Wal-Mart with babies in car seats being driven in carts. The world kept turning, time kept ticking, insensitive to the fact that my world had stopped cold.

And where was Heavenly Father? In the worlds without end that He monitored, with all of his spirit children and every creation named and known, had He forgotten my name? My eyes clouded. I couldn’t feel Him. I couldn’t feel anything. Something squeezed inside my chest. Even He seemed to be busy elsewhere. “Couldn’t you watch with me one hour?” The words ran through my mind again and again.

Slowly, a low murmuring interrupted my thoughts. A voice. I looked up and realized for the first time that the television was on, with the volume turned down to a soft hum. A man in a dark suit was speaking. He was surrounded by greenery interspersed with pink and yellow flowers. It was General Conference. Travis had told everyone in the ward, “We’re going to have an Easter baby, right after Conference.”

The speaker, unfamiliar to me, said, “Amen” and disappeared. Then the darkness withdrew. The camera pulled back to a full view of the choir, in red dresses and

navy suits. With one movement, they stood and began to sing.

“Jesus, once of humble birth, now in glory comes to earth–”

As I listened, my heart yearning for something to replace the emptiness, the words seemed to unfold two contradictory images–one of a helpless little naked baby, the other of a strong figure who could move mountains with a single word.

“Once a meek and lowly lamb, now the Lord, the great I Am.”

I pictured Addy on the day she was born. She wore

**“He knew what it was to be little.”**

a little white bow and curled her fingers into fists. Even before she could hold her head up, she ruled our universe. I imagined the Savior, a baby, held in a mother’s arms. He had saved her with His innocence, saved her by needing her, saved her long before He ever entered Gethsemane.

“Once He groaned in blood and tears, now in glory He appears.”

I saw in my mind the blood running down my legs and heard the fear in Travis’s voice. Then, with a gentle flow, the Spirit began to fill the raw places in my heart.

“Once forsaken, left alone–” He knew what it was to be little.

“Now exalted to a throne.” Because He had become little, He was lifted up to become big–bigger than He had been before. Bigger than His pain. Bigger than my pain.

I sunk back into the pillows behind me and let the stream of peace flow over me. In my mind, I heard





## “That’s my big girl.”

words spoken, low and soothing. Jenna, you’re only little when you try to do it alone.

A soft click sounded at the door. My eyes flicked open as my husband entered the room. His chin was covered in stubble, and wrinkles criss-crossed his plaid, button-down shirt.

“How are you feeling?” he asked, sitting next to me and taking my hand in his.

“Okay.” My tongue moved slowly, as if my mouth were stuffed full of quilt batting.

“I’m glad to see you.”

“The doctor thought you’d wake up a whole lot sooner.” Travis’s eyes fell down to our hands. “Jenna, the baby—”

“I know.”

Travis squeezed my hand. We sat in silence for a long moment. Then he cleared his throat and pointed back toward the door. “Addy will be coming over with Grandma in about an hour. She’s been asking for you non-stop.”

“I want to see her.”

“Grandma’s been spoiling her. Would you believe, she climbed on top of your dad’s recliner, took the car keys off the hook, and told Grandma she was just gonna drive on over here?”

I managed a soft smile.

He shook his head. “I thought she’d be excited to have her grandparents to herself. But she’s been asking when can she go back to her own bed, and when can her mom take her to the park again, and why are all the shadows different at Grandma’s house.” He placed his other hand over mine and locked his eyes on mine. “Addy needs you, Jenna. She always will.”

At his words, images began to merge before me. Pictures of park benches and autumn leaves meshed with those of car keys and recliners, grandparents and hospital monitors. In the middle of it all was a precious two-year-old girl in blond pigtails. And then I imagined the Savior with her, His wounded hands reaching out to push her on the swings.

As the images dissolved, I looked back into Travis’s face. All I could manage was a whisper.

“That’s my big girl.” ■

# Seeds of Reconciliation

written by RAY ALSTON

designed by STEVEN RADFORD

Fallen angels in scaly shells of self  
hoard all words.  
Each festers into an acidic pearl  
on which they burn their own hands trying to heft  
Answers at their foes.  
But rotten fruit tastes ripe to rotten tongues.

Fresh bruises sprout on both our minds  
when we let petty fists of words rail  
unhampered by higher thoughts.  
I have shouted and singed my arms  
(arched upward in exasperation,) while you festered on unvented jabs of thought.

This is the black, thick pulp  
of the Eden tree,  
serpent wrapped, fatal knowledge,  
dropping sweet- tree seeds.  
A seed speaks: Feed your brother, you will feast yourself.  
Our desert distance blots out  
tree tears, seed cries,  
sound falls like poorly tossed stones,  
far from its target.

But words on leaves have somehow been carried  
into our dimly lit linoleum wreckage,  
as if on messenger wings.  
I drop my fighting, burning arm  
and you and I are healed.



# A (W)hole

Designed by:  
Ruby Parra

by:  
Anonymous

Can they see  
right through me?

My ears burned as we entered the waiting area of the family counseling center.

The room was thick with the tang of a floral plug-in air freshener, and too small for us to avoid eye contact with the other patients. After roaming the beige carpet and paneled walls, my eyes landed on a stiff couple and the space between them on the loveseat. I pegged them “marital discord.” When an office door opened and a woman invited us in through a smile, I swaggered in with a hard face, but Mom jerked and fidgeted like a marionette. We went through introductions, and then the counselor asked us to tell her about our “situation.” Once Mom got through her description of my cold stubbornness and elaborate illustrations of our alternating silent treatments and screaming matches, her voice fizzled out. The counselor thanked her for sharing her perspective. Neither had included me in the conversation.

“Now, would you mind having a seat out in the foyer? I’d like to talk to Katie alone.” It only took Mom three steps to cross the claustrophobic office. She closed the door behind her. I looked down at the heavy Oriental rug covering the entire floor of the office. I searched for the edge with the toe of my Vans but the bloated armchairs pinned down the rug with finality. The counselor looked at me from behind the echaugette of her desk. “Have you ever been sexually abused?”

My shoe stopped short on the rug. Before my mind could accept the reality of the attack, my body burned. I was washed in the clammy heat of a sudden pathogen. “Why are you asking me that.” “It’s okay to tell me. It can help to talk about it.” I felt heat searing the top of my

head. The fire burned down my scalp and behind my ears. I flexed my jaw and made my eyes slits. “No. I don’t know. Where do you get off?” “You’re displaying many of the signs of sexual abuse,” she started. “Your fights with your mom show your aggression. Your promiscuity. Your denial. The clothes you’re wearing—how many shirts do you have on—four?” “It’s a cold day! I always wear layers.” The room held my words in the air between us. I folded my arms tighter against my chest as I realized my mistake. Her eyes seemed to flash with mild pleasure at my unintentional admission, but her voice remained distant and unaffected. She had never doubted her eventual victory. “Being a victim of sexual abuse is a difficult thing to cope with. How about you think about it, then come and see me next week?” She was already reaching for an appointment card. I didn’t wait for her to hand it to me, but immediately pushed away from the deep armchair and cut across the office. I pulled open the door. I could feel my mother’s leeching eyes on me from the couch in the waiting area but I kept going. I pulled open the front door. And kept going. I pulled open the Camry door and climbed inside. My chest expanded and deflated inside the sheath of my four shirts. I snatched my coat from the backseat and wrapped it around the front of me, pulling it up to my chin. I felt completely naked. My teeth started to chatter.

In calculus, a function is continuous if it can be drawn without lifting pen from paper. When graphing values, the plotted points are often connected with an uninterrupted curve to show what the function’s values most likely would have been at the points that weren’t expressly measured. The continuous curve represents all of the potential points of that function.

“You’re used. I know I shouldn’t think of you that way, but I can’t help it...”

By connecting those points, it is assumed that the function in question is a continuous function, or one whose outputs vary continuously with the inputs: what you give is what you get. The curve is predictable, reliable. Conventional.

I had been Matt’s girlfriend for almost a year. We were seventeen and wouldn’t admit that love could exist with anyone other than each other. I clung to him, needing him, despite knowing it would never work, not wanting it to work, but choosing to be ignorant in order to pretend we loved and were loved. Our relationship vacillated between desperation and disgust; a convoluted case of needing what hurts. He was my ally, my propaganda, my reason in the war against my parents. The way I saw it, I didn’t have any options: now that this dark secret I had buried for almost a decade had been uncovered by the counselor with such ease, I thought it would hit the fan and fly like shrapnel. Her confrontation made me believe others could see right through me, and that the point in my life had come when I was to root up my past in order to be rid of it. Matt and I weren’t allowed to see each other; my parents’ assault on our relationship was through siege. I remember pacing as I told him over the phone about what had happened with the counselor. I stopped pacing at his response.

“You’re used. I know I shouldn’t think of you that way, but I can’t help it. I feel like I’ve gotten second-hand merchandise.” I was staring out the window overlooking our half-acre pasture. Two horses leaned against each other, heavy and motionless, facing opposite directions, only touching at the neck. Their eyes were fixed on the dirt they stood in. Gray clouds were charging the sky; a storm was coming. My very being seemed to retract into some deep recess inside of me. I could feel my arm hold-

ing the phone to my ear, but it was like someone else’s arm, someone else’s ear, someone else’s body. I was far away, sucked into the center of this shell that I mentally understood was my body, but was no longer emotionally attached to. One word filled the rest of the newly hollowed caverns in my body, my soul: used. It was everywhere around me, repeating and increasing in resonance. Used. Used. Used. Used.

My logic told me that if I were to uproot this issue and finally discuss it openly with a counselor, family loyalty should have first dibs. I thought my parents should know what happened in their family before I talked about it with a woman who only knew my first name by checking her notes. “Mom, is it okay if Matt comes over? We need to talk to you and Dad about something.” Surprising me, my mom allowed Matt back into our house for the first time in months. Two days later I was to appear before the counselor again, so I needed to get this off my chest quickly in order to feel free to “make progress” in the next counseling session. Matt came over that evening and we went into the library. I had been trying to remember how old I was when it all happened, using my photo album to help me remember. Matt sat on the carpet next to me and my mind wandered over old memories as my fingers turned each plastic page. A picture of me at three, in a yellow church dress and too-short bangs held back by a lace barrette with a tiny pink rosebud. I remember the portrait studio, the photographer guiding me to lean in just a little closer to the decorative column until my cheek rested lightly against the smooth white plaster. My smile is small and shy, my eyes full under the soft lashes of a toddler.

I’m about five, and my cousins are visiting. I can tell someone told us to “say cheese” because I’m reaching out to put my arm around Sarah, even though we aren’t close enough to make it look natural. My neck betrays the stretched muscles of a forced smile and my freckled nose is wrinkled up to bare my teeth.

Mother  
Boyfriend  
Counselor  
Dad



I'm not even looking at the camera. There. A picture of me at eight years old, standing on the blacktop in front of the house wearing a faded purple swimsuit. I am smiling in the foreground, my brother a few feet behind me, holding a black kitten to his cheek. I remember this day and many like it. I feel the fire on the soles of my feet from the blacktop. I feel the soft, thin fur of the kitten and its needle-sized ribs beneath. I feel my eyes squint as I smile for the camera. I remember that this day, in the shed on the far side of the pasture, we hadn't been wearing our swimsuits. My stomach heaved into my throat. The muscles drained from the arm I was propped up on and my elbow swayed, then buckled. Matt asked me what was wrong, and all I could do was point to the picture.

"That day." My parents opened the door of the library and sat down on the opposite side of the room from where I was huddled on the carpet. Mom's lips whitened and her crow's feet deepened as she looked from Matt to me. Dad had run his coarse hand through his hair. The white tuft by his left temple was a fluffy, uneven clump. They are silent. I shrink, hit by a wave of not wanting to be here, say this. I realize that it is not so much telling them that their daughter was sexually abused, but that their son did the sexual abusing. This will hurt them. I can't say a word. Finally my mother cannot wait on my silence any longer. "Well?" In the end, it was Matt who said the words Katie was sexually abused multiple times when she was eight years old. He told

them it was my brother and pushed the picture album still showing the summertime photo toward my parents with three fingers. His voice was oddly calm, high-pitched, too smooth—the delivery of a sales pitch. He thought he was my hero. I only cried. My parents' faces didn't change. They asked one question. "Is this true, Katie?" I nodded and wouldn't meet their eyes. My heart screamed I'm sorry. I'm so sorry but they didn't hear. "We always thought there was something wrong with you." They stood up and left the room.

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In calculus, the purpose of a limit is to discover what a function will do in relation to a certain value, a point that is of particular interest in relation to the function. Calculus provides the unique opportunity to illustrate what functions will do when that certain value doesn't exist; finding the limits of a function allows for a precise definition of which values can be inputted in order for the function to exist. In order to find the limits of a function, the value must be approached from both sides. Limits determine where exactly there are points that make the function hold true. Limits also expose holes.

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Thursday afternoon, precisely a week after I met the counselor for the first time and I was back in her office. Alone. "Katie. It's so good to see you again. I'm glad you came back. How are things going with your mother?" The expression on my face showed her just how stupid I thought her question was.

am I normal?

"We always thought there was something wrong with you"

I clenched the paper in my hand a little tighter. She nodded to the sheet in my hand. "What's that? Did I assign you some homework last time?" I pushed a single sheet of notebook paper across her desk. The blue ink didn't quite fill a whole page. "You didn't; I did. First of all, I don't even know if it counts as sexual abuse. I thought you'd eventually want me to tell you all the things that happened, so I wrote them down so I could get it over with." I slouched back in the leather chair and waited for her to respond.

She reached across the desk and delicately lifted the paper. As her eyes scanned my words, she pinched the paper with her thumb and forefinger, the rest of her fingers curling away from the page. A fly butted against the window behind her, bouncing a trail around the perimeter of the pane. "Well, yes, from a legal standpoint, the experiences you've described here constitute sexual abuse, so have no fear of that." My eyebrows gathered, lowering over my eyes. "I'm not asking if I can press charges, I'm asking if it even matters." I beckoned to the paper still caught between her two fingers. "I can't even remember everything."

At last she freed the evidence from her grasp, set it lightly on the glossed wood top of her desk, then pushed it to its final resting place at her elbow. She leaned toward me over her desk, the shoulder pads in her powder gray suit jacket slumping forward. "From what you wrote, it sounds like you've harbored this burden for quite some time. How do you feel about your experiences now?" "I don't think about it." "Victims are often unaware of the extent of the lasting effects past sexual abuse can have on their lives. Now that we've established the reality of your abuse, some things in your life since then make a little more sense, don't you think?" "No, I don't think. I don't think this comes up at all in my daily decisions. I don't think it explains away me and my mom, I don't think it's the reason for me and Matt, and don't even try and tell me it influences what I wear every day." She leaned back, pushing her palms against the edge of the desk to roll her chair across the plastic floor mat. "I think I have something that will help you." She stood up and walked to a wall of books, tugged a paperback from its place, and brought it to me. I looked down at the cover. There was a bald man in a suit, grinning helpfully. Self Matters.

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"What do you mean you're not going?" "I am not going back. How can she call herself a counselor when her idea of counseling is making me read a self-help book?" "Well, did you read it?" "I started to. I couldn't stomach all the gushy warm-fuzzies about how the first step to improving yourself is believing you have worth." My mother sighed, put her hands on her hips. "How are you going to work through your little problem if you won't go talk with the counselor?" "She doesn't

want to talk with me and she doesn't want to help me work through it. All I want is to be through this. I want to deal with this and be done. And she's taking her sweet time." I turned toward the stairs leading to my bedroom, but Mom trailed a few steps behind me. "I guess you don't have to go back if you don't want to. But she suggested I make an appointment to get you a prescription for antidepressants. Your appointment is tomorrow."

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Calculus was developed in order to study the motion of objects, their speed and direction. Finding the velocity of a moving object requires the concept of a limit. Limits must be used to understand the potential changes of a function. If there is a hole, the function is no longer comfortably formulaic. Approaching the hole from both sides to determine its limits aims to define the bounds of the hole, to identify precisely where the function ceases to be identical to an otherwise continuous function.

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I left the doctor's office with a few sample boxes of Lexapro in a brown paper bag. They felt like a shameful secret, stiff-armed at my side. As soon as Mom unlocked the car I dropped the bag to the floor. My mother settled into the driver's seat. "I don't know why you had to be so rude to Dr. Williams, Katie. He was just trying to help." "I'm sick of people trying to help. They treat me like a mutant. And then throw medications at me like all I need is a pill and then I'll be normal. Taking a pill to make me happy is a fake—it's not me. It means everybody wants me to be somebody I'm not." As soon as we reached home, I went straight to the bathroom. I pulled each sample box of pills from the brown paper bag. I opened each box, my fingernails perforating a half-moon into the thin aluminum foil encasing each pill. I laid each pill in a growing pile by the sink, then gathered them up, a mass of powdery white in my cupped hands. I separated my hands and let the pills pepper the surface of the water in the bowl of the toilet.

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A hole is simply a discontinuity in a function, or a place where the function is not defined. Some holes are removable—it just requires finding the definition. They are identified in a function by comparison to an associated rational function, or one that is clearly continuous. The associated rational function provides the map to define the function's limits. Once these holes are identified, they can be removed by simply cancelling all common factors. With the removal of the holes in the function, the function becomes whole, a rational function itself. But other holes are infinite. All of the common factors from an associated rational function have been cancelled, but a zero remains in the denominator, signaling the need to divide by zero, which can never produce a real number.

They treat me like the plague



taking a  
pill to make me  
happy is a fake —  
it's not ME.

The graph of a function with an infinite discontinuity shows an area that will never reach an identifiable point. It is like the graph is trying to become a vertical line at a certain point, but of course it can't. From afar, the graph appears straight, but the closer the scrutiny, the more obvious the gap. Infinite discontinuities cannot be inclusively graphed. Instead of a set script, they are only a guide to the function's behavior in the foggy area of the infinite discontinuity. With infinite discontinuities, the only way to graph the function is to indicate this taboo space with the semi-transparency of a dashed line.

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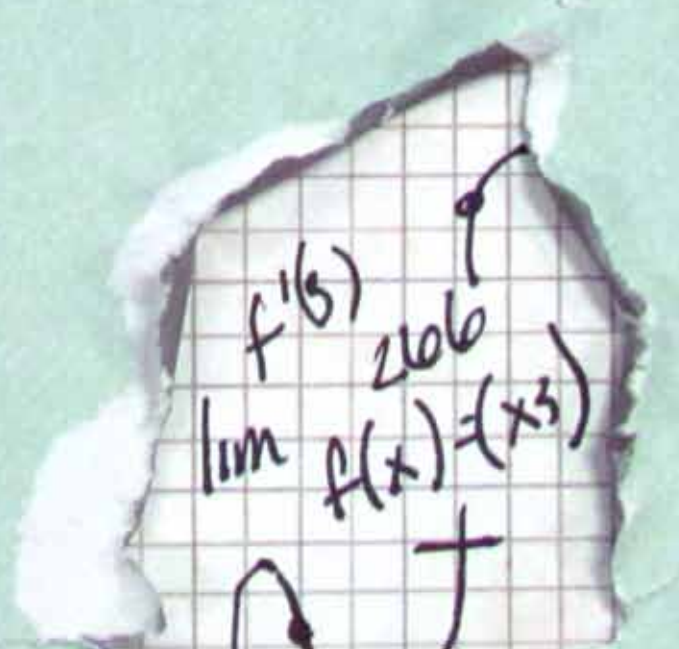
My brother had joined the Navy when he was eighteen. I hadn't seen him in nearly two years. But not long after exhuming these old memories, the Navy held Family Day, an event when all of the families of the sailors were invited to visit San Diego and tour the submarines. And this year, my parents decided our family would go. I made excuses. I pouted. I yelled. I even tried simply asking if I could stay home. But my parents wanted a nice family trip. And I didn't have an option. While touring the submarine, it was easy enough to keep my distance, keep quiet, and keep calm. I didn't know how I was supposed to feel, or act, or think. So I tried not to do any of those at all. That afternoon, we went to Sea World. The California sun burned into the backs of our timid Idaho necks, a high-pitched female drone blared Shamu show times over the intercom, and the greasy smell of funnel cakes wafted through the air. Everyone was ready for a good time.

Our parents herded us from attraction to attraction—Penguin Encounter, Turtle Reef, a choreographed dolphin show. I managed to hover on the outskirts, lingering a little longer when the rest of my family started moving to the next attraction. They gravitated to the exits and I read informational posters, pretended to be absorbed in getting a closer look at the animals, or discovered a sudden need to tie my shoe. I didn't realize my brother wasn't up ahead with the rest of the family when we climbed the ramp out of the coolness of the shark tunnel. My sister Jody was talking at me about the tiger shark, impressed with its speed. I squinted against the bright white of the sun and offered an "mmhmm." I heard Mom call for us to hurry up, and squinted harder to scan the crowd of beer-bellied dads and fanny-packed moms to so I could tow Jody toward the rest of the family. Without warning, my brother appeared between me and Jody, draping an arm around each of our shoulders. "Almost makes me want to get a shark for my fish tank!" His arm became heavier on my shoulder as he turned to face me. "Don't you think so, Kate?" My stomach seized, punched down like rising dough. I dropped my shoulder

and twisted away from him. I turned and lurched toward the shark tunnel, but slammed into a twelve-year-old skater punk who was running right past me. He stumbled backward and clipped the elbow of a dad holding a video recorder. "Hey—easy!" "Not my fault—that girl just ran into me!" The kid pointed at me. My heart was a race-horse serrating my chest, but I was frozen, and people were staring. I mumbled something and the kid walked away. Suddenly Mom was at my elbow, hissing in my ear. "What is the matter with you? You're causing a scene!" "I'm causing a scene? Get away from me." I could see my mother's eyes flit over the crowd, racking up a tally of each set of eyes on us, stopped in the middle of a sidewalk pulsing with tourists on the way to Shamu. "Can't you stop thinking about yourself and your problems for one minute? For one minute, Katie! We're here as a family. And you want to ruin everyone's time because you can't stop being so damn selfish."

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We don't talk about it anymore. I pushed the past aside, hoping for a day when people would see me, put pen to paper, and graph my function. They wouldn't lift the pen, wouldn't find the hole. The day when my mother, my counselor, my doctor, my boyfriend wouldn't be coming at me from all sides, reaching by limits to the edges of where I cease to be continuous. No one would study my function, repeatedly inputting values and expecting to get the same answer they would get with a standard function. On that day, I wouldn't be given a pill to fill the hole, the gap, the void, the difference. But what is the past? What is the difference? What is a hole, and who is whole? The shape of a function in a graph is determined by its properties, a visual product of a process of manipulating numbers. The shape of a function in a graph offers efficient categorization, judgment, labeling: linear, quadratic, rational; continuous, or housing an indefinite discontinuity. But the graph of the function merely represents the function—it is not the function itself. A shape is merely a facet of a concept. An experience is merely one number in an elaborate equation that becomes me. ■



MOON

WRITTEN BY: WILLIAM  
SCHEFFLER- VON BRACHT  
DESIGNED BY: RUBY PARRA

## MID-AFTERNOON

As I glimpse the moon floating in an azure sea,  
I feel I like an intruder on some sacred moment—  
a child entering to find his father knelt in prayer.

Normally invisible or unnoticed this hour in the various stages  
of its habitual blinking, this clear afternoon it hangs peacefully  
free of the coyote's howls and the longing eyes of lonely sailors.

Following twilight the stars will begin to flicker and will honor  
the glowing sphere after all else has faded.  
But as I walk beneath it now, our steadfast moon needs time alone.

In a few hours it will appear as we know it.  
Youth will use it as a metaphor for love,  
which comes out at night and fades in the morning.

It will draw in dreams with the tides  
and light our trips to the bathroom  
as we avoid waking our spouses.

But now it sits stoic in the western sky—collecting it's thoughts.  
So I drop my head and start a meaningless  
conversation, hoping to redirect the attention to myself.



WASHING

AUTHOR: Rebecca Jolley  
DESIGNER: Mikenzi Mitchell

WINDOWS



THE KEY:  
GO BACK AND FORTH READING  
WHAT SHE THOUGHT THEN WHAT HE  
THOUGHT.

HER HIM



HE'S HERE.

I get bored so easily—something I chose to leave off my application when I applied for a job washing windows. Having any kind of company makes the time pass much quicker—or at least funner. More fun? Anyway. He isn't such a bad thing to look at for twelve floors either. Clifton Headquarters is my favorite gig because there's the possibility of torturing the poor guy on the other side of my windows. There is something so composed and serious about him. Like a perfectly combed head of hair that you just want to reach out and ruffle. It's brown and flops up and down as he wipes at the glass. And he doesn't dress like a window washer. How does a window washer dress? For some reason I always picture a graying, paint-stained jumpsuit. Where is the paint coming from? He's usually in a polo shirt and designer jeans. The way he carefully tucks away his personality as we're standing face to face is fascinating to me. So of course I watch him carefully. Studying. He smiles uncomfortably when I do this and then looks away immediately. I love his discomfort. Partly because very little makes me uncomfortable, so I find other people's discomfort fascinating. Did I already say 'fascinating?' The other part of why I love this arrangement is that I've lived long enough to know that words are crap. People can say anything; and they often do. Words are too easy. It is way more difficult to lie through your actions. I trust actions. Especially the unconscious ones. There couldn't be words in this job if we wanted there to be. There's a kind of peace, but more importantly, honesty, in the silence.

Wow. I wouldn't be surprised if he smashes through the glass with his squeegee. He's getting pretty red. Maybe I should quit laughing. What a trooper. He just calmly reaches up and wipes away the spot I pointed out. I know no one would notice the smudge from seven stories up, but I can't resist the chances to force genuine reactions out of him after he tries so hard to be stoic to me.

Wow. I may have just fallen in love.

There's a kind of peace, but more importantly, honesty in silence.

WEST SIDE WINDOWS



SHE'S HERE.

I just want to wash the west side windows in peace. Four days a month there she is. Following me up twelve floors of windows. I hate doing the Clifton Headquarters building because it means having to work across from this girl. She always wears her ragged blonde hair in these two limp pigtails and she puts together these crazy outfits that either just barely work or barely don't. Today it's a red and gray striped shirt under a yellow cardigan and dark gray jeans. Her fashion sense reminds me of when I'm low on food and have to start improvising with what is left. But what makes me the most uncomfortable is having her so close without being able to speak. What's even more infuriating is how at ease she is with the situation. In fact, I swear she loves it. She stares at me as intently as if we are having some deep philosophical conversation rather than just washing opposite sides of the same window. I know she does it partially to make me crazy. But there is some sincerity behind it. She's looking at me. Trying to see me. So I retreat even further, which seems to just intensify her interest. I'm used to filling silences with words. It gives me a reason to be looking at someone. If there is no conversation to explain the attention then my motives are just out there for everyone to see. I need words in order to deflect their attention from me. There's too much intimacy in silence.

I am going to throw this effing squeegee through the window. And she's giggling soundlessly, pointing for the sixth time to a spot I've missed. Yes, I'm keeping count. Just breathe. Breathe through the buzzing in your head. I hold my spray bottle up to where she's pointing, spritz it, and then wipe it off. She keeps grinning and moves on to the next window. I grumble and pull the harness to the next window after her.

Floor nine. More than halfway to the end. She catches my eye and gestures again to a streak I have left behind in the middle of the window. I lose my cool. I regret it a few moments later – but not much. Without giving myself a moment to think about what I am doing, I spit on the streak. Incidentally, the streak is right in front of her face. At least it would be if there wasn't a window between us. Glaring at her through the glass, I yank a rag from my pocket and wipe over her stunned expression.



EAST SIDE WINDOWS

I focus on the window in front of me. Just clean the damn windows. Might as well do it right. Apparently it's all I'm capable of. I don't even want to torment the boy on the other side of the glass. My first audition in weeks. I'd prepared for hours. Days. I was rejected after two minutes.

There is a sharp rapping on the window. I snap my head up from where I have been staring at the windowsill. The boy dangling from a harness eleven stories above the city is pointing accusingly at a streak I've left in the corner of the window. That little jerk! How dare he point out something like that when I am clearly upset? I gape at him for a moment – and then spit all over the window. He had better precision yesterday. But I think my point is clear. We both stare at each other through the window. I am breathing hard. He is shocked.

I have no idea why, but I burst out laughing. What a great kid! I cover my heart with my hand in an effort to show my thanks. I know he doesn't understand, but that's okay. I feel like myself again. I'm back to being someone who is not afraid to lash out at strangers. I can't stop laughing as he continues to stare at me.

I sway side to side as I pull the squeegee down the window. Once I reach the bottom, I spin around, waving the squeegee over my head. My roommates all pitched in and got me an iPod for my birthday. Well, a cheaper version of it anyway. I filled it to bursting with all of my illegally acquired tunes. How did I ever wash windows without it? There are words now, but at least they are words that I chose.

Why is he bringing that day up again? It's in the past. Can't he see I'm happy now? Heck, I'm even dancing. But I have to hand it to him; he has to be genuinely concerned in order to ask. It's a lot harder to mime small talk than it is to speak it. Plus he looks adorably stupid while trying.

I own three pairs of pants and can only afford to do laundry once a month. So it is no great coincidence that the flier I got from my agent is still crumpled in my back pocket. I pull it out, smooth it and press it angrily against the window

She hasn't so much as glanced at me for four and a half floors now. She just sprays and wipes then moves on, staring at the floor. Maybe spitting in her face yesterday was a bit much.

This is taking forever. I wish she would at least point out the smudges to me. I want to be annoyed by her very presence. Without irritation ringing in my ears, all I can hear is the sound of rubber on glass and traffic down below. And her sadness is too close. There's nothing I can say to take away the rawness of the emotion.

The girl is insane.

When I get to my feet she is standing in the doorway.

As if her persistent eye contact wasn't awkward enough, now she is dancing as she stares at me.

I don't know why I want to know the reason for her sadness the other day and I feel pretty stupid while trying to ask her but there is something so annoyingly vulnerable about her. Maybe it's the pigtails. Or the incessant cheeriness. Whatever it is, it makes me catch her eye, make an exaggerated frown, point to her and hold up my hands in a shrug. She gives me a mock confused expression and demonstrates that she is dancing, and therefore happy. I give her a pointed look. I know she knows what I am referring to.

Ha ha. Figures. The flier is for an acting audition downtown. It advertises for everything from supporting roles to extras for a film to be shot in California. I look up at her after I finish reading it. The hand not holding up the flier is in a fist on her hip. When our eyes meet again she draws a finger sharply across her throat. It must not have gone well.

Today is our last day working together until next month. I don't want to leave, for some reason. I usually love eating my sack lunch in the cafeteria, partly for the irony of bringing my own food into a cafeteria and partly for the people watching. But today I find the boy on the other side of the glass more comforting. I almost wish we could speak to each other, but, no. It's better this way. He can't lie or disappoint me through a window.

I watch him unpack his lunch. We sit in silence (of course) not making eye contact, but not avoiding it either. After he finishes what looks like meatloaf and veggies left over from dinner, he puts away the Tupperware container and pulls out a chocolate cupcake.

I point at the cupcake, act out breaking it in half, and then gesture back to myself.

He's actually going along with it. There may be hope for him yet. He rips a chunk off the cakey trunk of the cupcake and holds it up.

I am determined to push this as far as he will. He doesn't know who he's dealing with here. Then he smears the chocolate against the window.

What is that boy doing? That stupid kid is going to ruin everything. Panic washes over me as I watch his brown leather loafers disappear above me. At the same time a surge of competitiveness cascades through my body. I flee to the elevator. Hopefully no one will notice the cleaning supplies are missing since they are still strapped to my body and there's no way I have time to put them away. I'll return them tomorrow. When the elevator door opens in the lobby I hear the elevator beside mine also ding open, announcing its arrival. It's probably him. I shoot out of the elevator and across the tile floor of the crowded lobby. I only pause briefly once I am safe within the revolving door. I look back over at the elevators. Yep. There he is, racing out of the elevator that had opened next to mine. I shriek and shove the door forward, running in place for a

The girl always disappears for lunch when I quit for lunch on floor six. It is halfway up the building and is the only floor that has a ledge for me to rest on. To my surprise she sits down on the windowsill and pulls a cheese and lettuce sandwich from a paper sack. She's either vegetarian, broke, or too lazy to assemble a decent lunch. All seem equally likely. I settle against the concrete wall. It is oddly companionable. As always, we can't speak, but it is starting to be a relief. Nothing is expected of me but to be present. It's impossible to disappoint her this way.

She doesn't bother me until I bring out one of the cupcakes left over from my little sister's birthday.

I smile as she communicates that she wants some of the cupcake. I decide to play along. I point at the cupcake then at her with an expression that asks if she wants some. She nods enthusiastically.

I wonder how far she is going to take this bit as she opens her mouth to receive the bit of cupcake. Well, I can take it as far as she can.

She bursts out with surprised laughter. I smile at the image of her throwing her head back, exposing her pale, flower-stem neck. I wonder what her laugh sounds like.

I have never run into her after work because it takes me quite a bit longer to get back into the building through the roof and put away the harness and all of the levitating equipment, while she just has to descend by elevator after stowing her cleaning supplies in the custodial closet. Usually, after washing the last window, we just wave goodbye. She heads over to the elevator and the radio up.

I pull myself up to the roof. But today when we finish the eleventh floor and are about to begin on the twelfth, I give her a mischievous look – and continue past the last row of windows. I hurtle myself over the edge of the building and onto the roof so quickly that I fall and roll several yards. I scramble quickly back to my feet and race down the stairs. I fling open the door to the twelfth floor just in time to hear the elevator door slide shut. After a moment's deliberation over whether I have the stamina to beat the elevator down twelve flights of stairs (I don't), I thrust myself into the room. I stab at all four of the elevator call buttons and one opens immediately. Twelve floors later it opens onto the lobby. The first sound I ever hear from her is the slapping of her yellow Converse across the tile floor as she dashes towards the revolving door. She glances back



few moments like a cartoon character. As soon as I am free, I sprint through the parking lot towards my car. As much as I love the game in this, I genuinely fear that he will call out to me and reveal his voice. It would shatter the illusion we've created. I reach the boxy beige Toyota that my parents bought the year I was born, twenty years ago. Thank goodness I never lock my doors. Once inside I slam my door shut, lock all the doors, and jam the keys into the ignition so that I can crank the radio up.

My heart is pounding. I tell myself that it's because of the running and not because of how worked up I am over the close call. He knocks on my window and tries to say something. I gesture to the radio and hold up my hands helplessly, mouthing that I can't hear him. He smiles and walks away. As I watch his retreating back in the side view mirror I stop dancing and turn the radio down. I am still trying to catch my breath. I peer up at the reflection of my green eyes in the rearview mirror. I am disappointed by how much fear I see in them. So many people have said they love me or have made promises to me. I have run away from just as many people. No one has ever chased after me before. That act alone sends a stronger thrill through me than anything anyone has ever said to me.

I walk into my miraculously empty apartment. It contains five roommates and two bedrooms. We are all living on dreams, and the dreams are not paying well for any of us at the moment. Which is why we are basically living on top of each other, and alone time is hard to come by. The answering machine is flashing a red number five, so I press the play button. Two guys for Sandra – one of whom has a very sexy exotic accent. She always gets the sexy exotic accented guys. The rest of us get the ones with sexually transmitted, exotic sounding diseases. Cassy's mother, and then one for me. "Babe," (my agent) "I know I swore that the San Fran play audition was basically a done deal, but they closed the auditions before I could get a hold of anyone. But don't worry, I have some other ideas in the works –," Beep. I delete the message before I hear another promise. You get what you pay for, I remind myself. The last message is also for me. "Hey, crazy lady!" It's a guy I met at a party last weekend. He introduced himself after I took a dive from a second story window into the pool. But I have a feeling that the nickname he gave me that night has more to do with him not wanting to try to remember my name. "So we're supposed to hang out this weekend but I'm going to have to go out of town. Sorry. But hey, I have your number and I'll give you a call sometime." BEEP. Sandra's words echo through my mind, "If a guy wants you he finds a way. People always find ways to do the things they really want to do." I am sitting on the couch watching the rain turn the dust to mud on the living room

once, but only as soon as she has escaped behind the walls of the door. She yelps when she sees me, but the sound is lost within the glass barriers. What is she doing? I chase after her. Better yet, what am I doing? I ask myself as I follow after her to the parking lot. I began this crusade with no thought to what my motive is. What am I planning on doing if I catch her? Fortunately, the slamming of her car door sounds my defeat. I slow to a walk as I approach her window. She has turned her music up to a painful decibel and is dancing along to it. I know without trying that she has locked the door.

"This isn't over," I say aloud, mostly to myself since I know she can't hear me. I smile at her and then head back inside to clear up the mess I left behind. That was odd, I think as I reenter the building. I have no idea what came over me. I have never chased after anyone in my life. I have persuaded and coaxed, pleaded and promised, but I have never actively done anything in relation to another person before. I feel like I really mean what I am doing for the first time in my life.

I shift into fifth gear. Let's get this over with. I am headed to my mother's house for our monthly family get-together. I quickly run through the list of issues not to bring up. It's sometimes difficult to remember what we are not supposed to talk about and which lies we are currently pretending are truths. Nobody's divorce (they all have at least one), and if it does come up, the only safe response is to condemn the ex as crazy. None of the estranged family members are to be mentioned. Nobody ever threw a punch at Grandpa. Aunt Sue did not have a nervous breakdown at last month's dinner, and she is certainly not in a hospital now. I was dropped off by the stork, and was not the result of poor prom night decisions. And I have not dropped out of law school. In fact, I never even went there. Several other cars are already parked around the house. Here we go. Mother greets me at the door. Her perfume is stronger than her embrace; and she doesn't wear much perfume. I am then seated next to my cousin and her husband. They have been married ten years with only a dog to show for it. Don't bring up children. I can practically hear them reminding themselves not to bring up college. I ask about their dog. They ask if am reading anything interesting. My uncle who is in the middle of a divorce overhears our conversation and begins discussing dog breeds with the cousin who has just been released from prison. Grandpa smooths his moustache which covers his son's moment of naked anger. I shift my gaze over to the window that overlooks the neighbor's yard. The

window. I sat and watched the dust blow against the window earlier. I am thinking about the fact that I'm not going to see my window-washing buddy for another month. Sandra walks into the room and looks out the window as well. "Great," she says. "We're going to have to wash our windows tomorrow. It's not like the management is going to take care of it – what?" My mouth falls open as I realize that all the window washers in the city will be working the next day.

I carefully track his progress up the side of the building and wait until he reaches the last window. As he finishes the second to last one I take a deep breath and step behind the last window still obscured by mud. He takes a moment to understand what he is looking at. Once he does, his face lights up, and I can feel my own illuminate with his. He didn't expect to see me. He hasn't prepared himself or his face to greet me. It is completely genuine.

As soon as he disappears from the window I run toward the exit. But this time I go upwards.

"HELLO."

glass is dusty and covered in water spots. It gives everything outside of it a faded appearance. Nothing like the windows I have been looking at her through. She and I have cleared away the obscurities. Someone says my name and I blink back into the conversation with the cousins. They have asked another inane question that I am too weary to answer. For heaven's sake, what are we all hiding from? Before I can stop myself I ask, "Have you two ever considered pursuing adoption?"

Normally I would have been done washing the windows of the Clifton building, but there was a huge dust storm yesterday followed by just enough rain to coat the windows with mud. Only the outside window washers are needed. Several others have been hired for the job in addition to me. They shout and joke with one another, but as they slide past each other on their harnesses with nothing to say, they avert their eyes, and pretend to be intent on their movements. I am trying to just focus on the job and not think about how much it bothers me to see the emptiness that is revealed after the mud is wiped from each window. It feels like ages before I reach the twelfth floor. I breathe a sigh of relief as I set to work on the final window. After three strokes with the squeegee I find myself face to face with her. She beams at me through the glass. She doesn't have the pigtails today. Her blonde hair is longer than I expect. It makes her look softer somehow. Then again, maybe that is the expression on her face. Not teasing, not avoiding. Just her and what she is feeling. Then she holds up a chocolate cupcake. I grin back at her. I start to pull myself upward then stop. I point at her with a stern expression telling her to stay where she is. She laughs and nods.

I pull myself up to the roof and roll over the edge. When I get to my feet she is standing in the doorway.

After three strokes with the squeegee I find myself face to face with her..





When

# ONLINE GAMING

**A**n adolescent boy holes up in the basement for hours playing the latest addition to his game collection. Another sits day in and day out, staring at a computer screen, neglecting homework and household chores. These justified stereotypes of the teenage video game user are common occurrences that are often viewed as merely a phase or as typical teenage behavior. Turn now to the 22-year-old undergraduate student whose grades are slipping and interest in social college life has all but vanished as he has become absorbed in the success of his online guild. Look over to the 26-year-old husband with an expecting wife whose marriage is souring and job performance is suffering

## Becomes Excessive

**Author:** Harrison Recht  
**Designer:** Sarah Jarvis

due to his perpetual involvement in an online world. What is the difference between these examples? They differ in what society expects and understands. It is generally accepted that the adolescent years may involve video games in one form or another. What about after that? What happens after the years of 18-21 when these teenagers are considered adults?

The critical decision-making years of ages 18-30 span a period of life when so many sources seek for attention. These years are years of schooling, military service, relationships, marriage, having children, choosing a career path, and so forth. Entertainment, although a necessary element of our lives, has become a dominant force in our world today. One great movement in recent years has been that of online role-playing games. The subscriptions to these games have skyrocketed in the last decade (Khazan, 2006). It has come to the point where video games, particularly online games, are no longer an adolescent boys' problem. The young adult population has become the major consumer and user of these games (Reddy, 2008). Although the majority simply enjoys them for fun and recreation, the ranks of those drifting into addiction are growing. Many are turning their heads from this issue. This paper will confront this concern, asserting that online game play is a problem in these young adult years (18-30) when it robs the users of actual social interaction and causes them to neglect real-life responsibilities.

### Online Gaming Background

**T**his social form of computer gaming is relatively young. In her dissertation, Sabrina Neu (2009) explains that the first massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG), Ultima Online, was released in 1997 and had subscriptions in the thousands. As of 2009, subscriptions to the growing market of online games are well into the millions with revenues

in the billions (p. 7). Games such as World of Warcraft, Everquest, and Final Fantasy have become household names. Blizzard Entertainment, who released the increasingly popular World of Warcraft in 2004, reported that the release of one of its expansions in November 2008 sold a record-setting 2.8 million copies within the first 24 hours (Blizzard Entertainment, 2010). These MMORPGs have revolutionized video games in general, but especially online gaming. Monica A. Hodis (2009) explains the principle difference in MMORPGs is the 24/7 availability of this online world. With servers completely devoted to maintaining the virtual existence of these games, users are able to access a constantly changing and evolving environment with millions of other players.

Unlike traditional video games which have programmed levels, organization, and outcomes, these games allow endless progression. Passage of time in the game does not stop when one is not logged into his or her online account. The allure of it may come with the fact that time, progression, and activity continue whether or not a particular subscriber is currently playing. Furthermore, social interaction is a must. In order to achieve goals and complete missions or quests, players must come together, join forces, and cooperate in order for progress to be made (p. 36-37). Olga Khazan in her online Washington Post article suggests that time invested is of the utmost importance in these games. Those who casually play will have difficulty competing against or making alliances with those more dedicated players. Time invested results in more abilities, resources, and allies within the game itself. Without these, less involved players will find it very difficult to compete (2006). With the expansion of MMORPG participation, the player demographics have begun to shift as these players are able to become an active participant in an online world.



12:00



## Virtual Identities

The unique and attractive feature of online gaming for many players, specifically MMORPGs, is the virtual identity each user creates. Essentially, this identity becomes an extension of the user's personality. With the release of recent films such as *Surrogates* and *Avatar*, it is apparent that this concept of a virtual identity is a fad that is steadily gaining popularity. The draw to live and interact through another being is quite appealing. MMORPGs permit each player to essentially create his or her own avatar, or virtual character. As Hodis describes it, users form "real-time interactions under the veil of anonymity in a virtual world that lacks boundaries, which evolves based on the user interactions and where players can assume any role they desire.... [A] very large number of players from around the world interact through their fictional characters" (2009, p. 34-35). Neu states that the amounts of activities these avatars can take part in are impressive. These characters can participate in combat, form relationships, and even fall in love. Furthermore, characters can have various occupations or specialties. All these characters work together while pooling resources and skills to fulfill quests and missions in this non-stop virtual reality (2009, p. 8-9). Although the possible social benefits and drawbacks to virtual identities will be discussed further later, the prospect of becoming someone else is alluring. The opportunity to leave behind the old way of life and step into a new world as a sorcerer or leader of an alliance is attractive. Respect, friendship, and a feeling of making a difference and being needed clearly play an important factor in so many individuals becoming involved with online role-playing games.

## Allure of Online Gaming

As has been discussed, MMORPGs provide a virtual fantasy world with infinite possibilities where users from across the globe can bring together

their characters and work together to fulfill missions and conquer enemies. The fact is that these games offer much in the way of entertainment and opportunity. A problem begins when these benefits of the game take the individual away from more pressing, long-lasting, and ultimately more important life responsibilities. There are many reasons why certain people find these games so compelling and spend so many hours involved in them. Some may find the rewards and incentives to fulfill life's duties meager and unappealing. In Khazan's article she observes that "people feel like they lack control in real life, and the game gives them a social status and value that they are less and less able to achieve in the real world" (2006). The mundane drudgery of day-in and day-out life can be draining. The entire purpose of the entertainment industry is to allow the participant to take a moment to step away from reality and travel to a new story, place, or time. MMORPGs are meant to be a form of entertainment. There are many who simply play for recreational fun. However, there are an increasing many that begin to cross the line from recreation to compulsion. Their play is no longer innocent but becomes problematic.

Khazan quotes a young pregnant wife whose husband is engrossed in online gaming. She regrets the fact that meaningful conversations between them have practically become nonexistent. To make matters worse, she mentions that he hasn't shown any real interest or concern for their coming baby (2006). This is one among many issues facing the young adult population. Surely, any rational person when asked which is more important, a new baby or a computer game, the response would be obvious. However, this young expecting father is showing that his interests and mind are on a game, not on his wife and child. It is not unusual to hear of a child being grounded from games because he or she neglected homework in order to continue playing. The problem arises with accountable,

self-sufficient adults. The behavior needs to be addressed. When family, school, work, or other essential duties are replaced or disrupted by computer gaming it is time for that individual to step back from the computer. The importance of looking at young adults rather than teenagers or children is due to the fact that children generally have a responsible parent or guardian to instruct them on appropriate amounts of game play and to reinforce priorities. The problem arises when these teenagers leave home and begin lives of their own. They owe it to their spouses, dates, employers, professors, and themselves to put forth full effort and attention when such is required.

The following section discusses how the audience of online gaming has shifted to be the young adult population. It will then proceed to cover three principle concerns. First, it will cover that although online games provide certain social benefits, there is a mounting problem with these games skewing the user's sense of reality and what is socially acceptable. Second, boredom with life's routine can lead to the user playing continuously in order to escape from the pressures and expectations of society. And third, those who follow this course and become excessive gamers begin to display behaviors and attributes of an addict.

## Concern with Young Adults

The days when computer games were solely an adolescent boys' pastime are over. As subscriptions to online games have grown over the last decade, so have the subscriptions among those who fit into the young adult age bracket of 18-30 years. In the American Medical Association Journal of Ethics, Swathi Reddy cites that the majority of active players are above 19 and an increasing amount of subscribers are female (2008). Online games provide different opportunities than traditional video games. Where traditional video games are based on achievement and challenge, online role-playing games add a level of social interaction,

collaboration, and camaraderie. Nick Yee, who did graduate studies at Stanford University, composed an online survey to catalogue the average MMORPG player. His research determined that the average MMORPG player is 26 years old and most hold full-time jobs. His survey concluded that males and females become involved in online game play for different reasons. He observed that males are more likely to play for advancement which involves power, progression, and status. Females, however, were more likely to play for the social aspects which he described as "casual chat, helping others, [and] making friends" (2006). Neu explains that the average players are well-educated, often working towards undergraduate degrees or with jobs in the computer information technology field (2006, p. 10). Perhaps the challenge and possibility of rank and recognition appeal to the young male subscribers, while the opportunity of making friends, working together, and chatting online draw in an increasingly greater female audience.

The issue arises when young adults take MMORPG play to unhealthy levels. Referencing Yee's study, Hodis explains that between 35 and 45% of MMORPG users admit that they are addicted to at least one game (2009, p. 38). Their definition or perception of what addiction is may vary, but they acknowledge that their game play in some way is damaging and excessive. These men and women are balancing real life responsibilities with game play. Neu, quoting the same Yee study, "found that 50% [of these players] worked full-time jobs, 36% were married (although the highest percentage of users report[ed] being single), and 22% had children" while playing approximately 22 to 25 hours per week (2009, p. 11). Most players are online logged into their accounts comparable to the hours of a part-time job. That amount of play combined with being married, having children, or balancing a full-time job can be regarded as excessive.

**A problem begins when these benefits of the game take the individual away from more pressing, long-lasting, and ultimately more important life responsibilities.**





## Social Benefits and Problems

There may be many reasons why certain individuals seem to be attracted to these games while others are not, or at least not to the same extent. Out of the millions of users, only a small portion show problematic behavior. Why do certain people become engrossed in play while others are able to separate entertainment time from real responsibilities? MMORPGs are arguably becoming increasingly popular due to the social aspect of the games. As has been discussed earlier, they allow millions of players worldwide to congregate and interact in continuously active fantasy worlds. It has been proposed that these online games allow those who suffer from social anxiety or excessive shyness to be aided in overcoming these obstacles by playing these games. Neu's study (2009) specifically looked at college students and the possible social benefits these games offer. There are those that feel that these games are a treatment or support to those who struggle with self confidence or social awkwardness. These games may provide a means whereby "players can overcome shyness, actualize previously untapped talents, teach or mentor other players, free themselves from physical disabilities, develop a sense of purpose and achievement, grow emotionally and spiritually, and engage in...heroic or generous acts" (p. 11). MMORPGs permit those who feel inadequate to become heroes, those with physical disabilities to experience mobility, and those who feel unappreciated to selflessly provide assistance to others.

These games have been described as "all-carrot-no-stick" when explaining how users are interacting socially (Neu, 2009, p. 13). Neu expands on this by explaining that these games provide a means whereby those who play can behave in situations without fear of consequence. Players kill one another, betray friends, disregard alliances, and so forth without suffering the consequences that would generally follow in real life (2009, p. 13-14). These avatars are virtual extensions of

the user and as such, provide all of the benefits and play without any lasting consequences. Those people who feel nervous or unsure of themselves in everyday life are able to "engage in exhilarating, dangerous, and heroic acts of bravery without fear of permanent consequence" as they socialize and interact with virtual friends and fulfill missions (Neu, 2009, p. 14). Some argue that these games provide excellent treatment for individuals suffering from social anxiety because they are able to let loose and interact without fear of rejection, failure, or permanent loss. In an online CBS News Health article Amy S. Clark states that some of these young adult players display "the emotional intelligence of a 12-year-old" and have failed to achieve social competency such as talking with members of the opposite sex (2006). How exactly does a video fantasy land compare with personal one-on-one contact? How does an MMORPG teach social skills for job interviewing, public speaking, or dating? The answer to both questions is the same: it does not. There is no reset button in real life. Once mistakes are made, harmful words said, or thoughtless actions done, there is no turning time back. Our lives do not revive like these avatars. Although gaming in and of itself is not a problem, it should never be used as an excuse for poor social interaction or a treatment for it. A simple game without lasting negative consequences is no training ground for real world society.

## Boredom and Routine

The world today is increasingly fast-paced and instantly gratifying. Online gaming rewards effort and time devoted with experience points, levels, and abilities. Boredom with the daily grind of life's duties can cause gaming to seem increasingly pleasant. Khazan quotes Kimberly Young who has headed an internet addiction recovery program since 1994. With her years of observation and experience she mentions that gaming addicts are the most prevalent new patients received in her clinic. She further deduces that

the excitement of online game play contrasted with the blandness of the routine of day by day life encourages these players to escape to these virtual worlds (2006). Khazan explains that the chief predictor of "problematic usage" is the idea of escapism. This occurs when the individual's game play is not merely for fun or entertainment, but to actually avoid responsibilities required of him or her (2006). Hodus (2009) adds that the element of control in online gaming is one of the most seductive to certain users. These people may feel they lack control over their own lives, and find that being able to determine largely what they achieve with their virtual identities becomes quite attractive (p. 40). In life, many choices are made for them and events happen which can largely be outside of their control. On the other hand, MMORPGs allow the player to outfit and choose the appearance of his or her character, select a specialty or occupation, and decide on which missions to embark (Hodus, 2009, p. 40). In addition to control, there is also the appeal of recognition. Players gain experience by completing missions and achieving goals. This generally is rewarded by means of level advancement. Each additional level a character obtains results in increased abilities and powers. In daily life, achievement and hard work may be less apparent. Job promotions, pay raises, or GPA are the more obvious visible markers of success. What about parenting, housework, marriage, or friendships? How does the world recognize accomplishment in these areas? Sadly, these areas are the ones most often neglected when online gaming becomes problematic. Once these areas are affected, even areas such as job performance or college grades begin to fall for these young adults.

## Addiction

The stresses placed on the young adult population are immense. Pressures to succeed in school, choose a major, date, start a family, and become self-sufficient are weighty tasks. The expectations are

high and sometimes the desire to leave it all behind is powerful. Online gaming, with its widespread use in recent years, has been tagged as a legitimate possibility for addiction. Clark explains that addiction is most often associated with drugs, alcohol, or other forms of substance abuse. Yet, she quotes Michael Brody, MD who explains there are two signs of addiction. First, the person begins to require more and more of a specific substance or behavior and second, that person may become "irritable and miserable" when these are taken away (2006). In recent years, South Korea has become a trial or case study for understanding online gaming addiction. Anthony Faiola, in his Washington Post article writes that in South Korea, almost 70% of the population is connected to high-speed broadband internet, compared to about 33% of Americans (2006). With such a high proportion of the country's population connected to the internet, online gaming has also become incredibly popular. Faiola further explains that the South Korean government has seen it as a serious enough concern to open a game addiction hotline. The gaming culture of South Korea can be described as "extreme" and symptoms of "depression and a sense of withdrawal" accompany these players when they discontinue playing (2006). In Clark's article, she quotes Keith Bakker, who is the director of Smith & Jones Addiction Consultants. He admits that it can be more difficult to convince a compulsive player of the fact that his behavior is damaging. Bakker pointedly says, "Nobody's ever been put in jail for being under the influence of [a game]" (2006). Addiction may be the most damaging consequence of gaming. Addicts begin playing to escape from stressful or unpleasant social interaction. As they gain experience and recognition in their online fantasy world, they find ordinary life increasingly dull and less stimulating. They come to the point where they use the games as an escape. MMORPGs become a vehicle to carry the users away from their pressing and urgent responsibilities to a land where the outcomes are much more in their control and the consequences less lasting and severe.

**As they gain experience and recognition in their online fantasy world, they find ordinary life increasingly dull and less stimulating. They come to the point where they use the games as an escape.**





## Conclusion

Online gaming provides an interactive and exciting realm where people of all nationalities and cultures are able to gather together in pursuit of common goals and aspirations. Exciting worlds full of adventure and possibility attract players of all ages across the globe. All one needs is a high-speed internet connection and a modest monthly subscription fee to enter a dynamic world which is accessible day and night. Users join teams and complete missions together. They are missed when they are not logged on. MMORPGs present a unique and impressive form of entertainment that has appealed to the world over. Yet, with all they have to offer, they are not reality. Online games are no more real than what happens on the screen in the theater or in a science fiction novel. More and more, there are those who begin to use these games as a permanent escape from the necessities that await them away from the computer monitor. In the formative young adult years, there are many wasting these precious years of decisions and opportunities because they are zoned-out in front of a flickering screen, interacting with people from South Korea or Japan whom they likely will never meet in person. When MMORPG play becomes a substitute for face-to-face interaction, a means to drown out the boredom of important responsibilities, or leads to withdrawal and depression when play ceases, gaming has become problematic. It is no longer simple entertainment. It has become a compulsion which can destroy the things of lasting value; education, marriage, children, employment, and self-worth. Moderation is the key. There is a time to sit back and enjoy entertainment, but not at the expense of what matters most. ■

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# THE KETTLE

written by: ANNA KOCHER designed by: ALLISON OTTING

He sits asleep in his worn recliner facing the television,  
the volume loud from drowning out my mother, toiling in the kitchen.  
He wakes at the sound of the volume leaving the screen,  
and I quickly turn it back on, guilty, returning to the floor.

The cat jumps onto his lap and nestles there,  
purring herself to sleep under his protection.  
He strokes her back as he stares ahead like a broken traffic light,  
his finger absently returning to the volume button.  
I look up from the floor and watch them.

In the kitchen, the little kettle shakes on the stove,  
sobbing hot tears of steam.  
It emits a low wail that cuts the air,  
and I press my hands over my ears  
to suffocate the suffering.

The television becomes deafening with each press of the arrow,  
competing to drown the fragile kettle as it endlessly laments.  
Yet, no one removes it from the stove.

And as the miserable television continues to shriek,  
I force my eyes shut and whisper,  
“Please.”  
But no one relieves the kettle from the stove.





## ABUELITA

Author: Matt Montoya Designer: Betsabe Ruiz

We were gathered in the church,  
*la familia*, dressed in Sunday best and somber.

I saw her cold-looking, sallow face  
with its typical scowl  
and her hands folded across her breast.

The priest was chanting in Latin,  
and everyone repeated the incantations,  
the eerie drone echoing off the ceiling.

Usually, Carlos and Lita were rowdy,  
laughing raucously as they clutched their *cervezas*,  
but today there were no *cervezas*, at least not now,  
and nobody told any jokes.

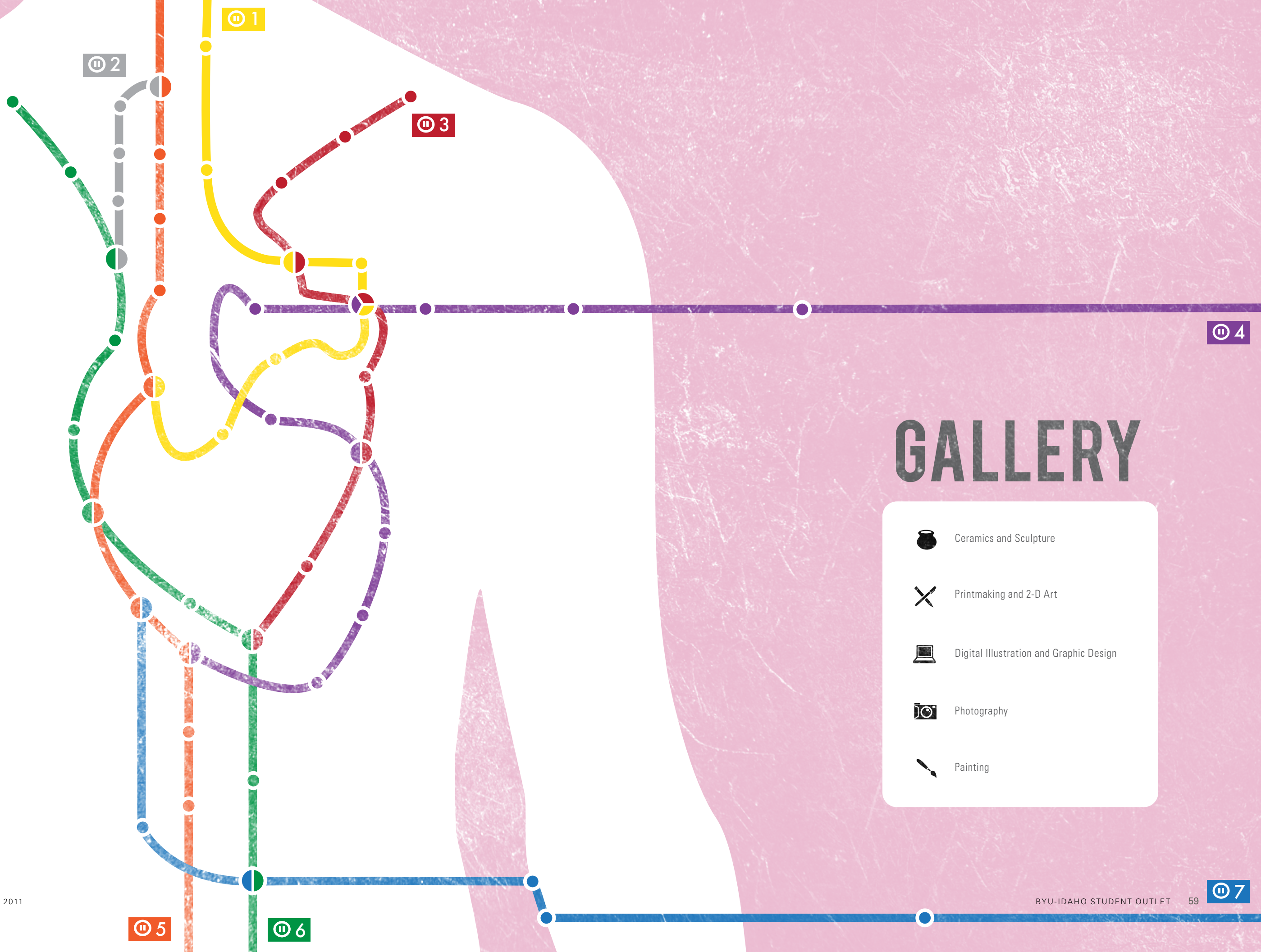
I thought of her life, a complex tapestry of  
homemade tortillas, staunchly ironed clothes,  
and grandchildren on her lap, whom she cared for  
while their parents were out "living their lives";  
how her daughters married alcoholics,  
and her husband occupied Hiroshima;  
how all she really wanted  
was to leave this arid Utah valley  
and go back home to México.

And I thought, after all these years,  
surrounded by us, her people,  
in the church she went to twice a year,  
it must be nice to finally get some sleep.

REAL CRAFTSMANSHIP, REGARDLESS OF THE SKILL  
INVOLVED, REFLECTS REAL CARING, AND REAL  
CARING REFLECTS OUR ATTITUDE ABOUT OURSELVES,  
ABOUT OUR FELLOWMEN, AND ABOUT LIFE.

—Spencer W. Kimball





# GALLERY



Ceramics and Sculpture



Printmaking and 2-D Art



Digital Illustration and Graphic Design



Photography



Painting





TITLE: Cello Rock  
ARTIST: Allison Otting



TITLE: Untitled  
ARTIST: Galina Klimova



TITLE: Holden & Sally  
ARTIST: Blake Pack







TITLE: Untitled  
ARTIST: Galina Klimkova



TITLE: Blue Jay  
ARTIST: Nathan Cowles

4



TITLE: Desert Flower  
ARTIST: Sheila Woods

7

5



4



TITLE: Walk the Plank  
ARTIST: Steven Sitton



5



7



TITLE: Pulled Down  
ARTIST: Steven Sitton



TITLE: Despair  
ARTIST: Steven Sitton

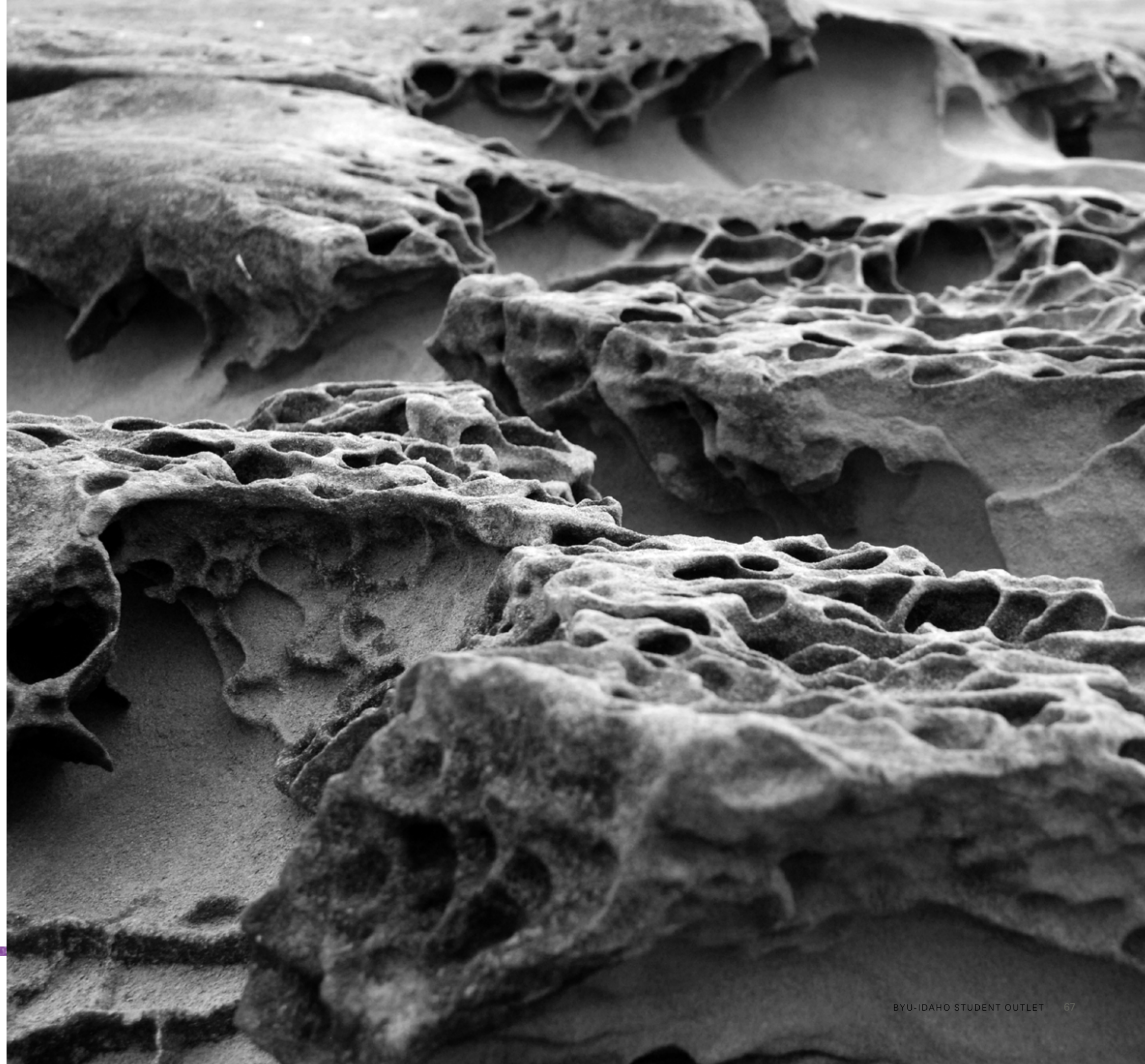




TITLE: Samurai  
ARTIST: Nathan Williams



TITLE: Holes  
ARTIST: Laurel Hulme







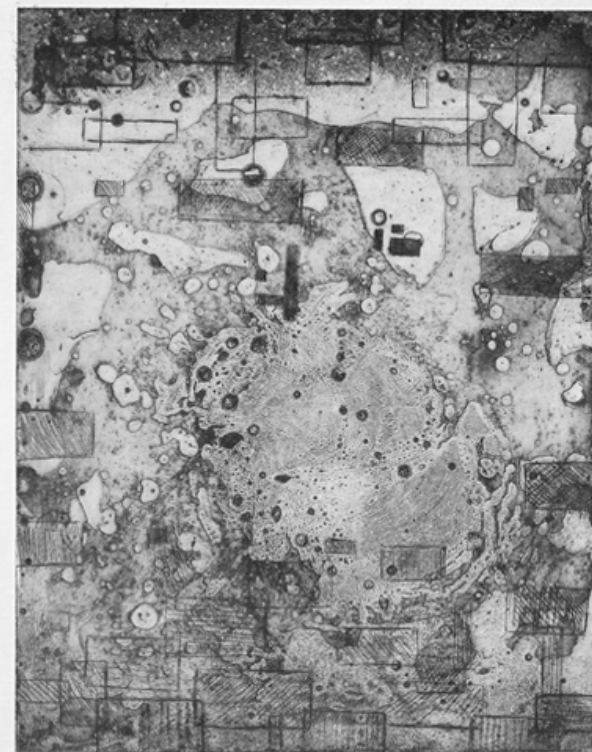
TITLE: Wright Creek  
ARTIST: Laurel Hulme



TITLE: Scratchboard  
ARTIST: Crystal Burnham



TITLE: Tropinin  
ARTIST: Sheila Woods



TITLE: Untitled  
ARTIST: Beka Larson





TITLE: Untitled  
ARTIST: Galina Klimkova



TITLE: Swiss Army Alphabet  
ARTIST: Lorraine Engebretsen



TITLE: Restaurant Logo  
ARTIST: Crystal Bunrham



TITLE: Radio Logo  
ARTIST: Mark McCann



TITLE: Asian Cupcakes  
ARTIST: Bree Tervort



**RAY ALSTON** is a Creative Writing major with a deep love of literature, especially of the Russian classics. After a Russian speaking mission in the Baltics, he discovered the poetry of Alexander Pushkin and a new love for words. Other influences include poets such as T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats and William Blake

**EDO AZRAN** was born in Israel and raised in the United States. He loves puppies, music, poetry, philosophy, and family. He graduated from BYU-Idaho in the fall of 2011 with a major in English and minor in Philosophy. He currently lives in Southern California.

**HEATHER BAIRD** resides in Sugar City, Idaho. She enjoys writing anything, from research papers and young adult stories to grocery lists and Facebook posts. The rest of her “free” time is devoted to designing wedding cakes, planning for the five-month long Christmas season, and heating up leftovers for her four beautiful children.

**MARY KEELIN DAVIS** was born in Santa Maria, California. She currently lives in Rexburg with her husband Joseph and daughter Sariah. She is studying English with an emphasis in creative writing. She dreams of writing short stories and children’s books after she graduates.

**KAYLIE FERGUSON** although born in California, considers herself an Idaho girl through and through. She loves the small town, blue jeans, and potatoes. For her, there’s nothing better than standing in a rainstorm, letting the drops splash on her skin. She enjoys daydreaming, reading, and making children laugh.

**STEPHANIE FULLMER** has always loved to read. Her best memories include camping with her family, reading “Harry Potter” by the fire. She started writing poetry in eighth grade, then short stories her freshman year of college. She wants people to enjoy her work as much as she has enjoyed the work of others.

**PAUL C. HARTLEY** is seeking a business management degree with an emphasis in marketing. He hopes to pursue a career in Internet marketing after graduation. He met his beautiful wife Melissa on a blind date. They’ve been married for two and a half wonderful years.

**CASSANDRA HULSE** is a junior studying English, an Oregon hippie, and a world traveler (mostly through words). She loves Indie music, the ocean, and little black birds. Words she lives by: “Hope... grows... in a dump.”

**REBECCA JOLLEY** was born and raised in Gilbert, Arizona. She attended three universities and finally graduated from BYU-Idaho in July 2011 with a BA in English with a creative writing emphasis and a double minor in history and psychology. She currently attends graduate school at Boise State University in the Composition and Rhetoric program, teaching English 101 at BSU. She would like to one day be a literary editor or a film critic.

**KATHRYN KELLER** is a 24-year old recent BYU-Idaho graduate from Dallas, Texas. She graduated in English with a Creative Writing emphasis. She is applying to graduate schools this winter to pursue an MFA in creative writing.

**ANNA KOCHER** is an English Education major and has worked with children to help improve their literacy skills. She enjoys watching children learn how to creatively express their emotions, ideas, and experiences in writing.

**MATT MONTOYA** graduated from BYU-Idaho in April 2011 with a degree in creative writing. He currently lives in Ellensburg, Washington with his wife Leisha, where he is pursuing a master’s degree in literature from Central Washington University. Some of his favorite poets are Billy Collins, Ted Kooser, and Ben Gibbard.

**AMELIA OWEN** graduated from BYU-Idaho in July 2011 with her degree in English. She is currently living in Dallas, Texas with her fabulous husband and their imaginary pet rock, Frank.

**AUTUMN PEARCE** grew up in New Plymouth, Idaho, on a horse ranch with four brothers and three sisters. She was home schooled with her siblings and cousins who lived in the surrounding valley. She loved to write stories since the time she learned to write, and she majored in creative writing. She graduated in April of 2011 and now works in Indiana.

**HARRISON RECHT** was born and raised in Hamilton, Montana. He is a tenor saxophonist and has served in the Texas San Antonio Mission. He and his wife, Carlie, met on a blind date. They have a son, Dylan. Harrison studies financial economics and looks forward to graduating in April 2012. He loves reading, playing Ultimate Frisbee, watching sports, weight training, and especially being with his family.

**WILLIAM SCHEFFLER-VONBRACHT** studies Spanish education. Currently, he lives with his wife in Washington where they are enjoying their new son, Chaim, and lying around and reading poetry in their free time. Favorite authors: Pablo Neruda, Robert Frost, and Billy Collins.

**CATHI WILLIAMS** is a senior majoring in University Studies. She grew up in Redmond, Washington, recently served a mission in Nauvoo, Illinois, and plans to resettle near family and grandchildren in the Pacific Northwest. She enjoys writing creative non-fiction and fiction based on life experiences.

**NATALIE SKOEN** is a married student, originally from Idaho Falls, majoring in professional writing and minoring in home and family studies. After graduation, she wants to do some freelance writing, focusing on family history. She thanks all her professors who have inspired her over the last four years, especially Scott Samuelson, who helped her with this essay.

# CONTRIBUTORS







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ARTIST: Allen Driftwood



