
P
47

PERIPHERY 47

STAFF

Writing

Editor-in-Chief
Chelsea Marie Hicks

Fiction Judge
Andrew Porter

Poetry Judge
Johnathon Williams

Literary Staff
Brandon Courtney
Mariah Marconi
Karissa Morton
Katie Stephenson
Rachel Vogel

Art

Art Director
Ashley Machacek

Art Judge
Jason Alread

Art Staff
Meredith Gallivan
Diane Pummill
Rachel Crown

Design

Design Director
Michael Carbaugh

Design Staff
Hannah Boom
Ashley Pettit
Caitlyn Pratt

About

Periphery, Drake University's Art and Literary Journal, is published annually and is funded by the Drake Univeristy Board of Student Communications. Submissions this year were accepted from the greater Des Moines area.

EDITOR'S LETTER

"I am a jug filled with water both magic and plain; I have only to lean over and a stream of beautiful thoughts flows out of me."
-From *Too Loud a Solitude* by Bohumil Hrabal

As I pass along this compilation to you, I am reminded of a love story between a simple man and the ink-filled pages he is determined to rescue. In Bohumil Hrabal's *Too Loud a Solitude*, Hanta works as a paper crusher in Soviet occupied Czechoslovakia where he uses his job to save and stockpile an extraordinary collection of books. The short novel, which, not so ironically fell victim to political censorship upon its original release, acknowledges the power of expression and celebrates the indestructibility of the written word. This book is a testament to the themes of Hrabal's tale, to the permanence of language, ideas and creativity as captured in its many forms on the page.

What you hold in your hands now is a jug filled with water both magic and plain, the 47th issue of *Periphery*, Drake University's art and literary journal. Within these pages exists a wet beauty that will trickle through your fingers a stream of words, images and spectacular tales honed by the talented individuals living throughout the Des Moines area. These stories, ones of mulberry trees, gun-possession charges, forces corrosive enough to dissolve gold, and anarchist, punk rockers, are hiding along the shoreline waiting eagerly for you to wade and paddle through.

Though this book may be brimming with magic, it did not appear out of thin air; *Periphery* is nothing if not the product of the ambitious work of a select few. A flood of appreciation should be sent to my staff, who have acted as dedicated participants throughout the entire process of delivering this journal to you, the judges, our advisor, Fred Arroyo, and all the brave souls who submitted their work for review and publication, without them we would simply be handing out bound, blank paper. A special thanks flows to Michael Carbaugh and Ashley Machacek who have passionately and diligently worked on the art section and, along with their staff, have designed this publication into the stunning siren that it is; this journal likely would have been an eyesore without this indispensible pair. To the many bodies that have made this body of work come alive, I thank you. Now please, go ahead and dive in. Explore.

Stay gold,

Chelsea Marie Hicks
Periphery
Editor-in-Chief

CONTENTS

Poetry

Fiction

Nonfiction

Art

Judging

POETRY

10:32 A.M.

Kristen D. Smith

The mall was shaped
like a German camping thermos,
fluorescent lights in the forms
of toucans.
I inhaled mousse;
fluffy, chocolate pie.

It was a date.
His name was Adam.
Spiky, badly frosted hair,
upper teeth jutting out;
he had a dinosaur smile.
Thick as the steering wheel of my Ford,
his black, rectangle glasses sat
awkwardly
on his anteater nose.
His breath consisted of
stale pistachios and dandelions.

But when the sticky note receipts came,
Adam left the blue-lamped Bar and Grille.
So Bubba, on my left, kissed me.

The waitress went in the back,
and cried.
I smushed a manila folder,
which turned cerulean blue,
between the window
and her sobbing cream shoulders.

Out the window were barracuda trees,
bent over, plateaued.
Motorcycle engines clambered through the glass,
blood buckles and Atlantis artifacts
crimpled from the burgundy clouds.
It began to snow.

Matt Nelson

Now is the time of memories
So when all is dead and gone
Except for you, and the man next door,
And the tree down the block
That gives thin shade to neighborhood children
Riding in carriages, on bicycles, in cars
As they pass along their way,
Screaming and yelling into the spirited afternoon
A collection of wild-eyed dandelions
Growing free and without abandon
Between the cracks on the curbs
In the dimness of the elm
In the yard of the old man next door;
And what you see now will be sweet, and dear, and old
And you will cling it in your arms like a husband does his wife
When he is asleep, and his love for her is unfiltered.
Memorize with ardor the sunset of tonight
Repeat in silence the songs of birds flitting ahead.
And live, live, live.
Live so when the darkness sets
And the Red Sea closes
You might still be
Alive.

Forests of Atlantis

Karissa Morton

have i told you
that making love to you
is like
searching for atlantis,
    using a tiny wooden boat
    to navigate
    the riverbank of your mouth,
words foaming on the waves
and trailing
    spirals of smoke.
combustion
semisweet like sparkling wine,
fractal bubbles
breaking against the goblet of our bodies,
quoting the wind
and melting my need for words.
i bow my head to you
    like a deer toward ivy,
tree trunk periscopes
rising through
fallen leaves
as i feed you my fingertips
to taste,
and wonder
if you were carried here
in the beak of a pigeon
    who was trained to bring home
        to me.

I've *only* SLAPPED two BOYS

Kelly Lawler

i've only slapped two boys in my life
one for telling me i had sweaty armpits
and one for cheating on me with a girl named carla
(the name inconveniently appears everywhere)
the prostitute in forrest gump carla
in a trash can carla
on my dining room table carla
on a nametag of a cashier carla

carla, carla, carla!

the mennonite bonnet wearing whore

Winter Lodgings

Intrepid death,
your vanity
come upon the oak
like snowfall,
accumulating skin
on a little used desk
in life's attic.

Joshua Kulla

AQ|RE UA|GI A

Matt Shields

We were told not to leave our tiny apartments in the ghetto. Hans' youngest daughter Sylvia, my
neighbor , liked playing with the Nobel Prizes. James and Max, the owners, had fled
germany. to disguise the trophies as water, i dissolved them in aqua regia a strong acid
and placed them on my shelf. she was disheartened, but i told her she'd see them
again she dreamt to grow up grace and dance ballet. one day the SS came

her door. come with us they said we'll take you to germany's best dance

academy they told her leave your shoes you would get a new

pair once you arrive sylvia was surpris d how many other

girls were on the train to st dy at the academy.

ha 's gav me her slip pers b ef re

she went al g n the c r

w th t os

men .

t of

" q ,
d"

why t ?

qu

Like a Thousand Things Still in Flight

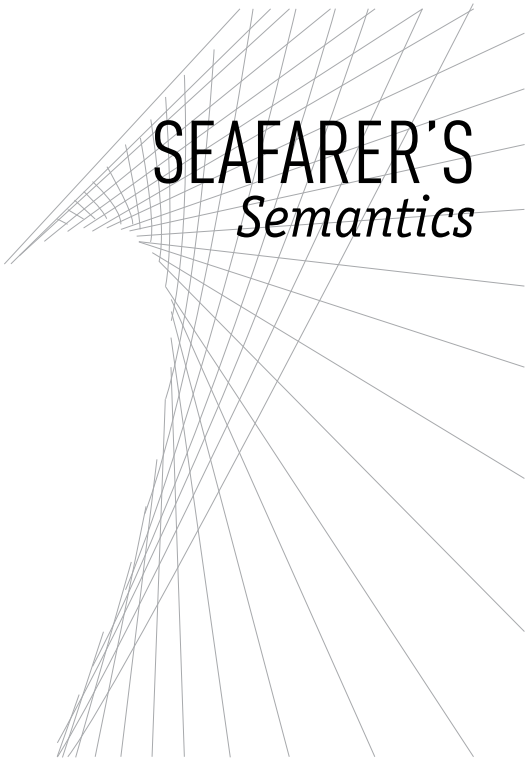
Brandon Courtney

It still amazes me.
        You smoking on the corner of the bed,
    blowing pale little smoke rings through larger ones
knitting your lips and tongue until some
            corporal target hovers
    momentarily absolute,
then storybook when you startle
    as a bird quivers awake in the attic.
How every time a thermometer shatters between your teeth
        you hear marbles dropping on mirrors, see ghosts made
    from coffee filters swimming from your mouth.
    My tongue simply absorbs the words you'll never hear.
Let's believe mostly in our mouths
    and call the smell of warm dust limping from the vents
the diction of this room, call your morning dress: extinguisher,
    the quelling static of lace against hipbones.
Because it still amazes me to think,
        that I can see no further than the high-rise behind you,
the forgery of sky lifted from gallery walls,
    the autumn leaves like traffic lights oscillating green,
    then yellow, then red,
in the updraft of alleyways; in the parking lot's dark anatomy.
Consider the house key you broke in the lock of your body a blessing.
No more will the boys vanish from your field,
than call it standing alone in a landscape.
    No more will the boys write your name in chalk,
erase it with their hands,
and clap you into dust.

Eyelash H(our)glass

Shaina Mugan

If I plant you a mountain,
Will you, one day, bring me a bouquet of avalanched eyelashes?
Seaweed crates of invites from the sea
will wash up and tangle our young limbs with
what will appear to be lost reflections of her tidings.
I knew you once in the constructs of wilted pocket watches and weathered Wednesdays.
I cupped my palms to drink what the crevices cradled, mixed with the salty something that still lingered there from the heated union of our touch.
The mountain has grown.
We must wait for the world to freeze for the snow.
We ponder ideas of snow angels,
But realize angels are for the helpless.
We make way for the children who don't know any better.
I scream with futile intentions, because if they hear me, I might make it out.
I grow angry at the compass (fucking thing, I'll say).
But the truth is, the compass was right- there was never a way out.
And when the avalanche finally has sense enough to coaster slide,
Wait for my eyelashes to become petrified.
Bring them to me in an hour glass vase,
And tell me the stories of the reflections in the sea.



Karissa Morton

a glyph or moth or the holy water of the sea,
all drifting the same
(-- objects in motion staying in motion
until acted upon by outside force or internal clock --)
leaving tally marks in the cement,
the way blades of grass break sutures
and the radiator burns
rorschach spots into our backs
as we pull the wings from monarchs.
"the fallen ones," you say.
-- the nephilim,
as leviathan as lovemaking

I. *your lips, sweet doilies stained with wine*
II. *riverbank curves as gentle as nakedness*
III. *pallid starlight struggling like captured kiss*

while votives,
puffing smoke like crematorium chutes,
flicker in tribute
to the creation of a language
too beautiful for comfort.

Obstetrician Gynecologist

in Search for his Pot of Gold

Kelly Lawler

Hello,
I'm not Mr. Incredible, I'm Dr. Incredible.
Somebody's trying to kill me!
Good morning all you lucky people.
He wrote on a twenty-dollar bill,
and taped it to the foyer mirror.
An astute Andrew Jackson in a thought bubble said,
Kelly, kick some ass today at the speech tournament!
A modern day Darby O' Gill
with lottery tickets tucked
behind a statue of the Virgin Mary.
Doctor Lawler endured
a brain tumor,
three brain surgeries,
and a seizure.
I went to thirteen years of medical school
so I could vacuum the red room.

A Ziploc bag of
twenty three bottles of medicine
to swallow each day.
Poor eyesight in his right eye,
too many liabilities
to go back and deliver children.
He patiently waits
for his pumpkin pie in the oven
like a surgeon anticipating
a patient in labor.
Searching for his way out of Disability,
of his determined non-working contract in life.
Why don't you stay up with your dear old dad
for a few more minutes?
I have a scratch ticket and a quarter for you.

Saturday Night California Roll

Haley Tatom

Confectioner's sugar sifted between
crushed corn flakes and coffee beans
Stools on stilts—a coward's waiting room
Watered-down starch, mashed into sewage pipes
and bloated heads
Uncensored wastebaskets
Overstuffed nooks in sliding glass doors
The pervert overheats
Menstruation is a bore
Rice is washed so it will stick
and beds are made to leave no trace
Tar and feathers
Et tu Brute?
I am a liar.

Record Cold, 1962

Brandon Courtney

for Ernie Kessler

I was told you were buried on the coldest day of the year. The priest
    allowed the families to pull their cars to the casket
and watch through the windshield, watch as your brother broke
    his ankle punching the knife-edge blade of a shovel
into the hardened ground for your headstone.
    Someone suggested a pick axe, boiling water,
a handful of salt to accelerate the thaw.

that the week before, you walked around the house,
    placing pennies and aspirin in your flower vases to keep them alive,
watching the pennies sink hard, the aspirin dissolve like paper umbrellas,
    forgetting that hair is the first to go in sickness
that it comes apart in the teeth of a comb
    comes apart in the hands of others.

I was told that the nurse did her best with bandages,
    a sling made from old bed sheets cinched
and tied to the meat of your shoulder,
    and how you were amazed that the recoil of a rifle
could be enough to break a jaw.

My god, it must have been something to see—the children in the backseats
    heads bowed, asleep or praying,
the priest stealing away to the columbarium—
    a respite from the wind,
as your brother used his good ankle to kick a spade
    into the frozen ground, shaving back strips of earth
like the peel of an orange until the stone stood upright.

And how the rest of the family, hunched in the headlights
    breathing small prayers, warm air into the palms
of their hands, offered what they could: an ungloved hand to turn
    the pages of the bible, another to strike the matches
and light the candles. I was told they returned to their cars,
    windows cracked, where they could draw enough breath
to hear each other sing.

FICTION

the mulberry tree

Kara McKeever

The mulberry tree needed to come down. The older grandchildren stood looking at it with their grandfather, their parents inside the house where their grandmother lay dying. They were sad about the tree. It was rotting on the inside, and Oscar's father, who knew about such things, had said that it would damage the house if it fell during a summer storm. Kate and Elliot's mother agreed and had mentioned all the other trees skirting the house and yard, but the grandchildren and their grandfather knew that the others were not the same, that this was the special tree. It was the only tree which had a name, even if only a simple one. They called it Mrs. Mulberry.

It had been a long time since the tree had produced any mulberries. Oscar and Kate, and Elliot if he squinted really hard, could remember the days they had picked the sweet, dark berries, each a bunch of grapes for a doll's house, staining their fingers and their clothes purple. Their grandmother would let them make their own jam by mashing the berries in a bowl, picking out the thin green stems, adding sugar to make it thicker, and spooning the mixture onto toast. Eventually there had been only a few berries, small and pink and hard, that they could sometimes spot, but easily missed until they had dropped on the ground to be stepped or sat on. Whole branches of the tree had deadened to gray, sawed off now and then by the children's fathers, but most of it was still there, splayed into four massive trunks on the west side of the house. Some branches were bare, even in summer, and on others the leaves were sparse. Their grandmother had a fondness for old things, like the olive-green shag carpet in the living room, which had served countless times as grass for stuffed animals and fields for toy combines pushed across the floor by small children on their knees. So the tree had stayed, visible through the kitchen window.

"Oscar, remember when you hid my plastic giraffe in the hollow, before I was tall enough to reach it?" Kate said. The tree had a hole in it where a large, low branch had long ago broken off. The hollow was chest-high to Kate now; she moved closer to examine it.

"I gave it back to you," said Oscar.

"After I gave you the rest of my Halloween candy."

"Oscar Anthony," said their grandfather, shaking his head. He eased himself carefully onto the rim of the tractor-tire sandbox at the edge of Mrs. Mulberry's arcing reach. He had been weeding the garden; the faded denim over his knees was soiled, his old shoes knotted twice, large and bulky below hemmed pants.

"Used to be a good place to keep things," said Elliot, as the children studied the hollow. The rotting was most evident there, the inside spongy-looking, and a piece gave way as Kate poked it gently with her finger.

"I had some of my dinosaurs living there for a while."

"In Mrs. Mulberry's mouth?" asked Oscar.

"Her ear, I think," said Elliot, so matter-of-factly that their grandfather smiled. "I've always had a soft spot for this tree," he said. It was something he'd said many times, which was not enough to save it.

The older grandchildren had lived near their grandparents since before they could remember. Their younger cousins had not, and always gazed up at the three-story farmhouse after long car rides, before scurrying off after cats draped around the front porch. That summer, however, their parents drove out frequently, sometimes staying overnight, so that someone was always at the house with the hospital bed pulled into the living room.

Oscar had turned 14 in April. Kate and Elliot, his cousins, were thirteen and ten, respectively. They were all getting old. Oscar especially doubted whether he should care much about the tree anymore. Kate thought the removal of the tree symbolized the end of her childhood and, while this was tragically beautiful in its own way, she wanted to stave it off a little longer. Elliot watched Kate and Oscar from behind wire-rimmed glasses and hoped they were planning to do something.

At home, Kate and Elliot kept mostly to themselves, except when they fought. That summer they often had to watch the younger kids at their house. The adults needed the children out of the way; their grandmother slept a lot. Kate found herself with surprisingly little time after she made everyone lunch and went about the household chores her mother left her. Her father's guitar, which she'd brought down from the attic and planned to teach herself to play, grew dusty sitting out in her room. Elliot liked to be alone, preferably at the computer or with his library books, and got annoyed when Kate pushed him to entertain their cousins. He wished he was old enough to mow the lawn like Oscar.

Other days they all spent the afternoon at their grandparents' with the grown-ups, and that was where Oscar told Kate and Elliot that his parents were talking about cutting down Mrs. Mulberry.

Elliot was concerned with what would happen to the birds that lived in what he thought of as Mrs. Mulberry's arms. He was afraid there must also be some squirrels, but though he sat watching the tree while Lindsay and Megan played on the swings or Donald and Patrick dug in the sandbox, he wasn't sure if any actually lived there or if they just used it as a jungle gym. When he had approached his father about the birds, he'd been told they would easily find new homes. They wouldn't have homes anyway when the tree fell down, his father pointed out.

If, Elliot thought. He didn't really believe that a little spongy wood could wreck something so big and sturdy looking. As the summer wore on, filling weeks with identical days, he grew frustrated with the adults' persistent belief in it.

"Grandpa, remember when Mrs. Mulberry had an oriole?" Elliot asked as his grandfather weeded around the hostas lining the front of the house.

"We saw it at breakfast that one time, remember? And we looked it up in the bird guide and found out that it comes to this part of the country in the summer, but we'd never seen one around here." Elliot could still see the book's page in his mind. He liked breakfasts at his grandparents' after overnight stays; they kept a guide to North American birds in a cupboard by the sink and always fed the cat a dollop of spreadable cheese from a finger.

It had been a while since he'd spent the night at that house with just his grandpa and grandma. Now the house was always and never quiet; this was how Elliot thought of it. There was always one of his parents, or an aunt or uncle, in the kitchen, always the younger kids underfoot until one of the adults shooed them outside. But it wasn't like Christmas, where everyone, young and old, talked at once. Now only one person talked at a time, just a single voice falling into the house, large and enclosed. And the east part of the house, adjoining the living room, was usually shut off.

Kate was washing dishes at her grandparents' one night while her mother sat at the kitchen table going through papers Kate assumed were from the hospital. She gazed through the window over the sink at the tree's lacy silhouette, the sunset glowing red behind it. Mrs. Mulberry was an old woman, she realized, craggy and gray, but Kate still thought she was lovely, her dark branches woven into a darkening sky.

"Mom, we just can't cut down Mrs. Mulberry," she said. She focused on her mother's image in the glass, hanging vaguely white before the tree. Her mother's hand supported her head as she bent over the table.

"She's always been here. It's like tearing down part of the house. And she's still nice to look at, when you're standing here…"

Her mother didn't answer.

"Mom," said Kate, carefully stacking too many cups in the dish drainer.

"What? Oh, I wish you kids would stop talking about this tree." In the kitchen's light Kate thought her mother looked almost haggard. "You shouldn't have named it."

Kate turned back to the window. She wasn't sure whether she or Oscar had named the tree. For as long as she could remember they had all called it Mrs. Mulberry. She remembered using Mrs. Mulberry as a character in make-believe games, remembered standing with her forehead pressed to the bark and her hands cupped around her eyes, being "it" for hide-and-seek, remembered building snow forts around Mrs. Mulberry's wide trunk. Sometimes she had perched on Mrs. Mulberry's lowest branch and waved to her grandmother working in the kitchen. Sometimes her grandmother had brought out an old blanket and let them have picnics—crackers and grapes, sugar cookies and orange soda—under the tree. She remembered being proud when she could climb as high as Oscar into Mrs. Mulberry's open embrace.

Kate began to dry the dishes in the drainer with a towel, for lack of anything better to do in the hushed house. Her mother's reflection in the window remained unchanged as the form of the tree soaked slowly into the night.

Every week or so Oscar mowed his grandparents' lawn, running the mower in a quick circle around the mulberry tree. He had to duck where the branches hung lower, further out from the trunk, and even still they sometimes raked his hair or caught his shirt. One day a scratch across his face made him so angry he'd stopped and snapped the branches' twiggy ends, living and dead. He'd yanked at a whole, leafy branch, bent and wrenched it until it finally came down. When the branch lay on the ground he realized it had been one of the healthy ones. He picked it up and went to throw it in the brush pile behind the garage, wiping his face quickly with the back of his hand.

That afternoon the grandchildren were again outside by the tree with their grandfather, the younger kids playing in the sandbox. Elliot sat in a swing on the nearby swing set, pushing the ground idly with his foot and frowning.

"Are they going to do it soon, Oscar?" Kate asked, wrapping her arms around a branch and pulling her feet up so that she hung with hair pointed pencil-straight at the ground.

"Dunno," Oscar replied. Their grandfather leaned slowly over to tap Kate's nose, forcing her to smile.

"Did you ask your dad if there was anything we could do to save it?"

"There isn't. He's sure of it, or they wouldn't do it," said Oscar. He leaned against the swing set, twirling a stick from the ground slowly in his fingers.

"Well, everyone gets old," said their grandfather after a moment.

"But Grandpa, don't let them," Elliot said suddenly. "It's your tree, just tell them they can't take it down. It's not going to fall on the house anyway. It's fine."

No one said anything; Kate and Oscar didn't look at him.

"It's rotting, Elliot," their grandfather finally answered. They waited for him to continue, but he was silent.

"This is Grandma's favorite tree," said their cousin Donald, who had wandered over to give Kate a sand and pebble pie he had constructed in an old dog food bowl.

"But she sleeps all the time now anyway. I wish she would get up. She looks funny."

It was lunchtime, and Elliot wouldn't come down from the tree. One and two at a time the adults and children had come outside to see what they could do. He was up on the highest branch he could reach, splayed out on his stomach with his arms around it.

"Comfortable up there?" called one of his uncles.

"Very," answered Elliot. "And you can't cut her down now, can you?"

Some of the grown-ups smiled a little; so that's what this was about.

"Elliot, this is childish," said his mother, and went back inside the house.

It was a hot and humid afternoon, and when Kate went out later she could see her brother's face glistening as he rested his cheek on the bark, his glasses a little off center.

"This is stupid, Elliot," she said. She sat and leaned her head back to feel the roughness of the trunk through her hair. Elliot didn't say anything. His sister closed her eyes.

"If Dad wasn't at work he'd climb right up there and haul you down," Kate added after a while. Then she got up and walked away.

continued at peripheryjournal.com

how to be his little sister

Kristin Thomas

Make bad decisions.
Start with the day after your brother dies.
When your family all but gags you and tosses you in the car to view his body at the funeral home, be stubborn.
Tell them you want to remember him alive.
As the car exits the driveway, instantly recognize you just made the biggest mistake of your life.
Do nothing about it.

Go to school the morning after he dies, two days before summer break.
Say you don't want to wait to face everyone when seventh grade starts in the fall.
But really, you wouldn't know what to do with yourself at home.
You don't want to fake emotions while everyone passes you up to comfort your parents.

Eat ice cream for breakfast. Challenge anyone who tries to stop you. Your brother just died.
You can do what you want.
Make this your motto because the world owes you something.
The world owes you a fucking brother, but it can't give him back, can it? Fuck the world. Fuck everyone. You don't give a Goddamn.
NOTHING FUCKING MATTERS

Make people feel guilty.
When the opportunity arises for you to throw it in someone's face, always do.
Say your brother killed himself when you were 12.
Don't say he died at 14. It's all about you.
But it is about you. He is gone. You remain, but who are you now?
You won't know who you see in the mirror for a very long time.
Let his death consume you and let it define you.

You should feel guiltier than anyone.
When you were seven, your brother dared you to punch him in the stomach as hard as you could. He said he wouldn't tell Mom, so you did it.
He told.
You felt guilty even then because you knew you hurt him. He didn't let on, but you knew you knocked the wind out of him.
What's worse is the time when you were 10 and making chocolate chip cookies and you wouldn't let him eat any dough. Feel guilty about this because he always ate the "cookies" you made from random kitchen ingredients when you were too young to know better. The dog wouldn't eat them, but he did. He did stuff like that all the time because he loved you.
You loved him, too, of course, but did he know? Did you tell him? Did he think about that before he wrapped a noose around his neck?
Feel guilty now because you shouldn't be feeling sorry for yourself.

Blackmail your mom.
When she refuses to let her 13-year-old go on a date with a 19-year-old, tell her you will go anyway.
Tell her if she doesn't let you go, you will go behind her back.
Ask her if she would rather know where you are or know you are lying to her.
Go on the date. Follow her rules, but only because you don't really like the guy anyway.

When you're 15, your mom will get hammered and describe precisely what your brother looked like hanging there—white face, purple skin. Don't hug her.

Continue watching MTV, stone-faced, stonehearted.
You don't care how she feels. You pity yourself.
Don't let anyone else off the hook because they are grieving too, especially your parents.
Later, be neurotic.
Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Instead, blame yourself for everything that goes wrong, but save this for your twenties.

For now, keep in mind nothing matters. Ignore your dad. He will ignore you too, except when you are 16 and pass through the living room, dressed to go to the bar. He will look up from his forty of Budweiser long enough to ask where the rest of your shirt is.

When images of your brother emerge, consider him melting, lying on his back in a vast human-sized oven, many freckles blending with his pale skin, blue sparks snapping over his emblazoned red hair. The braces melt too, then cool, combined with chunks of bone, white and gray. What is the gray, anyway, you wonder when you see the ashes for the first time.
And since this is the only scene playing in your head, you can't help but flash to the end of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. You peeked through your fingers years earlier as the faces of men melted off their skulls. Now those faces are your brother's.

Recall the movies you saw together. You both loved *Star Wars*, *E.T.* and *Indiana Jones*. Remember waking up at Grandma's house on Sunday mornings, eating scrambled eggs and orange juice with too much pulp. The two of you sat at the desk painted red and watched *Lost in Space*. (Danger! Danger, Will Robinson!)
Remember the nights before Christmas when neither of you could sleep. One year, he spent hours serenading you with Prince and the Revolution before you finally drifted off in a sleeping bag on the

floor next to his bed. He knew all of Prince's motions to "I Would Die For You."

Have a few drinks and let the happy memories morph into sad.
Drink margaritas until you black out. Your boyfriend will tell you that you sat on his lap and wept about how your brother hung himself in your basement.
Make him think you're insane. Oddly enough, he won't leave you ever. You will have to break up with him like you do everyone else because he is possessive.
Because he's a fucking idiot.
Because he doesn't know that Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers sang "American Girl."
Because he won't turn the heat up in the car when you're cold. It's the middle of the night and he has been driving for eight hours to meet your friends and he is having a hard time staying awake, but that's no excuse. You're cold.
Break up with him because he accused you of cheating on him. You are, but he doesn't need to know that.
And who in hell does he think he is for caring, anyway?
Break up with him because he isn't your brother.

Continue to date guys who are all wrong for you.
When one falls in love with you, make his life hell. Be melodramatic and egocentric because you don't know how to love him back. After all, emotions elude you, so nobody else has feelings either.
When you are 24 and a therapist suggests you make mistakes in relationships because the men who were supposed to be in your life were absent (dead brother, alcoholic father), have an epiphany. She's right!
But don't change.
Now you have an excuse.

Marry the wrong guy and make him miserable.
Divorce him four years later and make him more miserable.
Have two kids with him first.
When you have your first child, finally come close to understanding your parents' suffering.
Finally stop being so selfish and appreciate your parents more.
Be terrified you won't be able to protect your children.
Be mortified when you notice they are just like you and your brother.
Have twisted visions of your babies being hurt or killed. Tell yourself this is normal because of the post-partum hormones, but know in the back of your mind you have a morbid obsession with death.

Imagine your brother hanging.
Consider going to the police station to see if they have pictures of his dead body.
You need to see it.
They should have the pictures because suicide is a crime, and don't they always take pictures at crime scenes?
Never actually go down there. You're too scared.
Instead, try to envision what he looked like dead because you never saw him dead.
Because when you were 12, you listened to your dad who said he wanted to remember him the way he was.
Were his brown eyes open? Was his mouth open? Did his head hang to the side from a broken neck? Did his body swing? Did his freckles turn purple too?

Did it hurt?

Remember every miniscule detail about your middle school because that was the school the two of you attended when he died.
Remember the rustic brick of the cafeteria walls, red chairs, long brown tables, the wall of windows where you saw other students stare at you as they arrived the day after.
Remember the library.
Remember all of the boys who sat at the tables there. The tall, older boys who were in your brother's class, hunched over, not speaking, some of them crying. They didn't look up when you walked by.
Why were you walking by? Why were you there?
Remember the mustard yellow carpet and lockers.
Remember the locker where you stood the day before your brother died when Mary Grier approached you and asked if he had tried to kill himself. You scoffed at her. Where in hell did she get that? Stupid rumors.
Let the guilt grow in you like cancer.
Because when he hung himself the next night, it was your fault.
You didn't say anything after Mary Grier warned you.
You killed him.

Remember his room.
Remember the bed, the plain blue comforter, the desk and computer he paid for saving up his allowance, the calendar hanging on his wall that he made on the computer. Remember the compulsive tidiness.
Remember how you went home from school that day and he didn't respond to you. You were latchkey kids, so it was just the two of you. You chattered away. He didn't react. You saw him take a glass of milk in his room. You saw him sitting at his desk. You saw him hurl the glass of milk onto the floor with his arm. You thought he was nuts and you thought he was a jerk, so you went in his room and made fun of him for not cleaning the hamster cage. He ignored you.
Half an hour later, when you and your mom stepped out the door to go to your softball game, you deliberately didn't say good-bye to him. He was an ass to you.
Always remember that moment.
When you read the note, realize you saw him write it.
Realize it was a will.
Realize he left the hamsters to you in his will.
Realize you chose not to say good-bye to him.
Realize it was forever.

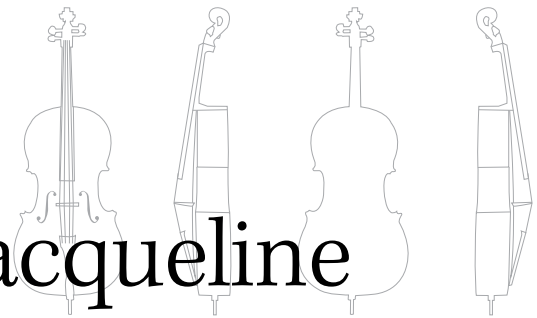
Be destroyed.
Let one scene circle through your mind frequently, like a movie reel with no power button. Remember Pizza Hut and the cop.
You sat at pushed-together tables with the rest of the girls, all of you in your dusty softball uniforms, silent and staring as the cop crossed the restaurant and took your coach aside. The coach pointed and the cop walked. She walked. She stopped at you. You didn't breathe. Nobody spoke. Nobody stirred. She escorted you to the squad car, as you demanded to know what happened to your dad, because you knew it was your dad—with his bad health and the drinking—he was dead, you knew it. She didn't want to tell you, but you insisted.
"Your brother hung himself."

Remember you cried all the way home. You stopped crying for good the second you entered the house and your sobbing mom squeezed you and crumpled to the floor.

Never cry about it again unless you're shit-faced drunk.
Be as numb as possible for the next 20 years.

Be jealous.
You grew up without your only sibling. You see adult brothers and sisters spending time together, having kids and having Christmas together and having each other to lean on when Mom and Dad struggle. They have shared lives, shared memories. They have their own language.
What do you have? You're just the little sister of a dead kid.

Make his suicide yours. You died too.
The person you were—would have been—died too.



Jacqueline

Hannah Wright

"And we're not performers, like Liszt, competing against the world for speed and brilliance (the 79-year-old pianist said, when I asked her What makes a virtuoso?— Competitiveness.) The longer I live the more I mistrust theatricality, the false glamour cast by performance, the more I know its poverty beside the truths we are salvaging from the splitting-open of our lives."

-Adrienne Rich, *Transcendental Etude.*

This is my office and that is my computer. I don't really need my computer, but it is helpful when the batteries of my metronome die out. Or when I want to use the sound recorder, which is very frequently now. Or when I need to order strings. Books. Plane tickets. So my computer is quite useful—and I guess, I do need it. But it is not Jacqueline. That is what I mean. Jacqueline is my 1978 Michael Fredrich cello, spruce top, flamed back, Chicago, Illinois. Jacqueline is the reason I need that office. Without her I would not need my computer, either. Why would I buy strings without her? Or what would I record? Myself? But no one wants to hear that.

) f |

Jacqueline got me into three out of five different conservatories. But she did not give me enough scholarship, so I ended up going to a state university, with in-state tuition and in-state programs and in-state job opportunities. That is why I am still in Wisconsin. Just 40 minutes from my parents' house. But I am not so opposed to that. Last weekend, even, I went to visit them and did not ask they help pay for gas. My mother is a very short lady, shorter now that she's old and her spine is beginning to crinkle forward. My father is still tall, still thick, and he has not changed much since I can remember. He has always had pepper-gray hair. He has always had five (I count every time) laugh wrinkles around the sides of

his eyes. My parents are nice people. Happy, they say. My parents ask me a lot if I am happy. "Are you happy, Andrew?" I think they want me to be, so I say "yes." I don't know why they keep asking me. They know I have loans to pay off. And payments on Jacqueline still.

They never understand why I don't just get a nice job in an office building somewhere, one propped in the middle of suburbia, one with chairs and umbrellas scattered across the lawn and walking paths outside I could stroll down during lunch hour, shooting pebbles into fountains. And find a wife, probably a pale, brown-haired girl working in a doctor's office. But I don't. A wife like that usually ends up having an affair with the doctor. I wouldn't want to risk it.

) f |

Well, another reason I need my office, my apartment, is that I am taking students. I never envisioned that. But I didn't get the orchestra jobs in Minnesota, Chicago, or the one in Texas, and even the one I did not really want in Madison. Rent money is playing in three community orchestras. Food is my eight students. All else comes from wedding and party gigs, some busking on the weekends. Three of my students are beginners, one in third grade, the other two in fifth. The other five are high school students. They do not even listen to me. Only one, Stephen, has passed the etudes I gave him when he started taking from me.

I told him this week that he was ready for Haydn C major. He jumped.

"Excited…huh?" I said.

"Yeah! I love Haydn, Mr. Lewis," he told me. "That is the first thing I heard. When I started playing the cello. Yo-Yo Ma's recording."

Stephen is a skinny kid with thick-framed glasses balanced on his nose—he is like a tube full of energy, like a candlewick. And he loves cello. He is my only student who can talk anything intelligent about it.

I told him that Yo-Yo Ma is not so great, it is just that he is famous.

"Maybe that's why he is famous," he said. "Because he is great."

I took my Haydn cello part out. I had not played it since eighth grade. It was my first concerto, before I had Jacqueline and debt. It was scribbled with all my old bowings, my old fingerings. I played the opening for him.

"Try it. With these fingerings," I instructed him.

"What do you think of that extension?" I asked him when he finished.

"I don't know. I can mess around with it," he said.

"I can give you a recording of DuPre. She is the best cellist."

"I like Yo-Yo Ma," he insisted.

"Then like him," I said, "but try listening to DuPre. Yo-Yo is all about playing for Obama and appearing on *Seasame Street*. He is a showman. Everyone has heard of Yo-Yo Ma. But if you want a true artist, listen to DuPre. Even my parents have heard Yo-Yo Ma—he's on PBS all the time. Listen to DuPre."

) f |

I still don't know why I said that to him. The truth is that I listen to Yo-Yo Ma all the time—have at least six CD's of his playing—met him once, after a concert. Drove seven hours to hear that concert. There was a time when I would have stalked him across the world on his concert tour, would have searched for him like a young warrior seeking his master.

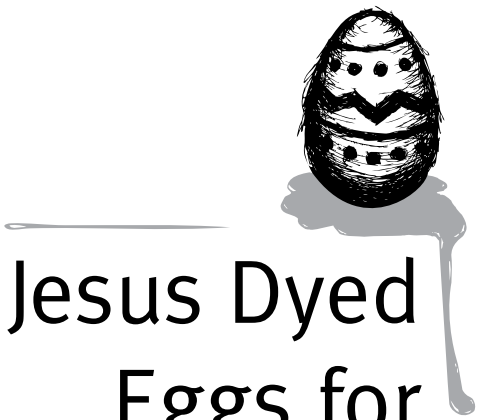
My parents gave me almost every CD of his I own. On winter days, school's closed, I remember sitting with my parents, still in my embarrassing pajamas and stockings, sinking into a couch before the T.V. and Yo-Yo, the sweat shining his forehead, his face turned towards the ceiling, painting that slow Bach Suite No. 2 in the silence and breaths as if this were the one chance he could, as if he had to. The announcer called him a true artist. That was the first time I heard that phrase. The first time my parents heard that phrase. They just sat back on their chairs, licked their coffee cups, and told me that if I worked hard I could play exactly like Yo-Yo Ma and have a concert in a fancy hall like that, with thousands of people paying 400 dollars a seat just to see—me.

) f |

I do wish for that sometimes. That there was a reason for that many people to gather to hear me, as if I had something very important to give them, to make sense of something. I remember that concert of Yo-Yo Ma's, how beat I was and how I dragged myself, fighting through the crowds. As if I were there looking for something, determined to find it. I do not know if I found it. All I know for sure is that I have never heard a more glorious Dvorak, and that every single person clapped, and the round chatty ladies behind me called him a true legend—a true legend as opposed, I guess, to a false legend. Maybe I wasn't prepared for him to be over. I felt like I wanted something else, to be on that stage myself maybe, like jumping from a high cliff into water, letting that fear and those soggy years of sitting in my office arranging another audition propel me forward, as if I could actually soar on those notes. And I would have stomped onto that stage and grabbed that feeling myself, but Yo-Yo is, as I said, famous, and they most certainly had bodyguards on the job. Or, I'm sure, those ladies behind me would have snatched my ankles and hauled me back to my seat. So I just stood up still and clapped along.

) f |

Whenever my parents ask me if I am happy I wish I could show them Jacqueline. It is almost as is there is fire on her back, tiger stripes. It is the most brilliant orange, like catching the sun underneath a fall leaf. I will play them a Bach Suite, the second one. Then I hope that they will understand. Are you happy, Andrew? I won't answer yes. I will tell them that I assume this is the closest I can get.



Jesus Dyed Eggs for Your Sins

James Lewis

Easter is only good for those who love hard-boiled eggs and candy, or are through with their obligations from Lent and can devour cows guilt free. This was a day devoted to thumping bibles, marshmallow birds, and uncomfortable silences with relatives over unanswered Christmas letters. This was a day of rest.

It was five weeks before Jerry Falwell died. The radio reported him saying that good Christians need not worry about the environment because the earth only needed to be around until Jesus came back to judge the living and the dead; Falwell presumed that would be soon.

Clay was driving a 1970 Lincoln Continental Mark III with a teal shade and a stuck-open sunroof into the city spring evening. The whole car was pretty much just built around two comfortable leather couches so usually the ride was pretty smooth. The dealership had been glad to let him take it for 700 down at six and a half APR on a two-year loan. Sturdy knuckles reading "Atavisms" clutched the sun-bleached steering wheel.

A month before this, he had convinced a Planned Parenthood to pay for his vasectomy. "I have eight kids with different mothers. I've never seen any of them. I hate children." Lies; well, he didn't just hate children, he hated humans. His growling voice and odd tattoos convinced the nice ladies in pleated pants that this man should not reproduce.

He was only 22 but his face was one that waitresses would say "had character" as they looked up at him admiring his scar. His receding hairline was slicked back by egg white induced luster, and the yellow stained fingers of his left hand were quick to roll a cigarette as he drove past the Rick's Tavern at Westboro and 28th St.

The procedure that finally happened two nights before had been quick yet surreal. He dropped his pants and they made two small incisions as he stared at the corkboard ceiling, imagining faces in the pattern. There wasn't much of the red stuff, then he just laid there, splayed out and high with his arms at his sides, waiting for it to be over.

"Do you want to see it?" the doctor asked after the first incision. Clay leaned slightly forward and glimpsed a small white tube, outlined in red. His own vas deferens. This was going to make all the difference.

Two pink eggs had been freed from their primary bodily attachments and the missing section of scrotal tubing was causing him quite a bit of discomfort as he drove west away from the orange glow of the city. Inside of the biker shorts the doctor had told him to wear was a bag of crushed ice, and the condensation was soaking the back of his pants.

Clay was working as a fry cook at a place called Gretel's Diner off of the freeway wedged between a strip club and a drycleaners. The hours weren't great but the pay was decent. The car sighed into its resting space; Clay left it purring as he looked in through the windows. The space was settled from years of passing truckers and all night waitresses. Yellow walls reflected pit stained patrons who'd cleansed two hours pay for the special and a bottomless coffee. Blank faces stared into white mugs. Clay pulled the boat into reverse. The building became memory.

Empty streets were marred by vigils to coffined cars, and the stereo sounded off recorded old tunes to the beat of the 60s. Maggie would be at home, her voice penetrating the phone receiver, sending somatic dreams across the country. Clay pulled into the cobbled alley adjacent to the Arcadia apartment building. The grey slabs had been laid in the winter of '56, and the owner wanted to draw renters out of the cold; the Arcadia was born.

The buzzer could be heard from the street. Clay's upward stare caught a head peering down from a neon lit window. Her voice filled the emptiness that the street provided; not words, just a cooing sweetness. Tranquility was broken by the sharp punch of the buzzer that unlocks the door. He tossed a bent butt to the gutter as the door touched his boot heel.

The corner store had given him the Carlo Rossi jug wine he clutched as he ascended the stairs. The landing felt his feet stop to see the door open with the faint voice still droning from the small, dim interior. He was hoping the cat hadn't gotten out. Maggie's neighbor was a meth addict with some kind of allergy to sunlight—it was her who kept stealing the cat. He closed the door silently as he let himself in and took to the couch.

"Yeah? Is that what you want to do? Well, I've never done anything like that before, I only just turned 18…" Her voice was hushed as she talked on the phone. Long red hair hung past her shoulders as she was mixing something in a small bowl. Her face spoke of heartbreak and eczema. Clay got up and took out two glasses.

Clay surveyed the room for signs that her roommate, Jude, was home. She had met Jude through the classified listings and moved into the apartment before ever seeing the wild eyes that would follow her around the apartment. Sunday night meant his daughter was coming over; the place was amphetamine induced clean. His absence left Clay to assume that Jude had taken his daughter out.

"Boohoo, yeah I can feel it. It's so big!" she had a dozen pure white eggs cradled upright in their carton in front of her alongside a large bowl. In between her lecherous speeches she was carefully

tapping a whole in each egg with a pin, then picking them up one by one and, as she held them over the bowl she would pin prick the underside of each ovum and, pressing her lips to each one, blow out the yellow eye placing each shell carefully back into it's uniform row. Her work on the line paid her more in half an hour than he would get a whole shift and she seemed to get a certain passive satisfaction from ripping off the suckers who looked up the numbers in the back of skin mags; who was he to judge?

Clay's eyes had been following Maggie as he dispensed drinks and breathed deeply the wet spring air. He knew he had time to kill before she would be done with her grind. She paced the apartment as she talked.

Her clothes stood in sharp contrast to her speech. Maggie was swaddled in three-day-old blue hooded shirt and durable pants, hiding her youthful body that was constantly being re-imagined over the telephone. Her lipstick red hair was halfway down to her midriff covering the tattoo on the back of her neck that read "Die Hard."

"Harder, yeah! Harder!" The screams from the kitchen didn't arouse his interest. The wallpaper was a fantastic red when it was in the showroom, but it aged poorly held to the apartment walls with creases and none of the seams matched. The whole room had an air of sticky body odor and wet dirt. He picked up his newspaper and put his legs up on the tattered three-piece couch that had been salvaged from neighbor's bad luck eviction notice. Every wall was lined with plants reaching out of their pots toward the apartment's only window as if clasped hands were reaching for the sky, the radio hissed softly with the inaudible news that dared not be heard.

"Yeah, you'd better shit on my chest." She was on a different call because she was playing the commanding mistress instead of the passive schoolgirl. She sat at the far end of the three-piece sectional, which set her kiddy corner to him.

"Baby, it's so warm," her beaming lies to a right hand man echoed.

Earlier in the afternoon Clay had been picked up by the police while sitting in his car outside of the abandoned Sack-and-Save wasting time. A Hemingway Reader book had made its way to be rain-pasted to his floorboard, left by some forgotten bar time drive home and he was flipping through it. "*For Sale, Baby Shoes, Never Used*. Hemingway would say later in life that this was his greatest work," he read. Clay laughed, "There are just too many fucking people on this planet for me to care," he chided himself as a sharp tap brought his attention to the window.

Before he knew it he was in front of the car in handcuffs.

"Not all of us have to go to church on your zombie jesus day!" He spat at the officer, who was waist deep in the side of the car sure he could sniff out contraband that Clay did not possess, but the goober only served to roll down the headlight of his own car resting like a tear in the corner of its eye.

Maggie was sitting kitty-corner to him on the sectional as she eased back and lay down with her head on his feet. He watched her talk as her bright red curls encompassed both of his feet.

The raindrops started to greet the window with a soft and growing trot. Clay listened to the tempo and imagined Maggie's continuing dialogue as the lyrics to some slow ballad, a saving grace told to a dive bar full of dime by the dozen, day clerk hacks who wouldn't appreciate it anyway.

"Clay." The voice didn't immediately seem to be a beckoning to him. "Clay!" crashed him back to reality.

"I thought you had to work today." She was looking him in the eyes as she sat up on the couch. For a moment he just stared blankly at her. Her eyes felt like they were piercing his face, searching for a cause of the cancerous presence that was him in the apartment.

"Wasn't really an option. One of our nation's finest gave me the shake down earlier. And the procedure on Friday has made it a bitch to stand up. I didn't have the capacity, or will." His voice felt stifled as it wheezed into the humid air of the room.

"Poor baby," Maggie's cooing was half making fun of him, "I really appreciate what you have done. I really don't want to take birth control any more and we really don't want to get infected with one of those little babies. Parasites."

They sat admiring one another's flaws in a comfortable silence.

"So where's the lord at?" his voice took a joking tone as if mentioning a name might conjure an omnipresence that was lurking, waiting to be summoned.

"He went to pick up his daughter," she paused before going on, "The motherfucker," she stopped, sucking in bits of air feeling them out for the next words, "The motherfucker was going on and on yesterday and then just collapsed. I brought him to the hospital because he wasn't breathing, it was just still. This whole room was with his presence but without his noise. It was weird. I almost didn't want to take him, but you only get one chance to help someone like that. He had hit rock bottom."

Clay laughed out loud with a kind of nervous grunting as he stood up and walked to the kitchen, still listening to her.

"All these egg's already cracked?"

"No, the two on the end are whole," she hurriedly let out before going on, "He's right back at it today though. Running around the house like a madman. I can't believe the courts let him see Lily, he's so obviously… fried."

Clay had gotten up to walk into the kitchen. The vasectomy itself hadn't hurt, but standing and sitting down sent shooting pain through his groin and he was still stiff from the snip and tie. He took down a clean saucer and cracked an egg, carefully dripping the white into one bowl and dropping the yolk into the one Maggie was using. He dipped his comb into the egg whites and looking into the mirror above the kitchen sink saying: "You should really move out of here. We don't need all of this. All these people. There is a whole world out there."

"What?" her voice hissed of bloodless contempt, "And live with you in your fucking car?"

His stance turned from his mousse-job and looked at her in seriousness.

"We should just go. Back to where we belong, out there," he said pointing out the window.

"These people are going to waste themselves, and their time, and each other and will all die screaming. Nature plays the last card," his voice faded cool into a silence as their eyes mirrored one another.

A frantic slamming of the foyer door was followed by two sets of scurried footsteps up the oval staircase. A high-pitched man's voice quickly versed excuses for a junkie's broken promises as it grew closer. Clay and Maggie were silent, staring at the apartment's meager door as though it was the gauge on a thirty ought six; Maggie swallowed her whole glass of wine.

continued at peripheryjournal.com

Female

Kat Fatland

Her name was Kate and she wanted to be Jane. She knew that if Jane was tired, Jane would never rest her head against the side of a bathroom stall when she was tired, like Kate did. Jane wouldn't do that. Jane was beautiful, and walked like she could have a meter stick taped to the back of her spine. Kate wouldn't doubt it. Kate thought *she* walked with an awkward shuffle, barely moving her arms, her head down, eyebrows furrowed, sucking on her lower lip as she thought and planned. Jane probably didn't suck her lip. Jane had these beautiful, naked lips that were always naturally smooth and glossed just a little bit, and sometimes Kate saw what she figured was Jane's thinking and planning face, and it looked somewhat like a magazine ad for a lip-gloss company, in fact. Lips barely pouted, eyebrows devastatingly frowning, eyelashes fluttering in some flurry of thoughts or ideas. Sometimes her cheeks even flushed a little. When Kate thought, and especially when Kate was nervous, her cheeks flushed a lot. In fact, her face turned roughly the color of a great red lipstick that Jane probably owned and could have worn well. That was the color it got. It was not the height of loveliness or innocence, and when Kate finally saw her cheeks flushing this way, the flush moved all the way to her neck and chest out of sheer disbelief. Kate would be a hotel manager someday soon. She would own some swanky hotel that her grandfather had a connection to. The job was laid out, and included free hotel nights whenever she pleased until then. She thought those hotel nights would really be something else, would really be pretty swanky with a group of girlfriends, all in the room with cocktails maybe, maybe ordering a sort of male stripper to joke about later, maybe going down and lounging in the hot tub while the alcohol fermented and spread in the stomach and bloodstream, giving the warmness of the tub an even better sensation. But, as it happened,

Kate had one friend and he lived in Michigan and she was in Illinois, and Jane was beautiful but Kate was afraid of the color her face may turn if she invited Jane to a hotel cocktail party. So she didn't and her face was spared the shade of red.

They knew each other because they went to school together. Jane was getting her masters in management, while working on a career as a violinist. Kate loved that: realistic, yet not afraid to dream about being on stage. Kate was working on her management masters and they had classes together, and one time, Kate wore a big turquoise stone she had received for her 21st birthday from her Michigan friend, and Jane found it pleasant and said so. Kate liked Jane because of her lips and because of her eyes. She had hazel eyes—nobody had that color anymore. Most were just brown or blue like Kate's, but Jane's were hazel and marvelous. And, of course, she had an equally marvelous head of sandy brown hair—not too curly, but not straight either, with not too many flyaways, always perfectly voluminous and shapely and always flipping in the right places and directions. Kate had blonde hair that leaned towards the stringy side, especially on the days she didn't have time to shower after she worked out. But she conquered this usually with a ponytail. Jane never wore a ponytail. Jane invited Kate to lunch once, and they went. Jane ate like a fine lady should—small bites, small portions, slowly, slowly, with a glass of Chardonnay to wash it down. Kate always tried to emulate this style, but the problem was she didn't like small bites or small portions, and she just got so excited about the deliciousness of the whole-wheat Mediterranean pasta that she tended to snarf it down in what seemed like a bite or two. And the Mediterranean sauce never ceased to show up on her shirt. And Kate always got a beer because wine sent shivers down her spine and made her upper lip curl in an unpleasant way. They talked quite a bunch at lunch, and it turned out Jane was 24, married, and trying to have a baby. That would be nice, to have a baby, Kate thought, but she hadn't had a boyfriend since the day she dumped her high school sweetheart a year ago. Now she just stuck to beer at bars with random student acquaintances who inevitably tried to put their hands on Kate's breasts, which would then end the relationship. Jane liked soccer. Jane ran marathons. Jane loved the violin so much that she wished sometimes that she could just quit everything, move to Europe, and play romantically with some band at an Italian restaurant… but she knows better than that. Kate didn't know better than that. Kate wanted Jane to do it, mostly because she wanted Jane to do what she really wanted, but also a little bit because she hated, hated loving Jane so much, so damn much. Jane loved Kate too, she really did, and the two met for a beer and a wine after classes on a biweekly basis. When they left each other at the end of their nights together, Jane would smile to herself and thank the God she believed in for giving her such a precious little friend. And Kate inevitably thought Jesus, Jesus, this is the last time she'll want to see me, the last time, she is fed up with my stringy hair and my beer, I just know it.

Jane was beautiful but Jane wanted to be Sam. Sam was a woman from grad school majoring in management. She was going to be an entrepreneur, she was already buying the rights to a smoothie franchise, and she had the lease on a building not far from campus. Smoothies, Jane thought, why couldn't I just do smoothies? Jesus, my life has to be marriage and kid thoughts and violins and, Jesus, smoothies would be nice. Whenever she saw Sam she thought she could deal with a smoothie right about then. Sam had these long legs, but they weren't skinny like Jane's—they

were sculpted as if by the hands of some running coach who said to his runners, "Now HERE is what REAL legs should look like." Sam ran marathons and she camped. She backpacked. She hiked every month on a long-weekend trip to the Rockies or Arizona, or any beautiful place within the vicinity. That is what she saved her money for—every month, and every month in their management classes they had together, Sam would tell Jane all about her last great adventure. Her last one included being chased by a rabid dog in the middle of the hot, dry Badlands. Luckily, she said, the rabid dog was too tired and too small to do anything but nip at my ankles. That sense of humor! Jane responded, as she thought to herself, oh, that sense of humor is what makes Sam, Sam. She is so damned funny, and I don't have a single funny bone in my body. All I have is violin bones and wife bones and somewhere in there are management bones. No funny ones, though. She would sometimes try to joke to Sam by saying, yeah, she remembered this one time when she was in the Rockies and she was hiking with her then-fiancé and he tripped over this tree branch and fell on his behind and she brushed it off for him as this old couple walked by and glanced at her touching his butt and…. And Sam's eyes shined wide and sympathetic as she let out a sweet, "How funny, Jane, really!" Sam had ringlet curls—black, and her skin was tan. She was from Italy—her parents were. Her last name was Graziana, and she had green eyes—nobody had plain green eyes anymore. Everyone either had hazel or brown—Jane's being hazel. But Sam's had this sparkle, and they were big, and her eyelashes, being black as they were, never even needed makeup, and her smile was wide, and her teeth were megawatts of white shine whenever she showed them, but Jane's were stained from wine. Sam asked Jane out for coffee one time. Sam ordered a tall caramel latte with extra caramel and whipped cream. Jane got a hot tea, and sat there the whole time wondering how Sam could indulge like that and still be so drop dead beautiful. Sam always gave her a bit of the caramel whipped cream, and Jane always took it and immediately wished she could lick the whole of it off the top of the latte. She never did and blushed at the picture of her doing it. But she still wanted to.

And Sam always loved Kate from afar. Here she was, this tall blonde woman, skin like porcelain, hair slicked back into a perfectly careless ponytail, and best of all, she heard Kate drank beer. Sam and Kate never went out, but that's another reason Sam loved her. Kate was an independent spirit, a free spirit, a drifter, and she never seemed to care. She carried around books by Hesse and Dostoevsky, but didn't show them off—they would just be there on her desk in classes and at the library, and when she had a moment, she would put her nose in one and furrow her brows and read. Sam loved that. Sam loved Kate because she had the most beautiful eyes—the color of the middle of the ocean almost, from what Sam had seen of the ocean. And Kate never wore makeup. She barely even acknowledged the fact that she was this gorgeous, intelligent woman. Kate biked and swam. Sam would see her at the gym sometimes in bike shorts—the padded seat added to the ass of them, just walking around careless that it looked like she had a package underneath a pair of normal tight shorts. Kate was woman. Kate had stuff published in the local news sometimes—she was a guest columnist. Nobody really knew but Sam, because Sam read the local paper. They were articles about bipartisanship, foreign policy, and everything else Sam knew nothing about. But Sam loved reading them because she always pictured Kate's furrowed brows, staring furiously at her computer screen, typing away. Kate had a perfectly small nose, accented by the smallest nose ring she

had ever seen—just a tiny diamond. She had a tattoo on the inside of her forearm of a rosebud, and on her upper shoulder of the opposite arm, she had the initials TRG. Sam asked one time what that was all about. Kate said the rosebud stood for the fact that she'll always be growing, and the TRG stood for her great-grandfather's initials—he had killed an anaconda in South America and had climbed mountains, explored, traveled, and drank excessively, and it's not like Kate wanted to live up to this necessarily, she said, but it was important for her to think about living her life in a big way. Sam liked that. Sam liked big. She also liked Kate.

THE RED BIRD

Kevin Clark

My grandmother's skin is as black as wet coal. It's as if the sun that beat down on her grandparents' skin as they toiled in never-ending fields had reached forward in time to sear her skin as well. Toothless and sagging, her face was a portrait of hard times that I will never know.

My mother told me that in her day my grandmother was very pretty and many a man pursued her. Today I can't tell. I find her beautiful simply because she is my mother's mother, though I wouldn't expect you to agree.

It was a warm Sunday morning in rural southeast Arkansas when she awoke for her daily routine. She sat up in bed and lit her first cigarette in the five o'clock darkness. In a few short drags it was done and she was in the kitchen. She put two pots on the stove to boil. One for her morning coffee, the other for the rice she cooked every morning with her eggs. From the living room my great-grandmother called from her bed.

"Sister," she called to my grandmother. "Uh, sister?"

"Ma'am?"

"Come take me to the pot."

Ellen sat at the edge of her bed making a feeble attempt to rise to her feet. I heard my grandmother's heavy footsteps stressing the floorboards of our small shotgun house as she headed toward the living room. Ellen's face was beaded with sweat, and her two long grey-black braids dangled to her knees as she tried to push herself up.

Looking at them from across the room I wondered how these two women could be related. My great-grandmother could have been the daughter of Sidney Poitier and Pocahontas; my grandmother the daughter of Marcus Garvey and Harriet Tubman. The only thing that gave away their relation was the long faces indicative of Native American blood.

"You know Mr. Pace comin' by here today?" my grandmother asked.

"Yes ma'am."

"You should have the food ready by then."

"Yes ma'am."

"And have him a plate ready too, sister."

"Yes ma'am. I will."

They finished the business in the bathroom, and my grandmother went back to the kitchen. She slaved for hours in the heat, sweating and humming gospel songs to herself.

"You need any help, grandma?" I asked.

"No, baby, I'm alright," she said in her sweetest cadence. "Now get out of my kitchen." This was said with a little more authority.

As I look back on those days I have come to believe that that kitchen was my grandmother's place to escape. Even though we were fairly secluded in the farthest reaches of Chicot County, in that kitchen she was truly alone, and that's how she liked it.

My great-grandmother was very superstitious. She told me that when a red bird landed in our yard, someone would be paying us a visit. Being that we lived so far away from everything and everyone, I jumped for joy whenever a cardinal blessed us with its presence. I imagined that my mother would return from her wanderings to take me up in her arms. She would tell me that she loved me and wanted me to come live with her in Little Rock or maybe even St. Louis. Often I was disappointed.

The cardinal usually announced the arrival of people like Mr. Pace, an old white man who took pity on my grandmother after her husband died. He felt it was his duty to bring her the things she needed to survive in the boonies. We would trade the vegetables from my great-grandmother's small garden and the slop from our meals for his hogs, and he would give us deer meat, bread and anything else he had in his freezer that he wouldn't be using anytime soon.

The cardinal also harkened the arrival of my aunt Minnie. I could tell the sight of her would hurt my grandmother to her already bruised soul. Her oldest daughter was lost and hoping to find herself in the hot glass of a crack pipe or at the bottom of a cheap bottle of wine. Skinny and scared from the hard life of a drug addict, she would slink through our house like a gold-toothed snake, waiting for the opportunity to strike an open purse or an unguarded piece of jewelry.

"Hey, momma," she would say. Her red eyes bounced around the room. "What y'all cookin'? Smells good in here." She smiled a pained, forced smile. I was only nine at the time, but I remember thinking that she was sober and I didn't like it.

"Chicken. Dumplins'. Greens. Whatever else I feels like cookin'."

"Oh, OK. Make sure you save me a plate now."

She moved around the living room peeking behind dusty pictures and nonchalantly digging through the couch cushions. "I was just stopping by to say hi. You know I'm goin' in to town in a bit? Y'all need something'? Kevin, you want some candy?" I had fallen for this trick before. The last time I gave her money for a Snickers bar I didn't see her again for three months.

"No thank you, Aunt Minnie."

"Are you sure? I'm comin' right back." She smiled that painful smile again. I think it hurt me as much as it hurt her.

"No. I'm OK."

"OK. Ya'll be good. I'll be back later."

She was gone for another three months after that. She lived like a nomad with her boyfriend, a pimp from Kansas City, in his old pickup. Eventually he was killed in a bar fight, and she got stranded in Michigan for three years.

I never heard my grandmother complain about her lot in life. The abusive boyfriends and husbands; her sons in prison. Her drug-addicted and wandering daughters. She just took care of me and her mother, retreating to the kitchen to cook and perhaps meditate. But there was pain and prayer in the songs she hummed. I think she prayed for the cardinal to proclaim the arrival of some kind of savior. Some form of relief, but relief never came.

the WOLFHOUND

Matt Nelson

I awoke when the sky had been colored a light tinge of pink. My sister Donna had already awoken, and sat at the kitchen table, wearing her small eyeglasses and Cinderella pajamas, pretending to read the *National Geographic* and actually sipping at a cup of coffee.

"You're not supposed to drink that," I said, reaching for the mug, but she withdrew it and waved her hand in a perfect imitation of my mother, who had been dead for almost a year now. "It will stunt your growth."

"I like it," she replied with the lofty air of a debutante, and took a rebellious sip; her small nose crinkled with disgust and her tiny shoulders wrapped adorably back around her neck. I couldn't possibly be angry with her.

"Alright, but only one cup," I sat down on a wooden chair next to the kitchen table and began lacing up my running shoes.

"What are you reading?" I asked her. She shrugged.

"I don't know. I like the pictures."

"Yeah? Which one is your favorite?"

She closed the magazine, "I like this one." The front cover bore a photograph of a girl with stunning green eyes wearing some sort of red robe; the headline read, "ALONG AFGHANISTAN'S WAR-TORN FRONTIER."

The image drew me in hypnotically; her eyes were hard with life, but I didn't think they were cruel. She looked angry, but mostly frightened, terrified, in fact. The ink glimmered glossily in the early morning light.

"She looks sad," my sister said matter-of-factly, "I think she's pretty."

"Why do you think she looks sad?"

But my sister only shrugged. I smiled and kissed her on the forehead.

"I'll be gone for a while. Dave should be back in a little bit. Will you be alright by yourself?"

"Mm-hmm," she said, and had another sip of her coffee.

"Okay," I said, smiling at her, "You be good."

"Bye Patrick!"

I left the farmhouse, exiting onto the broad expanse of relatively unkempt lawn that I now own. I turned back once and saw my sister in the window watching me walk down the driveway, her red t-shirt and Cinderella pants pressed up against the picture window. I thought of the girl on the magazine, and I looked away.

The early morning fog famous in northern Virginia curled around my muscles while I stretched. I heard the soft cooing noise of an owl, settling down towards another slumberous day.

Abruptly I found myself gripped with the type of memory that occurs with a stimulation of the senses; maybe it was the way the sunlight barely touched the rocks, or the way the tendrils of mist touched my cheek, but suddenly I was seven years old, wearing a backpack and waiting for the school bus to arrive. I woke up every morning at 6:30 a.m. and the bus always came at 6:52 a.m. or 6:54 a.m.—I could've set my watch by it. I remember craning my head in the darkness, watching for the headlights to appear in the gloom. One time I missed it, and I had to go back to the house—close my eyes. Blink and breathe. I don't want to think about it, but my therapist says I need to face these memories as they are triggered, no matter the content.

I should have gone back into the house after missing the bus to ask my mom for a ride into town, but instead I went by the barn where my father was separating pregnant ewes from the ones who had given birth. It had been a month since my father's return from the war, and I still thought of him as a mysterious novelty. He was not having an easy time with the sheep; our dog Snuffy, who had never worked well with the animals, ran around barking chaotically. I watched my dad from behind the gate; he was shouting at the dog *Goddamnit Snuffy—go by, GO BY!*

He said worse things than that, and then the dog came close to my dad, distracted by the mass of panicked ewes, and I saw my father in a single move grab Snuffy by the throat and flip his little body to the ground, shoving the back of the dog's head into the hay. He said something to the dog, but I don't remember what. When he let go, Snuffy laid on his back limply, exposing his stomach the way domestic dogs will do in a way to garner sympathy and live to fetch another day. My dad stepped back, and then he kicked Snuffy harder than he ever had before, directly in the ribcage, and the dog squealed with fear and pain. Then my dad kicked him again, and he squealed again and tried to run away but my dad kicked him until he stopped trying to crawl away, until my dad just screamed and cursed while kicking a corpse. I didn't make a sound; I never told my mother. I don't know why I never told anyone about that.

"You doing alright there Pat?"

My neighbor Dave, who stood by his mailbox, shook me from my reverie. Dave lives a quarter mile away and is my closest neighbor. Dave is 66 years old, a retired schoolteacher and a widower of three years. He watches my sister for me when I go running, something I am extremely grateful for.

"Yeah, Dave—I guess I'm just putting off this run. Ha."

"Oh yeah? How far you going today?"

"Shooting for 18 miles."

"Jesus!" he said, removing a stack of letters and a newspaper.

"Well, you be careful. Is the little one up yet?"

"Yes, brewed up her own coffee, as well."

He laughed. "Why your mother taught her that little skill, I'll never know." Close my eyes. Blink and breathe. Dave is the only person who talks to me about my mother; he brought my sister to the police the night of her death.

"I'll make her some of my pancakes," Dave said thoughtfully.
I smiled.

"She'll like that. Why don't you stay for dinner later? She loves it when you do that."

"Certainly. I'll bring over a six pack and we can shoot the shit on the porch—a college boy's got to get his beer, even if he ain't in college right now." Dave is the only person who talks to me about my education, as well.

"You have a good run—I'll leave a bottle of water for when you're done."

"Thanks Dave," I said, and waved goodbye to him.

The first mile is always wonderful, easy, whereas the second mile hurts, constricts, makes me want to stop. The third mile is a little better, the fourth mile a little better, and then they are all the same. After nine miles I have always been running. There was never an initial step, original breath, or a single, strong instinct that inspired me to move in the first place. I feel as if I am like God, with no beginning, and no end. I am not exhausted. I have too far to go to be tired; I have forever to run, on and on and on.

I like to run long distances on gravel roads because I feel safer there than on pavement. Eventually the sounds of passing cars become insignificant to me; I hear only the echoes of my inhalations and the rhythm of shoes against rocks. It would be too easy for some impulsive idiot to clip me from behind without me realizing until I lay on my broken back in the ditch in murky water, gazing up at the sky and thinking about what might have been. So I run on gravel roads, mostly.

I started running because my therapist said that exercise would be good to relieve some of the stress of dropping out of college and being thrust into the single parent role. The running did seem to help; I slept deeper and the memories were triggered less and less frequently by my home.

I had been hung-over when social services called me—how fucked up is that? I could barely comprehend what they were saying, "Please don't worry, we have your sister, she's safe. When can you come to see her? I think she needs to see you."

I didn't understand any of it except the fact that I needed to understand it. They weren't telling me everything. I never even thought to ask where my parents were. No one told me what my father had done to my mother until I had returned to Virginia and Dave met me at the courthouse, slowly telling me in jarring terms the bloody aftermath of my mother's murder. My sister wouldn't speak of what she saw that night to me—she still won't, but her child psychiatrist says she has opened up through other treatments. I think Donna will be all right as long as I stick around a few more years.

I went to visit my father in jail once, about three months after it happened, because I needed his signature on some form turning the property over to me. We stared at each other through the glass as if it weren't there.

"Just sign it," I said. "It will make this so much easier."

"You know I'm sorry, don't you? It got out of hand. I didn't mean for it."

Close my eyes. Blink and breathe.

"It doesn't matter." He didn't move. "Come on, dad."

"It got out of hand. I never meant to hurt her. You don't know how bad it gets. You think you're mad at me? You don't know anger."

"Dad, please…"

"How's your sister? Is she doing okay? I worry about her. I love—"

I slapped the glass with the palm of my hand, not hard but with enough force to make a loud sound.

"Shut up and sign the fucking paper."

"You need to understand—"

"I don't understand, dad. I've never understood. Sign the paper… for her sake…"

He took the paper and signed it, but his hands were shaking, and when he pushed the pen back under the glass he started crying loudly.

"For Chrissake it was an accident—it was an accident… please, Pat, please…"

The next day, I went for a 10 mile run, and afterwards I could no longer see the smears of his weeping. The runs just kept getting longer; I want to run a marathon in a few months.

I'm at around 15 miles at this point. I'm not tired. I'm beyond tired, in that gray area between morning and night, where things don't change, where everything is all the same. I must sound like a maniac—you can't understand all the things I mean unless you've been there before, down that empty dirt road, beyond the physical capabilities of your body. A robot roaming about the countryside.

I always get goofy during running; part of my nonsense lies in my isolation. I always run alone out here on these back roads; I don't really know anybody else that lives out here. The houses are all tucked back down long driveways into trees that hide the activities of every person. Out here, the wilderness runs wild and civilization keeps a gun cabinet. Not many people come out, and I like it that way; I like running alone. My therapist says its best if I take my running time alone, where I can be briefly away from Donna and her needs. More importantly, I need to be away from people who know what happened in my family but don't talk about it, so the truth sits hanging just above our conversation like some terrible, hulking demon. Time heals all wounds, they say—these runs in the countryside take a long time.

Sixteen miles now, pound, pound. I'm fucking tired. I'm golden as shit. These are the kinds of thoughts that run through your mind when you run; crazy thoughts. The runner's high starts deep into the run; you say the strangest things. You laugh but it's casual. When you run the senseless things rise to the surface and take some sort of form before dissipating like the sweat from your skin evaporating into the air.

I pass by the Marlow place. I've never seen the Marlow place or met Mr. or Mrs. Marlow, but I know it's their house by the placard on the little green mailbox placed at the end of the driveway. A large, black wolfhound is standing there, his back hunched and fur perched upwards. His lips are pulled so tight over his teeth that I can count every single one of them. He isn't barking, and that scares me. I slow down, and finally stop. Fear is a drop of blood in still water—first it sits, and then it spreads in waves, eventually coloring the entire container. I feel my fear as an almost physical thing, but in a run, it's just fuel to burn, and by God it burns well.

It snarls, and then the great black thing is moving, and I am running in the other direction. I'm *really* running—without form or thought, just *going*, running faster on fear than I ever could have on determination. But he's coming—I'm certain of that now,

and after 16 miles, I don't know how long I can keep this up. I think he's running on some fuel too—some primitive drive of fury or hunger or spite.

"GO HOME!" I scream, as loud as I possibly can. "GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE! BACK OFF!" I keep shouting as loud as I can, but nobody is coming.

Suddenly I am crashing, the gravel tearing into my face and arms. The world is rolling around me; the sky is earth. I thrash as fast as I can but I still feel a searing pain in my left ankle as the wolfhound's jaw makes contact. I'm making small sounds now, frantically kicking and struggling.

As the dog yanks on my ankle I suddenly see my father above my mother; he is screaming at her in some rage about something, pulling her backwards, away from my sister as I go staring on dumbfounded. My father returned from the war with an instinct I couldn't understand—something animal, something that consumed him at the oddest times.

I slash out at the dog with the side of my arm; he catches my elbow in his teeth and bites down, even as the momentum of my flesh pushes him backwards. I am struggling to my feet but my left leg no longer seems able to support any of my weight. Blood is running down my arm, and the wolfhound is snarling. He gains a foothold and I fumble forward, and the wolfhound goes for my face.

I cross my forearms and close my eyes in anticipation, and then, in the midst of the attack and my runner's high, I see Donna looking at the cover of *National Geographic* and drinking coffee. The green-eyed woman knows of the existence of violence in this world as well as my sister—I cannot die.

His teeth are at my lips, my cheeks while I try to push him away—and then suddenly I feel something inside my hand; a piece of rock from this gravel road, a larger chunk that escaped the truck and my wrist moves of its own accord with my last bit of adrenaline. *I'm not thinking*. It is crashing down, smashing into the skull of the wolfhound. I'm screaming, I'm swearing. He snarls, draws back, and I bring down the rock again, harder this time on his head. The wolfhound crumples, now whimpering, lying on his belly, and I bring the stone down again, and again, until it no longer whimpers.

I stagger to one knee, barely able to balance. My vision is red from the blood that has engulfed it. The wolfhound lies before me, twisted now, bloody itself. The wolfhound is dead, and I am alive.

I'm walking away from the wolfhound—I'm crying, and it feels so good. Then my quivering legs give out; I'm weeping in the gravel, not looking at the thing I have destroyed. I only destroyed it because I thought it would destroy me.

Soon Dave will come to find me, but I'm different now, and I can't say why. The wolfhound died because I had to live.

I can hear my own breathing; it's loud, strained, more from the exertion of my 16 miles than from the pain. Instinct does not become evil unless it is misdirected, but some instincts are more powerful than others. I'm waiting for Dave; I don't close my eyes.

NONFICTION

Beneath the Underground: An (Incomplete) Ethnography of Punk Rock Anarchist Hobos

Cali Searles

The first time that I heard of punk train riders was in the summer of 2002; I was 15 years old. My family had just moved from a suburb of St. Paul to the farm that my mother had grown up on in rural Iowa, just outside of the town where I was born. Amongst other things, I left behind my best friend, first love and mentor, "Jay." Of all the people that I have known (perhaps with the exception of my father, a cultural anthropologist and self-taught botanist), Jay was the most influential to the course that my life has taken: he introduced me to punk rock, which has since become a core element in my self-identity. Before Jay and I lost touch he sent me an e-mail that I will never forget (complete with typos and everything):

> howdy hi not to rub it in but ive had one fucked up fun ass summer so far last week this is the best i went to go see henry rollins and keith morris play black flag songs[ ] at first ave[ ] which they havebnt done in 16 years i got theere early so im walkin around and i ran into fuckin henry rollins the guy has been on vh1 and shit so he thinx hes a rockstar which sucks but i go up to him and start talking to him he sez to leave cuz hes busy and i asked him for a hug and he hits me it was so fuck like great and hilarious and then like ten minutes later i go walkin some more abnd i run into these 2 guys sittin there beggin they yell hey punk rocker! come sit with us so i go sit with these guys and they give me 2 cds to help them beg so I do and i t was amazing seeing first hand the total lack of human kindness there is nowadaze i could here there stomachs growling for fucks sake so i help these dudes beg for like 30 minutes cops ignored them cuz they were scary lookin cool as fuck but scary they had tattoos on their faces n shhit i ask em to buy me some smokes and when theyre ion the store im

waitin and they come out with a box of cheap wine and go yer gunna get drunk with us punk rocker! im like um naaahhhh but they go come dude moshin drunk is fun im like fuck ok so i follow them to bridge like 2 blox a way that has welcome tro crackhead bridgespraypainted on it an d the bridge was right next to a abuse shelter . so me and these 2 punx are sittin there tokin and they sed they dont have homes and they just hop trains from place to place and they beat the shit out of the casualties[ ] cuz theyre assholes and shit while were telling jokes sex stories stories in general they tell me to wear condoms as they show me their genital worts and herpes as we all puke on each other under the bridge a like hours goos by and we left to go to the show and it was fuckin great it was ana amzing show and i came home and ran around outside at 1 in the morning in the biggest storm of the summer wow what a fucked up day huh well im no different im still an angry sad strange lil punk rocker who needs a hug i just drink more now . . . well im tired and achy and hung na dyeah gnite loveya [jay]. [e-mail to author, summer 2002]

The mention of two punk train hoppers, although interesting, seemed of little consequence to me at the time. In the spring of 2005 I graduated high school and immediately moved to Des Moines with my then-partner, "Jimmie," unaware of the profound effects that punk train riders would have on my life.

Signification of the "Native" Anthropologist: Methods

"On one plane, we, I and he, may speak the same language and even act alike; yet, on the other, we stand miles apart, irreducibly foreign to each other" (Minh-ha, 49).

The label "native" anthropologist could be applied to me and the label "native anthropology" to my work. Certainly I am uniquely positioned, with one foot in academia and the other firmly planted in a local and national network of punk rockers and travelers. However, I embrace what Kirin Narayan refers to as "multiplex subjectivity" (Narayan, 676). This understanding of subjectivity recognizes the multifaceted and fluid nature of identity. For example, my identity is that of a punk rocker, a traveler and a student of anthropology. However, it is also that of an Iowa farm girl, a daughter, a sister and a service worker, amongst other identities that make up who I am. Not only can I claim a multiplicity of identities; these identities are fluid. When I wait tables, I am primarily a server, yet when I attend local punk shows I am primarily a crust punk and when I visit my mother, I am primarily her daughter. Thus different facets of my identity are enacted to greater extents than others in varying social contexts (Narayan, 674).

Like Narayan, I reject the label of "native" anthropologist, recognizing that this signification is the anthropological equivalent of the one-drop rule. Although this is not a racial or ethnic signification for myself, it nonetheless rests upon an insider/outsider binary in which the "native" anthropologist is primarily a native and only then an anthropologist. Bound up in the signification of "native" anthropologist is a homogenizing force, which assumes that all natives are somehow the same and share the same perspective (Narayan, 676).

Likewise, the "native" anthropologist label assumes that I am automatically an insider (Narayan, 677). However, due to the multifaceted nature of identity, every anthropologist (and every person, for that matter) is simultaneously both an insider and an outsider in every social situation. In other words, some aspects of

the self will prove to unite the self to those who surround her or him, while other aspects of the self will prove divisive (Lewin, 326, Narayan, 680). This can be illustrated by my relationship to the travelers whom this writing is about. My identity as a traveler is somewhat marginal because I have never been on the road long-term, nor have I been homeless for any extended period of time and relative to many, but not all, travelers, I am more privileged. This positioning limits my ability to identify myself as a traveler. I can say, "I have traveled," but I cannot say, "I am a traveler," or "I used to be a traveler." In "Minor's" words, "You've never ridden trains 'til you don't know how many you've ridden." I, on the other hand, can count all of the trains that I have ridden on two hands and one foot. Yet, I can identify with travelers because I have hopped freight trains and I am a crust punk.

My unique positioning in regards to and within the community that I have chosen to study has shaped and will undoubtedly continue to shape my perceptions, observations, insights and analyses. My informants and collaborators are also uniquely positioned in regard to the community of which they are a part. This situatedness of both my informants/collaborators and myself points to the subjective nature of the anthropological endeavor. Far from being an "objective" science, anthropology is subjective in the sense that each ethnographer writes from her or his own unique position about people who have spoken from their own unique positions (Narayan, 679).

Put into other words, ethnography is a representation of others' representations. Due to this situatedness, ethnography is always incomplete. I reject the myth of "objectivity" and, instead, I embrace a methodology in which a cacophony of voices can express their own unique experiences. This is of extreme importance because a professional discourse that asserts the façade of objectivity silences and therefore, "does violence to the range of hybrid personal and professional identities that we [both the anthropologists and people studied by anthropologists] negotiate in our daily lives" (Narayan, 681). To use the words of Clifford Geertz, I seek the "enlargement of the universe of human discourse" (Geertz, 14) to include as many voices as possible, each voice equally as relevant as any other voice. With this goal in mind, this ethnography bounces between description, analysis, and personal narrative and utilizes extensive quotes from members of the community in question.

Crust, Crusties, Crusty Kids, Crust Punks, Gutter Punks and Travelers

The signification of *crusty kids* is somewhat elusive. First, *crust* is a genre of anarcho-punk rock that tends to be audibly distorted and unintelligible to the untrained ear. It is generally electric and heavy, usually including drums, metal-influenced guitar, bass and at least one vocalist who screams with anger and polemics, whose lyrics tend to be radically political and anti-capitalist or even anti-civilization. For example, "Extinction" by Nausea:

> THE WORLD IS GROWING WEAKER/WITH THE PASSING OF EACH DAY/RIDING THE WESTWINDS/THE FETID STENCH OF DECAY/ RESOURCES DWINDLE INTO THE CONSUMERIST MACHINE/AS MECHANICAL VULTURES PICK/THE CARCASS OF OUR WORLD CLEAN/EXTINCTION/AS OUR DYING BREATH IS RELEASED TO THE WIND/THE INNOCENT LIE/WITH THOSE WHO HAVE SINNED/ THEIR MEANINGLESS LIVES/HAVE LONG BEEN FORGOTTEN/ AS THE CYCLE REBIRTH/STARTS TO BEGIN/A NEW DAY WILL DAWN/THROUGH THE RISING OF SMOKE/OF CIVILIZATIONS

SHATTERED DREAMS AND HOPES/NEW LIFE WILL RISE FROM MANKINDS FALL./WHOSE CORPSES WILL FEED/ON THE BARREN DEAD SOIL. [Nausea 2001]

Crust itself contains many subgenres including *d-beat*, *doom*, and *grindcore*, among others and includes bands like Dystopia, Filth and Witch Hunt. The distinctions of genre are, however, somewhat arbitrary, as many bands have *crusty* elements, but pull from other genres such as folk, ska and metal. This is exemplified by Leftover Crack, a band that can be best described as *crusty ska*.

Crusty kids is a term used to denote both punk train riders and a specific type of punk rockers. Intuitively, one might think that crust punks are punk rockers who listen to crust music. Generally, this is the case, but not entirely. Although crust punks probably like crust punk, they may be attracted to other genres of music. Minor, who I would not hesitate to call a crust punk, refers to himself enthusiastically, yet ironically, and somewhat defensively as a "pop punk" and has a passion for *pop punk* bands like NoFX and Guttermouth. Like many other crusty kids and myself, Minor also has a taste for outlaw country and traditional American folk music.

Music aside, *crust punks* are intentionally dirty kids (the term *kids* is used loosely, meaning teenagers, twenty some-things and older punks into their thirties) who may often identify with or as anarchists, or who have anarchist or anti-capitalist leanings. The stereotypical *crusty* is a dirty male (although *crusties* are male and female, the community is both male and masculine dominated, although not without reflection) with dreadlocks, haggard clothing including a punk vest covered in patches that carry band names and polemical political messages, and black leather combat boots. He has bone jewelry, *gauged* (stretched) ears, *stick and poke* tattoos (*DIY*—do it yourself—tattoos made using India ink and sewing needles) and a septum piercing.

Crusties can also be used specifically to describe punk rock anarchist *hobos*, who are frequently referred to and refer to themselves simply as *travelers*[5] , and who are occasionally referred to as *gutter punks* (although *gutter punks*, does not necessarily signify train riders, but may simply refer to homeless punks or punk rock *street kids*). The stereotypical *traveler* is similar, however, he (again, there are female *travelers*, but . . .) has a hefty pack on his back, a *train rag* (bandana) around his neck, and facial tattoos that may or may not be stick and pokes. The word *crusty* itself makes reference to the fact that *travelers* are (often intentionally) dirty, unbathed and smelly.

1 Keith Morris was the original lead singer of the 80s punk rock band, Black Flag. Henry Rollins, also a spoken word artist, later replaced Morris as the lead singer in Black Flag.

2 First Avenue and Seventh Street Entry is large a venue in downtown Minneapolis that frequently hosts large punk rock shows.

3 In trainrider lingo, a space bag, due to the fact that inside the box is a foil bag full of wine that looks like something from which an astronaut might drink. Space bags are generally taken out of the box and spun, that is passed around in circles. Each person drinks directly from the spout of the space bag.

4 The Casualties are a New York City street punk/hardcore band. Rumors that The Casualties "are assholes" are commonplace among many punk rockers.

5 Throughout this essay I will use variations of the word *travel* in italics to refer to hopping freight trains and hitchhiking. This is in order to delineate *travelling* from its common usage meaning "to go somewhere" or "to move."

continued at peripheryjournal.com

MY SCARLET FREEDOM

Kevin Clark

I spent 26 months, three weeks, and four days in federal custody. I'm not bitter about my punishment. I guess I'm one of the few felons who actually think their punishment fit the crime. At the age of 20, I was convicted for the possession of an unregistered firearm.

It seems that the federal government frowns upon young hoodlums brandishing sawed-off shotguns (and with good reason). My temper and immaturity led me to make a decision that could have turned out much worse than it did. An avoidable situation led to a nasty exchange of words that led to a fight that eventually led to me shooting an old friend. I'm lucky he didn't die, and that I wasn't convicted of attempted murder. I was charged, tried, and convicted justly, and sent to a world I wasn't prepared for, but one that seemed prepared for me. In it I observed drug addicts and hustlers, thieves and momma's boys, the innocent and the guilty.

I am confused as to the logic that dictates that we lock men up longer than I've been alive. At the age of 22, you can't imagine the impact of hearing an elder say that he's been locked up 25 years. Rapists and murderers I can understand; lock them up without remorse, if you wish. But a partially illiterate drug dealer? The only thing he's really guilty of is being industrious, an opportunist, and a capitalist. Most of these kids had no idea that in their pursuit of the American Dream they would wind up spending more time behind bars than they've been living. Plato said that punishment brings wisdom. If this is so, then these men and women have accrued enough wisdom to last you and me several lifetimes.

I met a few guys my age, kids really, who nonchalantly told me that at the age of 18 they had been given 15 to 20 year sentences. I thank God every day I wasn't handed the same fate. As I contemplate alternatives for the indiscriminate warehousing of our wayward youth, I realize that it is easier for us as a society to lock

away people and forget about them. Never mind the fact that these young men will emerge from their incarceration as socially crippled human beings with no idea how to readjust to society simply because they've been away from it for so long. What we create is a mindset ripe for recidivism and further crime.

I wonder how much of an impact it would make if we set out to create more social programs aimed at preventing crimes by educating the people who commit them, instead of just punishing them.

I was told while in the county jail that prison would be a world unto itself. I didn't quite believe or understand this until I made it there. When I did, I eventually became fluent in a different dialect and set of rules that would keep me safe. Not that this was a particularly vicious institution, but it was prison and anything could happen.

It's interesting to watch the transformation the human being makes in order to adjust to certain living conditions. Men brew alcohol, smuggle drugs, become homosexuals, and even develop a system of currency in an attempt to make prison resemble the world they were once a part of. Another phenomenon that occurs in prison is that men become frozen in the era in which they were incarcerated. White guys locked down since the 70s still sport thick sideburns and long hair. Black men who saw their prime in the 80s say things like "dope" and "fresh" and call each other "Jack" and "Charlie." These popular terms died long before I was born.

In life, both hope and faith are necessary, but in prison this sometimes borders on self-delusion. We sat glued to the television in the weeks leading to President Barack Obama's election. Even though most had never cast a vote themselves, some guys still felt that they had elected a savior-in-chief. They would say things like, "They got to let us go now," "He ain't gone let us sit in here," and "The first thing he gone do is enact the 65 percent law." Federal inmates have to serve 85 percent of their time. A 20 percent drop would put a lot of guys out the door.

Life is precious. So, too, is freedom. But, behind bars, it is sometimes hard to figure out which is more valuable. One day a man died in another unit. People were sad, but not devastated. Another man was soon to be released, and the compound was abuzz. People you haven't spoken to in three years are suddenly full of smiles and wishes for good luck. Yet another man returns to prison, and quite naturally there is an air of sadness and disappointment about him. People shake their heads at the one who made it out and was dumb enough to come back.

Upon my release several individuals pulled me aside. They assured me I was special; a born leader destined for greatness. They reminded me to take it slow; prosperity will come if only I am patient. I remember the handshakes. Some firm and reassuring and others weak and half-hearted. I was nervous as I walked through the front gate with my family. I still am.

I live and work in Des Moines now and go to school full time. I struggle with the desire to be the man I once was. Cars, clothes, and jewelry are easily attainable, if only I would risk my freedom. Because of my record I am only eligible for menial jobs and inferior housing. I have to deal with the assumption that since I am a convicted felon I am ignorant, violent, and likely to return to prison. Every time I see innocent people and they smile, I feel guilty. They have no idea who I am or where I came from. My scarlet freedom.

On Navels.

Shaina Mugan

This was her first time. This was my first time. Of course, I would be watching it straight on. If she was lucky, she might see some of it through the discernment of a mirror.

All day we wait. She screams from time to time. Late, her eyes begin to fall with the epidural. "Hey!" I startle her eyes open, "you don't wanna miss this, sis! It's time!"

"Shit." She sighs, as she searches the masked faces of the room for verification and rolls over on her back.

One…

(breathe)

Two…

(breathe)

Three…

(Damnit, you could have had it on that push)

One more…

Catch. Slide up to Mom's arms. Clean up. Measure vitals. Looking good.

My focus was not on baby's miniature confused limbs, or her blinded baby-blues, or the way she gummed the swollen nipples my sister had to offer, latching on like a professional. It was her navel. The Delphi, as the Greeks provide, of her miraculous, minuscule body, to decorate in teenaged fits of vanity with Conical stones. That may one day be the oracle for a worthy man's hands to seek his prophecy or to rescue forgotten particles from (more commonly, button lint).

The navel, anyway, that would, one day, form. The seductive scar that will have once connected her to Mom. That once fueled her every sprouting. I stood engorged in the sight. Watching the movements of the dichotomous flesh tube as it slow-danced between my sister and her daughter. I go to them and place two frail kisses on baby's eyes. Briefly, I lift my shirt to look at my own. I beam quietly to myself thinking about how one day, I too, will create a navel.

(Di S) Organization of Throwing Up

Molly Wilensky

Moller knew she had a better second grade teacher than Marker because the letter that Mommer and Dadder got from her said at the bottom: Love, Mrs. Berger. Moller wondered if she just made a mistake, and meant to write Love, Mrs. Burger because that is how it was spelled at Mickey Dees. Marker always got a hamburger and Moller always got chicken nuggets; Marker always sat on the right side of the car and Moller sat on the left side. Marker ate Apple Jacks in the morning. They reminded Moller of the Christmas lights at Tilles Park because they were red and green, but Mommer and Dadder said Jews don't celebrate Christmas.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Moller's stomach hurt so bad that she asked to go the nurse. Her stomach hurt everyday at the same time. Moller would ask to go to the nurse, lie down, and call Mommer to pick her up. Every time Mommer picked her up she squeezed Moller's hand.

-Do you need to hold a bag in your lap in case you throw up?

-Nope.

Mommer gave her the bag anyway. When they got home, Moller put her pajamas on and went to lay on the blue couch with white flowers. Mommer brought the trash can just in case.

-Why does my stomach always hurt at the same time?

-Maybe you have growing pains.

-But I want to grow. It hurts more to wait to be big like you and Dadder.

Mommer always suggested that Moller try to go back to school when the pains stopped. Moller always said no in case Mommer thought she never really hurt in the first place.

One morning before school, Moller decided to eat Apple Jacks. She stole a green one from Marker's bowl. It tasted like the penny that she once licked because Tyler dared her to. Moller decided to

eat toast instead. She was disappointed that the Apple Jacks were so pretty but didn't taste good. That day Samantha came to read a *Berenstain Bears* book to Mrs. Berger's class. She had big round glasses and was a fifth grader. Samantha sat on a stool and Moller and her classmates sat on the dirty blue floor. Moller wanted to come back and read to Mrs. Berger's second grade class when she was in fifth grade. Moller's stomach started to hurt but she tried to ignore it. She knew Mommer was getting tired of picking Moller up from school. Mommer tried to pretend that it was okay that Moller felt better as soon as she started watching T.V. Moller knew she didn't think it was okay because she always went into the kitchen to whisper with Dadder and Moller could hear her name.

-Psssssst PSSSSTT Moller psssssst pst pst pst.

Samantha left and Moller went back to her desk. There were four desks in a group and they made a square. Moller sat closest to the window. She began to work on her crocodile packet. Katie went to ask Mrs. Berger if she could go to the nurse and Mrs. Berger said no.

-You have asked me every day this week to go to the nurse. Please work on your crocodile packet, Katie.

Moller knew that Mrs. Berger was just confused because Katie had never gone to the nurse. Moller's stomach hurt even worse. Moller went to ask Mrs. Berger if she could go to the nurse and Mrs. Berger said no, even though Moller started to cry. Moller looked at her crocodile drawing and then she felt something rushing up her body. Brown and green and black came out of Moller's mouth and all over the desks. The mess reminded her of how the Apple Jacks looked when Marker let them get soggy in the milk because there were both dark and swirly. The second graders started screaming. Moller ran out of the room to the nurse as fast as she could. She was scared because she didn't want the other kids to make fun of her or be mad that she ruined their crocodile packets. When Mommer came to pick Moller up they walked down the hall just like they had yesterday, and the day before, and the day before. Moller felt sad because she wanted to say sorry to Katie and Rebecca and Allison and Jimmy.

-Look! There's my desk!

-Molly, they have to take it outside to clean it off.

Moller was sad that Charlie the janitor had to clean up her mess because he always waved to her in the hall and she wouldn't want to clean up the mess if he had made it.

-Molly, that's his job. There's no reason to be sad.

Later, Mommer and Dadder got an email from Mrs. Berger saying that she was sorry she didn't believe Moller was sick. Moller felt better and while she lay on the blue couch that day she decided that even if her stomach hurt again when she went back to school, she was not going to go home. She would rather puke again in the classroom than have the other kids think she was faking sick by always asking to go to the nurse.