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VirginiaWOOLF bretHARTE CarsonMcCULLERS AlbertCAMUS HonoreDeBALZAC CharlotteBRONTE
w.somersetMAUGHAM fyodorDOSTOYEVSKI julesVERNE alexandreDUMAS roaldDAHL annRADCLIFFE
benGREENMAN SOCRATES peternathanielMALAE chuckPALAHNIUK andreMAUROIS louisSACHAR
michaelDORRIS victorHUGO franzKAFKA hermanMELVILLE robertlouisSTEVENSON josephCONRAD
nathanielHAWTHORNE PLATO antonCHEKHOV thomasHARDY gustaveFLAUBERT sirwalterSCOTT
emilyBRONTE t.c.BOYLE nikolaiGOGOL oscarWILDE t.s.ELIOT williammakepeaceTHACKERAY neilGAIMAN
ann-marieMacDONALD jackKEROUAC borisPASTERNAK mayaANGELOU janeAUSTEN jorgeluisBORGES
samuelBECKETT danielDEFOE chinuaACHEBE charlesDICKENS jamesJOYCE henryJAMES thomasMANN
georgeORWELL williamFAULKNER ALCMAN flanneryO'CONNOR marcelPROUST ernestHEMINGWAY
f.scottFITZGERALD o.HENRY williamSAROYAN gottholdfriedrichLESSING sylviaPLATH samuelJOHNSON
johnKEATS ARISTOTLE louisamayALCOTT niccoloMACHIAVELLI johnRUSHKIN johnMELTON
henrywadsworthLONGFELLOW SAPPHO pedrocalderonDeLaBARCA johannwolfgangVongOETHE THE HOMER
williamcullenBRYANT kateCHOPIN h.g.WELLS lewisCARROLL johnWEBSTER waltWHITMAN izaakWALTON
lordalfredTENNYSON johngreenleafWHITTIER williamHAZLITT shirleyJACKSON markTWAIN josephADDISON
hanschristianANDERSON sherwoodANDERSON saintarieliusAUGUSTINE sirfrancisBACON benJOHNSON
omarKHAYYAM raymondCHANDLER albertCAMUS thomasbabingtonMACAULAY d.h.LAWRENCE
walterBAGEHOT alessandroMANZONI michelDeMONTAIGNE christopherMARLOWE johnDONNE dr.SEUSS
andrewMARVELL lymanfrankBAUM philipMASSINGER johnCHEEVER georgeBERKELEY giuseppeMAZZINI
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elizabethbarrettBROWNING thomasMOORE friedricNIETZSCHE johnBUNYAN williamBLAKE georgeSAND
aphraBEHN AESOP miguelDeCERVANTES betteREAGAN geoffreyCHAUCER ernestRENAN alighieriDANTE
leoTOLSTOY marcustulliusCICERO rebeccaREY CATALLUS samueltaylorCOLERIDGE jamesfenimoreCOOPER
stephenCRANE VIRGIL williamROPER joycecarolOATES charlesaugustinSAINTE-BEUVE pierreCORNEILLE
abrahamCOWLEY oliverGOLDSMITH johnDRYDEN emilyDICKINSON sirrichardSTEELE ralphwaldoEMERSON
albertbigelowPAINE henrydavidTHOREAU HELOISE sirarthurconanDOYLE alexanderPUSHKIN brandonRAMOS
louisL'AMOUR richardLOVELACE federicogarciaLORCA harperLEE thomasPAINE charlesLAMB ezraPOUND
sullyPRUDHOMME PYTHAGORAS haroldPINTER ambroseBIERCE johnBUNYAN elizabethBISHOP
AESCHYLUS langstonHUGHES williamBRADFORD counteeCULLEN aldousHUXLEY gerardmanleyHOPKINS
lafcadioHEARN carlHEIDENSTAM w.e.b.DuBOIS AMBROISE edgarallenPOE washingtonIRVING henrikIBSEN
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The Writing Life

English 129

Friday, December 5th, 2008

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After The Doctor Gave Her The News

Raquel Gonzales

She drove like cats fall, left her car
In the street, dropped her keys
On the table, slipped into the bathroom,
Slipped out of her shirt.

She stared at her camisole
Until she removed it—soft hills like white
Chocolate, Amoretto flavored peaks,
Foreign women dancing, dancing,

Gypsy dancers seduced a man into the Sea.
Perfected milk with female efficiency,
Built children, wept in showers,
Swelled in summers awful

Heat. She remembered
The steam. Slid one finger across
The surface, traced the curve, stopped
At the tip, as if to say, “You have

Betrayed me.”
The light narrowed through the window,
Became a rectangle on the floor, then
Could no longer be seen.✍



Apocalypse

Katie Coburn

There were no
clouds in the sky, and
the cows had been
shifting their feet for
hours. The stray cat,
which slept sprawled
across the front porch
to be close to the
kitchen, was
crouching beneath
the stairs, its eyes
bright, its breathing
heavy. None of the
hens laid any eggs
that morning; not
even Lucille, pride of
the farmer’s wife, dropped one into the straw. The rooster
paced across the yard, kicking up forgotten seeds with his
talons and ignoring them.



photo credit: Dat Cao

Occasionally a breeze tossed the daisies in the
flowerbox, but the air was still, and the draft horse tiredly
rubbed his head against the fence over and over, as if
scratching an impossible itch.

The farmer’s name was Smith. His boy, Tommy, was a
sandy-haired three-year-old who liked to color pictures,
armor-clad warriors with purple faces and cities assaulted
by green pygmies. He sat on the kitchen floor by his
mother’s feet, playing with a copper pot. Every few
minutes he hefted the pot in a chubby hand and let it fall
onto the tile.

Tommy’s mother was cooking. She stood by the stove
long after her water boiled dry; when she scraped a spatula
across an empty pan or turned the heat up, Tommy
squealed with laughter. She wondered when her husband
was going to return. He’d ridden away that morning, and
she watched his back until it disappeared, remembering

that his hair hadn't been so gray before and that he needed new boots. Before five o'clock, she wanted to have dinner on the table. That meant she had to hurry.

She sprinkled the last sugar on cereal for Tommy. He loved sugar, so she didn't regret watching it disappear down his hungry little throat, not really. She was still saying that she didn't resent him, her innocent boy who was so fragile. So young.

The ducks noticed the fire first, setting up an indignant quacking while it ate its way across the fields. Some ran to the pond, where they bobbed up and down, searching for food underwater, oblivious to sparks in the reeds. Flames reached the chicken coop before they threatened the house and the barn, and she stood at the window, setting the oven timer and watching the hens scatter across the yard.

When the first horses began to scream, she lifted Tommy, balancing him on her hip. He was almost too big for carrying—he dug his feet into her side and giggled, his voice high-pitched, nervous. She carried him into the nursery and said that it was nap-time, so he scrambled for his stuffed bear, kissed it, smiled. She touched her lips to his cheek, told him Mommy loved him, and locked the door.

She walked outside, sat on the porch swing, and swung her legs up beside her. She remembered idly that she wanted a new dress.

The flames were crawling across the yard, and soon the cat must flee or be killed. The rooster had already disappeared. The draft horse remained; he was dancing in circles around the paddock, frantically rolling his eyes. Already the fire had devoured the daisies. She remembered her husband bringing them to her in the early days of marriage, so she could admire them in thin clear vases and tickle Tommy's cheeks until he squealed.

The cat, sensing approaching danger, ran out, straight across the yard, keeping its tail tucked between its legs. It darted in circles and froze; it looked back at the woman, eyes bright and accusing, and scurried behind a bush.

Tomorrow she would buy her dress.

Tomorrow. ✍



Autobiography

Raquel Gonzales

Single moms are help wanted
Signs for pedophiles – and
Liars. Charlie Manson types



photo credit: Kyle Schisler

Shroud as daddy. Back Biters!
I betrayed my mother, then
I betrayed him. Spit out his
Lies—slimy snakes climbing up
My throat, thousands, out my mouth.
My mother drank them with gin,
Shattered our windows with a
Cast iron skillet. I found
Courage measured by cc
Climbing toward an orange cap.
Hitchhiked to L.A., Kansas,
Washington. Fixed myself with
Broken tools. Jack Kerouac,
A husband I could not leave
When he'd cheat, hold my face down,
Choke me with his awful sounds
Like a hoard of wasp with mouths
Adapted for biting and
Sucking. Worse, paralyzing.
Until drugs, my drugs, pushed him
Away. Destroyed a career
Of welfare. Severed trusting
Umbilical cords, snatched my
Kids from me. "Mommy, watch me
Dance." She said. "Mommy!" My son
Cried, reaching; I tried to burn

Hell and the sun to the ground!
Sweat dripping off my forehead,
Crawling down my back, drowning
All those carnivores eating
From my flesh. Fiercely I climbed
Out from beneath them. I left
Egypt and her infesting
Plagues behind. Walked barefoot through
Churches, cathedrals, basements,
Looking for God, or Milton.
Expecting to find them dead.
Or dusty. One was alive.
I found my kids in courtrooms.

I drive them to libraries,
Schools. And places to visit
With God; trees, sermons, the sick,
When He sends us out to speak
Hold in my pocket the breath
My grandson first breathed for me.
I read him stories I wrote
The swear words are colored gone.

A cop once told me, "Once a
Junkie, always a junkie."
I say, "He is a liar." ✍



Chinese Shadowboxing

in memory of my mother's father

Evelyn A. So

Rising each morning, he goes downstairs
and looks at Grandma's garden through
the glass porch doors. He sits to remove
his slippers before standing to face the sun,

breathing so deeply, I expect his breaths
to hang in the air, and cloud over, as if
winter herself had come indoors. I look up
from breakfast to see his hands and arms

cradle the sun before he steps backward
and pushes the air away to make a wall
he walks through, the shadow chasing his body. ✍



Daydreaming

Au-Co Tran

I missed my stop today
thinking of you.

The last time we were together:
your hand
with its jagged scar, like the stem of a rose,
from that time you fell off your bicycle,
rested on top of my head,
reminding me of how much smaller I am.

I put my hand on my head,
on the exact spot you touched.
In my imagination, your warmth still lingers.

The memory of your sweeping eyelashes,
constantly sleepy,
tickles my heart.

My own eyelashes sink,
dipping the whole of my mental body
into the caramel stickiness of you.

The sliding doors
remind me of your huggable arms:
strong and sure, neither long nor short.

Simply the perfect length
for being wrapped around
me.

I smile at the blurry reflection in the glass window:
long hair, wrinkly and tired,
lips curving into a shy smile,
eyes fogged over at the thought of you.

Then,
a nudge of recognition hits me
as I watch my stop roll past. ✍

∞

Drowning in Lemonade

Celeste Perryman

She sipped the lemonade and kind of made a face because it wasn't milk like usual, so she threw a fit and kicked her dad in the legs.

She sipped the lemonade because it was in a sippy cup, and she liked sippy cups so kicked her feet in delight.

She sipped the lemonade freshly squeezed with her hands after a long day selling 25 cent glasses, and then she kicked down her cardboard stand like a sandcastle.

She sipped the lemonade that was more lemons than ade and made pucker faces and kicked her legs along her friends because sour was cool.

She sipped the lemonade and immediately pulled down the sugar jar to add two cups of sugar, but stomped her feet because there was no sugar to be had.

She sipped the lemonade and put some water in because it had real sugar and she needed to watch her carbs before kicking feet up on the sofa.

She sipped the lemonade through a straw next to her boyfriend and kicked his feet playfully under the table.

She sipped the lemonade and cursed her husband for never making it right so she made a note to kick him out of the kitchen.

She sipped the lemonade and laughed because the kids never made it right, so she promised to show them how later, which they'd get a kick out of.

She sipped the lemonade and sighed because she realized it'd been watered down for the third time; she squeezed more lemon juice in to kick it up.

She sipped the lemonade because all there was left was a sip and she wondered when she could kick her hungry animal-like offspring out of the house.

She sipped the lemonade and realized it was her husband's stupid alcoholic lemonade again, so she kicked him out of the house.

She sipped the lemonade while looking over the letter she got from her husband and realized she got kicked to the curb.

She sipped the lemonade sourly while moving her things after being kicked from the guest room to the basement.

She sipped the lemonade and wouldn't give her grandson

any, so he kicked her in the shin.

She sipped the lemonade and kicked her feet up on a little stool in the rest home because it was the last place for her.

She sipped the lemonade and slowly shut her eyes, but accidentally kicked on the radio as the glass fell, so no one knew for awhile. ∞

∞

East Side

David X Brodsky

Orange stucco boasts of Mariscos,
interrupted
by purple tinted windows, hiding
inside cigarette smoking gangsters.
Coy fish engraved forearms throw
cards and half-scream curses
release the pent up tobacco smoke.

I drink coffee with Saigon survivors
staring through lingered and high heeled
waitresses, endlessly scratching scratchers.

I smell pho and ignore msg
and chew raw meat.
We drain ducks of their life
for psuedo-Italian
Vietnamese Pizza.

The 20,000 square-foot Sikh temple on the hill
was protested by the white neighborhood
at the bottom of the hill. They built it,
and it crowns the rise,
giving an Indian splendor
to my part of town priming
white washed fences
for new paints.



photo credit: Dat Cao

the television simulates
a Crypt Nobel Prize Winner,
Nortenos play rock, paper, scissors
with Sudenos
and my friend mixes
records, matching beats
for gunshots, wails
for riffs.

When the train wrecks the gunshots
don't line up and the crowd
slumps, and the dj
runs.
Today djs don't try much,
spinning compact discs,
kicking back with their hands behind their heads
and taking naps between mp3's.

The Israeli's wanted photographs
of the synagogue that was
made into a gymnasium,
the locker rooms still inscribed
with Hebrew letters. I told them
in America buildings change
all the time, but for money and
not by Cossacks.

I look through
the purple tinted windows at parking lots
filled with wanderers, and I wonder
if Saigon is anything like San Jose. ✍



photo credit: Felipe Yulis

∞

Fantasies from the Heart

Mary Boettcher

Fantasies sparkle through your mind
Clouds of dust twinkle and stick to your eyes.

Fire trembles in your mind, through your heart and soul
As your mind tickles you when you are dreaming and
reality is far away from you.

Weaker in your vision, your bones, and your voice
As you fall asleep and wait for another night's dream. ✍

∞

From Your Valor Chalice & Your Battle Phallus

TJ Flores

You might've seen a helicopter, I saw a dragon
dive bombin' Hamilton domes, mini-nukin' observatory
telescopes to nobody can see the stars like the first settlers
like cavemen like mountain & desert dwellers & gold
diggers.

Instead I melt glass into flying saucers into shapes more
necessary
in case of extraterrestrial takeovers & nuclear comb-overs.

Shards of glass will cover everyone!

Shards of glass will cover everyone!

Shards of glass will cover anyone!

Shards of glass will cover everyone

& I know no force field can shield me from these shards
'coz they're magnetic too, they'll suck the blood & iron
out of you,

from your mama, from your heart, from your valor chalice
& your battle phallus

slip in a "What the Fuck" shiver then
sniksniksniksniksnik

its over. It is far too late to recall the fleet but I can't
blame them

they're gonzo kamikaze anyway.

My moment of impact is cathartic!

My moment of impact is cathartic!

Our moment of impact is cathartic!

My moment of impact is cathartic!

a target crosshair on daycare centers, condo renters,
inventors

of Game over screens, hot dog vendors. Suck a sidewalk

missile! Suck this, astronomer! Don't tell me the truth! Believe me!

I seen it! in tailfire jet fuel rocketpod gasoline station security video of Cheetos & Pentagons & dollars of pigs & the irrefutable.

We will never meet eyewitnesses!

We will never meet eyewitnesses!

We will ever eat eyewitnesses!

We will never meet eyewitnesses!

under manhole covers misted w/ shit humidity & crocodile bile

misted w/ never & intoxicated with always always always & you saw the tunnel end & did nothing saw me crash nose first in the jungle & did nothing watched me shiver hogtied encuffed & did nothing safety off & careful with that Howitzer, Georgie Boy!

Careful with that cyanide, Chester!

Careful with that chainsaw, Charlie!

Careful with that axe, Eugene!

Careful with that blessing, Padre!

I

know you keep ledgers of legends of executioners masks to identify the executioners underneath & I admire the sincerity of your precise observations & documentations

though your methods are unsound, your sounds unsound, your squeaky briefcase unsound, the pen you padscratch & airdrum on the red nuke-the-world button unsound.

Breathe out 'coz time is frantic!

Bleed out 'coz time is frantic!

Greed out 'coz time is frantic!

Plead out 'coz time is frantic!

falling elevators, turbo escalators, mondo masturbatory monorails

packed w/ methoded-out OCD Slurpee babies hi on unsupervised

oxygen bar breathing apparatus visits from different kinds of Ultimate Warriors & babydaddys

chivalrous w/ intentions laced w/ honorable mentions skipped out on channel 2's news blues, just the facts, ma'am.

Brace for impact. ✍

∞

Gettysburg

Katie Smith

She remembers the chore of capturing this shot: climbing up numerous steep stairs of the steel tower, leg muscles burning, airways collapsing. At the top, panoramic view of this battlefield. Here the light and dark collide, the blood of the North and South stains soil. Ghostly visions of brothers fighting brothers while she is standing with her sisters remembering.

She stares at the picture of postcard quality. Fields various shades of green, clouds against light blue canvas float upward like helium balloons to a vaulted ceiling. Shadows displayed upon fresh grown grasses. Large hills in the far distance desire to protect, but defend in vain.

Bloodshed sees no purpose, other than to taint Mother Nature's beauty. Confederates fly their banners pridefully bloated with confidence. Union soldiers strike with silver bullets, faster than hawks snatch their prey. Individuals know their mission, both sides blinded by the goal.

Glancing at the photo, she sees the lone tree in the middle. ✍



photo credit: Dat Cao



Grounded

Emily Clark

Bark is nature's crumbling shield.
I climbed the tree and almost fell.

Paved walkways give in to the ground.
I walked the roads and almost fell.

The mountainsides are dusty slides.
I hiked the trail and almost fell.

The riverbank politely dips for you to dip.
I strolled the sand and almost fell.

Snow's purity covers the deceiving lands.
I trudged the snow and almost fell.

A bridge is a shaky promise between two soils.
I crossed the planks and almost fell.

You held my hand on dishonest terrain.
With open eyes, I fell. ✍



Holden

Au-Co Tran

When I was six,
you were my Popeye,
always ready, so ready,
to beat up the pudgy boy with crumpled hair
who mocked the slanty Asian eyes that I didn't have
and made me teach him the Vietnamese swear words
that I didn't know.

Now I'm twenty-one.
And you were never Popeye, were you?
You were just the nervous teenage boy
who checked tickets at Great America,
hands trembling whenever a pretty girl passed by.

You were supposed to be the Holden to my Phoebe,
letting me ride the carrousel on a cool autumn day
and taking me home when I was tired,
your protective hand wrapped around
my trusting fingers.

But you're not, are you?

Instead, you're just a boy
who mistakes himself for a man,
dragging a battered suitcase down
the empty street of our childhood home,

the cotton-ball blurs of the streetlights
like accidental blotches of yellow paint
in a cheap duplicate of some anonymous masterpiece,
hanging on the off-white wall of
a jaded motel room. ✍

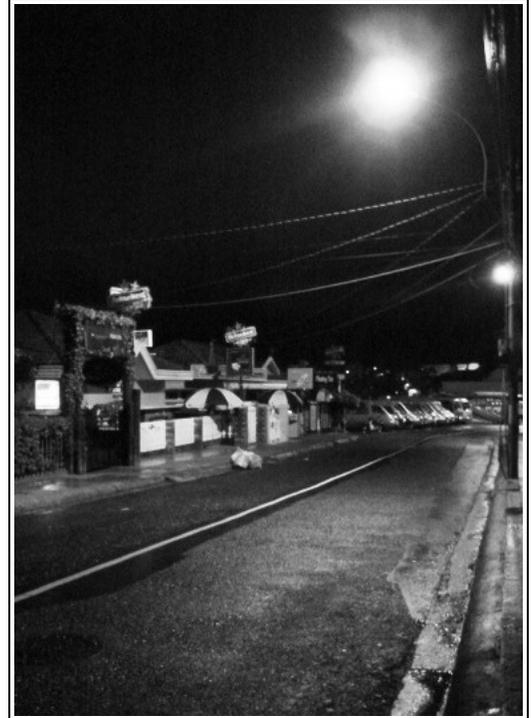


photo credit: Au-Co Tran



If You Give a Girl Some Chocolate...

Celeste Perryman

Diamonds, roses, chocolate, cards, dinner, and
A second round for the Irish drinking partner
That doesn't need a bunny's help to find her hidden egg
For reminders of mothers and fathers,
But smuggles in explosives for private light shows in
summer,

Are given to the pink princess by Dracula
So they can pretend to like family together
And bolster 4th quarter sales for each other
While Santa brings the New Year's baby. ✍



I Hate You, Kevin Costner

TJ Flores

but we have so much in common.

See, me & Kevin Costner can't stop
being ourselves.

He doesn't act.

He just is.

& just like Kevin

I don't act

I just is.

I'm nobody's bodyguard

& nobody's Wyatt

but at least I'm not the worst

Wyatt. or the worst Robin

Hood. & the best Wyatt

was an even better Elvis.

& the best Robin Hood

was an animated fox.

from Disney. & my mail is late &

I blame you, Kevin Costner.

I never fucked Rene Russo

I don't have webbed fingers

& toes & the wolves

I dance with will eat me & Yes,

I know who killed Kennedy.

Oswald? No.

It was Kevin Costner.

Me & Kevin Costner can't stop
being ourselves.

He doesn't act.

He just is.

& just like Kevin

I don't act

I just is. ✍



Night

K. Everal Schisler

The night is alive and young

We are eager and ready
Electricity crackles through our veins

Igniting the fire inside
Libidos and Egos ablaze

Where do we go?

What do we do?

We drift and float lazily
Into the nocturnal playground

Adventure and excitement dance in the air
And the atmosphere shines and sparkles with possibility.

Our youth cannot be tamed or caged,
We are dying to live.

We cannot be stopped
We boldly venture into the night. ✍



Organic Vacation

K. Everal Schisler

?How does it feel to enter another dimension?
To do away with all the tension
To break free from apprehension

Borders slowly melt away,
And there is only the light of today

I can sense the hidden beauty of reality
And my mind shifts into an alternate mentality

Memories surge and mingle
While extremities unwind and tingle

Closer to the natural rhythms of the earth
Like a child set free by birth

Laughing joyously with no end
As sobriety creeps around the bend

Soon this journey will conclude
And wake me from my blissful mood

The demons will come roaring back
To show me everything that I lack

They'll rub my shortcomings in my face
As I fall away from this safe and sacred place. ✍



photo credit: Felipe Yulis



Observations

Mollie Bloudoff-Indelicato

She noticed the horrors of the world. The failures, the inconsistencies of politicians, the wars, the racists, the rapes, murders, tears, those little twists and turns of fate that always seem to pick the innocent to wrong; pain... she noticed pain a lot. She noticed and cataloged them, filing them all away for future analysis when she had the strength to move past their immediate immoral countenances and into the root, the reason, the answer as to “why?”

She was always searching for answers, always digging deeper, always trying to see past the immeasurable sum of white lies that formed a thick web over the truth. Yes, she was always pursuing truth, and she would always be disappointed, always disillusioned. Time and time again

her inquisitions came up short, lacking any pure, exact motive because the fact remains that, in this chaos called life, there is no truth, there is... no... answer. But she couldn't bend her mind over the ultimatum any more than she could a complex algorithm, her synapses and neurons just didn't fire that way. It wasn't something that she could accept; it was an uneasy, nauseous feeling that wouldn't

let her rest, a force that drove her, reaching for a key she thought was just out of reach. Humanity was dying, soiling their minds and bodies with nothing more than everyday living, and it pained her that she, too, was being dragged down with them.

It was a harsh fate- to always question, always ask why. If she had only known the futility of it all she would have married right out of high school, dancing her life away at prom, giving her body to some crush in the back seat of a cramped pickup truck, her princess dress carefully hung in the front window, hiding the sin she knew she was committing behind layers of tulle and glitter. The irony of it all, being reckless and yet so safe.

She could have been content popping out kids, one after the other. Dissatisfied with her husband, as all such women invariably become, she could have run hard and gone to bed wet, finding solace in the arms of another, living her life from one impulse to the next, always cursing someone else, branding others with her mistakes so she would have someone to fight with when she woke in the middle of the night, head reeling, the truth of her actions coming full-circle back to her, finding their way home even after all of the back roads and detours she had sent them on.

No, it was when you quested, thirsted for the truth that you had to watch out. You remained forever young, unresolved, doubting, and let's face it, no one really wants to be cursed with such an irresolute, immortal reality.

It was a harsh existence and time was the only cure; it



photo credit: Dat Cao

would have salved her qualms long ago but for the fact that time was also the disease. It was the asinities of society that she did not understand; and the more classes she took, the more she studied, the more knowledge she collected, the more she practiced, worked, slaved, craved for answers, the less she knew.

So the list of disasters in her mind grew, catastrophes piled up in the catacombs of her psyche, cruelties dominated her thoughts, and she puzzled over them, taking each portion apart and trying to put the blurred pieces back together. Her mind was unrelenting, but the truth was impregnable and so she noticed; noticed but found nothing. ✍



photo credit: Kyle Schisler



Rule Number One

Mollie Bloudoff-Indelicato

“Rule number one, don’t sleep naked.”

My sister looked at me as if I were crazy. We’d been talking about college so I’d taken it upon myself to impart some words of wisdom upon her poor, uneducated high school brain. I, having one whoole year of college under my belt, was much more knowledgeable in the ways of the world, or at least dorm life!

“The best advice that I can give you for living out your freshman year in the dorms is pretty simple- don’t sleep naked.”

You’d think that people would understand this need to cover up certain, um, areas. But, surprisingly, the average person isn’t as intelligent as our state’s test scores make them out to be...

At three in the morning when the fire alarm goes off and you’re jolted awake by shrill blasts of the horn, (which is not quite as loud as the music at that frat party last night, nor really, if you think about it, as annoying, but hey, this

is cutting in on precious sleep time!) it’s helpful to have at least some semblance of clothing on.

The entire dorm scatters out onto the lawn, resident advisers yanking out the last of the stragglers. Of course, everyone is looking around, trying to figure out who that idiot was that interrupted my beauty sleep ‘cause “gosh darnit, I have a big party tomorrow night that I need to rest up for!” And there you are, pathetic, with one shoe, one sandal, sweatshirt and skirt-- the first articles of clothing that happened to be on the ground when you were herded out of the building.

Fire drills are nice times for the elite to show off their toned abs and sexy legs. Fire drills are nice times for the socially inept to show the world that they sleep in footsie pajamas, or worse, in nothing at all. Fire drills are also nice times for those aesthetically inclined to snap photos for the school website, Facebook and, my favorite, MySpace. Thank you camera phones!

But worst of all, people sleepwalk. People sleepwalk, naked. Guys that have never so much as turned over in their sleep all of a sudden find themselves halfway down the hall and in the common room. And while I’ve never witnessed such a spectacle firsthand, I’ve heard tell of such, shall I say, hilarious? disturbing? occurrences.

Now I’m not one to discourage those dumb enough to sleep bare and then bare it all (especially if it’s a good looking senior), but the sibling (however much I’d like the get her back for pushing me in the pool) doesn’t need to suffer through such terror.

So heed my advice. Just don’t do it. Even though the 300-thread count feels heavenly, akin to sleeping on a cloud. Even though liberation from the confines of such restricting clothing leaves your mind free to wander. Even though the luxurious cotton, extra-long dorm bed sized sheets are calling your name. Even though your roommate is gone for the weekend. Even though...

Oh, what the heck... go ahead, sleep naked. ✍



Sax Solo

Evelyn A. So

I’m waiting for the moment everything disappears. Hold on, it’s almost here. See the veins in her neck jump? See us about

to kiss each lick going
down smooth baby, you're so
good to me, I'll never
leave. And I want
to learn all her
names until we've run
out of words, the only
language's that which we
make without interference
from things like vowels
or consonants, no,
she's thrown all that
out, and nothing else
remains except come
closer, how do I, let me
count the ways, measure
for measure the two of us
wail, and her fingers
caress my stiff
neck, and I sigh. ✍



Sweet Liberty

Margie Brasil-Butaitis

I opened the door and there she stood with her flowing gown, her regal crown, and her flaming torch. I looked into her eyes and without saying a word, she beckoned me to have a taste of her luscious offerings. The rich texture of her chocolaty morsels on my lips was so decadent that a feeling of sinful, guilty pleasure overtook me. But I could not resist her white bits of heaven and slowly I sucked each piece until it all but dissipated on my tongue. I didn't stop until every last nibble of that sweet little pint was down my throat. Oh, sweet liberty!
How I love New York Super Fudge Chunk ice-cream. ✍



photo credit: Dat Cao



This and That

Doug Pearl

I crane my neck and crease my pant, I fold my arms and hold a slant, I fix my gaze and draw a breath, I scatter love and shatter death, I build a bridge and focus light, I feel a pain but it's alright, I tend to matters grave and

small, I won't set foot inside a mall, I pour some ale into a glass, I try to get up off my ass, I denounce war and all its lies, I fight like hell to sympathize, I ascertain the full extent, I pause along a steep ascent, I reach

the top but it's fogged in, I start to grouse then stop and grin, I spot a spire off in the mist, Mister Bush will not be missed, I dream a dream that's dramatic, I'm telling you it's got a kick, I denigrate my own beliefs, but I

don't care (not in the least), I polish off a Polish dog, now's not the time to go and jog, I squander peace and wander off, a wanderlust is what I've got, I sense some truth and feel afraid, I square my feet and in I wade, I bow

to you who keeps it real, integrity has great appeal, I grease the skids and break for tea, I love to watch a stormy sea, there's more to say but I'll abort, what a shame I've come up short... ✍



To the City

Amber Hedges

Dear San Francisco,

I hate you, I really do. I hate the cardboard signs perched in soggy homeless hands. I hate the smoggy rain that machine guns onto cracked sidewalks. I hate the Tenderloin junkies begging around painted alleys for a fix. I hate that the Golden Gate Bridge is so overrated. I hate that the hustle and bustle goes against the grain. I hate the idea of you being the gem of the west coast. Most of all, I hate that you're the only city I make sense in.

This all feels very self-deprecating, but I think I love you like a battered wife holds onto the hand that beats her. Every time I'm with you I finally feel like I belong

somewhere; I hate that I belong in such an inconsistent, backwards world, but maybe that's where I'm doomed to be. Maybe that's who I'm doomed to be: Forever twenty-one, thrift-store shopping, recycled-book reading, soy latte drinking, heart bleeding, counterculture seeking. I'm doomed to be someone angry with the world, yet so enamored by it at the same time. I wish I knew why you did this to me.

Maybe I've been reading too much *Tales of the City*, but the idea of you sounds more and more pleasing every day. I want to eat sushi off your stomach, pedal bicycles through your catacomb of hills, volunteer in your poorest parts, ride the Muni down the slope of your neck, drink gin and tonic in your Castro, smoke pot on your Tenderloin, and so many other things the San Jose just can't give me. My brain boils like a cauldron when we are together, San Francisco. Are you trying to kill me, or put me under your spell? Every time you promise lazy paddle boat rides in Golden Gate Park, or green milk tea in China town, you slap me across the face with unintelligible one-way streets and transsexual armpits and crotches pressed into me on the Muni. Why can't we spend time together with out the bondage and S&M?

What scares me the most is that I won't love you if I don't hate you. Sometimes the most tantalizing sex is mysterious and a little painful. Once I've gotten a taste, I may not want it taken away.

Would you be the same with out your imperfections? Would you feel so good if you stopped sinking your teeth into me when I least expect it?

God I want to spend more time with you. This relationship is so wrong, but it feels so right. When can we be together again?

Love,
Amber ✍

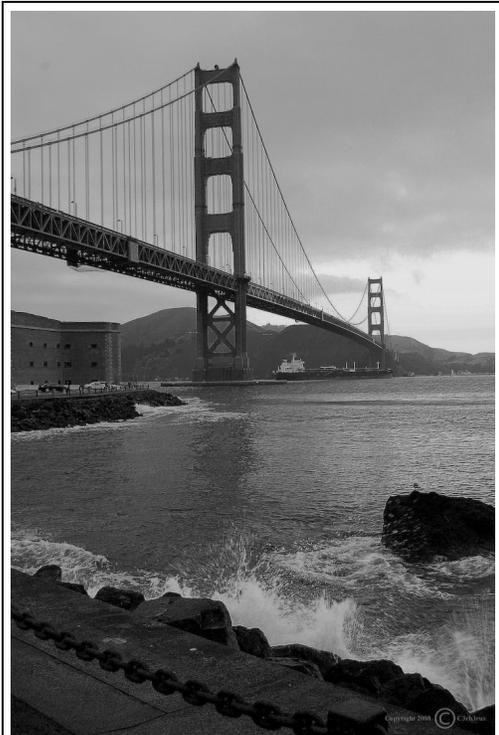


photo credit: Dat Cao



The Truth in Me

Mary Boettcher

I feel strong at times: full of bravery and courage as I walk down my road.

Inside: I feel hurt and stepped on all over and there is so much I can't afford.

I feel: I feel happy and content and knowing that everything will be alright.

Inside: I know that I am sad and uncomfortable and I am tired of this fight.

I am the person that I want to be.

It makes me feel wonderful and I don't care what people think of me.

I am my own person and even though I am not like everyone else.

I am tired of pretending now, making up lies and feeling like everything that I say is false.

Go ahead, and think what you want to think of me
Because I don't give a damn but this is going to be the new me that you see.

I am tired of hiding from you, I am tired of pretending to be something I am not

I am tired of impressing you, making you happy all the time, even though I am not.

You don't make me happy, I should be making myself happy

The truth in me is that I am proud of who I am
The religion that I have, how I look, how I dress

I am not here to ruin anyone's life,
What they believe in, what they see.

I see what I want to see and what I believe

You are not going to hurt me anymore because I am tired of being fucking irritated

You try to mess with my head and it is not going to work anymore

Stop this madness, I can't take it anymore.

You make me feel like there is no life in me

I am not allowed to live because of what you see.

You make me feel like I need to feel pain.

But there is so much life in me that need to be gained.

Go ahead, and burn me to death
Try to stab, do what you want with me
Because it isn't going to work this time
I will still be standing up, stronger than ever before
So try it, but you can't fuck with me anymore. ✍



Vantage Point

Patricia Kyle Putta

Sirens, singing a lullaby, beckon her to the sandy point.
Shining shells, the savor of Chartreuse and wine stains,
Glisten in the crunchy white sand.
Trailing robes of seaweed and kelp
Cling to her supple skin.
She dresses in Indian Princess' shells -
Radiant in the sun.

A tiara of starfish
Entwined with opened shells
Crowns her brow.
Visions wrap her in an oyster-pearl.
Adorned thus, the sky shimmers radiance,
Tunes of the sea enchant,
Shells underfoot touch cool and smooth.
The legends of sailors, the gifts of Aphrodite,
The wiser of long passing generations
Billow her soul beyond the horizon and back
Like the ebb- and flowing tides.
Small figure of a woman is embraced by the sea,
Nurtured by primordial waters.

By chance a fellow traveler on the well-trodden path calls to her
Full of questions and conventional wisdom:
"Why barefooted are you walking on the cutting sea's shore?
Why are you enshrouded in fly-covered seaweed?
Why do you scatter the remains of mollusks over your head?"

The woman pivots: once, twice, thrice.
Thus initiated, she beds down in the rolling sands
Illuminated by a translucent Cyclop's light.
Foamy waves gently lap over her cradling body,
Arm outstretched, she is lulled into slumber.
Dreams like Maids-In-Waiting attend to her.
Pristine symbols like sentinel guards stand watch
As Poseidon's gates swing wide.

Small figure of a woman
Lies crumpled on a rock cool hospital bed.
Dry eyes encrusted with sands, she rubs.
Still anesthetized, she vacillates.
Then rising like mercury in a thermometer,
Arms supported by arms attached to a white uniform
She sheds her sippy garments.

Phoenixlike in denim jeans and rusty red sneakers,
She silently slips from sterile sheets,
Fluffs the indented feathered pillow
Flies out of the flowerless room.
At the checkout desk
Two K in bucks
Shelled out of her breast pocket.
Costly abortion.
An electric eye
Opens the doors.
Hail a yellow Taxi.
Shades for an Arizona sun. ✍



image credit: Jessica Biell



A World of Disgrace

Mary Boettcher

We love to see the world fall apart
No one seems to care if there is destruction in the air.
Heaven is falling from the sky as angels are crying inside
After all the shit that has happened in the world, no one
seems to care.
Heroes everywhere try their best to fix up the mess from
all the corruption
They die with smiles on their faces as they descend and
part from the living world.

I believe in miracles
I believe in people who give a helping hand.
I believe in unity and people who stand up for what is right
I believe that everyone has innocence inside their souls.
Life is a journey, a puzzle we work on and explore
As we deteriorate and die, what is left of the puzzle but the
broken pieces just lying there on the floor. ✍

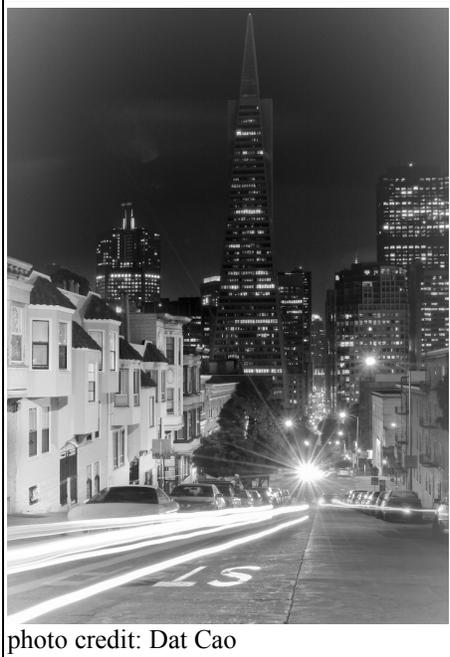


photo credit: Dat Cao

✍
Writer's Block
Amber Hedges

I have yet to find my place in the writing world. At twenty, I assume this is normal. *Write what you know* is the mantra espoused by every writing teacher I have worked with. They don't seem to realize that what I know is greatly affected by what I do *not* know. An unfortunate thought to barter with when betting your livelihood on one-upping fellow writers in the eyes of a publisher or a professor.

Writing came to me by accident. During my freshman year of college, I wrote a five-page autobiographical essay for an English professor. I spent a total of an hour and change on the paper, lying my way through the uninteresting parts. In retrospect, I assume she wanted the paper to be 'true', but I was not yet privy to the rules and regulations of creative non-fiction. Upon the essay's return, I nonchalantly turned toward the expected meaty comments on the paper. I had always been a decent writer; my grammar was correct, and I was pretty sure my spell check worked, so I arrogantly assumed an A. The A, the Oscar of the academic world, was handed to me on a

platter chiseled with more than a 'good job' or 'neat-o vocabulary choices'.

"This is the best student essay I have ever read."

The comment glared at me. I read it over and over again, relishing the slick red ink gracing my masterpiece. If it had lips, I would have kissed it. The professor had not just boosted my confidence, she had opened a door to furious ego masturbation: I was the *best* at something.

Several English literature and creative writing courses later, I am slowly coming to terms with the small chance that I am not, in fact, *the best* student essayist. I may get As on my work or win scholarships for especially poignant pieces, but I am by no means the best. Arrogance and self-absorbedness aside, I have been unwilling to take the plunge and fully accept this notion. Having counterfeited the confidence of my idols for so long, I found a spark of genuine self-assuredness in that comment. Granted, I took that confidence to the extreme—everyone makes mistakes. It didn't really hurt anyone but me in the end, though, because I focused so much on being Kerouac, Sedaris, Lewis, and Adams that my writing became a product of what I wanted to know, not what I knew.

When I look at the pieces I have written over the past four years, I sigh in relief. At least my writing is growing. The greatest fear of any artist is that their work will become stagnant and cliché; in this sense, I am lucky. I haven't experienced enough life to be shoved in a box, labeled, and sorted. All too often that's what happens with writers—they become a victim of their genre. I'd much rather float on a cloud of creative freedom, plucking through the idiosyncrasies of life and transplanting them to an eternal medium. If anything, I'm keeping a record of a grammar conscious twenty-something in the twenty-first century. That in itself should guarantee me a Pulitzer. ✍



photo credit: Dat Cao



Meet Your Writing Life Staff

Writer Mary Boettcher has a very interesting personality. She can be quiet and shy when she is far away from you, but once you get to know her, she is very loud and funny. She is more like Goofy in a way. She is a child at heart and she may look like a child, but she is older than how she acts. She loves to write poetry, more angry poems than happy ones, but hey, she is older now and she has a lot of responsibilities, so why not be pissed and frustrated at times? The ironic thing is that even though she loves to write, she is really bad at writing essays and research projects. She loves to read a lot of romantic and horror stories. Reading about other people having drama in their lives makes her feel better because it makes her feel like her life is not all that bad.

Writer and photographer Celeste Perryman enjoys tweaking language to meet her creative ends, including promoting the use of –sauce as an intensifier for nounsauces and adjectivesauces. Either her love of drawing in manga styles or her disdain of most American cartoons these days drove her to love anime of all sorts and many other things related to Japan. When she isn't busy racking debt on her library card with overdue manga, she often relishes cavorting around as BanditoBurrito on the game Kingdom of Loathing.

Writer and layout artist Jessica Purcell is very tired, since she has been spinning countless plates on sticks for the majority of the semester. She is more of an observer, and can think of no better fate in an Youtube-enabled Andy Warhol epoch than 15 minutes (or more) of anonymity. In her spare time, she reads tomes that have nothing to do with school or work but contain more pages than her textbooks for this semester, leading both observers and loved ones with the overwhelming question of, "Why?", to which she can give no other answer than, "Because it sounded interesting."

Writer and photographer Kyle Schisler is a student in post-baccalaureate limbo, pleading with the spirits of English to allow him into the kingdom of graduate school. He enjoys high altitude knitting and underwater scrapbooking. Kyle is also an avid fan of Sri Lankan ostrich racing. He is married to the Grand Duchess of Rhode Island. Together they have raised a pair of radioactive cats who are capable of performing advanced trigonometry in zero gravity environments. To support himself Kyle works as a quality control specialist for a company that manufactures adult

diapers. After getting his masters degree in English, Kyle plans to annex the state of California and turn it into the world's largest bocce ball course.

Writer and photographer Au-Co Tran aspires to be a waitress at a sidewalk café in a small fishing village (not unlike that of Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea*) near the southern coast of Viet Nam. Her maturity level ranges from that of a five year old girl to a twelve year old boy. She likes orange peanut M&M's, multiples of ten, and spinning around in office chairs. She dislikes long walks on the beach, tomatoes, and the phrase "cracked ribs." She is also the cheesiest, most clichéd romantic you will ever meet. ✍

All the pieces contained in The Writing Life are the intellectual property of their respective creators. All pieces that were submitted for The Writing Life were reviewed by the staff for acceptance and not all pieces recieved were included. While pieces by the staff were also reviewed, those pieces are included as part of the writing requirement for English 129, Career Writing. ✍



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