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Editors' Notes

-- Kyle

As Shakespeare once wrote, "All the world's a stage," and every single second of each minute in every hour of each day, the entire spectrum of our human existence is played out around us. Someone is born and somebody dies; somebody laughs while another one cries. This constant unfolding of events happens whether or not we are watching, which is why one comedian's remark seems apropos: "It's amazing that the amount of news that happens in the world every day always just exactly fits the newspaper."

In this issue of NOO Journal, I would like to bring to the foreground two important topics that recently haven't received much press: ethanol and immigration. And although they may seem unrelated, both issues deal with the security and prosperity of our nation and are critical areas in need of improvements. For the topic of immigration, we've tried something new. There are two essays, one in favor of tougher immigration standards and one against them. In the spirit of healthy debate, I hope that you, the reader, will take the time to consider them both, as well as voice your own opinion, either by commenting online at our website or by submitting your own essay. As for the article on ethanol, well, I'll let you be the judge, but please weigh in your verdict at www.noojournal.com, so I'll know if I'm guilty of hot air.

I would also like to take a moment and thank my Co-Editor, Mike Young, for his brilliant work and perseverance in putting this journal together. Without him, this would not be possible.

(Mike's note on Kyle's note: And I would like to thank Kyle for his work, tireless sincerity and commitment. We are like spaghetti and sauce.)

-- Mike

Please know this: when I visit you, I will take delight in your bathroom ornaments. A truckstop restaurant south of Dunsmuir, CA keeps a talking mannequin in a bathtub. I keep a little circus of pet ants near my plunger, just in case my guests get lonely. But things can go awry. My friend Dale used to put really spooky-looking carrot cake in his soap dish. Like, instead of soap. He would encourage me to eat it if I were feeling sad. He is not my friend anymore. His hands have turned orange.

My friend Chris, who is still my friend, has a calendar with this saying: "Years know more than books." He's also got this weird Gumby doll that straddles the light switch, but what am I, some sort of *bathroom detective*? Honestly.

This issue closes NOO's first year of life as a magazine (which is sort of like a book). Between July '05 and July '06, we hammered out four issues, fed local and international readers with local and international fiction and poetry, and attempted to engender debate through well-honed political essays and monologues. It makes me stutter to hear how many people have smiled. But in lieu of further anniversary-conjured self-worship, I will now share with you some of my year's *stunning* wisdom. Over these last twelve months, I treated my days like maple trees, drilling several pints of insights from each. Hark! Only four of these can I afford to part with, for I am very thin, and wisdom contains protein.

First: cheap mandolins will not stay in tune.

Second: things can be a lot of things at once. This summer has bewildered me. One afternoon in July I rode a bicycle past clean palm trees and suntans, and I couldn't stop singing about war.

Third: many people are trying to become famous *before* they die. This seems like it might stress you out. Some of these people own guitars. Some pay a high amount for haircuts.

Finally, to meet incredible writers and readers, to exchange emails and art with strangers, to offer people **BAD B♥RTV** for a good cause, to see our efforts applauded next door and across oceans, to be stopped in hallways and stalked online just so people can thank you—it all feels quite awesome. Kind readers: many thanks for your comments and snide remarks and laughter and support. We need to throw a giant party that will dent the strain of our world. In the meantime, read what we've done here at NOO to launch our second year. Cut out a story or poem. Crumple it up. Put it in a bowl near your bathroom sink. Light a fake plastic candle. Use air freshener that smells of pine and nutmeg, and pretend that you live inside of a pie. Give away something you love to your friend. Don't waste your time thinking what people shout. Form a contest between the year and this magazine to *prove* which can teach you more. Read our first four issues online and see what we've tried to build and continue to fortify. Keep your friends from feeling lonely, take delight in what you can sift from the world, and please refrain from making cake, Dale. Please. I will give you a hug. And a pet ant.

Immigration: The "Problem" Is The Solution

-- Jay Harrison

A Shortage of Willing Workers

A daily commute from work is about eleven miles for me. I live in a small Louisiana town named Jeanerette, and commute to a larger town, New Iberia. We are in the middle of sugarcane country and were affected by both hurricanes Rita and Katrina. For many decades this has also been a region affected by the oil industry.

Lately, on that short daily commute, I have seen more and more advertisements popping up, with signs that read, "Now Hiring!" But the industries advertising are not the normal casinos or companies looking for temporary summer help. They are larger companies, now having to resort to advertise for workers because they face a severe shortage of skilled and unskilled laborers in two very important fields: construction and the oil industry. And there is only one solution: we need more workers.

The construction industry has many areas being influenced by the shortage of willing workers. Road repair has always been slow, and we are accustomed to the slothful progress, but many coastal regions need new roads. Numerous roads also need to be widened, as each hurricane season it becomes evident that there are not enough multilane highways to provide safe and quick evacuations. Any state that borders a major saltwater body needs these highways, and inland states also need larger highway systems to prepare for the incoming evacuees.

However, road construction is not the only construction area having difficulties due to worker shortage. Building construction is also far behind schedule, and all three types—industrial, commercial, and residential—are being affected. Many commercial and industrial companies' new offices, warehouses, and other facilities have been put on hold. The sites have been purchased, the plans drawn, and the money for the projects allocated, but they just have to wait on the waiting list. It is a first come first serve business. Even the construction of new schools is being delayed, and there are not enough schools to service the students, leading to larger class sizes and the subsequent difficulties for educators and students.

The third area of construction affected by the labor shortage is the residential sector. My sister is buying a newly constructed house that was scheduled to be finished in October of 2005, despite the delays of both hurricanes. But, as of the month of June in 2006, it is still not completed. **There are just too many homes to build and not enough carpenters and other specialists to finish them.**

Not only is construction behind on preexisting projects, but there are new homes that must be built to replace those destroyed by disasters, and this same pinch is being felt throughout the whole United States. New construction workers are desperately needed, as almost all areas of life are being affected.

Even the fields that provide resources for construction are suffering. My father is a dump truck driver and works for an aggregate company delivering primarily limestone. There are

many grades of limestone, from very fine limestone needed for agriculture to larger limestone necessary for the early stages of construction sites. Much larger pieces of limestone are even used to prevent estuary and coastal erosion. However, there is currently a shortage of limestone because we need more people to mine and excavate the material. When there are no barges of limestone to be unloaded and the limestone starts to run out, my father is out of work. **When he is out of work, construction sites and farmers do not get the products they need, and more people skilled in very specific areas are temporarily laid off.** So the limestone excavating field is yet another field where we could use more workers.

There is also a critical shortage of oil field workers. In Louisiana and Texas, there are three main areas where drilling occurs: on land, the continental shelf, and the deep sea, and all three are seeing a shortage of workers. Jack up rigs, platforms, floaters, and inland barges in the marshes and swamp lands are all mini-towns on the water. While most just think of the roughnecks and drillers, there are so many more laborers on drilling rigs: crane operators, roustabouts, tool pushers, welders, electricians, motormen, mechanics, safety personnel, cooks, galley hands, BR hands, mud engineers, mud loggers, and so on. And these are just a few examples of who works on a drilling location. Materials and personnel must also be delivered to and picked up from the drilling location, which requires helicopters for lightweight cargo and crew boats and cargo boats for heavier cargo, each manned by roustabouts, captains, first mates and mechanics. **There are hundreds of service companies providing various services in the petroleum exploration industry, and they all share one thing: a shortage in the willing workers department.**

Why is the oil exploration industry so important? Just look at how much we pay to fuel our vehicles and heat our homes. The price of gasoline has doubled and almost tripled since I bought my 2001 Cavalier. We have the oil reserves available; we just need to explore and tap into these reservoirs. I was a mud logging engineer for almost thirteen years, and there is plenty of petroleum available to sustain America's hungry consumption rate for hundreds of years more. We can explore and produce the petroleum products while we are developing alternative fuels, such as ethanol made from sugarcane. But whether we rely on traditional resources or explore alternatives, we will always require workers.

An Increasing Population Needed

Many of the self-proclaimed "progressive" nations are facing another potential problem. There has been a major push to limit the amount of children couples can have. Some countries have pushed this so much that they have even imposed strict taxation on couples who go over the quota of allowed children. A nation that puts regulations on the maximum number of children allowed is putting itself in peril. The modern definition of responsibility has somehow been perverted to say that smaller families are more responsible.

But future generations are being faced with an increasing retired population and a decreasing contributing population. This disparity puts programs like Social Security at risk. The ratios provided by the Social Security Administration explain:

Social Security's financing problems are long term and will not affect today's retirees and near-retirees, but they are very large and serious. People are living longer, the first baby boomers are nearing retirement, and the birth rate is low. The result is that the worker-to-beneficiary ratio has fallen from 16.5-to-1 in 1950 to 3.3-to-1 today. Within 40 years it will be 2-to-1. **At this ratio there will not be enough workers to pay scheduled benefits at current tax rates.**

It is time to start thinking of our country's future. An increasing retired population and a decreasing contributing population can mean only two things: our children and grandchildren will give up huge portions of their income to accommodate our needs, and the benefits the retired currently enjoy will be severely slashed. America needs an increasing population of workers who will contribute to save and stabilize our social programs.

Immigration To Solve These Challenges

Once I listened to a speaker complaining about how Mexicans are the laziest people around. A few minutes later he said that he was so mad that the Mexicans were taking all of the jobs. How do these go together? True, our nation is faced with major challenges, but we also have a solution right in front of us. That solution is to rebuild our wonderful nation through the concept on which it was founded: diverse immigration.

I have lived by Mexican families. When my family and I lived in Arkansas, we resided in a primarily African-American and Mexican-American neighborhood, where we were actually

the minorities. We enjoyed the experience and the Latin music played on weekends. Our neighbors were very protective of us. **It is time to stop looking at our neighbors as unwanted invaders, but as part of us.**

The Mexican immigrants can help with the challenges we face. An increase in oilfield workers can help produce more petroleum products and create lower gas prices. Having more workers in construction can result in more affordable housing. More workers can build the roads faster to provide a quicker and safer evacuation from approaching natural disasters. More retirement funds can be made available by legalizing immigrants and having them contribute to Social Security.

Legalizing immigration will also help our economy. Instead of spending so much money trying to keep immigrants out, we can find better places to spend the funds, possibly even reduce taxes due to extra contributions.

The United States of America is built on diversity and character. Think of our nation as a flavorful gumbo with many exciting ingredients. Now, a good gumbo has a variety of spices and seasonings, and our various cultures are the spices that make our gumbo so good. There were many reasons why immigrants originally came here, those who came across the Atlantic and those who came across the Bering Strait. Some sought to escape religious persecution. Some came for the thousands of miles of open land, leaving Europe to its cluttered accumulation of civilizations. America has always offered hope and a fresh start to those outside looking in. Even today, there is no less opportunity than when our nation began.

So it is time to stop the "us versus them." We are a big family and can use the additional family members. Let America be as it was at the beginning. Let the United States be that beacon of hope we call ourselves. We will be a great diverse nation, with more opportunities for all. Adding the Mexican immigrants to our melting pot is the recipe for an awesome American gumbo.



'No Fence' / © 2006 Kyle Peterson

How to Reverse Illegal Immigration in America

-- William Gheen

Illegal immigration in the United States can never be fully stopped; however, it can be reversed. We can greatly reduce the number of aliens that attempt to enter America illegally by reversing this flow with remedies that already exist in United States law. There is a large consensus of support from the American citizenry for the implementation of these remedies to illegal immigration.

Unfortunately, there is a state of non-enforcement of laws, made possible by politicians, greedy corporations, and racially motivated industries that represent less than 10% of the US population, yet wield a great deal of power and influence.

Simply put, America needs to enforce existing laws. Political and media pundits are constantly expounding upon our need to send the right messages to terrorists. Why is it then that many of those same pundits send the wrong message to illegal aliens?

Only by reversing the flow of illegal aliens can we lower pressure on the border. The message we need to send? That America is not open, accommodating, or receptive to those who disrespect our laws and citizenry by entering as illegal aliens. The best messengers to carry this news would be millions of illegal aliens returning to their legal homes, to the nations they are citizens of.

Those who favor open borders and unrestricted immigration into America are constantly offering false dichotomies. They say "Well, do you want to secure the border or focus on interior enforcement?" or "Why are you not focusing on fining employers that hire illegal aliens?" The truth is that we should and must do all of the above. These same apologists for illegal aliens are the same political forces that are sending the message "Come to America and we will not enforce our laws. In fact, we will simply legalize you with the stroke of a pen and enroll you into a Guest Worker Amnesty Program. There you have it! No more illegal aliens."

We need to do many things to reverse the flow of illegal aliens and create the proper market pressures for many of them to leave on their own volition. Our efforts must be on every level of government: federal, state, and local. **The four things we must do are: (1.) Secure our Borders. (2.) Crack down on employers that intentionally hire illegal labor. (3.) Remove all benefits such as licenses, in-state tuition, and welfare for illegal aliens. (4.) Empower local police to enforce immigration law.**

Broad consensus exists for these measures, as multiple, national and local polls show over 80+% support for each one. From these multiple examples of support, we can see that the American public not only supports these measures, but American citizens are dismayed to discover that each facet has been compromised by influential political minorities.

The current administration in Washington is quick to point out that we are spending more than ever on border security resources. They do not like to mention the fact that over two thirds of our border patrol agents have poor morale because they are being prevented from doing the job they have been sent to do.

We can secure our borders by mounting pressure for the White House to rescind the current orders for our border patrol to only "catch and release" illegal aliens caught at the border. Mexican nationals caught entering the US should not be dropped off just across the border so they can try again the next night. They should be detained, identified, and told that a second crossing attempt is a felony. They should then be handed over to the Mexican government to be returned to their homes. A Congressional inquiry is needed to ascertain why these insane and useless directives are in place and why most of the border sensor technology the taxpayers have paid for is not in place or operational.

Fining employers is essential, and once again supported by over 80+% of the American public. In 1999, only 400 employers were fined for hiring illegal labor. **Under George W. Bush in 2004, Immigration and Customs Enforcement issued three intent letters but issued zero fines.** The green light has been given to every business in America that they can hire illegal aliens without fear of enforcement. Thankfully, many states are now training and hiring agents to enforce fines against employers in the absence of the federal government honoring its Constitutional responsibilities to the citizens of America.

Removing incentives to illegal aliens can be tricky. The Open Borders Lobby are using children and anchor babies as human shields to obtain benefits such as in-state tuition grants. No American should be forced to pay for services to foreign nationals. Each state and federal elected official must know that illegal aliens should not be given licenses, in-state tuition, mortgages, bank accounts, welfare, or any other benefit short of emergency medical care and law enforcement accommodations before they are deported.

Empowering local police to enforce immigration law is essential, but currently there is confusion about enforcement by local police. Most departments do not realize that Federal law passed in 1996 already allows them to take action. That is why many cities and states are already training their officers for enforcement. Both local political will and funding must exist to set this in motion.

Now picture yourself as an illegal alien in an America where the existing laws are enforced, border patrol is allowed to do their job, employers are fined, benefits have been restricted, and the local police are now involved. Are you getting the message?

Illegal aliens would have trouble finding employment and services. They would know if they were deported that getting back in would be more difficult than ever, and if they were caught by police for crimes—drinking and driving, or driving without a license—they would be immediately placed in the deportation line and local officers would be sent to their residence to determine the status of others living at that location. **There is no need for mass deportation, random sweeps, or draconian house-to-house searches.**

If these measures are put in place, our illegal alien population will shrink instead of grow. This will also allow the

to have some adjustment time. It took us years to get into this crisis and it will take years to get out. There will be some pain in the process, but **we can send the illegal aliens home on air conditioned, first class buses stocked with diapers, refreshments, and baby formula, to satisfy the most tender-hearted Americans.**

I often say in my speeches that "A chair without four legs is not a chair." We must do these four things. This is a true and holistic immigration reform. If we implement, as a nation, these four measures, millions of illegal aliens will begin to leave the United States of America. Some will have to be helped on their way through deportation, but we do not have to deport twelve million. We can engage in enforcement through attrition. I've dubbed this "chair" the Krikorian Chair in honor of Mark Krikorian, from the Center for Immigration Studies. I am an admirer of Mr. Krikorian's work, and one day I observed him facing down an Open Borders opponent on television by stating that **we need both border security and internal enforcement.** Mark then pointed out that a stool needed more than one leg to be effective.

Mr. Krikorian has pointed out that illegal aliens, in a sense, are migrants. This means they move from place to place. Those of us following this issue in the media have watched how illegal aliens chose states based on enforcement trends and benefits

and how they start to leave a town when local officials crack down. Many of our illegal aliens will migrate back to the land they know if we implement Krikorian's Chair and send the correct message, which is "Illegals Go Home!"

Another good analogy to use is being in a boat that has holes in the hull and is taking on water. Much like America, the boat will remain afloat for awhile but then pass a point where she starts to sink rapidly.

Right now, we are taking on much more water than we are bailing out. We need to plug some of the holes to reduce the flow of water. We need to increase the amount of water we are bailing out. We need to throw unneeded cargo weight off of the boat to alleviate pressure. Only when this is done will the situation improve for us.

Most importantly, we need to identify those that have punched the holes in our boat and are standing there saying "let's allow all of the water to stay in the boat and more to come in!" These captains of doom need to be removed from political office, positions in the media, and positions of political influence. **Only then will the effective reversal of illegal immigration begin.**



'Sleeping Giant' / © 2006 Kyle Peterson

Kicking the Habit: Part II: A New Fix

-- Kyle Peterson

In 1789, our greatest founding father, Thomas Jefferson, wrote: "The earth belongs to the living; no man may by natural right oblige the land he owns or occupies to debts greater than those that may be paid during his own lifetime." If this principle can be thought of as generational tyranny, than the United States' addiction to oil equates to oppression. Our dependence on oil forces us down an unsustainable path, placing the nation's political, economic, and environmental health at risk and therefore threatens the longevity of America and the prospects of our posterity. If we are to secure our future, as a nation, we must begin to conserve and increase the efficiency of energy use, especially in the transportation sector, while developing our vast wealth of alternative resources.

Currently, with only 5% of the world's population, the United States uses more than 20 million barrels of oil each day, approximately one-fourth of the world's production. Over half of that amount is imported and roughly 25% comes from the Persian Gulf. According to Milton Copulus, president of the National Resource Defense Council, the true price of these imports when factoring in direct and indirect economic costs, disruptions in oil supply, and military expenditures, currently cost our nation \$825.1 billion annually, **which if paid at the pump would raise gas prices by \$5.04!**

The situation will worsen by 2025, when our level of consumption will have risen to nearly 30 million barrels of oil per day, with imports making up as much as 70% of that amount. Over this same period, developing nations around the globe, most notably China and India, will also be increasing their own oil use and world demand will rise from its 2004 level of 84 million barrels a day to 111 million barrels (EIA AEO 4). Supplies are predicted to remain tight, which will increase competition, and considering political situations in oil producing nations like Iran and Venezuela, our dependence on oil makes us extremely vulnerable. So if all this is true, then why haven't we weaned ourselves from oil?

The main reason is that until the recent spike, low pump prices and the abundance of oil have limited consumer demand for and stunted the development of fuel efficient vehicles and alternative fuels. Consider for a moment that one hundred years ago **Henry Ford designed the Model T to go 25 miles per gallon and run on ethanol**; his vision was to "build a vehicle affordable to the working family and powered by a fuel that would boost the rural farm economy." Today, few domestic automobiles, including Ford's, are that efficient, and the ethanol industry has yet to develop outside of the Midwestern United States.

However, now that the price of gasoline in many parts of the country is well over \$3 per gallon, consumers, auto manufacturers, and oil companies are beginning to shift their attention toward fuel economy and alternative fuels. This ability of our economy to respond quickly to growing demand through innovation is one of the more remarkable facets of America and one that the authors of the book *Winning the Oil*

Endgame hope will be capitalized upon as we move away from an oil economy.

In their book, Amory B. Lovins and E. Kyle Datta, who are researchers at the Rocky Mountain Institute, outline a strategy that could **eliminate dependence on oil completely by 2040**. Their plan calls for a four-pronged approach. First, double the efficiency of using oil. This will happen by fully applying today's most efficient technology, an investment that will cost only \$12 per barrel, less than half of projected oil prices, which by their 2004 estimate was \$26 dollars per barrel.

The main component of this part of their strategy consists of developing ultralight vehicle designs using advanced carbon or light-weight steel materials. Currently, a typical recent year production car receives about 28 miles per gallon (mpg). Not bad, right? However, 85-87% of the energy used is lost just as heat and noise through the power-train (i.e. the engine, pollution controls, and transmission system, which applies torque to the wheels) and only about 17% ever reaches the wheels. Since 6% of that is needed to accelerate the car, only 12-13% is used to move 95% of the vehicle's mass (driver excluded), which means that less than one percent of the energy contained in a gallon of gas is used to move the actual driver! (46)

Not only will an ultralight design double fuel efficiency, but it will also increase performance and safety. And, contrary to popular belief, **a lighter vehicle is not less safe than a heavier one**. For instance, a global consortium of 33 steel companies reported in 2002 that a new ultralight steel auto body design employing extra-strong steel alloys and innovative structures would double fuel economy and improve safety at no additional cost! (55) In addition, carbon composites, made up of polymer resins that bind embedded glass or other reinforcing fibers, can be easily shaped into structures that absorb more crash energy per pound than steel or aluminum, while reducing the vehicle's weight by as much as 65% (56). The report outlines many other ways to create energy savings like reducing drag and using the most efficient power train and hybrid technology, and not one of these improvements require sacrificing an attractive design. Also, this shift toward greater efficiency would give new life to the U.S. auto industry and boost the economy.

The second part of the strategy is to develop biofuels, like ethanol and biodiesel, both of which are made from organic materials. For instance, most ethanol is made from corn, beets, wheat, and even cheese whey and waste from the beverage, brewery, and wine industries. However, when looking at carbohydrates, these are all starches, and new developments will soon reduce production costs and allow many cellulosic biomass feedstocks, such as sugar cane, rice straw, forest residue, sawdust, paper pulp, sludge and waste, municipal waste, and dedicated crops like milo, switch grass, prairie grass and fast growing poplar trees, to be converted to ethanol on a mass scale. All these sources are renewable and many are

recycled material that would otherwise go unused.

There are also many useful by-products from the production of ethanol which will help to recover the costs of production. For instance, ethanol from corn creates distiller's grain, an excellent source of animal feed, as well as corn oil, corn syrup, and CO₂ gas which can be captured and sold. From cellulose feedstocks, by-products like ash and gypsum are created, which can be used as fertilizers, replacing harmful chemical fertilizers currently used. Also, lignin, which is most of the remaining dry mass, can be dried and burned to fuel the fermentation process needed to make the ethanol. At one ethanol facility planned for Middleton, New York, David Webster of the company Masada Oxynol says that **enough lignin will be collected onsite to make the plant self-sufficient in energy!** (Greer)

Ethanol's many proven qualities make it an excellent way to displace oil. For instance, ethanol can be mixed with gasoline up to 95%, and as many as 1.2 million vehicles on the road today are already equipped with a microchip and fuel system that will allow them to run on blends of as high as 85% without any difficulty (Greer). This fuel burns cleaner and removes fuel deposits from engines. Ethanol also emits less pollution, and researchers at the Argonne National Laboratory found that an 85% blend of cellulosic ethanol reduced greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 102% (Wang et al 2).

A commonly held myth about ethanol is also that it would take all the farmland currently in use and more to satisfy our

fuel demands. However, the researchers at the Rocky Mountain Institute report in their findings that by 2025, approximately 9.5 quadrillion BTU per year, the equivalent of 4.6 million barrels of oil a day at a cost of \$36 dollars per barrel, could be provided without a major impact on the current agricultural system (Lovins 104). Additionally, by 2012, an annual production of 5 billion gallons of ethanol—only 1.8 times larger than production in 2003—would displace 1.6 billion barrels of oil, cut \$34 billion from the trade deficit, create 214,000 new jobs, generate \$5 billion of new investment, boost farm income by \$39 billion, and save the budget \$11 billion in farm subsidies (109).

Unfortunately, there is not enough space to discuss the remaining parts of the strategy in *Winning the Oil Endgame* or the other merits of biofuels. Perhaps the reader will be interested enough to get a copy of the report for themselves and join us online at www.noojournal.com as we debate this critical issue. It is suffice to say that there are many ways to reduce our dependence on oil by encouraging innovation through incentives and not through heavy regulation. **Our nation is on the brink of a new energy revolution, but we need a push from all those who see the importance of creating a better world**, not only for ourselves, but for future generations, since it is they who will inherit the world we leave behind.

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You

to

NOÖ: Monologues

--featured pieces mostly "concerning" "current" events

So, So, So, So Primitive

-- Brian Beatty



Strangers often assume that I'm Amish or Muslim or some backwoods nut with a 40,000 word manifesto and a plan to topple the government. Or else they're convinced I'm in the Witness Protection Program. That I've seen more than my fair share of criminal activity, including a few grisly mob executions, is just a bizarre coincidence. But does anybody ever believe me? Of course not.

You think your life is hard? Try having a beard sometime.

You've not been the victim of discrimination until an old lady has called your facial hair a chin mullet.

Many people believe that my beard is a lifestyle choice I've made and must be forced to live with—like a punishment. I can assure you that that's not the case. My beard is inherent to my genetic make-up as a man at the mercy of his overwhelming testosterone and laziness.

It's also a hereditary curse that goes back countless generations. My parents and grandparents all had beards, as did their parents and grandparents before them.

The most basic understanding of biology would seem to suggest that my beard is entirely natural, not the aberration many choose to fear as if I'm a sasquatch or werewolf arrived in town to eat their babies.

Fortunately, I've been able to earn an honest living despite my hirsute DNA. I entertain little kids.

I wouldn't have my job portraying the caveman at the children's museum if it weren't for my beard. There are days I can't suck down liquids fast enough and I pass out under the brutal stage lights, but paid, professional acting gigs don't come along every day. And it's only a matter of time until I'll be able to leave Indianapolis for New York or L.A.

I've been told I make a super-convincing caveman. Especially when I grunt.

And if the acting thing doesn't work out, there's always Plan B: my standing invitation to join ZZ Top. Whenever I'm ready, the guys say they'll teach me "Cheap Sunglasses" and "Sharp Dressed Man" and "Tush" on my bass clarinet. In return, I'll teach them to play chess.

Maybe that's why strangers eye my beard with suspicion. They'll probably never have the opportunity to be paid, professional actors. Nor are they likely to be asked to become the fourth member of a legendary Texas boogie band.

You'd think society could be happy for a guy with a beard, but apparently not. Clean-shaven people would rather spend their days asking stupid questions and bad-mouthing whatever their primitive brains can't comprehend.

Games & Graphics

-- Pieter Brueghel the Elder and Bryan Coffelt

Please play

The NOO Journal Classic
Artwork Scavenger Hunt of

Pieter Brueghel
the Elder's

"Malevolent Landscape
with an Allegorical
Figure of Patience"

and peruse

Bryan Coffelt's
comic adventure:

the ever smug
Sorry! game piece.

i am modeled after the inherent
properties of a drop of rain
falling into a body of water.
you are all byproducts of
a well-fed society.

© 2006 Bryan Coffelt (bryancoffelt.blogspot.com)



PATIENTIA EST MALORVM QVÆ AVT INFERVN TVR, AVT ACCIDVNI, CVM ÆQVANIMITATE PERLATIO . LaP. Int. L. 6.



CAN YOU FIND:



- The axe hanging from a pole
- The baby bird dressed as a monk
- The ram with an empty chalice
- The demon playing a lute with his toes
- The right hand holding a wilting flower
- The horse on a rowboat
- The bunny demon
- The two birds aimed for a man's eyes
- The two toad spectators and one toad adventurer
- The flying fish above the smoke
- The man late to the knife-loading
- The moth demon
- The fish-boat's arms
- The two lovers in the tree
- The boar sneaking away from the spit
- The food chain that begins with a sad water creature and ends with a sword
- The sunrise
- The head that billows smoke
- The two tiny birds by a jug
- The demon with the bee bum

Mark the fruit when you find the item

In the Catholic tradition, patience is one
of the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit

TICKET

-- Claudia Smith



My husband works at a Dollar Tree, night shifts, after he works selling software. We live near the woods on the edge of the burbs. Our car is dead, and we can't afford gas anyway. He's one of those men you see walking along the freeway, wearing long sleeves in the heat of August, cheap tie, sweat trickling down his neck. We keep getting ourselves into trouble. For breakfast, generic cereal. For lunch, an egg. The only way to get him to lose weight is to get broke. I work in the same mall, Landmark Place. I'm a barista. Frothing lattes. It's only for now. We play the lotto. I've told him the lotto is throwing a penny into a fountain, but that's it. We aren't throwing any more.

But you know, it's getting to where we will never catch up so might as well drive to Galveston, paint my nails, and we can drink frozen margaritas along the way. Spend the rest on tamales, throw bread to the seagulls. Sleeping on the beach is better than the motels full of sand and sticky smells. I swim with my hair braided, and we walk in the sun as it dries, and then he lets it down. Miles away, where we lived, they are cutting it all off. He gives me a mood ring, and it's purple. Does that mean I'm sad? Contemplative, he tells me. We sleep for awhile on the bedspread. When I wake, and reach for him, he's gone of course. There's sand in my panties, salt in my hair, and I can feel my skin peeling. Where are you? I'm calling but he's there, stick figure in the distance, and I watch him walk away behind the dunes.



'The Expulsion' / © 2003 Brad Evans (www.citysnaps.net)



Eyes

-- Kathy Fish

Prue and her boyfriend, Ray, sit near the creek at Washington Park. Prue's son, Cody, wades the creek, searching for crawdads. When he finds one, he plops it into a Big Gulp cup filled with creek water the color of iron. He moves with uncertainty, as if the earth were a balloon, filling and deflating and he has to steady himself to keep from toppling over.

Ray bought an Indian carved from butternut at the art store in Golden. He tells Prue he is sure it will bring them all good luck. It sits in the middle of the picnic blanket, frowning over the crackers and Spanish olives. Prue shifts from side to side. She's relieved to note that the Indian's eyes do not follow her. Ray had told Cody he could name the Indian. Cody named it "Ginger" after the neighbor's cat.

"Well, that's a fag name for a proud Indian, son," Ray said.

Ray's had one-half of a glass of wine and Prue knows he won't drink another drop. She wants to tell him that his loafers are ugly.

The sun disappears and the breeze picks up. A couple of teenaged boys sit hunched in long coats, their knees buckled, on the swings at the top of the hill. The bright tips of their cigarettes rise and fall in front of them. Prue feels they are watching her, but she can't make out their faces.

Since Cody had a stroke two years ago, she dreams of eyes and hands. She found him the day after his fourth birthday at the bottom of the basement stairs, one leg twisted out, the left side of his face dull as a lump of modeling clay. Ray tells her the dreams will go away as soon as she takes control of her life.

"Time to go, Cody-Man." She drains her wineglass and begins gathering up the picnic things. Ray stands and brushes at his trousers though there is nothing on them.

The boy lifts one foot high and plants it onto the creek bank. Prue goes to him. She holds out her hand.

"Careful."

"No!"

He holds the cup over his head, rocks forward and swings his other foot onto the bank. But the earth tilts. He stumbles and, righting himself, he drops the cup and the water and the crawdads spill out. They skitter away through the grass. The boy crumples to the ground and pounds it with his fist.

"Asshole! Asshole!"

"Okay, okay," Prue says.

"You get rattled too easy, son." Ray nudges Cody's ribs hard with the toe of his shoe.

"Don't do that," Prue says.

Ray turns to her, the butternut Indian in the crook of his arm. Its eyes are definitely looking at her. Over Ray's shoulder, she sees the teenagers stand up, toss their cigarettes. Cody screams, pounding the wet grass. How many times has Ray told her the boy is out of control? The boy is out of control. The teenagers are running down the hill. Cody screams. Every morning the woman wakes up feeling watched and handled. Every morning her eyes fly open. She thinks, "Cody's dead" but it's only the weight of Ray's hand on her thigh, the dead dark of the bedroom. The teenagers are nearly upon them, reaching inside their coats. Prue drops to the ground, draping herself over her son and Ray starts to say something, but stops. He throws his head back and his arms out in a gesture like sudden triumph and the butternut Indian flies away.

Crystal and Gold

-- Avital Gad-Cykman

My hope runs loose like a damp street dog.

The mutts' coarse barks break the furious sound of waves, crushed against each other by intersecting winds. The storm shrieks among rocks and bushes but it must die at the end of the night. In the morning, I'll fling the window open to find the sun resting atop a pine tree, indifferent to the stinging green needles.

My youngest daughter's slender arm is curled over my belly. My oldest is propped up on her elbows, staring at the shadow dance above. Chrissie, is my youngest one, the oldest is Gill. I may be reciting their original names, or maybe the storm has melded the words and given them home. I am not that lucid anymore.

In past times, each day stretched like our hammocks, and he and I interlaced ourselves to form a carpet for our daughters. They bloomed: natural born princesses with animal grace. They grew on power, and needed more than we could give. Their command squeezed us into the carpet that Jinns blew into air.

They befriended passersby whose names they could hardly remember. Their clothing bore classy names of prosperous strangers. They almost fell down the holes torn in the lace of each day. We were about to lose them by the time the storm began.

The truck arrived to take us to a shelter, to protect us from a devastating rain (though not from whipping gazes of officials).

"We stay at our home," I said.

The squeaking of the metal gate made my crystal Chrissie shiver.

He said: "We go."

I motioned: No.

"This is home," echoed Gill, my gold.

I thought: There's hope.

He said, "Let's leave. They are a piece of my flesh, and you and I are one."

"They are not a piece of anyone. Nor am I."

His glinting teeth split a bitter smile.

"Please!" he implored. "They shouldn't struggle, suffer, break."

"They are women. Their defeat takes more than rain."

"They don't need your drama. There will be swamps, sickness and cold."

"No."

Crystal shook against my shoulder. Gold rested her head in the slope of my neck. I held them like babies. Their warm faces, sweaty and trusting, sank against my waist.

His tea-brown eyes, so much like theirs, caressed us three women. "I don't understand," he said. "But fine, I will come for you in a few days."

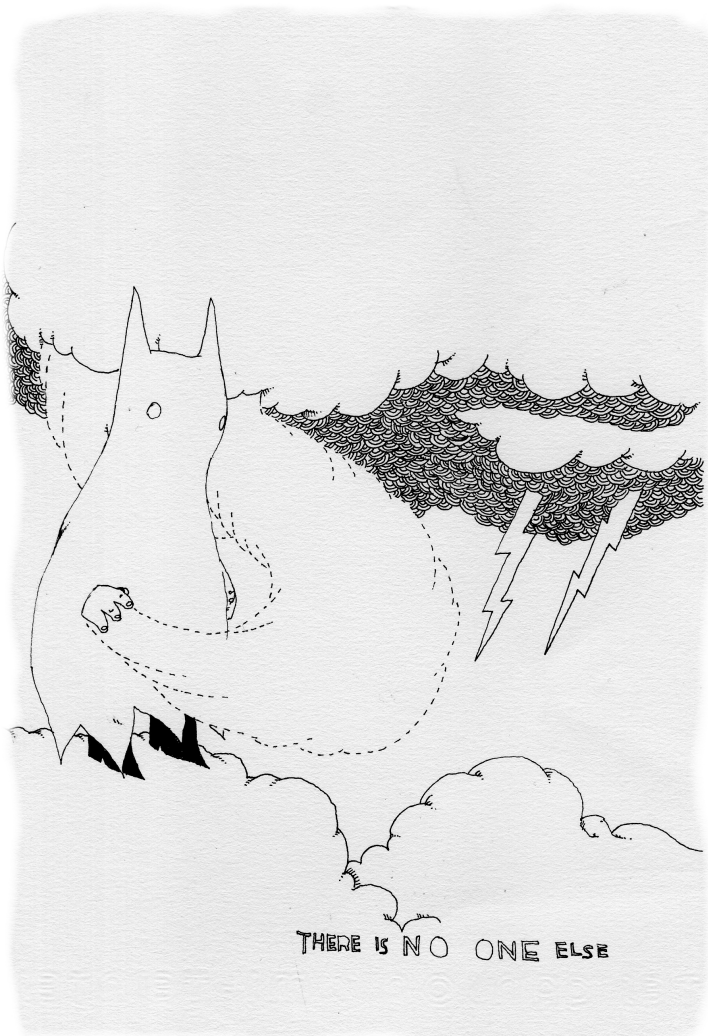
"Yes, go. When the water is down, come back."

Ever since, the water has risen so high, our house has become a mushroom in a swampy land. Tonight, the flood must stop, and the siege should break. We occupy the humid second story above the flooded first floor. The scent of cold and of water is slippery, more perceived than smelled. For thirty days, our walls have kept us safe. They should let us out in due time the way my body once released my girls.

I keep dreaming his sorrow and his smile, his enveloping arms. I wonder if he could reach us if he tried.

Under the woolen blanket, I cross my leg with Crystal's and put my arm over Gold. My husband will find us knitted together like a farm girl's braid.

There is little potable water and little food. Every dawn we look for the first sunray as if it were a sign, and every day we find it and smile. Like conspirators for a revolution, we are one against the madness of higher powers.



I burn with fever.

Crystal turns her lovely face to me. "Are you thirsty?" she asks.

"The first thing I'd do is make us soup." Gold laughs.

They decide to transport me to town. They will build a raft with the broken trunks that hit the walls outside.

I say, "We may be imprisoned, but we are still alive."

Gold's eyes enlarge, but she smiles: "The window frames an image of still life." Her long eyelashes close dark sickles over her eyes.

Crystal takes my hand in hers. Her touch is softer than mine.

Oh. It is time for him to come for us.

I am waiting for the morning. For his breath of relief.



Wrong, No, No Wrong, Wrong

-- Ricky Garni



Ady invited a boy out for a date. “Would you care for coffee?” she asked. He said he would, and so they went to a café. There, the boy read a magazine. Ady looked at the paper cups and the ice cream.

When they finished their coffee, Ady said, “Would you like to go out for a glass of wine?” The boy said he would and so they did. Ady ordered a macon, and the so did the boy. Ady realized that this was a good sign. At the wine bar, the boy found a magazine at one of the tables and picked it up. Ady noticed that the boy’s eyes were very good looking, and that he read very fast.

After finishing the wine, Ady was hungry. “Would you like to go maybe somewhere for dinner?” she asked the boy. He didn’t hear her, and so she said, “Would you like to go maybe somewhere for dinner?” Ady liked to eat Chinese food in particular.

One year later, Ady threw a marvelous party. When her guests came to the door, she screamed with joy. Some guests were dressed in costume, some were dressed in formal attire, and it was a delightful party and it lasted so long that the guests, after a while, tended to drift in and out, sometimes going to the nearby convenience store to buy club soda, beverages, candles, chocolate. And wine, champagne, and toothpicks. One guest even bought a tire repair kit.

Late that evening, Ady’s neighbor’s doorbell rang. “What is it?” Ady’s neighbor said, opening the door slightly. It was quite late indeed and her neighbor was not expecting any visitors. Outside, a man walked by with a bottle of club soda. The bottle was made of real glass, not plastic. Another man fell off his bicycle and hurt his knee quite badly; there was a great deal of blood. The man with the bottle of club soda put the bottle down and walked over to help the bloody party guest.

Next door, Ady and her friends were about to go out to see a very unusual meteor shower.

“Who is it?” Ady’s neighbor asked. It was the boy.

The neighbor opened the door.

“Oh, you’re ‘the boy,’” Ady’s neighbor said.

The boy smiled. “I must have the wrong house.”



'Linus in Budapest' / © 2006 Ricky Garni



GARBAGE

-- Antonios Maltezos

They picked up rocks along the way. The flat ones with the sharp edges were the best. When thrown with a snap, they sliced easily through feather and bone.

Three gulls—a coffee can full of food. That was the rule.

"Don't forget to sniff for sourness," Javier's father had said before sending them to the dump.

"And nothing with tomatoes," his mother had added, the tomaaaaaaatoes lingering for what seemed like twenty paces.

The gulls were smart. If they weren't sheltering behind mounds of garbage, ducking the stones meant to drive them up into the air, they'd zig-zag over-head like bats, their cries confusing the aim.

"Do they scream like that even when we're not here?" Javier's brother asked when they got to the dump.

"Of course," he shot back, "they're always hungry." Javier pointed to a fresh pile, not yet scavenged. There were some proper trash bags in the mix, shiny black ones. According to his father, people who spent money on garbage bags always left a little on their plate. "Start over there. I'll get the gulls."

...

"Why can't we eat what we kill?" Javier had asked his father.

"We don't eat gulls," his father had begun, "because they're below us." He'd made a cutting motion with his hand at his thigh. "We're better than them, son," he'd beamed, throwing the other hand up over his head. "We're way up here."

...

Javier got his three kills, and then went looking for his brother.

He found him stooped over a shiny black bag. He'd torn a little hole in the side.

"What have you found?" Javier asked.

When his brother didn't answer, he pushed him aside.

There was hardly any hair on the leg, and the skin was white where it wasn't covered with blood. "It's a tourist," he whispered, and then examined the sneaker. Had there been two, he'd have offered them to his mother. "It's been cut at the hip," he called out, his mouth watering.

They were a family of scavengers, but they weren't the lowliest of scavengers—those were the dead gulls. "And the live ones aren't food, boy," his father had said. "They're our competition." Everything else was good to eat, as long as it wasn't sour.

"You found it," Javier said as he turned to look at his little brother, "you have to sniff it."

Slide of a Glass Door

-- Edward Salem

She lay in the grass of her father's backyard, letting the sun heat her skin, and fell asleep under the monotony of constant light. She lay on her stomach, on her crushed breasts. She slept an hour without dreams, her faint snoring unheard by neighbors gardening and swimming and drinking Coca-Cola behind high fences.

The dog wandered with its wet nose in the grass. The dog inevitably approached her, almost crawling as it does. The dog began licking her sunburn as she slept. Her skin was thoroughly pink and shined in the warm smears where the dog-tongue licked and left flattened strokes of saliva on her shoulders.

The glass door slid open and her father walked out of the house. The father was soothed by the way the light and heat of the sherbet-orange sun felt on his face and arms as he, too, approached his half-nude daughter. The father stood over his sleeping daughter and observed the saliva that was left through some technique like Pollock painted on her pink shoulders and back.

Transfixed, he studied the beautiful discoloration of her skin. She was pristine. How had he made her. How had he made this. He was lost in a strange and serene meditation. He told himself he was going to play a little experiment and watch the color of her shoulders and back to see if, in one full minute, the shade of pink would intensify by even the subtlest increment. He wasn't wearing his wristwatch but he vaguely began the countdown in his mind.

He stood there above her without prescience. He listened to her delicate, imperceptible breathing. He concentrated on her apneic sleep, entranced, just her shoulders, glaze of her flesh, thinking, I made that flesh, she is me. His eyes dove into the back of her neck which was suffused with a warm pink color. He focused on the slow, almost postponed discoloration of her sunburn. He had abandoned the vague countdown with its vague deceit.

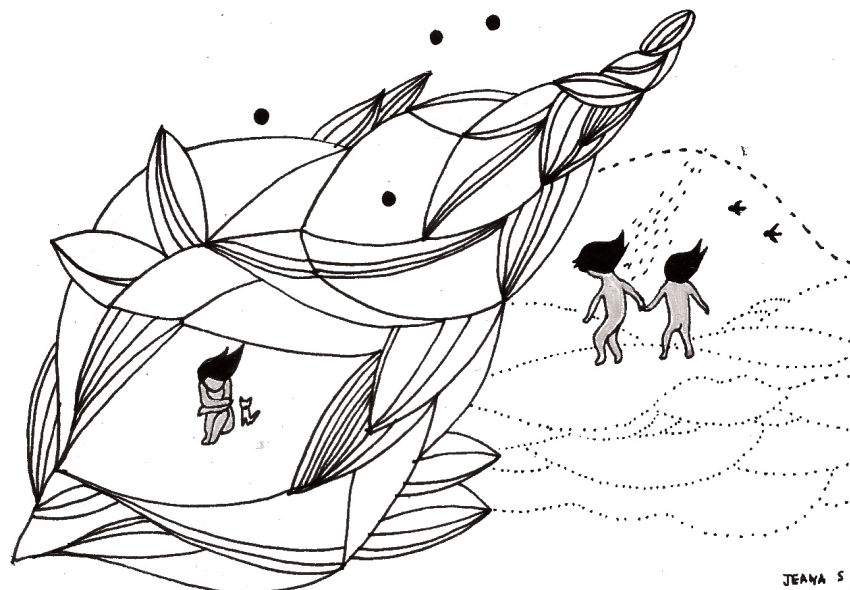


Tiny Bribes and Barbed-Wire

-- Jessica Rowan

There's a window in the livingroom that I cover with cardboard and images of lawn bowling from that summer in Connecticut. I didn't mean to miss those daughter cues, the one where Gram slips up again — tells you I'm leaving when I'm not, tells me that only the babies are redeemed, tells anyone in earshot that the retarded girl with the microphone was really no good at all — and the one where twenty years is long enough without a father but not long enough for a decent shower.

Somewhere opposite here is a little boy with some number of months and a maybe-war between us. I saw a movie the week he left—a movie about polar bears and bullets and buckets of things I could never process—and I told the screen that he was never coming home and the screen said, "I know, my dear. I've seen the windows and the dirt storms. I've seen chairs thrown from balconies and fires thrown over the bed. I've seen heel-bones shattering in slow-motion and let me tell you, big sister, there's nothing you can give save the storming."



JENNA S

Hummingbird

-- Jason Fraley



Outside my house, construction workers hollow the hillside
and pour concrete — the town is preparing its tithe
to the dead. Since angels have stopped protesting,
I prepare my youngest son as an offering, but neighbors
tell me senators and sheriffs may still object.
So I trap a hummingbird, which has many advantages
over a child. Watch how it lives in a constant flux
between stasis and explosion. Slow the wings
and it is any other small bird. Slow them further
and it will nest in weeds or mud. In fifty years,
its neck will still reflect red. This is the reminder we want.



Swirling

-- Arlene Ang



We never entered into first names,
and every morning the cleaning lady let herself in:

her hair arranged into a reclusive coil,
her rough hands an eddy of lines, false whorls.

She would clean tiles as quietly
as she arranged lemons in the fruit bowl.

I watched storm foliage in the lawn,
the rolling effect of wind on pages of a book.

Trees were skeletal. We never spoke
about the odd rings on our fingers.

Or the surreptitious rituals of dust,
the squirrels, the color white, paper cuts,

metastasis. Eventually, the lake froze over —
several men were called again to war.

And here, on the hallway sideboard,
she left her keys beside the glass swans.



'Up' / © Arnt Sneve (fotokunst.as)

Sunset at Puerto Vallarta

-- Doug Draime



for Carol

The way everything moved, slipped
in or out of gear, as the sun
was setting and the hotel beach boys
removed the sway back canvas chairs
from the ocean's edge. The restaurant's
lights coming on ; a few two-men fishing boats
coming home over the horizon,
like tired old boxers in the 8th round.
Several gulls hook and glide. And the
reflection of your gray-blue eyes out
over the ocean, bouncing from sun to
water, water to sun.

There is No End to the Tea You May Drink

-- Sarah Ruhlen

You may drink as much tea as you like.
 It is neither expensive nor particularly
 addictive. Your desire for tea
 will not cause you to mortgage the children.

Your ex-wife will not drop by a barren apartment
 to find you stuffing tea up your nose.

There is plenty of it. Plantations grow it by the shipload.
 It is not illegal to ship.

Moreover,
 as long as you can find water and leaves,
 you may have tea.

We may all have tea, the largest among us
 as well as the smallest.

A cat may have tea, if he likes.

Also a mouse may have tea.
 So long as she does not leave her dirt in the cupboards,
 a mouse may have all the tea she wants.
 See the love in her raisin eyes as you brew her a small cup.



'A Mouse at Tea'
 © 2006 Chuck Adams

what would prove to be a long and cold december

-- Peter Schwartz

We too can go charming
brave and uncaring as a childhood pox,

we can reinvent the unemployed,
our best version of momentum
a symptom — of the silence all around us.

we can enter a world of pet tricks
where the cattle prod remains useless
on the telephone table

we can release it from its ache
to squawk across the wires for
one more night of weird destiny
to flutter

we can rise into the fluted yawp
and pledge to sleep only when and where
it's needed, like firefighters

originally appeared in Mannequin Envy Quarterly



Theme Park Thrills

-- David Thornbrugh

death is a thrill that Disney won't insure.
nothing to do in Singapore on Saturday afternoons
in the bagpipe backyards kicking kilts around
and grilling sailors for loose ships and that old sinking feeling
since Sinatra died Las Vegas hasn't been worth avoiding
when the pirate ships explode on the hour every hour
and Bangkok bar girls cover their crotches out of envy
for the roller coaster ride at the top of the tallest elevator
to ever go to college in this family on a scholarship

I Thought About You and Cried and Wrote a National Anthem on My Ribcage

-- Sean Kilpatrick



for Ellen the Squid, Ellen the Lion

It is wrong to disguise your feet as lemons.
 It is wrong to tremble while pouring lemonade.
 It is wrong to roll down the stairs yelling, "squish! Squish!"
 It is wrong to chloroform a tree and rub against it for six hours.
 It is wrong to offer the mirror a drink.
 It is wrong to prop a skull on toothpicks.
 It is wrong to smile in the evening.
 It is wrong to wave razors at the sky.
 It is wrong to apply make-up to the living.
 It is wrong to cry against your sleeve on any holiday.
 It is wrong to caress anything that moves.
 It is wrong to take a mouse out of its wheel chair and giggle.
 It is wrong to bite paraplegic clouds in your fingernail.
 It is wrong to dress your freckles in WWI helmets.
 It is wrong to whistle like a bomb when you swing on a swing set.
 It is wrong to only shoplift chap-stick and giant stuffed aye-eyes.
 It is wrong to be young in the decade of skeletons.
 It is wrong to leave the room if I am your pet.
 It is wrong to operate on my fur with a violin.
 It is wrong to put me to sleep in curtains of milk.
 It is wrong to fold your big eyes into origami sex toys.
 It is wrong to aim wine bottles at people and call it an inquisition.
 It is wrong to wave your hand without permission from the radio.
 It is wrong to kill a centipede without having first been in love.



'Urban Rapture'
© 2006 Thomas Kearnes



Nervous Breakdown

-- Eric Gelsinger

I have had three fake breakdowns.
 The best one happened at Oxford.
 I shouted a lot on Magdalen Bridge.
 People were too scared to fight me.
 I used the word apotheosis a lot.
 My voice shook too much on the stones.
 I was too nervous to have a nervous breakdown.

I saw a friend have a real nervous breakdown.
 He emptied all his cereals (all ball-shaped, like Kix) onto the floor and peed on them.
 Then he spent a month in the hospital diagramming the physical structure of the universe.
 Which had everything to do with water and love.
 It was very bad for his G.P.A.
 I wasn't jealous. I visited him once.



untitled from Moodities series / © 2006 Livia Geabelea (www.livingfor.com)

Will Sword-Swallowing Save Us From Self-Pity?

-- Jennifer L. Knox

Air today's thicker than my mumbling—
 Monday, August, 100% humidity:
 a perfect day to die down at Coney,
 Tyler Fyre, as waddling rubes there
 to take in the ocean and a few clams
 stare, stunned, at your slick, silver patter.
 I read when the neon tube shattered
 in your throat, you thought, "I always
 wondered what this would feel like,"
 but after the wonder, you had to pull
 the broken glass back up and out.
 No solid foods for a week, you said.
 I want very real things to be afraid
 of—cancer and accidents aside—seen
 things—hard and immediate as the waving
 steel of a crimped Malaysian kris. Thus,
 gut me like a fish, I give in to the gag
 at the back of every dropped blade for
 I can't hold on longer in this heavy air
 to so much nothing that's no big deal—
 really nothing I can't choke down.



(Author's note: Tyler Fyre, sword swallower extraordinaire, is a performer at Sideshows by the Seashore in Coney Island and the creator of the Li'l Devil Circus)

What Remains

-- Miriam Kim

I have a black and white photograph of my grandmother on my bedside table. In it she wears a discreet smile and poses demurely under a cherry tree in bloom. When this picture was taken, I did not yet exist. That was back in Korea, before she and my grandfather immigrated with five of their children to Brazil, and before I myself was born, grew up and moved to the U.S. Even though I never knew the young woman in the photograph, that's how 'halmoni' became fixed on my mind after her death: a pretty Korean lady under a cherry tree. It was with a jolt then that I found a rather unflattering snapshot of her taken in her later years. It showed a tired looking, frail old woman in a house dress sitting amidst the chaos of a messy kitchen. This was the halmoni I had known and had chosen to forget.

The collision of these two disparate images sparked the painting "What Remains." Halmoni died of Alzheimer, and the photograph taken in the kitchen signaled the beginning of the slow decline that would finally take her away. Still, in spite of the emptiness that is starting to flood her eyes, that snapshot revealed—in the un-scrubbed pots and dirty stove pots—the life that buzzed around her. Halmoni's kitchen was as alive as the blossoming cherry tree from many decades before.

My intention was to create a painting that spoke of my memory of halmoni's and of halmoni's memory of herself. I don't know what filled her mind when she could no longer connect with the present due to the Alzheimer. I can only know what filled my own mind during the many months that took me to paint her. I felt love, sorrow, nostalgia, boredom, glee. I remembered her, forgot her, and remembered her again.

At the end, the painting is what remained.



See www.nojournal.com for a full color version of Miriam's painting "What Remains"

Harmony in the Chaos of the Street

-- Maria V. Szulc

I don't make art, I photograph it. I find it in public spaces — streets, bars, packed subways, political protests, social gatherings. To capture the continuous movement of busy New York City streets is no easy feat, and the resulting frames are very often a failure. But nothing is more rewarding than finding harmony in the chaos of the street.



I have a big problem with graphic arts passing for photography. A photograph is first a document of a moment existing in time and space. Manipulated content is no longer a truthful rendition of that reality. And to me, photography is about capturing reality, not creating another one.

See more of Maria's work at www.noojournal.com

Contributor Notes

Chuck Adams is lo-fi in all aspects. He enjoys slow food and slower movies. He lives in Eugene, OR, where he writes for the *Eugene Weekly*.

Arlene Ang lives in a small town outside Venice. Her poetry has been published recently in *FRiGG*, *GHOTI*, *Orbis*, *The Pedestal*, *Poetry Ireland*, *Smiths Knoll* and *Tattoo Highway*. Her first full collection of poetry, *The Desecration of Doves* (iUniverse), was published in 2005. She blogs (<http://arleneang.blogspot.com>) because, like sex, everyone does it.

Brian Beatty's jokes, poems and stories have appeared in numerous print and online publications. He does, indeed, sport an unruly beard.

Bryan Coffelt appears to own several beds. His stories and poems are in *elimae*, *Juked*, *Snow Monkey*, *NOÖ*, and *Opium Magazine .print #3*.

Doug Draime lives and writes in Ashland, OR. He has published extensively. Google his name to find more of his work.

Brad Evans is a San Francisco based urban photographer who seeks the strange and unusual. His urban images can be viewed at <http://www.citysnaps.net>.

Kathy Fish lives in Colorado. Her stories have appeared or will appear in *Night Train*, *Word Riot*, *Pindeldyboz*, *Gator Springs Gazette*, *Cranky*, *Wild Strawberries*, *FRiGG*, *Ghoti*, *Ink Pot*, *Alice Blue*, *Staccato* and *Temenos*. Her story "Shoebox" was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She may be contacted at mrsfish1960@yahoo.com.

Jason Fraley works at an investment firm in West Virginia and is pursuing his M.B.A. His wife and cat see him occasionally. He has appeared or is forthcoming in *Redactions*, *Confluence*, *Words on Walls*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *Stirring*, *The Salt River Review*, and elsewhere.

Avital Gad-Cykman has been published or is forthcoming in *Glimmer Train*, *McSweeney's*, *Prism International*, *Other Voices*, *Happy*, *Stand Magazine*, *Stumbling and Raging*, *Politically Inspired Anthology 2006*, *AIM Quarterly*, *The Bridge*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, *The Binnacle*, *Danforth Review*, *Descant*, and others. She has also appeared online in *Salon*, *Zoetrope All-story Extra*, *Salt Hill Review*, *3am*, *In-Pose Review*, and elsewhere. Her story collection "Light Reflection over Blues" was one of the six finalists for Iowa Fiction award.

Ricky Garni is a graphic designer living in North Carolina, USA. His recent publications include *Wandering Army*, *Defenestration*, *Ghoti*, *Nöö*, *Zafusy*, *Tryst* and *Centrifugal Eye*. Some of his sketchier work can be found at www.crispyworld.blogspot.com.

Livia Geabelea was born in Romania and discovered photography in 2002. Her style, though minimalist, reveals a plethora of senses that feed from simple life objects, gestures and feelings. More of her images can be seen at www.livingfor.com.

Eric Gelsing was born in the third person in the home of Buffalo, NY. He maintains a blog at www.gelsingers.blogspot.com.

William Gheen is the President of Americans for Legal Immigration Political Action Committee or ALIPAC found at www.alipac.us.

Jay Harrison is a special education teacher working on his MA in Teaching. Family is important to him, and he is married and has three children. He is the web master, sales/marketing director, and staff writer for *Hot Psychology Magazine*. Jay is also a moderator and public relations representative for *Writer's Beat* writing forums.

Thomas Kearnes is a 30-year-old freelance advertiser, fiction writer and artist from East Texas. He has published or will publish fiction in *Wicked Hollow*, *Bonnd Off*, *Southern Hum*, *Blithe House Quarterly*, *flashquake*, *Underground Voices* and *Forbidden Fruit*. His photography will appear later this year in *Tattoo Highway*, *Fiction Attic*, *Events Quarterly*, and *Skidrow Penthouse*.

Sean Kilpatrick lives in Detroit. He has published things in around seventy magazines and anthologies, including *Juked*, *Elimae*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *Action Yes*, *3AM Magazine* and the *2008 Outside Voices Younger Poets Anthology*. His blog includes interviews and can be found at <http://anorexicchlorinesextoymuseum.blogspot.com>.

Miriam Kim is a filmmaker and painter living in Los Angeles, CA.

Jennifer L. Knox was born and raised in Lancaster, California. Her first book, *A Gringo Like Me*, is out on Soft Skull Press. Her work has appeared in the 2006, 2003 and 1997 editions of *Best American Poetry*, as well as *Great American Prose Poems: From Poe to Present*, and *Free Radicals: American Poets Before Their First Books*.

Antonios Maltezos is working on a novel told entirely through flash entitled *A Train Runs Through Here*. Links to his published stories can be found at <http://antonios-maltezos-bio.blogspot.com>.

Julien Pacaud lives in Paris, France. His art has been published all over the world and exhibited in Paris and Halifax, Canada. His website is <http://www.institutdrahomira.com>. He maintains a blog called People Collector at <http://peoplecollector.blogspot.com>.

Jessica Rowan lives in Ashland, OR where she co-edits the *West Wind Review*. Her poetry will appear in the *2008 Outside Voices Younger Poets Anthology*. Her blog a.lobster is at <http://alobster.blogspot.com>.

Sarah Ruhlen longs for the open seas. Luckily her poetry rarely reflects this. You may read her work in *Slipstream*, *RHINO*, *Ibbetson Street*, *Nerve Cowboy*, *Wavelength*, *Curbside Review*, *Circle Magazine*, *I-70 Review*, *Coal City Review*, and the *Kansas City Star*. If you send her pirate stuff, she'll use it to decorate her bathroom.

Edward Salem is a Palestinian-American whose work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Critical Moment*, *Conte*, *Left Curve*, and *Dispatch*. This fall Edward begins his MFA in Writing candidacy at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Peter Schwartz has over 150 poems published, some of them in nationally-distributed journals, some printed overseas. He has stories and paintings published on and offline as well as his own somewhat controversial journal that can be sampled at www.watchtheeye.com. He's also the associate art editor for *Mad Hatters' Review* and co-founder of www.sitrahahra.com. He lives almost silently in the forests of Maine.

Claudia Smith's stories have appeared in a number of online and print literary journals; she also had a story anthologized in *Consumed: Women on Excess*, edited by Savannah Schroll. One of her stories will be included in the forthcoming Norton anthology *The New Sudden Fiction*, edited by James Thomas and Robert Shapard. More of her stories may be found at www.claudiaweb.net.

Jeana Sohn was born and raised in Korea, where she completed a program in graphic design at a local university. Jeana moved to the U.S. to study character animation at Cal Arts. Currently she lives and works in Los Angeles. Her site is found at <http://www.calarts.edu/~hsohn>.

Arnt Sneve has had many exhibitions and work as an artist and press photographer in Oslo. His new book of 72 black and white photographs was released by Lofoten.

Deth P. Sun grew up all over Southern California and received a BFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts in Painting and Drawing. She maintains www.dethpsun.com.

Maria V. Szulc grew up in Poland, took a year long vacation in Rome, moved to the U.S. and have been living in NYC since 1992. Its vastness never ceases to amaze her.

David Thornbrugh is an American poet currently living in Krakow, Poland.

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Excerpts

-- America needs an increasing population of workers who will contribute ... It is time to stop looking at our neighbors as unwanted invaders ...

Immigration: The "Problem" Is the Solution, *Jay Harrison, page 4*

-- Our nation is on the brink of a new energy revolution, but we need a push from all those who see the importance of creating a better world.

Kicking the Habit: Part II: A New Fix, *Kyle Peterson, page 8*

-- One guest even bought a tire repair kit.

Wrong, No, No Wrong, Wrong, *Ricky Garni, page 16*

-- According to his father, people who spent money on garbage bags always left a little on their plate. "Start over there. I'll get the gulls."

Garbage, *Antonio Maltezos, page 17*

-- Somewhere opposite here is a little boy with some / number of months and a maybe-war between us.

Tiny Bribes and Barbed-Wire, *Jessica Rowan, page 19*

-- a few two-men fishing boats / coming home over the horizon, / like tired old boxers in the 8th round.

Sunset at Pureto Vallarta, *Doug Draime, page 22*

-- It is wrong to apply make-up to the living. / It is wrong to cry against your sleeve on any holiday. It is wrong to caress anything that moves.

I Thought About You and Cried and Wrote a National Anthem on My Ribcage, *Sean Kilpatrick, page 25*

-- I read when the neon tube shattered / in your throat, you thought, "I always / wondered what this would feel like," / but after the wonder, you had to pull / the broken glass back up and out.

Will Sword Swallowing Save Us From Self-Pity? *Jennifer L. Knox, page 27*