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She had picked up the book she threw on the floor the day before, smoothing its wrinkled pages. As she read, she couldn’t help but look past her book into the world beyond the window, brightened with the early morning sun. Ania opened the window, flooded with the crisp, clean air. I wonder what it would feel like to fly, she thought to herself, to be weightless and free. She leaned out of the window, her arms stretched as far as they could go, her feet hooked under the ledge. The feeling was intoxicating. She felt like she was floating, the flower beds below her seemed distant and alien. She leaned back further and closed her eyes. Her feet slipped.

That afternoon, the gardener set about to pruning the flower beds. Sunlight poured over everything. He moved along slowly and methodically, carefully pruning each branch. He stopped. A young girl lay at his feet, arms outstretched, her face framed by her tawny hair. She seemed very much to be flying, he thought, and gently scooped her into his arms. Her mother never noticed she had left.

Stonehenge Revisited

Memory

By Amy Carlson

It was a big day for everyone involved, one of bustle and laughter with the occasional recaptured sob. It was the dorm move-in day and the sun was beaming on the young faces reinforcing their claim, “This is my day”.

My mom had helped me move all my stuff in before leaving and now it was left to me to unpack, after all it was mine. After three hours of unpacking boxes marked clothing, computer, school, and bed; after moving boxes marked art supplies, photos, and hats into my closet I uncovered the really important box. A box marked “other”.

It was my box of odds and ends. All the little things not needed to live, but necessary for life. My Rubik’s cube, Jacob’s ladder, and talking mice key chains. One of the mice is dressed like a mobster and says “Hey, forgettabout...it’s just...cheese!” Along with all the smaller pieces probably the most important possession, my teddy bear, Mr. T.

Mr. T has survived through every move I have made which registers easily in the 20’s range. Given to me when I was a baby, Mr. T was my best friend besides my brother and that was only because I couldn’t climb trees while holding him. As I pulled him out of the box I could not help but smile. Every time I discover him again I smile. Sometimes the smile has no specific memories attached, but more often than not I remember carrying him and running around discovering the world. Whenever I decided to do something new Mr. T was with me, always providing security.
The brown hair behind his ears is worn away from many years of rubbing and scratching. When I am nervous or thinking about something, my fingers move. Today I do not carry Mr. T with me, and so when I am thinking I draw, tap, or rub whatever is around me. A four year old is allowed a bear though, and I made use of him for both inspiration and protection.

One day I was around four, I was exploring my house (because things easily change everyday) when I noticed my mom was not to be found. Rubbing Mr. T’s ears and not finding mom in the living room or the kitchen I ran to her room. I opened the door and saw she was sleeping. Now that I knew where she was I didn’t have any need of her and so I left.

I shut her door and looked down the hall towards the rest of the house and had nothing to do. My brother was at a play date and my dad at work...what should I do? I ran down the hall and into the kitchen where my bare feet made slapping noises against the linoleum. It was a beautiful day outside with the sun shining in through the windows and onto my feet. It also reflected in the crystal hung in the window and morphed into millions of little rainbows slowly revolving around the room. I hopped from the larger rainbows to the smaller ones closer and closer into the circle and until I was spinning with the rainbows and all I could see was color. The sun was mine, the rainbows were mine, and I hummed and sang a wordless song as I turned in circles.

Soon I noticed one of the cabinets was open. It was the candy cabinet. I don’t think all the candy we had was in that one cabinet, but whenever my mom bought me a candy bar that was where it was put and it was open…it was mine.

Picking Mr. T off of his rainbow seat on the floor I rubbed behind his ear as I watched the cabinet. I wasn’t supposed to get into the cabinets. I wasn’t supposed to get on the counter. Was mom still asleep?

I ran back down the hall, slapping feet turning into soft small footsteps on the carpet that attracted the attention of our yellow lab Lucky. We opened the bedroom door and she was still sleeping. I ran to her bed and watched her, waiting. But she was still sleeping and so I ran out with Mr. T in hand and Lucky behind me. We ran down the hall and into the kitchen where the slapping feet in my hand, a simple Hershey’s bar, lovely and dark, and most importantly mine.

Mr. T. was always with me in those early years traveling into new territories, but soon I left him at home while I went to the park on my own. Always before he went in front of me in our explorations to scare off monsters, but now he stayed on my bed as I climbed my own counters. He moved with me into another town or another house depending on the year always in a box that would be unpacked within the first couple of days. He moved from the head of my bed to the foot and then sometimes to the floor, but I always moved him back onto the bed. That is where he belongs.

That first night in the dorms I was exhausted and could have fallen asleep on my own, but I grabbed Mr. T. anyways. I held him to my face as I used to when I tried to drown out any night-time sound that should not be there. And then I relaxed and just held him as I did on peaceful nights. I held him close, because after all he had been on a long journey and in a stuffy box for too long. He needed the room to breathe and the comfort of someone who cared for him.

This was a new environment and I didn’t blame him for being a tiny bit frightened. He had frightened all my monsters away as a child and the least I could do for him was hold him when he was unsure. Today was pretty easy, but tomorrow he would have to begin meeting people and he was worried. He needed me and I would be there for him, because after all, while some things were new, others were just the way they had always been. He was mine and I was his.
Hostage In the Best Dream
Isaac Christopher

Can't sleep tonight – nothing is right
Your look stays with me as I drift away
Lost in your wonder – who are you really?
I want to know you like nobody before

Can't wake today – your grip is tight
Holding me hostage in the best dream
Morning can wait – what is reality?
I want to hold on like never before

Can't rise to see – my knees are weak
Soft lips speak volumes to the heart of me
Tomorrow is here – the best day so far
I can't let go of you, so much like before

You grabbed hold of me – permanently
What are the chances that I'll ever see
The light of day again
Or have the right to breathe again

Can't breathe today – you stole my air
Leaving my lungs vacated inside
Watching my heart fade away into black
I don't want it back; I'll just settle the score

The Golfer
Jillian Beck

Swaying his hips,
Like trees in the wind,
He entices me.
Brushing the grass with his club,
Like my hair with his fingers,
He comforts me.
Watching him makes me eager,
To see his full potential,
He amazes me.

Rain
Kenneth Edward Keyn

There is a gentle peace about rain
When one has nowhere to go
It soothes the restless heart
And calms the weary mind
Reminding me of love
All around, the persistent sound of water
Runs over my senses like a balm
The sweet perfume of chill air
And the delicate taste of moisture
Millions of invisible paths to the ground
Traced by drop after drop in front of my eyes
And the touch of it reminds me I am alive
Worshipping the God I Love to Worship
Anonymous

Drum pulses, guitar screeches, hands are clapping while the synthesized fanfare blares-
The Voices ring over all.
My pulse elevate, pupils dilate-
Take me away O’ blessed Noise.

What is this?
Why am I singing?
Why can I not control my mouth?
Is this what they call the Holy Spirit?
   My convulsion a reaction to supernatural divinity-
   Or my minds recollection of the words through a completely man-made high?

This is ridiculous.
   Yes, the Holy Spirit empowers us through emotion-
   It is the comforter, sustainer through our times.
But it is not cocaine.
   It should not send me into a frantic state.
   I should not feel this way due to the “worship” noise.

Where is reverence in this yelling? In this clapping?
   Why are you flailing your arms, you wicked generation?
Why the hoots and hollers?
Is it really for God?
   Or is this for your own excitement? Has your frenetic noise served Its purpose:
   To get you to return worship to It?
Or this band? Is it for this band?
   Yes, let us bow down, now, let us prostrate before the noise!

If this is our point of reference for reverence and worship – how can we fear, let alone
believe, in evil? Our God would be too safe – the provider of a synthetic high.
   Our Blessed Lord Christ has ceased to be the Great Physician-
   And become the Great Pharmacist:
   Allocating out different chemicals to suit Our needs.
I wail for us – a depraved generation of Church-as-methadone-junkie worshipers.
   Yes, Lord Jesus, give me another shot that I might function in reality for one more week.

What happens when your safe God is no longer safe?
What happen when your grandmother, father, brother dies?
Will you run to your god here?
The great musical drug dealer?
The great alleviator of pain?

I weep! I beat my chest for you! I cry and tear my clothing –
Had I sackcloth I would adorn it – you sad congregation of screechers!
Oh yes! Wail voice! Yes, wail to your safe idol of a god.
Wait until he doesn’t hear, and tumbles like the great Dagon.
Oh no, don’t stop – keep clapping!
Keep hollering!
OH YES!
Here I am to worship!
Here I am to bow down!
Here I am to say that you’re my god!
We control it! At last, we control it!
Alas, we are great sorcerers of the sacred!
Wave our hands!
Jump!
Convulse, oh yes!
Yell at the top of our lungs!
I don’t think our god is awake yet:
Perhaps we ought harmonize on the next concoction.
Or play a beautiful enough solo,
Becoming at last what we secretly desire to become:
Praise-Onanists.

Wings

Rachel Mullany
The River and the World

By Jeff Shermer

The birds chirp and the wind gently caresses the earth as the trees clap their hands. Sun shines brightly as the sun peeks over the building and trees across the way. A bee or two buzzes by and I feel the quick twinge of caution I always do when I hear or see a bee. I guess it comes from being allergic as a young boy. But still I sit on the bank of the river longing to understand and share the inner stirrings of my heart. I grasp the guitar in my hands as tightly as I grasp for the understanding I long for about life. Only 22 and I have recently broken up with my fiancé and life just needs to make sense. It just needs to, that’s all.

The tires create a humming on the road and if I close my eyes as as I sit at my computer, it sounds like the ocean. I hear the crow cawing as if to tell me “Hey, you. You have SO much more you have to do. Get busy! Life still needs to be done.” I still type away, wishing I didn’t believe him. I sit at the bank of computer keys longing to know the stirrings of my heart better. I am almost 32 and I feel as alone as I ever did at the River. However the vast difference comes in the knowledge and “wisdom” I have gained, knowing life will go on and though it makes little more sense than it did ten years ago, I know it will get better... at least I hope it will. And the sirens reach my ears and trucks roar past as I wish for the soft ramblings of the Fox River in Yorkville, Illinois. It is a town out of the suburbs of Chicago as happenstancial as the Fox itself.

Alas, the clicking of the keys remind me I am in Portland, the region of my birth. I could escape myself at the River, but it seems escape that in Portland is no longer an option. The tirade of thoughts, responsibilities and pressures of
being a student, worker, husband and daddy beat upon me, along with the noisy cars, the heavy air. Then there's complete silence... Ah, relief! But oh... no, just kidding, the cars and crows, cats and dogs, the Harley fills the moment with the din of thundering echoes against my weary soul.

I could sing and play guitar at the River and it would never complain, never tell me I have to do or be more. I could sing and though the birds and scurrying little varmints may reply with an impolite squawk or cackle, I can pour out my heart to God and He does not seem to mind, either. Life was breathing, and breathing was simple. In, out, In, out. Ahhhh!

I sing here in my apartment and I can be reminded that I am not alone by the patter of feet that may leave from its domicile next door once I begin playing and singing. I am alone but not by myself. I can no longer get lost in the music as I did then. I must be aware of my volume and I get lost getting lost. I have forgotten the guiltless and freeing pleasure of lifting my heart in song and letting my fingers dance along the smooth surface of the neck on the guitar. Now I must bang my fingers in a staccato-machine gunning fixed rhythm “ratta-tat-tat-ratta-tat-tat...” along the keyboard as I type my paper.

Along the banks of the River I was transported to a heavenly resting place away from what was and towards what will be. Angels seemed to touch me there. Reassuring me that tomorrow would be healing and lively. Winds lift my spirits among the birds, flying with the rush of tomorrow. The squirrels come out to see who invades their land. They see me and seem to know that I mean no harm. The chirping adds melody to my heart and the River, it harmonizes to the music of the strings I pluck. All of nature seems to know how I feel and who I am. I almost hear God say, “It is good.” My heart joys in his presence, the entangling of the earth and the water and my soul sweep up to heaven in one accord as a choir crying out, “Holy! Holy! Holy!” Ah, the beauty, the freedom, the joy.

Now... I am reminded constantly of what is and must urge myself to dream of what may be. I have become my own cheerleader... but the cheering is silent as I fix my mind on what must be accomplished for tomorrow, for today, for what was due yesterday, what bills were missed this month.

By the river, I was fixed on a dream, on loving what could have been if... and wondering with a teenage naivety what may yet be... someday. The river told me, “You can be. You belong. You are wild and belong here with me, syncopated into one rhythm.” The water tumbling, frolicking over rocks and running over the small dam upstream adds to the capitulation of man and nature merging. The blue in the sky reflecting in the hue of my eyes. My ears picking out the humming of insects, the stirring of twigs and the gentle chaos of the trees pushing one another back and forth. The playfulness of nature, the symphony of sounds that cascade over my soul wash away the pain and fill me with adoration. Here am I, by myself but not alone.

“T'own you. You are mine and you cannot escape me. You are my prisoner and tomorrow is o different,” the whooping and beeping of the alarming siren screams at me. The Honda motorcycle scourges me with its high pitched whirring and blames me for not having figured life out yet. The computer humming reassures me that I have more typing I have to do and much more story I have to tell. I am enslaved with what must be done. Isolation.

But not at the river. I am free. I needn’t worry about what I should be. The sun inundates my skin with a blanket of warm hugs and the breeze kisses my cheeks as if to say, “Welcome back. So glad you could make it. I missed you. We are together again!” I was in love again. In love with freedom. With the unknown. The clouds coming from who knows where and floating happily into tomorrow. “We’ll be seeing ya soon,” they say, singing and dancing, tumbling away above me. Happy. This is my new love. Nature. Real. Honest. Unassuming, uninhibited, natural, unforced, yet forceful, wild and free. I only think about what could be. What might be? ... and who might be? What will she look like? What could we do together? Where would we go and what would her laugh sound like? Her kisses would taste like? Ah... to wonder!

Today, I know what the dream looks like and I know who she is. But the conundrum remains: what will be? The questions used to bring anticipation and hopefulness. But expectation has brought subdued resilience in remaining. However the remaining is what should be or what I have to be and my heart is timid to wonder what could be anymore. The future at the Fox was as bright and crisp as the reflection of the sunlight in the water. The weariness of today feels as dull and dreary as the 14 days of straight clouds we recently enjoyed. The River adds to my hope. The city takes my heart away. The city pulls me away. The sun, the wind, the earth. The River. Ah, the River raises me to higher heights.

Then I am back to Now. The cool, richness of the wind. The glowing of light. The embrace of the sun... It was the sunshine this afternoon that filled my heart as I sit at the computer and I remember. For a brief moment I am reunited with the young man sitting on the banks and dreaming. The embers rekindled. And I furrow my brow. “Maybe I do have some dreaming left to do. Maybe there is some more of tomorrow left,” I think to myself. And the River calls my name, again.
Second Chance
Matt Scholer

It's a struggle I fight with everyday
And the tide comes to drag me further away

I want to be a part of you
But sink in the deepening blue

Beneath the surface I lie with distraction
I see his glory but take no action

My body sinks further down
I let go of all emotions and begin to drown

My life seems to be a waste
I've failed in everything I've faced

The light begins to dim from above
Have I lost all love?

As flashes of my life emerge
I see the good in life begin to surge

My friends and family's care
The love of God they share

I see it in me too
My life must not be through

Though hard times may be ahead
I can do more alive than dead

I no longer see the sun's light
Yet I force my way up to the surface's sight

I cannot do it on my own
The grace of God I must hone

With him by my side I make it out
I take my breaths of air and begin to shout

The heavens can hear me sing
Of the love of God I am going to bring

For an anonymous friend
Marking  
Suzanne Lundgren

for Suzanne Valadon
for art against expectation

Suzanne posed for Renoir
provided him dapple-skinned beauty
just getting out of the bath
red hair swept up
about to fall
from its pink ribbon
a white garment
like sheet or shroud falling
casually at the side of the basin.

Suzanne observed Renoir
at his easel, marked the hands
deft at edge and curve
watched the swatches
of color go on
noticed the form
he built from
pink and blue and lavender
listened while upstairs
Satie put together
gnossiennes
melodies with little moans
in them, quite unlike
any heard before.

Soon Suzanne picked up
some charcoal, a bit of bistre
stroked downward
a bold and curving line against
the rough surface
of a piece of ivory oaktag
nearby
made a drawing
of women arranging
their hair, stepping
into a tub stepping into
a world of her own making.

Cat-Nap  Elizabeth Kilada

A Hollow Shell of Mirrors
Kenneth Edward Keyn

A hollow shell of mirrors
In the shape of a man
All are drawn and seduced
Thinking they see in him
What they most admire;
An image of themselves
Distorted, just enough
That they do not recognize it
Should the mirror be broken
What but air might be found?
Light yet unknown?
Or darkness untold?
Where the Wild Things Are
By Danielle Purdy

Cultures and time collided as five Americans hunched over sinks mixing crushed ocre stones with water to make paints in a run down women's restroom at the edge of a farmland campsite in the middle of the wild, Australian bush. The mysterious bush was beginning to swallow the restroom as spiders, cockroaches and a plethora of other beetles filtered through the crevices and corners, but we paid no mind. This was the last night of our week long immersion into aboriginal culture and as such, our indigenous lecturer, Oomera, had organized a ceremonial evening for us complete with a massive bon fire, tribal dancing and singing and, of course, traditional face paint. It was intended as our way of giving back to Country, as aboriginals refer to the land. For a week we lived by ancient aboriginal rules for community, eating, Country, ceremony, spirituality and travel. We explored her from the sandstone caves to the scraggly gum trees to the bright and ominous beaches to see if we might grasp the magnitude of beauty and simplicity of a culture that was so recklessly destroyed by European “civilization.” We learned from her and about her and thus it was time to give our humble gratitude.

For the duration of our time there, we lived in tribal groups with whom we bushwalked (Australian for "hiked"), cooked, ate, and performed ceremony. As we prepared our face paint, the five of us were not thinking about the ancient ceremonial ground that we trekked to earlier that day where we had sat in silence to search out the feel of Country and see if she might speak to us in any specific emotion. In that spot was respect and reverence as I traced with my finger the stone carvings now thousands of years old that once had represented the spirituality of a people. None of that existed now in the dull pink restroom. The ancient ways of ceremony were reduced to laughing, joking and photo-taking. We smeared the rough, chunky ocre on our faces in a design we felt represented our tribal animal, Waddaigun—the crow. Maren, Natalie and myself let down our hair, making it to accent the stark black color that covered most of our face and stuffing loose boa feathers in random sections of the matted mess. Josh then removed his shirt and covered his chest and back in the ocre while David secured the boa around his head, simulating a Native American chief’s headdress. All the while, the sounds of laughter from all the groups resonated through the warm, evening air as the fire crackled and burned somewhere in the distance.

Oomera stepped silently through the doorless entry way and informed us softly of our position in the dance, laughing quietly at our exuberance. In the moment it never crossed my mind, but looking back I wonder what was going through her head as she watched thirty-two 21st century Americans, faces painted, dance around a fire singing in the tongue of her people. This was her home. Her land. I was the invader dressed as a native. A white person within a brown body. But in a way, that’s no different than she. Oomera was, as a matter of fact, one of the Stolen Generation: one of the approximately 100,000 children kidnapped from her family between 1900 and 1969 and put in a simulated white school because she was what the Europeans labeled “half-caste”, not full blood Aboriginal. The Christians and government officials that set this plan in place believed the “savage blood” could be bred out by proper training, schooling and arranged marriages with white Europeans. Of course the idea was ridiculous and only succeeded in displacing thousands of children, breaking families, and creating abusive relationships as the white men treated their aboriginal wives as cattle, impregnating them and running off. Oomera doesn’t remember the dialect of her tribe. She was taken at such a young age that as she grew up in the Cootamundra Girls’ Home, she knew no other definition of home. The families were not allowed to have communication of any kind so she never even met her mother until she was well into her thirties.

By then Oomera was too immersed into white culture to ever be able to return to the traditional, ancient ways she was born into. She had lost her original identity. In her adult years she has sought out this identity and attempted to put it within the modern European context in which she now exists and in doing so has become a powerful advocate and leader of several organizations dedicated to reconnecting this displaced people with their ancient heritage. However, not all are so lucky as her and many simply fade into poverty and obscurity, beaten down by a world they no longer call their own.

It seemed so far away from my perception of reality. When Americans think of assimilation of Native Americans it usually involves the "pioneer days" of wagon trails and cowboys and Indians. No one, of course, would be alive now to tell such personal tales. But there she stood, in her young age of mid 40’s, in modern clothing and a thick
Australian accent, telling us of the traditional life robbed of her in which Country meant something and money was not a concept, white people were to be feared and English was a foreign word.

The dance and songs ended, the laughter died, the fire lowered to a soft glow and slowly the boisterous students trickled back to their cabins and warm beds as the night cooled. Only so much of tribal life can be accepted by a comfortable American and sleeping on the rock hard ground with no blankets does not fall into that category. I started to follow suit, switching into comfortable clothes and wiping away the ocre the covered my face and removing the ceremonial jewelry I had made out of leaves and sticks, returning once again to modern day existence. However, my Cherokee Indian blood often calls me to commune with nature and thus I decided to sit alone in the bush for a while. Walking quietly across the deck surrounding the cabins, I stopped in front of a gum tree that sank its roots close to the rooms. The fire lit the darkening night several yards away as the dull hum of voices slowly dissipated.

The gum tree stretched its legs, beckoning me to take rest upon it. I hesitated slightly, but the tree spread its arms and pulled me to its base, offering a root to sit and a trunk to lean against. My naked feet leapt from the splinters of a wood plank deck to the matted, dry grass and compact earth, transporting me from white European influence to native lands and memory. The ancient dust puffed and swirled and danced with each impact, covering my bare skin in brown. Perhaps Country would accept me this way. Surely it could not accept the ivory skin that had destroyed its people. Sit. Listen. Do not speak, the dust whispered. The night surrounded and covered me in calm and mystery. Leaning into the trunk, I sat before the forest of bush all around me. The crickets crooned and the possums scurried as the ethereal breezes swarmed and rose in chants and songs of the Darnjinjung aboriginal tribe. Guji nungara yanna. Gurrai gudiddigai. Boradhi murrangangi. Guji nungara yanna. “Children, come dance with me. Let’s hear your voices sing. This Land is our Country. Children, come dance with me.” It was the very song we had chanted not but a few hours earlier, only this time there was no laughter. The voices swirled the campfire that burned a few feet away. Guji nungara yanna. The sound swelled and surrounded. I lifted my head as the cries rose to the Southern Cross that spanned the starry sky. The ancients swept through the bush calling for their lost children. Guji nungara yanna. Gurrai gudiddigai. Boradhi murrangangi. Guji nungara yanna! A final explosion of earth and the bodies collapsed. My body collapsed as well and my tears flooded the land as the dust settled. The ancients were no more and the haunting pain only a whisper.

Rachel Mullany
Sun Child

By Jamie Bishop

At the young age of nine the light had been turned off within me. Being a child, I knew only instinctively that I needed to come across a light to replace the one that I had violently lost.

Not knowing where to find this new light I grew agitated and kept away from my family as much as possible. I had an amazing family compared to most, so my family was not the reason for my avoidance of their company. I had a secret. And the only way it would stay that way was if I could escape their seemingly perceptive eyes.

Before any notice could be taken, I was soon more outside than in. I had to escape the darkness that seemed to loom no matter how many lights were turned on in the house. The house was in essence a black hole, which had played as an aid in stealing my inner radiance.

I did very similar things to what other children my age in a small town would do to occupy their time. I made a tree house, I rode my bike, I kicked rocks, and I watched the beautiful neighboring horses, hoping to get to pet one. These may all seem like ordinary, mundane things to do from day-to-day, but for me they were the equivalent to a lifeline blessed by the sun.

Under the sun I kicked rocks that lay in my path. I had to. I couldn’t stand to have any obstacles in my way; truly, my secret was heavy enough to bear. I even kicked lame gravel, hoping that as I moved along I could get as much off to the side as possible. Surely the neighbors thought I was some kind of human road sweeper. But, I wouldn’t have cared, I was just glad to feel the heat of the sun on my head and shoulders. Its warmth always seemed to breathe life back into me. As I look back I can now see that my actions in removing the rocks from my path were my childish way in replacing an action that was much needed to remove the secret’s power over me, yet I was at the time unable to do so.

Of course, eventually I would be kicking rocks off here and there on my way home. By this time I would be dragging my feet. I remember thinking that the house looked so forlorn and unwelcoming when all the blinds and doors were shut tightly. Why could they never let the sunrays come in and fill the living room with its penetrating light? Was light not friendlier than darkness?

It would be about this time when I could hear my mother first shouting and then saying, “Jamie, it is time to come in! What do you do out there all day anyway? Have you done your schoolwork yet? Where are your brothers? Your dad will be home soon. Well go wash up, I’ll have dinner on the table soon. Set the table while we wait for your brothers to get back.”

I always wondered why my mom had to talk so fast, was she afraid that I would interrupt her? I hardly even talked at all. Or could she, like me, sense the ghostly quiet that seemed to permeate all throughout the house? Now I know it is because she had to fill the long silences that I left open with my absent replies.

I am sure during those days that my family thought I was devoid of all feeling, for all they ever saw me do when I was home was read, clean, and eat. But, if they had ever secretly followed me on one of my adventures they would have seen that I was filled with emotions that they didn’t even know were there.

I remember riding my bike all over the small town of Cody. Most times I was alone. My two brothers didn’t usually like riding with me because they said I always looked “so angry.” And it is true. I knew even then that I rode to vent the fury that the secret had caused and continued to cause within me. With each violent stroke of the pedal I pushed myself further and further toward my goal, hoping to leave the anger behind in the dust for the sun to evaporate as it did with my tears.

I wouldn’t doubt the possibility that my brothers knew something was wrong with me. For they were present when I fervently kicked the stones out of my way on the walk to school and they were around here and there for the vehement bike rides that I couldn’t live a single day without. They were also there to notice that their sister, who should have been their playmate, wasn’t there.

The sun did shine ever so brightly in Cody. There was hardly ever a day with a cloud outside. It is this fact that helped me survive the endless and deadly grip that my secret had over me. Sometimes I would even just sit staring up at the sun, ignoring the comment that it could make me blind. All I felt was warmth. I only felt blind within the dark walls of my home. Out here I could breathe; somehow I was free.

Naturally I would have eventually released all the anger pent up that day through kicking stones and beating my bike pedals in their endless circular cycle. It was then that I would drop my bike off at home and walk over to the horse stables only two houses away with an apple in my sun kissed hand.

They were beautiful thoroughbred horses that loved days with the sun as much as I. My favorite was the solid black horse with a white star on his forehead. He was always the first to gallop up to greet me and thus also the one and only to get the apple I held out in my eager hand. As he would stretch his beautiful head forward to take the apple, I would stretch my other arm to pet his muzzle, which was always velvety to the touch. He had beautiful mocha-brown eyes that seemed to caress my troubled soul on every on of our meetings. “You are my hope in this mean world Prince, my only hope. You make me smile,” I would say on almost a daily basis. It was at these
At the young age of nine the light had been turned off within me. Being a child, I knew only instinctively that I needed to come across a light to replace the one that I had violently lost.

Not knowing where to find this new light I grew agitated and kept away from my family as much as possible. I had an amazing family compared to most, so my family was not the reason for my avoidance of their company. I had a secret. And the only way it would stay that way was if I could escape their seemingly perceptive eyes.

Before any notice could be taken, I was soon more outside than in. I had to escape the darkness that seemed to loom no matter how many lights were turned on in the house. The house was in essence a black hole, which had played as an aid in stealing my inner radiance.

I did very similar things to what other children my age in a small town would do to occupy their time. I made a tree house, I rode my bike, I kicked rocks, and I watched the beautiful neighboring horses, hoping to get to pet one. These may all seem like ordinary, mundane things to do from day-to-day, but for me they were the equivalent to a lifeline blessed by the sun.

Under the sun I kicked rocks that lay in my path. I had to. I couldn’t stand to have any obstacles in my way; truly, my secret was heavy enough to bear. I even kicked lame gravel, hoping that as I moved along I could get as much off to the side as possible. Surely the neighbors thought I was some kind of human road sweeper. But, I wouldn’t have cared, I was just glad to feel the heat of the sun on my head and shoulders. Its warmth always seemed to breathe life back into me. As I look back I can now see that my actions in removing the rocks from my path were my childish way in replacing an action that was much needed to remove the secret’s power over me, yet I was at the time unable to do so.

Of course, eventually I would be kicking rocks off here and there on my way home. By this time I would be dragging my feet. I remember thinking that the house looked so forlorn and unwelcoming when all the blinds and doors were shut tightly. Why could they never let the sunrays come in and fill the living room with its penetrating light? Was light not friendlier than darkness?

It would be about this time when I could hear my mother first shouting and then saying, “Jamie, it is time to come in! What do you do out there all day anyway? Have you done your schoolwork yet? Where are your brothers? Your dad will be home soon. Well go wash up, I’ll have dinner on the table soon. Set the table while we wait for your brothers to get back.”

I always wondered why my mom had to talk so fast, was she afraid that I would interrupt her? I hardly ever talked at all. Or could she, like me, sense the ghostly quiet that seemed to permeate all throughout the house? Now I know it is because she had to fill the long silences that I left open with my absent replies.

I am sure during those days that my family thought I was devoid of all feeling, for all they ever saw me do when I was home was read, clean, and eat. But, if they had ever secretly followed me on one of my adventures they would have seen that I was filled with emotions that they didn’t even know were there.

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times that I felt absolute peace and almost joy.

But, then with a sudden flick of his ebony tail my lovely horse would gallop away to be with his friends again, and the feeling was gone.

My parents couldn’t understand my ardent love for my horse. I had pictures of them all over the bedroom walls along with cotton stuffed horse figures. I guess it was my childish attempt to bring the peace I felt with the real horses outside to the inside of my house, especially at night when all was dark and I was left alone with my treacherous thoughts, hardly able to wait for the sun to come over the horizon yet again to start my day. The song “Oh Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun, please shine down on me” was not a song I knew at that time, but was most assuredly the beat of my heart every time the navy blue sheet covered with white dots was laid out across the sky.

Indeed I had many nightmares during that time. Not ones that other children would have though. Mine were not filled with goblins, dragons, dying, or even falling. The nightmares I had consisted of my parents looking down on me with knowing and judging eyes. No longer would they look at me with love. And behind them, always behind them, was my secret pecking over their shoulders grinning and pretending that he is more a part of the family than I am; he is good, I am bad. And then I would feel this inner sinking feeling of loathing and almost death.

Down in the depths of my soul I was always afraid that my parents would soon discover my secret. Thus, I avoided them as if they were the darkness themselves, although if I had been a little older I would have known that the best thing that I could have done was have gone to them immediately when the shadowy and frightful thing had occurred. But then, I was only nine.

It is my belief that to this day, I would have simply imploded about the whole secret if it hadn’t been for my very superior listening tree house. It was a gnarly old tree that hardly blossomed beside an empty ditch about forty yards from my house. Everyday I came to this place to set up “house.” I was the mother, the father, and the daughter. It was here that I “told” my parents my secret, but because they were parents made up underneath the warm, glowing sun they always understood and still loved me. Even their faces glowed.

I would simply state, “Mom, dad I have to tell you something.” Then they would look at me reassuringly, to which I would continue rushing out the words so as to get them all out, “Grandpa did something to me on my birthday, when we were downstairs watching a movie in the dark. I think it was his fault. He...touched me. It felt wrong. He...he...he...” I stop unable to continue, for my throat and eyes are filled with tears as I sob from the unbearable pain that is once again searing my heart. My skin would then grow prickly with goose bumps because at this time it was evening and the sun was leaving. And once again I knew that I could not tell my parents my secret, for surely they would not be as understanding as my listening, sun-eating tree.

When I came in through the doors of my house, there was never even the slightest hint that I had just bared my soul to my “tree-house parents” and cried. Whenever I entered, I would close the door to all my emotions just as quickly as I shut the actual door behind me. Then, I would grab a book if it were not yet dinner-time so as to try and not realize where I was. Though I could escape the feelings brought on by being within the looming walls, I could never escape the knowledge that this house strongly bore the unbearable mark of my secret, for it was where the whole horrible event had taken place.

My secret was a burden far heavier than the personal therapy of kicking stones, riding a bike, visiting horses, and having a listening tree house in the sun could fix. I know this now, though I am sure that then I believed I could keep my secret to myself forever. I had solar energy, but what use is that when one is within the walls of a dimly lit house? Still, somehow I thought that the sunlit outdoors could replace what the secret had stolen.

But, just like the sun unmask every shadow, it eventually unmasked my own impenetrable darkness within me.

I remember this one particular day vividly and maybe it is because for the first time in a year I noticed that the blinds in the windows were open and the sun’s rays were lighting up my house as if it were an ant under a lens; my mom stood at the open door, silent. It was as if the house had finally grown a conscience and spilled the secret it had covered so well for four years.

Now, several years later, I am free at last from the dreadful secret that had kept me in a cage of darkness until I was thirteen, a darkness that had made me yearn for physical light. Of course, to this day I notice a positive difference in me when the sun is vibrantly shining outside. I tend to feel happier, stronger, and almost invincible. Yet, I also rarely venture to the sunlit outdoors these days, undoubtedly due to the fact that my family moved to rainy Oregon and my sunny friend is rarely seen. Yet, to my great relief, I now have the true light restored within my soul. This light no longer comes from the brilliant sun, but rather the righteous son. However, that is another story.
Know Yourself
Julia Tupper

Know yourself:
Be like the sparrow in spring.
Give your feelings
Authentic, honest, expression;
They won’t damage your world.

Value yourself:
Be like the wolf in winter.
Discern the difference between
Being valued and being used;
Live at the center-point between the two.
When we become a slave – either
To preserve our sense of being valued,
Or to avoid feeling devalued –
We give ourselves away.

Love yourself:
Be like the rose –
Sensitive enough
To love and be loved;
Tough enough
To weather the uncertainty
Of both love and loneliness.
Embrace your sorrows –
So that they do not consume you,
Leaving you frozen in grief.
Hold your hopes and dreams
With a gentle grip and an open heart.
Experience joy and delight
With confidence:
Know that feeling good isn’t an illusion,
It’s the velvet of the rose petal –
A thing not discovered by all.
Trust without fearing betrayal.
Be trustworthy without having to be perfect.

Own yourself:
Be like the hawk on the hunt.
When we disown ourselves
We know abandonment.
When we claim self-compassion
We know love.
Know your intent;
Own your behavior and your mistakes.

Listen to yourself:
Be like the whale sounding the depths.
Your intuition is your closest ally
When we hear that still small voice
Echoing our inner wisdom
We make wise choices.
Honor and meet your own needs –
You will be freer to love, laugh, and cry.
Believe in the choices you make.

Take a risk:
Be like the monarch, never missing a beat.
Claim your rightful place in the world
With confidence and dignity.
Be both the lesson you have learned
Without bitterness or resentment –
And the lesson you teach
Without arrogance or selfishness.
A clamor from the rest of the team assaulted Beka, anger, confusion, and disappointment painting their words. I was the only one to remain silent. Beka raised up her hands, rolling one shoulder back. By now all traces of tears were completely gone. My friend and director had her spirited expression set back in place. “I don’t get it either. But you need to hold your heads up high. Your “Commercials” routine was the best I have ever seen.”

Somehow she convinced us to all return to the auditorium to watch the remainder of the competition. Every now and then I looked her way, wondering if the anguish of disappointment would return to her face. It never did. Her lips were set in a taut line, but that was the only suggestion of any inner distress. I suppose I remember that brief exchange of emotion between Beka and my team because it revealed a side to her that was rarely seen.

Beka was known for her spunky attitude and spontaneity. When I first saw her bounding up the steps to the stage, I took her to be a fellow student, rather than director. Her hair was cropped short and yellow-orange, as if it had been sunbleached one too many times. Not much later she colored her hair a deep, vibrant red. Not Auburn, not strawberry blonde. This was Annie-the-orphan red. Freckles scattered her nose, cheeks, shoulders, and arms, adding to her childlike quality. As I watched her perform an off-balance bell kick only to then get tackled by three nine-year olds, I truly wondered what I had gotten myself into by signing up for a session with children’s theatre. But after a few months I came to understand the bell kicks and lung-crushing hugs. It was part of the life that Beka breathed into the program.

Beka is originally from Chicago. She grew up there, and after tearing her ACL in high school (thereby ruling out any potential future in sports) she focused her attention onto theater.

As a young adult she moved to San Diego to work with a program called Christian Youth Theater, learning the combined, chaotic art of theater and youth. Just as she was wrapping up her first show as Artistic Director, her boss presented the opportunity to start a new branch of CYT in Vancouver, Washington. It would be a move to a new city in a new state where she knew nobody: “I drove up with my best friend with all my stuff, and I was...terrified,” she later told me when our friendship was starting to form. “I doubted my decision...I mean, I seriously thought I had made a mistake. But then my best friend, Rebekah, told me that this was my moment. She reminded me that I thrive on change and challenge. I need it...I just had forgotten that in my fear.”

So at twenty-four - single, independent, charismatic - Beka helped begin the new CYT Vancouver branch. It was not long before she won over the affection of all the kids and their parents. She did so through the characteristics that made her uniquely Beka: the rusty, corroded blue Volvo she drove around town with unapologetic pride, the way in which she arrived to her classes and rehearsals ten minutes late every time, the habit of clapping her feet when she was greatly amused, and the laugh. The first thing you recognize about Beka is her laugh. It is unmistakable. In a theater of three hundred audience members, I could always distinctly hear her loud outburst of laughter from the stage. Usually in writing you use the word “Ha ha!” to describe a person laughing, even though the majority of people do not really sound like this. There are giggles, machine gun laughter, snorting, honking. But Beka’s laugh is the literal “ha ha.” It comes in a loud, exuberant stream of three to five syllables, and she never held back, especially the volume. Even when the two of us were in a quiet aisle in Powells Bookstore, if she found...
something funny, the surrounding world knew it. When she laughed really hard, her eyes squeezed shut, her mouth first forming a perfect "O" before stretching as wide as it could possibly open. Contagious is an understatement. I'm sure the most stoic of human beings would crack a smile in the presence of Beka's laughter.

I was swept under her spell along with everyone else. It was entrancing to watch her work. During rehearsal, she would pace the length of the floor, chin parked in hand. At other times, she hunkered down on crouched knees to watch from another perspective, scratching notes on yellow sheets of paper, or she slouched back in a metal folding chair with arms crossed in front of her. In all of these stances, her eyes were always intently watching the actors. Her craziness momentarily slipped to the side as she concentrated on transforming words from a script into art. I learned to recognize the pursed lips and unconscious twirling of her short hair around her finger as periods not to disturb her. I waited until her eyes widened the slightest bit as inspiration struck, or an enormous smile spread across her mouth as if to say, "Why didn't I think of that before?" Whenever something hilarious occurred during rehearsal, which was often considering it was theater with children, Beka had this habit of spinning on her right heel so her back was turned, her arms thrown up in a "Don't shoot" gesture, her left knee slightly bent as she brought her leg up a few inches off the ground. At first I found the motion strangely awkward, but then I came to realize that Beka was the least inhibited person I have ever met concerning the body. "Your body is a great acting tool," she said to me during rehearsal. "You can do so much with it. Play around, experiment, explore...don't be self-conscious." Seeing as how she modeled that in her day-to-day life, I began to feel more at ease with my own gangly limbs. Before long, even I was clapping with my feet.

Along with her goofy mannerisms, a strong current of integrity ran deeply within her, informing and molding her every decision. It was the spring of my senior year of high school, during which Beka and I worked together as co-teachers of a children's comedy class, which revealed to me how deeply this current ran. One afternoon towards the end of April, the two of us went to coffee, not so much to discuss the class but to talk as friends - something we had not done for weeks due to hectic schedules. I ordered my standard hazelnut latte, and Beka asked for an iced vanilla mocha; she was always experimenting with new coffee drinks.

"How is the show coming?" I asked her as we found two seats by a window and sat down.

She did not answer right away. That was never a good sign. "Actually...not good. I had to tell Sarah she was no longer in the show. Ben, too."

I felt my eyebrows fly upward.

"What?"

"I had written parts for them at the beginning and ending of Charlotte’s Web, sorta like bookends."

"I remember."

"I guess the publishing company is strict on what you can and cannot do with the script. Someone contacted them about the roles I gave Sarah and Ben, and I was told I couldn’t do that."

"It isn’t as if you’re altering the script," I pointed out. "You’re just adding to it. Directors do it all the time."

"I know. Some publishers are more stringent than others. I just."

She drew in a deep breath as her eyes darkened to a gray-blue shade. Her eyebrows slipped downward ever so slightly, a tiny V appearing at the bridge of her nose. "It’s my fault. I shoulda thought of the technicalities before casting the kids and getting their hopes up. I spent two hours with Sarah yesterday...she cried the entire time."

I didn’t know what to say so I took a long sip of my coffee.

"And this person also told the publisher that we were planning on taping the show as we do for every show. They forbid us to do that as well.”

"Who is this?" I demanded. "Do they have something against CYT? Against you? Do they want to hurt the show?"

"It doesn’t matter who it is."

With that answer I knew who it was that had contacted the publisher. A flame of white hot anger erupted in my lungs, and I pushed my coffee cup to the side. "That woman has a personal grudge from years ago and is taking it out on the program...on the kids!"

The slightest smile graced Beka’s mouth, obviously touched by my indignation. "I know."

"What are you going to do about it? One director tattoning on another isn’t right."

"Nothing. She is right, actually. I shouldn’t have added to the script without asking permission. I told Sarah she could be an assistant director of sorts for the show. It’s the least I can do."

The rest of our conversation is a muddied haze in my memory. I was dumbfounded at Beka’s refusal to seek vengeance. Her lack of fight irritated me. I would have gone after the other director in half a heartbeat; she was acting out of purely resentful, jealous motives. But not Beka. She chose to focus her attention and concern on the kids rather than the hateful treatment she was receiving through this woman.

We left the coffee shop as the late
afternoon sun poured across Highway 99, cars and windows sparkling like cut-up pieces of colored glass. Beka slung her oversized bag over her shoulder and squinted from the sunlight. “So we should discuss summer camp soon. I want you to be a counselor, Heaths.” Beka has this habit of abbreviating nearly all the words in her vocabulary. “Perfect” became “perfs,” and “cookies” became “cooks.” She did not call me Heather anymore; I was “Heaths.” So I called her Beks. This quirky habit caught on, and by the time I left the theater nearly all the older kids and other assistant directors were abbreviating names and words. It was yet more proof of Beka’s undeniable magnetism. She infused life and vitality into CYT. Even during the hardest, most frustrating times, such as the incident with Charlotte’s Web, she would remain level-headed, providing a blend of encouragement and inspiration.

And then she moved. The words she had related to me from when she first came to Vancouver returned to haunt me. Her life needed change and new challenges. Vancouver got old, and Beka felt the need to move on. From the perspective of a close friend, I knew she needed to go, but it still felt like a vital chunk of my heart was pulled from my chest, leaving a hole that icy wind whistled through. Her absence was potent, tangible.

I stopped by a CYT function a few months after Beka had moved back to Chicago. As I wove through the clumps of kids, parents, and adolescents I found myself expecting to hear an outburst of Beka’s laughter or see her bright red hair bobbing above the heads of several twelve-year-old kids. I heard laughter, but it was normal laughter. I saw a glimpse of red hair out of the corner of my eye, and I snapped my head that direction so fast I felt four cracks along my spine, only to find some natural redhead in a white sundress. The entire atmosphere of the event felt strangely hollow. Some of the life had been sucked out of the organization. The smiles were less vibrant; the love of theater less passionate. This was something the kids did now because they wanted to be recognized as actors rather than share their all-consuming love of theater. It’s far too dramatic to say that this change was solely due to the fact that Beka was no longer there. Yet when she left, some of the brightness went with her.

“It’s called Christian Youth Theater for a reason,” she had said to me during one of our first conversations. “Faith comes first, then the kids, then the act of theater. If you mix up the order, your priorities aren’t straight.”

Those priorities have slowly shifted during Beka’s absence. The organization has grown; ticket sales have increased with each new production. To the outside eye, one would say it is more successful than it ever has been. But for those who were there at the beginning of it all, the group we came to love is gone. The beautiful stage where magic was once created is noticeably absent. The theater’s auditorium is an empty room, dusty and covered with white sheets, waiting to be restored.
I was over at God and Sally's house the other night for dinner when
the topic of art came into the discussion.
“Did you know that God is an artist?” Sally said excitedly.
“Yes and his work is amazing” She added.
“Is this true?” I asked God, but he was only blushing in embarrass-
ment.
“My wife is crazy. She's lying” he said, “Honey, these green beans
are amazing, how on earth did you make them?” he asked trying to
change the subject.
“Come on I’ll show you,” she said to me rolling her eyes at her hus-
band.

We left God at the dinner table and I followed her into the basement
where some of his works was. Once at the bottom of the stairs she told
me to prepare myself and turned on the light; and I was immediately
blown away by the sight before my eyes:

Colorful little orbs spinning in circles around a ball of light hanging
from the ceiling, connected by coat hangers. Some were red and oth-
ers were blue. A few even had rings around them. And there were tons
of tiny little pieces of glitter around the basement which sparkled and
danced, giving the basement an enchanted kind of feel, like some kind
of surreal far away galaxy. An epic model display made from plastic
and Styrofoam.

“Wow!” I exclaimed, “God made all of this?”
“I know, isn’t it amazing.” she said proudly.
We stood there for a few minutes in silence admiring his creation
before us.

“Here follow me back up stairs and I’ll show you his paintings,” she
said even more excited.

Returning back to the dinging table for a split second God yelled

“Don’t believe her!” as we contin-
ued on into the living room. Once
there Sally pulled out a few large
books from under the coffee table.

“These are his paintings,” she
said, opening one.

And my jaw dropped as I
looked through the pages. They
were full of breathtaking and
colorful paintings of everything
imaginable:

Kangaroos in orange deserts,
monkeys in green trees, fish in
blue oceans. People in parks
walking dogs, birds flying in
clouds, and icy rivers flowing
through mountain valleys. Each
painting was unique and different,
expressing all aspects of life.

“Wow,” I said in astonishment,
“these are all so beautiful, God is
amazing.”

“I know,” she said looking
smug, “that’s why I married him.”

We both sat and looked through
the numerous books for the rest of
the evening while God watched
TV in the other room. Hours past,
and before I knew it, it was time
for me to go.

“Thank you for dinner” I said,
“and thank you for showing me
God’s art.”

“Before you go” she said qui-
etly, “take this with you, but don’t
tell God I let you borrow it, he’d
kill me.”

She handed me a large journal
with the words “Holy Bible” on
the cover.

“It’s his writings” she said, “his
poetry and stories.”

I’d known God years before this
and he never told me about his
creations, he’s quite the artist.
As the first woman to earn a living as a writer, Aphra Behn (1640-1687) had to constantly defend herself both as a writer and as a woman. To the British society of Behn’s day to be a woman one did not write, to be a writer was to be a man. Behn was both writer and woman and she used her characters to model the struggle over controlling gender roles and to illustrate the battle over who says what makes a woman a woman. Behn recognized she had potential power being a woman and that this power was being controlled by men who controlled the gender roles assumed by both sexes. Behn created her characters to both knowingly and ignorantly change the gender role qualities in addition as she used the characters to show the use of women by men as a sign of the man’s power.

In her tragic-comedy The Widow Ranter the Widow Ranter is the anti-gender role character. She swears, drinks, and states her opinions. The Widow Ranter’s husband left her money and she is able to live as she wants and that is what she aims to do. What the Widow Ranter wants is the hero’s, General Bacon, second in command, Daring. Unfortunately Daring does not want the Widow Ranter and plans on wooing the helpless Christine who was captured by Bacon’s rebels. The Widow Ranter’s actions to gain Daring show Behn’s manipulation of gender roles to allow her characters to take control of their own lives. The Widow Ranter recognizes the power within her and refuses to leave the power to the men in pants with swords. Through the device of cross-dressing, the Widow becomes a man in pants with a sword. When the Widow Ranter challenges Daring for Christine she is also challenging Daring for power over their relationship.

Critic P.E. Morgan explains in “A Subject to Redress: Ideology and the Cross-Dressed Heroine in Aphra Behn’s The Widow Ranter” how, by cross-dressing the Widow Ranter, Behn “undermines the traditional ideology of fixed gender, creating...a crisis of category in which the performative nature, the theatricality, of gendered roles is emphasized (emphasis hers)” (36). The Widow Ranter embodies the idea that the female gender role is different from the actual female. Women are able to act like men. For example, they can challenge a rival for love or write for a living (as Behn did) and still maintain their honor. As Morgan notes it is only after Daring discovers the Widow is cross-dressed and suggests to her as man-to-man that the Widow Ranter has been loose with her honor that the Widow Ranter draws on him. (37) The Widow Ranter still held that her honor was in her chastity, not in maintaining the traditionally viewed female gender role, and she claims the right to defend against slights. Just as the Widow Ranter has to fight for her honor, because she has crossed the gender role barrier Behn also has to defend against attacks, because she is a woman earning her living by the pen.

The Widow Ranter is not the only female character of Behn’s who crosses gender roles in order to gain control of her life and get what she wants. Helena in the comedy The Rover is also a model of a woman fighting for power. Throughout The Rover the cavalier Willmore has control of his relationships with both the prostitute Angellica and the high-born young woman Helena. It is only when Helena crosses the gender bar-
rriers by cross-dressing that she is able to claim equal power with Willmore.

Helena does not start out with the intention of cross dressing; however, she is brought to it by no other choice. In the beginning of the play Helena and her sister Florinda push aside the class and gender roles they are expected to follow and dress in masquerade during Carnival in order to seek out their loves (known and unknown). By dressing as a gypsy Helena is able to flirt with Willmore when otherwise she would not have; unfortunately, blurring the line of class propriety is not enough to gain her desire. Helena has to dress as a youth to go into her rival, the prostitute Angellica’s presence and tell Angellica that Willmore loves another. Helena acts on her own power to benefit herself.

What is interesting in The Rover is the difference between Angellica’s and Helena’s actions, because they essentially want the same thing: Willmore. It seems more likely for Angellica to move outside of her prescribed gender role, because she has “more” (it would be more accurate to say different) freedom. However, Behn never has Angellica move outside her gender role. Angellica, like Helena, tries to take control of her life and gain power back, but she does this by threatening Willmore’s life. Instead of gaining power the gun is taken from her by a suitor and Angellica exits the play with the impression she will be accepting the suitor (purchaser) Antomo as her keeper. The reader cannot help but feel sorry for the broken-hearted prostitute. Angellica tries to force power when she still accepted the gender role (and profession) that was given to her. Angellica did not accept the way that Willmore was treating her, but because she did not challenge the societal idea Willmore was living under, she could do nothing about it.

Helena on the other hand, did not try to force power. She recognized she had power in “who” she was, as a woman, and acted upon it. The power to be found in a woman is spoken to in Behn’s poem, “Epilogue Spoken By Mrs. Gwin.” Behn writes, “We (women) once were famed in story, and could write/ Equal to men; could govern, nay could fight/ We still have passive valour, and can show/ Would custom give us leave the active too” (329-330). Behn is reminding (or telling for the first time) the audience that Women were not always in the gender role prescribed in their day. Not only can women govern and force himself on her. But what is fight, they would be able to show it if Trefry’s purpose in showing Imoinda to Oronoko? I believe it is not because she is a beautiful woman, but because she is a beautiful woman in his power, hence it gives Trefry more standing in Oronoko’s eyes—showing how worthwhile Trefry is (although he does not recognize this).

Imoinda is a slave for almost the entire novel. There is a period of time before Oronoko’s grandfather sends for her to join his harem when she was free, but from that moment on she is told what to do and has no other option. In Surinam, Oronoko is told of a beautiful slave named Clemene and he wonders why Trefry has not forced Clemene, because that is what a master does with female slaves. (Behn 110) The Master has the power and the women bow to it. Trefry shows Oronoko the beautiful young slave, Clemene, who we find out, is Imoinda, saying he could not fight, they would be able to show it if Trefry’s purpose in showing Imoinda to Oronoko? I believe it is not because she is a beautiful woman, but because she is a beautiful woman in his power, hence it gives Trefry more standing in Oronoko’s eyes—showing how worthwhile Trefry is (although he does not recognize this).

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Oroonoko knows the retribution against him would also go against Imoinda, because she belongs
to him (women are property and a source of power). Like burning a city
before letting the enemies take it in
a war that cannot be won, Oroonoko
decides to kill his love Imoinda in
one of his last actions of power.

However, after Oroonoko has ‘friened’ Imoinda he finds
himself unable to act. Yes, part of this is because he just
killed the woman he loved,
but as Houston examines it
“Without the woman as sign of
his power, he seems to dis-
solve” (34). At this point in the
novella Oroonoko has nothing
to signify his mastery and he
cannot even control himself;
he collapses. We know that
Imoinda had power, because
when she was pregnant with
Oroonoko’s child she almost
killed the Deputy-Governor.
The image the reader is given is
“...his (Oroonoko’s) heroic
Imoinda, who, grown big as
she was, did neverthe-less press
near her lord, having a bow,
and a quiver full of poisoned
arrows” (Behn 129). When the
heroic power Imoinda symbol-
izes as Oroonoko’s power is gone
Oroonoko loses the power to act and
is captured by the Deputy-Governor.

When the rabble begins to torture
Oroonoko the first thing they do is cut
off his members. This is to show his
race will never continue, never have
power. After Oroonoko is dismem-
bered he can never be a master over
a woman again and to the eyes of the
rabble (and perhaps his own self) has
no power.

This is not the only work of Behn’s
that uses a woman character to show
power play between male characters,
nor is Houston the only critic to rec-
ognize it. Margo Hendricks in “Cit-
ivity, Barbarism, and Aphra Behn’s
The Widow Ranter” writes “Bacon’s
pursuit of Sermernia [the American
Indian Queen] takes on the rhetoric
of property. Symbolically, Bacon’s
pursuit is about the English efforts
to acquire American Indian lands’
with lands being synonymous with
power (236). When the Indian King
had power over herself. For Behn
living her own life, crossing gender
roles was as big a deal as if a
former slave was living on a planta-
tion with other current slaves, but not
doing what the Masters told him or
her to do and instead argued that he
or she had the right to what he or she
wants to do. As Houston writes “As
the struggle of Behn’s life revealed
to her over and over the society
wishes to define the woman, like
the slave, as utterly powerless,
a token of change and helpless
dependent in the world of men and
property” (32).

While Aphra Behn did write
for the populace and had to write
in a manner that would entertain
in order that she could live, she
also wrote with a purpose. Behn
wanted to show the audience of
her day how controlled the women
were and why they were controlled.
Women were controlled, not be-
cause they were weak and prone to
wander, but because they were the
male source of power. The only
way for men to have control of this
power was to force the women into
unnatural gender roles which the
men could have control of. This
is why Behn favored the “golden
age,” a mythical time when men
and women existed without gender
roles and why her heroines who
strive to have what they wanted had
to break the common gender role of
dress. The heroines did keep their
“honor” intact and not break that
gender role, because Behn needed her
plays to be played in order to live.
But all other gender roles were bro-
ken, because the heroines recognized
their own power and acted on it as
Behn did with her own writing.
L. A.
Matt Scholer

Up here it's harsh and cold
If only you could get away
You'd run before you're old
But I want you to stay

Everything is better down there
In L.A. you have a new start
Your life has been stricken bare
It's sad we've grown apart

You wanted change
You wanted more
Now life's been re-arranged
Up here it begins to pour

I let the rain shower down on me
I'm sure down there it must be nice
I can see the sun's glare on your face
So pretty
But all I will have is a memory that will suffice

And I never felt alone
Until I met you
But now I don't even answer the phone
Please leave a message on the cue

The only thing I have now is the sun, moon, and sea
Everything else you have taken away from me
I want you to be happy
And I understand if that's the way it should be

So say hello to Hollywood
I hope everything works out
With your charm it should
Without a doubt

Send me a postcard once in awhile
And I will write one back
Please, never stop that smile
Keep your life on track

Life goes on and so should I
So I walk away from the rain
And go on to something new
No more pain
Just happy thoughts of you

Rachel Mullany
Fun under the sun,
Every one is having some.
When night falls,
Into our beds we'll crawl,
Then awaken activity,
In hopes to soften the reality of it all.
I'm just writing what I see,
On the stations.
Even in silence all seems to be,
Lost in translation.
I deny the fun,
To me there is none,
Not extremely anyway,
We wake up to do the same thing,
Just on a different day.
I want to switch life up,
But for what?
I'll live for my kids then what?
Is what most think,
As their purpose sinks,
I say that's outlandish!
Then they hunt me like a shrink,
Sift me like grains of wheat,
Treat me like the meat they eat.
Contest me, I just might compete.
Then again, what will it mean,
If in this life I win these things?
This flesh,
Always wants the best,
It craves the fun,
To be in the sun,
And parch like all the rest.
I kept my eyes on the road. "You ain't the only one."

John looked away again. "Yeah, I guess." Then looked back. "But it went alright, huh?"

"Yeah, it was awright."

"That's a change, isn't it?"

"Sort of, yeah. Last few weeks haven't been the greatest, I can say that."

"Yeah," he said, looking out his window now.

We were quiet after that. I got onto 205 and drove in silence a little longer.

Eventually, he looked back and said, "So you ready for this? You up for it? A little apartment hunting?"

"I said I was. That's why I'm here."

He frowned a little. "Thought you were here to pick me up and hang out?"

"Well, that's kinda unavoidable no matter what if we're gonna do this."

His frown lessened some. "I was thinking we could go someplace after, maybe read, get some food or something."

"That's fine with me. I'm just sayin', I thought the point of today was——"

"Yeah, okay. I getcha."

I didn't say anything for a minute, my mind on the current place we were living, and why we were looking for a new one now.

I sped the car up, still thinking, passing a couple people who were driving too slow for me. I looked back at them in the rearview mirror, scowled, hoping they could see me, bared my teeth, and let out a low growl.

John looked at me, raising an eyebrow. "What are you doing?"

I nodded over my shoulder. "I'm growling at those punks behind me."

"There's no way they can see you. You're going over 75. You should've done it as you passed them."

He glanced behind us. "And why are you growling for? Wouldn't yelling..."
or a certain hand gesture make more sense?

I looked back at him. "I like to growl. Sometimes you just need to growl, man. You should try it—"

"I do," he said. "Think I got it from you, in fact."

"You should still try it more often," I said. "It's enjoyable." I sped up again, eyes ahead. "Also? I have good growl."

He shook his head. "Okay, if you say so. Still... it's an odd thing to be good at."

I turned my scowl to him. "Whatever, man. So, what's the plan? Are we just gonna drive around, or do you have some places in mind you wanna check out?"

John reached into the back for his bag. "I have some places in mind. But there's also gonna probably be some just driving around randomly too."

I looked at him a second longer, then turned to the road. "Okay, where to first?"

It was the third stop, and the only one John really wanted to get a more personal look at. Obviously he had higher hopes for this place. The other stops had been brief, and involved questions about price more than anything. This place was in Northeast, on Alameda.

Once I found a place to park, we got out and started walking. After a few minutes we arrived at a blue and grey three story building. John looked up at it. "This is it," he said.

I looked at it.

"What do you think?" he said.

I looked at it again. "Looks awright."

"Alright, huh?"

"Yeah, I guess it's fine."

"You don't seem too impressed by it."

I looked at him, pointed at the building. "I don't get impressed easily. Plus, you're only showing me the outside of a building. Aren't we gonna see what the apartment looks like inside?"

He shrugged. "Yeah, sure. Come on."

We walked up to the double glass doors marked 'Entrance.' John pulled on the door. It didn't move. He pushed at it. Same thing.

"What is this?" he said.

I looked at the door and pointed at something he was apparently not seeing. He looked at it, cursed, and looked back at me.

"This is garbage."

"Yep," I said.

A note on the door said: "Will be back at 3:30 pm. Please wait. Will be back."

"What time is it now?" he said.

I looked at my cell-phone. "4:15 pm."

He cursed again, smacked the door. "Don't break it, man."

John hit it again, a little harder.

"I'm not gonna break it."

"Alright, I'm just saying... I looked around, at some people walking. I thought they gave me a funny look, so I gave them a mean one. When they looked away, I turned back to John. "So, what do you wanna do?"

He pushed on the door again. "You think he's coming back?"

"Do you?" I said with a half smile. He didn't say anything. Then, "This guy said he'd be here. I called, told him when we'd be coming by."

"Yeah, I'm not doubtin' it."

John looked back at the door, grumbled something, and looked back. "I'm not waiting. Screw this guy."

I turned from the door. "Good to hear. I was gonna leave no matter what."

"What?" John turned to follow me. "You were gonna leave me? Get in your car and—"

"No, I just wasn't gonna stand here waitin'."

"That's—" He sighed. "Okay, let's at least take a look around the neighborhood." I nodded, sighing a little too. We started walking. John said: "Still, that apartment, I know we didn't see much, but it was pretty nice, don't you think? And it's in our price range."

I continued walking. "Sort of."

"Sort of?"

"Yeah... I think it might be too much actually."

John didn't respond to that, and we continued on.

After about a block he smiled and said: "So how about the neighborhood? You like the area?"

I looked around, shrugged. "Eh, sure."

"This is a really nice area. Got some nice restaurants, coffee shops, a lot of culture, you know?"

"Yeah, it seems so."

He stopped walking, glaring at me. "You don't sound that impressed again."

I glared back. "I said it's pretty nice, man. I'm not gonna jump around and scream like an idiot for you."

"Still, dude, give me something else."

I put my hands up a little. "Sorry."

John shook his head, and we started walking again. Another few minutes went by and he said, "I want some coffee."

I gestured to my left, to a small café. "This work?"

He nodded. "Yeah, let's check it out."

We walked inside. John walked up to the counter, and the girl there asked what he wanted.

"Yeah, an iced mocha, 16 once. That's it."

She looked at me. I gave something like a smile and said, "I'm good."

"Nothing for you?" she asked.

"Nothin'."

She looked at me another few moments, maybe expecting me to change my mind or something, or just to stare. Eventually she looked back at John, and he paid.

We waited as she made the drink,
then we found some seats. John took a sip from his mocha, brought out his laptop, turned it on, and glared at me again.

“Yeah?” I said.

“You never order anything, man.”

“I don’t want nothin’.”

“Ever?”

“Not right now, I don’t.”

“Alright...”

I looked out the window behind John a bit, watching people outside go by. When I looked back, John’s eyes hadn’t moved.”

“Yeah?” I said again.

“So, what’s up, man? What’s with you today? You having some kind of problem?”

“Whaddaya talkin’ about?”

“You never really said what you thought of the area.”

“I said it’s alright. Whaddaya talkin’ about?”

“You’ve been kind of strange since you picked me up.”

I smiled slightly. “I’m how I always am.”

He nodded again. “I guess. Though I’d say you’re worse today.”

I leaned back in my chair a little, resting my hands behind my head. “Worse? Come on. How can I be any worse? Is that possible?”

His gaze softened a little.

“Okay, man. I just wanna know something. And I won’t be offended by your answer. So just tell me.” He paused, took a longer sip from his coffee, then set it down. He looked at me a moment more, and said, “You wanna be roommates still or not? Because you don’t have to get this place with me if you don’t want to. I can easily look for my own place; some studio apartment or something. It would be a little more expensive for me but...”

I stared at him a few seconds, rubbed one of my eyes. “Where’d you get that idea?”

“Cause of how you’ve been today; this whole week actually. Your whole outlook on the apartment.”

“What apartment?”

“The one we just came from.”

I frowned. “We didn’t see that apartment. We only saw the outside of a building.”

“Still...come on. How about the neighborhood? This is a pretty nice area.”

“I know. You said so. And I agreed. The area is nice, lot’s of great places. There is no denying comin’ from me. Heck, I’m sure the inside of that mysterious apartment down there is not too shabby. But don’t expect some fake enthusiasm about it.”

John pushed his laptop away, picked up his drink, pointing at me with it. “So, do you wanna be roommates still?”

I leaned closer to him, across the table. “I keep sayin’ yes, every time you’ve asked that this week. Quit doubting me. It’s annoying. I do alright.” I took a breath. “Look, this whole thing, lookin’ for apartments? It just depresses me. I like where we are now, the house. I like it there. I’m about as happy as I can get. Gettin’ kicked out has messed me up more than I like.”

He looked at me, silent for a little while, moved his laptop back, and said slowly, “Yeah, I know. Depresses me, too. Them tearing it down kind of makes it even worse.”

“Yes,” I nodded. “At the same time, it is sort’ve nice being the last occupants of the place. That’s the only good I can get out’ve it.”

John thought about that. “Don’t know if I’ve looked at it that way... but yeah.”

I was feeling a bit calmer now, which was good. “Surely you knew I was depressed, though, right?”

“It’s hard to tell sometimes,” he said. “You’re always—”

“Yeah.”

He typed something into his laptop, looked back at me, didn’t say anything.

“What? What you gotta say now?” I said.

“Nothing.” He was trying to hide a smile. “Just wondering if this state you’re in has anything to do with what’s-her-face. It hasn’t been that long so...I didn’t wanna mention her, since she’s seemed to have crushed your spirit like a slug but—“

I grit my teeth. “You just mentioned her.” I could feel a growl coming on.

“Yeah,” he said, the smile guilty now. “You don’t have to say anything, man. I’m sure she’s part of this, though.”

I looked at him a minute, silent, thinking about that, that whole story. Now wasn’t the time for that...

John looked back at his laptop. One more minute went by before he said, “So, how about this part of town? Do you like it?”

Through grit teeth I replied, “I’d prefer something in Southeast, to be honest.”

He typed something else into his laptop. “See, was that so hard? Growling only gets you so far, man. You gotta use your words. Isn’t that what you tell those little kids you work with?”

I groaned. “Shut your mouth, and look for apartments.”

“I am.” he said.

We sat there, both quiet after that, John’s eyes on his laptop, mine on the people walking by outside again. Watching them, I thought about girls and places I called home, and the reasons you lose them, or never have them.

I’m not sure how long I sat there, sinking more into my head, when John said, “Might’ve found a place, I think.”

I pushed my chair back. “What?” “Take a look.”

I stood up, moved behind John, looking at his computer over his shoulder. I looked at it for a while, making sure I saw what I saw.
"What do you think?" he finally said.
"Looks... pretty good. Nice location—"
"In you’re price range?"
"Yep."
"And there’s a showing at 6:00 pm today."
"What time is it now?"
"We can get there on time."
"Let’s go, then."
"Alright." John downed his coffee, packed up his stuff, and we were gone.

Long story short, we got the apartment. It’s on 28th and Division. You can try to stop by if you want. Don’t expect a whole lot, though. Like smiley greetings or conversation or anything. Just two guys who will say—if you ask them what they’re doing—that they’re not up to much.

---

**The Ballad of Buddy the Brazilian Butterfly**

**John Moyer**

Buddy was a butterfly who lived down in Brazil
lying lazily on a flower, he had some time to kill
his muscles loose, his mind adrift, vulnerable and free
when out of nowhere fell a leaf startling him to flee

He flapped his wings a little bit, hopping from his spot
He thought it was a swooping bird; he didn’t want to be caught
The flapping of his little wings moved a little air
The air moved air, which moved more air, continuing to move more air

Air upon air kept moving air until a big storm grew
The weather was so greatly changed; it made a great to-do
A tornado made its way through Kansas, left Dorothy knocked out dead
Her flying dog, Toto had hit her in the head

Chaos sucks when you don’t know what it can do
When you think you’re safe from it, it sneaks right up on you!
A butterfly can cause a stir; bad weather he can send
Little changes in the start can ice you in the end!

---

_A song written for MA 104: Math Concepts and Applications_
Cory: Hey Bill.
Bill: Well hello, Cory, come sit in this chair right by me. The missus made some mighty good lemonade. He pours Cory a glass.
Cory: Thanks. Cory looks at the porch floor.
Bill: Continues to rock in his rocking chair. It’s a fine night. Don’t seem to get many of these any more, not since the city started heading out this way. I can remember when this neighborhood used to be little more than a bunch of empty fields. Bill continues to look around, and then seems to notice Cory. But somebody doesn’t seem to be enjoying the night.
Cory: No, guess not. He looks up. Kinda hard to enjoy something when you’re parents are at it.
Bill: Hmm, still fighting.
Cory: They’ve been going at it for an hour. I’m surprised you can’t hear them all the way out here. Cory looks back down the street toward home.
Bill: Well, you can sit here as long as you want —

Cory: — thanks —
Bill: — but what’s really bothering you?
Cory: Looks over at Bill. I guess I’m just tired of them fighting that’s all. Pause. I just . . . I just thought things might start to be different, you know.
Bill: Because you became a Christian.
Cory: Yeah. I thought maybe this would stop, the fighting. Maybe it would fix everything.
Bill: I’m sorry to tell you this, Cory, but you can’t use Jesus as a fix-it kit. He doesn’t work that way. If He did, everyone would want Him, but the truth is some people don’t.
Cory: But . . . He stops. I thought He was suppose to make life easier. What about Him carrying the yoke and all that.
Bill: He does make life easier, but He also makes it harder in some ways, or maybe I should say people make it harder in some ways. See Cory, this world doesn’t know Jesus. He points around neighborhood. And many of them don’t want to know Him, and when they see that you do, it makes them angry.
Cory: But why?
Bill: Do you remember what Pastor Joe said on Sunday?
Cory: Yeah.
Bill: Tell me what he said.
Cory: Pauses for a few minutes.
He said that we were to function as the conscience of the world. That that was our job as Christians. That’s what Jesus meant when He said we were to be a light and the salt to the Earth.
Bill: Chuckles. Very good, you catch on quick. Leans in closer. Now, do you know why the world doesn’t like us acting as their conscience?
Cory: Thinks for two seconds. Because it makes them feel bad.
Bill: That’s part of it. The other part is that they don’t want someone telling them that they’re sinning and
they should stop. They don’t want to be told their views and theologies are wrong. They would prefer to think that there is no right answer, that it’s all relevant.

Cory: So God doesn’t make things easier?

Bill: Hmm, He does now. Maybe you’re not there to see it yet, but He does. Cory, you no longer have to walk through life blind like many of the people around you. You don’t have to make the mistakes that many of us made when we were young. You’ve got someone to guide you. You’ve been given a light, the Holy Spirit. He touches his own heart. But now that you’ve been given that light you realize just how dark the world is around you. You never realized that before did you?

Cory: No.

Bill: So in some ways life is harder because you now have a new responsibility. You have to try to keep your light burning bright enough so the world can see it, which is no small task when the only thing they want to do is put a dimmer on it. Some are going to run from the light as if it’s the plague and others are going to swarm to you like moths to the fireplace.

Cory: Silence. I understand what you’re saying, but I guess . . . I’m just disappointed. I thought knowing Jesus would bring peace into my home. Yet ever since I started going to church and joined youth group my parents fight even more. They don’t fight about me going to church like they first did — they just fight more.

Bill: One thing you’ve got to understand is that Jesus does brings peace. He brings it to you. But He also brings division. There’ve been more times in my life where I’ve seen Jesus bring peace to an individual than to a group. An idea strikes him. Have you read the passage for your youth group this week?

Cory: No.

Bill: I was talking to your youth leader about it, and I was looking over it before you came here. Bill hands Cory his Bible. Read that.

Cory: reads aloud Matt. 10: 34-39. “Do not think that I come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”

“I’m sorry to tell you this, Cory, but you can’t use Jesus as a fix-it kit.”

Bill: Now right there Jesus says He comes to bring division.

Cory: So I should give up on my parents?

Bill: No. But realize that this Earth is Satan’s kingdom, and the spiritual power in your home has been upset. There’s an imbalance now because you have converted. You’re no longer under the same power as your parents. Now, this is the time that your parents are going to need you the most because you’re the only one in that house who can see, and you’re going to have to guide them out of this darkness. You may even need to do that without them knowing it.

Cory: Snorts.

Bill: Chuckles. No, it’s not easy is it. Sounds impossible. But don’t you forget that you have someone to help you. He touches Cory’s heart. The Helper. If you listen to Him, He’ll tell you what to do, and you obey Him, even if it doesn’t make sense. Be-

cause remember God knows the plan. We just have to follow it.

Cory: What if my parents don’t want to be saved?

Bill: That’s between them and the Maker. You’re job is to make sure they know they have a choice in this life. You keep praying for them until they’ve really made the decision of who they’re going to serve: the world or God. You pray for them and honor them until that moment comes. It may be a week from now. It may be fifty years from now, but you do not give up on your parents until the Lord tells you they’ve made up their mind once and for all. You honor them, and you forgive them for everything they have done. If you do that, the Devil’s going to have a hard time competing with you. But ultimately the decision is your parents’, and that decision rests on no one else’s shoulders but their own.

Cory: It just seems like I have to trust my parents to make the right decision, and I don’t think they will.

Bill: You don’t trust your parents, you trust God. It’s situations like these that all we have is faith. You trust Him for the impossible because He is the only one who can make it possible. Silence. You’re father’s coming up the path.

Cory: Turns his head to see. Guess that means the fight’s over.

Bill: Guess so.

Cory’s Father: Hello, Bill. Cory, you ready to come home?

Cory: Yeah, thanks for the lemonade.

Bill: No problem. Cory and his father start walking away. Cory, keep the faith and God will tell you what to do.
Fainting Rose

Jilliann Beck

Tattoo on my heart
You will be a great teacher
Influence my soul

Anonymous

Good things
are hard to come by
and harder to keep.
You were a sweet gift of
cataclysmic trueness

My eyes see more of you now
than when they were yours
yet how your beauty grows.

Maybe once more our lives may entwine.
Even so
I am grateful to have known you.
Would you board a flight on a supposedly steady astral plane?
Whose flight attendants serve worldly fame?
And mind games causing your trip to crash,
And if you survive you’re left insane?
Or would you rather fly first class, with a spirit steadfast,
Clothed in the righteousness of God’s Son no condemnation in this mass,
Sailing right past diabolical, intoxicating, exhausted gas.
The stewardesses on this flight don’t even require you wear a mask.
Or maybe your mind wants to somehow coincide between the two,
Because you want a peak through the windows of each worldview.
How low will you subside?
When the flight’s over the entire region will die.
Somewhere on the side you can no longer hide.
The earth will be rid of impurities, blemishes, muddiness, and foreign matter,
Left behind for those who were fed truth but passed to gather unhealthy interest,
I was among ones searching for legends different than what the Word cooked,
Then looked, and forfeited time I had booked. Left spent.
Allowing insolent talk to direct the walk.
Models call it a certain swagger,
I found with my faith I could shield those daggers, fiery darts, wiles,
At first when He called I didn’t answer,
But He didn’t leave me idle, just hit redial.
Patiently counseling a simple-minded child.
What a more wonderful one masters this position than God the Son?
No conscious agent that I could think.
He reminds me to pray Matthew 6 & 5 before I repose a wink.
Then He lays me down to sleep, throughout my rest my soul He keeps.
If He calls me home before I wake,
I thank Him in advance that my soul He’ll take.
I approached faith with fear.
Consistently telling my mind that He wasn’t near, not here,
Residing with me, how could it be, that He was whipped for me?
The same God in heaven on earth?
Didn’t know how to deal with it all at first.
By the thought of letting go I was enlightened but more frightened.
I let go and like an eagle He swooped me up to trust,
Holding on with faith is the only way to fly!
Strapped in tight ready for whatever the height,
Of turbulence that may bring down the flight.
I have no fear by the terror by night;
In the midst of the storm I trumpet a shout of praise with all my might!
It is He who restores my sight, walking this land in dominion, never fright.
Wake up declaring His loving-kindness,
And retire declaring His faithfulness every night!
From the very seat that I write I no longer have fear about the future of my life.
Letting go and letting God raid my brainwaves,
And can now take a revitalizing breath...Because I’m saved.
Don’t travel through a dark tunnel led by folly’s sight,
Be led by the light to the Way, Truth, and Life.
Lightheartedly board this flight called alive in Christ.
I Confess
Kenneth Edward Keyn
I confess that I am not yet who I should be
Nor am I yet who I want to be
It is by the grace of God that I am not who I used to be
And not what I fear to become
I am I, and no other
For better or for worse
I, in constant motion,
Confined to be never myself again
I was I, no more to be
Soon, I will be me

Amoré

A Human Moment
By Your Local Dead Beat

A lone girl sits next to a scratched window at the local coffee shop. One foot is dangling over the worn stuffed arm of the chair slightly moving; not moving with energy, but with existence.

It is a beautiful day with smiling people walking to important places. A hassled mother hurries her brood down the sidewalk. The girl cannot hear what is being said, but it must fall along the lines of ‘keep your hands to yourself. I know. Yes, Yes, five minutes and—no, don’t do that. Just wait. Yes dear, that’s wonderful.’

The smallest boy, about 4, trips and falls to the ground. The girl sits at attention behind the plane of glass with both feet on the ground.

The mother stops and kneels to the ground. The little boy just stands and cries. The older siblings run back to their mom and ask their brother what is wrong. All silent pictures with enough emotions that the window should break.

Tears stop falling as the mother wipes them away. A consoling hug heals the pain and his brothers smile and relax. One last caress and hair ruffle and the group moves on; now slower and tighter together.

The girl leans back into the chair. Her red sweater glows against the black. Her leg moves back to where it was and starts to slowly move, but with more energy. She takes a sip of coffee and savors it.

The bell above the door clangs as a man in his business suit walks in. Or rather, as the girl smiles to herself; the man charges in and he shoots out his order. He pays, checks his watch, puts his wallet away, checks his watch. He adjusts his coat. Brushes his pants. He is nervous energy and the girl’s foot stops moving.

She is watching him over the back of the chair while taking occasional tastes of her coffee. The man glances at her and turns around the counter. He looks at his watch. The barista sets the coffee down and the grabs it and turns.

He automatically raises it to his lips and drinks. He stops. He glances at the girl and takes a drink. She is still watching him; brown eyes over the back of a black chair. Their eyes seek the other and she takes a drink. He smiles and drinks. She smiles in return. The man turns to the barista thanks her and leaves; his over coat covering his body now. His legs still move with purpose, but now a human one.

The girl turns back to the window and pulls both legs into the chair with her with arms wrapped around them and enjoys the sun shining on the heads of people hurrying to important places to complete important projects.
Mysteries of a Paradox
Jim Prosko

You can’t live without them
But you thrive on such a gem

To men they are an unsown hem
But their gentle as a mother hen

Physiologically they do excite
But emotions do sometimes bite

If you are not careful their fire you will light
Though they will send you higher than a kite

At first you calm every nerve
Then you forget that you must serve

You catch and enjoy their every curve
But then they throw the curve that makes you swerve

You no longer are the toy
But you better no longer be the boy

You definitely better not be coy
Or their emotions you will annoy

But all in all they are a must
As God did make us all from dust

As a gentle wafting gust
Their existence is all but just

For in all creation God has not created any bust
But for good purpose not of lust

God did intend them for joy and assistance
For life is not but a dance

It is done best with one you love
One that God has designed from above

Although there is but one for each
That very one is within reach

If but in patience you gently wait
For God does not leave love to fate

He has a lady just for you
For just any girl will not do

For with Gods help you will become a single mate
As upon Him you both do wait

Your pleasure is His desire
As within you both He lights a fire

Forever may not be true
But God will take you too

Within his care you will survive
As in each other you will dive

That is the beauty of such lives
God in His love did provide such wives

For our pleasure
And without measure

So that we may serve together
During all kinds of weather

God will protect and give great treasure
As each trial you do endure

Until you time is fully developed
And with each other you have coped
Until God calls one or both on home
   So this earth you will no longer roam

And enjoy the presence of the One
   Knowing in your heart that you have won

The treasure of ultimate love
   That comes from nowhere but above

So enjoy the presence of the one
   For God's plan will be completely done

If you serve with gentle love
   That can only be accomplished with the dove

So woman is sanctified through your action
   And gain you credits worth a ton

So think carefully before you commit
   And see if this is the one the Lord has fit

As you take on such a feat
   And entertain such a treat

For through God's will your treat will suffice
   If you do not but throw the dice

Wait for the one God has designed
   And He will be content to send a sign

That the one you have chosen
   Has also been the one that He has chosen

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Cherry Blossoms

Elizabeth Kilada
My Friend
Jillian Beck

Where have you gone, my friend?
My friend who I laughed with;
My friend who I sang to;
My friend who inspired me to dance.
Why have you forsaken me, my friend?
My smile is wilting,
Like a rose in the smoldering sun.
My tears are falling,
With the drenched autumn leaves.
My heart is dropping to my stomach.
Gravity pulls me to my knees.
I am shaking.
My sweat gently rubs against the ink;
It’s melting through the paper.
Help me, my friend!
Please, where have you ran off to?
Who took you from me?
Are you coming back?
Has God hidden you in his loving arms?
Are you being embraced in Heaven?
Because I need your embrace;
It is Hell here without you.
Can I come, friend?
Can I follow you to your secret palace?
Who will join me in Hell?
My misery cries for company.
I need you,
My friend.

Myth of Fidelity
Jess Bielman

Pedals fall as flowers turn to winter states
Between you and sun is only rain and clouds

Beautiful beach too cold to dip your toes in
To run with might and finish fourth

To see for miles and never move
To feel her touch and wake from dream

Family photos up in flames
The perfect novel, no time to read

On the verge of peace comes heinous war
On the verge of life comes young death

To climb three quarters
Thirsting with only lukewarm water to drink

Too tired to sleep
Desperate for companionship
Too scared to speak

Too selfish for love

Wish
Rachel Mullany
Your God Reigns.
Joe Miller

The sun is hot today. Bright, glowing orb of the heavens, I bless thee and beseech thee: give me rest from thy heat. O Lord who controls the lights, please, for thy servant: grant me relief.

My legs are tired from travel, and my back sore from porting my supplies. The cotton vestments itch and scrape my sweat laden torso. My sandals are worn; the leather creaks with each movement.

My feet! How disgusting my feet! Grimy and covered in dirt; sweat from my legs caking mud to my toes. Jagged rocks have caused numerous lacerations, and dried blood marks only the sections that are not covered in earth.

My destination: I see it! A small hill in the distance – the length from my hut to father’s. I miss father, and mother, my wife and my kids. I haven’t seen them in months.

Why? Why did I undertake this message? This calling? Why did I agree to go? I’m tired, sore, hot, lonely, and my feet! My feet!

Closer now, there it is. I see the spot where I will stand and deliver. What am I even to say? I have not the words. O Lord who controls the earth and its inhabitants – grant thy servant words.

Almost there, a little - aah! Cursed rock! Rest ye in the middle of the road to torture the wandering soul! My feet, you have injured my feet: the vessel of the vassal! I throw you to the depths of the hells, you accursed creation. I damn thee to the depths of nonexistence for your wicked stature.

I cannot continue. My feet are burning, I am tired, the sun – O Lord who controls the universe: please dim the light!

Sheep bray in the distance; a breeze wisps the olive trees.

What am I doing here? I have no message, no life changing speech. I have nothing new to say. I am worthless; certainly not worthy to do Your holy work, O Lord who controls all of time and space. You who reign in Your Holy Land, Yisroel. You who discern every man good and blessed in your sight, O Lord who pours salvation: grant thy servant strength.

Twenty more steps till destination is upon me. Blood is coursing from my feet and on holy ground nonetheless. Tattered they carry my body the last twenty steps, trudging with a might that they cannot know. Strips of flesh are hanging on only through their mercy to me. I collapse and remove my sandals, writhing in the dirt. Rocks that have been digging into my soles fall out of their place, allowing new blood to flow freely onto the blessed land. My wineskin in hand, I begin to wash my wounds. Hand outstretched to the final rock where I will once again stand, I begin to crawl to my appointed spot.

How beautiful on the mountain are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace who bring good tidings who proclaim salvation who say to Zion “Your God Reigns.”
Knowledge Stack

A Critical Thinker's Response
Amy Carlson
Life Learning and Critical thinking
How you’ve made my life a hell
I was trying to live a descent life
When you said you knew all truth

Now I think things twice on over
And never settle within one thought
Instead the windows of my soul are fogged
With realistic pictures to the right

But yet I would never turn you out
Onto the cold of concrete fact
No boxes to move your thoughts in
No lies to ease the pain

This life of slippery movement
Is more than mine before
While now I’m always falling
I’m moving towards the door

The Poem to End All Poems
Jess Bielman

Many verses have been written.
Emotions captured into living words.

Poets painting pretty pictures
Of sunsets, dames, and virtue.

Too much poetry concerning poetry.
But here I will add my own,

Of amazing allegory alliterating,
Metaphors irresponsibly flying,
Like birds gliding in a ‘V.’

Rhymes take time in every line,
“Bang” an onomatopoetic mine.

So with this I join a select poet community
And with them I say nothing at all.