

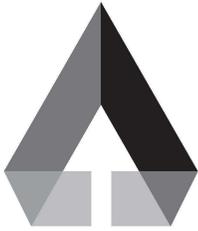


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2017

EXPRESSIONS





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ALLEGANY COLLEGE of MARYLAND

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EXPRESSIONS 2017

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ARTWORK FEATURED ON FRONT COVER:

"Smoke Color" by Vin Foy



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"Trouvaille" by Shayla Yaeger

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STUDENT EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

I would like first to acknowledge the incredible artists who have expressed themselves in this magazine, which began as a community experiment and is now a respected, award-winning publication. The Faculty Editor and I congratulate you all on the beginning of your career.

Many of us crave a lifestyle in which art of any type could sustain us financially—or even simply emotionally! I frequently hesitate to call myself a writer. I have not published my proudest works, and I have certainly not the time for it, which my mind requires.

I once wrote a short novel; it was probably eighty pages in length. The idea was so intriguing, so suspenseful... Yet I was unsatisfied. Disappointed. I destroyed the entire manuscript.

Such artistic behavior is not uncommon. The other day, before composing this introduction, I wrote a poem. I was prepared to share my personal expression with close companions. But something happened: time, events, and artistic distance. In ways I can't describe, I felt different. Oh, that beautiful poem: I no longer wished to be associated with the words contained within it. Distressed I was.

As I look back, it dawns upon me that this is the plight of the artist: emotional dissatisfaction with our very own creations. Forget about a career authoring high-return royalty novels of vampires and witches: the reprint of these creations a million times or more, with an unimaginable mountain of riches, cannot satisfy the true artist. And in fact, it is the variable of time in collusion with our dynamic selves that fashions our art.

I cannot know what the driving forces are of each individual who has expressed him or herself within this publication. However, I am absolutely convinced of the quality of these stories, poems, essays, photographs, and paintings. Everyone whose work is published in this year's *Expressions* is a true artist. If his or her experience is anything like mine, struggle was involved. I commend everyone for the evident success within this effort.

Robert Smith

Student Editor



Maternity

Ilyane Rodriguez

My Little Angel

Memoir by Alex May

We hope for things every day, a raise or promotion, nice weather on vacation, or victory for our favorite sports team, but is there more to hope? Is there a deeper meaning to hope? Henri Nouwen was able to find the true meaning of hope while caring for Adam, a severely disabled twenty-five-year-old man. Through Adam, Nouwen was able to see, learn, and feel the presence of God's unconditional love. We judge our self-worth by our outer shell, as did Nouwen; we worry about what others think of us, our wealth, and success. It is only with true self-reflection that we can tear away our mortal shell and see ourselves as God sees us. We are flawed and imperfect, yet when we open our hearts to God, we find His unconditional love. Adam was able to speak volumes to Nouwen. Even though Adam had no voice, the love in his eyes could be heard loud and clear. Being vulnerable did not make Adam weak; it gave him the power to show love, and touch a person's soul. Through Adam, Nouwen was able to see himself the way God sees him, not broken and unworthy as he saw himself, but as a beloved child. Being able to see himself this way, accepting his imperfections, gave Nouwen new found hope, hope for life and humanity. "I began to realize what an incredible gift life is" (Nouwen, 1998, p. 148).

Life changing events or epiphanies can come slowly, but most often will hit you like a speeding train out of control. For me, it was the latter. It was Fall 2010 when my husband and I found out we were expecting our first child. We had been trying for over a year, so to say we were overcome with joy would have been an understatement. We decided to tell no one until we were twelve weeks pregnant, including family. It is common knowledge, or so I thought, that after twelve weeks, a pregnancy is considered safe from miscarriage, and miscarriages are rare. The reality is "approximately one in four pregnancies ends in miscarriage" (Oeitker, 2012, p. 36).

At our second ultrasound we heard Angel's heartbeat; I called our baby "my little Angel" rather than *it*, as most people refer to a baby as *it* before gender is determined. Hearing Angel's heartbeat was the sweetest sound I had ever heard; I could have listened to it all day every day. Often, I would daydream of the kind of mother I would be, the things I would do with Angel, and things I wanted to teach our child.

We were going to tell the world we were expecting our gift from God on Christmas day. The week before Christmas I started to notice some changes; my symptoms started to go away, less morning sickness and relief from constipation. I had been reading everything I could get my hands on about being pregnant and learning what was happening to my body, so when I started to have relief from the early symptoms at almost twelve weeks pregnant I believed everything was going as it should.

December 22, 2010, is a date forever embedded in my brain. It was a Wednesday evening, and I was checking on my grandmother, as I had done every day since my grandfather's passing in 2008. I noticed I had some spotting and decided to go to the hospital, just as a precaution. I called my husband at work to let him know what was going on and where I was going. He asked if I wanted him to come with me; I told him, "No, spotting is normal. I'm just going as a precaution." I truly believed everything was fine. The doctor might put me on bed rest or tell me to take it easy, but nothing major. When I arrived at the hospital, I told the intake nurse about the spotting and was taken to a room. The emergency room doctor examined me, and with a concerned look, told me I was going to have an ultrasound done to see what was going on with our baby. The ultrasound technician was gentle and caring, being sensitive to the nature of the situation. My heart was breaking as I looked at the screen; already knowing the answer, I asked him, "Is there a heartbeat?" The image of my still little Angel will forever be with me. I had to tell my husband what had happened, but I was only able to say "You need to come down here, it's bad." My obstetrician came in that night to perform a dilation and curettage, D & C,

procedure to remove our baby, so I would not have to return the next day. Leaving the hospital, I had never felt so empty. It was not just an emotional emptiness, but a physical one as well.

Unless a woman has experienced a miscarriage, one cannot truly understand the amount of grief a person goes through; there is no closure, no goodbye, no final kiss, and no grave. To this world, your baby did not exist. People will say things trying to comfort you. For me, it was all women who had never experienced a miscarriage. Some would say "It's God's plan," but what I heard was "God never intended for you to have this baby." Others would shrug it off like it was no big deal; because my baby wasn't born and then passed away, Angel was still a *fetus*.

My baby was not a *fetus*; Angel had a face, two arms, two legs, ten fingers and toes, a brain, and most importantly a heart. I don't care to use the term *fetus*. The word *fetus* seems to dehumanize a baby; maybe for some it offers a way to disconnect from their baby, a way to avoid the pain. I cannot disconnect from Angel or the pain, nor would I ever want to. The pain my heart feels everyday proves Angel was very much alive, was loved unconditionally, and is greatly missed. Angel will forever be my first child; the first person I loved unconditionally. Some pregnant women say they can't wait to meet their baby, but I had already met Angel through the love and care I gave, through my hopes and dreams. Angel could feel my love with every heartbeat. This little person that was growing inside of me has forever changed my life. Angel showed me how fragile and precious life truly is, how to love more deeply, and give so much of yourself. Angel showed me the love God has for us all. I turned to God for the hope that this wasn't it for us; that we would have another child to love.

Our prayers were answered one year later when we got pregnant with our daughter, and then with our son. As I watch our children grow, there is still the longing in my heart to hold Angel, hear my baby's laugh, and see that precious smile. Even though we had to say goodbye to our little Angel too soon, we are better people for knowing and loving our baby.

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Three Poems by *Cameron Crouse*

A Society of Cists

America proud
but weary on the free.
As the people,
confused in their desires,
strain to protect the reason,
purpose,
and demands
put forth by our constitution.

Yet in doing so,
slowly tear through the middle.

The people have taken up arms.
Not in threats,
but in protest
to the miniscule evils of the nation.

We live in now,
a Cist society.
RaCist,
seXist,
etc.Cist.

But again,
but not in attempts of destruction,
but in attempts of prevention.

In striving to wash
these filthy cists from America's body
we've managed to provoke
new ones.

We are AmeriCists.

The Banner Flutters (the 4th of July)

The banner flutters
showing the way where lies
a dying soldier who mutters
freedom will rise.

It marks the path of the brave
struck down by foreign phantoms.
Whose lives away they gladly gave
to usher out their anthems.

The foreign invaders had mocked and spat
Upon the corpses and dying whose loyalty remained
to the war tattered flag that continued to flap
over their heads even as they were maimed.

The path was left in martyr's blood
trodden down by those who thought they had won,
but the flickers of men lying dead in the mud
begged to differ – The battle has only begun.

The banner flutters.

Worried Worrier

1,000 mighty men
and me.

Braced for impact
solid rocks,
but then there's meek and lowly
me.

Rocks don't bounce from my chest.
Rather they drill to the heat of my core
and through the fears of my mind.
Drums of war.

"No more!"
I cannot take it.
I lie in my bed
awake,
my eyes fixated,
but there is nothing to be seen.
Only the inevitable.
What shall be.

I grow insane.
Bullets will fly,
people will fall,
and yes
they will die.

A tomb awaits me, but I must fight
for all who sail under our flag
because those who do,
sail under God.

This worried warrior
is brave when he needs to be.

A Memory A Love and A Lesson

Memoir by Rebecca Ford

I went to a thrift shop and, while flipping through the old record albums, a particular one containing rock-'n'-roll hits from the '70's caught my eye. I didn't know why at first. I continued glancing through the albums but no longer saw the ones in front of me because my mind was busy searching for the reason that the one particular record stood out. I went back through the albums, picked it up and read through the songs on the back, and turned it back over to see the cover again. A dim memory of that time in my life over forty years earlier started to take shape and I began to remember. This was the same record that my sister's boyfriend had given her many years ago. We had spent hours singing and dancing to the songs on this album. Thoughts and feelings enveloped my mind as I recalled that simpler yet difficult time in my life.

I was in 5th grade, my older sister was in 9th grade, and she had a boyfriend that I found very interesting. He was especially fascinating because he was a bad boy and my sister was far from being a bad girl. She was an all "A" student who went to Sunday school and preaching every week. She never talked back to my parents, did her chores, and kept her room clean. She painted her nails, did her hair and makeup and even washed her feet before bedtime! The worst thing about that sister was that she had an identical twin. Yes! Two older and perfect sisters that were setting high standards for me to live up to. Of course I had no interest in trying to be like them and was content to be my brat self and make their lives as miserable as I possibly could. That is, until Bad Boy entered Perfect Sister's life. Suddenly I wanted to hang out with that sister, but only while he was around.

Bad Boy listened to Rock and Roll. He swore. His clothes were sloppy and his hair was long, tangled, and dirty. He hung out with other bad boys. And best of all, one day Bad Boy showed me where he carved my sister's name into his arm. How romantic! Suddenly I loved him too!

Bad Boy and his group of bad boy friends were all too old for me, so I began my search for my own Bad Boy. It did not take long to find the dirtiest and baddest boy in my class. My love for him grew quickly over the course of several days and one night I took my father's razor and carved his initials into my arm. I was careful and used alcohol between swipes through my skin. It bled but made me happy because I had heard that sometimes love hurts and now I knew that to be true.

I hadn't thought my plan through thoroughly and the next morning at breakfast my mother asked me about my arm. Then my father asked me. They were not interested in the excuse that Bad Boy had done the same thing for Perfect Girl. They didn't care what Bad Boy did, but only what I had done and how it had better heal up and not get infected. I bragged that I had used alcohol often and knew I'd be fine.

At school, the carving on my arm was quickly noticed by my classmates. No one wanted to be with me at recess then, and even my own Bad Boy did not want to be seen with me. If that was not bad enough, my teacher called me out in the hall to ask me about my arm. She threatened to call my parents and I told her they already knew. Then she threatened to tell the principal. That one did scare me, and I felt sick the rest of the day. As a matter of fact, I felt sick all that evening and night. I realized something must be done, so I packed a bag of sandwiches in preparation for running away the next day.

When morning came, my dad told me I could stay home from school and to make a list of everything that was bothering me. He said he would take care of the principal if I would do that. I listed the things that were bothering me in my complicated life and gave it to my father that evening. In return, he gave me a handwritten letter that he had written especially for me. It told about how boys showed they liked girls and sometimes even pulled their hair and did rotten things to be noticed. His concern for me was so evident in that letter. It was my own personal letter from my father. It was not for Perfect Sister or Perfect Twin, but it was for me, written by my very own father. Suddenly I didn't need to

impress another Bad Boy. My dad loved me and proved it by taking the time to write things to me that he had never said before. He loved me for who I was even though I still had some growing up to do.

As I stood in the thrift store holding that record and remembering those hard years of trying to find out who I was and how I fit in, I thought about people who made impressions on me back then such as Bad Boy. I realized I would buy that album as a remembrance of first crushes, misunderstandings and mistakes, confused feelings coupled with forgiveness and acceptance of my father as he lovingly guided his problematic third daughter, me, through those difficult years of growing up.



Untitled

Cherie Weasenforth

The Promise of Melancholy

Film Response by Matt Thomas

In a sea of films with open ended interpretation, *Melancholia* offers little to no clarification besides contributing to the list. By no means is that a negative assessment. Directed by Lars Von Trier, the film follows the story of Justine (Kirsten Dunst) and her family, days before the planet Melancholia is predicted to fly by Earth, with the truth being the planet is to collide with the blue marble and cease all human life. What makes *Melancholia* a masterpiece is how none of it really matters. Justine and her family are one among billions of other people in the world who must come to terms with death and depression; they are a pinprick on a pinprick on the scale of the world. Raw emotions of depression portrayed by Justine can strike a chord with any viewer. Justine becomes horribly depressed days before the destruction, not being able to move or eat her favorite foods. She even says later in the film that she knows something bad is going to happen, while everyone else around her pretends it is all going to be okay. Claire, Justine's sister, and Tim, Claire's husband, both believe Melancholia will pass by. Tim commits suicide before it even hits; Claire is struck with fear as the planet makes its way to its final destination. However, Justine almost finds solace in the destruction, calling life "evil." Perhaps Justine knows something deeper about life, her body preparing her for the doom. Her sister Claire suggests wine and music before the collision, to which Justine replies calmly but angrily, "No." Does Justine want to be sober, to be able to experience the total destruction in full, to breathe in melancholia, to feel the flames and destruction take her over, leaving nothing in its wake? The final scene, where it is Justine, Claire, and her younger nephew (whom she finds peace in throughout the film) are seated together in a teepee, the magic fort that will protect them from the destruction, hands joined. Justine is so deeply depressed, so disturbed in her emotions, that Melancholia isn't a state; it's a lifestyle to her. She finds the most peace as she knows the world is to end, and she has a front row view of it.

What I find most interesting is the lack of selfishness of her acceptance of the world ending. Justine knows there is no solution to this fate; and with that she finds peace in herself and the ones she cares for. That is beautiful. In a world of melancholy, some happiness is found, even if it means destruction of the world. Above all, Lars Von Trier wants us viewers to leave with the idea that even in the darkest of days, the light can be found in the darkest of places.

Scott Tobias writes a short review, not delving deep into what *Melancholia* really has to offer. Starting off, he writes of how Von Trier considers life on the “precipice,” and how he uses the planet not a sci-fi prop, but rather as means to explore the existential drama days before a planet’s demise. Tobias explains how there is no question that the Earth is doomed, as Trier plays highlights from the film at the beginning, showing the ending as well. This is to take the focus off the sci-fi and put it on the shoulders of the build-up, of the character relation and the ultimate realization that the world *is* ending. Tobias writes: “Split into two distinct parts, the film opens with Kirsten Dunst as a young bride trying to keep a wave of crippling depression from spoiling her reception.” He explains the events during the film’s major scene, a wedding at an estate within a vast mansion. Then he describes how Claire’s brother-in-law’s ease of mind becomes anxious at the impending doom, while Claire is “sanguine” now that the “doom-filled vision of the world has been affirmed.” Wrapping the review up, Tobias says how the film isn’t mysterious or too complex, and doesn’t jump in the rabbit hole of end-world philosophy, as the viewer being left to figure that out. He calls the film “eerie and restrained” and very personal, as Von Trier suffers from crippling bouts of depression just as Claire does. What the film lacks in overwhelming emotion is made up by the dread of the looming Planet *Melancholia* making its way to Earth, forcing inhabitants to deal with it, whether they are ready or not. Tobias gives the film a B+ rating.

In an even more affirmative review, A. O. Scott writes: “Bang or whimper? Ice or fire? Divine plan or cosmic accident?” In an infinite sea of possibilities, what could end the world? Lars Van Trier’s world, Scott writes, is a highly

personal version of apocalypse: “a celestial collision rendered in surprisingly lovely digital effects and accompanied by mighty blasts of Wagner.” Scott explains what melancholy means, and how it relates to the end of the world. He explains how, as shown by previous films, Von Trier tends to depict suffering through the portrayal of women. He is a “sadist,” but a sincere and “honest” one. Scott then leaves that topic, writing, “[t]he machinery of mass panic and media frenzy that juices up most films on this subject is notably absent.” This leaves—well, you guessed it—an up-close and intimate look at human reaction to expected death. These difficult emotions drive the film along. Justine, the “flighty grasshopper,” is impulsive, compared to her responsible sister Claire, the “dutiful ant.” Scott writes that the second part of the film shows Justine’s acceptance of the doom ahead, and how it is preferable to Claire’s “anxious practicality” at the prospect of *Melancholia*’s arrival. Scott addresses the ignorance the wedding guests possess, making each of their menial tasks ever more dreadful. The wedding offers “the spectacle of matrimony provid[ing] a rich, inexhaustible vein of comic and melodramatic potential — chance encounters, simmering grudges, sexual intrigue, dysfunctional outbursts.” The wedding acts as its own little control group, a little bubble in which all emotions to come out and play. Scott then comments on the lack of aggressiveness of the male characters, mainly being “useless.” The people who attend the wedding, Justine’s obnoxious boss who gives her a promotion and deadline on her wedding, Justine’s bitter parents who frankly don’t give a damn, all play a part in the “ensemble” that follows: the “loud arguments, awkward toasts, bad sex, confrontations with the help and a few moments of serene and luminous bliss.” Addressing the elephant in the room the best way possible, Scott writes: “To the extent that the destructive potential of *Melancholia* is a metaphor for [Justine’s] private melancholia, it is perfectly apt. One of the chief torments of serious depression is how disproportionate and all-consuming the internal, personal sorrow can feel.” Finishing the review, Scott writes how Von Trier makes it personal, turning a “psychological drama inside out.” He writes of

Justine that “her hyperbolic despair may turn out to be rooted in an accurate and objective assessment of the state of the universe.” Justine finds in “her darkest moment of clarity that the world deserves its awful fate. What the film achieves is the impression of “how difficult it is to argue with her conclusion.”

Each of these reviews come together to capture what *Melancholia* is all about. There is some room for interpretation, but when it comes down to the facts, the film is about acceptance of the grim fate of the world, and that it is well deserved. There are moments in your life when literal chaos is occurring all around your head like buzzing bees, and nothing can be done about it. Yet, you stay calm, focused, aware of the situation at hand, and you don’t falter. You are screaming in your head but are calm in the decisions you make. Why is that? Accepting something that is out of your control is the first and only step to true acceptance, to be able to look at the mess at hand and calmly state, “well this is bad, but I can look back on it and ponder why I thought it was so important at the time.” *Melancholia* does not offer a world where a solution is offered, but that *is* the solution. The destruction *is* the solution. Where no other options are offered, acceptance is the only way to achieve inner and outer, wholesome peace.

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Rainy Somewhere

Memoir by *Chuck Yowell*

Welcome to Almost Maryland, that mythical land somewhere between Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and nowhere.

It is a rainy Sunday morn here in the magical mountains. Not the electric, booming, fast-moving, sweep-in, soak-everything, light-up-the-day and assault-your-ears-with-thunder kind. Rather, it's a gentle rain. One more suited for September than August. The kind that usually comes after school has begun again for the year and you have to get up. The kind that tells you the time of splendor and of procrastinating in the blankets has passed. You know the kind of rain I mean. It is a peaceful rain, not the heavens weeping, more like the clouds softly watering her flowers, the rain that slowly soaks into the earth and replenishes our water tables.

My dog Fred and I are sitting on our porch overlooking Whoville, Almost Maryland on this gentle, easy Sunday morning. Just watching as the robins gather in increasingly larger groups to feed on the bugs and critters of the grass, mindless of the rain. It will run off of them like...well, like water off a duck's back. Meanwhile Fred and I enjoy sharing in nature's splendor, relaxing to the soothing sounds of rain on the awning and in the leaves. It's cool but not cold. The mountain across the valley is lurking darkly in the mist rising from the creek bottom and obscuring most of the valley. The rain falls and immediately begins to rise back up to heaven in the form of mist to be recycled yet again. The molecules that form each drop are the same ones from some ancient form of life passed on, yet living on by the act of atoms regenerating and becoming part of a new form.

Rainy Sundays are the best days. They're perfect for secluded cabins with tin roofs away from the hustle and bustle of the racing rats, for lying back and relaxing, feeling warm and cozy. Maybe it's a spring evening or a September Morn. Here in the highlands, sad to report, crime has stretched its filthy paws.

Two pharmacies have been robbed in the last week by desperate people who were dragged into their situation mainly by work injuries or vehicle accidents, problems compounded by Workers Comp doctors and lawyers trying to make a fast buck regardless of the harm to patient or society. Now the DEA is stepping in after the situation has reached a crisis point and is saying, "Doctors, you must stop giving medicine" and so they do. The thought of "My god what have I done? What have I unleashed?" never occurred to them. No increase in treatment centers, just *poof!* and you're on your own. Expect it to worsen and the jails to fill again, because we all know jail provides jobs and income for the state, the hell with the citizens.

Moving beyond the pale, shrunken heart of our government and back to our life, the rain continues; thank you, whoever and wherever you are, for sharing it with Fred and me. Rainy days will always be (if we're lucky). You can make them miserable and put up with them. Or you can take a step back, look around at the beauty of life and just...breathe.

Make it a splendid day and enjoy every minute. Once it's gone it's gone forever.

Keys to Clogging

Research Essay by Emma Wilson

Clogging, like any form of dancing, is a style of dance that has evolved over hundreds of years to arrive at the point it is today. Some people are unaware of what clogging truly is in the “dance world.” However, Mary Ellen Hunt, writer for *SFGate.com*, explains this misconception well when she says, “Although it sounds less like a dance style and more like something you call a plumber for, clogging enjoys an enthusiastic following, with thousands of dancers participating in more than 600 clubs across the United States.” Clogging originated in the Appalachian Mountains in the 1700s and basically started as a country or folk twist on tap dancing. Nowadays, clogging is mostly well-known in the southern states, such as the Carolinas. However, in the northern states, there *are* a few clogging groups, such as the Will’s Mountain Cloggers, which is a group this writer happens to be a part of.

What skills and qualities are required of an individual in order for him or her to clog correctly? There are *many* necessities when it comes to this unique form of dance. The most important requirements of any individual who wishes to succeed in clogging are timing, technique, and passion.

Timing is absolutely crucial to clogging. Timing consists of keeping rhythms in sync with the beat of the music. Each and every step in this style of dance has a rhythm. In order for one to learn and dance the step correctly, one must be able to count the rhythm of the step correctly. For example, the most basic step in clogging is called a “basic,” which makes sense for the obvious reason of it being the simplest step. The correct way to count a basic is “and a one and two.” If one were to use a musical instrument to play the rhythm of a basic, it would sound like two beats of eighth notes. Assuming an ambitious new clogger is capable of counting steps properly, he or she must now keep the steps in time with the song or music being danced to. The beat, or tempo, of a song is how fast or slow the music is. To make the clogging steps blend with the

music, dancers must listen very closely to the music to ensure that the beats of their steps are in time with the beat of the music.

There are, however, dances that can be choreographed and performed with no music at all! This is called dancing *a capella*. In this case, the clogger would do one of two things. If dancing with one or more other individuals, the clogger must listen very closely to the other dancers to be certain he or she is staying in time with them. What if the dancer is clogging an *a capella* solo? Well, at this point, the clogger would have to make certain to keep the same tempo throughout the entire dance. This is a very difficult thing to accomplish; many dancers tend to unintentionally speed up or slow down during their dance. To dance an *a capella* solo adequately, the dancer must keep the tempo constant and consistent from the beginning to the end of the dance. Regardless of whether music is present, being able to comprehend and apply timing to the dance is a crucial ability for any clogger.

The article "Dance Team-Dance Technique" explains the importance of technique well by saying, "Technique is the basis of all fundamentals of dance, from holding your body correctly while performing, to executing skills properly in a routine. Strong technique extends across all areas of dance, regardless of the style of your routine. Whether it's jazz, pom, hip hop, or kick, there is always an element of technique that can be improved upon." When clogging was first established in the 1700s, technique was not very important. However, over time, the preferred technique for clogging has become very well-established and well-known. The technique in clogging is part of what makes this style of dance so unique. For example, in tap dancing the dancers usually keep their feet relatively close to the ground. Whereas, in clogging, the dancers strive to keep their knees up and their feet flexed (unless specifically stated otherwise due to the type of step). Another factor that comes into play when discussing technique in clogging is arm movements. As clogging has evolved over the years, it has become very popular for contemporary cloggers to incorporate a great deal of arm movements into their choreography. Most of the time, the

arm movements are quite sharp and intricate. In addition to this, the arm movements often are in time with the music, but contrast with the steps the dancer is completing. Technique also has a large effect on the sounds of the steps. When a dancer has poor technique, the steps being completed tend to sound very slurred together and are very difficult to distinguish.

However, when a clogger is sure to continuously exercise technique, the steps being completed will most likely sound very clear and the rhythms will be very easily heard. When performing, some “dancers get caught up in the choreography and forget to hold themselves correctly when dancing ... it never hurts to go back to the basics of body alignment” (“Dance Team-Dance Technique”). When it comes to performing in clogging, dancers must keep their chins slightly lifted, shoulders back, stomachs in, rib cages closed, muscles tense, knees high, and feet flexed. These basic technique rules maintain uniformity throughout clogging teams and dancers while performing. If a clogger does not exercise adequate technique, his or her performance will not look or sound the way it is meant to.

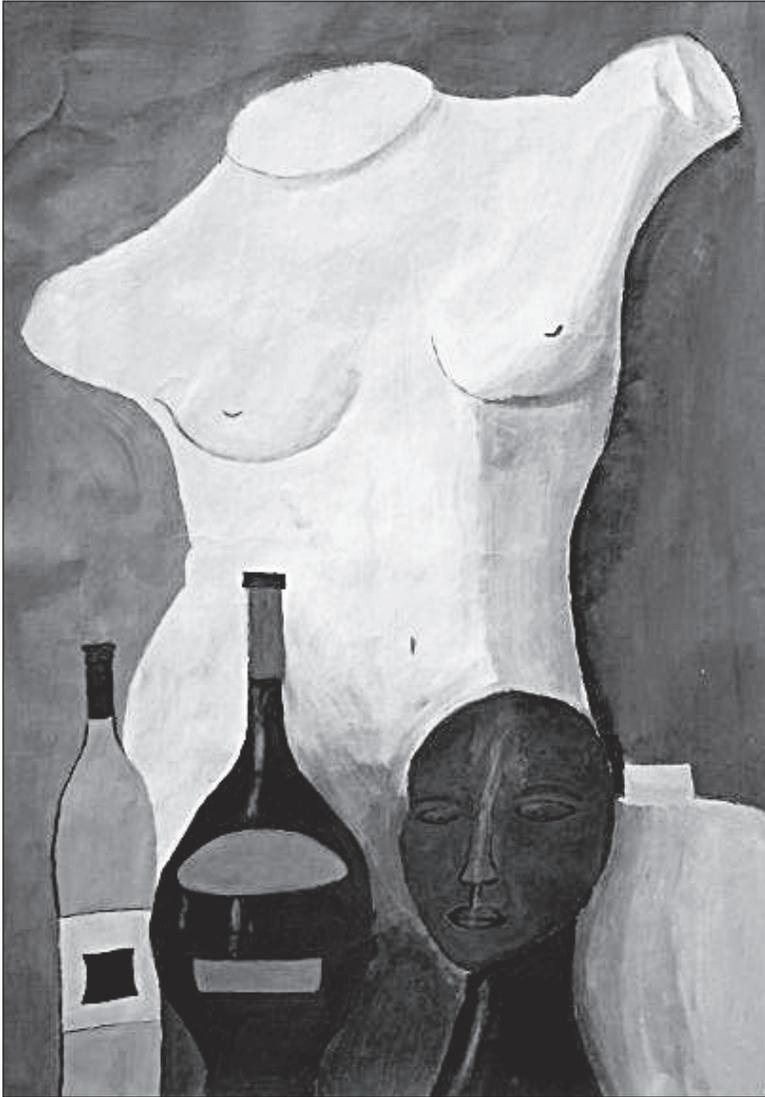
The final and ultimate necessity for clogging is passion. Passion is the motivator that drives the dancer to be the best he or she can be. To become a great clogger, the dancer *must* practice. Practice is how a clogger learns choreography, timing, and technique. Practice is how a *good* clogger becomes a *great* clogger. Who wants to practice something he or she does not have a love or passion for? Quite honestly, that would simply be pure torture. Speaking from experience, I would not be the dancer I am if I did not practice, and practicing once in a while does not count. Because of my love for clogging, I practice almost every day of the week, and it shows through my dancing. Another reason passion is such a key component of clogging is the way it is connected to showmanship. Showmanship is a term used in the “dance world” that refers to dancers’ emotions while performing for an audience and how those emotions are projected through their facial expressions. When dancers love what they are doing, the audience can see it in their faces. Normally these

types of dancers are the most energetic and have the most joyful smiles and expressions on their faces while dancing. If an individual does not possess a love for clogging, he or she will most likely appear to be very out-of-place, unhappy, and inadequate on stage. No one wants that. Passion is crucial to clogging.

Is clogging easy? Absolutely not. These are just a few of the difficult requirements to clogging. Without timing, clogging would be a jumble of unappealing sounds and steps. Without technique, there would be no uniformity to the steps and movements of this unique style of dance. And passion? Without passion, what would be the point? Above all, passion is the top key component to succeed in clogging.

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Fragmented

Sarah Thomas

Siren's Kiss

Fiction by *Kayla Spencer-Garlitz*

My footsteps echoed through the cold, dark forest, the quick pats of my feet on the dried leaves and branches signaling where I was to my pursuers. "Find the witch child!" I heard them yell. It would be all over for me if they caught me. Large puffs of hot air escaped my lips as the wind whipped red coloring into my pale porcelain cheeks. I had to get there. I had to make it to the secret fountain. This place, this world, these people ... it was all too much for me now. My orchid tunic flapping frantically around me, I sprinted at top speed, winding through the forest to throw off those who chased me. I could see the entrance to the fountain in the distance. Overgrown shrubs covered the caves perfectly. I held my hat tightly against my head and never took my eyes off that entrance. Thankfully, the moon gave me her blessing and provided me cover with dark clouds. The mob only had their flaming torches to guide them on their unjust man hunt.

Autumn red hair blew wildly from under my hat as I quickly slid under the shrubs. The light of the torches glistened off their pitchforks in the distance. "I need to summon her! I know she can help me!" I thought rushing forward, as more foul yelling spewed from the mob. I quickly sprinted to the center of the cavern and reached the natural spring. The water shined, beautifully even without the moon's kiss. Almost like a large gemstone set by the goddesses themselves. I took a deep breath to steady my thoughts. Only I could bring the magic to this place. Only I could summon her to save me from the fire. With another breath I began my song.

Can you see me on your shore line?
Can you hear me praising your shrine?
Soft young maiden ripe with power
Free me in my darkest hour.

As I sang the first verse of the incantation the cavern began to change. Mana began to flow in the long stagnant air. It was no longer cold or uninviting. Instead a soft warm breeze danced around my body.

Velvet lips and golden kisses,
Shining goddess, grant my wishes
Take my sadness, gentle beauty
Please fulfill your sacred duty.

Colored orbs appeared all around me as I beckoned to the undine goddess. The orbs began swirling, swaying and twisting about in a slow, watchful fashion. I could hear the horrid mob growing ever closer, trying even harder to end the life of one they don't understand. "Please hear me, aquatic queen!"

Hair of moonlight, scales of the Sun
Graceful queen rip my fate undone.
Hear my call, awake your sleeping
Can you make the life I'm seeking?
Golden Angel, queen of serpent
I am but your humble servant
Sing with me, oh gentle maiden
Take me to the land of pagan.

The shallow pool began to expand in size to that of a large tidal pool with a small glowing center. The orbs transformed into full water sprites, nymphs and fairies dancing around me in glee, twirling, ever watching with smiling faces. I knelt down by the growing body of water, closing my eyes and clapping my hands in prayer.

In my life and through my practice
I summon queen of Atlantis
Hear my words and join my singing
It's your velvet kiss I'm seeking...

I finished the last verse and slowly opened my eyes. The large simmering pool now bubbled and a golden light shot to the surface. As the light grew closer, it began taking form. My eyes grew in wonder and my heart filled with hope. Had I done it? Had she heard my call? Light sprang forth from the water's surface and the soothing smell of saltwater filled the cavern. The light then twisted into a beautiful, voluptuous queen adorned in a crown as bright gold as the scales covering parts of her body, with long flowing silvery hair floating gracefully around her, lips as pink as diamonds curled into a loving smile. "My dearest daughter, why have you summoned me here?" She cooed softly into the warm night air around us. She shifted her position in the air to one of lying on her stomach, both hands cradling her face supporting her weight.

I was in shock and awe ... I quickly got myself together and bowed my head. "Beautiful Siren queen, I beg you for assistance. I was discovered a witch by the townspeople of my village...they aim to kill me. I've nowhere to go and nowhere to hide without fear of death—can you grant my wish oh, powerful Goddess?" Her loving gaze saddened at my plea. "Aye my daughter, I can grant your wish...my poor child," she whispered pulling me up from my seated position and into a delicate embrace. I wrapped my thin arms around her, fear slowly dissipating.

It was then we could hear the footsteps of the angry mob growing closer. Even the small beings dancing around us ceased their movement. They stared at the long tunnel leading to their homey oasis. The queen held me tighter in a protective embrace. "Worry not dear witch child. Tell me your wish and I will grant it," she said, her voice as soft as the salty smell enveloping the cavern. I looked up at her and steadied my thoughts and heart. "Please, siren mother. Send me to a land where I can live freely, and without fear of death. A land where our kind is welcome."

I had never wanted anything more in my life. I had never desired anything as I did this new world. Her gaze softened again, her voice calmed. "Of course

dearest daughter, I shall grant thy wish." Her voice glittered like the stars high above. She brought her white sandy face close to mine and placed a single sweet kiss on my brow. The instant her lips made contact with my skin I felt relief, as though my own mother was holding me. I felt my body become light as air and a golden light wrapped around me, slowly separating me from her. "Your new land will be kind and just. Your new land will be free of the persecution you feel here. Tread carefully, my daughter, and live happily in the world betwixt this one and next." I could barely hear her voice as the light blinded me and I felt drowsy. I tried to fight it, but sleep overcame me.

Visions of the Siren Goddess came to me as I slumbered, visions of her alone in the cave with her aquatic subjects. She began singing a low, alluring melody of words I didn't recognize. The creatures around her shifted form again into sirens just like her. They joined in her song and together they sang the song of temptation and lust. The mob heard the song and ran into the cavern. I worried for them, trying to reach out to them, but to no avail. The queen gave me a secret wink as if she knew I was watching. I settled myself and attempted to watch more, but my vision became fuzzy. Sound faded and the last I remember was the mob being serenaded by the queen and her maidens. After that I drifted into a dreamless sleep.

Two Poems *by Olivia Howard*

Vanquish

Cold, bitter, biting
Your words
Like a bullet to my chest
One hand
I hold over my gaping wound
It feels
Like winter in my lungs
Heavy eyes
Turn to dark, warm puddles
And yet,
My feet still find the strength to hold me
Silent, hollow, bleeding
I survive.

Shelter

She liked the darkness
Strange, I know
Most ran from it, desperate to find a light
But she soaked it up as if it were sunshine
For the darkness was constant
Never changing, always coming back
Never betraying her
In the darkness she felt safe
It protected her, like a mother to a child
And she grew from the darkness
It gave her strength

Not to say she was evil or insane
She was just an average girl
Who felt it was easier to grow
When the world wasn't watching

Saving India

Research Essay by *Emily Sausman*

When I close my eyes I see red, purple, and blue, rainbows of color flying past, and the spiritual 'Om' penetrating through ancient walls in temples carved of stone. I see laborers balancing pots, children flying kites, and the cupped hand of a beggar slowly rising to the sky. I see chaos, but in that chaos there is balance and organization.

This is India. India is not only the modern land of enlightenment, colors, and Bollywood, it is also home to many foreign-based Non-Government Organizations (NGO's). After high school I dedicated a year to learning the rich culture that India and its people have to offer. During my time there I learned many things that shattered the stereotype that I, unknowingly, had gone into the experience with—one of which was that I had to go there to do my part and "save" India. But what did I expect to save it from? I soon learned I had to save it from myself and other like-minded individuals.

When India finally gained its independence late in 1947 it was a country reborn, but it had a long way to go to catch up economically to the "western" world. Thus it was labeled as a developing country. Flash forward to today and India is now a mixture of developed and developing. In the time between gaining independence and the modern day, this country was a breeding ground for NGO's and governmental aid programs. This was until late 2015 when Prime Minister Modi finally pulled the plug on overseas aid being given to the country, and India's finance minister Pranab Mukherjee publicly stated, "We do not require the aid. It is a peanut in our total development spending" (qtd. in Stevens). It came as a shock to the rest of the world that India was finally in a position to reject foreign aid, to mature on its own, and to grow into a great country. Not only is India in a better position now than in previous years, but it is experiencing success unlike before. For the first time in decades, business potential is expanding outside of India; in fact, when you look at the CEO's of

some of the world's major companies, such as Google, Microsoft, Syntel, etc., they are all Indian or of Indian descent. India also experiences success in its own version of Hollywood: what is known as Bollywood. This Hindi film industry combines any plot with song and dance to create one-of-a-kind movies unique to India, making this industry famous internationally. There is still poverty and struggle, but the "western solution" may not be perfect for a promising and successful country such as India.

On the streets of India there are a variety of people bustling about, but when you walk along these same streets a majority of those hovering around the sidewalks are the homeless who go around begging for help. They do this in a variety of ways, from knocking on car windows to touching the feet of those on motorbikes or autorickshaws. In most cases this begging is not random but organized by criminal groups, and as some now say it has become the world's "modern form of human trafficking." According to a study done by the Ministry of Home Affairs, an average of 180 Indian children go missing each day, and most of these children are never found or returned to their families (Bansal . Instead, a great majority are set on the street and forced to beg, oftentimes mutilated to draw emotional appeal from tourists, and at the end of the day heading to their owner to turn in their earnings. Many measures are taken to prevent the children from escaping by running away, including keeping the children addicted to drugs, or even removing limbs as a punishment for runaway children who are caught. Though our first western instinct is to give the children change or small bills, giving money to these children can be compared to putting the money directly into the hands and lining the pockets of criminals, reinforcing the continuation of criminal activity in cities spread across India. Money is not the only problem. When aid is given to the children in the form of new clothing, school supplies, or even gifts, many turn around and sell these items for cash to give back to their owners in hopes of gaining their freedom.

India does struggle with poverty, but what we see in the news about this country may not always be the whole story. When India makes our news, we

might see stories of a wife throwing her body on her husband's funeral pyre, a tradition outlawed in India but in very rare instances still occurring. On the flip side, international news providers might cover stories of shootings taking place in America, not covering the whole story and not stressing that they are not regular occurrences. We are subject only to our belief or disbelief, and to our interpretation of the information we are faced with. In doing, so we almost create a country that doesn't exist, one that shadows the shining success of India.

Though our heavy pockets and generous hearts yearn to provide the feel-good assistance that we imagine Indians need, we must take a second look at what this country has to offer. It is more than just a country in need of our help, as there is a reason that India is finally in a position to reject foreign aid. It is a country full of skilled craftsmen, doctors, and an abundance of successful businesses. Just as an older sibling looks after the younger, India is ready to accept this challenge, as it doesn't need to be saved; rather, it is finally in a position that it is thriving and ready to continue its successes. Every day politicians are fighting to end corruption and rid the streets of the criminals that endanger the future of the country. Though only time and determination will show results, there is more than just hope for India.

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ART111 Line Study

Rachel Ritchey

Moral Responsibility in the Void

Essay by Marilyn Peck

In a world in which “existence precedes essence,” does moral responsibility make any sense?

The world may very well be meaningless, but meaninglessness does not negate the fact that certain conditions, attitudes, and behaviors cause more benefit than others; thus we can say there are moral actions and immoral actions. We can identify these moral actions by establishing what best benefits and advances life. It’s better to drink water that is clean as opposed to water you find in a landfill ditch. It is better to eat food that does not lead to heart disease or diabetes, but it is better to eat unhealthy food than to eat no food. It is better that interactions with the self, others, and the environment are intentionally benevolent, as opposed to carelessly malevolent. That which ensures continued existence allows more time to derive essence, should one choose to do so, but is not dependent on the existence of essence in the first place.

The fact of inherent meaninglessness from an existentialist point of view cannot and does not abrogate moral responsibility or sensibility. If determining one’s essence is a matter of free will and choice, moral responsibility is more important and necessary in a non-essential world.

Moral responsibility, understood here as actions and attitudes that lead to more life, means understanding that each choice occurs within a context of a greater whole. That which ensures more life is advantageous to a living organism; living organisms depend on communities of other living organisms to thrive. That greater whole and an individual’s place within it is a large scale way of looking at things, but understanding the interconnectedness of individual plants, humans, and animals with communities comprised of all of these individuals leads to moral (life enabling) behavior.

I grew up in an area with lots of small dairy farms, therefore I have observed that cows want to be milked at certain times of day when their udders uncomfortably drag on the ground. I have seen cows experience and express horror when they are loaded up for slaughter. Based off these observations, I see a moral responsibility to not eat things that I know don't like being killed, but I feel okay with drinking their milk because they are eager to be milked. I would not expect someone who did not grow up around cows to understand these things, and I don't subscribe to the notion that those who eat meat are inherently immoral. I am appraising the situation based off of information and meaning derived from my own experience, which is the only experience to which I can apply any essentialism; the meat eaters' choices and experiences are meaningless to me. I cannot deny the truth of my observations: a cause and effect chain is created by my decision to eat a burger. Contained within that food choice is the reality that a life was taken to make my burger, and the final moments of that life were lived in sheer, abject terror.

Based off of these observations, made in a context of prioritizing life, I make a morally reasoned decision: no more burgers. It is better to have no burgers and more living things than to have burgers and fewer living things. Even if another person's moral reasoning allows for eating meat, most people who eat meat would agree that they did not want the animal killed in way that was painful or agonizing; people prefer to hope that a cow lived a happy life in a field with other nice cows and then, one day, suddenly became a steak.

This moral reasoning is not contradictory on behalf of the meat eaters; after all, what is good for cows (clean water, good food, safe shelter, fulfilling social relations) is also good for us. It is a moral responsibility to ensure that cows are given what they need to thrive, even if we will kill and eat them, because we need them to be healthy to make us healthy. That's why even the most devout meat eater will not eat a worm riddled, rotting steak, or why money conscious shoppers might still put out extra money for free range chicken. How the cow defines its essence will probably never be known to humans, but the conditions

which facilitate the cow's existence are observable, and make sense, and therefore we act on those perceived conditions.

Morality is a choice, based on perceptions, information, and essence we attribute to those inputs. Thus, moral responsibility is best defined as how an individual interacts with other individuals in the larger world, with an emphasis on interacting in a way that leads to more life. This definition is not dependent on an essential existence, it's dependent on ensuring existence in the first place. We can further break this down to detail what is good for the individual (me), what is good for the group of individuals, or what ensures more life for all living things. To this end, it *might* be morally responsible for a group of individuals to go to war with another group if their existence is threatened. However, it is *definitely* not morally responsible for the groups to choose global thermonuclear war as their means of battle because that leads to non-existence for all groups and all individuals. What is good or responsible is that which ensures more existence, and therefore moral responsibility is a sensible choice in a subjective world where essence is up for debate.



A Speck of Red

Elisabeth C. Humberson



Prince Charming

Maria Hite



Surreal Field

Maria Hite



Colour Rain

Megan Ruby & Markiee Fike



Habeeb in Color

Sarah Thomas



Mystical

Shayla Yaeger



Red Beauty

Shayla Yaeger



ART111 Alteration Project

Rachel Ritchey

Why I Returned

Memoir by *Connell Reese*

People always ask me, “Connell, why are you returning to college? You have already completed a twenty-year career in the Air Force. You will receive a retirement check for your service and a disability check for your injuries, so you don’t need to go back to school.” To this I reply, “You are right, I don’t need to go back to school; I want to go back to college and fulfill the promise I made.”

We will have to go back twenty-six years, to when I was in my last year of middle school. I was not the most promising student leaving middle school; in fact I was downright horrible. For two years I coasted along, hanging out in the hallways, skipping class, or not coming to school at all. That period was so troublesome that my father refers to them as the “Dark Days.” Nevertheless, though those times were hard on us, I made it out and was on my way to high school.

After summer vacation was over, it was now time to pick which high school I was going to attend. My folks wanted me to attend the Magnet School, and I wanted to go where the rest of my friends from middle school were going. I won out in the end, but there was a stipulation: I had to join ROTC. I agreed to join and was on my way to the high school of my choice. This was the same school that my friends were attending and a fifteen-minute walk from my apartment.

Upon enrolling in school, I would soon learn that my past exploits in middle school would follow me forward, and I was entered into a program for at risk students (basically students who were high candidates for dropping out/not finishing school). The program was called “Maryland’s Tomorrow.” It was geared towards helping students like me along. During my freshman year I noticed many people I went to elementary school with were in this program as well.

I didn’t allow being labeled (or what I thought was a label) to deter me from changing my life around at the time. I had spoken with my father of possibly

playing basketball in high school, and I was told I needed to bring home a 3.0 GPA. To this I arrogantly scoffed, “no problem.” With that, the GPA to be achieved was raised to a 3.5. I didn’t dare to scoff again. My entire freshman year I worked hard to get the required GPA, but it always seemed I would finish a few decimal points short.

Yet I was okay with that because I was cleaning up academically: I was on honor roll every quarter and won awards for academic success at every assembly. That euphoria wouldn’t last long: at the end of the year, attending the Maryland Tomorrow Success assembly service, I would be ridiculed for winning all those awards. I heard things such as, “look at this smart guy here.” Or, since I didn’t have the name-brand clothes, “look at what Reese is wearing, nobody wears that brand at all... he’s such a bamma.” When you’re a black teenager growing up inside the Capital Beltway in Prince George’s county, these statements are basically a social death sentence.

For the next four years, I basically went from a young promising student with the potential for being admitted to some fine establishments of higher learning to a fifth year senior. I was supposed to graduate in 1995 but had to do so a year later in 1996. This was because I succumbed to something that still takes hold of many an urban youth: peer pressure and wanting to fit in and belong. I was not strong enough at the time to handle and overcome these factors.

I said I graduated in 1996, but what I didn’t tell you is that I never walked across the stage of that graduation. The reason for this was because I was in Air Force basic training. Remember that demand from my parents regarding ROTC? Here’s where that comes in to play. I was a relatively successful ROTC cadet, so successful in fact that I was able to enter the Air Force two pay grades higher than I would have otherwise. ROTC and the military basically saved my life: before deciding to go in the Air Force, I was headed towards self-destruction.

One day, sitting in a military dorm in basic training, I realized I had taken a moment away from myself and my parents, one of those moments when your

folks are most proud of your accomplishments. I robbed them and myself of that moment, and it was at that time I either called or wrote my parents, and made them a promise. The promise I made to my parents was: "I will graduate from college and you will have the opportunity to watch me walk across a stage and receive a diploma. I promise that to the both of you."

In the twenty years since I first made that pledge there have been bumps in the road. They came in the form of frustration with the military, and a separation after my first four years. During this time I soon applied to and was accepted at the University of Southern Mississippi. While there, a number of incidents led me to leave the school. I headed home again wondering if I would be able to keep my promise. After some counsel with my father, I reentered the armed forces, where for the next sixteen years I would work and go to school off and on. As I stated, I had several starts and stops along this journey, from deployments overseas to falling in love and switching majors because of moves to areas with schools that didn't offer the major I'd started with.

Despite the many bumps, humps and hurdles, I was able to obtain an Associate Degree from the Community College of the Air Force, of which I'm very proud. Yet it still didn't satisfy the promise I made all those years ago; it only fueled the fire to ensure the promise that I'd made was kept. So when I retired from the Air Force, I enrolled here at Allegany College of Maryland, and am on track to graduate within the next year or two.

So if you wanted to know why I returned to school even after all I've accomplished, this is why: because I made a promise to a 19-year-old Connell and to my wonderful parents who never gave up on me that "I will graduate from college and you will have the opportunity to watch me walk across a stage and receive a diploma; I promise that to the both of you."

The Man in the Hat

Fiction by Logan Jeffries

In a town on top of a mountain lives a man with a hat. Under the hat lives the dense realm where reality mixes with fiction. Some call it the Twilight Zone and others call it insanity. Memories seem to dissolve into the same place as dreams. Sanity is tested and limits are pushed. From the outside, this seems to be the place of bliss but on the inside is a house of horrors. The man wields the powers of his hat every day. If you go to this town on the mountain you will find no man wearing a hat.



Train 734

Elisabeth C. Humberson

Starbucks: The Siren

Research Essay by *Laurinda Yoder*

Greek mythology spins tales of Sirens, mysterious beings who lured men to their doom. Starbucks, a modern company, has chosen the siren as its motto. Starbucks has learned how to entice people of this day into their grasp, but the following doom is questionable.

The gloomy doom preachers have begun talking of the “I-generation” snobs on laptops who won’t bat an eyelash when talked to. They croak that the young generation has forgotten the importance of community. Doom predictors think their fears are backed up by the fact that it is the new “cool” thing for young people to “hang out” at Starbucks on their laptops.

Starbucks is popular – there’s no doubt about that! Just go to CNN and search for “Starbucks” to be enlightened as to how Starbucks has become almost as everyday as old-fashioned pubs used to be. Pubs were social spaces where the everyday person could go to have a good beer and catch up on the town gossip. Coffee shops are seen by those who use them as a new-fangled way of catching up on the “gossip” without getting a beer. In fact, on a campaign trail, the presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, found it expedient to visit local coffee shops to put herself forward as “down to earth” (Merica). When a political figure uses a coffee shop to appear like a “grassroots” sprout, then it is obvious that coffee shops are seen as an important link between common folk and the powerful.

As a business, Starbucks aims to attract an educated group between eighteen and thirty-five. This population desires to have a choosy social circle with similar peers, and also desires to keep tabs on their old acquaintances through internet. Because Starbucks offers free Wi-Fi and social space, it has become a successful business based on the new form of “community.”

Coffee-shop skeptics suspect Starbucks and like venues actually spread epidemics of anti-social behavior, but they would be shocked to find that

Starbucks' homepage includes such "everyday" information on the different types of lattes, outrage at a rewards program, or the company's efforts to help the hungry. The very fact that Starbucks attempts to be customer-driven disproves suspicions around coffee shops' social compatibility. Howard Schultz, newly reappointed manager to Starbucks, Inc., acknowledged this in a letter to Starbucks' CEO, Jim Donald. Schultz pleaded with Donald to consider removing flavor locks on coffee bags and reshaping the coffee shop space to go back to the "warm feeling of a neighborhood store."

The financial success of Starbucks hangs heavily on their adaptation to the new form of community. This new community has surprising twists that have given Starbucks many advantages on the market. The most obvious part of the new community is the proliferation of personal internet use. People are fast becoming dependent on the internet for nearly every action. Even the social world has been affected – "hanging out" has been updated from chatting at the local pub to texting in the same room. The effects of internet-dependence are vividly described in a study by Keith Hampton. Hampton surveys the habits of wireless internet users in public spaces, and came to the conclusion that Wi-Fi causes users to act as if they are unavailable for face-to-face social chatting (713). Starbucks, aware of the in-wired behaviors of its target audience, offers free Wi-Fi in its bustling stores – so customers isolate themselves with their pet technology and still feel connected.

Because of its welcoming Wi-Fi, Starbucks also capitalizes on another aspect of the internet-dependent community – choosy social circles. The readily available social networking gives folks the option of choosing to communicate only with those they identify with. Hampton's study shows that the ease-of-communication caused by internet has made people gravitate towards communicating via Wi-Fi with their "increasingly densely knit networks" that consist of those who are similar to themselves (702-03). The study also confirms that Wi-Fi users predominately were communicating with non-present social ties (711). Starbucks, again, utilizes the choosy friend network through its

free Wi-Fi – users feel connected to their best group of friends while sipping a coffee. A small-town story illustrates the fact that if Wi-Fi is not the social medium, then Starbucks is not needed. According to Matt Purdy in his *New York Times* article, “A Downtown Too Decaf for Starbucks,” the town of Clifton, New Jersey requested a Starbucks, but was rebuffed because it didn’t have the right kind of culture. Clifton had no need for Starbucks and its Wi-Fi connection, since their own connections were all available in “pub”-ish locations, where everyone congregated (Purdy). In fact, the rebuffed townsfolk consoled themselves that Starbucks connoisseurs “[had] to have a laptop” (Purdy). If Cliftonites were to insist on putting their social energy into people living outside of Clifton, they ought to have moved to a Starbucks-dominated town.

Starbucks quickly recognized the need of even the most internet-addicted to have real, face-to-face interactions. In keeping with the picky friendships created by the internet, Starbucks provides the possibility of seeking friendships within specific groups. Starbucks has launched an advertising campaign on its *YouTube* site called “Meet Me at Starbucks” which chronicles how different special interest groups, such as the deaf, postcard junkies, scrap bookers, sweethearts, and musicians, utilize Starbucks for cultural connectedness. These advertising video tools exemplify that Starbucks appeals to friendship-picky groups.

Starbucks capitalizes on the feeling many have that the US is a highly civilized society. Starbucks has set itself up as a status symbol – “if you go to Starbucks, you have a good life.” John Winter Smith has caught on to the “coolness” of Starbucks. He decided to visit every company-owned store in the world. To him, Starbucks is a cultural experience. Smith even makes sculptures out of the cups he collects (Atwood). Atwood shows the attitude of those who use Starbucks to make themselves feel affluent and important – part of a good culture. Starbucks desperately appeals to the “save our world” group of elites by focusing on recycling, community improvement, feeding the poor, and other “civilized” projects – the very issues “millennials” consider important (Starbucks

Corporation). It is “cool” to talk of high social ideals and improving the environment and millennials have the time to dabble in such interests. However, history seems to reveal that good intentions of the upper class do not necessarily bring about change. Not surprisingly then, although Greenblatt admits that millennials talk about environmental concerns, he believes that they really do not do much about it (564). To the companies vying for millennial money, it is thus paramount to tout high ideals that can soothe the conscience of the well-intentioned who are not willing to make their ideals reality. Such people will pay high dividends to have others do the real work for them, but leave them feeling good about themselves. In reality, Starbucks simply found the human need for community identity and a goal, and have integrated those elements into their advertising.

There is a high-minded, older single group dominating the American culture, but how did this group emerge? There is a key in the lifestyle choices many are forced to make by their circumstances. According to Alan Greenblatt, a journalist with a degree in English, the answer is the tendency of the new generation to marry older due to high college debts, less job availability, and low wages (566). They focus on college and stack up debt, so feel shackled and unable to start families until they are more financially stable. In an interesting statistical analysis, Richard Florida states that singles now make up more than 51% of the US population (2014). The large group of singles proves that Greenblatt’s observations are correct. These living-at-home or in- apartment singles need a social group; they don’t fit into the married and parenting group, so they find a spot at Starbucks and meet similarly “rich and single” adults. David Brooks points out in the *New York Times* that even our media shows evidence of a high-class group of single adults. He recognizes that the old comedies were always family-oriented, but recently we have popular shows like *Seinfeld*, *Friends*, *Sex and the City*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Glee*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Cougartown*, *Raising Hope*, and *Better with You*. Brooks concludes that these shows all immortalize the cultural image we have

adopted towards friendship – one of unrelated mobs hanging out in coffee shops to develop meaningful connections (Brooks). One of the actors in the famous *Friends* series, known on the show as Gunther, speculates on the popularity of the show in this way: “I think the characters were real. People can identify with people in their twenties; you know they’re no longer with their families, so their friends become their families. And they’re a support group” (Tyler). That was fifteen years ago. Now, while some would rightly point out that high debts discourage those very twenty-somethings from moving out of home, it is also true that they still gravitate towards friends their own age. Starbucks intends to be a meeting place for these singles. In a 2010 interview, Howard Schultz declared that the most important part of Starbucks is letting it become a purveyor of community.

The new community of Starbucks connoisseurs thinks Starbucks serves a half-full cup. The critics think Starbucks’ four-dollar venti frappe keeps their cup half empty. Although the critics are correct that historical community has been disappearing, Starbucks connoisseurs have caught on to the new form of community Starbucks encourages. These “millennials” will be able to maintain their original connections and make new ones at Starbucks. No matter how “I-ified” a person becomes, God still created each person as a human. Within each heart is a need to interact with others in ways other than over a screen. And nowadays, places like Starbucks are fast becoming the new “home” where interactions occur. Those who live cloistered lives around “I-gadgets” can go there, find fellow “I-generational” and make meaningful connections. Starbucks will continue its amazing monetary success because society is moving even further towards isolation. And as usual, people make adjustments. Instead of coming home to a rich family life, the never-meet-in-the-middle families of today have, as Tyler added in his interview, found coffee shops to be convenient “3rd places” to go between “home and work.”

Ten years ago, Starbucks served mainly before 11 AM, but now, they serve all day nearly equally, and don’t close at 7 PM anymore, rather at midnight.

Maybe in ten years from today, you can go to a virtual Starbucks, order your drink, and print it out on a newfangled printer – all while face-timing an avatar who is doing the same! This “newer” version may be disconcerting, but it will still be part of the search for community.

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Two Poems by Katrina Yetter

The Perfect Place

Imagine
green grass with flowers
trees here and there
hills, streams, rivers, windy dirt roads
blue sky with white fluff every now and then
birds chirping.
No one is in a hurry to go anywhere.
People are
casually walking, holding nice conversations with someone
who happens to go the same way.
No fighting. That is like
Paradise.

Special Shoes

Once you lay in a box
So neatly, shiny, and new
With laces that had nothing to do,
Waiting to go out and see the world.
You did go here and there
Walking from place to place
Climbing trees once in a while
For as long as you could.
Slowly your laces frayed—who knows how—
Slowly you lost your shine, gathering the dirt where you went
Getting holes which makes you old.
Now all holey with the dirt you gathered and your laces frayed
You're back in the box waiting.

Destruction and Construction

Essay by Margaret LeMaster

Nature is dark, cruel, violent, and devilish; it is also beautiful, nurturing, engaging, and engulfing. Nature has many shapes and forms. When the great American poet Walt Whitman looks at nature, he sees it as holy and as equal. When I see nature, I often envision the violence it holds but I also see how it causes animals to be kind and protective of their offspring. Nature has always been there, though most people choose to destroy it and replace it with steel, concrete, glass, brick, pavement, and rubber. The world was at its most splendid before mankind started changing everything. Nature was always cruel but she has become crueler as more of her has been destroyed.

Nature's plants all had a purpose and as more are killed to be replaced by buildings, every blade of grass torn up to build things is like tearing a child from a mother's arms. The plants are nature's children; we cruelly steal them away.

Seen as a good thing, nature is left alone. The age of the country, the great red oaks, some left untouched and some cut to allow cars to travel through—this is the good and bad of nature. In his great poem "Song of Myself," Walt Whitman saw the good of nature and would not see what we have changed in the world as a good thing. Mankind has sometimes perceived nature as bad, as ugly, and as something needing to be changed.

When I look at nature from my seat out in my backyard, I see chickens running around chasing one another for something picked up from the ground. From my home in Western Maryland close to borders with Pennsylvania and West Virginia, I also see how the birds fly through the sky as if they never run out of energy, able to fly from one state to another within a matter of seconds. Nature stands to prove that she is needed in this world as a form of relaxation that you cannot receive any other way than by walking out into a park or your own backyard and sitting in the silence listening to the sound of the birds chirping, the crickets calling to others, the sound of the dry grass crunching

under the paws of a dog and the soft clucking a chicken laying an egg. All of these sounds together can relax anyone to a point where he or she no longer worries about the next day.

Nature holds the cure to everything. She holds the cure to the “mental disorders” and the cure to the illnesses that run through the streets. She can cure a common cold and cancer. For Mother Nature to give the cure to all illness we would have to stop destroying her children. When we tear down a tree to put up a building, it makes her angered and she holds more cures away from us.

When it comes down to it, nature is not only cruel and beautiful but destructive and constructive. When Nature doesn't like how things are, she will create a storm. Whether this storm is a hurricane, tornado, earthquake, or blizzard, it is Nature showing she is angered by our disrespect of her. Everything is simple when we respect it. This is proven by the people who can ride a thousand pound animal and not be thrown or hurt by it. We show respect to animals and get it in return. This is how Nature wants it. She doesn't want us to kill her creatures and destroy her plant life just for our pleasure— only when we absolutely need to.

What Happened to Stability? ***Take Shelter* and the Fragility of the American Dream**

Film Response by Kayla Lloyd

Stability is not something we Americans take lightly. We all grasp desperately for peace, which is threatened by eroding jobs and loss of medical insurance. The American Dream can be described briefly as the individual's ability in this country to build a life filled with stability and peace. Perhaps this dream was readily obtainable some time ago but with the shrinking of the middle class and many other factors, Americans are left with a deep, culturally ingrained "dream" and a sometimes hopeless inability to obtain it.

The film *Take Shelter* paints an emotional landscape that captures this exact desperation. The serenity felt in some of the film's early family-based scenes show us that Curtis (Michael Shannon) has managed to obtain the prosperous blue collar lifestyle of which many dream. Curtis and his young family live in a nice house. With his job on a drilling rig, Curtis is able to support his wife Samantha (Jessica Chastain) and deaf daughter Hannah (Tova Stewart). But this changes: Curtis, for reasons that don't make sense to his family and friends, decides to remodel an unused tornado shelter on his property. Without authorization, he borrows equipment from his job site and is fired. Stability disappears.

Technically, the sudden disappearance of stability comes in the unsettling scene in which Curtis, interrupted while working on his shelter, is fired; still, in this moment Curtis is emotionally still holding it together. He is filled with dread and unease, with suspicions that he might, as is his mother, be schizophrenic, but even when his wife reacts violently to the news, he remains calm. The inevitable explosion comes later in a community dinner scene, when Curtis is confronted by another worker (Dewart, played by Shea Whigham) whom he has gotten in trouble by involving him in the unauthorized equipment borrowing. This scene is magnified by expert cinematography. The

camera tilts upward to make Curtis's friends and neighbors seem small and cowering next to the fierce rage that explodes from Curtis as he towers over them strong and loud and angry. The setting is a large room with tables, one of which Curtis easily overturns in his devolution. In this moment, Curtis could have been projected as weak and sick. The other characters could have been shaking their heads in neighborly disapproval, but now the previously meek Curtis cows them with apocalyptic warnings. He comes off loud and powerful.

"Normalcy can seem awful precarious" comments A.O. Scott in his review of *Take Shelter* for *The New York Times*. At the end of the movie, we see that the dread is indeed a storm but we do not feel relief. It really doesn't matter if Curtis's destruction comes from nature or a mental illness. The film strikes us because, in real life as well as the film, failure is ever looming. Perhaps this can be traced back to childhood when we sat happily creating a masterpiece with our crayons. What a sense of accomplishment and thrill we felt only to have the one whose approval we most craved come storming in large and angry! We are shoved into a chair to sit alone and cry from our shock or perhaps hit so hard that we might understand not to color on the walls next time. We are raised from the beginning to see failure and approval as a delicate balance.

The blame could also be partially attributed to the western lifestyle. Do people in hidden tribes in, say, the Amazon, feel this dread? Are their lives and happiness forever at stake like ours? Or do they feel content in knowing that if they come back with a small basket of greens, someone else will share their fish? Roger Ebert describes briefly the present-day economic threat to Americans as "the thin ice beneath so many people these days, when employment is threatened by uncontrolled forces, and if you lose a job, there may not be another one."

Take Shelter encourages us to examine our day-to-day life and search for our sense of dread. Some may consider this search to be conducted as an innate personal drama to keep us ever fighting for safety, but it would be wise to consider that this shakiness has deep cultural roots and happiness is not

something to be fought for and obtained under lucky circumstances. Happiness is a human right and something has gone terribly wrong. The storm is already here.

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The Truth about Marching Band

Research Essay by Savannah Turner

Marching Band is something that many people are involved in and dedicated to; however, those not associated with the “activity” really have no idea what it is about. In my experience most people do not take it seriously. It is not widely recognized as a sport, and many falsely believe that Marching Bands were created for football teams. I have been told personally that if it weren’t for the football team then there wouldn’t be a Marching Band. This is not true. If someone were to look back to the roots of Marching Band or even look up the definition of a “sport” then the truth would finally be out in the light.

The *Oxford Living Dictionaries* classifies a sport as “[a]n activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an *individual* or team competes against another or others for entertainment” (“Sport”). In a Competitive Marching Band, the band and color guard will meet during the summer to start off the season, to make sure everyone gets into shape and so everyone can start learning the music and drill. In the Allegany Marching Band, we would have half-day practices and all-day practices out on the field in the sun. In order to perform in marching band, performers must do many things: carry an instrument, control their breathing, march at sometimes 180 beats per minute (which is very fast for marching), control their bodies so that they stay perfectly balanced in order to keep up visual appearances and be able to play without sounding like they are struggling (an act which requires one’s whole body to be very taunt, except for the shoulders which have to be kept relaxed).

Basically, the whole idea is to make something extremely difficult look easy. You are focusing on yourself and those around you to make sure the form is correct and you hit your dot, all of this done while playing music. This goes on for about ten minutes in high school Marching Band, and sometimes longer for Drum Corps. So you can imagine the exertion a marcher goes through, and the incredible skill it takes to be able to multi-task. Come September the

competitions start every Saturday (sometimes Sunday) till November. In between those competitions the band will go to football games to play stand tunes and perform their show. So all of the criteria set by the *Oxford Living Dictionaries* definition of a sport is met. But how can music be considered a sport? Great question. *Bleacher Report* correspondent Kasey Wahl states that “[t]he quarterback is never in the band room, and the painter is never in the weight room, but the musician ... the musician, I have found, has become the bridge between what we consider ‘art’ and ‘sport,’ making them one and the same.”

Most of the traditional marching bands today still go back to their roots in military bands. In armies, the marchers were key for directing soldiers. A lot of the terminology used in Marching Band actually comes from these military backgrounds. For example, at Allegany the drum major will say “Band, ten hut!” to call the band to attention, and the band will immediately snap to attention. The uniforms have military backgrounds, too; plumes (the feathers on the shako, or hat) were adapted from militias attaching feathers to their hats to show loyalty to where they came from. Officers would wear a uniform different from the soldiers to show their rank, like the typical drum major today. Color was a key factor as well. Stanbury marching band uniform designer Brent Becker says, “The color wasn’t so much about aesthetics as it was being able to tell one team from another, much like what we have in our sports teams today. With all the artillery fire, smoke and dust, the colored uniforms were practical” (qtd. in Lochner). In modern Marching Band the colors often designate which school the band is from. For example, Allegany just got new uniforms that are mostly white with blue on one half of the jacket, and darker and lighter blue accents (our school colors are blue and white). Marching Band has a proud history, and (sorry, football fans) was not created for football.

Marching Band is often underestimated by those who are not involved in it. No, we may not perform as long as the football team has to, but neither do cheerleaders, and cheerleading is now considered a sport. And, according to

the *Oxford Living Dictionaries*, Marching Band should be a sport, because it meets all of the credentials of exertion, skill, and entertainment factor. If you don't think watching a marching band perform would be entertaining, just look up the Ohio State Marching band on YouTube. Also, unlike what football fans would like to believe, we do not center ourselves around them. Anyone who cares enough to look would find the truth about how Marching Band adopted from military bands. Granted there are pep bands who are really only there to support the football team—and that's great. Competition bands, however, don't focus on the football games, and it's the competing factor that fulfills the final credential of being classified as a sport.

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Good Morning, Field

Maria Hite

Fly Fishing and Goosebumps

Memoir by *Derrick Miller*

I often find myself wondering if the fabled forest beasts of Pennsylvania folklore actually exist—beasts like bigfoot, mountain lions, and fisher cats. I usually wonder about these things when I'm in the forests either riding my mountain bike, hunting or fly fishing, and generally, at the most inopportune time—when I'm alone.

I have always been a fisherman who anticipated the beginning of April when the opening day of Pennsylvania trout season occurs. The start of trout season means it is time that I can enjoy the solitude and wildness of the many mountain streams located in southwest Pennsylvania. Bob's Creek, a small, freestone stream that starts high in the mountains at the edge of the Allegheny Plateau, flows steadily down the very rugged terrain and heavily wooded hollows found in Blue Knob State Park located in the northwest corner of Bedford County.

Blue Knob State Park is the very area where the local story of the "Lost Children of the Alleghenies" is set in 1856. In the story, the Cox brothers, aged seven and five, became disoriented trying to follow their father while hunting. The children ultimately perished from exposure in Spruce Hollow. Countless rumors flooded the vast hollows of the area that the boys may have been killed by their parents or taken by a witch or gypsy roaming the dense, virgin forest. Blue Knob State Park is a relatively intimidating place for an adult let alone a small child. This mountainous area has always had mysteriousness to me. I recall fishing this area as an eight-year-old boy—ironically, nearly the same age of the eldest Cox brother. I often found my excitement at this magnificent, wild area promptly transformed to distress as I recollected the Cox boys' fate, which, in turn, caused me to stay very close to my dad for fear of becoming lost myself and suffering a similar destiny.

Nearly twenty years ago I started fly-fishing and I quickly concluded that Bob's Creek would be the location where I would focus my new found love. I had not fished there since I was a child but I have always appreciated the therapeutic qualities of the tumbling water of Bob's Creek, not to mention its solitude. Fly-fishing reintroduced me to my long-neglected mistress.

On solo excursions, I fly-fished bottomless, olive green pools of water and the plentiful white-edged riffles of Bob's Creek for years to follow, familiarizing myself with the immensity of the watershed. I became knowledgeable with the various locally-given pet names of specific stream sections—names like the Deep Hole, the Shale Bank, and the Turkey Feeder lot.

The Turkey Feeder lot was aptly named after a now defunct turkey feeder located next to a very small and muddy parking area accessible only by driving approximately two miles back a bumpy and often washed-out state park service road.

I arrived at the Turkey Feeder lot on a late-May afternoon and unloaded all my fly fishing gear from my truck: fly rod, fly reel, waders, boots, and vest. The chore of getting "geared-up" to fly-fish is a story in itself. I slipped into my chest-high waders and decided to wear them only "waist-high" for it was a moderately warm afternoon and I decided not to start targeting my quarry of native Brook Trout and wild Brown Trout until after a lengthy hike. This hike is strenuous as it covers one mile of varying terrain ranging from a smooth-groomed hiking trail to rugged, rock-strewn sections to bushwhacking your own trail through the early spring undergrowth. Sprinkle in the occasional wind-fallen tree and stream crossing and you've got yourself soaking wet in perspiration thanks to your "not-so-breathable" breathable-material chest-waders! As rugged as this hike is, its harshness is tamed by the occasional and mandatory pause to take a wonderful photograph of one of God's finest creations that most people will never see: the spectacle of a trillium pushing its beautiful red wine-colored flower through the compacted brown leaves from the previous Autumn.

A gale of sensations rushed through me as I cautiously stepped down the eroded streambank and into the cold, clear water, both a consequence of the spring thaw of the past winter's snowfall. I momentarily stood in the water to survey my surroundings for any semblance of fish or insect life—neither of which caught my eye. I continued to inspect the water and topography around me as the sting of the cold water started to penetrate my wading boots, finding its way to my feet.

At this location, Bob's Creek runs parallel with a steep and rugged mountain ridge that protrudes from the right-hand side of the streambed. The ridge's summit would be an incredible vantage point for someone or something to stalk its prey from, I thought. My attention was quickly drawn away from the top of the rugged ridge to a small splash in the stream just underneath an overhanging Mountain Laurel bush. A feeding trout! My heart started to race. I selected a dry fly called a Royal Wulff from my fly box and tied it onto the tippet of my fly line as I positioned myself to make a cast in the direction of the splashy rise of the fish. The fly landed gracefully on the turbulent surface of the water about twelve inches upstream of the where the rise occurred. The Royal Wulff began its journey downstream floating through the tumbling current, getting closer and closer to its targeted destination as my anticipation of the splashy climax escalated by the millisecond. The trout sprang from the depths of the water's current, smashing the fly with its mouth. I gently gave the fly rod a flick with my wrist, sending the laser-like point of the hook deep into the fish's mouth. I felt the flexy tip of the fly rod jump from the struggling trout and quickly brought the native Brook Trout to hand and admired this beautiful creature. The trout's sides were deep olive green, pockmarked with red spots circled by pale blue halos and polluted with worm-like vermiculation marks originating from its spine. Its underside was pure white like the snow that had fallen and melted this past winter to provide a vital ingredient of its habitat. I quickly thanked the "Brookie" for the temporary gratification given to me and slid him back into the swift-moving current of the stream. As I stood there,

preparing for another cast, I could not help but feel that I was being observed. The feeling quickly dissipated, as another feeding fish distracted me. And, soon after that, another.

The evening was fading fast and daylight was starting to give way to darkness. I was nearly two miles away from my truck. Alone. I could not stop now! There were feeding trout everywhere! The surface of the water was alive with fish as if it was boiling on a stovetop. An incredible sight to see! "Just one more fish," I said aloud.

I knew I had to exit the darkening forest immediately as I released one last, wild Brown Trout back into its home. I had no flashlight to find my way out. The clear, early evening sky allowed the nearly full moon to partially illuminate the forest floor. Hastily, I traversed the trail, stumbling on what seemed to be every rock and wind-fallen tree in the forest. With a sigh of relief, I made it to a recognizable section of well-worn trail. The section of trail required a decision to bear to the right or left. I knew that they were of equal distance and their final destination was just a few hundred yards from my truck. I chose to take the path to the right, as it was further away from the ominous ridgeline that might shadow what little light the moon was casting on the paralleling path.

I stumbled on nearly everything in sight...or should I say on everything I *couldn't* see, as I travelled the right path. It seemed like an eternity. Suddenly, something caught my attention. It was a disturbing and un-natural sound that stopped me in my tracks. A sound that I thought might have been made from a Screech Owl. I heard the sound again as it prompted goosebumps to form on my forearms. "That is *not* an owl," I said to myself. What was it? I can only describe it as a Wooo---ooo---oooo sound that had a somewhat melodious sound to it. "What the..." I started to say. My question was abruptly cut short by another of the same sound. The thoughts of Sasquatch and the story of the Cox boys being lured away by gypsies began to gush through my head, similar to the gushing water of Bob's Creek that I had just spent the entire evening enjoying. My thoughts were racing as fast as my heart was pounding. I

tunneled around in the cavernous pockets of my mesh fishing vest to locate a little peace of mind: my revolver. It was there, as it normally is when I am alone in the outdoors. Relieved, I trudged forward into the unknown of what was out there. The sound intensified as I journeyed closer towards the safety of my truck. I was nearly certain that the sound was coming from the path that paralleled the one that I was on. Something knew I was here! "Someone is toying with me!" I exclaimed out loud. That's it! Someone that I knew had recognized my truck parked at the Turkey Feeder lot and hiked back the opposite path to stir me up! I wondered who it could be. I began accusing everyone I knew as names raced through my head. The sound was relentless. I knew the intersection of the two trails was just ahead. Who or *what* was going to meet me there?

I arrived at the intersection of the two paths which, coincidentally, was at the very end of the ominous dark ridge that I was trying to avoid. The moonlight was no longer obstructed by the ridge. I could easily see that there was no one there to meet me. The silence was now only broken by the pounding in my chest. I did not stop marching forward and quickly crossed two very small tributary streams that were now the only things between me and the security of my truck. I was now moving the fastest I had in the past ten minutes. The cold water of both tributaries was soaking my khakis that were supposed to be kept dry by my waterproof waders. I reached deep into my mesh fishing vest pockets to dig out the wad of keys for my truck that was now in sight. The sound resumed at the loudest volume it had ever been and was now coming from up in the dark, heavily-grown hillside of another ridge just opposite of my truck. In one fluid motion, I tossed my fly fishing rod and reel into the back seat of the truck and positioned myself into the driver's seat while quickly closing the driver's-side door onto my dangling left foot.

I was safe! I started the truck and turned on the headlights to lessen the darkness around me but I was still unable to locate my aggressor. I lowered my windows to exhaust the mugginess that occupied the truck's cab and I

immediately identified what had terrorized me for the past 20 minutes: bluegrass music. No, not *Deliverance*, but the wailing sounds of singing and instrument playing from the annual “Pavia Bluegrass Festival” that was taking place high on the hill top, opposite where I sat. How could I have forgotten that this festival was occurring? The festival happens every year on the same weekend! The once unidentifiable sounds were flowing down and through the very hollows that had just provided me with hours of entertainment only to be terrorized by the sounds of others’ entertainment.

I often retell this occurrence to the entertainment of my fishing friends and family members.

Despite my experience, I still find myself fishing alone in this wild area located along Bob’s Creek, accumulating a creel-full of emotions while wondering what things dwell in this uninhabited area. And, usually, at the most inconvenient time—alone.



Web

Vin Foy

Poetry by *William Ziler*

I Call Out

I call out to you
in the middle of the night,
but you're nowhere to be found.
Where do we go from here –
when the end is almost near?
I guess now it's too late
to turn around;
because the love we had is gone!
I need to walk away
before I see another lonely day.
I call out to you,
but your silence says we're through.
My only hope
is to flee from misery!

Do Cyborgs Dream of Tearful Rain? *Blade Runner* and the Cyborg Dilemma

Film Response by Jeff Martin

The movie *Blade Runner* is a fantastic sci-fi film that entertains with a futuristic aesthetic and develops what I'd call a "deep story" about the nature of humanity. In a future dystopia, Los Angeles has become a run-down, grimy city (if it isn't already). As interesting as it is to see how a rainy, polluted, overbuilt Los Angeles would look in the future, it's also sad to know how it could very well become. Along with environmental pollution, the city is also enveloped with pollution of the mind. What I mean by this is that there is mass advertisement everywhere, so much so that it is impossible to go anywhere in the city without seeing a billboard looming on the side of a building. This futuristic world is a persuasive depiction of how the world could be in the future, perhaps the near future (though probably not by 2019, the year in which the film is set). Yet, perhaps because the film borrows heavily from *film noir* lighting and set design, some of the very elements that make the film so persuasive, so cohesive, amount to a level of grimness that is hard to endure.

The story follows a specialized police officer, called a "Blade Runner," who is trained to "retire" replicants, who are cyborgs, part biological, part mechanical, completely indistinguishable in appearance from humans. The word "retire" is a gentle replacement for the word "kill." Cops and other authority officers are told, in severe situations, to "neutralize" threats, again meaning "kill." This job seems to be no problem for Rick Deckard (the Blade Runner) until he begins a new case that follows four rogue replicants who have left a far off colony world to return to Earth in order to find their creator, the head of the Tyrell Corporation, Dr. Eldon Tyrell (Joe Turkel). While investigating this case he meets a replicant named Rachael, who makes Deckard question his hatred of replicants. Rachael seems very human, as she projects every human emotion. In fact, Rachael is so convincing that Deckard doesn't even realize she is a replicant at first. Rachael

and the relationship she forms with Deckard becomes a major plot element, especially considering the inner turmoil it causes our protagonist.

The film effectively makes the audience question its own humanity. If replicants are capable of feeling emotions just like humans, would we really run them down and murder them as if they were animals? Would we really treat these beings who are capable of thinking at a human level as something so different from us that they deserve termination? Sadly, this does seem to be the case: we follow Deckard on his mission to cold-bloodedly slaughter the renegades, and witness the conflict he experiences as a result of falling in love with another, more benign replicant.

At the same time as we watch Deckard develop, we watch Roy and the other replicants develop as well. We see Roy struggle with what all human beings struggle with, the fear of death. As we see Deckard struggle to complete his mission to kill, we watch Roy's struggle to survive. These two stories lead to one of the most dramatic endings I've seen in any movie. As Roy seems to completely lose his mind after Deckard murders his three companions, he starts to assault Deckard in a manner that shows complete and utter physical dominance; and when Roy eventually has Deckard in a position where he can end his life, he chooses not to. This is the ultimate way to show Deckard that he has been wrong in his ways. Instead of choosing revenge, Roy chooses the most human reaction of all, forgiveness. Roy wants to show Deckard that he is just as human as he is, especially when he utters his last words: "All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in the rain. Time to die." These words were meant to leave Deckard, along with the audience, with a moment of reflection. Could it be that man's creations attain consciousness of what would seem to be uniquely human, namely their own mortality?

Reviews of this immortal film are plentiful, numbering 104 on Rotten Tomatoes alone. But they are not uniformly positive. For example, Roger Ebert praises the film for its aesthetic environment, but is honest about its lack of story. Ebert explains that Ridley Scott does an amazing job of set design. He

finds Scott's futuristic world to be an interesting take on how our society will be one day, describing it as an "urban jungle." However, Ebert also feels the movie falls flat in its characterization. Deckard seems rather low-key in the film despite being the main character, and the movie is ineffective in the task of exploring his or any of the other characters. I must say that I agree somewhat with what Ebert is saying. Throughout the film much of the attention is focused on the advertising billboards, rocket cars, and other aspects of a dystopian aesthetic at the expense of allowing the audience to get to truly know the film's characters.

A second review, by Rita Kempley, applauds the film on almost all fronts. Kempley compares the film to something biblical. Though Kempley finds the film to be deep and thought provoking, she still finds it to lack ambition, as the film doesn't adequately explore all of its deep questions, choosing instead to entertain. Another point Kempley brings up which is thought provoking is that if one has memories implanted from someone else's mind, does it make those memories any less meaningful? This review offers many valid points that offer new perspective on the film.

My own evaluation is that *Blade Runner* is, well, dull. This is in no way to diminish the film's exploration of what makes up the human soul, and no, the suspenseful plot is hardly "dull." What I mean is that the *noirish* lighting and coloration makes the imagined future of the movie incessantly grim. There is little sense of humor. Moreover, the love plot between Deckard and Rachael is rather forced, as there aren't enough romantic scenes for the two to reach a relationship in which the words "I love you" are tossed around. I also feel the movie doesn't show us effectively whether or not Deckard is starting to change his mind about how he feels toward replicants. He doesn't seem to feel anything with any intensity. Other than him supposedly falling in love with one, there is no emotional reaction to anything that happens to or with the replicants. Like memories in time, much that would make the film "moving" are lost in the action sequences and *film noir* aesthetics, "like tears in the rain."

Works Cited

Ebert, Roger. "Review of *Blade Runner*." www.rogerebert.com. June 2, 1982.

Kempley, Rita. "Review of *Blade Runner*." *The Washington Post*. September 11, 1992.

Two Poems by Megan Ruby

The Blind at Liberty

He was the sun in all of its bright, brilliant gloriousness; the literal embodiment of it. He was envied and loathed, longed for and adored, and he was completely unaware of being so. It wasn't out of anything but pure, blissful ignorance that he failed to notice, because he was much more invested in his own head than in how strangers perceived him. He was kind and considerate, though a little lacking where common sense was involved, which made him an easy target. He was the protector of all but himself and his most trusted friend was simultaneously his most dreaded adversary. He never blamed his friend for the way he was treated, always assuming that the only one at fault was himself. It took several years and the eyes and words of others for him to see the enemy staring dominantly down at him, their toes touching and his breath stirring his hair.

Three Boys

There were three boys,
lifelong friends with light hearts and dark pasts.
They played
on swings and slides and invented worlds together.
They were one and three
 until
they grew older and more distant,
Becoming more like men than boys.

The youngest fell in
 love
with a girl made of fire and he left
her for his life,
so remorse ate his brain.

The eldest's heart was torn from his
 chest
and flung into the grime of the sidewalk
by a careless passerby who wanted him to be
a secret
instead of a lover.

The middle boy's father
 died
under a crisp November moon and his siblings followed him
into the unyielding night.
He clung to his humor and optimism because they were all he had left that was
 definite.

They were together and apart, the trio.
Alive but dead and
 utterly
 entwined
They no longer played
the games of old and they
 replaced
them with
 worrying.

The youngest
found his way into the city of prey,
nose crooked with punishment and
soul heavy with
 fear
of being recognized.

The eldest fell victim to the starving
darkness,
that clutched his wrists and
begged
him to leave in the bath,
so he tried to.

The middle boy was plagued
with consequences that he was not owed.
Mother madness and halted,
intentional deaths.
He abandoned the omniscient in favor
of a well-dressed
void.



Temporal

Caitlynn Whitecotton

INSPIRATIONS

Cameron Crouse

A Society of Cists

The Banner Flutters (the 4th of July)

Worried Warrior

Ideas are like breezes. They feel calming and pleasant when they hit you, but eventually they pass over, leaving you longing for another one. Don't let them pass over. Keep an pen and paper on your person at all times. Record every idea you have. Ride those breezes!

Maria Hite

Good Morning, Field

It's early and it's cold, well, as cold as a summer morning could be. I guess that would explain the dew and the fog. While half operating in the thralls of an early morning grog, I had almost passed up the opportunity to snag this shot. My camera was in the front seat and I really had no viable excuse not to turn around and risk being late to my basic wage slave job. Glad I stopped.

Prince Charming

First, a walk in the woods on a breezy mid-summer day, warm and inviting enough to sip on sour lemonade and write poetry. I've got my Canon pack with the lenses strung across my back and a full battery in the barrel. Shoelaces were tied, phone was switched off, and I think I wore a bandana tight across my forehead that was double tied in back, obviously meaning business.

Second, I climbed the mountain. Past the no trespassing signs I bounded blindly with illiteracy.



Through the briars I waded assuredly, ignoring the snags on my clothing. Oblong sun spots trickled through the overgrown river weeds like a light show programmed to the maximum random settings. A rustle broke the silence. Third, and most importantly, his majesty arrived. Regal and untamed, he froze in an intimidating pose. A few snaps, then he would move again. A turn towards the light, chin tilted up, and a fluid hop towards the camera inspired what became an hour long photo shoot. Never again would I have such a perfect, engaged, and inspiring model. He even contracted me to produce an oil-on-canvas version for the throne room.



Surreal Field

Located somewhere north of Cumberland, Maryland and between the thinnest, most brittle pages of your imagination exists a surreal wonderland. What exactly takes place on this blended array of Earth's differing landscapes? You'll have to visit for yourself to find out.

Olivia Howard

Vanquish
Shelter

For me, writing is a way to escape the real world. When I come across a feeling I find difficult to express, I turn to writing for clarity.

Elisabeth C. Humberson

A Speck of Red

On a cool morning, I walked the canal looking to take a few photos with a new camera. Keeping my eyes peeled I was lucky to have seen the small ladybug just sitting on a dew covered leaf.





Train 734

I took a ride on the train to Frostburg. I was actually applying for a job on the train and although I didn't get it, I was happy to have had the chance to take some beautiful pictures.

Margaret LeMaster

Destruction and Construction

"Destruction and Construction" refers to Walt Whitman.

Marilyn Peck

Moral Responsibility in the Void

I like explosions, tofu, UFOs, and ghosts.

Connell Reese

Why I Returned

If any of my words can cause a positive impact on someone's life, I've done what I was placed here to do.

Kayla Spencer-Garlitz

Siren's Kiss

After hearing a lyrical version of a favorite childhood song, I was inspired to write something that delved into fantasy. "Siren's Song" was inspired by "Fairy Fountain Song" with a lyric adaptation at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSwY_dQuxbE and the Salem witch hunts.



Cherie Weasenforth

Untitled

In this piece I took a leap with my artistic abilities and tried to do this portrait. I'm not strong with facial features, but was very pleased with the outcome.



Shayla Yaeger

Mystical (a series of 3)

Sometimes the best art includes both reality and fantasy.

Red Beauty

I took this picture outside my house one day. Every year through the winter, we get about 4-5 cardinals. For this shot, I was able to focus on all the details in the bird rather than the environment around it.

Trouvaille

This is probably one of my favorite shots that I have taken lately. I captured the clouds above Allegany College of Maryland. The sun was just in the right place, and I was able to make a silhouette of the tree with the beautiful sky behind it. I like that it has a more unrealistic look to it, similar to something that would be in a movie.

Katrina Yetter

The Perfect Place

Special Shoes

"Special Shoes" came from an idea from *The Poet's Companion* that said "Describe a pair of shoes in such a way that a reader will think of death. Do not mention death in the poem."

William Ziler

I Call Out

"I Call Out" is an original poem that expresses my creativity and emotions.



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