

The Nemadji Review

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Volume 1

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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

The Nemadji Review is the first literary journal at UW-Superior in nearly thirty years. As such, I wasn't sure what to expect when we called for submissions. The response was overwhelming. Not only did we receive far more submissions than we expected from both the campus and the surrounding communities, but much of what we received was really good.

Unfortunately, since this is our first semester and we are a student organization, we had a very tight budget. This means that we are unable to publish all of the quality work that we received. So, if you submitted something and don't see it in this issue, I would like to encourage you to try again next year.

As I graduate this semester and move on to the next phase of my life, it is my hope that *The Nemadji Review* will become a fixed feature on the UW-Superior campus. That can only happen with your support. If you enjoy what you read here, please encourage your friends to pick up a copy as well. This publication is for our campus, so please help us spread the word.

Before I finish here, there are some people that need thanking. Special thanks go out to the UW-Superior English Club, where the idea for the journal was born and without whom we would have no funding this semester. Also, I'd like to thank our advisors for all of their advice and support. Of course I cannot forget all of those who let us view their art. Without you, we would be nothing. Lastly, I'd like to thank you, the reader. Without you, this journal would be pointless. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jason McDowell

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JASMINE BAUMGART

Mindreading

No one thinks to pick up gum out the water fountain and chew it;
It's as if we'd all read each other's minds, but no one knew it.

When Shadows Fade

Two friends walk beside each other,
and I wonder: which is the shadow?
beneath the eaves of this building,
as the snow falls, I watch as the pair
grow white in the distance.

You left without telling me goodbye
and I'll admit I expected nothing less.
was it while you drove home alone
freezing, breathing in your smoke
that you finally realized?

Perhaps what was rent between us
the sliver sliding between your skin
began when you looked beside you
and there was nothing to conceal
your lone silhouette.

MELONY BRANTLEY

Midnight Mystery

The night is calling
Whispers in my ear to come and play
I run into the darkness
And dance within the arms of the rain
The stars twinkle mysteriously
Like there's some big secret I don't know tonight
This is when I am alive

I touch the danger
And feel Midnight's poison envelope me
Breathlessly, I give myself away to the mystery
The whisper of the wind kisses my cheek
I smile and let it take me flying
I feel a cloud snatch me from the wind
A star beacon's for me to join him

I hold onto the star as we blaze through the sky
I'm addicted to the sweet aroma
Of a pine tree as she takes a hold of me
She tells me a story of a woman scorned
Who finds her true love on wings of a fairy
A bit of fairy dust and I am on my way
With the fairy of love I will stay

I wake up by the cool waters of the lake
Fireflies dancing above my head
The wind whispers encouragement
And my lips find yours in the night
Silence overtakes me and the world stands still
This is the night I fell for you and you for me
You are Midnight's Mystery

AUTUMN GRAY

Midnight Flight

Be my Bloody Nightingale,
And soar above the trees.
But every night come home to me,
And kiss me from the leaves.

BEN HOLMQUIST

This Should Be Easy

This should be easy,

It's not rocket science

Just whispers and moments

Where we wish to believe

That everything's okay.

There's no formula

No tell-tale way of knowing

What phrases to utter

Or when or where to place

This and that.

I have no brilliance

No wisdom to impart

Just a few mistakes

And years of solitude.

This should be easy

It's not rocket science

Just words spilled upon pages

With pens and paper

Like whispers in air and

Moments that feel as if

Everything will be okay.

This should be easy

No science, just poetry

Looking for a way

To solve a four letter word.

Old St. Croix

The summer grass grows long
On the banks of that lazy river.
Pike and bass dominate with ease
In the slowly swirling waters.

Fishing lines sway
In the river's casual currents
Biding their precious time
Until hungry fish mistake metal for food.

We start a fire with gasoline.
The light smoke drifts in the wind
Through the vibrant Wisconsin trees
While birds flutter and sing in the blue.

Fireflies blink in the deepening dusk,
And mingle with the fire's floating embers.
The day's catch roasts slowly,
Cackling on the heated stones.

I crack open some beers with the meal,
While our memories are passed around like a pack of cigarettes.
Here's where my childhood rests
On the banks of the old Saint Croix.

JAYSON IWEN

Making Up Time In Indiana

Take advantage of the speed limit here
Free as the arc you make with your arms
It takes even light a billionth of a second
So whatever you see has already happened

You saw a woman & two children
Above a man shaking his head at an engine
A masterpiece of perception
It would be as pointless as eternity

To close the distances between us
Without hitting anyone else
To travel that far
In the past before your very eyes

Playing on a blanket on the embankment
Flash by the side of the freeway
If it weren't so temporary
As pointless as the space between us

Death Style

Bob's life flashed before his eyes
Followed by
His life was a monologue
His death would be even better

He could have been cynical but
Instead he comforted himself knowing
When time, space, energy, & matter coexist
Like the taste of the air

A string of low budget films
A heavenly slow rotating Whopper
He patiently received
It was decided

Cynicism is for moral slugs
A species is only an ecological moment
When knowing becomes the known
Just before the Whopper

JAIME JOST

August in Northampton

Walk through town,
There's a street fair
sunflowers, apple cider, sweet potatoes.
He asks her if the man that is waiting
is her boyfriend.
She shakes her head.
He drinks a raspberry banana malt.
They lay in the grass near a half dead garden.

They are in the room where Emily Dickenson died.
There is a tour guide with an outfit that is too tight.

(Later, the girl will call the guide "slutty," laugh, and become quiet.)

BRIGID LINQUIST

If I Were A Bugle

If I were a bugle, I'd rooty-tooty so loud,
That all the world's people would come and crowd
They'd smile and laugh, and cheer on the sound,
And then I'd just play louder so they could hear one, clear and loud.
Yeah, you'd hear me honkin' and rooty-tootin'
Above all clarinetin' and flutin'.
So that's what would happen if I were a bugle,
But instead, I'm a drum.

TASHINA MARTINSON

The Inevitable

It is called upon by lonely thoughts
and put to rest by company.

The heart fuels itself,
racing on unavoidable activity.

But the pulse accepts this exhaustion,
this distress, this imprisonment,
and the flesh too
partakes in the fever's flush.

Any breath taken inflicts another scaly coil tightened.

With Attacks such as these,
most willingly are the diseased,
to bury their assaulters
and dispense
from their fingertips—
a
swallowed
Desire.

Such a curious little girl

It wasn't until after the little girl observed she
was less in stature to that of
a flower, did she
think it quite
Queer.

Trudging through the tall
stalks of grass, she came
across a bushel of mushrooms,
and on the tallest mushroom,
in that bushel of mushrooms,
was a
Caterpillar.

And all awhile she thought it quite Queer,
the little girl fixed her eyes upon
the many shoes,
on the many feet,
of the Caterpillar.

Did she not realize how
improper it was

for a little girl to
interrupt a Caterpillar
whilst he smokes his hookah?

Perhaps it was her curiosity
that helped lift her eyes
to the level of the mushroom
so that she may address
her acquaintance
while the Caterpillar
took the hookah pipe
away from his mouth
asking,

“Who Are You?”

HEATHER McGREW

Lessons in Cartography

We are most deeply asleep at the switch when we fancy we control any switches at all.
-Annie Dillard

With your back to Lake Superior on this purple
night and a low moon lighting up your play, you—bold
boy of fourteen, perhaps, stripped
to your underwear—gather sticks, dried leaves,
grass, bark from a long-dead tree, anything
at all that will burn. You light

your fire with Boy Scout-like competence, pick
it up with careful hands when the wind
blows it out, carry your creation
behind a stone the wind
can't find. How you persevere! And when the tongue
curls and licks
the outside logs, you smile.

I believe Annie Dillard: Control is our illusion.
But every morning I wake
to something unfamiliar, handle it or tongue
it and try, how I try, to place it on the map.

And then I recall how one morning Uncle Gordy woke
to a new day, found himself hungry, ate
a pickle that caught in his throat
and landed white-faced, belly up on the kitchen floor.

Maybe I ought to take your fire, burn
the map before I recognize
nothing on it at all, before the fire swells and reaches
for your smooth boy's hands, before either of us chokes
on what we cannot constrain, before gravity
crushes us in the spin of that world we want so desperately
to hold inside our small, human hands.

Journal Entry: The Evening my Daughter Gives Birth

I was only twenty-two. Doctors wiped
your stomach clean, held you up like an offering
and said, "A girl, a curly-headed
baby girl!" My second daughter, a hard
delivery, you clenched your stubborn fists
from the start.

My occupation? To record your growth
in pencil marks on your bedroom door—your skin
stretching to fit bone and muscle, your feet
trying out the softness of carpet, the grit
of dirt. I brushed through your tangled curls, pressed
wet cloths to your feverish forehead, counted your chest's
risings and fallings when you slept, wiped up your vomit
when you were caught by the flu, wept when I took you for stitches
after the dog bite, photographed you at Easter—chocolate eggs
stuffed in the pockets of your cheeks. And then years

later, when you had grown taller
than I, we walked a path in midsummer, watched lily pads
float on Lake Superior and stepped over tree trunks
beavers had felled. You turned to me
and asked, "Do you ever regret
not doing anything with your life?"
Strange, blind daughter. You did not (Do you still
not?) understand. My paints dried up
long ago, underused next to half-empty
easels: a bird without a beak, a self-portrait lacking
eyes and mouth. And the novel
I started? Half written, yellowed pages stuffed
in a basement's dresser drawer. You swallowed
whole all that I began and gave me my name:

Mother.

This is how you cursed me.
This is how you blessed me.

Marlow's Unhinging

Alone, in crisp uniform, I started
the journey. My assignment: to further the Cause
of men with starched collars, white
teeth, whiter skin. Seduced by the snake, the coiling
and winding river that pointed me toward
progress, I positioned myself at the helm and waved
goodbye to the beautiful women and their beautiful
worlds filled with knitting, foolish
smiles, empty conversation.

I slid along that oily river for days before
I saw the Cause in motion: rope-like
muscles of black men, necks bound in iron, collars
chained together, bodies slick and thin, moving
rhythmically with heavy steps, clinking chains keeping beat
with my own heart. I penetrated

the jungle deeper, closer to you—the man I came

to save—every minute feeling my own mind
slip, violent fever spread, the memory of white men's crisp
collars shadowed by the smell of rotten hippo meat and cannibals'
drums on all sides. I inched toward you until

face to face, we looked into each other's
eyes, ivory all around us, heads
speared on sticks before your door. I journeyed
all this way to gather your papers, secure
your memory, sit before you and hear you say those words:
The horror! The horror!—

the first words, the last words
I ever knew.

DANIEL E. PEARSON

Forgive-ness

Forgive-ness, in My heart today.
Forgive-ness, in these words I say.
Forgive-ness, for a past so shady.
Forgive-ness, to the world, just maybe.
Forgive-ness, to a world so cruel.
Forgive-ness, me and you.
Forgive-ness, through the echoing pines.
Forgive-ness, yours and mine.
Forgive-ness, the heart is here.
Forgive-ness, the dawn so clear.
Forgive-ness, my eyes see bright.
Forgive-ness, a beautiful site.
WHO

WAYNE SCHADEWALD

Escape Route

I know this, I didn't want fences, or boundaries, or leashes...
I guess neither of us wanted to be tied down to a relationship;
it was our vocation, the ferocity of youth, the sovereignty of being free—
our destiny thriving with freedom...

Exploring our realms and experiencing the joys, pains, the passions,
and the suffrage during our time here—to discover life, to keep it, to share it---
to live by what we would find. You weren't going to stop me; And I never stopped you;
The feeling was mutual, It is a truth that I love about you—courageous, willing, finding comfort in
the uncomfortable (The Challenge to try something new and different).

I understood all of this about you. As time went forward,
I watched you fidget from the lack of luster; that life was somewhat of a predictable soap-opera;
You would get cold feet, a wild animal that was trapped, caged, imprisoned by the dreary part-time
small-town drabby-reality that everyone seemed so content with in life.
It was bore-dumb! And you would not have it—not today, nor tomorrow!
Your blood-engine was combusting on the passion fuels of love, and adventure, and youth, and
beauty—
goals became plans,
 plans turned into motions,
 and motions moved you in the direction...

I was never going to be with you for long...
If this ever happened, I think somewhere along the way your plans fell through.
You got stuck at home for a while, and I helped pass the time.
I could not keep you,
 I could not stop you,
 I was not enough.
I hated you for it... I admired you for it.
And I remember you telling me:

You know, this is the longest I have stayed in one place for over a year...

... I could see an escape route brewing in your eyes, looking to somewhere,

Somewhere I could not follow.

Home (fill in the blank) Home

"I'm happy to have made it home this evening;
It is quiet here in my sun porch room
(My sanctuary—my bedroom).

It is rustic quarters,
With many windows that need a good washing;
My bed serves me as my desk,
 A table,

My lazy-boy,
A summer hammock.

Inside these chambers I can hear
All the sounds of the town—
The grumps of rusty cars and trucks growling
Up the steeps of Mesaba Avenue;
The hallowed tolls of the hours chime
From the Old Central;
The ugly whistles and blow horns hailing
From the Lakers arriving at port;
And that commanding reply from the bridge keeper,
Welcoming with a tone of SUPERIORity, authority.

I hear it all—and sometimes much more.
It's the buzz only known to be Duluth.
A unique area with a counterfeit décor.
Old and mysterious.
In limbo of being so attractive and, yet,
So set aside and forgotten—
Sometimes I wish
I had never settled in.”

Ritual

The ritual of it all;

This calls for me in the form of addiction,
The rehab had no affect,
With those wonderful quotes by Gandhi,
Or some anonymous Poet speaking his faith,
Born again... a new beginning,
From out of the ashes, the phoenix fire bird,
The Glorious and the self-righteous...
Like Barton Sutter's Sober Song,
I know there is more than one way
To say goodbye...

Amen—

But all those beautiful metaphors and wise words of
Reason have dulled; have flooded the spark; and
They do not move in me that way anymore.
The withdrawals of it still crawls,
My dirty habits are crazed with craves, foaming
At the mouth, rabid for a fixing...
And now they do me the honor of recital,
An act I've tried so very hard to forget about,
But these demons enjoyed the performance,
With flames for fingers they burn for more and more,

And I will, God damn it! Give them one hell of a show!
Because it must go on—

Tear myself up before I tear myself up,
And do it all over again.

SCOTT WALLACE

On A Summer's Day

Today, it is warm
I feel the sun's rays
 Gently
Seeping through
the azure sky
Caressing the foliage
 Of trees
the emerald of grass
the saffron of dandelions

Embracing all of Earth
in a warm hug
With a softer touch
On my skin

The aery warped view
Of my eyes
Scans this wondrous
 scenery
Breathing in
The smell of a barbeque
Wafting thru the air. -2/8/12

Contemplating an Orange

Contemplating an orange
That bears sweet juice
Bore in the fibrous meat
That holds my pursuit

Tender and soft
With a faint citrus smell
A fruit so exotic
It holds me under its spell

The fruit contained by a skin
Of an often changing color
Upon looking, it resembles a planet
Roughhewn trenches and craters
Of a body like no other

Smooth, yet with texture
A land with hidden pleasure
I gently peel the skin
And slowly,
I let my teeth sink in. -4/15/11

Between Two Hands

“God is in the toaster, He’s staring at me.”

“*I’m looking at you, Alice.*” Crouched down to eye level, eyebrow raised quizzically, I try to catch her gaze. She continues to stare off at nothing. Saggy blue eyes daydream towards the floor. Little pools collect under them. Surely, the bland decorations would be enough to make anyone cry if forced to interact with them constantly. It’s better that she doesn’t remember. Yet each morning I’m sure she wakes up to the white asylum-like walls and cheap country home-style fixtures and thinks, if only for an instant, *God, I’m trapped. I’m trapped in a cheap-looking hell.*

She squeezes my wrist reflexively and continues to smile like she always does. That is the most she’s ever said to me. Most days she tries to speak, but her lips don’t agree with her mind; they fumble on a shriveled tongue. I told her once, “I like your pink night gown, Alice!” Gummy lips quivered in a soundless reply.

She was left in this shit-smelling hell because of her tendency to wander at night. Where does she wander to? Perhaps she wanders throughout her dreams, her memories.

Hands clasped, lips touching. The first time she kissed her now long-dead husband. His eyes are brown and slightly crinkled at the corners like folds in fabric. Dark hair is slicked back, and he’s wearing that brown suit that fits him so nicely. His name is Charlie. They met when she was 19.

Not that I’d know any of this, but sometimes I like to make up stories for them.

“I’ll be back next week, Alice. Ok?” I get up to leave, prying her fragile fingers off. She nods, white flimsy hair shivering with movement.

On my way out I hear Norma shouting, “Where am I? I have to go home!” The nurse teases her. *You live here. This is your home.* I exit before I have to hear the scream of realization. It will only last a moment. Then she will forget, but that moment is horrible. It’s the moment the brain catches itself in its loop. And panics.

She will ask for is her husband first. When does he get off work? When is he coming to get her? Never. He’s dead. He’s never coming for you, Norma. And you can’t even remember.

I traipse down the long reeking hallway to my next, and newest, patient. It smells like soiled diapers and cheap coffee. Rocking chairs scattered with languid faces watch me go by, curious as to why a young person is here. My hands fiddle in my pockets. Eyes scan the floor for rebel pieces of shit that come out of The Shuffler’s pants (a resident who frequents this hallway regularly).

Evelyn. Room 108. It is dark. TV set straight ahead. Cat dolls lay on the flower-upholstered couch. In the room, a green dresser with a mirror supports long strands of necklaces, pearls mostly. A lump disturbs the smoothness of the matching twin-sized bed. Cloudy eyes stare towards the ceiling, awake. I try to introduce myself.

Those eyes...

They disturb me. She peers into the ceiling as if some invisible hell lay between the blotches of texture. She picks at her lip trying to pluck the silent screams from them.

I leave quickly. Other patients they stare, but not like that. They are hollow; their spirit has already left. Evelyn is still trapped inside.

I’m wandering. Push open the iron gate outside. I’m sure he will be there, just walking home from work. He will kiss me on the cheek, and there a warmth will spring. Right on my cheek. And he will push my hair behind my ear and smile into my eyes. It’s dark now. Darkness is creeping in.

Panic. It rises like a sneeze. I can't find it. I can't find that kiss, right on the cheek. Kiss me tenderly. Right on that warm, shining spot. Please. Kiss me.

I awake with the pursuit of some specter, some memory not my own, lingering in my mind. It seems so real, the panic. Soft sobs wind their way under the crack of my door up into my ears. He cries softly, not thinking I can hear. My hands are cupped as if in prayer beneath my pillow, my head rests on top. Unconsciously, I nuzzle my Lamb Chop sheets hoping the motion will allow me to escape in dreams once more. But they do not come, and by the time the sun shines through my window I'm not sure I want them to.

Her name is Evelyn. She is 103. At least that is what the paper says.

Other symptoms: Physical weakness, slurring of words.

Family Members: Mary, David, Paul, Michael, Teresa

Religion: Lutheran.

Hospice Volunteer: August Rose.

She's in bed today, again. I don't visit her.

I opt for sitting with Alice instead. I walk to her room, entering the security code for the locked unit she is confined in. Empty. The bed is cleared of sheets, but the plain dresser with a box of tissues remains.

An old woman named Mary smiles at me as I pass her on my way to the commons area. She begins to cry, "Look, my daughter is leaving me again. Please don't leave me. I love you." She steadies herself under a framed picture of a rooster. She relives the same memory every time she sees me. I don't try to imagine what it is.

I spot the nurse and approach her with confusion as to why Alice's room is empty. "Hi, I'm August, Alice's hospice volunteer. Do you know where she is?"

The young girl, mid-twenties, eyes me cautiously. "Alice died last night. Didn't anyone tell you?"

"No, no one told me." I leave. I take out the paper from my hospice binder. Alice. 82. Dementia. Dead.

I crumble the paper and toss it in the garbage.

I arrive home at 10:30pm. No dinner is made. My sister is hungry. The kitchen is cluttered with dirty dishes. Wine glasses stain the counters with their presence, dark circles bleed from their stems. Walking into my father's room, I hand him a sandwich. He pretends to scratch his face. I know he's really wiping away tears. He takes the sandwich, gorges himself. First food he's had all day he says. I sit on his blue sheets; a foul cloud of stench leaps from them as I do. I catch a glimpse of a dating site before he shuts his computer.

People don't tell the truth on those things. They are all the same. *Wanting a sensitive man who likes kids, walks, and wine.* Lies. All lies.

"August, I'm so tired."

"It will get better dad; you'll find someone else."

"But I'm not young anymore."

"So, you have plenty of time, think of all those people who never find anyone, at least you know you are capable of feeling love." He ignores this.

"You know, I'm what all the women say they want, but when it comes down to it, they are liars. I'm smart, funny...." The rest sounds like a big, juicy...lie. "...sometimes I just feel like it's not worth it."

“What?” I ask and then jokingly say, “If you’re talking about suicide I’m gonna punch you.” He turns his red face towards me. Silence. My smile slips away like a lotioned hand.

“You’d get over it.”

I sit for a moment studying his hazel eyes. He turns them towards his closed computer. The house creaks in response. I get up. I walk away. I slam my door. I can’t even cry. I try to. They are forced. Fake. I can’t even cry anymore, hugging my pillow doesn’t help.

“August, open your door.”

“No. I don’t want to see you.”

“...I’m sorry... sometimes people say stupid things when they are upset,” he whispers. I open the door to see a red, glistening face.

“I would not get over it, dad. You’re my father.” He hugs me.

“Well, I just figured you’d have my life insurance. You’d get all that money...” he sobs.

“Money doesn’t replace a father. You should know that,” I tell him robotically.

I’m a robot. That’s how it comes out sounding. I’ve dried up inside. I’ve changed. I’m steel. Without emotion. I am empty.

“I know, I’m sorry...” he says pulling me in closer for a hug. Robot arms squeak in need of oil and loosen their grip. They fall, too heavy. They fall and hit the floor.

There is a terd on the carpet. I stare at it, head cocked. The Shuffler, he was here. This is how sad I am; I am staring at a piece of shit. I side step it. Pass the stupid fake-stuffed birds and woven baskets.

Room 108. Evelyn. I can do it this time. I push open the door. She’s sleeping in her thick green chair. A nice brooch is tacked on to her sweater. A long, hooked nose stands in place of what, I imagine, was a smaller one. Pictures of a young Evelyn adorn the room. One is a clipping from a newspaper. ‘Extravagant youth!’ the title says. “This fur coat cost \$135!!” And there she is, smiling and posing with her fashionable fur coat from the 1920’s. I envy her for living then. Another picture shows her in boyish clothes, like Amelia Earhart would wear. The title says, “Tom Boy Phase!!” She isn’t looking at the camera. Instead, her face coolly glances to the side, hands tucked in a pilot-styled jacket.

I sit down next to her. My hand reaches for hers. It withdraws with a creak. So, I just listen to her breathe.

She’s awake this time. I find myself smiling at her. A 103 year old woman, meowing to an electronic cat. It’s one of the few objects that she reacts to anymore. “MEOOOOOOWRRRR” Her quakey voice says. She strokes the white robotic cat as it’s mechanical head tilts to one side.

“Meow,” it purrs. Her fingers follows its spine from head to tail. It is loved. It is her comfort, even if she doesn’t know it is fake.

The fat cat named Yoda is staring at me, the massive beast of white hair. Large blue eyes pretend to be nonchalant. We both know the truth. Attention. That’s what he *really* wants. He sprawls out right where I am about to step for it. His meow is gimpy. It lingers on an actual meow

and never develops; it sticks in his throat. Like Jaws, I always know when he's coming. It's that "HHHHHRRRR" sound; the sound of a shower through a closed door. Like that, except annoying.

"Dad?" I push open his bedroom door. Yoda sprints in throwing himself like a kamikaze pilot under my feet. The man is passed out with an empty beer bottle curled in his hand. I push my bangs from my eyes. I take the bottle. Tuck the covers. Turn off the light. Close the door. Wash my hands.

I sit down next to her. Very loudly, "EVELYN? I AM YOUR HOSPICE VOLUNTEER, AUGUST! I VISIT YOU EVERY WEEK." She never remembers. For some reason, she doesn't have to be kind.

A weak, drawn-out mumble, "WHAAAAAAT?" causes her droopy pearl-ornamented ears to wobble. Then she slowly says, "Eat some of this food. I want to make sure you eat."

"But you have to eat Evelyn, I'm not hungry"

"No, I want you to eat it."

So I do.

Her family told me she likes having her hand held. I'm hesitant to hold the hand of a person who doesn't ever remember me. Why should she want it there? I watch it for a moment...

Her hand is tissue paper. Purple veins dance across it like plump earthworms in the rain. Her misty eyes blink and focus. She looks down at the now two intertwined hands. Searching. She wonders whose old hand is squeezing hers. Then her eyes close, relaxed. Her hand squeezes mine. I look at them, then at her. I don't notice the tear until it splashes on our hands.

"We're leaving. I have to get away. I can't stand it here right now. I have some vacation time, so we are going."

"What about school?" my little sister whines.

"You'll only be missing a couple of days."

"But I have tests!"

"Do you want to go or not?" My dad shuts her up with that comment. Ashley wants to go everywhere.

"When?" I ask.

"We are leaving in two days."

"Ok," I say, leaving my dad and sister to argue amongst themselves.

"Two days!?" I hear through the walls. "How long are we going to be gone?!"

"A week or two, Ashley."

"God, you are so selfish, dad! You ever think that maybe I have school!?"

"You sound like a spoiled brat! You know how many kids would love to just be able to go somewhere? **You** are selfish! You know I need to get away right now."

"All you do is cry, and that's all you're going to do wherever we go!"

I close the door on that truth and turn up my music. I plop on my bed and look towards the ceiling. Glowing constellations (that I put up myself) smile back at me. *Hello Orion, Ursa Major, Cassiopeia, I missed you.*

I visit room 108. It's dark inside. I slip in. Her chair is empty. Electronic cat lies alone. I walk into her bedroom. She is in a thin tank top. No earrings. No necklace. No fancy sweater. Nothing but an emaciated frame. Her breathing is shallow. I know; I think she does too, this is the last time I will see her. I look at the photos of her once more and smile. I want to reach out and touch her. I fear she will wake, but I know I will regret it if I don't .

Two light fingers. They rest for an instant on her wrinkled skin. I don't know how to pray anymore. I gave it up. But I clasp my hands together as if they are under my pillow, kneel, and I look up.

When I leave the room she is still sleeping. I watch her for a moment, my mind snapping a photograph. I don't wipe my wet cheeks. Instead, I fold the paper:

Evelyn.

103.

Dementia.

Widow.

Lover of electronic cats.

I stick it in my pocket. The trash goes without being fed today.

Rain leeches over the glass like perspiration on a heated body. My forehead makes a circle of fog disrupting the otherwise clear window. Clouds overhead. The straight rode winds before us. A gear shifts as the rain drops. Soft music escapes from the radio lulling my mind to sleep. Focus on the road again, watch stripes of yellow flash by.

The car slows. My dad and I get out. He walks silently to the road stop bathroom. My younger sister slumbers in the back. She's angry. Always angry. Even in her sleep, her lips slouch in a disappointed gesture.

I walk away from the car. My arms find their way to a warm spot underneath my armpits. The rain is a comfort to me. It's cool and playful; On the ground earthworms dance about. I smile, and opening my mouth towards the sky, let life, and memories, fill me up.

JAMI KOIVISTO

Hindu Worship

As I wait for a cab on the corner of the Sai Baba Temple on Lodhi Road, it starts to rain. It is a dark morning, chillier than most, and the sound of men's chanting carries through the streets. The sun is still set, but the faint gleams of yellow and orange try to penetrate the patchy fog of Delhi. Half naked men sleep on sacks and soiled rags along the sidewalk while women huddle with their children near fires fueled by garbage.

Everyone is looking at me, a pale blonde in blue jeans and tennis shoes. Do they know I am American? It doesn't matter. White is white. White means money.

Leaning against the stone wall of the temple, I see two small boys approach me. They are young. The older I guess is seven and rail thin. He has black, untamed hair. Dark brown eyes penetrate my soul as he moves closer, slouching like a dog skulking back to its master after misbehaving. Releasing his hold on the other boy's hand, he looks at the pavement and shuffles towards me, motioning for food with his right hand.

"Please Ma'am. Food. Please." He repeats the phrase, the hand gestures.

I shake my head no and look across the street. Now the smaller boy moves up to join the him. He pulls at my jacket sleeve.

"Please Ma'am. Please," he says making the same hand gestures as the older one.

The boys have no shoes. The city is filthy. Flea-ridden dogs roam freely. Feces, food scraps, and rotting marigold petals adorn the streets.

The smaller boy lifts his right foot and rubs his left leg with it. He shivers, lowers his foot, and pushes his hand out towards me, palm up.

The line to the temple where I am going has thinned. On the sidewalk, a few of the men have shifted in their beds. Now they face towards the opposite side of the street away from me.

Plunging my hand into my jacket pocket, I dig out 20 Rupees. I shove the bill into the boy's dirt-stained hand.

"There," I said. "That's all I've got."

Both boys grin. Backing away, they press their palms together seeming to pray. They bow slightly, in a bobbing frenzy.

"Thank you. Thank you," they say.

I force a smile, return the gesture.

"Happy New Year," I reply.

Their eyes grow wide, their smiles big.

"Happy New Year!" they yell, turning, running down the street towards the market, where they probably sleep. I hear them giggle as they turn the corner behind the temple.

I fall back against the wall, propping one leg up. No one else approaches me as I continue to wait for my ride. Where will I go on my final day in Delhi? To Khan Market? To Lodhi Garden? Deciding to visit the Delhi Hut, I notice a young Indian woman crossing the street towards me.

Her bright orange sari has navy blue edging and sparkles. Part of the sari covers her head. Her left hip balances a baby. Her right hand holds a plate of food. On the plate are a small scoop of white rice, dal, and one chapatti. Stepping over a heap that I assume is someone sleeping, she continues toward me, moving her head slightly from side to side in what I call the "Indian head bob." With her tongue she makes a clicking sound. I acknowledge her, then look back to the temple's doors. She keeps making the noise. She raises the plate and readjusts the baby on her side, scooting him higher on her hip.

"Chai," she says. "Please. Chai."

I look at the food on her plate then at her face. She is maybe in her late thirties. In her left nostril she wears a small nose ring. She is missing several teeth.

"No. You have food," I say.

Shifting her weight from one foot to the other, she adjusts the baby again. He moans but doesn't stir. "My baby. Cold," she says. "Chai. Please."

Trying to shoo her away, I say, "You have food. No. "Get. Go."

"Chai," she says. "Cold." I ignore her and wonder why my cab is taking so long. It has been ten minutes since I called. Hearing her beg for chai, I walk down the sidewalk towards the alley to get away from her. She follows me.

"Please. Chai. Please."

The cab waits across the street. I turn towards her.

"No!" I yell.

She stops short, unsure how to react. Running across the first lane, I hop up onto the median and look back. The woman stares at me, chin high, eyes sad. Filled with guilt, I jump from the median and head to the cab. My last day in Delhi is the worst. I lose my humanity to a beggar woman by the Sai Baba Temple on Lodhi Road.

JASON McDOWELL

King of the Hamburgers

My job is a big joke. I try not to tell people what I do. I mean, imagine me. Four years in the Army, the better part of it spent traipsing around God-forsaken deserts, and look where it got me. I'm a ten-dollar-an-hour Rent-a-Cop with a shiny tin badge. Thank you, Uncle Sam. Travel the world, they say. The job experience you'll gain will be invaluable in the civilian world, they say. Uh huh. I travelled, all right, to plenty of shitholes I never want to see again. What did all that experience getting shot at by insurgents get me? Ten dollars an hour back in the States. Suck it, Uncle Sam.

I'm not writing to complain about my job. This is just the reaction I have whenever the subject comes up. I'm here to tell you about an incident that occurred last night at work.

Yesterday was Valentine's Day. I had the day off. I had some plans with a girl I met on one of my rare nights off. We were supposed to have dinner, then to go tie one on with some friends at a new bar on Tower Avenue. I've got this new dress shirt and tie I picked up. I'm looking forward to dinner and then doing something that wouldn't involve going to work and yelling at drunks or getting in a fight or having someone arrested. Suddenly, the phone rings. It's Jerry, my boss. Same old story. Something came up. There's no one else, blah blah blah. I was sure he was really broken up, I could tell by the sincerity in his voice. I told him I had plans. He told me there would be "consequences" if I didn't come to work. I almost quit, but bit my tongue and took the shift. When did I turn into such a pushover?

So, great. It's Valentine's Day and I'm guarding a warehouse. The property owners at Cedar Creek Foods have had problems with the people they laid off, so they hired on security to guard the frozen hamburgers and canned foods. Apparently my dipshit boss didn't know about this until just before he called. Yeah, right.

I sent out a text message to my friends and my date, telling them I couldn't make it because I'd gotten called into work. The girl texted me back, told me if I didn't want to go out with her I should just say so. When I called her, she called me an asshole. No one else who knew me was too shocked. In fact, me getting called into work was pretty much expected. Why'd I blow twenty-eight bucks from my paycheck on the new clothes again? I should've known better.

Instead of putting on my stylish polyester shirt and tie, I went to bed and slept the day away, then put on my old polyester security uniform. Coffee? Check. Shiny tin badge? Check. Sandwiches? Check. Flashlight? Check. .45 Caliber pistol? Hah, I wish. They won't give us guns. They know someone would blow away every one of those bastards that works at our main office. Not that I'd do it. If that happens, it wasn't me.

So, I get to this warehouse a few minutes after six o'clock. I'm late because I'm not in much of a hurry. Also, this place is in the middle of nowhere. Whoever the hell drove way out here to cause trouble at the place had way too much time on his hands.

Right, so like I was saying, I get to the place and relieve Joe. He tells me that he hasn't seen a living thing all day. I point to a crow sitting on the fence surrounding the property. It caws in our direction a few times. Joe flips me off, tosses me a duffel bag, gets in his car and leaves. I open the bag. It contains a two-way radio with a dead battery, a cell phone with an almost dead battery, a charger for the almost-dead phone, a bunch of shift reports and incident reports and some Post Orders. No pen or pencil. Luckily, I was a Boy Scout so I'm always prepared and brought my own.

I give myself a tour of the place, which Joe should have done, but Joe is much like me. Once he's off the clock, he's out the door. I don't find anything too exciting. There are lots of giant walk-in freezers, lots of big shelves full of cans of generic foods like they use in restaurants. Once I make sure nobody is here I take a joyride on the forklift for awhile for something to do. I park it somewhere near where I'd found it and go to find the break room. With the TV on, I glance at the

Post Orders. They're hastily hand-written, probably because the place has never had security before. These Post Orders are a wordy list of instructions that could be summed up by saying "walk around the warehouse once every hour." While in the break room, I pump a dollar into a vending machine, get a bag of chips, and watch TV for three hours. I must fall asleep for awhile because I don't remember how Dr. House solved the case, but I've had a bad memory ever since my second deployment when I banged my head hard on the hood of my Humvee. I was checking the oil and Corporal Kirkwood whipped me in the ass with an oil rag. I gave myself a concussion, so maybe we can chalk my bad memory up to that.

After awhile I figure I should go take a stroll around. I grab my flashlight and go on patrol. It's after eleven now, and the lights in the place are apparently on a timer because they have all shut off. Of course nobody left me instructions on how to turn them on, but in this business you get used to crawling around like a jackass in the dark trying not to bark your shins on anything. And I have my trusty flashlight.

As I'm walking past one of the smaller walk-in freezers, I hear a loud noise. Like a thump. Like somebody has dropped something, maybe, or is banging on something inside the freezer. I open the door and walk in, clicking on my flashlight. There is nothing in sight but boxes of frozen hamburgers. Did I call that one or what?

I walk to the back of the freezer just to make sure. I hear the door shut behind me. Then I hear that loud thump noise again. Apparently, there is something wrong with the motor in the freezer that causes it to make that noise. Satisfied, I turn to leave. I reach for the handle that's usually on the inside on the door of these large freezers, but this one ain't there. The place where it should be has been broken off.

"Oh, shit," I say. I kick the door as hard as I can and accomplish a pretty epic stubbing of my toe. A few other choice words follow. I try the work phone, but the battery has died sometime between Dr. House solving the case of the rare illness of the cello player and the infomercial about how to lose up to three dress sizes in sixty days or your money back. I try my own phone. The freezer was apparently blocking my signal.

"Maybe somebody could have put it in the Post Orders that this freezer makes weird noises and has no freakin' handle!?" I yell at the door. I push against it. I back up to the other side of the freezer and run toward the door, leveling my shoulder against it. Something in my shoulder makes a popping sound.

"HELP!" I yell. I start to hyperventilate. I crouch against one wall and concentrate on slowing my breathing. There is a reason I was in the infantry instead of driving tanks. I hate enclosed spaces. Even short rides in Armored Personnel Carriers make me jittery. I begin to sweat in spite of the cold. On the verge of screaming, I tear open a box of hamburgers and dump it out. I take the plastic bag that lines the box and use it to breathe into for awhile. After a few minutes I am able to focus.

Once I get control of myself, I climb up the wire rack shelving, waving my cell phone around like a madman while I try to get a signal. It's no use, really. There is probably six or eight inches of steel in every direction. It's after midnight now. Hours before any of the warehouse personnel will show up for work. I'm wearing my jacket, but my hat and gloves are on the table in the break room. Fortunately for me I am Wisconsin born and raised. A little cold won't hurt us northern boys.

An hour later I'm jogging back and forth in the freezer to keep warm and I've lost all feeling in my ears and the tips of my fingertips. To pass the time, I build a decently comfortable chair out of frozen hamburger boxes. I sit down on it and wrap my jacket around my head, pulling my arms inside. Now my lower back is getting really cold because my jacket is pulled up, but I start not to mind because I'm getting really tired. I set the alarm on my phone for twenty minutes in order to take a quick nap.

Thanks to the cold, my personal cell phone battery dies and I wake up two hours later and can't feel my toes. My flashlight is also dead. I have almost no energy, but I manage to get up and bang on the door a few times. I walk to the back of the freezer, return, bang on the door. As I pace, my mind wanders and I imagine that outside there is a terrible blizzard, that the workers don't

come in to the warehouse today. I've made it through two tours in the smoldering desert just so I could freeze to death in some crappy frozen food warehouse in Wisconsin.

This goes on for a half an hour. The feeling is coming back into my toes a little so I sit down on my hamburger throne again. Just as I sit, the freezer door opens.

"Hello?" says a silhouette in the doorway.

"Thank God!" I said. I run out of the freezer as fast as I can manage.

It turns out a forklift driver has come in early for a delivery. He's heard me banging on the freezer door. When he asks if I've moved his forklift, I say no.

He calls an ambulance. Despite my protests, they take me to the hospital. Turns out I have pretty severe frostbite on my toes and my ears. Also, I dislocated my shoulder when I tried to break down the door. It's really hard to type with a sling on.

The paramedic was really nice. I got her phone number.

I call into the office to let Jerry know what happened. Then I quit and hang up on him. I think I'll go back to Iraq. It's safer there.

AMANDA RILLEY

Reading With Children

Once upon a time there was a princess who lived in pink tree-house.

Was she beautiful?

She lived with her mommy and daddy. This princess did not know she

What was her name?

I don't know yet let's listen to the story okay?

The princess did not know she was a princess beca

Her Dad didn't tell her she was?

(the look of just listen to the story)

My dad tells me all the time that I am his princess.

Good I am glad you are his princess. Now let's read this story okay, it is reading time now so you need to listen to the story.

Okay sorry.

The princess did not know she was a princess because her family was hiding from the evil monster that lived by their castle. When the little princess was a very small baby her parents moved to the tree-house.

When the monster was growing up she was friendly and was friends with the mother and father as they grew up. They would frolic in the meadow and play hide and seek with the young monster.

They all grew up and the monster started to get fat.

It's not nice to call people fat.

My dad says he's big boned.

My mom said your dad is fat because he eats too much.

Your mom is a liar.

My mom got fat then she had my brother. I hope she doesn't get fat again.

My dad doesn't like my mom.

Monsters are supposed to be fat, or they would not be scary.

Being fat does not make you scary, Santa is fat and I love him.

Last year Santa gave me a puppy his name is Buddy.

I hope Santa will give me a sister this year the last two times I got stupid brothers.

Babies are not from Santa, my mom says they are from God.

Okay children let's get back to the story okay?

They grew up and were good friends. One day the queen noticed the monster started to get fat. The fatter the monster got the more fire she would blow. The monster started blowing fire more often and a few forests burned down. One night the king and queen took their little Sofia, bundled her up and left their castle to find a safe place to live. They walked for days.

I don't like walking.
My dad makes mom walk with me and him.
I like my mom.
I don't have a dad.

Okay back to the story boys and girls.

They found a new forest that was huge. The trees went for miles up into the sky. The king and queen could not even see each other when they walked on opposite sides. They decided to make a log cabin near the base of one of the trees. The king worked for days cutting trees and building a home. Then they saw wolves one night and they decided that they were not safe on the ground. So he began to make slots so he could climb the tree and build a tree-house.

It was pink right?
Pink is my favorite color.
Pink is for girls.
I like green.

We need to continue the story.

After the tree-house was built the family lived there. As Sofia grew she would look out over the forest and see wonderful colors. One day she asked her parents if she could color the house. She did not like that it was all just wood.

When I colored on the walls at my house I got spanked.
My little brother steals my crayons and I get in trouble.
My mom lets me color on my black wall with chalk.
I don't have crayons at my house.

Listen up, children, the story is not over yet.

The king and queen told Sofia that there was nothing to color the walls with. Sofia pointed over the forest to the valley that was beautiful. There are a lot of colors there, can I go and get some and bring them back for our house. The king and queen let her as they watched from the porch.

It took three weeks for the house to be bursting with color. Sofia had flowers held up with mud.

I don't like playing in mud
yea it is soo dirty
mud is dirt with water
I love making mud pies with my brother

(The look)

sorry
sorry
sorry

I want to be good and listen but my tongue has to move a little sometimes

Sofia had flowers that were held up with mud. They had made paint from ground up flowers and painted the tree-house pink. The house was beautiful and every few days she would get new fresh flowers. Soon the valley was not so beautiful anymore and she could not get anymore flowers.

I pick flowers for my grandma when we go to her house. She only likes the yellow ones from the grass not the other ones by the house. She don't like me to pick them.

ones.

Sofia felt bad for taking all the beauty from the valley and decided one day to go look for more. The queen packed her a lunch and off she went through the forest across the valley 'til she saw a desert. This was the first time she had ever seen a place with no color, just brown sand. As she walked across it she was not sure where she was anymore. She was lost.

I got lost at the store my mom left me
my dad left me in the bathroom
I have to go potty
can I go potty too

Can you hold it till the story is over?

No
I can
I have to go too

Lets take a potty break everyone line up. Whose my line leader?

Billy is
I'm second
I want to be last

keep your hands to yourself

he pushed me first
no I didn't
I want to stand behind Stella

Quiet, when we are all quiet we can go.

Shh
Shh
quiet I have to pee
shh
shh

Billy you can go.
(15 min later)

Who remembers what was happening in the story?

Sofia was lost and had to go to the bathroom
no she was just lost
she was in a desert

Right she was lost in a desert.

Sofia sat down and started to eat her lunch when she heard a noise. She looked around but saw nothing. Then she heard the noise again. She stood up and saw a little pink monster.

“What are you doing?” Sofia asked
“I am shedding my skin” replied the pink monster

That's like a snake
I like snakes

“Why?” asked Sofia
“Because that is what I have to do when I grow”
“you have to take your skin off, that would hurt”

“No it doesn't hurt, it is just hard to crawl out of without breaking it”

“Why do you care if it breaks”

“I have all of my shed-ed skins since I was a baby my mom said one day I will be able to make a bed for my kids with them and keep them safe like she did for us”

“O”

“Want to come over and see them”

“Sure where do you live?”

“On the cliff over the meadow”

“O Is it far from here”

“No not really. Whats your name?”

“Sofia. What is you name?”

“Addellas”

Addellas and Sofia walked through the desert till they came to a mountain. Sofia was tired, but just kept walking.

“Wow this is really cool you can see so far”

“ yea, mom said I have to start flying soon. I am really scared to though”

“You have wings?”

“Yea , See.”

Just then three monsters jumped out of the giant hole and ran by then jumped off the cliff. Sofia was amazed and watched as they flew in circles, from the base of the cliff to way high above it.

I would be scared I don't like swings

I jumped off the slide at home

I jumped off the monkey bars

We are almost to the end let's listen up.

Just then Addellas' mom came out of the hole.

“Addellas who is your friend”

“This is Sofia”

The monster walked around Sofia and looked her up and down. Sofia started to feel scared but did not know what to do. She had only been fearful of wolves before and they only came out at night.

“Are you a princess?” the monster asked Sofia

“No”

“I had friends once who had a daughter named Sofia. They were the king and queen here. Their castle is right there.” she pointed to the castle that was by the meadow near the forest. Sofia felt better but still just wanted to go home.

“Where did you two meet” the monster asked Addellas

“In the desert, I was shedding my skin and she was eating her lunch”

“Do you live in the desert?”

“No, I was looking for beauty to bring back to the valley. I picked it little by little to put in my house and then it was just gone. When I saw Addellas shedding her skin I thought it was so beautiful. I love the bright pink of her skin. I was hoping to take it back to my mom and dad and color my tree-house with it, but Addellas said she needed to keep it for her children.”

After a few hours Sofia knew she needed to get home so she said her good byes and started to leave. The monster mother gave her a ride home knowing she would not have made it and the wolves would be out. When they got back to Sofia's tree house the king and queen came out of the tree house. They recognized the monster. She had been their friend many years ago. They talked and became friends again.

Why did they stop being friends?

The monster breathed fire, remember?

I wouldn't be friends with a fire breathing monster.

Why do you think she breathed fire?

The story said so
I think it was because she was getting old
old people hurt so they would breath fire
my mom said that if my grandpa could he would breath fire because he don't like
most people he thinks they are stupid.
I think the monster breathed fire because she was hurting. Maybe she could not cry
so she just breathed fire.

Did you like the story?

No it was stupid
Why should a princess live in a forest with wolves?
Does Santa know where she lives when she moved?
I liked it I'm a princess and I don't live in a castle. My dad did say he will build me
one and I get to help.
Why did her parents let her leave when she is still little.
Did the monster have babies after she burned the forest or before cause my mom
said sometimes my brother and me make her have steam come out her ears. So if
she was a monster she would breath fire probably.

MICHAEL SCHULTZ

Colored Glass

My earliest memories are of walking the beach with my sister collecting colored glass. Our mother taught us to look for this glass when we played on the beach. Not sharp but small pieces of red, blue, green, purple on the beach. She told us that broken glass would roll in the waves becoming rounded like perfect pearls.

Every day we would greet the morning sun searching for glass. My sister kept the glass in a pickle jar and called it her “little rainbow.” I used to tease her about it, tossing sand in her golden brown hair, as she clutched the jar to her chest. My sister liked to play a game with the glass we found. We would each choose a color, and the one who found the most glass of that color was the winner. The competition was rough. Somehow, she always knew where to look for the glass of her color.

One afternoon she found a piece as big as my hand. She held the blue glass above her head and smiled, hers was the most beautiful smile I have ever seen. When the sun set we would count the glass we found like treats at Halloween. My sister made me promise to fill her jar. Though she never knew, I enjoyed looking for glass with her. Even now, in my old age, I still search the beach for that glass. I have filled many jars since then. When the sun is just right, those jars sparkle to life reminding me of my sister, and the smile I will never forget.

The Cat

When I was ten I found a dead cat in a garbage can. This was the year that everything went to hell, and Elijah and I started wandering the neighborhood like vagrants. A few weeks earlier we had found piled at the curb paper bags full of clothes, ratty baby toys, and an intact skateboard with a loose wheel that I easily repaired, and ever since we'd been obsessed with dumpster diving, peering into filthy bins to see what kind of treasure we would find, and barring treasure we'd filch the aluminum cans to cash in for pocket change. I imagined myself as a charming, urban ragamuffin, and Elijah, I think, just along for the ride, up for any adventure with his big sister. So one cool day in May we sauntered up to the cluster of trash cans behind the apartment building down the alley from our house, and I flipped the aluminum lid off one with an air of authority, and there on top of the black plastic bags was a brown tabby, curled up on his side as if asleep, except that his eyes and mouth were open. We stared dumbly at the cat for several minutes, waiting for or willing him to breath, and finally Elijah said, "We should tell Mom." I nodded, and we left.

I was young enough to still half-believe that grown-ups had powers that I did not, that they knew all the answers and could fix things, and Elijah, I'm sure, believed it wholly. He was a dreamy, sensitive child, especially then, and probably expected our mother to rush the cat to the vet or to massage life back into its chest herself. Mom was washing the dishes when we told her.

"There's a what?"

"A cat. In the trash can behind the scary apartments on the corner. I think it's dead."

"Are you sure?"

I couldn't say. I hadn't, after all, checked its pulse, and I was afraid if I said yes that that would make it so; maybe my ambivalence would at least keep it in limbo. I shuffled my feet and looked away.

"Okay," Mom said, squeezing her hands with a towel. "Okay, let's go."

Elijah and I led her to the garbage can in silence, and the three of us stared at the cat. Elijah held my hand now, and his eyes darted between me, the cat, and Mom, and we waited for a miracle. Mom crossed and uncrossed her arms, then exhaled as if she had been holding her breath, and marched up to the nearest door.

A young woman answered, and before she could speak, Mom asked her, "Is that your cat? In the garbage can?"

The woman grimaced. "There's a cat in the garbage can?" Mom nodded. The woman shifted her weight, made a face, and said, "No. The landlord won't let us keep pets here. Is it...?" She stole a glance over at Elijah and me, staring up at her blank-faced. She was unwilling to say the word, too.

"We were going to bury it," Mom said. Elijah and I turned to each other: we did not like this plan, this was not what Mom was supposed to do.

The woman shrugged, and pulled her sweatshirt around her as if she was suddenly cold. "Okay." We left without saying goodbye.

We went home and from the basement retrieved a pair of garden gloves and the old green blanket that Mom used to cover up the peonies during late spring frosts, and then we walked back to the cat. I hoped that this time the cat would be different; it would have closed its mouth or stretched its legs, or it would be gone completely, run away home after we let it out of the garbage can. But he was still curled into a crescent, facing east, on top of a plump pillow of garbage. Mom shook the blanket out and laid it on the ground, spending a lot of time folding it into a square, fussing over every wrinkle and unfolding and refolding it completely twice. When she had finally smoothed the blanket out on the gravel driveway, she put the gloves on and turned again to face the cat. Elijah and I stared at Mom, waiting, waiting; she clenched her jaw and blinked fast, and then reached out to the cat, stroking its head and smoothing the fur between its ears. It was here that Elijah started crying fat, silent tears, but I bullied myself up and told myself to be strong, be

brave, be tough. Wasn't I the girl who skinned her knees without crying? Didn't I once write a Halloween story so gruesome the teacher forbid me from reading it aloud in class? I didn't cry when Dad left, and I didn't cry when he came back. I hadn't known this cat, and I didn't kill it. Why should I cry?

Mom eased her gloved hands under its body and laid it gingerly onto the center of the blanket. She folded up each corner carefully, as if tucking the cat in for bed, and then picked up the bundle and held the cat's small body against hers, and we made our way back to the house. Mom laid the cat in the shade of the maple, retrieved two shovels from the basement and handed me one of them. I watched her break ground, and finally said, "Can't you do something?"

Mom stopped digging. "I'm doing what I can," she pleaded, her voice so strained and fragile that I winced. "This is what I can do."

Elijah sat vigil with the cat while we dug, and when we had finished, Mom sent him off to pick some flowers for the grave; he returned a minute later with an armful of lilacs ripped from the trees.

Mom smoothed the earth with her bare hands, and then gently laid the cat, wrapped in his blanket, inside of it. Elijah distributed the flowers. "Should we name him?" Mom asked.

"No," Elijah immediately answered.

Mom nodded and cleared her throat. "Dear Cat," she began, and then fell silent. "Dear Cat," she tried again. "The world is not as kind to cats as it should be. We hope you had a happy life, with plenty to eat and someone to love you." She fingered her bouquet of lilacs. "Go in peace," she said, and threw her flowers into the grave.

"Go in peace," I repeated, and tossed my flowers in.

"Amen," Elijah said, which he must've picked up from TV because we had never been to church, but then he too said, "Go in peace."

We three stood by the little flower-strewn grave in our little yard for a long, long time before Mom picked up the shovel again and began to fill in the hole.

The Last Christmas

Everything is white. The streets, the trees and the roofs of all the buildings are covered with snow. I look up at the sky to see large fluffy flakes floating down past the street lights. The snow flowers fall on my black overcoat and disappear as they melt. A snowflake lands in my right eye.

“Wow.” I turn my head down and blink my eye a few times. It was like someone splashed cold water on me. I take my hand from my pocket and try to catch some of the falling snow. I always enjoy the falling snow. I don’t know why. I just like to be around it. Even when the sun comes out, the roads and sidewalks will turn to ice. I will slip every time, no doubt; but I still like it. There is just one car driving on the road. It’s going really slow. I wouldn’t be so silly, driving a car on the street when there is so much snow on the ground.

Today seems a little different when I am walking around in the street. There are lights decorating the trees. It looks like some festival coming. I can’t remember.

“Iwis, leman, ye do me wrong
Iwis, leman, ye do me wrong
Or elles your breth is wonder strong
Hum, ha, trill go bell
Or elles your breth is wonder strong
Hum, ha, trill go bell”

“Leo, what are you doing there? Hurry! We need to buy a lot of things. We are almost late for your parents’ dinner.” What a sweet voice, warming me up in the winter.

“Without you, where would I be...?” I whisper and turn to her.

She has brown hair draping down to her shoulder, with a side parting and some small wings at her temples. Her eyes are not big, but deep. Every time when she looks at me, I always feel like she is a black hole absorbing my soul and spirit from my body. She wears a long red coat today, which makes her shine in the darkness and snow. My feet seem stuck to the ground, I cannot move. I stare at her. How will my life be without her? Whenever I am thinking about being with her, I smile.

“Leo, are you deaf?” She sashays toward me through the snowy sidewalk and grabs my arm. She starts dragging me along with her. “What’s wrong with you? Standing in the snow like a log hiding from the fire, and smiling like that too. You look like a psycho that escaped from the hospital.” She keeps dragging me, walking faster and faster.

“Nope, honey. You’re wrong. I don’t escape out the back door. I go out officially from the front door. Do you know why?” I let her drag me forward while I lean back to resist a little. She stops and looks at me as if she wants to say something. But she doesn’t, she just starts dragging me along the sidewalk again.

“Because Christmas is coming, Jesus gave me a prize and let the hospital off today. So I’m out. With you now.” I am not super religious, but I do believe there is some fate in circumstance. If not, I wouldn’t have met my wife—Sarah.

A cold wind blows down the street, making her hair dance on her shoulders. I glance at her. Maybe for just a second I see that she is smiling. I look ahead and adjust my pace to walk with her, so she isn’t pulling me anymore. I feel my arm getting warmer and warmer as she leans against me. Along the street, children are chasing each other. Some throw snow, and some hide behind the light stands. There are smiles on their faces, pure and innocent. I peep at her—my life could be that simple. She, our kid and I, form our final home.

Almost half an hour of walking, finally we make it—the City Market. It looks colorful today, maybe because they put the lights around the sign to decorate. Well, it seems Christmas is really coming now.

“Come on! Let’s go inside. Are you in a daze again? What’s wrong with you today?” She starts

pulling me inside before I can say something.

“See what your Dad will like, I’ll find something for your Mom. Don’t just stand there staring. The sales staff will think you’re not going to buy something and kick you out.” She gives me a slight kiss on my face and vanishes into the merchandise.

The store is playing “Jingle Bells” again. I am really tired of that. Why can’t they change to another song? They play it every year! The exhaust from people breathing and the airtight heat are mixed together to create a ridiculous smell. I feel extremely sick in this tiny room.

I move myself a little bit toward the checkout table. That way I won’t block people walking in and out of the store. I look around. There are many things to buy. People are just like jokers, comparing, picking, and chatting. There are several rows of shelves decorated in green and red, selling different kinds of stuff. There are signs hanging from the ceiling. People are everywhere. They look excited, picking through all the stuff, and trying to find what they want.

My eyes catch some attractive bracelets right next to the cash register. I walk over to the shelf and pick up one of the green bracelets. I turn it around in my hand. It feels good, although I don’t know what material it is made from. I’m about to put it back on the shelf when I notice something written on the inside.

“WWJD,” my face turns white.

“Um.....” My nose and eyes scrunch together.

“Have you heard that the police went to Mr. Albertson’s house today?” I look at where the voice came from. It is a fat lady in a tattered gray coat. Her back is hunched over a little bit.

“Why did the police go to his house? He is a respectable gentleman.” The other thinner lady asks from behind the cash register. She looks younger and has a nice necklace. Sarah keeps asking me to buy her one and I promise every time, but haven’t bought her one yet.

“It seems it was about his son.”

“Oh, no!” shrieks the younger lady. The whole store pauses and turns to face her. She quickly covers her mouth with her hands as red starts to fill her cheeks.

“What about Vera? Does she know about it yet? She seems about six months pregnant now.” She asks softly, afraid of attracting people’s attention again.

The fat old lady looks down, then back up as she takes her wallet from one of the pockets on her coat.

“It’s 7 dollars please.”

She quickly passes some money to the younger lady, then grabs the brown paper bag from the counter and walks out the door.

Suddenly there are two hands grabbing me from behind. I grab back unconsciously, thinking someone is going to steal my wallet.

“Leo, why are you standing there like a tree stump again? What are you looking at? Did you find something good for your Dad?” It’s her. Her voice can always bring me peace. My heart rate slows down. I turn to her; wipe off the little smudge of dirt on her face as I look at her.

“Nope, did you find anything good? Wow, look at what you found. Mom will love it. All set?”

“No! We gotta find something for your Dad.” She lightly slaps the back of my head and looks a little angry. Her face now is like a tomato that I want to bite into.

“Kay, kay...I’m coming... easy, easy honey.” I quickly slide the green bracelet back onto the shelf before she drags me down one of the aisles.

Sarah points out a brilliantly detailed bronze sculpture of an American Bald Eagle. It perches atop a rock with its wings stretched out into the air and its beak open, sending out a mute caw, letting everyone and everything know this is his territory. My mouth drops open. I am so struck by the eagle that I forget she is still around me until she hits my head again.

“Wow! Dad will like it. But I think he might like a rifle better if he could choose.” I smile to her and give her a big thumbs-up.

“Ouch, why hit me again?” I rub my head. “It’s hurt now. Remember, the hospital is off today. Don’t kill me, honey.”

“Don’t waste time, we’re going to be late and you know your Dad doesn’t like that kind of thing.” She seems a little worried and comes closer to rub my head.

I take a deep breath and absorb the smell from her. Without thinking about it, I quickly draw her up in my arms to hug her. She seems a little surprised, but then she relaxes and wraps her arms around me.

I whisper to her, "Honey, no matter what happens, you gotta be brave."

"What's that?" she pushes herself out of my arms and puts her hands on my face. "What happened, Leo? You look strange today."

"I need to go to..." I hesitate. The words choke up in my throat when I see the hopes and worries behind her eyes. There are tears around her eyes. I don't know whether I should say or not. I feel like a child that has done something wrong, waiting for my punishment. She slowly brings her hands down and grabs my arm now. Tighter and tighter. "You need to go where..." her voice seems a little shaky which makes me scared. I am so afraid that what I have now is not real. Our marriage, our family, it's all a dream. When I wake up, all will have gone. My head turns down. I don't know how to face her.

"Leo..." She cradles my chin with her hands and lifts my head up. "Look at me. I'm your wife. I'm not others. Tell me. Maybe I can help you. We are family."

"I've been drafted." I feel her hands losing strength and drop down. I look at her. Her face turns red. Her eyes are like the stars reflecting in the open water now. She looks so beautiful. I am completely lost in her eyes. They are always the lights guiding me home. She falls back into my chest and buries her face in my shoulder. Her arms are shaking. I can feel her tears dripping onto my coat.

"We fly out to Vietnam in three days. They're running short of experienced soldiers so they pulled out my file. I am sorry. I just need to go there for one year. Then I'll be back." There is a quiver in my voice. "Don't worry about that. I'll be back." I pat her back, trying to calm her down.

"Mr. Albertson's son said he would be back too. Now he's dead! Leaving his wife with a baby." Her voice becomes louder and louder. Now everyone turns to us. She hits my arm again and again.

"Why do you have to do that to me too? Why!" Her whole body is shaking as she cries. My heart has broken like a glass falling on the floor, pieces and pieces. I can't breathe.

At this moment, I just have her. I hold her tightly in my arms and don't let her move. "I'm sorry." She shakes harder as I hold tighter. My eyes cloud over with tears. I'm getting dizzy and dizzy. "I'm sorry...I really sorry...all I want is you...I promise I'll come back..."

The song pushes its way into my brain, "I wish you a merry Christmas, I wish you a merry Christmas."

"Merry..." Suddenly, there is a force pull me from my back. I tumble over backward. She is farther and farther away. Everything around me is a blur. I can barely hear her voice.

I fall against the ground. Why do I have tears? I can hardly move my hand to rub my eyes. There is blood.

"Hey, Leo! Come on! Don't sleep! Shit!" Someone is yelling at me.

"You're going home. You're going home for Christmas. Come on!" He slaps at my face.

"Merry Christmas...Sarah..." I am spitting up blood.

He yells over his shoulder, "Over here! He ain't good!" I stare at him. His knee is pressing down on my chest. He's wearing a green shirt, dirty and bloody. A gun is slung over his back.

"Leo, come on. They're waiting for you at home! Don't die, man!"

WWJD, what would Jesus do. I chuckle to myself. I should've bought that bracelet.

"God damn it Leo, come on! Wake up, man! Shit! Do you hear me!? You're going home!"

The sound goes farther and farther, like a bird, flying away.

Symbols and Discourse in “The Yellow Wallpaper”

In *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that “...it seems inevitable that women reared for, and conditioned to, lives of privacy, reticence, domesticity, might develop pathological fears of public places and unconfined spaces” (2030). This could be an easy explanation for the psychological breakdown of the narrator in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story, “The Yellow Wallpaper;” however, the narrator isn’t the only important character in the story. Some critics are “...interested in the notion that the wallpaper represents women’s discourse to the extent that the wallpaper is impossible to define” (Ford 311), but I have alternative theories to the meaning of the wallpaper as well as the garden and nursery in Gilman’s story.

While the unnamed narrator and the wallpaper are important, especially from the reading of both the Psychological and Feminist perspectives, scholars have placed little emphasis on the garden in terms of its importance to revealing not only the psychological state of the narrator and the possible reasons for her mental decline, but in exposing the garden’s symbolism of the narrator’s psychological state and women’s discourse in the late nineteenth-century. Discourse of women in the nineteenth-century is embodied in the narrator of this short story as well as the “*delicious garden*,” the “*atrocious nursery*,” and, most famously, the yellow wallpaper. These symbols reveal how it is not men or society that leads to the narrator’s mental breakdown, but the narrator’s own passive behavior that result in madness.

The narrator is a very important symbol who represents the entrapped woman of society in relation to her duties, men, and herself. This is seen throughout the story with the physical imprisonment of the narrator as well her mental instability. With the narrator’s delusions of a woman behind the wallpaper who escapes during the daytime “...in that long shaded lane, creeping up and down,” (Gilman 586), it is clear the medical treatment recommended for the narrator is not helping but hindering her condition. Heidi Scott theorizes that it is in the effort to adapt to the narrator’s new environment that the narrator has a mental breakdown. Scott writes:

The narrator is required to forgo intellectual and social stimulation, to eat and sleep indulgently, and to remain almost entirely in the strange upstairs room of a rented colonial mansion. As a result, the woman is forced by the rest-cure to adapt to her surroundings...she shows considerable ‘nerve strain in the effort of adjustment.’ The result of this strain is anger...aversion...and most importantly, diversion... (200)

Some critics argue that, not just the treatment by her doctor husband, but society in fact makes the narrator ill. Gilbert and Gubar suppose “...the complex of social prescriptions these [mental] diseases parody did not merely urge women to act in ways in which would cause them to become ill; nineteenth-century culture seems to have actually admonished women to *be ill*” (2031). This is important in understanding the narrator. Simply reading “The Yellow Wallpaper” from a feminist perspective would be inadequate because the suppression of the character isn’t just a physical but a mental act that is not simply performed by the men in her life, but society, and most importantly herself.

Little accountability is put on the narrator herself as she’s labeled a victim by most scholars. Looking at “The Yellow Wallpaper” from a Psychological perspective, Barbara Suess argues “...my Lacanian reading of the story [“The Yellow Wallpaper”] represents patriarchy, or specifically the arrogant abuse of patriarchal authority, as the primary source of the protagonist’s ultimately complete inability to separate fantasy from reality” (81). Reading this work from a Feminist perspective, Paula Treichler reasons that it is the restriction of male language that leads to the narrator’s insanity since “[i]t is the voice of male logic and male judgment which dismisses superstition and refuses to see the house as haunted or the narrator’s condition as serious. It imposes controls on the female narrator and dictates how she is to perceive and talk about the world” (65-66). The narrator does question her treatment saying, “I think sometimes that if I were

only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me” (Gilman 579). Talking to her husband, the narrator requests a different room “downstairs that opened to the piazza” (Gilman 578), visits from family, and to leave the estate completely. With this in mind, I disagree that it is the restriction or lack of language that holds the narrator to her treatment, but the narrator’s lack of action. Being passive and appeasing to her husband, the narrator continuously allows her husband to control her.

Critics have given a large amount of attention to the wallpaper, leaving other symbols such as the garden un-assessed or incorrectly analyzed. Lee Schweningen, an Ecofeminist, looks at the garden as “a place of confinement” since “the same patriarchy that dominated women and children dominated landscape architecture and garden design” (29). Other scholars agree with Schweningen suggesting “[w]alls and hedges are cells that enclose the partition, while the ‘gates that lock’ add an odd detail that reinforces a sense of the garden as prison” (Owens 69). I disagree with this notion. I interpret gardens as “a paradise or state of innocence” (Dobie 62). The narrator looks out to the garden hoping for freedom saying “I can see the garden, those mysterious deep-shaded arbors, the riotous old-fashioned flowers, and bushes and gnarly trees” (Gilman 579). It is true that a garden is “artificial,” and “man-made” in a sense, but being a “literal prison” as Schweningen suggests is unlikely in “The Yellow Wallpaper.” The garden is rather more like a utopia, an Eden to the narrator who is confined to a single room with “barred windows” and a “nailed down” bed (Gilman 581). When first describing the garden the narrator says, “There is a *delicious* garden! I never saw such a garden – large and shady, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with a long grape-covered arbors with seats under them” (Gilman 577). This is typical, a beautiful garden in the country. This particular image of Eden is intriguing however, especially since Eve was the sinner who brought exile for Man from the Garden. The narrator in “The Yellow Wallpaper” is a woman, perhaps imagining herself as Eve, prohibited to enter from her previous sins. The narrator doesn’t simply see herself as forbidden as she sees “her [the woman from the wallpaper] in those dark grape arbors, creeping all around the garden...in that long shaded lane, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines” (Gilman 586). The fact that the woman is described as “creeping” and hides when people approach suggests that she is not supposed to be there. This puts even deeper meaning into the garden.

The narrator is a stereotypical Victorian woman who is passive towards her husband constantly trying to be the good, meek wife that is expected of her. Despite the husband’s beliefs that his wife’s illness is simply “nervous depression – a slight hysterical tendency” (Gilman 577), the narrator strives to return with her husband to this “paradise” since “women owe their spouses obedience” (Schweninger 36). The narrator, unconsciously trying to escape society’s gender roles, pursues reentry into Eden to please her husband. The narrator’s mental illness is a symptom of the struggle to break from women’s suppression in nineteenth-century America, but the narrator falls back into submission trying to appease her husband. In the beginning of the story narrator “...walk[s] a little in the garden or down that lovely lane, sit[s] on the porch under the roses, and lie[s] down up [in the room] a good deal” (Gilman 581). Nearing the end of the story the narrator’s behavior changes drastically where she prefers to stay in her room locking herself inside and “throw[ing] the key down into the front path” (Gilman 587). It is inside the confines of this room that the narrator truly loses her mind. The garden is peaceful and alluring while the narrator’s bedroom is “atrocious” with “horrid paper,” yet the narrator chooses the confinement in the latter. Denying herself entrance into the garden “leaves us [readers] wondering whether woman’s freedom was lost with the Garden, as the story goes, or whether it creeps behind the bars of socialization within each of our minds” (Scott 202). Carol Neely proposes that “[t]he creeping phantom women in ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ seem to[be] a kind of grotesque counter representation of this Angel[‘Angel in the House’]” (Neely 318). It is the narrator’s own behavior or her lack of action that leads to her mental breakdown. While it can be argued what led to the narrator’s decision, it is at the narrator’s own fault, not her husband’s or society’s that she imprisons herself in the nursery and goes mad. In contrast to the garden, the “nursery,” where the narrator is placed to recuperate, is described in a less favorable manner than the garden. Whether the room is actually a nursery is questionable since “...the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls”

(Gilman 578). Later the room is further described as having a floor that is “gouged,” “scratched,” and “splintered” and “the plaster itself is dug out here and there” (Gilman 580) with an “immovable” bed that is bolted to the floor. This room that the narrator describes as a “nursery” is more appropriately labeled as a prison. So why does the narrator revert to believing the room is a nursery? Perhaps a simple explanation is that the “[w]oman is represented as childlike and dysfunctional,” so a nursery is an appropriate living space; however, the explanation is not that simple (Treichler 71). Taking into account the narrator’s state of mind and circumstances, one can understand the reasoning behind the belief that the room is a nursery. Being treated for hysteria after the birth of her child, the narrator is not only dealing with post-partum depression, but separation anxiety from her young child. Although the only diagnosis overtly given is “temporary nervous depression – a slight hysterical tendency” (Gilman 577), “[t]he narrator reports, among other things, exhaustion, crying, nervousness, synesthesia, anger, paranoia, and hallucination” (Treichler 65), all symptoms of such conditions. Herein lies the symbolism.

Unable to perform her motherly duties, the narrator creates a world that was at one time a home to children so she can be close to her child in some distant way. The narrator contradicts herself at times saying “[t]here’s one comfort, the baby is well and happy, and does not have to occupy this nursery with the horrid wallpaper...[w]hy, I wouldn’t have a child of mine, an impressionable little thing, live in such a room for worlds” (Gilman 582). The description of the room and the narrator’s thoughts on having children nearby suggest an entirely different meaning to calling the room a nursery. Since the birth of her child appears to be the source of her illness, and furthermore her captivity, it is only fitting that her prison is a nursery. Rather than escaping from this prison, the narrator decides to lock herself inside perhaps out of guilt for being unable to be a fit mother. While in most instances a nursery signifies new life and rebirth, the nursery in “The Yellow Wallpaper” symbolizes imprisonment.

Within the nursery itself, lays the most interesting symbol of all, the yellow wallpaper. Being one of the most popular paint colors in businesses today, yellow is believed to evoke emotions such as happiness and serenity. The wallpaper in Gilman’s story is not defined as a cheerful tone but as a “dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others” (Gilman 578). Paula Treichler labels the yellow wallpaper as “a metaphor for women’s discourse,” (62) while other scholars define the wallpaper as a window into the narrator’s illness. “...[I]t seems that the subject who sees subversive versions of mushrooms, as well as sick and strangled life forms, reveals her own sick and strangled psyche by her articulations” (Scott 201). Rather than being a lively, sunny tone with a floral pattern, the yellow wallpaper is ugly and repulsive with “[t]he outside pattern...reminding one of fungus” (Gilman 584). This tint reflects the narrator’s medical status, ill. Not only does the wallpaper reflect the illness of the narrator but also her imprisonment caused by her ailment. Throughout much of the story the narrator claims to see “...a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over” (Gilman 586). These women trapped by the yellow wallpaper symbolize the narrator’s own constraints caused by her mental illness. While the yellow-tinted wallpaper ensnares the woman or women behind it, the narrator is trapped by her sickness. It is not the narrator’s husband or society, but her own mind that imprisons her.

Each of the symbols in the “The Yellow Wallpaper,” the nursery and the garden relate, to the narrator’s state of mind and each other. Each depends on the other to further the symbolism of the other. The nursery, or prison, counters the garden, the escape or paradise. This contrast of freedom and entrapment is important in the development of the yellow wallpaper’s symbolism of illness and imprisonment. On the surface a nursery, garden, and yellow wallpaper would appear merry and full of life, but “The Yellow Wallpaper” contradicts this. This story, about a woman’s inner struggle, is further emphasized with the ironic symbols surrounding the narrator. The passive nature of the narrator allows not only the men, but the surroundings to take control of the narrator mentally and eventually physically; therefore, it is not men that are trapping the narrator, but the meek woman that permits such control.

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Manipulation and Hegemony in *Brave New World*

Someone once told me “being born in the United States is the equivalent of winning the lottery.” Although I do not agree with this statement completely, the point being made is that society is organized by socioeconomic classes (and in the United States it is easier to transcend classes). The wealthiest class has the money that makes the world go ‘round, while the poorest class is stuck being the underbelly of society. This distinction of class creates tension within society. In Aldous Huxley’s novel *Brave New World*, this tension doesn’t exist because the controllers of civilization use interpellation and hegemony to manipulate all of the classes into accepting their positions in society. With a Marxist perspective, I will begin by examining how subjects are placed into classes, manipulated into following the dominant ideologies, forced into consumerism, and pacified through different Ideological State Apparatuses. I will conclude by looking at how this creates hegemony over other civilizations and discuss how individuality perceives and rejects this type of society.

To understand how subjects are manipulated to accept their place in society, the reader must first understand what society has evolved to in *Brave New World*. Huxley’s novel is set in an unspecified time in the future where humans are no longer viviparous; that is, children are no longer birthed by parents and raised into adulthood. Instead, people are created in a lab. Through a process called “bokanovskify,” fertilized embryos are split repeatedly to create clones of one another. One embryo could produce up to “Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines” (Huxley 6). By mass producing people, society no longer needs family or love. Women are encouraged to be promiscuous and carry contraceptives (that the reader is left to assume are 100 percent effective) at all times. Sexual intercourse is only for satisfying sexual desires, not for reproduction. These impersonal encounters create an imbalance of power between men and women; women are expected to be willing to satisfy a man at any time. Bernard, an alpha male, points out that Lenina, a central character known for her promiscuity, “doesn’t mind being meat” (109). Lenina’s acceptance of her position makes her a passive member of society and highlights gender inequality.

Clearly there is inequality between genders, but the separation of classes in Huxley’s society is even more shocking. On the surface everyone appears to be created equal. But that is not the case. After the embryos are split, they are put into predetermined classes and are fostered differently throughout development and into life. This process determines a subject’s class. According to Joseph Childers and Gary Hentzi, in their book *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism*, a Marxist subject is “a being who is constituted in and by language or ideology” (292). Manipulative techniques, such as withholding oxygen or pouring alcohol on the brain, are used to modify biological factors like height and brain development. These manipulative techniques begin in the embryotic stage, and help form distinctions between classes. Adolescents and teens are then manipulated through sleep-teaching or “hypnopædia”. The controllers of the society brainwash subjects with the society’s ideology while they are sleeping to create a false consciousness. According to Ann Dobie, a false consciousness is the “acceptance of an unfavorable social system without protest or questioning—that is, as the logical way for things to be” (99). This false consciousness is filled with expressions that subjects use as morals and guidelines. Betas hypnopædia includes messages like, “Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they’re so frightfully clever. I’m really awfully glad I’m a Beta, because I don’t work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I *don’t* want to play with the Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They are too stupid to be able...” (Huxley 31). This manipulation creates a society where subjects are satisfied with their role in civilization. They don’t strive for more; they look up to those above them and look down on those below them, but there isn’t any tension because there isn’t any competition. Subjects are born into a class; they are stuck there

and are made to believe this is the best possible scenario. This cycle is defined by Louis Althusser as interpellation. Althusser says that interpellation happens when an “ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals, or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects” (1504). Because there is no longer individuals in this civilization—only subjects that adhere to the cultural ideologies—there is no consideration of alternative ways of life, and subjects remain in a false consciousness.

Hypnopædia isn’t limited to class structures and “moral education.” Sleep teaching also promotes consumerism. Consumerism is the promotion to purchase and use goods and services to drive society. Using these goods and services is, in turn, consumption. In “A Theory of Consumption” Hazel Kyrk says, “consumption is largely non-rationalized; the consumer does not know what he wants in such a way that he can select it with exactitude when it is displayed upon the market” (120). Throughout the book, subjects refer to verses they remember from their sleep-teaching that, I argue, prove they are inculcated with consumerism. Linda, a Beta who was left at the New Mexico reservation and becomes a mother, remembers her teachings from civilization, saying “it never used to be right to mend clothes. Throw them away when they've got holes in them and buy new. 'The more stitches, the less riches.' Isn't that right? Mending's anti-social” (Huxley 142). Consumerism makes civilization work. People are taught to want, replace, and upgrade instead of reduce, reuse, and recycle. Mustapha Mond, Resident World Controller of Western Europe, even goes out of his way to point out to John (the Savage and Linda’s daughter) that consumerism is preferred, saying that literature is forbidden because “we don’t want people to be attracted by old things. We want them to like the new ones” (262). The controllers know that consumerism keeps the society moving. Without consumption there is not a need for production; without production there is not a need for jobs; and without jobs, subjects begin to question the structure of society.

This consumerism isn’t lost on John, and he begins to question the morality of it. He tells Mustapha that civilization doesn’t “suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, [or] take arms against a sea of troubles,” but instead “You got rid of them...Neither suffer nor oppose. You just abolish the slings and arrows” (286). John also says that “Nothing costs enough here” and argues that God is necessary for society to succeed (287). All of these oppositions are shot down, ignored, or accepted but still thrown away. Mond’s final decision is that “Happiness is a hard master—particularly other people’s happiness. A much harder master, if one isn’t conditioned to accept it unquestioningly, than truth” (272). The use of manipulation, promotion of consumerism, and definition and separation of class help define “happiness” for subjects, and they all work together to keep all subjects in a false conscious acceptance of this ideology.

It is clear to any reader that there are going to be objections to this way of life. Subjects are manipulated into needing companionship at all times, because being alone is dangerous. Sometimes subjects become conscious of the injustices of civilization. That’s where *soma* comes into effect. *Soma* is a drug that pacifies the population by taking subjects out of the physical world and into an “imbecile happiness” (239). John is told that “*Soma* may make you lose a few years in time...but think of the enormous, immeasurable durations it can give you out of time. Every *soma*-holiday is a bit of what our ancestors used to call an eternity” (184). A *soma* holiday is an out-of-body experience that appeases the population. It is clearly an addictive drug: members of society work their eight-hour shifts and look forward to the end of the day when they take their ration of *soma* and are incapacitated until their next shift starts. The controllers also facilitate “Pregnancy Substitutes” that simulate the hormonal changes in a pregnant body, as well as “Violent Passion Surrogates” (VPS’s), which give subjects “All the tonic effects of murdering Desdemona and being murdered by Othello, without any of the inconveniences” (288). All three of these hormonal manipulators serve as Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), because subjects are not forced to take them, but do so by choice and believe these devices are right. According to Althusser, an ISA is a device or institution that “functions massively and predominantly *by ideology*” (1490). What Althusser is saying is that these apparatuses indoctrinate subjects with ideologies through the use of ideology itself; that is, by changing minds. Subjects accept these apparatuses, and the ideologies

they carry, willingly. *Soma*, pregnancy substitutes, and VPS's all act as ISAs because they promote the dominant values put into place by the controllers of society and are accepted by the subjects.

The same manipulative techniques used to pacify the people are used to create hegemony over other civilizations. The students touring the reproduction facility don't know what a "parent" is, and the idea of child bearing parents is considered "smut" (Huxley 25). Members of civilization believe the previous method of human development is inferior to this civilization's way of life. This attitude is also apparent in the way characters discuss the New Mexico Reservation, which is referred to as the "savage" society. Subjects are indoctrinated with the belief that their society is the best and they feel like the "savage" society is more of a spectacle than a community of individuals. The Director visited the society in the past, and, recollecting upon his visit, says "Well, we went there, and we looked at the savages, and we rode about on horses and all that" (113). Civilization's belief that they are superior to the savage society is an example of hegemony, which Dobie defines as "dominance of one state or group over another" (99). The members of civilization control the "savages" by belittling their culture, mocking their rituals, and treating them as inferiors. John transcends this control by being the son of Linda, who was originally from civilization.

John's prediction of a "brave new world" is shattered when he actually becomes a part of civilization (Huxley 166). He is again treated by subjects as a spectacle, constantly put on display for his uniqueness from everyone else: he has parents, has read literature, has been alone with his thoughts, and doesn't take *soma*. People like the savage (and Bernard), who think and question society, are threatened to be sent to an island, away from society, to live a life inferior to their current state. John—who is not a subject, because he is not controlled by the society's ideologies—on the other hand, sees this society as inferior to his own because it doesn't allow for culture, free thinking, love, marriage, or family. He is outraged by Lenina's promiscuity because of the feelings he has for her. He challenges Mustapha Mond's definitions of happiness, God, and value. In the end, John decides for himself that civilization is not the "brave new world" he saw as perfect and instead chooses to live in solitude outside of town, and asks God, "forgive me! Oh, make me pure! Oh, help me to be good!" (293).

The manipulation into a false consciousness is preeminent throughout the novel. Using hypnopædia, controllers force subjects into a subconscious acceptance of consumerism, class separation, happiness, and sexual desires. This acceptance is a false consciousness. Self-awareness over *soma*, child-bearing over pregnancy substitutes and bokanovsky, and real-world experience over V.P.S.es, even though they create tension, are more appealing to individuals. Furthermore, John's challenging of the society and Mustapha Mond's concessions of his challenges prove that those familiar with other societies know of the downfalls of this hegemony. Whether or not a subject accepts the ideology of one's community affects the way society sees him/her. This disobedience creates unwanted tension, and those who do not follow the ideology are sent away. This lack of tension is what drives the society, and by brainwashing the population, the ideology is allowed to flourish.

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TIANYI XIE

Carpet and Flooring Building

Everything in the world has its own story, and everything has a life similar to a growing human, from a baby knowing nothing, to an experienced adult facing death. It does not matter if it is as big and marvelous as the Alps mountain range or as small as a speck of dust; everything has its own unique story. Even twin leaves will never share the same life. The unknown behind each story is the beauty of the world; the discovery of each story is a magic pen which paints color into people's lives.

Nowadays in Superior, Wisconsin, when people drive by 1021-1027 Tower Avenue, they will recognize the Carpet and Flooring Building by its unique red exterior walls ("1021"). The store sells different kinds of materials to cover floors as well as products to install, maintain, and care for the floor covering. The function of the business is to help people to decorate their homes and their own businesses. Moreover, the hidden story and life of the building may be the real charm attracting people's eyes. The building has witnessed the highs and lows of Superior, Wisconsin; it has stood through the development of the United States into the world's superpower.

The very first record of a business at 1027 Tower Avenue, was Real Estate, owned by George H. Walker, and recorded in 1888, the same year the Washington Monument officially opened to the general public ("Street" 1888). It is the earliest record that indicates the existence of the building, when it was constructed, and what it looked like. However, based on the information held at the Douglas County Historical Society, in 1888 Superior was a slowly developing town, and the building was likely a small wooden structure. Real Estate operated on the property until 1893 when Walker sold his three lots with 50 feet of frontage on Tower Avenue for \$37,500. The purchasers promised to build a four-story building on the corner, but to this day that promise has not been kept ("Big" 2). Walker's Real Estate building was demolished, and the current brick structure was built.

During the years of 1893 through 1902, the building operated as a merchant tailor ("Street" 1893-1902). Also, during this period, America was ruled by "McKinleyism," a "system of combinations, consolidations, and trusts realized at home and abroad" ("William" para20). William McKinley, the president of United States and initiator of the American-Spanish War, opened a new series of war games between Europe and America to fight for more territories. War grew the American economy; at the same time McKinley hoped to make American producers supreme in world markets, and his administration pushed and promoted those foreign markets ("William"). Many business owners took advantage of these policies to develop and create more profit for their businesses. In 1903, the building went into its adolescence; it expanded its size to four lots, which were 1021, 1023, 1025 and 1027 Tower Avenue, and therefore more businesses were attracted and invested in the building ("Street" 1903). With more space for more businesses, 1903 was the beginning year of a diversity in business in this building.

In that year, the first tenant in 1021 Tower Avenue was the Russell Creamery Company, which sold cheese, butter, and milk. It was a reputable company, which was skilled at selling milk products. The company operated for just six years. Afterwards, it was restaurant time, a period which would last sixteen years. Haley & Brink, Royal Lunch, McDonalds, Chicras Brothers, Palace Café - even though the names changed again and again, the purpose of the building stayed the same: to serve Superior people good food and provide them with a place to rest from their-fast paced lives while they ate ("Street" 1903-1926).

During 1903 to 1945, WWI and WWII happened; but war did not tear down the businesses of the building or distract people from shopping. Some people joined the military, but the life of Superior was still going strong. At that time, when people considered what kind of meat to cook for dinner, they would first think about the meat market at 1023 Tower Avenue. Although it changed

its name several times to things such as Detrol Meat Market, Sauter Brothers Meat Market, and People's Meat Market, the quality of the meat stayed the same. Therefore, the business expanded its space to 1021 Tower Avenue in 1929. The meat market was closed as WWII ended in 1945; but the reason it ended was because it was not able to compete with other businesses that were in that same building ("Street" 1903-1945).

Where there is property differential, there will always be upper and lower classes. Where there is an upper class, there will always be some luxurious products available for sale. That was why New York Fur Company opened a store at 1025 Tower Avenue in 1903, selling luxurious furs ("Street" 1903). However, a fire happened in 1907 which caused the company about \$25,000 in damage ("New York"). Afterwards, Lindstrom took over the fur business. Lindstrom's business lasted about two decades until the first department store moved into the building in 1929. Emporium, a fashion department store, sold women's apparel and furs until 1940 when it became a Sears Roebuck office. Five years later, it was renovated to become one of the original bars in Superior after prohibition. The bar lasted only four years before the lot of building became vacant. The flooring business came in the 21st century ("Street" 1907-2001).

If the building was given an age, most of the time 1027 Tower Avenue was a teenager. It dealt with a furniture business between 1903 and 1911. It then started its teenage years as a Kresge SS store in 1912, selling different kinds of clothes for a lower price. Even without advertising a lot, it became a well-known place that provided the basic clothes that people needed ("Street" 1903-1938). In 1939, the City Market leased the Kresge SS site to become a home for its grocery business. The founding Cohen Brothers developed the City Market as a modern store featuring a 40-foot front, and they provided a self-service system along with the clerk check out. Their business offered groceries with prices lower than what most people were used to ("City Market" 3).

The City Market made that section of Tower Avenue livelier than any other area. At the end of April in 1952, a newly remodeled City Market opened to witness another period of economic boom ("Come" 11). Three years later, the Vietnam War exploded. People lived in a highly anxious state because they were afraid they would be drafted. After years of war, many people grew tired of the distant battle, especially in the small town of Superior. People in the Superior-Duluth area began to protest against the war. Stores such as the City Market sold bracelets for people to wear that asked for peace. The war finally ended in 1975, the same year the City Market held its 42nd anniversary celebration ("42nd" 2).

The time the City Market spent in residence was a high point for the building because it helped to develop the economy of the area, but at the same time, the City Market destroyed other small businesses like the meat market at 1021-1023 Tower Avenue that could not compete. During 1961 through 1985, the City Market became the only business existing in that building ("Street" 1945-1985). In an economic view, it is common when a big corporation invests in a small developing area; everyone just shops at the bigger store. On the other hand, other stores cannot survive under the shadow of the big corporation. That was why the building's other businesses went under and the stores became vacant while the City Market was open. The influence and effect that the City Market had on the area is exactly the same as today's Superior Wal-Mart. Nowadays, everyone will go to Wal-Mart to buy everything. The whole of Tower Avenue has been affected by Wal-Mart. What was once the shining power of Superior has become dull and faded. Wal-Mart is the retail powerhouse of Superior now, and the City Market never had the chance to keep its position. Henry Cohen, a founder of the City Market, retired in 1984 ("Henry Cohen" 7). Even though he claimed the City Market would continue, the business soon came to its end after it filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11—reorganization ("The City Market" 2). Its reign was over in 1985 after about a half century of operating in the building on Tower Avenue, which also meant the end of a dynasty. That location contained the beautiful memories of the baby-boomers. When Susan Lucia Donis, a former University of Wisconsin-Superior student, saw a picture of the building, she said "Ah, I remember only too well. This (City Market/Superior) is where I was shopping when Elvis died, all the cashier's/employees had just received/heard the news." Through her words, people can still feel the life the City Market once offered Superior.

Life is like sailing a ship in the ocean: there will be some good weather, but there will also be storms to suffer through. The death of the City Market left the whole building vacant from 1986 to 1988 (“Street” 1986-1988). Tower Avenue was pretty quiet during that time, but the world was noisy. The Iran–Contra affair happened. The American government secretly sold weapons to Iran in exchange for American hostages, which caused many Americans to become disappointed with their government. They did not believe that the American government should negotiate with terrorists; even more, they insisted that Americans should not trade with enemies. What the American government did was against the people’s will, and when a government is not supported by its people, the country is not able to develop as it should.

After three years of rest for the building, Superior Flooring Specialists began its business in 1021 Tower Avenue (“Street” 1989). After experiencing a quiet childhood, a crazy teenage time, and a middle-age peak, it was time for the building to settle down. The floor business expanded little by little. Finally in 2001, the whole building became a united business (“Street” 1989-2001). It was just like an elderly adult; after all the wild experiences of an earlier age, it was time for the building to settle down to have a new stable life.

Nothing will last forever. Everything has to face death. The Carpet and Flooring Building will be too old one day. There will be a day when it is time for it to rest forever. It may come soon, or it may not come for many years. However, the end of a physical life does not also mean the end of memories. A person will pass away, but his or her story will not fly away. The younger generations will honor the memories and pass them along to following generations. Perhaps the building will disappear into ashes someday, but its footprint has already been marked in the history of Superior. It will never fade away.

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