You of the finer sense,
Broken against false knowledge,
You who can know at first hand,
Hated, shut in, mistrusted:

Take thought:
I have weathered the storm,
I have beaten out my exile.

-Ezra Pound
The lady above us killed her sister by grating glass into her salad—we found out while polishing off turkey grinders in the kitchen.

Did she mistake the shards for cheese bits or gritty Caesar? Carol thinks she was too sauced to notice. We were always finding empty bottles shattered on the stairs. Lucy says the lady should fry but she’s never had a sister. I do, and once dragged my nails down her throat over the last pancake. Dad jumped up, clasped his napkin to her neck while Mom scrubbed my hands under the kitchen spout.

Now I ask Carol, death’s expert, “What would kill you, blood loss?” “Suffocation,” she says and slides her plate into the sink.
Another Variation

"Helen, or the Confession of a White Widowed Male, such were the two titles under which the writer of the present note received the strange pages it perambulates," you recite.

I sidestep an older couple—who have stopped to gaze through a store window at some Vera Bradley purses—to avoid a collision. Drawing back up alongside of you, I can’t help but repeat “true confessions,” looking up at you with exaggerated interest.

You shake your head. “That I highly doubt.” We stop at a vegetable stand, you scrutinizing each ear of corn and I looking at the spectacle of a small town patronizing local growers at the farmer’s market. Maybe it’s that it makes us feel quaint and simple, earth and small business friendly.

“True or not, the writing is inexcusable.” You would leave it at that, but I press you, still wanting to know what makes the piece so awful, wanting to judge whether I think you have misjudged. And something about it possibly being true does have a certain allure, I admit.

You received the manuscript at the small publishing company you started a few years back. You try and summarize for me: It came with a forward, written by a son who claimed he’d found it among his late father’s belongings. What follows is supposedly the story of his father and mother’s first meeting. As if some variation of this story hasn’t been told a thousand times before, you roll your eyes, we find out her father doesn’t approve the match—shocking, I know. At nineteen, just into freshman year of college, they become pregnant. Her father turns every shade of purple when the lovers tell him about the baby and their impending marriage. He kicks out young, Teddy—I think that was his name—and locks the door behind him. When Teddy comes back the next morning, having been properly encouraged by his saint-of-a-mother the night before, the shades are drawn and the house stands empty.

“Did you know?” I say smelling a ripe red tomato.

“Yes, they’re a fruit,” you reply, slightly annoyed by my tangential interruption, just as I knew you’d be.

“A berry, to be exact, once thought to be an aphrodisiac.”

“Don’t start waxing poetic about a vegetable.” You smile, in spite of yourself. And I’m glad I can be the one to do that for you.

“A fruit,” I correct you, handing the nice old vendor with a General Longstreet moustache a buck for two. They are best when really red and slightly fragrant. No one lets them grow to maturity anymore. I watch a lady struggle to open the door to her Volvo, her carefully picked bounty and fresh bouquet threatening to array themselves on the pavement, among pebbles and bits of paper, in such a way that they would only resemble their former selves in a very abstract kind of way: seed and stem, skin and petal, ovary and stamen, receptacle and pistil, carpel and mesosphere. I wonder, could I put them all back together if I had to? You go on:
Years later, only by coincidence—or fate, if you prefer—does Teddy read about the old man’s death in a local newspaper while drinking a glass of orange juice. He’s visiting a friend on the east coast, the very town to which Helen’s father had taken her. Imagine, this author doesn’t even bother to give specifics! Just a generic New England town. Anyway, Teddy shows up at the funeral and inopportunistly announces to the mourning crowd his undying love for Helen. Next to her is a ten-year-old boy:

“Our forwarder, I presume?”

You nod and go on, They get married and live happily ever after.

“Oh,” I say, feeling at bit more disappointed than I’d expected. Disappointed in the story or in the retelling of it? I wonder. “Why the Lolita reference?”

“I couldn’t guess. Maybe the poor attempt at linguistic play on page four.”

“So what happened after that?” I prod.

“After what?” You’re rolling up your shirt sleeves, not looking at me.

“After they’re married?” I won’t stop looking at you, like on those mornings when you wake up to find me taking in enough of you for the rest of the day. But now I do it annoy you.

“They live happily ever after.”

“I’m sure the manuscript didn’t say ‘and then they lived happily ever after,’” I snap.

You’re looking at me now, frowning slightly as we make our stop at the fresh cut flower stand, and I exchange the usual niceties with Mrs. Anderson while you make the bouquet. My colors: reds, dark pinks, and purples. With exaggerated chivalry, you hand it to me, a sandwich baggie filled with water rubber-banded to the stems. I admit I love the way you’re still excited about something that is routine for our Saturdays, from August through October. And that’s how we make up after a little tiff, which is all we ever really seem to have. Sometimes I wish that we would use words.

Stepping off the sidewalk, I take your hand as we cross the street, away from the milling crowd. I know without looking—by counting the number of steps you take or the number of times you lightly press my hand—where we end up: the used bookstore, which is a little small, but quite satisfactory for a town our size. I search for that $6.50 copy of Bel Canto I saw last weekend but guiltily myself out of buying. This past week I stopped by the coffee shop only twice and with that saved ten, I buy this guilty pleasure. For me, it’s arguable whether books or coffee contain more legal addictives.

You always take longer, never looking for anything specific. So I listen to Maggie talk about her daughter’s first day of kindergarten, how she cried from the time little Beth left until the time she came home. My parents used to line my brothers and me up on the front porch and take a picture every year, the last Monday in August. A neighbor of ours comes in and asks Maggie how she’s doing, only smiling at me (you and I are living in sin). Maggie turns to tell her the same story, like she’d recited that very rendition a hundred times before. She probably had, sitting at the breakfast table, going over in her head exactly how it happened. I’m already making mental note of what the weather is like. I turn and find you thumbing through an early edition of Absalom, Absalom.
exile

Faulkner. There’s something too ‘awe shucks’ about him.” I shake my head. “No, give me the Faulkner of the ‘30s, even with his manqué.”

You nod. “Do you think we have room for one more orphan?”

“Well, room for two, in fact,” I say, holding up Bel Canto.

“Then it’s settled.” You take out your wallet.

“Bibliophile,” I murmur with a sideways glance.

“You’re calling a bibliophile?” you ask, pulling me towards you. “Ms. Should I organize them by Content or by Author?” Then a kiss.

Back out in the sunlight of early afternoon, you ask, “How would you summarize this book in a single sentence?” You like trying to stump me.

“Progeny forsaking creator.”

“Is that what you tell your students, Dr. Reynolds?”

“That’s what I let my students tell me.”

“If you weren’t as brilliant as you are, your smile might just make up for it.” You take my produce bags, which have grown heavier as we walk down the street, leaving me the bouquet and book. You look at me for a moment, and I notice that your eyes are that deep, pensive blue of the fall sky.

My father has blue eyes, but there the similarity ends. I’ve always heard a woman marries someone like her father, and it is a statement that has plagued me often when I awake in the night to find you lying peacefully next to me. It makes me doubt you because you are so different than anything I ever thought I’d want. You are the opposite of my father in so many ways. “Unevenly yoked,” my parents would say, wagging a finger. And sometimes I wonder if I could truly ever for-real-love someone who unequivocally denies the intangible, the existence of the unseen. Yet, at the same time, as I’m lying next to you, hearing the rise and fall of your breath, I know I was deceived. Once I thought morality was impossible apart from faith. But you are the most moral, good person I’ve ever met. How can this be, I wonder, unsettled, unable to remember the instant that left with me such a strong impression of your goodness.

And I sometimes dream about my father’s face made hideous at the site of you, the manifestation of my repudiation of his legacy, the legacy of self every father likes to think is so concrete and engrained. A bleeding-heart liberal. A Yankee, for God’s sake. An intellectual, I should have known. I’ll bet those nails haven’t been dirty a day in his life. It occurs to me that I am forsaking my father in some indefinable way, and that it is inevitable—I unable to live within the parameters of his expectations. We all become Absalom perhaps. Still, sometimes even I think I’d rather have the poet’s husband, dirty from the sandblasting factory.

You look at me quizzically, knowing I’ve traveled far away and back. But, you’re confident that it’s always back to you. You take my free hand in yours, and we walk along in that full, comfortable silence, which takes a good decade to cultivate. Children play foursquare in the street—a phenomenon only possible in a place like this, where I feel as if I have stepped back fifty years, sans the apron and spatula, of course. We smile at their smiles, gripping each other’s hands more tightly because we’re so happy to know that the other is just as relieved that there are only two cats waiting to be fed when we get home. We said we never wanted that life, but I can find it aesthetically pleasing, all the same. I want to remember the way this little girl’s white-blond hair flows down her back and hangs in her face like a bridal veil.

“How would you summarize the manuscript in a single sentence?” I ask, but I’m not trying to stump you.

You look exasperated, the corners of your mouth crinkling like they do when you’re annoyed by the children playing in the street outside your study window. And I always thought that was silly. Like they should know you were in the middle of writing the next Great American Novel. I pull my hand away.

“A waste of time,” you say, putting your still-warm hand into a pants pocket.

“Try again,” I’m surprised by the force behind those words, and I can see you are surprised too.

“Like every other tale of true love.” You have a strange habit, taking both hands and rubbing your face clear up from the chin to the scalp. It means you are officially frustrated and want me to know it. I can tell you’d be doing it now, if not for the produce bags.

But I won’t stop, and now I’m not even sure why. I need to know, “What happened after they were married.”

“Nothing of consequence.”

“The author didn’t write anything, or you think it’s just too cliché to defile your own tongue with the words to tell me about it.” You hate when I get like this. I hate that I can never just say what I mean.

“What’s the difference?” We’re at the door now. “The reality is the same. All creating stops.”

We go in, and I try to hold on to that lovely, fading image of the little girl and my piece of mind.

You come in from talking to the neighbor over the fence (it’s easier than talking to me when I get this way) and find me sitting cross-legged on the floor of your study. I don’t look up, and I can feel the way that this unsettles you.

You clear your throat. “Why are you in my work papers?”

“I’ve read manuscripts before, and it’s never been a problem.” I’ve been staring at the blank half of the last page for what seems like hours now.

“But…”

I know; it’s an unspoken rule. We’ve had an unresolved fight, and we need our space. “Yes, but I couldn’t let you just tell me how this was.”

You’re quiet. It’s not until I hear a tear hit the page that I realize I am crying. I look up. “I’ve read the whole thing, and there’s nothing here. It just ends. Like you said.”

I’m still looking at you, choking on the words I do not have. You move towards me, and I think maybe this can turn out alright yet. But you stop, quite suddenly, and turn away. The back door slams. I hope you’ve remembered to latch it.
I have managed to remember both the little girl and the weather this morning. As for your goodness, well, it came to me while I was working in the garden. I was in the car with you, junior year, early in the morning. (God, what could we possibly have been up for so early?) It was foggy and humid. The expected happened when you clipped a deer (it wouldn’t be the last time either), that made it, hobbling, to the side of the road where it collapsed. You pulled over, and we sat there in silence. I had mentally begun my pitying elegy, when you opened the car door.

It seemed incredible at the time. I stood over you, as you sat next to the dying deer, gently running your hand along her forehead. She had a deep wound, smoking in the cool morning, where her life-blood met air. It took her almost an hour to die. She died looking at you, and I still wonder if that somehow made it okay.

You didn’t notice the dark smear of her blood on your shirt until we got back to our dorm. I took this shirt under the pretense of having in my possession some magical stain remover. I kept it and still have it, unbeknownst to you, tucked in the bottom drawer. Maybe that was when I first suspected morality isn’t found in a prayer.

I hear the back door and then your sock feet on the hardwood floor. I’m back in the study, sitting cross-legged, writing in the white absence of the manuscript. I look up and try to ask with my eyes what I’m thinking now: Why couldn’t you have done that for me? Now you sit down, knowing you have to somehow make it okay. You don’t ask for anything, any explanation. I couldn’t have given it if you had.

I cannot answer, my mouth too full with the blank space of that last page, wondering if my words could ever be enough, could ever fill it up.

Rachel Wise, ’06

It is twilight and Orion has beaten us out tonight. We had a late dinner because you let me try to cook. By eight I let you take over and instead busied myself with trying to clean up the counters, which I had so efficiently pillaged, plundered, and raped with nothing to show in the end. I would starve if it weren’t for you.

We sit out on the lawn, wrapped in the quilt my mother made. I admit the wine is going to my head as we laugh at the neighbor’s dog trying to engage our old, very pampered cat in play. You begin reciting “The Cremation of Sam McGee,” and I laugh even harder, feeling lightheaded. I’ve never been able to understand why you like this particular poem so much. Its “Devil Went Down to Georgia” beat just makes me giddy.

We lay back, hands behind our heads, and I sigh. The night is clear and cool, the purple sky depthless so that I feel like I’m being swallowed up in it. You spot the Orion Nebula and even the Andromeda galaxy has made an appearance. You draw me closer, tighter and I turn, lean into you and breathe in your sweet smell.

“We’ve been doing this a long time, haven’t we?” you say, still staring at the sky.

I nod.

“We’re doing alright.”

“Orion’s the one thing we know will always be there.” My voice seems lost in the night.

“Maybe two?” you ask, whispering hotly into my ear.
At the gallows, his head dips
with the sun, aching
as the coarse rope stings
his unshaven neck. He breathes
depthly the dust and dares
the crowd to search
for fear; they won’t find
it in his eyes. He isn’t apologizing
because he doesn’t regret what he’s good at.
The noose tightens in warning;
he glances at the excess
resting coiled at his feet,
as the cord extends
before him: a thin horizon
he must cross with stars in his eyes.
His hands unbound now,
he stretches them to either side,
a T with makeshift wings,
and inching along the tightrope,
he avoids the silent crowd’s gaze
as beads of sweat drip to the floor
where the safety net would be.
With eyes watching from every direction,
there’s no hiding his fear now, and he knows
the burning finality of his mistake.
A sound: the moment’s
distraction. He falls
three feet and stops.

Jess Haberman, ’06
Demeter and Persephone

So Persephone had to go back again. Demeter sulked around the house like a loose thread, like the tomato at the bottom of the refrigerator.

What could ever placate her? Lonly mother, perhaps a long drive in a thunderstorm, or buying some flowers for the dinner table.

Rice, with some cooked vegetable—not corn—too much like the bloody teeth of a pomegranate. The aching in the middle wrist at the iron, she watches television, hemming linen trousers. She grows disgusted at some uneven line of stitching, the coming and going of a sharp, pointed thing.

Julia Grawemeyer, '05
It's a Monday and the Rains have begun again. My name is Scipio and I'm fourteen. Even though everyone says they love my stories I never get a chance to write them down. There's nothing else to do now. The doors are secured, the food is secured, and the well is decades away from drying up, so it's either write or see what my sister's up to. I figure my parents are already tense enough without having to worry about make peace between Roberta and me. Whenever I ask them, or any adult for that matter, about the Rains or the shelter they just chuckle and tell me not to worry so much, like we're all down here on vacation or something. But they're not very good actors. As soon as they think I've turned away they immediately glance towards the ceiling and strain their hearing to catch the sounds of buckling metal, like they'll be lucky enough to hear a collapse in time to get out of the way. Yeah, they're all tense enough without having to worry about 'Berta and me.

Sometimes I wonder if I'm going to live to see the end of the Rains. I wonder if I'm ever going to crawl out of this hole for longer than the few hours we take advantage of each day to scrounge for supplies on the surface. Mom talks about the surface every once in awhile. She tells us how the sky used to be blue and how our houses used to be on the surface, with only a level or two underground. I enjoy that part of her story, but she keeps going. She talks about how she and her friends used to play outside all day long. I get sad at this part, because it always reminds me of Travis.

He used to live in another shelter a few miles from here. It was smashed by a meteor that was almost as big as a truck. Mr. Greene found him half-dead on the road not too far from here during a foraging mission a few months ago. He brought Travis back with him and bandaged him up. Travis got better, and would talk to me about his family sometimes, but I think he missed them a lot. He wandered off during another foraging mission about three weeks ago. I guess he's dead by now. It would be nice to think that he reached another belter, but it's hard. So many people die outside. I'm not sure I—DATA CORRUPTION

"Piece of shit," Jake muttered as he smacked the little journal with the heel of his palm. "I finally get something to work around here and it goes to shit like everything else!"

Cooper looked up from the pile of scrap that he had been sifting through. "Wah aw oo bithin abow now?" he asked, his words muffled by the small flashlight he was holding in his mouth. Jake gave him a puzzled look in response, so he took the light out of his mouth and repeated his question. "I said 'What are you bitching about now?' I don't want to be down here any longer than we have to be, but every time you open your mouth to complain about the place you keep us here that much longer."
“Sorry, Coop. It’s just that I found something that I thought might be worth a few scrip. But it’s busted just like everything else down here,” Jake wiped his grimy hands on his overalls before pulling his long hair out of his eyes and hopped down from his seat on the remains of a battered old truck. He quickly strode the few meters separating him from the older salvager and stretched up on his toes to peer over his shoulder. “You find anything worth selling, Coop?”

The old man tossed his light from his right hand to his left, illuminating both as he did so. “Does it look like I found anything? ‘Sides, if I did it wouldn’t matter to you.”

“Yeah, yeah, I remember the conditions,” Jake said and then began to dutifully recite: “‘If I want to work with the best of the best, I need to listen to your advice in all matters and remember that our haul is kept separated.’ Trust me, Coop, you’ve said it enough in the past week that I’m sure I’ll be repeating it on my death-bed, too senile to even remember where it came from.” Jake rolled his eyes and pulled out his own flashlight. The combined light of the two small flashlights served to almost completely illuminate the bunker for him and told him that he was just paranoid. I said that sure, every time we heard about another shelter being destroyed we all thought that the Rains were targeting them on purpose, but that it was really ridiculous. I told him that it’s not like they’re bombs, they’re just Rain. Then he laughed at me.

Cooper hesitated a moment before responding, “No, let’s poke around for another hour. I’ve seen these shelters before, so I’m guessing there’s at least one more room that we haven’t found yet.”

“What, like another bedroom? Face it, man; this shelter was full of the poor people. They couldn’t even afford decent tech, let alone anything that would be worth the time we’ve put into this dump. I say we cut out these losses now and just head back to camp.”

“Fine, head back then. I’m just your partner, not your daddy. Just remember, when I hit the mother lode, I won’t have time for people who dropped and ran the moment their legs were sore. I’ll be too busy sharing my good fortune with my friends.” Cooper threw down a twisted piece of titanium that he had been examining and stalked off down the corridor towards the living quarters. Jake sighed in resignation and followed him down the hall.

As Cooper walked down the hall he focused less and less on the drab metal walls of the shelter and began to turn inwards. He was glad that Jake had followed him deeper into the shelter even though they both knew that the chances of their striking it rich were slim-to-none. The boy had potential, but he was far too willing to listen to anybody when it came to what to salvage and when. Cooper knew it would get him into trouble eventually.

The two men continued down the corridor, stopping at every doorway and examining the room that each led to. They invariably contained some combination of rotting clothing, large patches of fungus, and human skeletons. The first skeleton took Jake by surprise and he rushed out of the room. Cooper could hear him retching in the hallway and sympathized. Though he had seen many dead bodies during his tours of duty, Cooper still couldn’t help but shudder as he imagined what their lives must have been like to lead them to this conclusion. His men always teased him about his “weakness,” but even then he knew that he’d never be able to help it. Sure, he grew bad-tempered over the years and pretended that he was just as mean as any other old veteran, but he could never completely dehumanize the dead. So while Jake vomited his horror onto the grate flooring of the corridor, Cooper stared at the dead and remembered the life they had all led while hiding from the devastation wrought by the rocky downpour.

* * *

Travis came back! It’d been about a month since he had left when he just walked back into the shelter with the day’s foraging team. Just like he had never left. That was two days ago. Last night we had a big party for him. Everyone was so happy that he had come back. They all kept shaking his hand and asking what it had been like and how he had survived the Rains. It was like he was some sort of hero or something. After the party he came over to our quarters. We hung out for a while and just talked about the outside. I asked the same questions that the others did, but he seemed to be happier to answer me.

He told me that the Rains were getting better. He said it had been nearly six months since he had been in a shelter and he had had to only dodge the Rains once or twice. When I asked him how he did it, he said that he usually went into one of the buildings still standing on the surface and waited them out. He said that the meteors were getting so small that they hardly ever broke through the walls anymore. Then I asked him about other shelters he had been to.

He got real serious all of a sudden and said that he wished I that I hadn’t asked him that. He said that he had seen a few, but that they were all crushed. He said it was weird, ’cuz it had happened recently, like after the Rains had eased up. Travis said he was afraid that the meteors were getting more deliberate. I laughed at him and told him that he was just paranoid. I said that sure, every time we heard about another shelter being destroyed we all thought that the Rains were targeting them on purpose, but that it was really ridiculous. I told him that it’s not like they’re bombs, they’re just Rain. Then he laughed at me.

Travis told me that he had seen some strange things outside of the shelter. He said that he’d seen things coming out of the sky that weren’t Rain. He admitted that he hadn’t seen them up close, but he said that the others on the surface had told him stories. I didn’t realize it, but I was leaning in real close when he began the
next part. Just the way he began made me jump back: “Aliens,” he told me. He said that people had seen them coming down with the Rains and that they were spreading across the surface. Then he leaned towards me and said in a low voice, “That’s why I came back. We’re trying to get an army together to stop them. We think they sent the Rains to wipe us out so they could take our planet without any resistance. I’m not going to let that happen.” I remember his words exactly. He sounded so sure of himself, so serious, that I did the only thing I could: I laughed in his face.

He left today. I don’t think I’ll ever be able to forgive myself. I tried to talk to h—FILE MISSING

“Figures. Just when you think you’ve fixed up these old relics, they go on the fritz again. It’s a wonder the kid could even keep it going long enough to write this stuff.”

Cooper felt like he and Jake had been down in the shelter for days, but his watch told him that it had only been half an hour since they had encountered the first skeleton. He already knew that they wouldn’t be able to make much of a profit from this trip, barely break even really, but he couldn’t let Jake know that. If Jake knew that they were down here just to follow through on some vague sentimentality, he’d leave Cooper in a heartbeat. And if he let Jake go now Cooper knew he’d end up just like all the other salvagers: a pathetic vulture, making a living off of the misfortunes of the dead. Cooper knew that most people didn’t differentiate between him and the others, but he did. Somehow he felt that sticking to salvaging equipment made him better than the rest, less predatory. Realizing that Jake had said something during his moment of introspection, Cooper turned and shouted back down the corridor, “What was that, Jake?”

“Oh, nothing, just this old journal I’ve been dinkin’ around with. I found it a little while ago and I figured it might be worth something for the electronics. It’s not like the writing’s any good. Listen to this: ‘He left today. I don’t think I’ll ever be able to forgive myself. I tried to talk to him—’” Cooper immediately attempted to hit Cooper with first his left fist, then his right. Jake was quick, and had age on his side, but the older man’s experience proved to be the better advantage. Cooper quickly side-stepped the blows and hit Jake squarely in the jaw, sending him reeling.

computer before closing it up again. He turned the journal back on and stood up, groaning as both of his knees popped loudly. After a few moments of examining the contents, Cooper handed it back to Jake. “It’s an alright piece, but I’m not sure anyone would be interested. Tell ya’ what, since it doesn’t look like we’re going to find anything else here, and you’re shorter on cash than I am, I’ll buy it off of you. Sound fair?”

Jake hesitated for a moment before replying. “That sounds great, but you’ve never been this nice to me before. What gives?”

“Nothing ‘gives,’ I just want to help you out is all.”

“Okay, no.... You’ve never just wanted to help me out. You’ve made it perfectly clear that I am here to do the heavy lifting and sell the scraps that you don’t bother with. No, I think you know something about this journal that I don’t know,” Jake accused Cooper as he jabbed his finger into the older man’s chest. Cooper didn’t seem the least bit fazed. “You’re paranoid, Jake. C’mom, how can you say ‘no’ to two hundred scrip?”

Jake was visually shaken, but quickly composed himself, “Two hundred?!! Now I’m certain you’re holding out on me. What, are you going to sell it to some of those historians that came through the camp not too long ago? Yeah, that’s probably it. I’m sure they’d pay through the nose for a first-hand account of life in the shelters, so forget you!” Jake was visibly upset now and he began to shout, “I found it; I’m getting paid for it!”

“Jake, I’m going to have that journal one way or another, so you can just let me pay you more than it’s worth, or I can take it from you through force and pay you less for my troubles,” Cooper growled as he glared at the younger man. “I’d prefer the former, but you know I’m capable of the latter.”

“You think you’re so tough! Well this is one time I’m going to get the better of you, old man! I’m outta’ here, and I’m taking the one thing of value that we’ve found in this hole with me.” Cooper could feel his anger drain away some as Jake turned to leave, but he was determined not to lose the journal. “I’m warning you, Jake. That journal means a lot to me and I’m not going to see it sold to some dried up old historian!”

Jake’s response consisted of only one finger and two words: “Fuck off!”

Realizing that his only option left was violence, Cooper dropped his flashlight and charged down the hall towards Jake, catching him squarely in the small of his back. Jake was sent sprawling and the journal skittered out of his hand, but he quickly recovered and turned back to Cooper. He closed the gap between them and immediately attempted to hit Cooper with first his left fist, then his right. Jake was quick, and had age on his side, but the older man’s experience proved to be the better advantage. Cooper quickly side-stepped the blows and hit Jake squarely in the jaw, sending him reeling.
This is the last time that you'll push me around! You've yelled at me, and ridiculed me, and made me feel stupid for too many months now, Cooper. This attack is the last straw. I won't put up with this bullshit anymore!" Jake panted as he regained his feet and ran at Cooper. Not expecting Jake to recover so quickly, Cooper was caught off his guard and borne to the ground. The two men wrestled for several seconds until Cooper abruptly gained the advantage. He caught Jake in a bear hug and dragged him to his feet.

“You are stupid, Jake. Just give me the journal, I'll pay you, and we can both forget about this and…” But Jake refused to let him finish, instead wriggling out of Cooper's grasp and pushing himself away. He lost his balance on the grating and fell hard against the wall and floor. Jake landed on a piece of debris and screamed as it pierced his back. Cooper could see Jake stiffen and then suddenly go slack, a foot long piece of titanium protruding from the young man’s chest. In shock, all Cooper could do was simply regard the grisly scene for a moment before retrieving the journal from down the hall.

He felt numb. The bodies in the shelter had been dead for at least thirty years, yet they had more of an impact on him than watching Jake die. No, killing Jake. He had been responsible. He had been the one too proud to explain that the journal had meant something to him. He had been the one too concerned with his own desires that he forgot about his partner. Jake had only been following the rules. His rules. Cooper began to feel very warm then, as if someone had suddenly turned up the thermostat. When he looked around to find the source of his discomfort he noticed that he had left his flashlight behind. He could see its beam off in the distance, but he didn't bother going to retrieve it. He knew were he was at this point and simply let his own desires lead him back to the exit.

As he walked back through the gloom of the shelter, towards the large common room, he scanned the journal once more. Once he was sure it was what he had come for, he tucked it into a pocket and quickened his pace. Occasionally he would glance over his shoulder, almost as if he believed someone to be following him.

“Good job, Coop,” he muttered to himself. “You just keep racking up the rookies. First it was the kid, then your boys during the war against the Invaders, now Jake. How do you keep going?” Practically running back the way he had come, Cooper continued his self-beration in an even more accusatory voice: “Jesus! These kids depend on you, put their trust in you, and you only get them killed! You’re a one-man fucking death squad!”

Stopping abruptly, Cooper shook his head violently and rubbed his eyes with the heels of his hands.

“But it’s not like I haven’t tried to help them. They just don’t listen. If they’d listened to me, they’d all still be alive right now. God, what a lame excuse. What would being alive even get them? An existence like mine, barely moving from one payday to another, forced to rely on the misfortune of those poor bastards who never made it out of the shelters?” As if in response to his own rhetorical question, Cooper began to retrace his steps once more. “No, they deserved better than this, and a whole hell of a lot more than what they actually got.”

Before he could continue his tirade, Cooper was cut short by the sight of the common room. The setting sun had reached the perfect position to illuminate the room. Once gloomy and foreboding, the room was now bathed with the bloody rays of the dying sun, allowing Cooper to see every detail clearly. The bullet holes, the burns on the walls, the twisted human remains piled into one corner, it all became too apparent. In the dark he had been able to ignore these reminders of the past, but it was no longer possible in the harsh light of the sun.

Long buried memories came flooding back into him, unleashing a storm of emotion.

He recalled the war and how it had brought him a perverse kind of satisfaction to kill the things invading his planet. He was there each time a new ship came down in the area, full of Invaders who were sure that their clever Rain maneuver had wiped out all life capable of fighting back. He had loved to spring out from his cover and prove them wrong, repeating his message with every pull of the trigger. But he also remembered the pain and the loss associated with these assaults. He was able to recall the names and faces of each man and woman lost under his command. They were only a little younger than he was at the time, but he was their Sergeant and therefore responsible for their lives. He had failed too many of them too often.

He also remembered the shelter. He could summon up memories of scavenging trips: the precious few nights spent under the stars and the tiring but satisfying days spent collecting any scrap they could find and gathering plants for the hydroponics bay. He had loved it. And then there were the long days in the shelter itself. The people there had taught him how to use the old computers and how to maintain all of the old machinery that allowed them to escape the Rains. He recalled with fondness his days there and regretted ever having to leave it. Finally, his thoughts settled upon Scipio: his first real friend but also the first casualty of his long life of hardship and violence.

“Damn it, Scipio, why didn’t you listen to me?! I only wanted to help you and do what was best, but you refused to make it easy. Why didn’t any of you listen?! If you’d have listened, you’d all be okay right now. If you had come with me, those first people you saw would’ve been friends, not Invaders. We could have helped you! And you could have helped us. You could have helped me! Why did you all have to die on me?!” And there, surrounded by the ghosts of his past, Travis Cooper’s mask crumbled and he collapsed to the floor, crying for the first time in thirty years.

Zach Walters, ’06
"Ideology" Aram Rosenberg, '05

Playing House

You look happy, all lavender, pearly teeth, and crinkled eyes as if you were born smiling, a charmed child, and I sit next to you, always the less radiant. We pose, baby dolls on our laps, running combs through plastic gold with one hand, holding identical toy hair dryers in the other, sitting knee to knee and shoulder to shoulder, in matching purple sweatsuits. It was your birthday, a party hat on your head, and we could now play house together, teach our sturdy children reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Twelve years later, holding our cousin, you’re still beautiful, still smiling. And I would say you look happy, except that I can see the picture’s captured the smallest of salt tears just emerging from the corner of your hazel eye. I know what our parents will never know. You often think of your own little girl, discarded like an unwanted gift. And you can’t help but wonder What if? You cannot hide it from me; we were mothers together once.

Rachel Wise, '06
Proof

I have often thought your mind
a jungle hackled with algorithms
and packed thick with
frothy equations.
My dealings are with
the symbolism of crows;
I am transcendental
and known to pick
through many leaves of grass.
But here you’ve brought me,
here is our drowsy blanket,
her is our popcorn sky.
We knit our hands and blanch
at the lovely American songs
(because, you see, it is Independence
Day, and we are both liberal and
sharply cynical enough to
hate this hour—our Kerry pins are
worn five months too early—)
and we wonder why
we are even here at all.
You haven’t shaved in a week
of sleepy summer Calculus,
and when we nuzzle you’re bristly
and laughing. Together
we form the separate places
in this much
of the bull-hellied,
the blue-black smokers,
the “good Christains” passing
out sticks of cinnamon chew—
“Jesus loves you (but if you think
this cum is hot, wait
till you get to Hell).”
We are the unbouyant,
the wide-eyed salamander children,
floating beneath the kerosene
river of hard breath and
snak tails of cigarette smoke,
those silvery wisps against
the beer-black sky.
It’s so loudsoft
that we can hear the stars
calling out, muted and
smothered
beneath their heavenly tattoos.
So when you kiss me
quiet its alright,
The Loneliest Number

She is lying beside me, crying, and he is turned from her, sleeping. Or, at least, he pretends to sleep. And I remain still, tracing the ceiling’s sponge pattern, unbelieving all those things that I must eventually force myself to believe.

Laura shudders strongly. Sponge designs on ceilings are never attractive. This one in particular looks as if the workers did not even attempt to do anything with it, more like they took their sponges and dabbed, one after another, as boring as a replanted pine forest. If it was a true forest, and I soared overhead, the base branches would brush at one another, barely touching. But from here, I suppose they aren’t trees at all. They’re really nothing but sponge marks.

Rolling over onto my side, my back to Laura, I stare at the green plasma of the clock, 3:44. A long day that just seems to get longer.

Work at the VA Clinic had been crazy. VA stands for Veterans’ Affairs. I’ve found that most people don’t know what you’re talking about unless they’ve been under the government closely for some time, either in the military or the workforce. It had probably been insane for three reasons. One, that it was a Friday. On Fridays, the veterans’ paranoia seems to rise. It seems all the more likely that a cough will turn into pneumonia or that their stomach pill won’t get in on time. Two, it was even more insane than usual probably due to the holidays coming up. People generally get more depressed during those times. Sandy, the clinical specialist in mental health, says it’s pretty much proven. Three, was that I had plans to leave a half an hour early under the condition that we weren’t busy. At the front desk, answering phones, filing, routing patients, wears you out more than you’d think. I needed stronger glasses about a year ago, and I would swear that it was because of my constant staring at the screen. Instead of having magnified eyes though, I opted for contacts, even though those make my preparation time about a thousand times longer. Poking at your eye just never seems natural.

It was about a quarter to two or somewhere around there when Mr. Snow decided to push himself in. The purple veins exploded from his hands and gnarled diabetic fingertips as he approached. At the front desk, he let out a long breath as he heaved his oxygen tank up to window level. A long rubber cement trail of saliva left his mouth and dripped to the desk as he bent over to talk to me. Disgusted, I offered him a tissue. His blackened nail brushed the inside of my hand, and I cringed back inside my head. His eyes drooped down.

“Mr. Snow...Mr. Snow? Are you alright?”

He shook his head “yes”, as he leaned farther down atop the counter and rested his head. Pushing off of my desk, knocking an entire list of alphabetized routing sheets from it, I ran around to the swinging hospital doors and to him. The time it took for me to reach him for aid wasn’t medically safe. Sometimes I wonder who designs these buildings that are supposed to help people, especially in emergencies. The best way would have been to jump through the window. But, there was neither room nor space for me to do so. So, Mr. Snow waited seconds as his head pressed on the countertop. He was gasping. I immediately traced the tubing from his nose, down through his clothes to the tank. The plastic hung beside the valve. “Mr. Snow, are you alright? You really have to be careful pulling this thing out of your car.” I pushed the tube back in and cranked the level up for a moment.

His purple lips sputtered. That was one thing I didn’t need over Christmas break—Mr. Snow to fall at my feet. No pun intended really, although I always seem to throw puns out unintentionally. I almost laughed but restrained myself as my supervisor came in from the back, wiping her face with a napkin. “What’s wrong?” she swallowed. The job paid well for a college student, extremely well, but sometimes I wondered if I was trading something. I carefully measured the valve back to its normal level. “Oh, we’re fine now. Mr. Snow just lost his breath marching through all that snow.”

“Thanks, young lady.” He smiled. I helped him to a seat and patted him on the arm of his trench coat. He watches my hands and looks up into my face. “Oh, I don’t think I saw a ring on that finger of yours. What’s a gal like you doing single?” If they weren’t dying, they were flirting. I guess they were entitled to it, in some ways. Over sixty-five, it can never be considered sexual harassment.

After checking him in and sitting back, the rest of the day proved relatively uneventful. I listened to Ashley chattering beside me, going through her Louis Vuitton purse once again. It was a real one, paid about five hundred dollars for it or so. Pretty insane really. And then, after was she done with that, she would always get on the internet and search for more purses. When that proved repetitive, she would usually look at pictures of exotic birds. “They’re so pretty” was the general statement for birds or purses. Although we were completely different, I still didn’t mind her. She was someone to talk to or pass the time, so I wouldn’t stare at the clock. I don’t know how people do that kind of work for the rest of their lives. I often imagine myself sitting there, when I’m about forty, doing the exact same thing everyday. Every day. It makes me feel sorry for some of the other workers, so I always try and help them out.

When it finally turned 4:30 exactly, I turned off my station, checked the lock on the file room, and turned off the lights. Saying my routine goodnights and offering dating advice to the forty-seven year old bachelor, Mark, I began to scrape the snow and ice from my windshield. The physical work warmed my entire body.
After scraping the front windshield, I moved to the back. I circled around the entire car until each window was clear. The snow began to fall again. With a few spins, my trusty '92 Grand Am was out and on its way.

My bags, a blanket, and pillow were already in the backseat. Popping a mix CD into my deck, I was ready to go. Laura and I talked on the phone, and I told her it was about time I saw how her four years had been at college. I hadn’t really seen much of her since high school, even though she stayed in-state. I guess a first boyfriend will do that to you or whatever. She said that he was great though. He sounded it, too. Besides the whole having a girlfriend when they started going out thing. The Who’s “Baba O’Reilly” (“Teenie Weenie Wasteland” for those who don’t obsess over them) blared through my speakers. We made the mix back in high school for our graduation music. Our class had decided to walk through the halls on the last day listening to some forgotten country song or Lynyrd Skynyrd. I can’t really remember which it was anymore. Both seem likely choices, thinking back.

After we walked through, hugging and expressing heartfelt goodbyes to the people we felt like we would miss then, Laura and I headed to my car. We sat and stared out at the school, listening to our mix. I cried. She teared up a bit. Laura never was one to cry. I only saw her do it once or twice, both at major points in her life. Once, when a mutual friend was caught cheating with her boyfriend, and I was the one to tell her about it. And the other, when I confronted her about the anorexia. It was obvious, always, but no one ever seemed to talk about it. She never really got it under control, but then again, most of us don’t. Her problem just showed on the I

...continued from previous page...

...and the boyfriend rescued me. He really wasn’t much to look at. The way Laura talked, I expected a strong chin, an all-around attractive musician. But this guy just seemed like white trash. He had a stringy heavy metal goatee, a Blink-182 tattoo, which he definitely had to regret, and if he didn’t, he was a dork, too, and some slogan T-shirt that should have been worn in high school through our whole angst-ridden stage. As far as first impressions go, he wasn’t really winning. I did have to give him some credit for running out into the snow without grabbing a coat to help me, but that might have just been stupidity. He was also short, definitely shorter than Laura. The worst trait was the way he smiled at me. I didn’t like it. As we rounded the tiny back roads, he bragged about seeing the scene where a kid committed suicide a week earlier. It was that kind of smile...with layers. After you stand long enough and strip so many away, all that would be left is a strong set of teeth.

Waiting for us at the door, was Laura. She was still dying her hair. It was black this time. Last time I saw her it was bright blue, fluorescent even. She wore a bright pink sweater with black pants and Chuck Taylors. She looked cute, but it looked as if she was trying too hard. Her eyes had dark circles under them, deeper than I remembered. I brushed at my own under eye and searched for puffiness. Satisfied without finding any, I tucked my hair behind my ear. “I guess you’ve already met Chris,” she smiled.

In the light of the building, I was able to read the words on Chris’s shirt. It said “Sugar Daddy” on it in the candy trademark’s design. “Yep. I wondered what your shirt said in the car. Pretty funny,” I smiled largely back. It was definitely White Trash Bash worthy.

General conversation began, up to the room. I commented on how comfortable the room felt with the two twin beds pushed together. His roommate had moved out around the first week without giving much reason why. Beginning to make my own assumptions, I held my belongings close, searching for a place to set them down. I could not believe she was basically living with him. It looked as though she lived there, and when I asked about friends, they sort of looked at each other. In my book, she was already married.

Laura begins to sob some more. She hikes the blanket off, ripping it from me in the process. I hear her bare feet slap on the floor, matching the fetish chains jingling around her waist. She slams the door behind her. My belt was somewhere in the back of my closet at my mother’s place, along with the black boots and statement key chains. I stared at Chris’s back in the darkness, waiting for him to follow after her. “Aren’t you going to go?” He doesn’t move, only shifts a little bit towards me.

The mattress shrinks in size, along with the room, and I bound out after her, into the darkness. Outside of the bathroom, I hear her weeping. Weeping against a bathroom stall. Instead of walking in, I stand outside the door and listen for a moment.
“Lar, are you alright?” She does not respond.

As soon as we left the room to go out for the night, it rapidly began to go downhill. Another great example of the snowball effect of relationships, I suppose. Laura mentioned wanting to take me to her room, to show me what it looked like. Chris followed. She told me about having some severe pain down in her lower stomach. It was a urinary tract infection, soon to be a kidney infection.

“Look, you have to get that checked out.”

“I know.”

Staring at her face, I told her it was probably all of the sex. She shook her head and looked away as Chris came back from the bathroom.

“Hey, let’s go out and find some parties. I feel like getting drunk tonight.”

I glanced over at Laura’s pale face and back to him. It wasn’t my place to say anything about it. He ended up dragging us all over the campus, clear into the night, not really settling on where he wanted to go. Laura just followed behind him, and I followed stupidly behind her. There was no conversation, merely the two of us gripping our coats closer and our hands deep into our pockets as the temperature fell with each wind that ripped past our bodies. With each icy wind that tore through my coat, a little bit of anger took the place of understanding. It was ridiculous, as he pulled up at the back of his too large pants and tromped through the cold. I stopped in my tracks and laughed. I laughed louder. I laughed at him, and I laughed at our situation. Laura, for her infection and her inability to speak for herself, he for his pants and determination to get drunk without friends, and me, for actually following in the first place. If I would have known the way back, I would have left. Laura turned around and read my face. I just shook my head at her and sighed, slightly laughing. I mouthed this is ridiculous to her.

Chris was looking up into apartments and houses as the drunkest filed out, away to their own homes. Laura looked back at him and then to me. “Chris. I really don’t feel very well.” He kept walking. “Chris.” He turned and pulled his pants but did not walk back towards us. She walked ahead, as she spoke, “We really want to head back.”

“I know.”

He stared me down, easily visible with Laura’s head bowed down towards the snow. He threw his hands into the air with “Fine.” He began to speed walk through the snow, through yards and a field, to get back. He was about fifty feet away from us the entire time.

There was no shutting me up now. “Laura, this is crazy. Why don’t we just go back to your place?” She didn’t respond. I couldn’t believe it.

The bathroom door creaks open and puffy eyes stare back at me. “I think I’m ready for bed now. Thanks for waiting for me.” Laura slides past me, standing at the doorway.

I loudly whisper, “Don’t you want to talk? We could just go back.”

She shakes her head at me, as she returns to the room.

I stand there and promise myself that as soon as I wake up, I’m leaving. Laura was with a man, a boy, who was too selfish to see anyone’s needs but his own. The way he had went immediately to bed when we got to the room. And she, she just stood there and then curled up next to him. He may have ruined my night, but there was no way he was ruining my sleep.

I sigh and creep back into the shadows, enter the silent room, and curl up to glance at the clock. 4:53. Only a little while longer and it would be morning. With my back away from them, it almost seems like I am in a different place.

Gracefully taking the blanket from her, I turn away, telling her thanks. She always has to help me. Fallon, the mother, should not have come here. Her blanket smells like her bedroom always did, slight tinge of her jasmine body spray and cedar guinea pig bedding. I wonder what she thinks right now. She shouldn’t have seen Chris on one of his bad days. Everyone has bad days. It’s just hard to understand why they are so difficult for some.

Fallon sighs. Please stop sighing. It isn’t that awful; I know you’re already disappointed. I knew it the moment you stepped in here and glanced around the room. And what happened to you. What were you trying to prove with the pressed pants, and those boots, you swore never to wear those. I always followed your style tips. Now look at you. And I spent so much time looking nice today, for what really.

The entire night was a disaster, a complete disaster, from the beginning. I thought you had forgotten or something happened to you in the snow. I was worried, and then you showed up late. Always late, not even fashionably; I know it’s probably not a big deal to come here especially with all the social crap you’re always doing now. But still. You could have at least showed up on time.
Chris invited me over as I waited for you. I figured I should do something. And then how was I to explain to him just wanted to be with you when he didn’t have anyone to hang out with. I always hung out with you and Brandon in high school.

I turn towards Chris and brush his back with my fingertips. And what did I do wrong? I never seem to do anything right anymore. He pushes away from me. Frantic, I jump from the bed, pushing into Fallon. Just don’t follow me, Fallon. Chris will come.

Pushing through the bathroom door, I lean down against the sink and flow cool water on my face. I let it flow and begin to sob. Fallon thinks I’m so weak. And Chris. I don’t even know what he thinks.

Walking through the winter darkness, I kept my abdomen tight. The pain was growing farther into my body but focusing on the crunched tracks through the snow kept me moving forward. The snow compacted loudly in front and behind me. I tread softly so my steps were not heard. My black tennis shoes flashed back and forth beneath my feet. The toes inside were stiff, almost frozen, but I kept going. I heard a sigh behind me, but I could not glance back at her. I could not look forward either. Stuck, I just kept going. I was just...same.

The water gushes down into the sink, and I remember how much is being wasted, flowing into the river beside us. The knob twists loosely under my fingertips, and I grip it longer, hoping that I can snap it off. But it doesn’t. It merely tightens. I keep my grip until the last forming drop stays firm at the faucet edge. I know you don’t follow me, Fallon. Chris will come.

And three lie together, in the darkness. There are a few subtle movements of restlessness, but even those dwindle down and stillness takes over. Fallon creeps onto the edge of the bed, curls up, holding herself tight. Laura presses her body against her partner, on the verge of holding him in her arms. And Chris remains whole bed stinks. I’m laying in it from earlier. She’s soaking into my skin.

The bed shifts. Laura bolts out the door, scared to death that I don’t love her. She doesn’t know me at all. No one does. You should have just done that earlier. Run away while you still could.

That girl had to be stubborn. I shift towards her. I thought everyone liked to party; I was just trying to find us all a good time. I never used to be such a pathetic bastard, had friends, drank a little too much, had a few girlfriends. Now. Now, I’m a computer science major that doesn’t even know where to get a few hits when he wants one. Pretty sad, laying here feeling sorry for myself. Wallowing comforts the soul, even if it’s temporary.

Oh, Christ, don’t get up. Jesus, I was going to go help her. But no one helps me. Kicking the blankets off, I punch the bed with my balled up fists.

You acted so weird around Fallon tonight. I never saw you like that before. And her. She came in here thinking she was better, the way she clutched onto her bags and things afraid to set them down. We’ve been busy with classes. Who has time to clean up shit like that anyway? It’s just going to end up on the floor again, clothes, pizza boxes, whatever. She acted like I wasn’t even there. She looked me up and down. That was it. I wasn’t good enough. Well, she doesn’t know me, she may think she does but she doesn’t. No one does.

So I tried to find you guys a good time, and once again, I screw up. I couldn’t even bare to look back, after trudging through the snow for maybe an hour or so and not finding anything. There was stuff going on, but I didn’t know the places.

And that laugh that echoed through the whole goddamn street. What in the hell were you two saying? I couldn’t even look back. I know I’m a loser. I know it.

Getting up, the streetlight filtered through the blinds guides my way, as I pick up shoes, clothes, and books. I hear footsteps and rush back into bed. I don’t turn all the way this time, as you slip in beside me. Icy feet run the length of my calf and tuck themselves under mine. I don’t know if I’ll be able to warm you.

Your friend follows. She stands for awhile. Maybe she’ll go and leave us alone. I’m not good around people; you know that. When she goes, I’ll show you how much I love you. I’ll wrap you up in my body and force every bad thought away. She says more with her gestures than her words. Her forced sigh echoes through our room, as she climbs in beside you.

And three lie together, in the darkness. There are a few subtle movements of restlessness, but even those dwindle down and stillness takes over. Fallon creeps onto the edge of the bed, curls up, holding herself tight. Laura presses her body against her partner, on the verge of holding him in her arms. And Chris remains...
motionless, allowing her to move close but without reciprocation. Their thoughts fade away to simple images and their breathing begins to flow in and out in unison.

In the darkness, the three lie together closer than they ever have been before. But as the morning sun rises and its rays creep through the blinds and angle themselves upon each head, the space grows into a distance. Past the visible and beyond the internal, the final line of a box is complete for each, never to be opened again.

Sarah Broderick, '06

Anne Barngrover is a first-year English Creative Writing major/Spanish minor from Cincinnati, OH. She is an unashamed feminist, tree-hugger, and daydreamer and is most likely found outside somewhere with her nose poked in a book.

Sarah Broderick is a Junior.

Tricia DiFranco is a third year English Major from Cleveland, OH. Tricia has supersweet shutter skills.

Maggie Glover is a senior English-Writing major who likes kitties, cigarettes and naps. She will be attending the MFA program at West Virginia University in the fall.

Julia Gravemeyer is a senior.

Jess Haberman is a junior English literature major from Watertown, CT. She works in the Writing Center and she is a member of Ladies’ Night Out and August Orientation staff. She also enjoys playing poker.

Robert Hillow is a senior majoring in economics and communication. A native of Rocky River, Ohio, Robert enjoys good friends, good music, and drinking responsibly. When not documenting his travels, Robert can be found supporting the Republican Party, participating in the Denison Shooting Club, and partaking in irrational debate. He is a versatile athlete and personality on and off the field, specializing in lacrosse, squash, and rugby. Articulate, authoritative, and a strong supporter of male rights, Robert truly embodies the American masculine ideal and has what his friends have identified as a real zest for life.

Erik Holtze is a senior.

Alissa Lorentz is currently a junior at Denison University who is double majoring in Studio Art (with a focus in Photography) and Communication. She is currently in a color photography class with Alexander Mouton. She hopes to move on to graduate school to further her education and her studies.

“I am really into capturing the present moment and these pictures of my grandfather really do that. These mean a lot to me because I feel they capture who he is as a person and who he is to me, his granddaughter. He has such wisdom and you can see it in his face.”

Daron Nealis is a senior.

Michael Queen from Mount Vernon, Ohio. I am a cinema major with a Studio Art minor concentrating in photography. When first coming to Denison, my interest was almost primarily in cinema, but I fell in love with photography after B&W photography. I’m not positive on any plans for the future yet, but I may own my own studio/gallery at some point. If I try to get into the film industry, I’m not sure what direction I would want to move in, but I’d love to
Aram Rosenberg: I’m a 23 year old senior Cinema Major from Richmond Indiana. My plans for after graduation are still up in the air but I’m excited to see what’s coming next. Ideally, I hope to work in the movies and do something in comic books (I’m a huge Batman fan), and eventually I’d like to live in London where I studied abroad. I have a background in theater and I’ve had a great deal of support in my interest in going into the arts from many people. My parents, my sisters, my grandparents, my Great Uncle Hank and Aunt Genevieve, my Aunts and Uncles, and my friends like Graham Cooper have all been incredibly encouraging and influential. My teachers at Denison in the cinema and art departments have also been great in encouraging me to take this interest further. Without these people, I doubt I would have pursued my interest in arts as far as I have.

Zack Walters is a junior English major with a concentration in Narrative Writing. In addition to being published in Denison’s on-line publication “The Inkslinger” (http://www.denison.edu/student-orgs/ink/index.html), he has also been accepted into the Young Scholars Summer Research Program where he intends to begin work on the development of the setting for his senior writing project. This is his first, but not last, submission to Exile.

Carrie Weaver, a member of the class of 2006 will be concluding her time at Denison with an Educational Studies major and with a double minor in both Studio Art and Psychology. She is a Maine native and in the near future plans to move to New Zealand. Someday Carrie would like to use her photographs to enhance others appreciation of our natural world.

Abby Wheeler is a senior.

Mark Williams is a Junior Political Science major and Physical Education minor. Mark was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1984 and graduated from Pioneer High School in 2002. His interests include rowing, distance running, astronomy, Michigan Football, and more recently, photography (particularly sports and landscapes). In the summer, Mark goes up to Canada to row competitively with St. Catharines Rowing Club in their 140lb. lightweight men’s program. While up there, he also hopes to hone his sports photography skills.

Rachel Wise is a junior English major from Harrison, Ohio. She has enjoyed writing since her obsession with the Anne of Green Gables books in elementary school. While her literary obsession has moved on to authors like William Faulkner, she still gets butterflies in her stomach when taking that first step into a bookstore. Rachel thanks Dr. Matt Ramsey and Nikki Bennett (’04) for nurturing her enthusiasm.

Editorial Board

All submissions are reviewed on an anonymous basis, and all editorial decisions are shared equally among the members of the editorial board.

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