

FIRETHORNE

The Gustavus Journal of Literary and Graphic Arts

SPRING 2014

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

FIRETHORNE SUBMISSION POLICY

Firethorne is Gustavus Adolphus College's student-run literary magazine comprised solely of student work. *Firethorne* is published twice a year, with a supplemental in the fall and a full-length publication in the spring.

Students may submit their work by emailing firethorne@gustavus.edu with "*Firethorne* Submission" in the subject line and the student's name, year, and major included in the body of the email. Emails must attach prose and poetry in Microsoft Word format in a standard font without color (Times New Roman, 12 pt.). Attachment file names should reflect the titles of the work you are submitting and the student's name should not be included anywhere in the document itself. Artwork and photography must be sent as a JPEG file with reasonable file compression (300-600 dpi), again with the file name reflecting the title of the piece. Multiple submissions should be sent as separate attachments. Drawings/paintings/etc. that are being submitted may either be scanned and then emailed, or can be a high quality physical copy. *Firethorne* encourages collaboration between artists and photographers; pictures of sculpture and other multimedia works will be credited to both their creators and photographers. Physical copies of paper artwork can be submitted through the Gustavus Adolphus post office and sent to Professor Baker Lawley. *Firethorne* will not publish anonymous work or materials submitted from a non-Gustavus email address.

The Managing Editor will systematically code all submitted work and turn over the submitted work, without attribution, for the editors' scrutiny. *Firethorne* staff will admit submissions for creativity, originality and artistic value.

For prose, submissions should be 2500 words or less. Artwork and photography can be color and up to any size, however please take note that color may be cost prohibitive depending on available funds. In this event, *Firethorne* staff will convert artwork to grayscale with the submitter's consent.

Submissions marked for publication will appear in their original submitted form except for technical aspects such as font, size, page placement and corrections of obvious grammatical errors. Stylistic changes (i.e. word substitutions, changes in length of the work, word omissions, etc.) recommended by the editors will be made only with the submitter's consent. If recommended changes are not approved by the submitter, they will not be made; however the publication of the work will then be determined by the *Firethorne* staff as it reflects our artistic mission for the publication as a whole. It is against *Firethorne* policy to publish works that do not reflect the submitter's artistic integrity.

Firethorne will publish up to two works from an individual student in each issue. This policy is applicable to both *Firethorne* editors and the general student body. Staff members' works will undergo the editing process like all other submissions.

The views and/or opinions expressed in the publication are not to be taken as those of *Firethorne* staff or its associated bodies. Materials deemed to place the publication at risk for liability with regard to obscenity or profanity in connection with hate speech, slander or other illegal forms of speech will be removed at the staff's discretion. Work found to be fraudulent in nature or plagiarized will be disqualified upon confirmation.

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the forty-plus talented students who submitted their work for consideration;

and to you, our valued readers, for your interest in and passion for the written word and artistic expression.

Thank you,
The Firethorne Editors

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Reader,

We are very excited to present our first issue of *Firethorne* to you. As new editors we have enjoyed being able to read and appreciate every submission we received.

The 158 submissions we received this semester came from a variety of majors, ranging from Molecular Biology to Financial Economics proving to us, once again, the creative mind can be found in every crevice of this campus.

We were also privileged to receive submissions from all different genres, from the highly experimental to the very traditional. With great difficulty we narrowed down the submissions to showcase a sampling of the phenomenal work created by the students of Gustavus.

This issue has been a labor of love for all involved and what you hold in your hands is the culmination of the many innovative minds inhabiting this community.

We are proud to continue this tradition of celebrating creativity at Gustavus and it is our dearest hope for you to enjoy this issue.

Happy Reading,

Elisabeth Krane & Lauren Biermann

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INTERVIEW

George Bishop 18 February 18, 2014

Cover Art: “Paradox” by Mara Johnson-Groh, Senior Physics
& Scandinavian Studies Major

QUIET MUSIC

Quiet music floated to my ears one night. I lived alone, so I figured I had just left my phone on or something. When I got out of bed the music ceased. I must have imagined it.

“No, I heard it, too.”

EATING TOAST

I guess I like
to eat toast while looking
out the window,
at nothing in particular,
but maybe an icicle
is in view; maybe I'm
thinking about rain in
January, or wondering
if my chewing will
go on indefinitely like
a goat or a cow

and when the last crumb
of my buttered bread has
vanished, I walk away
from the window
with the sinking feeling
there there was
something I missed.

PANSIES

I remember sitting on the sidewalk in front of our house, my once miniature legs on the rough concrete, my formerly blonde ringlets hanging down past my shoulders. Cars buzz by, colorful blips on the black streets of Chicago. The soft breeze carries my mother's voice to me, her song kissing my cheeks and cooling my face. "Don't sit under the apple tree with anyone else but me...till I come marchin' home..." I bask in the warmth of the sun. Or is it the warmth of Mama's love? I watch her as she kneels over the flower garden, beads of sweat abandoning their posts on her temples and diving headfirst into the grass. Pansies. Her favorite flower. I take a sip of lemonade, giggling to myself. Mama let me use a fancy glass because she knew I loved to watch it sparkle in the sun. Sometimes I'd pretend that I caught a little piece of sunlight in that glass, that I'm drinking it up, its rays injecting their light into my veins. Mama catches my eye and she smiles, her freckles hiding behind a slight pink on her cheeks.

Then we hear a screech and a crash and the breaking of glass and my mother is not gardening anymore but instead she is running toward me, pulling me away from the twisted metal of the station wagon that has just wrapped itself around the telephone pole in front of our house and I am screaming, my miniature legs kicking and flapping as she scoops me into her arms and runs, runs into the house where my sister is crying, saying she heard a boom and she can't find Daddy, my legs still kick and I hear my glass of lemonade shatter on the ground, the sunlight leaks all over the floor, my mother cuts her foot in the glass and I am screaming, the blood on her foot tracks into my room as she puts me into my bed and runs back outside into the blazing heat, I hear sirens wailing off in the distance and I wonder if they are coming for me, for her, there is blood on the floor and I call her name, praying she'll come back and scoop me up and give me a new glass of sunshine. I lay in the silence. There is no more singing. There is no more sunshine.

BURDEN OF PREJUDICE

Man is a commodity,
We buy and sell ourselves—
Go on, it's fine to never learn:
Give old advice a shelf.

Dear girls straighten your hemlines,
Women bow your heads.
Persecute each other,
The feminists are dead.

Don't speak too loudly darling,
It's for your good you know.
I love you so keep tame, lest
Your ignorance will show.

And you colored keep your hands from
Reaching out too far.
We wouldn't want to check you,
And leave a nasty scar.

But we must keep our children,
From being so defiled.
By muddied hands, who by our God
Have not been reconciled.

Keep your pagan songs,
Out in the cane-ing fields—
The merry notes a poison—
Your path to hell you seal.

We took the pains to bring you,
Out of the savage lands;
Our mercy may come as a whip,

But it's all you understand.

Native—noble savage—
Your race nigh disappeared,
For this we mourn, we wanted not
To slaughter you or sear

Away your past traditions,
But you refused to learn:
The earth nor power can be shared,
These things a man must earn.

But some are born with privilege,
By God these few are blessed
To spread his power o'er the earth,
To rule over the rest.

Now, change the voice you see here.
Because - this is not me.
These are the things I hate the most.
But this is what I see.

And it strikes my heart with fear,
Because when it comes to me,
I am white, but does that make
Me any less than thee?

I think revenge cannot be far
In fact, I'm on their side,
But I wonder if the day will come...
When my own skin I'll have to hide.

FARMING MISADVENTURES

We were scavengers.
adventurers. hunters.
running-all-over-the-farm-ers.
Our daily to-do list was find
excitement and go with it.

We partied in an old Camp Bus,
the best party that 7 year-olds knew.
Till the wasp chased us out the windows.
We ducked and rolled into the tall, wispy grass.

We had sword fights in the hayloft.
Once you surrendered, it was a jump down
from the loft onto the hay bales
to end your life.

Once we knew Grandma G was busy,
we crawled into the orchard
and grab as many strawberries as our
hands and cheeks could hold.

There was even a chicken coop that
we would grab eggs from.
Until the day I was locked in the coop
then I vowed never to friend the chickens again.

MARA JOHNSON-GROH
SENIOR PHYSICS & SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES



SKIN AND SKELETONS

THE BLIND PAINTER

I am standing before the canvas. I stretch out my hands to reassure myself of where its edges are. I turn my head pointlessly, as if looking down for the brush as I pick it up from the wax paper on the table. Sometimes I still forget I am blind because you never treated me as if I were. I run the wooden end of the brush along the bottom of the canvas, counting the jars' edges from left to right. One: red. Two: orange. Three: yellow. Four: green. Five: blue. Six: purple. Seven: white. Eight: black. I dip the tip into the purple, because it is our favorite color. I raise the saturated brush to the canvas and paint what I see in my mind, what I always see in my mind: you.

You are out in the sun, and the purple of your shoes shines bright and pure against the grass, green and yellow, a thousand little blades, that surrounds you. There are trees all around, in copses and groves, all the way to the horizon, their foliage thick, wild, and free against the sapphire sky. Ivy and moss decorates their bark in all shades, and little wildflowers peek out shyly from the brush around the roots. There are dappled shadows moving over the ground, perhaps in conjunction with a breeze ruffling your hair as you walk along. It takes some mixing to get the shade of your skin, but I know it, the perfect ratio, by heart. Your calves and knees are showing, because it is warm enough outside to wear your favorite skirt: the rainbow color-block under black lace that matches your top. Your chin is up, your hair is blowing back as you walk, and your shoulders are relaxed, because you're going to our special place, where we played as kids. I know what you're holding tightly in your hand; it's that locket with the broken chain, the one I gave you, the one holding the last picture of us from before Mom and Dad sent me away. You're going there, to the big tree, because you think you'll bury it there, lay it, and me, to rest. But the end of the chain is wrapped around your wrist. You'll get there, stand there for a while, and then slip under the roots into our secret room, just to sit there and cry. When it gets dark you'll make a little fire and look up through the

roots to watch the stars come out, like when we camped out. You'll find Gemini before you fall asleep, and tomorrow you'll find the locket won't leave your hand.

I paint the stars into your eyes and the sunrise into your cheeks.
They'll be safe there until I see them again.

GEORGE BISHOP

AN INTERVIEW - February 18, 2014

On February 18th, 2014, author George Bishop visited Gustavus to read from his new book, The Night of the Comet, as part of the Bards in the Arb Reading Series. While on campus, Bishop sat down with Justin Feit, a senior English major, to answer a few questions about writing and the writing life.

Justin Feit: How did you get into writing, and why are you a writer?

George Bishop: I came late to it. I didn't start writing seriously until I was about thirty years old. I studied English literature and Communications as an undergraduate, and then I worked as an actor for eight years in Los Angeles. During that time I always read a lot, and I wrote a little bit—I wrote some plays and some screenplays, but then I moved overseas as a volunteer English teacher, and that's when I finally started getting serious about my writing. I started really working with stories and novels.

JF: How did your background in acting help you in your writing career?

GB: In developing characters I use the same approach that you're trained to do as an actor. So when you study acting, they teach you how to break down a character and do a character profile for the character that you're playing, and so I think I've used that in my writing. Also, just reading a lot of plays and scripts really helps me writing dialogue and maybe in structuring plots.

JF: What does your writing process look like?

GB: I've been fortunate the past four years that I've been able to write full time, which sounds like every writer's dream, but it's also kind of hell, too. It's really hard because it becomes your full-time job. I get up in the morning and get up at 6, get my coffee, and I go to work. I work until lunch with lots of breaks, and then I try to work another hour, and I usually work six days a week. So it's really

tedious and boring and horrible (laughs). Yeah, it's really grueling, especially when you're doing it as a full-time job. And it's solitary, but I also think that that really dull routine is good for my writing. It's conducive. I think it's the only way I've been able to write these novels. It's really boring but productive.

JF: What's the publishing process like?

GB: I got really lucky with my first two novels. I had been writing for years when I finally went into an MFA program. I was living overseas teaching and writing on my own without any group or feedback. So I did that for six years, and that's when I started mailing short stories into journals. And also, when I was in the MFA program at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington I was sending stories into journals. I got a few published. So that's kind of traditionally one step on the road to publishing. But then when my first novel came out, that was the first novel that I had published, but it was actually the fifth novel that I had written, and those other four were never published. The way that one was published was that I had sent around query letters to agents for a previous novel, and a couple of them said, 'We're not interested in this one, but stay in touch.' And so when I finished the manuscript for *Letter to My Daughter*, it was very different from stuff I had written before. It was very short. I thought it was a novella. I sent query letters to some of these same agents and sent the manuscript, and one of them got back to me right away and said, 'I like this. I think we can do something with this.' It was a New York agent, and from the time that I sent the query letter to the time that she got a two book deal with Random House was less than three weeks. So it happened really, really fast. But after fifteen years of writing and not publishing four other novels . . . It seemed like it happened really fast.

JF: How did your experiences abroad change your writing style or make you a better writer?

GB: When I was writing abroad a lot of my stories were about an American abroad because it's very exotic, and you want to capture the excitement of living abroad. But my first two published novels oddly aren't about my overseas experience at all, which surprises me

because I always thought that I'd be writing in that genre about the expat. I think I'll come back to those stories and locales eventually, but the way my life abroad has informed my writing now is that living abroad kind of opens up your eyes to different ways of living. Like suddenly going to the store to buy a loaf of bread becomes an adventure. I think that sense of finding the exotic in the foreign, in the mundane, in the everyday—if you can bring that back to your own world, I think it can make you a better writer. You're seeing things as a foreigner might see them, even if you're living in the United States.

JF: A lot of writers here would probably be interested in writing novels in the future. What's the biggest piece of advice you could give on moving from short stories to writing novels?

GB: I was talking to a student about this earlier, how in an MFA program they, at least in my experience, are not taught how to write a novel because it's kind of an unwieldy form to workshop. I wish I did know more about how to write a novel before I tried to myself. In my experience I had to write those four novels teaching myself. Maybe some of the best advice is the way you learn to study and read stories and novels in literature classes, believe it or not, helps a writer because if you have a great literature teacher, they break it down and you're studying the story or novel and seeing how it's constructed. And I think in writing programs or classes we have this romantic idea that it's all just inspired, and it gushes out of the writer. You don't have to pay attention to form or anything like that. But in my case, the structure of the novel, the architecture of the novel, it's very, very conscious, and it's something you really have to work on, like how to build it. It's like crafting a good Hollywood movie. Although hopefully it's not that pat, but there's an architecture involved. The way I learned how to do it was becoming conscious of it in my own reading and seeing, 'Oh, look how that book is put together.' And then being conscious of what I'm doing in my own work, and how I'm building the novel, which doesn't guarantee that it's going to work, but at least you're thinking about the architecture of a novel. Just be very conscious of the architecture of novels and of stories—that's the starting point.

JF: You wrote several other novels that didn't get published. What happens with those? Do you use those for any other creative ideas or do you leave them alone?

GB: They're mostly just on the shelf now. I think at least one of them I'll be able to go back to and salvage. I don't think I have exactly scavenged from them for—maybe I do sometimes I pull out bits and pieces—but mostly when you're writing those bad novels, you're learning to put a scene together or how to write dialogue. Even if you don't use it, I guess all the practice helps in what you're writing now. It seems like a very inefficient way to learn how to write a novel, and it is. There must be a better way to learn. (laughs)

JF: What is the hardest part about writing?

GB: First, just having to do it because it's mostly painstaking, boring work. Having the discipline to make yourself do it is really hard. Then all the uncertainty—even if I'm working on something I'm not sure if it's good or not. Or if you're wasting your life doing that. Then the rejection, of course. To keep plowing on through that because with all those short stories that I was submitting, I collected just hundreds of just rejections. So somehow working through that.

JF: What is the best advice for an aspiring writer?

GB: Don't do it. (laughs) Read a lot. Love reading. If you don't love reading, I don't know why you'd bother writing. At least from my point-of-view, don't go into it thinking you're going to make a lot of money or write a best seller. Don't do it for the glamour because there's no glamour in it. Was that too discouraging? I don't mean to be too discouraging. (laughs)

IF THE WORLD FROZE

If the world froze, would you still remember
The taste of cauliflower?
The sound of running water?
If all the lakes dried up, would you still feel
How smooth the beach stones are?
How damp the sand?
If you lost your mind, would you still know
Your dearest friend?
Flowers in the summer?

GOING HOME

My eyes snapped open. A profusion of hot orange and soft violet spilled across the cluttered bedroom as the sun rose and my heart fell.

Tonight. The declaration sent chills racing down my slender spine. Tonight.

I cast my sheets aside and stumbled down the hallway to Cherry's room.

Shafts of glittering ochre sunlight pierced the tarnished window pane, warming my chest as I leaned against the door frame, watching her slumber. Her narrow eyebrows were furrowed over her pale visage, tan lips pursed between her gaunt and puckered cheeks. Shuffling quietly to her bedside, I leaned in and placed an affectionate kiss on her creased forehead.

"Good morning, sleepy head." The words escaped my parted mouth in a hushed stream of tepid air. Cherry did not respond; her agitated expression remained plastered to her pallid face.

She was light. Her bedridden days had ravaged her physique. Her delicate limbs had been whittled to the bone. I carried her down the hall to an elegant yellow bathroom with granite countertops and a large polished mirror. I blocked the drain and hit the faucet. I undressed her as the tub slowly filled.

My mind drifted as I swept the sponge across Cherry's balmy skin, holding her limp form above the waterline with my right arm as I cleaned her with my left.

There was a jacuzzi in the hotel room in Curacao. This was seven years ago, the summer of 2006. Cherry was twenty-two, I was twenty-four. We bathed together in the sweltering yellow light, restless bodies intertwined, young love in heat. Delicate hands worked supple flesh. Hushed voices. Silent moans. Steam. The crisp taste of salt water. I cleared my regulator. The cast iron air tank bobbed on my back. I tightened the straps on my BCD. A shark swam by. Cherry grabbed my arm in terror, winching herself to my side. Her dark, wavy hair flowed like swirls of chocolate down her narrow shoulders. We listened to waves lap against the sandy shoreline as the sun set

over the ocean. Tears stained her streaming cheeks. The ring glinted gold in the waning light of the sinking star. We kissed.

A soft gurgle hummed from Cherry's crooked throat as her warm head rested against the bend of my shoulder. I snapped back to reality. Slinging her diminutive arm around my neck, I lifted her out of the tub, brushing her tenderly with a plump white towel to stem the soapy cataract racing down her legs. I clad her in a blue summer dress with fuzzy white socks that cut off just above the ankle.

I brought her to the kitchen and sat her gingerly upright in her polished wooden seat. I filled a graduated syringe with warm water and cracked open a can of liquid nutritional supplement. Reaching under her dress, I grabbed the gastronomy tube appended to her midriff and began flushing it out. It took me half an hour to feed her like this. When I was done, I carried her to the living room and sat her delicately on the couch. I flicked on the TV and plopped down next to her. She slouched against me as I watched the morning news.

My nights were dark. Most were dreamless. But sometimes, when I set my head at rest and took leave of my conscious mind, I built a country home by the river bank and filled it with the children we never had.

Little Aviva and Darien play in the fields, the soles of their tiny feet stained with mud. Jonah sifts through stones at the waterfront, looking for fossils in the sedimentary rubble. Rose tugs softly at the blankets of her crib as she naps in the cool natural light of a beautiful autumn afternoon. Cherry sits next to me on the patio as we watch the kids at play, her arms wrapped so tightly around my shoulders I can feel my own pulse. There's a shock of gray on her sorrel head, but her eyes flash with youthful enthusiasm. I hold her snugly to my chest as the sun and moon tear through a muddled sky. The world flickers between day and night fifty times per second. Snow falls, snow melts, trees blossom, trees wither. Jonah goes off to college to be an archaeologist. Rose goes to law school. Darien plays Major League Baseball. Aviva's an art major. Our bodies slowly rot. Folds of wrinkled skin hang from our shrinking frames. Color drains from our thinning hair. We sit bundled together on the voluminous porch as age wears us thin and our last years elapse, until one day we die in our sleep and the kids come home to bury us in the yard under a single headstone that reads "Togetherness is Home", and as we decompose our bones mix and bodies meld until we're a shapeless, meaningless,

inseparable mass of unbreakable oneness.

Hours passed. Cherry moaned. I fed her again. The sun crept steadily towards the horizon.

I took Cherry to the park so we could watch the sunset together before we left. We sat on a bench, side-by-side, my wiry arm wrapped firmly around her frail shoulders.

Years ago I used to lift Cherry's eyelids and stare into her slack amber irises, frantically searching for some spark of meaning in the sporadic, subconscious twitches of her listless eyes. I'd stopped doing that. It gave me the hope I needed to keep going after the accident. Now it just sickened me.

I grew tired of convincing myself that some shadow of the woman I loved was still alive, somewhere in that debilitated husk. Cherry was empty. Just a graphic facsimile of deadened nerves and chilling flesh. I'd seen the scans, heard the doctor's anguished diagnosis. Her mind was gone. She wasn't coming back.

The sun went down. I carried Cherry back to our little house at the edge of the suburbs. It was dark by the time we returned. I laid her out on her bed and checked my clothes in the bathroom mirror.

There'll be pictures in the newspaper. I ought to look my best.

I changed shirts and took Cherry to the car stall, tenderly levying her sickly form into the compact passenger's seat of our aging Toyota Camry. I slid into the driver's seat next to her and jammed the "lock" button on the window console. I glanced at the rear-view mirror to make sure the garage door was shut. Then I started the car.

Cherry grunted, as if to ask: "Where are we going?"

I smiled at her, tears spilling from my bloodshot eyes. I held her tight to my chest as the engine belched putrid fumes into the stale garage air.

"Home."

THE SQUIRREL

Sitting on my grandparent's back porch
Pellet rifle in hand.

I was twelve.

I heard the crackle of leaves
Approaching at quick speeds
Then silence.

I scanned the ground

Of autumn shades

To find a squirrel

Stopped,

As if thinking of its next step.

With hesitation disregarded

I took aim and

Fired.

Silenced ripped with the

Split second chaos.

The creature collapsed.

I approached in excitement

Of my first draw of blood,

I noticed the small stature

In comparison of others

That I had seen,

His fur was clumped

With dirt since long collected,

Then I noticed that in his hands

There was still an acorn.

IRELAND BELONGS TO THE DEAD

"To be Irish is to know that in the end the world will break your heart."

-Daniel Patrick Moynihan

I've always been ashamed when Shane McGowan queries, "Have you ever walked the lonesome hills, or heard the curlews cry? Or seen the raven black as night upon the wind-swept sky? To walk the purple heather or heard the west wind sigh, and know that's where the rebel boys must die?" For years, my answer has always been no. And I've been ashamed. And now my answer is yes, I have done these things, Shane. I wish it weren't so. In the curlew's shrill keening there is only loneliness. A black-winged raven wheeling in widening blue-grey gyres brings only sorrow. Ireland belongs to the dead.

All my life, I've been proud of my Irish blood—what little of it there is in my patchy pedigree—and heritage: St. Patrick, Catholicism, "Danny Boy," Guinness. Oh, sure. I could tell you about the horrors Ireland survived. The Potato Famine. Oliver Cromwell. The Easter Rising. The Black and Tans. But they were just names and facts to me, snug in my home reading sanitized stories—no Emer the Great-Bladdered—of Cuchullain or Red Hugh O'Donnell. All the same, I was proud.

Here, in the looming shadow of the Burren's rocky hills, all that pride is gone. It's hard to care about Ireland's past glories when you're dripping wet and struggling to light a stack of peat bricks. Sure, you're soaked from your own stupidity in being caught out in a rainstorm, and the peat blocks won't catch because you're incompetent at starting fires, but it still takes your mind from Roddy McCorley or Kevin Barry and all that lot. Walking the lonesome hills also leaves little time for thinking about Fenian rebels. The scrubby brush and long wicked vines with their tearing thorns are more than enough to keep your attention. Otherwise you'll be joining the bold rebel men in their long dark sleep. Losing your footing up on the Burren's hills can result in a long slide down—and the rocks are slick with winter rain. I wonder now why anyone would find Ireland worth

dying for. Frank McCourt's father wanted his children to swear to die for this country. This land of rock and rain and memories. It's cold here. And wet. Why did Cromwell want Ireland? Why did ANYONE want Ireland? Having climbed the hills surrounding Ballyvaughan village, I don't understand what kind of maniac would keep climbing a slope littered with slick sharp rocks and treacherous spongy moss and tripwire thorny vines, crest ridge after ridge while never reaching the summit, and decide, "By all the gods, I like it here!" Perhaps the same kind of madmen who would fight to defend a land without "water enough to drown a man, wood enough to hang him, nor earth enough to bury him." I'm not that kind of person.

But for millennia, settlers and raiders have visited Ireland. Ring forts—earthen doughnuts glazed with brilliant emerald grass and sprinkled liberally with whitethorn and scrub brush—mar the Irish landscape like gargantuan acne scars. More than forty thousand such excavations litter Ireland. Each one belonged to men and women who had been dead fifteen hundred years when St. Patrick first stepped onto Irish soil. And they cannot be removed. Whether fearing the Daoine Sidhe (the fairies) or stiff penalties from the European Union, no farmer will touch them. And so these reminders of the old ways remain, sheltering nothing but cows and scrub where sheep and their owners would have huddled in the cold damp ages ago. What kind of men and women were these dead people? Did they carry a foolish pride in their clans? Were they happy? Or was life nothing but a hardscrabble drudge of rain and filth and death?

Death certainly was a constant for these ancient Celts. Their wedge tombs and cairns and dolmens dot the Burren. Thousands of ancient graves, some older than the Egyptian Pyramids, too many to even begin excavating. In each crypt archaeologists have examined, dozens of skeletons have been found. None of these early settlers survived beyond thirty years of age.

Small surprise, then, that even as far back as Roman times there's evidence that the "Hibernians" partook of the poitin a bit too much. When your landlord asks for rent and you've nothing but your house and a couple scrawny cows, you might as well have a drink. And if you're having a drink, might as well go down to the pub for it. It's warm there, after all, and your neighbors will be there, too. So you have a pint, and another one, it's toasty from a roaring fire, and you've another pint still and play a hand of cards, and Big Malachy McCabe and Sean Moloney are playing fiddle and accordion lively-like, and

Jimmy Lanigan buys a round, and you forget your sorrows—Ah, there's a lot of 'em—and you tell some stories. About the Good Folk, maybe, or heroes like Cuchullain, long dead now, and there's the dead again, coming back to haunt you. No escape from those unquiet ghosts, even in the warmth and the music and the fine company.

The rich folks thought they could run from Ireland's dead. Conquering British fools! Ghosts don't lie quiet here. For all the gentry's money and influence, they couldn't get away. Sure, sure, they paid and cajoled to get Galway's gallows moved outside the walls, away from their fine homes. Those fools. There's bones piled up six feet deep in the earth below Galway's streets. When they strolled down cobbled Galway streets or frolicked (only the rich have time to frolic) in Eyre Square, they strolled and frolicked over ancient graves. What about ceili dancing? Ceili dancing's no escape either. What kind of freedom is there in stepping and spinning to "The Siege of Ennis" or "The Battle of Aughrim?" All the sets and fancy patterns ever danced won't make those battles less bloody or return their slain to the living world. Death's grip can't be escaped. These aren't tales of the Daoine Sidhe where you can waltz off free through trickery or courage.

Not that old tales will survive for long, now. Take Eddie Lenihan, say. A grasshopper of a man, all agitated movement and Gandalf beard, Lenihan doesn't tell stories—he becomes them, bouncing around, clutching his throat, waving his arms frantically. Listening to Lenihan pontificate on fairy forts or the inherent danger of cutting a whitethorn bush (if he doesn't believe in the Good Folk, he hides it well), you begin to wonder if maybe, just maybe, there is Another Crowd out there, across beyond the veil. The remnants of a defeated race, still haunting their former land. Lenihan hops around, gesticulating, as he describes a fairy hurling match, and you'd think him a sugar-laden child on Christmas morning. Then you see his hands shake a bit as he sips from a glass of water, notice all the sources for his stories are old or dead, wince when he admits he can't drive anymore due to his health. Slowly, it sinks in—Eddie Lenihan is one of the last seanchai, one of the few remaining storytellers. How many legends will go with him to his grave in three decades, two decades, one? Too many. Dead tales for a dead land.

The old tongue is dying, too. Irish Gaelic is a mandatory subject in school here but that doesn't mean a tourist is likely to hear it spoken. In Galway, a city with high percentages of Irish-speakers

(a whopping 10% of the population), you might be lucky enough to catch some phrases tossed about by greying men over their pints, or witness a teenager, prodded by his father, belt out a few verses at night's end. Irish Gaelic is useless now. Stores display it out of legal obligation, but business is conducted in English.

What business there is. Ireland suffers from its second recession in ninety years. Limerick's side-streets and apartment-fronts are littered with garbage. Every third store is shuttered, imprisoned behind metal bars. Dog waste spots the sidewalks like canine-produced landmines. Ballyvaughan—picturesque Ballyvaughan with its grand stone church with the one stained-glass window and its cozy pubs full of warmth and delicious curry smell, all surrounded by the Burren's hostile majesty—is three-quarters closed. Most of the stores are shuttered for the winter, the tourist off-season. Rumors around town claim some shops won't survive another year. I wish I'd more money to spend. Fiscal life-support.

One of my housemates is surviving on potatoes. Just potatoes, lots of them, with butter and salt. There's an irony there. A sick sort of humor which must be necessary to survive here. When the weather and landscape conspire against you and you've sold your last cow to make rent, that ability to visit the pub and laugh about life over a pint must be evolution at its peak. Whatever that genome is, I lack it. While I can see the dark hilarity, I cannot laugh at it. I'm not Irish enough to live here. And I'm glad of it.

Ireland belongs to the dead. Every blade of emerald grass, every slab of Burren limestone, every turf of peat—all of it remembers. The countryside is dotted with property lines and old homes ruined and intact. Each stone wall dividing Ireland into forty shades of green is the work of some long-dead farmer or herder laboring countless hours to lift massive chunks of stone into place. Despite layers of jackets and sweaters, the cold and damp leach into your bones like the Morrigan's unwavering glare. Crow-headed they called her. Are those ravens or the Morrigan's favored bird circling above at grey dusk? According to some versions of Cuchullain's death, the enemy army didn't dare approach his dying form until they saw a bird perch on his shoulder and sip the blood from his battle-wounds. What no version mentions is: Was it a crow, or was it a raven? A carrion-bird, or the death-goddess herself? Does it even matter? The land remembers its dead. Bernie McGill's words don't apply here: "Some ghosts are so quiet you would hardly know they were there."

Ireland's phantoms aren't quiet. They scratch at the windowpanes and howl around the chimney. They remember. The land remembers. And it will not let you forget: Ireland belongs to the dead.

ACTING AS INSPIRED BY UPDIKE'S *BASEBALL*

I could do that

Come downstage, the lights start to burn, all eyes fixed on you

Sweating, the center of attention

Juggling diction, projection, facial expressions, body movements,
reactions,

Finding your mark in light or dark and remembering the lines

Hoping the lead doesn't drop her line

She does and you improvise

The heavy costume and caked on makeup

Slowly melting away in the heat of the spotlights

Maneuvering about the crew and cast backstage and light trees

Exit stage left and throw on your next costume

Grab water and touch up your makeup

Chat with the ASM until an interruption by a costumer who fixes
your suspenders

Grab the prop; enter stage right

You struggle to remain conscious in the moment; this is not your
body anymore

Loose and free

It is a wild horse you must break in

The director will give notes tomorrow anyway

DANIEL LY
JUNIOR BIOLOGY MAJOR



BABY STEPS

LAURA SCHROEDER
SENIOR ENGLISH MAJOR



JANUARY

THI HOANG

JUNIOR FINANCIAL ECONOMICS & STUDIO ART MAJOR



CARDS

THI HOANG
JUNIOR FINANCIAL ECONOMICS & STUDIO ART MAJOR



DOLL HOUSE



LIGHTS OF LIBERTY ISLAND

LESLEY DARLING
JUNIOR SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES MAJOR



SHEARING

BLAKE VAN OOSBREE
JUNIOR STUDIO ART MAJOR



ACHE



WU YI

HIGH TIDE

My heart washes ashore

 Your gloved hand brushes

 At the salt-crusted veins

 But the flesh tugs along

With a set jaw and a shallow sigh

 A bare hand lifts the

 Still mass into a lukewarm pool

 With fingertips of ginger and honey

Fiber by fiber, sensation returns

 Just enough clarity

 To question why I was sailing

 Alone in the first place

I HAVE BEEN VERY OLD

I have been on a thousand adventures with you
And that's not all I can remember.
I have seen five hundred faces like yours
A questioning mouth with a glow of life on the cheek,
Bright hope in the eyes.
I have been very old.

I have visited a hundred worlds.
None more modern than the present,
None less, but all convinced of superiority—
No end in sight.
I have been very old.

I have learned the name of the Earth, the flowers, the trees
In twelve hundred different languages.
Some with melodies like the wind on grass,
Others harsh as snakeskin.
I have been very old.

I have acquired wisdom like unto a sage,
But this is such as anyone may gain
Because it comes from the pattern of his life,
Not from his age.



ENGULFED

“WHAT IS DEPRESSION LIKE? HE WHISPERED. IT’S LIKE
DROWNING. EXCEPT YOU CAN SEE EVERYONE AROUND YOU

VARIOUS ARTISTS

LISTED BELOW

SOME QUALITY BULLSHIT

Superficial concrete minds
Stomp the watercolor moon.

Raging melancholy pinecones
Fika glittery on sails.

Kicking the iguana,
Raize precociousness.

Tapestry lights skiing.
Ah, sustenance!

LESLEY DARLING

JUNIOR SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES MAJOR

ANNALISE DOBBELSTEIN

SENIOR POLITICAL SCIENCE & SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES MAJOR

DARAILIA EVANS

SENIOR PHILOSOPHY & SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES MAJOR

MARA JOHNSON-GROH

SENIOR PHYSICS & SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES MAJOR

WILL METCALF

JUNIOR GEOGRAPHY MAJOR

MARY PATTERSON

SENIOR BIOLOGY & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES MAJOR

NICK REINERS

JUNIOR SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES & BIOLOGY MAJOR

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF KARL KOLTON

Jordan Bisbee awoke like he did every other morning by swatting his right hand in the general direction of the obnoxious bleeping issuing forth from his alarm clock. Only after several moments passed as he lay groggily in bed, summoning the will to crawl out from underneath the relative warmth offered by layers of blankets and his wife's body, did the gravity of this current day suddenly become aware to him. This would be the day, the one day out of his whole life, that he would see Karl Kolton, live and in the flesh, and hear him speak, and maybe, just maybe, exchange a few mumbled words of greeting.

Karl Kolton was, quite literally, the center of the universe. The totality of existence came with a cast of billions of human extras, and trillions and trillions of other life forms, and an infinitely expanding universe of stars and planets and black holes and dark matter and the laws of thermodynamics and quantum fluctuations, premade especially for him. And on this particular day, Karl would be passing through the town that Jordan lived in, and stop at the same Starbucks that Jordan went to every morning before work, and at the same time that Jordan would be there to get his daily caffeine fix.

"Hmmmnggh," Jordan's wife, Mary, sighed, shifting uncomfortably under the sheets, "Is it morning already?"

"Yes," Jordan replied as he righted his body and began to put on a pair of pants. "I don't think I fell asleep until a couple hours ago. My nerves have been off the charts about today for the past week."

"You'll be fine," Mary said, her eyes still closed. "Just be yourself."

Jordan silently continued getting dressed and picked out a green tie to wear; green was Karl's favorite color. In the bathroom he combed his hair meticulously, trimmed his fingernails, and brushed his teeth with extreme vigor. He looked at himself in the mirror, exhaled sharply, and turned to leave. He stopped briefly by the bed once more to gently kiss Mary on the forehead and whisper that he would see her after work and he went out the door to go and catch the city bus.

It was cold out, but not bitterly cold. Jordan wore a mid-weight jacket and shuffled down several blocks through the light snow to the bus stop. He sat down in the little wooden bench and began to wait. Karl was driving up from his hometown to visit an uncle who was deathly ill from some form of cancer. The doctors said the man had a few weeks at most left to live, and so Karl took some time off work to visit the man in his last few moments of life. The bus pulled up to the stop, and Jordan let the driver punch his pass and seated himself by a window.

Three stops after Jordan had seated himself he felt someone wheeze into the seat next to him.

"Oh, hi, Dale," Jordan monotonously said.

Dale raised his eyebrows three times at Jordan and winked, clearly in a state of excitement, "Are you ready for today? I've just been thinking about it for the past couple of hours, and it's absolutely insane what is about to happen for our little town."

"I've already got butterflies exploding in my stomach over it," Jordan replied.

"I mean," Dale continued, crossing his legs in evident discomfort, "To think that the people in the whole world, our little town is going to be visited by the one person who actually matters. Not to mention the fact that we're even alive at the same time as him, and we don't have to make near the same sacrifices that many people had to make. I mean, think about all the wars, think about World War II, and how millions and millions of people just died to shape the world in such a way at this particular day Karl Kolton would be passing through our city! I mean, there are people in the world right now who are suffering immensely just so this guy has something to read about in the newspapers and shake his head disapprovingly at. But at least they aren't the ones who are going to be around after Karl inevitably dies one day, after all, the world will keep on spinning, but the main event will have come and gone. The future exists only to give this window of time some sort of context. And out of all these people, you're going to see him, Jordan. I can't express how obscenely jealous I am of you."

"Thanks, Dale, you're really making me feel relaxed about this."

"Hey, come on," Dale smiled. "It's just a little coffee stop. And you won't mess up. Nobody ever messes up. It's all predetermined anyway."

After Jordan failed to reply after several brief seconds, Dale continued to speak, “Millions of years of evolution building up to this one guy. It still boggles my mind. It’s the reality I’ve been a part of my whole life, but it still just totally floors me.”

The bus pulled to Jordan’s stop, and he rose from his seat and slid awkwardly past Dale, who scarcely moved his frame to allow Jordan to slide past him. Jordan trudged through the light snow up the block in the heart of downtown and stared up at the green mermaid logo of the Starbucks that was his daily stop before he walked across the block to the newspaper offices where he worked as an editor. He blew on his thumb to cool his nerves, shifted his gaze downwards and walked into the Starbucks. He looked up, and there he was.

Karl Kolton, live and in the flesh, being handed a cappuccino by the barista behind the counter. He wore a red sweater and a large brown jacket that hung open on his body, and baggy jeans. He turned and walked towards the door where Jordan was frozen in his tracks, holding the door open, unable to move.

Karl walked through the doorway, nodding in Jordan’s general direction and muttering a gentle thanks he turned onto the sidewalk and disappeared into the morning cold.

“You, too,” Jordan said at last, but Karl was long gone by the time he mustered the words.

“You’re letting the cold in,” the barista called from behind the counter.

“Sorry,” Jordan said, pulled out of his reverie, “it’s just—”

“No need to explain,” she smiled as Jordan closed the door and walked into the heated coffee shop, “what a day, huh?”

“Yeah,” Jordan said, “it sure is.”

After work Jordan rode the bus back to his home in silent contemplation. Dale still sat next to him, talking out loud about how he thought he caught a glimpse of Karl driving his hatchback down the street but he couldn’t be sure. The bus stopped and pulled away slowly, vanishing around a corner. Jordan walked back to his home where Mary was waiting expectantly for him.

“How was it?” She asked excitedly.

“It was,” Jordan paused to compose himself, unsure of whether to express his true feelings or not before continuing. “It was underwhelming to be honest. I was extremely nervous when I saw him, but after that it was just being at a Starbucks at the same time

as someone else. Even if this one other person happens to be the sole entity for which everything exists.”

“Well, you can’t have been expecting fireworks and fanfares and all that,” Mary said.

“I wasn’t, it’s just,” Jordan paused again. “Sometimes I wish, you know, I wish that I mattered.”

“Oh, Jordan,” Mary said sympathetically. “No use worrying about something impossible.”

Jordan nodded softly as the sun slowly set on a day in the life of Karl Kolton.

LESLEY DARLING
JUNIOR SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES MAJOR



LOCH LEVEN, BALLACHULISH

VILLANELLE

the moonlight whispers secrets of a kiss
in the raindrop-blanketed peace of dark
and, sanctified, we sigh to find our bliss

clouds chance to part, a moment not to miss
uplift your gaze and listen near as, hark:
the moonlight whispers secrets of a kiss.

the buds and droplets join a tender tryst
but Cupid's tricky arrow missed its mark
and, sanctified, we sigh to find our bliss.

the streams flow down the rise in gentle hiss
the wetness bends the depth of mystic bark
the moonlight whispers secrets of a kiss.

but the pure is muddled to evils such as this
the savage fox devouring lovely lark
and, sanctified, we sigh to find our bliss.

true blessing shines though we are oft remiss
in cool breezes or charming rainswept park
the moonlight whispers secrets of a kiss
and, sanctified, we sigh to find our bliss.

DRIFTING

They called us Laverne and Shirley,

You know, that sitcom in the 70s?

Attached at the hip

never one without the other.

We could have had our own theme song.

They said it would never last,

Time and space would not be able to hold us together

I laughed.

I will never get old enough to grow out of you

You started calling less

I lost the ability to read your mind

And when I looked over you were drifting

farther

and farther

away

The show did get cancelled after all.

SENSE OF THE INCREDULIST

Amidst the calcified and passive
we professionally incredulous,
we un-subjugated bastions,
we want to believe.

Every shadow is not merely void of light,
and stars are more than gas and satellites;
the known world, and the unknown world,
and the unknowable world, the unspeakable word.
That every televised lipped lick leads
down a rabbits hole, or something more,
the cryptoid lair of cover-ups and outright lies that
there is more than what there is.

We want to believe our truth is universal.

The Pleiadians yearn to share their infinite knowledge,
the unknown knowable truths that we share
illuminated by dim screens in the late of night,
the witching hour when the rumbling in ear
is more than the groaning of plumbing,
and we trade tales of truth and terror:
of the soulless wraiths which steal skin,
of Lilith and her frustrating beauty,
of powers of prediction by Tarot or tea,
of fraternal orders behind every closed door,
of the big things.

The things of fantastic escapism,
escape from the droll reality.
The blessed curious yet enthused
in unrelenting fantasia,
too gawky, awkward, and forgotten
to join the after party call.
If that's all there is, my friends,
then let's keep dancing.

JOEL STREMMEL

SOPHOMORE MATH & PHILOSOPHY MAJOR

HOW FAR REMOVED IS TRUTH

How far removed is truth

From the place where metals and birthdays reside,

And 100,000 galaxies live between my thumb and index finger,

Placed against the infinite night.

SUNDAY

I was married, once. She was French. Her name was Inès, and I suppose I should have known that any woman whose name means “chaste” (especially if she’s French) is destined to live ironically. Personally, I think Inès was hell-bent on destroying the image her parents gave her from the very beginning. Just look at her kiddie pictures. You’ll find a lot of red lipstick and bent-over kissing poses.

Anyway, it was a Sunday afternoon and she was out on the veranda drinking coffee from a wine glass in her beige-and-white swimsuit. It was a bikini, of course, and depending on the time of year her skin blended in with either the white or the beige half of her suit, so it always looked like one of her breasts was showing. Her hair was pretty long at the time, and she always had it down in the summer, so the sun could turn it all blonde “like ze filles américaines.” I’ve always liked brunettes, myself, and for the most part, she was, but even when she wasn’t...

Well, as I said, she was French.

So, of course, with my two years of high school French and mediocre looks—and I know it probably sounds like I’m being modest, but I assure you I’m not—I really didn’t stand a chance. But we did get married. Bought a house in Pomona and a black French bulldog to remind her of home, I thought. She was offended. Eventually she warmed up to him though, and in the end I think she probably loved that dog more than she ever loved me.

But I’m not bitter about it.

Seriously though—why should Inès have married me? It might have been because we met on a yacht. I suppose the idea of being pampered by a rich American guy who did a triple-take every time he looked at her while she was wearing that camouflage bathing suit may have appealed to her, but in the end it’s a mystery.

So I wasn’t surprised that she ran off. I don’t know where she went or with whom (although I imagine he had some douche-y name like Clark or Sebastian or Jean-Pierre), but I know I wasn’t surprised. I was glad she took the dog. I just woke up one morning and I knew.

She wasn't coming back. I got out of bed and took a tour of the house, seeing if I could smell her in the kitchen or the shower or the creases of the chaise lounge, but whether I could or not, I don't remember. I just went and sat on the veranda in my underwear. I got such a bad sunburn on my chest that when the skin peeled it tangled in my chest hair so that I looked like a really unhygienic, modern-day Esau. And I remember thinking, 'damn, this is literally injury to insult' (and then of course I remembered that it was the other way around, and somehow that just made everything worse).

But it was on that Sunday when I saw her stretched out on a lawn chair in her beige-and-white bikini reading some girly magazine with a bright pink headline that said "600 ways to enjoy sex with your partner" that I realized what a total fuck-up I was. Maybe I still am.

"Inès," I said.

"Oui," she said. She didn't look up.

"Do you love me?"

She looked up. She kept reading. "Eez Sunday, Spensergh," she said, pronouncing my name with a touch of that guttural accent at the end.

"So?"

She muttered something in French.

"What?"

She frowned at me. "People don't talk about love on Sunday. It eez God's day."

"Maybe you should teach me some more French."

She slapped the magazine shut and pushed herself up from the chair, all arms and legs.

"Where are you going?"

"Ze bedroom. Come," she said, gliding past me. The utter embodiment of physical grace.

We went to bed and had the worst sex we've probably ever had. That probably anybody ever had. We didn't talk on Monday, and Tuesday morning she was gone.

Most people would probably say that Monday is the worst day of the week, and that I've just proved it. But it's still Sunday that I hate the most. If we had had that conversation and that terrible sex on a Monday, we could have blamed it on being Monday. On anything, really. I would have been skipping work—it would have been romantic and spontaneous. But we did it on "God's day."

It was like he designed a day on which Inès and I were destined to fuck each other to kingdom come and God Almighty would still come out on top. I don't know that Inès was ever religious, but what chance did I have? I was not her god. And it wasn't even because I was just an average guy. I was Spenser Staten, the yacht guy. The ticket, the bridge, the rope, getting man-handled and stepped on until she'd reached the other side. But to me there was no other side. No matter how I craned my neck I could only have knowledge about what was above and what was below.

It's clever, really. Calling Sunday rest. You let your guard down. You think you can be Jean-Pierre or Clark or Sebastian during the week and on Sunday no one will know that you're really Spenser Staten, the yacht guy. But the Alpha and Omega does. And he's fucking your French wife while you rest on the fact that you're Spenser the yacht guy. Well, I won't be resting anymore. I'll rest when I'm dead. Which, admittedly, could be soon, given all the blasphemy I've been spouting. Ah well. Tomorrow's Sunday. Maybe I'll go sit on the veranda.

ROB WARD

SENIOR THEATRE HONORS MAJOR

LEOPOLD AND LOEB

Rope slinging Übermensch

Nathan F Leopold

Little boy prodigy

Missing his specs

Could have done something more

Ornithological

Instead of submitting to

Boyfriend Dick Loeb

MARA JOHNSON-GROH
SENIOR PHYSICS & SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES



FOUNDATION

MIKAELA WARNER

SOPHOMORE COMMUNICATION ARTS & LITERATURE TEACHING MAJOR

MY HEART IS LIKE BUBBLEGUM

My heart is like bubble gum
The 2 cent kind
Blushing cylinders of affection
First it stretches with the distance
Then is inflated with your joy
But imploded with the space in the photograph
That I'm not in
And I become a membrane of tasteless tack
To be placed back in the wax paper
With two fingers
Within a moment
Without a thought

EMILY HAMBERG

SENIOR BIOCHEMISTRY/MOLECULAR BIOLOGY MAJOR

PRIMETIME

The laugh track says yes,
But ask the television
If you're living yet