Advisors/Editors

Annette Beamesderfer
Brett Stumphy
Deb Lovett

Student Assistant

David Zengulis

No material in this journal may be reproduced or copied in any form without written permission from the author.

Cover photograph by: Deb Lovett
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted</td>
<td>Hanna Tayler</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly Kisses</td>
<td>Natasha Fessler</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph Untitled</td>
<td>Michelle Hawk</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Death-oscope</td>
<td>Jennifer Mann</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph Untitled</td>
<td>Michelle Garcia</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having It All</td>
<td>Joan Weaver</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“proof against their enmity”</td>
<td>Brett Stumphy</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph Untitled</td>
<td>Pam Leahey</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rain Tastes Like Kool-Aid</td>
<td>Hanna Tayler</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs Untitled</td>
<td>Michelle Hawk</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph Untitled</td>
<td>Misty Billingham</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suicide and Redemption
Joseph Wade

Unexpected
Hanna Tayler

Photograph - Untitled
Michelle Garcia

Snow Angel
Brett Stumphy

Photograph Untitled
Pam Leahey

“I’ve Got You Under My Skin”
(Juliet re-mix)
Brett Stumphy

“Wise People Merge [...]”
Gloria Guardiola

Photograph : Couch Potato
Gloria Guardiola

Morons
David Zengulis

Toe to Toe, Blow For Blow
Shirlinda Pacheco

The Sovereignty of Madness
Justin Peiffer

Photograph Untitled
Brett Stumphy
Unwanted
By Hanna Tayler

Seething
Wheezing
Stumbling
Shuddering
Staggering across a highway he goes.
Hungry and cold,
Tired of being told
He's "not worth being sold"
And being kept on the tips of his toes.
Given a demand,
Beaten by a hand
That ironically never gave food.
Never fighting back,
Not wanting to attack
Yet angered by "being no good."
Left outside on a leash too short,
Hearing nothing but the thunder's report
And the rain dripping under his ears;
That was his only water, save his tears.
One day he growled low in his throat
When his hope could no longer float.
Angered by his step to the fore,
His owner abandoned him, forevermore.
So, wandering alone,
Hurt by a heart of stone,
Not expecting kindness or help,
Even when a car drew up
To give aid to this pup;
This sad, trodden down whelp.
Now, someone has a chance to shine this jewel,
Marred and scarred by another so cruel.
Butterfly Kisses
By
Natasha Fessler

Butterfly kisses
So soft and sweet
Gently caressing my cheek.
Butterfly kisses
So gentle and romantic
Fulfilling my wishes.
Butterfly kisses
Turned to hate
Slowly changing my fate.
Butterfly kisses
Become less and less
While sorting through this mess.
Butterfly kisses
Gone forever
To make things better.
The Death-oscope
By
Jennifer Mann

If you heard the word “stethoscope,” you would probably think of that funny-looking tool that doctors use to check your heartbeat. You know, the one with two curved metal tubes connected to a long rubber hose with a round metal piece at the end. To me, however, a stethoscope is more than that. It is a cruel device of unspeakable evil. It may look simple and innocent, but don’t be fooled by its appearance! It has the power to bring down a full grown man (or young girl) in less than the time it takes you to brush your teeth; but I’m getting ahead of myself. Just be warned; the stethoscope has a dark side to it.

February 15th began like any other day. I jumped out of bed, eager to begin another work day at Jubilee. Now, a thrift shop is not your average retail store. Places like Walmart have consistent, predictable products always in stock; whereas, Jubilee accepts donations from local residents and re-sells them for a profit. The money is then used to further Jubilee’s prison ministry. I enjoyed my time there because of the diversity of people I felt privileged to work with. Yes, with all those great co-workers, there was never a
dull moment. This day was no exception.

After clocking in, I took my usual position behind the cash register in the area of Jubilee known as “Discount Land.” This part of the store was kind of a catch-all for all of the clothing, housewares, and knick-knacks that were too crummy to sell in other departments. It is located on the second floor, tucked away in a back room about half the size of Jubilee’s other, more well-known departments.

The day progressed with the usual customers making their rounds through the small, cluttered aisles constantly over-stocked with items of little or no use to anyone—items like half-empty bottles of perfume, tacky decorations, and a myriad of glassware. Weaving through them was Joan (not her real name), a middle-aged woman of average height with short, brown hair and an aged countenance. Her complexion included placid, deep-set eyes framed by fleshy wrinkles that emanated the idea of “growing old gracefully.” She was a friend and co-worker of mine at Jubilee. She was always soft-spoken and kind, and she kept busy stocking the shelves with the many odd artifacts that come as donations to the store. One of those artifacts was an old doctor’s kit. In it were the usual tools of the trade—a blood pressure gauge and a stethoscope. The kit looked well used, and quite aged with stains, dirt, and rust spots on the black leather bag and equipment inside.
Joan thought I might like to see the medical kit since it was far more interesting than half the items that crowded the already full shelves.

She brought the bag up to my counter and opened it.

“Wow, that’s neat,” I said, “an old doctor’s kit.”

“Yeah, it’s not often we get things like this in here,” she replied.

I pulled out the blood pressure gauge and slipped the sleeve over my right arm. I tightened it and began squeezing the small rubber pump with my left hand. Joan, a retired nurse, showed me how to read the gauge and then took out the stethoscope.

“And then you put the listening piece here,” She placed the round metal part of the stethoscope below the blood pressure sleeve on my arm. “and now you can count the number of times your heart beats with this to check your blood pressure.”

As she spoke, she placed the two metal tubes in my ears because I was handling the gauge with both hands. Unknown to us at the time, one of the metal tubes had lost its rubber cap that fits over the end of the tube to provide a comfortable placement in the ear. Another purpose of the cap is to prevent the tube from going too far into one’s ear. Without it, the spring-action of the stethoscope will cause the metal tube to lodge itself in the ear canal. That is exactly what I found out.
As she let go of the tubes, the one missing its cap plunged down my ear canal like a tractor-trailer through a small tunnel. Sharp pain shot through my ear as I dropped the blood pressure gauge and reached for the stethoscope. I yanked it out of my ear and dropped it on the counter.

“Ow! Man, that went in deep,” I said, rubbing the outside of my ear (as if that would ease the pain).

Joan’s expression turned to concern, and she placed the equipment back in the black bag.

“Are you okay?” she asked me.

“I think so.” I kept rubbing my ear in disbelief as she took the medical kit away.

I waited for the public bathroom around the corner to open up, and I stepped in and locked the door behind me. I didn’t want anyone to wonder what I was doing as I flushed my ear with cold water. I ran water over my fingers and then tilted my head to one side to get a few drops into the throbbing ear. Then I tilted to the other side to drain the water. It was a little bloody coming back out, and I feared the thought of infection from the rust-riddled metal tube.

I calmly exited the bathroom and found Joan stocking the shoe display. I walked over to her and told her my ear was bleeding, and I could now feel a dull pain from the inside. She looked very upset and started asking questions when suddenly my pain grew more intense. It spread down my jaw on that side and my stomach felt as if it had turned inside out. All I could get out was, “Whoa…” as my vision narrowed and then
went dark.

I awoke to the sight of what seemed to be wood grain less than half an inch from my face. It was like waking up from a dream, only I wasn’t in my bed. I lifted my head to discover I was face down, flat on the floor still in Discount Land. I went from total disorientation to realizing what had happened in a few seconds.

“I must have passed out,” I thought to myself. “Wow, I’ve never done that before.”

I didn’t see Joan anywhere and I wondered what to do next. Suddenly a familiar voice spoke from behind me.

“Lay on your back. Just stay down and lay on your back,” Joan said and left again.

I flipped over and looked around. I felt my forehead and discovered a rather large lump where I must have hit the floor. Some customers gave me strange looks and mumbled to each other, but no one bothered to help or even ask me if I was alright. I felt like a spectacle in a freak show, and I hated it. Trying to escape their glares, I slid on my back to the other side of a nearby clothing rack. There I waited for help.

Those few moments on the ground were surprisingly peaceful, and I took notice of how unusually clean the floor was that morning.

Soon Sherry (not her real name), my supervisor, appeared with an expression of “What in the world are you doing on the
floor?” I wondered why she looked at me like that. Where else would I be after momentarily losing consciousness? Sherry was always funny and sarcastic. Her blatantly obvious red hair and contrasting vibrant green eyes matched her colorful and bright personality. Though not much taller than me, she made up for it with her spunky, modern attitude.

Then Mary (not her real name), a short, stout, gray-haired woman joined the group of people now crowding around me. Mary normally worked in an office a short distance from Discount Land. She too had prior nursing experience, and proved to be very helpful in instructing everyone what to do.

“Let’s get her up onto the chair,” Sherry said as they lifted me onto one nearby.

At first, I felt like I could get up myself and walk out of the building; but as my heart had to fight against gravity now to get blood to my brain, I felt as though I could pass out again any minute. One of the ladies around me grabbed a plastic yellow container off one of the shelves.

“Just in case you have to throw up,” she said, placing the container on my lap. I hated that thought as I gripped the container.

Someone also grabbed a small green towel, apparently from the Christmas section, and placed some ice cubes in it. Joan pressed the impromptu cold compress to the bump on my head and held it there.
“My fingers are numb,” I said.

“That’s normal,” she told me. “Just move them like this, slowly.” She made a fist with both hands and then opened them and spread out her fingers, demonstrating the motion repeatedly.

I kept breathing, moving my fingers, and hoping my stomach would keep everything down. It seemed to take forever to get out of “panic mode,” and I tried to keep the mood light with occasional sarcastic comments about how stupid the whole thing was. I was embarrassed. On the other hand, I was slightly satisfied to have experienced passing out. I had never done that before; it was something new and strangely fascinating.

Sherry arranged for my dad to come pick me up and take me home. Being on the second floor, I needed to get down to the parking lot so he could get me into his truck. Someone located an office chair on wheels, and we decided to use it as a makeshift wheelchair. It worked. They wheeled me to the elevator past the front counter where another cashier gave me a funny look. I gave her a “thumbs-up” like you see injured athletes and sports stars do when they’re carried off the field.

“Guess we’ll find out if you ate your Cheerios this morning,” Sherry said.

“Actually it was Apple Jacks,” I replied, still holding the yellow container.
We got down to the first floor and out to the parking lot.

“What does your dad’s truck look like?” one lady asked.

“It’s a red Ford with stupid-looking rims that my dad painted himself,” I said.

Sure enough, my dad pulled up, I hopped in, and we drove home.

Later that day, I visited our family doctor. Not known for his thorough inspections, he spent more time talking about anything under the sun than he did actually examining his patients. While very amiable, his approach never seemed professional. After checking me over, he explained the science behind my episode, and sent me on my way. It turns out the stethoscope exposed a nerve that, when stimulated, causes the heart to slow down. Less pumping means less blood getting to vital organs, and less blood means less oxygen to the brain. When my brain was starved for oxygen, it simply shut down. Gravity brought blood back to my brain as I lay on the floor, and that’s why I woke up again.

A few days and many explanations of the event later, I returned to work and still enjoy my days in Discount Land. But one thing has changed—I will never look at a stethoscope the same way again. I still cringe when I see one, and I hope my experience will bring an awareness as to how inexplicably evil those things are.
Photograph by: Michelle Garcia
Having It All
by
Joan Weaver

Fifty years later, a toothbrush is all she wants. She used to want so much more--adventure, renown, love. She wanted to earn ten thousand a year and be an eminent college professor and a circus elephant trainer, like Gloria Graham in *The Greatest Show on Earth*. She wanted Leonard Bernstein to pass by her house while she was washing dishes, singing "Tonight" from *West Side Story*, and come knocking at the door to say her voice was just what he needed for his new musical, and whisk her off to Broadway, then on to the Metropolitan Opera. She wanted to marry the guy behind her in English class, or the portrait artist on the Ocean City boardwalk. Maybe both, one at a time. She'd help them make something of themselves, be the woman behind the successful man.

She wanted to go to Hollywood and play opposite Fabian, Sal Mineo, Victor Mature, Marlon Brando. They'd all fall in love with her, they'd beg her to have an affair, but she'd remain true to her husband. She thought she might make an exception for Marlon Brando, or marry him. They'd both have to divorce their spouses, of course, and there'd be a sixteen-
year age difference, but their love would overcome all problems.

She wanted to do good in the world. Married to the English class guy or the portrait artist, she'd fix up their little house. They'd be poor but happy, live in a slum, back in an alley, houses all around with asphalt shingles peeling off and kids throwing garbage because they didn't know any better. She'd make curtains out of cloth some store was throwing away, and plant flowers, and he'd fix the porch railings. They'd set a good example--all the neighbors would want to fix up their houses, too. After a while there'd be a neighborhood garden, and block parties, and the street would be cute, like Elfreth's Alley in Philadelphia. The neighborhood kids would hang out at her house, and she'd teach them to read and keep them from turning into juvenile delinquents.

After Leonard Bernstein discovered her and she earned enough in Hollywood and the Broadway stage, she wanted to go to Africa or India or some Pacific Island. She could teach people to read there, too. It would take a while, but eventually they'd love her and come to her with all their problems. She'd give them advice, give them money, help them to live better lives. They'd name their children after her.

When she had done all she could in one country, she wanted to move on to another.
After awhile she'd have friends everywhere. If disagreements between countries broke out, she wanted to be able to call up all her friends in the governments of those countries and get the problems settled. She wanted to bring about peace in the world.

She wanted to have twelve children, half with black hair and half with red. She'd see that they studied hard and got into good schools. They'd have their own family chorus, family theater troupe, and family football team.

She wanted to live to be a hundred, or maybe a hundred and five. She wanted grandchildren, great grandchildren, great-great grandchildren to gather round every time she had another birthday. She wanted her husband to live just as long. They'd be handsome and bright-eyed at a hundred, plus. Journalists would ask them how they had lived such long and fruitful lives and what words of wisdom they had for the rest of the world. She wanted them both to die at the same moment and be buried, or cremated--she couldn't decide which-together. She wanted an immense funeral, with an official international day of mourning.

But now she is sixty-five, and her goals are more narrowly focused, if her life is not. It's 11 p.m., and this city is unfamiliar to her. She crosses the dark parking lot, toward the bright beckoning light of the Unimart. For tonight, all she wants is a toothbrush.
“proof against their enmity”
by
Brett Stumphy

In the mist, night illuminated in patches by the street lamps, the cobbled stones empty, all innocent souls tucked away in bed, obedient of the curfew, but there you are, waiting at the edge of a shadow, the silhouette of your brow, your cheek, your lips evanescent. You press your fingers to my chest, warn me of the dangers should they find me here, but I'll rely on the night to hide me away, cover us both and protect us. Only tell me that you love me, and the armed patrol, whose heels click even now in Parisian midnight, the red arm band crippled by a black and broken cross, will vanish. Give me only your kiss, and even Death will bow, obliterated.
The Rain Tastes Like Kool-Aid
By
Hanna Tayler

The snow smells like marshmallows, but tastes like honey as the flakes crunch and melt beneath my feet. The trees above rain down water, but could it be something else? Something sweet? Could those little drops have sugar in them, the kind that makes you want to open up your jaws, stick out your tongue and taste their sweetness?
I try it.
As the taste settles I climb a tree from the sunny wooded depths of the forest to the dark clouds above. The black stallion of the sky creates sonic booms with his hooves, his sweat the rain, his eyes the lightning. I welcome the strike of the open sky, his pasture.
Sometimes he lets me sit on the broad expanse of his back, stroking his mane, petting his fur. I cause hail when I do that. He sheds where I touch, thin strands of fur falling, dropping to Earth, icing over and cracking on tree branches. But I don't get cold, and the trees don't get hurt, and the grass never dies.
And the rain? Well, the rain tastes like Kool-Aid.
Photograph by: Misty Billingham
Suicide and Redemption

By
Joseph Wade

I had been running from him since the day we met, and he finally caught me. I spent eight months hiding in the endless depths of a thousand bottles to no avail. I got on the Appalachian trail and I ran. I ran through endless winter mountains, snow storms, ice storms, hail and zero degree nights. I ran through the winter into the spring, rafting rivers, surveying majestic mountain peaks, and hiding as a traveler lost in the passing millions of inhabitants in large American metropolises.

I left the mainland in North Carolina and disappeared seemingly unnoticed to the edge of the sand and the endless expanse of the ocean. The locals called this place the end of the world, and they were right. There was nowhere else to go. I had just witnessed a brilliant, bursting display of the sun's morning glory. It was quickly dampened and chased away by a southeast wind that brought cold sea-fresh rain and cold gray skies. I trudged off the beach exhausted, carrying my burdensome pack, miles from the nearest campground, miles from anywhere civilized, miles from home.

It was here that I noticed him. The same greasy unkempt hair and the same cry puffed eyes which had turned into an angry,
hellish bulge. One look into him and you knew that he was clinging to the last strand-snapping thread of sanity he had left. His face was twisted by desperation, pain, and hopelessness. He was standing next to his death-black Toyota Tacoma pickup in the middle of a barren fish cleaning station. The air around him was permeated by the odor of dead fish and ozone rain. A green portable bathroom was behind him with its door tapping a wind-driven rhythm. The sand was dirty and loose, and we were surrounded on all sides by tall, green sea grass that moved and rustled with the ocean wind. A sand road cut through our patch that led to the ocean and an out-of-the-way village on the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

I tried to sneak by, but he called out to me in a desperate way. The undertone was sinister. It was always sinister with him. I could not ignore him, and there was nowhere to run, so I turned to approach him. He stood on the opposite side of the truck bed. As I approached, I noticed the usual players on what, due to life experience, was becoming my unwanted field of expertise. There was a silver thirty-eight revolver filled with bullets, packaged neatly into their metal jackets. Beside the gun was an inhibition killing, half handle of Tequila. The other half was undoubtedly in the man I was approaching.

“What did you say?” I politely inquired.
“Get me an armed Ranger!” he replied, in a rage-filled voice that was not his own. *We were in a National Park, and an armed Ranger would be the equivalent of asking for an Officer in the city. It was apparent to me that he wanted suicide by cop.*

I knew this voice. I did not realize it then, but this was the same voice I had heard not long ago. I immediately melted with compassion for the man who was tortured by a blinding insanity he could never understand in his current state.

“You don't want that,” I replied with compassionate softness. His eyes began to well with the tears of a man tormented by more than anyone would ever know. A flicker of hope saturated with desperation filled those dark, exhausted, and tear-flooded eyes.

I began to tell him my story and my struggle with the monster that now had him in his grips, the monster that wanted only to pull him six feet under leaving a bloody aftermath where life once flourished.

It had been roughly a year before my encounter with this stranger on the beach when I had faced the sickness that took my friend. I remember it like it was yesterday. He displayed the body language that said "I am utterly defeated and cannot get up one more time." His shoulders were slumped and his tall frame sagged against his bone structure which looked as if it might collapse. His entire face was weighted with defeat, and his hair lay uncontrolled and greasy from the constant rubbing of his head. He moved like a ghost through the kitchen of our house, past the table where I
sat, sliding by my peripheral vision. He had just come out of a rage — one of his angry protests of a world that had been utterly cruel to him since the day he was born. He’d had enough after losing his second child. The first died from SIDS; the second was killed by a drunk driver. His only surviving son was scheduled for Afghanistan and, in his mind, death.

I suddenly realized that this time something was terribly out of place, something was wrong. What was it? There was no way to place it. There was just a feeling, like the calm before the storm, as if all hell was going to break loose. I got up from my chair and headed toward the basement he descended into, simultaneously calling out his name. I imagine the old, dirty white door must have creaked as I opened it, but I do not remember because what I saw next horrified me. He was sitting there on the narrow wood stairs. There was a stone masonry wall with a sandy mortar on one side and a dirty white wall halfway down the stairs on the other side. The shelving that ran from wall to wall gave you just enough headroom to walk down the stairs if you tilted your head and barely enough shoulder room to walk without brushing the walls. The floor was made of dirt, which accounted for the musty smell. There were no windows and, no amount of light could make this grave-like enclosure bright. It all
seemed much smaller with him sitting there, his back to me, one small rifle in his lap, and a double-barrel shot gun pressed tightly against his forehead. His finger was squeezed against the trigger, almost ready to go off.

The scene hit me so fast that it left me reeling as if I had been sucker punched by a heavy-weight prize fighter. Nothing could have prepared me for this. It was the first time in my life I was absolutely speechless. His answers to my best attempts at reason came calm and calculated but in a tone that was resigned to its fate, that knew what was to happen. This was not the man I knew but the monster that wanted his life. I will never reveal to anyone the words we exchanged, no, they will go with me to the grave. He could never do what was said; it was the monster who had him in his grips who did the speaking.

 Unsure of what to do, I turned to the faith I had been raised with, but was always unsure of. I began to pray for him with “911” punched into the phone, ready to push the button. I was not sure if it was the best idea, and before I knew what to do, I heard him whisper his name softly as if he were pleading with himself. That was the last time I ever heard his voice.

I will never forget the “pop” that echoed out of the basement. The resulting carnage which flooded my mind was the most horrific thing I have ever witnessed. The pieces of the back of his head seemed to push out as if it were
a ripe watermelon, and they turned and flipped into the air. It was while they were airborne that I pushed the button for 911, simultaneously spinning around and darting outside the door three feet behind me. I knew there was nothing left. He had literally blown off his head.

It was surreal to me how peaceful the outside world was. The trees were green and the air was a late spring temperature. I had just seen death a few feet away, and here I was in small town America, complete with white sided houses, sidewalks, and lawnmowers in the distance. No one was disturbed. Then the emergency operator broke the silence, and I do not think it registered when I told them he was dead. They kept asking me to check on him, but I kept telling them there was nothing left. After a few repetitions they seemed to understand.

There was no order after that. Policemen talked to me, fire trucks and ambulances came, and of course, the stereotypical onlookers gathered around the scene.

Soon after, I was drunk, drunk as I could be without allowing myself to pass out, lest the monster should find me in my dreams. I began to run, run any way I could, but the monster was going to catch me. It was inevitable.

Now I was at the end of the world facing this monster again. It was another man, but the suicidal monster was there, lurking beneath his skin. Only this time I could see him, and I knew the stakes. The story I just shared with this man had softened him, and he promised that he would
not shoot himself in front of me. Compassion was still there, a signature trait of humanity. The sickness was losing its grip. I noticed a Promise Keepers sticker on the back of his truck - a Christian group I was familiar with. I asked him about it and he confirmed our faith. I reminded him of the hope we have in God, and he seemed to crack a little more as he seesawed on the edge of utter destruction.

He showed me a picture of his kids as tears flowed out of his eyes. Broken sobs punctured the air as he fought for breath. He appeared unable to escape the despair that fogged his mind. The guilt of his part in the divorce seemed to be hammering his mind relentlessly. The thought of losing her was hitting him with all the force of a guilty verdict. All he wanted was to keep his family, but there was no way to control it. His heart was ripping at the seams; wounds had been created that seemed to be mortal. No amount of reminding him of his children helped. The situation seemed to be one of revolving hopelessness.

I explained some research studies I had read about divorce and the treatable, temporary depression that often accompanies it. Nothing I said registered and he offered me his camper along with the keys if I would go away.

I seemed to be losing again. I had no cell phone this time; all I had was prayer, so I prayed again. I decided to stay with him until he got better. I told him I was not leaving him until he
was clear headed and gave me the bullets to his gun. So we hung out, and shared our pasts. He broke down several times, and I did the one thing I wish I could have done to the one I lost — I gave him a hug. This man, who was once a hostile stranger, was now a dear friend, if only for now.

After speaking for a while, we decided that he should go and see his psychiatrist. He got into his truck, and we drove out of there. I rode with him until he got near the place of his appointment.

We parted ways, closer than many people are after years of knowing each other. We had each been saved by the other. In a very serious tone, he asked, “Are you sure you're not an angel?”

"No," I replied. In fact, he never knew that he was mine, and that the monster that chased me had been put to rest. I found my peace as he drove away, and I wandered lost in an awestruck trance across the sand to the campground.
Unexpected
By
Hanna Tayler

I’m far from my imaginings
Not what you expected;
Not what you had hoped for;
Now I see you’re corrected.
When a diver finds an oyster
He expects the pearl to shine with luster
But discovers instead a murky orb
Which will have to be shined
For society to absorb.
So what does that say?

We can’t accept things their original way.
Will you try to change me
So I don’t act so strangely
To you?
Will you try telling me to conform
Because it’s simply the norm
And it’s really just what I should do?
I don’t want to emulate
The people I hate
So who are you to make me?
If I don’t want to be the same
I don’t see the shame
In being what I am -- not expected -- to be.
Photograph by  Michelle Garcia
Snow Angel

By

Brett Stumphy

In the falling snow, languid as your twirl
Like a spire rising to an upturned face,
Your dark hair catches the melting stars, an
Evanescent constellation, the domed horizon
Given to gray, the sun burning dimly through,
And when you smile, the snow is a shower
Of fingertips conjuring my cheeks, my lips,
My eyes from the drifting snow, and then
You reach ecstatic and fall into me, stretching
Your limbs to incite me, angelic,
From sheets of white
“Got You Under My Skin”
(Juliet re-mix)
By
Brett Stumphy

should probably just leave, just leave, and pace a groove to the center of the earth—yes leave—but I’ve got you sprawling, crawling under my skin, waiting on the apothecary and his crafty poison to drag me down to the depths of my heart where, finally, its just you and me, but maybe I should leave, yes leave, but you’re under my skin—oh baby, please just leave—stop creeping into my head—and I’ve tried, sweet love, I’ve tried not to give in—pacing, waiting, ripping flesh from skin—muttering to myself amid the vials of mock elation and doldrums sedation, muttering not to give in to this affair, this impossible love that won’t end so well, but why resist it?—pacing, muttering, scheming with apothecaries to take me to the shallowest of graves because I can’t resist you—I know it all too well that you crawled up under my the skin the night we met—that rose-budding evening when you called to me in the moonlight because you couldn’t get enough, no never enough, and I’d sacrifice anything that you were a glove upon this hand, holding this little drop of
something in a crystal vial just to be near you in spite of everything—wrench me from bedpost to balcony, pacing insomnia like a scheming nurse out to ruin young love, listening in at key holes and repeating my ruin, repeating my ruin, tattling everything she hears like a mad woman gone mad to see that there you are, under my skin—you rose by any other sin, you sweet, you intractable desire that refuses to see that we can never win—we can’t, we just can’t, because we need to wake up and smell the lark, but I’m going to sleep now, drink now, and wake up to a different dawn because, every time I wake, I want it to be with you, because every time I wake, the world stops before it ever begins—oh, I got you, baby, under my skin.
“Wise people merge with all others
Rather than stand apart judgmentally
In this way
All begin to open their ears and hearts
More prepared
To return to the innocence of childhood”
-Lao Tzu on Wisdom

Art by: Gloria Guardiola
“Couch Potato”

Photograph by: Gloria Guardiola
Morons
By
David Zengulis

How many times in one day can I be annoyed by friends, family, and total strangers? I stopped counting as the true number would require algebraic equations. On an average day, we all encounter hundreds of people on the street, at work, in traffic, and in our homes. Irritating me seems to be a national pastime, or at least entertaining for others. I have come to start listing the players into different groups. One group I call idiots, the second is the cell phone junkie. In another group are the folks that are willing to tell their life story given the slightest chance. And how can we not include our families.

Let’s start with the idiots - it’s not necessary to know them, nor like them. Traffic is the most common meeting place for these special individuals. Nose pickers one and all. Using the turn signal as adornments, or to entertain fellow drivers, bolsters their standing. Idiots are also seen grazing in local supermarkets, and battering rams should be standard equipment on shopping carts to counter this threat. If standing in front of my favorite brand of pretzels to discuss the development of their newest offspring is their right then ramming with my cart should be a
legitimate shopping tactic. Sidewalk idiots are unique, and my favorite example of this is the motorized wheelchair I see parked outside a local bar. There are crossovers that can blur the line, or just enjoy living in two categories, with cell phones in hand they hit the streets.

The cell phone has become an integral part of our society. Quite useful tools to be sure, but they also allow the idiot factor to multiply. We get to talk about traffic again, and that is all I need to say on that. The new ear piece device allows them to look stupid in two completely new ways. To wear a large ear bud in everyday settings just astonishes me. I guess it gives the wearer a false sense of importance. Upon meeting them on the street, the impression of mental health issues abounds. The appearance of arguing with one’s self is such an endearing trait. And I can’t tell you how much I enjoy being exposed to intimate conversations just by sitting at a table in my favorite restaurant. This next group is also a partial crossover. The “too much information” (TMI) group can be the most annoying set on this list. Being provided graphic descriptions of prostate malfunctions, or listening to the marital woes of complete strangers makes my day complete. Another crossover set here is the cell phone junkie who happens to be discussing their latest fungus outbreak while in line at McDonalds. They can also do double duty in the market as well. If you choose to stand between me and my pretzels asking me about the nutritional value
of beef jerky, ramming will commence. Our families will always be a major source of annoyance.

Sadly, family fit all of the above categories. To pigeon hole them into one simply does annoying behavior a disservice. When we share much closer and intimate relationships with people, new and exciting things can annoy us. Who knew our loved one’s breathing could nearly drive us insane. And of course we have to mention the toilet seat debate that rages in every household shared by men and women. If a man can lift the seat, what stops the woman from dropping it? The cell phone can have a unique aspect in the home and family dynamic. If my girlfriend ever again calls me from the living room while I am on the toilet I swear I will flush my phone. And no, I have no idea why I answered the call.

The listing here could go on and on, and trust me it does. These are just a few of my favorites. In case you are curious about the highest level attainable, that would be true moron. Only a few have reached this milestone. One example was in Hawaii while I was watching windsurfers sailing in the air, and performing graceful maneuvers. I witnessed one true moron sail in a perfectly straight line, only to crash into the side of an anchored ship. Mind you that this ship had to be at least one thousand feet long and 15 stories above the water. I surrender, maybe I should just stay home.
Sweat is dripping, adrenaline is pumping. Clock is ticking, my dad is screaming. The only thing I hear is my heart beating. It’s the final round, and I have to make it count. Bombs explode against my stomach and face, and my only defense is my hands. Dip, slip, and wait for that perfect opening. BOOM! A perfect hook, and down he goes.

Boxing is the first sport I ever took up. Ever since I was little, I liked to play fight with my cousins and my dad. I remember going with my dad to the boxing gym and watching him and other guys train. The gym was on 8th Street in Lebanon down the block from the Lebanon Middle School. It was a large space with a lot of light blue plastic chairs in neat rows surrounding a boxing ring. The ring had a matching blue canvas and red ropes around it. The remaining area was a cement floor with white walls and boxing gear scattered about. There was a yellow rope tied from a pillar to the pole of a rack filled with boxing gloves and hand wraps. The rope was like a limbo stick. It was about four feet in height and I watched the guys squat down and walk the length of the rope by coming up and just letting the rope touch their shoulder after each step and alternate which shoulder it touched. Watching how they jumped rope and worked on throwing
punches always fascinated me. I can remember getting up and getting a drink of water every time the bell would ring because it was so hot in there. I liked watching the guys work the punching bags when they sparred. Watching them spar was my favorite part of going with my dad to the gym.

I don’t have any brothers but I have a lot of male cousins. So whenever my cousins and I got together, they would all gang up on me and pick on me because I was the youngest and the only girl. My dad decided to teach me how to box so that I would be able to defend myself and if any of my cousins got rough with me, I could get rough with them back. There was a time when some kid in my neighborhood was picking on my friend and I went after him and beat him up. I felt so proud of myself because I made a boy cry and I did it for my friend.

As I got older, I tried other sports like softball and swimming. I did well in both of them, but my passion still lay in boxing. When I was twelve years old, my father started taking me to the gym with him so that I would be able to train. But we went to a different gym; this one was in a garage. The smell of sweat greeted anyone who entered, as well as a mirror that covered half of the far end of the wall. The other half of the wall was blocked by a long, tall steel rack of shelves filled with boxing gloves, head gear, hand wraps, boxing magazines, a gallon of cold water, and a water
bottle. I was the only girl and the youngest one there. No matter the age, gender, size, or shape of the person, we all did the same workout. The workout was very tough and it worked out the whole body. I thought that they would only work on the upper body, but they did the lower body as well and a cardio routine. We did exercises like push-ups, jumping jacks, straight legs, six inches, sit ups, bicycle sit ups, and mountain climbers. The gym was open on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. I was there with my dad those three days of the week.

At last, when I was fourteen years old, everything I was training for would be put to the test. The moment of truth was in the middle of the garage with all of the protective gear on. I was extremely nervous and I didn’t really know what to expect. The bell rang for the first round. Everyone in the gym was silent. All I could hear was my own breathing. I focused on the antsy seventeen year old boy in front of me. His hair was dark brown and close cut. Light skin, semi-thick eyebrows, big brown eyes, a fair nose, and plump lips made up his face. Standing at 5’6”, he had a three-inch advantage over me. We were both about the same weight and my reach was a two-inch disadvantage for me. Overall, it was a pretty even match up. The first punch thrown was from him, and it landed right on my nose. The pain shot through the rest of my face and caused
the adrenaline to rush through my veins and calm my nerves. I felt my body become in sync with my mind and I started to throw and land a few punches. I didn’t have to think about what I was doing anymore. Everything I learned during my training was coming to me naturally in a beautiful flow.

We moved around, threw punches to “mark” how far to be to land a punch, and evaded a few punches by “dipping.” Every time I was hit in my face, I could feel the adrenaline pump even more. Whenever I was hit in the body, I had to regain my breathing. The three-minute round felt like an eternity as we battled back and forth. I knew that the people in the gym were cheering and yelling commands, but I still could not hear them. The only thing I heard was the bell for the end of the round. I walked over to my side of the ring and took deep breaths as I listened to my dad give me suggestions about what I should do for the next round.

The bell for the second round sounded, and this time I could hear everything that was going on around me. My body was more relaxed, and I was able to make cleaner dips. My punches were stronger and more accurate, but so were his. I could feel his punches digging deeper into my ribs, making my neck snap back. I just kept landing my punches and dipping when I had the chance. I was waiting for
the perfect moment to drop him with my killer left hook. During the middle of the second round, I dipped his jab and there was an opening in the body. I swung as hard as I could into the right side of his body, and down he went. The gym fell silent and it felt as though my booming heartbeat could be heard. I felt the warm sensation of joy overcome me and my lips spread into a victorious smile. My dad was so proud of me and gave me the biggest hug he’d ever given me. I did so well on my first sparring match. I touched gloves with the guy that I sparred with to show him that it was a good fight and as a sign of respect. After that match, the guys in the gym knew not to underestimate me and they knew not to take it easy on me when we sparred.

I continued to box for six months after the match. During the winter of the same year, I was in an ATV accident and injured my spine. In 2007 I tried going back to the gym and training, but most of the exercises aggravated my spine. Boxing is still, and always will be my favorite sport to play or watch.
The Sovereignty of Madness

By

Justin Peiffer

“No matter whether lunacy is the anarchist of the mind, or the mind is the monarch of lunacy, order will fall to chaos, and chaos will fall in order - for when the mind loses total control, lunacy shall govern what it has lost.”

-Your Smut-muffin

I was born with an IQ of one-thirty. At approximately seven-hundred feet per second, I can soar with more haste than most b-b-gun projectiles. I am gram for gram, the strongest lifter of my kind, or any other insect-species for that matter; wielding my sewing-pin and brooch with such ease, as King Arthur did his sword and his shield. I am the Mansa Musa of silver, shining from antennae to spur in the flashiest of sterling. The bet of a prophet would be sure to wager me more ravishing than a rainbow after an ugly storm, for the colors of my head, down to my abdomen, to the edge of my thorax make for the epitome of a vibrant prism. Colorless, the world would be, without me. And albeit, I have never caught sight of my own kisser, I am nearly certain that it would trick the Grecian Narcissus into having him accept such to be his own reflection. And of course, many would most certainly be snappy
in their prejudgment to brand me as “cocky,” but the only chip on my shoulder is a crispy, oily crumb from a bag of “Lays” sour cream-and-onion - for I am, most plainly, a genetically-enhanced housefly who enjoys the exact leisure-pickings as those of the gluttonous Titan’s tongue.

Due to my fortunate inheritance, gifted to me by the Titan, of who is crowned the “Etymologist” (for some presumably lordly reason - I am most certain), I have yet to encounter the same hard-knock lifestyles as those of my failure-bound, fellow insect-denizens - those as the worker-ants who live to work to live in the lowliest parts of the sublevel slums - those as the praying-mantises who occupy the middle-grass with decreasing numbers - those as the upper-level termites who reside in the attic district, who seemingly have everything they need, and yet are obliviously eating their resources unto depletion. It is all a socio-ecological catas-trophe without a means to question otherwise; here throughout these three residential domains of a state called “Condemned Rancher,” according to the yellow unwelcoming welcome-sign tacked outside of its entrance.

Utterly contrarily, in my extraordinary one-ness, I am a powerful and elite figure (elite in the exceptional grouping of me, myself and I) - privileged with flight, unlike the worker-ants; assured longevity, unlike the praying-mantises; entirely aware, unlike the termites. Yet, although made by the titan, and spawned and pampered
in the royal chamber of an obese pile of rich, golden pancakes, wealthy among all others - I still, on occasion tilt my wings, to swoop down and deliver my share of donations - pardon me - my pollinations to the economic - I mean, the ecological-system. As for a noble title, the “benefactor of botany” would suit me as well as gills on a fish, for it is through such for which I live and breathe; that is, my generous contribution to the charitable heads of Saint-John’s-Wort that keeps them open, even when the sun goes down. In return, it seems to fill everything with purpose.

Because of my superior exclusivity, I have labeled every insect, but I - a “bug.” Quite expectedly, the term emerged like a rash with a prescription drug; with good intent and bad side-effects. Since at the same time that it had appropriately distinguished me through the ensuing of my self-entitlement of “I-Thy Fly,” it had just as well had assumed a derogatory connotation, pertinent to and furthermore definitive of those, particularly, without wings, a future or a considerate sense of foresight. But why pay any bit of mind to those without one? The “bugs” are, after all, ignorant to their own existence - unknowing of the flowers even - insofar as failing to conceive the almighty “Etymologist” who erected them in the first place!

As for the “Etymologist,” he is a Titan of attributive jumble, in both physicality and personality. At estimably close to twelve Coke-cans high and forty-eight to fifty-two Snickers wide and
deep, depending on holidays and nights of self-brooding, his mood is as on-and-off as a flickering street-lamp. During times of the “Etymologist’s” sincerest kindness, “Condemned Rancher” is bestowed extravagant renovations - just last week, a new Frigidaire food-vault had been installed - three nights ago, my twelfth “House of Bisquick” was constructed, with logs of cinnamon sticks and a bed of whip-cream! Likewise, upon such joyous occasions there is a plentitude of pancakes! However, in times of the rare and wrathful, he strikes down the “bugs” with a rolled-up, grey-papered, ink-jotted club called “The Sunday Crier.”

No more cursed could be such a weapon of overpowering, insidious, hypnotic allure, since it is thereafter beyond his entranced reading of the manuscript that he flails its Herculean-heft - antagonizing ants - dismantling mantises - and terminating termites! Even I dare not to spare its bewitching text with the glance of a fragment of a single compound-eye. With curiosity as the finest of temptresses, she in her gown of utmost borderline intrigue could not draw me into the creases beneath those soiling sheets! The abhorrent transformation of the “Etymologist,” alone, has posed as a formidable deterrent in keeping me high and mobile, away from “The Sunday Crier’s” sinister script.

I as well have at times been the intended victim of the “Etymologist’s” wrath. Though, in my sheerest of assumptions, I believe it to be an intimate treasure, presently secured in my possession that has served as the evocation to his
anger - not the hex of the “Sunday Crier,” as it has seemed to be for the “Bugs.” As firm as gnats stuck in caulk, is my thought that his hostility towards me has a noticeable relevance to his fixation on the reclamation of the brooch, of which guards me well as my buckler. Within our encounters, he refers to it as Eleanor.

“Eleanor! Oh, Eleanor - why’ve you left me,” he would uproariously rant, “I shall cut six boxes of Bisquick out of our weekly budget! I will mow the grass in the living-room every other day - water the flowers between the floorboards! I’ll stop playing with bugs - sell my collector’s action-figures to fix the plumbing - find our most prized brooch - and be more patient in searching the classifieds of “The Sunday Crier” for a real job!” And then in his tradition of weeping, through his longing for the unattainable, he would sadly and exhaustedly conclude our tiresome showdown with, “I love you more than ladybugs - even though they are not as aggressive - more than stinkbugs - even though their fragrance is more olfactory-appealing - more than wolf-spiders - even though their legs are not as prickly - more than cockroaches - even though they are not as promiscuous! I love you more than bugs! Will you be my bedbug?”

Ironically, across the front of my buckler, there spans the glassy image of what I have skeptically theorized to be the face of a female Titan, her loathsome mug bordered by the design and colors of multiple “Bugs.” Perhaps the “Etymologist’s” dilemma is merely a conflict of in-
terests. For him, there seems to be no simple way of choosing between pancakes, “Bugs” and companionship. Perchance, the stomach’s craving is more insatiable than the heart’s. No matter for what heartfelt treasure his love-organ beats, mine pulses for my fondness in taunting him with the tantalizing playfulness of the brooch - Elea-
nor. Self-amusement makes for a dear compan-
ion when loneliness is nigh.

Nevertheless, amidst such bedeviling merri-
ment, I find myself flabbergasted by his devout persistence in trying to seize such a superb utility of defense, solely for the sake of being able to adore the hideous head of the female Titan who haunts its interior. Who would have ever imag-
ined the improbably chances that precious rhine-
stone could be blemished by the inhabitation of an unsightly titan? And still, with the acidic rins-
ing of my regurgitating lather I cannot polish and scrub free Eleanor of the monster inside. Should anyone gaze into the surface of my shield, their face will cringe and crinkle like a paper-bag, as did mine. Her eyes bulge out, red and buggy! Her protrusive straw-like snout greatly foreshortens my proboscis in contrast. And all across her beastly visage lay disheveled, over-excessive bristles of hair, enough to make a rat’s scrotum appear as sparse as the thinned-out stalk of a withering weed. To say the least, such an abomi-
nation may serve me well as an emblematic ter-
ror, in becoming my war paint per se.

“Behold!” I buzz, in calling forth my own vigilance. Now here within this moment, my eyes
suddenly strain themselves to grasp what has so swiftly and stealthily motioned below me within Saint-John’s-Wort at this absurd hour of midnight’s arrival - my foremost formidable and fiercest of foes, I suppose! But I would full-hopeingly desire against my own prediction, since from both sides at once the Queen can wage an attack. She can coordinate a full frontal bite and all the while flank with a sting! What more troublesome an adversary could there be than one who can spring a venomous dirk out from their rump? Whether a redcoat, or a yellowjacket, a WASP is a wasp. Imperialism is in their blood. And so I must patrol Saint-John’s-Wort lest the Queen and her swarm will come to kill off the Monarchs who spread about its enchantment.

Perched precisely thirty-five Coke-cans high atop a towering pantheon of oak and glass, where displayed are the plastic monuments of the Titans Wonder Woman, G.T. Joe and He-Man; I whet my sewing-pin between the edges of my sterling spurs. Out in front, I slide unbreakable Eleanor, shielding all beneath my eyes, readying my charge. I steadily center my sewing-pin over her rim. When newly honed, it can poke through exoskeleton as smoothly as a toothpick through a block of Muenster. From the ledge of the pantheon, I fall into a downward soar! In five-hundredths of a second I will have staked the mysterious intruder to the ground - instead - within midflight, I abruptly lower Eleanor, withdraw my sewing-pin, tuck my jagged spurs away and pull myself back into a hover - for it is not
the Queen!

“Oh, booty of gold caught in a snare,” spellbound and mad, I fondly declare!

“How can one steal the breath from fire,” through Hell I burn just to inquire!

“Why now is lightning chased by thunder,” in shock and awe, I dearly wonder!

A fly as I, she is, save for her quintessentially fair features. She is fixed in black, clad in the dress of dusk’s swarthy satin! She is a Boston-cream blonde, with a single middle-highlight of a brownie-batter-brunette, all crowned by the strawberry-milk-trim of a faded redhead! While about five-hundred times smaller in scale, her eyes look dark and enticing, much like chocolate covered coffee beans! And golden, glows her precious fanny! Her name is “Fire,” but she has been blasphemed by having been labeled a lightning “Bug.” A femme fatale of bioluminescent seduction, she has me mesmerized and fixated! Quite possibly, I am the one who is trapped; spellbound and imprisoned by her luminary mystique, even though she is the one who struggles in the entanglement of some spider’s strong, silk shackles.

Towards her, from a hollow as gaping and gloomy as a Titan’s maul, there dashes a glossy, ebony, eight-legged prowler, skittering forth with the iron-willed impetus of its appetite’s immediacy. Straight through the viscid beams of a web-spun bulwark, I slice down through the spider’s silky stronghold with my sewing-pin! And then, with Eleanor raised high, I fall like a brick and cut the air like a spiraling dart! I slam my shield into the
crease between the spider’s head and abdomen - guillotining it - hacking off its head with the edge of Eleanor, just before it can bite “Fire!”

Marked with the stigma of the red hourglass, the spider twitches down on its back. She was as good for the socio-ecological system as was Raid - merely a poison; a single-parent mother due to some fratricidal domestic violence, sitting back and collecting for food, relying on her housing to be supported by Saint-John’s-Wort. But she is a poison no more. As headless as her husband, she now lays - the uncut version of “Charlotte’s Web.”

As for “Fire,” I wish as much to taste her as I desire to devour her - as much to embrace her as to crush her. All at once, with sewing-pin and phallus, I want to prick her! I yearn to both kill her and adore her! She is simultaneously, all that I long to be and everything that I can never be! She is my idol and at the same time, through being such, she is the exploiter of my inadequacies? Who is one to build a bridge to infinitum in hopes of reaching their destination, whilst their destination mimics their efforts as the contrast to their flaws? I can either kill me a dream or spare me a nightmare.

I grasp all that I long to be and everything that I can never be! I taste her with my touch! I fondle her of her flavor! I ingest her beauty! I devour this moment, where we are one! Then, I cut her free - and I spare me a dream - for in that instant of utmost rarity, I was all that I had longed to be, and everything that I could never have been! As of now till forever, I am named “I - Of Flies.”
Photograph by Brett Stumphy
Endnotes

We hope you have enjoyed reading this year’s Lebanon Campus Literary Journal. Thanks to all the students, staff, and faculty who submitted their works.

The journal is published at the end of the Spring semester each year. We welcome submissions.

If you are interested in submitting an essay, memoir, story, photograph, drawing or sketch, please contact Dr. Brett Stumphy, English Department, or Annette Damato-Beamesderfer in the Learning Center. All entries must be accompanied by your name, address, phone number, email address and the title of the work(s) submitted.

You will be contacted when your work has been selected for the journal. Once accepted, you must submit your work to the editor in an electronic format.