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Spring 2005

### 115 Vernon: A Journal for Writers, "People, Power, and Passion" Vol.1, No.3

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The happiness of a man in this life does not consist in the absence but in the mastery of his passions. ~Alfred Lord Tennyson~

*My passions were all gathered together like fingers that made a fist. Drive is considered aggression today; I knew it then as purpose. ~Bette Davis~*

Be still when you have nothing to say; when genuine passion moves you, say what you've got to say, and say it hot. ~D.H Lawrence~

*Only passions, great passions, can elevate the soul to great things. ~Denis Diderot~*

*It's the soul's duty to be loyal to its own desires. It must abandon itself to its master passion. ~Rebecca West~*

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power. ~Abraham Lincoln~

*Ultimately, the only power to which man should aspire is that which he exercises over himself. ~Elie Wiesel~*

# 115 Vernon

## A Journal for Writers

### People, Power & Passion

*Power corrupts. Absolute power is kind of neat. ~John Lehman~*

The highest proof of virtue is to possess boundless power without abusing it. ~Lord Macaulay~

*The problem of power is how to achieve its responsible use rather than its irresponsible and indulgent use - of how to get men of power to live for the public rather than off the public. ~Robert F. Kennedy~*

*An honest man can feel no pleasure in the exercise of power over his fellow citizens. ~Thomas Jefferson~*

Power consists in one's capacity to link his will with the purpose of others, to lead by reason and a gift of cooperation. ~Woodrow Wilson~

~Volume 1~ ~Number 3~ ~Spring 2005~

Published by the Writing Associates of the Allan K. Smith Center for Writing and Rhetoric

## DO YOU LOVE WRITING?

The Writing Associates Program prepares highly talented undergraduate writers to supplement faculty efforts in the classroom and to expand the opportunities for helping writers on campus and in the community. Students are recommended by faculty and selected by a special committee composed of faculty and student representatives. Those students selected to be Writing Associates take English 302, Writing Theory and Practice, while serving as apprentice peer tutors in the Writing Center. In subsequent semesters, student Writing Associates may affiliate with faculty as teaching assistants in many different courses—ranging from First-Year Seminars to Senior Seminars—and/or work as writing tutors in the Writing Center, in residence halls, and in a number of other contexts.

We appreciate current Writing Associates' and faculty effort in promoting and developing the program by encouraging suitable students to apply. Applications—including a personal statement, writing samples, interview, and references—are accepted each February. Email [Christie.Kelley@trincoll.edu](mailto:Christie.Kelley@trincoll.edu) or call x2036 for more information.

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## FROM THE EDITORS

115 *Vernon* began as the culminating project of a student in Writing Theory and Practice, the class taken by all Writing Associates in their first semester with the program. In the beginning, it was a venue for Associates to publish pieces in which they explored language and shared with each other thoughts about the writing process. It has now evolved into a wonderfully unique publication, welcoming campus-wide submissions and expanding its focus further into the pursuit and discovery of what it really means to be a writer.

We spent a long time discussing possible themes for this year's journal. It has always been a goal of the Writing Associates program to seek out talented and motivated students from all majors and disciplines and to recognize that writers exist in many places beyond the walls of our wonderful English Department. We recognize the magnificent diversity in Trinity's own writing community, and wanted to find a way to display as much of it as possible. To this end, we decided on "People, Power, and Passion" as the theme of the 2004-2005 edition. These are three things which have influenced all of our writing from time to time; when we are lucky, they are all working at once. We left the direction very open-ended, and were thrilled with the results. People took our simple theme and ran with it, sending in a wonderful variety of pieces that beautifully represents the community of writers at our small college.

Thank you all for your submissions and your support for the program. We also wish to thank Professor Wall, Professor Papoulla, and Christie Kelley for their indispensable presence and support throughout this process.

All the best,  
Allison Eno and Emily Poote  
Head Tutors, 2004-2005

## To Be a Writer By Caitlin Schiller

Before becoming anything in college, before I was a rower, a student or a friend, I was a writer. I have been a writer for as long as I can remember. For various reasons as yet inexplicable to myself, I've been gifted with the talent to arrange words in a mildly pleasing if not always succinct manner that people seem to find both marginally entertaining, sometimes artistic. I myself write purely because I have the compulsion. I write because it's something I need to sort my thoughts, to keep my very large feet on the ground. While it's true that I've always been a writer, I first became fully aware of my status as such during my junior year in high school when I took an advanced placement Lit and Comp course. Being around gifted and motivated students, plus being supported by an outstanding teacher, showed my insecure, eleventh-grade self that I had a talent with words that made me stand out from the public school shuffle. However, the truly defining moment of my history as a writer took place much closer to home than my cross-town public school and certainly hit much closer to my heart. After an incident with my father there were few things that would remain the same; our relationship, my perception of him, my opinion of my alleged talent, my ideas about myself all changed with a phrase that reverberates in the back caverns of my mind, even when no motion has been made toward striking its chord.

My father has never been easy on me. He's never really been what one would call conventionally "nice," either. He and I have maintained a strained, slightly indifferent relationship since what seems like the dawn of time. Indeed, for me this may be true because he claims our mutual standoffishness dates back to my infancy when I, the definitive squalling hellion, would morph from a state of affected placidity in my mother's arms to a possessed demon the moment he tried to hold me. I guess that was it for him. Men really can't stand women crying. In any case, whatever the cause, I have never felt my dad cared too much for me, but growing up I found him useful for a variety of things.

First and foremost my dad was fixer of all things broken. In my adolescent clumsiness, if there was something I knocked down and shattered (a regular occurrence from about the age of 11 through my sophomore year in high school, also the cause of the appropriate moniker "Crash") it fell to my father to repair it before my mother noticed. This, for a few brief moments, rendered my father and me co-conspirators. We were united on one thing every few months when I broke something. I am still embarrassed to admit that on a number of occasions I broke things just to get his attention. This turned

out to be an ill-formed plan on my part because after the third episode in as many months, he started telling me to "fix it yourself." I quickly discovered that I'm shamelessly talent-less with superglue and clamps.

The second thing for which I found my father useful was the purpose of writing. Stephen Schiller has always been the smartest man and best writer I know. I feel that in the number of jobs he's had over my roughly 20 years of life, he's grossly underused both his talent and brains. There is no one I've known who can make an educational story into a riveting yarn remembered long past the exam date. Because of his extraordinary smarts and alacrity with a pen, up through my first eleven grades in public school, I lived in a kind of terrified awe of my father's mind. I admired his intelligence to the point of worship but feared the sharp tongue and acerbic words as a dog fears the rolled newspaper. Because of this, for most of my years as a student, I let my father's will and vision shape my work, too afraid to object, cowering beneath his superior judgment and intelligence.

As I grew older, my father's purpose became more editorial than stylistic. Where formerly he would start me off with the germ of an idea that I'd incubate to a towering contagion, now I formed those germs myself—caught from school, from the bus seats or feverishly dreamed up in my own imagination. Of course, my father still wanted to refine them but I'd already become protective of my little panoply of festering ideas. I would grudgingly bring my papers to his office, mumbling "could you just look it over for me?" before darting out, hating to hear the inevitable heavy sigh that communicated to me, in a waft of cigar smoke, "God you're a pain, but I guess so." Then there was nothing to do but wait. I'd try to help my mother in the kitchen or try to read or watch television to get my mind off the rape of my latest masterpiece. I'd sit in anticipation of his summoning bellow of "Cato!" that boomed through the rooms in New Hampshire and later in Connecticut. So, heavy-footedly I'd tramp up the stairs the same way the condemned takes the last steps that lead to the noose, and silently listen to his comments, his snide remarks, watch over his shoulder as he pointed out the circles, slashes, arrows, word replacement he'd imposed upon my essay. I would thank him and I'd leave, the paper now a repugnant item heavier in my hand than 4 sheets of computer paper ought to be. Next in this cycle came the tears, because if my father hated my writing, then surely, he hated me. Understanding it was mostly useless from the outset, but still hopeful of changing his opinion of me, at first I would make his changes. Later, I turned rebellious and resentful, stubbornly refusing his suggestions. I still brought home my A. I'd let him know this, hoping every time for a smile, for a pat on the back. His response was always the same: "Really? I didn't think it was that good," or "Everybody else's must've been pretty bad."

The criticism took its toll on me and my father's harsh critique of my

writing became something I simultaneously craved and feared. I knew his finessing of my words, his not-so-gentle guidance made me better at my craft, yet it hurt me every time and made me less and less certain I had a brain in my head worth acknowledging, much less a talent worth developing. Day by day, rewrite by rewrite, I developed a deeper distaste for him and for myself.

But gradually, something strange took place. The comments began to dwindle.

I would bring my papers to his office for revision and come back with only a few wiggly scrawl marks where I'd forgotten to capitalize a letter or where my transition could have been better. This for me ought to have been a small triumph, yet perhaps due to the years of verbal debasement I'd sustained in regards to my writing I still assumed my work, despite the straight A's and laudatory comments of my teachers, was horrible and I'd reached the sort of low in production that even my father, the man with a remark for everything, was beyond knowing how to help. His years of disbelieving in me had succeeded in teaching me to mistrust my every move. So I wondered: why did the comments lessen? Either I was turning into the writer he'd always implied to me I couldn't be, or I'd become something more. One day, in the middle of my junior year in high school when my dad first lost his job, I learned which of the two it was.

I don't recollect the subject of the paper, but I do know it was for that AP Literature and Composition class. It was a raw November, and the windows in my father's second floor office were open, a plastic Wal-Mart fan sucking cigar-riddled air from the tiny, oriental rugged room.

"Do you mind looking this over for me?" I asked.

He sighed. Of course he sighed. "I guess."

I rolled my eyes at his attitude even as I inwardly cringed, reflexively formulating an apology for being a nuisance. I knew he wouldn't get to it immediately, so I had some time to kill. I'm not sure now where I escaped. I probably went for a jog around my neighborhood, hoping to outrun thoughts of the certain doom of my paper back at 84 Whitman Ave. In any case, I know I'd left the house because I vividly recall coming through the back door and hearing the sleigh-bells my mother had affixed in homage to the approaching holiday. I chugged a glass of water on my way up the stairs to my room, making a brief stop to check email and talk online to some friends. I finally remembered to collect my paper from my father about ten minutes later, so preoccupied with high school gossip.

I padded down the hall in my sweaty bare feet and mesh gym shorts, peeking around the antique-teal triglyph doorframe. At first I didn't know what struck me as so odd about the scene. Everything was as it should have been—my father's computer was flicked on, a half-finished game of solitaire on the

screen. The phone glowed placidly in its charger. The office was cool and damp, Wal-Mart fan still blowing in the window, the Oriental rug immaculately clean thanks to my recent Cinderella efforts. Yet it was wrong. Wrong enough to turn my stomach upside down. My father sat at the pine desk he'd made himself, his elbows resting on its varnished surface, the balding spot on the top of his fine brown hair eerily visible in the wan grey light grudgingly seeping through the windows. His hands rested on either side of some type-written manuscript, reading glasses that magnified his eyes to owlesque proportions still resting on the bridge of his nose. He stared straight down at the document, eyes not seeing the 12 point Times New Roman with one inch margins in which I always wrote my papers.

"Dad?" I asked quietly, heartbeat skittering in unease.

He started, looking back at me over his shoulder as if I were a stocking-masked stranger, holding him at gunpoint and demanding all of his money.

"Yeah, Cait. Yeah." He turned back and looked again at the paper, pushing the glasses farther down his nose and violently rubbing his eyes. He leaned back in his chair, flipping through the six or so pages of my prose. Unsmiling and ashen he looked up at me, holding out the paper. I was nervous as I moved to take it. Both of our hands lingered over the essay, he seemingly unwilling to relinquish possession. The changeable blue-green eyes I'd always wished I'd inherited stared at me, hard, and to avoid their gaze I glanced down at my paper instead.

"Was-was it okay?" I mumbled, daring to dart my eyes back up toward him. He was still looking at me with a mixture of the disquiet I'd seen before and with something I now realize was defensiveness.

"Yeah, it was okay," he snapped, sounding irritated. He held my gaze as well as the paper for another moment. I just stared at him, confused. Finally he seemed to realize that whatever the monumental occasion taking place in this office was, I had failed to grasp it and with that he abruptly let go of the paper but not my eyes, his gaze challenging, hiding just below the surface something that I didn't want to admit resembled fear. When next he spoke his voice had quieted. He sounded like a jobless, middle-aged man with a chastened ego.

"You're a better writer than I."

I stood still for a moment, mind processing the words that seemed impossible. I was shocked down to the core of my sixteen-year-old soul. I felt naked and unnatural, as though the old cloak I'd been wearing with "almost up to snuff" emblazoned across the chest had been ripped off of me, and I'd been told that a new one was being made for me—that in the mean time, I'd have to walk around exposed. I was confused. I managed to stumble down the hall, to the sensible pink walls of my own room. I quietly sunk down into the scratchily-upholstered desk chair. Turning the pages slowly, silently, I

surveyed the copy for something familiar, a slash, a check, a violent X mark, anything at all that would make sense of this for me. But there wasn't a single marking. Not one anywhere. I blinked a few times and flipped through again. This was no visual deception. For the first time in my life I'd gone through my toughest critic unscathed. For the first time in my life, I was good enough. I'd won.

As the shock melted I felt a sort of guilty satisfaction spread through my limbs, a flush creeping up my cheeks. A grin spread across my face as the warm, glowing feeling of accomplishment tickled the tips of the same uncertain fingertips that had, just the night before, banged out the rhythm of the six pages that changed my life. A giggle, disbelieving and jubilant, quietly issued from my chest.

There was a noise from the door and I turned over my shoulder to see my father standing awkwardly just past the threshold of my bedroom, hands jammed into his pockets, regarding me with something I now recognize as a strange mixture of shame and pride. In the battle we'd been fighting for the past twelve years of our lives, I had come out the victor. But was that the way he'd always wanted it? I couldn't be sure, nor, do I think, could he. Our eyes met for a moment, quietly, as equals for the first time. It was he who broke the contact, footfalls thumping noisily down the old stairs and out the back door to take out his confusion upon our front yard via a rake and leaf-blower.

Since that day in November, my father has never talked down to me. He has never had anything belittling to say about my writing, but this is not to say our relationship has improved. Now, in addition to carrying the grudge against my screaming infant self, he feels lessened by the young woman who dared to accidentally surpass him and acknowledge it, accepting her new status like the athlete accepts his gold medal: with humbleness and appreciation, but with a certain degree of pride in the knowledge that despite disbelievers, the podium is his.

I will never know if my father loves me more or less for taking a step toward being the writer he'd given up trying to become. I will never know how he felt, reading over text that he couldn't make better. I will never know exactly what he thinks of his nearly-twenty daughter because we don't converse, he and I—not about anything that matters. What I do know with certainty is that no matter what I do from now on, somewhere in his heart, he is proud of me. Whether or not he chooses to tell me, he is proud of what I'm becoming. This, in addition to fixing the many things in life that I continue to break, will have to be enough.

## Professor Morris: A Role Model

By Jessi Streib

I had this vision of Professor Morris as a woman on mission, a mission to rid the world of inequality. When I look at Professor Morris, I see the only female professor in Trinity's sociology department; I see where I want to be in a few years. All of my life, I've felt compelled to do something big. Something meaningful. Something immortal. In high school I had dreams of ridding the world of hunger and supplying every person with clean drinking water. I knew these were ambitious goals, but somehow I felt that if someone just tried hard enough, they could make it happen. After a few years of college, I'm not as idealistic as I once was, but I still want to make a difference, maybe write a widely read book that exposes some structure of inequality in a new way. It was with this toned down idealism, this plan for impacting the world, and this wish to one day be in Professor Morris' shoes that I entered my professor's office to interview her about her writing.

I found her sitting at her computer in her jeans, loose fitting sweater, and clogs, surrounded by books: they fill her spacious bookcases, cover the floor, and line her desk. Many of them are opened, underlined, and earmarked. This too is how I want to be someday—wearing something comfortable, encircled by books, ideas and inspiring words. I like the look of books, the way their colorful jackets light up the room, the way that they casually indicate that this is a place for learning. By the number of books in Professor Morris' office, I guess that she feels the same way.

I wonder, based on all of this reading, what Professor Morris writes and how her life influences what she writes. I wonder if I'm following the same path she did, or if two completely separate paths led us to the same desire to be a sociologist. As we begin to talk, I discover that the two journeys were filled with similar scenery. We both moved into

small towns and faced the uninviting experience of being the new kid in the already established social order of high school. It was in our different small towns that we encountered inequality for the first time. Her experience came from when she took a day off of school to travel to her previous hometown to attend a dance with her boyfriend. She knew a biology exam was scheduled for that day, but her teacher assured her that it was okay for her to make it up at a time that they would agree on later. When she returned to school, her biology teacher demanded that she take the test that day. She hadn't studied; she wasn't prepared. But worse than the threat of a bad grade was the feeling that she was being discriminated against because she was the new kid. She was being punished for a status she couldn't control. It wasn't fair.

My own first experience with inequality came the first time I entered the small town that was to become my new home. My former suburban neighborhood was filled with gorgeous houses, well-groomed lawns, and even streets monopolized by mansions. Even though it was touted as one of the most economically diverse cities in the state, its appearance signaled wealth. When we first passed through what would be my new hometown, I was shocked at the houses that looked as though they must contain only one room, the abundance of trailer parks, the pattern of chipped paint on all of the houses, and the general run-down look. I asked my parents if we were moving to a very poor town, and they replied that this is how most of America lives, that these deteriorating houses in need of a paint job were the norm. I thought about how America is a rich country, and I wondered how people in poorer countries lived. Something about it just seemed unfair.

Strangely enough, both Professor Morris and I left our small towns with the idea of going into law. She was going to be a Civil Rights lawyer, helping clients win more welfare benefits, and I was going to be either

a defense lawyer or a judge who never sent people to jail. But in college, we both found sociology. One of her professors helped confirm her divergence from the law when he asked her if she really wanted to become one of "them." I also developed a distaste for lawyers. I refused to be responsible for sending anyone to jail, but I also didn't want to defend people who had done terrible things. Then I discovered sociology. It was like the movie version of meeting someone for the first time but feeling as if you've known them forever. Sociology knew my thoughts better than I did. It could finish my sentences and understand my ideas. As soon as I discovered this new friend, I knew I wanted to hold on to it and make it a central part of my life.

As I was discovering a new friend in Sociology, I also clung to writing, a friend that has always been an enjoyable part of my life. I like the way that words fit together, almost like a puzzle, and how if you interlock the words just the right way, you can form something coherent, strong, and powerful. I want to touch people with my words. I want to make a strong statement. Professor Morris only partly shares this view with me. She writes because it is part of her job. She tells me that "publishing is *not* fun."

But she also writes because she has hope—hope that someone will pick up her ideas and consider them. Hope that political times will change and that someone will look back one day, read one of her papers, and implement her ideas. She has hope that her writing will one day influence inequality. She knows that our society's stratification systems are too powerful and too stable to be dramatically reconfigured, but she hopes that one day her written words will chip away at the structures that support inequality.

But hope is not enough for Professor Morris. It's something she clings to, that she uses to validate her work, but sometimes action is needed when words aren't adequate. It's because she needs to feel like she is doing

something to better the world and rid it of inequality that she makes a point of introducing herself to people of lower social classes, offers special help for disadvantaged students, and it's the reason why she teaches. What bothers her the most, more than inequality itself is our American ideology of a free and open society where everyone has equal opportunities. She tries to show her students that this is "so far from the truth." She tries to introduce the idea of structural constraints while dismantling the idea of American individualism and the American dream. And, even though her oldest son is only four years old, she is already trying to instill these notions in him. He sees a homeless man and asks her why he has no home. Professor Morris gently tells him the truth, the truth that a four year old can understand. "I think it's because people don't share." If she raises children who share, students who adapt her policy of reaching out to the less fortunate, and people who are kind and understanding instead of critical and defensive, then, in a way, she has done her job. Changing the minds of just a few people is a small but important way to keep chipping away at inequality.

I want to believe that I'll be able to chip away at the structures that reinforce inequality enough to make a sizeable dent. I still have faith, a lot of it, in the power of the written word and the power of a book to change things, and change things now. Professor Morris tells me that she hopes I hold on to some of my idealism, and I hope so too. She tells me that it's often the unexpected encounters and influences that lead us in various directions in life. My life, as Professor Morris' did, is leading in the direction of a sociology career and a goal of lessening inequality. But even if it doesn't lead where I expect, even if I lose all of my idealism, I can still fall back on Professor Morris' ideas of spreading kindness, generosity, empathy, and hope. And even though it's not much, I think it might be enough.

## Saturday in George Bush's America: Everything/Nothing Has Changed

By Dorothy Francoeur

This story was written the Saturday after the November 2004 Presidential Elections.

It is Saturday morning, and I am off work. I could sleep late, but instead, I decide to hop a bus to the Raymond Library to return a stack of overdue CD's, which I ripped from my computer's hard drive without a shred of regret. The ripped tracks are a small reward for me, and I am an underpaid citizen who cannot afford to buy her own music discs. When the bus finally arrives at Main and Connecticut Boulevard, which is the last stop before it turns for Hartford -- I pull the cord, and step down onto the pavement glad to be outside, alive and free. Few people are around this morning, which also makes me happy. They are probably hiding from the taunting wind.

In the relatively quiet streets, I begin walking north. It feels good to walk forcefully -- to push against the weight of a brisk November wind that scatters and blows indiscriminately, leaving tossed and tattered remnants in its wake. All around me, things are flying in this mad wind: dust, dry twigs, dying leaves the color of blood, shreds of paper from the post office dumpster, and the occasional gum wrapper. An unnatural mix of organic material and plain old filthy trash are tossed together like a sadly used-up, inedible salad, over, under, and around the streets and sidewalks. Wind devils whip the debris furiously, provocatively, and remorselessly.

My first stop is a sensible one - Michael's Bakery, where the smell of fresh bread and warm pastries beguile the passerby. Hungry and chilled, I order hot coffee and two cinnamon cake donuts, a specialty of the house. Two older men are sitting against the wall near the storefront, arguing about the election. As I pass by, I hear nothing new. They are repeating the same phrases I have heard everywhere this past four days: Bush is winning the war, he doesn't take shit from anybody; Kerry has no experience, and besides, everybody knows Kerry likes gays.

In my mind, it sounds like these men were vaccinated with a phonograph needle, and their record is stuck in one groove, skipping over and over the same words. I want to jam, jar, and un-stick

their old, worn-out groove. Better yet, I want to push down hard on the tone arm, forcing it to scrape ahead where the lyrics and language are not FOX's regurgitated propaganda slogans. But, I restrain myself. Now is not the right time, and maybe Michael's Bakery is not the right place. After Tuesday's political reckoning, I am 51% certain that nothing will jar these men out of their particular groove. Instead, fueled with white sugar and blood-pumping caffeine, I head back outside again to do battle with the frisky and arrogant wind.

My next stop is the library, where I am forced to cough up \$7.00 in fines for the CDs I ripped. With a heavy, regretful sigh, I hand over my hard-earned money to the witless book checker, who looks to be new and unaccustomed to East Hartford's system of doing things. He seems to notice my slight impatience and he coughs in embarrassment as I wait. I notice that Judy, the usual crabby librarian, is nowhere to be seen. The new guy hands me a receipt and unblocks my account. I mutter a perfunctory "thanks", and I then go to look for more books or CDs to take out and rip and eventually pay fines on later.

Finally, I am buried in the paperbacks stacks, where I find two mystery thrillers. Both of these mystery thrillers are set in Arizona. This is very appealing to me, because I crave a change from the once quaint, now boring English village-Agatha Christie model. As I look at the book, I think, murder in Arizona? I try to picture a dead body sprawled at the bottom of a vast canyon, but I am having a hard time reconciling this image with my memories of the southwest. The paperback cover shows a yellow moon casting ominous shadows among a forest of black Saguaros, and all I can do is think about last winter's vacation in Phoenix with Sephy. In the musty-smelling stacks, I go into a dreamy reverie.

*Sephy. I can see her standing on the sun-kissed patio of her Phoenix apartment, hair rising like black smoke in the morning air. I can hear the sound of teal-green, shimmering hummingbirds dipping their beaks into the sugar water tray while we drink Starbuck's Columbian in massive earthenware mugs. I can taste the rum-drenched, mint-laced, and ice-sparkling mohitos that we drank every*



*night, like thirsty beasts, sometimes with slice after slice of rich peanut butter fudge - the fudge we bought while visiting Goldfield, a tidy, touristy rebuilt mining town at the base of the Superstitions. I can see Sephy dancing to David Bowie records, dressed in the emerald green lounging pants I gave her last Yule, trying to lift and play the didgeridoo without falling over backward, while I took digital photos of her to post online. All of this while, her regal cats, Cosmo and Blue Moon, hid under the kitchen table until the wreckage cleared. I still love you all!*

Coming out of my dream, I realize it is time to check out the books. The new library guy's eyes are at half-mast, and he is still slow to move when I approach. I find myself missing the volatile Judy.

Once outside again, finished with the library and wide-awake, I walk south on the East Hartford streets and think about where to go next. Suddenly, I find myself looking forward to this evening -- making popcorn and reading an engrossing mystery novel, instead, of endlessly channel-surfing through cable television and its limited range of messy offerings.

Filled with determination and now used to the wind, I decide to walk the mile back to my apartment. Strolling along with my tote bag of goodies, I pass the Riverside Nursing Home. A sixty-something woman sits bundled up in a wheelchair - a lonely sight. I realize she is out there to smoke her cigarette in peace. And so, I wave. She stares at me, face twisted in some emotion I cannot read. Perhaps she found the gesture cruel? I turn away from her and walk on.

For some reason, instead of walking past it, I stop in at the South Green package store, a place I have not gone to in years. Apparently, a Pakistani chap now owns the place. Neatly dressed in a pale blue knit sweater and brown corduroys, he politely asks what he can get me. The sight of him, neat, clean and articulate is a pleasant surprise. The previous owners were rude-talking, dirty-jean-wearing rednecks.

I don't know why, but I tell him I want to buy four lottery tickets. He gives me the form and a pencil. Very carefully, I fill in the numbered blocks in a rune-like pattern across four slots on the card. I refuse to notice what numbers I have chosen - it feels luckier that way. Solemnly, I hand over the four dollars, and in return I get my November 9 Connecticut Classic Lotto ticket printout and prepare to leave. The Pakistani chap says, "good luck."

Smiling ruefully, I tell him I need all the luck I can get. He asks why? Unbelievably, I find myself telling a man I have never met - *a foreigner* - about needing to win because I want to leave America. With that shocking utterance, the floodgates between us open up. Soon, we know everything about each other -- like lovers reincarnated from another life. Together, we pour out our feelings of disbelief, anger, and concern. As we speak, we both search deeply into each other's soul-eyes, earth-brown, and deep. We know that we can trust each other with our lives. This man and I have become closer than just "close". Our thoughts, worries, and confusion over the state of things overwhelm us; we understand nothing except our mutual, breathless relief at finding one another.

Finally, after some time of talking together, the co-mingling of our miseries ends. We stand in an exhausted silence, knowing it is over. It is time for me to go to the only place I have to be - at home. Reluctantly, I turn and leave him. He raises a graceful hand -- a respectful farewell.

Heading towards home at last, I wonder, furtively, if I should return to his store.

Like Orwell's doomed protagonist, Winston Smith, I am relieved to have found a kindred spirit in this, our personal corner of Oceania. As the wind (cruelly, now?) whips my back and face, I know that I will find an excuse to return here, to commit the new, American version of thought crime. Yes, I tell myself. I will return to talk with this quiet, dark, Middle-Eastern man again, because he is my Julia -- and I will never betray him. Besides, once you commit thought crime, it is already too late. Like Winston Smith, I hope we are not already dead -- and it is Saturday in George Bush's America and everything/nothing has changed.

## Ode to the Carillonneur

By Jamie Calabrese

A hydraulic hiss sizzles under brow-piercing quarter note squawks, not unlike those that awoke her ten hours and twenty three minutes ago. The kneeling of the F-Bus on Broad Street is an industrial metronome and she sets her stride to match it in double time, woolen overcoat brushing a backbeat against her business slacks.

A calm cobalt dusk surrounds them, the night-time exercisers, Mather commuters, and she in her solitary march. The very blueness of the sky makes this dusky air feel cool and wet. Something so infinite and beautiful could only be temporal, she knows. Her enchantment ends in four and a half seconds. Back to staring at her boots clack-clack-strike-the-tar, clack-clack-hands-in-pockets.

What was that song I heard on the radio today? Good bass line. Wonder who it's by, I want to buy it on iTunes maybe. I have to practice those Duke Ellington bits from jazz ensemble but how am I supposed to practice with no horn? It's been in the shop now, what- five weeks. Man I have to call Tom and ask him about the sax. That overhaul's gonna cost me five hundred bucks. I'll never be able to cut down my work hours when I keep running into these expenses. But I love that horn—love those engravings on the side of her bell that caught my eye and made me pick her up. Way back in fifth grade.

Rae Ann played the trumpet. She played it like the Kolo bird she was, with unabashed gusto. Yeah. Rea Ann did play the trumpet. She started at the same time I did, when the instruments were too big for our hands but we honked out fat notes anyway. Hers was silver. Rae Ann had the best laugh I ever heard and she got it from her mom. I loved it because she was never afraid to let it out, loudly and with her head thrown back. I've tried to laugh like her but it just sounds like I'm faking.

I wrote her name on the south wall of Widener because there were pencils laid out so that visitors could make a mark for their lost loved ones. But that exhibit is gone now, just like the mandala and Double Edge theatre. Thank God—that Stacie was a real bitch to work for, but damn they make good art. When's the next staff meeting? This Wednesday or next Wednesday I don't remember. Shit I still owe Bea my manifesto on house managing. Okay, let's think sections—late seating, hiring, scheduling, meetings, dress code—God it's so much easier to say it as I go along than to write it down all at once. But I

need the money and I told James I would. He's nervous things won't be the same when me and Eileen are gone.

What's the best show we ever worked together? Iris Dement was pretty awesome but maybe I'm just remembering her because she was just here. My favorite show I saw in college was Necessary Targets at Hartford Stage. By the author of Vagina Monologues. Sitting in that small dusky theatre, I clung to Neil's arm as we watched it. We both sobbed as we watched those women, but it was the kind of cry you choke down because you know there's no choice but to be strong, when the sheer strength of a person makes you want to cry even more till your throat just burns. We were crying for ourselves right along with that woman and her dead baby (she killed it to suppress the cries) because it was always easier for us in the dark and amongst strangers even though we didn't want it to be that way. He was no musician but he sang songs for me.

I really wish Neil would be at graduation in May but I know he can't come. I still want to invite him, but our words now insult what we used to be. So much to do between now and graduation—I'm so behind on my thesis. I was supposed to call and change which photo I picked for my senior portrait but I didn't have time. And when are the freakin letters for Tent City going to go out? I want to lose at least ten pounds for graduation—to look good in the pictures—to be as proud of myself as I can be all day long. Gotta get on the treadmill more. But I hate the fuckin treadmill.

I'm holding my breath. For more than two footsteps, less than three. More than syncopation, less than a fermata. All I want to do is stride and stride and feed myself and get back to work and maybe get some sleep but don't get your hopes up Jamie. Then there is a pause, like the crest of a wave, its gentle undertow drawing me back to pensiveness, swirling sand around my bare feet, sinking me down, grain by grain.

At a funeral mass I saw a priest fold cloth, so slowly and carefully. A white cloth. He must have folded it twelve hundred times before. Surely he could have been more efficient, but he made each crease with the confidence that his actions were something worth waiting for—worth contemplating.

The pause of the carillon swirls sand at her feet. The bells have been sounding. Before each round ringing chord of the six o'clock concert a brilliant pause, defying the metronome, wafts across campus, an unassuming momentary stop. The absence of sound means as much to her as the passing notes themselves, and for that space of time she revels in full quietude.

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*I submit to you that if a man hasn't discovered something he will die for, he isn't fit to live. ~Martin Luther King Jr.~*

## I Go Writin' After Midnight

By Patti Maisch

A few times a week, in my old house, I hear footsteps traverse the upstairs hallway, passing over the metal grate, traveling from the bedroom to the bathroom. On the return trip the footsteps halt at the grate and a man's voice whispers through the iron plate, "Come up to bed, it's after 2:00 A.M." The response is usually, "I'll be up in a minute—I just want to finish this thought." I am writing a paper. This is my time—after midnight. Once the kitchen sink is empty, after the last wash is in the dryer, my book bag is packed and sitting at the back door and my cell phone is on the charger—this is *when* I write. A Laura Nyro song seeps softly from the other room easing my mind while a steaming cup of aromatic ginger twist tea infuses at close range to help unravel my body—this is *what helps* me to write.

I've always been a night owl. I like the fact that there is no traffic noise, no barking dogs, no phones ringing, and no squealing children at the bus stop. It's just me, the sound of the hoot owl, a carousel full of eclectic music playing faintly in the background in cooperation with a teeny tiny idea which has such a potential for expansion. Most times the idea begins as infinitesimal—but like the moon flower outside my kitchen window—it seems to thrive within a nocturnal environment. It is not a tangible plant that requires sun, water and carbon dioxide, but a little seedling flourishing by means of darkness and brewed tea. Even the cats know enough to take their playful tumbling elsewhere and get themselves to bed early these nights—or they spend the time exiled to the basement. This recipe may seem simple but it is the result of hours of complex research and experimentation conducted right here at the computer—and for a short time—at any and all computers.

It started in the library a few years ago. Thinking that I could not forego the distractions of home life I spent untold hours trying to concentrate in Raether. I found, however, that the students did not share my feelings about just how one achieves focus and I could not find peace and quiet at the Trinity College library. Even with the help of earplugs I found it impossible to block out the "parties" of distracting study groups—so I tried the local library. It closed at 9:00 P.M.—no good. So I came home to rework my system. For the early evening or afternoon the earplugs work fine but there's nothing like late night—*after* David Letterman.

The hum of the furnace plays back-up to the normal creaks and moans of my two-hundred year old house in winter. While in summer time soft rainfall beats time onto the tin shed roof in collusion with chirping crickets or burping bullfrogs. This only serves to complement my self-devised process of writing. Some nights I get it written right and some nights I don't. Some nights when it's very, very quiet, even if nothing else gets accomplished I can seize the opportunity to sing along with Patsy Cline—taking poetic liberties with her words—"I go writin' after midnight, in the moonlight here on Hopewell Road." It's usually about then that the footsteps return and the voice says through the grate, "Time for bed country girl."

## "Silent Protest: A Defiant Process"

By David S. Brown

This is my silent protest  
Beginning at 12:01 a.m.  
Maybe ending seconds  
Before your class on  
The day it's due  
Library or in the  
English building  
Writing Center  
Your domain  
Below your  
Office  
I write

I've waited for the sun to go down  
Purposely  
The moon shines bright  
It's technically tomorrow  
Early but too late for me  
To ask you for  
Your suggestions  
Your opinions  
On what I should do  
What I should say and  
How I should say it  
Even if I wanted to  
I could not ask  
In my declaration of  
Independence  
I write

Deliberately ignoring  
What you say  
What you tell me  
I should do when  
I write because  
These are  
Not your thoughts  
In my head  
Not your fingers  
Gripping my pen  
Not your paper either  
Not yet  
I'm writing

Music on—no Chopin  
No Debussy but

Something you would hate  
It would kill you  
To know I wrote this  
Listening to that  
Unbeknownst to you  
Between the lines is  
Written everything  
I have done to piss  
You off while  
Writing this  
Double-spaced  
12-point font  
Single-sided  
Black ink  
1-inch margin  
1,200 word  
Subliminal love letter  
That meets your  
Every demand  
Every desire  
"It must be the My Love  
And Affection format"  
You say  
That's M.L.A. right  
I'm writing

With the notion  
That I must  
Satisfy my audience  
Never explicitly stated  
But I know  
You know  
We know  
And so in silence  
I protest  
I'll give you what you want  
My thesis stated  
In the first line here  
A main body to die for  
But just know

Every rule was  
Broken in the process  
To write your paper  
With my name on it

How's that for a  
Conclusion?

## Needleman

By Patti Maisch

Whewww—What a day!" the man said as he plopped his chunky body down into a chair too small for him. He sat across from me, as I manned the telephones at the Aids Project Hartford (APH), a quick glance at his scruffy exterior made me turn away in an effort to avoid eye contact with him. When I faced forward again, there he was—looking right at me with a big grin on his face. I sheepishly smiled back. He had a broad face, had a big pot belly, and wore a bright red flannel shirt and tattered jeans. His thinning hair was pulled back in a ponytail and he had a strong resemblance to the late Jerry Garcia. Having just come in from the cold, his rosy cheeks and his red nose were in sharp contrast to his unkempt graying beard. First to break the silence—I said, Hi, I'm Patti"—to which he responded, "I'm Gene and it's nice to meet you." At this point I didn't know why he was there — was he a client, a visitor, a caseworker or someone's ride? I wasn't quite sure how to ask.

The phone rang enabling me to postpone any further conversation. I hung up the phone and after a minute or two of awkward silence I asked, "Do you need any help? Are you

waiting for someone?" That's when Gene told me he was the "Needleman"—the person who goes out in an unmarked van through the streets of Hartford in snow, sleet, rain (and today in blustery below-zero temperatures) to distribute clean, unused hypodermic syringes to Hartford's community of intravenous drug users. Each weekday he and his driver, Carlos, take the dark blue Ford Econoline van into two specific neighborhood locations. Day after day, these two men dole out the new sterile needles along with a strong message that shared syringes can kill. The needle distribution program is supported by the AIDS Project Hartford (APH) and is a successful tool in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. From 7:00 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. Gene and Carlos park the van conspicuously among the dilapidated buildings at the corner of Park and Hungerford Streets and from 11:00 A.M. to 12:45 P.M. they are stationed at the intersection of Albany Avenue and Bedford Street. At 2:00 P.M., after a break for lunch, Gene-o (as he is affectionately known to the APH staff) and Carlos return once more to Park & Hungerford until 3:00 P.M. While there, the two men dispense syringes or "works" (the addicts' slang for hypodermic needle) to intravenous drug users, as part of a "street survival" kit. Each kit contains all of the components necessary to

complete the process of intravenous use such as: sterile cotton balls, clean spoons for the "cooking" process, and bleach for the post-use cleaning.

When I asked Gene if he thinks these addicts are abusing the system by sharing needles anyway and maybe not taking the proper precautions when it comes to sterilizing their paraphernalia, he answers, "Well, let's put it this way, they come out to meet the van because they don't want to die". At first I find that statement contradictory, but he then goes on to explain that just because they are drug addicts that doesn't automatically give them a death wish. To him, the fact that they come out at all is proof enough that they do want to live. Addicts are aware that contracting AIDS can be a death sentence, especially within these two particular neighborhoods where poor health is the norm. Gene tells me that the APH speculates that it serves 600-800 clients a week in needle exchange alone. A controversial program from its very inception, the needle exchange program has a proven track record of saving lives. He explains that he started years ago as a volunteer and has seen the number of needle-exchange clients grow exponentially. He says, "I've seen the progress— I've been doing this for ten years and I know it works for sure—" "Ten years!" I say and I sound surprised because I am. Gene-o takes

this opportunity to lean back, place his hands on his big belly, and settle in to tell me how it all began for him.

As a Vietnam veteran, he spent his time in Saigon installing reconnaissance equipment, and although he never saw "jungle duty," he did see, first hand, the disastrous effect the war had on the once beautiful cities, like Saigon and on its citizens. When he returned to the states, he took a job at Pratt & Whitney writing project promotions—and he loved it. His technical knowledge and his army discipline training gave him hope that he could fit into the corporate world. But being, as he puts it, "the non-conforming type," he found that too many personality conflicts and "other" problems made working a nine-to-five job unbearable for him. Ultimately, after several years he lost that job. Consequently, it wasn't long before he had depleted his severance pay and all his stocks and investments had diminished as well. And so, he became indigent and eventually homeless. After months on the streets he took a room at the YMCA. Since, he was relatively unemployable Gene decided to volunteer at the AIDS Project — and it was through community organizations, like the APH, that he came to be able to ensure a roof over his head at all.

At first the "suits" at human resources considered him too much of

a risk. Simply, his eccentricity made them nervous. However, Gene was persistent. He visited the APH offices and made himself useful anyway he could. By willingly volunteering his time in any capacity, he proved his trustworthiness and ultimately made friends at APH, and eventually he was offered the arduous responsibility of passing out needles on the streets of Hartford—but only on a volunteer basis. Even though, the budget could not accommodate this job monetarily—Gene stayed on—albeit unpaid—for a few years. In the long run, his performance and management of such a demanding position, along with his steadfast dedication to the APH and “his addicts,” and the simple fact that, “After a few years they (APH) realized I wasn’t going anywhere,” were incontestable grounds for placing Gene on the payroll—and so he became a bona fide employee.

I am enjoying the conversation and we continue to chat for awhile. Unfortunately, a phone call takes me from the conversation and before I can get back to him I turn to see that he has dozed off. I watch his big belly rise and fall with each deep heavy breath. Soon he is snoring loudly and his unkempt whiskers flutter with each exhalation. He continues to nap (and snore) until Carlos nudges him and they set out, together, for the final van trip of

the day. I’m alone for the moment and I take the time to ponder this community service I have chosen.

Once a week I spend a few hours behind the desk answering the phone doing what I sometimes consider boring and inconsequential paperwork filing. In the process, however, I have found a redeeming side to that random tediousness. I am acquainting myself with the AIDS Project Hartford, its employees, clients and, most importantly, the neighborhood it serves. I recognize the importance of a program that educates, feeds, and houses those infected with the disease of AIDS. I am getting to know people, like Gene, who are taking hypodermic needles and condoms out into the streets of Hartford as part of a process of saving lives. I am discovering the irony that these very items, stigmatized for so long by so many, are in contrast, the fundamental tools that are helping to reduce the spread of the lethal AIDS virus. But, I also realize that these items are useless unless they can be received with trust and a mutual respect. Gene is just the man to dispense the paraphernalia. He is a committed liaison. He is a competent employee. He may be an out-of-shape old hippie. But for a few hours each day— Gene is da man—the Needleman.

## Bad Energy

By Jennifer Tate

Lately I’ve been feeling like I need to take a break from life. (And not the kind you take by parking your SUV on a train track). A real break—the kind where you cuddle into a warm cozy corner and don’t come out for a while.

Lately I’m feeling stressed in this new America, land of the stressed. It doesn’t seem to stop, a sort of bad energy, the sort of energy that exists between blue state and red state. The sort of energy I feel as a black woman who can’t get excited about Condie Rice becoming the Secretary of State. The energy I feel when I realize that young Americans are in a semi-anxious state about their Social Security benefits, and they could be fooled into thinking the system will be bankrupt by 2042—will they bother to check the facts?

Don’t even mention pre-emptive strike to me—and I’m confused about why Jewish Americans don’t get incensed when they talk of religion in schools. Am I the only one who grew up in New York City?! School would never start if everyone got time out to say their separate prayers.

Bad energy it’s all around. Just when you think justice might be served—balloons burst and you’re writing letters like this one to Dear Abby, talking about why Americans can’t even talk about Reparations. Imagine free labor in today’s economy—Oh yea, the Mexicans... If we give them drivers licenses, what next, Texas and

California? Reparations always come back to haunt.

I’m selling my house and thinking of what a bad retirement move it is: Always selling and moving, never settling. My partner is quite settled. She makes me nervous. Loves her home, never wants to leave. In a way, I’m glad there’s now blue state, red state—cuts down on my options of places to live. My relationship is new and the energy is good. It’s become my oasis in this miserable world.

Tsunamis and bills—fewer parking places, even in Hartford. What is the birth rate in Hartford anyway?

Why do homosexuals offend our consciousness—even homosexuals struggle to not be offended by their own consciousness. We struggle to be straight and get married. Some don’t though, some just want to be brought together in a union, not for what it symbolizes, but for what it means. We hate paying middle-class taxes and being treated like a wild card that separates blue state from red state.

Yea it’s all bad energy. Shifts in tectonic plates—quiet corporate machines swallowing us with mutual fund dreams.

My girlfriend buys organic and I’m back in academia, so maybe I’ll figure out what this all means. I’m seeing good signs too. Palestine and Israel may have in deed exhausted each other. Congress has stood up to IBM and its sale of computer technology to China. Outsourcing has yet to affect any of my friends in IT. Maybe this letter will get published.

## A Level Far Beyond the View of an Elementary Organic Chemist's By Laurel Valchuis

As I sit in Lauren's room at 11:30pm, in the same spot I have been sitting for almost four hours now; I want to cry. There are five of us including a senior chemistry major and our teaching assistant for this organic chemistry class. We all continue to stare at problem number one, as we had been for the last few hours, and still nothing. *What is the point? Am I ever going to be walking down the street and have someone shove NMR data in my face demanding what molecule it shows? Does it really matter that the cis and trans isomers of 3,4-dimethyl, 3,4-bromocyclobutane show up differently in the proton NMR?* The pre-medical track is all that is keeping me on board of this ship, and I still cannot imagine what the point of all this stuff is- we can't even see it! Dr. Mitzel Ph.D. in organic chemistry therefore has perplexed me in the mere fact that he has a PhD in organic chemistry.

I often sit in class watching Dr. Mitzel construct molecules on the board with his assortment of rainbow colored chalk, blocking out all thoughts of resonance and hyperconjugation. I study his black and white tie depicting Einstein's head with various equations floating around it, just wondering how Dr. Mitzel could have made a career out of organic chemistry. In an attempt to answer this beyond the classroom setting, I decided to ask him about what he actually does as an organic chemist while I normally see him in lab on Monday afternoons, sitting in his black leather swivel chair at the infrared spectroscopy unit and whistling Christmas songs as he collects data for students. The back of his shirt is spotted with sweat as he had just returned from his daily run with the chemistry department.

Today, as Dr. Mitzel finishes a phone call I sit patiently in a wooden chair at the table set up in the corner of his office. In front of me a circular carved wooden Trinity emblem is propped on the table, half painted. Above are shelves of what must be years of The Journal of Organic Chemistry. As I turn to the left, hanging next to his Trinity cap and gown is a white sheet of paper reading "did you hear about the chemist that fell into the methoxybenzene reactor and made anisole of himself?" I laugh. Dr. Mitzel finishes his phone call (at his desk) and takes a seat in the wooden chair next to me straightening out the stack of blank sheets of paper in front of him, then folds his hands in his lap.

Not knowing much more than the fact that Dr. Mitzel must write in peer reviewed journals simply because that is what scientific professors do, I inquire about this. He writes for books, professional journals, plus general knowledge writing for texts such as the encyclopedia for organic synthesis. "Well," he begins, "I...well." He quickly reaches forward pulling out a journal from the shelf above and flips open to a page displaying several diagrams with text filled around it. "This is an article I wrote for this journal." He said pointing to the page, leaning back in his chair and crossing his arms. The process Dr. Mitzel goes through to write such articles is very similar to that in which he teaches us in class. "Draw the mechanism first. The mechanism speaks to you like art speaks to an artist. I build a story with the pictures and tables and then just fill in the words around that." I nod dutifully trying to keep up with the mechanisms he points out as my mind wanders to that morning in class, "Now, here is Pyridine, which is a nasty smelling little thing"; Mitzel draws it out on the board then turns to the class, "has anyone ever worked with Pyridine?" He looks at Rich, our T.A. who raises his hand. "Ah yes, well, you will notice that Mr. Yoon is a Yankee fan."

In order to keep his lab going Dr. Mitzel must seek funding from different companies by writing proposals. I ask about what kind of research he is doing to keep up his lab and he quickly reaches for a piece of paper, "Well," he pauses unfolding his hands from his lap then turns to me, "this is actually kind of cool." He whips out his blue ball point pen and begins drawing enedines going through cyclization in order to form a kekule structures. I am concentrating on his artwork, desperately trying to follow his electron flows and resonance structures. One radical throws me off track and I am back to confusion, yet I continue nodding my head as he moves from structure to structure. "Then if this molecule reacts with DNA," he peers over his glasses drawing vigorously, his slightly orange eyebrows raised, "it prevents tumor replication."

"Wait, really?" I ask, oh so intelligently. "So what are you going to do with that?"

"Well I actually have no interest in testing it; I just wanted to see if I could make the bond." He reflected upon his drawings for a minute. "And hopefully someone will pick up my work and think it is interesting enough to use." He hands me the white sheet of paper covered in blue and red structures to add to my ever-expanding collection.

There is just no way you can walk into Dr. Mitzel's office and come out empty handed. It is natural to think you may go in to ask for extra help and to acquire several white sheets of paper filled with blue and red molecules with p-orbitals and hyper conjugative interactions drawn in, but for an interview? Dr. Mitzel can simply not get enough of organic chemistry. He loves it. After all, it is few and far between you meet someone that had received his or her PhD in organic chemistry.

Lately I have been spending half my week with Dr. Mitzel; asking about a problem set, going over an exam, or completing a laboratory experiment. Honestly, it seems like something one would dread, and I must admit, I was not too excited about taking the class, but it has become part of my routine. Just like Dr. Mitzel told us on the first day of class, that after a few weeks, although it may be a struggle, we will not be able to resist the fact that we are organic chemists. Walking in front of Mather dining hall with my head down I don't see hexagons neatly placed together forming a walk-way. I see hundreds of benzenes and think about how they are all so stable because they have beautiful resonance and are fully conjugated, and cyclic and contain  $4n+2\pi$  electrons- oh my goodness, they must be aromatic! I can hear Mitzel's voice in my head coming to this revelation, picturing him giving the class two thumbs up and looking back at the board saying "cool". When I finally come out of my organic haze, I scurry away quickly hoping no one caught me standing in front of the dining hall, mesmerized by the walk way.

Yes, I enjoy going to class at 9AM Monday, Wednesday and Friday, but certainly not as much as Dr. Mitzel. In an email sent by Dr. Mitzel Wednesday October 6<sup>th</sup> at 8:12AM "Only 45 minutes to go until Organic Chemistry!! Can you feel the excitement building?" Dr. Mitzel's enthusiasm, although met with a little skepticism at the beginning of the year, which was made apparent when kids would turn to their peers and laugh nervously when Mitzel would crack a joke. The material we learn about seems to be so trivial and tedious but, for some reason, I keep following along just to see what Mitzel is so damned excited about when he begins drawing some mechanisms on the board. As the semester continues, Mitzel has succeeded in keeping my attention, as I seem to live vicariously through his enthusiasm; yet his level of enthrallment lies so far beyond my sporadic sparks of interest that I think I will leave the organic chemistry to Dr. Mitzel when the year comes to an end.

Dear Juliana,

By Alessandra Diamantis

Papou smelled of Old Spice aftershave, it being one of the few American items he'd become accustomed to. He had a bald top to his head that was always tanned like the rest of his olive skin. The hair he did have was dark and curly, just like yours. Papou would've gotten a laugh out of your wild and crazy curly hair. He wore spectacles that he perched on the end of his nose when reading his bills in private. Papou wore dress shoes, a dress shirt and slacks every day. I can't recall ever seeing him in any other clothing, even while cooking the pizzas at his restaurant. He always had his traditional Greek worry beads in hand. When he walked by me all I heard was the click, click, click of the beads that his fingers played with almost methodically. Papou drove a Cadillac that became his second love. He drove that long boat everywhere. Most often he drove it to the Texas Cafe, his usual hang out spot with the boys. When we drove down North Main St., we could spot that fire red Caddy from miles away.

He ate a tomato-cucumber salad that Yiayia made every night with olive oil and vinegar. Accompanying his salad was feta, bread, olives and some meat - usually pork. Yiayia cooked every night for him because he wouldn't eat anyone else's food. As much as you love Yiayia's "soupiés," he loved every one of her meals. His dinner drink was always a short glass of Metaxa or Ouzo that gave his breath strength. He drank red wine daily. Papou even made his own red wine by hand in the basement. He ordered the grandchildren to each have a glass when we didn't have school the next day because, in his opinion, a no school holiday made it okay to have wine. Good for the health, he said. It tasted bitter and extremely strong as a little girl but with age, I have acquired a taste for it. Dad may not have agreed with Papou's doctoring but he kept quiet.

Papou would've loved you as much as the rest of the family does. I know he would've because I was really close to him. Although he appeared tough and stiff, he was a funny and caring person. He loved to play just like a child. He is the inventor of your favorite game where we chase you around the hallways of their house. He did that with me for endless hours, and I know he would've played that very same game with you. As old and tired as he got, Papou still played the chase game because he wanted to see our toothless smiles and hear our laughter. Our laughter to him was golden. He would've loved to hear your silly little giggle and your endless screaming laughter. I'm positive you would've eventually gotten on his nerves with your loudness, but he'd have enjoyed it for the most part.

The most stubborn man I have ever met, Papou kept his Greek temper close to him. He was always right whether he argued about sports, religion, politics or the United States. No matter what the disagreement was about, he was right and he'd

make you see his side. I think you see that in Dad quite often. Now you know where he gets it from. These disagreements were most commonly found at family dinners. Family dinners always had an accompanying debate that made me upset as a little girl because I didn't understand the yelling. As a child I thought yelling was a sign of anger and aggression. I've grown wise to the truth that yelling is a very effective manner of communication. The louder someone yells the better others understand the point. Papou was unique. He could be the loudest person you've ever heard, or the quietest and most gentle person. The second side was usually seen with his grandchildren.

Papou had many jobs in America to provide for his family. The one I remember best was our family run pizza restaurant in Meriden, Connecticut. This restaurant had become my daycare where I played waitress at the age of five, receiving a \$20 bill at the end of my day from Papou. He was extremely serious in his work. If I acted up, he told me in Greek that I would eat wood. It was one of his favorite phrases. He also made sure a family member had that place open at some point of the day for every holiday. But, he did take time away from the huge pizza oven to play me in an occasional Pacman tournament. I don't think he understood any of the directions since they were in English. You see, Papou's education only lasted until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade when he was sent to work on the farms to support his widowed mother and brothers. You never would've known the hardships he faced as a child in Greece because he never let those memories get the best of him. He kept in stride, working towards a brighter future for his children and grandchildren. Maybe that's why he loved our bright smiles so much. The way Yiayia looks at you when you laugh is the way he would've looked at you - with utter happiness. They loved to see their grandchildren happy since their own childhood was spent during the years of the depression in Greece. He knew that because of his hard work, each generation following him would be more prosperous. In his hard-working life Papou created a legacy of dedication and happiness for his family, and we thank him for it everyday.

I'm sorry that you never got to meet him but I know he would have loved every part of you. You and he share that special Greek temper. I see it coursing through Dad and you. We don't talk about Papou much because you're young and don't really understand. But through the years you'll learn about Papou's legacy and the man he was. I hope this letter helps you come to cherish Papou as much as I know he would have loved you.

Love always,

Alessandra

## Dear Michael

By Edna Guerrasio

It was eleven o'clock at night, I was already on my third lap, and I had nothing. I could not think of one single reason why I had turned him down, blatantly crushed his ego. Out loud I had chalked it up to "how important our friendship was" or "how I wasn't ready for a new relationship," but I knew that neither of these excuses were the truth. I continued to walk over the slippery planks of the wooden deck. I could feel the mist of the ocean brushing up against my face every time a wave crashed into the side of the boat. I was wearing my new navy blue dress. My mother claimed that it was the "perfect outfit for an evening on the ocean." The wind began to pick-up and my skin felt the chill of the Mediterranean Sea. I draped the matching navy blue sweater over my shoulders and I could still smell the rosemary chicken I had picked at during dinner.

I completed the first mile of my journey, four laps and no destination. I knew why I was there, I even had a picture to remind myself. It was his high school picture, the one that would go in the yearbook at the end of the semester. He was wearing a navy blue vest - it certainly wasn't my favorite. It reminded me of elementary school when all the boys would come to class in outfits that their mothers had laid out for them the night before. The vest was very prim and proper, very unlike Michael. In the photograph he had a solemn look upon his face, quite the opposite from the warmth of his usual smile. His skin was slightly tanned from the heat of the summer and no matter which way I held the photograph it seemed as though his eyes would never quite look straight into mine. I was searching for one reason, one reason why I hadn't let myself indulge in his smile, in his invitations or even just the sweet soft spoken words he would send me off to sleep with each night: *"Sweet Dreams, I'll see you tomorrow in English."*

I didn't see Michael at all that summer. As I waved goodbye to the sandy beaches of Barcelona, heading towards Marseille, France, the next port-of-call listed on our cruise itinerary, Michael was listlessly laying on the beaches of the Jersey shore; him, his family and his new girlfriend.

Over the course of two week excursion, I found that I liked to walk the decks of the ship at night. It was a time when I truly felt that I was all by myself. The cold gusts of air that seemed to chase the other guests away bolted my feet to the wooden planks, forcing me to pause for a moment before completing another lap. As I wandered though the mess of lawn chairs and scattered bar stools I stopped every so often to peer over the railing of the deck; my hands firmly grasping the slick wooden ledge as my feet tried to balance on the tips of my toes. The eyes of a little girl would follow the crashing waves, looking for the point where the sky touched the ocean. But I could never find it. I looked down at the picture that was molded to the cup of my hand. The thoughts in my head rang clear with the sound of his

voice. *"Come to my wrestling match tonight. One of the seniors is throwing a party afterwards...it should be a lot of fun. I promise you will have a good time."*

I tried to think of why I had resisted his numerous offers and gentleman-like attempts of courtship. It didn't matter, I would realize; he now had a girlfriend. Someone had accepted his invitation, taken hold of his hand, and I should have been happy for him. Any real friend would have been. And he was my friend - he was a great friend. My body shuddered. It was cold.

I remember the very first day I met Michael. It was sophomore year English class. I didn't know very many people in the room, so the unfamiliarity of his face just seemed to blend with all the rest. I remember though, that he had a very distinct smile. It lit-up his entire face and, for a moment, hid the small scar above his right upper lip. He was wearing an Indian Hills Wrestling Team sweatshirt that hung from his limbs and did very little to hide the gaunt body beneath it.

Michael soon proved himself to be a very outgoing character. When the teacher would ask a question about the reading that obviously none of us had gotten to, Michael's voice, without hesitation, would be the one to break the awkward silence. He always had some joke or sarcastic remark hiding up his sleeve. Although the teacher didn't like his antics, or the tendency that he had to interrupt her lessons, the smile that she could never seem to hide showed that she appreciated his humor.

I could tell that it was getting late. The couple that I passed on several of my rounds had left the portion of railing they were pressed up against for quite some time. I stopped and sat down on one of the many benches that lined the interior of the deck. I was in Spain, one of the most beautiful countries in the world, thousands of miles away from home, and the only thing I could think of was Michael and the non-existent relationship we had been trying to define for the last year.

As I leaned against the cold metal bars of the bench I looked down at the curled up photograph, slowly turning it over to read the inscription as I had done many times before. "Our phone calls are the most valuable thing that I will take with me from sophomore year." My mind traveled back to the school year and the unknown anticipation that I had each night as I waited to talk to Michael before falling asleep. His phone calls were something I came to rely upon, depend upon, something that I thought would never change.

That's when it hit me. I realized that I had always thought Michael would be there to look-out for me, and carry me home at night when some other boy left me standing out side my doorstep alone. Somehow I had expected that he would always be just standing there, in the shadow of my thoughts, waiting to rescue me when I needed help or a shoulder to lean on. He had been a constant source of warmth and comfort that I continually took for granted. And now, he was no longer there. He was no longer on the other end of the telephone line waiting for me to respond to one of his sarcastic remarks. Michael now offered his comforting words and quiet gestures to someone else; someone who had



embraced the offer I left sitting on the table. I realized that I kept saying "No" to Michael and ignoring his attempts because I thought he would always be there waiting for me to accept when I was ready, when all of the other options had disappeared. Foolishly, selfishly, I thought that I had the only smile strong enough to warm his heart.

My hands became fidgety, they began to forcefully tap on the metal bars of the bench. I couldn't sit still any longer. I stood up, my mind wandering through a myriad of thoughts and emotions, my feet instinctively following. I didn't know what to do. Should I confess to Michael and tell him how selfish and naïve I had been or should I respect the fact that he now has a girlfriend and keep my thoughts to myself? For the first time in my life I felt alone. I was lost, scared and unable to turn to the one person I needed most, the one I had taken for granted so many times before. I would have given anything at that moment to have been able to pick up the telephone and hear Michael's voice on the other end. I began my laps around the deck once again. My mind was running in circles. I could feel the blood pumping through my veins, clenching my hands in fists. I had to do something. I couldn't wait until I got home. I had to dispense the raw emotions that were taking over my thoughts. I ran back to my room.

I silently cracked open the door, trying not to let the energy of my thoughts and emotions stir my sister from her sleep. I quietly picked up the pad of paper on the dresser and the complimentary pen the cruise line had supplied with it. I opened the sliding door leading to our balcony and once again looked over the railing at the waves crashing against one another. For a moment I listened to the silence of the sea. I sat down in the cold rod iron lawn chair, pen to paper. My thoughts were waiting to purge themselves on the clean white sheet that read "Royal Caribbean, Let Us Plan a Vacation Getaway for You" across the top line.

*Dear Michael...* I had nowhere to go. The nervous ache that twisted my stomach in knots traveled to my fingertips and tried to relieve itself through the capsule of ink that rested between my fingertips. I had all of these thoughts and emotions anxiously stirring in my mind, waiting for a brilliant introduction to release them - but there was none. There was no brilliant introduction, and no screaming emotions. There was just me. The jumble of thoughts, words and phrases parading through my mind came out in the same, youthful tone I had always known. At that moment I knew that it wasn't going to be a heart wrenching letter, causing overdramatic cries of love or joy. It was just going to be me, at that very moment, using the only voice I had ever known. Now, when I look back at the attempt I made to express the mess of emotions that were pulsating through my entire body, the words seem trite and silly - characteristic of a high school teenage girl who is experiencing love for the first time. But at that moment those were the words I had to write. They were the only form of release that I knew, and so I began.

Dear Michael,

8/16/99

Hey what's up? It's me. Right now I am on the cruise ship and we are sailing from Spain to France. So far the ship has made two stops, one in Palma Majorca and the other in Barcelona. Although both of these cities were beautiful, my favorite city has been Barcelona. We spent two days there before sailing to France. In Barcelona there is one main street called Las Ramblas. The street is divided by a market. There they sell all sorts of things like birds, paintings, flowers, drawings, crafts etc. Along the sides of the market, every so often you find people acting like statues. They paint their whole body one color, put on a costume and then stand on a podium being as still as possible. Then when someone gives them money they change positions. Honest to god, they really do look like statues. I didn't even know that they were real people until I saw one of them move. People also dance and put on shows and crowds gather around to watch. It's actually really cool. Las Rambalas was definitely one of my favorite parts of the trip so far. I don't know how many time I must have walked up and down that street just looking at all the different things being sold, and watching all the artists paint pictures.

Anyway, I definitely can't complain about being on the cruise. The boat is really nice and there is always something to do. In Barcelona, the sun doesn't set until 9:30, so no one really goes out until 11. The club I went to last night didn't start until 12:30! People definitely stay out until all hours of night on the cruise ship. Whether they are dancing, drinking, gambling, or just talking, everyone stays up late doing something. Tomorrow the boat is docking in France. Although I love seeing new cities, my favorite times are spent either laying in the sun by the pool, sitting on the deck outside my room or walking around the top deck late at night. Actually, walking around the top deck late at night has to definitely be my favorite. Even though it gets pretty windy up there, you know me, Miss anti-social, I love being by myself just walking around. It gives me a chance to think about anything and everything. I feel like I have been doing a lot of thinking lately.

I have about another 8 days then its back to good old New Jersey and tennis tryouts! (Sarcasm - if you didn't know. I know sometimes you don't pick up on things like that). Well, I hope you are having a good time at the shore with your parents and Danielle. I'm sure you will have plenty of crazy shore stories to tell me when you get back.

Look at that. Look at what a long letter I wrote you. I am even going to put a post card in the envelope. See - you expected a letter from me because I went away and I wrote you one. Now you also went away, so don't think that I expect any less. When I get home there better be a letter waiting for me (no sarcasm). I love the cruise and Spain is beautiful but I must admit I do miss our phone calls. I'll talk to you when I get home on Monday or Tuesday.

Edna

I returned home a week later. On the plane I promised myself a thousand times that I would wait to call Michael. I wanted to settle in, unpack, relax and gather my thoughts. But as soon as my foot hit the doorway of our old, colonial style home, I made a straight B-Line for the telephone. I sat on my bed nervously anticipating the call I was about to make. Maybe he didn't get the letter. Maybe I was worrying over nothing. My hand slowly reached down, my fingers trembling as they instinctively

touched upon the numbers in succession. 3-3-7-0-1-6-8. My heart was thumping loudly inside my chest. The blood rushing to my head forced an airy, faint feeling to take over my body. I wanted to hang up. I wished I had never sent that letter. And then just as I began contemplating the humility that could be caused by my actions, a voice on the other end of the line interrupted. "Hello." My heart slowly eased itself out of the nook it had created in the pit of my throat. The voice that I had been anticipating in my head for the last 7 days, had finally responded. My mind was at ease and life entered back into the realm of reality.

*"How have you been? How was the trip?"*

*"Good. It was a lot of fun. I saw a lot of really cool places and it was good to spend time with my family, but I am happy to be home."*

*"Me too."*

Michael and I talked on the phone for the rest of the evening, and then into the early hours of the next morning. A total of 12 hours with no breaks, no interruptions - just a 16 year old wrestler trying to make sense of a teenage girl's heart. Looking back that phone call is probably one of the most valuable memories I have. Sitting on my bed, waiting to make that call, I was nervous that I had made a fool of myself, putting myself out there for someone who rightfully should have turned me away. But he didn't.

The next day Michael broke up with his girlfriend. All of his friends at school told him he was crazy - that I would break up with him as soon as the next guy that sparked my interest came along - but Michael and I both knew there was more than just a high school crush between us.

Now, five years later, Michael still has that letter. It sits in a small box next to the headboard of his bed. Every so often, when we want to have a good laugh, or take a stroll down memory lane, he pulls out the faded pieces of paper and reads them to me. We laugh at how trivial and childlike my words sound - because we know how the story ends: boy likes girl. girl likes boy. boy and girl fall in love.

---

*For one human being to love another; that is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks, the ultimate, the last test and proof, the work for which all other work is but preparation.*

*~Rainer Maria Rilke~*

## Tonight

By Bryce Baschuk

The clear, cloudless night  
Bright with the moon's  
pale luminescence  
We conquer footpaths,  
brooks and trees

We are the bare feet  
that walk the soft waving carpet  
slipping gently  
across the marble grains

We cry out our joyful songs  
and shrug off  
the sad wisdom of the oaks

We swim naked  
in the gregarious tides  
Embracing cool comfort  
in the ancient soul of water

The pugnacious brush,  
the long sweeping arms of the willow  
and the marching sentinels of the  
dunes  
All pause

A spell so simple  
A kiss  
A spinning eternity of endless release  
We close our eyes and dance  
Spinning on a cloud  
where only stone-set names sleep  
We'll dance in an endless midnight  
of hope's conception  
Love, I'll dance with you anytime.

## The Long Walk

By Gwen Hopkins

On the aptly named long walk,  
a path well trod,  
I watch snowy blankets  
tuck in the quad.

People-watching  
on the sly,  
I size up  
the passersby.

Rushing to class,  
or to friends, or to eat,  
or to anywhere that has  
walls, roof, and heat,

unbeknownst  
to me and the rest,  
each harbors hopes  
in the heart in their chest:

beating for colors  
and shapes of dreams -  
but none of these hearts  
beats for me, it seems.

## ~The Back Page~

*Farwell to our Senior WA's:*

*Bryce Baschuk  
Jamie Calabrese  
Allison Eno  
Emily Foote  
Dorothy Francoeur  
Isaac Goldstein  
Edna Guerrasio  
Kathryn Hurley  
Kate Kane  
Wendy Metayer  
Kathleen St. Onge  
Mark Witt*

*And Welcome to our New WA's*

*Jorge Amaral  
Robert Baehr  
Emma Bayer  
Brooks Barhydt  
Michael Bojko  
Joanne Buehler  
Ryan Butler  
Sarah Cantor  
Katherine Chabalko  
Emily Cooperman  
Armand DeRosario  
Mary Dube  
Meghan Evans  
Natalia Frey  
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