Like literature, The Chestatee Review is multifaceted. The magazine is so much more than published material housed beneath a glossy cover. The Chestatee Review is a creative entity born of collaboration and hard work. The magazine provides a catalyst for ideas, events, and community. The most meaningful ideas the magazine generates are the literary pieces that students submit to our contest and events. Their work and talent is the heart of the magazine.

Effectively marketing the magazine and the club that constructs it also takes creative ideas. Some of these marketing tools emerge as events. The events we put on as a staff are the aperitif to the magazine. At our functions, our ambition, as a club, is to enrich the lives of the student body and community through literature and the arts.

We could not do all this effectively without The Chestatee Review community, which consists of our advisors, staff, and friends, who have embraced us over the years by reading the magazine and attending our functions. It has been my privilege to collaborate with such an accomplished and efficient staff, while gleaning guidance and leadership from wise and creative advisors.

Any success we celebrate as individual contributors or for the magazine as a whole, we cannot fully claim without acknowledging the work of the previous literary champions whose vision and hard work gave us a platform to maintain and develop upon.

I thank The Chestatee Review for this opportunity to create and appreciate literature.

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STAFF

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Tandra Long

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Editor, Madison County Journal
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“She watched, eyes glazed as the tide rolled in and washed out. She felt the heat of the day against her flesh and the heavy wind pushing her against the house.”

-“It Was True That There Had Been Dancing,” Katherine Schinell
He followed her everywhere now, where before they had returned to the island he at least spent part of his time in his garden, hunched over, giving special attention to his tomatoes. It had been tomatoes in their small garden, and they grew well into the winter months under the glaring Georgia sun. Here he planted pineapples and tended to the mango tree. It was the same tree that her father had pulled fruit from to sell at his stand in front of their house. It was at this stand that she had first met him. He came with the other soldiers to buy fruit and to offer coins to her mother for a piece of fried fish. She had imagined both of them here, but since her return to the island, it was becoming more difficult for her to pull them out of their graves and place her father in his boat, or her mother smiling gap-toothed upon their return. It was easier to think of her brother, but that was only because he had positioned himself behind the home they had grown up in and had spent the decades that passed calling for money. Their mother was ill and needed care, and how was he to pay for it? Of course she had been happy to send whatever she could. Her job at the factory paid enough for the necessities and the rest for her husband’s Budweiser and Camels. She sent more when he was working.

Now the mangoes were collecting in piles around her yard as there were no longer soldiers around to buy them, and she had grown sick of them. She remembered back home, looking for mangoes at the Piggly Wiggly and on the rare occasions that she found them, finding them lacking in flavor and so she had developed a taste instead for donuts from Krispy Kreme or Little Debbies. These were what she craved since her return to the island, but she was surrounded by fruit rotting at her feet. She had asked him several times to gather them, but they remained in the same positions, changing only by the number of flies each could attract. It wasn’t in her nature to allow such filth to surround her, but she allowed it now out of protest. This was no longer her home.

He followed her now, paying close attention to the same things she had been doing for him throughout their marriage. He seemed interested in the laundry although he thought she should use a different detergent, one that smelled more like soap and less like flowers. He wasn’t a woman. He was interested in the meals she prepared, though he ate very little and
complained that they seldom ate ham. Why did they always eat fish? Fish and vegetables. Where was the ham? Or what about chicken? There were chickens running around everywhere. She wondered if he would eat a cat. There were cats everywhere too. She would like to see him try to catch a chicken.

She had left the island because it had been time for his return home. He was to leave on the same ship that had brought him to her. She would travel by boat to be with him when he sent a ticket and a small amount of money for her to eat. Not that she was able to eat what with the swaying of the boat and afterwards the bumping of the bus that would take her and her new daughter to their home. She had been seduced by the image of rich Georgia earth sprouting groves of pecan trees. Georgia, he said, smelled of honeysuckle, and he was certain that blackberries were the south’s manna. To her his home smelled of concentrated gasoline. Georgia made her nauseous. Her mother-in-law stepped through the smoke of the bus and called to her. She had smiled up and reached for the child. Her mother-in-law inspected more than admired and then the “Well, You’re not at all what I expected.” She was greeted with a sense of relief. Relief that she wasn’t black. She wasn’t white either, what she was, was welcomed by this woman, this Betty who would introduce her to fried okra, rollers, and the Baptist church.

Everything she had thought about the island was wrong. She didn’t realize that she had been raised poor. It seemed natural to her to sleep in a hammock and to eat what was grown or what had been caught. There had only been the option to wear what was passed down from her mother or what she had sewn. Here things were bought in stores. She blushed at the prices and for the first year refused to shop without her husband, who felt at first fortunate to have found a wife who was hesitant to spend money but became quickly frustrated that she was unwilling to shop alone. She was expected to shop, and he to work. So for a while, she avoided shops and grew what she could, watched muscadines grow on serpent like vines, and bought dresses that failed to flatter even the mannequin, before she realized that he wasn’t paying attention.

In her twenties and thirties and forties, his slurried voice had filled their home. “What’s that dog doin’ in here?” “How’s my girl?” “Honey, bring me and Robert some tea.” “She don’t mind.” And then his voice was no longer in the house but over the phone. “I’ll be home late.” Until his voice disappeared all together. “Is this Mrs. Lewellen?” “Should we call a cab or can you pick him up?” “Mrs. Lewellen? This is Dr. Gray. No, calm down. He’s going to be fine.” Fine meaning he wasn’t dead. Fine meaning
he had lost his front teeth, crippled his friend, and the car junk metal. But God he had found. She couldn’t bring herself to look at the photograph of the car. It was his blue ribbon survival picture that he took with him to his A.A. meetings where he cried to strangers. These meetings without invitation extended to her.

She had left with a sense of dread. “’Cmon now, Where’s your sense of adventure?” She didn’t know what he meant. She had been to the main island once for a funeral, but only for the day and had never been any further than that. Now she had been to two places: here and there. She wanted to be back with her daughter whose nose had grown to look like her own, large and flared when angry. They had left the island to be closer to his family. He couldn’t stay with her on the island. Where would he work? He wasn’t a fisherman. He had no interest in fruit. She felt the weight of loneliness before she was gone. But away she would no longer be looked at with disapproval. Here they disapproved of her pants, of her white husband, of her child. They were happy to see her leave. She left when her mother seemed to be a young woman, before she was ill and before her father was blind. She heard from her brother that her mother asked for her often. She heard that her father laughed at the darkness even when he fell out of his cot and onto the floor. She had wanted to return back then, but there was never enough money and who would watch after the girl when her husband was out until dawn most nights.

They lived now in a house that sat on the same lot where her family’s shack had stood. She enjoyed her nights alone when they first moved back to the island, the old man staying indoors with the television turned to the highest volume so he could hear over the deafening of his ears. The woman’s thoughts came to her clearly at these moments in spite of the mixture of noise from the television and her husband’s cough which sounded bigger than him. She had been worried about their return. She had feared haunted memories. She had been afraid of seeing their faces at each turn. She didn’t want to remember her father’s pale eyes shining up at her when she came home riding a wild horse or her mother calling the children in from the water to serve them sliced plantains on sea grape leaves. There had been no need for her to worry. Children ate their food off of paper plates; the horses were starving and meek. Watching the water, her mind would clear, and she could think of nothing. She watched, eyes glazed as the tide rolled in and washed out. She felt the heat of the day against her flesh and the heavy wind pushing her against the house. The old man would shout at her if she stayed out through the rain, and it was only at his insistence that she moved.
That was before he decided to follow her outside. Now it was impossible for her mind not to be consumed by him. He stood with her on the porch and talked about their early days together. He remembered their beginning being cloaked in romance. He spoke of taking her dancing. He had loved watching her dance. He remembered that he had courted her by spending long days swimming in the ocean. They had been married now for fifty-three years, and he still couldn’t remember that she was afraid of the water. It had almost killed her when she was a girl. There was no reason to remind him. He never heard her. The woman didn’t need to be reminded of their courtship. It was true that there had been dancing, but he left out the fights started because of hours spent consuming alcohol and his resistance to ever learning her language.

They had been back on the island now for over a year, and she had felt every day pass. They had returned because of his lungs. She had watched him nervously after his retirement as he sat for hours researching pollution levels in his hometown that was now home to her. She wasn’t surprised when he announced that they would be returning to the island, only that it had taken him so long to remember it. She had been sitting in the kitchen having her coffee when her name was called from the den. She knew before he told her that they would be leaving, but she listened to him anyway. Even now, the memory of him squeezing her leg and the words “I’m taking you home” filled her with disgust. She had stepped out of his grip.

He had developed different interests since their arrival. He liked to stand on the porch at dawn and laugh at the men next door. He would shout in a crude version of her language to the men, and they would laugh in return. The old man felt accepted. The locals liked his humor. He nudged the woman and chuckled. He found himself to be clever. He asked her to take him fishing. He wanted to know what it was like to grow up here. He wanted to visit the rain forest. He wanted to take her on long aimless drives and treat her as if it were she who was the tourist, as if she hadn’t yet seen every mile of this island, as if it weren’t engraved into her memory. Her island had changed only slightly.

It would be easier if she had some way to distract herself. She thought little of reading. It was movement that called to her. In her youth she had loved to explore. Thought she had avoided, yet it was thought that defined her. She thought of the plates in her kitchen and how there wasn’t enough heat in her that could cause her to break them.
I take the city bus to school. I get my tokens from the light-skin case worker at the DFACS office. She has a bucket full of them in the bottom drawer of the tan metal cabinet that sits behind her desk. She looks too young to have her job. In our first meeting, she told me she was twenty-three, but she looks like she’s my age.

She has things that I want like the real diamond cross that hangs around her neck, the college degree that hangs above her head, and the name plaque that sits at the edge of her desk that reads ROCHELLE. She’s the best case worker I’ve ever had because she hasn’t had the goodness sucked out of her yet. When I go to see her I feel like I am somebody. She asks me all the usual questions like….

“How’s school?”
“How are your grades?”
“How’s your granny?”
“Do you have a boyfriend?”

“Good. Good. Good. Yes.” I lie. I make stuff up, and I start to believe it myself. It’s almost a game for me now. I start to think up things I can tell her to make her smile and give me tokens. I smile too when I’m in her office. I pretend I’m one of those that will make it out. The lucky one who can rise above all the crap and make her job worthwhile. Since I’m seventeen, Rochelle lets me bring in the paper work for my granny who is old and can hardly make it out anywhere. I fill in everything I can and bring in the papers Rochelle tells me to, and then she fills out the rest. I get my tokens, and my granny and me keep getting a check and food stamps each month.

I’m not sure why I even bother going to school anymore. I’m not passing anything. I wanted to do better this year, but it never seems to go my way. I live in Techwood homes, in the scary part of Atlanta. My granny told me they were the first housing projects ever built in America. I believe her because they are falling apart. Everything is broke or about to be broke. The church people brought the kids in my neighborhood new backpacks this summer. The backpacks were filled with pens and paper and other school supplies. The week before school starts every year, the church people bring us the bags. They call themselves an urban ministry.
This year I even got one I liked. It was pink and grey camouflage with a label on the front that said Timberland.

It made me feel like I might have a chance this year. It had a smell of newness that pierced the stale air of my room. It shined like a pink sunset revealing everything that was worn and old, like the dingy carpet and the dresser that was nearly stripped of its fake wood coating. I had nearly peeled it bare the night before the case workers from DFACS took me from Mama. The brown wood just peeled off in long jagged pieces, like wallpaper. The dresser was the only piece of furniture I have ever had. I begged Granny to go back and get it for me, but she couldn’t ‘cause she can’t drive, but Rochelle had it dropped off at Granny’s somehow. Now, my book bag sits beside me on the city bus: empty, dingy, and filled with the smells and stains of my life.

The best part of school is the morning ride on the city bus. The day is new and still dark. The bus is like a cradle rocking me with its stop and go motion as it shelters and releases its passengers. All the while the motor hums like a mother softly in the background. There are familiar faces and routines unfolding as the sun trumps the darkness. Each day the bus gives me someone new to look at and wonder about. Today, it’s a woman with three young children all bundled tightly beneath wind breakers, their hoods tied so tight beneath their chins that the elastic around the hood has etched a zigzag pattern on their foreheads. The lady does not speak English, and she is trying to make sure she’s on the right bus. She keeps showing the driver the bus schedule and making strange noises that I think are words. Finally, she just starts pointing. The driver, a fat cranky white man who smells like clothes that have been left in the washer to long, rolls his eyes impatiently as he tries to decipher the woman’s attempt to use English. He snatches the bus schedule and points to the train station and says "You transfer J. Bus Station” in his best Spanish accent. “Oh, J, si” the woman smiles.

The driver, regretting his meanness under the glare of stares from the onlookers, pats the woman’s hand and smiles like a fancy white lady in a beauty pageant, all teeth and no heart. The Mexican lady takes a seat, her children shuffling behind her. I try to imagine where they are going. I decide she is on her way to the battered women’s shelter escaping her crazy, wife beating husband. Mama used to see a Mexican man, and he used to beat her worse than any black man ever did.

The regulars on the bus have their stops in front of gas stations or shopping centers. Some of them wear uniforms that tell you where they are going while others wear the mystery of street clothes. One lady is
always dressed real nice. She sits next to a young man each morning, and they talk excitedly with arms flailing, tongues wagging, and big eyes. They have different stops. Hers is in front of a tall building with a door that spins in triangular slices filled with people rotating in and out like a merry go round. His stop is right before mine. He has beady little eyes and a chipped front tooth that make me uneasy. He seems too rough for her, too knowing. Some days his look troubles me so much I want to warn the nice dressed girl.

The bus drops me off a block away from school. Every day I curse myself for coming back as I walk up the side walk that lines the side of the school. The faces of other students start to come at me like cockroaches in a crack house. I look at their clothes, but blur their faces by squinting my eyes, white and black smears. We cram ourselves into a building that traps us with cement blocks and thick paint just like the jailhouse that Mama’s in. I don’t even bother getting my books from my locker. I go to the cafeteria and eat grits that require two packages of salt and a cold biscuit with lumpy grey gravy.

Only the poor kids eat breakfast at school. Everyone knows, but we don’t care. We’re too hungry for pride. We sit silently lapping up each bite. The weight of the hood clawed on our faces. The daily hustle like a poison eating up our insides. We think our secrets are safe, but school pricks our skin and the rage oozes out. White people like to make up names for it like: ADD, ADHD, BP, fucked-up. It’s just their way of marking us.

My first class is English. My teacher is a white lady with blond hair pulled to one side in a perfect wing like a pigeon’s. Her classroom is neat and tidy just like her long denim skirts that are starched and straight. Her collared shirts are buttoned to the neck like an old school marm. Her lips are pink, and her glasses are too big for her face. All the kids are scared of her.

I avoid her eyes, but I love to look at her. I want to do good for her but just not enough. In her class, I feel guilty that I haven’t read that brown book they talk about each day, but I like hearing her and the other kids talk about the boy in it. His name is Holden. They think he’s pretty messed up, but I think he’s an ungrateful rich kid. If they could see what messed up really looked like, they wouldn’t be allowed to read those kinds of words in a classroom. The teacher’s name is Mrs. Todd, and she avoids my eyes too. I guess I’m too much to take on, and it’s easier to pretend I’m not there, a black hole in the atmosphere of her class; if she cared, she might be consumed.

The bell rings, and it’s time to move on to the next class. This time
it’s Biology. A black lady teaches this class. She lets us call her by her first name, Mrs. Brenda. She’s a good teacher. She taught me how to get rid of hiccups by drinking water bent over with my mouth on the far side of the cup. It works every time. The rest of the stuff she teaches is okay, but I usually fall asleep in her class, the grits and biscuit pulling on my eyelids. The bell wakes me up, and I wipe the drool off my cheek and shake my hand that is prickly and heavy with numbness.

My next class is PE. The locker room is always filled with white girls smoking like chimneys and whining about this or that. Every day I ask myself why the stupid dike, gym teacher doesn’t come in here and bust all these crackers.

The school is half black, but somehow I am the only black girl in this class. They separate the boys and girls at PE. The boys play flag football, basketball, and dodge ball while the girls do girly sports like volleyball and kick ball. Lately, we’ve been doing aerobics, jumping around and hiking our legs like dogs. Each girl is supposed to make up a routine to do in front of the class, like a real instructor, while all the rest of us follow her.

Last week, one white girl got a brand new pair of high-top Reeboks to wear for her turn. I knew they wouldn’t fit me, but yesterday morning during breakfast I went to her locker and took them. My cousin Terrell had showed me how to pick a combination lock with a safety pin. I had practiced for several days on one that came in the supplies of my book bag.

Today, when she opened her locker, I thought some big neon sign would start flashing over my head that read, Guilty! Guilty! Black Thief! Call the police, get the principal, and grab the tar and feathers. My tongue started to stick to my mouth, my ears throbbed with my heartbeat, and the palms of my hands got sticky and hot.

Her face was all contorted; she looked so dumb and lost. I felt a strange sting of hate and pity for her. She opened her locker again and looked as if they would magically appear. I tried not to look, but it was too hard not to watch. She opened her book bag and dug around, then tried to open the locker next to hers. She was all flustered and pink. I wanted to laugh and almost did, but then she started to look around the room for the culprit. I quickly turned my eyes to my locker and began changing. I could feel her eyes penetrating my scalp like a laser. I got up and went to the gym feeling cocky like I was some hardened criminal doing time in the pen.

I had hid the shoes in a plastic bag underneath a thick bush on the side of the school where I catch the city bus. I grabbed them on the way out and quickly stuffed them into my book bag. On the ride home I kept
opening the bag and looking at the white leather shoes. They were two sizes too small for me. I didn’t care that I could not wear them; I just wanted them.

When I got home my granny was in the kitchen standing over a steaming pot of ox tails. Her face was shiny from the steam. She still had her night gown on. It hung on her loosely, and I could see her tit through the arm hole as she stirred the pot. It hung like an over-ripe shriveled banana to her chest. The sight of it made her seem vulnerable and helpless. I wanted to consume her with a tight embrace. Instead, I gave in to a long yawn that stretched out my face. The house seemed to be sucking out all my energy, making me clumsy and dull. I leaned against the counter, my legs and arms heavy with drowsiness.

“Charlene, make sure that door is closed honey. Don’t want the chill coming in.”

I stared into her brown eyes for a few moments, focusing on the dark, grey blue rings that outlined them. I gave her a kiss on the cheek and went to the door and pushed the top of the warped frame with my hands and kicked the bottom with my foot until all the gaps were tightly sealed.

I went to my room and closed the door. I pulled the shoes out of the plastic bag that filled my otherwise empty book bag and stuffed them under my bed. I lay on my bed and replayed the bewildered look my victim had. She deserved it, I told myself. It will do her some good to learn about loss, I thought. I probably did her a favor. I felt a surge of power and wellbeing wash over me. I was like a giant, evening the scales of justice. I rolled over and took the shoes out from under the bed. This time I tried to cram my feet into them. I got them on, but they were so painful I had to pull them off.

I went to the kitchen and opened the drawer where my granny kept her scissors and crossword puzzles. She was still minding the pot with sincere dedication. I took the scissors back to my room with such dramatic skill that I pretended I was an actress being filmed for a climactic scene where I was about to murder someone. I shut my door and threw myself to the ground landing on my knees. I began stabbing the shoes with the blades. I cut the laces and sheared the leather. I dropped the scissors, and with my bare hands, I started to rip the shoes to pieces. White bits of Rebook flew like confetti. I felt bizarre, crazed, and alive. I started to cry; deep sobs erupted from my gut, making me heave and moan. Salty tears ran into my mouth and soaked the carpet beneath me.

I could see the stupid white girl’s face. It was floating in the blackness of my mind. Rochelle was there too, so was Mrs. Todd, and Mrs.
Brenda. “What a pity, such a nice girl, what a pity,” they said in unison.

My granny knocked on my door. “Charlene, are you alright?” I swooped up the evidence and crammed it under my bed.

“Yes, Granny, I’m fine,” I said, frantically drying my eyes, trying to pull myself together.

“Come on out here and get you something to eat,” she said.

“Ok, Granny.” I grabbed a small mirror on my dresser and looked at myself. My nose and cheeks were swollen, and pink outlined my lips and laced my eyes. My stomach felt hollow, and the smell of supper made my mouth wet. I shook off my fit with determination and opened my door.

Granny was on her chair with her old, black tray in her lap sipping her stew from a spoon. “You look terrible child; go get you some stew and come have a sit down with your old Granny.”

I slid my feet obediently to the kitchen and spooned myself a large bowl of stew from the heavy cast iron pot that was stained by grease and wear. The stew was rich brown from the ox tails, and the smell stuck to everything in the small apartment. I sat down on the couch that edged up to my granny’s chair.

“What’s wrong sugar?” she said. Her eyes weak with age and concern, her face crumpled up with worry.

“Nothing, Granny,” I said after slurping a dangerously full spoonful of stew. I could feel its warmth slide down my throat and hit my stomach.

“You know I love you……” she said and paused looking right through me. “And I’m sorry I can’t do more for you…”

“Granny, you do too much as it is. Don’t worry,” I interrupted.

“Is it a boy?” she asked.

“No.” We sat silently, each one sipping on the hot stew and savoring its wholesome contents. She sat her bowl down on her tray and reached for my face and touched it gently.

“It’s going to be alright; it’s all going to be alright.” She smiled, picked up her bowl, and resumed eating. The only sound in the house was our spoons hitting the glass bowls and long slurps of pleasure. The warmth of her stew was like a healing balm that spread through my body touching each nerve and quieting it. For a moment.
I was awake even though I wasn't supposed to be. My bedroom was right next to the porch and the window was open. My older sister's giggling was keeping me awake, and it was keeping my elephant, Mr. Snuffles up as well. Mr. Snuffles used to be Jacie's, but when she turned twelve in February she said I could have him. I wanted to know what they were giggling about. Jacie had told me she didn't think she loved Chester anymore. So I didn't know why she would be giggling, especially since Mom had told her we were leaving and we would have to tell all our friends goodbye. Maybe she was happy to be leaving Chester. Maybe that's why she was giggling. Or maybe she was trying not to spoil Chester's good news about getting to go the college he picked out.

I finally had to peek my head through the curtains and watch what was happening. I really wish I hadn't, and so did Mr. Snuffles. I covered his eyes when I saw Chester knock my sister over with his lips and stick his hand up her shirt. My teacher had told the class about bad touching. I think I knew what she meant when I saw that. It was bad enough they were sitting on my toy chest, but now all my toys were going to know about bad touching. I held Mr. Snuffles tighter, but made sure to keep his eyes closed just in case there was more kissing. Then I heard Chester tell her he loved her. Maybe that's why it was okay to put his hand up her shirt. I was waiting for Jacie to tell him what she told me, but she didn't. She lied. I heard her say it.

“I love you too.”

Mom always told me not to lie and that Jesus always wanted us to tell the truth and to love everyone, but Jacie didn’t love Chester. She had told me so. Maybe it’s okay to lie to someone if you don’t love them. Maybe that’s why when Jacie came to bed that night she told me that she was sure she didn’t love Chester anymore. And she told me that it was a good thing she didn’t love him because it’s easier not to love anyone you don’t have to.

What she said about love didn’t make sense. I didn’t believe her that night, but then when we got into the car to leave the next morning, I knew she was right. I knew Jacie was right because as my dad yelled “good riddance” to my mom as we drove away, my mom began to cry. It was the first time I’d ever seen her cry. I knew it would have been easier if she
she hadn't loved him. She wouldn't have to cry, and my sister wouldn't have to hold back her own tears so she could hold my mom's hand. But my mom did love my dad, so she cried for the next three hours, and Jacie held her hand the whole time. When we came to the first rest stop, I threw Mr. Snuffles in the trash. I was done loving things I didn't have to. Jacie was right. Jesus was wrong.
Circling the hill, balefires bright,
Did cast long shadows dancing.
And in the between the pyrelight
I fancied fauns there prancing.

-“Beltane Night,” Sarah Madsen
'Twas Beltane when it happened then,  
The first of May dawned clearly,  
And all us to the blooming glen  
Did go, as we did yearly.

We waited 'til the moon hung high,  
'Til every star was shining,  
Then made our way to that hill night  
The pole with ribbons twining.

Circling the hill, balefires bright,  
Did cast long shadows dancing.  
And in between the pyrelight  
I fancied fauns there prancing.

They gathered up the maids all fair  
And gentlemen unmarried  
To circle round the maypole there  
A ribbon each we carried.

Around and round our merry way  
Until the trimmings tired,  
And each us on that night in May  
A perfect match acquired.

Then the moment came at last,  
The ruler's royal crowning  
And after every vote was cast  
I blushed, in applause drowning.

They raised me up and on my brow  
Placed a wreath of blossoms bright  
And at my feet they all did bow  
My true subjects for a night.
I watched the games and merriment
And found a man I fancied
Then beckoned him with finger bent
To celebrate unmercied.
must have sunk through the water
like a truck full of spearheads
but with just one in his rib
was he found, after centuries
meatless, his bones never grazed
by teeth, mostly pristine
among a rubble
of fine metal razors
with horsehead handles,
among antlers, mandibles
spiraled bangles and dishes.

Some pale, bloated deity was pleased
by these submerged bobbles and carcasses:
crowned with fingerbones
regal in sphagnum,
a stiff cloak of reindeer ribs,
and a viscous manner of dismissing his attendant,
the serpent,
who still enacts the end of each day,
becoiling the sun in darkness.

Each dawn all of the dead row the boat of the morning
out of unreasonable night:
the noble and the young, the hanged and the bogged.

How much has the ship’s passing quickened
with all of them dead?
Each day now a flash

like a thrown ball,
a terrified bull
hurtling over fields of black glass.
Big and brown and soft
I thought you were furniture
Then magically you were a horse
And I rode you like a cowboy in boots and a plastic hat
When I traded my spurs for a glove and bat
You were my 4 legged short stop
And then there were cars, and girls, and beer
I didn’t forget you, but I didn’t remember you either
I found your old baseball the other day
But you weren’t there to play short stop to my pitcher
And to a boy (even my age)
A backyard without his best friend is the loneliest place in the world
Porcelain Girl
Megan McCaffrey

She is always there,
A constant companion in a shadowy lair.
A limp body wearing a dress so pale,
Looking at her, you know she has a tale.
Her face is ashen and hair so light,
Silken pink bows are tied so tight.
She watches you with her uncanny gaze,
Dead eyes on a porcelain face.
A young life trapped in a body of cloth.
She cries out for help, but it’s all for naught.
I.

I smell the scents of early spring,
So sweet with floral fumes
Which signs to me, such life anew
From seeds to violet blooms;

I see Demeter shed tears of
Joy upon the world below,
Giving birth to cherry trees
For the bumbling bees to sow;

I hear the cooing of the dove
Through the rustling of the trees
And the oh, so eloquent echoes
Of spring’s benevolent breeze;

I feel nature’s balmy bliss
Within my soul reborn, graced
By Demeter’s godly grounds
In this gayest springtime morn.

II.

I smell the scents of summer
Sweat, from my labor upon the land,
’Tis the scent of sap and grass
Which stains my work’ed hand;

I see the chopping of the
Trees by sharpest silver axe,
And the greenest blood in drip
Like dying candle’s wax;
I hear Hephaestus’ heavy hammer
Herald ing hollow creations,
And the crying crickets chirp
At the summer night’s elations;

I feel Apollo’s golden sun
Heat the land now clear,
And wilt the lively flowers that
Once thrived in April’s cheer.

III.

I smell the somber autumn air
So dense with sordid smoke,
From wood aflame in fire’s
Hearth with logs of fallen oak;

I see the final leaf afloat
In sultry September’s sky,
And swoons to dying grass
Below by breeze’s softest sigh;

I hear the blackest dove in
Mourn sing its saddened songs
From high above in cypress perch
To wail my wanton wrongs;

I feel Persephone’s dying
Soul betwixt my Hades hands,
Yet my eyes blind with greenest
Greed and sinful soul’s demands.

IV.

I smell the icy rains from
Winter’s darkest clouds
That fill the air with deathly
Scents as smog and smoky shrouds;
I see a mausoleum of memories
Covered in frigid forest frost,
Marked and marred by graying stone
In this godly land now lost;

I hear Demeter’s sullen weeping
In the wispy winter winds
As dearest daughter is laid to
Rest by solemn selfish sins;

I feel the frozen tears of
Guilt fall from face to snow
As I sink into my dark abyss and
Wonder, where did springtime go?
The dishes, the laundry, I mop the floor, between the battle of everyday norm;

Lump in my throat that ceases to move, tears behind eyelids have something to prove.

Called out and chosen, quietly I rise to an occasion I hate to describe.

Swish, swash, fold and turn; Still I ache and heart still yearns.

Breath of His voice heard over the dryer, "Deep within there still is the fire."

Rested at peace, He shakes my core, I capture a moment I've known before.

Blessed assurance not just the melody, signed and sealed, I wait on delivery.

Count the blessings to and fro, it's a routine I've come to know.

First fruits, first thanks not thought of at the time, when faced with this mountain I am to climb.

Heart and legs stronger, my opponent, I'll outrun; First blessing of thanks, "it's not day one."
Smoky finger tips twirl soot
The last light of day is gone
And the summer’s end
Invites reds and oranges and brittle greens
I can taste them

Roasted cinnamon sticks and pumpkin spices
Allures promises —entices!
Warm fires flicker in their places
In the ashes we almost see the faces
Of winter

The apple tree receives a second harvest
How lucky!
How strange to envy a tree
Expected, however, when one’s own weak buds
Sizzled in the desert’s heat

Leaves are masters of death
They lick the heels of the frost
They’ve spread their wealth
For one glorious summer!
If only I were we.

We must only fall like leaves, solitary, mutely wonder
Is the unaccompanied path unsurpassed?
Marching into the cold night, wintry grows,
This over brimmed prosperity cannot last!
Who dares alone to trek a desert’s snows?
Husband, you are strong-
you strap on your back the weight of our home.
You conquer, risk, survive.
You pile up stuff for the taking,
but your soul is not with us.
Your hands build the walls that keep us safe,
but they steer your car away from us.
we can spend you, but we cannot have you.
You are a ghost leader with a wallet.
I long to cling to you, but your thoughtless entitlements -
twist my desire and turn it to stone.
Dirty clothes and dishes remind me that I am an employee not a wife.
Sometimes love and affection overtake me,
and I turn to you to fill you with this emotion,
but like a neglected child you cannot receive it.
You make me laugh-
and your humor soaks up my anger like a sponge,
but it exasperates our son like a beating.
Your affair with astroturf and polyurethane courts
deny me of the benefits of masculine affection-
they entrance you like I never could.
Your bad decisions strip us of security,
and your deaf ears won’t hear my concern.
If the husband is the head of the household-
then who should pull the plug when he is unconscious?
SELECTED WORKS
by Art Students

Gainesville State College
2010-2011

Life is a Journey, Photo Collage
Cari McDonald, featured cover artist
What Little Boys Are Made Of
Charcoal
JULIA KININGHAM
Newborn
Ceramic
KIRSTIN HERRINGTON
Untitled
Acrylic
JESSICA STEVENSON
Untitled
Plaster Sculpture
ZACH MORISSEY
Unseen Black Bear
Acrylic
EMILY BECK
Untitled
Ink
ELIZABETH HARRIS
**Pop Shoe**
Sequins and Paper

APRIL EDEN
Untitled
Acrylic and Ink
LIBBY HANSEN
Psychadelic Breakfast
Ceramic
KRISTIN HERRINGTON
For the Time Being
Ink
LISA CRONE
Pop Shoe
Aluminum
RHODA DYE
Oh my gaaahhh, let me start by asking who in the world would perform a marriage for a Montague and a Capulet?

-Romeo and Rosaline, Katie Keiger
Characters

ROMEO: An emotional teen who is easily infatuated.

MERCUTIO: ROMEO’s witty friend who tries to help ROMEO out of trouble.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: A friendly helper to ROMEO and JULIET, but a bit clumsy.

ROSALINE: ROMEO’s ex and Juliet’s mature friend.

TYBALT: ROMEO’s enemy, Juliet’s drunk cousin.

JULIET: A naïve teenager who loves innocently.

Place: A modern day Verona.
Time: The present.

Scene 1

Characters: ROMEO, MERCUTIO, ROSALINE
Setting: Street in Verona

ROMEO: (Chasing ROSALINE onto stage) Ok Rosaline, I get it, you want to take a little break, that’s fine-

ROSALINE: No, Romeo, you don’t get it; it’s not a break. I’m sorry; I just don’t think it’s going to work out.

ROMEO: So take a little time and think it over, that’s all-

ROSALINE: (Sighs) I don’t need to think about it. It’s just not going to work; you’re just not my type.
ROMEO: What does that even mean? I’m a guy, girls like guys, that’s it.

ROSALINE: Romeo, it’s not that simple. You think all girls are the same; we’re not all so easily manipulated by charm. Romeo, you’re really immature.

ROMEO: (Defensively) No, I’m not!

ROSALINE: Yeah, yah are.

ROMEO: No, I’m not.

ROSALINE: (Points finger at ROMEO) See, there ya go again.

ROMEO: You started it. (ROSALINE begins to leave) Just tell me the real reason.

ROSALINE: That is the real reason. (Looks at phone) I don’t have time to explain this to you anymore; I’ve gotta go.

ROMEO: Where to? You got another date lined up or something?

ROSALINE: No, Romeo, I don’t rebound like you. I doubt I’ll be going out with anyone for a while; I’ve gotta focus on getting my degree.

ROMEO: What are you, a nun?

ROSALINE: Whatever helps you sleep at night. (Begins to exit)

ROMEO: So where are you going then?

ROSALINE: If you must know, I’m going to a party at a friend’s house, and I have to go home and get ready. (Exits)

ROMEO: (Walks around texting, MERCUTIO can be heard from offstage reading off names. MERCUTIO enters) Hey, what were you doing?

MERCUTIO: Just helping some guy read some names. He couldn’t read. Can you believe that in this day in age people still can’t?
ROMEO: *(Uninterested)* Yeah weird, aren’t you going to ask me how I’m doing?

MERCUTIO: *(Sighs)* How are you doin?

ROMEO: *(Dramatically)* Rosaline just broke up with me!

MERCUTIO: Aww, I’m sorry bro. Why?
ROMEO: She said I *(pause)* she decided she wants to be a nun.

MERCUTIO: That’s crazy, man. You turned a girl away from guys completely, way to go!

ROMEO: This is serious, Mercutio. I am really sad about it. *(Pause and makes a sad face)* I loved her, man.

MERCUTIO: How could you love her? You hardly knew her. *(Pause)* I’d hate to know how you feel about me. *(Backs away)*

ROMEO: I just knew with her. It was like love at first sight.

MERCUTIO: That only works with pretty girls. *(ROMEO looks angry)* Besides, you can’t change her mind if she’s decided to be a nun.

ROMEO: *(Whines)* But Mercutio-

MERCUTIO: *(Puts his arm around ROMEO)* Listen man, there are millions of other noodles in the pot.

ROMEO: What are you, a fortune cookie?

MERCUTIO: Just come with me to this party tonight; you might find somebody new.

ROMEO: I don’t want anyone else. I want Rosaline.

MERCUTIO: You sound like a two year old. If you would have let me finish my story earlier you would know I read that Rosaline is supposed to be going to the party too.
ROMEO: That must be the party she was talking about!

MERCUTIO: Sure, sure, just come it’ll be fun. But promise me you’ll at least try and talk to some other girls while we’re there.

ROMEO: No, I have a plan. I’ll make her jealous and go out with her friend; that way she’ll want me back. Girls are crazy like that, you know? They always want what they can’t have.

MERCUTIO: Actually, that sounds more like you.

ROMEO: Come on let’s go get ready. I have to look good so Rosaline will think I’m cool not immature (pause) or whatever.

MERCUTIO: Wait, that’s why she broke up with you, isn’t it? (Laughs, lights out)

Scene 2

Characters: ROMEO, MERCUTIO, JULIET, ROSALINE
Setting: At a party, background talking and music

MERCUTIO: (Runs over to ROMEO, a bit drunk) Romeo! You should have just seen Tybalt; he’s already hammered and just got told by his uncle. (Nudges ROMEO who is not amused) The funniest part is they were arguing about you!

ROMEO: Where is Rosaline? We’ve been here for 30 minutes, and I don’t see her anywhere. I’m beginning to think she wasn’t even on that list.

MERCUTIO: Oh yeah, about that, I’ve been meaning to tell you; she isn’t coming.

ROMEO: WHAT?! (Angrily) Mercutio, this isn’t funny! All you do is joke around; you need to learn when enough is enough.

MERCUTIO: Chill out, bro, I’m just messin’ with you; she’s somewhere. Just have a drink. (Gives Romeo some of his drink) Live a little. (Romeo takes a big swig) Whoa (Taking drink back) I said live a little.
ROMEO: You’re right. (Shakes head) I’m on a mission.

MERCUTIO: Look, there she is. (JULIET and ROSALINE enter stage)

Her friend’s pretty hot.

ROMEO: You can have that one.

MERCUTIO: (Walks over to JULIET) Ok then.

ROMEO: No, I need her for my plan. She’s the one, look how much hotter Rosaline looks next to her. Girls hate it when you rebound with someone uglier than them.

MERCUTIO: You keep hanging around girls and you’re going to have the same menstrual cycle. So you’re really going to do this? Go for it.

ROMEO: (Walks to JULIET, ROSALINE rolls her eyes and exits) Hey there, gorgeous.

JULIET: (Shyly) Hello.

ROMEO: Can I ask you, did it hurt?

JULIET: Did what hurt?

ROMEO: When you fell from Heaven. (JULIET laughs, MERCUTIO laughs in the background) You’re right that was too cheesy; you are something though. A saint maybe?

JULIET: (Laughs) Maybe.

ROMEO: Can I get you some more punch? (“Accidently” touches JULIET’s hand) I’m sorry, my rough ugly hand touched your soft fingers.

JULIET: Aww your hand is not that rough. (MERCUTIO laughs in background)

ROMEO: Maybe a kiss will make it all better.
JULIET: (Flirtatiously) Kisses make everything better. (ROMEO kisses JULIET; JULIET is taken aback)

ROMEO: I’m sorry I...JULIET: (Leans closer) You didn’t let me kiss you back. (Kisses ROMEO, MERCUTIO howls, phone rings) Oh (JULIET looks at phone) it’s my mom, I’ve gotta go.

ROMEO: (Smiles) Busy girl. (Takes JULIET’s phone, types in his number) Now you have my number; text me sometime.
JULIET: (Calls ROMEO) Why don’t you just call me? I’m Juliet.

ROMEO: I’m ...

JULIET: Let me guess, you’re Romeo.

ROMEO: How did you?

JULIET: (Smiles) I’d better get going. (Exits)

MERCUTIO: (Walks up to ROMEO, laughing) Dude, that’s Capulet’s daughter!

ROMEO: What!?

MERCUTIO: (Laughing) I thought you knew!

ROMEO: This isn’t funny, man. Now I have to find somebody else.

MERCUTIO: (Tries to stop laughing) No, you can’t do that or Rosaline might catch on to what you’re doing- if she doesn’t already know. Besides, this will make it look all the more real that you would risk your family’s name for some girl.

ROMEO: You’re right, but what if Juliet doesn’t want to see me anymore because I’m a Montague?

MERCUTIO: Just do something crazy romantic to convince her that you really do love her. Like go tell your dad to buy one of those planes that write people’s names in the sky.
ROMEO: Yeah then the whole town would know a Montague loves a Capulet (*laughs*). Why not get your dad to erect a statue of us in my parent’s yard! A mayor can do that, right?

MERCUTIO: (*Pause*) Maybe you should just forget the whole thing. Maybe I’m sobering up but this does not seem like such a good idea anymore now that your family’s involved. Remember Tybalt freaked just seeing you, imagine if you dated his cousin?

ROMEO: No, this will work, trust me. (*Sways a little*)

MERCUTIO: Nah, you should just move on and find somebody else you really like. Look, I got four numbers tonight; I think one of them may be Rosaline’s.

ROMEO: Are you serious?!

MERCUTIO: Just kidding, bro, I’d never do that. I only date girls younger than me.

ROMEO: (*Sighs*) You better stop joking around all the time, you might get in trouble someday. (*Suddenly*) I gotta go. I think I just thought of something cheesy enough to say to Juliet! (*Exits*)

MERCUTIO: See yah later, Romeo. (*Lights fade*)

*Scene 3*

Characters: FRIAR LAWRENCE, ROMEO, JULIET, MERCUTIO, ROSALINE
Setting: A church with a confession booth, some potted plants on a table

ROMEO: (*to MERCUTIO, outside church or offstage*) I don’t care what you say; I can’t have the same shirt as Tybalt, I’m taking it back.

MERCUTIO: Just wear it when he’s not around.

ROMEO: Hold up, I gotta go inside the Church for a minute.

MERCUTIO: Why?
ROMEO: Well, last night I talked to Juliet and thanks to my quick thinking I convinced her that I love her, and she has agreed to meet me in the church - the only place we can keep our secret safe.

MERCUTIO: *(Laughs)* Except from me and whoever else you’ve told.

ROMEO: Hopefully Rosaline knows, or else this whole marriage will be a giant waste.

MERCUTIO: What do you mean? You’re joking right? *(ROMEO is silent).* You’re marrying Juliet? What happened?

ROMEO: It’s kind of a long story, and I have to get inside.

MERCUTIO: *(Grabs ROMEO’s arm)* Whoa, whoa, whoa, this I gotta hear. What’s your escape plan for this one?

ROMEO: I do not intend to escape because I’m not going to get caught. I have brought marriage certificates that aren’t completely legal, so if my plan doesn’t work out and Rosaline doesn’t interrupt the marriage to confess her love for me, then I’ll just deny it ever happened.

MERCUTIO: You don’t really expect Rosaline will do that –

ROMEO: It’s my last resort!

MERCUTIO: *(Sighs)* Oh my gaaahhh, let me start by asking who in the world would perform a marriage for a Montague and a Capulet?

ROMEO: *(Nods towards Church)*

MERCUTIO: Nooooo... Not Friar Lawrence. *(ROMEO nods).* That crazy-

ROMEO: Shhh! *(Whispers)* Yes, he is the only one who would do it for us and the only one that nobody would believe if he said anything after.

MERCUTIO: Don’t you feel bad about doing this to a girl you don’t even know?

ROMEO: *(Shrugs)* She’s a Capulet.
MERCUTIO: There’s just one thing I don’t get: how’d you convince Juliet to marry you?

ROMEO: There is a fine line between stalking and being romantic; that’s all I gotta say. *(Enters Church)*

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Why hello there, Romeo, I heard you out there.

ROMEO: *(Nervously)* What did you hear exactly?

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Oh just mumblings, I can’t hear well enough to contribute to any gossip anymore if that’s what you mean.

ROMEO: *(Clears throat)* Oh, well, I wanted to ask *(pause)* what are you doing?

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Just tending my plants. This one *(picks up plant)* helps me, what’s the polite term for “taking a dump”?

ROMEO: Uh, number two?

FRIAR LAWRENCE: No, it’s... digesting! Yes, this one helps with digesting. This one *(points)* helps me sleep better. *(ROMEO moves towards plants)* This one *(points)* helps-

ROMEO: Uh, Friar, *(points)* you know that’s we-

FRIAR LAWRENCE: That one’s my favorite. You put it in this little pipe.

ROMEO: Yeah, you might want to hide that one.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Oh, alright then.

ROMEO: I thought I smelled something. Anyway, I wanted to talk to you about Juliet Capulet.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: What about her? And I don’t want to hear anything about the feuding nonsense.
ROMEO: I was wondering if you would (pause) marry us?

FRIAR LAWRENCE: (Shocked) I thought you were going out with Rosaline? Your parents at least liked her.

ROMEO: We broke up. It’s as simple as that.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Love is never “as simple as that.” It should be taken seriously as should marriage, which is one of the reasons I never got married.

ROMEO: (Quietly) One of the reasons. (Normal) I do take it seriously (pause) so what d’ya say?

FRIAR LAWRENCE: I don’t know.

ROMEO: Think about it. (Puts arm around FRIAR LAWRENCE and pans hand in the air) You would single handedly stop this entire feuding by one simple marriage ceremony. Friar Lawrence, Verona’s hero! The mayor would give you the keys to the city.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Yes, yes! But now what would I do with an entire city?

ROMEO: Uh (pause) you could add them to your choir!

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Oh that would be nice!

ROMEO: Great, you’ll do it then – thank you so much!

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Well I don’t think you’ll be thanking me in a few years, but I’ll do anything as long as you promise this will end the feud.

ROMEO: Sure it will; it’s fool proof. Now Juliet will be here soon; she’ll be so happy to hear we can get married!

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Oh yes! We must get ready right away!

ROMEO: You mean, today?
FRIAR LAWRENCE: You do want to don’t you?

ROMEO: Yeah, but today?

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Yes today! As soon as possible! Now go! (Pushes ROMEO out) The feuding ends today! (Runs around getting ready, confession booth door opens slowly, horror music plays, Friar screams) Witchcraft! (Throws a plant at door)

ROSALINE: ( Comes out) Friar! You left me in the middle of my confession! You said you were going to the bathroom.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Oh my dear child, I’m sorry. What were you confessing?

ROSALINE: About the sins I committed with Romeo, that son of-

FRIAR LAWRENCE: (Scolds) Rosaline...

ROSALINE: Forgive me Friar; I have to call someone. (Dials number) Hey, Juliet... The egg has hatched... Yeah, I know, listen are you sure you still want... Ok, we’ll just see what comes up. Ok, bye.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Who was that? I heard you mention Juliet.

ROSALINE: That was my (pause) milkman.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: I wish I still had one of those.

ROSALINE: Yeah, well I have to get going; I’ll be back in that booth soon though. (Begins to exit)

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Ok, I’ll keep it warm for you. (ROSALINE stops and shakes head and exits, lights out)

Scene 4

Characters: ROMEO, MERCUTIO, TYBALT
Setting: Street in Verona
ROMEO: (Phone rings, sighs) Look at this, man, another text from Juliet.

MERCUTIO: (Takes phone and read dramatically) Romeo! Oh Romeo! Where for art thou Romeo!

ROMEO: That’s not what it says. (Takes phone)

MERCUTIO: (In a normal voice) Wouldn’t it be funny if you slept with this chick and she ended up pregnant? (Laughs) Then you’d be stuck.

ROMEO: That would suck.

TYBALT: (Enters angrily) Hey, you! (Points at MERCUTIO)

MERCUTIO: (Laughs) You mean, him? (Points at ROMEO)

TYBALT: (Points at ROMEO) Yeah you!

ROMEO: Leave me alone, Tybalt, I’ve had a rough day.

TYBALT: (Sarcastically) In that case, I’ll have my uncle throw another party that you can CRASH!

MERCUTIO: Hey, we were invited to that-

ROMEO: It doesn’t matter; let’s just go.

TYBALT: (Holds up a water bottle) You’re not going anywhere!

MERCUTIO: (Laughs) That is a water bottle; what are you gonna do?

TYBALT: (Pours out water to check) Oh. Well I’ll let you off this time.

ROMEO: (While leaving) Shut up, Tybalt.

TYBALT: (Threw water bottle at ROMEO and MERCUTIO, spilling water on them) That’s right you run!

MERCUTIO: Hey!
ROMEO: Just let it go, Mercu- hey! My phone! (Pulls out phone) It’s ruined! I had all those texts from Rosaline on it, too!

TYBALT: Rosaline? Didn’t she break up with you like (tries counting fingers then waves hand) forever ago?

ROMEO: It’s been two days!

TYBALT: (Laughs) She’s been talking to me for way longer than two days.

ROMEO: (Begins to march towards TYBALT) You stupid son of a Capulet! Rosaline would never go out with you; you’re just a drunk bum!

TYBALT: Oh yeah? I’m just a drunk bum? At least I’m not a mommy’s boy!

ROMEO: Yeah, you just live off your uncle.

TYBALT: And yet I get all the ladies. Don’t worry; I’m sure Mercutio would date you. You two are gay, right?

MERCUTIO: You are just saying that because you love Romeo. You know you do, Tybalt. That’s why you’re always picking on him.

ROMEO: This ends now! (Puts hand down TYBALT’s pocket)

TYBALT: Rape! I knew it!

ROMEO: (Pulls out TYBALT’s phone and throws it) Go fetch! Now see if Rosaline calls you when you don’t have a phone!

TYBALT: Hey man! That ain’t cool! There were over 200 numbers in there! You stupid head! I don’t even have Rosaline’s number! Like I would ever date her! (Tries to knock ROMEO down but falls)

ROMEO: Why’d you have to...?

MERCUTIO: (Phone begins ringing, going in and out) Hey! My phone’s messed up too! This is a $300 phone! (Opens phone) Hello? Hey? Dad, I can’t hear you either... There was an accident...
TYBALT: *(Yelling over the phone)* Romeo ruined my phone!

MERCUTIO: No, dad, that was Tybalt... There was an accident, and we got all wet... No I didn’t wet my pants! Tybalt threw water on us; then Romeo took Tybalt’s phone and threw it- Yeah? Ok, dad? Hello? *(Off phone)* My phone’s dead too. My dad says you guys can’t see each other or he’ll take legal action. He’s gotten ten complaints this month from people around the town because of this family feuding.

TYBALT: Hear that, Romeo? You gotta stay out of my face! *(Exits)*

MERCUTIO: *(Shaking phone)* Ugh, it’s broken. Man, why does this stuff always happen? Both of you should be locked up or *(Dramatically)* the swine flu enters both your houses!

ROMEO: I’m sorry about your phone, Mercutio, but what am I gonna do about Juliet?

MERCUTIO: *(Distracted)* Why don’t you come up with one of your amazing plans and-

ROMEO: Wait a minute, this is perfect! Now I have a reason not to see her anymore! I’ll just go talk to the Friar and- YES! This is great!

MERCUTIO: What am I even here for? Am I the only sane one in this town? *(Lights out)*

Scene 5

Characters: ROMEO, FRIAR LAWRENCE, JULIET

Place: The Church

ROMEO: *(Enters stage)* Friar Lawrence! Oh it’s terrible! Tybalt started fighting with Mercutio and me! So Mercutio’s dad said I am not allowed to see any of the Capulets anymore or he’ll throw me in jail! What am I going to do about Juliet? I can’t put her through all this drama. I can’t see her again; she doesn’t deserve a rebel like me anyway.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Oh no! Are you hurt?
ROMEO: No, but my phone’s broken. (Sniffs) Friar, where’s that plant I told you to hide?

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Oh, umm...

ROMEO: Never mind, I can’t see Juliet anymore, you understand? It’s not that I don’t love her it’s just-

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Well there you have it then; we’ll find a way! Love always finds a way! Juliet will be here soon, so we can figure out something together.

ROMEO: But-

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Don’t lose heart, Romeo. It’ll all work out in the end.

ROMEO: (Sighs) I sure hope so. (Looks at plants) But I have to get out of here if Juliet’s coming or else someone might see us together. (Begins to leave) So I’ll leave the planning up to you. (Pause) God help us, and then you can tell me what it is later. (Takes a sleep-aiding plant; FRIAR LAWRENCE doesn’t notice)

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Great, I’ll call you with the details.

ROMEO: (Exiting) I won’t have a pho- (door shuts)

FRIAR LAWRENCE: (Starts dancing around) I get to be a middleman! I get to be a middleman! (In a dramatic voice) This week Detective Lawrence goes undercover-

JULIET: (Enters) Friar! Have you heard about Romeo?

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Yes but don’t worry; we’ll find a way for you two.

JULIET: I love him so much! I just can’t live without him!

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Well, (looks at plants) I’ve got it! You’ll fake your own death! Then Romeo can pick you up at your tomb and nobody will know!
JULIET: That’s a bit extreme (pause) but just might work.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: You can take this plant (gives JULIET plant) and it’ll make you appear dead in the morning. Your parents are going to hate me, but I need to end this war before someone gets hurt.

JULIET: Oh thank you, Friar; please call Romeo for me. I lost my phone earlier.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: I will. (Lights out)

Scene 6

Characters: ROMEO, JULIET, ROSALINE, FRIAR LAWRENCE

Setting: Juliet’s Tomb, JULIET is “dead”

ROMEO: (Enters with crowbar in hand) Juliet! No! (Cries on JULIET) Why did this have to happen?! She was so young (nudges JULIET) Wake up, my darling! WAKE UP! (Pounds fist) No, no, no! I love you! (Looks at the door) Is someone there? (Pause) If anyone’s there just leave us alone! (Pause) I’M GONNA KILL MYSELF! (Stops crying, in normal voice) Alright, enough of that. (Leans on JULIET’s coffin facing the door) I know she’s not dead. Friar Lawrence sent me like 5 Facebook messages and called my house 3 times. (Looks up and sighs) Mercutio was right. (JULIET gets up, ROMEO doesn’t notice) Rosaline’s not coming back. And I shouldn’t have done this to you, Juliet. (Slightly nods towards JULIET but doesn’t see her. Juliet stops then continues moving toward crowbar) I don’t want to keep living with Juliet (ROMEO pulls out sleep-aiding plant) and I don’t want to tell her the truth either. I hope the door is still open when I wake up. Now, how did Friar say to take this? You just eat it, and you’ll fall asleep? (Shrugs and makes a sarcastic toast with plant) To true love.

JULIET: (Makes a sarcastic toast with crowbar) To true love.

ROMEO: (Turns to face JULIET) What? How?! How long have you been...

JULIET: (Holds crowbar over her head) Once a Montague, always a Montague. (Hits ROMEO in the groin with the crowbar; ROMEO cries; JULIET leaves; ROSALINE is waiting outside)
ROSALINE: How did it go?

JULIET: (laughs) According to plan. Good thing I listened to you.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: (Runs on stage) Juliet! I called your parents. They thought I was crazy when I asked them when the funeral was. What happened? Did the plant not work?

JULIET: No, (pulls out her plant) I just thought things were going too fast so I figured I’d go and talk to Romeo.

FRIAR LAWRENCE: (Hears ROMEO crying) I guess he didn’t take it too well.

ROSALINE: He’s ok; he just needs some alone time.

JULIET: Don’t worry, Friar, he’ll get over it. (ROMEO cries from within tomb “mommy!”) Let’s leave him with his thoughts. (Lights out)

The End
Characters

KATE JAMESSON, teenage blood donor

JENNA KO, phlebotomist

KATHY WEISS, receptionist

OFFICER KLEIN, police officer

JOHN HAMILTON, reporter

RICHARD JAMESSON, Kate’s father

GEORGE ROSS, Richard’s boyfriend

Scene

The lobby of a small blood bank. It is furnished like many waiting rooms, and there is a desk at one end that serves as the reception area. There is a woman seated at the desk, pecking at the keyboard of the laptop before her. A bell rings to indicate a visitor, and a young girl enters stage right.

KATE: (Shyly.) Hey.

KATHY: Good morning, dearie! Are you here to donate?

KATE: Yes, ma’am. Of course.

KATHY: Okay, hon. Can I get a photo ID? Can’t have anyone underage in here! (KATE hands over her license, and KATHY scrutinizes it.) Well, I’m sorry, dearie, but.... wait, what’s today?

KATE: Tuesday?
KATHY: Well, happy birthday, then! You’re just old enough to donate today.

KATE: I know.

KATHY: Okay, the address is the same, yes? *(Enters address into laptop.)* Can I get your social security number?

KATE: 135-00-4322.

KATHY: Oh, New Jersey? My husband’s from Jersey!

KATE: Is he?

KATHY: Now, will you be donating whole blood or platelets this morning?

KATE: Platelets? I just thought I’d have ...

KATHY: Oh, yes, I’m sorry. You’re correct! Completely right. I’m wrong. You must give whole before platelets. Now, as soon as this info prints for me, I can get you a file, and we can get started on your physical!

KATE: Do you.... do you do the physicals?

KATHY: Oh, heavens no, dearie! *(KATE is visibly relieved; KATHY does not notice.)* Jenna will be right with you. I’m Kathy, by the way.

KATE: Kate, but I’m sure you saw that.

KATHY: *(Giggles.)* I sure did! Could you sit at the desk over there, dearie? That’s where Jenna will do your physical.

*KATE moves to a desk almost directly across from KATHY’s. This desk is laden with medical supplies. KATHY exits stage left. A moment later, JENNA enters stage left.*

JENNA: Good morning.
KATE: Morning.

JENNA: This is your first time donating, right?

KATE: Yes, ma’am.

JENNA: Ah. I didn’t think I’d seen you around before. This place is so understaffed; I’m sure I’ve worked enough shifts to meet every donor we’ve had in the last nine years.

KATE: I can imagine.

JENNA: Mm. Now, can you tell me why you’re choosing to donate?

KATE: Well...my parents used to donate. I just thought that I’d give it a shot, too.

JENNA: Mhm, okay. I just wanted to make sure you knew that we don’t pay for blood here.

KATE: Oh, I do know. (Beat.) Y’know, that whole idea has always bothered me. Like, is there no other way for you to make money? Really? Don’t you save three lives with each donation? I’d like to think that the knowledge is payment enough.

JENNA: Oh, I agree, but-

KATE: And another thing... oh, I’m sorry, did I interrupt?

JENNA: No, I was just going to say I agree.

KATE: Oh. Well, I mean, the people who would probably be most likely to sell their blood would probably be the kind of person who would have blood too dirty to donate, anyway, right?

JENNA: Did I touch a nerve?

KATE: Sorry, yeah.

JENNA: Don’t worry about it. I agree with you, for the most part. I do
think it’s sad that so many people have to rely on greed to get people to give, but sometimes I think I’d stoop to it if we could afford it. Honestly. Like, we’re so low on type O right now, both positive and negative. I’d like to pay some donors to come in more often.

KATE: More often? I thought you had to wait eight weeks in between donations.

JENNA: Yeah, but we have donors who come in once or maybe twice and then forget all about us. And you’d be surprised at the number of people who seem to think that every blood bank pays for blood. You wouldn’t believe the number of people who come in here madder than heck that we won’t give them anything more than a soda and crackers.

KATE: I’m sorry. (Beat.) I have O positive, if it makes you feel any better.

JENNA: (Smiles.) It does, thank you. Did you type yourself in school? Most teenagers don’t know their own blood type. (Pulls out gloves.) Did you do a lab at school?

KATE: (Shakes head.) I’ve just had blood work done before.

JENNA: Oh? Then I’m sure you’re familiar with the typical medical professional’s obsession with trivial questions. Ready to start your physical?

KATE: I guess.

JENNA: Nervous?

KATE: No. Of course not.

JENNA: Right, okay. First let me take a look at your blood pressure and your iron. Can I see your hand? And since you’re totally not nervous, I’m sure this is unnecessary, but I’ll tell you anyway. What I’m going to do is poke you and stick the blood sample in this machine. (JENNA gestures with needle.) Okay?

KATE: Yes.

JENNA: Don’t look so scared. This one doesn’t even hurt, I promise.
Ready? *(KATE nods and JENNA jabs her with the needle, collects the blood, and inserts it into a little machine on the end of the desk. She places a bandage on the finger.)* Now your blood pressure.

KATE: I think this might be more painful than the needle.

JENNA: *(Slips the cuff on KATE’s arm and pumps.)* Oh? It’s only 125 over 80, nice.

KATE: That’s good? My parents have always had high blood pressure, both of them. *(The machine at the end of the desk clicks.)*

JENNA: Well, you must be doing something differently, yours is fine. And your iron is at 14.5, also nice. Okay, ready for the questionnaire?

KATE: I guess.

JENNA: Okay, first, have you had breakfast? And how much do you weigh?

KATE: Yes, I have, and...

JENNA: It’s alright. We just need to be sure you won’t die from donating. Or pass out. Whichever.

KATE: *(Softly.)* 170.

JENNA: Psh, is that all? We’re the only ones here, it’s alright. You’re in the clear, anyway. No dying today. Are you on any antibiotics?

KATE: Well, I was on amoxicillin.

JENNA: When? Was it in the past week?

KATE: No, it was two weeks ago.

JENNA: Good. Any aspirin products?

KATE: No.
JENNA: Have you been to the United Kingdom at all in the past decade?

KATE: No. *(Beat.)* What does that have to do with anything?

JENNA: It's just a federal guideline. There have been recent cases of-

KATE: Is this about that mad cow disease thing?

JENNA: Yes... well-

KATE: Isn't that a little ridiculous? Wasn't the illness successfully contained?

JENNA: I believe it was, but it was recent enough-

KATE: It was "recent" ten years ago! I mean, wasn't it? Wasn't the last case in '98 or something like that?

JENNA: And ten years would be a decade.

KATE: *(Beat.)* Oh, right. I just think it's crazy. Isn't blood screened anyway?

JENNA: It is, but it's dangerous. The disease is actually incredibly easy to transmit.

KATE: It is? I had no idea.

JENNA: Mhm. *(Glances down at clipboard.)* Actually, that's what the next question is. Do you have a family history of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease?

KATE: I don't even know what that is.

JENNA: It's mad cow disease. It can be genetic.

KATE: *(Lightly, almost joking)* I'm just saying it seems like you're discriminating against the British.

JENNA: Yeah, well, I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to side with the
guidelines on this one. Did I touch another nerve?

KATE: Yeah, sorry.

JENNA: It’s fine. I still have to ask you the questions, though.

KATE: Go ahead.

JENNA: Have you been outside the US or Canada in the past, oh, two years?

KATE: No. To be honest, I haven’t left Georgia in three.

JENNA: Okay, thank you. And you certainly haven’t been to Britain?

KATE: No, not ever.

JENNA: And Africa?

KATE: I’ve never left the States.

JENNA: (Checks everything off on her clipboard.) Okay, that’s just the geography portion of the test. These next couple of questions are more... biological, and I guess you could say sociological? Some of them are a little sensitive, okay?

KATE: Sensitive?

JENNA: Well, they’re about your personal life.

KATE: You’ve asked me about my family. Does it get much more personal than that?

JENNA: Yes. Much more personal.

KATE: Oh.

JENNA: Are you ready?

KATE: I guess. I hope.
JENNA: Okay, here we go. Have you ever taken street drugs by needle?

KATE: Well, I’m not getting paid, so I don’t think so, no. (Smiles.)

JENNA: (Smiles back.) No?

KATE: No.

JENNA: Okay. Have you ever had sex in exchange for drugs or money? (Beat.) Kate?

KATE: You know.... I wonder....

JENNA: You wonder what?

KATE: Why don’t you just ask if I’ve ever had unprotected sex? What’s the difference if I did it from pure stupidity or if I did it for cash?

JENNA: The situations are different, don’t you think?

KATE: How do you mean?

JENNA: Well, I mean, if you’re seeing someone for, I don’t know, five years, but you just forget a condom one night, you’re pretty safe, right? You may risk a pregnancy, but neither of you are getting sick.

KATE: Yeah, I guess.

JENNA: But if you’re trading it for coke, chances are the situation is a little more dire.

KATE: I see. Well, no, I haven’t. (Wryly.) It’s just that I had this sudden image of you calling the police to charge a donor with prostitution.

JENNA: Not something we’d do! I promise, there is a logic to these questions, even if some of them are stupid. They’re just for safety.

KATE: I know, I’m sorry for slowing you down. It’s just nerves. Keep going?

JENNA: Don’t apologize! We’ve had much more...belligerent donors before.
But if it’s nerves, are you sure you actually want to donate?

KATE: Yeah, yeah. I’ve been waiting to do this for years, since my parents started coming down.

JENNA: Alright. Then there’s really only one question left. *(She appears suddenly uneasy.)*

KATE: Yes?

JENNA: I want to make sure I’m prepared for this question. I mean, we’ve gotten complaints about it before, so I want you to understand that it’s just a federal guideline and that’s why we follow it. I don’t want you to be offended by it or anything.

KATE: What kind of question could it possibly be? How could it be that bad?

JENNA: Ho, you’ll see. If you took issue with me asking about family vacations to see the queen, then this one will really get you. Are you ready?

KATE: Yeah, sure. Fire.

JENNA: Okay. The last question is, have you ever had sex with a man who’s had sex with another man?

KATE: *(Beat.*) Seriously?

JENNA: Uh, seriously.

KATE: I guess you were right to ask me if I was ready, then, ’cause I don’t know if.... just.... why? That’s a federal guideline? What’s the guideline?

JENNA: Um. Well. You can’t donate if you answer yes to this question?

KATE: *(Beat.*) And let me guess, if a man has had gay sex any time in his life, he’s disqualified from donating. Is this what you’re saying? The guideline has a problem with gay men?

JENNA: Um. Yes. I guess you could say that.
KATE: That’s ridiculous. Just absolutely ridiculous. Why? HIV?

JENNA: I believe so, yes.

KATE: So you mean the federal government apparently still believes AIDS really only affects gay men?

JENNA: I guess that’s what they’re saying?

KATE: You’re right. I actually am angry. What the hell kind of question is that?

JENNA: I’m sure it was logical at some point?

KATE: But that was twenty years ago!

JENNA: (Sighs.) I know, I know. And for what it’s worth, I agree wholeheartedly with you.

KATE: Well, thank you, but really? Really?! Gay men can never give blood?

JENNA: I know. And what makes it that much worse is that we screen our blood now, so there’s even less of a chance if anything happening. 

KATE: Somebody should do something! How can you guys or the Red Cross or any other blood bank ever really expect to collect enough blood? They’re always complaining about the lack of donations and then they go and ban a whole segment of our population from even-

JENNA: (Interrupting.) I know, I know. I agree. But right now, I need your answer.

KATE: (Sneering.) No, I’ve never had sex with a man who’s had sex with another man.

JENNA: Thank you. That was it.

KATE: Saved the best for last.
JENNA: (Sighs.) Come with me for a second. Come sit down in the armchair so we can get you hooked up and donating, if you still want to?

KATE: (Grumbling.) Yeah, I still do.

JENNA: Alright. (Calls out) Kathy?

KATHY: Right here, dearie. (Enters from stage left.) What do you need?

JENNA: Some new needles, if you please.

KATHY: Sure thing, hon. I'll be back in a minute. (Bustles out of the room, again stage left.)

JENNA: Look, I'm really sorry about that question, I know it's ridiculous. I wish there was something we could do about it, but these rules exist on the federal level. Do you have any idea how long it could take to bring them down?

KATE: (More calmly.) I think it'd be worth it. They're in the dark ages!

JENNA: I agree, I agree. And if you have any reservations about donating, I can have Kathy turn right around and put those needles back.

KATE: I don't think that'd be a good idea. I have to start making up for all the men who can't donate, right?

JENNA: I suppose you could say that.

KATHY returns from the storage room, entering stage left.

KATHY: Here ya go, a whole box of brand new sterile needles.

JENNA settles KATE into a chair and gives her a bottle of juice and a cookie.

JENNA: That'll keep you from passing out, keep your blood sugar up. I suggest you drink some of it now, you look a little pale.

KATE: Thanks, just a little nervous. (Quickly.) But I am ready!
ONE-ACT PLAYS

JENNA: Okay, okay! Get settled, it’ll be at least half an hour before you’re done.

KATE: Really?

JENNA: Yep. At least that long. Settle down. Unless you have to use the bathroom before?

KATE: Nah, I’m good. Could we just get it over with?

JENNA: Sure thing. (Pulls equipment out and begins prepping KATE for the donation.) Are you allergic to iodine?

KATE: Not that I know of.

JENNA: Good. That could complicate things. (Pulls out the box KATHY handed her.) Oh, shoot. I meant to ask for heating pads, too! I’ll be right back

KATE: What’s the matter?

JENNA: It’s important that you keep warm, lower temperatures can mess with the donation. I’ll be right back. (Exits stage left, leaving KATE alone. There’s a commotion and KATHY leads two men in from stage right. The first man is dressed in a police uniform and the second man is dressed in a suit. There’s another man with a camera following. All attention is turned to the newcomers.)

KATHY: Here you go, dearies, just make yourselves comfortable, and Jenna will be right with you, I’m sure.

OFFICER KLEIN: (Nods.) Thank you, ma’am.

JOHN: Yes, thank you! I think I’ll just start my interview.

OFFICER KLEIN: Shoot.

JOHN: (Laughs, although it’s obviously fake.) Some police humor there, huh? Sure, I’ll shoot! First question, and make sure you get this, Matthews. (Gestures at cameraman, who gestures back, counting down.) Alright,
first question, what is this all about?

OFFICER KLEIN: *(Fidgeting.)* The donation? I guess we all, and that’s all of us on the force, we all just felt like this was part of our civic duty. You know, giving back to the community.

JOHN: Impressive, impressive. Whose idea was it? The chief’s?

OFFICER KLEIN: Uh, no. It was a new recruit, Herrington. His sister needed an operation of some sort, and he donated and told us he thought we all should give some time.

JOHN: Uh huh, uh huh. And is his sister doing alright now?

OFFICER KLEIN: Uh, yes. She made a full recovery.

JOHN: *(Smiles wide.)* Excellent, really warm the heart, stories like that. They really do. So are all of the officers donating this week?

OFFICER KLEIN: Uh, yeah, ‘cept for Pickens. He’s anemic, and he can’t give on account of that. He could die.

JOHN: Pity. Maybe he could help hold you guys down in case you’re afraid of the needles. *(Laughs at his own joke.)*

OFFICER KLEIN: *(Uncomfortable.)* I guess, yeah.

JOHN: *(Continues.)* Now, when is this drive of yours?

OFFICER KLEIN: It’s all this week. We can’t all give at once, you know, we work on shifts.

JOHN: Certainly, of course. Maybe I could camp out here and get photos of all you officers!

OFFICER KLEIN: Ha, yeah, maybe.

JOHN: But who would report the news, then? *(JENNA enters, stage left.)* Ah, here’s the woman we’ve been waiting for. And your name is?
JENNA: *(Hesitating.)* I’m... Jenna Ko, and I’m the head phlebotomist here at the blood center.

JOHN: And can you tell us what a phlebotomist does?

JENNA: *(More smoothly.)* A phlebotomist is someone who’s been trained to draw blood.

JOHN: So, someone who’s been specifically trained to work in a blood bank?

JENNA: Not necessarily. A lot of phlebotomists work in doctors’ offices.

JOHN: Right, right, very interesting, very interesting. And what do you know about the officers’ blood drive coming up?

JENNA: The sheriff contacted us last week and asked us if we had enough chairs for all of his officers. He asked-

JOHN: Do you?

JENNA: I’m sorry?

JOHN: Have enough chairs? Do you?

JENNA: Um, yes, if they come in shifts. We wouldn’t if they all came at once.

JOHN: Of course, of course. And what do you think about the drive?

JENNA: I think it’s a very positive thing. Hopefully it’ll raise awareness for the need for blood. We could always use more donors!

JOHN: Excellent. And do you think we could get some pictures of you about to stick Officer Klein here?

OFFICER KLEIN: Is that really necessary?

JENNA: Um, well... I had another donor I was working on first, Kate.
JOHN: Kate?

KATE: Hey. (Waves at JOHN.)

JOHN: (Expression brightens.) Kate! How old are you Kate?

KATE: Um, seventeen.

JOHN: So young! So young and already taking such an interest in the community.

KATE: I guess so.

JOHN: You guess so? You should be proud of yourself for setting such an example! Yes, Ms. Ko. You should finish what you were doing with Kate first.

KATE: No, it’s alright. You guys go ahead. I’m sure you’re very busy.

OFFICER KLEIN: Are you sure? (KATE nods.)

JENNA: We really should finish up with you first, Kate.

KATE: No, I insist. Unless my blood is going to expire with me sitting here or something, I think you should do them first.

JENNA: If you insist.

KATE: I do. (JENNA moves over to prep OFFICER KLEIN at her desk.)

JENNA: Alright, your hemoglobin is fine for a man your size, and your blood pressure is surprisingly low for someone in your line of work.

OFFICER KLEIN: So I’m good?

JENNA: You’re good. I just have a couple of questions for you now, okay?

JOHN: (Drowns JENNA and OFFICER KLEIN out.) So, young lady. Is this your first time donating?
KATE: Sure is.

JOHN: Isn’t that something, Isn’t that something, Matthews? The camera’s still rolling, right, Matthews? *(Camrerman gives him a thumbs up)* That’s something.

KATE: *(Uncomfortable)* I guess it is. Are you allowed to do this?

JOHN: Do what?

KATE: Film me like this. I thought I had to be eighteen to do that.

JOHN: Nonsense, utter nonsense. Georgia law says that anyone seventeen or older is no longer a juvenile.

KATE: But I’m under eighteen, I am a minor.

JOHN: Yes, yes, you are correct. Minor and juvenile are not the same thing.

KATE: What?

JOHN: Georgia law says that you can give your own consent if you want to. Don’t you want to be on TV?

KATE: I guess so?

JOHN: Fantastic! Just fantastic. But if it bothers you that much I can send around paperwork, and your mom and dad can sign it and bring it back to the station.

KATE: Okay? Where’s the station?

JOHN: It’s all on the paperwork, I assure you. So! Tell me. How’d you decide to donate?

KATE: I...My parents always gave blood.

JOHN: Impressive, impressive. Setting such a good example. Do they still give?
KATE: My mom does. As often as possible.

JOHN: Truly impressive. Hey, Officer Klein is done! (JENNA leads OFFICER KLEIN to the chair across from KATE'S and begins swabbing his arm.) Matthews, do you have your regular camera? (Cameraman gives another thumbs up and shifts to a small digital camera.)

JENNA: How many pictures do you need, Mister Hamilton? We should probably get this over with. I think Officer Klein wants to get back to work.

OFFICER KLEIN: (Speaks at the same time as JOHN.) Ha, yeah. Um, Miss Ko?

JOHN: (Speaks at the same time as OFFICER KLEIN.) Oh, call me John! Just a few, could you hold that pose right there, with the needle like that? Good, thanks, Matthews!

JENNA: (A little annoyed.) I can’t listen to both of you at once. Are you done, Mister Hamilton? Can I continue?

JOHN: Go ahead. I want one picture of Officer Klein here reclined and donating, then we can leave. Now, what were you saying, Officer?

OFFICER KLEIN: (Suddenly nervous.) Um, well... Do we have somewhere we can be alone, Miss Ko?

JENNA: Certainly, Officer Klein. And I’m sure Mister Hamilton and Mister Matthews can wait just another moment. Come on. (Helps OFFICER KLEIN out of his chair and they both move toward the reception desk. They converse in hushed tones.)

JOHN: Wonder what that’s all about, huh? It’ all too interesting. Never thought I’d have this much fun at a blood bank. All too interesting.

KATE: Oh, I don’t know. Maybe you should give blood, too.

JOHN: Oh, I couldn’t, I couldn’t. My iron count’s too low.

KATE: You’re anemic?
JOHN: That’s what that means? You learn something new everyday. Yes, I’m anemic. And I have a terrible fear of needles, terrible.

KATE: You didn’t seem to be too afraid of the needle Jenna was going to put in Officer Klein’s arm.

JOHN: Oh, no. I don’t have a problem with other people getting stuck. Just me. I hate the feeling, just hate it.

KATE: I see.

OFFICER KLEIN and JENNA return and OFFICER KLEIN settles back into his chair. JENNA grabs the needle she prepared and presses it to OFFICER KLEIN’s arm.

JENNA: Okay, are we ready? Got the camera ready, Mister Hamilton? You’re going to feel a little pinch, Officer, and... (OFFICER KLEIN winces as she punctures his arm.)

JOHN: Beautiful, beautiful. Are you getting this, Matthews? Okay, good. I think we can leave. Come, Matthews. (They leave stage right.)

JENNA: Have a good day, gentlemen! I’m sorry about that, Kate. I thought they were coming later.

OFFICER KLEIN: Yeah, I’m sorry I stole your spot in line, miss. That John Hamilton is such a blowhard.

KATE: You know him? I’m sorry.

OFFICER KLEIN: Yeah, I don’t think anyone at the TV station likes him much, either. He only ever gets stuck with the small time local stories like the book drives and stuff. Not that this stuff isn’t important, of course.

JENNA: Of course.

OFFICER KLEIN: You remember the coat drive last October? He did that, too. That’s what I mean; he doesn’t get any of the breaking stories or anything.
JENNA: He does seem a little difficult to get along with. I feel sorry for that cameraman.

OFFICER KLEIN: So do I. I think he’s the same one Hamilton brought with him to the drive. I wonder what he did to piss the studio execs off, huh? He is right, though.

JENNA: About what?

OFFICER KLEIN: It is a wonderful thing for a young person like you to be donating. And you’re trying to set a real example, and we’re just getting in your way.

KATE: It’s no problem.

JENNA: (Moves over to KATE’s chair and begins swabbing her arm again.) Still not allergic to iodine? But it is a problem. Today’s just not been a good day for you to donate.

KATE: It’s really no big deal. I just wanted him out of here quickly. I was kind of afraid he’d stay the whole time with Officer Klein.

OFFICER KLEIN: I wouldn’t have let him.

JENNA: But I do feel bad. Here you are, nervous, it’s your first time donating, and you have a hard time with the questionnaire, and then that idiot blows right in here and disrupts everything and-

KATE: It really is fine! Can we just put the needle in and get it over with? (Beat.) Could you hurry up with that thing? (Wincing and looking away from the needle.)

JENNA: Sure thing, sure thing. You know, I kind of wish Matthews was still here to get a picture of your face right now. (Punctures KATE’s arm.) There we go.

JENNA: This will only take about twenty, thirty minutes. If you need anything, just yell.

KATE: Sure thing.
JENNA moves over to OFFICER KLEIN’s chair and takes a small bandage and sheet of gauze out of her pocket. She removes the needle from OFFICER KLEIN’S arm and wraps the gauze and bandage around it.

OFFICER KLEIN: I’m sorry for wasting your materials, ma’am, but thank you.

JENNA: It’s alright, officer. I think the publicity is worth it.

KATE: You’re not donating? Why? I mean, if you don’t mind me asking.

OFFICER KLEIN: Um, some of the questions in the physical, uh, they... (Plays with the gold band on his ring finger. JENNA brings him a bottle of juice.)

JENNA: You should still have something to drink before you go. We have cookies and crackers if you want something to eat.

OFFICER KLEIN: Thanks, maybe I will.

KATE: I understand. I think that rule’s bogus, too.

JENNA: (Nods.) It really is. I wish there was something I could do about it.

OFFICER KLEIN: Yeah, well... me, too. But thanks anyway.

KATE: Do the other officers know?

OFFICER KLEIN: Who?

KATE: The guys at your station or whatever. Do they know?

OFFICER KLEIN: Some of them do. Most of them know I’m married, but they just assume that, you know, it’s to a woman. (Smiles ruefully.)

KATE: That’s why you wouldn’t say anything with that ass around?

OFFICER KLEIN: Hamilton? Yeah. I just know that he’d turn it into some huge, sensational thing. He spent a lot of time sniffing around the
chief when he was there for the coat drive. He must've heard the argument when he was having with his brother that morning on the phone. Maybe he thought he was having an argument with his wife or something. Hamilton's a nosy little bastard.

KATE: Why don’t you just tell them though? I mean the other police, not Hamilton.

OFFICER KLEIN: I can’t. Do you know how hard it would be for me? And for Aaron?

KATE: You just told me, and I’m a total stranger.

OFFICER KLEIN: But you’re not a cop, miss. You don’t know how it is. I couldn’t handle it, and I couldn’t put Aaron through it, either.

KATE: Yeah...you said some of them already know?

OFFICER KLEIN: Yeah, a few of my closest friends. They’ve been on the force with me for sixteen years, some of them. I went to high school with two or three of them.

KATE: So they understand.

OFFICER KLEIN: They try to. But some of the newer recruits, they’re just stereotypes, you know? Hot-headed, hateful little men who like to show off and abuse their power.

JENNA: And the way they treat you would change if they knew?

OFFICER KLEIN: Definitely. I mean, they wouldn’t dream of actually trying anything serious, not with the chief and their superiors watching, but our relationship would change. They’re not the most professional people, not all of them.

JENNA: Maybe someday.

OFFICER KLEIN: If they ever get their heads out of their own asses.

KATE: I’m sure you could tell everyone. I mean, things might be bad for
a little while, but it’ll blow over, right? And your relationship must be strong enough, you’re married.

OFFICER KLEIN: I don’t know...

KATE: And maybe you can force those guys into sensitivity training. That’s always loads of fun.

JENNA: You said you’re married?

OFFICER KLEIN: Yes, ma’am. I’d say for almost ten years now.

JENNA: How is that possible, I mean-

OFFICER KLEIN: How do you define marriage, ma’am? Legally it’s been since last July. We got married in Iowa; it’s where Aaron’s from.

JENNA: Oh, right. I didn’t mean to offend you or anything.

OFFICER KLEIN: You didn’t, it’s alright.

JENNA: I just thought-

OFFICER KLEIN: It’s fine, ma’am! It’s not like that’s the first time I’ve ever gotten that question, and it’s certainly not the most offensive thing I’ve heard.

KATE: Anyway, I still think you should reconsider telling the guys on the force. Not that you should take advice from a perfect stranger, but, you know. It would be freeing, I think.

OFFICER KLEIN: Maybe. I’ve really got to get going; I’ve got some errands to run before I start my shift today.

JENNA: Thanks for stopping by, officer. I think the drive’s going to be a huge success.

OFFICER KLEIN: I hope so. Herrington definitely had a good idea and, as much as I hate the guy, Hamilton might actually raise awareness for blood donation.
KATE: Have a good day, officer, and kick some ass on patrol today.

OFFICER KLEIN: I'll try. You have a good day, too. (*Exits stage left.*)

KATE: That really is a ridiculous law, you know.

JENNA: Well, it's not even a law, really.

KATE: You know what I mean. And you follow it like it’s a law.

JENNA: (*Sighs.*) I could lose my job if I don’t follow it.

KATE: And your license?

JENNA: No, phlebotomists aren’t licensed in Georgia. It’s not required.

KATE: That just makes it worse, you know. You have less to lose. I mean, not trying to be rude, I understand. It’s just bogus.

JENNA: It is. (*Beat.*) You’re almost done, just a few more minutes. Do you have a ride?

KATE: Yeah, my dad’s coming to pick me up soon. I should call him.

JENNA: You know, you never told me why your parents don’t donate anymore. You just said that they used to donate.

KATE: Yeah, my mom still does sometimes. They divorced about two years ago, and it’s just been crazy. They’re busy a lot of the time. My dad said he can’t give anymore.

JENNA: Oh, I’m sorry.

KATE: (*Shrugs.*) It happened; it’s over. I guess they’re even still kinda friends.

JENNA: That’s nice. (*Beat.*) Why can’t your dad give anymore?

KATE: He would never tell me. I guess I know now.
JENNA: (Calls out.) Kathy! Could you bring me another bandage and some gauze? (To KATE.) You’re just about done. And what did you mean, you guess you know now?

KATE: I just learned some stuff today, I guess.

KATHY comes bustling in from stage left.

KATHY: Here you go, dearie. (Hands JENNA bandages.) Did you have a good time?

KATE: I guess?

KATHY: I know it wasn’t much fun, but will you be coming back to see us in two months? We’d love to see you!

KATE: Sure.

KATHY: Great! I’ll make you an appointment. Does the thirteenth work? It’s a Saturday.

KATE: Yeah, at nine, I guess.

KATHY: Great! I’ll go fill it in now. Oh, and Jenna dear, your eleven o’clock called and said he’d be twenty minutes late, I hope that’s alright.

JENNA: It’s fine. I didn’t have anyone else coming in till the afternoon, anyway.

KATHY: Good, good. Well, I can’t wait to see you again, dearie! (Moves back to the reception area.)

JENNA: Well, you’re all done now. We’ll just get you wrapped up here then get the blood back to the fridge. (JENNA pulls the needle out of KATE’s arm and quickly bandages it.)

KATE: You refrigerate it?

JENNA: Of course. It wouldn’t keep otherwise.
KATE: That’s weird. You have a whole fridge full of blood back there?

JENNA: It’s a walk-in, too. Now, finish that juice. Don’t want you passing out on us.

JENNA exits stage left. KATE gets up and walks around in a small circle, stretching her legs. JENNA reenters.

JENNA: You said you had someone coming to get you?

KATE: Yeah, my dad. (Pulls her cell phone out of her pocket and dials.) Dad? I’m done; are you coming? Okay, I’ll see you in a few.

JENNA: Is he close?

KATE: Why, trying to get rid of me?

JENNA: No! I just thought it would be a good idea for you to not waste your entire day here, that’s all.

KATE: I was kidding. Yeah, he was at the mall just up the road. He’ll be here in, like, two minutes, and that’s if he hadn’t left before I called him.

JENNA: Well, I hope what happened today didn’t discourage you from donating in the future. I know you made that appointment, but still. I do hope to see you again. And again.

KATE: You will, don’t worry about it.

KATHY: (Calls out.) Kate! Your dad’s here to pick you up, dearie!

JENNA and KATE walk to the reception area. KATE’s father is standing at KATHY’s desk. He is accompanied by another man.

RICHARD: Hey, honey. Ready to go?

KATE: Yeah, dad. Thanks, guys. I’ll see you in two months?

KATHY: Yes, dearie. I’ve got your appointment set and I’ll be waiting for you!
KATE: Can’t wait.

GEORGE: Do you have everything? Did you get something to eat?

KATE nods.

RICHARD: Then I suppose we should get going. We’re supposed to be meeting your mom for dinner.

GEORGE: (To KATHY and JENNA) Thank you. It went well?

JENNA: She did fine. I think she’s fit to donate platelets, too, if that’s what she wants to do next time.

KATHY: I’ll make your appointment for a longer time slot, then. You’ll be able to donate every two weeks now, instead of every two months! That means we’ll get to see you more often, dearie!

RICHARD: Two months, right? Let me know the date and time so I can bring you,

GEORGE: But don’t tell him now; he’ll forget. (RICHARD smacks his arm playfully.)

RICHARD: I’m not that bad.

GEORGE: That’s why you have at least three notifications for each appointment in your phone, right?

RICHARD: Not important. When’s the appointment, Kate?

KATE: On the thirteenth, two months from now, nine a.m. (RICHARD quickly types it into his phone.)

GEORGE: I see you setting those alarms.

KATE: We should go. Can’t keep mom waiting!

RICHARD: (Links his arm with KATE’s.) Lead the way, dear.
GEORGE takes RICHARD’s hand and the three of them exit stage left, KATE looking meaningfully back at JENNA.

KATHY: They seemed nice; don’t you think so, dearie?

JENNA: Yes, very nice. It’s an odd coincidence, though.

KATHY: What is, hon?

JENNA: Well, did you meet Officer Klein?

KATHY: (Confused.) Yes, I did.

JENNA: Then...Never mind. It’s not important.

KATHY: If you say so, dearie.

JENNA: Call me when my next appointment shows. I have some guidelines to review.
The scene opens with LANCE running through the woods, meeting up with JASON in a clearing. The moon is full, and both boys can be seen in detail.

LANCE: (panting) OK. Let’s go.

JASON: Did you get rid of it?

LANCE: It’s cool; it’s cool. Let’s get out of here. Kelly’s wait –

(JASON cuts him off, roughly shoving him in the chest.)

JASON: That’s not what I fucking asked, man! Did you or did you not take care of it? I don’t want nobody snooping around and finding it.

LANCE: Nobody’s gonna find it, man. Just relax. Ain’t like nobody ever comes around there anyway. The old bat’s cats’ll finish her off before any other sane person heads out her way.

(LANCE lights a cigarette and winks at JASON.)

JASON: Put that shit out, man! I don’t want nobody seein’ us out here!

LANCE: (Taking a long drag and calmly leaning forward to JASON.)
Riddle me this, daddy-o; who the hell’s gonna be out this far from town on a Tuesday night if they ain’t up to somethin’? Huh? Am I right or am I right?

(JASON shoves one hand into his pockets and begins hastily running his other hand through his hair. His greased ducktail hairdo has become disheveled.)

JASON: All I’m sayin’, man, is that we don’t need no extra attention bein’ brought on us. You get that, huh? Just ‘cause she lives... well... lived that far from town don’t mean she don’t have no relatives or nothin’. Did you see those pictures on her mantle? Looked like grandkids. Maybe around our age, huh? One of them kids is bound to bring his granny some jams’n jellies sooner or later.

LANCE: (Still calm) I’m willing to bet that it’ll be later than sooner. Now chill, my man. Kelly’s waiting for us by the south side tracks. The cargo train comes by around 12:45 so we got... (Checks his pocket watch) about half an hour. We gotta get a move on, man. Ain’t no way I’m spending another night in this town with what we done tonight. Besides, I hear California’s much nicer than this stink hole. I say we find out soon as we can. (He pats JASON on the shoulder a few times, smiling as reassurance.) Am I right or am I right?

JASON: Yeah, yeah. I guess you’re right. I just gotta get cleaned up, man. I can’t stand this mess on my hands. It’s nearly dried and crusty. And it’s starting to itch. Besides, if the 5-0 find us, they’re gonna be more interested in why we got blood on us than why we’re hoppin’ trains.

LANCE: Right you are, my man. There’s a creek or stream about half a mile that-a-way. (He points in the direction of a narrow path through the brush.) It’s on the way, so let’s get a move on, get cleaned up, and before you know it, you’ll be sitting on a beach with half naked gals bringing you drinks with little umbrellas in ‘em. Am I right, or am I fuckin’ right? HA HAAAA!

JASON: Yeah, yeah. You’re right, OK? Let’s get a move on, man.

(LANCE and JASON take off towards the path, LANCE still smoking his cigarette. The two clean off in the stream, checking each other’s hands and...
clothes for stains.)

LANCE: You’re fine, man, you’re fine. You got clothes in your bag anyway. Just change when we get to the tracks. You’ll be set.

JASON: Yeah, I know, but if the cops catch us, we’re screwed, man. And I ain’t talkin’ about Mom sendin’ me to my room for a few nights screwed; I’m talkin’ jail time screwed, man. You know what they do to kids in jail? Do you know?!

(JASON grasps LANCE’s leather jacket collar and shakes him as he asks his question. LANCE smiles, puffs his cigarette, and gently removes JASON’s hands.)

LANCE: Yeah, I heard the rumors. Yeah, I heard the older guys fuck ‘em. So what? You think that’s the worst thing that can happen to you in life – a prison fuck? Man, you’re in the wrong business if that’s at the top of your list.

(LANCE takes a step back and tosses his cigarette, immediately lighting another.)


(LANCE turns backwards to face JASON as they walk down the trail. LANCE is now walking backwards.)

LANCE: ‘cause there ain’t nobody who fuckin’ cares! It’s the ‘50s, man! All these pigs care about is Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly turnin’ on their daughters and keepin’ niggers off our water fountains. You think they care about some old lady dyin’? It’s what old people do – they die. It happens. I’ll admit, yeah, I’ll admit that most don’t stab themselves to death. Ha Haaa!

(JASON stuffs both his hands into his pockets and concentrates on the ground in front of him. LANCE turns forward and treks on. The two walk along the path until they reach the train tracks.)
LANCE: Hey, pretty girl!

(LANCE runs up to KELLY who is propped against an empty train car, smoking a cigarette.)

KELLY: Hey, baby. What took you two so long? I’ve been waiting nearly two hours.

LANCE: Yeah, yeah, yeah. The square over there got the spooks, and it took a bit to get him on the way. Ain’t no big thing, mama. We’re here now. BUT – (LANCE takes a step back and holds his arms out wide then points them westward) within 36 hours, we’ll be in Cal – I- Forn- I- A! Get excited, kiddos!

(JASON runs his hand through his hair and smiles, giving LANCE and KELLY a thumbs-up.)

JASON: I hear ya, man. All I’m sayin’ is tonight coulda ended much worse than it did, ya know? Yeah, we got some money, but was it worth that old lady dying?

(LANCE and KELLY look at each other solemnly. LANCE digs through his pockets and raises a wad of cash to the sky.)

LANCE: You know it was, my man! It ain’t thousands, but it sure is a few hundred. More than enough to get to the coast and hole up in a beach bum house for a few months ‘til we find work. Not like she was gonna spend it on anything but cat food and mothballs. Am I right, or –

JASON: Yeah, you’re probably right. When’s the next train supposed to get here?

LANCE: I told you, man; 12:45. We still got ten or so minutes to chill. Just relax and enjoy the ni –

(LANCE is pulled towards the still train car. His head slams against the footholds. He slumps, motionless, and falls to the ground. KELLY rushes to her collapsed boyfriend.)

KELLY: What the hell, man? What happened?
ONE-ACT PLAYS

(As KELLY looks over to a stunned JASON, a baseball bat slams into the left side of her face, knocking her atop LANCE. JASON takes a step back, his mouth hanging open slightly. A dark figure leaps from the train car. As he lands, he spits on JASON and KELLY.)

FIGURE: Going west, are you, pussy?

(JASON turns to run. He takes two steps before the baseball bat collides with his head. He falls to the ground. The figure muses over JASON’s still body.)

FIGURE: Didn’t think so.

(Scene fades to black.)
“Never did I know freedom as I did when I lay in that well of snow and watched the clouds float in the azure abyss above me.”

- "Snow Covered Garbage,” Emmy Dixon
As an athlete, I have traveled the world many times over, visited and competed in over twenty different countries, and lived and trained in six different states. I represented the United States internationally for well over ten years, from the far reaches of Asia to our northern neighbors of Canada and everywhere in-between. I competed against the best in the world in three sports and defeated them all at one time or another. I became a Long Track Ice Olympian in Torino, Italy, a Short Track Ice World Champion in Seoul, Korea, and a numerous time Inline Speed National Champion in various states throughout the United States. I have looked adversity straight in the face and triumphed. I broke my back in a terrifying high speed crash in Short Track Ice, hitting the wall at over thirty-five miles an hour. The doctors said I would never skate again; I qualified for my first Olympic team a year later. I have lived more life than my twenty-seven years would seem to suggest, yet my life is just beginning. The past year has bestowed upon me a life lesson worth more than all the accomplishments and dreams one could imagine. This lesson of forgiveness has provided my heart with an existence more fulfilling than any achievement possibly could.

I started out 2009 with only one thought on my mind, the 2010 Olympic Team. I incorporated everything I knew was right from twenty years of success in elite training and competition into my regime: ten hours a day, six days a week, for an entire year. I did this with an uncommon focus and determination. I went into trials having trained harder, longer, and faster than I had ever done before, and knew I would never do again. I believed I was on a path to the final Olympic team of my career, and I knew I would retire after the season, win, lose or draw.

On my drive to the Olympic Team trials in Marquette, Michigan, I received an emotional phone call from my mother. She said that my estranged, alcoholic father was in the hospital with congestive heart failure and he might not survive the week. I did not realize at the time how this would alter my journey. Over the next few days of competition, I competed with a heartless effort, and I failed to make the 2010 Olympic Team.

I moved home and changed my life as I had known it for the past twenty years. I initiated the steps to start my next journey, my next
passion. I got ready to attend school in the spring of 2010, as a twenty-six year old freshman, with more travels, experiences and memories than most students could dream of.

After ten years of angered estrangement, I started contact with my father again. I struggled with many emotions at the time: life changes, pent up resentment, anger towards my father for his neglect in my life, and a general fear of a future that was uncertain for the first time since I could remember. My father resided in a small apartment north of Atlanta that my mother and sister provided for him after his recent hospital scare, keeping him off the street or from under a bridge. I would take groceries to my dad once a week. I would sit on the front porch with him and have conversations to try to find the man I grew up adoring, respecting and idolizing -- my childhood hero. The process went on for months, and every Friday, I would see my dad and wonder what had happened to the father I longed for.

My father was a man of extraordinary aptitude and ambition. I never knew of anything he was not capable of mastering. He cooked like a chef straight from the best cooking schools of France. He drew scenes with such vivid imagination they could only be compared to a dream. My dad raced motorcycles and cars to their absolute limits, flew airplanes to the max of their capabilities, maneuvered a boat in such a fashion that everyone stood watching in awe. In all my travels, I still have not seen an equal to his talent and potential.

During three months of the search, I would only see momentary glimpses of the man I held in my heart and in my mind. He was lost in a storm at sea, a storm of alcohol and drugs. I got a call from my dad saying that he needed to be taken to the hospital. I jumped in my car and rushed to pick him up and get him to a doctor. I sat with him in the emergency room, questioning if he was actually in pain or if he was just looking for his next fix. The doctors had explained 30 years before that he would die in a hospital a young man if he didn’t choose a path without alcohol and drugs. As it turns out, the doctors were right. My dad died at the age of sixty-two, a young man by today’s standards. He died of complications from continuous alcohol and drug abuse.

Right before he died, I had a life-altering moment with him. We were in the hospital room alone together, not a nurse in sight: so serene and quiet that I could have heard a whisper from a mile away. It felt like time stood still and we were both bonded in that moment together. I looked him in the eyes and told him I was proud of the man he was in my childhood, that I forgave him for any transgressions in our past. I was able
to tell the hero of my youth I loved him with all my heart. I will never forget the final hug and dance I had with my father, the look in his eyes, and smile on his face, what I would classify as joy, relief, and love. He looked to be at peace, after a lifetime of struggles. I will forever remember the good in my father. I will always hold dear to my heart the lesson of unequivocal forgiveness his life taught me.

After trials, I remember having the question in my mind, “Why didn’t I make the Olympic team?” We all have our doubts; we all question the path we are on. I am very fortunate to have been given an answer to my query. As it turns out, had I made the Olympic Team, I would never have had the final moments with my father. I would have been sitting in Vancouver at the opening ceremonies, feeling empty and hollow at not having peace with him. The fulfillment I experienced from unconditional forgiveness is a life lesson worth much more than any accolade. There is not a more liberating feeling than letting go of hurt and anger. Through all the travails of my journey, the most influential lesson of my life has been forgiveness, for someone who has hurt me, and for myself.
Snow is often described as pure and peaceful, an angel’s frozen blanket sent down from Heaven itself to lull us all to sleep. It has an innocence that was mirrored by the eyes of the rabbits I once called family. There was a time when I would have simply nodded in agreement, but that was long ago.

Growing up on a farm in Wisconsin was never what one would call easy. There were always chores to attend to and frequently heavy snow to do them in. Comfort was forever in short supply, but hiding places were not. If I needed a quiet place to take a book or a secret place to dream, I had an abundance of choices. To escape the unrelenting loneliness of my childhood, I made friends with the birds and gave every rabbit a first name. I built houses of hay bales that no wolf could blow down and spent hours lost in the clouds. I danced alone in fields of wheat and played hide-and-seek in fields of corn. I’d say that I got to know snow on a far more personal level than my own family. The cold was felt in degrees of pain and often measured in feet. It never stopped my fun though. Out I’d go into the single digits to build castles on the beaches of our sleeping fields and surf the drifts around our barn. Down, down, down from the hayloft, a perfect cannonball into the enveloping darkness of my frozen world. Never did I know freedom as I did when I lay in that well of snow and watched the clouds float in the azure abyss above me.

The biggest distraction from this pastoral scene was the mountain of garbage. Oh how I hated that putrid pile. By habit, we tossed the bags of garbage onto a heap beside the barn where they festered until the load was large enough to necessitate a trip to the dump. What a stain on my sight, like a pimple on the face of God. That the remains of our compulsive consumption should spoil the utter perfection of nature’s masterpiece was something that even my youthful mind knew was unacceptable. Then came the snow, first in inches, then in feet. I couldn’t wait for the first good storm to cover that stinking aberration; then my world was truly a fairy’s playground with no end to its enchanting possibilities. For me, snow’s ability to hide the inherent ugliness in the world under a magnificent cloak was truly an unrivaled feat of magic.

We had a hill behind our house that was perfect for sledding; down
I’d go at warp speed, all the way to the edge of a large stand of birch and spruce, then back up again. Over and over I’d repeat this process, never tiring of the monotony, the cold only a minor ache in my tiny hands. The hard work was always worth the payoff of that exhilarating flight to the woods. Sometimes I didn’t immediately go back for another round, but instead settled myself on a very convenient fallen tree just inside the wood line and awaited my fey conspirators. This particular forest held many creatures that offered themselves up for my friendship. There were the deer that my father liked to fill the freezer with and the rabbits barely scratching out their survival, only to be caught instead by a wily fox that was just a wee bit better at securing his own survival. Still as a statue I sat; one would think I was frozen solid but for the steam issuing forth from my mouth. Just when my legs began to ache almost unbearably and I could no longer feel my toes, out they would come. Silently they’d slip into view, never all together and sometimes only one; it was my reward for persistence.

One such afternoon changed my simplistic view of snow forever. After waiting for my quarry for an indeterminable amount of time, I was rewarded with the sight of a skinny, gray rabbit. She appeared wounded on the left hind leg and consequently moved quite slowly, her nose twitching in anxious appraisal. Immediately worried about my little friend, I followed her further into the recesses of the old grove than I would ordinarily go. So absorbed was I in catching up with the little bunny that I didn’t give going home a second thought. It was only a matter of minutes, though it seemed liked an eternity, when I suddenly realized that I was lost, utterly and completely. I no longer saw the rabbit, and with a growing sense of dread, I realized that I could no longer see my home base either. Starting to panic, I turned in a circle, my nine-year-old brain completely unprepared for this. Everywhere I looked, I saw snow. Every limb was as white as the next. What once served to adorn my fairyland now obscured my way home. Beginning to sweat profusely, I found my blood had turned to ice. Dusk was creeping through my playground, stalking me as surely as the fox would stalk my wounded sister. I sat down hard on the frozen carpet of needles and began to cry fat tears that burned like fire down my icy cheeks and froze on my chin. I wanted to vomit. I was surely going to die. My mother had no idea I was even outside. The fox would pick my bones clean. The snow would cover me. I would never be found. A whirling kaleidoscope of thoughts filled my mind as my fear took over. Several minutes wasted in sickening anxiety gave way suddenly to quiet reserve, reflected on the irony of my grave situation. Once I had worshipped snow for its
transforming abilities; I now hated it in equal amounts for the very same reason.

Suddenly, my soft gray friend returned. Maybe it was the cold, maybe it was the impending darkness, maybe it was my numb feet, but I swear I locked eyes with the little creature. I swear it spoke to me. I swear it led me out. I got to my feet and followed her, blindly trusting her word. Within minutes, the surroundings took on comforting familiarity. I sped up with a surge of confidence that we were indeed homeward bound. Starting to run now, my energy renewed with the prospects of hot chocolate and a warm fire. We burst out of the trees simultaneously, and then she was gone. I only saw her once more.

Numb with relief, I entered my house and skipped the hot chocolate. I was so completely drained that I went straight to bed. Under my flannel sheets, I burrowed like a squirrel bedded down for winter, and I slept. For at least twelve hours (which is quite long for a kid on a break from school), I slept, unmoving in body but feverish in mind, so racked with terrible dreams that I may not have slept at all. I was buried in the garbage pile, and the snow kept coming down, covering me layer upon layer. I screamed until my voice was hoarse, but the snow muffled all sounds from the interior. What had always filled me with disgust had now become a frozen prison filled with me.

Mom finally woke me around noon the following day with a highly coveted invitation to cooperative snowman building. She described the fresh snowfall on our front lawn as a down comforter with a diamond-studded duvet. To me it sounded cold and constricting. To her utter amazement, I declined. The snow had taken on a new meaning for me, and I was quite sure my snowman building days were done. All the rest of that day, I stayed in my safe burrow, unwilling to face the outside world and its frozen fangs. The events of what I started calling “the terrible, horrible almost dead day” replayed themselves for me a hundred times. I kept thinking of how close I had come to being carrion and swore I’d never leave my house again. How could I? What once had been a salvation for me was now an unparalleled menace to my very sanity. I was afraid of snow.

Finally, towards nightfall, the rabbit returned. I could see it clearly in my mind’s eye: the fat fluffy tail, the skinny grey ears, the bloody wound on her flank. My eyes focused on her tiny prints left in the fresh snow. Prints? I sat up straight in my bed and laughed out loud! I was literally shaking in hysterics, filled completely with a relief that outweighed that of simply surviving. “Of course!” I shouted to no one in particular. The rabbit left prints in the snow, then surely so did I! Why hadn’t I just
followed my own tracks back to the fallen pine? I wanted to immediately leap from my bed and run outside. I didn’t care that it was dark and the temperature hovered near zero. I would cry out to the whole world that I had been a fool! I knew the answer the whole time. Snow had not forsaken me. In fact, because of snow’s impressionable quality, it made a first-rate ally!

I cannot even begin to describe what power that kind of knowledge gave me. I felt like I had cheated death. I felt invincible and made of magic. I held the secrets to survival. My idyllic upbringing on a dairy farm was a trial by fire that taught me self-reliance and showed no mercy. I am forever grateful. Sometimes snow is an angel’s blanket, sometimes it is a death sentence, sometimes it shows you the way home, and sometimes it simply covers the garbage.
Oh, to be a Ramblin’ Man
Grayson Taylor

As a simple fast food employee who lives in his parents’ house and occasionally has to mooch off of friends for food and entertainment, I would classify myself as a bum, a bum like Rocky Balboa’s loser friend, Paulie, in Rocky. However, in the future I would like to elevate myself to the position of the noble hobo. The original hoboes were migrant workers who rode from place to place by train, and they haven’t changed much (“Hobo’s Boxcar”). Hoboes have always been revered throughout the years in literature and other media. John Steinbeck’s novels Of Mice and Men and Grapes of Wrath are fine examples of classic hobo fiction. The tale of Tom Joad traveling across the country is so vivid and impactful it will not soon be forgotten. Unfortunately, neither Class Matters nor The Occupational Handbook considers the bum or hobo true careers worth mentioning. Although the bum and the hobo are both low paying positions, the differences in geographic location, job enjoyment, and intellectual stimulation prove the hobo’s superiority.

The bum, being lazy and shiftless, does not get to travel and see the world like the hobo. We live in a beautiful country, but it often goes unappreciated. A hobo spends the bulk of his time outdoors and knows how to love it and live in it; his home is anywhere he lays his head (Waters). Bums are stuck in their location, anchored by their addictions to what’s comfortable; they don’t see the exciting world outside their window. A bum will not choose to move, while a hobo lives a life of constant movement. Diana Lackey, an interviewee in Class Matters, describes the United States: “They call it the land of opportunity, and I don’t think that’s changed much . . . times are much, much harder with all the downsizing, but we’re still a wonderful country” (qtd. in Keller 7). She almost grasps the whole point of the hobo: to drop all worry about issues of downsizing or other matters of economic concern and explore and enjoy the wonderful land of opportunity.

Another main key to the hobo’s supremacy over the bum is the contrast of work enjoyment. To a hobo, to enjoy a job is to enjoy life. A bum never enjoys his work; he just complains about having to do it. He lives his life stuck in the same routine, day after day. It is difficult to enjoy repetition. The National Hobo Association’s definition of the hobo
demonstrates why being a hobo can be so enjoyable:

Unlike tramps or bums, the hoboes are usually very resourceful, self reliant and appreciative people. They display the quiet pride that comes from self confidence and the secure knowledge that they control their own destiny. As a group, they avoid long term work commitments, preferring to be free to follow the call of the open road when it comes. They are, in general, well read, artistic, romantic and quick witted. They survive in hostile conditions that others would shun. They are creative, good natured and glib. They are NOT homeless. If they want a home, they’ll get one when it suits them. (Waters)

Bums are not independent; they would rather receive handouts than work. Alternatively, the main word to describe a hobo is independent. The hobo represents freedom, and no other occupation is concerned as much with pure, unbridled happiness as his.

A hobo is always learning, while a bum doesn’t care to learn. Films that deal with rambling folks often portray these hobo types as very musical. There is often a scene involving a group around a campfire, softly strumming guitars and playing lonely harmonicas. They sing their songs, written about what they see and what they feel. This outpouring of emotion is the exact opposite of what the bum represents. Being, once again, lazy and shiftless, the bum simply does just enough to get by. He doesn’t concern himself with matters that might broaden the intellect. The hobo writer Jon Stone explains the mindset behind a hobo’s actions: “Most people define themselves by the money they have; the hobo defines himself by the miles he’s traveled” (“Hobo’s Boxcar”). While a bum might worry more about the numbers in his bank account, the hobo sees those numbers for what they are – simply numbers. Hoboes travel to work and make only what they need to provide for life’s necessities (Waters).

The hobo is everything that I want to be: free and on the open road (or open tracks). When being a bum finally gets old, then it shall be time to stick out my thumb and find the nearest working railway. There will be nothing else except hitching trains, looking for the next decent short term job, meeting people, and writing about what I see. Wherever I stop is where the guards happened to catch me and throw me off the train. A hobo has the benefit of never getting tired of his surroundings because he never has a set location. He is consistently stimulated intellectually and therefore thoroughly enjoys his job. Jon Stone encapsulates every reason to be a hobo very succinctly: “The hobo’s knowledge of the world is
restricted by his lack of a television set, a radio, a daily newspaper. Consequently, he has much less to worry about” (“Hobo’s Boxcar”). There is nothing to fear when you don’t know what to fear, and that leads to a much more peaceful life.
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“It is the constant need for survival that seems to have created, and in some ways manipulated, humanity.”

- “Humanity: Killing is in our Blood,” Jason Martin
Since the beginning of humanity, one struggle has been consistent to all men no matter where they dwell. Man has found himself pitted against nature for his survival, and because of this, the evolution of humanity has been most impacted. It is the constant need for survival that seems to have created, and in some ways manipulated, humanity. Over time, this necessity to survive has caused some of us to manipulate and change nature for our benefit. Therefore, I believe that our survival has caused us to suppress what impact we have had on the environment, its species and habitats. We have established advanced civilizations, created laws and governments. Many of our establishments are based on the laws of nature. We have made the killing of humans illegal, and we call it murder. Yet, humanity over time has killed off entire species and destroyed habitats in the environment. We don’t call it murder; we call it survival. This idea has made humanity seem as nothing more than a species of natural born killers, and through evolution, we have suppressed this trait and dismissed it as a necessity for survival.

Early in humanity, there were hunters and gatherers. They relied on what the land provided for them, and very little domestication occurred. The practice of hunting and gathering meant that humans would scavenge or kill animals and gather plants for food. Usually, they would follow the food, which meant they migrated with the change of seasons. Sometimes this change would be because all the food had been consumed. The fact that most were nomadic shows the struggle that they had with nature. They did all they could mentally just to survive, nothing more and nothing less. They hunted prey and used the land to survive. This practice was accepted, and after all it was survival. Early humanity was nothing more than physical beings that used animalistic instincts to survive. Despite the many uses of the environment by early man, they were one with their environment. Food and shelter were the primary goal.

With the emergence of stone tools and the discovery of fire, humanity would now start to become more technologically advanced. The development of these tools enabled early humanity to be better hunters and gatherers. With a greater ability to utilize the environment, a trend was started: humans wanted more. They started to hunt at a level that caused
species to become extinct. An early example of man hunting a species to extinction is that of the mammoth. Despite the fact that climate played a part in the extinction of mammoths, a recent study by Carnegie Institution for Science published in the Science Daily journal shows that early humans played a part in it as well. The study looks at how the hunting of mammoths by early humans not only helped to drive them to extinction, but also how it dramatically changed the environment. The vegetation of once inhabited areas dramatically changed. It is a well-known fact that vegetation plays a huge part in the emissions of greenhouse gases. Therefore, this study proposes that with the help of the human hunters, greenhouse gases increased, which raised the earth’s temperature over time. So, even with early humanity, the overuse of the environment impacted it in a harmful way (“Human-Made”).

Despite the use of the environment by early humans, they wasted very little. With the evolution of humans came the evolution of the mind as well. Humanity began to erect civilizations and look at ways to make nature work for them. With this change came the idea of using the land as a more sustainable source of survival. These ideas led humans to create lifestyles based on agriculture. By farming and cultivating the land to provide food, humans became more than just hunters and gatherers. As the concepts of cultivation advanced, different ways to use the land were developed. Land became a renewable resource and food more plentiful. Changing the makeup of the land was required to accomplish this goal. Whether altering the flow of rivers or clearing the land of trees, humans had to have land that was able to support the increased growth of food.

The advancement of agriculture meant that humans could create societies or civilizations that were more permanent. Humanity once again began to evolve. With this came many things that we see in our modern societies: formation of government, hierarchy systems, laws, classes of people and the need for an economy. This evolution impacted humanity the most. The creation of classes of people and the need to sustain an economy became a major objective. I believe that this led humans to want more and, at times, more than they needed. In civilizations of the past, many were not content with the land that they occupied but instead wanted more, which would lead to territorial wars, much like what we have today. Whether it was for more land, the use of natural resources or just different beliefs, humans wanted more. With the creation of economies, humans looked at ways to improve those economies. Different from early humans who just strived for food and shelter, those within advanced civilizations were driven by wants and desires, which were not always based on necessity.
With these new wants and desires, humanity started to tame its inherent closeness to the environment. As technology advanced over thousands of years, so would our knowledge of the planet we live on. Humanity began to create sciences to study the parts of the earth and even that of the universe. Author Christopher Manes describes how this technological advancement came to be: “Originally a curriculum emphasizing classical learning, humanism came to emphasize a faith in reason, progress, and intellect that would become the cornerstone of modern technological culture” (Manes 20). As our civilizations became more advanced, so did our desire for more. No longer were we the hunters and gatherers of the past; we now wanted to explore and populate the entire world. This exploration had more benefits than just that of survival. Our oneness with the environment started to dissipate or in some cases completely disappear. We began to use the land for economical, political and personal gain, none of which are a necessity for survival. It is hard to find a place on Earth which hasn’t been touched by humans and the natural resources exploited in the name of survival. Yet much of what we see is not done out of survival, but done because of our desires and wants.

In modern history, the rainforest is one of the best examples of a habitat that is being destroyed. It isn’t being destroyed for survival, but for the want of more money. The rainforests of the world are known to have the most diverse habitats on the planet, and many of our medicines come from plants that live there. According to rain-tree.com, an estimated 200,000 acres of rain forest is deforested each day (“Rainforest Facts”). The deforestation of land consists of clearing the land of natural vegetation and reusing the land. This was one of the most important concepts developed in making land viable for food cultivation. This process not only provided more land for the cultivation of food, but provided more wood for the growing civilizations. Over time many problems would arise due to this process. Changing the makeup of the land in excess can be harmful. Not only does it require taking away vegetation but also the harming of species, the soil and indigenous people.

One of the best examples of this practice is in the Amazon rainforest. In the Amazon, particularly Brazil, the rainforest is being deforested for the raising of cattle. According to Rhett Butler, a rainforest conservationist, an estimated 232,000 square miles of the Amazon has been destroyed since 1970. Despite the many natural benefits that a rainforest provides, the reasons to deforest them are purely economical, ignoring the many benefits that help us survive as humans. Is this destruction necessary for survival? According to Greenpeace, Brazil hasn’t become the largest
exporter of beef because it had to, but because it was economically beneficial. More than 80% of the beef raised is exported to European countries ("Cattle Ranching"). Looking back at the evolution of humanity that spans thousands of years, we can see how we have changed what is necessary for survival. Even early humans found themselves pitted against nature in order to survive. As evolution progressed, humanity grew to need more to survive. Looking at present day, we consider many things a must for survival. Whether it is our cars, cell phones, big houses or any product, we need them to live. Over time, through evolution, we have lost that oneness that early humans had with nature. By losing that, we have suppressed that closeness we had with nature and now find ways to exploit it for the sake of survival. Whether it is hunting a species to extinction, destroying a habitat, making war, or any other way of manipulating the environment, we modern humans will find a way to justify it. In our eyes, it takes more than just food and shelter to survive. We now must live with more, and looking at our past, one can see that to be true. Not only have we become smarter through evolution, we have also created a way to justify our killing by saying it is a must for survival. So with that said, modern humans are like the earliest humans... natural born killers.


The Normalizing of Aberrant Behavior Through Television Talk Shows

Cheryl Mills

We are living in a self-help culture. Walk into any bookstore and the sheer volume of texts addressing the need to make your waist smaller, your wallet fatter, your kids more popular and your marriage more fulfilling attests to this. But nowhere are the dangers of pop psychology and the quest to “be better, do better” more apparent than in the popularity of television talk shows. These shows, such as Dr. Phil, Oprah, and Jerry Springer, showcase social deviants under the pretense of helping them to conform to the norms of society. I say that these shows are actually functioning to conform society to accept aberrant behavior as a new norm.

People tend to judge their own behavior based on what they see other people doing. In sociological terms, this is called symbolic interactionism; we interpret what we see and act according to what we have observed. Sociologist Edwin Sutherland came up with the term differential association to describe the way that individuals learn to conform to or deviate from societal norms. He states that behavior is learned from the different groups that we associate with (qtd. in Henslin 144). Similarly, the psychology theory called the social comparison theory suggests that when people are uncertain as to whether their behavior is acceptable or not, they will seek out others with whom to compare themselves (Winstanley 210).

How do all of these behavioral science theories tie in to viewing television talk shows? Let’s look at one recent topic on the Dr. Phil show, “Moms Who Drink.” This episode, which aired February 18, 2010, featured horrific news stories such as the mother who drove drunk on the Taconic State Parkway in New York and crashed, killing eight people including four children. There was also the story of the school bus driver who got behind the wheel with a blood alcohol content almost twice the legal limit. Then there was Mary, the featured guest. Mary drinks at least a twelve-pack of beer every day, sometimes more (“Moms Who Drink”). Her life was spiraling out of control. Now imagine another mother, maybe a lot of mothers, who are sitting at home with a glass of wine, watching this show. They might not know any other women who are drinking at that hour, but thanks to the Dr. Phil show, they know Mary, as well as a couple of other guests, also mothers. The show is set up to get these women to stop drinking, and at the end of the episode, Mary does agree to go to rehab, but
because of the way our brains work, the mothers at home with their glass of wine are left with the feeling that what they are doing is normal because other people are doing it. Even more, they perceive that what they are doing is acceptable because their lives are not as bad as the ones portrayed on the show. Yet.

Talk shows are also notorious for introducing people to deviant behaviors that they never would have considered on their own. Dr. Phil has had several shows on teen drug use that showcased inventive ways to get high that I'd never heard of before, with regular household products. One of the most shocking "everybody is doing it" episodes I've seen was the March 25, 2010, airing of the Oprah Winfrey show. This show was an exposé by Lisa Ling on the millions of women who view porn ("Millions"). She reports that seventy percent of women keep their porn habit a secret, but thanks to the Oprah show, they no longer have to hide that dirty little secret because apparently their neighbors, their boss, and even their day-care provider is viewing porn as well. To humanize the industry further, for those who may still be skeptical about jumping on this wagon, Oprah brought on Jenna Jameson, the world's most famous porn star. She was sweet, speaking of love, fidelity, and her home and children. This kind of portrayal brings about a connection between viewer and televised personality in an intimate way, similar to a personal relationship, and this perceived intimacy strengthens the personal comparison to and acceptance of socially deviant behavior (Rubin, Haridakis and Eyal 340). If a nice person like Jenna Jameson can perform in porn, what could be wrong with merely watching it?

Not everyone who watches these types of shows connects on such a deep level with the topics. Viewers of The Jerry Springer Show, for example, consider that show to be simply a voyeuristic form of entertainment and have no desire to emulate the behavior displayed because they perceive it to be unrealistic (Rubin, Haridakis and Eyal 348). I think they are on to something there. Do any of these talk shows actually exist for the purpose for providing help as they claim? Stuart Fishoff, Ph.D. and former media psychologist, does not believe so. He states, "Talk shows exist to entertain and exploit the exhibitionism of the walking wounded" (2). Dr. Phil provides follow-up help to the most needful guests through counseling referrals and rehabilitation programs, but is that to be considered a kind gesture, or a way for the show's producers to ease their guilt about providing a platform for the nation's derelicts to exhibit their foibles?

Today's talk shows, with their endless parade of social deviants, have influenced cultural values and removed shame from the social
conscience. People no longer worry what others will think of their alcoholism, or criminal acts, or that they slept with their wife’s sister. The reason why they don’t worry is they see hundreds of other people doing the same things and being awarded with sympathy for their seemingly obvious victimization (Abt and Seesholtz, 178). America is becoming desensitized to social deviancy and aberrant behavior, and this is due in no small part to the trivialization of these actions and circumstances through the television talk show medium.

I would like to see a return to more traditional values, where people’s dirty little secrets are spoken of over back yard fences or whispered into the phone, out of earshot of small children. I would prefer a community where shame is existent and shameful behaviors are kept out of the public view. Perhaps I’m a bit Puritanical in my world view, but I think adulterers, lushes and abusers should be exposed in order to be shunned, not given first-class airline tickets, deluxe accommodations, and a spotlight on the world stage.


“A nigger! They’re coming! Here they come!” was the shout heard by students, parents, and the general mob gathered to protest the integrating of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. The black students were spat on, the girls were called “nigger bitches,” and threatening chants from within the mob called for the students to be “lynched.” These horrible incidents were not isolated to Arkansas. Similar incidents were seen throughout America and ultimately projected to the world. The world watched as pictures exposed the massive display of hatred. The images were reprinted for the whole world to see. So, why was desegregation so explosive? Did the need to address this shameful practice of injustice prick the conscious of America enough to respond, or was there a bigger political motive?

When Emmett Till was brutally murdered in Mississippi, a federal grand jury refused to hand down just punishment, but instead set the murderers free. President Eisenhower’s administration was not concerned with what was morally right in the case, but was more concerned with the Communist Party’s role in agitating and protesting what had happened.

The threat of global communism played a role in school desegregation and the civil rights movement. Segregationists often accused their opposers of being communist. The Red Scare and the Cold War were both promoters and inhibitors of social justice. President Eisenhower was reluctant to address the Civil Rights Movement. In fact, from his personal perspective, desegregation was morally wrong. Sweet, little white girls and big, overgrown Negros should not be made to attend school together. He chose to ignore other landmark events in the Civil Rights Movement, such as the Montgomery boycott. He feared that any decision made regarding desegregation would associate the Republican Party with the ruling. When Arkansas faced the crisis of desegregation, “Eisenhower, who had said two months before that he could not ‘imagine any set of circumstances that would ever induce me to send federal troops,’ ordered 1,000 paratroopers to Little Rock to protect the black students, and he placed the National Guard on federal service” (Tindal & Shi 938). Why?

The United Nations, of which America was a member, had a formal ban on racial discrimination, and the charter contained clauses
that supported human freedom and equality worldwide. It appeared that America was operating under double standards. In one voice they declared freedom and equality worldwide, but in another voice, a loud contradictory message was sent out by the refusal to address deeply embedded racial attitudes on the domestic front. The Arkansas event undermined Americans’ sense of themselves and what they stood for, and U.S. prestige was significantly lowered by the event. America was lambasted by the world for its hypocrisy of so-called American democracy and freedom. The president of the Institute of International Education wrote from Warsaw addressing the racial prejudice in the United States. America’s moral leadership in the world was questioned because of the shameful discrimination tactics that were allowed to transpire at home.

After watching the film Eyes on the Prize, I was compelled to do further reading to better understand why desegregation was such an explosive issue. To my surprise, I discovered many reasons why America could ill afford to be a racist country, but I was still left baffled why a great nation such as America would allow such racial devastation to cause such division. The answer was (and still is) simply hatred: a hatred so embedded that innocent victims were attacked simply because they were black, a hatred so deeply rooted that whites refused to sit in classrooms with blacks. Other reasons why desegregation was so explosive include: U.S. government refusal to address racial issues, U.S. desire to rule and remain a world power, and the threat of global communism. However, on the domestic front, a bold hatred toward blacks was the reason desegregation was so challenging.

Even today, much hate exists between blacks and whites despite emancipation, desegregation, and integration. African Americans are still looked at in a subservient nature, but I believe there is hope. The fight against discrimination and prejudice demands the attention of everyone in society. Legislators, educators, and law enforcement must do what is right to address the issue. As individuals, we must embrace diversity and reject bigotry. We must proclaim that we will be part of the solution for change and not part of the problem.
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EMMY DIXON is an underachieving overachiever who believes in the unbelievable. She is an introspective extrovert living a waking dream. She is an aspiring author, a domestic goddess, a home school mother, and her fabulous husband’s good fortune. Four perfectly imperfect children call her mommy, and that is her favorite name.

ABIGAIL DIORIO is an English major in her second year at Gainesville State College. She has been writing since she was a little girl and has always had a love for literature. She hopes to get her PhD and go on to be an English professor.

SAMARAH HAYS is a non-traditional student finishing her goal of a college degree. A widowed mother of two, she finds comfort and peace in mixed media art, dance, and writing. Her ideas are a mixture of logical romance with a splash of colorful tart. She holds her faith and her children as her top priority.

BRAD JAMISON is a Georgia native and is currently pursuing degrees in Journalism and Sociology at Gainesville State College. He has had works published in the New York Times online and The Chestatee Review. He was the recipient of the Gainesville State College Compass Newspaper Scholarship in the fall of 2010 and is a current writer for GSC’s newspaper, The Voice as well as a member of The Chestatee Review staff. He currently lives in Athens, GA, and plans to graduate from the University of Georgia. When not busy with school, he enjoys traveling for any reason at all.

KATIE KEIGER is attending her third semester at Gainesville State College and has only experimented with one creative writing class: play
writing. Katie is majoring in Journalism, and she intends to continue her pursuit of becoming a better overall writer by testing her literary feet in the waters of professional competitions.

JOYCE KINSEY is a non-traditional student at Gainesville State College. She is pursuing a B.S. degree in Early Childhood Education. Joyce is happily married with two children. She attended Gainesville

CHARLES RYAN LEVEILLE has traveled the world many times over, visited and competed in over twenty different countries and lived in six different states. He represented the United States of America internationally for well over ten years. He competed against the best in the world in three sports and defeated them all at one time or another. He became an Olympian and a World Champion; he has looked adversity straight in the face and won. He has lived more life than his twenty-seven years would seem to allow, yet his life is just beginning...

TANDRA LONG is a woman of whimsy and tenacity. She is a nontraditional student becoming a traditional scholar. She is a poet, daydreamer, and connoisseur of truth. Tandra hopes to befriend her inner storyteller and experience creative and financial success by transcribing the landscape of her past into fiction.

ANDREW MACDONALD was born in Hollywood, Florida and has lived in Dahlonega, Georgia for nearly seven years. He recently graduated from Lumpkin County High School and currently attends Gainesville State College. He is an avid writer, currently an English major, and is an aspiring high school teacher and professional writer.

SARAH MADSEN is an English major at Gainesville State College. She’s a nontraditional student and lives in Cumming with her husband, two young sons, and three guinea pigs. She harbors dreams of someday publishing a novel but for now just enjoys writing for the fun of it, even when it’s not really any fun at all.

JASON MARTIN is a thirty-two year old father of two and a retired Marine who served his country for almost twelve years. Currently, Jason is attending Gainesville State College where he plans on majoring in history. He plans on pursuing a career in politics upon graduation.
MEGAN MCCAFFREY comes from a Scotch-Irish family and was born in Schenectady, New York. She graduated from Mill Creek High School and immediately went to Gainesville State College. Megan is currently working on her associates' degree in English and Journalism. She likes to read sci-fi and fantasy books and loves to write poetry.

KAYLA MCGEE is a third year student at Gainesville State College. She will be graduating in May of 2011, with two associate degrees (one in English and one in Journalism). Afterward, she hopes to transfer to the University of Georgia to study public relations at the Grady School of Journalism.

JESSIE MERRIAM was born of midwestern parents in Charlottesville, VA, is 25, and a four-year resident of Athens. She is a printmaker, waitress, and long-term student of many disciplines with special enthusiasm for bookmaking—prints and writing. So far she has written a little poetry.

CHERYL MILLS is a non-traditional student who did not discover her love of writing and academics until after she had four children, so she’s kind of busy and not given to long-winded third-person autobiographical statements.

MADISON MOSELY was born in Jacksonville, Florida and spent the last four years living in Fort Lauderdale. A sophomore and English major, she completed her first year at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida. After living in Florida for 19 years, she is thrilled with seasons and the mountains.

GRAYSON TAYLOR is finishing his fourth and final semester at Gainesville State College. He plans to transfer to the University of Georgia as an English major and one day become a writer. A writer of what, he doesn’t know yet, but hopefully, it will be something pretty decent.
Gainesville State College
2011 Writing Contest Winners

SHORT FICTION
1st Place: Katherine Schinell  “The Island”
2nd Place: Tandra Long   “Gone”
3rd Place: Abigail Diorio  “Jesus Was Wrong”

POETRY
1st Place: Sarah Madsen  “Beltane Night”
2nd Place: Jessie Merriam “The Auroch”
3rd Place: David Butler   “The Amos”

ONE-ACT PLAY
1st Place: Katie Keiger   Romeo and Rosaline
2nd Place: Kayla McGee   Stuck
3rd Place: Brad Jamison   The Run

INFORMAL ESSAY
1st Place: Charles Ryan Leveille “This I Believe”
2nd Place: Emmy Dixon    “Snow Covered Garbage”
3rd Place: Grayson Taylor “Oh, To Be a Ramblin’ Man”

FORMAL ESSAY
1st Place: Jason Martin  “Humanity: Killing is in Our Blood”
2nd Place: Cheryl Mills  “The Normalizing of Aberrant Behavior Through Television Talk Shows”
3rd Place: Joyce Kinsey  “Why Was School Desegregation So Explosive?”
AWARDS RECEIVED

THE 2011 SOUTHERN LITERARY FESTIVAL

Short Fiction - 1st Place
“Gone”
TANDRA LONG

One-Act Plays - 1st Place
The Run
BRAD JAMISON