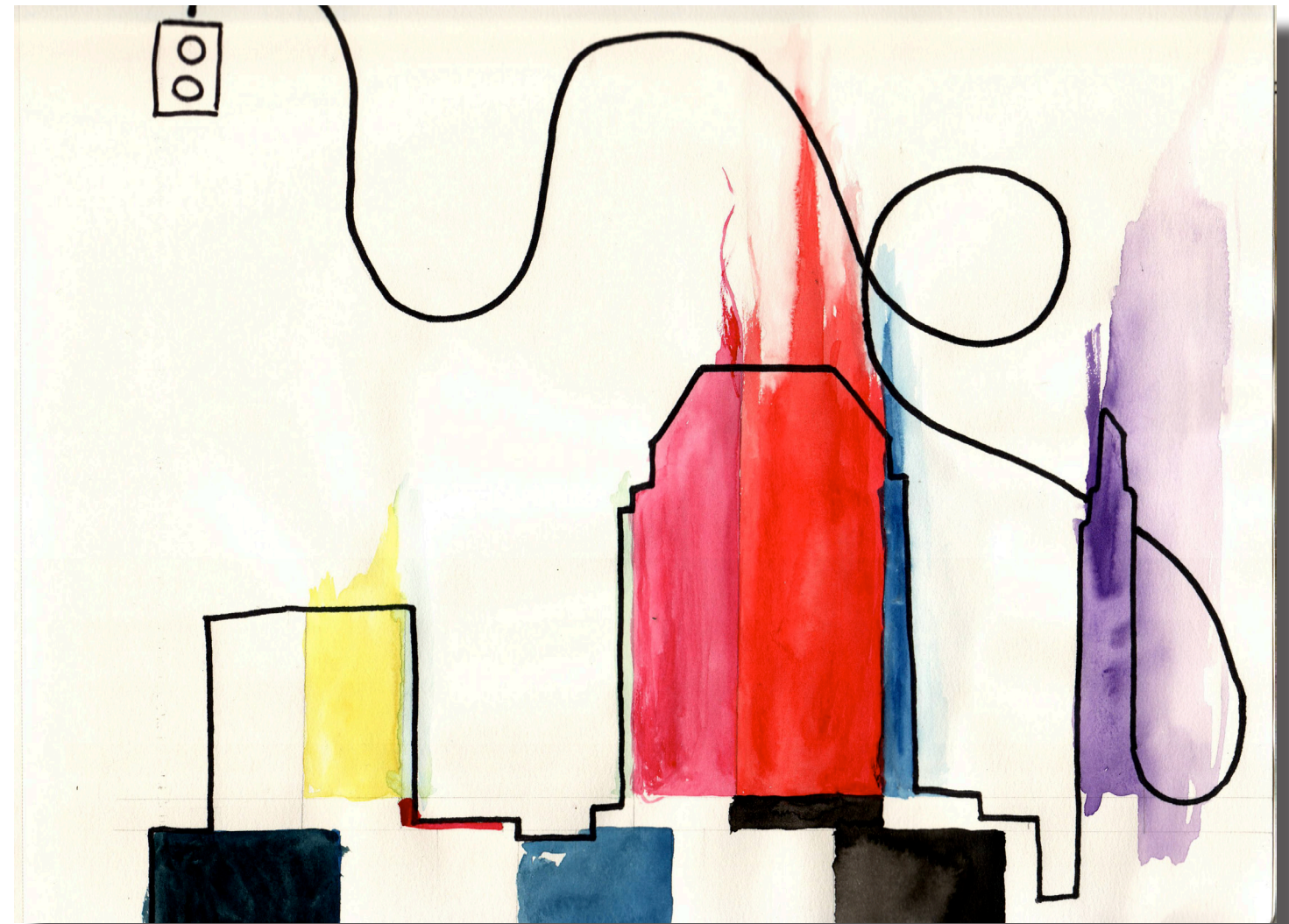


# BRICK HOUSE Review

is a publication of Springfield Technical Community College

# BRICK HOUSE Review

Spring 2010



Springfield Technical  
Community College

Special thanks to Dean Arlene Rodriguez and Professor Gwendolyn White

Designed by Ellen Spritzler, Graphic Arts Department

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*I'll publish right or wrong:  
Fools are my theme, let satire be my song.*

Lord Byron

***EDITOR'S NOTE***

I want to welcome you to the first edition of Springfield Technical Community College's literary magazine, *Brick House Review*. A very special thanks to Amy Halloran for her unique and insightful title. I would also like to thank the student editors, Patricia Dineen, Nick Collura, and Joe Olbrych for all their hard work and enthusiasm. This magazine would never have made it to press without the more than saintly patience of Trish Maiolo in the IT Department, Cynthia Claudio in Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and Ellen Sprintzler in the Graphic Arts Department. My gratitude to Professor Cheryl Lukas for sending me much needed assistance, and Professor Gwendolyn White and Dean Arlene Rodriguez for holding my hand and supporting me every step of the way. Working on establishing this publication and getting it off the ground have been challenging and rewarding endeavors. I want to thank all the students who submitted literary work, art, and photography. Unfortunately, given the space constraints, all submitted work could not be included in this first edition. There will also be an online version of this edition. The work here speaks for itself, so on to the reading.

Enjoy!

PJ Jongbloed

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PJ Jongbloed

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Patricia Dineen

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**Stephen Dumala**

## **A Curious History of the English Language**

English is a fascinating language. Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) men were short (about five feet), long-armed, short legged, with low foreheads and underdeveloped chins. They lived in Britain while it was part of the land- continent of Europe, when there was no English channel, and the North Sea was only a river basin. We know practically nothing about them. Later came Neolithic (New Stone Age) men who had polished stone implements, a higher culture, domesticated animals, buried their dead, did weaving, had crude pottery and agriculture, and simple mound dwellings. They were a dark race, and their descendents are found in the dark-haired natives of Scotland and Wales. Their language and culture also disappeared, but some believe that the Basques (peoples) near Spain's Pyreenes Mountains are a surviving remnant of Neolithic Man.

The first language we know of in Britain was Celtic, an Indo-European Language. Before the Christian Era, Celts were found in Gaul (France), Spain, Great Britain, Western Germany, Northern Italy, and Galatia in Asia Minor (Turkey). Today Celtic is found only in remote areas of Britain and France. In Britain, there were two branches of the Celtic language: Gaelic or Goidelic, and Cymric or Brittanic.

The Roman invasions and occupations beginning with Julius Caesar in 55 A.D. resulted in the spread of the Latin language and alphabet. The successful Roman invasions really began with Emperor Claudius in 43 A.D. and lasted until about 410 A.D., when they withdrew from Britain to defend Rome as their empire was collapsing. In addition to the new Latin alphabet, the Celts had their own Ogam language, and had been previously exposed to an ancient Germanic alphabet, the 24-letter Runic alphabet. The Old English alphabet that we hear about was actually a mixture of Latin, with some Runic letters mixed in.

Around 449 A.D. Britain was invaded and settled by Teutonic (Germanic) tribes from the northeastern coast of Europe. These were the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes. According to the venerable Bede in his *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the Jutes and Angles had come from the northern and southern Danish peninsula respectively. The Jutes settled near Kent, the Angles on the east coastline and north of the Humber River (Northumbria), and the Saxons near Sussex (South Saxony), Essex (East Saxony) and Wessex (West Saxony).

The Celts referred to their Teutonic invaders as Saxons, and some early Latin writers called Britain Saxonica. Britain was later referred to as either *Angli* or *Anglia* or also *Engla-Land* (Land of the Angles). The Teutons called the Celts *Wealas* (foreigners), where the word Welsh came from. Also, the original spelling of England was *Ingland* (Middle English), similar to the Spanish *Inglaterra* and the Italian *Inghilterra*. The Anglo-Saxon influence in England was dominant, with the exception of beyond the northwest mountains to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

After that followed the Scandinavian invasions, occurring between 787 and 878 A.D. This took place in three phases, Many battles took place in Canterbury, London, Wessex, Lindisfarne, Jarrow, Edington, Danelaw, Brunanburth (in Northumbria), and Malden. This led to some Danish and Scandinavian influences on the English. Language. In studying Old English and Middle English, it is sometimes difficult to separate English, Germanic, and Scandinavian words.

The Norman Conquest in 1066 was another huge impactor on the English Language. Norman comes from the word Normandy, a seventy-five mile stretch of land off of the coast of France, across the English Channel. Although these people were Northmen or “Norsemen,” they were a predominantly French culture. So now you have French language influences on English. No wonder some foreigners get confused trying to learn English! We have exceptions to all of our grammatical rules all over the place.

Another aspect of English is that Old English, which stems from ancient Germanic, Runic, and pre-Gothic German, is actually closer to Old Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic (Russian) in its declensions and inflections. For example, you would not say “Me went to the store,” or “She bought I a car.” However, I and me are the exact same word in English, but they are spelled differently because *I* is the subject of the first person personal pronoun, and *me* is the direct object. This grammar feature is descended from Old English, which had a huge abundance of spelling changes according to grammar usage. Modern English has been losing these “inflections” over time and is becoming more of an “analytical” language. This means that English grammar is now overwhelmingly based on word order in a sentence, rather than I-me inflections. The fascinating aspect of the history of “English” is that it exposes you to the vast history of the languages of the world.

#### Work Referenced

Baugh, Albert C. *History of the English Language*. New York: Appleton, 1935.



*Italy*  
Rd'M

**Matthew Piela**

## **Machine Guns and Other Messiahs**

Come here angel wrought of steel

I have sins I need to share.

Lurk towards me on your rubber ribbed feet

I do not fear your holiness

You, of which I oppose,

Nothing can touch you not even death.

You're almost upon me angel wrought of steel

Burn me with your incinerating forgiveness.

Your almighty piety crushes buildings.

Just to exact your mercilessness upon me.

In my Godlessness I have beckoned you.

In my pious nature, I have angered you.

Is there no satiating your cold metal hatred?

You are the angel wrought of steel.

Without you on this destroyed plane

Where would God go in the heat of battle?



## DaQuan Cook

### There are moments like these ...

There are moments like these  
when sitting  
is not a problem  
not to me at least  
I can recognize immediately  
that the Earth is ready to sing  
knowing that I free myself  
from whatever activity I am  
involved in and respectfully show  
myself to the source

Outside is where I am  
and as I look to the sky  
a voice is what I hear  
speaking very clearly  
Into my veins she speaks  
to calm down my nerves  
all of them  
my body is tranquil  
and so aroused  
not only physically  
but by the atmosphere  
and with such a wonderful view  
I am blessed to view

I am sitting now  
on my steps  
as this long awaited episode  
begins to unfold  
it is heavenly  
what this Earth can do  
as an unexpected smile  
grabs a large portion  
of my face  
I guess my head  
was in the clouds  
because I was and am being  
polished by light drops  
of water

Here it is  
as I am being relieved  
of the stresses inside me  
Bravo, to nature's most  
beautiful song  
I think I'll savor this moment  
how I do love the rain

**Nancy C. B. Evren**

## **The Job**

Sonny dropped two bullets into his Smith and Wesson and spun the cylinder. He looked around, taking in all the grandeur of high living; then narrowed his eyes onto his victims. The night had not turned out how he'd planned. He'd calculated the man to be home alone this evening. Extra people created extra problems.

Circling the mahogany dining table, Sonny blew out the candles on the silver-plated candlesticks. He picked up the crystal decanter, poured himself a glass of wine, sampled it then placed the wineglass back on the table. It seemed a small celebration was taking place this evening with the table elegantly set for two. An empty jeweler's box sat opened on the edge of the table. Gift wrap paper lay neatly folded beside it. Sonny paused in front of the table. Steam rose from the food heaped onto the dinner plates. He picked at the roast pork with his fingers, licking them contently. With a slight sigh, he walked away from the table. His eyes refocused on the wealthy couple. His steps were deliberate now; his body relaxed as he strode across the room in his gray flannel suit, the revolver still in his hand. The lines on his face hardened as he approached the couple.

"Are you a betting man?" He sneered at the well dressed man now held hostage and bound to his dining chair. His equally well dressed wife knelt at his feet, quivering in horror and fear. The housekeeper's body lay within eyesight, the pool of blood around her head slowly being absorbed by the Oriental rug.

Nick and Sonny had broken in through a side window in the front parlor. Now Nick scoped the back of the house, looking for a second exit. Sonny had worked with Nick before, a thorough no-nonsense kind of guy who played strictly by the books. Sonny was never one to follow the rules but he liked his partners to.

"So," he repeated the question, "are you a betting man?" This time, he spun the

cylinder around and pointed the revolver at the wife. Both cried out. His wife's sobs grew louder and more terrified. She clung to her husband's legs.

"Take whatever you want but, please, spare my wife," pleaded the man.

Sonny hadn't thought about robbing them but now that the idea was put into his head, he considered the option. A little piece of something sparkly might make up for all his troubles. Nick would put up a fuss though, telling him that they needed to stick with the job. The boss didn't like his employees calling the shots. Sonny's job was to knock off the old man.

Nick was in the parlor now, red-faced and perspiring.

"Sonny, you said this was a piece of cake. What the hell happened in here? Who's the dead lady? I thought we were supposed to take care of the old man. What're you waiting for, for Crissakes? The cops'll be here any minute now." Nick's face had exasperation written all over it. Sonny knew Nick was right; but he liked pushing limits.

"Hey Nicky, the old man says we can take anything we want if we don't kill the wife. What'd ya think? A little something for our troubles?" He spun the cylinder around again. He'd mastered the art of Russian roulette, knowing precisely how hard to spin the cylinder so the bullets would line up in the barrel exactly where he wanted them. He'd had plenty of time practicing as a kid with his dad's old pistol, taking aim at the rats behind the family's decrepit old barn. He hated that life - complete waste of time. City life was what he craved. That's where the action was, always something to do, always places to go. Nothing was beyond his reach.

"Sonny, we gotta get outta here man! Finish the job and let's go. All you gotta do is pop the old man. Why you messing with her?" Nick stammered. Sonny could see that Nick was starting to sweat even more. He could tell that the thought of not carrying through with the boss's orders was scaring Nick even more than getting caught by the cops. His eyes twinkled.

"Because she's wearing a necklace," aiming the revolver at the woman. "And he's made me an offer. He is a betting man. He figures I won't pop her if he gives me something in exchange. So, I want the necklace - ain't it something?" Sonny walked over

to the woman and yanked off the diamond choker from around her neck. He fingered it in one hand while he aimed the gun at his victims.

“Nothing personal old timer; just doing my job.” With that he fired the revolver at point blank range into the man’s forehead. Then he aimed at the wife. “Sorry sweetheart, can’t have any witnesses.” The bullet pierced her chest, blood splattering down her evening gown. Her lifeless body slid to the floor resting at the feet of her dead husband.

“What the hell was that?” Nick screamed furiously, “Why’d you shoot the old lady? The boss’ll be real happy when he finds out you shot her too!”

“He ain’t gonna find out. When the cops get here, all they’re gonna see is dead people. Now, help me fix her up.” Sonny moved the wife slightly away from her husband and, wiping his prints off the gun, slipped the revolver into her hand. He then untied the man and propped him up in the dining chair.

“Now let’s get outta here before the cops find us.” Nick didn’t need to be told twice. He was flipping off lights and cleaning up their footsteps as they made their way out of the house. From behind him, Sonny called out.

“Hey Nick, change of plans.” Nick stopped still. He slowly turned around to see Sonny aiming a pistol at him. One pop and Nick lay wide eyed and stone still on the floor. Sonny dragged Nick’s large frame back into the dining room, positioning him near the doorway. He replaced the revolver with the pistol in the old woman’s hand and put the revolver in Nick’s hand. Taking a small canvas sack out of Nick’s tool bag, Sonny scavenged around the first floor of the mansion looking for anything of value. He didn’t have to look too hard. Placing them in the bag, he dropped it beside Nick. He stood above the dead bodies, looking over his work. Breaking and entering, robbery, murder-suicide, let the cops figure it out, he thought to himself. He crawled back out the parlor room window and into the night.

**Yosef Sahler**

## **Interracial Flotation Device**

If I could be a boat I'd float away  
If I could be a moth I'd fly away  
If I could be a shark I'd swim away  
And when I'm in my car I drive away

You're not stuck, no no you're not  
You're not stuck like a clock  
But her knife it cuts so deep  
Tho I feel I can not weep

Mama says I'm bad, I'm all she ever had  
But I know the truth I'm just a youth  
Drugs and porn it's all we ever do  
But sometimes I like you too

If I could be a boat I'd float away  
If I could be a moth I'd fly away  
If I could be a shark I'd swim away  
And when my time comes I'll die someday

## **Anonymous**

### **The Innocent**

A child of fifteen, without the benefit of an inquisition, was sentenced to the altar along with her nineteen year old rapist, (she has never told a soul about the rape) to be married. **They** said to her “Pack your clothes gal, you’re getting a husband.” The innocent child bride meekly complied because there were no questions to answer, only a summons, to be obeyed. **They** said to her “You’re an adult now,” and you have what every woman wants, a baby and a husband. **They** told her how lucky she had become “To get a baby and a husband.” **They** chose the rapist as her betrothal because he confessed that the gal could have been made of virginal quality and thereby would make the pregnancy, probably, his best decision to marry her, and live in honorable existence with her family. **They** said he was a good man to allow her to come live with his mother and all the rest of his family.

**Them** accepted her with a list of how their breakfast, lunch and supper, was to be cooked and served. **Them** said she would learn quickly, certainly after several beating, how to cook without burning the water. **Them** told about another girl who was more pregnant than she by the rapist, and who was better suited to their family needs and knew how to cook, clean, and was liked by **Them**. **Them** said that she would get used to sleeping in the same bed with the rapist and his brothers because he was a good man.

The innocent child bride gave birth with all of **Them** at home celebrating the home delivery and beseeching her that the whole town could hear her screams; therefore, knock it off. The child bride turned sixteen two weeks after the birth of her first born son. The innocent child bride adamantly refused to have intercourse with her rapist/husband after the birth of their son and accordingly deserved more beating, for a wife did not ever refuse her husband anything. **Them** told her she was acting like a child by denying him devotion when all of them could hear her pleas to not be touched, all throughout the night. After

six weeks of refusals, she was suddenly taken to a party by him and vaguely remembers crawling around on the floor behind him because her milk filled breast had become too heavy for her to stand. Alcohol became her only salvation after that party.

Alcohol caused the innocent child bride to shatter his eardrum accidentally. She was trying to ward off his usual devotion and the showing of his love to her by beating her into bed, when she swung widely in a drunken stupor, at his head, setting off a sound closely resembling the gong of a cymbal. **Them** took him away and peacefulness reigned over the innocent-one. Three days later a recognizable smell reached the innocent and she knew without a doubt that he was returning.

The rapist/husband packed up the innocent's belonging and her 3 month old son and deposited both at They old abode without ceremony or admission of the cause. They told the innocent that she had to apply for "Welfare" and go back to her blessed school. **They** took all of the innocent's checks and bade her to reconcile with the rapist/husband. The innocent turned 17 and was returned to **Them**. He would not abide by an intelligent book smart wife and forbade any books in his sight. The alcohol helped the innocent find him in a drunken stupor in a house, the chosen's one with his other child, in her bed. So she dragged him into the street toward **Them** house, when he began pounding fist upon fist upon her head. The innocent had concealed a small dagger upon entering another's house and used this to rapidly and repeatedly puncture his hated head. Only by seeing the blood running freely down his face did the innocent cease her stabbing and flees from retaliation.

The divorce was granted quickly. The innocent had two sons and was living back in **They's** old abode. **They** said for her to get a job and a house and be an adult. The innocent always did what she was told and soon found a job and a house. Being only 17, she bought a car and was married again by the time she was nineteen. This husband was no rapist, instead he was a gigolo. A male for hire. The innocent was impressed by the rich looking clothes he wore and the sweet smell of his Brute cologne. A brute he turned out to be, always fighting with the innocent for his share of her paycheck. If not for John Barleycorn, the innocent would not have survived the fifteen months that marriage lasted.

The innocent left the state of Georgia vowing never to return, unless she wanted to

die, because husband number two was a little upset with her. Apparently during a drunken stupor, the innocent came to, standing over him with a pot of scalding water. She had blacked out and didn't remember anything. The fighting stopped but sleep was a luxury the innocent could not afford nor anymore than drinking. Fleeing for fear of retaliation and to get some necessary sleep was her only choice.

Now some twenty year's later and 3000 miles away from Georgia, **They** called the innocent. The innocent is now a 53 year old woman and not innocent nor ignorant anymore. She has lived alone with her sons without any of their salutations. **They** said "We miss you," and "Where do you live?" and "What's your address?" The Woman says "What do you all want?" **They** said, "we love you and we worry about you." The woman said "NOW?" Now **They** love me; now **They** want to know where I am living. Now **They** wants to know how have I been making it. The woman tells them, "thanks for calling, I love all yawl too. But I am very busy, living my own life. Without you or anyone telling me what to do and not ever asking me what do I want? Thanks for calling. Good-bye." The innocent's choice is to be left alone because that's the only choice she's had for most of her life. All her choices were made by others when she was growing up. For twenty years, **They** had left her alone. Now her choice is to leave **Them/They** alone.



## Young Snow

### *'Balloons'*

As we,  
Go,  
On,  
Smiling over what we see,  
Our souls float together,  
Over a breathtaking gaze of life,  
As if bright balloons,  
Taught to children's hands,  
Held softly lightly,  
As our hearts,  
Their strings slowly winding ever tighter together.

Aside me,  
See,  
Tell,  
I,  
You,  
Share times of our world,  
That is coloring more,  
With lifting promise of new ones.

Hearts guiding footsteps,  
For my hand is in yours,  
The sun chasing us,  
Together we will be,  
Followed by our floating laughter.

**Jesenia Ashwell**

## **Inner City Child**

Once, there was an inner city child  
Inner city?  
Well you know what they say  
She must have cockroaches in her cereal  
She must shop for clothes at the Salvation Army  
She must be lacking a proper education  
Her school lunch is probably her only healthy meal  
Poor inner city child  
Her mother must be on welfare.  
Once there was an inner city child  
Her mother was a secretary at the middle school she attended  
On most days  
After completing her homework for her honors class  
She cleaned up after her younger brother while her mother cooked  
On Mondays, baked chicken, mashed potatoes and green beans were a given  
Most mornings the inner city child would eat a bowl of cereal while reviewing her school  
notes.  
So did this inner city child get knocked up and drop out?  
No this inner city child went to med school  
She'll be performing your cervical biopsy today  
She'll be here soon  
She drives all the way up from the inner city, you know

**Ayrian Russell**

**Untitled**

When I'm said and the tears can't stop coming

Make it rain

When I'm thinking of you and it makes my heart weak

Make it rain

When I fall and think I can't get up

Make it rain

When you leave me and never come back to me

Make it rain

When my heart is bleeding and I take my last breath

Don't stop the rain.

make it rain

**Adam Ketchum**

## **Sunday Morning**

“God why do you have to be so damn religious?” she sighed as she tossed my copy of the gospel of Judas off the bed.

I looked at the small book. White veins raced up and down its well worn spine. I shrugged. “I don’t know. I’m not really evangelical if that’s of any comfort to you.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean I’m not militant about it. I don’t push my beliefs on anyone.”

“Like hell you aren’t. Leaving this book on the bed where I’m sure to see it? That’s passive aggressive evangelicalism. Don’t even try to tell me its not.”

She looked down at me from the bed, despite the fact that I was standing. I sat next to her reclined body and attempted to explain. “I just like talking about that sort of stuff. I don’t know. It’s not a need or anything. I don’t even know if I believe it. It’s just interesting.” She yawned.

“Have I ever told you about the siafu?”

“I’m not really interested in this stuff, babe.” she murmured stretching lazily.

“No, it’s not anything religious, driver ants.”

She perked up almost imperceptibly, “Do tell...”

She loved learning about the natural world. It was one of her greatest features, her insatiable curiosity.

“They are these blind ants that travel only by pheromones. It’s actually pretty cool to watch. They have the soldiers form a protective tunnel, menacing pincers facing outward, against invading forces. Then all the workers travel through it. Its like a river of ants. Anyway the pheromones from these ants attract the sausage-fly...”

“Huh. So, you’re telling me that you want me to unzip your fly and grab your sausage right?” she had shifted so all her weight was on her side. It created the most beautiful silhouette. I had to admit that there was nothing more that I wanted than her suggestion.

“Uh...no, um, you see the sausage-fly is attracted to the pheromones and when he reaches the ant river, he gets captured by the siafu. His wings are torn off and he is taken off to mate with the queen. He dies shortly after mating.”

No one said anything for a while.

She finally broke the silence.

“What’s so great about this gospel of Judas anyway? I thought Judas was a traitor.”

“Well that’s the thing. He says that it was part of some grand scheme revealed only to him by Christ. The idea that....”

“I hate that term, Christ...” she snapped quickly.

“Huh? Oh that’s another thing Jesus Christ...its the Greek for what is Anglicized as ‘Joshua Messiah’ and the Hebrew would be akin to ‘Yeshua Masiah’ or something along those lines. It could also be translated roughly as Joshua Seth as both ‘Seth’ and ‘Messiah’ mean ‘promised one’. It’s just his name. It’s come to mean something else, I guess. I don’t know. It’s not that hard to remove that guy from the title of ‘christ’ when you think he’s just Josh Seth. I don’t know he even seems kind of, cool...”

She sat up and leaned towards me. She was telling me to shut up.

Closer until she was almost touching me. I leaned in, and she quickly pulled away and flopped back down.

“I don’t know bout all that. I remember the story of Sampson though,” she said sitting up again.

“Yeah...well anyway, the thing about this secret stuff that Jesus supposedly told Judas is, it’s supposed to sort of be realized. It’s not enough just to praise him or say he saved your life or soul or anything. You have to somehow realize this secret knowledge about him. It’s kind of interesting when you think about it in a bigger context of religion in general...”

“Mhm. Yeah.” she was rubbing my freshly cut hair and her murmurs were more of a courtesy. “I hate your hair cut. It looks real stupid”

“Yeah well...I always get it cut too short...for some reason. I’d probably just let it grow, but you would complain too much,” I replied.

“Yeah, you got sheered like a sheep.” She pushed me down.  
More silence.

After some time she took my hand in hers, lifted it to her mouth, and bit it. I just looked at her.

“Why do you just take that shit?” she snapped “Why are you so fucking passive all the time?”

“I don’t know. Just kind of am. That didn’t really hurt though.”

She put my hand over her heart and looked at me.

“Liar. Would you like to pray with me?”

She looked at me, I met her gaze and said, “liar.”

Minutes later she was chanting God’s name.

**Brian Krawiec**

## **An End to Winter**

As the start of another season is around the bend,

A wish and being glad to see this one end.

Stating a point for sake to know,

There has not been much falling snow.

Some came down, would afterward melt away,

Making things look, and feel brighter each day.

For these are not why thoughts to share,

Outside the weather, and temps in the air.

Simply to say without sounding bold,

Just being tired of everything so cold.

## DaQuan Cook

### To the World

In what way  
may I express myself?  
It is not in me  
to be so wordy  
This question I ask myself  
will be answered in writing  
with words  
I shall entertain the world  
with these words  
in a portrait of mine  
but there are  
so many  
an infinite space  
of words

It is I  
now standing tall  
in a maze  
with words  
seeking to express words  
but  
I am able  
and have found  
my idea

In my working hand  
lay the artist in me  
my craft  
and with my other hand  
I grasp this palette  
I hope the world  
will enjoy the colors  
within these words

## Christopher Brown

### Can You Understand

Can you understand what I been through  
What I seen what it's like to be me  
Pain, deception and lies  
What it's like for no one to understand your cries  
All day screaming out why but no one answer  
Feeling worse than cancer  
To survive got to be more agile than a panther  
Never knowing what's going to happen in these streets  
Society can't understand why I'm packing this heat  
I'm just trying to survive on these streets  
Death is the big question  
But the bible says everybody's Destin'  
Confessions of my adolescence  
To see my best friends lay to rest  
Knowing they aren't the ones that got hit in their chest  
Not understanding why they had to die and why i'm still alive  
Family feeling shaked up feelings of remorse was fates cause  
At the end realized you was never a friend  
Still I ate everything on my plate through my activities in the world  
I escape but it seems the dead presidents don't matter  
Cause the problems just gather  
They say life goes on but is death really only the beginning  
Well everything that starts has to end  
Just not trying to end early want to be an old man when I reach them pearlies

Rest in peace lee boi, pat, stacks, noah, and jigga gone but not forgotten



**Nick Collura**

## **Orientalism**

The Americans sit around me,  
Watching the Haitians on TV –  
And today, even donating money has been made more convenient,  
So that we can do it in the apex of our lethargy – through a text message.

This is our Americanized altruism

And those people who make the donations see the Haitians on TV –  
And they know they will never look like them  
or be that poor.  
And they feel better about themselves.

And on the ride home later I turn around in the passenger seat  
And see everyone staring up at a billboard on I-91 south.  
On the obnoxious sign a blonde woman applies her L’Oreal Infallible LipColor  
And the Americans in the backseat see her,  
And realize that they will never look like her  
(No matter how hard they try)  
And they are distressed-  
But they will buy the product anyways.

**Nick Collura**

## **The Tell-Tale Bluetooth**

Somewhat of a scientist I am, making observations and noting them in this here journal. Watching people - sometimes from my window - most times from the peephole of the door, on the third floor of my apartment. For this reason some may call me mad? But scientists are often called such; so I've taken to liking the title.

Being the tenant of his, it was unavoidable. Monthly, I appeared before his door - paying the rent, on the threshold of his private life, and I had inquired so passionately; which is why I started watching him.

A detective of sorts I am.

Conveniently, he had been temporarily living in a room on this very floor, making my objective easier. That's when I saw it, that wretched object lodged in his ear! What was he? An android? A spy? A bureaucrat? My motives lie in this discovery!

12<sup>th</sup>

He came out of a cab- the piece still in his ear- carrying groceries along the curb, making his way up to the door. At the top of the stairs I heard him talking to himself and I watched him carry on to the door labeled 317. His shirt was only buttoned three-quarters of the way up, revealing a dash of old chest hair losing its pigment. A gold chain hung about it, like a snake in the grass. The smell of his Brut deodorant slipped through the crack in my door, very gentlemanlike.

I was so curious about the silver in his ear, mostly because of its' blinking. Its light shone on and then off, pulsating, in tune with the beat of his heart, perhaps? As a disciple of discoveries I had to look into it. Of course I remind you, I only planned on finding out what the device was.

13<sup>th</sup>

Old man walks up the stairs ranting about politics. His brief case is empty – I presume based on the way he carries it, effortlessly. “Long day at the office, huh old man?” I ask facetiously under my breath.

14<sup>th</sup>

Hawaiian shirt today, revealing a slight gut. He is talking again. His talking seems incessant, and thus I must take my observations one step further. My hypothesis predicts it must be a tape recorder or a headset of some sort.

As a scientist, I cannot let closed doors block the way of making such important discoveries.

14<sup>th</sup> (night)

About eleven pm: I make my way to his door where silence is abundant and light is absent. Luckily, his door is not locked, and I push it open slightly. Through the crack I can see

the man's balding head, his earpiece still attached. I wonder then if it cannot be removed whatsoever.

15<sup>th</sup>

Is this the busiest man in the world, that he cannot be bothered to hold a device similar to the one attached to his head? If not he is possibly the laziest.

This night I did the same thing, peering into his room from a crack in the door, so as to not disturb him. He seems a sound sleeper, since the floorboard, at one time, made a creak and he remained motionless.

16<sup>th</sup>

At first I was content just watching from the door each night, for hours. But when I looked at it, I was almost hypnotized. It had to be removed immediately. Temporary insanity one might say? Alas, you should've seen the way I crept over to him, hovering over his corpse like a hawk. Then like a master surgeon I worked so fastidiously to remove the parasite from his ear. It seemed an intricate procedure at first, but once I pulled the visible piece wires followed, it was as if I were a magician pulling tissue out of my sleeve without end. I thought I was removing the man's entire nervous system, the way the wires came out, like hundreds of tapeworms. He made a slight budge, a reaction to a possibly slight pain, but a good pain, the kind of pain one feels when healthily purged...

17<sup>th</sup>

Do I regret my studies? I cannot answer; I haven't seen the man save one time since the experiment. I caught a glimpse of him in the park on a bench, alone in pouring rain. He was holding a book, and by the looks of it, Walker Percy. I cannot say which is better the former, or the latter.

**Matthew Piela**

## **Speculation from an Aged Man**

Deafening Color, was that a knock?

No, couldn't be, I'm handsomely alone.

Just a cornered animal, shivering from cold

or is it fear? I've ceased to know.

What could I achieve, devilishly crooked.

or just bent to perfection?

I'm old, news I have learned through solidarity,

with who? Just some bones in a grave.

Why do I have to live clumsily in my experienced perfection?

All I have is my knowledge, I've learned I know nothing.

Where is that water? My mind is parched.

Its lips are withered and dry.

I just sit here handsomely alone,

A knock is the only suspense I could bear to deny

## Robert Mattern

### Struggling to Survive

Gasping for one last breath  
Trying to fight this thing called death  
Cant give up, must go on  
Cant go on, too tired.....

My dad was a true artist  
My body seemed to be his canvas  
His only two colors seemed to be black and blue  
My body didn't hold the paint well  
As it usually took two to three coats before finally applying  
Being a canvas is harder than expected  
While mom went next door to borrow some sugar from the man next door  
I walked outside and sat on the stoop  
The wind stings the cut on my lip  
The neighbors continue to suspiciously glance  
Yet don't say a word  
Come into class with a darkened eye  
The other kids asked questions  
While the teachers whispered  
Yet nothing happened

Sirens roared in my ears  
One eye shut and another looking a ceiling  
I feel cold and sharp pain in my stomach  
I am lifted onto a stretcher  
Daddy had another outburst today

Look to my right, a girl is pregnant  
Look to my left, a guy is getting stoned  
The only good thing is daddy wont be home

Daddy got me good today  
I spilled my cereal and milk  
Tears formed as a new outburst was on the way  
I tried to run before daddy saw  
But slipped on the milk, my leg really hurts  
He roared into the room with bloodshot eyes  
Picking me up he brought me into the bathroom  
The bathtub was filled with water and he threw me in  
His hands wrung around my neck and underwater I went  
I looked at him with such disdain  
Gasping for one last breath  
Trying to fight this thing called death  
Can't give up, must go on  
Can't go on, too tired.....



*Forest Park*  
Carol Roman

**Tatiana Flores**

## **Uriel's Rant**

Based on the painting *Angelico* by Guru Karam Khalsa

I work for the man above

Do not fear, for this may not be Heaven but close to Hell

This place where we meet

Though blinding of darkness,

Is my chamber of truth and question

This chamber is my self's keeper

I moan,

I cry, and ask why

In return I shed purity

If man really listened they could hear me

Or better yet, feel me

It is then when faith is born

Yet, I do not mingle with the miracles

I open the Gates to the fruits of sins to their eternal demise

And you question why does this archangel gaze down into his lap?

## **Christopher Brown**

### **Not Far From Death**

Not far from death  
When the world you will never manifest  
Lived life short as a young adult  
But now trapped in a world of solitude  
Breathing but are you really living  
Things you will never see a father you will never be  
Love you will never learn and the feelings so hot it burns  
Makes you acted up if you had a gun clap up  
Once change sets in its too late cause them four letters  
Condemn you to a place that all you know is hate  
Invalid judgment is the subject life for a life  
But when will it stop eye for an eye in the scriptures  
But are we not seeing the picture  
Was it all worth it revenge was sweet  
But that was on the street but now you're in a place  
Where it's hard to sleep cause the rest of your  
Life is what this place keeps.

Rest in peace in prison to my friend's coco, Shawn shea, Nino and dustie and for the forgotten ones



**Cheng Zheng**

## **Studying Abroad: Tough but Worthwhile**

I still clearly remember what happened about two years ago. When my husband and I got the chance to come to the United States for further study, we decided to go for it without hesitation. Knowing that to start a new life in a strange place would definitely have a lot of difficulties, I still enthusiastically expected to challenge my life. Therefore, in the winter of 2007, getting on the airplane to the United States, I turned a new page in my life.

Arriving in the land on the opposite side of the earth from my homeland, I found everything here fresh and exotic, which made me feel crazily excited. Soon, however, I realized that the life here is much more difficult than I had imagined. Exerting my most effort on the lecture, I still failed to understand what the professor talked about in the class. Trying my best to accomplish every task efficiently, I still had numerous trifles to deal with. Choosing the cheapest apartment to live in, I was still under great economic pressure. What is worse? Sometimes things just choose to go wrong together. I will never forget what I have experienced at the end of 2008. When I was busily preparing for the final exams, my family suddenly suffered from the bedbug problem, which is severe enough to force you to move out once you have it in an apartment. The bedbug is a notorious insect that will crazily reproduce after sucking the human blood and will leave you many itchy and painful bumps on the skin. They are also very difficult to be killed off because their favorite hiding place is the mattress. Therefore, serving as the dinner of bedbugs several nights, my husband and I finally could not stand the torturous biting and decided to find another place to move. However, unfortunately and coincidentally, our car broke down at that crisis.

Cultural shock also proves to be a problem to me. Inquiring for information and dealing with various issues on daily life is not difficult to me, but I am still unable to make heart-to-heart conversations with Americans. In addition, my different cultural background also makes it difficult to adapt to the western culture and customs. Thus, I just have very few friends here. Lacking a social life makes me feel uncomfortable, lonely, and homesick.

The rainbow comes after the storm. Despite the toughness, I still have happy moments every time I made small triumphs. Those are very encouraging moments when I got the highest score in the class, when I got all straight A's and received the scholarship, when I acquired the advanced skills that are unavailable in my hometown, when someone praises me that my English is excellent, when I survived the bedbug problem, when I am able to

convert the pressure into power, when I found I am strong enough to endure the unknown difficulties in the future, when I take the tough life for granted, and when I become more and more open-minded. As the old saying goes, no pain, no gain; I believe what I have paid for is worthwhile.

There are a lot of obstacles in front of my road, yet I am still brave enough to challenge myself. In my opinion, leading a vain and humdrum life is a waste of time, for life is too short to be wasted. Someone asked me whether I would choose to come to the United States again if everything returns to two years before. Taking a deep breath, I nodded my head heavily.



*Photo 1*  
Alex Bartolo





Drawing by Joe Olbrych