

Crosscut



Crosscut

literary magazine

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Crosscut

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Editor's Note

This volume grew out of my fall 2007 Creative Writing course. There, a group of students representing diverse academic perspectives — including biology and business, criminal justice and paralegal, education and English — converged in a workshop devoted to the short story. This explains the large helpings of fiction about to be served by our contributing editors, several of whom are experiencing the magic of first publication. I hope they will press on with their promising work.

One of our course texts, Nicholas Dellbanco's writer's guide *The Sincerest Form*, recommends imitation not just as a form of flattery, but as a wholesale strategy for learning to write effective short stories. In that vein, two tales that follow by Adrien Watts and Aimee Ricard present humorous and heartfelt parodies of the Lorrie Moore classic "How to Become a Writer." Matthew Thibodeau, Kalyn Doten and Oscar Ody bring multiple perspectives on America, from both likely places and unexpected voices, in "The Eagle," "What Glimpses," and "Amira, Queen Without a Country." Ashley Winslow's account of a high school graduation suggests even more intense rites of passage, while Tyra Aliardo's modern African fairy-tale treats coming of age in a different light.

These student writers also helped select from submissions of poetry, prose and photography to round out the issue. Photography by Husson contributor Barry Kitchen pauses at the geometric scale and eternal color of a Maine summer day. An earthy essay by Yarmouth-based writer Richard Wile takes us back across the years to an indelible summer memory. Thoughtful poems from Brittany Veilleux,

Janice Tye, and Michael Stutz sound out their own directions, aesthetic, geographic and life-altering.

Finally, this issue brings with it two farewell notes. Professor Kathleen Wall, whose wonderful photos of Maine nature have graced many covers over the past decade, will leave Husson this spring. Her descending osprey that graces the cover suggests her own graceful landing after years of dedicated faculty service.

This will also be my final issue as editor. I've enjoyed the last seven years at *Crosscut*, for the annual editorial challenge and for the constant exposure to so many great artists and fine people, both local and global.

Thanks to everyone on and off campus who has shown positive, sustained support for a fledgling publication. I hope *Crosscut* continues to be so nurtured, to thrive and to wing it far.

– Greg Winston

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Brittney Veuilleux

**Where are we going, Walt Whitman?
Which way does your beard point tonight?**

Through elderly eyes
One would see progress and failure
To these eyes, these donkey's and elephants
Are mere images of tax collectors and slogan sellers
Words do not mean anything now
Lies are about the only true thing we have
When the next one runs for a higher place to sit
And the lies he spits to win his people over
The skies almost seem to darken
This takes us to broken hearts, lost souls
Two soldiers standing tall in the middle of New York
City fall...
Fall down to the earth as if they were stepped on by
God himself
All that is left is rubble, besides the lies that were told
When we feel sad, the government builds us a
shopping mall
Of course we'll only be cutting down a forest or two
But who needs beauty when you can buy a new shoe?
Forget equal rights, it's all the same
Like sugar covered candy Our hate is only on the inside
Only they don't know that we have that mind frame
And when war breaks out
We are not going to feel their pain
Like the needles that pierce the legs and neck on a
body that had a name

We will be at home safe
Watching news reporters cover up the truth
Others know what's really going on, but have no proof
It was magic at first
But when you turned on the TV it was so embarrassing
To see all of the other people and see what they see
We'd rather pave parking lots than plant a few trees
And take money from the people who need
To make the people who don't live with even more ease.



Dandelion
– *Barry Kitchen*

Janice Tye

To My Doctors

I gave you my respect before I met you
But you have earned my trust.
You hold my future in your hands.

I strive to make my mark amongst your patients
To show that I exist outside my records.
I am so much more than my disease.

We have a lopsided relationship, you and I.
I do not really know you, or know
Your interests, your hopes, your dreams.

I strive to protect my spirit as I pledge
To assist you with my will and determination.
You are the guardians of my health.

Some days are hard, but I look to the future
As I follow your treatment plans.
Together we will safeguard my life.

Janice Tye

I Believe

I believe in the power of prayer
And the power of thought.

I believe in sensible nutrition
And restorative sleep.

I believe in the power of teddy bear hugs
And Chinese food.

I believe in the importance of every day life
And other people's nothings.

I believe in miracles.



Amsterdam
– *Oscar Ody*

Aimee Ricard

How to Become a Field Hockey Player

Find yourself in 6th grade, when field hockey is first introduced. Tell you mother you are interested in joining this sport. She will look at you with an odd expression on her face. She has heard of this sport, yet is not familiar with it. All your friends are gossiping about how they are going to try out for this sport. How can you not join. Think you will lose all your friends if you don't try out. Tell your parents you will die if you don't make the team.

Show up to the first day of try outs geared with nothing but a water bottle, your old soccer shin guards, and your medical paperwork. Your mother insists on getting you a stick only if you are to make the team. You will mumble "real nice mom", as you look at all the other girls with new equipment on their feet, bodies, and back. The other girls will have field hockey gloves. You have no idea those even existed. Hand the coach your paperwork, who is a larger woman with kind eyes. Line up on the sideline. Run 15 laps, equivalent to 3 miles. Think to yourself "Thank god for those active summer camps I have been attending".

Surprise yourself with how well you handle the conditioning. Realize the stick you have borrowed from the school does not seem to handle so badly either. Dream of that hot pink stick you saw in Olympia Sports for a mere \$100.00. Pray that you make the team for more social aspects than anything. Imagine the spaghetti dinners and happening sleepovers you will be invited to. Your mom will pick you up from the last day of tryouts as you complain how tired you are. Do not complain about how tired you are or anything until you get in the truck, your mother will whisper. She does not want your coach to think you are weak. Think she

is getting into this whole field hockey idea a little. Slowly plot how you are going to ask for that pink stick. Wonder if that stick is even a good one.

Cuts will be posted at the next practice on Monday. Make the team. Regardless of the fact that only 2 people have been cut, still make the team. Leave the field so excited with your mom that you miss the memo about the practice later that day. No matter, you have made the team. Go with your mom to pick out a stick. The pink stick will be an offensive stick, of which you want nothing to do with apparently. Let the clerk advise you to pick out a defensive stick. End up getting an orange STX, 36", with black grip instead. Fall in love with it and carry it with you until your junior year in college.

End up being a star player on your middle school team, on which you play for 3 years. Your coach will be strict. Know that your hometown is very big into sports. Your middle school is viewed as a "feeder system" for your high school in the town. Your mom will make cookies for the team and hair scrunchies with colored ribbon tied to them for all the girls to match the school colors. Be really glad you chose to play this sport. Come your 8th grade year, the thought of high school will haunt you.

Approach high school with extreme nervousness. Let your parents send you to a private catholic school in a town 30 minutes and one toll booth away from your hometown in the states capital of Concord. Inform them you will die if they send you there. When you get there, know no one. Quickly offer to pass the ball with a social looking girl. Make sure you get into the right cliques. Spot your new coach. She is a thinner woman with toned legs and looks fairly young. Run four laps around the field hockey field. Stretch. Pace yourself on this run. Surely there will be a long, excruciating run later on in practice. Coach will introduce herself, and you will quickly get into drills. Get yelled at for chatting too much. Already on her bad side, you will whisper quietly as

you run 2 laps around the football field in punishment. The football players will scope out the fresh meat. Learn soon after to not get into drills with your friends. Realize it always ends up with an additional 15 laps added onto your laps.

Make varsity as a freshman. It will come as no surprise. Work hard. Never complain. Quickly earn the respect of the upperclassman but become secretly despised. You will understand this concept down the road when you get to college and a freshman takes your spot as a junior. Your high school coach will be less into the idea of destroying the other team as your coach in middle school had been into and more into respect for others. Be on the team that is known as the snotty bunch. Have jokes poked at your school often for being catholic. Your school will often chant back at them in pep rallies WE GO TO COLLEGE because, although your family will not be the richest at the school, you are still a PRIVATE school which will make it ok to boast. Notice down the road that a majority of the students who graduate from your school attend the Technological Institute down the road rather than Harvard.

Enjoy the Varsity team. Be nominated in your junior year as Captain of the team, and the following year you will also be elected as Captain. Think to yourself "It doesn't get any better than this". Disregard sportsmanship and respect for others. Your coach will still somewhat despise you for your socialness but figures what else can she do. Apply warrior paint to your face before every game in the shape of a mustache and unibrow. Have your former football-player boyfriend bring you a Gatorade to each game. Your parents will attend your games for the most part. Your mother will sit on the sideline with what you would call the FOOTBALL moms, and scream for you to "kill them". Remind yourself to explain later that you can no longer yell those sorts of things at sporting events. Your dad will stand calmly on the sideline and as the ball goes to the offense, he will talk to

you, asking how your day was. Remind him that you are in the middle of a game and cant chat right then.

Apply for college. Choose a Division 3 school in the middle of nowhere. Tell your high school coach you are going to be going out for the team. She will tell you it is a smart decision. Envision yourself playing on the team. Keep the first stick you started out with. Plead with your Dad to buy you new running outfits. Learn you will be playing on turf which is a novel idea compared to the sand pit you played in in high school. Worry about your skills. Don't sweat it. Never second guess yourself.

Get to college. Your entire family will be impressed with the fact that you are playing in college. "Wow", they will say, "you must be very good". Your grandparents will probably brag about you to their neighbors, you will think to yourself. Go to the field hockey meeting on the first day. Glance at all the girls going out for the team. The coach orders pizza. Do not eat the pizza. Don't look like a pig. Realize nothing will make you as nervous about college except for this team. Tell yourself all you need is hard work and dedication to succeed.

Have an excruciating first day of double sessions. Swear off French fries forever with your fingers crossed. The 3 mile run will remind you of middle school. Laugh at how the summer before your 7th grade year you did not attend a keg party every Saturday. Run 20 minutes of stairs, 5 suicides, 3 miles, and many other drills. Cringe as you hoist yourself into bed the first night. Call your boyfriend back at home and put him on speaker phone since you cannot raise your arm. Think of how painful the next day is going to be.

Survive through your first week of field hockey. Put school on the backburner to your thought to be blossoming career. Have your coach tell you she is impressed with your hard work and dedication. She will inform you she is going to start you in the first game. Call your Mom, who is 4 hours

south of where you are attending college. She will be thrilled about the news, and will surely not regret her investment in this sport. Think you did alright. Be more concerned about your new boyfriend sitting in the bleachers watching you and whether your skirt looks cute on you.

Three years will pass and it is now your junior year. Be a fabulous social aspect on the team. No longer start in the games. A freshman will quickly fill your spot. Start dating your high school sweetheart who brought you Gatorade everyday again. School work will finally introduce itself into your life as something that matters. Wonder when you will find time for your sport. Sit in your English class the day before a big rival game and miss practice. Hardly care at all about whether it will affect your playing time.

Be sad to think of how important this had once been in the early, innocent stages of school. Your father will call you and tell you how he understands you are giving up the sport. Thank God for such a supportive father. Think back to the days when your mother would stay up 'till midnight cooking so she could bring your team snacks the next day, when your father who worked an hour and a half south in Massachusetts would drive to pick you up from practice, and appreciate their sacrifices. Wonder when this sport became politics. Laugh to yourself when girls in the Phys Ed Major can't understand why someone in PreLaw can't miss a test. Shrug it off. This is D3, you will remind yourself, and in two years no one will care whether you played this sport. They WILL care about your GPA.

Later on in life, you will reflect on your years as a field hockey player with your young children, 1 of which is a young girl. You will encourage her to begin field hockey that coming fall of her 6th grade year. She will beg you for a new stick. Tell her you will not buy her one until she makes the team. ❁

How to Become a Cosmetologist

First, try to be something, anything, else. A rocket scientist/maid. A rocket scientist/cashier. A rocket scientist/waitress. A tribal chief. Fail miserably. It is best if you fail at an early age—say, ten. This is necessary so that at ten you can begin to experiment with a blow dryer and curling iron. Use the curling iron on your younger sister, unintentionally burn her with it. Show your mom. She is harsh and insane. She has a son banging his head against the wall in the state mental hospital and a husband who romanticizes with other men. She'll glance at your sister then back at you. An expression of troll quality will pass over her face and quickly fade. She'll scream at you: "Why did you burn your sister?" She will send you to your room. In retaliation to the unfair treatment throw your sister's belongings at the wall. Unjust circumstances are a requirement. This is only the beginning.

Apply to beauty school. The one located in your state's capital city. Fill out the application with your best friend. Wear the same outfit while doing this. Braid your hair in pig tails. Your best friend will do the same. Your mission statements will sound similar. Because you will have completed high school, for no other reason, you will be accepted. Learn that your friend has received her acceptance letter.

Enroll part-time. Show up for classes part-time. Get suspended for three days. You missed too much school. Your best friend's attendance will be worse than yours. She will quit before the officials can suspend her. A true beauty school drop-out. She will continue wearing pig tails. You will not. Attend school on a regular basis. You may be tardy every day but at least you show up.

In beauty school look at your instructor's fingernails.

Determine that finger nails are important. Your own fingernails are short and stubby. Learn to apply acrylic nails. Struggle. Paint them red. Count the brush strokes one, two, three. Experiment with hair color. Color your hair red, orange, blonde. Give the school's clientele the exact same hairstyle that you currently have. Your instructor will point out that while you work well with the clients, you personally have root rot. She tells you this while twirling her blonde synthetic locks at the tip of her finger. Everyone in the room is listening. Remind yourself that inner beauty is what is important. To reflect your instructor's inner beauty draw a picture of her while at home. Give her gray hair and a goatee. Show the picture to your best friend the next time you see her. She will appreciate it.

The other students will have an important impact on your life. The Grandmas, will be bitter. You still have your life ahead of you. Recognize that you will be beginning your career before the door to your casket begins to creak open. Listen to the strippers; it will be like reading a copy of *Cosmopolitan*. Learn that strippers fart while they dance. Find humor in this. Meet a runaway nun. You will like the runaway nun. She will tell dirty jokes about Scottish men in kilts. There will be at least five gay men. Notice they know more about make up and fashion than you ever will. As a final project give a freshman a make over. She will be a former drug addict. She will give you advice about your job, boyfriend, and eating habits. All the students will offer you their personal opinions. Become absolutely confused.

While at beauty school you will be subjected to a crazy clientele. Take all the crazy clients you can get, especially the women. Crazy women are your specialty. They love you. Spend six hours perming one woman's hair. She will tell you that her hair is different than everyone else's. Her hair requires a special type of permanent solution. Tell her that this special permanent solution is actually a magic potion from an exotic place like India. Make it sound as though this

potion was designed specifically for her. She will be content until you give her a hair cut. She will provide you with a picture of a wig on a mannequin. The mannequin's hair is longer than hers. She wants to look exactly like the picture. You wonder if she thinks you're her fairy godmother. Pretend to cut her hair and tell her how gorgeous she is.

Lie boldly.

Complete your schooling one year after you began. You could have completed it in nine months. Shrug it off. You were a part time student. You could have had a baby in nine months as well. But you didn't do that either.

Send resumes to only prestigious salons, none will express an interest.

Secure a job at Universal Hair. A salon in the same small town you grew up in. This will be the Kmart of hair salons. It is the one stop bargain shop located in an old barn next to the rail road tracks. The whole building will rumble when the train passes. The hydraulic chairs will be fastened together with duct tape. This is the place where people will go only if they are desperate or have no money. This will be revealed in the character of the people with whom you will work and the clients.

The boss will be huge. She will look like she belongs in a barn. Her gut will hang lower than her crotch. She will be critical. Know that this is because she wishes that you weren't cuter than her. Her five children run around the place like a bunch of hooligans. They will eat you're snacks when you're not watching. Learn the type of foods these children hate. Your boss won't pay you enough to buy her children groceries. Wonder if the children are hungry because she ate all their food. Debate whether you should call the Department of Health and Human Services. Opt not to.

On your first day everyone will be talking about Mrs. Damon, a frequent Universal Hair client. You won't know Mrs. Damon, but by the end of the day you will know her sex life. After a short, excruciating amount of time passes

interrupt, "Excuse me, but isn't it wrong to gossip about your clientele?" They will all stop and look at you with the same expression of disillusionment. They will remind you of a toddler making a mess in his pants. The only male cosmetologist will speak up, "No, we're cosmetologists." Say: "Oh-right," as if that explains it. Stare at your freshly painted fingernails momentarily, they are red. Wonder if you will ever be able to condemn clients to your co-worker's expectations. You think perhaps your morals are above that of those employed by Universal Hair. You get ready to pack. Don't move. The resume process took way too long. No other place will hire you. Perhaps this job is your destiny. Perhaps you will find many horrendous things to say and do to your clientele.

Decide you like working at Universal Hair. At the shop you will secure a wonderful clientele. You will be tipped one dollar or less regardless of the type of service. Meet a lot of assholes. Meet many nice people. All of which are smarter than you. And none, you notice are dumber than you. You will continue, unfortunately, to view the world in exactly these terms for the rest of your cosmetologist life.

The old lady in your hydraulic chair will tell you that you should go to college. Everyone should go to college. She will also tell you to learn to drive a standard. Every girl should learn to drive a standard. She will invite you to church. Out of courtesy make an appearance at the church. The temperature will be thirty below zero. You won't be able to find your panty hose. Drag your best friend. She is atheist. Everyone attending will be at least forty years older than you. Decide that you're not ready for college. Never learn to drive a stick shift. Agree with your friends thoughts on God.

While working in a salon you will learn proper etiquette. Your middle finger will be your favorite expression. Buy a package of chewing gum; chew the entire package all at once; talk while doing this. Learn how to smoke. You will not fit in with the other cosmetologists, or get a break unless you smoke. Use phrases like "She don't got none," "We ain't do

that no more,” “God Damn!”

A co-worker will teach you how to attract a clientele. She has a large clientele base because of her bust size and seductive attire. Get implants. Use your cleavage to secure your client’s head in place while you cut their hair. Buy a mini-skirt so short that it would cause a scandal if you bent over. Wear thigh-high boots and a low-cut shirt. Your boss will pull you aside and ask you to go home and change. Your attire is too provocative, even for Universal Hair. Walking home to retrieve a change of clothes you will end up on a street corner in front of a gas station waiting to cross. A man in a Chevy will try to pick you up. You will tell him that you are not a whore.

Decide that perhaps you should specialize in rugged men’s styles. Start dating a man named Eddie who wears a mullet and drives an oversized pickup truck, with fog lights and deer antlers attached to the hood. He will be your inspiration. Give everyone Eddie’s hair style. Females, you will learn, are extremely vulnerable when it comes to their hair. One such female who received Eddie’s do will scream at you. “I-LOOK-LIKE-A-DYKE.” For the first time in your life you will be put in a head lock.

After saving your life, your boss suggests that you start paying attention to the desires of your clientele. Tell your boss that Eddie’s hairstyle would look nice on her. You will be lying. Nothing will look good on your boss.

Give your best friend Eddie’s hairstyle. She will tell you that you’re lucky she loves you. If you had been any other person she would have kicked your ass. The following week she will get married. The groom will be skinny and freckly. Ugh. He used to bench warm for your high schools basket ball team. Imagine Eddie proposing to you. Never gonna happen.

Over the next five years, everyone at Universal Hair continues to gossip during their smoke breaks. The people in the stories will change, the subjects remain the same: “George

is cheating on Maude.” “Eliza is growing hair on her chest.” “Donald is packing on the pounds.” “Kristy has the clap.” Pay close attention. These are important conversations. The details of these stories have a vital impact on your personal life and the lives of those with whom you work.

When it is your turn, look at your co-workers hopefully as they examine the quality of your gossip. Tell them how Sally brought you a delicious batch of cookies. You welcome her kindness. But, you dropped them in your drive way when you got home. Eddie didn't even get to try one. They will look at you and roll their eyes.

You have been living with Eddie for about a year. You live in a one bedroom apartment where the kitchen and living room are combined. There is no ventilation in the bathroom. Every time Eddie uses the bathroom your entire home will be polluted. Eddie will begin to spend more time at the bar than he will with you. You stay at home. Watch children's television shows on the Disney Channel.

Your best friend is going to have a baby. You're not even married yet. Contemplate whether you should speak to Eddie about your desires. Decide against it. The only happiness you have is cutting hair, showing others how beautiful they could be, if only they would start their day five hours early.

Barbie doll has become your idol. You color your hair blonde, wear too much blue eye shadow, starve yourself, and hop around on your tip toes even when you're not wearing your heels. You start to spend too much time on vanity. Eddie suggests camping. But by now Eddie has been drinking too much Jack Daniels, has developed a beer belly, and passes gas as a hobby. Your best friend suggests giving Eddie a good boot in the ass. You are said to be losing brain cells from hair spray fumes, but you continue to practice.

Men will like you. You will be asked on dates by a variety of them. Most of your prospects will either have grown children or they are children. By now these moments are the only times you appreciate Eddie. A geezer visiting from

upstate New York will tell you that he will kill you if you get married. Cringe. Promise that you will not. Feel relieved when he leaves. Get asked to the prom by a senior in high school. He will gawk at you. Saliva will stream from the corner of his mouth. Before he leaves he will grab your ass. Decide that maybe you don't want to specialize in men's styles anymore. Start wearing turtle necks and mom jeans.

Eddie will begin to return home drunk every morning at three a.m. He will decorate the toilet with vomit on a regular basis. Get fed up. Take up kick boxing. It's about time you followed your best friend's advice. Learn exactly how one goes about giving a person a good boot in the ass. Your best friend will join you. At this point she will have given birth to two children. She wants to get rid of her baby weight. You notice she has a better body than you. Suppress your jealousy. Question whether you will remain unmarried and childless for the entirety of your life.

Feel ancient by your mid-twenties. Become insightful. Wonder. Where does your desire to be a cosmetologist come from? This is an important question to ask yourself. Without the answer to this question you will not be able to function as a natural human being. Get a picture of a celebrity; keep it in your pocket. Every time you ponder this question take the picture out. Admire the celebrity for their artificial beauty. Realize that you are capable transforming anyone that sits in your hydraulic chair into a celebrity.

At the Boston hair show you will learn about new styling techniques. The magicians will show you how to cut long hair styles with clippers, and the latest razor techniques. Learn about all the new potions they have created. These potions will allow you to manipulate hair into any style you want. You could mold a client's hair into a peacock if they so desired. There will be new makeup tricks and you will buy a "magic" wand. You have just received your fairy god mother diploma. The magicians will flare with creativity; this will inspire you.

Tell your best friend your great idea, your personal use of creativity: (1) color the hair bright red “Bozo’s mother’s red”; (2) buzz the left side; (3) use some magic potion, to create one large spike on the right side; and (4) color the tip of the spike black. Call your creation half a devil. It will be a statement.

Your best friend looks at you with pity. By now she realizes that you have been pushing her away because you are jealous of the fact that she has children and you don’t. She suggests getting a drink at Ollie’s. After too many martinis, apply this creative image of abstraction to your own hair.

Universal hair will absolutely despise this. When you first show up to work they think that you actually are the devil. You suspect that they think you’re strange. You don’t give a shit. They give you a pitiful look and say: “It will grow back honey.” Tell them that you don’t want it to grow back. Throw out your red nail polish. Purchase black nail polish. Be the subject of your co-worker’s gossip for the next three months.

Your boss will try to help you in your quest for creativity. She tells you to put feeling into your work. Your boss is disgusting to look at. You will find it hard to take anything your boss says seriously. Try...Today you are angry at your poodle puppy because he ate your favorite silk pillow. Give all your clients poodle perms including the males. They will become distraught. When they ask you what you have done, stare at yourself in the mirror. Find great pleasure in looking at yourself.

Universal Hair will shut down for the day. Your co-workers are stuck mending your disasters. The shop has lost money on you. Your boss demands you take a vacation.

At parties, people say, “Oh, you’re a cosmetologist? What should I do with my hair?” Your best friend, who has taken too many trips to the beer keg blurts: “Are you kidding? She can’t even figure out what to do with her own hair.”

Insist that you know exactly what they should do with

their hair. Tell everyone that they should bleach their hair and get a permanent. Forget that both products blow open the cuticle and that the mixture of the two will lead to liquid hair. Liquid hair when dried creates the fried, dyed, and laid to the side look. They take your advice and a week later you get nasty phone calls, hate mail, and death threats.

Begin to wonder what hair style would look best on every person that walks by. Stop some of these people and give them your opinion. Start giving your opinion to anyone who will listen. Give your opinion to those who aren't willing to listen. Your opinion is important. You are a hair dresser. You know what looks good. No one else does. They need your help.

When you get back from the extended vacation ask your balding client whether he wants you to cut the three hairs remaining on the top of his head or if he's growing them out. Cut them before he answers. He will look stupid with three long hairs on the top of his head. He will sigh. He was growing them out. Tell him you have a bottle of super glue in your purse, he can borrow it if he'd like.

Your family will want free services. Your mother will take advantage of you. One day your mother will mention how you used want to be a doctor. You don't remember ever wanting to be a doctor. You remind yourself that your mother should be rooming with your brother at the state mental hospital. Her husband has left her by now for his male tennis partner. Say: "Mom, I like cosmetology."

She'll say: "Sure you like cosmetology. Of course. Sure you like cosmetology." Realize that she wouldn't know the difference. Call a nursing home the next chance you get.

Give everyone a rock star hairstyle one day, including an ex military sergeant. The sergeant was a challenge as militants often get a haircut before they need to. He enjoys your enthusiasm. He will suggest that you consider the military. You love to run. You're in good shape. You love loud noises. Explosions would be nothing to you. You realize that you

are capable of trying new things. Be glad that you are not just a cosmetologist. Speak with an army recruiter. Imagine being a pilot for the army. Take the test. You can't be a pilot you didn't score high enough.

Decide not to go into the military. You are told that you would only be allowed five minutes preparation in the morning. You know that it takes at least five hours to make one's self presentable for the world. Spend a considerable amount of time telling people the reason militants aren't stylish.

Somehow you will stay in cosmetology, as long as possible.

Perhaps you get a new job on a Hollywood television set. You will meet vain celebrities. The celebrities will prove to be a discouragement. You will be required to treat them like kings and queens. The celebrities will talk about how beautiful they are. You will know that their beauty comes only from the touch of your magic wand. You will supply photos of the celebrities to the press for a fee. These photos will expose the celebrities true beauty, or lack thereof, to the outside world.

Perhaps you work in a nursing home. Remember crazy people are your specialty. In the nursing home you will find plenty of opportunity to work with senile senior citizens. The nursing home will be a discouragement. You will treat the patients as though they were your children. You will chase the elderly man that thinks he's Jesus down the hall. Put him in a headlock to finish his hair cut. You will worry about whether or not the elderly lady will have a stroke because you left her in the shampoo sink for too long. This will happen if the circulation of blood to the brain gets cut off. The patients will accuse you of ripping them off, even patients with too much money. You will become cynical of the world, and start talking to everyone as though they were children.

Perhaps you style everyone in your family's hair for free. As a cosmetologist, it is your obligation to give family members free hair service. Cutting their hair will be an

inconvenience whether you're busy or not. On occasion a family member will ask you how much they owe you. Tell them they owe nothing. You won't mean it but they will take you seriously.

You are losing friends. You realize that people have been using you for free haircuts. You don't need friends like that. Eliminate them from your life. Realize that your best friend is the only friend you have left. But ever since you gave her that mullet she has been afraid of you with a pair of scissors in your hand. Her oldest child is almost nine. He is mouthy. Don't tell her how lucky she is to have a child. Wish that you had a bratty child to complain about.

You have broken up with Eddie. He is in rehab for drugs. You now date a man who, instead of wearing mullets, refuses to cut his hair, and wears clothes that look as though he pulled them out of the garbage. He was your first client ever. Spend a considerable amount of time chasing him with scissors. You like short hair on men. The style with the bangs flipped in the front. Wonder if the man who started that craze is single.

Get fired. Your personality conflicts with Universal Hair. At least they fired you at an age where you can keep your dignity. You will be thirty soon. If you get any older you will lose your clientele. People don't want an elderly cosmetologist working on their hair. People enjoy youth. They want youths to do their hair because it makes them feel better about themselves. People will start asking if being a stylist had always been a dream of yours. Your stomach turns as it would at the smell of a freshly cracked can of cat food. Say of all the fantasies possible in the world; you can't imagine being a top stylist. Tell them that your senile mother thought you should be a doctor. They always sigh, "I bet you would have been a great doctor." Cast them a dirty look. Tell them you don't like the sight of blood.

Wish that you had gotten fired before developing tendonitis in your wrists and arthritis in your hands. Your hands

are shot, all those years of repetitive motion. Try to hold a mug of coffee. Pain will cause you to drop it on the floor. Always it shatters and creates a mess.

Apply to college without a clear plan. You will be enrolled as a Liberal Arts major so that you can receive financial aid. Lose the regret. All those years you spent in cosmetology weren't really a waste of time. Whatever you decide to do make sure to live life and be prosperous. 🍀

Michael Stutz

On the Piscataqua River Bridge

roll down the window
and breathe deep
the air,

the cool cold
air of Maine,

the open sea
air,

fresh and
brisk
and blended
with the sea

Michael Stutz

In the first hours of August

the cold
morning air

lingers

the summer's
still so

endless

Ashley Winslow

Commencement Day

On a beautiful spring day cars began to fill up the high school parking lot in Southern New York. All the students were walking up the gray stone steps to get to the auditorium in time for one last run-through of what would be their last day of high school. As they all marched down the aisle in the auditorium the drum major began to shout “Right Step, Left Step” until everyone was in beat. Everyone had sat in the correct seats so the principle sent them to get their caps and gowns on. All the students piled into several classrooms to get ready. Beth-Ann went by the classrooms one-by-one looking at the signs outside: “A-D Rm. 100”, “E-G Rm. 102”, until she got to room 110 “U-Z Rm. 110”. She thought to herself ‘I’m so sick of always being last.’ With a name like Yezinsky, Beth-Ann was always last. Room number 110 was where she would be putting on her cap and gown and putting on some finishing touches to her makeup.

She opened the door taking a deep breath as she turned the cold metal knob. As she walked in, a few people stared, the people she rarely saw walking the halls and hadn’t had a class with in the last year. Many began to whisper. They had heard the rumors but never believed them. There she was standing in front of them all with a belly like a watermelon and ankles swollen beyond belief. She attempted to ignore the stares, but it was exceptionally hard on a day like today. No high school graduate dreams of being 9 months pregnant as they walk across the stage to receive their diploma.

“Beth-Ann! Over here!” Beth-Ann hears the familiar voice of her best friend Karen and followed the waving hand until she fell into her arms. “I’m so glad you’re here!” Karen exclaimed with a big grin on her face. “I was worried you let

little Bobby out early.” She said patting Beth-Ann’s belly.

“No, not yet. Hopefully not anytime today.” Beth-Ann looked at Karen with a worried look on her face as a single tear streamed down her face. Karen wiped her tear away assuring Beth-Ann everything would be fine. Karen had been Beth-Ann’s best friend since kindergarten. They had gone through everything together, then in their senior year Beth-Ann got pregnant and assumed she was in it alone. Even then Karen was the only one to stand by her and hold her hand through the toughest time of her life. Beth-Ann had no other friends or even family to count on. The boy that had gotten her pregnant didn’t go to school in Seneca New York, he went to school in New Jersey and they had met at a summer camp years before. After braving it through a long distance relationship for two years he had finally convince Beth-Ann to have sex with him. He had told her how much he loved her and how much she meant to him. She had always been nervous because she heard the horror stories about girls getting pregnant the first time they ever had sex. Non the less she did as Mark had wanted and had sex with him. They took the necessary precautions yet she was still nervous.

Two months later Beth-Ann walked up to Karen crying her eyes out. “What’s wrong?” Karen asked.

“I missed my period twice now.” Beth-Ann exclaimed through her tears.

“YOU WHAT?” Right then Beth-Ann and Karen ran from school to the Wal-Mart right down the road. Beth-Ann waited in the bathroom while Karen bought the pregnancy test. Moments later they were staring at a plastic stick that was smiling at them while Beth-Ann was crying and Karen was trying to console her. Beth-Ann obviously had to tell her parents. She hadn’t even tried to hide it until she started to show, which hadn’t happened until about 5 months. She knew her mother would know right off that something wasn’t

right. She walked the steps up to her house with Karen holding her up. Beth-Ann began to tell her mother, "Mom, I need to tell you something. It's not going to be easy for me, but I need to tell you now."

"What's wrong?" Her mother said sounding concerned.

"Mom, I'm pregnant." Her mother's jaw dropped and she just looked away. She immediately went to Beth-Ann's father and told him.

"You will not stay in this house!" Shouted Beth-Ann's father. Her parents were very religious, as was the rest of the town, and had sent Beth-Ann to a Catholic school, but she left after her first semester only because she didn't like being away from Karen who hadn't grown up with a strict religious background. Beth-Ann began to cry and ran out the door. She went to Karen's house for the night and tried to call Mark the morning after but he never picked up. She couldn't get a hold of him anytime after that. She never figured out why. Beth-Ann stayed at Karen's house from that point on. They had taken care of her so well. Karen's mother loved her and went to all the doctor's appointments with her, and her father always made sure she was comfortable. The morning of graduation Beth-Ann had gone over to her parents' house to see if they were coming to her graduation, but they didn't answer the door. She walked around back to the garage and noticed the cars were both home. At that point she walked back to her car to head to the school.

"Okay everyone! Time to line up!" Mrs. Crose yelled above everyone in the classroom. Beth-Ann quickly put on her cap and zipped up her gown. She looked in the mirror on the wall at her reflection. She hadn't had time to finish her makeup, but she just waved her hands in front of her face, as if to say, 'Oh well.' Beth-Ann lined up right behind Karen taking slow deep breaths.

Beth-Ann began to cramp up right in the pit of her stom-

ach, but she ignored it thinking, 'It must be nerves.' "Pomp and Circumstance began to play in the auditorium and all the students began to march. Beth-Ann hesitated, but began only one step behind. As she entered the large auditorium, echoing the marching tune, all the students around her looked up at family and friends. Beth-Ann looked straight in front of her. There was no one there to take pictures of her, no one to hoot and holler as she crossed the stage, and no one to say "Congratulations" after the ceremony.

The principal, Mr. Brown, began to talk about how great the students had been over the last four years and how it was so great to see how many of them had chosen to go off to college. Beth-Ann couldn't help but think she hadn't been among that group of students.

Mr. Brown introduced the valedictorian. "Here now is the valedictorian of this years class, Anne Rice." Everyone cheered and Beth-Ann cringed. Karen looked over right as Beth-Ann gave the awful face.

"Beth-Ann, that's not very nice." She whispered across Tommy (the boy sitting between Karen and Beth-Ann).

"No, I'm just very crampy. I think I'm just nervous." Beth-Ann whispered back. Karen looked away but both her eyes got very wide as did Tommy's. Shortly after, the guest speaker approached the podium. His name was Brian Kimball and he was an amateur comedian who had visited local bars and clubs. Several of the students had heard him or heard of him and wanted him to speak. Everyone knows a guest speaker is supposed to be boring, but this years' class wanted to be different. He was very funny although Beth-Ann didn't crack a smile. At one point he had talked about how great the real world was and how when they got older and had babies, they would be so much fun too. Running around and throwing everything on the ground. Beth-Ann didn't find this part funny and wouldn't have even if she wasn't in pain. She was too bothered by the shooting pain

across her stomach to be worried about what he said.

After Brian Kimball was done his speech, which Beth-Ann missed most of because of the awful cramps she was starting feel travel across her stomach, the principle went back up to the podium to start announcing names to hand out diplomas. Beth-Ann couldn't help but think something was terribly wrong. She was in so much pain yet it seemed like no one noticed. She looked around the auditorium and saw a few faces looking at her growing pale. Suddenly her water broke but the principal went on, "Now is the time everyone's been waiting for. One by one I will call the students up to receive" he was cut off by Beth-Ann screaming and chairs screeching across the stage. Tommy jumped out of the way as Karen ran to Beth-Ann grabbing her arm and pulling her out of her chair.

"Beth-Ann's going to have her baby!" Beth-Ann began to cry. This was not how she pictured this happening, but she was only worried about what was going to happen next. How were they going to get to the hospital? Who was going to be at the hospital? Who cared? Karen and Beth-Ann waddled off the stage as everyone began to grow louder. Karen's mother followed the two of them out and drove them to the hospital, Karen and Beth-Ann riding in the back. Again, Karen was holding Beth-Ann's hand through it all. Beth-Ann was laying down screaming as each contraction hit. She could only wonder, 'when will this end?' She arrived at the hospital and had her baby 3 hours later with her best friend by her side and her mother and father in the waiting room. She couldn't believe it when she heard that they had actually showed up.

After Beth-Ann had her baby her mother came into the room to take a look at her new grandson. She looked at Beth-Ann, "Honey, I'm so sorry that we didn't let you live in our house and take care of you like we should have through this hard time. I know you will never forgive us, and

we understand if you don't want to come live with us now. But we just want you to know that we love you very much." Beth-Ann began to tear up as she looked over at her father who was crying.

It's no girl's dream to have her baby on the day of her high school graduation. This was never Beth-Ann's dream. She had always been a straight-A student who played softball and basketball since 6th grade. This wasn't her dream but that day on her way out of the auditorium a woman whispered, "Any baby is a blessed baby, and those who aren't willing to help you aren't worth calling a friend." Beth-Ann had a beautiful baby boy and they both moved into an apartment a month after he was born. She took her mom's offer for a month but soon realized that she needed to take care of her baby on her own. She supported him by herself but always had Karen to hold her hand through the tough parts. Her parents showed up to the house every now and then but never stayed for long.

Two months later an old woman showed up at her door with a package of baby toys, clothes, and food. Beth-Ann didn't recognize her but as soon as she heard her soft voice say "Hello, are you Beth-Ann?" She recognized it right off as the woman who had given her the best advice of anyone. Because of this woman she was able to forgive her parents, yet not ask them for any help, and was able to forget about trying to come in contact with her old boyfriend who had brought this blessed baby into her life. ❦

Amira, Queen without a Country

March 2003. The sun rises in Baghdad while men on the streets play dominos. The United States and Iraq are on the brink of war. At the Zumir barber shop the owner Abdul takes care of his customers and watches news on the small television placed on the top corner of the room. The shop is small, neatly cleaned, the walls are baby blue ceramic, and there are mirrors all around. The client is bald and smokes a cigarette, while Abdul trims the hair around his ears and takes special care on his beard. They are talking about what everyone else is: the fear of United States' invasion in Iraq. People in the streets are busy and the traffic is chaotic. The motorcycles, bicycles, pedestrians and cars are constantly beeping, while birds fly free around the skyscrapers of Baghdad.

A bird flies from the Quincy market to the Boston Harbor. Americans also talk about the possible war in Iraq. Parents like Darlene, watching her children in the playground, fear for the security of their children and family members. Darlene's son-in-law Chris, 23, is a reporter for the *Boston Globe* and was supposed to have gone to Afghanistan a couple months ago, but to Darlene's happiness they called it off at the last minute.

One night in March, Darlene watches President Bush of the United States live on television: "United Nations security council has not lived up to its responsibilities, so we will rise to ours. Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within forty-eight hours, their refusal to do so, will result in military conflict, commencing at a time of our choosing. For their own safety, all foreign nationals including journalists and inspectors should leave Iraq immediately. We will help to build a new Iraq that is prosperous and free."

Abdul pays close attention to the American president's speech that is being translated instantly to Arabic on his small television set. He looks at his daughter playing in the living room, enters his bedroom, closes the door and starts to cry next to the bed. Meanwhile in the United States, Darlene receives a call in the middle of the night, "we are going to war!" said Darlene's sister, "my baby is flying out in three days." They both start to cry over the phone.

Forty-eight hours later, the United States Army starts bombing Iraq. Abdul wakes up in the middle of night to the sound of bombs and his daughter crying. Father and daughter lay on the bedroom floor praying for protection. As the sun rises the bombs stop, Abdul puts Amira to sleep and goes to his shop. He walks slowly, observing everything around him. Outside is quiet. His shop is only three blocks away, and on the way he sees the destruction. There is broken glass, and cars that have been burned are still smoking. Abdul comes to find out that his shop has been destroyed, the entrance door has been broken, and the place is a mess. His small television is gone, the mirrors have been broken, the place has been vandalized. Abdul's feelings are of anger, hate, and sadness; suddenly, he thinks of his wife that passed way two years ago. She was hit by a car while attempting to cross a busy street in Baghdad. "The burka makes it difficult to see!" she always argued. The daughter, Amira, was only three years old then. Abdul makes the decision to leave everything behind and try to escape to Syria. He knows it will be a long and dangerous journey but for his daughter's future that will be the only way.

Chris arrives in Damascus, Syria, the very next day. Recently graduated from college, he is excited to work in the war zone, despite his family's fear for his safety. Chris dislikes the dry heat. "It feels like I'm in an oven, it's terrible," he said during his first phone call home.

Abdul is scared to leave his apartment, but he knows there is no other option. The small car is barely even packed;

they must leave as soon as possible. Abdul puts his daughter in the back seat, Amira is crying. "Don't cry honey, we will be fine in a little while. You are wearing your lucky red sweatshirt that mummy made for you." As he starts the engine, it is dark out, the streets are empty, not one soul around. The loud engine is the only thing to be heard besides the sound of bombs in the background. Abdul manages to avoid bad areas where the bombs have blocked streets, he has never been so nervous and scared in his life. The radio plays happy Arabic music, which makes both Amira and Abdul relax as they drive away from the city. Hours later the sun was rising; it would be another hot day in Iraq, as they reach north. Suddenly Abdul swerves being forced to stop. He notices a flat tire. The road is empty, no cars, trees, or any sign of life souls. Amira is sleeping and Abdul kicks the tire, swears, spits at it, but he has to change the front tire in order to reach his destination. He is upset because he knows how dangerous it is to be there, alone and vulnerable. The dry ground starts to shake. A couple hundred meters down the road, American troops, coming Abdul's way; he fears them as they get closer.

Chris' goal is to interview refugees and get their side of the war in Iraq that had just started. Iraqis are flooding Syria. Abdul is not the only one to pack his things and leave it all behind. The 450 mile border between Syria and Iraq is now busier than the US-Mexico border. Refugees arrive every minute and the situation is getting worse, since they have no where to go.

The American troops are scared that Abdul is a supporter of Saddam Hussein and fear he could be a car-bomber. There it is, an Iraqi man on his knees, working on his car tire. The troops had been trained for situations such as these. An Arabic translator gets a megaphone and orders Abdul to step away from the vehicle. He looks at his daughter and fears that they might separate them. "Hands on your head, and lay on the ground!" said the translator for the American

troops. Two Marines quickly approach Abdul and lock him in a prisoners' van.

Three months later, the war situation has become worse. Abdul is not sure where he is. The prison cell is to its full capacity with ten men sharing a four by four meter room. Abdul has suffered several types of tortures. His only hope is that Amira is well, wherever she might be. "I was at home. They broke in, separated our family and took me," explained a newly arrived prisoner. "We all have been taken from our loved ones," replies Abdul. The next day, Abdul suffers a heart attack while being tortured during an interrogation, and collapses.

In Syria, at 10 am Chris walks into a store to buy water; the heat is horrible. As he comes out a young girl begs for his drink. She looks about five, and wears a dusty, red sweatshirt. He gives her the water, and she vanishes. The following day, the same thing happens, and Chris wonders who is looking after this girl. "Wait!" He shouts. The girl stops running and looks back. With the help of his translator, he finds out her story. "What's your name?" he asks. The translator says: "Amira, she lives in the streets, she is a refugee. Her father has been taken away by troops, she is alone, and her mum has passed away."

In the United States, news strikes about a British reporter that has been kidnapped. Darlene tries to keep the news from her sister, but she finds out later on. The following day is a cloudy Sunday, Darlene and her sister attend Mass in Boston. They pray for Chris' protection in Syria.

The young reporter decides to write about the young girl, and starts a journal about the search for her father. Four days later his editor in Boston demands Chris to drop the story about the girl and focus on the British reporter search. "Chris, if you are going to write about every child that lost their family in this war, I suggest you start searching for a new job. We are not the Red Cross! What the hell are you thinking? People in American want to know about Western-

ers, not Iraqis. Focus on the reporter that was kidnapped!” Chris listens to his boss with disappointment, a couple hours later decides that Amira’s future is more important than his career with the *Boston Globe*.

Chris drops his career with the newspaper and starts a desperate search for the girl’s father, her only family left. “Aunt Darlene, if I can’t find her father, what will I do?” he asked. “Chris, we have compassion for this girl, but if you adopt her, what will she be: Muslim or Christian? Do you think she will adapt to our style of life?” Amira is young, and I can’t just leave her here, people are just too busy with the war, God knows where her father is, if even alive. I’m returning with her, I found out that I can adopt her as a refugee. In the future, when the war is over, she can return and search for her father. In Boston she will be safe and will choose her religion and beliefs, but I can’t leave this girl here.”

One week later at Logan International Airport, Darlene waits for the return of Chris and for the first time, she lays eyes on Amira. The young girl has big dark eyes, wears a red sweatshirt and seems to be scared. Chris finds out that Amira’s father, Abdul, has died on the same day that Darlene brings Amira to Sunday Mass. •



Bavarian Alps
– Oscar Ody

Tyra Aliardo

Worlds Apart

There was a young girl named Uli, who lived in southern Nigeria. Uli was 19 years old and she lived with her mother in the village. Her mother's name was Rhoda, her father died when she was very young. Uli was the only child to her parents. Uli and her mother were very close to one another. They had only one room so they both slept on the floor.

Uli loved school. Throughout her life school had been important to her. When she was younger she attended a school that was far from her village. She would walk every day. Sometimes it was very hot and other times it was raining. Her mother felt that the school was too far from home.

As Uli grew, things became more complicated. The only means of support was Rhoda and her small farm. There wasn't money to pay for Uli's schooling. At an age where most children were still in school, Uli was forced to stop attending school because her mother needed help with farm work.

Subsequently, one day it was very beautiful outside. Uli went to the stream to get water for her mother. On her way back home, the poor young girl never saw an airplane before but just on the sky, with water on top of her head as she looked up on the sky and kept on saying, "Airplane, Airplane, Airplane;" during her excitement, the pot she carried on her head fell and shattered.

Uli fell down crying. She concealed herself in the bushes and cried aloud. An old man overheard her crying and peered at her from the other side of the bush. "Why are you crying my child?" he had asked her. She said she broke her mother's pot. The old man accompanied her on her way home. He told Rhoda that he found Uli crying in the bush, but please to give her food to eat and some water to bathe and some food

to soothe her. Rhoda had thanked him for his hospitality.

One week later, Rhoda's brother named Benedict who lived in town, came and took Uli to the city with him. She was very happy because she had never been in town before. At night when they were eating dinner, they were telling stories. Uli asked Rhoda, "Did you and my father ever go to town?" She replied, "Yes." Uli asked how life in town was. Rhoda whispered that there was an old white man in town she saw who ate a cooked egg and that made her sick. Since then, she and her husband never went back in town and they both loved life in village.

Next day all her family members came over and gave her advice to be a good girl. They told her not to put on those long nails, or lipstick like those township girls, and her mother told her to respect her uncle Benedict and his wife Meme. She told her to also please remember her pot of water when she came back to the village.

She was happy with life in town, she never saw TV, and never watched it before. Her uncle taught her how to say TV and, bar, radio etc. She was very good in learning objects. Uli never dressed up like those township girls but like a village girl, or even a servant. One day she went outside to ask a gate man, his name was Anozie, where she could buy oil. He directed her to where she could buy it. As they were talking she saw king Idoto pass by. Because she never saw cars in her life before, she was very happy. She asked the gate man "Are they going to pass by again?" and the gate man said "Yes, they pass through here every day." She said that she would come the next day and wave at them like she used to wave at the airplane in the village. The gate man said go and buy your oil before madam comes and gets you; so she ran to buy her oil.

In the morning when the King was passing Uli waved to them. Then the next day when the prince was passing by he saw Uli; the prince got out of his car, Uli and the gate

man saw him coming and they both ran inside the house. The next day prince John came and asked the gate man for Uli. The gate man said, "Inside." He told him go and get her as he walked in the sitting room he told madam that prince John wanted to arrest Uli just because she waved at him. As they all walked outside he was nowhere to be found. Madam said, "You see! You see! Now you began to set your eye on this young girl right!" He said "No! No madam no madam".

The next day prince John came back again, now both MeMe and Benedict came outside,

Benedict said, "I was told that just Uli waved to your convoy. Is that a crime?" He said, "That is not a crime. I'm just here to see Uli." Benedict said "Uli's just my servant." He goes I know, the way she dress up, the look in her face will tell, you also he said that he wanted to see Uli, then Benedict said that if you are looking for wife please wait I had three beautiful girls who live in UK. Prince John said, "No, I just want Uli."

Then one day he came to Uli's house, and asked "Uli why do you always run away from me."

Uli answered, "Anozie the gate man said that you want to beat me up."

"Anozie said a lot of things don't him?" The prince replied, "I bought something, I brought you some cake. And he said your name Uli means die, the die of beauty. You are as beautiful as a queen beautiful."

"Why do you say I'm beautiful like the queen?" she wondered. "Your mother is the queen."

"You reason intelligently, which means you must have gone to school," he stated. She revealed the story of how she went to school and her mother had to pull her out because it was far, they were poor, and she needed to help with farm work. And he said, "That's ok I will teach you." Uli was very happy and she said, "Thank you; and he asked why. She said, "Because how many people have a prince as

a teacher?"

"You are naturally intelligent," he said.

While they were talking he told her that one day "I will take you to my house," and she said "No I will not go nowhere." One week later he asked her again if she could come to the airport because his parents were coming from South Africa. "Please put on your best dress." She said ok, and she asked what she can say to her family if they were going to look for her. He said to tell them that you are going to buy some oil. She agreed.

The following morning she and the royal family member went to the airport. Prince John said to his mother, "Here is my friend, her name is Uli."

The woman as she looked at Uli's clothes asked, "Did my son tell you that you were going to the airport?" When Uli had told her yes, the woman pointed out that she was not dressed appropriately.

The prince and Uli's relationship grew stronger, every moment they spent together. Mirable, the queen, didn't approve. She felt that Uli was beneath them because she was poor and didn't have any thing of material possession to offer.

The next day the queen went over to Uli's house and asked MeMe that she will give Meme any kind of money just for Prince John not to see Uli's face again. Meme said, "No I don't want your money." Mirable said, "That's ok but if Prince John came and asked for Uli please let him know that she was sick, and died, and they took her body to the village."

The next day Benedict took Uli back to the village to her mother Rhoda. She was crying; her mother said, "Please don't cry." At night when she was sleeping she was dreaming about Prince John with her they both playing with water in the stream at the same time. She was laughing, then Rhoda said, "Uli why are you laughing?" She said nothing, mother and they both went back to bed.

A week later prince John paid the gate man to tell him what happened to Uli. The story made him feel sick. He demanded his mother to answer him why. He went to his room and packed for an adventure to find his Uli. He found Uli cutting a piece of wood in her village. He helped Uli cutting the wood and wanted a tour of her farm. He told Rhoda that he had never been into the farm before, or even the stream where everyone was having fun. Rhoda told Uli to please watch after him.

The king came looking for his son two days later. Prince John begged his father to speak with him and he told him that he couldn't leave Uli. He loved her. He wanted Rhoda to come with them as well; he saw how much she and her daughter cared for one another. He requested that the king pay their rent. He wanted them to have servants, and a teacher so that Rhoda could learn English. He wanted to see that Uli got the best education possible in Nigeria. The king was in agreement and he also agreed not to tell the queen, lest he lose his only son. Then his father the king said, "Promise."

They all came to the city; six months later the mother and the daughter both have been transformed their name Uli into Lily and Rhoda to Mary; even their look, the way they talk, eat, and dress, hair. They learned English like the (British) people, and learned how to eat in good way. In the morning when the sun was just rising up him and his mother were talking and he told his mother that he found a young beautiful girl named Lily She was the daughter of an Ambassador of Nigeria Peter, and she will be coming for a dinner. The mother said ok. When she came, Prince John liked Lily, her look, the way she talks everything on her that a man wanted in a young beautiful woman.

Lily moved in to the place, with the royal family, the family were very pleased with her, and her kindness. At night prince John said to Lily, "It's time to tell them the truth."

She said, "Yes is time." He said, "There will be no servant no madam nothing and we invite your uncle and his wife as well. Let's go to bed because the next day will be heavy day and remember that dress I asked you to keep it is still there." She said yes. In the morning they were in the sitting room only with his parents. Lily's mother, Lily's uncle, and his wife MeMe. Prince John stood up and said, "Do you all know why we are here?" They all said no. He said, "this question for my mother the queen; if any one who know this question I asked them please be quiet; and this question is the main reason I invite everyone here today."

"He said, mother look at Lily closely. Do you know her?" His mother said that she knows her, "She is my daughter-in-law." He said, "Look at her again." She looked at her and said, "Of course, she is my daughter-in-law Lily, any problem?" He said, "Good Meme and Benedict look at this people my wife and her mother, you know them?" They both said, "We just know you are now married, no we don't know them;" Then he said, "Lily just go inside." She went quickly without any word and she remained quiet.

He said, "Please I demand for your role patience just for a while," and he sat down next to his mother the queen. She went and put on her dress that she wore to the airport and her hair was a mess. As she walked to the sitting room she felt her eyes fill with tears; she went close to her mother-in-law; her mother-in-law said, "What's going on here?" He said, "Mother you haven't seen a ghost, Mother." This is the same girl you reject back in the day Uli, with the help of my father the king I brought her and her mother to the city and transformed them."

Uli mother sat quiet and what you could see was the tears in her face. He said, "You see life is all about equality, we should try always to make the people we love, to be the people we want them to be, people married thief and make them born again, married drinkers and make them stop

drinking, if you love a poor person if money can do anything then spend money on her and make her what you want her to be, love can change everything.”

“Yes,” the king agreed. “Love can change everything, that is what we all learned from this incident.” He turned to the Queen. “Now Mirable do you accept this girl for whom she is?”

“Please forgive me,” she said to Uli and they embraced. ♣

Richard Wile

My Father Shoveling...

Every Fourth of July, my father shoveled shit. At least that's what I remember, although our septic tank probably didn't back up more than three times altogether. Still, in my memory, my father's shoveling shit was as much a part of Fourth of July in the 1950's as the intermittent popping of firecrackers during the day or the town fireworks display in the evening.

Nine or ten or eleven years old, I would watch my father methodically digging down three or four feet through the rocks and clay that lay under the grass in our back yard: stepping down on the shovel, lifting the dirt, pausing, turning the head of the shovel to drop the dirt where he wanted, then reversing the arc downward.

He talked to himself, his voice raspy from Camel cigarettes: "Goddamn septic tank (step down) ... What's the friggin' use (lift up) ... Work all week for chicken shit (turn) ... Shovel more shit on the holidays (drop) ... Some goddamn life" (swing down) He cursed this country's education system for not preparing him for a trade, cursed World War II for taking five years from his life, cursed Frank Wilson who'd stayed home during the war and made money in real estate and who was probably lying in the shade right about then, drinking beer.

On Fourth of July, when he shoveled shit and the sun rose to the top of the maple trees in the front yard, my father removed his sleeveless under-shirt. When the sun got directly over his head, he ran water on the undershirt and tied it around his head. When he got to the septic tank, he pulled a pint of Old Crow from the pocket of his overalls, and took several swigs before using a crow bar to pry open the rusty cover of the tank. I stood in the shade of our apple

tree, away from the smell, hearing my father's distant, dry voice: "Jesus H. Christ from Baltimore! How much toilet paper do you kids use at one time, anyway?" Feeling then as if it was my fault that my father had to shovel shit on his only summer holiday, just as it was my fault for needing new shoes, my fault that we ate fried bologna while Frank Wilson's family ate steak.

Yet what strikes me now is that in some weird way my father was, if not happy, then at least content. Perhaps shoveling shit confirmed his conviction that God and Circumstance had conspired to make his life as shitty as possible. Beaten by his father until his mother took him and moved out, put in what 1920's Massachusetts called a "Home for Wayward Boys" for eight years while she worked in Grants and searched for another husband, taken to a small Maine town when she did remarry where he struggled in school and lived the rest of his life working sometimes two jobs to support his wife and three children, he was convinced he lived in a world of injustice—where life handed out unearned advantages to some and unwarranted disadvantages to others ... like himself.

Or perhaps, in spite of considering himself a failure, he knew his family loved him, and if he had to clean up their shit, well, that was better than living in the Home for Wayward Boys or in an Army barracks.

Or maybe his spirits were simply jacked up by half a pint of Old Crow.

For whatever reason, I remember my father singing as he and I carried the shit, the smell dancing in waves over our buckets, down back of our yard to a ditch that ran to the river that carried shit from septic tanks all over town to the ocean:

"God bless America,
Land that I love
Da da da da, dum de dum dum,
Da da da, dum de dum, da da da."

My father has been dead now for over twenty years, but recently my sister dreamed of him:

“There he was,” she told me, “looking just the way he always did—overalls, crew-cut, funny pot-belly. ‘So, Dad,’ I said, ‘how are you? How are things ...wherever you are now?’

Kalyn M. Doten

What Glimpses

Waiting anxiously, the little girl bounced excitedly in her seat. With the sound of jet engines rumbling in the background, she stared out the terminal's large window leaving her tiny faceprint embossed on the shiny glass. It had been eleven months since the last time she and her mommy had come to the airport. They had come to say goodbye to her daddy when he left for some faraway place called Iraq. She tried to remember what her mommy had told her. She would not see her daddy today. He was still being somebody's hero on the other side of the ocean. She knew this because her mommy had told her that his job working for the Army was very important and that he needed to stay and help keep people safe so they wouldn't get hurt. Even knowing this, she still secretly hoped her daddy would come home today as a surprise.

The sound of her mother's voice brought Julia back from her daydreaming. As she beckoned Julia to follow her, she explained that it was time to greet the soldiers. They had just landed in the larger than life plane Julia had been watching, as it rolled in from the black outstretched runway. She heard her mother's soft voice telling her that the soldiers would be very tired and that it was their job to cheer them up, so she should smile big when she gave them hugs and handshakes.

Scrambling off the well-worn, vinyl green seat, Julia grasped onto her mother's smooth hand and followed her to the arrival gate. Standing with a small American flag tightly encircled within her little fist, she grinned broadly as the troops began to exit from their arrival gate. She had never imagined that there could be so many of them. Distinguished

in camouflaged uniforms and tan combat boots, the soldiers filled the airport. They all looked just like her daddy! She thought about this for a moment. There must be a lot of people who needed to be kept safe, she decided, because looking around the airport there were more soldiers than she knew how to count.

In the midst of Julia's deep thoughts, she caught a glimpse of a familiar looking face. In an instant she was at his side, tugging on the velcroed camouflaged pocket, beckoning him to bend down and scoop her into his arms just as he always did. Glancing down, the tall distinguished man caught the look on Julia's quickly changing face. Bending down to her level, he softened his tough, deep voice and gently asked her name. Julia tried to hold back her surprise. It was not her daddy gazing back at her as she had thought and wished and hoped. The tall, broad-framed soldier remarkably resembled Julia's father. His rich colored hair and strong jaw line drew attention to his dark features offsetting bright blue eyes. Timidly, she whispered her name and the resilient soldier introduced himself as Mark.

Julia's mother had now joined them, realizing from a distance what had happened. She quickly explained to Mark that Julia's daddy was still deployed, but they had come to greet the rest of the troops arriving at the airport. Turning back to the tiny blond curls and brimming blue eyes, he knelt down to face her once again. Julia was desperately trying to hold back her threatening tears as she answered the soldier's question by stating her daddy's name. "I know your daddy," she heard him say. "He told me he misses you and that he loves you more times than you can count." Brushing against her tears, she glanced up at her mommy; she was wiping her eyes too. "You really saw him?" she dared to ask. With deep, understanding eyes Mark nodded with a smile. "He said he would be home...w-when it starts to snow," Mark said, after a disguised, questioning glance to Julia's mother.

“And he sent you a present. If you wait right here with your mom, I will go find it okay? I had to pack it away in my big bag so it wouldn’t get lost.”

Julia patiently stood with her mother as she watched his uniform disappear around the corner, into what looked like the tiny store she and her mom had been looking in earlier. Maybe he had to leave his big bag in there to keep it safe, she thought to herself. Looking up at her mother and then around the airport, she wondered why everyone around them seemed to be staring at her. Looking into the small crowd, she recognized a few familiar faces. They were part of the troop greeters group Julia and her mother had come to the airport with. Two of the greeters, Miss Abigail and Mrs. Kenny, were whispering about the stranger Julia had met and how kind he was. She was about to tell them Mark’s name, when suddenly she saw him returning towards her.

As Mark strode closer, she saw him quickly tear a red tag from the ear of something pink and fuzzy, only to disguise it again by placing it within a brown paper bag. When he reached her, he took the bag from under his arm and handed it to Julia, smiling softly. She eagerly opened the bag, exposing a cuddly, pink teddy bear with a bright red ribbon tied around its neck. “Your daddy wanted you to know that he misses you and that every time you hug this teddy bear, he is thinking about you and is sending you a hug.” Standing up, Mark said something to her mommy, but Julia didn’t hear it. She was beaming, hugging her new friend as tight as her little arms could hold it. “Thank you for bringing my daddy’s present home,” Julia said, as she hugged Mark’s side before moving to show her new present to her mother. She was pretty sure her mom was still crying, but Julia didn’t understand why. She wasn’t sad anymore, even if her Daddy hadn’t come home today. She knew her daddy was thinking about her that very moment.

Suddenly, Julia realized that it was not just her mother

that was crying, but that all of the greeters and the spectators at gate 34b were also tearing up. In response to Mark's gesture of kindness that they had witnessed, a slow increasing applause rippled through the waiting area, and Julia joined in. She wasn't sure why they were clapping and turned to ask her mother, but she was hugging Mark and saying thank you for something Julia couldn't quite understand. It was then she heard one of the troop greeters talking. They were talking about Mark, and how he was a hero like her daddy. Nodding vigorously, Julia chimed in. "He is a hero, he fights with my daddy to keep people safe. And he brought home my daddy's present for me." "Yes, you are very right," they agreed, a secret lurking behind their damp eyes. "What glimpses," Julia heard them say next. "What glimpses of the heroes among us." ❧



Portonovo
– Oscar Ody

Matthew J. Thibodeau

The Eagle

Alone I sit perched on a bowing arm. It balances and holds me as I ponder what is to come, what lies ahead in my endless flight. I am constantly on the move in search of a place to call home. The only friends I have are the rocks and trees and bushes and streams. They hide me. Protect me. Nourish me. I share with them the same respect by finding new friends so I do not overwhelm them. There is one, however, that I can't seem to let go. She is a branch. I carry her everywhere I go. I feel an attachment to her. She carries olives with her, but I never eat them. I never want to. They are a part of her and she has become a part of me.

I am looking now, out across the wilderness. All the beasts and men are busy eating. They fall. They rise. One day a tree falls down, the next day, a tree is born. The beasts and men are constantly hunting each other. Killing. Trick-ing. Befriending then killing. I can see this as I look to my left. I see my Olive Branch as I look to my right. That is all I wish to see as I look to my right. No matter where I go, it is always the same. Because of this, I try to stay where I can see them all. In the clouds I soar. On the branches I perch. I will never drop my friend into the wilderness. I will never let her go. I try to stay away from the beasts and men. I am not going to be hunted. Atop a bowing branch I perch, waiting quietly until I must flee again. My eagle eyes must watch intently.

I sense danger! I spread my wings and up I go, grasping my Olive Branch. It is just the two of us. I fly over the hills and toward the Sun. I grow warmer with every beat of my wings. The leaves on my branch flutter out of fear. My right talon grasps her a little harder to reassure her safety. My

left talon grasps some twigs and sticks as I swoop down over the trees. I grasp as many as I can find. I rise above the tree line once more and cast all that I found down to the ground, like spears. They fall down towards all the men and beasts. I fly even higher so I can see the stars as the Sun's innocent light begins to shade. Darkness begins to fill the world below me. I continue to fly west, where the Light is. That is where I am safe. The Moon is untrustworthy. It comes and it goes while I know the Sun will come every day. Of course, that is all I should expect out of darkness. I do not depend on moonlight; it will inhibit my vision and lead us in the wrong direction. I swoop into a cavern upon a hill and perch once more on top of a tree that grows next to the entrance. I look up at the Moon. It is laughing at me. I tuck my head under my wings and hide. I wait for the Sun to scare the Moon away. I am the one who should be laughing because I do not hide from Light like the Moon does. My Olive Branch believes this as I hug it tightly with my talons. No one will dare to try and take her from me. They will see my sharp beak, my great wings and my fierce eyes and run. If that does not scare them, I have one free talon to fight with. I would rather fly with the Sun to avoid fighting. I choose to look right more than I do left even though whatever is on my left is growing bigger every day and more distracting. That is why I ask the trees for sharpened branches whenever I am ready to look to my left.

Morning dawns and the Sun embraces me with its golden rays. I wake to find the tree I perch on is an olive tree. I look down at my friend. She flutters out of happiness. The tree seems to be fluttering too! I look to my left. I see them coming. The beasts and men are stirring up clouds of smoke and dust. I look to my right and see my branch and the tree on which I perch. I realize there is no safer or happier place for her to be. I know she is happy here. I do not want to take her away. I know she will be safe here, away from the place

where everything else is broken, where the men and the beasts fight. I set her down in the middle of the tree. The tree waves me good-bye as I set off to find food and head west for another day of escape. I decide to look to my left once more. I get angry. I swoop down and gather all the branches I could gather. Now, I have another free talon so I can grab twice as many branches! All of them are sharp. I fly to my left. The men and the beasts look up at me and my talons are so full of branches that I look like I am ten times larger than I really am. I fly as high as I can. I cast out the sun's light from the men and the beasts as I spread my wings as far as possible. I dive. The sharp sticks are grasped tightly in my talons much like the Olive Branch I once carried. I release them and fly even faster and point my sharpened beak at the beasts and men as I watch the sticks land in their places just right. All the men and beasts fall, except for one human. She walks towards me as I cascade onto the rocks and go unconscious. I awake to find I am perched on an olive tree. I look around to see where I am. It is peaceful here. There is no war on my left. There she is. The woman who saved me! She has a crown of grape vines around her head and clothes made out of branches. Her shoes are made of mud. There is an aura about her. She shines like the sun! She advances towards me and offers out her arm for me to perch on. I take the offer and glide down to her. I feel safe like I used to in my childhood nest. She takes me away into her kingdom where she promises me everlasting peace with no more beasts and no more wars. When we get to her kingdom there is a huge tree in the middle of the forest. It is the size of all the man made things put together. This is her house. She looks at me and points to the very top of the tree where all by herself sits someone very familiar. It's my Olive Branch! I beat my wings and fly up high to the very top of the tree where I sit forever watching over the forest and its queen. 🌿



Lupine
– *Barry Kitchen*

Contributors

Tyra Achayo Aliardo lives in Portland, Maine, and attended Portland High School. She is an undergraduate biology major at Husson College.

Kalyn Doten is a sophomore at Husson College. She is majoring in paralegal studies, with a minor in English. She has had writings published in the *Bangor Daily News*, as well as in the 2006 edition of the *Anthology of Young American Poets*.

Barry Kitchen is the Deputy Director of Husson College's Safety and Security Department holding the rank of Lieutenant. He's been with the department since 2002. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in both Business Administration ('86) and Criminal Justice ('06). He is currently enrolled in a dual masters program and will graduate with Master Degrees in both Business Administration and Criminal Justice in 3 years. He has enjoyed photography for the last 35+ years. He likes to take photographs of everything in his world; namely nature and people. He enjoys life with his wife Ruth (Husson '08) in Brewer. His oldest daughter Angela, lives in Winterport with her husband Brian and their 2 daughters, Jennifer and Mallory. His youngest daughter, Jessica, is overseas serving in Iraq.

Oscar Ody is a fifth-year international business major from Novo Hamburgo, Brazil. He played four years of soccer and one year of football (as a kicker). He also worked four years for Husson Maintenance, one year at Center for Academic Services. He is a member of the International Club. He enjoys the outdoors, people and different cultures. Oscar hopes to travel the world.

Aimee Ricard is a native of Goffstown, NH, in her third year as a Paralegal Student at Husson College. She has a wonderful mother and father, a remarkable sister/best friend Sarah, 17, an amazing little brother of 12 years, David, and an incredible boyfriend Randy, to all of whom she owes the world and relates most of her stories. She enjoys romance novels, attributes most of her writing to her own life experiences and loves writing with no boundaries. She would someday like to pursue a career concerning animals and conservation in Cape Cod, where her wonderful grandparents reside, and help in the fight against animal cruelty.

Michael Stutz is the author of *The Linux Cookbook* and his work has appeared in *McSweeney's*, *Wired*, *Rolling Stone*, and other magazines and books. He has recently completed a novel about growing up online in the net age.

M.J. Thibodeau is from Van Buren, Maine. He is a third year English major at Husson College. He loves to read and write and hopes to one day publish his own book. Even though he loves comedy, he sometimes likes to create fiction.

Janice Tye is a second-generation storyteller. She grew up in London listening to her mother's stories but has been firmly planted in Down East Maine since 1980. She taught for many years and had her own business. *Wolf Moon Journal* has published some of her work under the title "Maine: The Way Life Is." Her most recent children's stories are "The Journey" and "The Knitting Circle." Diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2006, Tye finds writing poetry helps her express her feelings. She works, writes, and savors life.

Brittney Veilleux is a fourth-year English major at Husson College. She is an avid reader and writer whose dream is to write for and edit a fashion magazine. She would also love to travel the world and write about her journeys.

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Richard Wile grew up in Yarmouth, Maine, where he now lives and writes. He received his MFA from the Stonecoast Creative Writing Program, and works in the Writing Workshop at Bates College.

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