

sine cera

a

DiverseCity Writing Series Anthology

So They Said

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This edition of *sine cera* was compiled and edited by the DWS Coordinator, Elizabeth Coleman.
Cover art was created by Madison Briggs.

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Introduction

“We, at the Community Writing Center, believe that writing has the power to unite communities and build bridges over social chasms such as economic disparity and racial intolerance. Because of this belief, we have created the DiverseCity Writing Series, which provides a way to develop writing communities, and to disperse the thoughts and emotions of people whose stories may otherwise remain untold.”

This is the mission statement of the DiverseCity Writing Series (DWS)—the SLCC Community Writing Center’s writing group program. Our efforts to start this program began in August 2000, when we worked with writers from local organizations in two-month writing workshops, each culminating in a publication and a public reading. During the first two years, we worked with four groups: Justice, Economic Independence and Dignity for Women; the Liberty Senior Center; The Road Home shelter; and Cancer Wellness House.

In the summer of 2002, we decided to expand the DWS into a multi-group, year-round writing program. In March 2003, we began training volunteer mentors in collaborative writing group strategies. In April of that year, the first writing groups met. Six months later, we published *sine cera: People Are Strange*, the first anthology of DWS writing; and hosted a public reading to celebrate the participants’ work and the publication. Over the past four years, the DiverseCity Writing Series has grown into a program with multiple writing groups, dedicated volunteer writing group mentors, and over 30 community writers who write and share their work within the series.

Currently, the DWS has seven writing groups that meet bi-monthly: the Community Writing Center group; the Salt Lake City Public Library group; the Sam Weller’s group; the Poetry Group at Barnes & Noble in Sugarhouse; the Literacy Action

Center group; the Pathways to Recovery group; and the Environmental Writing group. Additional groups are being developed; throughout the city, people are writing and sharing their words with others.

This June, we celebrate the eighth DiverseCity Writing Series publication, *sine cera: So They Said*, which illustrates the efforts and inspirations of DWS mentors and writers over the past six months.

Preface

I believe writing is a reflection of community—the time and space in which we live. Writing is like the shadows which pull from buildings and people—without attention it is possible to miss the true shape of things, our complete environment.

In this edition of *sine cera*, *So They Said*, we read music theory, poetry, narrative, memoir, short story and playwriting. But most of all, we see experiences through the perspective of each writer. We are able to hear voices that are not our own, to connect with our community in an intimate way.

So They Said brings us to the pages of these experiences and celebrates the diversity, challenges, triumphs, dedication and development of the writers, their work, the mentors, the DiverseCity Writing Series.

I present *So They Said* as a way to better understand and know our community.

Elizabeth Coleman
DiverseCity Writing Series Coordinator
SLCC Community Writing Center

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A special thanks to Tiffany Rousculp whose dedication allows for all of this.

Thanks to Madison Briggs who generously donated the work for this edition's cover art.

Madison Briggs is a 48-year-old mid-life artist who was a long-term graphic designer. She made a decision in 2006 to pursue her childhood dream of being a full-time painter. She works in acrylic, oil and metallic paint. Her signature is vibrant color with an emotive expressionist bent. She paints what she sees, be it from her dreams or the everyday reality of her life, in abstract and traditional styles. Madison has a gallery and studio in her townhome in Artspace City Center, 230 South 500 West, #13, Salt Lake City, Utah. She is open for Salt Lake City Gallery Stroll the 3rd Friday of each month and by appointment, (801) 485-2875 or madisonartchick@yahoo.com.

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Gods' Many Faces

OLIVIA MORETON

An aspiring writer who keeps practicing and hoping to improve.

dangle dogma through the years,
leaving traces in all those places.
Like crumbs for Gretel they stave off fear

of flames and fury, purgatory;
offering the one true way.
Secret teachings, sacred readings, mandatory
offerings—indulgences will pay

the cost of transport heaven bound.
Does it work? And who's to know?
No concrete traces have been found
of heaven's gate or heaven's ground, and so,

I put my money on more certain things.
Create my heaven here on earth
with sailing boats and water wings,
waiting for the great rebirth.

My mom is older than the pope
and that's enough to give me hope.

James

STEVE PASTORINO

Steve Pastorino mentors writers twice a month at Sam Weller's. He thinks that building a pitching mound is at least as difficult as composing a short story.

Winter is hanging over much of the nation like a soaked down comforter—wet snow piling on shingles from New Mexico to Maine, but you'd never know it here on this 1.92 acres of clay, flapping pine-colored windscreen, crisp fresh blades of grass and a brand-new home plate, sanitary white bordered with night sky black precisely 17 inches across.

I am fumbling with the largest rake I've ever held, aimlessly scrolling racetrack patterns on the red-brown infield dirt, when I hear the voice.

"Gotta get ready," the deep baritone mutters. "Gotta get ready for Spring."

I look up—no one on at the plate, nor anyone on the mound. Empty grandstands, glistening silver with the snow-capped San Jacinto Mountains towering in the background—no one there either. Behind the locked gates of the first base dugout—emptiness. Third base? The same. But then, in the disappointing way that some apparitions creep into your conscience instead of announcing themselves with flashes of light and heavenly chimes, I see him.

More Fat Albert than Muhammad Ali, the rotund, jelly-like man labors as he removes his blue jacket adorned with an "A" on the chest. The familiar red-and-blue cuffs and trim remind me of the baseball dynasty with the fickle fans—Hank Aaron, Turner Field and all those pitchers.

"This is the year," echoes the voice.

He lowers himself onto the aluminum bench adjacent to the left-field bullpen mound, deep breaths marking his concerted effort to reach down to the metal-studded cleats. The spikes are blue, sky blue,

holdovers from another decade of baseball. They fail to contain his monstrous feet. His squat, fat feet ooze through the seams.

"Gonna make it. I'm goin' north with the big club."

"Hey!" my voice shatters the morning calm. "Can I help you?"

He wears a ragged red-brimmed cap bursting with an afro like I haven't seen since the 70's. It is pulled down low over his eyes and he keeps his chins close to his chest, so the answers come muffled.

"It's a beautiful day," he continues. "A beautiful day for baseball."

Going through his determined motions, the voice answers, but he scarcely flinches another muscle to respond to me.

"Don't mess up my mound!" I yell.

I get the sense he isn't going to pay me much heed.

"That took me an hour!"

I drop the rake to my feet. The sun is high and warm on this February morning and my sweat-dripped long-sleeve t-shirt clings to me. I'm heading to the 'pen.

"Four Hunnerd strikeouts," he answers, as if I'd asked a question.

"That's what they'll remember me for...just like Satchel Paige, hardest thrower alive."

He's talking to himself?

"Twelve on Openin' Day. Four days rest, then eleven more...Front page, Palm Springs Desert Sun. Sixteen in one game before May... Sports Illustrated! I can hear it now... James Wilson Aloysius Thomas Jefferson Cy Grover Cleveland Reagan Brigham Halliburton is MVP this year. And they'll get it right. They'll get it right. Ask me three times the order and I'll always repeat it... James Weston Henderson Abraham Lincoln Tyrus Cobb Reagan Birkenbeiner. Yeah, that will be some story."

“Excuse me?” I have to interject.

“Coach, thank yooou for the off-season regiment, liftin’ and runnin’, throwin’ rice and grabbin’ the rubber bands. I feel like One-point-six-nine-two-four-eight million dollars...and worth every penny. Did you see me at the gym?”

“Who is Coach? What?”

“Ever since I struck out Willie Mays Strawberry in my first game, I knew this was gonna be the year. So let’s get to work.”

Laces tied in a jumble, two-striped white socks pulled up high but eclipsed below the knees by Champion sweats—drawstrings askew, belly protruding—he rises to his feet. He towers over me and surrounds me in the narrow confines of the clay between the white-chalk foul line, the bench and the chainlink fence.

This is James. James K. Prospect—a man whose reputation has already entered my conscience despite my shallow days-old knowledge of this new town.

“You must be James,” I extend a hand.

“Yesssss, I am. James K. Harmonious Filibuster Travis Wilson Breadmaker, number one prospect in the California Angels of Gene Autry of the American League of Professional Baseball. And THIS is my year.”

Doobie, the city’s head groundskeeper, as well as Hawk, the team’s GM, have told me about James. They couldn’t be more right.

“Ever’ day I come down to this temple of baseball and wrap my hands around this little white ball and throw...well, I fire. Great balls of fire, heat-intensifyin’ missiles of strikeout material. I throw a seventy-seven mile curveball that falls like a donut from the coffee shop table and then I set them up for high an’ mighty heat that comes from the soul and when they go back to the dugout them announcers say, ‘strike three—James Montgomery Davis Winfield Bestenwilder has done it again’ and I just climb back up on the mound and get ready to fire and retire the next fella.”

Windmills, fine watches and great pitchers rotate in concise circles. James is more like tumbleweed—an imprecise shape, limbs in arcane directions. He climbs on to the pitching mound, balancing precariously ten-and-one-half precisely compacted inches above the playing field.

“Thirty-three years I’ve given to the game and when the Hall of Fame comes callin’, they probably want to make a bust of me and put it next to Satchel n’ Babe and I just scowl because intimidation is part of my game.”

He stares towards the south. He eyes home plate of the bullpen. Silent now, his left foot slides perpendicularly backwards by about six inches and in a jagged but non-stop motion, he steps forward lurching his body like a dented cab around a corner. The left foot clears the rubber by inches as he turns his back to me, sends his left arm flailing skyward, cocks his right hand behind his ear and creakily brings the entire motion forward with a demonstrative “umph.”

The ball releases and in the split second that any observer of the game can assess whether someone is a prospect, I cringe. Home plate is always 60 feet, 6 inches away—no more, no less, no argument. But this first throw of Spring lands either 30 feet from the mound or 30 feet shy of the plate, give or take a few inches. I wonder if it slipped from his hand. But before I can utter a word, suggest that I’ll chase down the ball or process what this man is thinking, he cries out.

“Steeeee-rike Three... Looks like I still got it.”

He steps down from the mound, reorients his cap, takes three heavy steps behind the mound, leans over and pulls out another baseball from his tattered bag “-N-G-E-L-S” inscribed on the side.

“Second inning... Up one run already. Boy, these folks are enjoying the game. Gotta stay focused. This is the year. Scout’s gonna sign me. One-point-three-point-two-four-six-eight-million dollars. Highest paid black man in the game.”

The contortion begins again. He steps up to the pitching rubber and like Lincoln Logs tumbling from a preschooler’s hand, James’ elbows flay, his waistline sags, a foot rises skyward and his right arm cocks

and lunges forward. Horsehide flies again. The 216 red stitches float through the air, and before they fall to earth, the baritone erupts again, “Steeeee-rike Three... James got a perfect game today.” The workout lasts 13 pitches. Perspiring profusely, he takes three steps to the bench and reaches for the Coleman water jug he had set down when he arrived.

“Lemon-limeade Gatorade, is it in you?” his laugh is a bellow.

It looks like water to me.

“Hoss, my name is James. James Stapleton Heaverlo Adams Industry Beltaker, Cy Young award winner. Best Negro ever to put on this uniform—at least that’s what Mr. Bavasi says to me.”

He doesn’t let me respond.

“And you must be Mr. Rickey. Branch Rickey. It’s my pleasure, Mr. Rickey. I know you signed my bro, Jackie Robinson. And you’re gonna sign me, too. Where’s the contract? One-point-nine-three-point-six-zero-zero-zero-zero dollars, richest man in America.”

He pauses and looks deep, wishfully into my eyes. Standing before me is a man who leaves his bed in a shelter or transient hotel or cousin’s living room every day and comes to this sacred green-and-clay space, to forget about the demons, the doctors, the drugs and the TV cartoons. He grabs a tattered bag filled with all the treasures a man could want—a glove, some balls and a pair of spikes—and walks and walks because his legs are on auto-pilot to the ballpark. He’s done this ever since he woke up in this strange desert sanctuary, not that he remembers any place else. He trudges and he mutters, he winds up and he chatters and he zeroes in on a catcher’s mitt and he sweats and then he waits.

And I think of the dreams of 10-year-olds on Little League fields in a wealthy suburb of Any City, USA. I think of my upbringing, the college education, the graduate school, the ivy-walled academia and our self-aggrandizing “community service initiatives.” I think about every dream I’ve ever had—and the harsh reality when you tell a young boy in the projects whose mother is a drug addict that maybe college isn’t in the cards for him. I think about my move, 3,000 miles

in a Ford Escort with nothing but clothes, music cassette tapes, Mom’s credit card and four boxes of books. I think about this man before me who couldn’t look happier or more hopeful and I hear myself answer, “Tomorrow James. Come back, tomorrow. Casey Stengel will be with me and he wants to take you North with the big club.”

“All right, sir,” he answers. “I better get some rest.”

“James?”

“Yes, sir?”

“He’s bringing you a contract.”

My Memories of Grandpa

ART REEVES

My earliest memories are about my Great Grandpa Rasmussen. We called him Grandpa. I remember he lived alone, and was very old. He used to drive an old car. When he would visit, he used to bring suckers for us kids.

One memory was when I was over to my cousins and we were eating. Grandpa pulled up in the front yard and we all ran outside. I had the fork in my hand. I was running across the lawn when I tripped over a rock and the fork went into my cheek.

I can recall visiting him. He had his Christmas tree up. It was an aluminum tree with a colored wheel that turned around and made the tree red then green then blue then yellow.

Another one was when he used to take pictures with a movie camera. It was an old one. The movies were black and white. He would show us the movies of us.

My funniest memory was about how he went to visit my cousins (his grandchildren). When he went to go home, he backed up and the kids' bike stuck on his bumper. He drove all the way home with it on his bumper. We didn't see it happen. He just called and said he had the bike and he'd bring it back.

Grandpa was a really good guy. He reminded me of Mr. Magoo. I miss him a lot.

Tough Guy

RICHARD SCHARINE

“Was your father a tough guy?”

The question suddenly interrupted a stream of consciousness monologue of the kind I was accustomed to from Tanya Varenka, and it took me a moment to realize that I was expected to reply. This particular topical obsession was with the effect on her husband, Andy, of his father's domination. A self-made business success and patriarch of a large family, Andy's father had never found his youngest son's achievements while growing up suitable causes for praise, and even regarded with suspicion Andy's adult career as a software engineer. His alternating verbal abuse and withholding of approval was the source (Tanya felt) of her husband's difficulties in nurturing and sustaining emotional relationships.

Perhaps. I sometimes thought that T.V. had projected onto Andy's father the personality of her own father, a French immigrant dry-goods entrepreneur, whose personal decisions tended to be as hasty as his business choices were considered. For all practical purposes he had disowned Tanya when she elected to become a professional dancer at 18 instead of going to college. A generation and two self-earned college degrees later, nothing more than an uneasy truce (entered into by the rest of her family) existed between them.

My own father had also grown up with a dominant immigrant father who made a success in America, in his case as an agricultural landowner. My father, Werner, had left school the spring he was twelve years old and it was time to plow and plant. As an adult he had taken over one of my grandfather's farms a little way away from the others, and when my grandfather died 29 years later, having willed it to him, paid nearly its monetary value in inheritance tax to make it his own.

Of course, the investment that made the land his was much more than money. He had nursed it through the uncertainties of the Great Depression and the wartime prosperity of the forties, right up to the

brink of the oil shortages which sounded taps for Midwestern family farms, and then he died.

To me the 1930s are nothing but a few stories, as frugally doled out as were the good crops during that decade. Significantly, I only remember the good fortune: the prairie fire that the neighbors all joined together to stop just short of the barn (a nephew's carelessness burned down that same barn five years after my father died); a tornado that ripped out a fence line, but spared the crop in the field; a dust storm that thrived all the way from Kansas, only to die out five miles west of the farm. I know more about the Good Years (invariably odd) than about the Bad Years (invariably even), but even the brutal winters of 1932, 1934, and 1936 have in my mythology more of Currier and Ives in them than Jack London. My father told me that the essential difference between 1934 and 1936 was that in the former he made fifty dollars, and in the latter nothing.

Still, I know that in the winter of 1934 he daily loaded the milk barrels on a sleigh and drove the horses through the woods to the nearest highway, because the National Farm Organization had blocked the local roads and were pouring the milk into the ditch in a vain attempt to raise prices by lowering production. I know that the Good Crop of 1937 provided at least some justification for my birth (which the Bad Crop of 1938 might have advised against). And there was always fresh milk, eggs, a lot of pork, less beef, vegetables, apples, cherries, grapes, pears (canned in the winter), and fresh bread (coarse crusted made by my mother, and soft white delivered by the Jaeger Bread Man three days a week). And I knew that I had underwear, because I saw the feed sacks my mother used to make them. And I knew that there were others worse off than me because I saw some of them: tinkers who would mend your pots and pans for a free meal and to be allowed to sleep in the hay loft; gypsies in their wagons who were never encouraged to stop; black men who came all the way out from the Slaughterhouse because my father would let them hunt (and buy and dress a Poland China barrow in the grove west of the hen house).

Is what I remember from the 1940s and 50s before I left home forever really darker, or does it only seem so because I personally remember it? I remember the double hernia my father suffered harvesting our perennial crop of stones from the Back Forty; the truss he took off when he washed the upper half of his body in one of the big laundry

pans before the noon meal in haying season; the quiet concentration on his face as he carried the five gallon buckets of water down the hill from the stock tank to the hog troughs. I remember the blood running down his face and arms when the horses ran away with the corn planter and pulled him through a barbed-wire fence. I remember him milking the cows with his hands swollen with erysipelas, a disease he caught from the pigs.

What don't I remember about my father: his ever raising his voice to my mother; his ever allowing his temper to affect his judgment. My brother-in-law, Michael, who worked for him, called him the least-threatened man he ever knew. Michael once approached him after a day of attempting to repair a fence, yelling in total frustration: "I can't work with this damn stuff!" My father looked at him calmly: "Then get what you need." The word "damn" was such a rarity with him that I can remember the only time I ever heard him use it, followed by a half-embarrassed grin. I can also remember the only time he ever hit me, a swat on the bottom when he caught me sitting on a milk stool listening to the barn radio when I should have been feeding the cows.

Not that he minded listening to the radio in and of itself; it provided him with the same adventure as the magazines he subscribed to and the book clubs to which he belonged. He bought the family's first television set two months after Network Radio ceased to broadcast drama in 1954. Maybe it was his sense of a world beyond the farm that made him take a test to qualify for an eighth grade diploma, which he accepted with gravity at the same ceremony during which my sister also graduated. Maybe that was why he offered to pay her way through college, and later my way (although it was clear I had no clue what I was preparing for). And I remember this least demonstrative of men standing grinning on the sidelines during the fathers' days of both my high school and college football years, and when I quit in my junior year, never mentioning it again.

What did I learn from my father? It seems so simple now, hardly worth saying really: The cows have to be milked twice a day. Seven times out of ten is not a passing grade. You cannot promise them more quality time tomorrow. You cannot work twice as hard in the morning so you can take the evening off. Milking twice a day is your responsibility to the cows and to the task. What else did I learn?

Laying blame is pointless. A teaching colleague of mine was fond of quoting a Zen proverb: “When there is no solution, there is no problem.” My father never studied Zen, but he lived that proverb. He lived all his life in the township where he was born, and the longest time he spent away from it was the last four months of his life in the University Hospital. It was in that hospital that he asked me if he was going to die. I have regretted for thirty years not giving him an honest answer to that question. I would like to have heard what he had to say on the subject, even as I hope my children will be similarly curious.

“Was your father a tough guy?” Tanya Varenka asked again, and I returned from a distance of fifteen hundred miles and fifty years.

“The toughest guy I ever met,” I answered, and we returned to the subject at hand.

So They Said—Open Heart Surgery

BONNIE LINDSEY

I was born in 1956 in Salt Lake City. The doctors told my parents that I had a heart murmur, which is a hole in the heart, but I would be just fine. So they said.

But when I turned 13 years old, I started getting migraine headaches. They were so severe that I wasn’t able to go to school. My parents took me to a doctor. He ran several tests on me but could not find any reason for the headaches. He decided to do a test on my heart called an angiogram. When that test came back, the doctors told my parents that they still could not find any reason for the migraine headaches and that my heart would be fine. So they said.

Until 1977, after the birth of my daughter, I started losing a lot of weight. I was eating all the time, but I just kept losing weight. I was always so tired that I couldn’t even take care of my daughter. So back to the doctors I went.

The doctor ran several tests again. Then the doctor called back and told me to come in and to bring my parents. So we made an appointment and went in. When we got there, the doctor told us that I needed heart surgery or I would die in six months. The doctor told us that he would make all the arrangements and that he would get back with us. So we went home. I cried for days. I was scared to death. I didn’t know what I was going to do. Then about a week later the doctor called us back to tell us that there were a few problems. The heart disease that I have, which is called Wolf-Parkinson-White syndrome, means that the electrical part in the heart that pumps the blood through the body—mine did not work right. This disease is rare and only shows up in your early 20s. So my doctors here all got together and talked about what to do. The 10 patients of different ages that they had performed this surgery on had all died. So they wanted to send me to North Carolina. The doctor back there had performed this surgery and the patients had lived. This doctor was going to retire and was willing to take me as his last open heart patient.

So my mom and my step-mom and I flew down to North Carolina on June 1st, 1977. The doctors told my parents that I might not make it through the surgery, so on my 21st birthday, they opened up my chest. This surgery was supposed to take 8 hours to perform, but once they opened my heart, my heart was so swollen that they had to take my heart completely out. They had to put me on a lung and heart machine so they could work on my heart. They also had to replace my mitral valve. It had a hole in it.

Well, needless to say, I died three different times, but I made it. I stayed in the hospital for 30 days and then I went home. The doctors told us that I wouldn't live past my 25th birthday. But through three severe pneumonias and a mild stroke, I'm still here.

Madame Porter

RAY BRISCOE

Retired teacher, Professor of Human Behavior, Research Specialist at the LDS church.

Let there be Marie...
Yellow hair cascading upon her
Tender shoulders
As she reaches forth her
Soft hands to caress the tired body
A gentle breeze reflects upon her skin
and
Peacefully my body finds endearment with my soul
Marie's eyes of wisdom penetrate
and
Sees what man does not see
Words of wisdom are carried into my mind
to
Comfort...
Teach...
To turn knowledge into wisdom
How can this be?
There is far more to Marie than meets the eye...
Higher Intelligence is available
to
Change earthly perceptions into eternal truths
when
Viewed through the eyes that Marie sees
Why is this so?
Be still and know
For it was said
Let there be light...And I gave you Marie

4-Wheel Drive Broom

MARYLEE CARLA CLARKE

I'm on 4 years in trying to write and I still can't stand in front of all of you. Deb is a love and my friend Martha helps me sit and read and I am still very scared still.

May is a witch with a 4-wheel drive broom. She can change her gears with her nose. Her cat, Tom, has a nest on her witch's hat because the broom is too hot. The fast witch is almost as fast as lightning. Be careful. Don't be a plane and get in the way.

May isn't bad or good, but she is very, very lonely. Her only friend is her cat. May thinks she knows everything there is to know and has done everything there is to do in the world. You and I are very boring to her, unless it is all about her. Then everything is great.

May and Tom like to take an early morning ride. They both like the fresh morning smells in the fresh air. May and Tom smell breads, coffees, and other different smells.

When the sun comes out real bright, May and Tom go home until dusk. At dusk, they visit their cat friends and eat out of all the trashcans. May loves to watch Tom play with all his friends. This is their second favorite part of their day.

Intuitive vs Systematic Composition

DAVID COTTLE

Dr. Cottle is director of the experimental music studios at the University of Utah, where he also teaches music technology, audio engineering, theory, and computer aided composition.

Composition students, even gothic goddess communist heathen flag burning students, have a surprising level of spirituality, or should I say superstition. The same group of people who are uneasy about using a computer to compose are also leery of any form of systematic organization, e.g. the serialism of Webern and Schoenberg, the total control of Babbitt, the numbing repetition of Glass. Art that is so carefully calculated, they reason, must come from the deep reaches of an evil heart, say, Darth Vader. A true artist, on the other hand, should inhabit a more spiritual plane, relying not on numbers, graphs, and series, but rather on "the force" of their intuition to choose notes. This is a romantic point of view. Romance never delivers on its pretense, as observed by the twisted gerbils of Joe Cartoon: "candy hearts, with printed lies, for every one, a gerbil dies."

About six years ago, while browsing through the stacks of our library (yeah, I'm that guy), I stumbled onto a book called Virtual Music by David Cope. It describes his recent experiments in systematic composition. It evolved into a computer program that is first loaded with data from existing works, then generates a new composition in the style of those templates. For example, ten or so Chopin Mazurkas can be plugged into its memory banks, chewed on for a while, then a new Mazurka in the style of Chopin is excreted out the other end. It's an astonishing idea, and it works, almost too well.

Each semester I present to several classes the "challenge" this book has in the appendix; four mazurkas—at least one having been written by Chopin, at least one by "EMI" (for experiments in musical intelligence). That adds up to about 600 critical ears and minds since I pulled the text off of the stacks. Musicians, composers, jocks taking a music appreciation course, pianists who eat drink and sleep Chopin,

it doesn't matter, they are always split down the middle. They can't pick the machine art from the real thing.

Many people find these works unsettling. Machines making music? Have you been in a cave for the last 50 years? Hasn't every sci-fi TV series had an episode that warned us about machines taking over?

That a machine can generate music doesn't bother me; any style can be parsed into a series of probabilities so why not reproduce it using those same criteria? What makes me uneasy is, ironically, the simplicity of his methods. It's a sizable text but less than a quarter of the pages are needed to describe the actual process. It boils down to a clever, almost cheap parlor trick of mixing, matching, recombining and juxtaposing material. The rest of the text is commentary by various authors who are similarly troubled by the genius and/or abomination before god this method presents. One of these authors, Douglas Hofstadter expresses the objection best. He argues that the computer algorithm is a meaningless, cold, calculated, cheap imitation of great art. Chopin, on the other hand, is a human being who gave birth to ponderous works only after living a life of human experience and suffering. Surely it can't be both. Surely EMI can't be music because it has no soul. Right? Well I can assure you, that surely it can. And stop calling me Shirley.

Hofstadter, while troubled by the imitation Chopin, was also intrigued, and traveled around the country giving lectures on Virtual Music, playing the examples of fake and real Chopin to well educated audiences. He proceeds with skepticism, not willing to grant legitimate status to the Iron Horse versions. But then...cue the shower scene, wherein Mr. doubting Hofstadter, while performing his morning ritual exfoliation, subconsciously begins to hum (thousands of Belles from chapter 4 swinging in harmony). He executes the familiar tune soulfully, lovingly, savoring each interval, each climax of a beautifully crafted melody. And so began his descent into the Robot Holocaust, for the thematic material that had germinated in his heart was none other than (dum dum dummmm), the "fake" Chopin. You can just hear the demons cackling in the background. Cognitive dissonance ensues; either the machine has a soul, with which you identify, or a soul is unnecessary, and Chopin, the person, is also a cheap parlor magician who mixes, matches, and recombines musical

ideas. Either way, apparently a computer, like a camera, can steal your soul.

I believe Cope has just scratched the surface. He has created the tools to uncover an exhaustive iteration of Chopinesque sentences using "I don't dig you work" style "words" culled from the existing Mazurkas. The original body of work, written by Chopin, from which the new versions are derived is a genetic code, extracted from the amber of yellowing manuscripts. From this code new dinosaurs emerge (he has also generated versions of Bach, Beethoven, and so on), poised to attack your sense of fake or true art.

This raises some interesting questions, which invariably find their way to the final exam. What if a co-worker catches you humming the fake Chopin and comments "What a nice melody. Who wrote it?" How do you answer? EMI? A machine? No one? David Cope, because he wrote the program that wrote the music? Or do you say Chopin, since he originated the genetic code? If it is Chopin, couldn't we extend that logic and say that he, Chopin, is also a soul gathering machine? The bias that led him to write mazurkas is nothing more than an algorithm developed over years of suffering through history classes that lay out dried artifacts of past composers for examination and assimilation.

What if Chopin had lived another 400 years? What if he wrote 60,000 Mazurkas (aided by a million monkeys). Isn't the EMI just predicting what one of those 60,000 Mazurkas could have been?

What if you entered more than just Chopin Mazurkas into EMI's data banks? What if you entered a mixture of Chopin, Webern, and Cage? or added in some random elements? Could you arrive at a new composer, formerly unknown to the artistic community?

Back to my superstitious, "use the force" students. They are loath to write anything that doesn't immediately appeal to their sense of taste. How could it be worthy of a concert hall if their ego didn't approve? And that is precisely what human bias is: relying on answers that "sound right." But what do you do when you want to move on to new ideas? How do new styles evolve? You intuitively write what sounds correct to you because it matches the collection of styles that have been loaded into your data base. Don't scowl back at me. I've known

hundreds of students just like you; I play an example of a style you don't know, you wrinkle your nose and tell me it's not music, but after listening through the assignments in your dorm closet the new sounds begin to grow on you, and next year you're churning out 12-tone fugues like hot cakes. You are the soulless machine that listens then imitates.

It's normal for a new style to sound "wrong" when you are first exposed to it. Audiences are always "blind" to fresh ideas. There is a story floating around about early American indigenes who could not "see" Columbus' ships because such a vision was so foreign to them. They could not see in that dimension, so to speak. They had never experienced ships on the horizon, and their brains couldn't parse the information. It took a Shaman who observed the ripples in the water then stared long enough on the horizon to finally make out the "ghost" ships. I'm sure this anecdote is apocryphal, but true or not it is a perfect allegory of the dumb-founded look I see every year from a classroom's first exposure to Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna* outside the context of 2001: A Space Odyssey. (Without the context of the film it somehow is no longer "music.")

Like computer generated 3D art, sometimes you have to stare at a new idea before it appears. Every innovative composer wrote music that was invisible to their contemporaries. Debussy (tonal relationships too vague), Bach (too ornate—Baroque means "ugly"), Beethoven (his late chromaticism was dismissed and attributed to increasing deafness), Wagner (yeah, he was a hack), Handel (the Messiah was too "modern"), Bebop (even seasoned jazz artists thought the band was just tuning) and the list goes on.

Here is the question that should keep you up at night. There is going to come a point in your life where you have studied, been shocked by, resisted, then imitated with your fledgling compositions, all the existing composers. You will get tired of them and want to move on. (You see the ripples on the shore. There's something on the horizon, but what?) And don't skim over this paragraph because you're not a musician. I'm talking to you too, it's called allegory. All this time you've been following a well beaten path, blazed by thousands of composers. What do you do when you reach the end of the path? How do you move on to material that is even new to you? How do you become the next composer who at first shocks you, then leads

you to new vistas? How do you write the next piece that you will then learn to like?

It's not through intuition. That's what machines do. (I can't believe I just said that.) That's what Epimetheus, (Prometheus' lesser known brother) did. He could only look back, and was at a loss when asked to give mankind a redeeming quality. Machines can look backward at existing fossils and cookie cut new ones. So do intuitive composers, who imagine a sound, recombined, mixed and matched from existing biases from existing styles, then describe the actions, the meters, the notes, the chords, the process necessary to create that sound.

A systematic composer, like Prometheus, stares into the blank horizon until his vision clears. He does this by putting the question in front of the sound, asking "what would happen if..." He imagines and describes a process (independently tuned flashing overtones, all of Beethoven in three minutes; 3s against 5s against 7s against 11s; Brahms with Indonesian tunings, setting a piano on fire, four minutes of silence, Bach forward and backward at the same time—no, wait, that's been done, by Bach), then discovers the sound that results.

You move on to new ideas by ignoring "the force" and instead relying on a system that generates results contradictory to your bias.

Intuitive, mechanical, imitative, computeresque composer: "This is what I want."

Systematic, visionary composer: "I wonder what would happen if...?"

The difference, according to Herbert Brun, is political.

I get busted for this generalization by colleagues. So I should qualify this by saying that most people work with a mixture of the two, or switch back and forth. If you are writing jingles for the local radio station you use intuition. Because they want what they want. If you are pushing the art music envelope, you look to systems.

Nine Ball

PACE S. GARDNER

I'm a Gemini and a cuddler, I like long walks on the beach, any Meg Ryan movie and I don't think I could exist without strawberry cream cheese!

9 Earl smashed the elusive nine into the corner pocket. With the sound of the shot still in the air, Cindy sashayed behind him. She slid her greasy hands around his robust waist as he stuck his cue in the rack. He turned and grabbed her around the hip. Together they left the bar.

8 Earl was on a roll. The eight dropped softly into the same pocket as the seven.

7 Finally a little bit of luck. The seven rimmed on the edge of the corner pocket and finally dropped, Earl chuckled to himself. Cindy giggled as it went in.

6 Mack sunk the six with a rough slop shot off the eight. Cindy had been intently eyeing Earl's bulbous ass for the last half hour.

5 Earl slobbered the shot on the five. His eyes were getting more bloodshot. He rubbed the palm of his hand on the flank of his beer mug until the palm was dripping wet. He slicked down his sideburns with the soiled palm.

4 Mack dropped the four with a very subtle slop shot.

3 Mack smacked Cindy's ass with a crisp bang. She managed to throw him a smile as her eyes began to well up. Her mascara got a little chunky. She stared at Earl even more. Mack easily put the three into the side pocket.

1 & 2 Mack sunk the one and two with a single, planned shot. As the balls rolled through the belly of the coin-operated pool table, he crept-up behind Cindy and threw back his hand.

Earl had been flirting with Cindy, Mack's girl, for a pitcher of beer. Each time he made her laugh, she brushed his tawny shoulder or discretely slid her plastic fingernails on his thigh. Mack finally noticed after he'd won his third game in a row. He yelled across the bar, "Hey Earl, you wanna play some 9-ball?" In the instant before Earl could yell back, Cindy leaned close to him and whispered in his ear. Earl reddened, his bleary eyes darting from Mack, back to Cindy. In his deep, Southern drawl he yelled to Mack, "Sure buddy, I'll play ya."

Friendship

VIRLEE BAKER

Godly person that has a perfect opportunity to offer my gifts of contemplation, gaze and glimpse to listen, read, draw in and give out. Through my messages in the poems I write.

Friendship...with the exception of wisdom no better thing can be given. Sweet is the scene where genial friendship plays the pleasing game of interchanging praise.

A priceless gift, cherished bond of caring.

What you share matters in the beginning and matters in the end. Oh, the comfort inexpressible feels safe with a friend having neither to weigh thoughts or measure words, pouring them all might chaff and grain together, faithful hand taken with kindness.

Bring joy to the heart, friendship between each other takes different forms, it can run like a river, quietly and sustained through life, it can be an intermittent, something or it can explode like meteor altering the atmosphere so that nothing ever feels or looks the same again.

A friend's face that's warm and bright is more like a face of a flower. Tender and warm is the joy of life, with friends that are faithful and true.

Friends bring silly news. Calling friends out of the shadows, you can hear their voices echo great memories. Having good friends is like being built upon a rock and not upon the sands that dissolve away with the ebbing tides and carry their monuments with them.

The proper office of a friend is to side with you when you are in the wrong, nearly anybody will side with you when you are in the right.

The Day the Roof Caved In

DAN CHRISTENSEN

That's how Dad described it: He had just turned sixteen. Maud, his mother, fifty-three, was a high-profile, talented woman in her prime. University-educated with a bachelor's degree in elocution, (a term used to bring acting and theater into the realm of higher education), she had honed the art of drama.

Maud and my grandfather, Bernard, fifty-four, connected with the movers and shakers about town. Her educational, social, and family connections had fostered friendships with President Heber J. Grant, other general authorities, university administrators, and public officials. Nor had she lost the common touch. Her kitchen was the processing plant for the dairy products her family delivered. And she continued producing babies into her forties.

Those children were Kathryn, age thirteen, and Owen, age ten. Besides my father, the older children were Maurine, twenty-one, and Clare, twenty-five, who was on a mission in South Africa—at least the last they had heard. In those days, a mission was like other church callings—you served until you were released. Clare had been gone for two and a half years. He had been faithful in his correspondence with home and, as was her custom, Maud had maintained a steady stream of letters to him.

It was a Saturday in early spring. Not a day of work on the farm. My grandfather was at his place of business in town, the children at home. A telegram was delivered to the front door. Maurine called to her mother in the kitchen. It was from Clare. Maud dried her hands on her apron as she hurried into the front room. Clare had sent the telegram from a ship in the Indian Ocean. The roof was caving in.

Her children, watching from below, heard the rafters break in Maud's at-once brittle brow, felt the ceiling sag under the thud in her stomach. "Pull the shades!" Maud said in panic. Unnerved by the dimming light, the change in their mother, Paul, Kathryn, and Owen sat on the perimeter of the front room like starched children at a

funeral. Maurine straightened the lace curtain. "Get away from the window!" Maud commanded.

Maud had not moved from her place in the entry and no one kept track of how long she stood there before she noticed their eyes. Seeing her children reminded her they had a father. "I'll call Bernard." They were distracted by her voice that released like a pile of shingles and dust onto the floor near her shoes. Was she talking to them and who was she talking about?

Remnants of the strange sound settled. Maud somehow transferred to the kitchen.

From the next room, the children took temporary comfort when they heard Maud speak into the telephone. She calmly asked to be connected. They recognized this voice although they knew well enough that their mother always used it so as to not alert those who hovered near their small-town telephone switchboard. Then, during the moment she waited, Maud must have suddenly thought better about speaking to her husband over the telephone. She thanked the operator and hung up.

"Maurine, I need you in here." Again their mother produced that foreign sound that scraped the walls as it came into where they sat. From the front room, the younger children could only make out part of Maud's terse instructions to their sister. Through the window, they saw Maurine drive away in the car. They listened for their mother's footsteps from the kitchen. None came. They heard a chair slide on the linoleum.

How long they waited I do not know. But now, there are tires on the gravel driveway, the sagging screen squeaks then glances from the jamb. My grandfather strides through the back porch momentarily suspending the silence in the house. He and Maud go into their bedroom and close the door. The children sit quieter than before. The worst breaks loose. They hear their father's loud, collapsing shouts, their mother's pleas as Heaven cracks overhead, her terrifying cries in grief. Owen covers his ears, Kathryn her face. My father hesitates, then leaps across the room to stand against the wall behind his sister. The roof caves in.

Rocky Raccoon or Something like It An Excerpt

TAMAR SCHMIDT

Tamar has been writing short stories and plays for a few years. She currently works as a Technical writer for Mckinnon-Mulherin.

SCENE: *It is a few days after the dinner with RICHARD, NANCY, and DAN. DAN and NANCY are sitting on a bench in the park discussing the previous events and feeding the birds.*

DAN. So he really liked me?

NANCY. Yeah he thought you were great. We spent quite awhile talking about your virtues and how excited he was that I had a friend. I didn't really question it. He has been acting strange ever since he's been working such long hours. I just don't understand him anymore. At first he was so concerned that I was spending all of my time with a strange man. I think he was kind of jealous, which makes sense since I am married to him and spending time with a strange man. Plus I think he was worried. He was concerned that you might be some type of murderer, but now that he's met you he seems to think everything is okay. Whatever. I guess that means we're free to spend as much time together as we want with his blessing.

DAN. That's certainly something I would never do.

NANCY. What?

DAN. Let my wife spend all of her time with a man I hardly know. Especially one as charming as me.

NANCY. I don't think he noticed all of your appealing qualities. Besides, you're charming?

DAN. Ha ha, very funny.

NANCY. I thought so. I can be just as witty and fun as you.

DAN. Hmm...I'm not so sure.

NANCY. Well there must be something about me that you keep coming back for. Your visits haven't seemed to lessen.

DAN. I just enjoy the company of another human being.

NANCY. That's it? So if I was an 80 year old man you would visit just as often?

DAN. Of course.

NANCY. But only if he knew how to play cribbage.

DAN. All 80 year old men know how to play cribbage.

NANCY. Well whatever your reason for visiting, Richard doesn't seem to mind.

DAN. That's so odd. I don't understand his thinking.

NANCY. Me either, but whatever. At least it takes away some of my guilt. I don't feel like I'm cheating on my husband anymore.

DAN. Guilty? For what? We have never done anything that would cause you to feel guilty.

NANCY. I know, it's just strange to think that my husband is off earning money to support me and instead of helping I spend my time with another man. Don't you find that a bit inappropriate?

DAN. I suppose, but since I'm not Richard and you aren't my wife I don't really care.

NANCY. Thanks. Hey did you hear about your job?

DAN. What job?

NANCY. The one you had the interview for the other day.

DAN. Oh, that one. Yeah.

NANCY. What job was this anyway? I thought you wanted to leave this town.

DAN. Well yeah, but I saw the job advertised and I thought it might be good for me.

NANCY. What is it?

DAN. I would be working for another law firm, but I would be doing mostly the same type of work, working on construction law and the like. It's actually a contract lawyer position.

NANCY. Meaning?

DAN. Basically they hire me to work for a case and then when that contract is up I can choose to sign up for another case, take some time off, etc. It's really great because I can set my own hours and choose how long I want to stay with this company without any consequences. Basically the perks of feeling free with the security of a job.

NANCY. Well that sounds interesting. Is this something you really want?

DAN. It could be.

NANCY. What changed your mind about staying?

DAN. I'm tired of moving around. I know I said I'm a wanderer, but sometimes you just get tired of pulling up your roots every few years, and this place is kind of growing on me. Besides, now it feels like I could pull up my roots if I really needed to.

NANCY. Oh. Well it makes sense.

DAN. It would be nice for my son to have a solid place where he could come visit me. It makes it hard on the kid to come visit because he doesn't know anyone and if I'm constantly moving he can't consider a place to be home.

NANCY. But he usually stays with his mom.

DAN. Yeah, but it would be nice if he spent some more time with me. I miss having him around, and if I stayed in one spot longer than three years he might feel like that place is close to a home and be more willing to try and make friends in the area.

NANCY. This town isn't such a bad place.

DAN. I've been in worse.

NANCY. Well I'm glad that you're staying.

DAN. Really?

NANCY. Of course, since my husband is gone all hours I need someone to entertain me.

DAN. I won't always be around. Everyone has to start supporting themselves at some point.

NANCY. I know, but I try not to think too far in advance. I like to live in the moment.

DAN. In every moment?

NANCY. I find thinking about your actions leads you to think about the consequences and the consequences often stop you from finding something you really enjoy. Take inviting you to dinner that first time. If I had stopped and thought about what I was doing I might not have invited you. Think about all the terrible things that could have happened. You could have been a killer rapist, or even just a rapist. You could have been a burglar scoping out our house, getting ready to steal our possessions while we were away. My husband could have thought that I was cheating on him and divorced me. Who knows what the neighbors might think. I might have even fallen in love with you and decided to leave my marriage. If I had thought about all of those things I might never have invited you to dinner and never discovered what a delightful person you are.

DAN. Or what a terrible person I can be.

NANCY. I don't believe that.

DAN. That's because you're not Richard.

NANCY. What do you mean?

DAN. It doesn't matter. I'm glad that you didn't think about the consequences and that we're sitting here on a bench just enjoying being with another person.

NANCY. Because I'm not Richard meaning that he would find your motives less than golden?

DAN. Perhaps.

NANCY. You have had ample opportunity and have yet to make a move. I don't think Richard has any complaints.

DAN. Maybe I wanted to be sure. And maybe you can't choose who you fall in love with.

NANCY. What are you talking about?

DAN. Let's not talk about this right now.

NANCY. No, we're going to talk about it. The other day you walked out on me and said that I was a happily married woman. You gave no hint to any other type of feeling or idea. And now you're sitting here waxing eloquent about not being Richard because of your terrible motives and saying things like, "you can't control who you fall in love with."

DAN. What do you want me to say?

NANCY. I don't know! I don't know what you're trying to say and I don't know how it affects me.

DAN. It can only affect you if you want it to.

NANCY. I don't know.

DAN. You don't know what? You don't know how you feel or you don't know if you want it to affect you?

NANCY. I think you're right you can't control who you fall in love with. Sometimes things just happen that you aren't looking for.

DAN. But do you put yourself in a position where those things are much easier?

NANCY. You came to my door. I didn't ask for that knock that day.

DAN. You invited me to dinner.

NANCY. But you stayed.

DAN. Does it really matter what choices we made?

NANCY. I didn't choose to be in this situation.

DAN. But did you stop it?

NANCY. No. But Richard didn't help.

DAN. You can't blame this on Richard. Do you think he forced you into this place?

NANCY. He didn't stop it from happening.

DAN. Did he even see it happening?

NANCY. No, and that's part of the problem.

DAN. But only part.

NANCY. You're right, only part.

DAN. What do you want Nancy?

NANCY. To be happy.

DAN. How?

NANCY. I don't know.

DAN. (*There is a pause*) What are you thinking?

NANCY. I feel like I'm on a precipice and I'm about to fall, but I don't know which way, and no matter what happens it will change everything.

DAN. Don't walk away from potential happiness.

NANCY. Are you speaking about you or my husband?

DAN. I don't know.

NANCY. It doesn't matter anymore. Dan I've tried. I've tried to be the good wife. I've wanted to have a happy marriage, but things just don't seem to work. How long do I have to wait before something actually turns in my favor? Why do I always have to make the right decisions and hope that the consequences fall sometime in my lifetime? What does it matter anymore? For once I'm going to make a selfish decision and do something that I want to do. It doesn't matter what other people think or how the consequences play out. Like I said earlier, I don't like to think about consequences, they will only stop you from performing the actions that can bring you happiness in the moment. And I want that happiness. I just want to feel like I belong for one small moment!

They look at each other for moment and then NANCY reaches out and kisses DAN. They look at each other for a moment afterward and then scoot closer together.

DAN. So Richard really liked me?

NANCY. Yeah. Strange huh?

DAN. Well I guess that's one hurdle over. Do you think that will make this any easier?

NANCY. (*She laughs*) Does it matter? Maybe you should come over for dinner next week.

DAN. I think that would be nice.

NANCY. Even if Richard isn't there?

DAN. I think I would prefer it if he's not there.

NANCY. It's a date then.

DAN. Are you ready to go?

NANCY. Yeah, I should go make dinner so Richard can eat it when he gets home. Do you want to come home and help me?

DAN. No, I should get going. Jeff is going to call me and I said I would be around.

NANCY. Alright. Well, have a good afternoon.

DAN. *(he smiles, grabs her hand pulls her to him and kisses her. She smiles at him and then walks off. He stands there watching her.)* You too.

FADE OUT

Happiness Recipe

JOHN BOLES

John Boles is retired. Coming from a technical field he is cultivating his long neglected right-brain. A love of writing, the visual arts and hiking help.

The two of us,
Making chili.
Our cozy cabin,
Covered in white,
Wind whistling around,
Sparkles in starlight.

An old knife, razor-like
Sharpened on leather
And steel.
Chopping onion, garlic,
Crisp green pepper,
All sizzling
In olive oil.

Stepping outside for a moment
Exhaling white breath
The cold pinches my nose.
Coyote tracks lay a line
Crossing the ridge.
Two ducks wing it, quacking
Over the foggy creek bottom.

Stomping my feet
And back inside,
The pungent smell
Of onions and garlic,
Bring memories
Of images long past.

A battered pan,
Various beans,

Black olives and canned corn,
Tomato, oregano, thyme,
Hot pepper sauce and chili powder.
Just feels right.

Mix with my special spoon.
Bubbling ever so softly. We wait.
Sit close to each other
On the cuddling couch.
With blankets
And Tullamore Dew.
Before the red coals.
No hurry.

Burning Flames, Lingering Memories

DEBORAH YOUNG

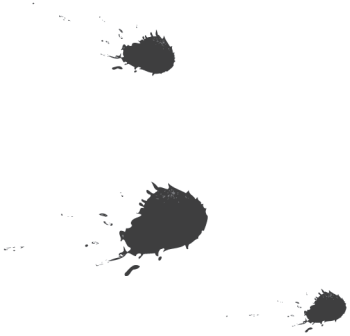
I can see the scars. Can't you? They cover the upper knuckles of my index and pointer fingers on each hand. Are they psychological? Left over memories of my past? Perhaps. Yet, you can see the visible effects—my quivering hands, especially under stress. Generally, I don't notice the tremors. Sometimes, however, I need two hands to keep a glass steady enough to sip its contents.

How did this happen? I was fourteen years old. I was in ninth grade. On this fateful afternoon, I was taking my mid-term examination in physical science. The exam had two parts: one written and one hands-on. The class was split into two groups. I was in the hands-on group. I had spent the past quarter using heat to filter unknown substances in which to delineate their chemical compositions. For the exam, I performed the same tasks but without a lab partner.

Upon entering the science lab that day, I self-assuredly picked up my assignment, found an empty lab table, and studied the instructions. I was nervous. Taking my first mid-semester exam as a high school student was serious, scary business. Yet, the process of gathering the materials to conduct the experiment was second nature. I followed the procedures, took detailed notes at each step, and recorded my observations as I'd previously been taught. I had several hypotheses about what compound was in my test tube that day.

So what went wrong? Because my classroom was not equipped with gas jets, I burned alcohol in glass jars like the glass jars sold with spice racks. I filled the jars with alcohol then covered them with metal caps. Thick white cord poked through the center of the caps. This cord acted as a wick. I lighted the wicks and the alcohol provided a constant source of heat for my experiments.

Midway through this two-hour lab test, I had used up the alcohol in four burners. To complete the experiment, I re-filled the four burners, adding the clear, odorless, room-temperature liquid. I tightened the caps on the jars. With two burners in each hand, I touched the wicks



of the two burners in my right hand to a flame coming from a friend's burner. When the wicks were lit, I touched the wicks of the burners in my left hand to the burners in my right hand.

In moments, flames covered all four burners and crawled down the tops of my fingers. My mind was dumbfounded. Initially, I was paralyzed. When the eternity ended, I put the jars on the fireproof table. The jars tipped. I ignored the slow stream of liquid, followed by a trail of flames, licking the table top. Instead, I furiously blew on my fingers to put out the flames.

Classmates noted what was happening. They saw me frantically blowing on my hands. They saw the fire spreading on the table. Several people took charge of the table. Someone else took charge of me—guiding me to the classroom sink to immerse my hands in cold running water. Someone else went in search of the science teacher, who'd left for the teachers' lounge moments earlier.

I don't know what else happened around me. My next memory is of me sitting in the nurse's office with my hands stuck in a bowl filled with ice cubes and water. I was grateful. Thirty minutes later, the school nurse draped a protective layer of gauze over my hands and put me on one of the plush luxury coaches we used as school buses. She instructed the driver to drop me off at the hospital before he dispersed the rest of his passengers. The pain when my hands were in the ice water was almost bearable. The pain in the gauze wrappings was intolerable. I wasn't a crybaby but, throughout the hour-long drive over bumpy two-lane country roads back to civilization, tears rolled down my face.

My mother was waiting for me at the hospital. The doctors cleaned the charred skin, carefully trying to save the skin. In the end, balls of gauze were placed in the palm of each hand. Each hand was wrapped so that no air could penetrate the bandaging. I walked out of the hospital with my hands looking like they were in large white boxing gloves.

For more than three weeks, I found out what it was like to lose the use of one's hands. I immediately discovered that privacy was not an option. Toileting, from the simple act of releasing a button to wiping one's self, was not possible. I was an avid reader and reading was out,

too. Time out of school to pursue my own reading list would have been a delight; however, I couldn't turn the page of a book no matter how hard I tried with my elbows or parts of my face. Eating was yet another matter. I could not hold on to any utensils or dishware. I was incapable of holding anything between my two large mitts that were formerly my hands.

Eventually, the mitts became less bulky. By week six, only one finger on my right hand was in a protective splint. It had suffered the greatest damage. I remember one cold Sunday morning in church several years following the accident, I looked down at my hands and the scars jumped out at me. They looked so raw and red that day. They frightened me. I hadn't noticed them so much up to that point. Since then the physical features of my hands have healed well. Today, strangers can't see the damage in the way that I can. I know where the fire burned. I know what was disfigured by the flames.

Thread Crossing

VIRLEE BAKER

Godly person that has a perfect opportunity to offer my gifts of contemplation, gaze and glimpse to listehn, read, draw in and give out. Through my messages in the poems I write.

The silken threads by viewless spiders spinners webs. Float so idly in the breeze, helps to make each morning fair, shining silver in the sun and diamonds in the rain, caught by wayward breeze, weaving on the flowers, wing insects know they meet their death where the threads have crossed their path.

Blow to the east and west and fastened there. How dare any human deed arrange or attempt to wreck any moment's cost, crossed threads is safe, because you can't see where threads cross, as the spiders spin their webs, they are made so strong the wind or storms cannot break them down.

My Family's Trip

KATE CUSHING

I am writing a song and drawing pictures for it. My friends played basketball together. I used to play softball.

On 16 Nov, my mom and dad and I flew on an air plane for a long-time.

We left Salt Lake City at 5:15 pm and arrived in New York at midnight.

The next day we went to see the play "Spamalot."

That night my sister and her family got there. My 12 year old niece slept in our room with me

The next day went to the American Girl Store. There are eight American Girls. They represent different times in American history. There are books and dolls of each girl. There is also a theatre, which we have never been to and a restaurant. There is even a hairdresser for the dolls' hair. On the internet there are also American Girl Games.

Then we went to see the play "Drowsy Chaperone." My Mom's friend's son-in-law wrote it and is in the play. He was going to give us a backstage tour but he was sick that day. I liked the music and dating part.

That night we went back to the American Girl Store for dinner. Two of my nieces took their dolls. They hooked chairs onto the tables for the dolls. There are American Girl Stores in Chicago and Los Angeles too.

The next day we went to church where the Manhattan Temple is and after church we went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We looked at the pictures up close so we could see the detail.

Then we went to see the play “Wicked.” I saw it before—last year. It is the story of the Good Witch and the Bad Witch in Oz—before Dorothy. This is my mom’s favorite musical.

Before we left on Monday, we went to the Museum of Modern Art. We didn’t have enough time to see everything. My sister gave us some headphones so we could understand more about the pictures.

My nieces shared their feelings with me about the trip.

Sophie, age 7, said she liked 3 things:

1. The American Girl store and dinner
2. The Drowsy Chaperone
3. Wicked

Ellie, who is 10, wrote this:

“My mom is making me write this. We went to 2 Broadway show. ‘The Drowsy Chaperone’ and ‘Wicked.’ We also went to a museum unluckily. I got so mad at my dad, because he made us go to a museum that was very boring instead of Toys ‘R’ Us. I am still mad at him. We also went to the American Girl doll store twice in one day because we couldn’t get into lunch there so we shopped then we went to The Drowsy Chaperone then we went back and ate dinner there.

Adios!”

Finally my 12 year old niece wrote this:

“Going to New York City was an amazing experience. I have been there once before, but there is always something new to do and see. I got to see two Broadway plays.

I saw ‘The Drowsy Chaperone’ and ‘Wicked’ (Wicked was my favorite) these two happened to be musicals. This is why I loved them. I also got to go shopping. Shopping in New York City is overwhelming. You could go to this store or that store or maybe even the candy store, but which one first? I got to go to almost everywhere I had planned in advance. I got to go to a chocolate store. Multiple restaurants, and the American Girl Doll store. I got to go Christmas shopping early. (Goody goody) But even better, I got to work on my Christmas list! Hotel room, I shared with my grandparents and aunt,

looking down at Times Square with all the lights, noise, and people. I got to do so many things in so little time. I am glad I went to New York City; and I plan on going again.”

On Monday afternoon we flew to North Carolina. We landed in Raleigh; it was a two hour drive to their home in Greenville. One day before Thanksgiving we went to a farm where we had family pictures taken. We had them taken by a river in a barn.

There were a lot of people there for Thanksgiving dinner. One of the people had a birthday that day also.

On the way we had to fly back to New York and then on to Salt Lake. We couldn’t fly straight though to Salt Lake because it was a holiday and it was so busy.

I had fun visiting my nieces and older sister and brother-in-law.

President Bush, Stop Killing Our Families!

TERRY TRIGGER

My name is Terry Trigger. I live in the State of Utah. I got to Literacy Action Center to learn how to read and write and help other adults.

I am asking the President of the United States and the senators to stop the war!!! I am tired of our boys and girls being blown up in cars and buses and at dinner. The deaths are senseless. Our sons and daughters need a fair chance to have a real life of their own. Many of them have babies and spouses, but these soldiers are dead. The spouses and children have to go on without their partners or parents. Moms and dads have to go on without their sons and daughters.

My son was in the war in 2003. He was sent home because he was shot. I think all of our people should come home because I really don't feel this is our war! It is really Saddam Hussein's war with his people. He was the ruler of his people, killing them for no reason. His people wished that he was destroyed. Are we still in this war because we haven't found Osama bin Laden?

I feel for the good Iraqi men, women, and children, but the bad people—the ones who are shooting our troops—should get what they get. I wouldn't want our U.S. to be like their country. Wouldn't it be nice if our countries could be like sisters and brothers? If we could continue helping Iraq with food and finances after our troops are out, maybe they will stop fighting and build their country back even better than before!

Riding Shotgun with Tom Waits

ELIZABETH WAGSTAFF

English Major. History Minor. Educator and poet. (and I love Tom Waits)

Riding shotgun with Tom Waits is like dancing with an eel
in roller skates
the slippery ease in which he teases
laughter that intoxicates
voice to verse pontificates
leaves me thirsty—
we talk of words and inspiration,
connecting the dots,
and the art of mental
masturbation—he's much better
than I—
He asks me if I'd like a smoke
and I choke on my reply—only because he needs
both hands to drive

so I steer but it is hard to hear him above the prattle
of the ballads

we speak of love and the lack thereof
the men I've dreamed...
he kissing me with chocolate
in his mouth
cigarettes on his breath...
David Bowie grabbing my breast...
Those were nice dreams...he had to agree
And does he
even like Lee Marvin?

Silence
For a while—He winks and smiles...

“Musicians,” he growls, “should never be allowed in
kitchens—unless,
of course, the want to rattle some pans—or kiss a poet.”

And I have to agree
Because he is Tom Waits
And I am riding shotgun
And we are waiting for the light
To turn green—

Long Lost Love

MARTHA CARTER

I like reading and writing. I am a lot happier now since I'm engaged.

I have a new boyfriend. His name is Dale. We have known each other for 25 years. We first met each other when we were living at Lakecrest in Orem, Utah. I was fifteen. Dale was eighteen. We lost touch with each other but we still loved each other.

I didn't recognize him but he recognized me. Dale yelled, "Martha!" across the crowded bus. I was sitting up front. I turned to look. As he got off the bus, I recognized him.

Two days later, I saw Dale's roommate at Ream's. I wrote my phone number on his hand and told him to give it to Dale. That night, Dale called me. From there on, we kept calling and talking to each other. I have been living with him since February 19th.

It was the best thing that ever happened to us. I love him a lot and it is hard for me to be away from him.

On February 24th, his sister took us to Brigham City because his mother was in the hospital. His mother and his sister told me they like me a lot. We go to his sister's house and stay with them sometimes. They said I am the best woman he's ever dated. He should not let me go.

We got engaged two weeks ago. I am wearing his grandma's engagement ring. We have already set the wedding date. It is going to be on June 20, 2009, at Thanksgiving Point.

Snot

RANDY EGGERT

Randy teaches linguistics at the U of U. He is a mentor for the Sam Weller's group. And he has a black dog.

My first year of grad school at the University of Chicago, I went to a lot of movies. The U of C had three film clubs, and I bought a season pass for each one.

On a cold winter evening, I walked the seven blocks to Ida Noise Hall, where Doc Films showed their movies. It was flu season, and everybody had a runny nose. I kept toilet paper in my pockets to blow mine. The auditorium was crowded when I arrived, as it always was when they showed Orson Welles films—this one was *The Magnificent Ambersons*. The only empty seats were on the side, where I hated sitting because you had to look at the screen slant-wise. But I got an aisle seat, and the seat next to me was empty, which I was happy about because I wouldn't have to share an arm-rest. I put my parka next to me.

The seats around me filled up until my parka occupied the only empty one. A well-dressed man walked up the aisle scanning for a place to sit. His grey hair was slicked back; he wore a tie underneath his knee-length overcoat. "That seat taken?" he asked me, pointing at my jacket.

I moved my stuff and gestured an invitation for him to sit. He smelled good, which made me feel awkward because where I grew up a man didn't enjoy the fragrance of another man. He smiled at me, a fatherly face; he had the air of professor. I guessed he was a nice professor, the kind who makes esoteric jokes in his classes and all the students feel smart because they get the jokes and nobody outside of the class would.

The lights dimmed. The elegant, good-smelling, kindly professor sniffled. I wondered if I should offer him some of my toilet paper.

A spotlight lit the stage in front of the screen, and a jumpy undergraduate vaulted onto the stage and welcomed us to Doc Films. He held a poster in his hands and began announcing what was showing the rest of the quarter. Out of the side of my eyes, I glimpsed my distinguished neighbor raise his hands to his face. He blew his nose loudly and then lowered his hands. I glanced at them expecting to see him fold up a handkerchief or crumple a tissue, but no, there were just hands. It was too dark to see the snot I knew was there.

The undergraduate on stage wrapped up his announcements, looked at somebody in the audience who none of us could see and asked if there was anything else he should add, then said okay, told us to enjoy the film. The spotlight went off. The room darkened and then lit again slightly as the film began rolling.

I looked at my neighbor. What was he going to do with his snot? Would he rub it on his slacks? Would he ball up his fists and shove them into his pockets, then open the fists, and wipe the snot on the inside? If it were me, I would have used my socks. Socks are good for that sort of thing.

But he just held his hands open on his lap.

The image on-screen was of the Ambersons' mansion. Welles' smooth voice narrated as people, horses, buggies, and sleighs passed by, but I divided my attention between the screen and the professor. Finally, five minutes into the movie, he brought one of his hands up to his mouth, then assiduously licked it clean. He finished one hand and moved to the other.

Okay, you're asking, what's the point of this story? How does it develop character? Where are the denouement and other plot elements best described in French?

Who cares? When you witness something like that, you simply have to tell people about it.

The Tiger Story

JESSICA CASSELMAN

I like this writing class because I like to write my stories. Tigers are cute.

One hot summer day, I went swimming in the nice extra-large Redwood swimming pool.

I walked five blocks from my house to the swimming pool. I was wearing a swimsuit under my tank top and pants. I was wearing socks and shoes, too, so I would not step on glass on the street.

Before the pool opened, I grabbed a free lunch from the Granite School District. It was okay. I never get cramps if I eat just before I jump into the pool.

The swimming pool entrance looked like a little garage door. It opened at one o'clock. I paid one dollar. I went into the bathroom then through another door to go outside to the swimming pool.

I met lots and lots of new friends for the first time today at the pool. They were all guy friends. They came to the pool by themselves.

I jumped into the pool feet first in the five foot side. I swam the breaststroke across the pool. While I was swimming, I saw the biggest tiger I ever saw up in the apple tree. He was sleeping. His tail was hanging over the metal fence.

I got out of the pool, walked over to the diving boards, then I jumped off the high diving board. Before I jumped, I got a better look at the tiger. It scared me.

I didn't think the bunch of lifeguards saw the tiger up the apple tree because they were too busy watching the people in the pool.

I grew up around swimming pools. I knew that tigers weren't supposed to be in the swimming pool area.

When the pool closed at four-thirty, I walked out of the pool area. I waited until the people went home, then I coaxed the tiger out of the tree. "Come here, tiger, tiger, tiger. Come down from the tree. Come home with me." The tiger followed me home. I put the tiger with my horses. Now I have a tiger in my backyard.

Worst Time I Broke a Bone

JAMES M. KUROCIK, II

Born and raised in Salt Lake City (local guy). Pro-welder of 6 years. Welding is my passion. I enjoy writing, building, any outdoor activities. My motto is, "I can sleep when I'm dead."

At the age of five
I had stars in my eyes
I wished I could fly
I thought Superman could
So why can't I
To the top of my bunk I go
My heart was pounding and time drifted slow

I jumped off with all my might
I spread my body out like Superman in mid-flight
A feeling of freedom engulfed my whole soul
For a brief moment my body was invigorated and whole
Peace and tranquility suspended in air
It was most incredible, there was nothing to compare

It was all cut short at the sound of a thud
My body crashed violently on to the rug
Excruciating pain raced through my arm
I lied on the floor wanting to cry in alarm
I opened my mouth but made not a sound
I was muted by pain as I rolled on the ground
I rose to my feet and ran to my mom
I yelled out a shriek as I rushed right along
My mother embraced me and asked "What's wrong?"
I turned right around and showed her my arm
It was a compound fracture and it was starting to swell
I was rushed to the hospital like a bat out of hell

From room to room I was wisped in a hurry
On my father's face was an expression of disgust and fury
The doctor fixed me up
I was on my way with a cast

And now it's the future and I'm thinking of the past
Was it worth all the agony and pain
For one brief moment of totally freedom I claimed
The answer is yes it was worth all the sorrow
For freedom today, there is pain tomorrow
Pain only lasts a brief moment of time
Freedom lasts forever stored in my mind.

Disobeying My Parents

PEGGY DEAN

I like writing stories and going to movies. I like to read books.

My story is about when my sister, Martha, was eleven years old. We lived in a little trailer in Wilton, Arkansas. Behind the trailer were a dump and a gravel pit. My three sisters and I were told not to play there but we did not listen to our father. We went there any way.

We had to walk through the dump to get to the gravel pit. We used to go to the gravel pit to get the different colored rocks to take to school for show-and-tell.

One day Martha and Nancy went walking in the dump by themselves. They were on their way to the gravel pit to get rocks for school. Martha tripped over a can, fell on some glass, and cut her leg.

As Nancy, our older sister, carried Martha to the trailer, she was yelling, "Daddy! Daddy! Come! Martha's hurt."

Daddy was working on a car in front of our trailer. Daddy ran over to Nancy and Martha. Daddy yelled to Mother to come out of the trailer. Daddy yelled again, "Betty, get some rags and gasoline and put it on her leg."

Mary, my middle sister, and I were playing in the front of the trailer. Mary walked over to Nancy and Martha. Mary said, "Mom, her veins are hanging out of her leg."

After Mary told Mother about the veins hanging out of Martha's leg, Mother said to Daddy, "Take her to the doctor."

When she came home, she was all bandaged up. Daddy carried her into the trailer. She couldn't go to school.

We never went back to the gravel pit because Daddy wouldn't let us. He would have whipped us with a belt if we had gone back.

Utah Lake, West Mountain and Beyond

E.B. (HOMER) CONDER

Homer is a graduate of SLCC with degrees in CADD and Manufacturing Technology. He writes for a BMW motorcycle club newsletter. Many of his writings are about motorcycle travel and events. He is retired.

It's barely above freezing and I'm sitting on my motorcycle watching a freight train roll by. The cold air forces the diesel smoke to hug the ground and the crisp country air is fouled by its smell. Six engines warn me of a long wait and I turn off the motor. Looking back over my left shoulder, a tree blocks my view of the trailing railcars and I don't have a clue as to how long it will take the slow moving freight to pass. I entertain myself by trying to read and interpret the graffiti on the cars as they go by. No luck. You'd think if someone takes the time to tag a railcar they might want their captive readers to know what they have to say. I close my eyes for a few seconds and I'm lulled by the rhythm of the rails. The mechanical music seems magic and timeless. The train continues to pass and I see less and less graffiti. How is it limited to just the leading cars? After a few more minutes, I look back over my shoulder and see the end of the train. The last car rattles by and on its side is a piece of graffiti I can read. Nothing fancy, just a single stroke plain lettered message. "George W. Bush is un-American." The crossing arm raises and I'm allowed to pass. Is George W. Bush really un-American? What an opportunity to editorialize. Do I comment on what I perceive to be incompetence and arrogance in the Oval Office or let my mind wander back to the ride? I start the bike.

I'm on SR-141, and I continue north past Lincoln Beach on Utah Lake. Its mediocre pavement turns west around the north end of West Mountain and bends back south toward the orchard community of Genola. The road is poor but the ride has its rewards. West Mountain is a beautiful blend of desert and wetland. On my left several rock formations cling to the mountain's steep hillside interrupting its arid landscape, and orderly rows of apple trees grace its foothills. On my right I see wetland vegetation and Utah Lake's frozen southern shore. Marsh birds fly through the willows and a deer bounds away from me

as I pass. Turning right in Genola I ride west on US-6. The highway is better than SR-141 and the Tri-Cities of Genola, Goshen, and Elberta are soon in my rearview mirrors. These quaint little communities have changed little since the Mormons settled this area, but I have the feeling they will be squashed under the boot of expanding urbanization. Utah County's developments are crawling their way and I wouldn't be surprised to see a sanitized stucco subdivision bordered by a white vinyl fence in this area as early as next year.

Ten minutes after leaving Elberta I cross the Juab County line and ride down Eureka's decayed main street. It looks and feels like a ghost town. Shells of vacant century-old buildings stare blindly at me through empty window frames as I ride by. In my mind I can see the ghostly shadows of the miners walking these streets when the mines grudgingly gave up their silver and gold. On the west end of town, standing tall like a ship's mast, the headframe of the abandoned Bullion Beck and Champion Mine marks its sealed entrance and serves as a monument to the town's mining history. A quarter mile past the mine, a small cemetery with its crumbling stone and faded wooden markers adds more testimony to the town's history. I make a right turn on SR-36 and head north toward Tooele County through a silent sea of desert sagebrush and juniper. The scenery is great, but in the distance the foul air of the city spoils the skyline. I'm riding on the edge of Salt Lake County's air pollution and wonder how far south I'd have to travel to leave it behind. I'm enjoying the ride. It's a beautiful day; the weather is cold but obliging. The bike is running smooth, and I'm dressed in Gerbings heated clothing, and unstylish insulated Carhart coveralls. I'm as warm as I can be.

I continue north toward the foul air though the town of Vernon. Thankfully I'm not hungry and find it easy to ignore the town's Silver Sage Diner. I've eaten there before and I'm not eager for a research project. On the skeleton of an old barbwire fence, a feathered raptor of some sort picks the fur off his dinner. They're plentiful out here this time of year and I wish I knew better how to identify them. A few miles later I pass the Fairfield and Cedar Fort turnoff in Faust and stay on route to Tooele. I slow down as I pass Rush Valley; and the idea of a quick two-directional ride over Johnson's Pass is tempting, but it's late in the day and I wonder about ice in the shadows. In the distance the small igloos and bunkers of Tooele Army Depot's south area sprout from the desert sage. The compound is home to the remains

of the army's chemical weapons supply. Thankfully the stockpile of these old mustard gas and nerve agent bombs will be gone soon, as the army's disposal project winds down. I wonder what will be stored there when the gas is gone. At the junction of highway 73, I turn left and stay on 36. A mile later I pass Penny's Café. It's been there as long as I remember and much longer. On the outside it's as inviting as a cold sore kiss and the inside isn't much better. Far enough out of town to be ignored by the cigarette police, a visit inside is like stepping back to the 70's. If you don't find the smell of stale beer and greasy burgers smothered in tobacco smoke objectionable, Penny's is a true oasis and worth a visit. I roll on by. North of Penny's, past the dry bed of Rush Lake; the town of Stockton offers another watering hole of equal quality to Penny's. Valley Lounge for a cheap beer on a hot day is a good bet. I'm glad it's cold.

When I ride into Tooele on the south end of town, I notice it hasn't changed over the years and its main street still reflects the character and charm of Norman Rockwell's Middle America. The center of town with its orderly streets and well-maintained buildings has the look of the early 60's. On the north end of town I find a new and different chapter of American History. Tooele has fallen victim to franchise plague. It looks just like Battle Creek, Michigan, which looks like Boise, Idaho, which looks like Yakima, Washington. Wal-Mart lives here too and there doesn't seem to be room for any of the Mom & Pop businesses America was built on. It's too bad...I think about a warm drink at Tracks—a private club for members. It's tempting, but I'm not far from home and decide to push on. My warm living room is more comfortable than any bar.

The open space north of Tooele is growing smaller as local farmers cash in on Tooele's urban boom. Growing smaller...What a euphemism...I ride through Erda, and continue on past the "growing larger" community of Stansbury Park with its Maverik entrance. Got to have fuel for the commuters. The historical landmark "Adobe Rock" which served as a traveler's camp in the 1800's, falls by on my right and seems insignificant when compared to the monolithic truck stop marking the entrance to I-80 a few miles north. Dodging a couple of lumbering freight haulers working their way toward the freeway onramp, I throttle back and make a smooth calculated merge with the traffic in the east bound lane. The Great Salt Lake on my left rolls listlessly, and a single sailboat braving the cold day tacks into the

weak wind as it moves slowly away from the marina. I wonder why it's heading out this late in the day. I'm only on the interstate for a few miles before taking the Magna exit on SR-201. What a change in view. The peaceful marsh with its reeds, cattails, ponds and wildlife between the interstate and 201 is a sharp contrast to the industrial complex on my right. The world's largest copper smelter and its 1200 ft. smokestack marks the beginning of Kennecott Copper's industrial corridor. One oxygen plant, a refinery, two mills, a tailings pond, a power plant, and eight miles later, I drop off a small hill and make a right turn into Magna. The westernmost community in Salt Lake County, and the only place in the valley that can lay legitimate claim to being Salt Lake's ghetto: Magna, Utah, my hometown. As I ride down Magna's main street on the last leg of my ride, I judge its aesthetics and charm to fall somewhere between Eureka's decay and Tooele's preserved facade. Magna still has hope however, and I'm not giving up yet. With the aid of urban renewal money, and new commercial and residential projects, Magna is getting better all the time.

The bike is in the garage and I'm on the couch with a warm mocha-rum in hand. My feet are comfortably covered in a pair of my mother's knit slippers and I'm free from the cumbersome clothing that kept me warm on my ride. The aroma from the hot rum comforts me more than the brew itself, and I'll probably doze off before it's gone. I'd say it's an excellent ending for a great winter ride.

God Puts a Candle Inside of Us

TIFFANY CARVER

I live to write stories for the book that people like to enjoy. I really enjoy typing on my computer.

I was living at home. I asked my mom a long time ago if I could go on a mission. She said, "You already are on a mission."

"How, Mom?"

She said, "You make people happy."

"How, Mom?"

"You have a pretty smile and a sweet personality."

"But Mom, I really, really do want to go on a mission."

Later on in years, when I was sixteen years old, I moved out of my parent's home. My mom had a hard time of letting me go. I didn't know how to be independent or what living on my own was like.

Right now, I am living on my own. I really didn't know how dependent I really was on my mom. Now I do because she is on her own mission. She is in England and she's learning about that country. She is learning about different kinds of money and food. She also is learning new words and a new way of speaking. New people surround her and I feel it was a good thing for me as well as for her. I'm talking differently, too. My language is changing on the telephone especially when I talk with my brothers. They tell me I talk more clearly and so says Deb. Everybody notices, even at my work.

Many different kinds of people are on their own special mission. It is like a light in us.

The women my mom works with come from very diverse backgrounds. One is from a small village in Nigeria. She is 60 years old, divorced with 3 children. Another is from Ohio and is the president of 2 companies. She is 65 and divorced with 3 children. She

is in the healthcare field. She also has a couple from St. George in their late 60's with 4 children. My mom's companion, who she rooms with, has been an office manager for 2 doctors in Salt Lake for 37 years. She lost her husband about 2 ½ years ago and she is my mom's age. She is such a sweet lady.

My mom says: Food tastes like it's slightly off. There is no such thing as tomato sauce but the chocolate is scrumptious! The dollar is worth half what the pound is but what cost one dollar in the states, still costs a pound there, making it two dollars. It the second most expensive mission in the world.

Think of what kind of mission you are on.

Come Dance with the Master

VIRLEE BAKER

“Godly person that has a perfect opportunity to offer my gifts of contemplation, gaze and glimpse to listen, read, draw in and give out. Through my messages in the poems I write.”

Pines whose whispers fill the air,
Birches bow as if in prayer.
The sun comes dancing to the sky.

Benediction everywhere, the Lord's
Light leaps up: the mountain's azure crest.

It shakes and swings for above the placid breast, bewildering
the dazzled eye.

Lakes are clouds at rest, all earth is glad; butterflies and birds
and bees, waves rejoice over their bright sea.

Altar hills and singing trees, be still and listen to your heart,
and hear it beating!

For faith is born again to the world so let heaven be joyful let
the earth triumph with all that is.

The Workforce and Education

CYNDI LLOYD

When World War II brought about the working woman, it did so by removing African American women from field and house work and white American women from mostly housework. However, most white American women during the colonial era worked farms, apart from housework. The war placed women working in factories, working the jobs that men left behind for the military. Of course, when the men returned, they resumed their jobs, and women were out of work. They were told to go back home and do the things they were meant to do—take care of the house and family.

Post WWII saw a baby boom. My mom is one of many baby boomers. Her mother never worked outside the home until 1962. Mom had turned 16-years-old, and Grandma suggested they take a job at Distinctive Catering. Sometimes they worked together, on Friday and Saturday nights because mom didn't have school. Other times, Grandma worked week nights if the company had a large party and needed extra help. Grandma wanted to do this because she thought it would be fun. Grandpa made no objections; he was content with their decision.

My grandparents expected my mom to get a job after graduating high school. When mom was 18 years old, she decided to attend Brigham Young University. She did so for a year, but left when Grandpa lost his job for he had been paying for her education. Mom thought it best to leave college and get a job.

Mom liked working. With money from her job, she bought her first car. She never returned to college because she liked having money and buying her own things; in addition, it wasn't expected for women to graduate from college.

Grandma never went to college, but out of seven sisters, my great-aunt Lela attended and graduated from Drake University. Again, obtaining a higher education was seen more for men than for women.

After I was born, mom worked until I was four-years-old. In 1974, she stopped working after my brother, Scott, was born. Mom didn't work again until 1981, and only worked for two years. She returned to the workforce permanently in 1984.

As I grew up, Mom worked because our family needed the second income. While she worked full time, she also did the housework and cooked the meals. Dad cut the grass, sometimes played with us kids, bathed us and saw us to bed. There were occasions when dad did housework, for example, when mom was really sick or in the hospital. At other times, he had helped with the dishes, vacuuming, and meals. Mom told me that she didn't agree with the notion that men shouldn't do housework.

Dad never went to college. My parents weren't the best parents while I grew up. Would a college education have made them better parents? This is a tough question to answer. Having a college education may affect a person's knowledge, values, and priorities; it may change a person's perspective. My answer to this question is no. There are so many other factors that make up a good parent. I think if they would have taken parenting and communication classes, they would have been better parents, but only if they believed the principles taught and developed the necessary skills.

My mom is the oldest sibling out of four girls. Both my aunts Dee and Marilyn attended and graduated from college. Aunt Dee wanted to be a nurse, so of course she had to have a college education. My Aunt Marilyn is highly intelligent. After she graduated from high school, she wanted to keep learning; that's what spurred her to college. My youngest aunt, Karen, has Down's Syndrome. She's never been to college, but she has gone to school since she was five, and she still loves going to school!

For me, I grew up thinking that life was all about work, whether it was a job or housework. Being the oldest child with five siblings, I was like a second mother. I had house chores, I made school lunches, and I tended my siblings when our parents went out. I also babysat neighbors' children where I actually got paid.

I remember buying my school clothes at the start of seventh grade. All summer I had saved my babysitting money. From that time forth,

I bought most of my clothes with money I'd made from babysitting. When I turned 16, I was expected to get a job, again, to pay for school clothes, yearbooks, and outings with friends. More than anything, I think our family finances dictated this.

After graduating from high school, I went to work full time. College wasn't expected, and had only been a suggestion. But I didn't go to college for two reasons. First, my parents couldn't afford it and neither could I. Secondly, I was afraid—afraid of failing.

Now, almost twenty years later, I'm a full-time college student. Looking back, I realize that at age 18, I wasn't ready for college. Basically, it has taken me almost twenty years to prepare for college, but it was well worth the wait. I've learned so many other important things during this interim. I see some of the kids in my classes who just do enough work to "get by." They haven't learned the principle of "doing your best" and what it means to give 100 percent effort.

From being in the workforce since I was 16-years-old, I know what work I don't want to do and what work I enjoy doing. Fortunately for me, my occupation perspectives aren't limited as they were during Mom's era.

I also know what I want out of life and what I don't want. I don't desire to have children of my own. I have a husband who is loving and supportive. I always want dogs to be a part of my family. I also want a college education, which I am pursuing. Getting a college education is important to me—to diversify my life; furthermore it will empower me, as a woman.

Charging Toward a Better Future

JOHN BOLES

John Boles is retired. Coming from a technical field he is cultivating his long neglected right-brain. A love of writing, the visual arts and hiking help.

Good batteries are essential to reducing our dependence on oil for transportation. Batteries form the link between good mileage and a car with good drivability characteristics. For some time the image of great gas mileage was a little car with a tiny engine. Comfort and range were something to sacrifice for good mileage. Then along came a good mileage car that has four doors, can hold its own in traffic and will take you on an extended trip, the Toyota Prius hybrid. There is a growing consensus that a car designed to use battery technology more fully will get even more miles to the gallon than the current Prius.

A hybrid achieves its great mileage by combining an efficient gas engine with batteries, an electric motor/generator and management electronics (to manage everything so the driving experience is no different than for a "normal" car). The car can move by electric power alone or in partnership with the gas engine. The hybrid car doesn't plug into a socket. It charges the batteries on the road, while braking, and through the gas engine. Key to efficient operation is the battery that stores electrical energy. Weight, cost, capacity and long life are important battery parameters. The hybrid's battery is built from technology developed in the 1990's in response to California's zero emission vehicle mandate.

During the 1990's, the US government and the Big Three Auto Manufacturers jointly funded battery research to prepare for a zero emission vehicle. All the major manufacturers were working on pure electric vehicles (EV) like the General Motors' EV1. The EV1 was a significant development because it was a from-the-ground-up design. Many other manufacturers produced conversions. Toyota produced an electric-only conversion of the RAV4 to meet the requirement (the RAV4-EV). A positive outcome of this work was the further development of the nickel-metal-hydride (NiMH) battery. The NiMH was a big step up from the familiar lead-acid battery. The first EV1

cars used lead-acid batteries and had a range of 60 to 90 miles. Later in its short production life the EV1 switched to NiMH batteries and had a range of up to 140 miles.

Concurrently with the development of various EVs, however, the same companies developing EVs were working to overturn or water down the mandate. Regrettably, California backed away from the zero emission vehicle mandate. EV production stopped. Then General Motors proceeded to literally crush the EV1 cars that they had produced as if to wipe them off the face of the earth. This effort was chronicled in the film *Who Killed the Electric Car*, first shown at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival.

Toyota RAV4-EV users were able to work with Toyota to stop a similar crushing effort. In fact, there are still RAV4-EV vehicles on the road today. They are providing concrete evidence that NiMH batteries survive. As reported in *Plug-in Hybrids* (New Society Publishers, 2006), five year old leased RAV4-EVs have more than 100,000 miles on their original NiMH batteries. These batteries were estimated to last for only 75,000 miles. In a report, *Advanced Batteries for Electric-Drive Vehicles*, published in May 2004 by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), it is estimated that they will last 130,000 to 150,000 miles. But NiMH batteries are not the latest technology that has been developed in the years since the RAV4-EV introduction. NiMH battery technology has improved since the introduction of the RAV4-EV. Today's NiMH batteries will do even better.

Today as we experience high gas prices, drivers seem to be encouraged to buy gas-saving cars such as the Toyota and Honda hybrids and the Ford hybrid Escape. An inventive community of green vehicle enthusiasts is starting to push a technology to make hybrids even more fuel efficient. This new effort is known as plug-in hybrid technology. The technology promises to more than double, maybe triple, the mpg of a plain old hybrid to 100-150 mpg by using more batteries and plug-in charging. With more batteries it is possible to drive more miles on batteries alone, maybe even commute to work and back. The hybrid's battery pack is relatively modest in capacity, and the computer system keeps the batteries at a relatively high state of charge. To drive on batteries alone, more batteries are needed and the system must allow them to discharge a fair amount

in order to drive effectively on electric power only. Another essential factor is to use the power grid to charge the batteries overnight. This combination of more batteries and power grid charging allows the plug-in hybrid to drive a significant number of miles as an electric vehicle, not using any gasoline at all. Power from the grid gives the car its big boost in gas mileage.

Are the big auto manufacturers rushing to build plug-in hybrids? No. In 2007 batteries are still being perceived as a problem for Detroit and one reason they give not to build a plug-in. They express a need to wait for a new technology: Lithium-ion (Li-ion). Yes, Li-ion is a promising technology but NiMH is a proven technology and is available now.

Industry executives contend the necessary battery technology required is years away and the US government needs to invest \$100 million a year for the next five years. Sherry Boschert in her book, *Plug-in Hybrids*, tells her readers that the car companies "claim that the batteries aren't good enough or that consumers don't want them" as some of the reasons not to build plug-in hybrids. She asserts that "none of these excuses hold water." Taking the same tack as the Auto Industry in the March 2007 issue of *Car and Driver*, Csaba Csere published a column on the Volt, General Motors' plug-in concept car. He writes about emerging battery technology, "But if progress is achieved in reducing battery costs, a vehicle such as the Volt could conceivably hit the market in five or so years."

There is a determined group of people trying to get plug-ins available as soon as possible. A little background will explain why. The driver of a Prius can expect to average around 50 mpg. Compare this to the estimated 2005 model year light-duty vehicle average (passenger cars and light trucks) in the US of 21 mpg. If everyone drove vehicles that averaged 50 mpg, there would be savings of 58% in the amount of gas used nationwide. In the US, a fleet average of 21 mpg is the equivalent to 9 million barrels of oil per day. An average of 50 mpg would drop the oil consumption to 3.8 million barrels of oil per day.

In the late nineties NiMH batteries supplied the energy for the EV1 and are now supplying power for the less demanding hybrid. It stands to reason that NiMH technology would stand up to make the plug-in hybrid possible now with a battery requirement in between

the electric vehicle and the hybrid. We need to encourage the Auto Industry to step up to the plate now.

I'm a baby buffalo

JIMMIE L. FREEMAN

I like to write and read books. I like to be walked by my sister's dog.

My family and I ate. I had milk from my mom and they ate green, green grass by the cold water at the water hole. After I ate, I walked to the tall cool grass, laid down, and went into a deep baby sleep.

When I woke up, everyone was gone. I called for mom, but mom didn't answer. Neither did anyone else. Everyone was gone. I was scared, lonely, and hungry. I was very, very hot. The sun was up high. There was no shade.

There was something coming my way. It was so far away it looked like a dot. Because of the heat, it seemed like it took hours to get closer. As it got closer, the dot got bigger and bigger. There was a lot of dust around this thing still coming.

I saw two Indian boys on horseback. The boys used a rope to drag me to the water hole. They gave me water and shade. After we spent the night at the water hole, I saw only one horse and boy.

By morning, the herd was back. I was a happy, full baby buffalo again, because my mom was back. The Indian boy was home, too.

Retinal Fatigue

DAN CHRISTENSEN

I see STOP appear at the top of the blue screen,
then REW. I hear the movie rewind,
attain full speed, maintain
a high-pitched whine.
I stare and wait.

In time, STOP flashes again,
then something I hadn't seen before:
shadows of the same letters hang against the blue
a few seconds more.

River Wisdom

MELISSA HELQUIST

Labyrinth Canyon on the Green River. October 2006.

Before the Green River meets the Colorado, it is the Green that is the true river. This is the river that Powell explored. This is the river that seven friends and two dogs decide to paddle. We are not as brave as Powell, not as daring, not explorers at all. We want to drink beer and build campfires and get sunburned. So we choose Labyrinth Canyon, a 68-mile stretch of flat, easy water. We begin at the town of Green River, a stretch of road and restaurants that most people pass by. We will follow the river to Mineral Bottom, a parking lot/ launch point at the end of a steep, twisting, rocky dirt road. We could follow the river another fifty-two miles through Stillwater Canyon, but we don't want to risk the rapids lurking at the confluence with the Colorado. We are lazy paddlers.

It never rains in the desert. Unless it does.

October is a good time to visit the desert. The monsoon season has passed. Sun is abundant, but not too fierce. A float down the Green River in October means shorts and sunscreen and coolers full of cold beer. The forecast calls for rain, but we all assure ourselves that it doesn't really rain in the desert. We bring our rain jackets, but don't trade the beer for hot chocolate.

On the morning of our departure, a woman at a local store tells us that it's supposed to rain three inches that day. Three inches? Clearly the woman doesn't know what we know: that it doesn't rain in the desert.

Unless it does. And then it rains with abandon and ferocity. It rains for days, never stopping. Rivers form and surge and disappear. Banks are consumed and islands buried. Dry canyon walls break open with roaring waterfalls so loud they can wake you up in the middle of the night, waterfalls that disappear come morning. Water so forceful you can understand how solid earth can give way to canyons and coves and crevices. When god divided the water from the land, I think the water decided to fight back.

A river will flow where it will.

Before our launch, our preparedness is checked doggedly by an over-eager ranger. There are three parties waiting to go and he moves back and forth among all of us, delaying everyone's departure. Each piece of equipment on the list launches a story about changes in regulations, failures to comply, and accompanying disasters. He is a man continually thwarted by gear rental companies, state regulators, and paddlers. He scolds us for our failure to comply with several regulations, telling us he could keep us on the shore. He declares that the bailing sponges we've brought will be insufficient and makes one member of our party dig in the garbage can to find a milk jug that we can convert into a more proper bailing device. He seems convinced that the milk jug will protect us from whatever the river might bring. Of course, it will only be the sponges that do any good against the mud and water that will soon fill up the bottoms of our canoes.

As the river widens and deepens, it becomes clear that the predicted three inches of rainfall was fairly accurate. After our first soggy night, one member of the party suggests paddling back—upstream. He is also convinced that somewhere downriver is a ranch where they film porn. If we can't paddle back upstream, then he figures we can at least find shelter (and who knows what other comforts).

But the river takes us where it wants to, downstream, alongside high canyon walls, through tight turns and long meandering bends. When the sky and river calm, we pull our paddles into the canoes and let the current take us. We turn from bow to stern, floating more sideways than straight, but we keep moving forward, down the river.

Later, when we arrive at Mineral Bottom, the resident ranger will come to meet us. He is opposite from the man who bid us farewell—shirtless, long-haired, barefooted, a joint dangling from his bottom lip. He will tell us about the impact of the rain, about how parts of the road leading out of Mineral Bottom had to be rebuilt, how a group of paddlers were stuck for two days waiting for a passable road. The wheels of parked vehicles will have been buried in mud to the top rims. A two-foot wide gully has been cut around the ranger's mobile home and truck. He won't be driving out for a while. But he will seem unsurprised, unimpressed. He's been around long enough to know what the river can do, how water can transform a landscape. He knows it's not about bailers or futile attempts to paddle upstream. He

knows the water will take you where it wants.

A blue heron may not be a good omen, but plastic funeral flowers could be.

In the first hours of our trip, the sky is gray, but not yet hosting a deluge; we see a blue heron on the shoreline. I tell everyone that a blue heron is a good omen. "Is it?" someone asks. It is not long before the rain starts to fall and when it does it refuses to stop. We see another heron. "Are you sure those are good omens?"

On our second day of rain-soaked travel, when the river has risen more than four feet, churning into a murky, trash-filled mess we retrieve a bouquet of pink plastic flowers that have clearly been dislodged from a gravesite. The discovery gives us a bit of pause about what else might be in the river. We keep the flowers, though, placing them decoratively in the bow of a canoe. When we arrive at camp (a high and wide stretch of tree-covered land) we plant the flowers on the shore. Moments after we arrive at camp, the rain stops and the sun demands some attention. Just before dinner, it rains again and rains fiercely all night.

Paddling the next day we meet others who had to abandon camp in the middle of the night because the river was steadily washing away their solid ground or who slept underneath a waterfall suddenly formed atop the high canyon walls. We all agree that our campsite was a very lucky find.

The idyllic can be found in unexpected circumstances

By all accounts the float through Labyrinth Canyon is supposed to be an idyll. Even John Wesley Powell, in his adventures on the Green and Colorado Rivers, found a moment of peace in the quiet waters of Labyrinth Canyon: "There is an exquisite charm in our ride today down this beautiful canyon. It gradually grows deeper with every mile of travel; the walls are symmetrically curved and grandly arched, of a beautiful color, and reflected in the quiet waters....We are all in fine spirits and feel very gay, and the badinage of the men is echoed from wall to wall."

Even though our canoes stay entirely upright, our encounter with Labyrinth Canyon is wet. The waters are rarely quiet. We find short reprieves from the rain: enough dry sky to build a fire, eat a meal;

a tiny strip of land on which we can eat our lunch and do heart-pumping, cold-guarding jumping jacks; a splinter of sunlight. But most of the trip is spent trying to stay a little bit dry, a little bit warm, a little bit happy. On our third day, the near-constant rain finally stops; the flow of the river begins to slow and debris collects along the shore instead of pelting by us. We can finally enjoy the trip, lean back, shake off some of the water and mud, drink some of our abundant beer supply. We paddle through the Bowknot Bend, aiming for Horseshoe Canyon to set up camp. Horseshoe Canyon has a river running out of it, making the beach at the confluence a swath of quicksand. We take a break to run through the sand—never stopping for too long lest we sink into the depths—but there will be no camping here. We keep paddling on, looking for a place to end our day. The beaches have disappeared; we think there might be flat stretches of land against the cliff walls, but these hypothetical spots are hidden by layers of impenetrable brush. We pass a small strip of island, but it is already inhabited and we think perhaps it is an unwise location given the circumstances of previous days. We have no choice but to keep paddling. The sun sets, the air is chilly. We are close to our take out, but not close enough to make it before dark. We abandon hope of finding our campsite and decide to keep paddling for Mineral Bottom, the take out point (we will later realize that we paddled exactly one half of our trip miles in one day). This means paddling in the dark and the cold with only headlamps to guide us. I am grumpy—hating the cold and the dark and wondering if we'll paddle straight past Mineral Bottom.

As we paddle forward longing for a place to stop and rest, moonlight starts to shimmer from the east walls of the canyon. A nearly-full moon rises up, hanging in the cleft of a side canyon. The river is quiet and black. We have to watch out for logs floating past us, but they hardly seem a threat. We are quiet and slightly desperate, but it seems as though we have finally found the exquisite charm of the canyon. With the moonlight, we can see the curves and arches of the canyon reflected in the water. And when we reach Mineral Bottom, we are suddenly in fine spirits, and just like Powell's men, our badinage echoes from wall to wall.

Longing

VIRLEE BAKER

Godly person that has a perfect opportunity to offer my gifts of contemplation, gaze and glimpse to listen, read, draw in and give out. Through my messages in the poems I write.

I long to gaze upon the beautiful eyes of the Lord, and that someday I will dwell in His house.
 To look into each child's face in hope to find a divine master piece transform into God words.
 Through the world the frosty grass shows signs of things to change, as the robins carol with the redwing flutes warble, along with the bluebirds, sparrow the songs beginning, each melody delight and thrills out.
 Then there are days when a gaze is more like a glimpse of a back turned.
 As each memory drifts thought times.
 And sound of foot steps retreats: whiff of fragrant memory.
 Can you hear my echoes of laughter return from lost time?
 Pitter-patter of rain, giving messages to the new hope that is filled with promises from heaven, as clouds of angel wings dispersing the wake of a vessel gone out of sight, rainbow flame for freedom from sight a conversation stopped mid-sentence sounds of silence falls.
 Whether a gaze or a glimpse
 God's love speaks out through the silence falling, with colors through a rainbow.
 He still comes as King, seeking, knocking. Carrying the longing to prayer.

