

The Vault

An Anthology of Student Writing

Presented by the Writing Program of
Sullivan County Community College

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PREFACE

The Vault

Overview: The Writing Program publishes an anthology of student writing each school year. The anthology – called *The Vault* – showcases excellent writing created in our courses, offers models for current students, and creates a potential teaching tool for instructors. The writings come from a combination of Writing Program courses (Developmental English, Composition I, Composition II) and Creative Writing courses. The Editorial Committee selects the pieces for publication.

Procedures: Instructors select worthy essays, poems, or stories from their classes and, with the permission of the student, submit them for consideration to the Editorial Committee. Instructors must note that offering or refusing to offer submissions will not affect a student's grade in a course. Students and instructors should do the following if they wish to submit a piece:

- Instructors should select worthy pieces of writing and ask students to make any revisions that may be necessary prior to submission
- Students must fill out a Permission Form
- Students should give the instructor an electronic copy of the final draft of the writing and, if available, an earlier draft (preferably first) of the writing

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CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

DEN 1000 Basic English

This course is designed for students who need work in the basic reading and writing skills. This course will review such writing skills as grammar, mechanics, spelling, sentence structure, paragraph development, and outlining; and such reading skills as comprehension and vocabulary. This course is required of students who do not demonstrate the minimum proficiency established for entrance into ENG 1001. This course may not be used to satisfy the English requirement at this college.

ENG 1001 English Composition I

This is a writing-intensive course in which students will draft and revise college-level essays. Students will study the conventions of academic prose, examine various methods of organization and development, and learn research skills.

ENG 2004 Creative Writing

A basic introduction to creative writing. Students will write poems, stories or creative nonfiction that will serve as the basis for classroom discussion and for conferences with the instructor. Prerequisite: ENG 1001.

ENG 2005 English Composition II

This course emphasizes analytical skills in both writing and reading. Students will write analytical and argumentative essays and a research paper.

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Karimah R. Abdussalam

Catherine & Heathcliff Forever

What does love mean? The American Heritage Dictionary defines love as "a deep, tender, ineffable feeling of affection and solicitude toward a person, such as that arising from kinship, recognition of attractive qualities, or a sense of underlying oneness." With that I ask: have you ever loved someone? Of course you have. But have you ever loved someone so deeply and completely that you both have essentially captured each other's souls? Loved someone so deeply that your soul is his or her soul?

This is the everlasting love of Heathcliff and Catherine in Emily Bronte's novel Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff and Catherine share an extremely complex, strong, and perpetual love for one another. What's unique about their relationship is that it does not just fall in the category of romantic feelings. There exists an incestuous type of relationship between the two because Heathcliff was brought up in the house as one of the children; Mr. Earnshaw, Catherine's father, raised him like his own. For years they lived together as foster siblings and grew into adults only to be smitten with one another.

The two are so similar; they both are wicked and are pleased when they upset people or torture them. They feed off of others' discomfort. Catherine found it to be comical when she humiliated Isabella in front of Heathcliff. Her action was uncalled for yet Catherine took great pride in doing it as well. Heathcliff treated Isabella wrongfully by marrying her to abuse her emotionally, verbally, and physically. To him it was funny because she knew what she was getting into yet she thought he was a romantic. Heathcliff and Catherine, both, were despised by their family. They could completely love each other without having to show false faces, i.e. they loved each other for who they were.

Heathcliff and Catherine harbor these feelings for a long time. When the two are young teenagers, Heathcliff tells Catherine that he takes notice of the evenings they spent together as well as those spent with the Lintons, then he points out that most of her evenings are spent with the latter. He says, "The crosses are for the evenings you have spent with the Lintons, the dots for those spent with me... I've marked everyday... To show that I do take notice" (Bronte 50). This is a very subtle way of him showing, to Catherine, that he has a likeness to her beyond just brother and sister. Although the two never outright confess to each other in the earlier part of their lives how they feel about one another, the emotion is present. Catherine confides in Nelly saying that her "...love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath" (Bronte 50). Then she goes on to say, which is even stronger, "Nelly, I am Heathcliff" (Bronte 60). And even before this incident, Heathcliff also admitted to

Nelly, in his own discreet way, his sentiment toward his dear friend.

Even after Heathcliff went away and came back, the love was still there despite the detail of Catherine's marriage to Edgar. In fact, it would be quite logical to say that their love for each other grew immensely at the time of Heathcliff's absence.

One aspect that is a driving force of this very intense relationship, or union of souls, is that it lacks physical consummation. The joining of the body in this very corporeal, passionate embrace tends to relieve sexual tension on both parties. If a couple is void of bonding by sexual means then they must link in other ways, as in emotionally and/or spiritually.

Emily Bronte created a connection between Catherine and her valued companion that would never occur in reality. The relationship between the two is unnatural in the sense that it couldn't fully exist. This kind of love can destroy a person: it would drive someone insane and throw them out of proportion with their life and their love. In fact this was one of the reasons Catherine died, heartache. Heathcliff tells Catherine this, before she dies, on her deathbed. He says, "Why did you betray your own heart, Cathy? ... You deserve this. You killed yourself" (Bronte 119). Then Catherine even admits it, "If I've done wrong, I'm dying for it" (Bronte 119). This intense feeling is so powerful that it is mythical. It subsists in a plane many levels above 'love' as we know it.

A fictional yet wonderful invention of love was the coming together in the here after. Heathcliff and Catherine weren't able to fulfill their destiny while they were both alive, but this didn't stop them. Another unreal factor is that upon Catherine's death Heathcliff wanted Catherine's presence any way he could get it so he was contented to have her with him as a ghost. He says:

Catherine Earnshaw you may not rest as long as I am living! [...] – haunt me then! Be with me always - take any form. [...] I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!
(Bronte 124)

He would rather have her in some form or other than not to have her at all. This is ultimate love.

Wuthering Heights can be compared immeasurably with that of a Shakespeare tragedy. They both describe catastrophe. The family members connected to Heathcliff and Catherine were all, in a sense, cursed because their lives at some point in time went up in flames. Everyone is ruined since Heathcliff and Catherine were insolvent due to their lack of coming together as soul mates or lovers. Only after Heathcliff and Catherine found each other, in the afterlife, were the survivors of the family, Cathy and Hareton, able to come out of the storm, and go on with their lives.

The novel and the connection between our two main characters is a magnificent creation although the reader may perhaps feel frustration at the absence of Heathcliff

and Catherine affirming to each other the forceful passion that they possessed for one another. However, the reader may also find, upon further contemplation, that if this was to be done there would be no substance to effectively fill the pages with great storytelling. In light of this, maybe Emily Bronte could have been more specific with the coming together of the two unphysical lovers in the eternal life. Perhaps they could have shared an intense dialogue where, once and for all, they verbally admit and scold each other about mutual feelings. This action would have made their ineffable feeling, their love, more realistic but would have down played the strength of their profound oneness.

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Anonymous

Choosing Life

"Knowing is not enough. Risk knowledge with action and then you will know whether it is genuine, pretension or just information."

Sri Gurudev Chitrabhanu

It's getting dark now, and I smell the rain in the air as I strive to open the office door and get to the car before the tears start falling. The vet sees my struggle and runs to hold the door for me while I hoist your weight up higher. He avoids looking me in the eyes, and I sense how helpless he feels in a profession dedicated to curing illness; yet, appearing so deficient in the face of inevitable death. His best way of caring for you is to shorten your life, my dear, beautiful friend—to end your suffering. I guess I had known when you first started slowing down that I would have to make this decision one day, but I'm not ready to choose yet. We need to get home and out of this rain.

It is a long drive home, with traffic backed up in the pouring rain as I hear you panting in the back. You never did like the car much, for I'm sure you thought it was much better just to run. I allow my eyes to pass over your wasting body. How could such a magnificent, noble athlete be reduced to this state? I remember all the long runs we took together through the crisp early mornings, the thrill of feeling the power and speed in your body making your eyes sparkle and your tongue hang out in a lopsided grin. Now you lie in the back of my car with rear legs paralyzed, heart and kidneys failing, and not much time left. I've really avoided looking at your state properly until now. I've been so insulated from illness and death, with nursing homes and hospitals whisking away all those who could have given me the experience needed to help me come to terms with this business of dying. I feel so inadequate to be your only source of comfort and care as you near your end. How can I watch you suffer? How can I ease your pain? How will I ever be able to let you go? Maybe I should have let the vet give you the needle today. Am I being selfish or, worse, unkind to do otherwise?

An angry horn blares at me. The lights have been green for three seconds now! "Woof, woof!" you bark in response, protecting me from the impatient driver. What is death, I wonder? Is it a time when our thoughts and feelings, our personality and presence simply fade away—gone from the world and never to return? Or, is it a time when we leave our body and move on to a new state and a new life (Borgia)? I've watched every step of your slow physical demise but have seen no sign of your spirit fading. Strangely, as your body weakens, something inside you seems to be growing in strength. An intense passion and devotion to life seems to be burning within; a force you are using to stay with me,

even in your weak and helpless state. Could this be the work of your soul I am experiencing—the essence of you that will live on when you leave this world (Fortune)? How I wish that you could speak and comfort me with the answers to these questions. I wonder if you know what went on today at the vet and the resulting thoughts that are running through my head. What would you think to know I am considering shortening the last of our precious moments together?

We're home now and the porch light welcomes us. Placing you on your bed I feel you rest your head lightly on my shoulder—a gesture of love and concern for me. I look into your soft, brown eyes for the first time since I accepted you were going. You hold my gaze, your love and understanding pouring into me. Somehow you know what I have been going through, and the decisions I have had to face. Your look tells me you will love me through whatever decision I make, even if I make a mistake. How wonderful it is to be accepted in my confused, crippled, and inexperienced state. I hug your body closely and place my forehead against yours, feeling your soft tongue lightly licking the tip of my nose. Then your nose nudges my hand and I feel a nudging in my mind—something I need to remember.

There is a conversation I had, months ago, with a stranger at the gas station. Somehow we had started talking about your deterioration, and she had given me many tips on how to care for you in the final days—methods not commonly known by traditional vets because of the usual push for euthanasia. She said she had cared for over one hundred creatures through their deaths and had never once put an animal to sleep—not because she was heartlessly just letting them suffer, but because she trusted in the value of every moment of life and had consequently learned ways to ease the discomforts of terminal illness. At the time I had not really listened as denial prevented me from seeing your upcoming death. Now, however, I struggle to remember this knowledge. I sense that it will offer me the choice I am looking for—a path that will prevent me from just standing back and helplessly watching you die. I realize that it is this feeling of helplessness that drove me to the vet today with the hope that there was some way I could participate in your death in a supportive and loving way. The vet just an hour ago could not give me the answer I desired, but now I start to feel a sense of freedom as I delve into my memory, a sense that I can leave the choice of euthanasia behind.

I remember the stranger had mentioned that chamomile—a strong tea made of the dried flowers—could be sweetened with honey and syringed into your mouth on a regular basis. This, she had said, was one of her main means of easing pain and discomfort for the dying—especially the digestive distress that often accompanies the failing system. She told me of this herb's ability to calm and promote sleep (Lust 145) even in some of the most difficult cases, and, acting also as a

tonic, it would. Be nutritive for the creature who is refusing to eat (De Bairacli Levy). In the opinion of alternative medical professionals, it is better to ease the pain without further aggravating the liver, as happens with conventional painkillers (Norminton). She said conventional pain killers should be considered only as a last resort; when used as such, these powerful medicines do have a role (Norminton). It is necessary to consult an experienced vet even with something as simple as aspirin. There are some pain killers that could be lethal to dogs and cats—such as Ibuprofen and Tylenol—and the tranquilizers and narcotics that can be used effectively with household pets need to be given in the minimum required dose with specific instructions from a professional (Glick). I look down at you lying on your doggie bed lovingly waiting for my next move. I pour boiling water over the healing herb and feel my sense of helplessness lifting as its calming smell blends with the inner voice of memory.

The stranger had gone on to say that as a creature is dying, especially if they have stopped eating, there seems to be a push to clean out all the toxins in the system. Creatures naturally fast when they are ill so as to save the energy normally used in digestion for the process of fighting the illness (De Bairacli Levy). It is the job of the blood stream to carry the waste products to their destinations, the job of the liver to break down toxic substances and prepare them for excretion, and the job of the kidneys to filter out and excrete in the urine many of these waste products (Martini). All of these functions, and in fact nearly every function of the body, relies on the life-giving properties of water (Batmanghelidj). As the systems fail upon nearing death—especially the functions of the kidneys—dehydration occurs and wastes build up in the system. Dehydration can cause a myriad of problems on its own, one of them being increasing pain levels (Batmanghelidj). Providing adequate fluid, subcutaneously if necessary, helps ease a lot of these problems—lowering pain levels and decreasing discomfort in many areas of the body. Profound effects in pain relief have been observed simply from the administration of fluids.

I had asked the stranger how to check for dehydration, and as the answer runs through my head I walk over and pinch the skin around the back of your neck, lifting it up away from your body. When I let go, it does not spring back to its normal position but stays there a while before slowly settling down. A sure sign of dehydration I had been told (Glick). I remember the vet, at an earlier date, teaching me how to administer fluids under the skin and I immediately get the kit. It is an IV bag with fluid inside that contains all the appropriate electrolytes. I take the lid off the needle, hang the bag up high so that gravity will pull the fluid into your body, and push the needle under the loose skin at the back of your neck. I set it, as I had been shown, so the fluid runs slowly and make a note of the amount I am aiming for.

You look up at me now with a long look of gratitude before your head falls back onto the bed. It has been a hard day for both of us, and despite the undying spirit that shines in your eyes, I sense the great exhaustion that has seized hold of your body.

I watch as the fluid drips down the tube, and I wonder if I imagine the relaxation I see softening your muscles. I too feel at ease as I delve again into the wisdom of the kindly stranger. She had noted that keeping a creature warm and providing a quiet, safe place to rest would go a long way in easing tension. I see this piece of information as common sense, but somehow know I would overlook it if I were not reminded. I remember my own experience of easing muscle cramps and nerve pain with a simple hot water bottle and upon return from dimming the lights and placing a soft blanket over you, I fill the bottle with hot water, ready for use. The stranger had concluded our meeting by mentioning the importance of a gentle, loving touch as a means of comfort. She had seen great pain tamed by loving hugs and pats! A particularly effective method is stroking very gently and lightly from the top of the head to the base of the tail—one hand on each side of the spine. It somehow seems to quiet down the nervous system and is especially effective at promoting sleep. The importance of quieting myself first was indicated, as well as concentrating on slowing my breathing and thinking about how much I love you as my hands gently stroke. Is it the love coming through my hands that will quiet your pain and ease fear, I wonder, or some physiological process? My memory stops. A change in your condition is pulling me back into the present.

I kneel down beside you and place my hand on your noble head. Your breathing has slowed right down now and I sense a great peace around you. It shows as relaxation first, in your whole body—like every muscle and nerve has finally succumbed to a deep tiredness and is ready for sleep. More than that, though, there is a feeling in the air, like the kind I have felt upon completion of what had seemed an impossible task. It is not the elation or excitement of reaching a goal, but the calm confidence and acceptance that comes from knowing the job is finished and all is well. This feeling seems to emanate from you and somehow enters my own heart. I too relax as I gently stroke your head, knowing that the time of transition has come. I am not afraid like I thought I would be. Your own tranquil acceptance and lack of fear is overriding any misgivings I may have had. I say a prayer as I feel the contractions in your body—the arching of your back, the muscles expelling the last of the excretory wastes (Hampton). The contractions go on for a while, but I gently keep my hands on you while praying continuously, knowing that this is your final struggle to let go of the body. A deep intake of breath is expelled in a gentle sigh, your body falls to rest on the bed, and it is over (Hampton).

I look down on your body, my beautiful friend, in its final pose of relaxation and harmony. I do not feel alone, though. I know you are no longer there before me. You seem to be nudging my mind still, and I feel your presence strong around me. Somehow I know this experience was your gift to me. You brought me with you to the arms of death, dispelling my fear and showing me the peace that is possible in these precious moments. We were blessed today with the ability to follow the path of a natural death. I place a last kiss on your soft, courageous face and walk out into the night air, giving thanks to the stranger whose trust in life and resulting knowledge made this choice possible. The rain has stopped now. The air is clear and I can feel the light of the stars filtering down on me through the darkness.

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Finding Peace

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in analyzing new landscapes, but having new eyes."

Marcel Proust

I am a caterpillar, grounded and dependent on the world around me for nourishment as I struggle in my attempts to become a butterfly, to find the color and light that will lift me free of the darkness of 9/11. Six years ago I was violated by this event, so brutal in its assault that it stopped me short in my tracks. My whole being was left seemingly incapable of processing a world where violence and hate can destroy life as if it were of no value. Only now can I look back on the horror of September 11, 2001, and allow its details to penetrate past my internal shock and help me proceed with the

process of growth that I long for. I must turn to the world around me for guidance and so I use my caterpillar instincts and start chewing through a leaf of the tree of knowledge and memory, hungry for the vital sustenance that will move me forward.

I was in the dentist's chair at 8.45am when the first airplane struck. I had been thinking about my son's upcoming first birthday, allowing his joy and innocence to take my mind off the feel of the drill penetrating my decaying tooth. A dental nurse rushed in, a glazed look on her face, announcing fragmented details of a terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, a symbol of America's wealth and prosperity. Later I would learn it was an American Airline Flight 11, which had been hijacked during its flight from Boston and crashed into Tower One, killing the hijackers and passengers instantly. But right then it was the shock that entered my mind, not the details. The innocence of my son was replaced with a stuck, locked-in feeling and, as the dentist finished up, I entered into a world of confusion and overload. I couldn't comprehend what was happening. I did not want to face violence and aggression so close to the home that was my place of freedom and safety.

Eighteen minutes later, United Airlines Flight 175 hit Tower Two. By 10:30 am both towers had collapsed and American Airlines Flight 11 had crashed into the Pentagon. At 10:48 am police confirmed that United Flight 93, thwarted in its attempt to reach the White House, had crashed in Pennsylvania (Wheeler). I chew over these details now and I find not only the suicides of nineteen terrorists and the nearly three thousand lives they took with them, but also the grieving hearts of millions (Wheeler). Not just family members, but the whole world feels the impact of such a loss. It is the whole world, including myself, that must choose how to respond, how to pick up the pieces and carry on after an example of pure aggression has forced its way into our consciousness. I turn to the many who responded immediately while I lay locked in shock. I study them now to learn how I, though six years later, may still be able to respond in a way that has a positive effect on the trauma of this event.

Mayor Giuliani worked nonstop for the next thirty six hours, mobilizing the city of New York into action when it had been stopped dead. Police officers, firefighters, medical personnel and other volunteers came from miles around to lend their strength, their courage, and their knowledge. Thousands of people around the country donated blood in their attempt to give something of value and use, Money came piling in to be used to help rebuild the city and the grieving families (Wheeler). Prayers and solace from around the world poured in, with spontaneous memorials and moments of silence. Hundreds of leaders came together as one to voice their sorrow and support. Some of these leaders were: Palestinian Leader Yassir Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri,

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Pope John Paul II, representatives from Russia, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries, Syria, Cuba, Pakistan, and Libya. As well as offering solace for the grief felt by so many, they all criticized the attacks, and expressed a need to fight against terrorism, against the forces of darkness. In response that day, President Bush promised the United States that they would find and punish those people who instigated the attacks (Wheeler). A war was started against terrorism. This would be a different type of war, however. "This war had no border, no army and no government. The only thing that mobilized it was hatred" (Wheeler).

I think about this force of hatred that drove nineteen people to destroy their own lives, bringing so many others with them. I find myself feeling afraid of a force strong enough to evade the defenses of the free world and bring down America's greatest symbol of wealth and power. I do not like this fear. I do not like the helplessness I feel, to think there may be nothing I can do to protect myself in this newer and darker world and that I may have only the wisdom of our leaders and the military to fight this fear for me. I remember when I walked out of the dentist's office that day a lady walked in, muttering under her breath, "It's all those bloody immigrants we're letting in." I recall keeping my mouth shut, afraid to allow my accent to give away my own immigrant status. Although I am not from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or the United Arab Emirates, as were the terrorists, my way of thinking and being is different. I wondered if somehow, in the knee jerk response of seeing an outsider as a threat, I would also become a target of fear as have many Muslims and people of Arabic heritage following the attack (Wheeler). I realize it is not just the terrorists who are feeling hate now. It is in some of those around me. As I continue to feel oppressed by the terror of possible further violation, I, too, may use hate to push away that which threatens my safety.

On October 12, 2001, President Bush is quoted as saying, "How do I respond when I see that in some Islamic countries there is vitriolic hatred for America? I tell you how I respond: I'm amazed. I just can't believe it because I know how good we are" (Ali). It would be easy for me to think like this, too. There is so much good here in America. The longer I stay here the more I see it, hidden beneath all the judgment that so often comes this way. However, George Will suggests we look at the world, and this war of aggression not just with a "happy eye," but with a rational perspective (Will). I therefore also listen to Tariq Ali, who describes the desperation and hatred in the parts of the world that have turned against America, as coming from the great power and wealth that resides here (Ali). We live comfortably, but elsewhere billions of undernourished people are oppressed by poverty, and seven million children die each year as a consequence of the debt owed by the

countries in which they live (Ali). I wonder if the violent aggression that is coming from the terrorists to our doorsteps is the result of a terror that they feel themselves, the terror of being oppressed by poverty and circumstance. Is the fear and helplessness I feel as result of the 9/11 attack similar to the feelings of oppression that the terrorists feel? I reflect on the bitterness, hatred, and despair James Baldwin describes feeling as a Black man enduring the injustices of the White world. He remembers vividly an occasion he let this hatred overwhelm him, and had the desire to crush the White faces that were crushing him (Baldwin). If I continue to hold onto these feelings of fear and oppression as my only response to the violence of terrorists, will the resulting hatred eventually lead to a similar desire?

Hatred separates us from each other and allows us to lay blame on and kill those who we feel are oppressing us. It breeds insecurity, aggressiveness, jealousy, envy, and suspicion. It produces feelings of misunderstanding, bad-temper, and anger toward one's fellow man (Chancellor). I do not want to go down this path. I must find another way of acknowledging the terror of 9/11. I turn away from the fear, hatred and helplessness that I sense is locking me in the shock of this event to new sources of inspiration, new nourishment that will move me forward and help me see and feel in a different, more compassionate way.

Barbara Ascher, in a study of compassion, suggests that it is the increasing presence of the needy in our midst which will eventually give rise to compassion, for the helplessness and raw humanity within us all (Ascher). Is the increasing presence of aggression in the hands of not just the terrorists, but the many other violent perpetrators in society, a hidden cry for compassion? I struggle here. I know not where to look to enable compassion to flow for the violence which creates so much chaos in this world. Only in the poetic wisdom of Kahlil Gibran am I given a clue:

Oftentimes have I heard you speak of one who commits a wrong as though he were not one of you, but a stranger unto you and an intruder upon your world.

But I say that even as the holy and the righteous cannot rise beyond the highest which is in each one of you,

So the wicked and the weak cannot fall lower than the lowest which is in you also. (Gibran)

Are some of my own emotions and behaviors contributing to the violence of the world? I think of all the words and actions in my life that have stemmed from anger and judgment. My role as a mother is my greatest challenge. To choose patience and understanding to effectively discipline, rather than anger and punishment, is overwhelmingly difficult at times. I do not want to chew this leaf. It is hard to look at myself close-up, rather than

at others. However, I have chosen this path, so I gather my courage and creep forward.

In his autobiography, Gandhi describes the pursuit of self-control as one of the hardest struggles he ever undertook. (Gandhi). I see the great difficulty our leaders and military are having in fighting this war on terrorism, and I find myself in them, struggling to fight my undesirable behavior. How do I tackle this momentous task of facing and controlling myself? How can I possibly feel compassion and forgiveness for the many times I have failed to do so effectively in the past? I turn to my experience as a mother. I remember watching my two beautiful boys as they first started moving away from babyhood, how many times they fell down during their attempts to learn how to walk. Yet now they run and climb and play with full control over the movement of their growing bodies! Am I, too, going through this process of falling down in my attempt to learn how to control not just my basic physical movements, but my emotions, thoughts, and resulting behaviors? Will I, through this process of falling down, learn how to walk?

I ponder now on warriorship, described by Chogyam Trungpa as the ability to master the challenges of life - on and off the battlefield - through gentleness, courage and self-knowledge. He states that in order to experience fearlessness (going beyond fear) and its product of tenderness, it is necessary to first endure fear. Only through this endurance will we gain the knowledge necessary to understand its workings and rise above it (Trungpa). I stop here a while. This leaf is juicy and sweet. I find here a chance for compassion - for the terrorists, myself, and the many others locked into ways of being that go against their true humanity. I find here the trust that fear, aggression, and negative behaviors are steps on the pathway to peace, not an indication that darkness has taken over. The cocoon is spinning now and I feel snug inside as I absorb this new nourishment, knowing it is the answer I had been looking for on my quest for understanding. With the help of the many others who have studied 9/11, those who have entered my life with their understanding of compassion, and the beauty of the children who continue to bless my life, I have been led to a place inside where I am changing into someone new, a butterfly: fragile and courageous, colorful and light, bursting with the beauty and fragrance of life once again.

From this day forth, in memory of those lost in the trauma of 9/11 and all those lost in the violence of war, I will remember the butterfly. I will take time to sit quietly and remind myself how important it is not just to strive to be a better person, but to have compassion for the times it seems that I have failed. I will trust in my growing ability to endure, understand, and overcome my fears and my negative behaviors. I will send thanks to the many whose words and actions led me to find this inner peace, including the terrorists who burst into my consciousness on September 11, 2001. As I think about these terrorists

and all others locked into violence and hateful ways, I will feel compassion. I know that they, too, are on the pathway to peace; they, too, are caterpillars on their way to becoming butterflies.

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Felicia Banuchi

Write to Heal

I was petrified at the sight of my brother lying on the bed. His arms were pinned down with needles, his eyes were darkened and sucked in, his face was pale, and his lips had no color to them. His body was nothing but bones, and you could tell he was really weak. My heart dropped to my stomach. My mind became filled so many with questions and concerns that if I was to speak my mind, it would have all poured out as gibberish. Brandon (my brother) had cancer, and that put my family in a terrible condition. My writing was the only thing that I could turn to at the time to help me relieve the pain that I held within. As I shared my writing and poetry with my brother, I could tell he really loved it. If I could teach him to write as well then maybe, just maybe, writing could be the cure for his suffering.

Day by day, as I returned to the hospital with more and more poems and writing, my brother kept getting stronger, and so did my writing. I believed that my writing was helping my little brother stay alive and fight this life-threatening disease. My brother made me want to continue writing and not stop until he was healed. Though my brother was only four at the time, I was teaching him to write and express himself. I would always ask him how and what he felt when the doctors injected him with a needle or when he went through surgeries.

Having someone sit by his side and ask him these questions to write down his answers on paper got him to release any insecure thoughts he may have had. This helped him release all the tears within that he kept inside from everyone; he showed that he was strong. This was my first strategy to help my brother get better. I knew that writing down my feelings helped me to get through the toughest times. Teaching him to write down his feelings by first giving him things to talk about would help him as well. As I helped teach Brandon how to write I was able to help him cure himself with his writing and not just mine. A couple of months later my brother's cancer miraculously disappeared. He was back to being a healthy, growing boy. Writing is no different than therapy. The connection of writing to heal is simply helping people heal from stresses and traumas through writing. Writing down your emotions is enough to relieve stress and improve your health.

I did not stop there from writing. I strongly believed that I had something to do with my brother's recovery. I wanted to help others as well. I began working in the same hospital that my brother stayed, teaching young children to write. Each child was very ill and/or diagnosed with a disease. "Now, new research suggests expressive writing may also offer physical benefits to people battling terminal or life-threatening disease" (Murray). This statement clearly states that writing can help battle

diseases. I believe that the key to writing effectiveness is in the way people use it to interpret their experiences, right down to the words they choose. Releasing emotions through your fingers and on to paper improves health. Teaching people to write is a step to getting them to come into a comfort zone and jump into another step to writing down how they felt.

The children's glowing eyes and slow recovery gave me encouragement to continue to take those long rides on the subway from my school down in Wall Street to 168 Street Washington Heights. I would read poems and stories that I wrote about them. My writing helped give them hope that there are miracles. Sometimes I would go home at twelve in the morning just to spend more time with the kids because they never wanted me to go home. As I continually returned to the hospital I had got in so close to them. Before I went to bed I would pray, asking god to help me heal these children.

Through reading Vive Griffith's books I learned that giving an individual a poem or writing that represented them would help them to feel comfortable and relaxed. I remember one day in late February when I heard from a mom that her daughter (Sapphire), who was only five at the time, was not getting any better.

"My daughter is getting weaker and weaker. I don't know what to do. I feel as if I want to kill myself just to be in the other end of that gate, to take her in and take care of her." She told me as tears flowed down her eyes.

I held my tears back and tried to comfort the mother. Her daughter was dying with cancer in the blood. That night I went out and brought a frame home with clouds and angels that surrounded the whole frame. I looked at the frame but had no idea what to do with it. I thought of putting a picture in it of her but I had other plans that night. I lay down on my bed and closed my eyes. I dreamed about heaven and it gave me the picture that I needed. I woke up and painted my vision with words in a poem. I placed it into the frame and the next day I handed it to Sapphire. I sat down with her and read it. I explained that the poem was about a beautiful it peaceful place where you can do and be anything. She loved it and held it tight to her heart.

When I would visit her room her mother would tell me that her daughter made her read it to her as a bedtime story before she closed her eyes. Griffith's books helped explain the internal emotions and reassurance, meaning that Sapphire was sad about what was going on with her. The poem helped reassure her that everything was going to be okay and that she has nothing to worry about. The meaning of internal emotions refers to the changing of emotions before and after the poem was given to her. This strategy of Griffith helped this girl through her difficult time.

About a month later, I returned to Sapphire's room and saw the bed made and no one sleeping in it. I figured that she had recovered and was sent home, but

to be sure I asked the nurse. "Excuse me, what happened to the little girl that was staying in that room?" I said as I pointed to the room. She looked across the hall and said "I am sorry, but the little girl that stayed in that room passed away almost a week ago. Her mother told me to tell you that because of you she went peacefully. Do you know what that means?" I knew exactly what that meant; because of my writing she went away peacefully. The poem helped to assure her that everything was going to be okay.

Writing helps people let go of the unwanted feelings inside. "They are left with a new sense of the power of words. They actually got access to using language as a healing tool in a way that they had never used it before. Through writing they become active creators of their life styles. They are not simply people; something bad or painful happened to them" (Griffith). Obviously Griffith explains that through the children's writing they are able to take control of their thoughts with their writing and turn it into something positive. They can create whole new life styles, ones that do not involve something bad or painful.

One strategy that involves Griffith's method is to take a group of children and put them into a group. Have them explain a moment in the hospital that they remember and create a whole new funny story involving their memory. This strategy creates a whole new world for them that they are unable to see what is happening in the present. It's more like a mini vacation or fantasy for them. Another method to use is to separate them individually. Have them each write down words that come to them from the top of their heads. With the words they create poetry. At the end I would have them share their poems with each other. This poetry expresses each individual child. It also lets them know that they are not alone and that there are others that feel the same as them. Another technique that I was able to use that was very helpful was when I asked them to rip up their pain. I would ask them what upset them the most and ask them to write it down on paper and then rip it up into pieces. I was able to convince the children to believe that once you rip the paper up, you're ripping up anger and pain. Once they are done ripping it up, they feel much better. Our minds are designed to understand what we are going through and it takes time to heal from these wounds. This strategy helped relieve that pain that was held within them.

Some people might believe that its doctors that are the only people that can cure you when you are ill. Some people believe its God's work. But when I look back with a little help from God I believe I helped those kids help themselves to heal with their writing. I also used my writings and poetry to help those who lost all hope of recovery. The recovery of my brother was the beginning of a new change for me. My writing grew stronger and so did theirs as they participated in my beliefs. Writing helped them believe in something so hard that they were able to pick themselves up and continue moving. The

creative thoughts in their writing helped them to control their reality. They were able to block out reality and replace it with a creative story. This helped them concentrate in faith. It also let them that there are bad and painful times but yet they can get through it. It only took a pen and paper to let go of what they kept inside for so long.

Writing is a pain reliever. When they write I can see the sadness on their faces cast away and change into happiness. I watched their emotions begin to change to become positive. I breathed in the sense of relief, and the children felt the writing heal within them.

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Melissa Carroll

Slow Dancing with the Devil

Picture in your minds eye grown men wearing tight leather pants, high heeled boots, make-up all over their faces, with their hair teased about two to three inches off of their head. Some would say that they escaped a padded room from Bellevue if not the circus! However, with concerts that resembled theater shows; with antics of spewing fire, having blood dripping from their mouths while eating "bats" and singing lyrics about sex, drugs and rock and roll, heavy metal has been labeled the music of devil worship. I am a listener of 80's heavy metal and believe me when I tell you that I am as far from a devil worshipper as you can get, especially with my upbringing.

Let me tell you a little bit about myself. My parents are both Puerto Rican. They are devout Catholics and raised me to be one as well. I went to Catholic School from Kindergarten to 12th grade. I have a sister who is nine years older than me and a brother that is twelve years older than me. It was through them that I got my first musical influence. My sister listened to Donna Summer, she had the Saturday Night Fever Soundtrack and she also listened to Spanish music. My brother on the other hand was more hands on with music. He played the electric guitar -- it was nice that he could use his hands for something constructive other than messing around with girls. One chord on his guitar rippled through the amplifier and you could feel the vibration through your chest.

I'm not sure if it was the music itself that I liked or that fact that I thought my brother was cool, whichever it was it definitely left an impression. I always remembered how my parents would bitch to him about how loud the amplifier was and my brother would get annoyed but if you think about it, can you play that music in low volume and still get the same effect? I don't think you can! That would be like telling someone who's hungry "here's an apple, you can look at it but you can't eat it" and still expect them to get the same effect. A couple of times he would get so pissed off that he would go outside and smash his guitar against one of the rocks out in the yard. Even at the age of four, I wondered what the hell he did that for but now as an adult I get the point. If they're going to give you the cake but not let you eat it what is the point of having the cake? Looking at it is just torture, so you might as well get rid of it...right?

One would say that my brother was getting out his frustration like most teenagers do at that age but I would think that he could accomplish so much more with writing his frustrations on paper while salvaging his guitars. I was not musically gifted like he was in that I could not play an instrument. My parents made me take piano lessons when I was around eight and I just didn't take to it. I hated it, I always complained that I was sick or that

my hands hurt when the piano lesson day rolled around. My mother got her kicks out of it though because she still had the piano man come and play "Love Story" for her. I did like to sing though; I used to stand in front of the mirror and pretend my hairbrush was a microphone. I used to pretend that I was Madonna or Cyndi Lauper and sing my little heart out, but then something changed.

At this point my brother had moved out and my sister had gotten married so I was practically an only child overnight. I had graduated from eighth grade and was going to a new school that was about forty-five minutes from my house, and I knew no one. I went from a school that had uniforms to a school that had a "business" dress code. I was a blank slate. When I look back I feel like I had no personality. I wore what I was told to wear, believed what I was told to believe, was friends with who I had to be friends with. I did what my parents told me to do, when to do it and how to do it -- hell I couldn't even figure out what to wear, let alone how to think!

My parents had this whole thing figured out! You see my parents never wanted me to date, so what a perfect way to make sure that their daughter never had a boyfriend than to make me a social misfit. But I was a little more wile then they were. It took me a little while to figure out how to do my hair but I had great teachers from the guys in the hair bands who had the nice long, panned -hair with blonde highlights. I figured out how to dress myself, sometimes a bit controversially, depending on the day. Being that I am only 5'2" I always wore high heels and on some days some short skirts. Unfortunately, my Catholic school found something wrong with the length of my skirts and I got detention on a few occasions but I guess it helped me get boyfriends. And the one thing that comes along with boyfriends is breaking up with them. What is the one thing that you notice when you break up with someone? How many love songs are played on the radio? I think that is what attracted me to heavy metal music, the ballads.

Even though it was the bands brazen methods that brought them to my attention, it was their power ballads that kept them with me all these years. Skid Row is one band that has come to mind with their song "Youth Gone Wild" in the lyrics "Since I was born they couldn't hold me down, another misfit kid, another burned- out town, I never played by the rules and I never really cared , my nasty reputation takes me everywhere" (Skid Row). I don't know of any song that exemplifies teenage angst as well as this one does. Then there is their song "18 & life" where they sing about a young man who has a drinking problem and accidentally shoots his friend when playing with a gun. Their lead singer Sebastian Bach has such a powerful voice when he sings "I Remember You" he just gets under your skin. In the lyrics he sings "You said I love you babe, without a sound, I said I'd give my life for just one kiss"(Skid Row). I think if this band were devil worshippers they wouldn't be singing about loving each other.

People don't realize that after these bands fall from the lime light that they actually do go on. That they actually do have talent as Sebastian starred on Broadway as the main character, in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Poison's known for their love song "Every Rose Has Its Thorn" but the thing that made them stand out the most was the fact that they had nicer hair then most girls and that they wore more make-up than most girls did too. The scary part was that they actually looked good! Guns N Roses had "Welcome to the Jungle" with Axl Rose, this skinny little dude with this killer voice and his hair was bigger than he was! They had the guitarist Slash that reminded me of cousin "it" from the Addams Family because all you saw was his hair, you never saw his face. The songs were raw and in your face, but then they came out with "November Rain," "Don't You Cry," and "Patience" and that just solidified them for me. Ozzy Osborne is notorious for eating a live bat on stage but during my time he sang a song with Lita Ford called "Close My Eyes Forever." In the lyrics it says, "Will you ever take me? No I just can't take the pain, Would you ever trust me? No I'll never feel the same (oh)" (Osborne/Ford). In the song the girl is asking the guy if he will take her back but he says that he can't because he still doesn't trust her. A lot of times, even though there is role playing in the song, we relate to the opposite sexes point of view and that is what attracts us to the song. Other songs that I just LOVE from Ozzy are "Mama, I'm Coming Home," "Time After Time," "Say Goodbye to Romance," "Changes," and "My Little Man." "Changes" was revamped recently so that he could sing it with his daughter Kelly, and "My little Man," is a song that he wrote to his son, Jack, that describes all the fears that he has for his son in life and how he can't protect him. From their I had found his tribute album to his fellow band mate Randy Rhoades, who had passed away from an accident, and from then I was hooked.

I think what kept me going with these bands was the camaraderie that I saw among them as well. Def Leppard had a band mate that lost his arm in a car accident and the perseverance that he showed and the support that they gave him was unbelievable. He learned how to play the drums with one hand and redesigned his drum kit to play with his other foot. Any one else would have given up on him. Metallica is another band that lost a band mate, Cliff Burton, early in their career in a bus accident as well and they kept going in his memory and to this day they are still making records.

However, their image has changed with the times.

I always wondered why these bands felt it necessary to look different and dress different. I think they were trying to get people to think outside of the box as to what they believe "normal" to be and to be more open-minded. If people would just accept people for who they are then maybe they could be ok with themselves in their own skin. People like to stereotype and as I like to say `judge a book by its cover" but if you change the cover do you

have to change your perception of the book? Also, these artists do not walk around in this make-up and teased hair 24 hours a day. They are not musicians 24 hours a day. They have an image to uphold that they let the outside world see and then they go home and they are themselves. How many times have you seen in The Enquirer how celebrities look with no make-up on? How they grocery shop and go to the beach? Ozzy Osborne does not act the same way with his children and his wife as he does on stage.

Gene Simmons from Kiss does not walk around his house in moon boots with make-up on his face. It's all just for show, to get a stir out of people.

In my day, Motley Crue and Kiss wore make-up to break out of the cookie cutter mold and be more of the theatrical in your face tactics just like Marilyn Manson of today. My daughter told me that she never listened to any of his music because of the way he looked (Carroll). She told me that he was "scary looking!"(Carroll). My question is what if she heard his music/message and never knew what he looked like? Would it make that much of a difference? What if she heard his music first? Would she think that the look he has is cool? It makes me wonder how many people judge what they see before they hear? I'm sure that my mother being from the old school would think that Poison was a bunch of transvestites or homosexuals just by looking at them. Now, if she heard the music she would probably think differently.

If these bands were into devil worshipping wouldn't they be singing about hate rather than love? About hurting each other rather than helping each other? People need to stop being so afraid of the unknown and step out of their comfort zone to try and experience new things. People always negatively label things that they are afraid of and afraid to learn. It seems to almost liberate them from having to ask questions and get involved. It's almost like the time in Salem, Massachusetts where people accused each other of witchcraft. People just joined the masses without asking questions and killed hundreds of innocent people. They were afraid of what they didn't know and threw a label on it which made it ok for them to not have to ask any more questions. At least we have evolved from such a negative place to put our differences aside now but we still place labels on things to make ourselves feel comfortable in unfamiliar territory.

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Sarah Devine

Cyclical Nature

The night I let you touch me, the angels
 fell from the sky into arms of waiting
 devils with your face to the depths of hell
 while voices screamed "NO!" but I couldn't listen.
 That night I let you touch me, I was wrapped
 up in a dream in which you cared for me.
 I could not hear their logic, I was trapped
 inside your arms, where reason had no piece.
 I listened instead to the lies you wove,
 and closed my mind to what I knew was right.
 Preferring the pretty pictures you sold
 to what I let you do to me those nights.
 I might regret those nights I gave to you,
 but realize you're a fallen angel too.

Letter to a Schizophrenic Delusion

You ask me why
 I refuse to take the drugs they give me,
 and instead teeter on the breaking point,
 caught between two worlds.

How else could I see the things I see,
 both the good and the bad.
 Like the night the man in black
 came walking down my hall
 while giant praying mantis scaled
 brick walls to my window, calling my name.

With faces pressed to window-panes,
 they beckoned me to leap out and play
 their deadly games, while the man in black
 sent balls of dark light towards the chair
 where I clung as if to a raft in the ocean.
 How else would you then have been able
 to send them away, and stroke my hair
 til the shaking sobs stopped and we slept?

I don't mind the little girl
 who at the same time loves me and wants
 to kill me. I don't mind.

Without Lyr, my Tyler Durden,
 I never would have been able
 to do many of the things I've done,
 both the good and the bad.

I would never have seen
 the blurred lights at night
 or the colors of rain,
 never heard the music of clouds moving through the sky.

I would never have had conversations
 with gargoyles (who later turned out to be my chair.)

But without you,
 my steadfast friend, where would I be?
 You are more than an imbalance of hormones

or a figment of my imagination.
You are the constant in my life,
even if I'm the only one who knows you're there.

I'd rather stay caught between
reality, and the world we live in my head.

Stacey Eckerson

Stuffed With Love

Behind every material object lies a meaning. Material objects have become extremely important to people whether it is physically relying on them or simply having some sort of an emotional-spiritual connection to them.

A specific time when I had a connection with a material object is when I was given a stuffed animal as a child. It was an old raggedy Winnie the Pooh. He was tan, medium sized and went everywhere with me. This doll was passed from my grandmother to my mother and then to me. By the time Winnie was given to me he had been sewn back together numerous times. He had black fabric sewn on to give him eyes again, he was missing a nose, not to mention all the little holes when the dogs used him as a chew toy. This toy had definitely seen better days. As much as this doll was old and raggedy and not quite appealing to one's eye, I loved and cherished him deeply.

When I was a child, this doll became my comfort zone. When I was scared, he was scared. When I had surgery, Winnie went in to have surgery with me. When I cried, I cried to Winnie. And when I went on vacations, he went on vacations as well. This toy bear meant everything to me; there was a symbolic meaning behind him. Winnie was my best friend, my comfort; he was a part of my family and my everyday life. Like young children need their warmth, I needed Winnie for my comfort. I knew this doll was special to my grandmother because it was a gift that she could give to her daughter. I knew this doll was special to my mother because it was a gift from her mom. My mother also used this bear for comfort when she was a child and had to have surgery done.

I knew this would be a special gift to me because it had seen so many years and told so many stories. Winnie meant a lot to my mother and I liked having that connection and bond. It was going to be a tradition to keep passing this stuffed animal down. All three generations of women had a special unique bond with this toy. As a child I never thought the day would come that I would have to part from Winnie. After all he was my comfort zone and my favorite childhood possession.

In November 2001, it became time for me to part from my beloved bear. My mother's sister, my aunt Karen (who was just as much of a mother to me as my own mom) passed away after a very long battle with cancer. This event devastated me, my heart completely fell out of my chest and I felt so very alone. My world that I had come to know, completely collapsed from underneath me. My aunt took care of me like I was her own daughter, she made me feel so loved and special, and this had meant the world to me. Much like this bear of mine my aunt was someone I turned to cry on, someone to laugh with, someone to share my secrets with,

someone to share my hopes and dreams with, someone to travel with, and someone to love. I decided that since Winnie was such an important part of my life just like my aunt Karen, that I wanted him to be put with my aunt in her final resting place. This toy had given me comfort and peace in many difficult times throughout my young years. I knew that by giving it away to my aunt it would bring her peace and comfort as well. Winnie was symbolic in this way. He had comforted me and I felt better knowing and thinking that he would be doing the same for her. Yet again, even though I was parting from my bear, he continued to get me through one of the hardest times in my life. It was not hard for me to come to the decision to give Winnie away. It simply came easy and made sense to me. It felt like the right thing to do. The time had just come to do so.

It has now been seven years since I have parted from my favorite childhood possession. I am still and will always be spiritually connected with this bear. It had served its purpose and it was given away because of love. Winnie was not only a stuffed animal but an unbroken bond between my grandmother, mother, and me. He represented family and love. Life still went on, and parting from Winnie was not the end of me or the world. I still have all the memories and pictures of that bear to remind me of my childhood and growing up. In a small sense I am sad that I do not need Winnie to rely on anymore. It just means that I have grown up and am no longer a young child with a huge imagination. It is in every sense of the saying a bitter sweet situation for me. I can look back and laugh at how I needed and relied on that bear for everything! What had started off as a material object turned into something full of memories and traditions.

It was somewhat natural for me to part from Winnie the Pooh; of course I cried my eyes out for days knowing that I lost two of the most important things in my life, but it was bitter sweet. Something that I thought would have been one of the hardest things for me to do turned out to be one of the easiest. The hardest was losing my aunt, but thanks to that bear I was able to cope a little better through another life altering situation. I know that since I gave Winnie to rest with my aunt I cannot physically pass him down to my kids one day. I can, however, pass on the memories of him.

This also gave me the chance to start a new tradition one day that my children can keep passing down the lines and hopefully cherish like my grandmother, my mother, and I did. The possibilities are endless of whatever this new tradition may be. I know how fortunate I was to have a tradition that meant so much to the lives of three women. It would be selfish of me to not pass this experience down to my future children. Winnie was stuffed with love, happiness, strength, courage, friendship, comfort, and he passed all those wonderful things on to me.

Joy E. Finn

Nurses, Male or Female, Which One is Better?

Nursing has been an important part of the medical profession for many years. Nurses have always been considered to be compassionate, caring, and able to assist people in need, both medically and emotionally. Nurses today receive extensive training on how to recognize certain needs of their patients, and how to handle each patient on an individual basis. No two patients are the same, and their needs may be quite different. Since nurses are required to pass strict guidelines and rigorous training before becoming licensed, what difference should it make if the person providing this quality of care is a female or a male?

Males growing up have been taught that their emotional behavior should be that of the "tough guy", and over the years this belief has been reinforced in them by society and cultural expectations. Men are not supposed to show their emotions, not their gentle emotions anyway. Males need to be the stronger of the sexes and leave the soft and caring attributes for the females. Men, as well as women, have the capacity to express and interpret emotional communications with people. If men have this capability with people, it would very well include patients. The way a man expresses care for a patient may be different than the way a woman expresses her care. Men don't lose their masculinity just because they have chosen to be a nurse. Their approach to a patient may seem a bit stronger than a woman's interaction; the men may speak with a louder and stronger voice where a woman may use a gentler approach. Women often speak softer than a man which shows their more feminine qualities. This certainly has no effect on a male nurse's capabilities. Both genders are capable of expressing compassion, professionalism, and concern for patients.

Between 1500 and 1800 most nurses belonged to a religious order and consisted of mostly male nurses (Mellish). A woman's place was in the home caring for the family. The field of medicine benefited during this time period due to the scientific advances, but nursing care started to decline (Mellish). Most of the religious orders and monasteries closed due to the Protestant Reformation and the monks and nuns were driven out of the northern European countries (Mellish). During this time period, there was an increase in the number of women joining the religious orders of Catholic countries and encouraged to work for hospitals (Mellish). Nuns, though untrained, were encouraged to be nurses, while male nurses' duties were starting to change (Mellish). Male nurses were used primarily when intimate nursing care was needed for male patients, and when their strength was required to subdue a patient that was out of control due to mental illness (Mackintosh). Male nurses' duties started to fall into the category of orderlies and more and more they were removed from the patient's

care. The number of female nurses started to rise over the number of male nurses. Male nurses continued to nurse the injured in battlefield hospitals during this time period. In the early part of the nineteenth century, when the South experienced outbreaks of yellow fever, smallpox, and typhoid, many male nurses stayed behind instead of leaving the area to nurse the sick (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 23). These men were often referred to as care givers only, and didn't receive credit that they were actually nurses; it was assumed that they provided care in the emergency situation and would return to their previous occupations when the epidemics were over (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 23). After the Civil War, there was only a small percentage of male nurses left (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 23). Training schools for nurses started to appear but only accepted women, which almost led to the extinction of male nurses (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 23).

During the Industrial Revolution, factories throughout Europe and North America required heavy physical labor, which meant more work for males, and also led to a decrease in male nurses (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 24). The men could earn more wages in the factories rather than nursing and didn't require the education needed for nursing (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 24). In the mid 1800's, a woman, Florence Nightingale, was very successful in improving the conditions of hospitals (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 24). The physicians and the hospital administrators who allowed the poor conditions in hospitals were mostly men (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 24). Nightingale's belief was that "women, by nature were better suited for performing and supervising nursing care" (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 24). She believed that all nursing care should be provided by women and that women had more qualifications and their place was not just to nurse those at home (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 24). Nightingale was responsible for recruiting highly educated women to fill the positions of nursing (Bartfay 17). Nightingale opened her first school for nurses in London in 1860 (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 25). Her actions and the improvement of patient care were quickly noticed and the demand for highly trained nurses grew, and additional schools opened, but still only accepted women (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 25). Men were allowed to work in asylums as attendants, but would not receive the respect or training that the female nurses received and, though men were allowed to work as private duty nurses and could still work in the British military, none of these opportunities was available to men in the United States (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 25).

In 1937, the Society of Registered Male Nurses was formed to encourage men to join and receive professional training (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 26). During this time period there was a shortage of nurses (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 26). The government recognized the contributions of male nurses during World War II, but it wasn't until 1960 that men were allowed to

receive the education and finally the employment (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 26). The male nurses still received negative treatment from female nurses (O'Lynn and Tranbarger 26). The government accepted the fact that males could be nurses, but one has to wonder if this decision was based purely on the fact of the nurse shortage. The female nurses have always been prejudiced when it comes to male nurses. Some male nurses have actually experienced hostile environments at work (Mackintosh). The males would not receive any support from their fellow female nurses. Female nurses have always felt an intrusion of the "all girls" work space. Possibly they feel the men have always been able to advance in leadership with employment and that women would be overlooked for the same opportunities. In this day and age, I feel it is ridiculous that we still have such battles of the sexes.

Society with its traditional theories regarding the word "care", which is first and foremost associated with nursing, is responsible for the image that only females should be nurses. Caring has always been associated with women and femininity. In the past, women have always worked in the home providing care for the family and looking after the health of the family, while the men have always worked outside the home and provided the financial support for the family. Some people have a hard time accepting the fact that these traditions can change, and feel that men will never be able to provide nursing care with the proper amount of care and compassion. I think that working with a male nurse would have many advantages. First of all, a male nurse will now understand how hard a women works when she is outside the home. He will be doing the same work and have a better understanding of what is involved in caring for patients. I also think it would be advantageous to work with a male nurse who can provide another perspective when dealing with different patients. For example, if a female nurse has certain issues with a male patient, a male nurse might be able to give some advice on how to handle the situation. Also, male nurses are capable of lifting heavier patients.

Women do not always think of men when they are looking at other positions such as political, organizational, or other employment opportunities where men and women both have active roles. Female nurses must acknowledge the need to include men in nursing with the same regard to other minority groups. Health care can only be enhanced through this social and cultural diversity. Including men will allow them to use their talents and diversity, which I feel is important for the quality of healthcare. Women need to have confidence in their own abilities and not feel threatened by the presence of male nurses. Women are always seeking employment in some mostly male dominated professions, and want to be treated equally, and they expect to have the chance for advancement. Men and

women should both have the opportunity to express their talents and receive the opportunity to advance equally.

I feel this is a very important issue that needs to be addressed by society. Male nurses are not just choosing this profession in order to aggravate female nurses. They are choosing this profession because they feel they can be an asset to the healthcare field. When a patient is in pain or suffering from an acute illness and a nurse enters the room to provide care and make them comfortable, how can this be an issue if the nurse is female or male? The care that they are about to receive will be the same if it is provided by a female or a male nurse. There are not two different training manuals for teaching female and male nurses. Caring and compassion are human traits, not something we learn from a book.

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The following essay has been edited for length. Entire sections, pages, and attached artwork have been removed.

Lindsey C. Jardine

Modernism vs. Remodernism: The Formalist Crap and Stuckist Art

This paper contributes to a new evaluation of how modern art follows and sometimes leads this country and its culture into a steaming sewage filled crapper. The investigation in this paper will trivialize the common question "What is art?" even though this answer relies merely on the viewer. This will be accomplished by the following: first, a look at the general background of art; second, a description of the Formalists; third, an introduction of the Stuckists; and fourth, a comparison of the Stuckist's art and the Formalist's art. Although modern contemporary art has a purpose and concept, its minimal essence compared to the paintings of the Stuckists has lost much expression and talent. This relationship between modern art and Stuckist paintings has never been seen in this light.

A Generalized History of Art

Defining "art" is a major player in aesthetics historically and recently. There are two basic definitions of the term art that include distinctions normally resulting in annoyed defensive and exasperated people. The two definitions are *classificatory* and *honorific*. The honorific definition is as follows: "Usually when we say of an object, 'That's a work of art', we mean that the object merits the honor of being called art. We often implicitly think of 'art' as 'good art' or even 'great art'" (Barrett 1). Honorific definitions look for specific aspects of a work of art in order for it to be considered "good art". A classificatory definition is a descriptive definition. The definition claims, "When an object is said to be 'a work of art', it does not necessarily mean that it is a good work or art, but just that it is one of the things that the community counts as art rather than some other kind of object, such as an item found in a hardware store"(Barrett 3).

Twenty first century museums are filled with "art" that can be defined as classificatory art. Today, if one steps foot into the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City one may be tempted to ask questions like: "What is the reason for this art?" "People get paid for this?" "It seems so easy to make, can I be considered an artist then?" "Will they pay me?" "Is this art good enough to be in here?" "Is it 'art' only because it is in a museum?" To answer these questions we must look into the past of other artists. To answer these questions based on a written institutional account-as in a set of rules for a work to be considered "art"-read: Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis (1974) by George Dickie.

There are four traditional sets of criteria for art; they are: Realism, Expressionism and Cognitivism,

Formalism, and Postmodern Pluralism. It is necessary to see where art has been and where it is now in order to fully understand why art was defined in the first place. The mobility of art from Realism to Postmodern Pluralism is complex and drawn out and will only be briefly discussed here.

Realism art is what it sounds like, realistic. Terry Barrett, author of *Why Is That Art?*, claims that "Realism is the oldest theory of art in Western Aesthetics, dating back to the Ancient Greeks, particularly Plato and Aristotle" (17). This makes sense because, of course, the ancient Greeks didn't have pictures or better yet the internet. They used their minds, eyes, and their hands to the fullest extent for the purpose of art. They studied art's truth and beauty. What the Greeks saw in nature and in historical events is what they produced. Plato and Aristotle became widely interested in realism art.

It is interesting and worthy that Plato and Aristotle "radically disagreed about the value of art because of the effects it had on people. Plato wanted art banished from his ideal society whereas Aristotle valued art"(18). It makes one wonder, why would art have a negative effect on people as to that it shouldn't be valued? As mentioned before, the two definitions of art-honorific and classificatory- brings annoyance, defense, and exasperation among people mainly because of disagreement. Plato probably recognized the questions of these definitions and realized it was a ridiculous notion for art to cause such destruction rather than direction and control. Realism lived a long time and is still practiced today, with the exception of alterations on what we "see" now. Barrett states that "Western art primarily was made within a Realistic tradition from the time of the ancient Greeks until the eighteenth century, when *expression* became more important than *representation*"(18). Expression found in art became known as Expressionism.

Two terms, Expressionism and Cognitivism are used to define specific theories of art. Expressionism is when one expresses their ideas, thoughts, and emotions into their art. Barrett explains, "Expressionists assert that 'artists are people inspired by emotional experiences, who use their skill with words, paint, music, marble, movement and so on to embody their emotions in a work of art, with a view to stimulating the same emotion in an audience'"(57). Many artists are considered Expressionists, most famously "Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) in Holland, German Expressionists around the time of World War II such as Franz Marc (1880-1916) and Ernst Kirchner (1880-1938), and later Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), who is the most famous of the Abstract Expressionists of the New York School"(57). If you would like to learn more about specific artists please read something other than this paper.

Stuckists Art vs. Formalists Crap

The Stuckists and the Formalists may both be considered artists, but with all that has been mentioned, what is truly artistic? Stuckists base their art around paintings and spirituality. This makes their art meaningful and creative. The Formalists base their works on form itself, forcing viewers to search harder for meaning. Two works of each group are displayed and will be described from the artist's viewpoint and from the viewpoint of someone who did not create the art.

The Formalists will be discussed first. An artist by the name of Agnes Martin analyzes the theory of Formalism, "especially a primary concern for form, radical abstraction, a belief in artistic progress an intent to provide aesthetic experience, a striving for the sublime, and acceptance of the autonomy of art, and belief in artistic originality"(Barrett 119). The form is considerably present on number 15 *Untitled*, 1995 (see attached artwork). This work of art is definitely abstract but not said with one of those I'm-really-cool-cuz-I-like-art-voices '*abstract*'. If she intended to give an aesthetic experience, it is up to the viewer if they feel the sense of beauty as she saw it. If she struggled for the supreme degree, it is also in the eye of the beholder. As for the 'autonomy of art', it may be self governed but to struggle in search of the meaning behind art, it is unnecessary. And it's suggested that the term originality be completely scratched off of her list.

The description of the work (see attached art work) states that it was done with watercolor wash and pencil on transparentized wove paper. So she delicately paints watercolor wash, whatever that is, onto wove paper, whatever that is, and draws lines on it as to make a grid with a pencil. Genius. As she has stated "Anything can be painted without representation"(Barrett 123). The notion is extremely subjective because you can then take that idea further and title the meatball on your dinner plate as a bloody rocky planet that our earth will soon be morphed into. Its bizarre, really. Although this is a creative thinking process, it should probably be separated from artwork that is created by the talented minds, such as the Stuckists. But in fact it is all considered to be art.

To see something beautiful that is given to you, like a flower, one's mind would identify it as being beautiful. But when you are staring at a white canvas with one blue stripe, it is harder for the mind to justify if it is beautiful or not. It is an interesting idea: that beauty is held within what we are taught and know but not what we can discover on our own. Formalists try to convey beauty with what we do not know in an aesthetic approach. But this type of approach is an example of negativity. Perhaps it's because people do not understand what is being thrown at them. Formalists try to simplify their work and their ideas, but in fact they are making the art world much more difficult to be a part of.

Another work produced by a Formalist is number 17 by Joel Shapiro titled *Study (20 elements)*, 2004 (see attached art work). The description of the art work says that it was made from wood and casein. Casein is a paint derived from milk; it dries fast and has a glue-like consistency. Maybe that is why certain parts of the blocks are not painted, because of the glue-like paint he had to hold each block with his fingers and couldn't turn the wet block over to paint its other side, afraid of getting his fingers dirty.

It is said that, "Shapiro is eager to distance his work from Formalists of the type that isolates art from life"(128). Clearly Shapiro is not eager to do just that. Blocky shapes are far from the organic shapes of life. When referring to one of his works, Shapiro noted, "If you were looking at the joint on that little piece, the way I chose to do that is significant, and it has a psychological dimension to it"(130). If one were staring at the joint of the piece of wood, they would not know that it had any significance unless Shapiro himself was there to say so. Unlike the Stuckist, Formalists need to further explain the meaning behind their works in order for a person to understand it.

A Stuckist painting by Charles William titled *Home from the Abattoir* 1993-94 (see attached art work) is much more appealing to the eye yet still mysterious with meaning. The painting clearly constructs a feeling of insecurity to the viewer, because there is a person with perhaps blood on his lab coat with a ridiculous smirk on their face. It's unnerving. William states:

I was thinking about dying and the last few moments of life- which are the most important. The painting shows the discomfort of life we walk through. It contains the cycle of birth-life-death, which we are all part of. Ideas informed by background of Buddhist reading. The top of the painting shows a field of sheep. We are all oblivious of the blood we're covered in. (Evans 39)

The painting clearly shows everything that he has talked about. It makes the painting more interesting and it's completely relevant and necessary. He did not talk of his technical painting procedures, which is a good thing because it doesn't matter. Who cares if you used milk paint to conserve your money or spray paint to get high, the product which is put in front of a stranger's eye is what counts. It is more uplifting and memorable to see a painting such as this one than to stare at a minimalized painted canvas having just heard the artist's viewpoint. When thinking about your life, do think of multi colored blocks that convey beauty, or perhaps the blood on your shirt from the numerous lives you've butchered? Again, it is all up to the viewer to decide.

One other painting by a Stuckist is by Bill Lewis titled *me X 3* 1999 (see attached art work). The painting clearly shows a woman dangling a puppet doll and a little white dog in the left corner. The artist is, with just looking

at the name, a man. The funny thing is the woman looks almost like a transvestite with manly feature excessive makeup and the covering of the arms from the dress. The puppets face looks scared and dog looks like it doesn't really belong in the photo, focused on something else. Also, the background (the yellow-smoke) looks like its in the shape of a question mark. Because it is titled *Me x 3* we know the painting represents him. Lewis claims that the painting conveys his personality, "in this case the feminine side. The small white dog is a trickster figure who points towards the human shadow"(37). Maybe this idea wasn't given directly but it was still clear enough to understand, unlike Formalists works.

Ultimately anyone can call anything art because of freedom of speech and personal viewpoints. Formalist's work will remain using aesthetic approaches and a main focus on form. And the Stuckist will continue to live up to their own morals and reject modern madness. There may never be a differential between good art and bad art but there will certainly always something to be said about it.

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Vanessa Maisonave

The Beautiful Sound

Lonely building, cars hurrying, lights, endless lights
passing flashing too fast for my eyes to process. We
stop;

the doors open people get off people get on.

There's the man to the left, absorbed in the horrific
events

happening in the world, a woman to the right reading her
self help

books. What good will come from that? There's the
mystery man, too

bad he forgot to put back on his wedding band, he's
probably going

to get shit for that later.

I rub my eyes look down at my watch, get a glimpse of a
woman,

her face warm and full of life, like a bud breaking through
the

frozen ground, an angel in a crowd of darkness. Too
many books and bags

for her own hands. I stood up,

gestured for her to have my seat. She smiled
and sat "thank you."

Her voice shattered the glass suffocating us. No one
looked. No one cared,

too concerned with the world that is just their seat. It was
another noise,

another day, another person.

It was the most beautiful sound I heard all night.

Corn Stalks

Feeling the cold drops of water falling from the
faucet, Dicey gently rinses the soapy dishes that are in
the sink. The cold drops feel good against her skin,
cooling her off with the help of the fresh breeze flowing
through the window. She looks out, staring into the
endless grass, probably knee high filled with weeds,
though to her they are beautiful flowers. She sees the
red barn which holds the chickens and that beat up old
tire swing. And there in the distance are the many acres
of corn stalks. Those corn stalks that she used to run to,
asking them to take her in, to allow her to lose herself in
them. She realizes that she wasn't trying to lose herself,
but rather find, find a life that wasn't hers, to find an
answer that never could be found, to find hope where all
else was gone. Those corn stalks, where she would run
through with her arms wide open, feeling every inch of
her surroundings. They would hug her, hold on to her,
suffocate her with their numbers. Those corn stalks,
whose soft whispers would make her dance in circles
until she got so dizzy she would fall down, that would

make her laugh though nothing funny was ever said, they
would make her free enough to be happy.

Dicey dries her hands on the coffee stained rag, sets
it aside and hops onto the cool counter top. She grabs a
glass, fills it with water and starts taking sips, still looking
out the window, waiting. The glass sweats in her hands;
she puts it down and hops of the counter, noticing the
corner of the flowered wallpaper is peeling. Dicey tries to
push it back up but the old wallpaper doesn't want to
hold.

"These walls are practically screaming for a new life,"
Dicey says, while taping the corner of the paper back
onto the wall. It's not like she'll even listen to what they
have to say. "Sorry walls, but you're just gonna have stay
up with tape."

Dicey walks back to the counter, grabs her glass and
drinks the rest of the water. Tired of picking apart the
imperfections of the house, she heads outside and sits
on the wooden steps. It's hot, probably over a hundred
degrees. The sun stares her in the face, slowing burning
her fair skin. Sweat drips down her body. A tank and
some cut off shorts are still too many clothes for this
heat. A breeze will come but it is filled with the dusty
road. Dirt sticks to her skin and she tries to wipe it away,
wipe the sweat away, wipe the imperfections away.
There in the distance she sees it, that red pickup racing
around the corner, driving down her long driveway. She
goes back inside, grabs her beaded purse and walks out,
leaning against the screen door. He opens the door to
his Chevy and walks out: scruffy hair, white tee, some
beat up old jeans, his weekend clothes.

He walks over to Dicey, giving her a kiss on the
cheek. "Is your mother home?"

"No, it's Saturday silly; she's down the road at Mrs.
B's house, baking some sort of pie, not sure what it is
this week apple or blueberry." Dicey throws her hair up
in a ponytail, trying to get the heat off her neck.

"So why don't we go inside." He takes her hand
leading her to the front door.

"I thought we were going for a drive today." She lets
go of his hand, and walks back towards his truck.

"Well, I have to clean up anyway so I'm gonna go
inside" he looks down at his greasy callused hands.

"So that's why your late, messing with your truck
again? Can't you find some other time to be playin' with
your truck instead the day you know we are suppose to
be hanging out?"

"Me and the boys were down at the garage and
anyways I can do whatever I want with my truck and if
I'm fixing it on a day we have plans your just gonna have
to wait until I'm done." He walks over to the screen door,
getting ready to open it.

"I just cleaned the house you're gonna get it all
filthy." She walks over closer to him.

"Well your just gonna have to clean it again when I'm
done."

She grabs his arm "I don't care if you're all dirty. come on let's just go."

He looks at her, wipes his hands on his jeans, and walks over to the truck.

Dacey opens the door and hops in. She looks in the mirror, trying to fix her sweaty hair. She looks back at her home and the trail of dust leaving behind the tires of the truck. She looks behind at the corn stalks, giving them a slight wave goodbye, whispering she will see them soon, for she knows they can hear her.

She digs in her purse and pulls out a cigarette, a little bent from being pushed in there. She lights it up and puts it to her lip-glossed cherry red lips.

"What are you doing with that?" He says, while looking at her.

"Don't you think I look sexy?"

"Not with that garbage in your mouth." He stares at the road ahead.

"Don't I look like those old time glamour movie stars? They use to smoke and they were sexy." She leans her head back, trying to give a sexy pose.

"Well, you're no movie star." He still stares at the road.

She gives a pout, looking completely disappointed.

"Oh come on now, you're gonna mess up that pretty face like that." He takes a quick look at her.

She gives him a slight smile and throws the cigarette out the window. She looks out at the passing trees and the endless acres of grass, thinking back to the corn stalks, the happiness.

"Well it was Mindy who gave them to me anyway; she stole them from her brother and oh to see the look on his face when he was tearing apart his room trying to find them. It was too funny. Mindy was standing at the door of his room saying that their mom probably found them while putting away his laundry, it was too funny, he was..." She looked over at him, noticing that he wasn't even listening. "And then a huge dinosaur came in and wrecked the place, took him hostage and ate all his family!"

"What the hell are you talking about?" He stares at the open road. "Why can't you be more like your mother or even your sister and learn to talk less. Seriously. I didn't ask where you got them from."

"Well my sister is too concerned with Tom. they're practically married; all she does is follow his every word. Marriage shouldn't be like that; it should be about love and happiness and being together forever." She plays with the beads on her purse. "Don't you ever think about marriage?"

"It's not for me. Why do you always have to bring that up?"

"Shouldn't it be for you? You're older then they are, but they're more about commitment then you are." She pulls the beads from the purse.

"Using big words there aren't you. Anyway what brings this up?"

"Nothing. Never mind." She stares out the window again, at those numbers of trees.

The rest of the ride is silent. Dacey continued to stare out the window, letting the nice cool breeze hit her face, thinking back to the whispers and dizzy dances. That is until they get to the single stop light in their town. Left is town, right is endless possibilities.

"Babe, let's go west. There's land out there and a different town, a town where no one would know who we are. We could build our own home, and have a garden filled with daisies and lilies, and we could have a dog and you could name it whatever you wanted to. We could have everything and we would be happy and no one could get in our way."

"You need to stop with those wild dreams; you really get way out of hand with them. Eh, a garden filled with daisies. I really don't know where you come up with this stuff."

He turns on his blinker and turns left, back to their town, back to no possibilities, back to their wasted lives. He likes this life. He likes the fact that she will follow him and love him no matter what. He loves that her innocence will never make the decision of leaving and going to a better life. He loves her and knows that he won't leave either.

She follows the road going west with her eyes. Freedom is down there and it is then she dreams of her corn stalks, remembering what it is to feel free.

Manzano

Lake

I grew up near a lake called Swan Lake, and I have some great memories from being around the lake. A few features have changed around the lake, like a small park that was once just a grassy terrain with a few trees around where at times people went fishing and beautiful flowers were planted close to the waterfall where it was once a small weedy terrain. As a child, I only thought of it as just a lake, a body of water that does nothing and sits around like a chair or other objects that cannot move unless moved by a movable force. As I grew older, I see that the lake has been expressing itself in the way it moves and changes, like a person does as a person gets older.

The lake has many different forms of expressing itself. During the wintertime, the lake is frozen enough to become this huge ice rink that stretches out for miles. Sometimes in the dark, people would ride their snowmobiles on the frozen lake with the lights flashing and the sound of the motor buzzing, like fireflies dancing around in warm nights, flashing their glowing lights in swampy places. The lake is a beautiful white color like shining diamonds from the snow that falls, like white puffs of cotton as it covers the sky. In the snow, the lake looks like a huge part of terrain, like in the tundra. Also, when it's real cold, the trees near the waterfall look like this wintry wonderland, like a snowmaker created it in a unique way with pillows of ice and snow combined.

During the summertime, in the morning, the lake is a beautiful blue color like a tropical blue sea. Later in the summer, the lake can be a nasty green color like a swamp with lily pads caused by algae multiplying. Most times, the lake is a clear color like looking through a large window. One time it flooded and the lake was tea color, like a mud puddle after it rains with all of the eroded sediments being picked up by the waves. When it's breezy and comfortable outside, the lake moves back and forth as if it wanted to take you away, floating in the waters of the lake as if you were a twig, but relaxing. During autumn, as the leaves fall and the temperature gets cooler, fog appears in the morning, becoming at times like an eerie bog like in movies. In calmer times, the lake can become as flat as a road like a huge mirror that you can look in, when no wind is blowing and trees are still.

This lake has been with me since I was a child and I look at it some days when I'm not so busy as if it were a huge painting in front of me. My life with the lake has been great, looking at it from above where I live. When the storm appears, at times it appears with strong winds and heavy rain causing the lake to elevate as if it were going to explode with rage. The lake can be a beast devouring anything in its path as it overflows and being around the lake makes me feel calm and relaxed when

it's a lovely day. When the sun sets, it's breezy, and when it's clear out, it can make you feel as if you were going on vacation and enjoying the cool breeze hanging around the ocean looking at the evening sky.

My love for the lake is difficult to express in the way people express their deep feelings. The lake is family to me in a brotherly way in that it tells me how it feels and how it's doing. I look at the lake in a spiritual way, that it makes me feel like I'm connected with it, like a long lost friend. People may look at the lake, the way I did when I was small, but to me it is like a living person that reveals the way it feels and acts. As I become even older, I'll know it will still be there with its water changing season by season, year by year, and hope that it will still be there for as long as I live.

Poverty and Hopelessness Contributes to Gang Influence

Many people ask "Why are more young people joining a gang?" There are many reasons why young people are joining gangs. There is an estimate of 30,533 gangs and 815,896 gang members nationwide (Vigil). The growth of gangs has been an increasing problem for decades. Young people around 13-17 years are joining a gang because of financial, social, or family problems. Gangs recruit people by giving them the things a person wants in life: money, a purpose of belonging, respect, and power that makes the person feel on top. This cycle may go on for generations if there isn't any solution.

Young people that are in gangs may have different opinions about why they joined such as culture, interest, or their friends join gangs, but that's not the point. Many young African-Americans, Hispanics, and other ethnicities who experience a terrible, dull, and lonely life may feel that they can escape their problems by joining a gang. African-Americans and Hispanics are likely targets to be recruited by gangs because both ethnicities are more likely below the poverty line. Gangs continue to flourish as they attract young people who have nothing, want a better life, and hope to gain power and feel respected.

According to James Vigil's article *Young People Join Gangs Because of Social Marginalization*, family life and parenting practices play an initial role in the socialization of a child. Children from families that are structured are less likely to join gangs, whereas children from unstructured families are more apt to join gangs. If the family is unstructured, there will be a big chance that a young person in the family will join gangs. A family is unstructured is because of dysfunction from abuse, domestic violence, and lack of communication. The young person may feel pressure from abuse, divorce of parents, neglect of parents, and lack of socialization. Being in a gang begins filling the void of the young person making it impossible for him or her to resist gang

influence.

Poverty can lead to family dysfunction, a poor living environment, lack of education, and lack of socialization. Young people start to have the sense of no purpose, no meaning, no attention, no power, and no money. Without direction by parents, a young male or female who is sexually active, may engage in promiscuous activity causing unwanted pregnancies. Once the teen father realizes he has impregnated a woman, most often he fears parenthood and abandons the teen mother. The single mother often has to work to raise her child on her own without the father unless parents will help. Otherwise, life for a teen mother is difficult. In a functional family, fathers are most likely the ones who work to keep the family financially secure. Because some women may not receive equitable pay for the same job a man may do, it makes a living wage for her and her child difficult. As the child grows into a teenager, the child feels like escaping poverty because the child starts desiring materialistic objects that most people will want. Also, if a young person has no parents or any money to survive, he fears for his life that he will not survive in this life of poverty. This cycle has been mostly affecting African-Americans and if this trend continues, future African-Americans will inherit this cycle because they don't know the consequences of promiscuity.

In schools, most young people socialize and become educated, but there are some that do not. Teens who are alone may seek gangs, so the person will feel like he belongs. The need to belong is a universal human need. It is difficult if the person does not socialize with his peers. The lack of parenting skills of a single parent could explain why the person does not know how to socialize and communicate, which can make him or her an easy target for recruiting gang members. People who immigrated to the U.S. will experience trouble because of the lack of understanding and communication (Vigil). Unfortunately, the cycle of poverty is also a cycle of hopelessness. This cycle affects young people with different languages and minorities because minorities have thought that they aren't as bright as other students. Young teens with different languages believe that their limited language in this country leads them to believe that they cannot fulfill their dreams that will lead to joining a gang for help (Virgil).

According to the article *Young People Join Gangs Because of Social Marginalization*, "Poverty areas generate gang members". Adults may live in poverty because their parents did not motivate them to get an education to set goals. Adults with no plan, no dream, and no hope will fear that they would not survive in this world, so they assume that they should join a gang to make a living. Parents who are in a gang may pass down gang influence to their child making gangs a culture as well. If an adult gang member becomes tired of committing crimes and wants to leave his or her gang, he or she may end up brutally beaten or dead. For

many, there is no escape.

The poverty and hopelessness cycle continues as lack of communication between the parent and child affects the child as he or she grows into a teen. The teen later finds himself or herself in a world where no one cares. People may or may not become aware that the more poverty means more recruitment for gangs. The pattern of inferior living situations, substandard working conditions and dysfunctional families result in the seeds for the growth of gangs (Virgil). No solution can be made unless a person resolves his or her problems, or tries to become involved in something. Also, a young person may end up in jail or laying in a coffin, that will create an impact for communities. If is no solution is found to destroy the cycle, more and more bodies of teens as young as 12-17 will be lying dead in the streets.

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Sarah Ann McConnell

Autumn Wind

As I walk outside, the crisp autumn air whisks a few brightly colored leaves at my feet. One flame-red leaf gets caught in my shoelace and, as I pluck it out, I take a deep breath. That particular scent that signifies the transition between summer and fall sends goose bumps along my skin. It's a mixture you can't explain by how it smells, but by the images it brings to mind. Somehow this special combination of the smells, breeze, and temperature brings me back to a few years ago. It was the day my father and I sat on our front porch, the day he informed me that he had cancer. I knew in that moment that he was already gone.

I unlock my car and climb inside; the slam of the door echoes off the hills. As I wrap my hands around the steering wheel, the old leather cracked and worn, I wonder if I will actually make it to my destination today. Maybe I will end up driving aimlessly, lost in my memories, reliving the past as best as I can. I am still amazed at how certain mixtures of elements can so easily transport you to another time and place, how you can get lost in the past. As the miles roll by, the yellow line just a blur in front of me, I slide a CD into the player, and release the breath in my lungs that I hadn't realized I was holding. The Celtic notes and rhythms somehow calm the emotions churning inside, settle the anger and grief, while lifting my heart into a lighter mood.

These soothing melodies remind me of the ocean, of me looking out upon that immense expanse of blue, the tang of the salt and sand. This is where I spent the day when I had heard that my father passed away, right on the edge of the ocean where the wind and sun could sweep and bake my tears away. I had been driving to the beach while on vacation, knowing my father was at Death's door, but he had insisted that I go anyway. I could see Death's shadow flitting around his bed, reaching out with its grasping fingers, waiting to claim my father's soul. But when I closed my eyes for a moment, the image was gone.

As I drove my phone jangled, sending a tone of doom into my heart. When I had gotten the news of his death I turned off my phone, and all of a sudden the highway had become an immeasurable distance. It was expanding and lengthening, while everything else seemed to slow down. The rumble of the engine, other car horns honking, all the traffic noise suddenly faded out leaving a deep silence, a strange void. The rest of that journey was a blank to me until I had stepped onto the hot sand, the heat seeping up into me through the soles of my feet. I don't remember the rest of the car drive or how I arrived at my destination; I had gone into autopilot, focusing entirely upon the thought that my father was dead.

The beach was the only place I could imagine myself being able to smile while remembering him instead of mourning him with tears, to remember how his laugh was contagious and could chase away any frown. It is here that I could and still can reminisce how his smile and presence could light up any room or how his greenish blue eyes could cause you to reveal any secret you were harboring. Every year I try to find my way back, always on the same day that he traveled from this life to the next. It doesn't matter if I return to the same beach, just as long as I can visit one. On this day I need to hear the waves crashing upon the shore, sense the pull the water has against me, actually feel the rhythms of the ocean that push and pull. I always have an ache to deeply inhale the salty air and have the sun beat its rays on me and perhaps melt me into the sand underneath. This is the one time that I feel closest to him.

Braking slightly to navigate the winding mountain roads, I begin thinking that I am lucky to have the beliefs that I do. I am lucky to believe in reincarnation and the soul and the spirit. There is peace in knowing that his soul has not only moved on from this world but will also journey to his next adventure one day. He will be restored and whole again somewhere else, once he knows that I will be all right without him. Once more, my father's spirit will be reborn into the next life, and he won't truly be dead. I also have a lifetime of memories filling my own heart about my father that will keep him alive as I share my stories, hopefully, one day, with my own children.

Even though his essence has gone on, I still question why it had to happen to him. How could this man who was immortal to me be gone? What must he have done in his past lives that would bring about his end like this? I get so angry wondering what part of the universe felt that it was my father's time to move on. But I comfort myself by realizing that there is always a universal balance; all things happen for a reason, and perhaps I needed to lose my father for me to become the person I am today. I know that I would not have become the strong, self-reliant person I am now without being forced to learn how to do so on my own.

I can torture myself with thoughts of how he can't be here physically for my great moments in life, can't be here to watch me on my proudest, happiest days. I can think of how he won't be here to walk me down the aisle and give his little girl away as a woman. How he can't be here to watch me graduate college and attain my career or become a mother. However, I smile because I know he will be here for me in spirit, watching over me, being just as proud of me as if he was here in physical form.

As I park the car on the side of the road and step out into the brisk mountaintop overlooking the river, I can take some solace from the truth that I feel in the depth of my own soul. As I gaze out over the mountain range, down into the valley carved in two by the sparkling river, my father is here with me. Always. Within the air causing

my hair to swirl around my face, within the trees displaying the beauty of their oncoming winter sleep, within the earth that nourishes all. As long as I can be outside, I am reminded that I am never alone and that he is never truly gone.

Runaway

"Runaway Train" is a simple song with a graphic music video that was aimed at the "lost" children around the world. Released in 1992 by the rock band Soul Asylum, "Runaway Train" and its music video were based upon the many young people who have disappeared, run away from home, or were kidnapped. The song, written by the lead singer Dave Pirner, has a subtle meaning, describing life from the viewpoint of a runaway youth ("Runaway Train" Wikipedia).

The tone of "Runaway Train" is sad and slow, developing the despair of the lyrics. Its melody conveys feelings of woe and isolation. Simple guitar cords and a soft, even movement of the music match the voice of the singer perfectly to convey the feelings that a runaway child must be feeling. His voice is mellow and soothing yet full of sorrow. The lyrics of "Runaway Train" describe a hidden meaning about abuse and neglect and what causes a young adult to run away from home.

"Call you up in the middle of the night
like a firefly without a light
you were there like a blowtorch burning
I was a key that could use a little turning
So tired that I couldn't even sleep
So many secrets I couldn't keep
Promised myself I wouldn't weep
One more promise I couldn't keep"

This first section of the opening lyrics says that many young children and young adults who are the victims of any type of abuse, especially sexual abuse, are harmed within the dead of night. It is during those dark hours when no one else is awake when they feel the most vulnerable, when they are scared and helpless. A young child who has not matured fully could be described as "like a firefly without a light" ("Runaway Train"); an underdeveloped creature of beauty. Being abused by a much stronger, larger person and to be hurt by such a figure can appear to be something bright that injures, "like a blowtorch burning" ("Runaway Train"). At the same time, many are verbally abused and can be made to feel inferior and weak and worthless. Sometimes they think of themselves as objects that need to be mended or repaired or tinkered with like a tool, "a key that could use a little turning" ("Runaway Train").

The second part of the first section of lyrics begins a more direct and obvious voice of child's despair and agony. The lyrics describe the attempt of a young person who is struggling to stay awake to possibly fend off such an attack, unable to sleep because of the stress

and anxiety due to the atrocities that have been inflicted upon him or her. The victim is trying to be strong regardless of the situation and bottles up the grief and pain, but is unsuccessful at it: "promised myself I wouldn't weep, one more promise I couldn't keep" ("Runaway Train"). This young child is desperately struggling to hide any additional signs of weakness but just can't find the strength to keep the sadness within, and it overflows with tears.

The second section of lyrics of "Runaway Train" starts to explain the need to remove oneself from the current environment, but the victim does not know what the best solution is when one's home is where one is supposed to be kept safe. A young child feels utterly alone when this occurs, and he knows the very people who are supposed to protect him from the horrors of the world have betrayed him.

"It seems no one can help me now
I'm in too deep
There's no way out
This time I have really led myself astray"

Any abuse causes the victim to lose trust in almost all adults and feel that he can't turn to anyone except himself and possibly other peers. The choice of running away and removing oneself from a bad situation only to discover that it is a hard life out on the streets is very disturbing for this victim. Regardless of the events happening at home, a young child finds out that he can become lost in an entirely different bad situation.

The chorus of "Runaway Train" speaks of being caught in a place that may be better than whatever the victim was experiencing at home, yet she has become lost and helpless, if not more so.

"Runaway train, never going back
wrong way on a one-way track
seems like I should be getting somewhere
somehow I'm neither here nor there"

A young child or young adult who has become a runaway realizes that he is not doing what is best for her, but that this is the only escape that she knows exists at that time frame. The victim feels that although she has removed the horrible aspects of abuse, at the same time she feels trapped in a void.

In the third section of lyrics the song begins to describe a little more in depth how a young runaway must feel once out in the harsh world, reaching out to someone, somewhere and trying to find some sense of normality.

"Can you help me remember how to smile?
Make it somehow all seem worthwhile
How on earth did I get so jaded?
Life's mysteries seem so faded
I can go where no one else can go
I know what no one else knows
Here I am just drowning in the rain
With a ticket for a runaway train"

The desire of this young person is to go back to being a child without worries or responsibilities and to be carefree and happy again. The victim wants to become innocent and live normally like any young person should, but this wish now appears as a distant memory and a dream to be discarded. So much has been lost at this point, and there does not seem to be any way or any chance of attaining it again; the victim was forced to grow up long before nature ever intended it. For a young person to be harboring such deep, painful secrets and feeling so alone, "Just drowning in the rain" ("Runaway Train"), is like drowning in her own sorrow.

The fourth section of lyrics of "Runaway Train" is a very straightforward depiction of events and what it must seem like for a youth in these circumstances.

"and everything seems cut and dry
day and night
earth and sky
somehow I just don't believe it"

This part is describing the ability to be resilient, the ability of young children to tenaciously grip onto hope, even when it looks like there is nothing that can be done to change the situation and there is no one to help them. These events are as permanent as the "earth and sky" ("Runaway Train") to them, but they believe in their hearts that this can't be true, can't last forever.

The fifth section of lyrics goes on to bring the finality of what most runaways come to in the end, and the inevitable sadness and darkness that almost always descends upon them if they survive. It steals away their hope, strength, and resolve.

"bought a ticket for a runaway train
like a madman laughing at the rain
little out of touch little insane
it's just easier than dealing with the pain"

The first two lines of this section are better explained by the last two lines and claim that, as ridiculous as it was to have wanted to get on this "train," this young person has begun to lose the sense of self that had helped him escape in the beginning. The victim escaped from a world of agony and pain, only to have found a different type of isolation.

While the song itself describes the emotions from an abuse victim in the voice of a young child or young adult who became a runaway, the music video that was produced for it was a little more broad upon the subject of "lost" children. The music video, directed by Tony Kaye, partnered with the song and lyrics seamlessly. The video opens with a black screen with white words that stated "There Are Over One Million Youth Lost On The Streets Of America," and featured throughout the video are pictures of missing children. After the picture was shown, information about the victims was displayed, including their names and the years they were reported missing ("Runaway Train" Wikipedia).

The video plays images of many missing children who had run away or been taken or kidnapped, between

views of the band playing and performing. This video brought a very strong message to the rest of the world, helping to tell them what is happening around the globe every day. Although the music video was not originally intended to be a public announcement, it actually reunited many families. Remarkably, there were even some children who saw themselves within the video and returned home on their own ("Runaway Train" Wikipedia).

Because it had such a big impact in America, other videos were produced for the band that focused on missing children in the different parts of the world where Soul Asylum would be touring and performing. Depending on the country in which the band was performing, the new videos would show some of the missing children who were from that area. Soul Asylum did not produce its song "Runaway Train" and the music video for this specific purpose but to bring greater awareness to the public about how many missing children there are and to explain that many of them became runaways because of horrible home situations. Many people believe that young runaways leave left their homes because they don't like the rules imposed upon them by their parents or don't like getting grounded for skipping school. Soul Asylum wanted to change this image, and it had an enormous impact; an impact that spread around the world ("Runaway Train" Wikipedia).

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Catherine Patton

Your Heaven

Dismal grey of polluted fog surrounds us, you and I.
 We sit on a high girder in a floating city of desolation,
 ever being built, ever being destroyed.
 Is it Ramadi or Djibouti or someplace between?
 We don't know or care; visiting time for us
 carved from the war that rules this place.
 I hear the comforting resonance of your voice
 swinging a slow waltz through the air.
 The instant passes; comfort replaced by chaos,
 your voice replaced by random digital tones.
 Solitude replaced by speed.
 You're flying through the city, a maze of girders
 narrowing, narrowing...
 The flying platform you drive rolls just as your skateboard
 did,
 not so long ago.
 My gut twists with the nuance of every turn you make,
 just like it did before.
 I can never stop being your mother...
 You whip your flying platform to the girder beside me.
 As a boat, it sits floating in the grey swirls of air, silent
 and still.
 You step up to me; your shit-eating-grin betraying your
 pride.
 All you say is "Yeah..."
 My eyes open to consciousness; fear dissipates.
 I know I have seen your heaven.
 It is perfect.

Brien Reno

American Wolves

One of the biggest controversies in the United States today involves wolves. These misunderstood creatures have been considered the vile beings of the woods, ferocious hunters willing to do whatever it takes to get a meal. However, all the myths that surround wolves and depict them as terrible and frightening are false.

Portrayed in many fairytales as evil beings ready to eat the hero of the story, wolves seem to have a bad reputation among people. Before the first Europeans set foot in North America, Indians and wolves were abundant. The Indians and the wolves lived in harmony with one another, and the Indians would use techniques learned from the wolves to help them hunt. Then the Europeans came. The Europeans feared the wolf and thought of it as a savage hunter (*Wolves at Our Door*). Over time, the Europeans and the future citizens of the United States drove the wolf to near extinction. Today, the wolves of North America live mostly in Canada and Alaska.

The belief that wolves are savage beasts of the night is totally a falsehood. In reality, wolves are actually afraid and skittish of people. Nick Jans wrote an article in [Defenders of Wildlife](#) telling about his encounter with a wolf pack:

As it turned out, the wolves never came within a hundred yards and, after a curious investigation, completely ignored me. As I watched over the next three days, they drifted in and out of sight on the creased tundra flat that stretched across the valley floor. They howled, napped, played with sticks, scent-marked and groomed; they came and went singly and in pairs, passing around my camp as if it were a strange outcropping, part of the landscape. Neither threat nor prey, I was of no consequence. (Jans 18)

Jans goes on to say that there isn't a single death caused by a wild wolf on record. He says the deaths caused by wolves involve either a captive wolf who was fed by humans or a rabid wolf. It is obvious that wolves in the wild are no great threat to humans.

One of the most controversial issues in the United States today involves Alaskan wolves. Pilots licensed to shoot wolves from the air are paid \$150 by the Alaskan government for each wolf they kill under a new plan intended to protect their prey, including moose and caribou (Yardley). This is called aerial shooting. The Alaskan Department of Fish and Game Committee gives hunters special licenses to shoot wolves from the air. The hunters then board an airplane and go on an aerial hunt. The hunter, though, has all the advantage. Not only can he travel faster than the wolf, but he can also track the wolf's every movement from the air. Wolf hunts are

done in the winter when there is a lack of vegetation to provide cover for the wolves. Because of this, the wolf cannot run or hide from the hunter. Many times, a hunter will chase the wolf in a slow, low-flying aircraft, shooting all the time and finally running the wolf to exhaustion. The hunter then lands the plane near the exhausted wolf, where he will run out and shoot the helpless creature. Those who bring in the front paw of the killed wolf get \$150 dollars for the killing. One video on the web shows a wolf getting shot multiple times before the hunter finally brings him down. Such killings are definitely not what one would call a clean kill.

Webster defines "bounties" as rewards designed to encourage the killing of noxious animals, especially if offered by the government ("Conservation Groups Ask Judge"). The Alaskan government is giving hunters money to kill wolves. Bounties were made illegal in 1984. However, to get around this, the government is making excuses and calling the bounties an "incentive" to encourage hunters to help enforce predator control. They are claiming that the wolf population has grown and is destroying the moose and caribou population that the people of Alaska depend on for food and other necessities. The officials are also saying that the only course of action to take is predator control. They say that the wolf population has to be lowered by eighty percent to help the moose and caribou population recover. However, due to the cost of gas and poor flying conditions, hunters are having trouble killing the wolves. The officials say that an incentive must be provided to encourage hunters to conduct aerial shootings.

The unfortunate thing is that none of these statements made by the Alaskan government is true. First, biologists say that there are between 7,000 to 11,000 wolves in Alaska. There are over 1,000,000 caribou in Alaska (Jans 17). That is a ratio of 100 caribou for every wolf. How can the Alaskan government say that the natural resources of the land are diminishing because of wolves? This is quite an extreme ratio; especially since a whole pack of wolves can survive for weeks on one caribou (*Wolves at Our Door*). Not only that, but officials allow big game hunters to hunt the moose and caribou. Big game hunters usually come in from out of state and shoot the animals as trophies. If the Alaskan people depend on moose and caribou to survive, why are they allowing big game hunters to come in from out of state to shoot these animals?

People who go to Alaska to look for wolves rarely find them. One person talks about his trip to Alaska and his experience there:

Recently, while visiting Eagle, I heard continuous complaints from hunters and locals about the so-called decimation of moose from wolf predation. This mantra, preached throughout Alaska, gives one the impression that wolves are more abundant than mosquitoes. While listening to fantastic tales of

wolves gone wild, I watched an endless line of motorboats, jet boats, and even a hovercraft being unloaded into the river.

As wolves were so abundant, I looked forward to the chance of seeing one. But after a week on the river, I saw no wolves, no tracks or scat and heard no howls in the night. (Roberts)

Nick Jans tells more about his experience with not only wolves, but other creatures native to Alaska: "I've lost count of the bears, caribou and moose I've seen, but wolves are another story. Each encounter is fused into my memory" (15). It is quite apparent that wolves are more scarce than the Alaskan Government would have us believe. So why do they want these poor creatures eradicated?

The answer is not environmentally related to anything at all. The answer is the result of big corporations. Tourists pay thousands of dollars to large hunting businesses to schedule and go on so-called grand hunting trips. The tourists, mainly big game hunters, hunt for moose and caribou. Once the tourist has killed his animal, he has the choice of what parts of the animal he wants. He then pays for each animal he kills. Each animal is priced in the thousand dollar range. Wolves, however, prey on these animals and the hunting businesses feel the wolves are taking away their money. More caribou and moose mean more money for these businesses. Wolves not only are preying on these animals and taking them away from the businesses, but they are also keeping the moose and caribou population down. So what to do about it? The businesses' answer is to eliminate the wolves. Because sport hunting is a multimillion dollar business in Alaska, the government supports these businesses. The government, in cahoots with the big hunting corporations, covers their actions by telling the people that the moose and caribou population is dwindling. They then blame this problem on Alaska's top predator, the wolf. Now, due to recent legislation, not only is it legal for wolves to be shot from planes, but bears as well ("Alaska's War on Wildlife Persists"). Bears also prey on the moose and caribou and the officials feel that they also need to be eradicated.

Wildlife organizations fear that if aerial shootings continue in Alaska that other states will be encouraged to do the same. The only thing keeping the aerial shootings from happening in the lower 48 states is the fact that in those states, wolves are on the endangered species list. However, a proposal has been made to take the wolves off the list. If Congress approves, wolves may come to an end in the United States.

When will humans learn from their mistakes? It was because of humans that the dodo bird became extinct. The poor birds had never seen humans before and didn't know they were any threat. The birds walked right up to the people, not expecting to become their dinner. The same story goes with the passenger pigeon. Hunters shot them for dinner, not anticipating that if they

kept killing them, there just might not be any passenger pigeons left. Thanks to humans, buffalo were nearly driven to extinction. The same now goes for the wolves. People will just keep killing them until no wolves are left in North America. It will be when the wolves are gone that the people will regret killing them. It will be when they are gone that future generations will scoff at our ways. Why can't we take a tip from the past and prevent something from happening before it's too late?

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Sonja L. Trappe

Healthy Exercising

"He does not run to lose weight or become fit, or to prevent heart attacks. He runs because he has to. Because in being a runner, in moving through pain and fatigue and suffering, in imposing stress, in eliminating all but the necessities of life, he is fulfilling himself and becoming the person he is." – Dr. George Sheehan

I silently yell at myself for not going. I ask myself why I did not get up and just go. When I skip a day or two of not doing some type of exercise, I feel like I gain ten pounds and I am really angry with myself for a while. Sometimes when I go to the gym, I do not want to leave the gym for a couple of hours until my body tells me I have pushed it too far. I do not think I have a problem; I just want to keep myself in shape and healthy. I do sound a little obsessed, but do I really think I have an obsession with the gym? I only go to the gym five days a week as recommended.

Many people make a New Year's resolution to lose weight or look better in their bathing suit, but how often does a person have to go to the gym and exercise before she is considered healthy? That is a popular debate in this country, especially among college students. Many Universities are carefully watching students to monitor how much time they spend in the gym. (Davidson). I believe that it is very important to take care of your body. Too many people neglect their body by not staying active and eating healthy foods. I believe the main problem is that people are not educated well enough on the subject of physical fitness and healthy eating behaviors. There is a great deal of information available on this topic, but it can get confusing with all the recommendations and advice professionals and non-professionals give.

When I think about weight problems in this country, I picture a spectrum that on one end we have people who need to exercise more, and, on the other, people who exercise too much. I try to keep myself in the middle. It seems to be a hard place to find for most people, including me. All of the studies I reviewed for this paper conclude that it is a difficult situation to assess because everyone is different in their needs for physical activity (Keating, Guan, Pinero, and Bridges). There are plenty of articles on and attention paid to obesity, but a topic that is not considered often is how the number of people who are obsessed with exercise is a slowly growing concern. First let's look at how much exercise a person should be getting, according to a couple of research studies.

There has to be some agreement on the average weekly physical activity needed to live a healthy lifestyle. A person can get confused when trying to find a recommendation for how much and what type of exercise

to maintain for a healthier lifestyle. For an example, the Surgeon General Report recommends that people should get approximately thirty minutes of moderate to intense exercise three to five times each week (Keating, Guan, Pinero, and Bridges). Others say that each person should include at least thirty minutes of exercise every day. Yet another recommendation goes into detail about how much strength training and cardiovascular exercise each person should include in his daily activities (Keating, Guan, Pinero, and Bridges). Cardiovascular exercise would be easy to incorporate in daily activities by parking further away from the grocery store and walking the extra couple of feet, or by walking to the store altogether. Strength training would be difficult for most to fit into their daily schedules due to the fact that they would have to actually set aside time to do this physical activity. This discourages the majority of people. Since every person is different in his or her physical activity needs, I believe it is important for a person to seek professional advice when initially starting an exercise regimen. A professional trainer or even a family doctor can help a person get started by performing a fitness test on an individual (Davidson).

When researching articles on exercise, many results are focused on over-weight individuals. There is a small percentage of exercisers who exercise too often and are labeled as "exercise-dependent." There is a quote in one of the articles I stumbled upon: "Those who pursued physical activity when it could potentially compromise health or took precedence over elements of participants' social life are labeled pathological exercisers" (Garman, Hayduk, Crider, and Hodel). Some studies touch on the subject linking exercise dependency with eating disorders. A study published in the Journal of American College Health stated that the outcome was varied. The outcomes ranged between a low percentage of twenty-six and a higher seventy-seven percent (Garman, Hayduk, Crider, and Hodel). More studies should transpire in order to narrow these percentages and help focus on the cause of exercise dependency. I believe there is a close relationship between eating disorders and people who are addicted to exercise. From a former research paper I wrote on eating disorders, people who have an eating disorder are obsessed with how their body looks, which, in turn, leads to becoming obsessed with exercising in hopes of creating a body they will like. Since there is limited research on the link between these two obsessions, it is difficult to determine if a person who has an eating disorder develops exercise dependency or if a person who is exercise dependent develops an eating disorder.

What type of person is likely to become exercise dependent? Sometimes athletes are looked at as obsessive with their exercising. Athletes must keep be in top physical shape in order to participate in games. Most athletes were disqualified from studies because they were in training for the sport they were involved in.

Naturally athletes exercise extensively (Garman, Hayduk, Crider, and Hodel). Some researchers believe that athletes who train begin an unhealthy exercise addiction (Burgess and Pargman). There are many other theories as to why a person becomes obsessed. As mentioned earlier, there are very few studies on this subject and more studies need to be conducted. Some theories include the genetics theory, arousal theory, and the neurological theory. These theories will be discussed in brief detail later on in this essay.

Before discussing theories on why people become exercise dependent, an interesting study was conducted with the Sensation-Seeking scale. After the volunteers answered a series of questions, they were placed into one of the five categories. The first category is called "Thrill and Adventure Seeking." These are people who like the outdoors and sports. The second is the "Experience Seeking" person. These people like to experience new things such as travelling or, in more extreme cases, different and new drugs. "Disinhibition" is the third of the five. Finding this person at wild parties or gambling would not be out of the norm. People who are bored easily and do not like the same thing repeated over would fall under the category of "Boredom Susceptibility." The last category is the "General Sensation Seeking" person. This is the average person who enjoys social stimulation and a more mild excitement (Pargman and Burgess). I believe the Sensation-Seeking scale is a useful tool in assessing whether or not an individual is an extreme exerciser, and it also lays the groundwork for determining why he choose to be so active over other aspects of life.

Diseases such as cancer are known to be passed down from one generation to another. Just as genetics play a role in certain diseases and traits in a person, genetics are also thought to play a role in exercise dependency. Researchers say that if a child has parents who exercise, even one parent, then that child has a higher chance of becoming addicted to exercising (Burgess and Pargman). I read an article on the biological reasons why people become addicted to exercise, which included evidence that genetics play a role. After reading the article, I thought the study was focused more on the influence parents have on how their children exercised than the actual genetic link. I believe that along with genetics, a child also learns certain behaviors from his parents. If the parents are exercising at home, going to a gym, or even playing sports, the children learn these behaviors and carry them throughout their own lives. The same is true for parents who do not stay healthy or lead a healthy lifestyle; their children will also pick-up on those behaviors.

The Optimal Level of Arousal theory is one of the best theories I researched for this paper. I agree more with this theory than with most others. The Optimal Arousal theory is an idea that a person becomes addicted to the stimulation that occurs throughout the

body. When “feel-good” hormones are released in the body, a person experiences a type of stimulation she will push, through exercise, to experience again. The hormonal rush is a physical and neurological arousal. Stimulations are not necessarily conscious and each person has her own level of stimulation. One person might need a small amount of exercise in order to receive the same stimulation that another person experiences at a longer amount of exercise (Pargman and Burgess).

There are subgroups of arousal theories. Personality is among the subgroups. Personality is believed to play a role in exercise dependency. People who cannot handle mentally stressful situations are found to be non-exercisers. Just the opposite of non-exercisers, people who exercise on a regular basis are believed to handle stress well (Pargman and Burgess).

Exercise dependency is considered an addiction. A person who is addicted to exercise usually experiences the same side effects as a person addicted to a drug when he is deprived of exercise. The person will experience increased anxiety, restlessness, increased sexual tension, and impaired sleep. This study also showed that individuals who are considered to be “moderate” exercisers experienced these symptoms in a milder manner. What I found most interesting is a little comment on that study. The researchers found it difficult to convince people who exercise daily to quit for a month. The people reported that they would not give up the “well-being” feeling for anything, not even money! When they did find people who would give up exercising for a month, the individuals said that they felt less healthy and well. Researchers also found that these individuals were more emotional and had a harder time dealing with stress (Burgess and Pargman).

When more studies are conducted and more research has been evaluated, there will be more theories and information on how someone becomes obsessed with exercising. Until these studies are performed, there are a few tips on how to spot someone who is becoming addicted to exercise. People are increasing their exercise and workout time if they seclude themselves from others and/or if they are exercising even when they are not physically or mentally well (McGough). Some signs are easy to catch while others are not so easy. Some of these signs are as follows: if a person utilizes the same machines and continues the same routine for weeks or months at a time, if the person talks about her weight and diet often, and if the person is canceling plans with friends and family to go to the gym and exercise. These are all warning signs of a person who may be developing a dependency on exercising (McGough).

After the warning signs there should be a type of intervention. Faculties on college campus gym facilities have been holding seminars to inform students about the danger of over-exercising. Some faculty and fellow students have made comments about how difficult it is to

approach someone and talk to the person about his exercise behaviors. Most of the people who have been approached become defensive and deny that they are addicted to exercising (Davidson). In public gym facilities, managers have been posting warnings. If a person is under a certain body mass index he must have a doctor send in permission to “Okay” him for exercise. Some gyms, such as the popular Bally’s, has gone to the extreme of mandatory medical screenings before a person is allowed to join that facility (McGough).

Exercising is one of the better lifestyle choices to make. It is not until a person becomes addicted that is can be dangerous. A person can dehydrate, get a concussion due to passing out and bumping his head on a piece of equipment, or a person can pull muscles and tendons (McGough). These reasons should be enough to alter the way a campus gym or a public gym facility considers their students and clients. These injuries can cause a huge liability to the school or business (McGough).

It is important to watch for exercise addiction in the college-aged population. College students who begin an exercise regimen tend to continue this regimen until late in life. If a student does not start an exercise regimen then that student is likely to not start an exercise regimen later in life (Garman, Hayduk, Crider, and Hodel). It is important to carefully watch a student’s behavior in order to intervene when necessary. The same concept goes for public gym owners. If the client is showing signs of exercise dependency then immediate action should be taken.

Exercise dependency or exercise addiction is an uncommon story. Scientific theories have been published on how and why a person becomes addicted to exercising. Physical reasons and mental reasons both play a role in this addiction. A person addicted to exercise exhibits the same symptoms as a person who is addicted to a drug. The most predominate symptom is the need to have exercise even when a person has to cancel plans with a family member or friend. A person finds a way to fulfill the exercise need. Intervention is a must in helping a person who is addicted to exercise.

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Bogdan Volchik

Remember

01 – Go Play Son: You're Young, Go Play...

My father would often tell me a story about his grandfather. Maybe it was his uncle. It's been far too long for me to remember the exact details now. Uncle, grandfather, long lost brother, hell maybe it was just some random guy– who really cares now?

There are two men. One has a toothache. The other is borderline alcoholic. The man with the toothache is afraid of the dentist. He decides to buy a bottle of vodka and invite his borderline alcoholic friend over for a drink. "Come by at quarter to midnight," the man told his friend.

At eleven o'clock that night the man started drinking. After two shots he tied fishing line snugly around the tooth that was giving him a bother. After four shots he tied the other end of the fishing line to his bedroom door. After six shots the man laid in his bed and made sure the fishing line was taut between his sloshed mouth and the bedroom door. After eight shots it was eleven thirty and the man had passed out in his bed.

At quarter to midnight his friend, quite punctual for a man who was inebriated for most of his waking moments, came into his house. Sure enough, eventually the man grabbed hold of the doorknob to his sleeping friend's bedroom and swiftly yanked the door open, tearing the man's problematic tooth out of his mouth.

With the tooth problem solved, the two drank, dropped, and that's the story.

I always wondered why the man took the extra step to fall asleep. I'm sure after being drunk his friend could have just yanked the tooth out; no worries, no problem. Did he really require the peace of mind that ignorance brought? Did he really need to be dumb drunk and asleep to get over the self-proclaimed tragedy that was the simple removal of a tooth?

"We saw it coming. Anyone who says they didn't lived under a rock. The guy knew his tooth would be ripped from his mouth. He set up the procedure. Then the pieces fell into place. Serbia, Iraq, Uzbekistan, North Korea – you name a third world country with a chip on their shoulder and they were involved."

"Gonna get you!" Two boys ran in under one side of my tent and out the other. I didn't see them, but the sound of their bare feet against the sand was enough to know. I dismissed the intrusion and continued talking to whoever was still listening.

We set it up. We fell asleep. And it happened. Maybe we thought it wouldn't hurt as much if we didn't look.

"I'm sure when it started happening some redneck sitting in his piss soaked recliner under a Confederate flag got up and started 'hollering' about how Bush was right, how Iraq had nuclear weapons and how they should have elected that Texas queer for a third term."

I let out that same disappointed sigh I had become familiar with over the last several decades.

"You've never seen television. We could see pictures from far off in the world. There wasn't much coverage – eh, there weren't many pictures to show of the destruction when it began. Bits. Pieces. After about a week the broadcasts stopped. After another week power started going out. I know you don't understand most of these terms – heh, how the hell do you explain electricity to someone who's been born to the life of a backwater spear-chucking tribal?"

"I get it grandpa – I read the old pictures."

"So you're a smart son of a bitch, eh? Smart enough to listen when someone's tryin' to tell you something?"

"Sorry grandpa," I could tell the boy was somewhere to the left in front of me. Probably sitting cross-legged and absorbing what I was saying. He'd be the first.

"The first after forty-six long years," I had started speaking my thoughts aloud.

"What grandpa?"

"Shup boy, I gotta finish or you'll leave here confused. I'm gonna be poetic about it because it's a damned shame you'll never be able to experience the beauty I once abhorred during my education."

"Okay grandpa," the boy had to be around eleven to thirteen years old. Bright, considering the circumstances.

"The reasons were the same as they had always been. Purely human ones. Greed. Petty, fucking greed. For money, oil, power, territory. It didn't matter. A tidal wave of nuclear fire rose out of the void we had developed in our hearts and consumed everything it touched. Continents were swallowed whole. The end of the world happened just like that man's tooth being pulled. It was quick. It was painless. We set it up, went to sleep, and it was over in the morning."

"What were you doing grandpa?"

"I was writing. I was older than you but still just a boy. I wanted to decide what to do with my, hah, 'my life.' I wrote down a sentence, 'I am' and then I walked away. I knew that when I came back whatever I filled in after those words would help me realize what I would have to do. I came back, I finished my sentence, and I never needed to decide what to do with my life. After I finished the sentence, I felt the shockwave. I turned on the television. And it began."

"What did you write, grandpa?"

"I am a writer. A writer of fictions," I let out a long painful sigh.

"Go play son. You're young, go play..."

02 – Please. I Hate Drinking Alone.

I could feel the warm December sun beating on my eyelids. The weather was backwards. Summer was winter, winter was summer. After people stopped hiding and running in fear they caught on to these new little details about the changed world. The sunsets stayed the soft, amber rose that I grew up with. I hope they're still that same beautiful color now.

Everything was a warm pink. I hadn't opened my eyes in thirteen years. I hadn't needed to. My children took care of our settlement. The elderly took care of the manageable children. Everyone played their role. We hadn't been disturbed in years.

These mountains were hard to get to. Even harder to get into. Especially during the winter months. August was a frozen hell for us. I was surprised we hadn't been found after raging those fires all through the night to keep warm. Then again, who was looking? Hell, horrid question. I can only hope nobody.

"Grandpa, are you telling stories again today?"

The kid would have annoyed me at a younger age. Now what better did I have to do with my days?

"Bring your grandpa a bowl of water – I've gotta wash my face."

"Okay grandpa," I heard the front flap of the tent blow open as the young boy darted out to fetch the wide wooden bowl. He brought it in, I dipped both hands in and splashed the water against my face, "sit down somewhere boy." I could feel the wrinkles. I had never seen them. I'm not sure if I wanted to.

"Your great-grandfather set us up here, son. The last bit of gas we had we used to steal supplies from the towns and gather the people we trusted. I remember uncovering the van – it had a blanket of leaves on it. The bastard robbers and thieves had interest in vehicles. Your great-granddad was a smart man. We probably spent more energy getting rid of the vehicles in the end than we did carrying all the supplies up the side of this mountain. We must have driven more than twenty miles out after setting up here, just to keep people from looking. The car went into the lake, by the way. It might still be there."

"That was more than forty years ago, boy. We brought the bunnies, we brought the chickens, we brought the seeds and whatever else we could carry."

"Why here, grandpa?"

"Your great-granddad used to read about Lewis and Clark traveling through these mountains as a young boy. He didn't always live in this country. I remember him telling me how amazed he was that he could be walking the same ground as the heroes he read about."

"Yulie!" A woman's voice pierces through the tent.

"Mom wants me, grandpa."

"Heh, Yulie... do you even like that name?"

"I want your name, grandpa."

"Maybe you'll get it for Christmas tomorrow, Yulie," the boy rushed out of my tent and I laid myself down

again and waited. Waited for another inquisitive mind, another energetic boy to rush in here and absorb the knowledge of the "before-time." I wanted another to revel with me in nostalgic glory.

But nobody ever came. I fumbled around for the bottle and pressed my lips against it. The coarse alcohol from the still ripped a path down my throat. This was nothing like what I used to drink. I put down the bottle and muttered, "nobody but that boy Yulie." He would come back tonight. I was sure of it. Or maybe I was hopeful for it.

Come back, grandson of mine. Come back and get drunk off of my memories with me. Please. I hate drinking alone.

03 – Run.

I was the son of the founder of this settlement. His only living son. I watched my brothers die of greed, disease, and war. One killed when the pillagers started raiding the farms.

Money meant nothing after the world burned. Food became a commodity. Food that could replenish itself even more so. Livestock was coveted. Better alive than dead.

They came in the night. Four men from a neighboring home a few miles away. We kept a scarecrow dummy in one of the windows poised as though half asleep. They went for him first. I was a decent shot. Even at night. One I wounded, the other I killed. I then killed the wounded one.

I had killed before. The first time made me nervous. After it happened I realized how easy it was. My brother shot at what we thought was the last one, the third one.

I thought the one running was the last of them. God dammit, I should have known better. The fourth one pierced my brother in the back with a knife as he fired a few rounds into the night at the runner. My brother was just a kid. Just a young kid with a gun trying to help keep the family safe.

There wasn't much we could do.

Disease took the younger brother. He suffered. We all did. It was worse watching him struggle knowing we could do nothing.

The one that still hurts me most is the one who died that night when the cities were bombed. None of these bastards deserve to know the story behind my family. I don't need their bullshit sympathy. They don't understand. And they don't deserve to. Nobody can know what I know. Father began "the move" then.

That's why I'm in this tent. It's why I'm alone. It's a reason my eyes have been closed for thirteen years. The more spiritual fucks in this settlement think I choose blindness because I'm a "wise man." I don't care what they use to get through their day. If it helps, fine. The simplicity of this life is its comfort.

My sons don't disappoint me, they just don't surprise me like they should. They're my god damned sons. Why aren't they the way I was?

"Father it's time for the feast," the oldest of my three sons came in and took my hand. He led me out and sat me at the head of the long table. The head of the table: this is where my father sat. My sons do not have privilege to sit here. Nobody does. Nobody can until they can sacrifice what I have for us, for this.

"Why rip a tired old man from his rest?" I hear the muffled chuckles from however many people are here now. I didn't care for the trivial information, like population, about this camp. "Forty-two years ago today we held our first Christmas here. The meaning of the holiday has faded and the abstract concepts that create its purpose remain. We are a family and we are grateful for another year together," I recited the usual sentimental, this-is-what-you-want-to-hear bullshit. I had to. Times now were simple and hard, no longer complex and easy.

"But this Christmas is a special one. Today marks the one hundredth birthday of the man who founded this settlement. Words don't do justice to what we owe him – so eat, drink and remember. Amen."

It was another gathering. Another feast. Another toast that would soon be forgotten. I was walked back into my tent, helped into my bed, and immediately interrupted from what I would have hoped to be a sound drunk sleep.

"Grandpa, why do you keep your eyes closed?"

"Hrm... boy do you ever think to leave an old man to his peace?"

"But grandpa, is it because you're blind?"

"I choose not to see son. I'm waiting for something. And the transition to my longer sleep will be easier, I bet. And holy hell, boy, I was damn sure I'd have a dream about something nice tonight – the booze was better than usual."

"Grandpa what are you waiting for?" Annoying little kids. Who would have known that behind my grumpy façade I actually enjoyed this? He reminded me of what it was like before humanity decided to exterminate life on this planet. The innocence, the naivety, and that youthful charm helped me recall brighter days. "I might be waiting for you, Yulie."

"Yea? Grandpa can I ask you somethin'?"

"Go ahead son."

"I see stars moving and shining in the sky. They're really big stars and they move fast, grandpa." A child's imagination is a beautiful thing. Time for a wish?

"They're getting bigger grandpa; why are the stars getting bigger?"

At that moment I felt the chill of thirteen years race sharply down my spine. I felt the chill because I remembered the faint humming that I heard when I closed my eyes thirteen years ago. This time the sound didn't go away.

“Grandpa?”

I opened my eyes.

The helicopters closed in from the distance. The spotlights began searching for our settlement. I blinked and a tear forced its way down my cracked face. Thirteen years blind was not enough of an offering to prevent this.

“Yulie.” He looked like I did before men turned the world inside out.

“Yea grandpa?” he answered eagerly. He couldn’t see the tears on my face.

“Run.”

Yuliya Yauseichyk

Struggle Stays

Diapers, breast milk, baby powder
fill the air in the room.
Shadows of the rocking chair, blanket, teddy bear
Reflect on the wall from the moon.

The melody from the music mobile,
Hanging from the crib,
Calms the baby down
And puts him deep to sleep.

I lean over the fragile body
Consumed with disgust in me.
The rape night memory crunched in him
Cannot set me free.

Punches, wet leaves, bloody lip
Brown bench and a breath of beer
the pain to be a woman
and the thought of my mother awakens the shame
and the feeling of fear.

I cover his face with the pillow,
hoping he will fly away.
Seventeen and a single mom
with the sight of a rapist’s son
everyday...

Music stops. Silence awakens me.
I tuck him in, check his breath, kiss goodnight.
Struggle stays.
I will start fresh.
It will happen today.
