

LEGACY 12

DRIVE

2013



DRIVE

LEGACY

12

Cover  
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**Cody Hudzik**

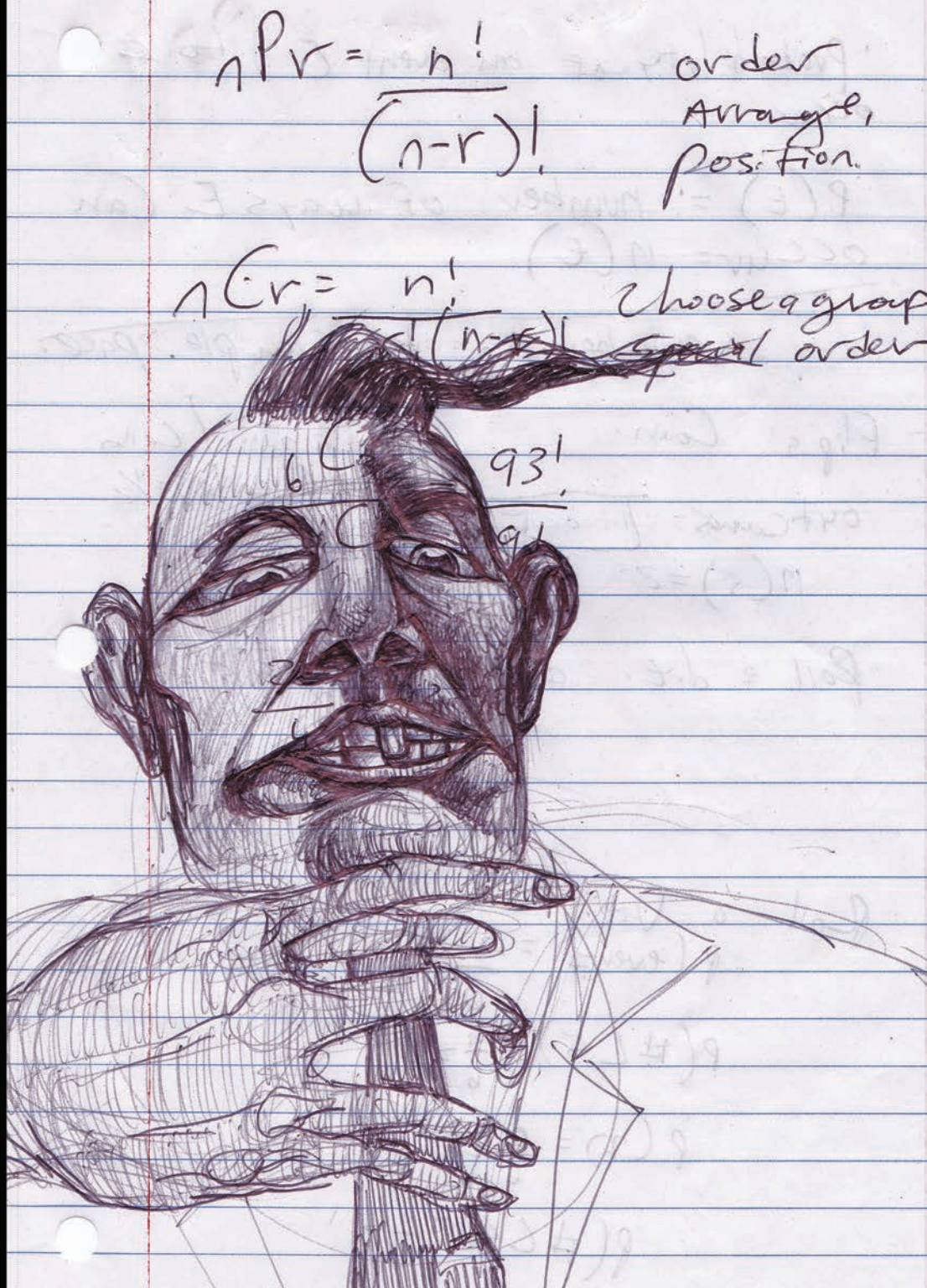
**Manphin**

**Rafael Nuñez**



# New Tie

Rafael Nuñez



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## Voice of The Editor

Just as the disappearing horizon continually expands to greet us as we draw near, Reading Area Community College opens to invite those that are driven to traverse unacquainted roads before them.

Something has inspired us to be here;  
something has coerced us to get out of our comfort zone;  
something has influenced us to become better than we were yesterday;  
something has compelled us to succeed.

That something, although it is different for each and every one of us, is drive. What drives students brings together this year's *Legacy 12*.

I am proud to have had the opportunity to meet and work with this year's Legacy staff. The works presented within *Legacy 12* are a sample of the impressions that individuals leave behind for other travelers to witness. They represent the culmination of inspiration and achievement of students. The art, photography, research essays, and literary works within this volume of *Legacy 12* exemplify the dedication of those who attend Reading Area Community College.

*Legacy 12* opens with a powerful creative non-fiction story about the drive to live. And, I am proud to announce for the first time in the history of *Legacy*, we published a play, "The Fractions of Our Lives," which explores the controversial topic of hydro-fracturing, a process of extracting natural gas from layers of shale. Also included is a poem inspired by the students posting answers around campus to the question "What Drives You?" *Legacy* Layout and Design Manager Kellie Collins arranged the answers into a collaborative poem. Artwork and photos wind readers through the pages, such as the winding road of "The Unknown," the quiet patina of "Charcoal Still Life," and the brash attitude of "Blaaah!" Make sure to watch out for "Manfin," one of my favorites. The Legacy staff selected these contrasting yet complementary works because of the works' ability to relate to the drive within us while representing our individuality.

For those intrigued by history, the staff included two researched essays about US mid-nineteenth century history. One essay "The Underground Railroad in Berks County" describes African American and abolitionists figures assisting runaway slaves to freedom through Berks County, and the other "Life in Berks County: The Early 1860s" discusses Berks County's role in the Civil War.

So what drives you?  
What is your motivation?  
Do you know?

Take a tour through *Legacy 12* and see what motivates others. You might find something you have in common with one of the dedicated individuals whose works adorn this scenic road trip.

I hope you enjoy the ride,  
Richard DiGirolamo

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## Acknowledgements

The Staff of *Legacy 12* would like to gratefully acknowledge all those who made this publication possible. We are sincerely thankful to all of those who submitted work for consideration. Their art, photography, and literary works are a tribute to their determination and drive.

We would like to thank our faculty advisors Jodi Corbett and Dawn Gieringer, whom without their incredible dedication and drive, this publication would not have been possible. Their leadership, flexibility, and patience are a gift to us, and we are exceptionally thankful to them both.

A special thank you goes out to staff member Kellie Collins whose dedication to *Legacy 12* has personified the very essence of this year's theme. Her drive is an inspiration to the staff and it has been a pleasure working with her.

We would like to thank Sue Gelsing for her dedication to organizing all of the student activities at Reading Area Community College; we are extremely grateful for her guidance and patience throughout this year's publication process. We also extend our thanks to all of the faculty members for educating, supporting, and fostering drive in the students; their dedication has helped make this publication and many bright futures possible.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the administration at Reading Area Community College for creating and maintaining an institution for us to gather, learn, and grow together and as individuals.

## Staff

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# A COLLABORATIVE POEM: DRIVES

Kellie Collins

I was asked what drives me.

Well, I believe it is money and free gifts.

Hell, even my car.

Many possibilities there are to obtain.

giving me the confidence which I need to regain

In fact, my family,

my children and my future all render

great drive.

But, it is the faith in my God who'll

see to it that I safely arrive.

So now,

I must ask...

“What Drives You?”

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During fall semester, we put post-it notes on bulletin boards, sent tweets, and advertised on campus monitors: *What Drives You?* Many students wrote words of inspiration, which helped me in creating A Collective Poem: Drives. So, behalf of the students of Reading Area Community College, I bring you their voice, ideas, thoughts, but most importantly -their drive!

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# Final Departure

Catherine Mahoney

\*The names of some characters have been changed for their protection.

My heart was pounding hard inside of my chest as I ran through the parking lot, away from my teenaged assailants. It was just fifty more feet until freedom-the safety of my house where my mother waited with open arms. She would sit and listen, wiping my tears away as I told her of the hell I endured at the hands of ruthless teenagers, kids who relentlessly teased me because I was shy, because I wore a wig which covered sporadic bald patches on my head. An auto immune disease had waged war on my body, targeting my white blood cells, making me a walking punching bag. My mother tried to call the school and intervene but it only made things worse.

She was my beacon in the darkness of my pre-pubescent abyss, sheltering me from the outside world (sometimes a little too much). My parents adopted me when they were in their late forties, after years of trying to conceive children of their own with out success. My father, A New York City taxi cab driver who worked fourteen hours a day, was never around. My brother was a teenager and we often fought, forcing my mother to wedge herself between us, physically shielding me from his anger. My mother, severely overweight, struggling with depression and battling high blood pressure, was uncomfortable with leaving the house.

It was the night before my eighth grade field trip, a night that would change my young life forever. The doctors, with their coffee breath and sullen expressions, called it a massive stroke which left my mother in a deep sleep they called a coma. The hospital walls were a pale, cold green. The machines beeped and hissed, as an accordion compressed, forcing my mother's chest to rise and then fall. I grew up in all of those ten minutes that I stood there kissing my mother's soul good bye. My innocence was snatched away in that very instant. I knew all too well what it was like to be an adult with a loss of faith. Life as I knew it would never be the same again.

Everyone said the service was beautiful, but all I could remember was the overwhelming stench of cheap flowers that permeated my nose, raping my nostrils with that horrid odor which to this day still nauseates me. After the house was empty and all of the I'm so sorry Catherine's and she was such a good woman's began to dissipate from my head, I realized that I was utterly alone. There I sat alone in a house filled with remnants of a Christmas that would now never be: my mother's macramé trees, the half-decorated Christmas tree, unopened gifts, Christmas cards strung from the ceiling with red yarn and a



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picture of our family on the wall. Everything suddenly faded into the background, as I zoomed in on the label of the whiskey bottle in front of me on the kitchen table, the same table that was once filled with my mother's holiday feast—a perfectly cooked turkey, homemade stuffing, my mother's famous cheesecake and tons of other treats made with motherly love.

The laughter, which used to resonate within those four walls was just a distant memory now, still echoed inside of my head. I took one last look around the empty room and made a decision that would lead me down a dark road, a desolate road that I would walk alone for the next sixteen years. Slowly, I brought the glass to my lips and with a desperate attempt to wash all of my pain away; I threw back the poison. I shuttered at the sour taste and the burning sensation inside of my throat and chest and then it came: the feeling of comfort that I had been longing for. I needed a way to escape this nightmare and I had found it at the bottom of a whiskey bottle. Over the next three years this warm feeling had come in many forms: a joint, a line and finally a needle. By the time I was seventeen, heroin addiction had brought me to my knees—deteriorating my body, desecrating my soul, diminishing my hope, tearing my family apart and ultimately rendering me powerless. I felt as if my only solution was suicide.

*Dear Anyone Who Fucking Cares,                      August 1993*

*I have made a decision. I am going to be no more. If you are reading this then I have succeeded. I can no longer take the pain. I have become a slave to the needle. I just wish I never said yes when it was offered. So, now these are the last words I will ever write. If I could go back in time to that night of my sixteenth birthday and say no I would. I know that people have tried to help. Dad, you need to know that this is not your fault. You did the best you could after Mom died. It's just that I needed to find a way to escape the pain.*

*I am so sorry it has come to this. I have a plan and it will be painless. I will not go into gruesome details, just know I have thought this through and an overdose of pills is the easiest way to go. I want to be cremated just like Mom. I do not want anyone to cry over my grave. Do not cry for me, you have all suffered enough.*

*Love, Catherine*

This note inhabited a special sleeve inside of my wallet and would soon see the light of day. I memorized its contents, like my own private eulogy. The words raced through my head as I sat on the edge of the old tattered mattress. Crimson pain was dripping from the crevices in my arms, arms that were now merely portals for Junk. I possessed the marks indicative the entity which would infiltrate every aspect of my life from that day forward. The devil himself took the form of a pentagram between my breasts and an inverted cross between my sharp shoulder blades. My freshly branded skin pounded

# Safe Landing

Cody Hudzik



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beneath my Hole tee shirt. From across the room, Courtney Love eyed me down. There she hung in all her glory, larger than life, 8 by 10 with torn corners and a look of disgust on her face. In the background, her husband Kurt was inviting me to join him in a Lake of Fire. I was drowning in that same lake, and I knew the only thing that would extinguish this agony was sitting in that pill bottle I had stolen two days earlier from my girlfriend's mother.

Those tiny yellow Valium, combined with ten bags of heroin, made it possible for me to be branded with a blow torch and needle without losing consciousness completely, the night prior. I zoned in on the name on the bottle, which was not mine. As I stared at that bottle it became clear to me that I had no name. I had no purpose. I was a nothing, merely a lump of useless flesh with no soul. I was the embodiment of darkness, a vampire consumed with an insatiable hunger for junk. My existence was meaningless. With this revelation I slowly began to rise off the bed. I knew what had to be done.

Reassured that I would evade the sickness for a few hours, my mind reverted back to the words in my final note, "I was a slave to the needle." I had to follow through with my plan and I had to do it before I sobered up and lost the courage. While preparing my final shot I had a vivid glimpse of "The Last Supper." My mother had a hideous knock off of the painting hanging over our couch. I was a junkie version of Jesus, as I flicked the remaining contents out of the waxed paper bag with the words "black death" inscribed on the side. This was my Last Supper. Unlike Jesus, who was sharing a wholesome meal with his apostles before his death, I was indulging in the poison which was about to lead me to my own suicide. I, unlike Jesus, would not be resurrected to come back as a savior of the world. I was no martyr. I was simply someone who chose to use heroin and had ultimately fallen victim to an evil addiction in which I saw no other escape besides death.

I salivated as I set up my final fix. I hit a vein on the first shot. I closed my eyes as I felt my mother reach down from heaven and embrace my limp body. I will be with you soon, I whispered into the deafening silence. The next thing I remember is looming over bottles of Tylenol p.m. in the grocery store. I stood there swaying in my oversized jeans trying to hide from the eye in the sky. I was an expert shop lifter. My deep pockets were the perfect size to conceal the things I refused to pay for. The bright lights in the store burned my corneas and it became hard to focus on the task at hand.

Suddenly I faded to black. I heard a familiar humming from aisle 2, and I was drawn by curiosity to go explore it. Overhead I heard Michael Bolton delivering a message thick with foreshadowing. "How am I Supposed To Live Without You?" I stood there frozen, much like the peas and pizza which surrounded me in the icy coolers. It was cold and I was shivering from the inside out. There at the end of aisle 2 was a familiar old brown recliner in the lounging position. I shook my head violently from side to side in order to awaken myself from this nightmare. I spent nights as a child curled up on the arm of

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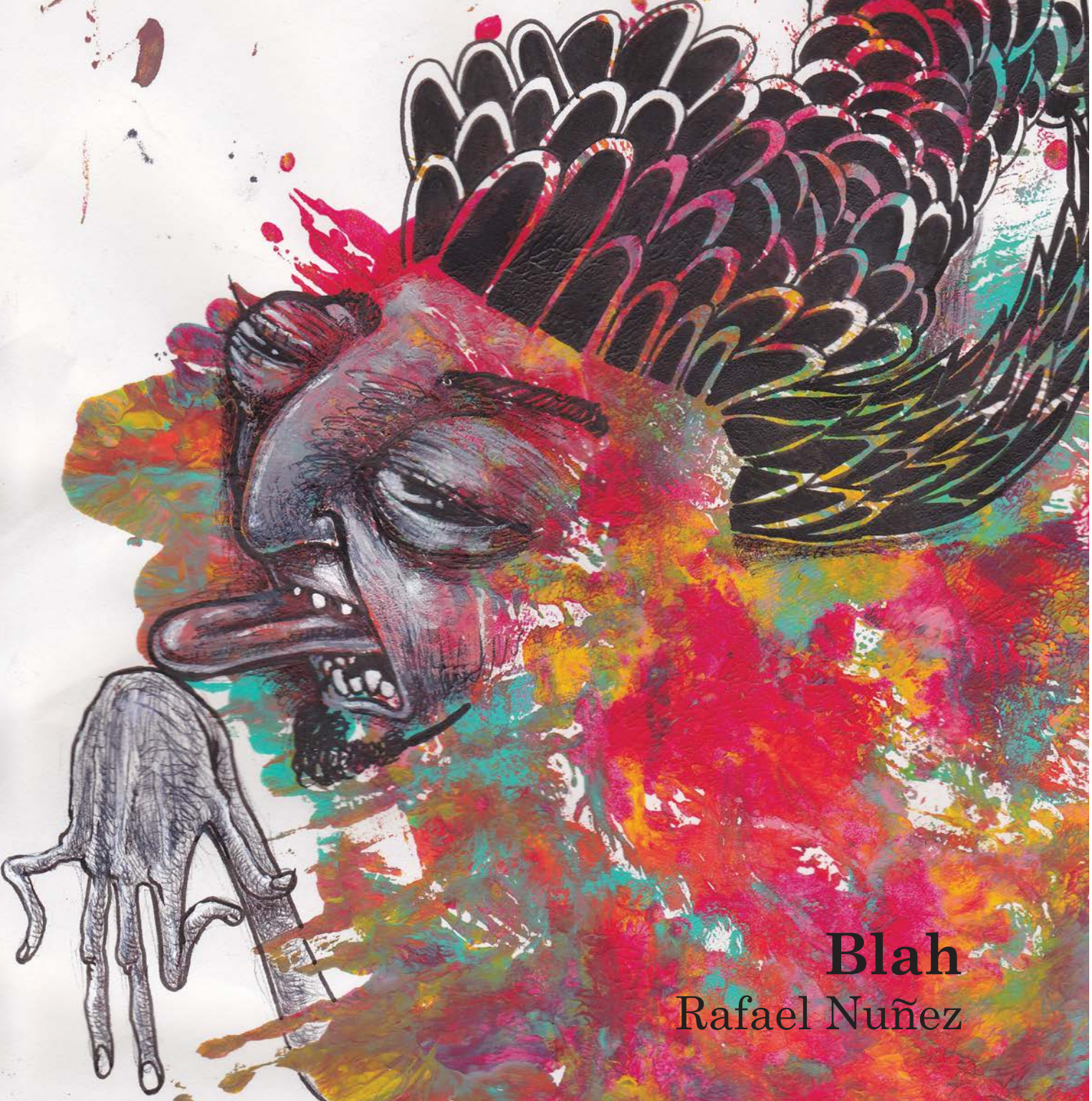
a chair much like that as my father told me stories of three little pigs and a boy named Jack and his bean stalk. I walked slowly down the aisle in fear of who I might find sitting in it. My feet dragged with the weight of a thousand bricks. As I grew closer the humming became all encompassing.

The humming was soft and sweet, drawing me in like the pied piper. Just as I came upon the chair I was horrified with what I saw. No, it couldn't be! It was my father! There he was in his slippers and ratty plaid robe. The image of him brought tears to my eyes. He was old and tired, skin sagging under his eyes like two shopping bags. His face was sullen and contained no reaction to my presence. Then I looked over his shoulder, as I had done as a child so many times before to see what he was reading so intently. The paper was mostly blank with except for one lonely section. It was the obituaries. I put all the effort I could muster to squint hard enough to make out the name on the page. Right there in black and white was my soon to be fate, and his. CATHERINE J. MAHONY, OF HOLTSVILLE N.Y. ....Oh my God, wake up! Wake the fuck up NOW!

Pale as a ghost and sweating fiercely, I came out of my drug induced stupor, in front of the sleeping aids. My breath was quick and forced. As much as the vision had saddened me I would not be deterred. I had grown accustomed to blacking out in strange places. It was what my life had become. My father would be better off if he didn't have a junkie for a daughter. I snatched my manner of death from the shelf and shuffled out. Reading the label ensured me that this was the way to go. Let's see, a fifth of vodka, five bags of heroin, a bottle of Tylenol p.m. and who knows how many Valium already floating around in my unsuspecting system would definitely do the trick.

I sat there already numb in the parking lot ingesting the pills, washing it all down with the alcohol I had stolen from my dad's liquor cabinet the week before. I do not remember putting the key in the ignition, let alone actually driving my car. I recall a voice talking to me but I cannot recall who it was. My mind was violated with hazy flashes- Slow on curve, 15mph, then, two yellow lines twisting like caution tape in the wind. My brain was on auto pilot as it commanded my foot to hit the gas. Then, like a tiny square which grew bigger and bigger the billboard called out to me, taunting me to come closer. Instantly by body was thrust forward violently and then I was forced to a complete stop. The sounds of creaking metal and shattering glass settled inside my eardrums. I felt my body collapse into a heap, dressing my steering wheel like a bloody curtain. I was in and then I was out. A strong voice called into me from the sharp hole where my windshield once was." Are You.....?" Darkness, that's all there was. My mother was not there with arms outstretched. It was pitch black and cold.

"Can you hear me? Catherine, can you hear me? It's Dad!"



**Blah**  
Rafael Nuñez

# Misunderstood



Jillian Hyde

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I could hear him but I was unable to speak. My throat felt like I had been gargling with razor blades. My limbs were rendered motionless. I became painfully aware of my body, tied to a bed, with tubes coming out of me like plastic barbed wire, fastening me to a machine that was breathing for me. I was covered in thick black ooze. The charcoal they had force fed me stained the sheets and gown I wore like the black death I had forced into my veins.

I did not know what had happened. Where is my mother? She was supposed to be cradling me in her arms and stroking my hair, welcoming me home. She was nowhere to be found. Instead standing there in the place I had reserved for her was my entire family. The first face I could make out was my brother's. It was the first time in my life I saw emotion on his hardened face. My brother was nineteen when my mother died. He was blessed with more time. I was only given twelve years that were ripped away from me in a horrific instant. I hated him! He was never there to comfort me the nights I would lay awake in my bed sobbing uncontrollably for my mother. He was never there then, and now I looked passed him like a ghost who was just as transparent now as he ever was. He tried to communicate his remorse, but I rendered myself voluntarily deaf to his empty words. He stepped closer and seemed to materialize himself enough to speak.

“Hey, you’re awake. Thank God. We called the whole family. The doctors said you might not make it.” He spoke like someone who loved me. He spoke like he actually gave a shit. This was not Donny. This was not the same brother who used me as his verbal punching bag my whole life.

I was catapulted backwards through time as I drifted in and out of the room. It was a bitter cold night in January of 1990. Donny had been out at some seedy bar with his wife to be, and I had lost my house key. There I stood shivering on our front porch, as I waited on him to let me into my own personal prison I had a horrible flash back. I gazed over at our fence which was still broken in two, the fence my mother had smashed through, the night she had a massive stroke and her mind was on auto pilot and commanded her foot to hit the gas. I was ripped back to reality by tires screeching up the gravel driveway like nails on a chalk board.

That night Donny was in a rage. He was angry because he had to leave his friends to come home and let the poor little orphan into her house of pain. What I remembered most vividly was the feeling of sheetrock as it crumbled over my head. I was covered in a sheet of white dust praying and pleading for my life. Just one more inch and that gaping hole in the wall could’ve been my head.

At thirteen years old it is hard to comprehend the intense emotions that are associated with the grieving process. The only outward emotion my brother was capable of displaying was anger. My brother was a mastermind when it came to masking his true feelings. Beneath all of the rage he was actually just as broken on the inside as I was. Donny was a masked man, never revealing his identity in fear he would become vulnerable. His jealousy over the closeness between my mother and I lurked just below

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the surface. His regret and remorse over never really being there to care for my mother devoured him from the inside out. This was the unresolved pain that ultimately ended up destroying our already strained relationship. This shell of a man who stood over me as I cowered in that corner beneath the hole in the kitchen wall never shed a tear but I shed enough for the both of us.

I reentered my awareness with a resentment that had been festering inside of me for years. The apparition of a man sat on the edge of my bed and pulled a thick yellow envelope from his pocket. Now, everyone else was gone and I was face to face with my arch enemy. From the envelope he pulled out a picture of what looked like a silver accordion. He leaned in close and said, “This is what is left of your car. The car I gave you. The car I trusted you with. You are lucky you walked out of that heap alive. I cannot say that for the rest of us though. Between you and me the next time you try to kill yourself, you better do it right!”

My brother always did have a way with words. He would load them like ammunition in a gun, aim, and pull the trigger. I had learned to wear a bullet proof vest around him. Although my heart had become somewhat calloused and semi -bullet proof to the sting of his words, they would still leave open gaping wounds when I let my guard down. Sometimes the scars you cannot see are the deepest and most scorching.

I was released from the psychiatric ward of that hospital three days later, dope sickness coursing through my hungry veins, without any thought in my mind other than feeding that monster. For the next thirteen years I walked the streets, ducking down isolated alley ways for a fix, sleeping anywhere that was dry and warm and making every detox and rehab in New York a revolving door. I was a mere ghost of my former self, never knowing what tomorrow would bring. I knew in my heart that my mother would not approve of my sordid lifestyle. Every time I tried to get clean, the demon which lied dormant just beneath the surface would drag me back down to the depths of Hell, enticing me with that warm motherly embrace, as it swam through my veins. Then finally, after thirteen years of self -destruction it was a mere dot on an ultrasound that made me see the light.

I was faced with a decision. I had a life growing inside of me, an innocent child who did not ask to be born to a junkie. After many failed attempts at getting clean and breaking the chains of addiction, it was an unborn child who had the strength to pull me from death’s doorstep. Without a second thought I knew with every fiber in my being that I would keep this child; my baby would be raised by a sober mother. Suffering from post partum psychosis and being a single mother was an uphill battle which led me to a two- year court battle with my family over custody of my daughter.

It wasn’t until December 10, 2008 (the day I regained custody of my daughter) that I finally found out what happened to that wallet which contained the suicide note. As my sister-in-law and I sat in the therapist’s office she shared a gruesome story with me. I was rendered motionless with shame as I was



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forced to sit there and listen to the damage I had inflicted upon my family. She began by stating that she was aware that Donny was never capable of being emotionally available to me. Then the story came out that left me in shock. It was a few months after my suicide attempt and I had lost my wallet at a drug-fueled rave party. Being a drug addict, I never really had a need to open my wallet which never contained any money anyway. I never reported it stolen because heroin had stolen my identity long before my identification card was ever taken.

This part of the story I was aware of but what came out of sister-in-law's mouth next blew me away. "It was three in the morning and your father got the one phone call every parent of a drug addicted child fears," she said with a look of disgust on her face. "The voice on the other end of the phone spoke in a timid voice. Mr. Mahony, we regret to inform you that your daughter's body was found earlier this evening behind a dumpster. It appears to have been an overdose. We would like you to come in to identify her body. I am so sorry for your loss. Catherine, your father could not bring himself to go to the hospital so your brother went instead. We had been waiting for this moment and knew that it was coming. When Donny got there and they lifted the sheet off the face of the unidentified body, to his shock it was not you. Apparently someone had stolen your wallet and when she was brought into the morgue after overdosing, they assumed it was you. Do you even remember your wallet being stolen?"

"Yeah, I was at a rave and my wallet was stolen but I had no idea about the other part! That must have been devastating for you all. I am so sorry."

"Well, he said that he went weak in the knees and almost threw up. I'm not sure if it was out of relief or surprise. They then gave him your wallet. It was then that he grieved for you. It was then that he cried over your death. You may have not been under that sheet but to him you were dead."

I sat there dumbfounded and began to weep. I realized that my scars would heal, but the emotional scars that I inflicted upon others would not turn white and fade away. I survived my suicide attempt but only in the physical sense. There was no way for me to ever resurrect my relationships or the scars I left behind as a result of me being a slave to the needle. Now, as I sit with my daughter twenty years after I tried to take my own life, I am so grateful that I did not succeed. I could not even begin to fathom the pain my father must have endured, as a complete stranger told him that his child was found behind a dumpster like a piece of trash. Addiction tried to take everything away from me and in the end it almost succeeded. I knew that I had been entrusted, by a power greater than myself, to break my chains of addiction, to be a sober mother to an innocent child who was my saving grace.

**Facing  
Page:**

**Hang on Tight**  
Cody Hudzik



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# Shakespeare and Said: Othello as Orientalism

Topher King

William Shakespeare wrote *Othello, The Moor of Venice* in the early 1600's, and according to Imtiaz Habib in his book *Shakespeare and Race*, this time in England's history was still a mono-cultural, so a black character would have been a new experience for his audiences. People of color were a novelty; Habib notes, "What notions of race the Elizabethans had were hopelessly confused, as they routinely combined Africans with Arabs, [and] Indians [with] south Asians and pre-Columbian Americans ... Indeed ... blacks and Indians were necessarily interchangeable in the Elizabethan popular mind" (95). Shakespeare's *Othello* was simply known as the "Moor." This deliberate racial ambiguity throughout the play enables the characters and the audience to maintain their orientalist attitudes towards Othello by de-humanizing his origins and his true character.

Edward Said published his groundbreaking book *Orientalism* in 1978 and it quickly became a modern classic. The book is a critique of the West's historical, cultural and political perceptions of the East. Said's

theories trace the origins of "orientalism" to the centuries-long period during when Europe dominated the Middle and Near East and how it defined "the oriental" simply as "the other." The "other" was a constructed view of Middle East and Near East through a Western lens that often reduced culture and its people to stereotypes that prevented a true understanding of the East and its people. So much was Orientalism ingrained in Western thought that texts, whether historical, educational, or literary, perpetuated a dominant worldview as the superior culture. Shakespeare's play *Othello* not only reveals the inherent racist underpinning of orientalism in the play's European characters, but also reveals Shakespeare's own orientalist views as evinced by Othello's sudden and implausible descent into ignobleness.

Dr. Jamil Al-Asmar notes in his essay, "Othello and the Discourse of Orientalism" that "Shakespeare exaggerated his hero's [Othello's] naivety and exposed him as an easily-led man which does commune with the same discourse of orientalism, which in its term, insists on exposing an oriental as naïve and simple" (91). Because of this, readers see two Othellos in the play. In the

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first Acts, Othello is a dominant and calm man. His status as a general for the Venetian army provides him with great power and authority among and even over European men. All he has to do is raise his voice in order to stop a sword fight between two of reports. When faced with an angry Duke, father-in-law, and senators, after marrying Desdemona without permission from Desdemona's father, Othello simply and calmly tells his side of the story and he is in total control of the situation. However, in the later Acts, Othello is a different man—afraid, self-doubting, paranoid and angry to the point of murder. Author Stephen Cohen writes in his piece, "I am what I am not: Identifying with the other in Othello: "[T]hese two Othellos correspond to the period's two chief notions of race, one exploits the negative stereotypes of blackness to emphasize the Moor's difference while the other underlines the General's linguistic, personal and professional integration into Venetian society" (166). This duality is central to the idea of orientalism.

A dual-perception of the oriental is evident straight away in the play. Othello's close friend and fellow soldier Iago reveals how he truly feels about his general, who has chosen the less experienced Cassio over him for a promotion to lieutenant.

This overlooking Iago for a promotion sets Iago's revengefulness in motion, and consequently Iago's role of evoking oriental attitudes in the European-minded characters. He and Roderigo, a character in love with Desdemona's, reveal to Desdemona's father Brabantio that she has secretly married Othello: "Zounds, sir, you're robbed! For shame, put on your gown. Your heart is burst, you have lost your soul. Even now, now, very now, an old black ram is tugging your white ewe" (Shakespeare Act 1.1.86-89). This metaphor speaks directly to the idea of orientalism. Not only is the imagery of black and white used against Othello, it also conveys that animalistic "other," good versus evil and the sense of Muslim versus Christian, as well as the black devil and the white innocent virgin. Iago drives the point home by adding, "[Y]ou'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse. You'll have your nephews neigh to you...your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs" (Shakespeare 1.1.121-23). Within the opening scenes, Iago draws on the fears of the other, by insinuating Othello, a "black devil" and "beast" threatens Brabantio's heirs and family lineage.

These sexually charged racial accusations are too much for Brabantio, who

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although he held Othello in high esteem and considered him a friend, cannot abide the thought of his daughter being with this dark foreigner. This orientalist view of Othello shows how when the Westerner, Brabantio, loses control of the relationship between himself and Othello, his real feelings are realized, as Said notes, “Freedom of intercourse was always the Westerner’s privilege: because his was the stronger culture, he could penetrate, he could wrestle with, he could give shape and meaning to the great Asiatic mystery” (44). So Brabantio feels betrayed by Othello because he broke the orientalist rules Brabantio had imposed on their relationship. On one hand, Brabantio could be great friends with Othello, yet on the other hand, still hold onto his orientalist views is explained in Kojin Karatani’s piece “Uses of Aesthetics: After Orientalism.” Karatani writes:

*Orientalism sees people of the non-west as convenient objects of analysis but ignores their intellectual and ethical existence... this in turn produces an ineradicable self-deceit: Those with an orientalist attitude come to believe that they, unlike others, treat non-westerners more than equally-they treat them with ‘respect’. (2)*

This attitude which ignored an Eastern worldview of intellect and ethical thinking, constructed the other as having knowledge of things like secret potions and magical powers. As soon as Brabantio realizes that Desdemona has run off with Othello he quickly suspects Othello of having put his daughter under some kind of spell. Brabantio cries, “Oh treason of the blood! Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters’ minds by what you see them act. Is there not charms by which the property of youth and maidenhood may be abused?” (Shakespeare 1.1.169-73). And when he comes face to face with Othello, Brabantio accuses, “O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my daughter? Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her! For I’ll refer to me all things of sense, if she is in chains of magic were not bound...thou hast practiced on her with foul charms” (1.2.62-5, 73). This ingrained perception of the Moor even overrides Brabantio’s knowledge of social standards.

Dr. Al-Asmar writes, “Brabantio forgot that a cavalier of those days, even among Arabs, could only win the heart of his mistress by entertaining her with wondrous narratives” (95). Brabantio ignores what he knows of Othello first-hand: Othello tells powerful narratives of his rise from slave,

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soldier, and general. Brabantio instead relies on an orientalist attitude by accusing Othello of “enchant[ing]” her with “foul charms,” mentioned twice. Othello defends his actions by telling the Duke and senators about the stories he used to tell Brabantio and Desdemona. Othello explains, “She loved me for the dangers I had passed, and I loved her that she did pity them.” (Shakespeare 1.3. 167-68). In these early Acts of the play, Othello’s “word” still impresses the Duke and senators who also at that moment needed a general to fight the Turks. Thus, Othello’s status as general who works for the state overrides Brabantio’s accusations. Brabantio unwillingly concedes to Desdemona’s and Othello’s union and give the couple his blessing.

So Iago’s plan to ruin Othello using Roderigo has to change; thus Iago turns his attention to Cassio. This new plan involves using Cassio to evoke Othello’s jealousy. Iago states, “I put the Moor at least into a jealousy so strong that judgment cannot cure” (Shakespeare Act 2.1.310). This view of Othello as a man who could be controlled completely by his emotions speaks to one of the main views held by the orientalist Iago. As Cohen explains:

*If Othello as a tragedy of jealousy invites us to empathize with its hero as victim, the tragedy of race, while not denying Iago’s role in Othello’s downfall, focuses on the Moor’s own culpability—a culpability based less on the universal susceptibility to jealousy than on the racially specific characteristics associated by the play and its culture with Othello and blackness: gullibility, violence, superstition and a susceptibility to sexual jealousy that we are invited to view not as potentially our own but as a weakness of the racial other.*

These ideas are central to Iago’s reliance on his own preconceptions about Othello’s nature that unfolds his downfall in the last acts. Iago’s orientalist view of Othello’s emotional weakness is exactly what Said refers to when he wrote, “The oriental is (seen as) irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ‘different’; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal’” (40). As already discussed in this essay, Iago manipulates Brabantio to act emotionally rather than “rational” and “mature” in his accusations of Othello. This fallacy within the Western worldview also points to Shakespeare’s own orientalist views shaping the play.

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If Othello had been a European general in the Venetian army, had worked his way up through the ranks, and not received a commission like the nobility of the day, Iago's influence over Othello would have been very slight. A modern audience struggles to believe Othello such a fool to believe every word Iago says to the point of murdering the one with whom he was so in love. In order for Iago's plan to work, Shakespeare drew on his orientalist view of the "other" as one who can be easily manipulated through emotions like jealousy and anger to the point of blind homicidal rage. In respect to this point, Dr Al-Asmar writes, "Shakespeare exaggerates his hero's naivety and simplicity. He creates from him a short-sighted man who cannot feel the plot being woven to trap him" (95).

So from this viewpoint, we can see that once Iago has been dishonored; he cannot rest until he has had his revenge, his justice. As soon as Iago even hints at the fact that there might be something going on between Desdemona and Cassio, Othello's changes to a sullen, paranoid and angry character. He says, "Oh curse of marriage that we can call these delicate creatures ours and not their appetites!" (Shakespeare Act 3.3.273-75). Iago fuels his suspicion by telling him he saw

Cassio with Desdemona's handkerchief and Othello flies into a murderous rage shouting, "Damn her, lewd minx! Oh, damn her, damn her! Come go with me apart, I will withdraw to furnish me with some swift means of death for the fair devil" (Shakespeare 3.3.541-42). This parallels the discourse of orientalism where Othello believes he is killing Desdemona for a good honorable reason, sacrificing her to an ideal rather than murdering her in vengeful hatred. Dr. Al-Asmar writes, "This is the oriental atmosphere of dealing with a female's infidelity; that is the oriental world in which a person is not ready to sacrifice his honor for the sake of his love" (98). Othello the Moor has no other recourse than to kill Desdemona.

So the tragedy of this play is completed when at last Iago's plan is revealed to Othello by Iago's wife Emilia. He finally realizes he has been tricked and laments about killing Desdemona, "[W]hip me, ye devils, from the possession of this heavenly sight! Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulphur, wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!— Oh Desdemona! Desdemona! Dead! Oh! Oh!" (Shakespeare Act 5.5.277-80). He stabs Iago, injuring him and then turns his blade on himself and dies.

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In the end Othello wins our sympathy and pity, but Othello's ability to be manipulated by Iago through such a simple deceit speaks to the image of the Easterner as inferior and the Westerner as master of the oriental. As Dr. Al-Asmar notes, "This image forces Othello to become a slave of his oriental origin, which is a clear sign that Othello, the person, does commune with and conform to the common discourse of orientalism" (101). While most protagonists exhibit a duality that progresses their story, Othello's isn't a rational duality. Shakespeare's Othello is a character whose life experience is juxtaposed to his gullibility which could only have been created in the culture of orientalism.

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*What drives me is the sign that says: NO BLACKS, NO DOGS, NO IRISH.*

*What drives me is how common this message is.*

*What drives me is making connections.*

*~Christopher King*

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# Half the Man

Rafael Nuñez



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# Mexican Drywall Hangers: The Men Behind the Walls

Amber Corbett

A white passenger van pulls into the packed dirt drive and parks among the mounds of snowcapped dirt alongside the various other trucks and cars. As the doors open, one after another, 13 men set their worn boots down in the mud and start to strap on their tool pouches. The men laugh and talk among themselves, in Spanish, which is their mother tongue. Together they unload various trash barrels from the back of the van. I am momentarily confused since I know these men are here to hang drywall, not clean. I continue to watch as twenty-six calloused, scratched but eager hands move from barrel to barrel collecting different tools. Each barrel contains a set tool, extension cords, routers, screw guns. The previous laughter and chit chat ceases as they set out in different directions in groups of two.

As the day goes on the men work efficiently, almost mechanically. Each pair appears to strive to show their worth. Even though a majority of the Mexican drywall hangers present do not speak English, they are aware that the foreman and other tradesmen talk about them and watch them closely. This fact alone reminds them that if they do not perform well it will be reported back to their boss and they know they can be replaced easily. Jorge Perez, owner of a sub-contracting company that employs both legal and illegal Mexicans based in Virginia, told me, “It’s not too hard [to hire new people], people usually just call me.” (personal communication, November 26, 2012). Furthermore, the Mexicans also know that if they do not perform, they will not receive

the most lucrative pay. Perez explains to me that he pays his workers based on their worth, not a set minimum wage. He says, “I don’t care if they are illegal, I don’t care where they are coming from, I still pay them what they are worth” (personal communication, November 26, 2012). These two facts alone must weigh heavily on these workers’ minds, not to mention many of them know they are lucky to have found steady employment. I wondered why these men would settle for this pay system, especially if they are legal.

Many Mexicans, both legal and illegal, have seen first-hand or have experienced day-labor: standing on corners or gathering in parking lots to wait for builders, sub-contractors or anyone in need of a laborer to drive by and ask for someone to come and work an odd job for a short duration. Huang (2007), staff writer for the *Maryland Gazette*, interviewed Russell Roeding, president of the Chesapeake Associated Builders and Contractors’ Chapter. Roeding explained that contractors don’t want to hire illegal immigrants, although they will pick them up for basic one day labor, like clean up. This type of work will put money in their pocket, but is unreliable as they are just one of many vying for the same job.

Day labor is a reality for both legal and illegal immigrants who want to work and have not been lucky enough to find steady employment, like those that work for Perez. Chris Weller, a foreman for a construction company in Pennsylvania, experienced the chaotic day labor scene in a Home Depot parking lot located in Philadelphia. A broken tool caused him to visit

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the store one morning; upon arriving, he saw more than 100 men gathered in the far end of the parking lot. When he went inside a worker explained to him the group was Mexican men hoping to find work. The employee also said they had to put port-a-potties outside to accommodate them. Corporal Sara Schriver, a police spokesman, responded in regard to day workers massing in Maryland saying, “If they are peaceful and we suspect they’re illegal aliens, there’s nothing we can do about it. It’s up to immigration agents” (as cited in Huang, 2007). Ernestine Fobbs, an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent interviewed by Huang, said that going after these people would be considered profiling since they do not know if they are illegal. “Our priorities,” Fobbs added, “are people who knowingly hire undocumented workers” (as cited in Huang, 2007). We can see that Home Depot installed the port-a-potties to make the best of the situation that would otherwise result in daily calls to authorities. Weller said, “I was leaving in my company truck and the men saw me and started to run toward me shouting ‘Drywall! We do anything!’ I told them no and they started to walk away” (personal communication, November 26, 2012). These men must be familiar with the way the system works and were peaceful – not to attract any attention or risk losing the lucrative location Home Depot provides as a construction supplier.

A dissertation by Edward Hernandez, student at the State University of New York Stony Brook, gives a Mexican’s insight into day labors. Hernandez interviewed several Mexican men hoping to be employed for day work. The harsh reality, which is these men’s only hope for

income, is glimpsed in his work. One excerpt from Hernandez’s work documents a Mexican immigrant’s motivation:

*Well, many friends told me that one can get one hundred dollars very fast. In my country, one hundred dollars is a lot of money. If you work two three days, one can buy a TV. In my country it’s very difficult to acquire those things, one needs three four months, and here it’s very fast. (as cited in Hernandez, 2009, p. 75)*

But the work is unreliable. They never know if anyone will need them or if they will be the first person to make it to the truck. It is easy to see why men that work for Perez are satisfied working based on their worth as opposed to working for a set salary; the other option for these men is far worse.

The kind of work ethic these Mexican men show is admirable. We hear of the unemployment rates hitting all-time lows, but we do not see American citizens standing around in parking lots drumming up business or side work. The Mexicans seem to have a desire to do what is necessary in order to make money—their pride is not an issue. Many people seem to feel the Mexicans’ willingness to work cheaply is taking jobs away from Americans. However, some statistics suggest otherwise. A 2008 study published by Pew Hispanic Center (2009) gave a detailed breakdown of occupations with high shares of undocumented workers. According to the study, drywall installers had 255,000 total workers, and of those 255,000 unauthorized immigrants accounted for 94,000, or 37%, U.S born accounted for 43% and legal immigrants accounted for 20%. It should also

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be noted that construction laborers had a total worker count of 2,055,000, while 556,000 or 27% is unauthorized, 54% are U.S. born and 19% are legal immigrants (appendix B). See Table 1. These findings indicate that while Mexicans are prevalent in the construction industry they are not dominating it.

The opinions and theories of some business owners in the industry also support the notion that Mexicans are not stealing jobs from Americans, but rather are filling in unwanted, but vital jobs. Weller speculates on why the numbers are so high in the drywall industry:

*My theory is most Americans don't want the headaches or backaches these jobs cause. Hanging drywall is hard work—physically demanding. They do not want to work the long days or weekends that are required to make deadlines. You must remember many drywall hangers get paid by the sheet—piece work—not by the hour, so there is not overtime for staying late or sacrificing weekends. (personal communication, November 26, 2012)*

This theory is supported by an article that was published in the Wall Street Journal:

*The Pew study supports the theory that immigrants are supplementing the U.S. work force, not pushing native-born Americans out of jobs. Native-born U.S. workers have become better-educated and more ambitious in the past four decades. The percentage without a high-school diploma has dropped to about 9% from 52% in 1960. And these U.S. workers are looking for*

*higher-skilled, higher-paying jobs. (Millman, 2005, pp. 0-A.2)*

In his article published in the National Mortgage News Journal, author Sichelman also speculates that Americans would not replace illegal workers even if the jobs paid more. Michael Fink of Leewood Real Estate Group based out of Trenton, N.J, explains, “These are not bottom-rung jobs, and we still have trouble filling them with people from any country, but in my experience, native-born Americans are not willing to gain the skills necessary to get them” (as cited in Sichelman, 2006, p. 6). While many people are jobless, jobs like drywall hanging that require hard physical work remain vacant. Many native-born Americans do not want the long hours associated with the job.

Aside from realizing that these Mexican drywall hangers perform a job that is often overlooked by many Americans, it is apparent that without the hard work these workers do the economy we are used to would be altered. Without these men filling jobs otherwise left vacant, our construction industry would slow down to a crawl. The construction industry relies on the skills and labor of this sub-culture. The speed and price of new homes and buildings is affected directly by immigrant labor. Susan A.M. Stroud, Director of Government Affairs for the Home Builders Association of Maryland observed, “The fact is foreign workers have become an integral part of the construction industry” (as cited in Haung, 2007) Without sub-contractors like Perez supplying ample drywall hangers, contractors would struggle to meet the deadlines builders place to meet the needs and desires of the

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consumer. As a consumer society many Americans would not want to wait months or even years for their new homes or malls, or pay the increased cost.

While speaking with an illegal immigrant I became aware that some of these men may have broken U.S. laws to come here, but they are desperate men who just want to provide for their families and give their children better lives than Mexico can offer. Chibo Ramirez agreed to talk to me on the only break, his thirty minute lunch: “I just want to give my wife and kids more. I don’t mind working till I can’t see no more. I miss my family when I have to travel to work for a few weeks. But I go to bed thinking how I can give them nice things and maybe when my kids grow they can have a nice job. I do it for them” (personal communication, November 26, 2012). These simple, heart-felt words broke through some preconceptions I had toward Mexicans. Like many, I felt their presence took livelihoods away from Americans, but now I realize that no matter what their immigration status they are just people who are willing to do the unpleasant work Americans pass up. I will remind myself every time I resort to being judgmental that all Americans at one time were immigrants and what makes a person is not a green card or not their birth place, but their willingness to accept the proverbial hand they are dealt and make the best life possible for their loved ones. If nothing else in this life shows the true character of a person, it is one’s desire to sacrifice and take the hard road so others that follow may have a smoother passage.

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# Daisy Chain

Cody Hudzik



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# The Underground Railroad in Berks County

## Mildred Gilyard

As the Administrative Assistant of the Central Pennsylvania African American Museum (CPAAM), one of my duties is to organize an annual Berks County Underground Railroad bus tour. My husband Frank Gilyard, founder of the museum, and I spent many years working with CPAAM. One of the main topics of the CPAAM exhibit is the Underground Railroad in Berks County. Also, being a member of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Reading, PA, has encouraged me to learn more about the Underground Railroad since the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) worldwide played a significant role in the Underground Railroad.

Since 2008, CPAAM has sponsored annual tours to various sites in Berks County which had played major roles assisting slaves to freedom through the Underground Railroad. Some of the sites include the following: the Old Bethel AME Church, which houses the Central Pennsylvania African Museum located at 119 North Tenth Street, Reading, Pennsylvania; Hopewell Furnace, Joanna Furnace, Pine Forge, Parvin Estate, Mt. Frisby African Methodist Episcopal Church and slave cemetery, which are both located on the Cole Estate property; the Presbyterian Church, and Scarlett Mills. According to Mr. Frank Gilyard and a historical exhibit at CPAAM, eleven documented stops exist of the Berks County Underground Railroad, which also includes a private home in Hamburg,

Kirbyville Inn, and White Bear Inn.

The Underground Railroad was not necessarily underground nor was it transportation by railroad. It was a whole network that assisted slaves in their escape to freedom. Free blacks provided the backbone of the Underground Railroad. Thousands of fugitive slaves found their way to freedom through the courageous efforts of free African Americans like Harriet Tubman, William Still, Jermaine Logue, and others (NPH 45, 58, 61, 67). Richard Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, was a slave who purchased his freedom; therefore, most of the AME Churches continued the plight of assisting fugitives to freedom. The Bethel AME Church, Reading, assisted slaves to freedom by way of the Underground Railroad; as a result, Bethel Reading has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In lectures and tours of the Central Pennsylvania African American Museum, Frank Gilyard emphasized the fact that the Underground Railroad was very active in Berks County. At Bethel Reading, he showed visitors the site, located in the lower level of the church, where slaves hid if there was indication that anyone was hunting for them. Thus, the purpose of CPAAM is to tell the Berks County Underground Railroad story through the exhibit panels which provide information about historically important people and places associated with it.

One of those most interesting and beloved 19th Century African-American figures of Bethel Reading's community was Dinah Clark. Born to slave parents in Bern Township

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in 1794, Clark earned her freedom at aged 21 under the provisions of Pennsylvania's Gradual Emancipation Law. She spent her early years as an indentured servant, bought and sold by many masters. Before she earned her freedom, Clark was a member was a slave of Mr. Joseph Heister and was known to cut more wood in a day than the average man could. At a youth service which took place in 1836, Clark told the youth of the church that Bethel assisted the fugitives by feeding, clothing and hiding them in a space, commonly known as the pit, located beneath the lower basement. Clark's husband William was also listed in the Bethel Reading Church's Baptismal record of 1836. Morgan, one of their daughters, was also listed as baptized in the same year. According to Bethel's records of 1836, William Clark was an active church member and was buried in a grave located in the back yard of the Old Bethel AME Church (CPAAM). The AME Church records continue to be a resource for tracking African American family histories.

Gilyard often referred to a slave case that was tried in Old Court House at 5th and Penn Streets. The defendant, a married man named Turner, was a member of Bethel AME Church, Reading, PA. His alleged owner was not able to take him to Maryland. According to an August 1, 1932 Reading Eagle article, the trial was held on February 19, 1840. Mr. Jacob Ross, the church sexton, testified that the defendant had been a member of Bethel for six years. Ross, the Church's most colorful figure as a hulking, six-foot tall wood sawyer was known as a "shouting Methodist," whose emphatic "Amen!" rung out during church services. Born a slave in Virginia,

he escaped to Pennsylvania sometime around 1800. Ross was a man who risked capture to save another (CPAAM). It is said that the court case was one of the most important cases held in that old structure. Gilyard said that after Turner escaped successfully to Canada, he wrote a letter to Bethel Reading to report arriving safely. Indeed the Underground Railroad was very active in Berks County.

The Underground Railroad was a system first organized at the end of the 18th century. In 1786 George Washington complained about how one of his runaway slaves was helped by a "society of Quakers, formed for such purposes." The system grew, and around 1831 named "The Underground Railroad," after the then emerging steam railroads. The system even used railroad terms: "Stations" referred to the homes and businesses where fugitives would rest and eat. "Depots" were run by "stationmasters." "Stockholders" were those who contributed money or goods, and the "conductor" was responsible for safely moving fugitives from one station to the next. Some notable conductors of the Underground Railroad were Levi Coffin, a Quaker who assisted more than 3,000 slaves, and Harriet Tubman, who made 19 trips into the South and escorted over 300 slaves to freedom. The system successfully moved hundreds of slaves northward each year. According to one estimate, the South lost 100,000 slaves between 1810 and 1850 (PBS).

Along with the railroad language as a code, spirituals were filled with codes to covertly operate the Underground Railroad. Two familiar types of coded spirituals were signal songs and map songs. In a signal song a singer or group of



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singers communicated in code that a certain event – such as a planned escape from a plantation – was pending. In a map song, the lyrics actually contained basics of a map that directed people to important points of flight along the routes of the Underground Railroad. The most famous map song was “Follow the Drinking Gourd,” (Tobin and Dobard 15) which used the metaphor of a drinking gourd to symbolize the constellation of stars known as the Big Dipper, containing the North Star, an important compass guide for fugitives who needed to be assured that they were travelling north as they made their way to freedom. Another signal song was “Wade in the Water,” which contained the lyric, “When you escape and are attempting to connect to the next relay point on the Underground Railroad, make sure that you wade through water in order to throw the bloodhounds off your scent” (14).

Quilt patterns were another communication tool used by the fugitives on the Underground Railroad. Specific places that had to be reached were identified by the shape of the pattern that was sown into the quilt. Following the patterns correctly enabled the slaves to escape in their quest for freedom. In *Hidden in Plain View*, researchers, Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard Tobin define Quilt Codes that assisted slaves:

*Flying Geese:* A signal to follow the direction of the flying geese as they migrated north in the spring; as most slaves escaped during the spring; along the way, the flying geese could be used as a guide to find water, food and places to rest.

*North Star:* A signal with two messages--one to prepare to escape and the other to follow the North Star to freedom in Canada. North was the direction of traffic on the Underground Railroad. This signal was often used in conjunction with the song, “Follow the Drinking Gourd.”

*Monkey Wrench:* A signal to gather all the tools required for the fleeing slave’s journey, meaning the physical tools, as well as the mental and spiritual ones.

*Sailboat:* A signal that either a body of water was nearby or that a boat was available.

*Drunkard’s Path:* A warning signal to take a zigzag route to elude pursuing slave hunters and their hounds that are in the area. A slave spotted travelling south, for instance, would not be suspected of escaping.

*Dresden Wheel:* A signal to the slave to pack the items needed to travel by wagon or that could be used while travelling. It could also mean to pack the provisions necessary for survival, as if packing a wagon for a long journey, or to actually load the wagon in preparation for escape. Some records indicate this symbol meant a wagon with hidden compartments in which slaves could conceal themselves.

*Crossroads:* A symbol referring to Cleveland, Ohio, which was the main crossroads with several routes to freedom.

*Bear’s Paw:* A signal to follow a mountain trail, out of view, and then follow an actual bear’s trail which would lead to water and food.

# The Unknown



Jillian Hyde

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***Bow Tie (or Hourglass):** A symbol indicating it was necessary to travel in disguise or to change from the clothing of a slave to those of a person of higher status.*

***Shoofly:** A symbol that possibly identifies a person who can guide and help; a person who helped slaves escape along the Underground Railroad and who knew the codes.*

***Tumbling Blocks or Boxes:** A symbol indicating it was time for slaves to pack up and go, that a conductor was in the area. **Broken Dishes:** A symbol referring to a signal that involved broken crockery at some future landmark.*

***Britches:** A symbol indicating the escaping slave needed to dress as a free person.*

***Rose Wreath:** A symbol that indicated someone had died on the journey.*

***Log Cabin:** A quilt symbol that indicated a safe a house along the Underground Railroad. **Double Wedding Ring:** This pattern did not exist until after the American Civil War. (Tobin and Dobard 113 - 14)*

Another marker, or code, was a groomsman hitching post, a common cast iron statue. Some of the Church elders state that stationmasters used the hitching post to hold a lantern or bright white cloth as a signal that the coast was clear. If the groomsman was not lit they were instructed to lay low or travel to the next stop.

As a result of Underground Railroad activity, Reading, Pennsylvania, The County Seat, was at known as “Kidnap City.” A July 1, 1827 article in The Berks and Schuylkill [sic] Journal reports:

*Thursday evening our town was in considerable commotion in consequence of a bare faced attempt having been made to arrest, secure and carry off a coloured man born in Reading and the offspring of free parents, under the pretense that he was a runaway southern slave. The principal was arraigned before a magistrate to answer for his transgressions before the law, but by mistake or some other cause was suffered to make his escape.*

The threat of kidnapping by slave catchers was ever present for runaway slaves that had settled in northern states. From the 1830s through the beginning of the Civil War in 1861 attempted kidnappings of slaves were common in Pennsylvania. Slave hunters were hired for a flat fee by slave owners. Rewards were based on degree of difficulty. A typical fee structure would be \$20 for those slaves captured in the south, \$50 in free Border States, and \$125 in free northern states (CPAAM).

Another documentation regarding Underground Railroad activity in Berks County is found in William Still’s Book, The Underground Railroad (24). “Welcome Aboard” was the heading of the article and the letter was from a Joseph C. Bustill (U.G.R.R.) depot, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, March 24, 1856. An excerpt from his letter follows:

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*Friend Still:-I suppose that you have seen those 5 large and 3 small packages I sent by way of Reading, consisting of three men and women and children. They arrived here this morning at 8 1/2 o'clock this morning and left twenty minutes past three. You will please send me any information likely to prove interesting in relation to them.*

*Lately we have found a society here, called the fugitive aid society... When you write, please inform me what signs or symbols you make use of in your despatches, and any other information in relation to operations of the Underground Railroad...*

*Yours with respect,  
Joseph C. Bustill*

After reading this letter, one can witness that Reading played an active role in the Underground Railroad.

Dot and Ken Hirneisen, owners of the Parvin Estate, stated that it was indeed an Underground Railroad site. Visiting the Parvin estate, one feels he or she is experiencing past history. An archaeology dig produced blue beads and other artifacts, indicating that slaves had been assisted in the flight for freedom. Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth J. Hirneisen, Sr. have opened their home to the public that they may breathe in the historical atmosphere and culture of our past (Hirneisen).

The oldest known Negro cemetery in Berks County is located on the Cole's Estate. Almost all visitors are eager to observe the names of those who are buried therein. Among the graves are those of James Jackson and Isaac Cole, veterans of the Union Army. The cornerstone of

the Mt. Frisby A. M. E. Church, located adjacent to the cemetery, provided the fact that the church was founded in 1856. Gilyard reported that Mt. Frisby Church also aided slaves in their escape to Freedom. Three sides of the church remain intact. At one time the Church was used as a garage and it is currently used for storage. The historical role it played during slavery will forever be noted. The Coles had originally purchased 200 acres of land under the Homestead Act (Gilyard).

Gene Delaplane, a retired African American History teacher and an archaeologist associated with the Joanna Furnace, gave the following account of Joanna Furnace's participation in the Underground Railroad in Berks County. Delaplane stated that the records did not specify that slaves came through Joanna, but it is assumed that those persons who worked for a short period of time and then went on their way were fugitives. The following report of the short-time workers who were believed to have been fugitives are part of the ledger: Thomas Jackson, manager, lived near the furnace and most likely participated in the Underground Railroad before 1827. He died in 1834. The record listed Jackson as having 11 short-time workers. Elizabeth Scarlett is credited for having 15 short-term workers. Elizabeth Scarlett started in the 1830's and was active until her death 1841. Her son, Joseph, was active in the Underground Railroad in Lancaster after 1841. Lewis was the son-in-law of Elizabeth Scarlett and was active from 1841 to his death in 1842. The record stated that he had 12 short-time workers who were believed to be fugitives (Smith 30). Levi Bull Smith was the owner of Joanna Furnace and was active in the 1850's. An additional listing was that of (Bull 9), the mother of Levi "Bull"

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Smith. Fugitive slaves who were seeking shelter were given tremendous assistance when Levi Bull Smith, owner and operator, joined the ranks of Abolitionists. Those coming through Reading and the Joanna Hills were only a portion of the many Smith assisted in their quest for freedom (Homan 118).

Mark Bird, owner of Hopewell Furnace, was the largest slave owner in Berks County. By the time the Pennsylvania Assembly passed An Act for the Gradual Abolition of slavery in 1780, Mark Bird owned more enslaved laborers than anyone in Berks County (Delmar). As mandated by the Abolition Act, Bird registered his slaves as ten adult males, four adult females, three boys, and one girl (Delmar). No records exist that detail the slaves' role in the design or building of Hopewell Furnace. However, it appeared likely that the male slaves, being descendants from African iron workers, shared their benefits of oral tradition and iron craft. Archeologists' reports show that the ancient people in Africa and the Far East used meteorite iron to make weapons and household implements. The furnace first appeared in West Africa around 1200 BCE (Delmar).

After the publishing of the book *The African American Experience at Hopewell Furnace*, Edie Shean-Hammond, Superintendent of Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, stated that now another book will have to be published because the names of Bird's slaves have been found through further research of the ledgers. During his lecture, Frank Hebblethwaite, a lecturer and park ranger at Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, pointed out that the wooded area of Hopewell Furnace provided a safe

haven for the slaves. Many former slaves earned their living in the industry as woodcutters, colliers, and teamsters.

The Scarlets were Quakers who took the risk of helping fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad. If caught in aiding the fugitives, one could be punished severely. The village of Scarlets is mostly residential now (Tour, 29 September 2012). According to lecturer Jere Brady, the Scarlet Mill is still on the premises. It has been converted into a large beautiful home by Henry M. Willits. Brady described the mansion's basement as having a "cavernous opening off the basement...although there was no light." The mansion was located across the street from the Mill. Brady said that Scarlet not only harbored runaway slaves, he also fought against whites to defend slaves' freedom. While residing in Lancaster County, Scarlet was indicted for his participation in the Christiana Riot of 1851, among the nation's most violent confrontations between slave masters and free blacks. Elizabeth Scarlet's son, Joseph, was among the three Quakers and 38 blacks arrested for treason and jailed, but all were found "not guilty" (Homan 120).

Charles Rutter, who resided in the Jesse Ives house in Pottstown, harbored slaves in a room above an out-kitchen in the rear of the home. During the night, he would then take the slaves to the next station, the home of his brother John Potts Rutter, who was a resident of Pine Forge (Chancellor).

Before establishing the first iron forge in Pennsylvania near present day village of Pine Forge, Thomas Rutter was a Germantown resident, leader, and magistrate who broke away from the Quaker church and followed the teachings

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of rebellious Baptist leader, George Keith, is the alleged author of a pamphlet first protesting slavery 1694 Europe. Rutter was one of the four or five who published this first protest against slavery (Chancellor). Rutter, who became a minister because of Keith's teachings, did not own slaves, nor did the other Rutters that owned Pine Forge. According to the ledgers, the Potts family, Thomas Potts (1690 – 1752), John Potts (1710-1768), and David Potts (1742-1782), also owners of the Forge, had one or more slaves. Although it is difficult to document the Underground Railroad, local oral history supported by physical evidence indicates that there were tunnels on the Pine Forge property (Chancellor).

The Thomas Lewis home, along a private lane just south of the railroad crossing at White Bear, became a safe stop of the Underground Railroad sometime after 1850 (Homan 117). The Lewis' were Quakers too. A private home in Hamburg, 17 South 4th Street, was a station in the Underground Railroad system. One of the previous owners has shared with Gilyard they had found an old pig skin description of the property which said that the site was a station on the Underground Railroad (Gilyard).

At Kirbyville Inn, an excerpt from a placemat tells the story of the Inn's sealed attic:

*Discovery of a long-sealed attic during extensive renovations to the Kirbyville Hotel, [built in 1790] ten miles north of Reading on route 222 has lead to the theory that the hotel was an overnight haven for fugitive slaves making their way from the southern states to freedom in Canada. The only entrance to the attic was through two outside windows by means of a ladder...In what was the*

*attic area was a rough-wooden panel that extends the length of the attic gave ties to the Underground Railroad theory. The fugitive slaves apparently were taken to the attic through a trapdoor in the ceiling of the kitchen on the first floor...Some theorize the partition was erected to prevent light from escaping, or the guests from being seen from the two windows.*

*A man's moccasin was one of the many items found in the attic. Other items included two patches, a piece of clothing, an old label from a whiskey bottle, and a medicine bottle with a label containing these words "Dr. J. R. Miller, Universal Magnetic Balm" (CPAAM Collection).*

According to the Historical Review, some of the slaves were directed to Harrisburg while Mr. Still ordered some to be taken to Reading. While in Reading, the slaves were housed in the Washington Street Presbyterian Church where they were the recipients of clothes and food until they were to proceed to the next station (117). According to two letters in Still's Underground Railroad Book, (25) the Presbyterian Church in Reading played a role in the Berks County Underground system. One such letter read:

*Letter from G.S. Nelson (U.G.R.R.)  
Reading, May 27, 1857*

*Mr. Still:-My Dear Sir—I suppose you are somewhat uneasy because the goods did not come safe to hand on Monday evening, as you had expected-consigned from Harrisburg to you. The train was only from Harrisburg to Reading, and it happened, the goods had to stay all night with us, and as some exciting exists here about the goods of the kind, we thought it expedient*

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*and wise to detain them until we could hear from you. There are two small boxes and two large ones; we have them all secure; what had better be done? Let us know. Also, we can learn, there are three more boxes still in Harrisburg. Answer your communication at Harrisburg. Also, fail not to answer this by return mail, as things are rather critical, and you will oblige us.(Book is in CPAAM's Collection).*

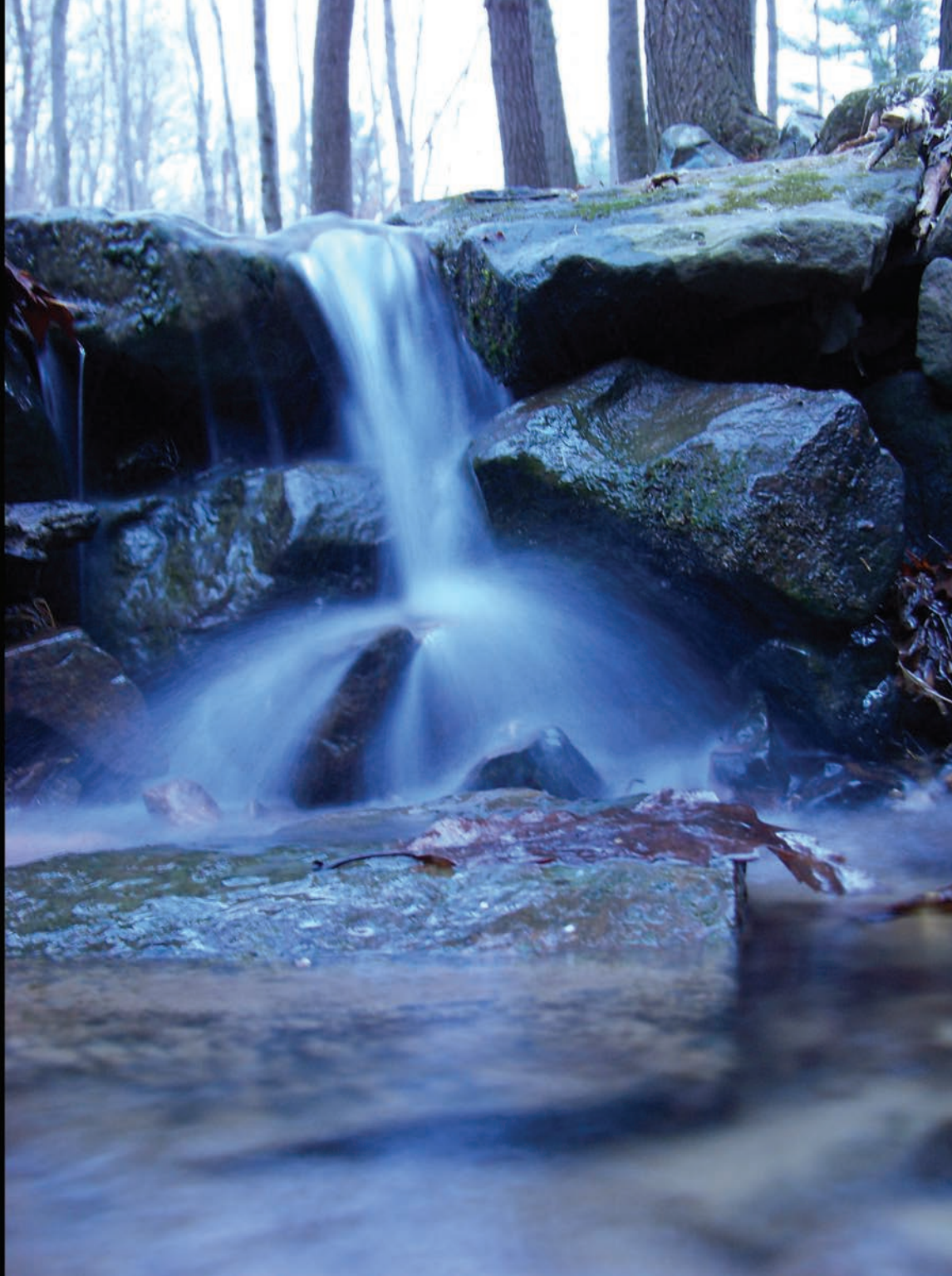
The escape from bondage to freedom was a difficult, dangerous, and challenging struggle for slaves and those who helped slaves to freedom. Berks County churches, furnaces, businesses, and private homes were used as stations on the Underground Railroad. The African Methodist Episcopal church in particular was very active in this movement, primarily due to the fact that the founder, Richard Allen was a slave who purchased his freedom from his slave owner. Those persons who risked punishment for assisting the fugitives had to be dedicated to humankind and should have been applauded for their actions. This paper contributes to the knowledge of the Underground Railroad and applauds those who sacrificed to help others in their quest for freedom as well as those who keep this heritage alive.

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# Long Trout

Cody Hudzik





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# Rippled Woman

The day we met the priest, cleansed my head, and washed all of my sins away.  
She was there, but I cannot recall anything that she did say.  
Dressed in blue and full of light she marked that holy day.  
Years have passed, but she still appears in rain from clouds of gray.

Puddles remind her of the past, with acid drops that sting.  
She lives in shallow waters and shiny metal things.  
Now, that time has left its wounds, regret is all she brings.  
Pebbles tossed, and they do skip, giving way to rings.

I saw her once at the waters' edge, and there is where she wept.  
With every tear her body grew, the closer that I crept.  
Her body shivered as she recalled the day that we had met.  
We had made a promise on that day, and that secret we have kept.

We met again in an empty room, the day I planned to leave.  
She stared at me, her face framed in wood, and her pane was well received.  
I stood upon a shaky chair, and gazed up at the moon.  
The look upon her sullen face swallowed up the room.

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# Catherine Mahony

With the knot now digging in, I had a fleeting glimpse and  
At this thought, I winced.

This woman that I see, is not who she was meant to be.  
She retracted from my touch like ripples in a creek.

I placed my feet back on the floor and forced myself to stare.  
I gazed deep into her eyes and told her to prepare.  
Raising my fist over my head, I screamed a primal roar.  
Now, shards of her and shards of me were strewn across the floor.

I sat there and as I wept, a puddle soon did form.  
I baptized myself again that night, and in that water I was reborn.  
I sat amongst the bits of glass and all the promises we kept.  
In that puddle I saw a reflection of a woman whom I could respect.

# Xmas Lights



Cody Hudzik

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# Notes for My Children

Rich DiGirolamo

You started out so small so sweet,  
you took from me my heart complete.  
You grew so fast, so smart, so tall,  
I could not believe your wherewithal.

The world before you could not contain,  
your quest to conquer, your place to gain.  
I felt so helpless it was all I could do,  
to keep you within my worldly view.

The busier I kept myself;  
my feelings placed upon the shelf.  
When time has come for us to part,  
a giant wrenching in my heart

I did not say, that which I should,  
I love you more than anyone could.

Looking back it seemed so short,  
the time we had seemed to abort.  
By chance to do it all again,  
I'd make more time before the end.

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# Chopin's Passion and "The Storm"

## Michelle Granitz

In the late 1800s, women were expected to be submissive and never complain about an unhappy marriage. Marriage was meant to be "happily ever after" and is, as girls have learned over time, an expectation that continues today. Kate Chopin, an independent widow after her husband's death, wrote stories from a unique female perspective: Chopin was the voice of the woman, but was a voice beyond her time. She wrote stories about women feeling suppressed and confined sexually in their marriage by a society which, in the late nineteenth century, did not allow women to emotional or physical freedom. Chopin did not submit "The Storm" for publication after she wrote it in 1899, at the age of 48, due to its daring content (Kirsznner and Mandell 263). Finally published in 1969, long after Chopin's death in 1904, the story draws the reader back in time to an era when the women were not allowed to act on their sexual desires. In "The Storm," Chopin's protagonist Calixta tries to conform to the societal norms of marriage, but, like a storm that cannot control its powerful nature, she is unable to control her own strongly passionate instincts.

Through the plot and imagery of the story, Chopin conveys the liberating appeal of sexual freedom for women.

In any era, many women are unable to find joy in marriage, and Chopin was possibly one who shared in this experience. Chopin's story illustrates how a woman's hidden sexual desire can be suddenly awakened when she is confronted at the right moment and by the right person. Professor of English, Bernard Koloski, explains that "Chopin's recent biographer, Emily Toth, has written that Kate had an affair with a local planter," a detail that infuses similarities between Chopin herself and her protagonist, Calixta. It is telling that Chopin did not start writing until nearly seven years after her husband death from malaria; one might infer that she was finally able to find her own voice and share her feelings about her own passionate nature.

The title, "The Storm," conveys the central theme of the story, which highlights the emotional development between a married woman, Calixta, and her lover Alcée. Chopin writes that as Alcée approached the house "big rain drops began to fall" (264), which indicates the beginning of the storm and the start of the rising climax between Calixta and Alcée. Chopin continues to connect

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phrases such as “with a force and clatter” (264) and “crashing torrents” (265) to heighten the experience and passion between Calixta and Alcée.

Today’s romantic novels are full of passion and sexual desire; in Chopin’s time, however, these were never recognized. In his 1969 biography, scholar Per Seyersted argues that Chopin “broke new ground in American literature” (qtd. in Koloski). In “Desire and the Female Protagonist,” professor of English literature McKittrick Wallace Honor states, “Literature is full of failed articulations of desire; such failure, in fact, is at the heart of many heroines’ tragedies” (184). Because society failed to fully understand the choices women were forced to make and the desires they hid, the only options for freedom was death or possibly madness. Chopin, however, did not find the horrific end to be necessary; she shares great desire in “The Storm,” when the synchronized height of the gale and the passion between Calixta and Alcée are reached: “When he touched her breasts they gave themselves up in quivering ecstasy, inviting his lips. Her mouth was a fountain of delight. And when he possessed her, they seemed to swoon together at the very borderland of life’s mystery” (264).

After their passionate encounter, and when the “thunder was distant and passing away” (264), so too passed the physical relationship Calixta and Alcée shared. Chopin, being ahead of her time,

was unafraid of her feelings and passion. She was happy to share the desire inside herself and used her talents to create a purely physical relationship between a woman and a man—one built on mutual lust instead of conventional mutual admiration.

Chopin also chose to describe great passion with near purity. In a seminar paper written for the University of Texas, Kerstin Krauss states, “Her [Calixta’s] passion is described not as red hot, but as “a white flame.” The image of the “white flame” is a unique choice here. As science explains, the white part of a flame, not the red, is the hottest. Yet, the color white also symbolizes purity, a strange way to describe the passion of an extramarital affair” (15). Yet, as the story progresses, the two old lovers go on to enjoy and live, presumably, very happy lives with their spouses. The story ends just as abruptly as it began, just like the storm. Calixta’s infidelity is kept with her, in her heart, in the purest sense of passion. She continued her life hiding her actions so not to taint her marriage and family.

Chopin explores an interesting concept: If a woman is happy and content with her feelings and her passions, can she, and society, ignore the issue of infidelity? Chopin uses “the sun turning the glistening green world into a palace of gems” (264) as an analogy for a new start and a washing away of negative feelings and frustrations after the storm of Calixta and Alcée’s tryst. The passion



# Charcoal Still Life

Christine Studenroth

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Calixta experienced was over and it was time to move on, refreshed. The assertion that a woman could have such ardent and unconventional feelings sets “The Storm” apart from most stories of the nineteenth or even twentieth century. However, the fact remains that Calixta is a married woman in the story and, as such, her affair is an infidelity. Society accepted a man’s betrayal of his wife, but not a wife’s disloyalty to her husband. Today, infidelity is a common occurrence in the lives of many, but it is not an acceptable practice in American culture. Chopin was going out on a limb with a story which allowed such behavior.

“The Storm” is not just a story about a woman’s innate sexual tendencies, but the plot also represents the sexual reservations controlling Chopin’s personal life and the time period. Chopin seems connected with her feminine sexuality and, through this story, is able to communicate an avant garde attitude regarding sexuality to her readers. She portrays the marital problems of the 1800s in a bold way. Biographer Per Seyersted emphasizes that:

*She was the first woman writer in her country to accept passion as a legitimate subject for serious, outspoken fiction. Revolting against tradition and authority with a daring which we can hardly fathom today; with an uncompromising honesty and no trace of sensationalism, she undertook to*

*give the unsparing truth about woman’s submerged life. She was something of a pioneer in the amoral treatment of sexuality, of divorce, and of woman’s urge for an existential authenticity. She is in many respects a modern writer, particularly in her awareness of the complexities of truth and the complications of freedom. (qtd. in Koloski)*

After having lived in New Orleans and other major cities, along with her travels in Europe, Chopin found that she, like Calixta, was unable to fit into societal molds for women and refused to allow convention rule her life. Her choice of setting for most of her stories illustrates this point: New Orleans, a city that differentiated itself from typical, industrialized America, was a city that attracted a wide variety of cultures, sophistication, diversity, and passion. It was the progressive, exciting environment of a place like New Orleans that allowed Chopin to write about equality for gender, fulfilling desire, and finding the colorful existence of the people a way to express her inner most desires.

Chopin is the voice of women not just of the nineteenth century, but of women today. Her ability to shake things up and cause great commotion within the literary world and beyond did not start or stop at “The Storm.” Bonnie Shaker, author of *Coloring Locals: Racial Formation in Katie Chopin’s “Youth’s*



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Companion” Stories, affirms that Chopin’s validation of conventional gender norms was accomplished as a “second political agenda beyond her feminism,” to help the reader appreciate innuendos and overtures that are part of her work. “What happened to Chopin, her textual production, and her texts’ marketability after the publication of *The Awakening* continues to be the subject of scholarly debate” (94). Having shaken things up, Chopin opened up a world to women originally not thought possible. It was the doors being open for women which caused a stir in many others trying to find their place in the world.

As women today try to find how they fit within society, so too did Chopin so many years ago. The struggle between independence, femininity, strength, and passion will continue for even many more years to come. Chopin had a storm of her own, and it took over seven years after the death of her husband before she had the ability to share it with the world. That one night, a few hours during “The Storm,” will remain a secret between Calixta and Alcée and all the people who shared in their moment, and society will continue to struggle with the thought that woman could have such desires, perform such acts, or betray her husband.

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# Big Old Piano

Darrell Evans

Music is a healer; music is a listener; and music is life.

As a young kid, I was rather depressed. My mother, a single parent, struggled financially, and as a result, we moved around quite a bit. The constant upheavals from city to city and school to school made it difficult for me to create lasting friendships. I felt alone. One day in second grade our teacher rolled out a big old piano. She began to play. I heard a piano before, but this time something was different. As she played, it seemed as though the notes danced around the room, flowing in and out of each other; sometimes they danced alone, sometimes they danced together creating beautiful melodies and rich harmonies. My heart raced and slowed with the rhythm of the music. I did not feel alone. Instead I felt inspired, and hopeful. It seemed the music expressed how I felt deep within.

I learned my letters, numbers, and days of the week, and even how to spell and create a sentence through music. I learned all the different animals and the sounds they make as a child by way of music. I learned simple things, like when the scary part of the movie was coming up, or when the ice cream man was on his way. The music that others have made, from Beethoven to today's music superstars, taught me compassion, tolerance, and understanding. It allowed me to hear a piece of their soul, a story from their lives. Music taught me to have pride in my country. It has taught me about religion. It has informed me about political issues. It has given me the chance to learn of the lives of my ancestors by the stories told through song.

Music became the ear that I'd whisper my secrets to, declare my dreams to, and share my sadness and joy with. I didn't have to be afraid of what I had to say. Music did not judge me; it was there just to support me, to allow me to get out any, and all my emotions.

Music is life.

# Busy Bee

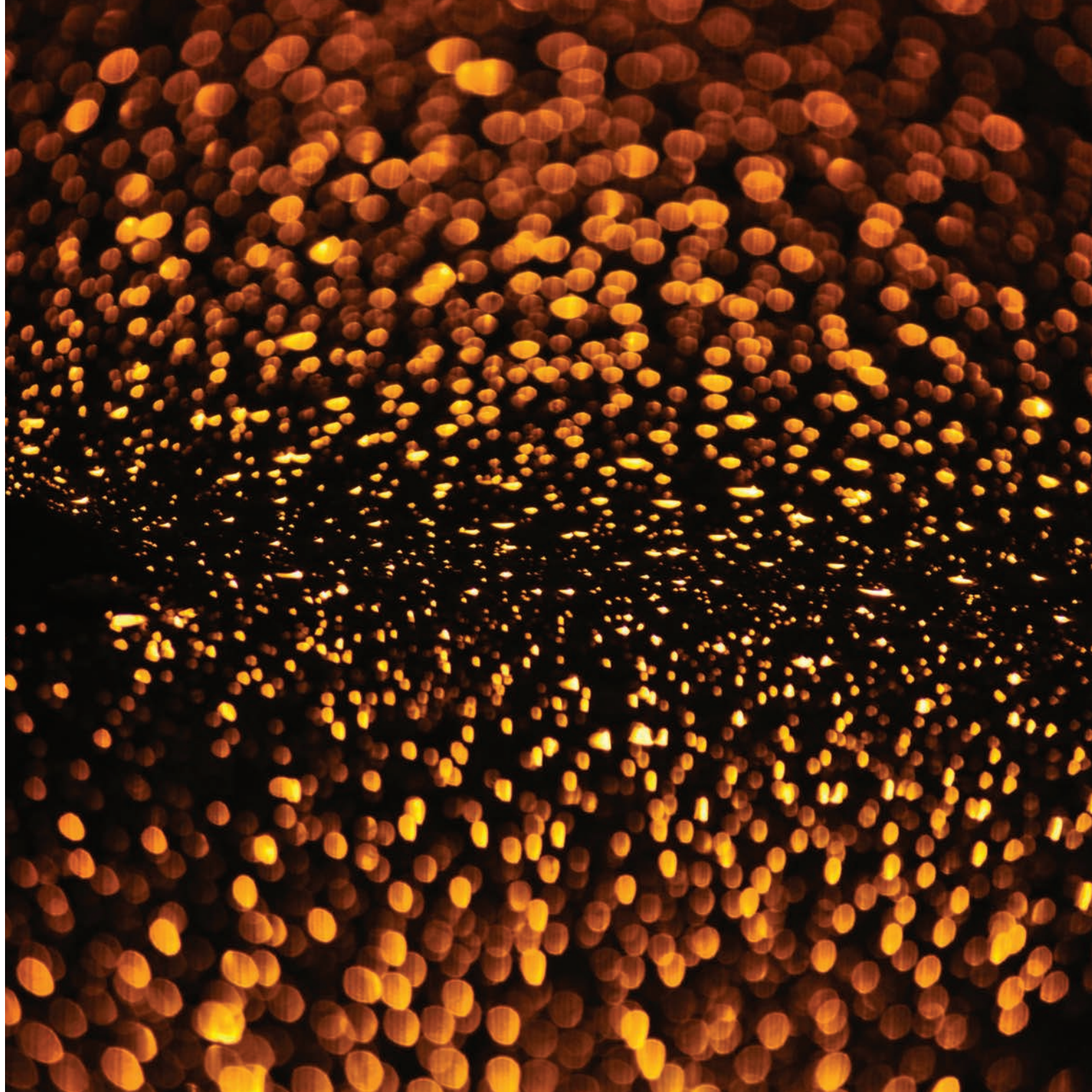
Leah Claypoole Ludwig



Facing  
Page:

# Abstract Beauty

Cody Hudzik



# Into The Fog

Cody Hudzik



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# Whisper

Moses Wamalwa

The moments are mere shadows of a memory  
Collecting dust in my mind like old books,  
The stories only half remembered,  
Slipping through my fingers like smoke  
I can almost hear the whispers of our laughter,  
the echoes of forgotten conversations,  
the faint heat of the blazing infatuations  
that now are only ash and dust  
I stumble through the age old dance  
knowing the motions but not remembering.  
And I wonder if you can still dance  
Your words with mine like before.

# Solitude



Jillian Hyde

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# Emotional State of Mind

Kellie Collins

It has always been there walking behind  
Waiting for the moment I change my mind

True I am weak

But I shall never allow it  
To reap what I have harvest  
No, not in the least one bit

This beast, this ugly beast of darkness

~

From time to time it slips by and walks ahead  
Yes it has struck me and now sees me tread

Oh the fight is there to rise again

So I shall never allow it  
To reap what I have harvest  
No, not in the least one bit

This beast, this ugly beast of darkness

~

The struggle is getting harder by the day  
It is always pulling and dragging me towards dismay

Once again I pick up speed  
Because I shall never allow it  
To reap what I have harvest

No, not in the least one bit  
This beast, this ugly beast of darkness



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# Memory

What is a memory but a moment immortalized  
In the moonlit mind of a midnight dreamer?

A gem of golden gladness gloriously displayed,  
or a moment of madness merged with misery.  
Standing tall, torturous in one's mind-  
Solid and immutable as a diamond by stress formed.  
Is a memory a gem to be held, polished, and admired?

Or a deadly shard with which to cut oneself;  
is it so concrete and rooted?

Or rather a bubble of iridescence capturing a fleeting moment  
Of sun and reflecting a million rainbows?  
Each glance back casting the brilliance of experience  
upon the fragile moment and seeing the subtle nuance.

Of the bubble sounds dancing in the breeze of time,  
a memory moment so fragile and mutable  
that the experience of seeing it changes it,  
and the rainbows dance to a different tune.

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# Moses Wamalwa

So fragile that we grasp it or we try,  
our desire to know invisible hands reaching  
for that moment until they have it

Then ...“POP”... it is gone forever,  
a burst of air, gone  
The moment, the kiss, the words gone  
as a bubble bursts and leaves behind air  
so the lost moment leaves an aching emptiness.

Is memory a river, rapidly running rampart,  
Its riotous rage ripping the bank of the past  
and rising to the present,  
the inundation seeping through everything,  
and overwhelming now and sweeping everything to the past?

Maybe a mountain, an obstacle obstructing openness  
and overshadowing opportunities opening up,  
maybe a memory is a mystery madly made magnificent--

Or maybe a mirror

# Make a Wish



Leah Claypoole Ludwig

# Seagull Sunrise



Cody Hudzik

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# Tree House of Memories

Our tree house had managed to stay up after the storm. Standing under it, the only thing I could think about was all the nights Donavon and I had spent playing and talking. Neither one of us, though, have visited it in the last 15 years and now it certainly looked abandoned and small, compared to what I thought when I was ten.

The wood was beginning to turn gray. The curtains we had put up were now shreds of dirt stained fabric that could barely be noticed from the bottom of the ladder. The wind was blowing and, from where I was standing, it looked as if the house was dancing with each gust. Sighing, I stepped on the first rung, bouncing on it to make sure it could handle my weight, and I headed back up to my childhood.

“Donavon, do you ever wish we could ride on the stars?” We would look up at the sky from what we called the Star Gazer, a tree house that took us nearly all summer to build. I remember his brown eyes picking up reflections of the moonbeams. If anyone were to ask me about his eyes then, I would have said they were brown. Now, I would tell you that is what made me fall in love with him.

He shrugged. “I don’t know. Never thought about it.”

I’ve always been a bit of a dreamer. I always had the bigger imagination, but he had the logic. “You’re going to make it through this.” I remember squeezing his hand, trying to smile, kissing his cold skin and he couldn’t bring himself to speak. He just smiled, and closed his eyes. The sound of the heart machine rang louder in my ears than anything else those last days.

“What if you were the orange Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle and I was the pink Power Ranger, couldn’t we be on the same team?” Striking some kind of ninja stance, I jumped from the house and rolled onto the ground as if we were being surrounded by the Foot Soldiers and Putty Patrollers. “Umm...no, we can’t do that. I mean, c’mon, you know that no one is scared of the Pterodactyl! What does it do anyway? Doesn’t it just fly around like a funny looking bird? What are you going to do as the Pink Ranger? Are you just going to peck your enemies?”

Climbing up into the tree house, I positioned myself to scoot along the water logged wooden floor. Shutting the door, I locked it and could feel tears welling up in my eyes. Playing with the ring he had placed on my finger that promised forever, I could see all of the years playing in my head quicker than they had happened. Even on the brink of crying, I looked around, laughing at the memory of our crime fighting days.

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# Jessica DeDeo

“Why don’t you shut up? You’re no cooler than the Power Rangers, stupid turtle.” I had pushed him and he nearly ended up on his rear end, covered in dirt.

“No, you know it’s true. Stupid dinosaur bird!” He picked up a handful of mud and heaved it at me. Stupid boy.

“Ugh, com’on now!” I pushed him down into the dirt and before we knew it, fighting crime wasn’t in our regimen. We were too busy rolling around in semi-wet grass, getting our clothes dirty. We didn’t even care.

“Did you tell your mom you were staying at my house?” I asked him, tossing my bag along the wooden floor of our tree fort. I adjusted my hat and threw my sleeping bag into the corner.

“Yeah, you at my house?” he said, flipping through some old Batman comics he took from his older brothers.

“Yeah. Whataya got there?” I dove next to him, “You got one for me?”

“Whataya got for me?” he said, pushing me back some.

“I brought us some nacho cheese Doritos. And…” getting up, I looked through my sack and pulled stuff out, “My mom gave me a thermos of sweet tea, gross.”

“Good, because my mom gave me Coke. I prefer tea.”

“Trade?”

“Yeah. What else?”

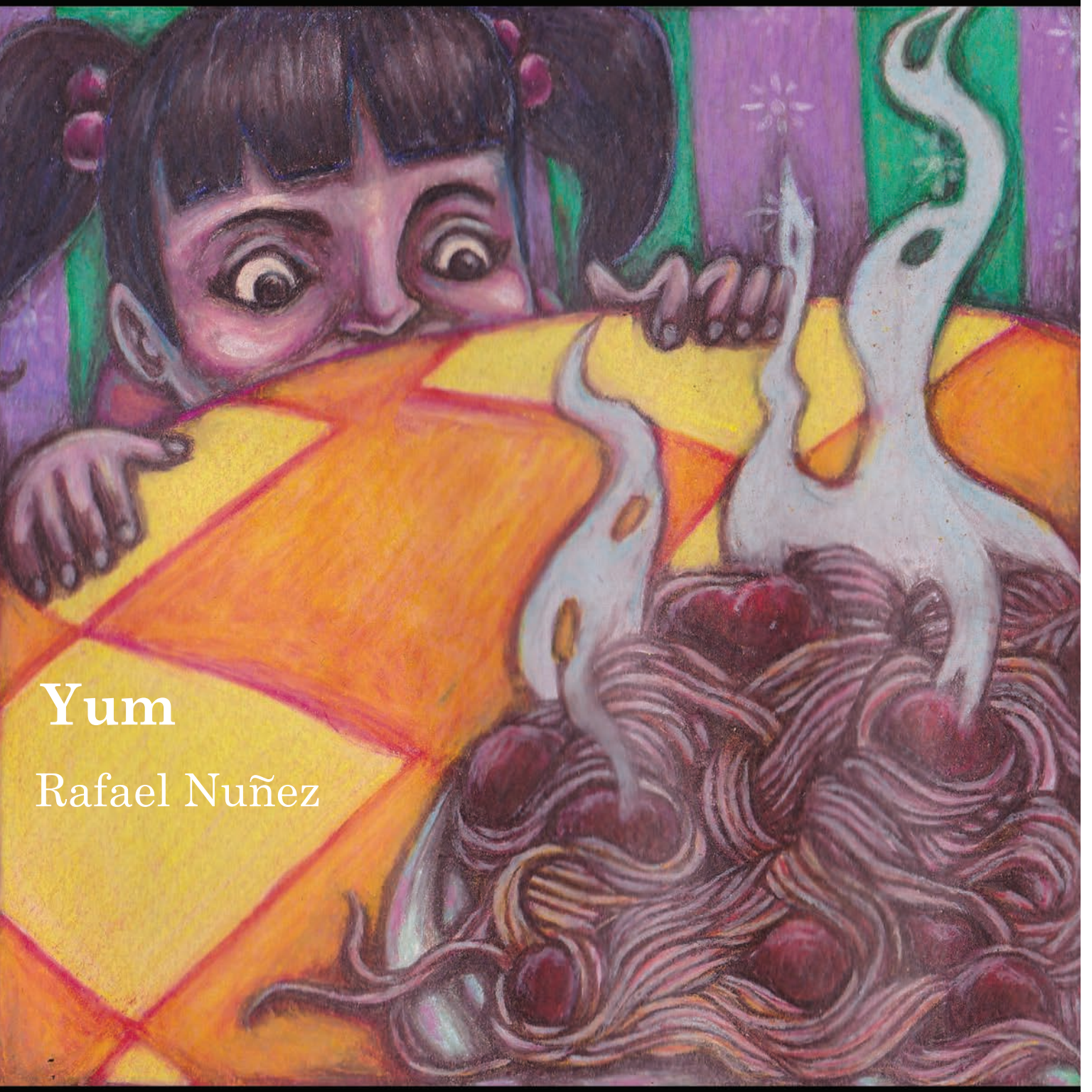
“I got us some Sweet Tarts, some ice cream marshmallow cones…”

“Awesome! I love them!” He closed the comic and snatched the artificially flavored cones out of my hand. Crinkling them in his hands, he shoved one into his mouth. His mouth full of marshmallowy-goodness, he grabbed the thermos and sipped the tea. “You know, Alli,” swallowing quickly, “You’re my best friend.”

“Really? You’re my best friend too.” I picked up the comic and thumbed through it.

Growing up I didn’t know Donavon had a heart condition. Thinking about it caused my body to shake inside. It felt like everything in my body was about to collapse and the anxiousness of knowing that it took him from me, almost made me throw up. The time we spoke about it, was literally the last time we were in this house. I could picture the whole thing as if it were yesterday.

Even though we had to go to different high schools and we didn’t hang out with the same kind of people, I still asked him to my prom. Donavon was the only guy I could count on and know I would have a good time. But he didn’t show up. He ended up calling me two days before the prom and bailing.



Yum

Rafael Nuñez

# Cars Can't Escape

Cody Hudzik





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“Alli, I have something to tell you.” His voice cracking on the other end of the phone, it sounded like he had been coughing nonstop.

“What is it?” I was holding onto the phone so tightly, and it was nearly sticking to my skin on my cheeks.

“I can’t go to your prom.” I heard him sniffle.

It was months before I decided to show up at his house.

“Donavon, what happened? You kind of stood me up at the dance.” Peering at him through the screen door, I could see his eyes sunken into his face. The spirit of this boy was drained from him, not only in spirit, but by the prodding needles that left marks on his arms.

“Alli, we need to talk.”

Both of us walked to the tree house, not saying a word. The wind was just about blowing, and I couldn’t even look at him. My heart hurt then just as it does now, while he explained that he had something called Congenital Heart Disease. It was something that he had been born with and doctors were surprised to see him live as long as he had. At times, it made him short of breath and it made him not have enough energy to do normal things, as much as he did them. Donavon explained to me that he wanted to be there. Not only did he want to be at the dance with me, but he wanted to spend his life with me.

“Would you love me even if I couldn’t promise to be here forever?” His voice was low and his eyes hooded by his long eyelashes. We were gazing at the stars just as we would have done at ten.

“Of course.” I responded, without even a care in the world.

“Marry me, Alli.”

My heart was pounding. I was almost sure the world could hear it. “Stop. You don’t mean it.” I joked, nudging him. It was then he took my hand and squeezed it tightly. The warmth from his hand penetrated through my skin, sending shivers along the length of my body.

“I believe I do.”

Tears crept out of my eyes and began down my cheeks. This Tree house held more memories than I ever wanted it to. I stood up, my knees shaking at the weight of the realization that I would never be able to see that boy who changed my life again. Sighing, I looked over the side and I could almost see us wrestling in the puddles beneath me.

I tried to wipe them away. I tried to wipe the tears, the sad memory of finding him on our porch. His body was pressed up against the front door of our house. I was only stepping out for a minute. I didn’t know that was the minute I was going to find him face down in the ground.

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“Donavan! Get up!” Kneeling down, rolling him over, I could feel my whole body beginning to shake. I wanted to scream, but the only thing I could do was fumble around his chest for a heartbeat. The smell of Irish Spring was still lingering on his skin when I found him. “Please get up...”

As many times as I asked for him to get up, I knew. I knew he wasn’t going to. His skin was cold. It was the only time I remember his hands being colder than mine.

“I made sure to leave you a marshmallow cone and a Pink Power Ranger with you. Even though we spent so many years here, I feel like coming back here was how you would want me to let go. I know, I know. You told me you couldn’t promise forever. At least, not my forever. Only yours.”

Here I was talking to the emptiness of the house and what seemed like rain. Playing with the ring, remembering the way he used to poke fun at everything I liked, just to tease me.

“Power Rangers; lame. Coke over tea; lame.” Donavon’s voice playful and accepting, all at the same time. Donavon accepted everything as it came to him.

“You know, Alli, I won’t be here forever.” His eyes sparkled deviously when he said this.

“Stop, You will be here longer than you think,” I joked back, not thinking anything about his statement. It wasn’t until he was looking into my eyes and I could see the seriousness in them. There weren’t any crinkles around his eyes. His lips weren’t curving upward leading into a possible facetious grin.

“Just know that no matter what happens, you will be fine. Truth is, eventually the pain will stop and you will be moving forward. Luckily,” he changed the subject, knowing it was upsetting me, “when my heart stops it only ends my life, not yours too.”

Even though he may have been joking about the heart only taking one life, essentially, he was dreaming that it wouldn’t end my life. In some sense, Donavon not being there any more ended one part of my life. It didn’t end my entire life, just pieces of it. Or at least that is the excuse I’m constantly reminding myself of. In the end, he turned me into a logical thinker. Despite the fact that eventually reality would have to settle in and I would come to grips with losing him, I didn’t expect Donavon to be taken from me at twenty-nine.

Today, I lost more than a childhood friend. I lost the little girl who wanted to ride the stars with her best buddy. I lost the sense of thinking I could still fly. I lost the person who made me realize that I wouldn’t float off the ground if he let go of my hands. Donavon took with him the parts of me that lived in an endless dream.

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Laughing to myself, I leaned against the side, letting the tears soak into my sweater. “Where are you now when I need another good memory?” Closing my eyes, searching my mind for another one, I felt my sweater get snagged on a nail sticking out in the wood. Pulling quickly, I heard something hit the ground.

Clink!

Opening my eyes, I looked around to see what that sound could have been. My hair was blowing against the force of the wind, my heart pounding hard against my chest. Something shiny caught my eye. I bent down to get it.

The inscription: When this you see, remember me.

Smiling sadly, I held the ring to my lips, “Trust me, I will always remember you.” I slipped the wedding ring back onto my finger.

“I may miss you now, but I will forever love you.”

As I climbed back down to the present, I could feel the sense of weight being slowly lifted from my shoulders. It was almost like Donavon was telling me that everything was going to work out in the end. Somewhere inside myself, I knew that I wasn’t going to be the same, but we’ve learned so many things throughout our lives. We both learned to love, to play, to get along, to struggle through what we can’t avoid. It helped me learn that just because the heart takes someone’s life away, the love doesn’t end there.

Waving up towards the fabric blowing in the wind, I smiled lightly. It was like the little boy I met so many years ago was doing the same. Tears burned my cheeks and, while I was staring, I could see the eyes of a boy who was my best friend, who was my soul mate saying goodbye.

I left the tree house that day, knowing I may never get back the person that changed my life. I might lose the memories over the course of time, but I can honestly say one day we will find our way back. Just like we did when we were young, we will find each other again.

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*What drove me to write this story is life is so complicated except for things when we are young. Young love is the force of innocence, and it’s also the point when one understands he or she is no longer a child. I wrote in my fiction writing class, which I enjoyed very much. I suggest taking Joey Flamm-Costello’s to students who are looking for a way to release their creativity. ~Jessica Dedeo*

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# Life in Berks County: The Early 1860s

## Lori Scargle

Born and raised in Berks County, I know the general history of the area, such as how Native American tribes once lived along the Schuylkill River and how, during the industrial revolution, numerous textile mills and iron work forges scattered the landscape. To locals, Berks County still appears to be a quiet, small town that is a little “behind the times” and backwards in its thinking compared to other cities. Culture, fashion and philosophies always seem to take some time to catch on in Berks County. During the Civil War era, however, Reading and Berks County were a center for political drama and strife.

The City of Reading and the surrounding Berks County area played a surprisingly significant role during the Civil War time period. During the 1860s Reading was home to the Ringgold Light Artillery Unit (historically known as the “First Defenders”) and the Ladies’ Aid Society. Also, Berks County was home to a secret society called the “Knights of the Golden Circle” which were Anti-Lincoln supporters (Devlin, “Berks was Home”). These groups are an indication of the political differences felt in the area at this time. The presidential election of 1860 was very controversial throughout the nation, and Berks County and Reading were no exception. The political arena in Berks County was a “hot bed” for Democrat and Republican differences. This

piece of information is very surprising because Berks County has traditionally been Democratic due to the number of industries, laborers (blue collar workers) and the strong influence of the Pennsylvania (Dutch) German community.

During the 1860 presidential election, both political parties in Berks County participated in hotly contested issues about whom they were going to nominate. Local newspapers endorsed candidates from both parties and strongly helped the candidates promote their causes. Election excitement in Berks began early in 1860, when delegates started to arrive in Reading for the Democratic State Convention (Weigley 1). At that time in Reading, three newspapers supported both parties and helped to fuel the ongoing political tensions of the day: The Reading Gazette & Democrat and Der Adler (now the Reading Eagle) were both pro-Democrat. The Der Adler was written entirely in German for the highly influential and predominantly Pennsylvania German residents which were the majority in Berks County. The third newspaper, the Berks and Schuylkill Journal, was Republican, and endorsed the People’s Party (formerly the Whig Party).

Throughout Berks County, the issue at hand among the Democrats was the conflict between which of the two candidates to nominate based on their views on slavery. One candidate was Stephen A. Douglas, a Northern Democrat who favored posing the slavery question to new states requesting admission into the Union



# A Vet to Be Remembered

Alexis Freeman

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(popular sovereignty) (Montgomery, Historical and Biographical 124). The other candidate was John C. Breckinridge, a Southern Democrat who favored Southern plantation owners (Weigley 1) and submitted slavery requests to the Supreme Court for adjudication under the Constitution (Montgomery, Historical and Biographical 124). Not only was Berks County divided between the two opposing parties, Democrat and Republican, but also within the Democratic Party itself. Party loyalties would split squarely in two for the first time since 1848 (Weigley 1). Reading hosted the Democratic Convention and it was one of the largest audiences ever assembled for such a meeting in Berks (Weigley 8). The Democratic papers of Reading called on their convention to “above all maintain a solid Democratic front and to unite the party” (Weigley 1). “Few Pennsylvania party conventions have been so important as this one,” commented the Reading Adler, “On its proceedings depends the success not only of the Democracy in Pennsylvania but of the party in the race for the Presidency” (qtd. in Weigley 1).

Local Republicans were also undecided over their candidates Edward Bates, John McLean and Abraham Lincoln (who happened to have a branch of his family still living in the County) (Weigley 3). The Republican Party’s view on slavery was to restrict it to territory currently occupied (Montgomery, Historical and Biographical 124). The majority of Republicans in Berks County favored Lincoln because of his local popularity. The Berks and Schuylkill Journal endorsed him as well stating, “He is the right man

for the times” (Weigley 3). The Adler, however, did not look favorably on Lincoln, calling him “one of the weakest candidates the ‘Black Republicans’ could have chosen.” They also questioned his conduct as a Congressman who had opposed the Mexican War insinuating his actions were next to traitorous (Weigley 3).

Despite their disagreements, Berks County Republicans were determined and very active during the election and were often seen about downtown Reading trying to win support of the younger voters. New political groups were created, such as The Young Men’s Union Club and the Wide Awake Club, which were often seen marching through Reading wearing pro-Lincoln uniforms consisting of black oil-cloth capes and black glazed caps, carrying red, white and blue transparencies, or signs. (Weigley 6). During these Republican rallies, supporters carried their transparencies emblazoned with slogans such as “Our Whole Country,” “The Union and the Constitution,” “Protection to American Industry,” and “All Right for Honest Old Abe,” to name a few (Weigley 6).

Although the Republicans as a whole were the most active party during the 1860 Presidential election, the Berks County elections were a disappointment to the local Republican Party. On October 6, Abraham Lincoln would break the decades-long Democratic hold on the city of Reading, which also happened to be the county seat (Lawlor Jr 32), and the People’s Party would carry the city of Reading (Weigley 1). The Democratic majority in rural areas were enough to

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put Berks County as a whole in Democratic hands and Lincoln would lose Berks County—not to a Northern Democratic candidate, but to a Southern one (Weigley 1). Strong political differences among states, cities and towns were felt across the nation, and Reading and Berks County were not immune to the political unrest that the nation was experiencing. Personal opinion, highly-influential newspapers and moral viewpoints regarding the issue of slavery were all hotly debated issues here in Reading and Berks County leading up to the Civil War in 1861. Friends, families and neighbors argued and fought over conscription, Union and Confederate loyalties, and a host of other topics.

After Lincoln was elected on November 6, tensions between the North and South continued to escalate. Militia regiments in and around Berks County started to prepare for an impending confrontation with Confederate troops. The feeling of patriotism and defense of the Union was strong in Berks County among both Democrats and Republicans. Public meetings were held in which judges, lawyers, merchants and businessmen united, regardless of party affiliations, to encourage and sustain the national administration (Montgomery, *Historical and Biographical* 125). The people of Reading and Berks County were excited and filled with a heightened sense of national pride in defending the Union. Penn Square was bustling with enlisted men practicing their drills on a daily basis, and “the music of fife and drum and the marching of men thrilled the entire community”

(Montgomery, *Historical and Biographical* 125).

Even though Reading and Berks County were preparing for war, daily life went on as usual. Trade continued and was profitable and improvements were made throughout the county. Religion was discussed with earnest in every church. Sermons reflected the efforts to “win the favor of God who had been blessed in their Revolution and struggle for independence and freedom, so the Union could be preserved as it had been transmitted unto them” (Montgomery, *History of Berks* 190). The cost of goods and materials remained high, money was abundant and the economy flourished. Encampments in the outskirts of the City attracted much attention and afforded the people of Reading a “naïve” look into military life and discipline (Montgomery, *Historical and Biographical* 125). However, the pre-war way of life for those in Berks County and Reading was about to drastically change.

On April 12, 1861 military forces in South Carolina fired upon Fort Sumter. President Lincoln, finding the laws of the country opposed “by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceeding, or by powers vested in the marshals by law,” issued a proclamation on April 15 which called for 75,000 militia to “suppress said combinations and to cause the laws to be duly executed ... and aid this effort to maintain the honor, integrity and existence of our national Union” (Montgomery, *Historical and Biographical* 125). That same day, the Ringgold Light Artillery under the command of Captain James McKnight was practicing their drills at Three Mile House outside the City. The regiment

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had “been on notice” since January 21, and were told that in the event of an emergency the unit should be ready to move on 24 hours’ notice (Strohecker 2).



Upon receiving the President’s call for help, Captain McKnight readied his troops. He sent them home to await orders and to “get their personal things in order” (Graff 4). The volunteer militia’s response was quick and immediate: “We are coming, Father Abraham,” the unit replied as it marched back to its headquarters in Reading (Devlin “Berks’ Role”). Captain McKnight sent the following report to his commander: “I left Reading with my command, numbering 101 men, fully armed and equipped, on the evening of April 16, 1861 at 6 o’clock, reaching Harrisburg at 8 o’clock” (Strohecker 3). According to John Hoptak, upon arriving at the depot in Harrisburg, the volunteer militia were sworn into service and given a handful of weapons as they were asked to leave outdated weapons behind. Many of them were unarmed and wore civilian clothing. The militia arrived in Baltimore and was met by an angry Confederate mob that surrounded and attacked the trains. Baltimore police were called in to escort the Pennsylvania militia as they

walked on towards Washington, DC (Hoptak).

Of all the units heeding President Lincoln’s call, the Ringgold Light Artillery was the first regiment to enter Washington, 24 hours before the others (Hoptak). In total, there were five companies of volunteer Pennsylvania militia who arrived first in Washington to protect the Capitol from Confederate troops. President Lincoln personally welcomed the Ringgold Light Artillery regiment on April 19; while stationed there, the Ringgold Artillery’s duties were to protect the Capitol by pouring barrels of cement along the walls and into the Potomac River in order to reinforce the area (Graff 8). These heroic men have been awarded by the United States Congress the title “First Defenders” and the Ringgold Light Artillery was the “first” of them to arrive (Graff 2). These brave men have been called the most devoted men in U.S. History (Hoptak). Interestingly enough, “Berks was the sole County in the Commonwealth to withhold electoral support for Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 election. Yet, it was Berks that sent the Ringgold Light Artillery, the first company to answer Lincoln’s plea to defend Washington, DC” (Devlin “Berks’ Role”).



RINGGOLD LIGHT ARTILLERY WASHINGTON NAVY YARD APRIL 1861





**Norfolk Southern**

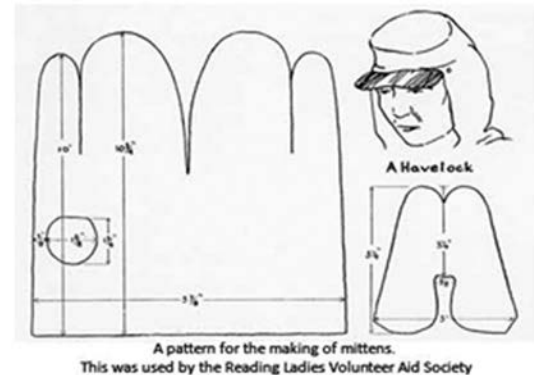
**Cody Hudzik**

While the Ringgold Artillery were preparing for War, the women of Berks County were also getting ready to support the war efforts. In the City of Reading, an influential group of ladies met at the home of Mrs. Diller Luther to form a woman's group called the "Ladies' Aid Society." The purpose of the group was to supply soldiers in active service with clothing and other essentials they might need during the war (Balthaser, Wagner and Hoch 76). During the winter months, the Society provided knitted stockings and mittens to keep the soldiers warm. The districts cooperated in this work effort and responded nobly by forwarding many materials to Reading which were then sent to the front (Montgomery, *Historical and Biographical* 126). The Society provided these services throughout the entire war.

The Ladies' Aid Society was the first of its kind organized in America. Berks County again had the honor and distinction of not only sending the first soldiers to the front, but also the first to provide for the comfort and welfare of the soldiers that were serving in the war (Balthaser, Wagner and Hoch 76). The Ladies' Aid Society was also active in the welfare and care of the sick and wounded soldiers at the military hospital which was set up on the "fair grounds" of the Agricultural Society. Arthur Graff states that by 1862, the sick and wounded became their chief concern. Instead of seeking clothes, the women collected bandages, hospital supplies and food for the injured soldiers (19). This military hospital is now the Reading Hospital, and although their name has changed, the Ladies' Aid Society has

continued its service to the hospital until present day.

In 1862, when there was a threatened invasion of Pennsylvania, the people of Reading and Berks County became alarmed for the safety of their lives and property (Montgomery, *History of Berks* 190). County commissioners offered a series of bounties to men who enlisted voluntarily or to those who would re-enlist in order to make the county quota for militia. Eventually,



the number of volunteer recruits drastically reduced in the North including locally in Berks and Reading. The city and county had to resort to conscription (Federal draft) to make quotas. John Lawlor, Jr. explains that conscription during the Civil War was a new experience for the country and one that was "universally disliked" both nationally and locally, and that opposition ranged from resistance and rioting, to obtaining false enrollment registers, desertion and even murder of enrolling officers. Lawlor continues to explain that, in order to maintain control, the Federal government stepped in and assigned

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each congressional district a Provost Marshal whose responsibilities included establishing an enrollment office, enrolling eligible males, arranging and executing a draft lottery and making sure draftees reported for duty or else imprisoned them (23). Being Provost Marshal was a difficult job, but especially in Berks County which was primarily Democrat and opposed the Republican views of President Lincoln on all platforms.

Of course, there were a large number of people in Berks County who opposed conscription and the war but, when called to enlist, did so willingly. Their reasons for opposing the war were primarily due to the issue of slavery. There were a few opposition groups such as the Knights of the Golden Circle (a reportedly secret society) and the Order of the Sons of Liberty whose members were sympathetic to the Confederate cause. They argued the Civil War was not being fought to save the Union but to free blacks and enslave Southern whites. They wanted “peace and restoration of slavery to the Union” (Devlin, “Berks was Home”). “Berks was labeled the “Eldorado of the Democracy” by a Pennsylvania Republican Senator because of its staunch opposition to Republican war policies (Lawlor Jr 24). Citizens of Berks County considered themselves Unionists but believed a negotiated settlement with the South was preferable to a military victory and therefore greatly opposed conscription and the local Provost Marshal, Henry S. Kupp (Lawlor Jr 25).

The most tragic day of the Civil War for Berks County happened on Wednesday, July 1, 1863, the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg, on which approximately 250 Berks Countians were killed, injured or taken prisoner (Fryer). As General Lee was advancing into Pennsylvania, Reading Mayor Joseph Hoyer issued a proclamation ordering all hotels and saloons to close their bars. “Our city being very much crowded with excited people . . . it is the duty of every good citizen to . . . have good order and to prevent disorderly conduct and disturbance of the peace . . . in order to do this must be kept sober . . . done by not selling any liquor at all” (qtd. in Fryer).

The history of Berks and Reading during the early 1860s is truly fascinating. Reading and the surrounding Berks County area were filled with Civil War support and opposition. There were abolitionists, pro-slavery individuals, Confederate sympathizers, and secret societies living side by side. Berks County heeded the call of President Lincoln and was the first to respond by sending troops to defend the nation’s capital. Notably, the women of Berks County were the first in America to support soldiers heading into battle. The historical significance of “backward, behind the times” Berks County is amazing; both Reading and Berks County should never be thought of as anything but a great place to live and call home.

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# Burst



Leah Claypoole Ludwig

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# Relative Importance of Factors Informing Organ Donations

Velena McHugh

[Editor Note: The college has a strong technical writing curriculum because of its workforce development programs; therefore, the staff decided to showcase one of the many feasibility reports submitted to this year's *Legacy*.]

## Abstract

The purpose of this report is to examine the association between implemented public policy, attitudes, and knowledge about organ transplantation. The study involves secondary research and the survey of attitudes toward organ donation in two countries with different public policies on this subject: the United States and Russia. The cross-country analysis reveals significant differences between two countries regarding the level of willingness to donate organs, medical mistrust, altruism, and superstitions. Overall knowledge of organ donation is at the same level in both countries.

Grounded in this survey, it is clear to see the implemented public policy can affect attitudes toward organ donation. The survey found a negative impact of opt-out legislation in Russia. The Russian public is less trusting and would prefer to express freedom of choice in their giving. Other major factors that influence willingness to donate are altruistic values and superstitions. No connection between overall knowledge of organ donation and willingness to donate was found.

## Introduction

During past decades, organ transplantation has become an integral part of many health systems throughout the world to manage serious life-threatening health conditions. Transplants do not just save human lives. Most transplant recipients could go on to lead productive, improved quality lives. Moreover, organ transplants are cost-effective. For instance, a renal transplant costs approximately one third as much as renal dialysis over a 5-year period for end-stage renal patients (Shaw, 1996).

However, the success of this treatment has caused a big problem: unmet demand for organs. To address this problem, numerous legislative and policy efforts to bolster the organ supply have been proposed and implemented. With the only exception, the legalized sale of human organs in Iran (Hippen, 2008), all

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current policies have failed to provide the sufficient number of transplants to eliminate the waiting lists of patients who await organ transplants for years. It seems that the range of pre-existing attitudes and ethical issues related to sources of available organs (a fresh cadaver or a living donor in some cases of kidney and liver transplantation) are more important factors that affect outcomes (Siminoff & Mercer, 2001).

To solve the problem of organ shortage, some economists have offered a few possible solutions. One is a legalized market of human organs. This proposal is based on the success of the Iranian program (Dubner & Levitt, 2006). However, this idea is considered unpopular and repugnant (Roth, 2007). Another possible approach to enhance the supply of transplants is Presumed Consent (opt-out rule). It assumes that all individuals are willing to donate their organs unless they explicitly document their refusal. This policy is implemented in Russia and 15 countries of the European Union, including Austria, Belgium, and France.

The subject of this research is factors and motives that lead people to decisions to be or not to be organ donors. The purpose of the study is to examine the attitudes and knowledge of organ donation in different countries with respect to various policies and investigate to which level public policies, social norms, and other cultural factors determine willingness to donate.

The report will cover information concerning Presumed Consent, the public policy implemented in several European countries, the overview of factors and variables that influence a person's decision toward organ donation. The research will include a set of data from conducted surveys involving a comparison of attitudes toward organ donation in the United States to attitudes in Russia and in the European Union.

## **Literature Review**

Views on Presumed Consent among policy makers and the scientific community are varied. Those who promote the opt-out system expect that it will increase the number of donors (Johnson & Golstein, 2003). Others believe that Presumed Consent “has the potential to damage the vital relationship of trust between clinicians caring for people at the end of life, their patients and their families” (Organ Donation Task Force, 2008, p. 4). Mixed findings indicate Presumed Consent alone is not a panacea. The success of any public policy depends on how readily individuals accept premises behind that policy and what other social and cultural factors affect donation rates.

The Organ Donation Model based on the Theory of Reasoned Action demonstrates that the level of knowledge, attitudes, social norms, other factors such as medical mistrust, the desire to maintain bodily integrity, religion and altruism largely impact the decision to donate organs (Morgan, 2009). To further advance the existing knowledge and explain the variation in organ donation rates between countries, this study will examine the role and the relative importance of different factors that affect willingness and intention to donate organs.

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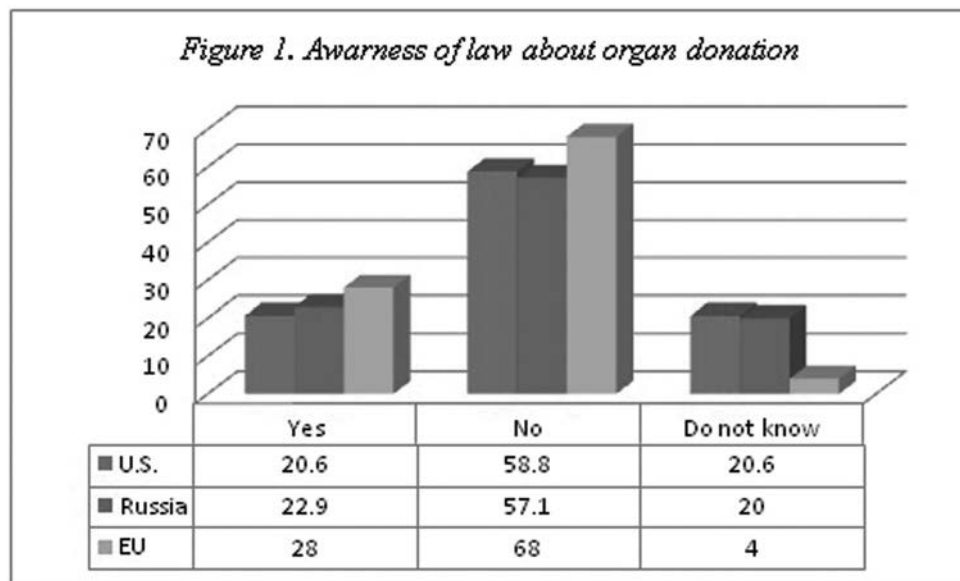
## Materials and Methods

In order to perform this research, a survey containing 10 questions was conducted in two languages, Russian and American English. The answers have been collected by using the software from [surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). 35 random Russian and 34 American respondents were asked about their knowledge of legislation for organ donation and transplantation in their countries and their attitudes towards possible policies such as Presumed Consent and the legalized market of human organs. People who do not support the presumed consent system were asked their reasons. Other questions were designed to investigate the influence of other factors described in the Organ Donation Model (Morgan, 2009). Then the cross-country analysis was performed.

In addition, the set of data from the survey conducted in countries of European Union by TNS Opinion & Social for the European commission and other secondary research have been analyzed and integrated into this study.

## Results

The chart below shows the level of awareness about the legislative system in one's own country. The analysis of results does not reveal any significant differences by country. Only 20.6% of Americans respondents and 22.9% Russians said they know the regulations for organ donation in their country. According to TNS Opinion & Social, people from the European Union have a somewhat higher awareness level (28%).



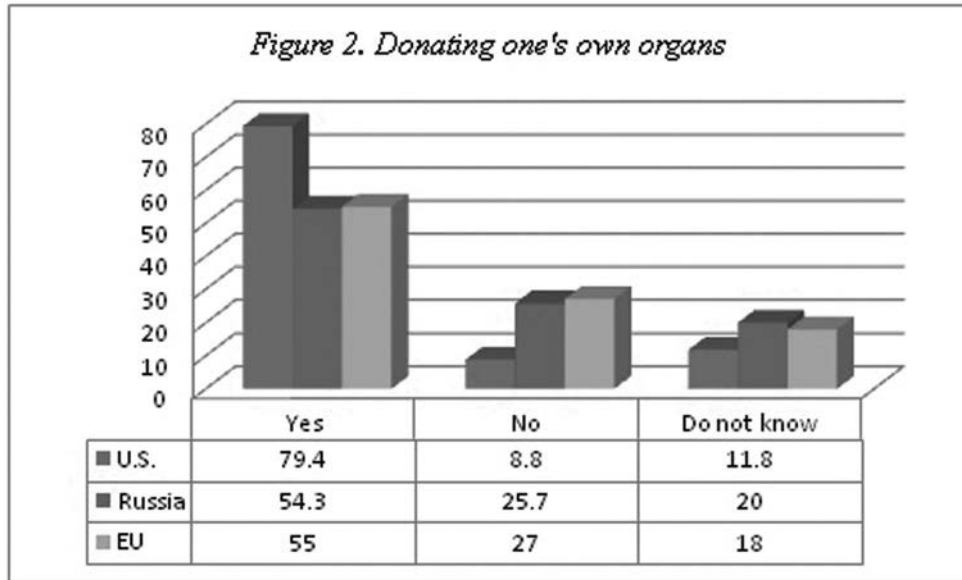


# Meditation

Leah Claypoole Ludwig



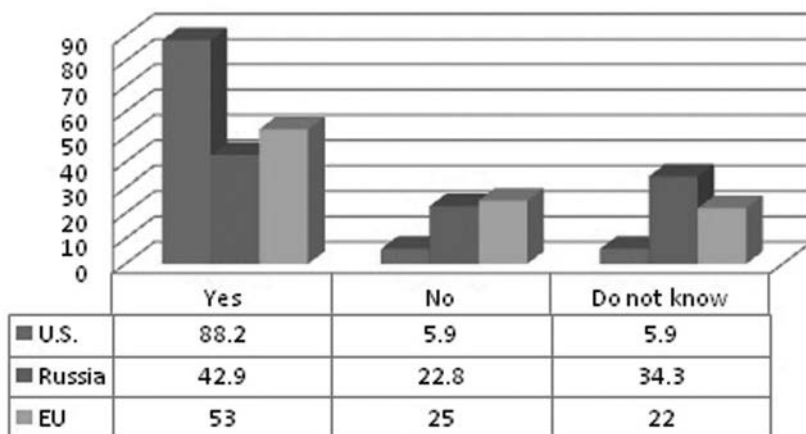
The majority of Americans (79.4%) are willing to donate their organs after their death. Russians show much lower support for organ donation (54.3%). One in four (25.7%) is against this idea and one in five was not able to express an opinion on this topic at all (Figure 2). However, this proportion is in line with the average level of willingness to donate in European Union countries.



Also, American respondents reveal a higher level of willingness to donate their kidney while they are living. Nearly 24% of Americans said they would donate their kidney to an unknown person, while only 8.6% of Russians would consider it.

Significant differences by country are observed regarding willingness to donate organs from deceased family members (Figure 3). Approximately 88.2% American respondents said they would give their consent if they were asked in the hospital. From comparison of sets of data from Figure 2 and Figure 3, Americans are more likely to donate organs from a deceased family member than their own (88.2% versus 79.4%). In contrast, the percentage of Russians willing to donate organs from a deceased family member is lower than the percentage of those willing to donate their own (42.9% versus 54.3%). Over one in three Russians indicates the difficulty of making this decision.

*Figure 3. Donating an organ from a deceased close family member*



As shown in Table 1, the main barriers for organ donation are medical mistrust and concern of bodily integrity for both groups. However, Russians reveal a greater level of medical mistrust than Americans (36.7% versus 20.0%).

*Table 1. Reasons for not donating organs*

| Reasons  | Americans | Russians |
|--|-----------|----------|
| I cannot donate my organs because of medical reasons   | 10.0      | 13.3     |
| This is against my religion  | 0         | 10       |
| It is possible for a brain-dead person to recover from his/her injuries                                | 15.0      | 20       |
| I do not want my body cut up or disfigured   | 30.0      | 26.7     |
| I don't trust medical system. Knowing I am a donor, doctors will be less likely to try to save my life | 20.0      | 36.7     |
| I don't like the thought of it. Such thoughts increase the chance I will die                           | 0         | 16.7     |
| Transplants often go to undeserving people   | 10        | 6.7      |
| Other  | 15.8      | 16.7     |

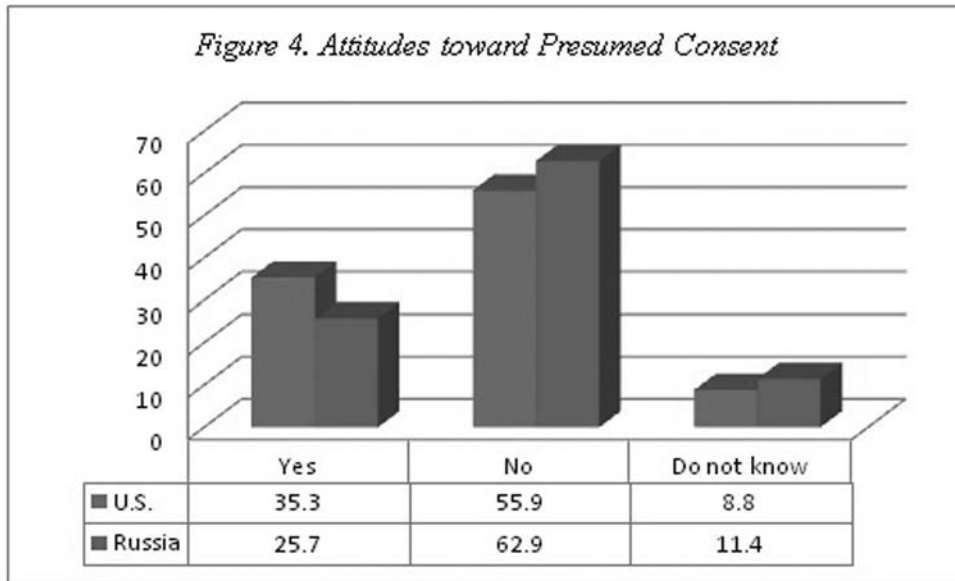
Interesting results are revealed by comparison of reasons for organ donation (Table 2). The dominant attitude of Russians toward organ donating is more utilitarian: I do not need it any more, so you can use it. Only 40.7% of Russians versus 87.1% of Americans find the idea of saving somebody’s life is valuable. Also, almost twice as many Americans than Russians consider that organ donation could alleviate the pain of a loss for the family (38.7% versus 22.2%).

*Table 2. Reasons for donating organ*

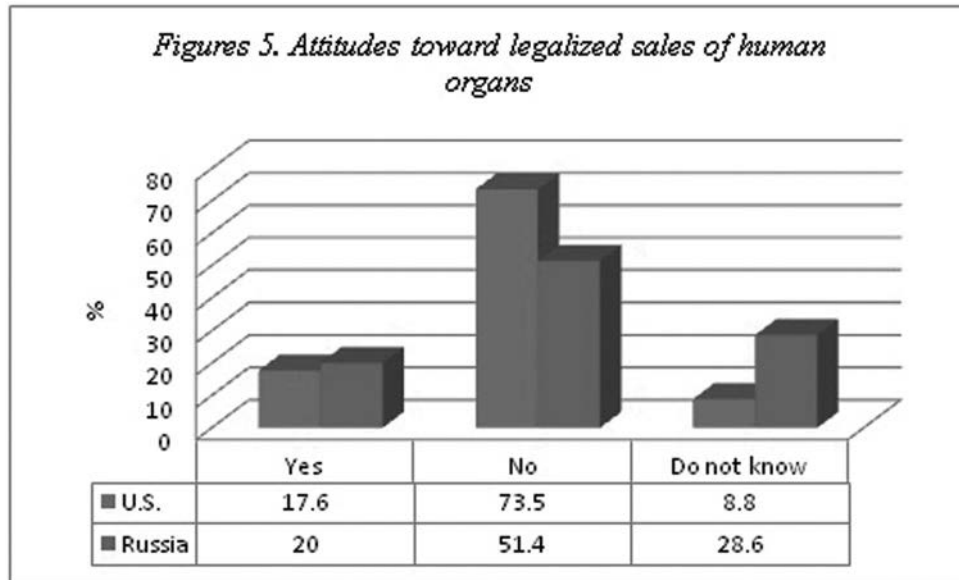
| Reasons  | U.S. | Russia |
|--|------|--------|
| I think after I die, I do not need my organs anymore   | 67.7 | 55.6   |
| I like the idea that after I die, I could save someone’s life  | 87.1 | 40.7   |
| I have a close friend/family member who needs organ transplantation. So I completely realize the importance of it    | 16.1 | 18.5   |
| I think if I died, my family would find solace in the idea the part of me is still alive and helps someone else live | 38.7 | 22.2   |
| Other  | 6.5  | 3.7    |

There is no significant difference between attitudes of both groups toward the Presumed Consent system (Figure 4). Over 55% of Americans and 63% of Russians do not support this policy. Half of them consider it a violation of their rights (52.4% and 50% respectively). And again, as in the case of the barriers to donation, Russians reveal much greater distrust to the government and system than Americans (37.5% versus 14.3%).

*Figure 4. Attitudes toward Presumed Consent*



Only 17.6% of Americans and 20% of Russians are in favor of the idea of legalizing the sale of human organs (Figure 5). About 74% of Americans and 51% of Russians do not support the sale of human organs. The Russian group has a higher proportion of “do not know” answers. Nevertheless, 57.1% of Russians and 42.4% of Americans are ready to buy an organ if they or their loved ones will be in need. In addition, 31.4% of Russians and 41.9% of Americans were confused about making this decision. Summarizing these numbers, it can be concluded that 80 to 90% of Americans and Russians are potential violators of the law prohibiting the sales of human organs.



Noteworthy, Russians reveal more confusion answering the survey questions. Approximately 20% of Russian respondents do not know whether they are willing to donate their organs after their death. One in three Russians was not able to give a clear answer about donating an organ from a deceased family member. In addition, 28% of Russians could not take a firm position toward the legalization of the sale of human organs. Among American respondents, these figures are 11.8%, 5.9%, and 8.8% respectively.

## Discussion

Previous findings in the published literature on organ donation have indicated that the number of factors can be used to predict the willingness to donate and, thus, predict the success of any public policy (Morgan, 2009). Two of the most important factors influencing the decision to donate are an awareness of the urgent need for organs and overall knowledge about organ donation. In the study, the overall knowledge was measured as an awareness of the law about organ donations. Also, the analysis of reasons for donating or not donating organs can reveal the level of overall knowledge by implication. The awareness of the law about organ donation is at the same level in the U. S., Russia, and the European Union on average. Almost the same numbers of people show a lack of understanding of brain-death. Nearly 15.0% of Americans and 20% of Russians believe that a brain-dead person can come alive as it is shown at the Table 1. The same numbers of people in both countries (16.1% of Americans and 18.5% of Russians) have family members or close friends who need organ transplantation (Table 2).

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However, attitudes towards organ donation reveal significant differences. Almost 80% of the people in the U.S. are willing to donate their organs after their death versus 54-55% of Russians and Europeans. Thus, no connection between the level of knowledge and the attitude toward organ donation was found.

Major differences between Russian and American respondents are the level of medical mistrust, altruism, and some subjective norms (superstitions). 33% of Russians and only 20% of Americans believe doctors will be less likely to try to save their lives if they would be donors. Fewer than twice the number of Russians than Americans considers the idea of saving someone's life as valuable enough to donate their organs, or this idea will be valuable enough for their families (Table 2). About 23-24% of Americans and only 8-9% of Russians could donate their kidneys to unknown person while they are still alive. Also, Russians seems to be more superstitious than Americans. Approximately 17% of Russians believe that talking or thinking about death brings bad luck or even death. No American respondents indicate such a fear (Table 1).

Thus, it can be concluded that the higher level of medical mistrust and superstitions is negatively correlated with willingness to donate organs. Also, the lower level of altruism determines the lower level of willingness and intention for organ donation.

The results of the survey also support the opinion that Presumed Consent can lead to a greater mistrust and an even greater damage to the whole organ transplantation system (Organ Donation Task Force, 2008). Russians who live in a country with implemented Presumed Consent reveal more mistrust and more negative attitude toward this system. Only 25.7% Russians versus 35.3% Americans support the opt-out system.

Moreover, the idea of Presumed Consent is more unpopular in Russia than the idea of the legalized sale of human organs. Almost 63% of Russians are opponents of Presumed Consent, while only 51.4% of them do not support the legalized sale of human organs. Half of 'opt-out' opponents in Russia think this law violates their rights. Almost 46% of them believe this system is unethical because 'organ donation is very individual choice' and 'no one should presume an individual will have a specific belief'. More than 37% of Russians versus 14% of Americans do not support Presumed Consent because they do not believe the government and the medical system.

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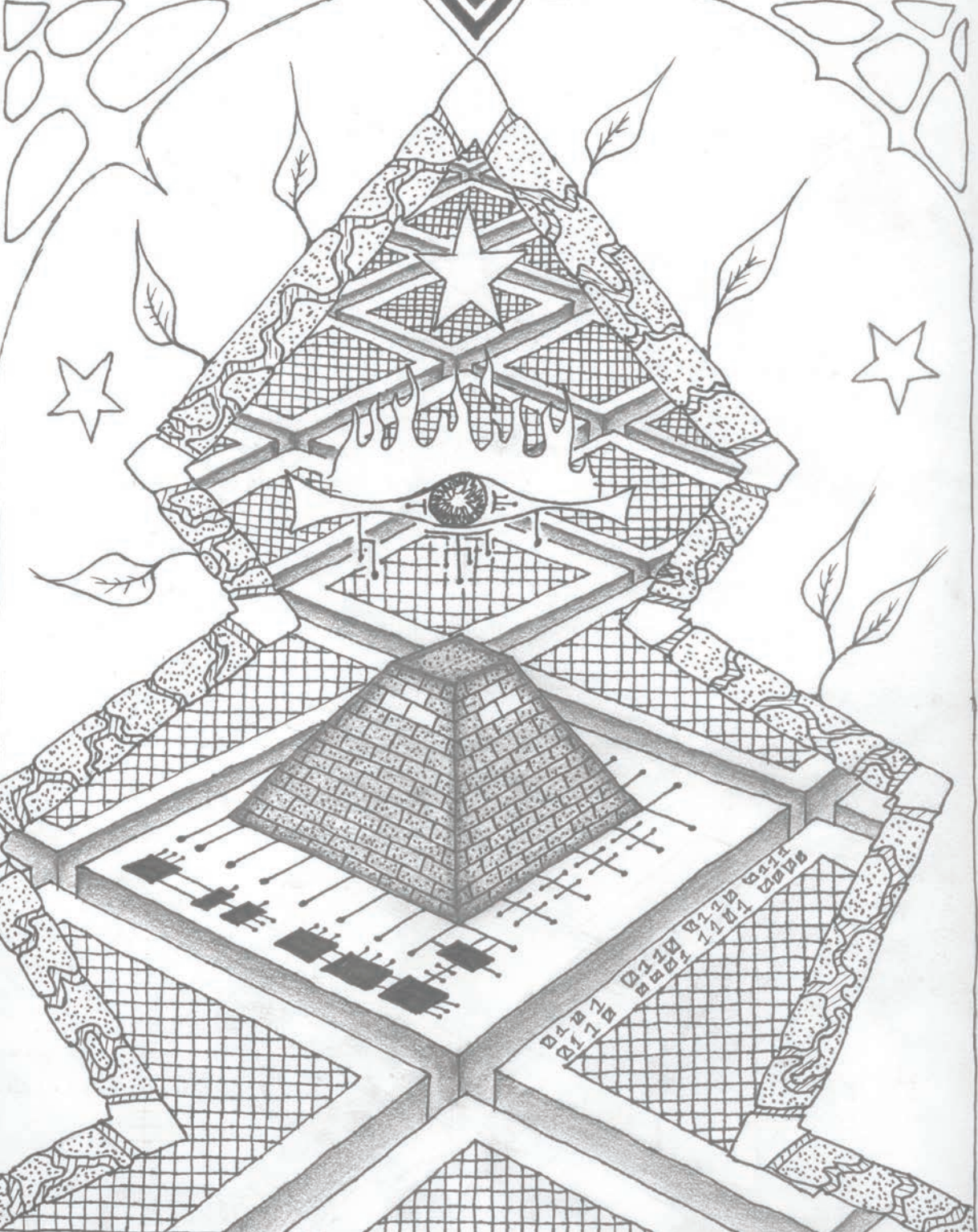
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# Zero One

Robert Mailloux III



Who is she?  
What is it she searches for?  
Is she better off now than she was before?  
Simplicity still begs for more

In moments of silence  
When thoughts take pause  
Muffled sounds of greatness crowd her space

Has she been trapped by fantasies exceeding  
Or blinded by that which has already been leading?  
Profound thought or not  
Loving herself has not yet conquered the plot

It is only that of others seem to quench the clutter  
A strangers' truth standing firm  
While her own throws blunders  
Reverence, with no fear of a ruined fortress  
Would be ideal if she knew how to appeal

In defense her armor shines  
Yet in peace she still looks for her throne  
Easily finding herself in others  
Helping them define one another  
Yet she still feels alone  
Sometimes lost with no home

With no crowd to adore  
Is she strong enough to explore  
Thoughts of existence  
Which manipulate her persistence?

Waiting to see what waits inside  
Not present  
Not absent  
Finding her way through the tide

Wanting  
Needing  
Feeling  
Belonging  
Desires prevail  
Yet without them she fails





# Dragoon

Rafael Nuñez

*Two things that drive me. The first thing that drives me is that "life is too short." And when these words don't do the trick, the second thing that drives me is lots and lots of caffeine. ~Rafael Nunez*

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# The Fractions of Our Lives: A Play in One Act

Elaine Mendelsohn Pleet, Jennifer Edwards, & Michell Good

PLACE: Gordia, Pennsylvania – a fictitious, small farming community north of Pittsburgh

CHARACTERS:

Florence Adams – the owner of a family farm faced with a decision

Rhona – a friend, the voice of forceful conservatism

Sophia – a friend, the voice of self-assured, liberal wisdom

Olivia – a friend, the voice of innocence and peace

THE SCENE: Florence’s kitchen – the place where all important life decisions are made

FLORENCE: My dearest friends. Thank you all so much for coming over this morning. I know you have many other things to do during this busy planting season. I really appreciate your coming over on such short notice.

OTHERS: Of course... we are the oldest of friends... that’s what friends are for...

FLORENCE: Well, you may not be aware but I have been approached by the Messina gas company.

OLIVIA: Oh, yes, I have seen lots of their cars in town lately. I hear some other farmers in the county have already signed up with Messina. Everyone’s talking about it. You know some of their people were over at the high school yesterday. I saw them go into the building.

SOPHIA: Yes, they came into my classroom and talked about donating money for the music program so it doesn’t need to be cancelled and new computers for the entire school district.

OLIVIA: Wow – that’s great! What kind of computers were they? Apple or Microsoft?

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SOPHIA: Olivia, let's let Florence talk. Can't you see she's upset?

FLORENCE: Well, they came over to my farm, too. They want me to give them permission to drill on the property for the natural gas they say is under the ground. They gave me this contract I'm supposed to sign. They were very nice about it and understand that this is a big decision. They gave me a few days to decide. They would pay me a lot of money if I give them permission. I could sure use that money!

RHONA: Absolutely! We know things have been tough on you since Jack's gone.

FLORENCE: Well, that's exactly the problem. Since Jack died last year and the kids are all so far away, I am left alone to make this decision myself. I don't know what to do. I don't understand what this is all about... [referring to the contract on the table]

SOPHIA: Florence, we are your oldest friends. We've been together since grade school. Tell us what you want.

FLORENCE: Well, this is the issue – I want you to tell me what to do! What should I do? Should I sign this contract? I wish Jack was here to talk to – he always seemed so sure about things.

OLIVIA: That's right. Jack was always strong. I'll never forget the time he...

RHONA: But Jack isn't here, Olivia. We are. Florence, what does the contract say?

FLORENCE: It says... it says... oh, I can hardly read this legal gibberish. When the company people were here they talked so fast. I have to admit I hardly understood much of what they said and was too embarrassed to admit it. I just nodded and they left me with this stack of papers. They even gave me this beautiful pen to sign it with.

OLIVIA: That is a beautiful pen! Does it write in black or blue?

SOPHIA: Well, the contract is still written in English. Let's take a look at it and see if we can figure this out together.

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OLIVIA: Yes, we were always the “four musketeers” in school, weren’t we? Gosh, those were fun days.

RHONA: Olivia, this is serious. Florence has the chance here to finally get out of debt. Look at this number at the bottom here – now this is a big number!

OLIVIA: Yes, you’re right. Silly me. Wow – that is a big number! You know, Florence, with that much money you could finally get to Paris. You always did want to go shopping on the Champs-Élysées – I remember you even wrote that in my yearbook.

RHONA: That’s true, Flo. You always did want to travel. Inheriting this farm from your parents always gave you so much responsibility. Your kids are grown. When is it going to be your turn? You owe it to yourself and to Jack to enjoy the years you have left. He would have wanted you to be happy.

FLORENCE: True. I did write that in the yearbook. I started to think Paris was just a picture on a postcard I’d get from someone else. Wow, Paris... I hadn’t thought of that. I’m not sure Paris would be that much fun without Jack anyway.

RHONA: Okay, then take one of your grandchildren!

OLIVIA: I know, take us!! We could be the Four Musketeers on the Riviera. Gosh, that sounds exciting!

SOPHIA: Olivia, the Riviera is in the south of France, not Paris. This isn’t our money. It may not be Florence’s money either if she decides to not sign the contract.

OLIVIA: Don’t yell at me, Soph. I just want Flo to be happy. Okay, so what does the contract say?

RHONA: It says that they will pay you \$2,000 per acre as a signing bonus if you sign the contract, plus it says if Messina does decide to drill any time over the next five years they will pay you a percentage per cubic inch for all the gas rights that they produce.

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OLIVIA: Wow! Two thousand dollars an acre – and yours is one of the largest farms in the county, Flo. That’s like winning the lottery!!

RHONA: This is really serious money, Florence. As one of the oldest farms in the area, you are one of the lucky ones. You could completely retire with that kind of pocket change.

FLORENCE: I know. They told me that’s exactly why I was approached. They said they really preferred the larger farms – that way there is plenty of room to build all the roads they need, space for their turnaround roads and drilling platforms, let alone the retention ponds. I think they said something about wanting to set up over by the woods. That way they said I wouldn’t be bothered by all the activity. They want to cut down five acres of the trees for each drill site so that they don’t have to take up any of my plowed fields and meadows. They’d even help me sell the lumber, too.

SOPHIA: I don’t know, Florence. That’s a big commitment they’re asking of you. I have heard that several of the older farmers don’t want to sign these contracts. They don’t like all these outsiders coming into our town, changing things.

RHONA: Maybe, but I also hear that it’s the younger folks around town that are excited about the contracts – especially the ones who own the cabins over near the state hunting grounds. They see this as a real boost to the area. Florence, think about all the new businesses that could finally open up in this sleepy place. And all the jobs that would mean! I would just love to be able to take a yoga class and then have a cappuccino without having to drive 30 miles in my stretch suit. Talk about relaxation!

OLIVIA: Yeah, that sounds fabulous – and maybe some new restaurants would open up, too. I am so tired of pizza and Chinese food.

SOPHIA: Rhona, these young folks you are talking about don’t really live here. They come here just for their summer vacations and for the hunting season. They will take their money from the contracts and go back home to the city. If we have any problems here with gas spills or water contamination, they don’t care. This isn’t their real home.



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RHONA: That's so easy for you to say, Sophia. You have a job. You're a school teacher in addition to Tom's farming.

SOPHIA: And you know I only went back to teaching since the farming prices got so out of control. We can hardly make it on the price of chicken anymore. Besides, the jobs that the gas companies are creating are just minimum wage and temporary work. This won't change things in the long run.

OLIVIA: Please don't argue, you guys. Florence is the one holding the chicken with the golden eggs.

FLORENCE: That money sure would certainly go a long way. Why I could help my daughter, Helen, get my grandson into that special school he needs. You know raising a child with autism is really expensive! I know why Helen didn't want to get involved in this decision – she didn't want me to feel obligated. I could really use this money to help them.

OLIVIA: It would be like a miracle! Hey, Florence, how many drill sites would Messina be setting up on your farm?

FLORENCE: [picks up contract and scans through it] Gosh, I don't know. It doesn't specify. Do you think they would set up more than one? They are kind of big from what I hear.

RHONA: I'm sure if Messina plans to put in more than one, they will let you know ahead of time.

SOPHIA: Really, do you think so?

FLORENCE: I'm sorry. We have been so busy talking that I forgot to offer you all a cup of tea. Who would like some tea? [POURS TEA.] [others raise hands]

OLIVIA: Me! I'll take mine with milk and sugar. Thanks.

SOPHIA: You know one of the issues with letting them drill so close to your water wells is

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the risk of contaminating of the water supply. I've read stories about people being able to light the water that comes out of their pipes on fire! I think it's the methane gas and other strange-sounding chemicals leaking through.

RHONA: Sophia, those are just stories. Do you really believe everything you read? I've read stories, too, that say those problems, if they exist at all, are just a part of nature. I read a history book recently that talked about rituals from thousands of years ago where they would burn water like the Greeks at the Oracle of Delphi. Plus, there have been places all around the U.S. called "burning springs" – places like Kentucky, West Virginia, and even New York. There have been cases of water catching on fire in areas of Pennsylvania since the 18th century. Soph, the story you read about a man lighting the water from his faucet on fire was in Colorado. The government says that kind of thing has been happening since the 1930's. People are just connecting it to the gas drilling to scare people. You have to read more than just Mother Jones Magazine.

SOPHIA: Well then why are we hearing about all this now? It just seems too coincidental to me.

OLIVIA: I agree. But aren't the gas companies being really safe about the drilling? Aren't they lining the drill wells with steel and concrete to protect the water? Doesn't the contract say that? If that's true, Flo, then you have nothing to worry about.

FLORENCE: Gosh, the water. If my water gets ruined, how will I make tea? What will I drink?

RHONA : It says in this paragraph right here [pointing] that if anything happens to your water, then Messina promises to replace your drinking water. I have heard that they will truck in as much water as you need.

SOPHIA: Okay, but what about her bathing water and cooking water and water for washing her clothes? And beyond that, what about the water for the animals and the crops? Are they promising to bring in enough water for all those things?

RHONA: Well, that's only if something happens and nothing like that is going to happen, so you

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don't have anything to worry about. Don't worry, Flo, it says here that if you are not happy, Messina will actually offer to buy your home from you.

FLORENCE: But I don't want to sell my home! Where would I go? This farm has been my whole life. I was born here. I promised my parents [holding her heart] that I would never sell this farm. Do you know that this property has been in my family for four generations?

RHONA: Flo, I wasn't suggesting that you sell. I just wanted to assure you that the company promises to make you "whole" if any problems occur from the drilling.

SOPHIA: Yes, but I have heard that if your water is contaminated and you complain about the arrangements or if you do refuse to sell your house, the company will call it a breach of the contract and will stop delivering your water. Then you are really stuck – no water, no gas subsidies, no luck. I hear parts of Texas have been ruined by this type of arrangement. The properties are worthless without good water.

RHONA: My goodness you are so negative sometimes, Sophia. Besides, this won't happen to Flo. See here [referring to contract] it says Messina promises to use the highest technology available to make sure it doesn't happen. This is just a silly science scare tactics.

OLIVIA: Yeah, silly science.

SOPHIA: You can make fun of the magazines I read, but I heard from Janice Miller that over in Potter and Tioga Counties where they have been drilling for a while that it's a big mess. The companies spill "stuff" all the time and they don't tell anyone, they just try to cover it up. They say they are using peanut oil (yeah, right) to drill to make it sound "safe," but they don't tell you what else they are using. Janice said it's not the fracking water that we need to worry about but the water that is brought up as a byproduct. She read somewhere that arsenic and natural radioactive stuff is in the water below the surface. From what I understand at each drill site they have a retention pond to hold the water for the drilling and another pond for the dirty wastewater once they are done. The retention ponds are not covered and they overflow all the time. Who knows where that toxic water goes? Maybe into your alfalfa fields? A "sloppy mess" – that's what she called it.

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RHONA: What does she know? Janice is just a hairdresser!

SOPHIA: True, but her brother-in-law is a truck driver for one of the gas companies over in Potter County – well, at least he was. The company actually pulled out because they said the regulations in Pennsylvania were getting too tight and New York isn't allowing any horizontal drilling at all. So a lot of the gas companies are heading over to Ohio instead where people are more desperate for jobs and the state rules are looser. Apparently, the gas they are getting out of the ground in Ohio has more kinds of biocarbons in it so they get more “bang for the buck.”

OLIVIA: Ooh, that expression reminds me of something. Now what was it? Didn't we hear something else about Ohio recently? What was that??

RHONA: And what if Florence decides to not sign and all her neighbors do – and things are “just fine” which I have heard from farmers in other counties, won't she be left out while all her neighbors are receiving checks? How about that?

SOPHIA: And then there's this thing called “forced pooling” where the gas companies drill down on one person's property and then drill horizontally underneath someone else's farm even though that farmer didn't sign a contract. The company gets all the gas they want and the farmer doesn't get a penny. That's just plain old greed! How do you know that won't happen to Flo?

OLIVIA: What was I hearing about Ohio? Do any of you remember?

RHONA: Isn't that an issue of mineral rights? Farmers like Florence own the land that's above but who owns the gas that's so far down under the surface?

SOPHIA: Actually, that's a really complicated issue – I think we all own the gas, every one of us who live and work in Pennsylvania.

FLORENCE: You mean Messina could take the gas that's under my farm that we all own together and then later sell it back to us? Isn't that the issue of “impact fees?” I think other states charge higher fees for the gas than we do here in Pennsylvania. Aren't the companies making a lot of extra money that way?

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SOPHIA: Yeah, I think that's right.

OLIVIA: Oh yeah, earthquakes – they are having earthquakes in Ohio just like California!

RHONA: Olivia, what are you talking about?

OLIVIA: Believe it or not, I read things, too. There was this article; I think it was in People Magazine. It was about someone in Ohio who said the fracking in her neighborhood was causing earthquakes.

RHONA: That sounds ridiculous!

SOPHIA: Actually that's right, Olivia. There is proof of unusual seismic activity in relation to the horizontal drilling in Eastern Ohio. You know the horizontal fracturing is not a well-proven technique despite what they want you to believe. How can the companies guarantee our water wells when earthquakes are happening? And what if an earthquake causes one of the wells to collapse or worse? And then there are rumors of health issues – serious health issues, like cancers, that are related to all the chemicals they use in the fracking.

RHONA: Sophia, you know those claims have not been proven.

FLORENCE: [Fanning herself with the contract] Is it just me? Is it getting hot in here? I need some fresh air. [Opens Window.]

OLIVIA: Eyeow... What's that smell?

SOPHIA: Yeah, I smelled this last night, too. I think it's the burn-off the Messina company is doing to the extra gas that they drilled on the Baker's farm on the other side of town. When they can't store all the gas that is coming up – you see it comes up so fast that the pressure builds and they have to release the extra and then burn it off so they don't have an explosion.

FLORENCE: An explosion? Oh my goodness! No one told me that!

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RHONA: Now don't get excited, Flo. There's no explosion. That's why the company is doing the burn-off. It keeps everything under control.

FLORENCE: I don't know. This is getting pretty complicated.

SOPHIA: Actually, Janice also told me there was an explosion just last month over in Tioga County. One of the really big wells had an accident and it blew the whole top off the well! All sorts of gross stuff spilled into the air and onto the ground.

RHONA: I don't believe it. If that happened, then why didn't we read about it in the newspaper?

SOPHIA: I don't know. I only know that Janice told me what her brother-in-law told her. He was working in the county when it happened. You know one of the reasons the companies like to set up their drill sites in the woods is that no one is around to see what is going on. They have security guards sitting at the entrance roads even when no drilling is taking place. I just don't trust these people.

OLIVIA: That's strange. I wonder why they are doing that? Hey, you guys. Listen. What's that?

RHONA: I don't hear anything.

OLIVIA: Exactly. Nothing. Aren't the birds usually all over the fields during planting time? I usually have to keep my windows shut or else the noise wakes me up at sunrise! And I wake up early enough to go to work.

FLORENCE: Oh my gosh, Olivia, you're right. It's so quiet. Where are all the birds? I did notice that my bird feeders have been untouched lately. That's really odd.

RHONA: Oh my goodness, would you guys relax?! It's just a natural change in the migration patterns, that's all. You are always jumping to conclusions.

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SOPHIA: I have heard about this. Once the gas companies start doing their work, the animals don't like all the activity – the noise, the lights, the traffic. They seem to leave the areas.

FLORENCE: I hope that's not permanent.

RHONA : Florence, relax. There are no studies that say the animals are affected by drilling.

SOPHIA: Yeah, but there's no study that says that they aren't!

OLIVIA: Would you two please stop bickering? It sounds like we're back in middle school!

FLORENCE: Do you think the birds would really leave my farm if I signed the contract? I'd hate for the animals to be mad at me. That would be awful. I'd feel so abandoned. First the kids, then Jack, now the birds... I've never felt so alone in my life.

RHONA: Flo, we are here with you. You are not alone.

SOPHIA: Yes, you have us. We will always be The Four Musketeers. [Reaching out her hand.]

ALL: Yeah, the Four Musketeers! [All four women reach into the middle and shout]

OLIVIA: Brr... it's getting a bit chilly. Can I please shut the window, Flo? Thanks.

FLORENCE: You know this was something else that the Messina people told me. If I signed to give them permission to drill, then I would get a discount for a brand-new natural gas heating system for the house. They said it would save me a lot of money on my heating bills. This old oil heater that Jack had installed has been giving us trouble for years. I never thought I could afford to replace it.

RHONA: Florence, that's great. You know it's crazy that we are buying oil from overseas countries – especially countries that hate us, when we have all this natural gas here right under our feet. It's American energy!

# Bloom



Leah Claypoole Ludwig



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OLIVIA: That's right, Rhona. It's American gas. Why we could be sitting on top of America's future right now!

SOPHIA: That's true. And then maybe, Rhona, your daughter, Rebecca, can come home from the Army sooner and you can start enjoying grandchildren someday. We are all so proud of her, you know.

FLORENCE: Yes, we say prayers for her safe return every night.

RHONA: Thanks, you guys. We are so extremely proud of her, too. She was always so determined to do something important. But it's been so long. She's had three deployments. It's time for her to come home.

OLIVIA: You know, Florence, if you sign this contract, maybe Rebecca can come home sooner?

FLORENCE: Olivia, that's a sweet but silly idea. What possible connection is there between the Messina gas company offering me this contract and the fact that Rebecca is serving over in Afganistan?

SOPHIA: Hey, you guys. Don't add any more pressure onto Flo. She's not responsible for bringing Rebecca home.

RHONA: I'm sure there's a connection. But I don't want to talk about that. It's too upsetting. One thing I do know is that this natural gas we are sitting on is America's chance to be self-sufficient about energy.

SOPHIA: Rhona, I want Rebecca home too, but honestly, I don't think that all this gas that is being harvested will just be America's gas. The world is just more complicated than that.

RHONA: Who knows? All I know is I would love to have my daughter home again. I would sell all the gas I had if it meant keeping her safe.

FLORENCE: You know there is a prayer list at the church and I know Rebecca's name has been part of the prayer circle for months now.

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OLIVIA: Maybe we should do that right now. Let's say a prayer for Rhona's daughter and all the sons and daughters.

[All bow their heads, or look off into the distance, in silence --] – 10 seconds

FLORENCE: [sigh] Anyone want more tea?

SOPHIA: Speaking of church, I've heard that a couple of local churches that own the cemeteries out of town have signed leases with Messina. Isn't that strange?

OLIVIA: Wow, do you think there's gas underneath the cemetery? Under all those dead people? What a creepy idea!

FLORENCE: Oh my gosh, that's a frightful idea! Do you think they will set up all those lights and scaffolding right over where my dear Jack is buried? I go out there every Sunday afternoon to be with him in peace. What'll I do? Oh my dear, Jack...

OLIVIA: And what if there's an explosion of one of the gas wells right under where all those people are buried? That'll be spookier than Halloween! Oooh, how creepy!

RHONA: Oh, my goodness, Olivia! Be realistic, would you? Of course the gas company wouldn't think of drilling underneath the cemetery!

SOPHIA: Oh really? So why did the church sign a contract with Messina? Do you think the company "found" religion? I just don't trust corporations. We bought plots in one of those cemeteries. My parents are buried there, too. It just sounds suspicious.

OLIVIA: Yeah, my parents too. I feel like it's very disrespectful to the dead. I also don't want to visit my parents in a place that's all drilled up – it's already so sad. I'd rather it be a pretty place. Why would they do this?

FLORENCE: Maybe it has to do with the streams nearby. Weren't you guys saying something about the gas companies using water for drilling?

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SOPHIA: A lot of water actually! I've heard that the companies need up to 3 million gallons of water per fracking treatment. Three million gallons! Now where's all that water going to come from? And this year already looks like we are having a drought since we hardly had any snow – more signs of climate change if you ask me!

RHONA: Well, ironically I just saw on the news this morning before we came over here that the Department of Environmental Protection has recently revised the permit for fracking and that they now have to clean and reuse all the water, so they really won't be using streams anymore. Messina has been in business for over twenty years already – they must know what they are doing. So would you please stop upsetting Flo? She called us for help, remember?

SOPHIA: The permit may be in place now but it wasn't before and who knows, the damage to the streams and rivers could already be done. Our entire ecosystem could already be altered and we wouldn't even know it.

OLIVIA: [LOOKING AT THE NEWSPAPER] Hey, look at this. There's a group called, Citizen's Campaign for the Environment. They are hosting a discussion on this Messina gas issue tonight over at the high school auditorium. Who are they?

SOPHIA: They are an environmental advocacy group from New York State who are trying to talk to people about the gas concerns. That sounds like it might be important.

RHONA: Great – now we have more outsiders coming into Pennsylvania trying to tell us what to do. Let them decide what to do in New York. This is our land, our farms. I can't stand those environmental extremists protecting the owls when we are hurting here. Florence wants to save her farm, not protect a couple owls!

FLORENCE: Okay, stop! We have talked so long and I still don't know what to do. Would you all please just tell me what you think?

RHONA: Florence, I think you have an amazing opportunity here to do something really big! If there truly is the amount of gas underneath this farm that Messina thinks there is, then you could be making a huge contribution to our local community, you can help heat hundreds of homes in

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the winter, and give people fuel to cook their food. You can help give people jobs at a time when they need it the most. This is a gift! I don't like these outsiders coming into our town telling us what to do with our land and our gas. What good is the gas doing just sitting underground anyway? People complain about the price of oil, but where else do they think the energy is going to come from? You can't have it both ways – and you have a chance to help make it happen for all of us.

OLIVIA: That's true, Rhona. You're right.

RHONA: And, Flo, when was the last time you actually thought about yourself? I mean, really be good to yourself? You have worked so hard your whole life. Shouldn't you for once put yourself first, and your daughter, Helen, and your grandson? This is your chance to make a real difference in their lives, too. What kind of life will your grandson have without that special school for autism? Don't you want that satisfaction? Be realistic, Florence, you'll never see this kind of money again. And what about the promises you made to Jack? Don't you think he would want you to finally walk down the Champs-Élysées? It's a dream, Flo, that otherwise might never come true. If you don't do it for the town, or yourself or your daughter, then do it for Jack!

OLIVIA: Flo, Rhona's got a point.

SOPHIA: Florence, what about the promise you also made to your parents? You told them you would never compromise the farm. Is allowing Messina to set up, who knows how many gas drilling sites, the best way to preserve the farm? It might actually ruin the farm! Messina is asking you to take a huge gamble. What if the chemicals they use make the land uninhabitable for people and animals? I just don't trust corporations to do the right thing even if it says they will in a contract. If the water is spoiled and the soil is polluted, you'll never get it back. And either will your grandchildren. I don't care how many gallons of water they truck in, your life will never be the same. Countries like India are struggling over access to clean water and we are playing Russian roulette with ours! Besides, I disagree with Rhona. I don't think it's just about our community. Even though, yes, you own this farm, the gas underneath belongs to all of us and the water and the air belong to the world! The water that starts on your farm might end up in the Susquehanna or the Mississippi and then maybe the Chesapeake Bay or Gulf of Mexico!

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And the air goes everywhere! It's not just about us here in Gordia. It's a much bigger issue than that.

OLIVIA: Wow, Sophia, you're right, too.

SOPHIA: And speaking of your grandson, what kind of world do you want him to have? We don't know yet all the effects this horizontal drilling might have on the animals and the birds. We are already having problems with our bees. We can't measure the potential issues we don't yet understand. We all have the right to live in a non-polluted world. What's really going on with those earthquakes in Ohio? The gas companies don't talk about any of this because they are just concerned with business. They get in, and they get out! I don't like how the companies are bending the rules and laws that were made to protect us! What does that say about their motives? I think they are just taking advantage of you. The consequences if things do go wrong are just so huge! What difference does it make how much money you have in the bank if you get really sick from the pollutants? Who will take care of you then? Certainly not Messina. What are the consequences of all these things? They aren't in the contract!

OLIVIA: Sophia, you are scaring me!

RHONA: Me, too. It just sounds too sensational to be true.

FLORENCE: Olivia, what do you think?

OLIVIA: Flo, you're one of my oldest and dearest friends. I just want you to be happy! I want you to have the money so you don't have to work so hard now that Jack is gone. I want you to send me a postcard from Paris so I can tell you how jealous I am that you had fun. I want you to give your daughter, Helen, a big fat check so she doesn't have to cry herself to sleep. I want Rhona's daughter, Rebecca, to come home from Afghanistan. I want Sophia's students to get the new computers they need and for the music program at the school to put on the concerts like they always have. I want people in Gordia to thank you for their jobs and their warm homes when you walk down Main Street. I want the world to change so we can all feel good again.

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At the same time, I want know that the birds aren't going away and that the animals aren't mad. I want to go fishing down at the stream and feel secure about eating the trout for breakfast. I want the air to be clean enough so the little girl who lives on the farm next door doesn't have to go the hospital with asthma. I want to know we aren't going to have earthquakes, or explosions, and that the rain won't kill the crops. I want to know that you won't leave us, Florence, because you had to sell your house to the gas company. I don't want the world to change. I just want us all to be happy!

I don't like that this issue is so black and white. Rhona and Sophia can't both be right, can they? Can't we find a middle road?

FLORENCE: Thank you my dear, dear friends. I do wish I knew the answer. I still feel so overwhelmed and confused. What should I do? [Turning to audience] What would you do?

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*What drives me is:*

- 1. Understanding - gaining knowledge about the complex nature of things.*
- 2. Communication - the ability & willingness to pass on that understanding.*
- 3. Compassion - the realization that the cliches are true - we are intricately and inseparably bound to each other.*
- 4. Insight - based on all the above - the choice to make responsible change.*

*~Elaine Mendelsohn Pleet*



**Baby Face**

Rafael Nuñez



Facing  
Page:

**Splash**

Leah Claypoole Ludwig



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## Voices From the Volume

### **Kellie Collins**

*Poetry writing is having a sacred box that holds and safeguards all of my thoughts. When I write, I am not only writing about my feelings, but also I am often thinking of what others may be going through as well. I created “Emotional State of Mind” as a dedication to the beautiful souls who struggle from time to time with this ugly beast of darkness, depression.*

### **Mildred Gilyard**

*One requirement for my history course was to write an academic essay. To that end, I selected as my topic “The Underground Railroad in Berks County.” It is a subject that is a tourist attraction at The Central Pennsylvania African American Museum (CPAAM), founded by my late husband, Frank Gilyard, Sr. He loved telling the story of a unique people and I am compelled to continue revealing the same. I have been elected as the new president of the CPAAM Board of Directors.*

### **Michele Granitz**

*Knowledge, understanding, acceptance, tolerance, and the desire to learn drive me. To write, particularly a critical response to a piece of literature, helps me understand the time, the author, and piece more intimately, especially when getting feedback from professors. Writing forces one to open his or her mind, in order to think, argue, dream, and create.*

### **Catherine Mahony**

*My ink is composed of blood, sweat, and tears. I write about my experience so that maybe I can reach just one other person who is still suffering and show him or her there is always hope. You have a purpose on this planet. Find that purpose, and when you do, shine the light that can guide others out of darkness. A special thanks to Stephanie J. Andersen, writer and writing instructor, for her support and guidance.*

### **Velena McHugh**

*I am motivated by curiosity. I love to gain knowledge about people and their beliefs, thinking and attitudes. Shortly before conducting my research on this report, I came across an article about organ donation that intrigued me. It started me thinking about why different countries have such different organ donation rates. As a student in the medical field I wanted to learn more about it.*

### **Lori Scargle**

*Fall 2012, I had to write a research essay for Professor Lawlor’s US History course (HIS 110). I wrote about Berks County because I was born and raised here. After researching the Historical Society and Reading Public Library, I was surprised to learn about many “firsts” in American history, which I did not learn in high school, happened in the Berks/Reading area.*

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## Editorial Policy

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