1. The nest of an eagle or other predatory bird built on a crag or other high place
2. A house or stronghold built on a height
3. The literary and arts magazine of Concordia University Irvine

[Med. Lat. aeria < OFr. aire.]
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Faculty Advisors
Professor Rachel Soo
Professor Kristen Schmidt

Graphic Designer
Sabin Martinez ’14

Literary Editors
Katherine Dubke ’14
Margaret Langdon ’14
Professor Rachel Soo
Professor Rachel Hayes
Professor Niclas Kruger

Taylor Bundy ’14
Michael Butler ’14
Kristina Deusch ’14
Katherine Dubke ’14
Margaret Langdon ’14
Gretchen Sheets ’14
Professor Kristen Schmidt
Professor Thes Grown

The Aerie is an annual journal which showcases work being done in creative writing and art by Concordia University Irvine students, alumni, faculty and staff. In addition, it provides students from both the English and art departments a hands-on experience working collaboratively to produce a quality literary and arts journal. Students are involved in every aspect of the production from the call for submissions, to the selection of creative work and the design of the journal. The publication of The Aerie is made possible with funding from the Office of the Provost.

The text for this magazine is set in Mrs. Eaves and Avenir.

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Together

It’s funny, isn’t it, how personal symbolism defines a relationship—
Or rather, how a relationship can be catalogued,
Snapshot and framed and preserved by little things,
By Pogs and toy dragons and Yu-Gi-Oh cards,
By couches and phone charms and bracelets.
It’s funny the way the mind relives the memories trapped in those objects,
Breathing in the aura of nostalgia and keeping old feelings alive.

An 8-ball Pog—that’s what you collected, just the 8-ball ones—
And we’re snapping slammers by the playground wall,
Oblivious to the other children because, well,
Why would we need anyone else?

The dragon—Oh, the dragon. The first thing you took from me
(Okay, so I gave it to you).
We’re in preschool and my daddy packs me cool toys and you’re the only one
Who wants to play with me.

A Harpie Girl card—Your favorite, the most scantily-clad one you owned.
We spend a good ten minutes behind the bleachers,
Snickering, as 6th-grade boys do, about the boobs,
Before a teacher catches us and takes it away (you steal it back during lunch).

But nostalgia isn’t the only feeling brought by memory.
We’ve had our share of bridges—you more than most teenagers.

Your tattered 70’s couch—It really has no business still being indoors.
It’s night and you’re crying. You’ve drunk too much and thought too much;
You throw up on me, but that’s what I’ve got a towel for,
So I can hold you through your tears as you drift to sleep on the sagging cushions.

The phone charm—You still wear it on your phone today.
It’s 9th grade and you have matching phone charms with your first real girlfriend.
You go steady for months, and you don’t blame me when she breaks it off,
But I know it’s because you refused to give up our time together.

The bracelet—it doesn’t look like anything special at a glance,
But that plain silver circle is a vessel for deep love and deeper betrayal.
It’s one of the few things your mother leaves behind when she walks out on you;
She leaves a marriage and a 12-year-old son and a bracelet.

You’re broken, I know. But I’m not letting you fall apart,
Not without someone to sew you back up again.
To pat in the stuffing and remind you that you are loved.
And I’ll show you the dragon to remind you how long we’ve known each other,
And I’ll show you the charm to remind you how much we’ve sacrificed
Just to keep each other going. And I know without you saying a word
That you understand my unspoken vow—I’ll always be here for you.

Eden Griffith

Backyard Fiestas
Acrylic and Hand Embroidery on Paper and Drafting Mylar
Rachel Hayes
He shook his head, smiling. “No, yeah, sure. I like it.”

“Sorry. . . go on.”

“Star Wars-y. . . but, immediately, I reddened. Why’d I say that? Stupidest idea ever, really,” the one said with a shrug. “As he talked, his smile grew wider and wider; I felt my own smile grow with it.”

“I snorted, inhaling and shaking as I snickered. “They could have replaced Hayden Christensen with a block of wood and nobody would’ve known the difference! I mean, really, if you hit the little brown laser beam points through his lenses.”

“Here.” I grabbed the Gatorade bottle and held it out to him. “It’s the only one I found in there.”

“I hope you will be,” I said. “I hope you will be.”

Suddenly, I saw a vision of Kenneth as a thirty-something in a long white scientist-coat, his spiky blond hair sticking up a little taller than usual. Thirty-something Kenneth smiled... that smile. I saw his smile, one of those smiles that seem too big for faces to handle. He blinked, then pointed at me abruptly. “You’re. . . Anna, right?”


“I asked Kenneth what his favorite movie was and he said, “Star Wars. But only the original ones. . . the prequels are just weird.”

I asked Kenneth what his favorite movie was and he said, “I’m sure. If you want.”

He smiled, then looked down. He shrugged. “We’ve got this dinky old cabin out there––used to be a vacation cabin, before we moved in. Dad’s always complaining that we’re too far away from or anything; he just did it, every single day. He didn’t even tell her.”

“I made sure to pack two Ding-Dongs in my lunch bag. It only seemed right to pay Kenneth back for the food he’d shared with me the other day.”

“Awesome!” he exclaimed when I handed him one. He pumped his fists in the air. “I never get these at home.”

“Where do you live, anyway?” I leaned forward.

“Mesa Bluff.”

“Where do you live, anyway?” I leaned forward.

“... Mesa Bluff.”

“I asked Kenneth what his favorite movie was and he said, “Star Wars. But only the original ones. . . the prequels are just weird.”

“I asked Kenneth what his favorite movie was and he said, “I’m sure. If you want.”

“Okay, then. How much do you make?” I asked quietly.

“Can I call you Kenneth Kenobi?” I blurted. I thought it sounded cool, and it was kind of Star Wars-y . . . but, immediately, I reddened. Why’d I say that? Stupidest idea ever, nicknames. . . “Sorry. . . go on.”

“Check out what I found!”

I yelled excitedly from one end of the cafeteria, waving two large liter-size Aquafinas.


“I asked Kenneth what his favorite movie was and he said, “Star Wars. But only the original ones. . . the prequels are just weird.”

“I asked Kenneth what his favorite movie was and he said, “I’m sure. If you want.”

“So you really are a Kenobi.” In my head, I pictured Kenneth in those long Jedi robes, standing on a deserty cliff. Alone against the elements. The bright sunlight offset his prominent chin really well.

He gave me that smile again. I decided that if I could spend the rest of my life looking at that smile, I would.
Monday. 0 bottles, 0 cans.

I waited at our table, but Kenneth didn’t come. I fished a bottle out of the trashcan and set it on the edge of the table. Then, bored, I tipped it back into the trashcan. I hadn’t seen Kenneth all day... was he sick? He never took off from school. Even people who didn’t know him knew him as the kid who won the “Perfect Perfect Attendance Award” last year—no absences, no tardies. I suddenly pictured him locked in some mortal lightsaber duel, battling a Darth Vader at least twice as tall as him. But Kenobi died in that battle... I shut both eyes, then popped a sliced apple in my mouth. I knew how to be alone. Yet I missed him. My cheeks grew hot, and I knew. I liked him.

Tuesday. 1 bottle, 0 cans.

My heart sank when Kenneth didn’t show up at homeroom class. I doodled his name, I doodled “Kenobi” all over the margins of my notebook. I slid into my usual seat at our usual table, and prepared to take a bite of my tuna sandwich. Then, I heard a click. Kenneth pushed open the door to the cafeteria.

“Hey... Anne.” he said. Both of his hands were in his pockets. He didn’t sit down.

“What’s wrong?” I said. My insides kind of shook as I spoke. “Where have you been?”

“I...” He looked away. “I have to move away. Dad said... he’s had enough. He’s got a new job. Nashville. We’re... all going.”

The words dropped like weights thrown into a deep ocean. I pictured myself leaping up and hugging him, kissing him all over, but I numbly sat still. Then, without a word, I reached into the trashcan. A bottle, Gatorade, sat on top. I held it out to him.

“Kenobi...” I whispered. “Don’t go.”

Before I could react, he had taken the bottle and wrapped both arms around me, squeezing me close to him. I wrapped my arms around him, too, melting into the hug. He gripped the Gatorade bottle behind my head, tight.

Margaret Langdon
Fiction
Te amo sin saber cómo
after Neruda

I do not love you as if you were diamonds, or amethysts
or precious mithril gleaming from the books we love to read
I love you as we can only love the earth and redwood trees
inside, where only we can see

I love you as a seed deep in the ground
bursting slowly into the shapes and petals and green growth
that litters the ground in little leaves, thousands
of heart flutterings in the cardiac breeze

I love you with the weight of rain falling
falling from up high, speeding, racing down and down
so fast I fell into you, a splatter of emotion on the pavement
so focused on that target that is you and all you are

I may see the globe and seven seas, the wonders of all we’ve built,
the rings of Jupiter, the constellations in the sky
waves upon the closest shore and that café by the pier
in the car watching lights swirl past and past
through the night, through the days, the sun and moon embracing

Skyscrapers may rise ahead of me, gray towers slant so high
the cityscapes roll on and on, bridges spanning waters
if there be empty roads lined by empty fences and yellow fields
forests of tall trees and lichen on fallen logs and eternal rock
all I care is that you’re with me
in all of this, even here in my thoughts and reverie
and I love you no other way than this.

Danika Schmid
Performing the Truth

Reality

Four white walls of cinderblock, one tiny window reminding you that you are not in prison. Outside noises disturb, try to distract: the rat-tat-tat of a snare drum, the marimba’s lilting glow, the soaring and piercing ray of a trumpet seeping in through the door as it rattles, attempting to keep out intruders.

Forced focus.

Your eyes are attached to the music. The music shoots back notes that bore into your brain, which tumble and jumble around until they flow back out again through your neck, your arms, your fingers.

Frustration.

Your mouth mutters words, sighs pouring out, mingling with tears that descend like a diminuendo, blurring the unplayable notes on the page. You admit to yourself that perfection is impossible. Sometimes honesty is the best policy, you think. And then you try again.

Breakthrough.

Suddenly, you stand on top of the endless staff lines, victorious. The tangles separate, organize, and you recognize a melody, a harmony. It makes sense. You allow the start of a smile to twitch from the corners of your mouth.

Pure

There is no hiding from those soul-revealing spotlights. Hot and white, they beam down. The slightest shudder could give you away—the lightest jitter could cause catastrophe. You breathe, almost gulping for air, gasping backstage before you have to plunge into the undersea depths of performance.

The act begins. Chin up, shoulders down, a brilliant beam displays all those teeth, no chattering allowed. You stride onstage with a confidence you do not feel. You take your seat, hold your instrument, and take one more breath, this time sipping courage through a straw. And you begin.

The world melts away. The faces in the audience become an Impressionist painting, blurred together. The nerves that have frozen every muscle in your body begin to thaw. You realize that as terrified as your brain might be telling you to be, you really love this. In this moment, you hold ultimate power. With a few movements of your fingers, you can hypnotize the audience and suspend them in a web of enchanted sound. Through your instrument, you can speak. You can utter words you’ve always wanted to say but never had the courage with which to do so. This is your moment to talk; you have the floor.

Tell the truth.

Facts

“I think a life in music is a life beautifully spent and this is what I have devoted my life to.”

~Luciano Pavarotti.

Is it really a life beautifully spent, though? How many hours can be spent in a box, practicing until fingers or lips are bleeding? And for what? Entertainment? Or is music more meaningful than simply pleasing the masses of wealthy old folks slumped in the velvet chairs of a theatre?

“Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy.” ~Ludwig van Beethoven.

Revelation. What does that word mean?
Merriam-Webster Dictionary

re•v•e•la•tion noun \ˌre-və-ˈlā-shən\ t. a : an act of revealing or communicating divine truth
How can music reveal truth? Is it through the discipline required to play it? Is it through the expression and interpretation of the musician, bringing new life to an old piece? Is the musician able to reveal truth through the intricacy of sound?

Principles/Principals

The Clarinet Player
He raises his ebony instrument and invokes a happy dance with his eyebrows. A grin escapes from the corners of his embouchure as he plays a lively tune. He approaches the throaty lower registers and the elusive upper notes with equal passion, bobbing his head and creating a brook of cobalt blue feeling.

The Flautist
With grace and precision, she tilts her head and presses her lips against the silvery wand. She performs trills and scales with a toss of her curls and a determined stare. Flirtation and sophistication combine to form the soaring, diving, lilting melody. With a flutter of wings and a final flourish, the melody flies away upon the airy waves of breath.

The Trumpet Player
He breathes into the instrument and bright streams of sound emanate from the bell. Sometimes he lifts his eyebrows, as if reaching with them for the highest currents of liquid gold. Other times he smirks, tosses his head cockily, and the trumpet belts out some saucy jazz. Always the loudest and the strongest, he prides himself on his “ripped” instrument, seldom revealing the tender soul encased within the metal.

The Pianist
She sits ruler-straight, arms extended, fingers draped over the keys. She pauses a moment, then plunges into a Prokofiev Sonata. Everything from her shoulders down to her fingernails becomes a blur, leaping over the field of black and white. She boldly strikes chord after chord, creating thunder. Listeners might hold their breath, but she never wavers, confident in her ability to press ten notes simultaneously and pour harmony into the world.

Genuine
You remember the first time you laid eyes on your instrument and knew that you and it were meant to be. It sounds like a sappy love story, but in all honesty, it has turned into the longest relationship of your life. You approached the wooden/metal contraption cautiously. With every muscle taut, you picked out the melody of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” There were halts and hesitations, but you were so proud of your accomplishments. You and the instrument connected and you had spoken together. Your journey of performance had begun.

Authentic
So many times, I have longed to strangle my instrument with all forty-seven of the strings it possesses. I have to take an enormous breath, grit my teeth, and force myself to play again. One more minute after those hundreds of hours spent practicing might make a difference. One more run-through might mean perfection. And then when I pluck the strings, forget about the technicalities, and express myself, even in my angry state, it is as if a sigh is released from my body. The tension disappears when I cooperate with the structure. The music becomes beautiful when it experiences freedom and I remember this truth: that I love playing the harp.

Honesty
Musicians are strange; it’s almost a proven fact. However, their fascination with performing and their thirst to create art and share it with others might not be as weird as it initially seems. Music imparts the truth. With each shimmer of a sound wave, a well-processed idea leaves the performer, following the practice room process of eyes to notes, notes to brain, and brain to appendages. The idea might be an emotion that was packaged in a practice room for months. It might be a concept of something so profound it lacks a defined name. Whatever it is, it slips from the soul of the performer, soars on a breeze of sound, and settles as a new idea in the heart and mind of the listener, a new truth.

Gretchen Sheetz
Creative Nonfiction Collage

Violin
Photography
Allison Brocato
Requiem for the Golden Wood: A Sestina

Stars gaze down to lose themselves in ripples,
Solemn in reflected silver pool.
The light of evening swiftly seems to fade
As moonbeams trickle from the mirror’s edge;
Flutters of the wind now bear a whisper,
Murmurs of the cool, impending grey.

Our glorious golden wood has turned to grey,
A soft and silent blight that slowly ripples.
Silken leaves surround me with a whisper,
Alighting sorrowfully upon my pool.
Within the breeze, I ponder at the edge
And watch as flaxen buds begin to fade.

The time has come now for my kind to fade,
For people fair to pass into the grey,
A ship awaits us on the water’s edge,
White bow kneeling deep against the ripples.
Velvet foam and mists around it pool,
Waves caressing with a muted whisper.

A new age dawns: we end ours with a whisper,
Our escorts, gulls that flicker near and fade.
Foreseen by age-old eyes and hallowed pool,
We slip into a future masked by grey.
This world no longer needs our subtle ripples,
Our guidance and our words of double edge.

We for whom time’s blade has little edge
Hide now our eyes and go forth with a whisper.
I leave behind the softly singing ripples
As roots and branches mourn that they must fade.
The sky weighs down in unforgiving grey.
A circle frozen weightless in my pool.

We drift away from my now-shadowed pool
And turn our eyes to ocean’s westward edge.
The stars above are swallowed by the grey,
Extinguished in a single sighing whisper.
Our footsteps lead to havens, soon to fade
As white sails leave their final even ripples.

The world is gray within abandoned pool
As silence ripples to the weeping edge;
A whisper waits as light to darkness fades.

*Eden Griffith*
Ode to Dark Chocolate

You are like a Russian novel. Mysterious, you entice readers, begging them to experience silky midnight taste.
Bittersweet, you are sometimes difficult to swallow, but satisfying, incredibly savory, succulent.

Delicately, I place a morsel of delight on my tongue, the thick slab melting away into a perfect puddle.
Images erupt: whirling skirts, tapping feet, the spicy Spain of your origin. Then everything fades, peaceful darkness reigns... bliss.

Gretchen Sheett
You take a selfie of yourself sticking your tongue out at your phone. Then you add your comments: “Shut up loser lol,” pick a red paint to draw “flames” in your hair, and finally send your Snapchat to your friend Matt, who fortunately for him isn’t with you at this particular moment.

You click the button and watch the Snapchat app shrink to its logo, joining the other apps in line, waiting to be used again. What to do now? Maybe you should check Facebook to see what’s been happening to your 1,384 “friends,” most of whom you don’t even talk to on a regular basis. You click the app and it zooms into the Facebook you love and adore. Let’s see: Aunt Heidi showing another picture of cousin Jed with food all over his face. That’s boring. You slide your thumb up on the screen to see what else is up. Nothing. Nothing. Nada. Some Buzzfeed article titled “50 Reasons Why English Bull Dogs are the Best Dogs,” picture of Toby with his sister at Yosemite, another Buzzfeed article (this time “40 Reasons Why Doctor Who Fans are the Craziest!”), etc. Nothing really of interest.

Anyone’s birthday, you ask? You click on the bottom button that says “More,” which shows you the events. You click on that, and what do you know? It’s Jenny’s birthday today. That’s right, Jenny Cobb, the hottest junior at John Quincy Adams High. You know you like her. After all, when she was giving that presentation during history about apartheid, Dakota Facebook messaged you that gif from Tumblr. You know, the one from Young Frankenstein where Victor goes, “What Knockers!” and Inga replies in her German accent, “Oh, thank you doctor!” You tried to hold in your snickering as you replied to him with, “true dat.” It’s a miracle Mrs. Stiven didn’t catch you that day, or else she would have taken your phone away from you in front of everyone, including Jenny.

But it’s more than that, you say. Sure, she’s super hot, but Jenny’s just a really cool girl as well: she follows a lot of the same bands you follow on Twitter, like @EdwardSharpe, and @thelumineers, for example. She also follows @meganamram and @robdelaney, some of the funniest Twitter writers ever. You can also tell on her likes on her “About Me” section on Facebook: her favorite shows include Arrested Development and It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia.

So what can you post on her wall? Everyone posts “Happy Birthday.” You need to think of something a little more creative, maybe even a little more personal. Sure, you’ve only talked to her in passing, and she’ll laugh at a joke you tell when you’re lab partners in chemistry, but you are far from going on a date with her. If only, though.

You want to see a picture of her. You slide to the Instagram app and type her name under “search.” You wonder if she posted… yes, she did: a new picture of her at the beach. Perfect. She’s with some other girl who you can only assume is her friend: “Chillin’ w/ my bestie @alliespringer at the beach! #beach #bestie #bf #friend #hotstuff #sepia #sexywenoit #wateriscold.” She definitely overuses the hashtags, but that doesn’t matter to you. You wish you could zoom in, but you can’t use your fingers to zoom in on photos on Instagram like you can on Facebook. Maybe if you also check out @alliespringer’s wall—

Suddenly, your phone buzzes you and look at the top for the alert: a message from… mom? Why’s your mom texting you when she’s just a few seats down from you? You look up and look into your text messages. You get to the messages from her, and it says: “YOU GET OFF YOUR PHONE NOW.” Uh-oh, she typed in all caps; she must be really upset, you think. Another message buzzes through: “WE ARE AT UR GREAT UNCLE’S FUNERAL SHOW SOME RESPECT.”
“Fine!” you respond. Then a thought: maybe if you shield your phone with the funeral program she won’t notice as much. That seems to work. You think back to the days when phones were first becoming a thing, and every time she picked you up from school, she would just yammer on and on to some other person on the other end about god-knows-what. Meanwhile, you had to wait forever until you could finally tell her about your day.

Then it hits you: just post a video from Arrested Development! You switch to your YouTube app, look up clips from the show, and find it. You copy the link, go back to your Facebook app, and post on her wall, “Happy Birthday Jenny! Hope your party ends up better than this lol,” as well as the link to the video clip.

You quickly check to see if Jenny liked your post yet. A like, grrr—darn, it’s from one of her friends. Then suddenly, your dreams come true: Jenny likes it. Maybe she will invite you to the party, you think. Maybe you could actually get closer to her, maybe start spending more time with her and less time with those girls whose names you still remember despite clearing the history. Maybe now—

Then your phone suddenly is pulled away from your sweaty palms. Your mom is the culprit.

“Hey,” you whisper.

“I warned you,” she whispers back.

“But, but—” you stammer.

It’s worthless. Now you have to watch this boring funeral, and watch Aunt Mary try to say her speech without crying. She’s saying something along the lines of, “live life to the fullest,” “live in the moment,” “time goes by so fast that you need to live in the present,” something along those lines.

Doesn’t matter what she said. You want your iPhone back.

Nicholas Scutti
Fiction

Shade Cut
Installation
Sydney Parrish
Safe Habor

I stare into the harbor,
cushioned by cold rocks—
my eyes drink in liquid landscape:
green ripples patterned with indigo kelp.

Balancing dark, the sky beams pastel;
across the bay, homes shine—
open arms of light enfold me,
windows framing friendly faces.

Harsh boulders below me accept
the gurgling, slurping, receding tide.
Pelicans sploosh; I laugh as they disappear,
then emerge from foam with dinner.

A grand yacht drifts by
sweeping a train of lacy bubbles,
dressed in twinkles, starry décor;
flaunting wealth, solitary dancers, music.

I glimpse a couple on the highest deck—
I seek my sweatshirt’s embrace,
shrugging aside lonesome thoughts,
icy water lapping my toes.

But my companions bring warmth,
with chatter and hilarity to soften
life’s cooler currents, and the ocean
murmurs thaw numbed reflections.

The accompanying friends scatter,
climbering over stony cracks like crabs.
Their antics amuse the rising moon and me—
a smile, a sigh, contentment.

Gretchen Sheetz;

Bipolar Disorder

Digital Montage

Paul Watson
Memories Come and Go

I am away at college now, a great new chapter in my life, or so I’m supposed to tell myself. I do find it refreshing. The freedom, I mean. Being free and discovering a new level to my own independence. Of course I can never be totally independent. “To be free is to be alone,” I once heard said. It has become one of my more frequently remembered quotes. Still, there is a part of me that longs for a connection, somehow, to my old life. And so here at college, I check my mail every day. I can rarely go a day without checking, though I knowingly expect an empty slot at the student mail center.

I experienced a moment of nostalgia yesterday when I checked my mail. I approached in my normal fashion and, to no surprise, my slot stared emptily back at me once more; a silent, daily tradition between myself and this tiny cubby. Over my months at school, I have grown accustomed to finding a peculiar or silly word or phrase to give in reply: “Dern it” with a southern accent and a foot stomp, “gosh golly” with an emphasis on being ridiculous. Yesterday however, I sighed out a “suck-o-tash.” I visibly stopped short for just a moment, hit with a jarring wall of memory and no small amount of emotion. The word had come to mind by instinct—I hadn’t intended to say it. It brought with it such feelings because the last time I’d heard it said, it had been from the lips of my now deceased grandfather.

My feelings are complicated on the issue—the memory of my grandfather and his silly phrase. They were the words he used in the bowling alley to show how lighthearted he felt about a poor throw; the words I typically only ever remember when I am in that same setting. He would throw a smile at me every time he said it, and I would smile or laugh back at the joke. They were his words. It felt strange to have used them at the mail room, not because of their antiquity, but because I had trouble accepting them as my inheritance. But they were, and I had to accept that.

I walked back towards my dorm room, the double doors of the mail room only just behind me, and sank into a new memory that came forward. I was standing back in my childhood home. It was just about all we could afford at the time. From the backyard my family could see (and smell) the back of a Chinese restaurant, whose employees called us “the twee famuhwee” on account of the great big sycamore that distinguished our backyard from all the others. I remember doing my home school work, my mother in the kitchen, and my grandfather sitting alone in the living room.

It would turn out that my grandfather was not sitting in the living room, however. Having been asked to check in on him, I noticed the front door stood ajar; no one had locked it after he arrived. I knew what to do right away, yet still I panicked. I let out a short, heavy yell and then sprinted like I’d done after one of our dogs who liked to escape. My grandfather had nearly traveled the six houses it took to make it into the busy boulevard. I caught up halfway before the sidewalk decided to catch up to my feet. I tripped violently, scraping a knee and taking other injuries, not the least of which were to my ego. I sat collapsed in the dark, dirty water of the gutter. I cried after him in desperation but he continued his oblivious shuffle into traffic.
I was closer to my dorm room at that point than I was to the mail center. I could still see it though, one door always kept propped open, enticing my curiosity. I knew I’d already been disappointed for the day though, its temptation was over. I continued to reflect on the memory as I walked, passing a friend without noticing their friendly wave, and mused at my childhood emotions. I’d not thought about that day since it had happened. I realize now that I am older (and he long buried) what it meant to me back then. That was the day he had died. It didn’t matter that my mother had caught up after hearing my shout and captured my grandfather’s arm. Nor did it matter that she had lured him back into the house with a false promise he would forget had been made, or that he would continue to live another five stressful years. All that mattered to me at that moment was that, though the body remained, the man who was my grandfather had died. He had died, and I had been left with a hollow... thing, compelled to still love it and safeguard it. Sitting there in the gutter, covered in grime, feeling the emotional seeds of anger and confusion that would grow into the weed of bitterness, and not even with a mother to help me up, I had to accept it.

My heavy boots finished resounding on the tile of the dorm’s staircase. My key clicked open the front door, and I saw my things strewn on the bed. My lack of mail, and the disappointment from it, had already been forgotten. Tomorrow I would try again and hope for better luck. The flow of memories slowed down and I was left with just one. It was of the early days, before his illness, when I would call him up from home. We talked—largely—about absolutely nothing. The conversation was never really the point, even if I could remember what we spoke about. The meaning could be found in the motivation to call him. Beneath each call, there existed a very unique bond. My grandfather and I found in each other, despite the age gap of nearly seventy years, a kindredness of spirit. As he aged and turned ill, different struggles arose like that day. I know now his problem had not been forgetting where he put his keys. He had forgotten what keys were. It is a perspective I wish to have had growing up taking care of him.

As I begin to move on and start completing the tasks I have for the day, I think upon this bond he and I shared. I realize how I have become him in so many ways: as a boy scout, as a man of literature, and as a man of quieter disposition who aims to one day simply be at peace. Three seconds pass by. In the first, I feel guilty for how I felt as a child. I want to find a rationalization, somehow, to excuse my bitterness. I want to deny the anger I feel inside sometimes when I think back on those times with him. It takes only a second more to understand: I already have. I’ve accepted it. Time, experience, and maturity have provided me with my absolution. And with the third and final second ticking past, I feel the bond between us one more time. It passes just as quickly, but I will never forget it.

Nicholas Evon
Creative Nonfiction
Clock

We stand here and face our great opponent, reach for hands that deceive, trick us to think they hold so much but they only touch for a second, a second then gone.

We look upon a broad face marked by the scars of time; stoic it stands, perfectly carved on carefully balanced feet poised to strike when our time is up reminding us constantly that we fall at its mercy, as the pendulum swings out when we try to cheat.

Yet for all of history we’ve been defeated by the hands of this prison guard and its robot gears that try to pin an expiration date on us the maker.

Who would have thought once upon a time that metal, glass and wood would be what bound us? Our own invention we first wound up, and then perfected our lustrous brainchild that has somehow outgrown us and lived on past us.

It creaks and moans with every move, gives every order with a deep prolonged chiming command that rings in our minds, startling us to move because time is ticking.

Danika Schmid
I wanna ask out the girl who works at the video rental store near me. Any tips on how I can show her I’m interested without embarrassing myself?

Additional Details: I am interested in a long-term relationship.
I don’t have enough money to hire Steven Spielberg.

Answers:

samclem: I’m assuming you’re a regular customer. If so, I would start by asking how her day is going and gradually adding more pleasantries to your conversations. After about three months of doing this, you might be able to ask what her favorite movies are… but don’t get too deep, too fast, my boy! You don’t want to scare her away!

single4lyfe: I would go in and ask her if there are any good movies out. It gives her a chance to share her recommendations. Plus, I bet she never gets asked this.

jazzygirl93: Awww… that’s so sweet!!! I would definitely go there over the lunch hour and bring her a cupcake and tell her that you were thinking of her. Make sure the cupcake has chocolate frosting… girls loooove chocolate. Then the next time you go in, you should totally bring her a rose. If you *really* want to impress her, write her a poem about her hair! Ahh, I’m tearing up just thinking about how cuuute this would be!

homewrecker69: This comment is hidden because it was flagged as inappropriate or received too many negative votes.

sweetjane4twenty: I’m a pretty loose person, but your sick…

trollolol: HAHAAAAAAHAAAAHAAAAHAAAAHAAAAHAAAAHAAAAHAAAAHAAAAH.

rosebudwatcher: Since I’ve actually worked in a movie rental store, I’ve had a lot of time to think about what would impress me if a guy came in and asked me out. If this girl is good at her job, then she must be a movie buff. Here’s what I’d do: While you’re walking around the store, try and make eye contact with the girl and smile. When you get to the counter, present the following movies one at a time in this order: “Without a Paddle,” “Til There Was You,” “Now and Forever,” “Playing for Keeps,” and “In the Mood for Love.” Oh, and make sure you end with, “P.S. I Love You.”

**Depending on your comfort level and experience, you could add “Never Been Kissed.”

bballer99: My comment is really just in response to “rosebudwatcher.” I would skip all that crap and just show up at the counter with “No Strings Attached.” But you can’t just hand it over like you simply want to rent it. Nah, man. This is tried and true, and what you gotta do is slowly hand it over to her while flexing your arm. At the same time (and this might take some practice so you don’t look like a fool), cock your head and lift one eyebrow as you flash her your pearly whites. Girls are a sucker for that! Then as she takes the movie, channel your inner Don Juan and ask her when she gets off work. If she doesn’t look very receptive, place “Just Go With It” on the counter. If the first movie didn’t work, this is a sure bet. GO GET ‘EM BUD!!!

maxfischer: Wow, you must get a lot of girls.

jamesmitchell: I think you’ve got to ask yourself one question… When you see her, do you think you’re gonna hurl? As my hero Wayne Campbell once said, “I’d say hurl. If you blow chunks and she comes back, she’s yours. If you sput and she bolts, it was never meant to be.” Why don’t you just go talk to her?

tarantinofan: Thanks, man. This helped a lot… but whose Wayne Campbell??

Answers.com
delsol77: Creo que deberías comprar algunas flores bonitas. Hice esto para mi novia y todavía estamos juntos. ¡Buena suerte!

kleankanteenkamp: This is America... so start speaking ENGLISH!!!!

realSleepie: Actually, this is the internet... which doesn't excuse racism either.

shatcheler: you are such a little punk loser. what a tool, you can’t even ask out a girl. how can you like tarantino if you cant even do this stupid thing. why are you asking an online forum. you are going to get nowhere in life. shoveling fries at white castle and landing in jail for stealing girly magazines. u suck.

buffalooldier: Haters gonna HATE!

buffalospringfield: Why can’t we be friends...why can’t we be friends...why can’t we be friends??

halpython: You empty-headed animal, food trough wiper! I fart in your general direction! Your mother was a hamster and your father smelt of elderberries!

screenpowers: WALK UP TO HER AND AS SOON AS YOU MAKE EYE CONTACT WITH HER, START CRYING. IT WORKS EVERYTIME.

grogunders: Your caps lock is turned on.

nate842: ur an idiot

gummersao: It would be: "You’re an idiot."

cinyredfilm: I can’t believe this thread! You people are not normal! Seriously, just walk in the movie store and nicely ask the girl out. Simple as that.

maspargrns: I disagree with “cinyredsfan.” In order for this girl to even look twice in your direction, you must orchestrate an extravagant meet-cute. Because this is surrounding the sacred area of film, anything you say to her must be an ode to the art. Hire Steven Spielberg to give you some direction... isn’t this kind of like “Close Encounters of the Third Kind?”

Taylor Bundy
Fiction

Defend the Victims
Digital Illustration
Sydney Parrish
Bikini Bummed

So, I’m twenty, with an average figure, and I live in Orange County. Summer’s coming.
And I am terrified.

It’s not that I’m anorexic or worried about my self-esteem or anything. Oh no. In the fall and winter, I feel perfectly happy with myself.

It’s just that I am completely unable to wear fashionable swimsuits.

Call it a condition, call it a phobia, call it whatever, but every single time I attempt to shop for a swimsuit, I come home empty-handed and battle-scarred—eyelids drooping over an ashen and haunted expression.

Bikini racks? Better make that the rack. Hot pink nipple shields dangle hypnotically over their perfectly paired G-string bottoms. ”Nautical” patterns with jagged ninja-star-fishes jammed into the cleavage area make me uncomfortable just looking at them. Is there really a difference between these and honest-to-goodness lingerie? Why can’t I just wear my underwear into the ocean? It’d probably be more comfortable, anyway. And let’s not even talk about those supposedly ”classy” white bikinis with the gaudy gold rings plunked in the center. Are those rings like targets for hunky beach archers or something? ”Hey, look at my sternum! Isn’t it white and shiny? As shiny as this gold I’m wearing?”

The Ring even infects one-piece swimsuits. And if it’s not The Ring, it’s V-Neck Impossible. ”Oh look, I may not be actively showing you my bellybutton, but let me bend over and you can see it anyway!” Swimsuit manufacturers must have a fetish for bellybuttons... and hip bones. Some of those one-pieces... if they cut them any higher, I’d have to get duct tape to keep the thing on my body.

So... board shorts. Those should be safe, right? Kinda sporty, not too flashy. Except for the fact that the only color choices I have are neon-vomit-green and tear-my-eyelids-out-with-a-highlighter-yellow. Even if I do find a color I can live with, my enthusiasm always dies in the fitting room. I really shouldn’t have to cinch the waist up that tight, considering that the bottom hem is simultaneously cutting off the circulation to both legs. Or, worse, I can’t find the bottom hem. Oh, hello, hip bone, time to break out the duct tape again!

Last year, I broke down and purchased a pair of men’s swimming trunks. Neon-vomit-green, of course.

This must be the real reason California kids invite their friends to midnight beach bonfires instead of “to the beach.” We’re much more willing to risk pouring pizza-box oil over open flames than to risk being seen in one of these swimsuits.

If I were a swimsuit manufacturer, I’d forget about bikinis, run to my magical swimsuit laboratory, and melt together equal parts Favorite Pair of Beat-Up Columbia Hiking Shorts, Hot European Man-Magnet Cardigan, and Le Sex Appeal de Marilyn Monroe. (Don’t forget the Chemical X!) Or I’d invest in orthodox Muslim “burqinis.” Maybe if I built a time machine, I wouldn’t have this problem. Whatever happened to those turn-of-the-century taffeta swim dresses and bathing caps? I’d trade this G-string thing for a pair of bloomers any day. Or those striped jumpsuits from the 1920s? Buster Keaton, honey, you’ve got my number.
Of course, Buster Keaton had his share of problems with swimsuits, too. So have all those cartoon characters throughout the ages. Sometimes, all the character has to do is waltz out wearing a bathing suit and we laugh at them. (Goofy in “How to Swim,” anyone?) In fact, ever since the dawn of media, we’ve been making fun of people in swimsuits. Swimsuits are always coming off in the pool, highlighting stick-thin celebrities’ “cellulite,” and lowlighting TV personalities’ fashion sensibilities. How many copies of Leer-at-People Magazine’s “Worst Celebrity Beach Bodies” will it take for us to realize that people just naturally look funny in bathing suits?

I don’t know. Maybe I really am the only one who has this debilitating swimsuit-itis. Maybe I’m being filmed in this department store, right now, getting laughed at by hundreds of people. “Oh, the poor thing doesn’t understand the way things work! She doesn’t know that swimsuits are made only for us normal people and that she’ll never look good in a bathing suit.” Maybe this is some mad alien scientist’s idea of an experiment. “Let’s see how the test subject reacts to the psychological stimuli implicit in an impossible swimsuit shopping trip! I should add random electric shock punishments in the fitting rooms…”

Sigh. Maybe I’ll just buy a North Face jacket and go skiing in the Alps this summer.

Margaret Langdon
Creative Nonfiction

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Emblaze
Photography
Rebecca Chang

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Fishstar

O scaly fishstar, shining in the waters,
You live in the timenight
As the grey moon silveryglows,
Floating past the fishjellies,
Uplighting the ocean like a flyfire
—you little speck of lightstar.

Katherine Duble
Shakespeare Fakespeare

after William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?
Famous, iconic, renowned, legendary, effectively
Overrated. Women swoon while men personify
Disgusted gloom. Her rolling eyes pierce the sky
While the enchanted words caress his ear like
Supple silk. If continued speech of false love and
Beauty follow, eternal death need not wallow.

Clichéd sonnets split ears with every tiresome
Declaration of bizarre admiration. Compare me
To a summer’s day—a season filled with rancid sweat,
Unwanted insect invasions, and burned crimson flesh—oh
My one true greatest desire has come! Flattering flamboyance
Threads the famous poet’s words as time goes by and summer fades;
Opened eyes can no longer see what was once revered to be beautiful
Beyond compare but now can only curse the lie summer’s days once
Promised to bare.

Kaitlyn Orszewski

Succulent
Photography
Rebecca Chang

Untitled
Photography
Sydney Parrish
Get a Grip, Prufrock
(based on "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock")

“Do I dare eat a peach?”
Really? That’s what you’re worrying about?
Eating a piece of
Fruit?
Oh, Alfie. (mind if I call you Alfie?)
You need some sleep or something
There is so much more to life
Than
Whether or not one should eat a peach

Yeah, I get it, you’re getting old
But why not live a little?
Your hair will continue to shrink
But that doesn’t mean you give up

We’re all tired of being attendants to
Spoiled princes who waste their time
On revenge
Do something to make the mermaids sing to you

Disturb the universe, Alfie!
I hate to hear women come and go
On and on about Michael—what’s-his-face
He is marble, you are flesh
Besides, your manhood is bigger than his
(Then again, whose isn’t?)

And indeed now is the time
To squish all rumors of impotence
To walk upright
No longer scuttle like a crab

Eat the damn peach!

Nicholas Scutti
Pumpkin
Acrylic
Kristin Almquist

Limes
Acrylic
Kristin Almquist
Library

Do not be deceived by the silence.
It is loud—deafening:
the chaos of books crying out.
Like burial plots they each have their assigned place:
here lies BF1261.H22.
Yet they will not be silenced.
These great voices, long buried, scream to be heard
in this cemetery of solitude and hush
where the dead still speak.

*Katherine Dubé

Cityscape

*Graphite
Patrick Nguyen
About Concordia
Concordia University Irvine prepares students for their vocations—their various callings in life. CUI offers undergraduate, graduate, and adult degree programs in a beautiful Southern California location, with online and regional cohort options. Concordia’s undergraduate program is distinctive among universities in California because of its nationally recognized Core Curriculum and its Lutheran heritage that provides a thoughtful and caring Christian community that lives out the theology of “Grace Alone. Faith Alone.”

Location
Just 40 miles south of Los Angeles, Concordia University Irvine is located in the heart of Orange County, minutes from beaches, jobs, internships, world-class shopping; and a diversity of cultural experiences. Yet, Concordia’s campus is secluded and tucked away in rolling green hillsides overlooking the city of Irvine and Orange County.

Accreditation
• Western Association of Schools and Colleges
• Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
• Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education

Schools
• School of Arts and Sciences
• School of Business
• School of Professional Studies
• School of Education
• Christ College

Faculty
• Full Time Faculty: 134 (Percentage of Faculty with Ph.D. or other terminal degree: 65%)
• Student to faculty ratio: 18:1

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