

The Aerie

Volume 12 · Spring 2011



The Aerie

Concordia University's Literary and Arts Publication
Volume 12 · Spring 2011
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also aery (âr'e, îr'e) n. pl. -ies

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 publication of Concordia University, Irvine
- [Med. Lat. aeria < OF.aire.]

Acknowledgments

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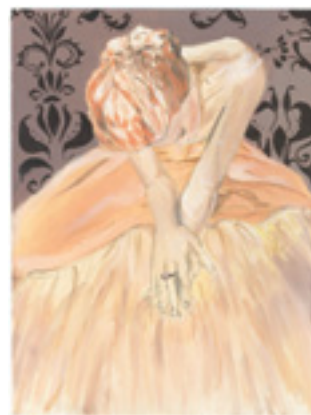
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The Aerie is an annual journal which showcases work being done in creative writing and art by Concordia University, Irvine students, alumni, faculty and staff. In addition, it provides students from both the English and Art departments a hands-on experience 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.



Lost in Thought
Gouache
Olivia Holdt

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The Brightest Star
 Adobe Photoshop
 Ashley McMillan

College: Drug Facts

Active Ingredient College Education.....	Purpose Success
Use: Helps prevent illiteracy, ignorance, poor grammar, being a complete idiot in scholarly circles, loneliness, homelessness, and starvation.	
Warning: For temporary use only. Extreme monetary loss has been reported when used over extended period of time.	
Keep out of reach of small children (pre-requisites required).	
Stop use and consult doctor if you experience any of the following symptoms:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insomnia Severe nausea from brain cell over-stimulation Swine Flu 	
Other less serious symptoms include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight gain or weight loss • Urge to BS papers • Obsessive Facebook usage/stalking • Drama with boyfriend/girlfriend • X-boyfriends/x-girlfriends • Encounters with creepy, quiet, probably-watches-you-sleep roommates • Encounters with annoying, messy, slob-of-world, eats-off-the-floor, leaves-the-hair-in-the-sink-and-the-shower-drain, eats-your-food-in-the-fridge, nosey, smelly roommates 	
Consult physician if any side effect persists for more than two weeks.	
If pregnant or breastfeeding, consult health professional before use.	
Consult physician if you have developed an addiction. This usually involves users who sit in poorly lit corners, digging their noses into textbooks instead of showering, eating, or socializing, for several years at a time.	
Directions: To enhance experience, apply four years of education to adult life. Additional years as needed.	
Other Ingredients: Studiousus (professors), stressglooms (term papers), stressglums (exams) textitosis (textbooks), pencilanica (writing supplies), papercopulosis (a lot of paper), sac (backpack), nutrition-pronos (an expensive food plan), petroleum (gasoline), Bejamins (money from parental unit).	
Check that the tamper proof seal is not broken before first use. *Certified Essential by society	

Brittany Amsler

Music of My Heart

"You can really tell a lot about people from their taste in music. What pushes them through the hardest times, what makes them jump and dance and what makes tears come to their eyes. You just have to hear what they do." -Unknown

The sound of country music takes me back, no matter where I am or what I'm doing, and puts me in the garage of the house I grew up in and still call home. I can feel the sun beating down through the open door. I am five and my bare feet are sticking to the painted grey-blue floor. The twang of heartache carries over the radio and the smell of oil being changed. It sounds like Sunday, and roller hockey with the neighbor boys, sliding over the same painted floors when I was 10, and oil painting in high school. In the voices of Brooks and Dunn I can feel the paint brush in my hand as it drips on the already stained floor as my dad builds another chair or fixes one more thing my brother and I seem to have broken. In country music I feel home.

"Remember when I was young and so were you / and time stood still / and love was all we knew."
Couples from 30 to 80 years old hold each other close, the lights dim, leaves fall in the November night, circling around the dance floor, the newlyweds in the heart of it all. They are all lost in each other; they all remember when.

The sounds of a hospital are not something you usually think of as "music" but to me, it's a worthy soundtrack to many big moments in my life. The squeak of rubber shoes, gurneys creaking down the hall, chatter among the nurses, deep murmurs from the surgeons and five different TVs playing at once. The hospital sings of life and echoes of death. Hope, faith, fear, love, joy and despair ring through the halls. These songs, though I can't tell you all the lyrics, resonate in my soul and stay with me wherever I go.

The red yarn on my wrist could tell you all about those songs, and so could St. Philomena. I was introduced to little Philomena on the second day of August. The circumstances were quite odd. I had jumped off of a cliff, 50 feet straight down, like a bird with broken wings, and managed to smash my spine as though it was no more than a cookie fallen from the table. I was only a centimeter from being paralyzed from the waist down. Hours and ambulances, tests and x-rays later, I was strapped onto a spine board, wearing nothing but my swimsuit and the glow of morphine under my skin. I lay below the small window of the medical jet, the night skies passing above my eyes. Caroline, my substitute mother for the night, sat next to me holding my hand. She told me stories of her dogs and her children, and the story of her cancer that magically disappeared without a single treatment. She helped me hope. It was in the moments between her stories that she took off the simple red and white, seemingly homemade bracelet from her wrist. She reached down and slipped it around my own smaller wrist. I looked at her questioningly, and it was then that I learned of St. Philomena, the patron saint of miracles. She was renown for her extraordinary cures. The tradition of the bracelet goes back for years and holds strong in the Catholic faith. The only time a wearer takes off the bracelet is to pass it to someone else who needs, or is, a miracle. I pondered for the rest of the flight whether I was lucky enough to call myself a miracle until I was rolled into my second ER of the night. A young pretty nurse came striding up to me, smiled down on me and said, "Hi. I'm Miracle, and I'll be with you for the night."

Taylor Swift has been sweeping the nation for the past few years with her songs of young heartache, friendship and love. She writes all her own songs based on how she's been loved and how she's been wronged, saying all those things every girl tends to wish they had said in the moment. Taylor Swift is my freshman year of college. Her album Fearless cried, laughed, and painted the background for five freshman girls. In her we found common ground. Each one of us was caught in the quick sands of first love, lost love, and the fight for love. There was a different song for each one of us, a different strength in her lyrics, and a different story worth telling. We spent hours on the floor debating when life changed and how we had started to grow up, ready or not. Taylor Swift was rain and thunder, the sun rising, a night spent with those who mattered most. We all sang with her in the car and danced to her in our dorm rooms. She had the ability to make five girls a bit more fearless.

Music is therapy to the heart and a blanket for the soul. It has the ability to take you to a better place or a place of emotion you might not uncover otherwise. The same can be said for art, especially for me. My whole life, my outlet for stress and emotion of any kind is to sit against my bed, sing my heart out and draw what I feel. I get out on paper the secrets of my heart. This is what I want to help other people do through art and possibly music and animal therapy. My goal is help others find peace and release of stress through the use of art as therapy. It can be done anywhere from children's hospitals to rehab homes. The idea that art can heal a range of heartache is nothing short of magical.

The beat rocks inside me; the floor thunders up through my feet and into my chest. The music is alive and in me. Lights of every color pass over me and in me, coloring my hands a rainbow as I wave them outstretched over my head. The crowd is throbbing like a heartbeat. This is how house music feels; this is how alive feels. I close my eyes and lose myself in the crowds of color, costume and glitter, and the endless sea of the imagined.

"Remember when we said when we turned gray / when the children grow up and move away / we won't be sad / we'll be glad for all the life we've had / and we'll remember when" Those words painted the soundtrack of my grandfather's funeral, the slideshow of a life of love and a heart like none other. Black and white photos of a child and his little brother, matching outfits and smiles. There are slides of his childhood, the small and beautiful wedding of him and my grandmother, his lifelong love. Slides of my mother's childhood with her brother who is also gone. The last I recall are the photos of my brother and myself, happy as ever with more love than we could ask for, because he gave that to us. I remember when.

Olivia Holdt

Read It Aloud

Read it forwards,
You find a meaning.
One thing is said
And you see what it's worth.
The brain comprehends the words on the page –
But there's something missing: a phrase, a voice.
Writing is one thing, as far as emotion
But you make it your own. A choice:
The way you see it, you don't know better.
And you think "Of course! There's nothing the matter."
One way means something that much is true.
You think for a moment... Then say
"Read it backwards."

Paul Mendez



No Shave November
Gouache
Kelly Johnson

Another Lovely Day

THE DAY IS LOVELY.

I silently read the above inscription on the heart-shaped woven sign hanging prophetically on the wall of Mama Esther's hut. Overhead bright blue, red, and yellow pieces of plastic cookware hung from the straw thatched roof. Mama explained how she often fed the children of the community. She boasted being the best cook around. She took out a pot of cabbage from the night before to let us taste. It was sweet like her smile.

Mama's family moved to Unyama several years ago. Like thousands of other residents of Northern Uganda, they were forced to leave their homes due to the twenty year civil conflict. They settled in various refugee camps where the threat of abduction by Joseph Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army is an unceasing reality. Despite the efforts of various humanitarian organizations, residents remain internally displaced persons (IDPs)—living within their country but without a place to call home. Every few months the rebels invade the Gulu camps. Entire families grab their mats and head for the bush. They run for hours through the darkness, sleeping only in brief moments of safety. One night, while running, one of the rebels grabbed Mama's son. Before he joined the others captured to become child soldiers, he escaped. He returned home unharmed.

In the late afternoon, as Mama prepared dinner, I climbed to the roof of an old abandoned schoolhouse to watch the burnt African sunset. As I rested my foot on the frame of a broken glass window, I heard playful shrieks from within. Unyama has been rebel free for two years. Orphaned children used to sleep in the former classrooms in hiding. Now they jumped out from behind jutting stone walls attempting to frighten us, the "Mzungus."

After a traditional meal of rice, beans, and chapatti, Mama asked each of her American guests to tell her a story. As we sat in a circle on thatch mats, we relayed to her and the children of the community, "Once upon a times..." of mermaids, enchanted woodland animals, and handsome princes none of which were culturally or practically relevant. Looking around at the endless gray huts visible by the light of burning lanterns, I understood that here there were no fairytales. Their story would likely not end with "happily ever after." Yet there was hope and joy and dreams.

Around midnight a violent thunderstorm struck the village. The wind blew furiously and the thunder boomed. Lightning illuminated the violet night sky of coal-colored rainclouds. Dry in Mama's hut, I experienced the power of God. As I lay awake listening to the rain melodically fall upon the roof, I realized the Lord was in this place. It was, indeed, going to be another lovely day.

Jocelyn Post

Dredging Mariana

down down sinking down
to inky unknown
eyes shocked wide open
with cold frozen terror
plummeting through life zones
murky and unclear
the wild descent threatens
struggling to slow down
to catch my bearings
silent wreckage covered
in silty geology of generations
trembling hands disturb
the long dead tableau
pawing now with greedy abandon
blindly grasping for booty
to tuck in my sack
detritus drops unheeded to the floor
where is the treasure?
eardrums drumming
the bends endanger consciousness
have i stayed too long?
floating slowly
the lifeline grips my hand in the dark
follow the bubbles
lungs bursting
i see the feet of birds
lift off in flight

Cindi Z. Rhodes

Barefoot Bravery

“At that time the Lord spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go, and loose the sackcloth from your waist and take off your sandals from your feet,” and he did so, walking naked and barefoot.” Isaiah 20:2

Now I don’t know what Isaiah was feeling when the Lord told him to walk naked and barefoot, but I do know what it feels like to have your professor say, “Take off your shoes and start hiking.”

I have been on many hikes in my 21 years spent on this earth, but never have I hiked barefoot. I always thought my teacher, Prof. Gavin, was crazy for hiking without shoes, so when I heard we were going to do it I thought, *Okay, now she has really lost it.* I began fearing the snakes and tarantulas that would be crawling on my feet. I loved hiking, but the thought of doing it barefoot made me quiver with fright.

We arrived at French Hill and I looked at what I was about to conquer. I had never hiked that hill and today I was going to hike it barefoot. *Oh gosh this is going to be so fun. I just can’t wait!* (yes, that was sarcastic) Gavin commented on my feet saying, “Oh how nice, Hillary has beautiful, red toenails.” *Yeah and they better not get ruined.*

Although apprehensive to take the first step, I warmed up to the idea with each footprint I made. By the time I had sunk my feet in the wet, cold and mushy mud, I had come to fully embrace the idea of hiking barefoot (at least for today anyways). Pedicure ruined or not, I was going to give this hike my all.

Pants rolled up and shoes removed, I hiked up the hill, avoiding rocks and watching for creatures I didn’t want on my feet. In the background I could hear faint cries of “ooh ahh ouch” coming from the few other souls who were brave enough to remove their shoes. In the distance I could see the non-risk-takers and their shoes. My feet got dirtier and dirtier as I walked up the steep hill. The mud oozed between my toes as water splashed up on my pants.

Gavin pointed out a plant and we touched it with our feet. We were “getting acquainted” with the different textures of nature. My hands, that were so used to feeling things, were left unused as I touched with my feet. Bushes, bristles, and beer bottle glass—everything was being felt with my feet.

My feet gripped the ground as I made my way down the steep north side of the hill. I thought it would be easier to walk downhill barefoot than with shoes on.

I was wrong.

Before I knew it I was slipping. “Oh no!” I heard Gavin yell as I caught myself with my hand. Thankfully my hand caught me before my butt could touch the muddy trail. I got up with nothing but a dirty hand to show for the fall, and within a few minutes I was at the bottom of the hill proceeding back to my dorm.

The walk back to my dorm was filled with thoughts of the hike. I stared at my feet, trying to decide if I liked the hike or not. Did I enjoy it? What were the positives and negatives? Would I do it again?

Overall I enjoyed hiking barefoot. It was a new experience and something I can now tell people I did. I loved that my feet could feel the ground and that I was not inhibited by shoes. I loved that my feet got dirty and I didn’t have to worry about washing my shoes. I disliked feeling the rocks beneath my feet and having to look out for glass. I disliked the fear of snakes and tarantulas attacking my feet. But even with the negatives, if given the experience to hike barefoot again, I would most likely do it.

Isaiah walked naked and barefoot when commanded by the Lord. I walked barefoot when asked by Gavin. Going barefoot was a big deal for me and something completely out of the ordinary. I don’t know if this will become a hobby I do continually or remain a one-time experience. Maybe one day I will be brave enough to hike naked. No probably not. As of now it would have to be the Lord commanding me, and it would have to be a very loud command indeed.

Hillary Wessel



MAC Ad
Adobe Photoshop
Emily Moore

Soldier w/o a Sword

What is a soldier without a sword?
Certainly not a soldier anymore?
Or is he still a soldier in his soul?
Maybe being a soldier is something more?

Jason Daniel Lyle



Animal Instinct
Oil Paint on Canvas
Ashley McMillan

Lili'uokalani

(The Smarting of the Royal Ones)

Look above and see
a sky of white washed blue,
so clear without a cloud in sight.
Look around and see
a sea of heads hung low.
Hardly a face looks up.
The few that do
are dark and blurred,
unclear to read except for mischievous grins.

Look ahead and see
majestic gates, once vibrant green
like the lush green of Diamond Head,
now soiled and smeared a sickening brown.
Look down and see
dirt black imprinted steps
that stain once pearl white stairs.

Look above and see
armed soldiers perched up top;
“personal escorts” that stomp
and tarnish the once sleek koa¹.
Look around and see
a room filled with just one bed, one sofa,
one small table, one small chair, one odd safe,
one bureau, one chiffonier, and one cupboard;
so full and yet so empty.

Look ahead and see
from the window fit for ali'i²,
the view of a hurt and outraged nation.
Look down and see
the shattered heart of their loyal queen
now forced to bid Aloha `Oe³.

¹ Type of Hawaiian wood

² Hawaiian word for royal or chiefly status

³ Hawaiian for “farewell to thee”; Also the title of the song composed by Queen Lili'uokalani while she was under house arrest

Michelle Lee

Shanti Dan

Oh, happy day, happy day. Sweat drips down the side of my guitar and onto my black and blue spotted pants. Hunched over I glance between our little yellow song book and my fingers as they move from chord to chord. My throat tingles with a cough that wants to break loose, but I hold it back and sing loudly so the ladies surrounding me can hear. On the ground sitting crisscross-applesauce holding a small plastic red ball, a woman sits mesmerized by the music coming from the small piece of wood I am holding. *Forever I am changed.*

I know He rescued my soul. The faded light-blue walls and dark-grey cement of the veranda floor outline the empty center courtyard. The scorching sun beats on. Women squat, sit, and sprawl out everywhere in the shade and stare blankly in the courtyard where Mother Mary stands watching. Jocelyn dances in front of me with two women who awkwardly manage only small movements with claps off-beat. A few sway to the melody; some are smiling. Most just sit—emotionless. *My redeemer lives, my redeemer lives.*

Oh my God, this love, how can it be? Bright blue, black and white swirls, and large flowers printed on an oversized gown worn by a thin woman. She sits across and to my left. One leg up on the white chair the other dangling, barely touching the ground, she watches me. I look up to meet her eyes. The right eye is exposed her lower eyelid droops down half her face. No lower lip—her teeth are all that can be seen. Half of a nose—she has two little holes with hair sticking out in the middle of her face. I can hardly take my eyes off the woman who a few days before I had so much trouble looking at. Holding back tears of joy—I watch her as she claps along to her favorite part. *Na Na Na Na Na Na.*

Take my hand to the promised land. Close to my heart, I sing the words intentionally, with hope the women will understand why I sing for them every day. They do not speak English. “Auntie Auntie Auntie,” lovely Meena sings daily to me and smiles when I look up while playing. She points to my guitar and gives me a thumbs-up. If only she did not just hear sounds but understood the words. I continue, sounds will have to do, the Spirit will do the rest. *Without You I’m so alone, I am weak but You are strong.*

So here I am to worship. Songs over and over, I no longer hear the words I sing, but am absorbed with other thoughts. I know the words. I know the song. An hour of singing is long. I hear a voice, pronunciation slightly off but strong with confidence in knowing the words as well as I do. I look up to my left at the woman. Silver-grey short hair, she is older than many of the woman. Her figure small, arms and legs scrawny with hardly any remaining muscle. I do not know why she is a patient at Shanti Dan. I do not know her story and what disability, mental or physical, has brought her here. What I do know is that this beautiful woman understands. I get up to leave for the day and a small hand reaches out and grabs my elbow. I turn around and see her smiling face gazing up and saying, “Thank you for playing and singing the beautiful music today.” *And You’re altogether lovely. Altogether worthy. Altogether wonderful to me.*

Shea Thorson



Untitled
Gouache
Emily Moore



Grimm's Fairy Tales
Mixed Media
Ashley McMillan

It's the End of the World

I always thought the world would end
with sirens running through the streets
while people, by historic trend,
run from the robots' laser beams.

Or by some massive plague that spreads
creating life from rotting meat.
The droning troops with empty heads
all searching for a human treat.

Some said a dinosaur would rise
rampaging in a frenzied rush
destroying cities with its size
and stomping people into mush.

Perhaps we'd die when missiles storm
and mushroom clouds start to descend
leaving only shadowy forms.
That's how I thought the world would end.

Instead, I ponder life alone
rotating bullets in my palm
preparing for that vast unknown,
my world ends with a loaded gun.

Ashley McMillan

Good Girl

Riding on the grocery cart was getting old. I hopped off the side and tried to run ahead, but Daddy called me back.

“Hold on to the cart, Gabby. Be a good girl like your sister.”

Jane was always a good girl around Daddy. She was older, a fifth grader, and wore those big glasses. I thought about getting glasses myself. I thought maybe they would make me smarter and then Daddy would love me more. But I tried on Jane’s glasses and they hurt my nose. So, I settled with perfect vision and started calling her “four eyes” instead.

“Alright, you two, wait here,” Daddy said and pointed at me. “Don’t leave this cart,” he added while wagging his finger and then walked over to the Deli counter.

“Hey, Gabby. See those?” Jane asked.

We were standing in the candy aisle. Deep containers of chocolates, sugar straws, and tiny cookies were stacked up on top of each other. There were shovels the size of Daddy’s hands inside each container.

“You want some?”

“No,” I said, looking away, trying not to sound interested.

“Why not?”

“We can’t.”

“Yeah we can.”

“That’s stealing.”

“No, it’s not.”

I looked at her. She was serious. I glanced at the container of sprinkled cookies and then at the Deli. Daddy was still trying to decide which lunch meat he wanted.

“Well, I’m going to have some,” Jane said.

“Really?”

“Yup,” she said without moving.

“You’re gonna get in trouble.”

She huffed and turned. She tapped her finger on her cheek and studied each container.

“You want some?” she asked again.

“No,” I said while jumping off the cart to join her side.

“Why not? ... baby,” she whispered.

“Why don’t you do it?”

“I don’t have pockets.”

I looked down at the pockets of my overalls. They could hold about six of those sprinkled cookies ... maybe seven. Daddy was still looking at the lunch meats. Jane’s eyebrows were raised behind her big glasses. She crossed her arms and tapped her foot.

“Well?” she said.

I bent down, flipped the lid, scooped out a shovel full of cookies and crushed them into my pockets.

“Ready to go, girls?” Daddy called. I jumped up.

“Yes, Daddy,” Jane squeaked and grabbed the side of the cart.

“Good girl,” he said. He plopped the turkey meat on top of the apples and wheeled the cart to the checkout line.

“How are you this fine day, Mr. Cambell?” the cashier said while making the food beep.

“Just fine, thanks.”

“And how about your little ladies? They being good?”

Jane nodded. I looked at my pockets.

“Is that everything?” the cashier asked Daddy.

“Yes,” I answered for him. Daddy looked at me and raised his eyebrow. Right outside I could hear a police car siren. Something really heavy was beating in my chest.

“Alright, that will be fifty-five, thirty-three.”

Daddy pulled out his wallet. I lunged for his legs and hugged them tight.

“No, no! Don’t! You—you can’t pay!”

He laughed. “Yeah, I know ... it is a lot of money for the amount of food we got.”

“No, if you pay then you’re stealing!”

The cashier chuckled. Jane was suddenly interested in reading the back of the cereal box.

“Gabby, what do you mean?” he asked and pried me off of his leg. That was when I pulled the sprinkle cookies out of my overalls, bowing my head so I could hide behind my bangs.

“I stolded them.”

The cashier tsk tsk tsked and Jane started humming.

“That’s stealing, Gabby. That’s very, very bad. And you know better than that. Why did you do it?”

I shrugged my shoulders and looked at Jane from underneath my bangs. She was breathing on her big glasses to clean them.

“You’re going to apologize to the cashier for stealing food.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Really mean it.”

“I’m really sorry.”

That night, I didn’t ask Daddy to tuck me in (he was quiet all the way home from the grocery store), but when I turned out my light and pulled Teddy to my chin, the door opened.

“Gabby? You asleep?”

“Yes.”

“I’m very disappointed that you stole today.” He paused and sighed. “But I’m proud that you told the truth and admitted that you stole. And you didn’t tattle on your sister either. For that, you were a good girl.”

I sat up in bed. “Good girl?”

“Yes, Gabby. A very good girl.”

Brittany Amsler

Abandon Ship

I have a million and three things on my “To-Do” list today. Fully aware that two of my big projects need to be done by tomorrow, I pull out my computer. Logging on to the internet, I see that the homepage is dictionary.com and showing me the “word of the day.” I don’t have time for that. Clicking on the search engine box, with full intentions to start research for one of my two projects...something happens. Suddenly, my body is taken over and all free will is stripped from me.

What is happening? I find myself writing in my email address and password. *Oh no. Not again. Don't do it! Well, maybe I'll just look for a couple minutes...*

The latest epidemic has attacked our cities, government, schools, children...and even our grandparents. It is the major social gateway drug of our time. Innocent bystanders are caught off guard and, unbeknownst to them, are swiftly sucked in and added to the millions of users that are on every day.

I'm sure you can see where this is going. Facebook. What once was a college version of Myspace is now quoted by my roommate's boyfriend to having “been tracked back to being owned by the CIA.” Oh geez.

Sarah and Adam are in a relationship. Joanna is a fan of naps. Karl is playing vampire slayer and has 59,007 points. Courtney is tagged in 80 new photos and all your friends are commenting, so you better catch up. Amanda has the top Farkle score of the week. Joe Schmoie added you as a friend. Creepy McCreepster messaged you again. Awesome. Highlight of my day. Ugh. I'll have to put this up as my status update. “Creepster keeps messaging me and won't leave me alone. Any advice?” Nine people comment on your status with ridiculous ideas that aren't even funny, two friends post generic ideas that you would be able to come up with yourself, your dad asks who the creep is and thinks that you should be more careful with what you do with your time, so you decide to come up with a new status. Perhaps “having a great day” or “loves Jesus” will suffice.

Facebook has been wonderfully engineered so that just about anyone can find...just about anyone. The stalkers, pedophiles and rapists are known to be the biggest fans of this faction of facebook. Oh, and anyone who has a facebook account officially has been handed the “stalker” badge as well. Welcome to the club. You may not want to admit it yourself, but facebook users are stalkers. Facebook gives a person the ability to look up a person that knew from kindergarten, and decide whether or not to “add them as a friend.” Sadly I have to say that I have done this myself. I was bored one day last summer, so I got out my elementary school yearbook and decided that it would be fun to see what these people looked like now. Why I actually sent the request to be their friend, I will never know. What is wrong with me?! I haven't seen or heard from them since 6th grade. The funny thing is that they accepted.

One of the biggest problems with facebook is the fact that people are obsessed with it. Anything can become a bad thing if it is used too much. Today's students are especially faced with the hard temptation of letting facebook procrastination take over. Students bring facebook to class and tune out professors so that they can join groups like “I bet we can get 10,000 Angel fans before they get 10,000 Dodger fans” while IM-ing their friends and creeping on their other “friends.” My personal favorite is online flirting. You're online with someone who is J-cool and smooth over facebook chat, but when you pass one another in real life, it is unspeakably awkward and you hardly dare to even give the person eye contact. Shoot, I thought we were really hitting it off online last night!

Luckily, some light has recently been shed on this growing epidemic. Facebook users are realizing their addiction. They are spreading the news that they are only going to check their facebook twice a day. Some are giving up facebook for the entire Lent season. Some even bravely handed their password

over to be changed by a close friend, so that they would not check their accounts until “the time was right.”

I have now started my research on Google for my project. Ooh, what is this? You can change your language on facebook to Pirate? “Do you want to be a pirate? 1) Scroll to the bottom of your Facebook page. 2) on the bottom left, click English:US. 3) Then click English: Pirate.” I'll just check this out really fast; it'll only take a second...

Aarrgh.

Karin Saethre



Coraline Book Cover
Adobe Photoshop
Jordan Kimura



Living Green
Adobe Photoshop
Jordan Kimura

Old Man

Around the corner lives an old man with a bald head and droopy eyes.
Can glued to his hand, he spits his tobacco,
dark brown juice drips down his chin.
Every time someone passes by his porch,
ferocious growls erupt from his blind old dog
growing old just like his master,
hell approaching every minute.
Indifferent to the weather, or time, or day, he
just dozes on the porch waiting for death.
Kind neighbors stop by
leaving meals on the rusty, sinking steps,
making an effort that the man won't repay.
Never touches the food; he leaves it for the dog.
One day a naïve child walks up to the porch,
pets the dog, then walks away.
Quickly the old man looks up
ready to yell at the boy.
Slowly he sets the can down and stands up.
Their eyes meet, and the old man recognizes his grandson.
Undeniably shocked the man falls to his knees.
Vigorous pain shoots through his heart-
wheezing and coughing he grasps for his faithful dog.
Xanax no longer does its job.
Yelling out for the boy he never knew,
Zen is never reached.

Cassie Ells

Oh, how He loves us so...

{...He is jealous for me...}

My deepest insecurity is my fear that I'm unlovable. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that when I was born I came out purple. Evidently I swallowed something while still inside the womb that I wasn't supposed to. So when I finally entered the world, I wasn't crying like most babies but silently choking—struggling for my life. It took a long two minutes before one of the nurses was able to suction out of my newborn throat whatever it was I had mistaken as a good idea to eat. Eventually, I was laid upon the breast of my mother. I felt for the first time love's embrace—two minutes after I was supposed to.

{...loves like a hurricane...}

Sometimes it seems like all anyone today ever wants to talk about is love. A few weekends ago, when staying in the home of a friend, I watched *Moulin Rouge!* for the first time. The 2001 Oscar winning film undeniably reflects the ideals of my generation. In the movie, a newly Bohemian American writer moves to France hoping to experience the life of "The Revolution." The poet, Christian, believes in all the cliché descriptions of love presented through the artistic culture of the time. That is until they are challenged when he falls in love with Satine, the "star courtesan" of the Moulin Rouge club. Despite their lethal romance, at the end of the film, Christian confirms through his literary account of their love affair that, "The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return." If only this was easy...

{...I am a tree...}

The Bible has a lot to say about love. The basic gist is that God is love, that He loves us, and that we are supposed to love Him and others. I believe the first part, mostly doubt the second, and am living proof that the third can't be true. Yet, my Christian faith tells me that I must believe everything the Bible says even if there is limited evidence.

The real part where I take issue is the notion that God apparently has that we are capable of loving one another. We talk about it all the time as Christians. "If we just loved one another..." is our relentless creed. But the thing is, we don't love one another, and I'm not so sure that it is possible for us to. You see, I'm a sinner. This means I am innately proud, jealous, greedy, selfish, and full of hate. My natural inclination is always to do the wrong thing and chances are yours is too.

Saint Augustine describes the depth of our shared depravity in his Confessions. Amidst a detailed account of blush-worthy sins, Augustine tells of the time he wandered into his neighbor's backyard and stole two pears from his pear tree. He remembers that he wasn't hungry. He simply wanted to steal the pears, because it was the wrong thing to do. He wanted to experience the thrill of evil. Yeah, that's what we like too.

The other day I was talking with my friend Israel about the irreconcilable differences that exist between our friends who are Christians. Ex-boyfriends and girlfriends. Former roommates. Old best friends. He was saying how he doesn't understand how these broken relationships can persist among people who are specifically commanded to love each other. People who are specifically instructed to confess, to forgive, and to bear with one another. But we are people who also feel the full weight of this charge and know that we can't fulfill these expectations. And so we don't. And we are left crying, "If we just loved..."

{...bending beneath the weight of His wind and mercy...}

My co-worker George is one of the wisest people I know. At work one Friday morning, I asked him what he made of this whole idea of God's love and our love. He told me that he pictures it as an "overflow." He imagines God's love falling from the sky like rain and filling us as if we were a cup.

Eventually, the cup becomes full, and the rain love trickles down the sides and begins to fill the other cups beside us. Perhaps this image is what King David was thinking of when he wrote in Psalm 23, "My cup runneth over."

I think the reason that we don't understand love as we're supposed to is because we don't really get who God is. In 1 John 4, John, Jesus' disciple and probably His closest friend, writes in verse 8 that, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." God is love. As a math equation it would look like this:

God = Love

Yet, for some strange reason, we insist on reading the sentence, looking at the equation, backwards.

Love = God

Instead of using the character and nature of God as our standard of actualizing true love, we project our feeble attempts of selflessness, resulting in selfish interactions with one another, onto Him and insist that He must also be this way. We make God in our image and wonder how everything became so messed up.

{...when all of a sudden, I am unaware of these afflictions eclipsed by glory...}

The most honest and practical example of God's love is illustrated in "The Parable of the Prodigal Son." The word "prodigal" means wastefully or recklessly extravagant. The title of the parable is misleading. Really it should be called "The Parable of Two Prodigal Sons and Their Even More Prodigal Father." The younger son is prodigal in the premature expenditure of his inheritance. The older son is prodigal for not tapping into all his father has to offer. Yet, it is the father who is truly prodigal with his love for both his sons. The younger he runs to embrace upon his return, not even asking for or acknowledging the apology the son has prepared and offered. The older he reminds, "All that is mine is yours." Whether at different times in our lives, under different circumstances, we are prodigal as the younger son or prodigal as the older son, God remains the prodigal Father of us all.

{...and I realize just how beautiful You are...}

And that's really the point, isn't it? That as much as we fail to love one another, God loves us anyways. He loves us despite our inability to love.

A few weeks after Israel and I had talked, I attended a church service capturing the events of Holy Week all at once. The service started outside with the waving of Palm branches signifying "Jesus' Triumphal Entry" into Jerusalem. It concluded with the stripping of the altar and removal of the Christ candle from the front of the sanctuary to signify Jesus being laid in the tomb. In the middle of the service, after the various Gospel accounts of "The Lord's Supper" were read, we took communion. As I sat in the front row, and watched the ex-boyfriends and girlfriends, former roommates, and old best friends receive Christ's body and blood "for the forgiveness of all [their] sins," I realized the depth of the beauty of God's love. Jesus died and rose because God knows we can't love each other without Him.

{...and how great Your affections are for me...}

Maybe this is what John, "the one whom Jesus loved," was getting at when he writes in verse 16 of chapter 4 of his first letter, "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us." He states this idea again in verse 19, "We love because He first loved us." I think instead of asking what life would be like "if we just loved one another," the question we're really all searching for the answer to is this: "What if we knew how much God loved us?" I'm not so sure anything else would matter.

Jocelyn Post

Reflection

Peering
at the eerie image
noticing me from behind
the watery wall, I wonder if she sees
what I see when I see me. Mystified, she stares
sweetly smiling, my dearest darling, eyes without a soul.
Narcissus' lover, she enchants me, scans me, surveys me,
admires me, puckers her lips, flips her hair. Stares.
Loves me. Abhors me.
Scorns me. Adores me.
Staring and reflecting, she scowls, scrutinizes, glares
with arctic eyes. Echo's contender chokes her crush in the rush
of a frozen brook. Coveting keeps her caught in the icy wall.
Confounded, I stare. I question. To study me, she checks
and inspects me from her glass prison. Shattering
enchantments and ideals held
by girls who are constantly
peering.

Johanna Saleska



Classic
Photography
Margaret Langdon

Music & Lyrics

I've been a certifiable "music lover" since my sophomore year of high school, when I discovered the infinite glory of the dearly departed Tower Records. But I never knew just how important it was to me—or really, truly felt the power that it holds—until I started traveling. That's when it took on a whole new importance to me. It moved me.

I'd gotten off to an admittedly rough start in Buenos Aires. It was my first time away from home, first time with the people in the Around the World group, first time on my own. I'd never left the country before and it had been six years since I'd left the state. When I stayed on-campus during the regular school year, I was only 40 minutes away from my house and I'd see my parents at least twice during the week before heading back home on Friday afternoon.

It was hard for me to deal with my new situation and the growing sense of disconnect I was feeling. It didn't help when I got a kidney stone. A day after that particular episode, the group gathered together for our own version of SHOUT. I'll be honest: I don't like to sing and I usually can't stand Christian Contemporary songs. To me, they're all the same, made up of three simple chords; they're repetitive and about as original as a Bubblegum Pop song. I'm all for praising and worshiping God, it's just that this isn't the medium I choose to use when I do it.

But something happened that night that changed my mind. Christine requested "From the Inside Out" to be played. I'd never heard it before, so I wasn't sure what to expect. When Sam went into the line, "Everlasting, your light will shine when all else fades/Never-ending, your glory goes beyond all fame," I felt this huge warmth. Something exploded inside my chest and I got this feeling like everything was going to be all right. It was bizarre. I'd never felt it before. I had to stop singing along for a bit because I almost couldn't breathe. I had goose bumps. I was elated, but I felt like I was about to burst into tears. When I logged onto Facebook that night, my mom told me that what I had felt was God.

My faith isn't something I talk about, but it's very important to me and very personal. Still, this is an idea that I probably would've scoffed at under different circumstances because I feel like it's something people tend to throw around too easily. However, this time, there was no other way to explain it. I'd had my first actual encounter with God, and I couldn't deny it.

It was real, it happened, it was amazing. The fact that He came to me through music made the moment even more special because music means so much to me. I immediately went back to my room and downloaded the song from iTunes. I put it on the "repeat" setting on my iPod, and listened to it for the remainder of the evening, falling asleep with it still playing in my ears. The next morning, I thanked Christine for requesting it, telling her that it was exactly what I needed to hear.

Music has always had an effect on me. The way some people are able to completely allow themselves to get lost in movies, I allow myself to be swallowed up entirely by music, easily applying different songs or lyrics to my entire life. A week later, sitting on the airplane from New York to Chicago, and then from Chicago to California, I found myself drawn towards Iron Maiden's song, "Coming Home." It spoke to me, hitting every emotion I was feeling—exploring the world, facing uncertainty, and then suddenly there's this moment when you're coming home, and you see those runway lights cutting through the darkness... and it's just this really beautiful feeling, because that's when you realize, "This is my town. This is where I belong. This is home."

Two weeks later, heading back to rejoin the group in Finland, my feelings were the exact opposite. I wanted to be back, I wanted that adventure, I wanted that rush. "Dig Up Her Bones," by

the MISFITS, was my drug of choice. The chorus—“Point me to the sky above, I can’t get there on my own”—was powerful, and it fed my desire to be up in the air and traveling once again. It was freeing, and the desperation in Michale Graves’ voice mirrored my own. Since then, music has still been the one constant that I’ve used to comfort me during times of homesickness and times of doubt.

When I feel like I can’t take it anymore, like being away from home and friends and family is too much for me to handle, music lifts me up and gives me support. I don’t want to make it sound like music is a substitute for God in my life, because it’s definitely not—quite the opposite, actually, as I fully believe that God moves through music, even secular tunes, as an effective means of offering comfort, regardless of whether it’s Michael W. Smith or Michael Stipe. When I hear Bruce Dickinson, or M. Ward, or Kurt Cobain singing, I feel a huge connection that most people only feel during church services.

On the way to Turkey, Ozzy Osbourne spoke to my concern of maintaining my own identity on the trip with the lyrics, “I don’t wanna change the world. I don’t want the world to change me.” In Egypt, Shakira helped form and strengthen the bonds of my friendship with Catherine. Social Distortion got me through my tiff with Christine in Petra. The original MetalPunk—Glenn Danzig—was there to reassure me in Jerusalem when I got my first tattoos, and Bob Marley gave me a deeper appreciation for Kenya and the time I spent there. Even WEEZER’s Christmas album—almost entirely made up of Christ-centered songs—helped me get through the living hell that was India.

Music is important. It can be a security blanket and a therapist, offering better advice than Dr. Phil ever could. And it’s especially essential for traveling because it’s often the only familiar thing we have to hold onto. The way it can instantly conjure up thoughts, and feelings, and memories of home and the people there... it’s priceless. Its ability to alter emotions—happy to sad, angry to indifferent—is simultaneously awesome and terrifying.

It took me going around the world to realize that music can also be a spiritual experience. It can touch the soul, a gift from God in heaven bestowed upon mankind. As KISS once said, “God gave Rock n’ Roll to you.” And as Tenacious D eloquently puts it, “Rock is not the Devil’s work, it’s magical and rad.” I already knew that long before this trip even started, but these last few months have strengthened that point in my mind and made me even more confident that it’s true.

Erik Olsen



Aquabug
35 mm Film
Eric Korzeniowski

Beware Young Ones

Striking figure,
A bulbous buboe of a man.

He rotundly shimmies into our homes by night, from flight.
Where cloven hooves cleave the winter moon in their passage.

Garb of bright red, blood red,
trimmed with the frosted flesh of the snowshoe rabbit.

Black coal boots, size 15, with heels that crunch and crush sleet underfoot.

Dark gloves grapple with an oversized bag of ominous content.

He hides secret packages under the dead branches of a once Noble Fir.

In the morning, small children wait for their parent's arrival
to see what lies in these packages,
portentous presents, tied with sickeningly garish ribbons and tagged with subtle warnings:

To Billy,
From Santa

Amanda Nuckolls



Driving in the Desert
Photography
James Bogert

How to Answer When People Ask Where You're From: A Guide for the Lonely and Homeless

If you're a military brat or any other child of a parent who seems physically challenged to stay in one location, you will constantly be faced with a question that will irritate you to no end: where are you from? If you've lived in approximately twenty million places in five years, you have very little clue as to where home base is. The situation is made even more painful if your parent is following in his/her parent's moving footsteps, since they don't have a home either that you can claim.

Dealing with people who have only lived in under five locations can be difficult—and annoying. When you have finished reading this guide, hopefully you will be much closer to establishing an understanding with a person of this species.

So, first, let us start out in a typical conversation where you have just met the person in question. We'll begin with where you probably are right now—unsure what to say:

STRANGER: Oh, where are you from?

YOU: I don't know.

This is obviously a very awkward situation, and people will believe that you have a mental problem and should be seeing a psychiatrist or something. So this maybe not the best answer. To avoid this problem you should consider another approach:

STRANGER: Oh, where are you from?

YOU: My father/mother is military.

Unfortunately, this begs another annoying question:

STRANGER: So, you're from all over?

Any one of you knows how extremely annoying this question is because no, you haven't lived in every single habitable (and uninhabitable) place in the world. You probably will begin feeling frustrated at this point. Do not. Continue. Oftentimes the response will continue as follows:

YOU: Oh, no, not really, I've just lived in a lot of places.

STRANGER: Like where?

YOU: Oh, let's see, I was born here, but when I was three days old...

By now you have completely lost their attention, as shown by the glassy look in their eyes, and you're not even finished with the first half of your first decade. People do not care how many places you've lived, even if you've lived in a place like Belarus or Timbuktu. Therefore, clearly, while you are trying to straighten out the situation by saying that you are not from "everywhere," you have made an enemy of your victim. Another approach is called for.

If you've been continually asked in a relatively short period of time, there is another response which is common, especially the first day of the semester at college when you have already been asked the question exactly 67,891,372 times already that day. And yes, to save your sanity, you have been counting.

POOR, UNSUSPECTING STRANGER: Oh, where are you from?

YOU: SHUT THE @\$% UP!!!

Generally, this will be a professor who is genuinely interested in you as a person and would like to get to know you. Unfortunately, you may find yourself kicked out of class (and/or school) if you treat a professor this way, so you should most likely avoid this response. It is, of course, completely possible to make up a place and hope they'll go away:

STRANGER: Oh, where are you from?

YOU: Gila Bend.

STRANGER: How long were you there? Or are your parents from there?

YOU: Neither.

STRANGER: So you just like it there?

Unfortunately, if you've just picked a random place, you have no clue where it is or what it's like and you've created a problem for yourself because this person will forever believe you are from Gila Bend. And if they ever find out you're not, you will never be trusted again. You don't even know where Gila Bend is, but you just assume it's nice there, and they did say that you're from everywhere, right?

By now, you're probably tired of trying to find ways to keep yourself out of the looney bin and keep your new friends. Perhaps there should be a review of the failed approaches:

1. Cluelessness, accompanied by a blank look.
2. Straight answer, followed by long discourse.
3. Losing temper.
4. Making up a place.

So, if you don't want to lie, go crazy, or lose a friend (or your future career), there is still one possibility: generalization.

STRANGER: Oh, where are you from?

YOU: Earth.

Through this response they cannot be offended by your lack of vagueness since they probably believe you have lived everywhere on earth by now. Nor do you have to describe in complete detail your home because they have already seen it. Unless you were born in space, you have never left the planet, so you have not lied. As for details, who needs them?

Reno Hokana



The Passion of Football

Gouache

James Rammelsberg

The Ashes of the Day

The sun sets slowly in the sky, burning embers of the night.
A fire rages on the hill, and life drowns in its light.
The forest quakes, beside itself. The fire rages on.
The morning brings a heavy rain, with echoes of the dawn.

Bones, and birds, and bees, and things, struggle under ash.
The trauma of the night before still stinging like a lash.
No one foresaw what happened, and no one ever could.
A wind streams through the countryside, where no one ever stood.

The evidence is clear to see, the burns, and bones and ash.
The trauma of the night before still stinging like a lash.
The day is bright, and cool, and still, the stole of smoke hangs loose.
The air is dense and soiled, and strangles like a noose.

The sun again sets on the hill, the smoke begins to clear.
Life goes back to normal, there's nothing more to fear.
Morning comes on feathered wings, the nightmare's gone away.
Morning comes on feathered wings, and brings again the day.

Erik Olsen



On the Way
Photography
Michael Hartley

Yellow

She speaks kind words and a gentle disposition,
Illuminates light, and brightens any situation.
Bonds two people together with her smile,
She doesn't only shine for awhile.

Intangible, yet you can see her with the naked eye.
Unites faith with the rainbow after the storm,
No this beauty does not have its form.

She embraces the sunflowers with admiration,
She circles the sun, dances with the moon,
Signifies friendship,
Accompanies laughter,
Expresses hope.

No matter if you put it away and come back after
She's still there shining,
With no dullness in her smile.

One of three primary colors,
Much different from the others.

Tyler Howard

A Kartoshka

The shovel bores into the ground, cutting through weeds that lie dismally on top of the black soil, scorched by the heat of summer. With a thrust of my foot, the shovel buries itself into the earth, stopping only when meeting the pang of a rock. Pulling back, the cold soil meets daylight, breaking the once neat rows of the field, and leaving behind an empty hole. The shovel and I sigh and continue on.

I had met the shovel when pulling up to a white house, paint fading in the sun. It had been waiting for me. Its dull blade and nicked handle showed an experienced and practiced laborer. Being neither of those, there was some hesitance as I picked him up, but he immediately reassured me that all would be well. We were to search the field, trying to find the illustrious Russian potato; digging up row after row of rich dirt. We had been told that due to the lack of rain this summer, it would be an arduous task, yielding less than what was usually expected. It would take more than lack of precipitation, though, to defer me from joining centuries of Russians before me, who had taken out to the fields whether there be rain or shine.

Referred to lovingly as *kartoshka's*, potatoes are a staple at any Russian meal. Whether they be smashed, fried, boiled, or stewed. Prepared by babushkas, old Russian women, they are lovingly cut up into stews, featured as the main dish with herbs generously sprinkled over, or put into pancakes. Not even breakfast can escape the potatoes' monopoly on Russian cuisine. I have been in Vladimir, Russia for a little over a week, and already am showing the outward signs of turning into a kartoshka myself. My skin is now showing a slight yellow tinge and some places are becoming a bit more cushy than they used to be. I eat potatoes, dream potatoes, and talk about potatoes. It seems only right to grab the shovel and search for potatoes as well, to fully carry out the whole Russian experience.

Let me clarify as to how I came to be shoving a shovel into Russian dirt, searching for potatoes. A group of students and professors from Concordia Irvine in California are traveling around the world for four months, visiting ten countries of which the second stop is Russia. As for the potato field, part of our trip encompasses doing service projects with our host country, which led to the state-funded boarding school sitting atop a hill, which led to the potato field. California. Russia. Boarding school. Shovel. Potatoes. It should all make sense now...but back to the potatoes and the field.

A quiet peace slowly descends as the pattern of digging becomes a rhythm, only broken by the thud of the potatoes as they hit the bottom of the tin pail. I break away from the music, resting my shovel in an empty hole, staring into the wide-open space beyond the field; a muted silence weighs down upon it. Trees move back and forth across the landscape and a river snakes by before slowly disappearing around the bend. The boarding house gazes down at it all. Its windows staring deeply into the vast expanse of sky and clouds that cast shadows over the scene. I stand still in the moment, taking in Russia for the very first time, feeling quite small in the vast expanse of the Motherland.

But the shovel demands continuation of the search and pulls me from my moment of self-reflection. It yearns to meet the ground head on, to tear through until triumph is reached. He cares not for the view but only for the task at hand, having witnessed it hundreds of times already. Back into the earth, a repetitive motion, over and over again, always searching. Sweat drips down, hands become red with the beginning signs of blisters appearing, and feet cry out as dirt finds its way in between the toes, irritating them with every small movement. The shovel berates my signs of weakness, having no patience for excuses. "Keep going, keep digging, keep searching," it says.

I tell it to shut up and continue. Reminding him that he said he would be nice to me. He grumbles as I angrily push him into the ground. A technique arises. I attack the potatoes from the top of

the row, throwing all my weight unto the shovel, and pushing it down as far as it can go into the ground. At times, I even bunny hop onto the shovel, all in the hopes of striking potato gold. Then, grabbing the top of the handle, the shovel and I lean back together, hopefully pulling potatoes out of the earth's embrace. It turns into a large game of Battleship, filled with "hits" but many more "misses."

Slowly the bucket begins to fill of kartoshka's as we move along the row, scrapping aside the weeds before crossing fingers and plunging into the ground. The soil crumbles between my fingers leaving black stains across my hands and dirt in the nail beds of my fingers. My mother would kill a babushka for dirt like this. Its dark richness screams of its health, highlighted by the big fat worm that I just accidentally cleaved in two. Its two halves squirm as if reaching out for the other.

My arms grow weak but I see the light at the end of the tunnel. It turns into a race. Dirt flies, potatoes are hurriedly thrown into the bucket, and the shovel laughs in glee. And then – the triumphal finish – the end of the row. The shovel falls to the ground in victory, the bucket overflows with our glorious bounty, and my left leg aches in a slightly pleasing way for having been used. I observe the row with satisfaction, having accomplished what Russians have been doing for centuries. As I peel off my gloves, stained with dirt, a woman well on her way to becoming a cranky babushka points at me and then points at the next row.

Russia always needs more potatoes.

Annmarie Utech



Outplanet Seed
Photography
Margaret Langdon

The Devil is French

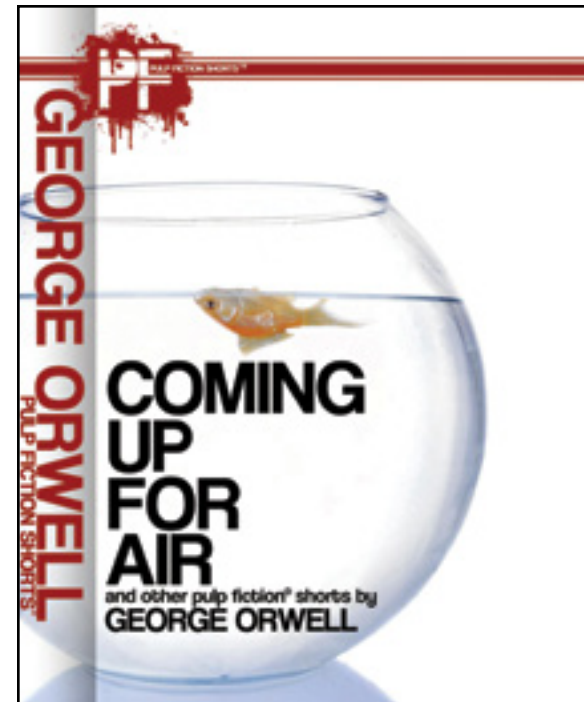
French Hill
You are the devil
Full of loathing
You are sadistic
Fracturing the skyline

Laughing at me
With your prodigious pointing fangs
Clutching my feet
With your merciless dirt claws
Pulling me down into the depths of your rocky bosom

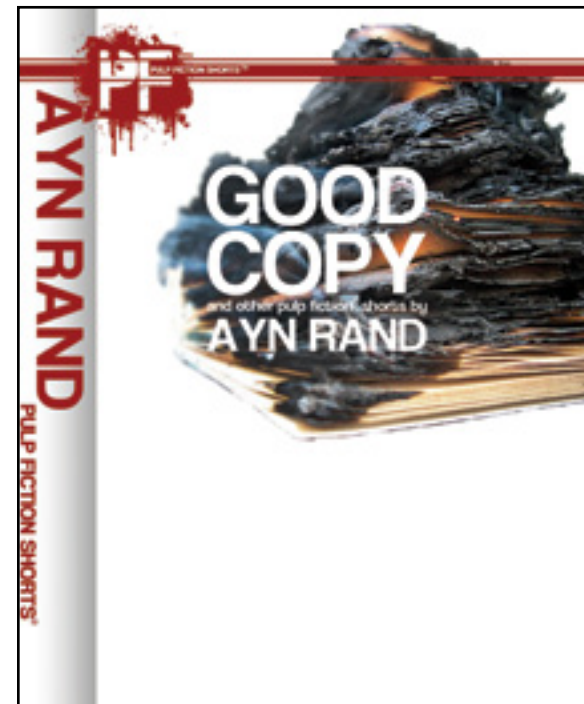
Snakes, scabs, and soil cover my quivering legs
But I will not be brought down
I refuse to bite into the apple of lethargy
I will not be like Eve tempted to give up all that I have been given

My thighs now burn like the pit of fire that you call home
But I have reached your peak
I stare into the eye of God
Ascending to heaven

Mariya Artis



Up for Air
Adobe Photoshop
Courtney Van Laar



Good Copy
Adobe Photoshop
Courtney Van Laar



The Exiles
Adobe Photoshop
Courtney Van Laar

That Gateway Back East



Eryn
Gouache
Megan Miller

The song playing on the radio was too upbeat as we drove through my new city for the first time. *Mmm Bop, ba duba dop.*

“There it is.” My dad smiled and we all followed his glance to the stainless steel arch that gleamed in the sun like the silvery scales of a water snake. An alien structure, it towered above the muddy river and led us into the chaos of high-rise hotels and office buildings, abandoned factories with brown, busted-out windows, and a knot of highway overpasses and underpasses. *Ba du bop, ba duba dop.* Everything outside melted in the thick heat. Oaks, Sassafras, and Dogwood wilted and I wondered if when we got to our new house, I could try that experiment where you fry an egg on the sidewalk.

I remember our first night in St. Louis as vividly as I remember seeing the flashy glare on The Arch for the first time. A man at the grocery store stuck his hand into my mom’s purse when she wasn’t looking. When my mom turned and caught him in the act, he froze and said, “Do you have any cigarettes?” My mom suddenly decided we had enough groceries.

“My teacher let us skip our lessons so that we could watch them put the last piece onto the top of The Arch.” My mom tells the same story often. She grew up in St. Louis. I sometimes wonder how proud our city must have been that day, the buzz that rang through the streets. St. Louis never grew the way it was expected to. After the luster of the 1904 World’s Fair died out, the city dwindled while Chicago and New York shot up from nowhere with their shiny buildings and fresh streets. St. Louis grew creased like the skin of an old and wise man. But still I imagine the wonder in 1965 as every news station in St. Louis brought something besides Vietnam into the living rooms. And St. Louis gazed up in wonder at its new crown jewel, the biggest monument in the United States, its “Gateway to the West.”

Thirty-three years later, my mom took me to visit The Arch I think to convince me to love St. Louis like she did. I was eight. The golden, red, and orange leaves of the 100-year-old oaks in autumn cast a fiery reflection on the reflective structure. From far away, The Arch looks like a toy to be played with, haphazardly thrown among tall buildings. But up close, the structure is strategically placed parallel to the river and overlooking the greater St. Louis Area. And it’s massive.

We entered The Arch through a tunnel in the ground, which led us directly to a museum filled with taxidermed animals and animatronic English settlers, native Americans, and Cowboys. I stared into the eyes of a placid buffalo and he stared back. He seemed pretty carefree for being dead, I thought. The egg-shaped basket holds five people within seats that butt up against sloped walls. Our basket was full, and the adults were forced to lean forward and knock knees with each other. I was content to pull my knees to my chest and enjoy the four-minute ride to the top.

When I moved to Southern California for college, I quickly realized that I was my class’s only representative of St. Louis and one of the few for the entire Midwest. I took it upon myself to let everyone know that there is a world outside of Orange County—and it’s just as good. I throw out random facts I learned in fourth grade like that hotdogs and cotton candy were invented in St. Louis. So were waffle cones. I say things like, “Did you know that the restaurant Panera began in St. Louis and is actually called St. Louis Bread Company there?” No one usually cares. And then I add something like, “Yeah, I can walk to the original Panera from my house.”

The response I usually get when I say where I’m from is something like, “Whoa, I bet you love California then, huh?” Or my personal favorite: “St. Louis is in Minnesota, right?” No.

I remember when I first gazed at my city from the teensy windows at the top of The Arch. My

mom had to boost me up the slanted wall where I leaned and stared. I felt like I was standing over my grandpa's train set—everything was miniature. The yellow oaks lit the ground like summer lightning bugs. The abandoned buildings lay among the new ones, I noticed, and the mixture, along with the red of autumn, reminded me of a bowl of my mom's vegetable soup. The Cardinal's stadium looked like a bottle cap, flipped upside down, and tucked between highways and buildings.

My first week of college I went to an Angel's game with some new girlfriends. When we walked in, some "Angel Girls" had a booth set up and if we painted our faces Angel colors, we got a bag full of free coupons. We did it. And when I got home that night and saw my Cardinals hat sitting in my closet, I felt utterly ashamed. I scrubbed the huge A from my face and vowed to never be a traitor again. Now I wear my Cardinals hat to every California sporting event—regardless if it's baseball or not.

I visited The Arch recently and brought my boyfriend with me. He is a native Californian and had never been farther east than Arizona. The grass and trees surrounding the Arch were a muted shade of winter brown and the sun was hidden beneath a sheet of gray clouds. But The Arch managed to stand apart from the dismal background and shine as always.

I smiled as I watched my boyfriend gape.

The museum underneath was less crowded than I remember, and my overly calm buffalo still stared off into the distance. The Cowboys and Native American's hadn't aged a bit. The egg-shaped cart was empty except for my boyfriend and me, but my legs were too long now to avoid knocking knees with him, and both of us had to lean forward because of the sloped walls. The four minute ride seemed longer this time—and scarier. Each shudder had me gripping the chair until my knuckles were white.

The top looked exactly as it had before. Carpet covered the floors and the walls surrounding the small windows, and this time I didn't need help to see out.

To outsiders, St. Louis is nothing but a distant abstraction in a humble state called Missouri—or is it Minnesota? But to those of us who live there, it is an eclectic blend of old and new and is deeply rooted in history. It's a place that discovered waffle cones and the novelty of a soup and sandwich place called Panera. It's the home of Ted Drewes Frozen Custard and toasted ravioli, of St. Louis Cardinals and Budweiser beer. And the Arch is our sign of home—the image that flashes in our brains of the place that is our city.

Johanna Saleska



Ascent
Photography
Margaret Langdon



Concordia University at a Glance

Why CUI?

Nestled on a picturesque hillside in Irvine, California, Concordia University's blend of rigorous academic study within a Christian community in the Lutheran tradition makes Concordia University Irvine a distinctive private university in southern California.

Along with many of California's state universities, Concordia is ranked as a Tier One Regional University by US News and World Report's America's Best Colleges. But what sets Concordia apart is how it integrates this academic excellence with Christian values.

Concordia graduates are academically and professionally prepared. But additionally they have experienced Concordia's historic mission—that each student would also develop a wise mind, an honorable heart, and a cultivated character. This happens as a result of living in a dynamic Christ-centered community where students get to know their professors in small classes and as personal mentors.

It's the hallmark of a Concordia education—developing wise, honorable and cultivated students!

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, with all of this so close, 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 and Professional Studies
- School of Education
- Christ College

Faculty

- Full Time Faculty: 100 (Percentage of Faculty with Ph.D. or other terminal degree: 77%)
- Student to faculty ratio: 17:1

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Class Ring

I was a typical scared Freshman. I told myself I wasn't going to cry when my parents left me in this God forsaken cell, with people I had never met. But I did, hard.

California was a whole other world, with actual sunshine and actual seasons. Utah was dismal and cold, meant for people who like the outdoors and spending 3 hours in church on Sunday.

I thought I was never going to be happy out here by myself. Life proved me wrong.

Sophomore year. Summer couldn't have gone any slower, and I didn't cry this time when my parents dropped me off.

Having that first breakfast burrito after three months of frozen waffles and frosted flakes tasted like home. My new home. The crispy bacon, the soft eggs, and the warm hash-browns flooded my mouth with pure satisfaction. It scared me how much I had missed this place.

New soul mates, new adventures, laughter, live music, first funeral, first broken heart.

Nothing could have been sweeter or more tragic.

Summer, once again, was excruciating. Working out was an epic failure. Eating was a complete success. Junior year was either going to be painful or joyous. The word for this would be called change.

But I still loved this place. I had my soul mates. I had my burrito. I had a life. I had cute neighbors, a major plus.

Public speaking took over my life. Feeling those lifelong feelings of sweaty palms and a nervous bladder became a new routine. But I was good. Surprisingly good.

I am now a Senior. I now have a car. I am now feeling the painful stings of dread. Soon the day will come when I have to leave this place forever. No pre-move in day jitters. No more soul mates. No more burritos.

But what I have had are road-trips, all nighters, concerts, spring breaks, laughter, independence, life lessons, life goals, lifelong friends. An actual life.

I look at this blue stone. It's precious, like the memories I hold of this place.

It's small, like the amount of time I got to spend in this place.

It's beautiful, like the life I had in this place.

Lindsay Gerner



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