

2016
2017



TAPESTRIES

SFU'S LITERARY & VISUAL ARTS MAGAZINE

Each year the School of Arts & Letters hosts the Gunard Berry Carlson Creative Writing and Visual Arts Contest, a competition open to all Saint Francis undergraduates. Students may submit written entries of up to 3,000 words in the following categories: (1) fiction, (2) creative nonfiction, including personal narratives and memoirs, (3) essay writing, and (4) poetry, with a minimum of five poems per submission. Students also may submit works of visual art, such as photographs, sculptures, paintings (oil, water, and acrylic), sketches, and collages.

The contest begins in the late fall and ends in the early spring, during which time students may submit as many entries as they wish. Entries must be either e-mailed to Dr. Brennan Thomas at bthomas@francis.edu or personally delivered to Room 305A Scotus Hall before the announced contest deadline.

The 2016-2017 contest winners and honorable mentions were published in the sixth volume of Saint Francis University's literary and visual arts magazine, *Tapestries*. Opinions expressed in this magazine do not reflect those of the contest judges and magazine editors or those of the Saint Francis community.

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TAPESTRIES

WEAVING THE THREADS OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

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“Idle Steam” (1st Place Winner in the Visual Arts Category)

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Dr. Roxana Cazan, Assistant Professor of English

Dr. Lauri Chose, Associate Professor of English

Mr. Bradley Coffield, Assistant Information Services Librarian

Dr. Patrick Farabaugh, Associate Professor of Communication Arts

Dr. Balazs Hargittai, Professor of Organic Chemistry

Dr. Theresa Horner, Director of the Public Health Program

Visual Arts Judge

Mr. Charles Olson, Professor of Fine Arts

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Shay Boisvert, student editor

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Contents

Writing

Author	Title	Page
Kristen Toth	<i>Lost at Sea</i>	6
Molly Fischer	<i>The Box</i>	14
Shay Boisvert	<i>Edgar Allan Poe: Dancing with Madness – 2nd Place Winner</i>	19
Mark Frank	<i>The Demons Stir – 4th Place Winner</i>	28
Gina Famiglietti	<i>Artificial Food Dyes Yellow 5 and 6: The Caution Tape of Processed Food</i>	34
Lauren Hendrickson	<i>Probiotics May Be Better than Hand Sanitizer</i>	39
Gabrielle Beck	<i>Far from Folsom Prison: Logotherapy and the Correctional System – 3rd Place Winner</i>	44
Aleesa Fieg	<i>Worth</i>	50
Anna Baughman	<i>Cassis Bar</i>	57
Tara Fritz	<i>Unbury Your Saints – 1st Place Winner</i>	61

Artwork

Artist	Title	Page
Paige McLean	<i>Away with the Wind</i>	13
	<i>Self</i>	33
Zachery Marker	<i>Depressive Downpour</i>	18
Caroline Manley	<i>Seen But Not Heard</i>	27
	<i>The Four Horsemen</i>	68
Sydney Davis	<i>Monocot Root Cross Section Under a Microscope</i>	38
Alexander Rivers	<i>Standing Ground</i>	43
Tara Fritz	<i>Reflection of a Quiet World</i>	49
Christopher Evans	<i>Old Friends</i>	56
Shay Boisvert	<i>Fire of the Night</i>	60

Lost at Sea by Kristen Toth

“Happy birthday!” The lights flick on in the restaurant, and I see balloons tied around the room. In the front is my father standing with my Aunt Jackie and Uncle Roger, though Roger isn’t really my Uncle. He’s just been the chef at our restaurant for the past fifteen years. Aunt Jackie, however, is my real aunt. She’s my mother’s younger sister.

“Come here, ladybug!” Aunt Jackie opens her arms wide as I hesitantly walk forward in the quiet restaurant. “Happy 18th, my dear!” She squeezes me tightly to her chest and gives me a kiss on the forehead. Uncle Roger then comes over and squeezes us both before I’m released.

“I baked you your favorite,” he says as he gestures over to one of the tables. Without even looking, I take a guess.

“Red velvet cake?” I ask, looking up and smiling.

“Don’t forget the cream cheese frosting,” he adds with a playful wink.

Lifting himself off of the wall, my father walks over with a small, neatly wrapped square box in blue paper with a red string bow.

“Happy birthday, Jennifer,” he says, handing it to me with a small smile. I pull on the red string, unfold the paper, and hold the light white box in my hand. Inside is a small seashell necklace on durable brown string. I smile back at my father.

“Thanks, Dad. I love it,” I say. I hand it to him and turn, and he clips it for me around my neck. Placing one hand on it to feel that it’s there, I turn around to my family.

“Well, God damn,” Aunt Jackie mutters under her breath. “She’s the spitting image of her mother.”

“I know,” my father says.

“Good!” Aunt Jackie says, clapping her hands together merrily. “Now we can get onto my gift.” Her smile is contagious, and she guides me by the shoulders towards the back door, pushing me forward. “We have a little bit of a walk, though.”

“Oh, Lord, Jackie, what did you do this year?” Uncle Roger says teasingly, rolling his eyes.

“Well, I may have gone a little overboard this year, but I figured since you’re my only niece, and this is your only eighteenth birthday, it was well worth it.” As we walk down the beach, she guides me to the wooden docks set up where the fishermen keep their boats and some recreational boats. I come down here every weekend to rent out a solo sailing boat and sail around a little bit, but my father doesn’t let me go far. He’s so terrified of me sailing that I’m surprised he lets me go at all.

"There, right over there," she says pointing to the end of the dock where an open 50-class sailboat is tied up. *The Voyager* is painted on it in large gold letters.

"No way!" I say, looking over at her with astonishment. "No way!" I laugh and run from the beach onto the dock and down to where it is.

"Aunt Jackie, you're joking!" I say, standing there smiling before my new baby. "You didn't!"

"Oh, ladybug, but I'm not. And I did."

I turn around and throw my arms around her tightly.

"Well, get up there, girl! Go check it out!" Uncle Roger says with his arms folded across his large belly.

I climb over the side and onto the boat...my boat.

"Thank you so much," I say, running my hands over the smooth sides of the boat, the solid mast, the crisp sails.

"Jen," my father says sharply. "You have tables to wipe in the restaurant, remember?"

"Yeah, yeah, I'll get to them in a minute," I say, entranced by the beauty of this babe.

"No. Now, Jennifer." I look up, his face stern, his jaw shut tightly.

Climbing over the side, I'm forced to find my land legs again.

"Fine," I say, and I storm up the beach into the restaurant.

At two o'clock, I get off of work. I go home, change out of my apron, unpin my hair, and put on a pair of jeans and a loose shirt, then my water repellent sailing jacket over it. As I quickly grab a bite to eat, my father walks in through the screen door.

"Where are you off to?" he asks, taking a large bag of carrots from the fridge.

"Going out on my boat," I say.

"All it takes is one mistake on that boat, Jennifer. One mistake, one unpredicted event, and you have trouble. You've got to figure it out all on your own out there."

"I'm not Mom," I say, my tone sharper than I intend. He stabs the knife into the cutting board.

"I know you're not your mother!" His face is splotchy with...anger? My father rarely gets angry to the point that he's yelling.

"Just because you never learned how to sail doesn't mean I have no interest in it," I say. "That's my boat out there on the docks. I'll be gone at college in two months and you

won't have to deal with me anymore." I whip around and walk out the door, slamming the screen behind me.

I make my way down to the docks and untie the dock lines. Holding onto the last line, I step onto the deck of the boat and let it go. Once I'm clear of the docks, I pull in the fenders, begin hoisting the sail on the mainsail, then on the jib, and head leeward. I look out at the vast ocean before me. Now where to? The answer is clear. I want to go to Ocean City, just like my mom used to do. Steering the boat along the buoys, I take out the maps from a safe hold in the boat.

Out on the water, the air is cooler than it was on the beach, the overcast day rather chilly for summer. I zip up my jacket and continue to navigate. I'm alert, watching for the other boats or shallow rocks and depth changes. I notice that the turbulence of the water is choppy, throwing the boat about quite a bit, and the wind is giving me a good fight. Up ahead is a shallow rocky area along Sunset Beach. Sunset Beach is covered in what the townsfolk call "Cape May diamonds." We used to come down here to look for them often, but once my mother died we never came back. That is why I have to keep sailing; I can almost bring her back every time I sail. Almost.

Once I navigate through this part of the area, I'll have a clear ocean view and a fairly worry-free sail. However, with the shallow waters I have to watch the hull of the ship to be sure it doesn't scrape against an unmarked shallow area or rock. Fog quickly comes in and covers the surface of the water, rapidly growing thicker and denser. I stand up and carefully move forward to the bow of the boat, looking for other boats.

The fog is soon impenetrable, so I use my eyes to scan meticulously for other boats. Out of nowhere, I hear a loud boat horn. From which direction? I have no idea. But they're entering the cove, and there's not room for the both of us. They can't see me. They can't. Otherwise, their boat lights wouldn't be sailing straight towards me. Pulling on the mainsail ever so slightly, I attempt to steer my boat out of whatever rut it's stuck in, but it doesn't budge.

"Hey!" I shout, waving my arms from the stern of *The Voyager*. "Hey! Stop! Stop!" I see their boat only growing bigger, coming closer. I grab onto the tethers coming from the mast and brace myself for impact, planting my feet solidly into the ground. Hold on, Jen. Just don't let go. And suddenly...WHAM! *The Voyager* is pushed forward as my feet stumble, catching on a loose rope and throwing me into the water. I feel the searing pain of my head meeting rock, and then...nothing.

* * *

Some people say that it's right before death that you feel most alive. That there's this moment when your life flashes before your eyes, or a memory, or adrenaline courses through you one last time. But I don't feel alive...I don't feel anywhere near alive. I mean, my heart's ticking and my eyes are open, but there is absolutely no part of me that wishes to push myself up off of this sandy beach. How long have I been here? I slowly move my

hand up to my head, dragging it through the sand, my cheek still pressed to the ground. As I pull my hand away, unsurprisingly, there's blood on my fingertips. I need to get up, to find help. I know that's what I should do. But my head is ringing, and my arms are aching, and why would I want to leave this warm sandy beach? I close my eyes. Perhaps I'll just lie here for a little while longer.

Before I open my eyes again, I know where I am. I don't know what day it is. I don't know how much time has passed. But I know where I am: the hospital. Flicking my eyes open, I see the glare of sunlight pouring through the window into my eyes. I feel someone grab my hand and lean forward into my line of sight, a hand getting caught in the tangle of cords coming from my arm.

"Hi, honey. Oh, my goodness. Hi, baby." She kisses me on the forehead and gently tucks my hair out of my face. Do I know her? What happened?

"I'm so sorry, honey. I am. I'm so sorry." Her eyes look familiar, and so do her nose and her curly hair. But I can't put a name to her face. Why can't I put a name to her face? Why can't I remember my own family?

"Jen! Oh, God! Jen!" I look over in the doorway and see my father standing there breathless, with his shirt buttoned in all the wrong buttons and his hair a complete mess.

"Dad," I croak, barely able to get it out before his eyes shift to the woman sitting on my bed who turns to face him.

"No," he says. "No. No, I didn't believe it. I didn't believe them when they told me. No."

"Richard," the woman says, empathy and repentance coating every syllable. "They called me. I was her other emergency contact."

"No!" he says. "No!" He points his finger at the woman and then tries to hide it by running it through his hair nervously. "You were gone," he gets out; it's barely a whisper, but he has said it. And suddenly it hits me where I saw those eyes and that nose and the curly brown hair before. Those are my eyes, and my nose, and my curly brown hair. And those are all things my father said I inherited from my mother. Could it be? Is this...is this her? Is this real?

"Mom?" I ask, turning to the woman on my bed. She places one hand on my cheek and smiles, not hiding her tears.

"Momma's here, Jennifer. I'm right here."

"I can't believe this," my father cuts in, tossing his jacket onto the chair. "I can't *believe* that after twelve years, twelve *years* of letting us think you were dead, you just decide to show up here unannounced!"

"They called me, Rich, and they told me about Jen. I had to come—"

“No. No, you don’t get to say my name, Margaret Rose James-Bronston.” I’ve never seen my father like this before. Fists clenched, face red and splotchy. I’ve never seen him so angry. Not even when he yelled at me earlier in the kitchen.

“Actually...it’s Margaret Donovan now,” my mother says quietly, almost guiltily. Immediately, my father’s composure changes. He’s not as aggressive anymore, but more defeated.

“So you remarried.” There’s a long silence before my father breaks it again with the question that I’ve been wondering. “So where have you been all these years, Maggie? We thought you died in the storm that night.”

“I know,” she says, standing up from the bed and walking towards him. Suddenly, I feel like they’ve forgotten I’m here and I’m intruding on their moment. I don’t want to be here. I don’t want to intrude. But most importantly, I don’t want to hear what took priority over my father and me.

“I’ve been living in Maryland in a small town down there. I was rescued by a local fisherman from my boat that night and we docked in Maryland, and I just never could get myself to leave. I wanted to come back, for a little while I really did. But I couldn’t get myself to. And then I met Ben and everything just happened so fast, and I was young and stupid.”

“You married me when you were young and stupid, too, then.” It was a low blow, even I know that, but my father lingers on every word. My mother and father did marry young; they were only nineteen years old. They had me two years later. But everyone said they were so madly in love I never put any thought into it.

“How long have you and Ben been married?” I ask, breaking the silence and diverting their attention from each other. The look in her eye softens as she walks back over to me and touches the cast on my arm.

“Ten years.” I hear my father snort from the other side of the room.

“God, you didn’t waste any time there, did you, Mags?” Ignoring my father’s comment, I press on.

“Do you have any kids?”

“We have three boys. Tucker is nine, Jacob is seven, and Miles is the youngest. He just turned five.” I force a smile on my face in an attempt to bring lightness to the situation.

“So I have three half-siblings,” I say.

“Yes.”

“Do you love Ben?”

“Yes.”

“What about your boys? Do you love them?”

She smiles and sighs softly. "Yes, very much so."

I look over at my father. "You're not staying, are you, Mom?" I ask, not taking my eyes off of my father.

"Well, I'll stay for a little while—"

"No. I don't want you to." My eyes dart back to her, and her face is shocked.

"But Jenny—"

"I want you to leave. Now. You shouldn't have come back. It would've been better if you'd just stayed dead to me."

She grips at the bright pink purse on her arm and leans down to me. "Oh, honey, you don't mean that."

"Please, Mom." It's a demanding please, but I can't think of anything else to say. She straightens back up and pushes her loose curls out of her face.

"All right." She kisses me once more on the forehead. "None of my boys look like me. I'm glad to see my daughter does." As she walks out of the room, she pauses once in the doorway.

"It was good to see you again, Richard."

"Yeah." He hesitates for a moment as he rubs his hand through his whiskers. Shoving his hand in his pocket, he looks up from the floor and into her eyes. "I'm sorry I can't say the same for you."

I watch as my mother bows her head and walks out the door without looking back. All this time, and she's been alive. All this time, and she never thought to give us a call or write us a letter or let us know that she was okay. I had a different view of my mother yesterday than I do today. Now her memories are corrupted, and she might as well be dead because the mother whom I grew up thinking about would have never abandoned her family.

My father sits on the bed next to me.

"You had me worried there for a little while," he says.

"I'm fine. Just a couple of bumps and bruises."

He smiles and pats me lightly on the leg. "Listen. I'll ease up about letting you sail from now on as long as you promise me you won't run off and do something like that again. You have nothing to prove to me."

I look away from him towards the flowers sitting on the windowsill. "I want you to get rid of *The Voyager*." There's a moment of shock; I can feel it without even seeing his face.

"Jen?"

"I don't want to sail anymore." He stays quiet, waiting for an explanation. "I sailed because it made me feel closer to her. It made me feel like we were connected. But I don't want to be connected to *that*. She is not the mother I grew up daydreaming about." As he runs his fingers through his hair, I reach up around my neck and pull off the beaded necklace he gave me.

"She had a necklace just like this, didn't she? That's why Aunt Jackie said I looked just like her when I put it on." He nods slowly, and I tenderly place it in his hands.

"I want you to get rid of that, too. We don't need her anymore. We have each other and that's good enough for me."

His eyes swell with tears and he leans down, wrapping his arms tightly around me. "You've grown into such a beautiful young woman. And while you might have her eyes, nose, and ridiculously curly hair, there's a part of you that's entirely your own. I can't lose you, Jennifer. I can't. You're all I have left."

Wrapping my arms around him, I quietly mumble into his shirt. "I love you, Dad."

"I love you, too."



Away with the Wind by Paige McLean

The Box by Molly Fischer

There are certain events that, when you hear about them on the news, you think to yourself, *That could never happen where I live*—things like high school teachers having affairs with their students or sex trafficking rings. And yet, in my hometown of Chambersburg, we had such news events.

“We’ve got some very tragic, breaking news: the body of the 16-year-old Chambersburg Area Senior High School student reported missing last week was discovered in the Conococheague Creek early this morning. The body was found, dismembered, by members of a search party looking for the girl. Police suspect foul play. A source close to the family has thanked everyone for their search efforts and asks to please give the family time and space to mourn.”

I was standing in the kitchen when the report aired; I overheard it coming from the living room where my parents had been watching a James Bond movie. I peeked around the corner so they wouldn’t be able to see me. The pretty, blonde newscaster sat with a somber look on her face; a small picture in the corner of the screen depicted a heavily wooded area that I knew in an instant did not belong to Chambersburg. I couldn’t blame them—what were they supposed to do? Show a picture of the girl’s dead body?

* * *

When I was born, my father’s parents had already died at least ten years prior. Both were heavy smokers so their deaths were, according to my mother, “no big shocker.” However, my mother’s father died when I was seven. She was an absolute wreck. I don’t remember much of the occurrence, but I can still faintly remember parts of his funeral.

I wore a black dress with a bow on the back and strappy black shoes. My brother, James, wore a black suit and stood beside me the entire time, holding my hand. At one point, I heard my father sternly say to my mother, “We can’t make them look at his body. They’re just kids, they won’t understand.” To which she responded, “They need to see him one last time. This is their *grandfather*.” Suddenly, she grabbed my brother’s hand and dragged us to the casket, where we looked at the lifeless figure that had once been my grandfather. I agreed with my father. I didn’t understand.

Veronica—the girl who died—wouldn’t have an open casket viewing. How could she? Her body had been dismembered and she had been missing for almost a week. I thought that she probably wouldn’t want it that way—she probably would want to look beautiful. But then, I thought, she probably didn’t want to die so young.

* * *

At school the following day, everyone was talking about Veronica. When a sobbing friend would walk by, silence would fall over the crowds, but soon enough the chatter started up again as to who, or *what*, could have done that to poor Veronica.

"I don't know why everyone is talking about this so much. It seems insensitive." Alyssa, one of my close friends, stood beside me in the hallway, watching people walk by. We always did this—it was the easiest way to overhear the latest gossip. While I understood where Alyssa was coming from, gossiping about whether or not Haley was pregnant seemed insensitive as well.

"I think people are just curious," I replied.

"Well, Shan, of course, I'm curious." Alyssa turned to look at me. "But you don't see me going around asking who everyone thinks murdered her when there are clearly grieving people all around this school."

We dropped the subject and went to lunch. The special was Sloppy Joes, but neither of us was hungry enough to eat.

* * *

James was in his freshman year of college at Shippensburg. He lived on campus but was home almost all the time, much to my parents' disapproval. ("He needs to be making friends, and he can't do that if he's at home so often!") So when he announced that he and some friends were going to Pittsburgh for the weekend, my parents couldn't have been more ecstatic.

I found him in his room, packing a suitcase. "James, do you really need this much stuff for Pittsburgh?" I asked.

"This isn't for Pittsburgh."

"Then what's it for?"

"I'm moving most of my stuff up to campus. I know Mom and Dad are sick of me hanging around all the time, so I thought if I take most of my stuff up now, that'll encourage me to be more independent."

"Clever thinking." I sat down on his bed. He gave me a sideways glance and I immediately stood up. "Something wrong?"

"Nothing," he said, then smiled.

"Okay," I said hesitantly. "Let me know if you need any help."

He nodded and waved his hand for me to leave, which I happily did.

* * *

James had always been very secretive. No one ever seemed to know what he was up to. When he got his first job, he didn't tell any of us. He just left the house for hours at a time and started accumulating more and more video games. Our parents thought he had fallen in with a bad crowd and maybe started selling drugs or something, but in reality, he was just working for minimum wage at McDonald's. When they asked why he never told anyone, he said he didn't think it was a big deal.

He was the same way about relationships. He had his first girlfriend when he was 14. She was a year older than him, had dark brown hair, and wore thick eyeliner and no other makeup. The only reason I knew about her was because I walked in on them kissing on his bed one summer day. He was so angry at me.

“Shannon, what the hell?” he screamed.

“I’m sorry! I was just trying to find where you went!” I cried.

“You cannot tell Mom and Dad.”

“I won’t!”

And I stuck to my word. That was the last I ever heard about that girl. A few years later, when he was a senior in high school, I saw him holding hands with a curly-haired blonde girl in the hallways, and he ended up taking her to the prom. At the after party, I asked him who she was and he said, “Just a friend.” But when I saw them kissing by the vending machines, I knew he was lying.

It was my understanding that they had broken up soon before leaving for college.

* * *

From what I had seen on crime shows, the way the police handle real-life cases is very similar to how it’s shown on TV. Her entire family had, according to Alyssa, been brought in for questioning. Veronica didn’t have any significant others as far as anyone knew, and they searched through her phone to find anything incriminating, but to no avail. The best theory they had was that she was out alone, kidnapped, and killed.

However, the police decided to go through her phone records to see if there was anything that might have been deleted—this time, turning up solid evidence. She had hundreds of calls and messages from the same number; before anyone realized what was happening, there was a warrant out for an arrest.

* * *

A little over a week prior, while James was home, I overheard him on the phone, arguing with someone. I couldn’t hear everything that was happening, but it sounded bad.

“Ronnie, what do you mean?” A pause. Something incoherent. Another pause. “Don’t do this to me.” Pause. “Can’t we just meet up and talk about this?” Pause. “You’re just like—” then something else incoherent. Pause. “I need to see you again.” Pause. “You can’t just leave things like this.” Pause. “No, I’m coming to get you. We need to talk about this.” I heard him shuffle toward his door and quickly bolted back to my room.

After I was sure he had left, I snuck into his room. I searched all around, but didn’t find anything out of the ordinary. When I got to his closet, way in the back, I found a box labelled “SHIT.” I opened it up and found pictures of him with each of his exes, but with devil horns drawn on their faces. I found old gifts, like teddy bears and T-shirts. I found a love note he had written to one of them that she had apparently returned. On the back he had

written, "Cassie must die. Joanie must die." Repeatedly. Most importantly, at the bottom of the pile, I found a set of kitchen knives, with one missing.

Oh, my God, I thought. My brother is a psychopath.

I quickly packed up the box again and put it exactly where I found it, before leaving my brother's room. I took out my phone and called him, hoping to interrupt whatever he planned to do to Cassie or Joanie or Ronnie.

"Hello?" he said.

"James, where did you go?"

"Back to campus."

"Already? I thought you were going to stay for dinner. Mom's making lasagna."

"I've got a paper due tomorrow. I can't focus at home. I'll be back in a few days."

"Okay," I said quietly before hanging up. There was nothing I could do.

* * *

The news that Veronica had gone missing hit two days after that. We were all sitting around while James was flipping through channels, trying to find a movie for us to watch. He paused when we got to the news, where they showed a picture of Veronica with the word "MISSING" right below it.

"Do you know her?" Mom asked.

"She's in the grade below me. I've definitely seen her before," I responded before cautiously looking over at James.

"I hope they find her," he said quietly.

He started flipping through the channels again before we decided on *Happy Feet*.

* * *

The day after the warrant for James's arrest went out, they found his car in a parking lot in Erie, but he was nowhere to be found. They suspected that he had crossed the border somehow. His dorm room had been nearly emptied—he had told his roommate that he was going to start commuting. His room at home was searched, too, and they found the box that I had looked through. This time, the set of knives was complete, but one of them was still bloody.

The police wanted to interview the members of our family to see if anyone knew what James had done or where he had gone. We sat on the couch, and my mother got everyone a glass of water. The detective looked at us and asked, "Did you have any idea what James was up to?"

I grimly looked at him. "I had no idea."



Depressive Downpour by Zachery Marker

Edgar Allan Poe: Dancing with Madness by Shay Boisvert

2nd Place Winner

"I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity." Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe was an enigma in the years after his death; some say he was a genius while others argue he was merely insane. Yet not one person can claim that Poe's stories are not influential. Say the name Poe to anyone and images of murderers and madmen, premature burials, and mysterious women who return from the dead come to mind. Although Edgar Allan Poe did not financially benefit from the success of his stories during his lifetime, as he often struggled to make a living, he is now known to many as one of the best detective story writers in history. His lyrical poetry also still haunts readers to this day. Poe achieved this by almost flawlessly creating characters who were terrifying yet still believable, even when they were striking fear into the hearts of readers with their madness. There is probably not a single person in the world who would dare insult Montresor or want to hear a raven crow "Nevermore!" This madness the characters experienced was so detailed and fine-tuned that even with the historically flawed belief of mental illness during his time, Edgar Allan Poe was able to include true signs of mental illness in his characters. Poe himself has even become a character in people's imaginations in today's society. Edgar Allan Poe was and still is an influential figure in the world of writing, and despite the cultural biases of his time, he was able to accurately write characters who fit the criteria for schizophrenia into his stories, especially in "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Cask of Amontillado," and "The Fall of the House of Usher."

Additional insight into the work of Edgar Allan Poe is gleaned through the use of Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism. This is a practice that uses critical reading methods used by Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and other theorists. Since the characters in Poe's work show signs of suffering from schizophrenia, it is important to take into account the real-life diagnostic criteria when analyzing them. These characteristics, according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fourth Edition*, includes several symptoms:

Two (or more) of the following [symptoms]... [are] each present for a significant portion of time during a 1-month period...delusions...hallucinations...disorganized speech ... grossly disorganized or catatonic behavior...negative symptoms, i.e., affective flattening, alogia or lack of motivation... [although] only one symptom is required [for diagnosis] if delusions are bizarre or hallucinations consist of a voice keeping up a running commentary on the person's behavior, or two or more voices conversing. (DSM-IV)

Using these diagnostic criteria and analyzing the appearances of these symptoms in the various stories, it is plausible to state that the characters of Poe's stories could be suffering from schizophrenia. The definition of the disease suggests that schizophrenia is present in

the stories “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Fall of the House of Usher,” and “The Cask of Amontillado.”

One of the most famous Poe protagonists is the narrator of “The Tell-Tale Heart.” Written in 1843, “The Tell-Tale Heart” is one of Poe’s most famous stories because of its peculiar narrator. Though technically a protagonist, he shows more qualities of being an antagonist. In the very first sentence, the narrator even asks, “[W]ill you say that I am mad[?]” (Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart” 1). The narrator himself is questioning his own sanity at the start of the tale. The biggest symptom shown by the narrator is the only one that leads to the diagnosis of schizophrenia even if no other symptoms are present: hallucinations. These consist of two or more voices conversing with each other. This is proven when the narrator says, “I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell” (Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart” 1). The narrator is saying that he hears voices telling him what to do, and that is a clear sign of schizophrenia, because the narrator is personifying heaven and hell to act as two voices that guide his actions.

Another major diagnostic characteristic presented in “The Tell-Tale Heart” is the disorganized pattern of speech. At the start of the story, the protagonist begins with a strange manner of speaking, although at this point it does not necessarily point towards schizophrenia. It seems as if he is giving a speech to a lawyer (this can be deduced from his use of “you”), as he is using the patterns of forensic oratory at the start. It is towards the end of the story, when a typical person would conclude and bring all his or her points together, that we see the schizophrenic speech patterns because “by the end [...] his forensic powers have degenerated into complete and utter frenzy: he succumbs to his schizophrenic symptoms again—specifically a violent mood swing comprised of anger and anxiety” (Zimmerman). This breakdown is apparent because he no longer tries to justify the murder he committed:

I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men—but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! what could I do?... I swung the chair ... grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all... It grew louder...—louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? ... no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they knew!... this I thought, and this I think.... I felt that I must scream or die! and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!” (Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart” 4)

The repeated use of exclamation points and the rushed and frenzied speech patterns point to the narrator’s degenerating speech, which involves hesitation, agrammatism, and effortful speech. By providing the dashes, Poe is showing us hesitation. The frenzied speech shows the effortful aspect of speech degeneration. Finally, the agrammatism (switching tenses) is shown with the switching of the tenses of the verb “to think.” This degenerating speech is a clear symptom of schizophrenia.

The narrator also suffers from delusions throughout the story. The most apparent delusion the narrator suffers from is that the police officers are villainous because “his

own dissimulation [causes] ungrounded suspicion of the policemen's dissemblance" (Shen). The delusion is that he believes the police officers know of his crime but are just mocking him and pretending to believe he is innocent. The previous passage demonstrates further delusional behavior when the narrator imagines the heart of the victim beating louder and louder, until it becomes unbearable for the narrator. Also, the repetitiveness of the narrator's thoughts are an example of Elementary Delusion, identified by Jacques Lacan "as elementary as a leaf is in relation to the plant... similarly, analogous structures can be found at the level of the composition... and thematisation of a delusion... [an] elementary phenomenon. In other words, it's always the same structuring force, as it were, at work in a delusion" (19). This means that if the delusion were to be challenged in any way, including completely falling apart, the elementary phenomenon would survive to propagate a new delusion. The narrator illustrates this because even though the investigators act normally, therefore disproving the delusion that the heart can be heard throughout the room, the narrator forms another delusion that they must be tricking him.

Would a mentally stable person kill a friend merely because he or she insulted this person? Although unlikely, this an extreme reaction that can only be explained by the murderer possessing a mental illness. This is the case in "The Cask of Amontillado." In this story, Poe gives his narrator a name—Montresor. In the romance languages, this means "my treasure," providing some unsettling irony as Montresor's treasure may be interpreted as his buried friend. The first line that Montresor opens with is "The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge" (Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado" 1). The first thought that might come to someone's mind when Montresor says "revenge" is that possibly he means that he will do some small act of revenge, such as insulting him back. This is not the case; the revenge Montresor speaks of is murder. There are many different mental illnesses that are offered as explanation for Montresor's actions, but if one looks at the delusions and other various symptoms Montresor shows, schizophrenia can be argued as the cause.

A prominent symptom that points towards schizophrenia would be delusion, just like in "The Tell-Tale Heart." Montresor is under the impression that the insult of Fortunato is the worst possible thing that could have happened to him. The ways in which he describes Fortunato points toward a delusional state as well, since there is no clear evidence that justifies the descriptions. The story also gives some evidence that Fortunato most likely wouldn't have insulted Montresor as well. In the story, he is lighthearted, kind, and weak willed. Fortunato would not have had the courage even to insult Montresor, who seems to be an overbearing and intimidating man. Montresor finds Fortunato during "madness of the carnival season... [and Fortunato] accosted [him] with excessive warmth" (Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado" 1). If such a weak, nervous man had run into the intimidating Montresor after insulting him, he would have had to be ignorant to greet Montresor with such warmth. This shows that Montresor was under a great delusion that

Fortunato was a villain, as the subtle clues in the text reveal otherwise. This sort of delusion falls under the real life diagnosis criteria for schizophrenia.

Delusions do not have to involve only people; they can apply to the environment as well. An example of this is how the context of the story goes against the actions of Montresor. At the start, he talks only of revenge, but later cares about Fortunato's health, and "this change in register between [the] opening remarks and narrative proper is decidedly chilling because from this point in the narrative, the complete disjunction between speech and context is so glaringly obvious" (Hartnell 2). Montresor is under the delusion that despite the fact that he is about to murder his friend Fortunato, he should care about his welfare, which is being affected by the nitre. This strange disconnect that Montresor feels between his emotions and actions shows that Montresor is mentally unstable. In fact, it is clear that Montresor seems to live in a permanent state of delusion, which points towards schizophrenia.

Insanity is shown in many different ways. In "The Fall of the House of Usher," the character of Roderick Usher seems to portray a variety of different symptoms. Written in 1839, it was published before "The Tell-Tale Heart" but lacks nothing when it comes to the elements of madness that its successor portrays. This is because "'The Fall of the House of Usher' is among [one of] those few stories that seem to elicit nearly as many critical interpretations as it has readers" (Timmerman). The combination of themes of incest, madness, isolation, and fear make for a horrifying story. The theme of madness is seen through Roderick Usher, whose symptoms hint at schizophrenia. This is what truly made this story a success and what has led to many critical analyses of the story as well.

One real-life diagnostic characteristic of schizophrenia would be the hallucinations Roderick Usher suffers from. One night he comes rapping at the narrator's door, and when the narrator opens the door, Usher's eyes are wild: "'And you have not seen it?' he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence—'you have not then seen it?—but, stay! you shall.'" While saying this, Usher's demeanor contained "an evidently restrained hysteria." The narrator then agrees to go outside with Usher, but when they arrive outside, what Usher claimed to be ghosts is just the electricity acting up, according to the narrator (Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" 8-9). Usher insisting that there are ghosts outside is a sign of his suffering from delusions. Another delusion shown is the fact that Usher "tells the narrator that over the centuries the mansion and the family had been so bonded as to become identified as one" (Timmerman). Sane people do not think that they are linked to and part of their house, but Usher claims that whatever happens to the house happens to him, which is a form of an extreme state of delusion that he is caught in. Delusions are one of the main symptoms contained under the real-life diagnostic criteria of schizophrenia.

Some additional major symptoms of schizophrenia Roderick Usher suffers from are simply called negative symptoms. These are thoughts, feelings, or behaviors normally present in a sane person that are lacking when a person is suffering from a mental illness.

The negative symptom that Usher displays is catatonia, defined as being in some sort of stupor, which is portrayed by the perceived slowing down of time. Theorist Declerq states, "Catatonia is considered to be the most severe manifestation of psychosis" and leads to severe delusions (105). Catatonia can be seen when Roderick Usher shows "a petrified perception of time that was reflected in [his] psychomotor slowing down" (Barreiro 2). This occurs in the story when the house is falling and Usher does not try to escape. Instead, he keeps "his eyes bent fixedly before him, and... reigned a stony rigidity" (Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" 11). Having two or more of the symptoms that are described in the real-life diagnostic criteria of schizophrenia already helps solidify the argument that Usher has schizophrenia.

Although there is no concrete proof, a large majority of research points to schizophrenia being triggered by occurrences of incest in a person's life. Not only was Roderick Usher described by Gilman Sander as being "of the last offspring of a highly inbred family," but also "Poe hints at an incestuous relationship between Roderick and his sister, [Madeline Usher]" (Sander 1). The narrator hints at the presence of incest within the Usher line by stating, "I had learned ... that the stem of the Usher race...had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent" (Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" 1). Also, like their ancestors, there are many signs that Madeline and Roderick Usher are involved in an incestuous, sexual relationship. A major sign of this is that neither of the siblings are married despite being of age and that they live together by themselves in the manor. In today's society, this may not be questioned, as sometimes siblings do rent houses together, but in Poe's society this would have been looked upon as possible incest, since marriage was a goal of the people of that time. The narrator also states that Madeline was "a tenderly beloved sister— [Roderick Usher's] sole companion for long years" and that they have been secluded from the outside world, both of which are implications that their relationship is incestuous (Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" 2). Although schizophrenia is a genetic disease, certain events can trigger the disease in a person. Dr. Karon states that "many schizophrenics have talked about incest...Freud [even] reported that the incest fantasies they [relayed] in psychoanalysis were undoubtedly real" (Karon 5-6). This shows that there is a high possibility that a correlation exists between incest and schizophrenia. This further could prove that Roderick Usher was indeed suffering from schizophrenia in "The Fall of the House of Usher."

Edgar Allan Poe wrote all of these characters with such flair and gave them all their own unique personalities with flaws. Even with the stigma against mental illness in his time, he did not make his characters exaggerated or unrealistic. Although the characters were at the extreme ends of the spectrum, they did not do anything implausible. It is possible that when those who are mentally ill with extreme cases of diseases, such as schizophrenia, are left untreated, they can commit crimes as extreme as murder. Ernest Hemingway once said, "When writing a novel a writer should create living people; people, not characters. A character is a caricature" (qtd. in Petit). Edgar Allan Poe did just that: he

created living people who did not fall into the stigma of mental illness. They all had symptoms that were realistic and could be classified under the real-life diagnostic criteria of schizophrenia. By writing these pieces, Poe rebelled against the unbeneficial stigma that came with mental illness. Poe did the opposite of the people of his time; his characters were not trapped in asylums and they were not “reduced to shaggy brutishness, abased lower than the animals” (Porter). Poe’s characters were a fresh, invigorating take on mental illness instead of a caricature of the time. Many people say writers write from what they know, and that is typically true to some extent. Poe is no exception, as there is evidence that points to his suffering from mental illness as well.

Edgar Allan Poe most likely did not suffer from schizophrenia, the disease he so often depicted in his characters, but he did show signs of other mental illness. Poe’s life was filled with tragedies. The greatest of these is arguably the death of his beloved wife, Virginia. It would be foolish to believe that a person could go through all of those trials and escape unscathed. When describing himself, Poe even said, “What the world calls ‘genius’ is the state of mental disease arising from the undue prominence of some one of the faculties. The works of such genius are never sound in themselves, and, in especial, always betray the general mental insanity” (qtd. in Pruette). Poe is saying that writers write about themselves in some sort of way, and their work betrays their mental issues by showing them hidden within the works. The mental illness that Poe was hiding was probably manic depression, according to Dr. Kay R. Jamison. Jamison states, “Poe was probably one of many writers... who have suffered from the ailment, which is marked by wild swings between frenzied activity and crippling despair,” and the evidence that she provides for this were his mood swings, seasonal depression, and impulsiveness (Birch). This manic depression was most likely caused by the tragedies that filled Poe’s entire life. When describing Poe’s life and writing, George Bernard Shaw says it best in his remark on January 16, 1909:

“[Poe] died...and was duly explained away as a drunkard and a failure, though it remains an open question whether he really drank as much in his whole lifetime as a modern successful American drinks, without comment, in six months . . . Poe constantly and inevitably produced magic where his greatest contemporaries produced only beauty . . . Poe’s supremacy in this respect has cost him his reputation. . . . Above all, Poe is great because he is independent of cheap attractions, independent of sex, of patriotism, of fighting, of sentimentality, snobbery, gluttony, and all the rest of the vulgar stock-in-trade of his profession.” (qtd. in Vines)

Poe’s stories capture realistic haunting profiles of mental illness; his stories are still memorable to this day and are taught in classrooms across the world and adored by many. Writers write what they know and Poe certainly knew the darker sides of life. However, he also knew the lighter sides, and that is how he was able to produce such great stories. He surpassed the mental stigmas of his day and through his own experiences was able to write realistic portrayals of schizophrenia in “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Cask of Amontillado,” and “The Fall of the House of Usher.” Writers today should take a message

from Poe and work on accurately portraying symptoms of mental illnesses, even when they are having those characters commit atrocious acts.

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Seen But Not Heard by Caroline Manley

The Demons Stir by Mark Frank

4th Place Winner

In what I consider his premier work, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*, Carl Sagan issued a warning that, in the past year and half, has become prophetic: “Whenever our ethnic or national prejudices are aroused... habits of thought familiar from ages past reach for the controls. The candle flame gutters. Its little pool of light trembles. Darkness gathers. The demons begin to stir.” That quote rang through my head as I watched the election returns come in on November 8, 2016.

During the 2016 election, as Donald Trump’s campaign steamed forward to an improbable victory, conspiracy theories abounded. Voting machines were changing votes from Trump to Clinton in Texas, Clinton would trigger World War III with Russia, climate change is a hoax invented by the Chinese, and the list goes on ad infinitum. The latter of these claims was voiced by the then President-elect himself, but the former were voiced by those sympathetic to his candidacy. Regardless of who said them, the point remains: unfounded claims were paraded around as objective truths without an ounce of support given by those who made the claim. Some say that there is more to politics than reason alone. To an extent, I would agree; however, this is one of the most consequential periods in human history, which is no hyperbole. Our species has developed the means to alter the world’s climate. This is grave enough without considering that the threat of nuclear annihilation remains, just as it did during the Cold War. With all of this in mind, it becomes clear how the threats of ignorance and xenophobia have been multiplied exponentially over the past half-century. Despite the gravity of the position Donald Trump acquired on Inauguration Day, he has not, as of yet, demonstrated an ability to move beyond his campaign rhetoric. In fact, it seems his bluster was not mere campaign rhetoric but a genuine promise to pursue hasty and reactionary action. Within his first week in office, Donald Trump instituted a travel ban on seven Middle Eastern nations, invalidated the VISAs of thousands of visiting nationals, suppressed the free exchange of scientific information, and threatened to invade Mexico. These actions were made, not from an overabundance of caution, but from a phobia of the foreigner. These decisions did not follow from a rational thought process born from spirited debate but from the spiteful, misguided prejudices of a vocal and disenfranchised demographic. Like an insidious contagion, a hostility to intellectual pursuits has spread through the American population and festered. The result is that economically disenfranchised workers now believe that a demagogue is their savior and that facts are a tool of the elitist class. Despite all of his horrible decisions, Donald Trump is not the disease of which I speak. He is a symptom of the disease; he is the manifestation of a strain of populism derived from a disdain for knowledge, science, and intellectual pursuits. That disease—a malady of the American mind—is anti-intellectualism. This affliction, though not new, has become a much more dangerous problem in light of contemporary world events. Without objectivity and an acceptance of inconvenient facts, our political leadership cannot make informed decisions

for the American people. Furthermore, a nation unable to pose tough questions to its leaders or itself cannot function as a democracy. Quite simply, a debate cannot be had if a particular group desires to make itself immune from the burden of evidence.

It is a common fallacy to equate opposing views with ignorance, but here I will make the case that the recent political reasoning of those on the Right is largely a manifestation of anti-intellectualism. This is very different from saying that conservatives, by merely having certain political views, are anti-intellectuals. What characterizes an anti-intellectual is how he or she reacts to evidence or facts that seemingly conflict with spiritual or political beliefs. An anti-intellectual is content with interpreting reality through a purely ideological lens. If evidence emerges to question a view he or she finds disconcerting, the anti-intellectual blocks it from his or her mind or outright denies the fact and more or less suggests that those presenting the disquieting evidence are out of touch with the lives of everyday people. It is important to note that there is a very natural tendency to block out of our minds information we find disagreeable; this happens in all of us to an extent and it's what is more commonly referred to as bias. The distinction is that an anti-intellectual does not recognize his or her bias. Alternatively, the anti-intellectual fails to subject his or her own opinions to an appropriate degree of skepticism. If there is a key symptom that suggests one is at risk of becoming an anti-intellectual, it is an unwillingness or inability to assess the validity of a disagreeable claim. Throughout the election cycle, there were many examples of dubious claims that were passed off as facts and vice versa. Some have been quick to claim that we now live in a "post-truth" society, as in facts are completely irrelevant. While I don't necessarily agree with that assessment, it seems that we are perilously close to the precipice.

During the Republican primaries, it became particularly clear how there is a visceral distrust of intellectuals, particularly against those whose ideas conflict with traditional conservative values. Dr. Ben Carson was wildly popular among evangelicals during the primary, particularly for expressing his belief in creationism. Dr. Carson is an important exhibit in anti-intellectualism because he is clearly a well-educated individual, holding a medical doctorate from the University of Michigan ("Biography"). While being well educated as a neurosurgeon, Dr. Carson has clearly shown anti-intellectual leanings in his rhetoric. In 2015, Dr. Carson gave a talk on creationism and evolution in which he claimed the theory of evolution was "encouraged by the adversary"—the adversary presumably being Satan (Chapman). In 2012, the distinguished neurosurgeon also expressed his conviction that the Big Bang Theory was a "fairy tale" (Plait). Dr. Carson either is horrifically uninformed or has no qualms about being dishonest. It doesn't seem plausible that Dr. Carson could earn an MD and not be aware of the enormity of evidence that supports biological evolution. It is more likely that this was a conscious effort to gain political points from evangelicals. What seems particularly notable is how militantly the rhetoric espoused by Dr. Carson was. It demonstrates a fundamental lack of respect for empirical evidence. Perhaps ignorance can be assigned to his stance on the Big Bang, but

to equate the fundamental theory of his discipline with lies from Satan is unquestionably an expression of hostility to an idea he finds disquieting.

There are others, unlike Dr. Carson, who I don't think simply misunderstand but are, in fact, truly malevolent in their intention to lie to people. When Donald Trump said climate change was a hoax for the benefit of Chinese economic interests, there was a clear political motive. Donald Trump had no regard for what was true; he simply wanted to appeal to the ignorance of his supporters and win the election. It didn't matter to him in that moment what costs to human health or well-being spreading climate denial entailed; all that mattered was squeezing a few approval points from his base. I want to highlight this particular statement by Trump because it illustrates what I believe to be the most dangerous aspect of the anti-intellectual movement: the direct undermining of public trust in science by appealing to the American sense of fairness. Of course, the corporate media makes this mistake all the time. Despite the weight of evidence, CNN will insist on giving equal time to both sides of an issue. This works for strictly political issues; however, this is inappropriate when it comes to matters of scientific knowledge. There is no debate when it comes to the merits of Darwinian evolution or the reality of anthropomorphic climate change, at least not like there is a debate on health care or immigration. This obsession with fairness in American media is getting in the way of being objective. It may be fair to hear a creationist and an evolutionary biologist debate whether evolution is a scientific theory, but it is certainly not objective. Despite the problems with the American media, the final responsibility falls on the individual to assess how credible a source of information is. This ability to question the information we are presented with is fundamental to democracy; it moderates the ideological zealotry begotten by arrogance. Without informed skepticism from the citizenry, political leaders can get away with dishonesty and thereby free themselves of the burden of public accountability.

This is where Americans have failed miserably during the past election. It goes without saying that one should not take Facebook threads too seriously; however, there must have been thousands of people who soaked up partisan propaganda like sponges. Late in the Presidential campaign, a conspiracy theory arose that claimed e-mails from WikiLeaks implicated a child-pedophilia ring run by Democrats out of a pizzeria in Washington, D.C. (Aisch et al.). The rumor was eventually debunked by news outlets across the political spectrum for what it was: a desperate attempt to undermine the candidacy of Hillary Clinton by using unsubstantiated rubbish. One might expect that would be the end of the story, but it wasn't. The owner of the restaurant, James Alefantis, received death threats. His staff were not spared, being harassed and threatened on social media. A shooter also opened fire in the establishment, thinking child slaves were present. Once the suspect realized the error in his judgement, he surrendered to the authorities (Aisch et al.).

All of this from a conspiracy theory, something that had no trace of evidence to support it. If an insight is to be gleaned from this incident, it is that an inability to critically question a source is dangerous—possibly life threatening. Instantly sharing a sensational

headline on one's social media page may not be as innocent as it once was. Moreover, the moment one surrenders his or her judgement to another person or authority, that individual become a puppet and, in some cases, a weapon to be wielded by a demagogue. Unfortunately, it is far too easy to surround one's self with agreeable viewpoints regardless of how well anchored in evidence they may be. This goes for liberals and conservatives alike. Whether it be Twitter, Facebook, or Tumblr, recommendations to follow or subscribe to a page are based upon what one has already "liked" or "followed." The internet is a wonderful tool, but it is important to be informed on what constitutes reliable information. In my experience, I often give a source the benefit of the doubt. I trust that the author isn't falsifying scientific data or trying to convince me of a falsehood, but the only way to be sure is to remain skeptical. When it comes to analyzing political news, the most important thing to know is the bias of the author. It's inevitable that those writing to advance an agenda will paint the opposition unfavorably and omit inconvenient facts. This is when it's important to have the tools needed to uncover the truth. This is why it's important not to fall into the trap of believing what makes us comfortable.

People like to complain of bias among the media, but it's not bias that is the problem. The problem is that those who primarily get their news from one source are not critically analyzing the information they obtain. There is a reason many authoritarian regimes try to control the flow of news: an informed and skeptical populace cannot be controlled. In America, there are many outlets to get the daily news. What has happened recently is that many refuse to accept inconvenient facts. The fact that a transition to alternative energy sources is required to minimize greenhouse gas emissions is inconvenient to the oil industry. The fact that protecting water resources requires government oversight of the private sector is inconvenient to ardent libertarians. The reality of evolution and the age of the Earth are inconvenient to religious fundamentalists. The Right in America generally favors personal responsibility and a free market. At face value, these ideals are not objectionable. What is objectionable is an inability to acknowledge that some problems require the resources of the government. What is shameful is that some on the Right have, in the past election cycle, rejected the dignity of refugees and immigrants by insinuating that they possess wholly malevolent intent.

From what I have gathered in the past few months, many people supported Trump because the past few years have left them with a feeling of uncertainty about the future. The future has always been uncertain, but the challenges faced in this century are different; the scale of the issues facing world leaders is hardly comparable to centuries past. National prejudices have indeed been aroused, and the demons have begun to stir.

The only way leaders within a corrupt government can be held accountable is if their knees are held to the fires, but not by xenophobia or ignorance. The flame of enlightenment arms the citizen with his greatest weapon against would-be tyrants: the ability to dispel nonsense and see beyond the cloak of authority. When America once again embraces the utility of reason, it will be great again.

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Self by Paige McLean

Artificial Food Dyes Yellow 5 and 6: The Caution Tape of Processed Food

by Gina Famiglietti

Kraft Macaroni and Cheese is a staple in the diet of many American children. Who can resist those yellow creamy and cheesy noodles? While consuming processed foods and beverages with an enticing bright color, we rarely think about whether the color is natural or artificial; all we know is that it's colorful and tasty. The yellow color of Kraft Macaroni and Cheese is iconic and quintessential of all cheesy foods, but artificial food dyes also could be a health risk. As a young American who consumes just as many processed foods as the next American, we should reevaluate the health implications of consuming food dyes, especially since millions of Americans ingest foods doused in artificial food dyes. In particular, the use of artificial food dyes yellow 5 and 6 should be banned by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) because they have been associated with attention deficit disorder (ADHD), severe allergies, and even cancer.

Artificial food dyes are most commonly used in processed foods, and since processed foods make up a large portion of the America diet, artificial food dyes are extremely hard to avoid. The FDA, which verifies the safety of drug, food, and cosmetic additives, certifies that tartrazine, or FD&C Yellow 5, and Sunset Yellow FCF, or FD&C Yellow 6, pose no risk to humans. To illustrate the FDA's stance, Linda Katz, the head of the FDA's Office of Cosmetics and Colors, insists, "Color additives are very safe when used properly. There is no such thing as absolute safety of any substance . . . [the] FDA determines if there is 'a reasonable certainty of no harm' under the . . . additive's proposed conditions of use" (qtd. in "How Safe Are Color Additives?"). Although the FDA has evaluated the safety of all color additives used in the U.S. and assured consumers that they cause no damage, many families still have concerns about artificial food dyes.

These concerns are valid. Many food activists have deemed the use of yellow 5 and 6 as unsafe, protesting and petitioning for any U.S. company to discontinue the use of these dyes in their processed food. For instance, an advocate for healthy food known as the "Food Babe" to her bloggers and Vani Hari in the real world has revealed to the public the harmful effects of yellow 5 and 6 in hopes of spreading awareness of their danger. If Hari is correct that the safety of these artificial food dyes should be re-evaluated, then the popular assumption and the FDA's stance that these dyes are safe needs to be reassessed.

It turns out that this popular assumption is changing. For example, Stephanie Strom, a national correspondent for *The New York Times*, reports that Hari convinced fellow Americans to sign a petition for Kraft to discontinue the use of yellow 5 and 6 in its macaroni and cheese products. After much deliberation, Kraft gave in to its consumers' wishes and since the beginning of 2014 has been using spices such as turmeric and paprika rather than yellow 5 and 6 to color its macaroni and cheese (Strom). Kraft has set a responsible standard for many other food producers to follow by recognizing the health risks associated with yellow 5 and 6.

The first of many risks associated with yellow 5 and 6 is ADHD. Children tend to consume colorful foods and thus are at a higher risk for developing diseases caused by artificial food dyes. In fact, little oversight from parents may be equally toxic. “I have friends who swear that if their kid eats a red M&M . . . they go absolutely bonkers, but that’s not exactly the same as scientific evidence,” states Dr. Samantha Radford, an assistant professor of chemistry at Saint Francis University who is well versed in chemical food additives. During a personal interview about food dyes, she stated, “I do limit my own children’s exposure to artificial food colorings since I’d rather be safe than sorry” (Radford). Some parents are not taking the risk, and rightfully so, since there is scientific evidence to back up this assumption. According to a study published in the July 2012 issue of *Neurotherapeutics*, an American journal focused on research of neurological disorders, 75% of a random and representative sample of 200 children selected from 800 children with ADHD showed less hyperactivity when artificial food dyes were no longer in their diet. Additionally, in that same study, 34 of the children who showed less hyperactivity in the absence of artificial food dyes were placed in a double-blind experiment and fed 6 doses of tartrazine, or yellow 5; as a result, 22 of those 34 children displayed an increase in hyperactivity (Arnold, Lofthouse, and Hurt). In other words, this study showed that there is a significant correlation between ADHD and the artificial food dye yellow 5.

Notably, there are many other studies pointing to this dangerous association. Similar conclusions can be made about ADHD and artificial food dyes from another study conducted in 2007 by Stevenson and colleagues at Southampton University. In that study, artificial food coloring was eliminated from the diets of 277 children for two weeks. Afterward, a placebo fruit drink and a fruit drink containing five milligrams each of yellow 5 and 6 were administered to the children. The study revealed that the children who drank the fruit drink containing yellow 5 and 6 were impulsive and hyperactive, while the children who drank the placebo acted normally. This behavior was observed by parents and teachers, while psychologists studied how the behavior impacted completion of tasks (Arnold, Lofthouse, and Hurt). Clearly, this evidence is too substantial to ignore; exposure to yellow 5 and 6, especially for children, should be banned.

In addition to ADHD, yellow 5 and 6 can also cause severe allergic reactions. The FDA insists that reactions to these artificial dyes are rare, but they do occur (“How Safe are Color Additives?”). The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), a non-profit organization that promotes safe and healthy food, published a document that laid out case studies highlighting reactions caused by yellow 5 and 6. Allergic reactions to these dyes are similar and range in severity. For instance, reactions that are non-life threatening include weakness, foggy vision, elevated secretions from the nose and pharynx, suffocation, palpitations, relentless itching, hives, swelling, and rashes. On the other hand, one extreme, life-threatening case detailed in the document was that of a pregnant 15-year-old’s reaction. The girl underwent an enema that contained yellow 5 and 6, then fell into anaphylactic shock. She became hypotensive, then lost consciousness. Her blood pressure was unmeasurable and her pulse became weak. Upon gaining consciousness,

hives covered her body and she had trouble breathing. Further allergy testing proved that yellow 5 and 6 were the cause of this reaction (Jacobson and Kobylewski). In 2008, CSPI ultimately urged the FDA to ban many artificial food dyes. The FDA did not budge, but acknowledged that food dyes could cause harm (Clemmitt). A warning label required by the FDA advertising that a food contains yellow 5 or 6 is not enough, however. Because reactions to these dyes can be unexpected and life threatening, yellow 5 and 6 should be banned by the FDA.

Furthermore, yellow 5 and 6 can lead to cancer. Edward Group, a clinical nutritionist and herbalist serving on the American Clinical Board of Nutrition and Functional Medicine, revealed that the U.S. is behind in recognizing the carcinogenic nature of yellow 5 and 6:

Yellow 5 and 6 contain the chemical benzene, a known carcinogen. The [Center for Disease Control and Prevention] claims that very little is known about the health effects of benzene, despite the mountain of evidence pointing at its cancer-causing potential. While most of the world has banned [yellow 5 and 6] . . . American companies freely use . . . [them] in . . . processed food[s]. (Group)

The CDC and FDA need to reevaluate the safety of yellow 5 and 6 by recognizing the international studies that reveal their carcinogenic nature. Regarding this, genotoxicity can measure a chemical's carcinogenic nature. According to the *Academic Press Dictionary of Science and Technology*, genotoxicity represents the ability of a chemical to bring about mutations or damage DNA, which could result in cancer ("Genotoxicity"). Overall, in the CSPI's document mentioned above, six out of eleven genotoxicity studies that evaluated yellow 5 were positive. Unfortunately, CSPI was unable to use unpublished FDA studies that could have revealed more about the toxic and carcinogenic nature of yellow 5 (Jacobson and Kobylewski). Yellow 5 is clearly an established danger, but could it be more serious than we are aware of?

Just like yellow 5, yellow 6 proves to be genotoxic. A study published in the *Journal of Environmental and Public Health* revealed the genotoxicity of yellow 6. The study applied 0, 1, 3, and 5 percent yellow 6 solutions to replicating cells for 6 hours. Afterward, the division of these cells was analyzed, showing an increase in divisions for greater dye concentration, with 0% dye concentration having normal divisions. In other words, yellow 6 produced chromosomal abnormalities, which reveals its genotoxic nature (Dwivedi and Kumar). Clearly, the FDA should ban these genotoxic chemicals.

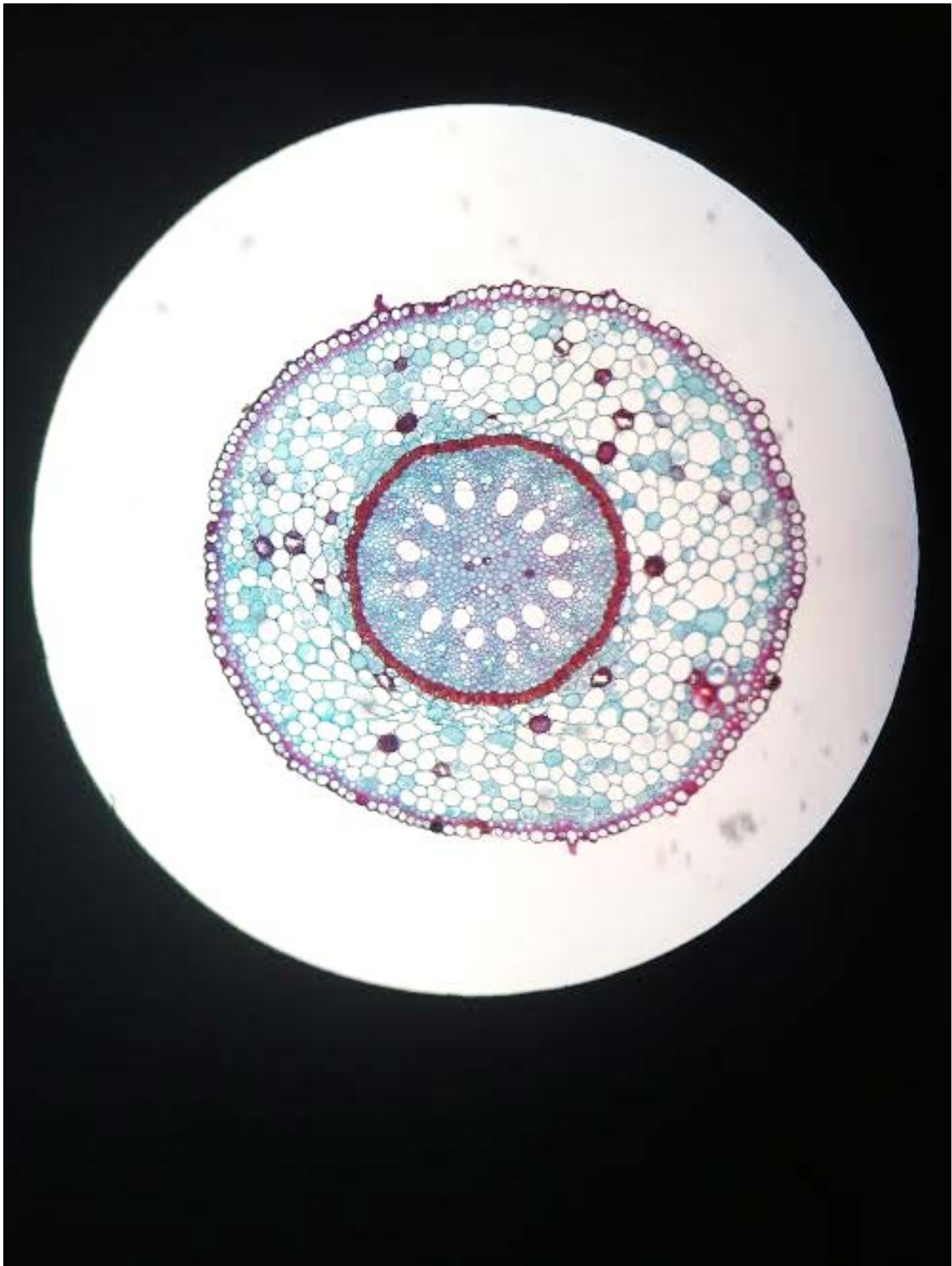
Still, some people think that these studies are bogus. Lois Swirsky Gold, an expert in toxins and carcinogens, believes that experiments are misleading when they reveal that artificial food dyes are unsafe. He states that to prove their point, these experiments use an excessive amount of dye that people would never normally ingest ("Chemicals"). However, Americans are consuming more food dye than ever before. According to the July 2012 issue of *Neurotherapeutics*, the daily consumption of artificial food dye intake has quadrupled over the past fifty years. "The dose alone makes the poison," as the great

philosopher Paracelsus once said (qtd. in Arnold, Lofthouse, and Hurt). It is clear that artificial food dyes yellow 5 and 6 are an increasing danger.

Processed food lovers, as well as nutritionists and toxicologists, should be concerned about the safety of artificial food dyes yellow 5 and 6. The FDA needs to recognize the studies outlined in this argument pointing towards the link between yellow 5 and 6 with ADHD, severe allergies, and cancer. If artificial food dyes yellow 5 and 6 were banned by the FDA, producers would have to find more benign, slightly more expensive alternatives, as they do in other countries. Overall, this would make American food safer and healthier, yet equally as colorful.

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Monocot Root Cross Section Under a Microscope
by Sydney Davis

Probiotics May Be Better Than Hand Sanitizer by Lauren Hendrickson

A large, juicy hamburger with warm, greasy French fries would make any woman bloat until she cannot see her toes. On the other hand, consuming a salad would make most feel slim. Unfortunately, I cannot say that I feel the same way. In the past, I could have eaten the healthiest foods but still struggled with chronic bloating: stomachaches, the appearance of being pregnant, and a constant gurgling stomach. The perpetual struggle would not end—until I heard of probiotics. As I was shadowing a gastrointestinal physician assistant, I noticed how often she recommended Align, a brand of probiotics, for all sorts of reasons. Patient complaints ranged from irregular bowel movements and bloating to irritable bowel syndrome, diarrhea, and even just the need to strengthen one's immunity. I decided to try it for myself. Although probiotics are not like antibiotics with quick outcomes, I began to see changes after six weeks. Food did not irritate my stomach as much, and I started to feel better about my appearance. Lo and behold, a small pill of living microorganisms was just the trick to fix my constant struggle.

Many Americans think that good health depends on absolute sterility, upon killing as many germs as possible by using hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, or even antibiotics. But antibiotics should not be taken lightly. After a health crisis that requires antibiotics, people should do all they can to reestablish beneficial bacteria to restore health, and probiotic products are able to do just that. Following a crisis, people should act as considerate hosts so that they and their gut bacteria can thrive together. Probiotics have been shown to be beneficial within human bodies; therefore, people should use probiotics not only to increase the quality of their health, but also to protect and support their digestive systems while maintaining digestive balance.

Probiotics may sound like some annoying pill that you have to remember to take daily, but these supplements are much more than that. Dr. Ester Swee Chong states, “The term ‘probiotics,’ meaning ‘for life’ in Greek, was first used in 1965 to describe any substance or organism that was beneficial in promoting microflora balance in the intestinal system” (“Role of Probiotics in CRC” 351). Similarly, a recent publication in *The Journal of Gastroenterology* declares, “The most widely accepted definition of probiotics states that they are live microorganisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host” (Borchers et al. 26). We are ingesting living organisms into our bodies, making us hosts of live bacteria that are benefiting our health, so we had better treat them right!

Multiple over-the-counter dietary supplements, such as capsules, are available to provide the daily boost in digestive health (See Figure 1). According to Dr. Edward Group,



Figure 1. The brand of probiotics that the author takes. Photo taken by author.

these generous strains of bacteria are also found in fermented foods such as yogurt, sauerkraut, dark chocolate and pickles (“Probiotic Foods”). This means that probiotics are found in many places with easy access at an affordable cost. Within the multiple types of probiotic sources, there are different varieties of bacteria. Dr. Chong states that two specific strains of bacteria, lactobacilli and bifidobacteria, aid in the balance of good bacteria to strengthen the intestinal system (“Role of Probiotics in CRC” 351). Both types of bacteria are safe and healthy within the body. Upcoming Physician Assistant Graduate Collette Rhyner explains that “[the good bacteria] helps to digest food [. . .], break down proteins in the intestines, and fight off ‘bad bacteria.’” She confirmed that when there is an imbalance of good and bad bacteria, one can experience diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, yeast infections and UTIs; therefore, it is important to balance gut bacteria through probiotics (Rhyner). Overall, probiotics do contain bacteria; however, these healthy bacteria are beneficial towards our bodies and the gastrointestinal tract.

Some may say that thorough handwashing has the same effect as taking probiotics to prevent catching the common cold. However, the common cold is airborne and is almost impossible to avoid unless the immune system is strengthened. According to the article “Fermented Foods and Probiotics,” by creating an acidic environment where harmful bacteria cannot live, the healthy bacteria within probiotics help the gut microbes to absorb nutrients (Cox 24). Therefore, if the gut is acidic and harmful bacteria have no chance of survival, the chance of diseased bacteria latching on becomes less likely. *The Essential Book of Fermentation* discusses the findings of a study done on mice. Mice with healthy gastrointestinal tracts produced more white blood cells that could then help fight off diseases (Cox 25). This indicates that the healthy bacteria placed in the gastrointestinal tract can benefit the body by helping to create more “fighting” cells against diseases.

Although probiotics do truly help to prevent the common cold, healthy bacteria have been proven to achieve much more as well. Chong, Ph.D., articulates that probiotics have substantial benefits against diarrhea, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and Crohn’s disease, as well as possible reduction of the risk of colorectal cancer (“Role of Probiotics in CRC” 351-352). Probiotics not only add good bacteria into the human immune system but also have shown to regulate bowel movements. IBS and Crohn’s disease patients struggle with sudden urges to pass a bowel movement, as well as maintaining constant bowel form. Probiotics help to regulate and slow down the disruptions within daily lifestyles. The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) also claims these living microorganisms help control multiple complications such as allergic disorders, specifically eczema or hay fever, oral health issues, and even liver disease (“Probiotics: In Depth”). Probiotics help not only the gastrointestinal tract but overall health as well.

Although probiotics do wonders for the body, the product is not considered a drug. Align probiotics states that the product was not evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA); therefore, probiotics are not promised to determine, heal, or avoid any disease (Align box label). Probiotics can ease pain or daily struggles, but without being approved by the FDA, the product cannot be considered a drug—only a dietary

supplement. However, the bacteria within probiotics are still extremely beneficial to our bodies, as they extend beyond the normal effects of dietary supplements.

Since probiotics are dietary supplements, they are easily accessible to the public. “People take supplements very casually,” explains FDA spokesperson Lyndsay Meyer. “They don't understand that they can cause drug-like reactions, and they assume that if a supplement is for sale it's safe to use” (qtd. in Weeks). Although there are overdose cases, probiotics are a very safe product to use. There are few cases in which one should not take probiotics. PA student Rhyner states that probiotics are safe “unless the patient is severely immunocompromised (such as HIV/Advanced Cancer patients receiving chemo[therapy])” (Rhyner). Even though probiotics are overall safe in most cases, the product should still be handled cautiously and the recommended dosage on the package should be taken. All patients may react differently to each strain of bacteria. When asked if there is a probiotic that is more beneficial than most, Rhyner explains that there is not a type that is overall more beneficial and that all patients are unique. She adds that she and her fellow colleagues usually recommend yogurt, as it gives patients the therapeutic amount of probiotics (Rhyner). Once again, probiotics should be handled with care, but there is no major threat that comes from the product itself.

Society may relate probiotics solely to the elderly, but the elderly are not the only age group struggling with fluctuating bowel cycles. Newborns can struggle with diarrhea, and starting as teenagers, minors can develop Crohn's Disease over time (“Crohn's & Colitis”). The probiotic packaging of Align expresses that “diet, changes in routine, travel and stress may disrupt your natural balance of good bacteria” (Align box label). These disruptions can cause changes in bowel movements in all ages. Gastrointestinal problems can all begin as early as birth. The article “The Health Benefits of Probiotics and Prebiotics” states that in utero, the alimentary canal is clear of bacteria, but once the infant is born, bacteria multiply within the individual (Gibson et al. 52). Once we are born, bacteria flourish throughout our bodies. PA student Rhyner discloses that it is possible for newborns to benefit from extremely small supplemental amounts of the healthy bacteria to treat reoccurring diarrhea, but the circumstance is very uncommon and controversial. According to the article “Probiotics: Immunomodulation and Evaluation of Safety and Efficacy,” a study was done to observe the results of infants ingesting probiotics:

However, although probiotics have a long history of safe use, it is unknown if consumption early in life can induce adverse long-term effects. In a prospective, double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study, healthy infants age 3 to 24 months received a baby formula with *B. lactis* and *S. thermophilus* for a period of 210 (± 127) days. Probiotics were well-tolerated by these infants without any influence on growth, formula intake, episodes of fever or diarrhea, or day care attendance. (Ezendam et al. 5)

There is no negative effect with an early use of the healthy bacteria. The infants given the probiotics at a young age revealed no unfavorable symptoms. Another expert states that

besides age, if the patient is not struggling with two conditions at once and does not possess interfering allergies or a severely weakened immune system, then probiotics are safe to use (Rhyner). In general, probiotics are uncommonly used for young children, but are largely considered safe for all individuals under correct circumstances.

While drugs may quickly do the trick to fix a health problem, probiotics are overall a safer, healthier and more beneficial choice. Probiotics not only increase the quality of health, but also protect and support the digestive system while maintaining digestive balance. These healthy microorganisms we put into our bodies do so much for us, and as hosts, we must protect our bodies in return. Hand sanitizer may clean one's hands, but probiotics clean and protect one's entire body.

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Standing Ground by Alexander Rivers

Far from Folsom Prison: Logotherapy and the Correctional System

by Gabrielle Beck

3rd Place Winner

As many Americans sing the “Folsom Prison Blues” or eagerly await the newest episode of *Orange Is the New Black*, their fascination with prison life becomes apparent. However, many Americans do not realize the toll that high incarceration rates in the United States take on society or the need for more efficient correctional methods. In fact, according to researcher John Dewar Gleissner, most Americans believe that a prison sentence should be as miserable as possible for the inmate. Few realize that this prevents effective rehabilitation and increases recidivism rates, or the rates at which prisoners are re-incarcerated after serving their first sentence. The implementation of Viktor Frankl’s method of logotherapy in correctional and rehabilitative settings could reduce high incarceration and recidivism rates and the associated financial burden by addressing addictive behaviors, targeting juvenile delinquency, and providing inmates with hope for a life after prison.

High incarceration and recidivism rates show that current correctional and preventative practices simply do not provide the rehabilitative treatment needed to keep people out of prison. One in 37 Americans have spent time or are currently serving time in a punitive correctional institution (Shrum 226), which adds up to an incredible 2.2 million people in state or federal prisons in the United States (“Incarceration”). A major contributing factor to the high number of incarcerated Americans is the recidivism rate in the United States prison system. A recent Bureau of Justice Statistics study shows that of a group of prisoners released in 2005, 76.6 percent were rearrested within five years, with 56.7 percent being rearrested within the first year after their release (Durose et al. 1). This startling statistic is a major area of concern because with incarceration rates sky-high and recidivism rates rising just as quickly, prisons are costing the United States government more than ever. A conservative estimate of the average cost per prisoner per year comes to around \$31,000 (Jacobson). This places an \$80 million yearly burden on taxpayers, costing each individual taxpayer approximately \$260 per year (Picchi). The ineffectiveness of the United States prison system and the burden it subsequently places on taxpayers demonstrate the need for reevaluation of current correctional practices.

The United States prison system attempts to correct the deviant behavior of prisoners by forcing them to comply with a highly structured institutional lifestyle. However, the aforementioned recidivism rates indicate that this technique is ineffective. Prisons have been shown to have a notably negative effect on the psychological well-being of inmates. When offenders are incarcerated, they are forced to adapt to an often harsh environment. This can cause prisoners to become dependent on this structured lifestyle and lose their sense of personal independence, leaving them with little to no motivation or opportunity for recovery. In this setting, prisoners also learn to carefully conceal

emotions. This avoidance of emotional expression can lead to isolation, mental distress, and symptoms similar to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, especially in extremely harsh or violent prison settings (Haney). By the time inmates are released, the negative effects of their time in prison make adjustment to life outside of prison extremely challenging. This difficult adjustment period contributes to the high recidivism rates and explains why such a significant percentage of rearrests occur within the first year after release. If prison life could be modified to promote the psychological well-being of prisoners, a marked decrease in recidivism would likely occur.

The implementation of logotherapy in United States prisons holds great promise in reducing recidivism rates. Logotherapy developed out of renowned humanistic-existential psychiatrist and neurologist Viktor Frankl's experiences in various concentration camps during the Holocaust. This method of psychotherapy encourages people to find a sense of meaning in their own lives. As Frankl describes in his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, "Logotherapy focuses . . . on the meanings to be fulfilled by the patient in his future . . . [so that] the patient is actually confronted with and reoriented toward the meaning of his life" (98). Frankl claims that meaning in life can stem from three sources: "(1) . . . creating a work or doing a deed; (2) . . . experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) . . . the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering" (111). If correctional centers took a logotherapeutic approach to rehabilitation and encouraged prisoners to find meaning in their own lives, recidivism rates could potentially be greatly decreased.

According to Frankl, logotherapy consists of several main techniques, two of which could be used in a prison setting: dereflection and Socratic dialogue ("Logotherapy"). Dereflection is effective with people who become overly focused on themselves. This technique encourages individuals to look outside of themselves and focus on the task they are trying to complete or on other people in their lives, helping them escape the self-absorption that takes away their ability to focus on the important matters in their lives ("Dereflecting"). This connects to Frankl's idea that even inmates can discover their own potential when they focus on what they can become instead of on their current identities as prisoners ("Youth"). The second method, Socratic dialogue, attempts to help people to find the meaning in their own lives. For his method, the therapist listens to the client speak and points out patterns or hidden meanings that he or she hears in what the client says. By helping the client better understand who he or she is as person, the therapist can help the client to discover the meaning in his or her own life ("Logotherapy"). This method also could help prisoners by allowing them to uncover the flawed thought patterns that led to their deviant behavior and to discover the potential within themselves to live meaningful lives. These two methods could be implemented in various ways within the correctional system to target addiction, prevent juvenile delinquency, and provide inmates with hope for a life after prison.

A primary use of logotherapy in a prison setting could be addiction treatment. In 2010, the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse released a study showing that 65 percent of the inmates in United States prisons met the DSM-IV criteria for a

diagnosis of addiction, yet only 11 percent of these people received treatment while incarcerated (“New CASA Report”).

In light of these statistics, the need for effective addiction treatment in prison settings becomes apparent. Additionally, studies conducted using The Purpose in Life Test, which determines the amount of meaning in a person’s life, show that people who score very low on this test are highly likely to be addicted to alcohol or illegal substances (“Purpose”). This suggests that logotherapy, which aims to help clients discover the meaning and purpose in their lives, could be highly effective in treating addiction in prison settings, especially as a supplement to other treatment programs. Throughout the course of a regular 12-step addiction treatment program, dereflection could be used to help inmates focus outward and forward rather than fixate on their addictions. This could be followed by sessions of Socratic dialogue, in which a therapist would talk inmates through the discovery of the meaning in their lives. Studies conducted on the use of logotherapy in Folsom State Prison and the California Rehabilitation Center suggest that when inmates were treated for both their addiction and the inherent lack of purpose in their lives, a marked decrease in relapse and recidivism occurred (Shrum 229). In one study, the rate was reduced from the national average of 76.6 percent (Durose et al. 1) to just 5.5 percent (Shrum 229). While this hypothesis requires further testing, previous studies suggest a promising future for logotherapy in addiction treatment.

Logotherapy also holds great promise in the area of juvenile delinquency. According to a report by the Child Trends Data Bank, between 50 and 75 percent of youth who spend time in a juvenile detention center later end up in jail (“Juvenile”). Consequently, if this cycle could be broken, the number of incarcerated people would drop significantly. The success of logotherapeutic methods in combating recidivism in adults suggests that they would be useful with juveniles as well. Many juveniles experience the idea of the “imaginary audience,” which is the feeling that people are always watching and criticizing them (Pethtel). Dereflection could be highly effective here in teaching juveniles to focus outside of themselves and overcome the anxiety created by believing they are always the center of attention. Socratic dialogue could also be effective in combating the underlying lack of meaning that leads juveniles to delinquent behavior. At San Quinten, logotherapy was shown to be highly effective in treating juvenile delinquents, reducing juvenile recidivism rates from the national average of 40 percent to 17 percent (Shrum 230). The broad implementation of these techniques could reduce juvenile recidivism nationwide.

Finally, logotherapy could be used to reduce recidivism rates by providing inmates with hope for life after prison. The re-entry process for prisoners is often fraught with anxiety and desperation. In Nebraska, for example, the protocol for releasing prisoners consists of releasing the inmate back into the outside world with \$100 or less in “Gate Pay” and no food, housing, or means of transportation back to the inmate’s hometown (“After Prison”). For prisoners already suffering from a lack of meaning and purpose in their lives, this situation compounds the utter hopelessness and desperation that leads to continued criminal behavior and subsequent re-arrest. By using logotherapy to help

inmates find purpose before they leave the prison and teaching them the skills needed to survive in the outside world, recidivism could be reduced. For example, this strategy was used successfully at Folsom State Prison, where a group of prisoners participated in various workshops helping them to find meaning in their lives. They then found purpose by arranging workshops for other inmates, which showed them that they could help others and serve a purpose even from behind bars. This learning experience equipped them with social skills and confidence. For those among this group who were later granted parole, the recidivism rate was zero percent (Shrum 229). The concept of re-entry preparation could take many different forms, but the focus would need to be on not just preparing inmates for life outside of prison but also using dereflection and Socratic dialogue to help them to discover meaning, purpose, and hope for their lives outside of prison. As the success at Folsom State Prison suggests, the combination of these strategies to give inmates hope for life after prison could be effective in reducing recidivism rates.

Some may argue that little empirical evidence exists to support the success of logotherapy in correctional settings. While evidence is limited, the studies that have been conducted on logotherapy in prisons indicate a bright future for logotherapy as a means of reducing recidivism. In one aforementioned study, logotherapy was implemented at the California Rehabilitation Center, where inmates were encouraged to use their time in prison as an opportunity to help other inmates, which in turn helped them to find a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. Although the therapy was short term and only one group of inmates went through the program, the program showed great promise. The recidivism rate for prisoners released after completing the program was just 5.5 percent (Shrum 229), compared to the national average of 76.6 percent (Durose et al. 1). As previously discussed, logotherapy was also tested at Folsom State Prison. A group of 19 inmates serving life sentences attended a series of workshops and then presented the information from the workshops to other inmates. Of that group, five were able later to be released on parole and three were discharged from parole. For those released, the recidivism rate was a promising zero percent (Shrum 229). While further investigation is needed to fully support logotherapy in prisons, the limited evidence that is available strongly favors the success of logotherapy in reducing incarceration and recidivism rates if implemented in the prison system.

Ultimately, we may be entertained by the portrayals of prison life in modern music and television, but the reality of prison life and the toll it takes on inmates and society as a whole is no matter of amusement. As it currently stands, millions of Americans suffer in the United States prison system each year, and all of society feels the financial burden. However, through the implementation of logotherapeutic techniques to aid in addiction treatment, prevent juvenile delinquency, and provide inmates with hope for life after prison, incarceration and recidivism rates could be reduced. This would lead to a reduction in the financial burden to the government created by the large numbers of inmates in United States prisons. With logotherapy, prisons can make the transition from

containing offenders to rehabilitating offenders, and the beginning of incarceration will no longer mean the end of life and meaning.

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Reflection of a Quiet World by Tara Fritz

Worth by Aleesa Fieg

“The moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease forever to be able to do it.” – J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*

We are human, we make mistakes, we succeed, we fail. There are qualities we like about ourselves, others that we wish to fix or replace. Oftentimes we feel ourselves being compared to objects. Those objects that are worthless, used, and have no worth. We find doubt in ourselves, we look towards all the negatives so that we don't see the positives. We don't look to see the light and purpose we have in ourselves. However, we can be compared to objects, because every object has a purpose in life, just like you. Life is worth living and it's worth living by being happy and loving yourself for who you are, knowing you are unique, perfect, and have tons of WORTH.



FORGOTTEN. I was a best friend, a comfort, a person whom people could talk to, hug when they were scared. I never got left behind and I was perfect, no matter all the scars and tears I went through. FORGOTTEN. Sitting patiently, waiting for your return, like I am not good enough anymore. What is wrong with me? With all the memories made, how could you forget and leave me? FORGOTTEN. Thrown away. Left with just memories of the happy times, the innocent times. REMEMBERED. Bringing joy and laughter, but also healing and calmness. Sparking your imagination and magical child. REMEMBERED. Helping to get through the hard times, but also being there in your best of times. Leaving a lasting impression, legacy, leaving to be REMEMBERED.

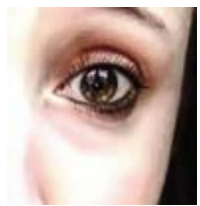


WORTHLESS. Tossed aside and forgotten, as millions have thrown me to the ground, walked by me, or left me in the dark, bottomless pits of their purses. Many think I am worthless because I cannot buy them things that other coins can. WORTHLESS. The only time I feel important is when someone comes along and picks me up because they think I am lucky, but even then I am soon forgotten. How does it feel to be so worthless? To be all you can be and still not be good enough? To feel that there is always someone or something better and liked more by others? A waste of space, feeling of emptiness, so small, so limited, and so boundlessness. WORTHLESS. But I am worthy. All it takes is for someone to come along, pick me up, and shine me up. Many think I am little, but I am powerful. I realize that the more I have by my side, the more valuable I am. There are many qualities to me that stand out. I am worth more than anything in the world. I am WORTHY.

INSECURITY. I often look the same as everyone else. We all get planted the same way, grow the same way, die the same way. I can be fat or too skinny. I can be too tall or too short. INSECURITY. I can be weak, easily cracked by a little gust of wind. Weeds sprout up around me; many tend to cut me down. It takes years for me to grow. SECURITY. I am strong and give so many people life. I am beautiful and always nearby. My roots define me, I am wild and free. SECURITY. I will change over time, but I will always be myself. I may lose some parts of me, as time changes, but I will grow some more back. I help provide for others, giving to those who need it most. I will always stand firm and tall. I will always follow the wind. SECURITY.



USED. Opened and then tossed away. SHAME. An inward focus, to find negative qualities about myself. To have my minute of glory, to have my lifetime of sadness as I am whisked away to the trash can. To give and give and give, to only receive nothing in return. To be manipulated into thinking there is something wrong with me. USED. When someone realizes your purpose or your strengths and takes them for granted. USED. To be treated like an object with no emotions or feelings, to be taken advantage of. However, I am NEW. I have a quality that others don't have. A quality that I can bring to the table as my own. NEW. Without me, there would be no flavor, no energy, no benefits. I am a protector, a fighter. I help boost others when they feel bad; I strive to help others improve and reduce risks. I provide strength, endurance, but most importantly, I enjoy helping someone become NEW.



INDIFFERENT. When you look at me, there are many things left unseen. All the pain and sorrow I have viewed. The tears and struggles that I replay over and over. I am not the same as everyone else. INDIFFERENT. I sometimes am in a blurred state and need assistance. I am mysterious, sleepy, unclear.

Many items and events seem so far away but appear quicker than I expected. I am easily distracted, oftentimes curious, plenty of times sensitive. VIGILANCE. I am focused; I am a messenger. I can be adjusted easily to fit into any situation. VIGILANCE. I see beauty in the world, in other people. I get to view the world in color. I am careful, I am awake and alert, watchful, VIGILANCE.



BURNT OUT. Little by little, as I am lit, I slowly get smaller and smaller. I am not as bright and eventually there is nothing left and my purpose seems to be gone. BURNT OUT. Some do not enjoy what's on the inside of me, quickly basing me off of their first impression and never giving me the chance. However, when something goes out or goes wrong, they use me, use me only when they need me. BURNT OUT. Some use me for romance,

others to sit there and look pretty. PURPOSE. But that's not me. I bring warmth, light, and a sense of hope to people. PURPOSE. I help guide people when they are lost, in trouble, or afraid. I bring people out of darkness as well as help to pray or meditate. I can help set a spark. I may be small, but I can light up a whole room. I have more power than I think, more power than what others think. I have PURPOSE.

WORN DOWN. Plenty of times I have been walked on, stomped on, trampled on. Oftentimes I find myself falling apart and watch as I try to patch myself, only to come undone again and again, a few miles down the road. WORN DOWN. I find myself often distressed, fatigued. I have lost my color, my sense of style, I have lost myself. Continued to be weighed down, feeling as if the road's getting longer and longer.



Because I am falling apart, I am letting down those whom I care about and not providing them with their needs any longer. ACTIVE. No matter how many patches or scars I have, I continue to power through. I have walked upon many obstacles, but still I am moving, alive, continuing to put one foot in front of the other. ACTIVE. I never give up or give in. I am adjustable and I will continue giving it my all, giving high performance even when I am feeling tired. ACTIVE.



DUMB. Slightly torn and worn down on the edges. Sometimes I am too hard to understand and boring. I can be predictable, thought provoking, or easy to read. DUMB. Watch out. I am full of deception, full of mystery; I can be conversational. Easy to fall down and full of ripped pages. KNOWLEDGE. But I realize I am insightful, memorable, and simple. I am always learning but always teaching others. I am adventurous and entertaining. KNOWLEDGE. People can turn to me by turning my pages. I have a hard spine and don't let people walk all over me. I am compelling, gripping, fascinating. I can relate to and help individuals prepare for the future. I am good at giving instructions. I am smart and have many events happen in all chapters of my life. I am evolving and I am KNOWLEDGE.



MISTAKES. There comes a time in your life when you think everything is perfect, everything is working out as it should. Then all of a sudden, you come to a screeching halt. Sometimes I cause you to have to choose a direction and sometimes you will go down the wrong road. Lost, scared, lonely, should I turn back around? MISTAKES. I prevent you from moving forward, feeling trapped. Others often must go before you; they will get a head start. Sometimes you might roll through me, only to realize that you can crash and burn. PERFECTION. However, there are times when you need to go down the wrong road to realize the right one. There will be times when you need to stop. Meditate. Relax. Think of

the situation at hand. Sometimes you have to make the stops, make the mistakes, in order to achieve PERFECTION.



FALLING DOWN. Fragile and delicate. I can be up so high, on top of the world, and instantly detaching, falling, hundreds of feet down where I will crumble. Full of color to instantly dull. I am constantly changing, constantly being different. FALLING DOWN. I am wilted, carefree, traveling with the wind, with no prediction of where I will end up. Feeling like I keep whirling around in a circle. RISE. Even though I fall down, I will grow again. Grow into something so beautiful. Full of life and color. RISE. I am simple, different from the rest. I provide for others in order to help them survive. I love when the sun shines down on me, bringing warmth to my body. I might be forgotten or trampled, but in the end, I will continue to RISE.



DOWN. DOWN. DOWN. I can allow you to feel like you are on top of the world, only to realize in a split second that you can come right back down. In order to get to the top again, you must work as hard as you can. It is tough work to be as high as you once were. Feels like nothing is going your way, like you don't have the strength to keep moving, you start to slow DOWN. In order to make your way UP, though, you must first start low. UP. UP. UP. Finally, you see how much all of your hard work pays off. You see valleys and mountains, views you have never seen before. Sometimes all you needed was a little push to get you going. Soon you realize that on your own and with your strength, you were able to soar. Life is full of DOWNS and UPS, but it will be rewarding in the end.

RIDICULE. Many will not believe in you; many will turn away from you, not even wanting to see what you have to offer. Many will not get the chance to look inside, to see what you are all about. Many will make fun of you, laugh, mock, snicker. Many will not agree with what you stand for. RIDICULE. Many will not see you as an avenger, not fighting for revenge but fighting for what is right and for other people. Some will follow but then soon quickly turn their backs on you. RESPECT. You give hope and new life. You can bring peace inside humans that allows them to heal and forgive. You are inspiring, loved, and real. One day you hope to be able to affect people's lives for the better. You hope one day that you can make a difference in this world. One day to earn RESPECT.



BROKEN. So fragile, so easy to crack, to break. To feel hollow inside, as if there is nothing left. Numbness. Beaten, not feeling whole, like there is something missing. Like something is missing from the inside. BROKEN. How can I be whole again? I thought I was



unbreakable, but somehow I broke. However, I am frustrated to somehow lose something that I may never get back. There is nothing you can do about it. Whatever happens, happens. You cannot go back and change time; you cannot go back and be whole again, untouched, not cracked. WHOLE. But sometimes we need to break, but not be beaten, in order to feel, in order to understand. In order to feel what it's like to be hurt and realize you never want to have that feeling. You need to be broken in order to change into something new, in order to find purpose in your life. You may not be able to patch yourself back up, but you can be WHOLE again in a new phase in your life.



UGLY. To feel out of place, abnormal. Having those certain qualities that I don't like about myself, a certain way I look, a way I wish I could change myself. The want and need to outgrow the others, to be prettier, brighter. UGLY. To have someone walk past, thinking they are staring at you, noticing all of your flaws. Thinking that one day you will never be picked but instead go unnoticed and untouched. BEAUTIFUL. Until someone comes along and waters you, to love your imperfections and flaws, and help tend to them. When you realize that you have natural beauty, having certain qualities that no one else does. To grow even despite the weeds around you, to grow despite how you look or how everyone else looks. However, we all soon will die one day, but life is too short worrying about how you look or what others think. Life is too short to dwell on the qualities you think you do not have. Life is too short, too BEAUTIFUL.

HOLDING IT ALL IN. Feeling like you are ready to snap. Ready to come undone, to let go of everything you have been trying to hold back. You start to come loose, little by little. Trying to hold on, but all the weight and pressure start to get heavier and heavier, and there comes a point when you can't HOLD IT ALL IN. I am used to keeping everything inside, to keeping you shielded and warm. But after a while, I can quickly fall off, leaving you opened to the world ahead of you. LETTING GO. You have the strengths and abilities to make it on your own. There is no reason to keep a shield up. Put all your worries, anxieties, and stresses in the past, LET THEM GO. It might be scary allowing yourself to open up, but you don't need to protect yourself anymore. How can you know if you don't try? How can you succeed if you don't fail? You won't make it very far closing yourself off from the world. It doesn't hurt to LET GO.



WEAK. Sometimes life gets too heavy. Am I strong enough? Too scared to even test out your strength, afraid you will fail. Sometimes it's a competition, who is stronger than who. Repetitive, over and over and over. WEAK in the mind. WEAK in the body. Hopeless, quickly beaten



out by others who are superior. Taken advantage of. **STRONG**. Strength doesn't happen overnight; it's gradual, takes practice and time. Soon the weight of the load will feel easier, smaller. Persistence and patience, your time will come soon. In order to become stronger, you must know what it is like to feel weak. To feel at your lowest. You will overcome many battles, but just know that you earned it because you fought for it. Being **WEAK** is the key to becoming **STRONG**.



DULL. Flavorless and never changing. Sometimes when a storm or hardship passes through, you can be rough. You often find yourself to be misleading, chaotic, wild. You are untamed, a force to be reckoned with. Emotional and oftentimes reflective. You can be indecisive, unsettling and undecided. **DULL**. Crashing. Erupting. To feel like you are drowning, never to resurface again. **SHINE**. However, when there is a hardship or obstacle, there will always be a rainbow. You can replenish, you are strong enough to build up again, no matter what brought you down in the first place. You can rise, you can bring life. To move along with the current, to end up down the river, for we know that life doesn't stop. **SHINE**.

UNWANTED. Often abandoned and feeling unloved. People don't know my real worth; they often think I have nothing to give. Neglected, unlovable, cheated, and forgotten. **UNWANTED**. Less valuable than everyone else, sometimes all you want to be is the center of attention for once. Loneliness, self-pity. **LOVED**. To be respected for who you are, what qualities you bring forth. Not to be judged for how you look. To have self-respect for yourself, knowing you were created this way for a purpose. When mixed with someone else, you can make beautiful colors, different colors. To love yourself for who you are, because you are **LOVED**.



UNFIT. I don't often find myself fitting in with the crowd. Because I am different shapes and sizes, many find me quite difficult. I have to be rotated in certain ways, handled certain ways or I don't work out. **UNFIT**. I am confusing and often find myself missing certain parts, needing to be put together piece by piece. **UNIQUE**. Connected. There is no other like me, my different qualities, and when it is all said and done, I am needed to finish the whole picture. Daring to be different. Truly one of a kind, you only have one life, one opportunity, and even one duty—to live the way you see fit, to be **UNIQUE**.



Old Friends by Christopher Evans

Cassis Bar by Anna Baughman

On the corner of a table in Cassis Bar, I engrave your name: Gaston...

* * *

It is a bright day. All I've ever known of France is bright days. I've been so lucky to never see a gloomy day.

Perhaps I have, but the memories I've made have all been given a beautiful backdrop, courtesy of my mind's eye.

I'm a positive person. I always see good—and beauty—in everything. Ever since I was a child, “beauty” was my favorite word; I called everything, everyone, beautiful.

However, I didn't know true beauty until I stood on the dock, looking at the city of Cassis on a bright day, my first bright day.

Now, I stand once again, looking at my city, thanking God that I can have yet another bright day, my last bright day.

To anyone else, it would look the same, exactly the same. I feel the changes, though.

There is a woman standing at my favorite fruit stand. She was around the last time I was here, but her father owned the stand. He never left his post, 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. When I last saw him, he looked old, tired. He coughed through our whole conversation and leaned against the wall of the building behind him, wheezing.

In a balcony above one of the little shops sits a couple. They are young—younger than I am. They sip wine and look down at the busy streets, the little shops, the glistening water: the hidden gem of France. Even from the ground, I can see they have cheap wine and panic deep in their eyes; their stay in Cassis is not for good.

I think of myself. I'm wearing sunglasses. My first day, I had to shield my eyes with my hand. I'm in shorts and a tank top, but I'm holding my jacket over my arm; the shops, old, made of stone with the ability to hold every ounce of cold air, chill me to the bone. My earphones are in my ears, though I'm not playing any music. The cart salesmen are less likely to push items on you if you're occupied. I think of my changes only known by me; the biggest changes are unseen, as they always are.

I stare at my city, feeling like I know everything about every nook and cranny of this place. I give myself two full minutes.

“You have things to do,” I mumble to myself, and I begin to walk into the heart of the city.

I walk past many shops I have loved, many apartments I have shared dinner in, many cafés I have relied on for my morning pick-me-up, until I hit my destination: Cassis Bar.

It looks the same. Unimpressive. It looks dull between a green building and a pink cart. The tall, tan building stands, blankly staring at me.

It is my hidden gem of France.

I walk to the door and push it open.

The inside is the opposite of its exterior: it's alive.

Unlike the rest of Cassis, this looks the same. There are no changes in this room from my first day until now. I even feel the same as I did on that first day, when I took it all in.

Despite the fact that it's before noon, the dimly lit room is packed.

Men laugh, yell, and roll dice on almost every dark wooden tabletop.

Couples sit intimately in the darkest corners of the room, smiling over shared secrets and countless glasses of red wine.

People yell to the bartender for another as they blow their cigarette smoke toward the ceiling, as though it will just go up and up until it leaves the room, the building, the world.

No one drinks alone in Cassis Bar. No one sulks in Cassis Bar. No one fights in Cassis Bar.

You drink, laugh, drink some more, gamble, fall in love, and do it all, all over again.

People smile at me when I walk in. Some of the regulars look at me like they almost recognize me, but not quite. I find an empty table in the back, one of the small dark tables couples romance over.

I calculate that it will take about 5 minutes for someone to come over and hit on me: to ask me what brings me to Cassis, what America is like, and how someone like me is single.

It has happened before.

A man walks over to me almost immediately—had I calculated incorrectly?—holding a glass of wine. He sets it down, runs a hand through his fine, light hair, smiles, and says something in French.

"Je ne parle pas français," I say apologetically.

He points to the bar. "Bartender," he says, his accent weighing down that one word.

I look over his shoulder to see the bartender polishing a glass, as bartenders do. He looks up for a second, and we lock eyes; he gives me a nod. He remembers me.

"Merci," I say to the man, with a nod of thanks back at the bartender as my lips begin to turn up into a smile.

He looks away. The man walks away. My grin won't go away.

He knows me, he knows my drink, and he knows what I'm about to do. Looking away just gave me permission.

I look around. No one is looking at me. Other customers must think I turned down the man who brought me my merlot—I just bought myself another 10 minutes.

I rustle through my purse quickly, pulling out a pocket knife.

You would want me to write “Honor.” Although you talked about making Cassis yours long before we met, you would insist that it was my name that represented your dream.

You would say, “I want to make my mark, but your name *is* my mark, my calling card.”

But I want to make your mark, your name.

I gingerly open the pocket knife, pulling out all of the extensions. I stare at it for a second, then decide to go with the knife. After carefully returning the other applications to their spots, I push the tip of the knife into the wood of the table before me. I feel the finish give as I carve in my goodbye.

On the corner of a table in Cassis Bar, I engrave your name: Gaston.



Fire of the Night by Shay Boisvert

Unbury Your Saints by Tara Fritz

1st Place Winner

The barn falls in the middle of the night. The sound, a rumble like nearby thunder, like the earth itself swallowing, startles Sarah into waking.

She squints against the light of the full moon filtering through the bedroom curtains, unsure of what woke her. All that remains is a strange absence, a vacuum of sound. A strong gust of wind knocks against the house and the walls groan in answer. Sarah sits up in bed, the cool late-autumn air drifting over her shoulders like a passing ghost; she can see Wilder at the end of the bed, nose stuck in the air, ears perked. A half-bark, half-huff escapes his mouth before he settles his head back onto his paws and seems to decide the threat is minimal. No more noises from outside are forthcoming besides the whistle of the wind between the bare trees. Sarah pulls the sheets up past her collarbone and stares at the ceiling until sleep washes over her again.

In the morning, she finds it, the wreckage, when she goes out for the mail with Wilder trotting along at her heels. The sun has barely risen above the distant hills and the dawn fog, sunk low in the valley of the pond across the way, is still struggling to rise above the treetops. When she rounds the final bend at the end of the driveway, Sarah looks across the lane to find an empty skyline and a pile of rubble where the barn used to be.

Her feet stop almost of their own accord, as if the shock reached her toes before it caught up with her brain. Wilder darts down the drive and over the hump of the road before she can fully comprehend what it is she's seeing; refocusing, she lets out a sharp, "Hey!" but he doesn't heed her call.

Sarah moves a little slower than he does, even though they're both of them getting old now, and checks both ways before she crosses the lonesome farm road. On the other side, the grass beneath her boots is stiff with frost. She takes her steps cautiously until she's down over the bank, the wreckage of the barn looming high in front of her.

The building had been leaning precariously for years—taken over by ivy, the metal roof rusted, the walls splintered and rotting. She'd watched the barn decay, neglected, over the passing decades. In winter, it had been buried in snow; in summer, drenched by heavy rains and dried in the blistering sun. The gusts of wind that had battered her own farmhouse in the early hours of the morning had likely been enough to knock the whole thing over. One final death blow. Now, there's nothing left to show for it but an oversized log pile and the warped and deteriorating roof. Jagged pieces of the broken boards are sticking out of the pile, sparkling like glass in the frost and morning light filtered through the fog. The sight of it takes Sarah's breath from her chest.

Wilder sniffs a pile of the debris like he's searching for something, but Sarah already knows there's nothing left for him to find. She whistles for him, but he's too intrigued by the spectacle to listen to her.

“Come on, now.” She walks to him and hauls him away by the collar. “There’s nothing here. Hasn’t been for a long time.” Something in that turn of phrase makes it hard for her to swallow. Her heart aches like a caged thing, heavy with a nostalgia she hasn’t felt for a long time. It’s been decades since Ruth left and the property was abandoned, but sometimes Sarah still dreams she’s that young again, that her life is as good and innocent as that one heat-scorched summer.

Wilder answers her with a half-attempted bark as he wriggles in her grip. Finally, she lets him go, and he takes off running across the field. His brown fur blends in with the dry, frostbitten grass. Sarah stands and watches as he chases after a flock of geese by the pond, and her eyes follow the curve of the valley until she finds the hill, where the house used to be. She can’t even see the pile of rubble there anymore, or where the earth is blackened like a smudge of ink. It’s been long since overtaken by weeds and time. In her mind’s eye, even her memory of the house is blurry with the all the passing years. It was once a faded white, sagging two-story with a wraparound porch, with sky blue shutters hanging crooked next to the dust-smudged windows with yellowed curtains. She and Ruth had spent many afternoons peeling the graying paint from the front porch in long strips that curled up like roly-polies in the palms of their hands. The house, like the barn now, had been there one day and gone the next, lost to the gasoline and the flames and the rage.

With the barn gone, Sarah feels almost like she’s lost an old friend—the gentle sentinel that had watched over her and her farmhouse for as long as she could remember. Memories she had nearly managed to push away come rushing back all at once until her head feels like it’s caught in a sandstorm; old questions she’d never had answers for and old hurts that had plagued her for years press their cold and heavy fingers into the spaces between her ribs.

Ruth. Lost to time and fuzzy recollections. There all at once, and gone just as fast.

Wilder returns to her, panting and happy. Sarah lets out a long sigh, watching her breath dissipate, cloud-like, in the cold air as he rushes ahead of her, back across the road again. She looks both ways before she follows him. “If a barn collapses in the middle of the night, and there’s no one around to hear it—” She doesn’t finish the sentence because she can’t remember how it’s supposed to end. Instead, she gets the mail with the wreckage of the barn standing dark and melancholy in the corner of her eye.

* * *

On the night the house had burned down, Sarah’s mother shook her awake, long after she had gone to sleep, with an insistent whisper and hands winter-cold on her bare arm. When Sarah blinked awake, she wondered how she had slept through all the noise—the sirens, the voices, and underneath it the dull roar.

“What’s happening?” she asked, rubbing her sleep-heavy eyes.

“There’s a fire.” Her mother’s face was pinched in worry, her grip tight on Sarah’s shoulder. “The house across the way is on fire.”

Sarah scrambled out of bed, pushing past her mother into the hall. The sirens made sense to her now. Her breath caught tight in her throat as she grabbed a coat from the closet and stuffed her bare feet into her winter boots.

“Oh *no*, young lady, it’s ten degrees out there and—”

But Sarah was already gone, pounding down the steps of the front porch loud enough to start the dog barking inside. The full force of the winter air startled her into full awareness, her toes tingling and alive in her leather boots, fingers stinging in the cold. She stuffed her hands into her pockets as she made her way across the road to where a small crowd of neighbors, firemen, and police officers had gathered. Her own father was there, lingering at the edge of the crowd, but he wasn’t quick enough to catch her as she ducked past him.

The house was cast in an angry glow as flames shot from the first-floor windows, the wood scorched and black from the smoke and the heat. Sarah weaved her way through the crowd, looking for someone in particular. “We’ll investigate the matter to the fullest, ma’am,” said an officer to a woman wearing a nightgown singed at the sleeves and no shoes and a face shining with tears—Julia. The fire was reflected in her eyes like it was trapped there. “Someone tried to kill us. I know it,” she asserted to the officer. “I’m *sure*.”

A modern day witch hunt, Sarah’s mother would say later, long after they were gone. Was Julia a witch? She almost seemed like it in that fraction of time as Sarah passed her, her eyes on fire with a certain righteous fury, back straight, hair loose and spilling over her shoulders like a waterfall of dark smoke.

Sarah moved on, shivering despite the heat of the flames, and found Ruth at the edge of the crowd. Her nightgown was covered by a heavy blanket someone had wrapped around her shoulders, and she was wearing shoes. Her face was blank as a doll’s. Sarah was almost afraid to approach her, but she did anyway. “We’ll have to go back to my dad,” said Ruth, almost too quiet to hear, as Sarah stood next to her in the rapidly melting snow. “That’s what my mom says. That we can’t stay here anymore.”

“Do you think it was—?” Sarah couldn’t seem to force the name up and out of her throat, and it lodged there like a stone.

Ruth didn’t nod, or shrug, or even answer the question. Instead, “I don’t know why anybody would want to hurt us.”

But the logic of it all seemed immaculately clear to Sarah. Her mother’s words slipped out of her mouth: “That’s just the way it goes in towns like this.” The sentence hadn’t sounded so bad in her head, but Ruth shuddered and didn’t reply, and Sarah wanted to clamp her hands over her mouth to stop anything worse from coming out.

Ruth’s silence would haunt Sarah for a long time after, where it lingered in dusty corners, in the empty barn, in the ruins of the house on the hill. Despite it, on that night

Sarah pledged to stand beside her friend for as long as it took, till the house burned to the ground or the sun rose or their feet grew into the earth, whichever came first.

But soon, Sarah's father startled her with a touch to her arm. "It's late," he said, with half a glance and a grimace at her friend. "Come on, now."

The house was still roaring with flames. Sarah looked over at Ruth, but Ruth did not look back. Like the fire was hypnosis. Sarah wanted to hug her, to touch her at least, but wasn't sure if she was allowed. Nostalgia sowed its seeds in the swelling cavern of her chest, turned out and empty. Half of her soul was left behind, and the other half followed when she turned to go.

* * *

Ruth and Julia had arrived in the sweltering high heat of July, though Sarah didn't know they were Ruth and Julia back then. The grass was dried to brown by the sun and the earth was cracked and begging for water on the day when a car pulled into the driveway of the farmhouse across the road.

Sarah saw the woman first, a curious, tall figure in a long dress, with her dark hair billowing around her in the hot breeze. She was carrying worn cardboard boxes from the trunk of her beat-up car to the front porch. Sarah watched from the safety of her mailbox, one hand looped around the wooden pole; she was exhilarated. No one had lived in the house on the hill since the foreclosure sign had gone up in the front yard at the end of the last summer.

But soon enough she was bored with spying on the woman and instead began watching a trail of ants that were navigating around the toe of her shoe. She looked up, startled, when there was a crash and a loud swear—a word her father sometimes used when he tripped over the dog or noticed a chicken missing—from across the street. One of the boxes had fallen apart in the woman's arms, spilling what seemed to Sarah to be a library's worth of books onto the loose gravel of the driveway. The woman put her face in her hands for a moment, like she was crying, before she swept her long hair from her face and bent down to retrieve them all.

Sarah looked both ways, twice, just like her mother had taught her, before she crossed the lane. Up the steep driveway she traipsed, her little-girl legs carrying her as fast as they could. "Scuse me," she said, and the woman's head snapped up in surprise at her small voice in the silence of the hot day. "Can I help you with that?" Sarah's mother would be proud. She'd always taught her to help those in need. She probably wouldn't even be mad that Sarah had walked across the farm road without her.

The woman smiled a hesitant smile and said, "That's alright. But thank you."

Sarah picked up a book anyway. *The Scarlet Letter*. The woman took it from her and placed it on top of the stack in her arms; the box was well beyond repair. There was the sound of footsteps on the front porch, and Sarah looked up to find a girl about her own

age, with hair long and dark like her mother's swinging in a plait down her back. She squinted down at Sarah. "Who are you?"

"I'm Sarah." Her grin had a few baby teeth missing, of which she was very proud. "I live across the street." Her mother had always taught her not to talk to strangers, but she figured it didn't count since they were neighbors.

The other girl padded barefoot down the stairs and replied, "I'm Ruth. That's Mom, but other people call her Julia."

The woman—Julia—smiled down at the two girls as she stacked the books on the bottom step of the porch. Then she bent down to retrieve the box; the cardboard crinkled wearily in her hands as she folded it. "Well, thank you for your help, Sarah. Do you want to come in? I can make lemonade—?" The edge of her voice tipped up into a question, hesitant. Her eyes were wide and dark, just like Ruth's, and big enough to swallow Sarah whole. Sarah nodded and hoped her mother wouldn't worry.

The scorching heat of July cast her burgeoning friendship with Ruth in a feverish haze in her mind—hours that blended together, each into the other, spent with glasses of lemonade dripping condensation on the front porch, games of tag in the fields till their legs were scratched and weary in the long grass, hide-and-seek in the dark gloomy corners of the barn. Sarah and Ruth became like sisters, like twins; if they were ever separated, it wasn't for long, except to crawl into their own beds every night. In a lazy summer on a long and empty road halfway out of town, they had no choice but to be half the other's soul.

Sarah's mother didn't like Ruth and Julia, and she pursed her lips every time Sarah ran across the street. She'd heard it, she said. What people were saying. "That place belongs to Jack Storms," she told Sarah one evening, "no matter who's living in it." The foreclosure had sparked a firestorm of gossip all over town—first when Jack was forced off the property, and again when someone bought it. Sarah's father agreed in gruff tones over the dinner table. Her mother raised a pointed eyebrow at Sarah as if to make sure she understood in the clearest, simplest terms. "Believe me," cutting into her chicken, one quick slice, two, "Jack will want his revenge." A small town, she explained, did not take well to a reordering of the hierarchy—of the old ways, old places, old families.

Summer melted away like butter on Sarah's tongue, each day the same, unchanged by her mother's words. The day before school started, she and Ruth lay beneath the rose bush beside the barn to soak up the last of the summer sun disappearing over the hill. It had been a long time since Julia had called out to them; Ruth said she was busy studying for the night classes she'd started taking around her job as a secretary, trying to find a better way to make ends meet. Because of this, Ruth was over at Sarah's house for dinner more often than not anymore, a situation Sarah's mother tacitly accepted but didn't seem to much like.

“My dad used to put me on the school bus every year on the first day of school,” said Ruth in the midst of their comfortable silence, picking leaves from the underside of the bush and shredding them in her fingers. “But not anymore.”

Sarah had never dared to ask, but now there seemed to be an invitation. “What happened to him?”

She looked over at her friend, who gave only a nonchalant shrug, peering up into the bush as if there were something interesting happening in its dark depths. “He was always yelling at my mom. One night she woke me up, and we just left.” She swallowed hard, an audible gulp in the quiet twilight, but didn’t say anything more. Later, Sarah’s mother would tell her that there was more to the story, but she would have to wait until she was older to figure it out.

They fell silent for a while. Sarah was examining an ant crawling alongside her arm when there was a sound like the crunch of gravel and dry grass beneath a heavy boot. Then a shadow fell over them. From their vantage point, all Sarah could see were the boots, dirty and worn through with holes, and above them, swinging from a gloved hand, a shovel.

“‘Scuse me,” said a man’s voice, gruff, unfriendly, “but I’m comin’ to take the roses.”

Ruth sat up on her elbows and Sarah followed suit, looking up into the man’s weathered face. “Huh?” asked Ruth, but Sarah shushed her. She knew that face—her mother had pointed him out to her at the supermarket, and once at the diner. Jack Storms. He looked even more haggard than usual, his face unshaven, eyes bloodshot, hair lank beneath his faded ball cap.

“That’s my grandmother’s rose bush,” he said, and with a sudden move he dug the shovel into the ground not six inches from their heads. The girls shrieked, but he ignored them. “It belongs to me.”

Before he could continue digging, Ruth and Sarah scrambled from beneath the bush and ran for the porch. In response to their screams, Julia had emerged from the front door. Her face was white with panic, tinged orange in the sunset as she stepped from the porch into the light. “What do you think you’re doing?” she said to Jack. “This is my property. Get away from those kids.”

She looked so small when Jack Storms turned to loom over her, like a flower before a tree. “This *property*,” he spat, “has been in my family for generations, and if I have to take it back one piece at a time, dammit—”

Julia’s face was no longer afraid but stony as marble. Fury was brewing in her dark eyes, and when she straightened it seemed like she was towering over Jack now, like she had turned into a dark and poisonous rose. “Not as long as I’m here. Girls—come on.” Ruth and Sarah ran to her, hiding in the safety of her shadow. To Jack, she said, “If you don’t get off my property now, I’m calling the police.”

She put one arm around each of the girls' shoulders' and led them back to the house. Sarah's heart was like a fluttering bird pounding up against her ribcage. "Be my guest!" Jack shouted after them. "But I'll be back!" Julia let the front door slam and locked it behind them.

The police took fifteen minutes to get there, and by that time Jack had already made quick work of the rosebush. The officers didn't let him take it with him—perhaps because they recognized the crime of it, or perhaps because it wouldn't fit in the backseat of the squad car. Sarah pressed her nose up against the window and watched the officers arguing with Jack; Ruth was too afraid to look outside, but Sarah couldn't seem to tear herself away, overcome with morbid curiosity.

In the end, the policemen didn't arrest Jack; instead, they led him back to his truck, parked haphazardly on the side of the road. The rose bush was left behind, its roots exposed dark and damp to the sunset in the hole created by Jack's shovel.

When the police car was gone and Jack Storms' truck had ripped out onto the road again, leaving behind a cloud of angry dust, Sarah crossed the road to her farmhouse with its windows glowing yellow and full of light. Her mother greeted her on the front porch and took her into her arms. "You're never going over there again," she warned. Her voice was shaking. Sarah nodded, but she promised nothing.

In the morning, she made both of her parents stand outside with her, two sentinels at her back, as she waited for the rusty yellow bus to chug its way up the hill. Ruth's house was dark in the morning sun, and the rose bush was gone.



The Four Horsemen by Caroline Manley

TAPESTRIES

2016-2017

WEAVING THE THREADS OF
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