

# PLUM

vol. 1



Pacific's Literature by Undergraduates Magazine

# PLUM

*Pacific's Literature*



*by Undergraduates  
Magazine*



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**Editors:**

*Cathy Kadooka  
Katie Dressler*

**Advisor:**

*Kathlene Postma*

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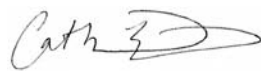
Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of PLUM: Pacific's Literature by Undergraduates Magazine.

Volume one of PLUM features the first place winners from the 2010 Writing Contest, as well as work from senior photography students. The nonfiction, fiction, poetry and critical essays published within PLUM represent the wide range of talent among Pacific undergrads. In addition, both editors selected a variety of photographs to include within PLUM; it was truly a pleasure to go through the beautiful submissions.

As co-editors, we worked hard to offer a legacy to Pacific through PLUM. Without the support and encouragement from Kathlene Postma, none of this would be possible! Thank you, Kathlene!

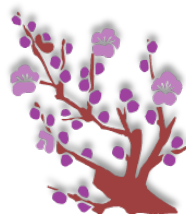
We hope you enjoy our first issue. As graduating editors, we look forward to watching PLUM grow and expand throughout the years. Sit back, take your time, and enjoy the creative work of some of Pacific University's finest authors and artists.



Cathy Kadooka  
Class of 2010



Katie Dressler  
Class of 2010





Photograph By: Ian Pearson

## Expect Rain

NON-FICTION

sami auclair

An armadillo mates in late summer. My biology does not submit to the seasons, but sometimes I suspect that the weather does affect my passions and consequently my own habits. When it rains, I want it more, but when the sun shines, with patches of grass crisping relentlessly beneath it, I succumb to the drought and impatiently await what the gray abyss and the coming rains inspire. An armadillo, like clockwork, will mate in July and August, just as the scorched grass begins to glisten beneath the weight of the showers and my body prepares for its feast.

An armadillo's gestation period lasts four months, but when she is faced with the stress of little food, or not enough water, or any harsh external condition that she can sense, she is able to delay her pregnancy—to stop it right in its tracks—for up to two and a half years. And when she is ready, four potential armadillos, all identical and originating from one egg, will develop within her armored womb.

I see it when I am young: the armadillo's insides gushing, blatant on the side of the road. I am such a child that the complexity of her reproductive evolution does not occur to me, but now I wonder: could there have lain within her a single egg already fertilized and implanted, simply remaining dormant in her dead uterus, not willing to develop—as if it somehow sensed the danger of that fateful curbside? Instead, I look at her guts and find them cool: that her armor is the same color as the scabs on my knees, is cracked like an oyster, as protected as an infant outside its mother's uterus.

After the summer time, and as fall makes its way, I always want it more. In a hypothetical today—upon implantation with a typical gestation period—I could become my own mother by mid-June. It would be a year too late, considering my parents' early start, but their life could be mine, if only I could want it. I could take my offspring out for lunch, watch it throw a fit over a plate of macaroni and cheese, and see a young woman similar to my former self roll her eyes and try her best not to come over and sock it—and I could realize that I, too, have become numb to the cry and the general

burden of parenthood, that I am not able to recall the initial implantation in my uterus for what it was: an intrusion.

A human body is more decisive than an armadillo's. My uterus would make up its mind during the six to twelve days it would take for an egg and sperm cell to implant while an armadillo's could take months to seal the deal, choosing to delay her pregnancy for a large portion of her lifespan if that is, indeed, what she wants. But that choice will never be mine, nor was it ever my mother's.

My father tells me that I was wanted: my mother loved me—he loves me. But I wonder if my mother would have internally delayed my arrival—by more than the nine extra days it took me to slide screaming through her prominent, torn abdomen—if she had known what was in store. If her uterus knew her heart, and her heart was aware of its fatal arrhythmia, would my combined egg and sperm cells have waited to implant? Would I, the little zygote, have reacted knowingly to my mother's condition and internally suppressed any intention I had of developing beyond a certain point?

The summer is nearly over, and I am finding myself wanting it more, despite how unready, how ill-equipped I feel in regards to what my body so clearly wants. It is not a dead armadillo on the side of the road that catches my eye as I ride the city bus this morning; it is a baby carrier sitting oddly on the highway guardrail, a large block of wood inside it. There is no indication as to why it is there, but it makes me think about what is in store for me. The grass is still brittle beneath my bare feet, but the rains are coming—there is no drought in sight—and all I can do is hope that my uterus knows my heart and that my heart will continue to reason with a more rational part of my anatomy.

*Sami Auclair is a Creative Writing major at Pacific University. She grew up in Rhode Island and first went to college on an island in Maine, where she studied Botany. But Sami is not a Botanist; she is a Writer. She relocated to Portland, Oregon, in September of 2008, and now she resides in Forest Grove with her cat. She likes to ride her bike, especially when wearing a skirt.*





Photograph By: Luciana Bianco

## **Jane Eyre Meets Her Match in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall**

### **CRITICAL ESSAY**

ruth happ

Charlotte Brontë joined other critics in censuring her younger sister Anne's novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, claiming its "choice of subject" to be a "mistake," as it was "too little consonant with the character, tastes, and ideas of the gentle, retiring, inexperienced writer" (Frawley 56). Anne's book deals openly with "debauchery, adultery, foul language, and violence in male characters" (Frawley 56), and her heroine breaks the law and defies what is considered socially acceptable in various ways. Those who know of the Brontës' lives are aware that the sisters passed much of their time writing in the same room, even around the same table. This leads some to believe the sisters collaborated on their novels, especially because they did work together in their early years of writing (Raine 15). The parallels in their various novels indicate the sharing of ideas, but the stark contrasts among them imply more of a literary discourse and debate than collaboration (Raine 11). *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* has been discussed as a response and revision of *Wuthering Heights* (Raine 148), but Anne does not only appear to disagree with Emily; Charlotte and Anne have their differences, as well. Both *Jane Eyre* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* took form around the same time (TWH xlvi-xlix), and both espouse a feminist approach to marriage in their support of equality of mind and spirit, relational intimacy, and a female voice, and both expose an ambivalence and somewhat contradictory attitude toward marriage and equality between the sexes. However, Anne Brontë's book transcends Charlotte's in its realistic and feminist strength, as revealed in a comparison and contrast of the two tales' storylines, characterizations, and conclusions.

*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (henceforth to be referred to as *The Tenant*) has, within its plot, parallels to *Jane Eyre*, as well as some inversions and additions to Jane's story that create a stronger message for women's rights. *Jane Eyre* runs from her beloved Mr. Rochester, who loves her, but also wishes to master and mold her to be the woman he wants, not the woman she is. Jane recognizes that if she dresses as he pleases,

she “shall not be [his] Jane Eyre any longer, but an ape in a harlequin’s jacket” (221). As Jane sees it, Rochester’s smile is like that which a “sultan might... bestow on a slave his gold and gems had enriched” (229). If Jane were to remain with Rochester as his mistress, he might come to see her with the same level of disparagement he felt toward his former mistresses (DeLamotte 214-15). Therefore, Jane escapes becoming another “inmate” of Rochester’s “harem” in an attempt not only to retain her purity and self-respect, but also to secure Rochester’s love and good opinion of her (230). She takes a bold step, leaving all she has known and loved, and nearly all she possesses, behind at Thornfield Hall to make her way in the world. Later, Jane also runs from St. John, who would have her become something she is not to marry and mold herself to his ideal of a woman. Rochester wants Jane to let go of her Christian morality in light of her love for him, and St. John wants her to let go of love in light of her Christian morality. Jane lets go of neither. Her individual story of faith, determination, and love, as well as her search and establishment of autonomy, asks female readers to follow her noble example. Jane’s is a powerful story, but Helen’s is even more so.

Helen Graham in *The Tenant* also runs from a man she once loved and who appeared to love her, but has degraded further from partying gentleman to alcoholic, abusive husband. She, like Jane, makes her own way in the world, but Helen’s occupation braves the world of painting as a profession rather than simply an expected pastime for women. Jane is a governess, then a teacher, both the primary careers for Victorian women who must earn their own keep. Anne makes her heroine defy expectation, however, and use her talents and interest in drawing and painting to support herself and her son. When Helen’s husband thwarts her original plan of escape, taking the money she had saved, her jewels, and painting materials (311), Helen bides her time but does not ultimately surrender. She utilizes the resources she does have (her own ingenuity and talents, family, and friends) to free herself and her son from Arthur’s corrupting and abusive influence.

Helen “runs” from Gilbert Markham, as well, who wishes to marry her. As Helen is still married (like Mr. Rochester), the two cannot commit their love with wedding vows and Helen must sever the connection, at least in person. In contrast to

*Jane Eyre*, the woman is the desired one, the unattainable lover, rather than the man (as in Rochester's case). Jane Eyre tells her own story; therefore, the reader receives quite a modest view of her. With Gilbert telling Helen's story, Helen's admirable qualities and virtues can be colorfully painted without being seen as boastful or unbelievable. The fact that a man opines about her would also have given the words more credibility to a Victorian audience, creating more respect in the reader for Helen (Raine 99). The fact of her divulging her secrets to Gilbert also endows Helen with more heroic qualities than those Rochester manifests. Rochester "delights both in confiding in and mystifying Jane...[He] is married, in secret, and he wishes to know Jane without fully acknowledging part of himself—either to himself or to her" (DeLamotte 209). In fact, Rochester never confesses his secret to Jane until he is "found out" and forced to explain. Through her diary, then, as framed by Gilbert's epistle, Helen becomes the unreachable beloved, thus bestowed with a higher ranking than Jane holds (as Rochester appears to own "the throne").

Both Jane and Helen run from men, and both return to them. Their returns create controversy in feminist discussion, provoking the question of whether or not the heroines are regressing back into a patriarchal, repressive structure, rather than continuing the struggle for women's rights and equality in which they have heretofore been engaged. Jane returns to Rochester after her refusal of St. John, first to minister to him as his "neighbor ... nurse ... housekeeper .... [and] companion" (370), and then to marry him, for Bertha has died. Helen returns to her husband and explains her purpose to him: "I came to offer you that comfort and assistance your situation required; and if I could benefit your soul as well as your body, and awaken some sense of contrition" (362); Helen thus attempts to nurse her husband back to health (doing her marital "duty") and show him her faith in hopes of leading him to repentance and redemption (doing her Christian "duty"). Unlike Rochester, who appears far more humble than in their previous courtship, and more accepting and appreciative of Jane for who she is, Arthur remains obstinate in his depravity, selfishness, and tyrannical abusiveness. Helen acknowledges she cannot save him, physically or spiritually, however much he clings to her as the hope of his salvation (380-81). Helen only has more power in that she is physically healthy and strong and has control of Arthur's son. She asserts this power when she boldly, though in

reality unenforceable by law, negotiates a deal of signed permission from Arthur allowing her and her son to leave whenever she deems it necessary in exchange for time with his son (Ward 162).

Both women return to their men and try to give them aid physically and otherwise. The two marriages are strikingly different, as Jane's is happy and harmonious and Helen's miserable and full of strife. They are similar, however, in that both women sacrifice their own interests to care for their husbands. Jane's marriage presents this with "rose-colored glasses," but behind the flowery surface, thorns of contradiction prick the reader's interest. Jane describes her marriage to Rochester as one of "perfect concord" (384), but this fairy tale ending is unrealistic and even disturbing. As Jean Wyatt argues in her article, "A Patriarch of One's Own: Jane Eyre and Romantic Love," "Jane's rhapsodic tone powerfully reinforces the fairytale message of the romantic ending: if you marry the right man, you will live happily ever after. Jane has lived out this static happiness for ten years without a wrinkle in her bliss" (Wyatt 211). No marriage is this blissfully free of conflict (nor is a conflict-free marriage even healthy).

Jane experiences love and companionship with her husband, but she also seems to enter a new kind of bondage. Wyatt claims that this fairytale ending wipes out the "argument against the domestic bondage of wives" found throughout *Jane Eyre* (211). Jane is an independent woman who enjoys connections with family and friends and aspires to know more of the world. As Nancy Pell points out in her article, "Resistance, Rebellion, and Marriage: The Economics of Jane Eyre," Jane gives up these enjoyments and aspirations, for "once they have found each other [Jane and Rochester] withdraw from society altogether" (418). Pell adds that "ten years after their marriage Jane and Rochester are still sequestered at Ferndean Manor, always a place of dubious healthfulness and damp walls, seeing only the servants and, once a year, Diana and Mary Rivers and their husbands" (Pell 418). Not only is Jane now unable to see more of the world or spend much time with company other than Rochester and their servants, but she also must now give up her occupations, including care of Adèle (Wyatt 211). Jane explains, "I meant to become [Adèle's] governess once more; but I soon found this impracticable; my time and cares were now required by

another—my husband needed them all” (382). Throughout her story, Jane seeks to establish her independence and significance; at the end, she seems to surrender it all to Rochester, causing the reader to wonder where Rochester ends and she begins.

Indeed, Brontë’s ending seems to contradict what the rest of her book espouses. Eugenia DeLamotte in her book, *The Perils of the Night*, discusses the Gothic elements in *Jane Eyre* and delineates the contradictions in the finale of the novel. DeLamotte claims that throughout the novel, Brontë “casts doubt on the efficacy of a woman’s attempts to find transcendence vicariously through a man’s broader sphere of activity,” as exemplified by Jane’s two marriage refusals “for exactly this reason” (226). Jane’s restlessness and its “metaphysical connotations” throughout are replaced in the end with “peace in a marriage of constant and perfect communication” (226). DeLamotte argues that the most important contradiction of the novel is that while Charlotte portrays, “in a shockingly specific and overt way, the perils of ordinary domesticity and equat[es] them with the worst Gothic nightmare of confinement, [she] nonetheless ultimately defines woman’s transcendence as domestic enclosure” (DeLamotte 226-227). Rochester is depicted as the perfect fulfillment of Jane’s desires for autonomy, occupation, travel, and companionship. DeLamotte explains that Rochester “knows the ‘busy worlds, towns’ [Jane] wants to know; her relationship with him is described in metaphors of vision, openness, expansion, travel, adventure in a sublime landscape” (211). On the other hand, Rochester “also represents the danger of blindness, confinement, stagnation; the possibility that domestic interiors are places where, as Wollstonecraft protested, women are ‘immured in their families groping in the dark’” (211). Hence, Charlotte’s ending is not only fantastical and unrealistic, but also contradictory, and may subvert her arguments regarding female independence and equality between the sexes. It seems reasonable, then, to charge Charlotte with the “delicate concealment of facts” Anne refers to in her “Preface to the Second Edition”; an act, according to Anne, that may enable, even perpetuate, the “sin and misery” of “the young of both sexes who are left to wring their bitter knowledge from experience” (4).

Helen's reunification with her husband is similar to Jane's in that she fully gives herself up to her husband's care. At first, she is cautious not to let herself be made "a complete slave," and recognizes that "it would be unpardonable weakness to give up all other interests for him," thus limiting her care of Arthur so as to watch over the servants, her son, and her own health (369). Eventually, however, Helen, like Jane with Adèle, must give her son into Esther Hargrave's care, "as her presence was so constantly required in the sick room that she could not possibly attend to him herself" (375). Helen's resolve to respect her boundaries with Arthur also seems to dissipate. The woman who before did not "generally sit up at nights" and takes care of herself, her son, and the servants (369), now spends nearly all of her time caring for only him: "I hardly ever leave him, except to go into the next room, where I sometimes snatch an hour or so of sleep when he is quiet; but even then, the door is left ajar that he may know me to be within call" (377). When visited once by friends, she allows herself only "a few words with them" and a breath of "fresh, bracing air," but rather than "join them in a walk round the garden," Helen confesses, "I tore myself away and returned to my patient" (377). Of course, Helen does not receive the gratitude from her husband that Jane does; Arthur "reproache[s] [her] bitterly for [her] levity and neglect" (377). Both cases of marriage are troubling; Helen's obviously so.

Anne's novel does not end with Helen's return to her husband's repression. The story continues and its feminist strength eventually outshines Charlotte's. In *The Tenant*, Arthur, the dominating patriarch, dies, freeing Helen from her legal obligation to him. She is later reunited with Gilbert and the two marry. Inversely to *Jane Eyre*, the woman does not return to the man. Gilbert must travel to find *her*. Gilbert also discovers that Helen is of a higher social class and possessing much greater wealth than he. In *Jane Eyre*, Rochester is above Jane in matters of age (he could be her father), social rank, and wealth. On several counts, *Jane Eyre* does plead for equal rights for women: Jane and Rochester view themselves as equals before God (216); Jane becomes financially independent by earning her own living and inheriting money (like Helen); and due to Rochester's physical impairments, Jane serves as his guide and leader in the conclusion. Practically-speaking, however, Jane still comes from a lower social class and limited experience of the world. By contrast, the hero in Anne's story is

a young farmer (certainly of lower social class) with limited experience, though he is viewed as more respectable and desirable than the rich men who have nothing to do but “eat, drink, and be merry,” abuse their wives, and neglect their children (i.e. Mr. Huntingdon, Mr. Hattersley, and their other friends of ill-repute). Gilbert moves into *Helen’s* home (unlike Jane, who moves into Rochester’s Ferndean Manor). Helen’s house is not sequestered away from family, friends, and society; indeed, her aunt even shares their home. Helen no longer needs to paint for a living, and she could certainly afford to send her son away to school or hire a governess for him, but Anne Brontë never implies that Helen gives up painting, nor does she surrender the care and education of her son to another.

Even in the romantic, matrimonial ending of *The Tenant*, Anne Brontë still seeks “to tell the truth” (3) and empower the female characters and readers. Some have felt that Gilbert and Helen’s marriage is inappropriate and disappointing, as Gilbert is not “the book’s ideal reformed male of the future,” due to the “anger, even viciousness, in his temperament” (Poole 862-63). Gilbert’s imperfections and their perhaps imperfectness for each other may be more purposeful, however, than simply flaws in Anne’s writing. Gilbert writes at the end, “I need not tell you how happily my Helen and I have lived and loved together, and how blessed we are in each other’s society, and in the promising young scions that are growing about us” (417). His language reflects Jane’s in its “happily ever after” feel, but his words do not include Charlotte’s idea of “perfect concord” nor do they fill more than one paragraph. The reader is also aware of Gilbert’s and Helen’s flaws from the rest of the story. This depiction of characters and marriage is more realistic than Jane’s ending of perfect harmony and near-obsession. It reflects Anne’s desire to “reveal the snares and pitfalls of life to the young and thoughtless traveler” rather than “cover them with branches and flowers” (4), as Charlotte’s ending seems to do in its covering over of the problems and conflicts even a happy marriage experiences. Anne’s book, with the imperfectness of its players, coupled with its contrast to the exclusivity of Jane and Rochester’s marriage, also encompasses more of humanity and concerns the whole of society, not just the individual looking for love and personal fulfillment.



Helen's story further transcends Jane's in its empowerment of women and feminist critique of society as Helen dares to break the law three different ways in order to protect herself and her son. She unwisely places herself in a marriage that soon becomes miserable, and regrets her decision, but cannot easily find her way out of it. Not only has Arthur gained possession of all that she owns by marrying her (Bellamy 255), but she also has no legal right to her money, her son, or her own body (Bellamy 256). As Joan Bellamy explains in her article, "*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall: What Anne Brontë Knew and What Modern Readers Don't*," Helen acts illegally when she keeps the money she earns from selling her paintings. In Victorian England, "a wife's earnings were the property of the husband" (256). The same applies to children. Helen has no legal right to her child; in modern terms, women of 19<sup>th</sup> century England had no rights of legal or physical custody or visitation with their children. Helen thus commits a crime when she "kidnaps" little Arthur from his father's residence, for children "were the property of the father" (256).

Helen's third crime, and one of deep significance, is her denial to Arthur of the conjugal bed. Upon her discovery of Arthur's infidelity, before removing herself and son from him, Helen proclaims, "henceforth, we are husband and wife only in the name" (260); in thus retaining full sovereignty over her body, Helen breaks the law. As Bellamy delineates, "The law gave a husband the right to take action in the courts for the restitution of his conjugal rights; she could be forced back into co-habitation and sexual relations" (256). This law was likely an unjust interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:4, which states, "The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife" (NIV). Victorian readers would probably view Helen as not only disobeying the law of mankind, but also the laws of God. It may be that Anne calls attention here to the injustice of solely holding women to these laws, disregarding the man's responsibility to give himself to his wife and be faithful to her. Her religious statement is thereby radical, and her heroine's rebellion groundbreaking.

A well-known statement of May Sinclair's from 1913 demonstrates the social significance of Helen's story. Sinclair stated that "the slamming of Helen Huntingdon's bedroom door against her husband reverberated throughout Victorian

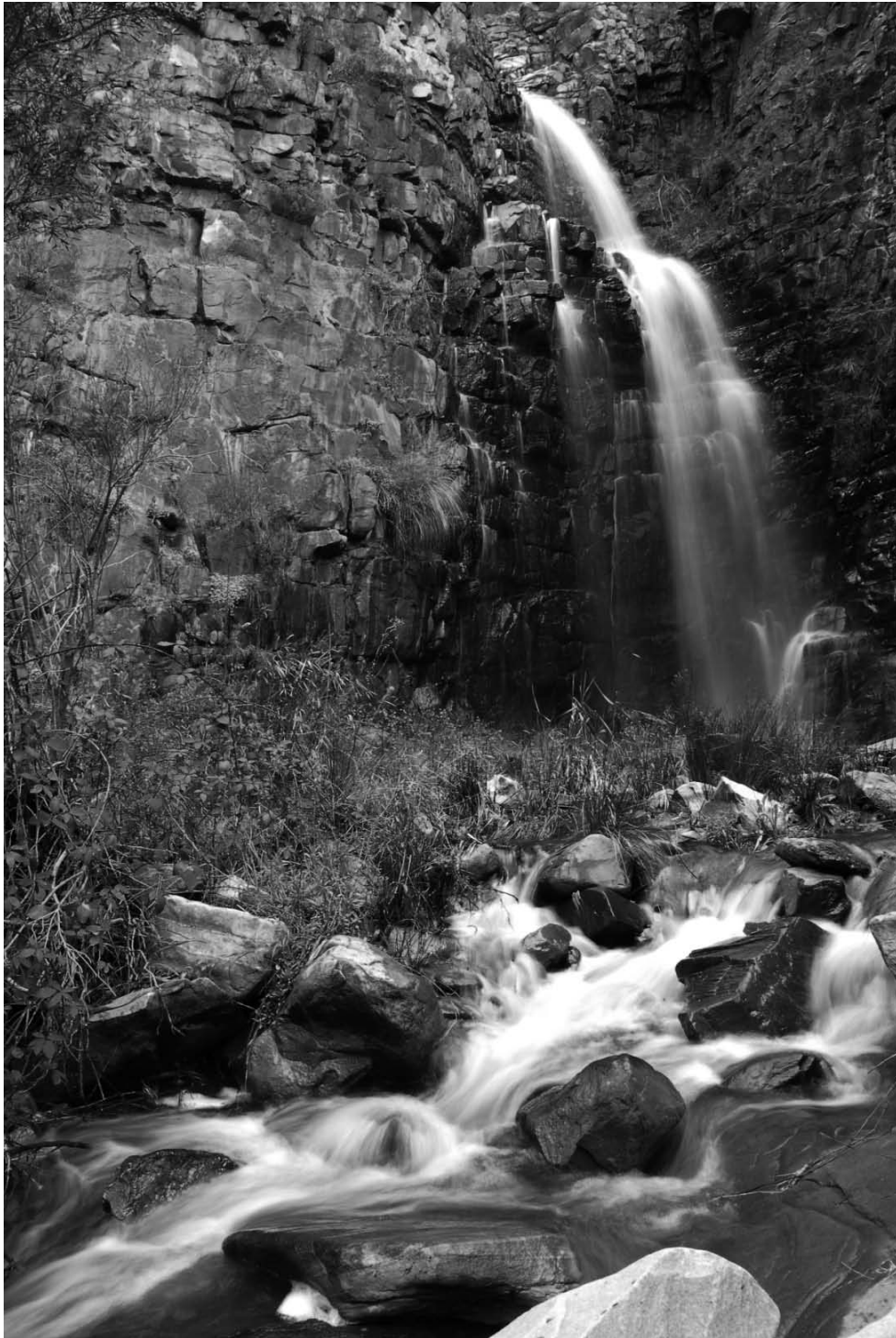
England” (Ockerbloom 1). Anne’s sister, on the other hand, “writes of individuals, each with her own frustrations and her own solution to them. She does not think in terms of a cause and can see no body of women to lead,” claims Patricia Beer in her book, *Reader, I Married Him* (88). Where Charlotte writes a love story that involves a woman’s stand for autonomy before marriage, Anne writes about the evils in marriage and parenting, the upper social class, communities, the legal system, and the treatment of women and children, among others; in short, Anne expands her characters’ concerns to reflect and critique those of the society at large. Ian Ward states in his article, “The Case of Helen Huntingdon,” that “in its stark portrayal of a dysfunctional, abusive marriage, the Tenant shattered the pretenses of marital harmony so beloved of many Victorians” (151). *Jane Eyre* seems to support this idea of “marital harmony” in its conclusion. Of course, Rochester and Bertha do not share a happy, fulfilling marriage, but Bertha is not a “normal” member of society, as Arthur would be perceived; rather, she is a foreign-born madwoman, excluded from all society. Ward additionally argues that Anne’s book “display[s], in harrowing detail, the reality of marriage for many Victorian women—and not just any women, but middle-class bourgeois women, the kind of women who could, indeed, be expected to read a Brontë novel” (151). In *The Tenant*, the reader is allowed to see the full effect of marrying for passion, without reason. Jane “experience[s] the full force of sexual temptation,” but she resists it and flees (DeLamotte 214); in *Jane Eyre*, Bertha may be the demonstration of what happens when one lives a hedonist lifestyle without limits. Anne gives a truer picture, however, as well as a more intimate one, of the consequences of such choices. She appealed, not only to individual female readers, but also to all Victorian women, especially of the middle-class, and her message extended itself to men and all of society.

Jane Eyre’s story is powerful in that it depicts one woman’s struggle to define and assert herself with the men in her life, saints and sinners alike. The romantic, but unrealistic, conclusion of her love story is somewhat disappointing to a reader who wants Jane to maintain some level of autonomy and fulfill some of her wishes. Jane’s relationship with Rochester feels somewhat gratifying, as everything turns out well (Rochester’s sight even returns), but its “happily ever

after” tone causes the novel to lose a level of credibility and intimacy with the reader who knows better.

Helen Graham’s story is also powerful in its depiction of one woman’s struggle to define and assert herself, but her story is integrated with other women’s (and men’s) experiences, as well as various depictions of marriage, in a way that serves to encompass all of society, not just one individual. The reader becomes engulfed in the unfolding events, which parallel and invert those of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, and may begin to embrace the moral Anne sought to convey “to those who are able to receive it” (3). Anne did not intend “those” to solely signify women, either. Even as regards writing and literature, Anne speaks out for equality between the sexes. Just as she wrote the book under a male pseudonym, and a man tells the heroine’s story, as well as his own, the novel’s message is meant for both men and women. In life, and in literature, authors and readers are created equal and should be treated as such. As Anne states in her Preface, “I am satisfied that if a book is a good one, it is so whatever the sex of the author may be,” and, “All novels are or should be written for both men and women to read” (5). I say Amen to that.

*Ruth Happ graduates in May of 2010 with a Bachelor's degree in English Literature. She works as a Bilingual Assistant at Poynter Middle School in Hillsboro, and hopes to attend a Master's in Teaching program next year. The Bronte sisters and Jane Austen are her favorite classics authors, and she makes her husband watch the film adaptations. When her two- and four-year old daughters get older, they'll probably watch them, too.*



Photograph by: Reese Moriyama

## America, My Valentine. 14 February 2010.

### POETRY

casey nishimura

1.

Your voice carries days  
and nights in my head  
and I wonder if my God has created alternate universes  
where I can love you like how I want to  
because every time I hold your hand  
I picture a little Palestinian boy sitting  
handcuffed to an Israeli  
police car so his friends won't throw rocks at it.  
I find myself  
only able to say "I love you"  
when I streak it on the side  
of a dirty hybrid car on a rainy day

2.

I walked to the edge  
of the forest and I couldn't understand how  
you took  
the trees, the birds, the bugs, the earth, everything  
that represents freedom, the frontier  
cut it down  
to lay railroad tracks and sign posts  
laced with barbed wire  
and Thompson machine guns  
to intern my people.  
And I find myself  
counting the ways I love you  
on the rings of dead trees  
till they reach zero

3.

You speak the languages of all the people around the world  
You have killed  
You cannot separate your body  
from the Uganda girl raped  
in a hut, in a town  
by some soldier whose name I cannot pronounce  
from the Palestinian boy maimed  
in a school, in his mother's arms  
by some soldier whose weapon came from your pocket  
from the Iraqi father exploded  
in a café, in a voting line  
by some suicide vest rigged with your definition of freedom  
from the American boy dead  
in a hospital, in an unmedicated pain  
by some disease because you were too cheap to pick up the tab  
How do I speak the language that has caused so much death?

4.

I need you to send me a  
stimulus love package  
because I know the news channels laugh  
at you and talk behind your back.  
I'm tired of listening to your internal conflicts  
of red and blue thoughts,  
when all I want to see is  
purple, gay faces of bliss  
because I'm tired of hearing people talk about  
how I supported  
this black guy  
that is taking away their rights  
when the only right he took away  
was the right for them to live under a White President  
I find myself only able to love you  
When Mr. O'Reilly creates the illusion we actually have  
a relationship

5.

I find myself without you to comfort me  
and the voice I hear is threaded with lies  
dropping weapons of mass destruction in my living room.  
but they do not plunder my faith.  
I find comfort in knowing your hands  
that hold me are not your  
founding fathers.  
I find myself loving you  
saying “Yes we can.”

6.

I hope  
my love  
can mend your wings  
Stop your hegemonic flights of adultery.  
Your \$3 billion affair  
with Israeli democracy  
has given birth to your illegitimate child,  
Hamas.  
Don't let yourself be Foxed.  
Glenn Beck would use  
your 2nd amendment if he had to give his home back to  
Native Americans.  
Remove Americans and insert  
Hawaiians.  
When newspapers no longer make sense  
I read poetry  
but when  
love is all you give  
and love is not enough  
doesn't everything seem  
like poetry?

7.  
You tell me I've got a lot to learn  
but I've walked through the huts of your history  
I've defeated you  
with my pen  
I want to put a curfew on your corruption  
because when I'm sitting at the bar  
in some distant place we own  
I want to stop tipping  
the bartender more  
to show him  
I'm not like you.

8.  
I'm tired of watching you hang  
out with your crony capitalist friends  
my lady liberty  
please, close your lassie-faire legs  
raise your interest rates with me  
deregulate the trade  
of our words  
equalize the exchange rate  
of my love.  
When did I not become good enough for you?  
When did you privatize your soul?  
When did I lose your property rights?  
Why did you let your friends convince you of this  
Washington Consensus  
that traded a part our relationship?

9.  
I am not a fighter.  
Well, I am a fighter,  
but not the type to split my head open  
for a vague cause where all I can understand is your  
call to action  
because love is easier to give than trust, baby.  
And we're just not there yet.

*Casey Nishimura is a senior at Pacific University majoring in  
Politics and Government. He began writing poetry three years ago  
after studying the intersection of poetry and politics with Kaia  
Sand. In the future he hopes to continue writing while studying  
political communication.*





Photograph By: Ian Pearson

## Whiteout

### FICTION

robbie dressler

Henry sat in his chair and looked out the window. He watched the children in the park across the street. They ran up and down the jungle gym, tiny blurs against his static landscape. Their voices mixed together indecipherable yet melodic, rising and falling with the intensity of play. The sound reverberated in Henry's mind. His thoughts wandered, a dream forgotten.

"Hank."

He felt a hand touch his shoulder.

"Hank, come back."

Henry opened his eyes. The hand belonged to a woman dressed in a red pantsuit. She stood, purse in hand, bent at the waist slightly, close to Henry's ear.

"I have to go, I'll see you soon."

"It was nice of you to visit," Henry said, arm extended for a handshake. "Take care now."

The woman ignored the hand and hugged him, whispering, "I'll see you tomorrow."

Henry turned to the window. The sun dipped below the horizon, casting shadows over the playground. The few remaining children dashed up the ladder of the slide, begging for one last turn before darkness descended, before night came to chase them back home.

## 2.

Betty lined her kids and husband in front of the house. She had been snapping pictures of the children playing in the snow all afternoon, and wanted one with the entire family. Hank stood to one side, muttering at the interruption. He was intent on doing yard work, but had relented to Betty's request. She attached the camera to the tripod and set the timer, nearly slipped as she rushed to join the portrait. The kids scattered after the flash, leaving them alone. Betty put her hand on her waist, facing her husband.

"Hank, are you coming in? I'm going to put the kids to bed soon, and then maybe we can watch Steve Allen together."

Hank lit up a cigarette, opening and closing his lighter before putting it away.

"I have things to take care of still. You don't want the basement to flood, do you? I'll come in when I come in."

He wandered off to the backyard, where Betty heard him rattling the tools in the shed.

She put the camera in its case and tucked the tripod under her arm, carrying it into the house. The kids would tire out soon enough and drag their wet feet all over the new carpet in the entryway. She might bribe them to remove their shoes.

When Betty was young, she had never been around new things. All her clothes were used, handed down from her older sisters. The house they grew up in was old and worn. Her kids had their own rooms with new clothing hanging in the closets. She worried they might be spoiling them, but dare not tell Hank. He had such pride. He oversaw the construction of the house, hammered many of the nails himself. He couldn't be bothered with the children when he had so many responsibilities.

The kids burst through the door, found their mother waiting.

“If you can take your shoes off without stepping on the rug, I'll make hot chocolate before bed.”

The children removed their boots and shed layers of winter clothing, left only a few wet footprints on the carpet. Betty inspected each one before allowing them into the living room, drying their hair and little bodies with a towel. She gathered piles of damp coats and scarves, then tossed them down the laundry chute in the bathroom.

Later she mixed the cocoa in a pan and heated it on the stove. She called her kids into the kitchen, sat them down at the table. Their hands held warm mugs, all talking in unison about the snow, vying for their mother's attention. Behind her, a figure darted back and forth in the window. The kids backed away, frightened of the shadowy outline

“Don't worry, that's just your father. I think he's digging out the drain.”

After the children finished their drinks, Betty tucked them in their beds. She returned to the kitchen to straighten up. She put the tin of cocoa back in the cupboard, along with the powdered milk. She loved the new fridge and stove, loved her kitchen. Hank had built the home they always talked about yet something was missing. She washed the dishes slowly, swaying to the rhythm of shovel against ice.

### 3.

Henry's nurse wiped the crumbs from his face. He'd eaten half his turkey sandwich, more than most days. His energy improved enough to take his meal in the cafeteria with the other patients. The doctor switched his blood pressure medicine a week earlier, and the change showed.

"You're looking good Henry. I bet you can't wait for your wife's visit today," the nurse said.

His wife. Henry heard the words and thought of Betty. He remembered the first time they met all those years ago during the war. Was it during the war? Was it after? He thought about it hard, saw flashes of a nightclub, of a young curly haired woman so shy she barely spoke, but she could dance. They danced the whole night as the band kept them moving. Or did they meet at a high school social? Didn't he visit his school during homecoming, on leave from the Navy? He remembered the Navy. At least remembered being on a boat. It didn't matter. He remembered Betty.

"When is she coming? It seems like forever since I've seen her."

"She'll be here this afternoon, same time as always."

Henry ran his fingers through his silver hair. He brushed the sleeves of his cardigan, straightened his shirt. He looked at his loafers, remembered how he used to shine them, lighting the polish on fire then dousing it. The leather had tarnished, fading over the years.

"Is she going to take me home? Do you know where that is?"

"Relax Henry, you'll figure it out. You worry like this sometimes, but it will pass."

The nurse scribbled something in a notebook. He patted Henry on the back and moved to another patient.

"Is she bringing the children? There's this wonderful playground across the street, and I know they'd love it. They always love the park. They always..."

Henry trailed off. He'd been excited about something. He could tell by his racing pulse. What had it been? He looked around the cafeteria at the unfamiliar faces. Fear crept over his body. He didn't belong in this place. A man washed the table next to Henry, nodded in his direction. Henry smiled, looked for a hint of recognition in his face. Did he know him? Did he know his family? Could he get him home? The man finished cleaning, moved to a table further away. Henry waited, unsure of what to do. He scanned the cafeteria for a way out. Through the

window he saw a courtyard with a small fountain. If he could climb the fence, maybe he could leave. He walked to the door. Nobody seemed to notice him. He tried to turn the knob, but it wouldn't open. He shook the door, twisted the knob as hard as he could both ways, but it didn't budge. He hit the door with his fist, softly at first then harder, hard enough for everyone in the room to hear.

"That's enough Henry. You're ok. I've got you. I'll take you where you need to go."

His nurse took him by the arm, walked him to the rec room and sat him down in his chair. He gave him a few pills and a glass of water, which Henry swallowed. His vision turned fuzzy as he struggled to keep his head above his chest.

#### 4.

Betty picked herself off the floor. She had sat there for a few minutes, mind blank, processing what had happened. She opened the screen door and ran to the sidewalk, but couldn't see Hank. She hurried back in the house and dialed 911. The dispatcher asked her to explain the emergency.

"My husband is lost. He gets confused sometimes, and he wandered off. Could you send someone to look for him? He's in his seventies, and has silver hair. He's wearing a blue sweater. I'm not sure which way he went, but he couldn't have gone far."

The dispatcher assured Betty they would find him, and advised her to stay at her home. She gave her the number of the police station to call in case he returned. Betty thanked her and hung up the phone.

The house was silent. Betty looked around the kitchen, unsure of what to do. The numbers of her children were written on the phone, programmed in so they could be reached with the push of a button, but Betty hesitated. Should she tell the kids? Ever since Hank's problems began, they wanted to put him in a care facility. They thought he'd become too much for her to handle, even before this had happened. Betty scolded herself. She shouldn't have blocked the door, someone in Hank's state couldn't be reasoned with. She kept trying to tell him he was home, this is your home, you're not going to find it out there, but his eyes were vacant as he shoved her down. Betty knew she had to tell the kids eventually, but she could put it off for awhile. The doctor might figure out the right medication, and Hank wouldn't get so confused. She didn't expect a miracle or a full recovery; she had done enough

research to be realistic. All she wanted was a glimpse of his old self.

She sat down on the couch in the living room. She thought of Hank lying on the side of the road somewhere, hurt and bleeding, all alone. She forced the image out of her mind, looked around the room for something to distract her. Family portraits hung on the walls. She scanned the pictures, revealing the progression of her family over the years. Some showed the children when they were young, others as adults with families of their own. Betty felt disconnected from all the smiling faces, carefree and ageless. Had they ever been that happy? She thought about what it took to get the kids to sit still and smile for a few seconds, not to mention all the grooming and careful planning to match the outfits. What had the effort accomplished? She wished one of the portraits portrayed them more honestly. She imagined what it would look like: her youngest crying at some perceived injustice at the hands of her siblings, Betty consoling her while at the same time wrangling the older kids back into view of the camera, and Hank off in the background, waiting for Betty to get the children in place. She would have hung that picture proudly, above the piano, for all to see.

Betty heard a car door slam shut in the driveway. She got up and looked out the window; saw a police officer kneeling by the passenger door, assuring Hank he was home. This is it, Betty thought. Hank's here, but he is never coming back.

## 5.

Henry was listening to records on his side of the room. His nurse had put on Rachmaninoff's "Concerto No. 2" and set the volume to a modest level. A thin curtain split the room in half, giving Henry a sense of privacy.

He heard the door open followed by footsteps and the murmurs of quiet greetings. His roommate's family visited often, and the occasional interruptions didn't bother him. A tiny hand pulled the curtain open enough to reveal a girl, no more than four years old.

"What do you have there sweetheart?" Henry said.

The young girl looked down at the floor, unable to meet Henry's gaze. She held a small blue bear with a heart on its chest.

"Too shy to answer? You remind me of my daughter. Maybe she'll come by some day when you're here and the two of you could play. Would you like that?"

The girl nodded her head without looking up.

“I know you’d get along, she’s a great kid and has lots of little dolls. Maybe you and her could go across the street and play on that slide. Would you like that?”

The girl shrugged.

“You kind of look like her, isn’t that neat? Her name is Kelly.”

Henry stopped. That didn’t sound right. What was it? Karen? Katie? He thought hard, but nothing clicked. Henry quietly recited all the names he could think of starting with ‘k’, but each felt wrong. The girl’s father picked her up and closed the curtain, reminding his daughter not to bother the other patients

Henry reclined on his bed. If he could concentrate hard enough, he knew he would remember. His record player hissed and skipped. The Concerto had ended. The nurse would flip it over the next time he made his rounds.

## 6.

Betty sat up in bed and covered her face with her hands. She had the dream again, the one where she was huddled in the back of the family station wagon speeding down the road, taking quick turns, always accelerating. She bounced from side to side, struggling to stay in one place. When she steadied herself enough to look to the front, she saw no one. No hands on the wheel, no driver in the seat, and the car kept going, faster and faster.

She got out of bed and paced her bedroom. It was bare except for the boxes lining the floor, unopened and unpacked. She hadn’t gotten around to decorating her apartment since moving in. She folded her arms and gripped her shoulders, felt the flannel of her nightgown against her palms.

It was around midnight, too late to call one of her friends from the senior center. She had started going there nearly every day for lunch, eating with a group of women in similar circumstances as her own. A few of the gals had husbands with impairments like Hank, but most of them were widows. They often told Betty how lucky she was to still have him, no matter how difficult it seemed, and she’d smile and agree, but deep down wasn’t convinced. She envied their freedom. She hated herself for it, but on nights like these she couldn’t get the thought out of her mind. Life would be easier if Hank was dead. At least then she could mourn and get on with it. Since going to the care facility, Hank had declined at an

accelerated rate. Several times the doctors didn't think he'd make it. She'd sit at his bedside, making arrangements for his funeral mentally, thinking of the words to say when people consoled her, but Hank always pulled through.

Betty opened one of the boxes against the wall. Scrap books and photos were stuffed inside, and she grabbed the one nearest to her. She turned on the lamp and sat on the bed, opening the album to a random page. The pictures were from a Christmas party, the last one she and Hank had attended. The hostess had encouraged the guests to perform a talent. Some people had put on a skit, others had sung. Hank and Betty had danced. The younger partygoers found it charming and looked forward to it every year. Hank would put on his favorite Benny Goodman album and away they'd go, just like the night they met.

Betty pulled a photo from out of the plastic and placed it on her nightstand. The picture caught her mid twirl, hand in hand with her husband, as old friends and forgotten faces smiled in the background. She turned off the lamp and crawled under the blankets, far to the right on the worn mattress. She stroked the empty side of the bed with her hand, humming quietly.

## 7.

When Henry woke from his nap, the nurse had brought him some coffee.

"Henry, your wife is here. I told her you've had a rough day, but maybe this will perk you up."

Betty. Henry sat up in his chair, looked around the room for his wife. He didn't see her.

"Hello Hank. How are you feeling? I see they put up the Christmas decorations."

Henry looked at the old woman in front of him. He looked at her wrinkled face and graying hair. The nurse was playing a joke.

"This isn't very funny. This old woman isn't my wife. This old woman isn't my Betty."

The woman forced a laugh followed by a quick swallow and looked at the nurse, half smiling and shaking her head. She took out her pocket mirror, showed Henry his reflection.

"You're not looking so good yourself Hank."

He stared at his face, felt his cheeks. She was right. He looked worse than she did. He looked closely at the old



woman, looked at her eyes. Maybe it was her. He couldn't be sure. He didn't recognize himself.

"I just want to go home. Do you know where that is? Can you take me there?"

"I told you yesterday Hank, they're tearing it down. That old house you built, they're tearing it down today to start a new subdivision. It finally sold. The money should last us as long as we need."

Henry thought about the house. He remembered putting up the frame and plastering the walls. He remembered his den, reclining in his chair reading the paper, the muffled sounds of his kids playing in the next room. He wanted to be there, to get back to that place.

He looked out the window across the street, but the playground was empty. Snow covered the slide and jungle gym. He saw men outside, clearing the parking lot. The rhythmic sounds of digging calmed his thoughts and body. His shoulders relaxed as he leaned back into his seat.

Hank could feel the wooden handle in his hands, his muscles tired from working in the yard all day. The drain needed to be cleared. He stopped for a moment and leaned against the shovel. He exhaled deeply, his warm breath like smoke in the cold air. He looked up through the kitchen window, saw his wife and children gathered around the table. The glass had fogged over, blurring their faces. The kids' mouths opened and closed as they talked to their mother. Hank moved to the window, hoping to hear his family. He moved closer, pressed his ear against the glass, shut his eyes. The wind howled, drowning out all sound. Snow began to fall, around Henry and in the kitchen of the house. His family didn't notice, sitting at the table, sipping on their mugs, snow piling up around them. He wanted to go in, to put his arm around his wife, to drink hot chocolate with his children, but he didn't. There was work to do. He'd left his gloves in the shed, decided to get them. He trudged through the yard, leaving footprints. He walked further into the dark, surrounded by a flurry of white.

*Robbie Dressler is an English Lit major and senior at Pacific University. He drives the range cart at Quail Valley Golf Course in Banks, where people try to hit him with golf balls. He has no idea what he will do after he graduates.*



Photograph By: Luciana Bianco

## Somewhere Over the Rainbow

### COLLEGE WRITING

vanita carillo-rush

I crank the engine of my ruby-red SUV, Trinka, over three times, pleading with my stalling ignition to catch and start. Named more for a Russian prostitute than for her Japanese origins, Trinka has seen better days. My Freshman year at Pacific University has come to a close, and my summer vacation finds me heading south to my home town of Brookings, Oregon. The reasoning behind Trinka's hesitation comes not from laziness, but from her knowledge of the summer events that lie ahead for her; there is only one fate for a vehicle possessing four-wheel drive on the Chetco River. I laugh internally at the memory of the monstrous dodge truck pulling her from the river last summer and dragging her across the rocky river bar. As if sensing my insinuation of her weakness, Trinka's engine finally ignites and gurgles alive. She gets her pride from me I think.

Forest Grove, Oregon might be the most inconveniently placed town in America. Pacific University is surrounded by major highways and inlets to the bigger freeways, but each outbound route takes upward of an hour to traverse. Making my way through Beaverton, land of endless car lots, I contend with the mid-afternoon traffic. Driving this junction to Interstate 5 is second nature now, when at the beginning of my Freshman year I can still imagine myself frantically searching for road signs while simultaneously clutching the MapQuest instructions. Reading and driving is a dangerous challenge, owing partially to the eight-point font that the directions are printed in: ink is expensive at Pacific University. The last of my anxious energy flies out of the window as I accelerate on to I-5 South. Finals are over, Freshman year is over. I turn the volume up to 18 on my stereo, adjusting my bass and treble to fit the needs of my new mix CD, titled "The Road Home." Zero 7, Nirvana and Sublime combined makes for a relaxed musical ambiance.

Songs pertaining to new tattoos and cruel summers accompany me through the grassy farmlands flanking the freeway. This straight road with virtually no change of scenery

stretches for several hours, causing my mind to wander for entertainment.

Leaving Brookings was the easiest decision that I have ever made; it was the staying at school that took the courage. Homesickness was a plight that I do not wish upon my worst enemy. The ache for the familiar was chronic my first semester at school. Hearing that other Freshman were experiencing the same feelings did nothing to relieve mine. Humor was the shield that I used to block those back home from seeing my struggle. “I have no friends,” I would joke with my friends from high school. In reality, I felt as though I didn’t. “These girls don’t read Cosmo,” I would complain to my grandma, “how can we be friends if none of them read Cosmo?”

But I stayed. I fought like hell to fend off depression, repeating the phrase “don’t drop out” like it was some sort of twisted mantra. And hey, I did manage to make some friends. Granted, I had to introduce them to Cosmo, but I cannot be too picky. Passing a KOA campground reminds me that some of my friends from school will be heading south to Brookings to camp in July. I can almost feel Trinka recoiling at the thought of her and I showing off some four-wheeling for the city kids. I have yet to tell them about the bathroom that is required for real camping, the little matter of there not being one. Well, starting next fall I may be back to square one, joking once again about how I don’t have any friends.

Glancing to my passenger seat I see a stack of letters that I received throughout the year, some from home, some from Pacific. Under the crisp yellow manila envelopes containing the indentures to my life, also known as my student loans, I glimpse the white envelope hailing from The Dean’s Office. Earning my place on the Dean’s List was definitely a surprise. My college aspirations prior to really attending school included passing, and quite frankly that’s about it, but mixed in with my letter from the Dean are some other papers deemed important enough to keep: My Big Brother’s Big Sister’s handbook, a Phi Eta Sigma Honors Society certificate, the application to start up a Cooking Club on campus. So much for just passing.

My grandma has my Dean’s List letter hung up on her fridge, because Pacific sends out identical letters to parents

who want to be on their kids' mailing list. She knows more of what is happening on campus than I do, which saves me the work of reading all of the highlighter-hued posters duct-taped to campus building sides. Grandma tells me when the McCormick Hall Pizza party is, whether I like it or not. She is some combination of wicked and good, the ratio determined by the state of being in the family and the amount of coffee coursing through her system. Nicknamed gator, presumably for her lurking watchful eye and snapping jaws, my grandma believes that the world is her business, and controlling that enterprise is in the job description. The FBI, she claims, was her calling in life.

I am the first in my family to attend college, or at least to attend and intend on finishing. My grandma refers to my college experience as getting my brain, and how the obtainment of this brain will eventually lead to a high paying job that will allow me to support her in her old age. Sometimes I wonder if she knows how much money high school teachers make in a year. If she knew what my future salary will actually be, maybe she would encourage me to work on my biceps instead; manual labor doesn't require student loans.

Or I could just get married. Right. Marriage has never really been my style. When the major of "Ring Before Spring" was explained to me I actually had to check the date to make sure that I hadn't been time-warped back into the 1900's. Was the ballot that I cast in November illegal? I still have the right to vote, don't I? Never a subscriber to that cliché story of living down the hall from the man you're going to someday marry, I didn't walk into Pacific expecting to find the love of my life. Besides the knowledge that clichés really are just clichés, I also was privy to a certain statistic: Two thirds of the Pacific population is female-- the odds are not in my favor.

The funny part about the whole love scenario is that I just don't care that much. After a gnarly break-up and thousands of shed tears, truthfully I just don't think that I have the energy for "love" right now. But try telling that to a family full of middle-aged women. Two unmarried aunts, an unmarried cousin, my grandmother the FBI agent and a divorced uncle, who gossips like an aunt, live within two square miles of one another, and I, essentially a guest during vacations, provide new news on the family commune. The hoard of singles descend

upon my love life like a pack of hyenas in Africa; my potential love drama is the oasis to quench their thirst.

Visits home from school always include a hair appointment at my aunt's shop, a Saturday deemed as "family hair day" by everyone besides my aunt. As an early riser, I head to the shop around nine, catching my aunt after her chai tea but before her mai tai. I take my seat on the black swivel chair and the interrogation begins. Twenty questions always starts with the same number one: You have a boyfriend?

Well, there it was.

"No," I answer, "I've been pretty busy with class, you know, not a lot of time for that kind of thing."

"Hm," she ponders the strangeness behind my reasoning, "well, have you been dating at all?"

Apparently dating takes up less time than actually having a boyfriend. "Not really," or at all.

I sense her impatience with my lackluster responses. "Well have you heard from Evan? I liked him."

The ex-boyfriend and reason behind my two month stint of dehydration due to crying, Evan had been a fun summer, and an economic drain. Leaving Brookings while I was away at school without so much as a courtesy text message, Evan had not yet moved into the "this will be funny someday" category. "Nope," my deadpan reply, "I don't even know if he's alive." The game stalls, and suddenly my hair is priority numero uno. Throughout the time allotted to me for dye processing, some other family members trickle in for their own beauty-parlor experiences. My other aunt comes through the door nursing her third Americano of the morning, my cousin entering behind her. I brace myself for another round.

My Americano aunt takes her seat on the wicker couch, greets my now mai tai aunt, and looks in my direction. "So, you have a boyfriend yet?"

Who saw that coming. "Nope, pretty busy with my classes. Very little time."

"Well don't get discouraged," she enlightens me with her wisdom, "you just have to get out there and date! Have you been dating at all?"

My answers remain civil, but become increasingly less patient. "Not really, no."

“You don’t talk to that Evan anymore do you? I really didn’t like him.”

“He might be dead,” I answer, straight-faced.

The hair styling pushes on. Unfortunately for my grandma, who probably cares the least about my lack of a love life, she is typically the last of the women to enter the salon, and also the last to play twenty questions with me. Although I live with her, she has yet to ask me about the state of my love life. For some reason this topic is inappropriate to discuss outside of the salon. I feel question number one hovering just on the tip of her tongue, as though the beauty parlor demands one to ask such questions.

“So Vanita,” she gives in to the beauty parlor-pressure, “any boy given you his heart up there at school?”

“Nope,” I say, “still defective!”

When my patience evaporates, this is my favorite response to question number one. After such a sarcastic answer, the topic of who’s heart that I do or do not possess will not be brought up again during the duration of my visit. A bittersweet satisfaction I must say.

The sun begins to fade into the west as I near Grants Pass, the gateway to the redwoods, and only one hundred one miles away from Brookings. A former NBA theme song begins to bump over my amped stereo system. This track reminds me that playoffs are underway, and that when I get home I can kick back with my grandpa and watch the game. Now there is one family member that doesn’t play twenty questions with me. I don’t think that asking me about my love life, or even that I would have a love life, even occurs to my grandpa.

One of my fondest memories with him include my junior homecoming dance, the first dance that I ever attended actually. I was in my room with my grandma, attempting to pin-this and adjust-that.

“You have to look your best, Vanita,” she attempts to impress upon me the gravity of a high school dance, “you never know which of your schoolmates could be the next Bill Gates!”

“Money doesn’t mean anything to me,” I say, “when I end up with someone, it will be for love.”

“Same thing,” she confidently answers. I roll my eyes.

Meanwhile, my grandpa is parked in his off-green chair in front of our disproportionately large living room television, watching the Trail Blazers getting their asses kicked. I walk, or rather, I

stumble out of my room, balancing on some ridiculous heels, towards the front door, passing the living room along the way.

“Doesn’t she look pretty, Rod?” my grandma prompts.

My grandpa looks up. “Come back when you’re a boy again,” he says.

The simplest wise man that I know, my grandpa always has just the right words.

I enter into Grants Pass, and marvel at how big the sky really is. No ambient light down here, just stars and headlights. I pull into Albertsons to gas up Trinka, and to get a little liquid fuel for myself at Dutch Bros Coffee. Driving out of town I suck down my strawberry redbull, gearing up for the home-stretch. I often wonder how many years I took off of my life my senior year of high school by drinking at least one redbull a day. Looking back, I wonder if high school was really that bad. Maybe I just liked the flavor.

The Canyon is a stretch of highway that winds along the Smith River, heading from Grants Pass to the Oregon coast, and to Brookings. The Canyon is a title expressed with tones of both fear and reverence. Wrecks happen in The Canyon due to ice and stupid drivers. With the sun down I enter The Canyon knowing that I will have the road mostly to myself, a foreign idea up north in the city. I roll my window all the way down, the combined efforts of the mild evening and the redbull keeping me warm. My CD starts over for the fourth, possibly the fifth time. I couldn’t change it, because it is titled “The Road Home,” and I’m not home yet. The Canyon is narrow and treacherous, but if a driver is patient and steadfast enough, it is possible to drive the entire way without using the brakes. Tonight there are no cars on the road.

The redwoods take over where The Canyon ends. They line the side of Highway 99, living guardrails all the way to the coast. I meet back up with the Smith River about two miles away from the Highway 101 junction. Crossing over the last bridge, I turn right at the stop sign onto Highway 101, the ocean my new scenery. As I drive through Brookings, I am reassured that nothing has changed; home is still home. A town boasting six stoplights and a Fred Meyer, Brookings is known for neither size nor diversity. Brookings can however claim the ocean, the river, the forest and a blissfully mild climate that snowbirds refer simply to as paradise. I pass under the second stoplight in



town, crossing the Harbor Bridge over the Chetco River, heading for North Bank River Road. My headlights play off of signs warning of deer and curves, my CD ends for the fifth, or maybe sixth, time.

I turn left onto Yellowbrick Road, noting that our street signpost has been spray painted, the product of a thwarted attempt to actually steal it I'm sure. I pull Trinko into my driveway, and she sighs with relief as I turn off the engine. Don't be too excited, I want to tell her, we're going wheeling in the morning. Slings duffle bags and backpacks over my shoulders, I head toward the front door. My grandma greets me and attempts to relieve some of my burden. My morbidly obese black toy poodle vies for my attention at my feet, wiggling to and fro, frothing at the mouth. Cute in a sad kind of way. I ignore her, however, and seek out my black and white Maine Coon cat Jessabelle. I find her curled up on my bed, waiting to give me the silent treatment for being gone for so long.

*Vanita Carrillo-Rush is from Brookings, a small coastal town on the border of Oregon and California. She is a sophomore majoring in English Literature, with a minor in Photography, and working toward a career in education. Music and the ocean are the loves in her life, and traveling is her passion. In the future, Vanita intends to travel to my own private, tropical island, and play a whole lot of fantastic music. Ideally food, friends, and sunblock will also be present on her island. According to Vanita, "what's the point of a private island without anyone to share the party with?"*

## PHOTOGRAPHERS BIO IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

### SAORI DEN

Saori grew up in the city of Osaka, Japan and moved to the West Coast in the summer of 2008. She is currently finishing her degree in photography at Pacific University. She is always looking for models for a new body of work and available for commissions and editorial work.

E-mail: mordecai929@yahoo.com.

### IAN PEARSON

Ian is currently finishing a BA in Music with a minor in photography. He has found that photography as a medium helps him to relax and enjoy everything surrounding him. Learning the fundamentals only three years ago, he has made it his ambition to strive for only his best work. He tends to capture subjects that he feels stand out from daily life and isolates them so that the viewer's attention is directed only to the subject. He feels that it creates a more intimate connection with the subjects.

### LUCIANA BIANCO

Luciana was born in California, but grew up in Hawaii which is her home in every way. She has always had an interest in art, and by the time she started High School, had met many other students that were interested in photography as well. Ever since, it has always been a passion of hers to go on adventures with her camera and see all the beautiful things the world is just waiting for her to find.

### REESE MORIYAMA

For Reese, Photography has become a true blessing. It encourages interacting with new faces, and teaches him to become much more observant of the world. This art form provides him with a creative outlet to express himself and offers an escape from the hectic life of a college student. Once he pulls the camera up to his eye, he is in another world hunting for the best light.

**Back Cover Photo: Reese Moriyama**



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University  
Oregon