



HIPPOCRENE 2006

HIPPOCRENE 2006

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

HIPPOCRENE is an arts magazine by and for the students, faculty and staff of the Washington University School of Medicine. We accept submissions year-round, and publish roughly once per year. Issues are freely available to all current medical students, graduate students in the Division of Biology & Biomedical Sciences, and to many Medical School and Division faculty.

This year we celebrate our tenth issue and tenth anniversary with a 40-page, full-color format. We thank everyone who contributed writing, artwork, or their time to this issue. The works presented here were selected by our review board using a double-blind web-based process. We hope you will enjoy them as much as we have. We are especially grateful to the Medical School Alumni Fund, the Department of Admissions, and the newly formed Arts Commission (see below) for their generous support.

You can download an electronic version this issue, browse past issues, and learn more about our organization, as well as local arts events, at our webpage:

<http://medicine.wustl.edu/litmag>

Please contact us if you are interested in joining the review board. Submissions, comments, and questions can be sent via e-mail to litmag@medicine.wustl.edu. Thanks for picking up this issue of HIPPOCRENE and for continuing to support the arts in all its forms within your community!

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Washington University School of Medicine Arts Commission

To foster a formalized arts tradition at Washington University in order to add richness to the medical school community. To provide a resource for students and groups in the cultivation and presentation of art – in all its forms – on the medical campus.

In addition to Hippocrene, the Arts Commission supports these events and programs:

- **Annual Art Show** – March 1-7. Opening reception featuring student musicians, 3/1 at 7pm in the LTC Atrium. Displaying visual arts created by students, faculty, and staff of the School of Medicine.
- **1st Annual School of Medicine Musical** – “Guys and Dolls” -- April 7-8 at 8pm, and April 15 at 2pm/8pm in Moore Auditorium.
- **Coffeehouse Concert Series** – Monthly concerts in a relaxed and informal setting. A venue for classical, jazz, and other Medical School musicians to perform and be heard.
- **Grants for the Arts** – Encouraging the creation of art by providing selected students with funds for art supplies and materials.

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Arrested development

Buck Samuel
Microbiology



Drying peppers

A. Burcu Babaoglan
Developmental Biology

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Octopus before dinner
Skiathos, Greece

Cawas Behram Engineer
Plant Biology

Stripped

Scratch Scratch

A window tap
Fly on poles as Venus trap
Blind-sided slap and misplaced nap
That flap sits open in your lap

Zip Zip

Decoded hips
Forbidden drinks for sultry sips
Attentions drawn from eager lips
One dollar tips for metal grips
Libidos sleep in cotton crypts

Slide Slide

The nights deride
Five-dollar cover and your pride
Once inside want to get inside
You tried they lied
They laughed you cried
Cannot wipe tears with two hands tied
Empty beds stand in as bride

Click Click

Phantom clocks won't tick
When stilettos stick
Where eyelid flick's
The cruelest trick
Sweet soft and slick
The dawn of dawn
Will make you sick

Crash Crash

The bachelors bash
The maddest dash
For the reddest rash
We drown our sins in midnight bath
The first splash leaves
the deepest gash

Lament Lament

We cry for thighs held unrepent
We die for eyes of *mal* intent
We've spent our lives collecting debt
Belie the bill; the tip, torment

Stumble Stumble

Lies are yelled in sterile mumble
Vindications topple, crumble
No truth is found amidst the jumble
Why can't we simply be humble?

Jason Hill
MSTP II

Hand me downs

Clare Ridley
WUMS II

I. Her Last Breath

Mama finally let go of her last breath on Friday. I watched her breathe in and out, her left nostril pushing in and out against the air, her right nostril still and silent. I sat next to her for thirteen hours straight, getting up only to go to the bathroom, racing back desperately so that I would be there right up until the last millisecond, so that I wouldn't miss the most important moment in her life since I was born. I watched the flecks of dust on the table next to the clock, stirring weakly with her breath, a million ghostly molecules waiting for the air to stop. I put my head down, not on her pillow, because I did not want to wake her, my finally peaceful mother, but in a triangle of mattress left by her folded arms and the curve of her hip. For twenty minutes I fell asleep, and I woke to the feeling of Dad squeezing my hand.

I asked Dad to wait a minute before we covered her with the bed sheet. Though I don't like to admit this, I believe I'd been expecting something like a grand finale, some scene where death would catch her in mid-sentence, in the middle of a confession of profound and unparalleled love for my Dad and I. I had wanted her to say, "Crystal, I will miss you in Heaven," or something else. Now I won't know for sure if she does actually miss me in Heaven, if there is one.

She died silently. Her jaw slacked slightly, not too much, but I could see the glistening spittle between her tongue and her lower teeth. I touched the right side of her jaw, which was still warm, ninety-eight point six degrees for the last time ever. The vertical creases between her eyebrows and the U-shaped lines running around the corners of her mouth had not relaxed. Mama was tense even in death, and the final release was no release at all. I wanted to hit her so hard for going, but I know I'd never forgive myself if I did, so I ran into her and Dad's bathroom and punched her towel instead.

My Dad looked to me for agreement before we pulled the stained sky blue bed sheet over her head. Some of her dyed red auburn curls peeked out from underneath the

sheet. Gone and not gone. Mama's body was still full of warmth. I actually prayed for a few seconds that she might move underneath the covers, that her lax body was a practical joke from the heavens. I waited for her to push aside the covers and mumble about a cup of tea.

After Dad called the funeral home and then Aunt Corrie, I went downstairs and started the hot water for tea, just in case, even got two bags of chamomile out and peeled back the paper covering, but I left them on the counter unused. Mama was only quiet and complacent in bed.

My language changes when I think of last Friday. Even though I punched the towel, when I think back to that day the loss, the incredible, indescribable loss overwhelms my memory and I don't know how to put things in my own words. I don't have words for something like this. The loss can never be outlined for someone else. So when I think back to last Friday and try to describe the events to myself, I just borrow images and descriptions from fragments of books that I've read in school that talk about death and loss. When I can't think of anything else I quote passages of the Bible to myself, but then I catch myself because I don't believe in God anymore.

I still have Mama's sheets, folded in my closet with the utmost care. That was the first thing I've folded in the past two years, when Mama got too sick to make sure I was doing housework. She tried to make me pick up the chores she couldn't manage anymore, but at the time I felt like if I began doing them, it would be a confirmation that she was sick, like I'd accepted it. So after a while Dad started to help out, but he was mad at me for it. It's just that I knew what would happen.

Dad would say, "Crystal, would you mind helping me with this?"

I'd say, "Sure," and before you know it, Dad would start assuming I'd do the housework and he'd stop doing it himself. Like I'd married him and said that it was my job to pick up his stuff. Sophomore year of high school is too early to start acting like a woman. I've decided not to become the type of girl that Mama got trapped into being.

So what actually happened is this.

"Crystal, help me with the garden hose. I don't know how Evelyn wrapped that thing up around the spool."

"Fine, I'll be right down."

I unwinded the garden hose. That was fine.

"Now carry the spool around back and put it in the shed." So help me rake the leaves. So run this errand for your Aunt Corrie. So bring this pot of beans over to the church for Evelyn, for Mama.

So don't take my help for granted. I know he thinks I'm selfish, because last year, he said, "Crystal, why do you have to act so selfish?"

I said, "Well, if you'd talk to me once in a while other than to tell me to do something, I might feel like helping."

He sighed and left the room, like he always does when you bring something up that points out something uncomfortable.

All I have to say is that Mama's sheets had better stay far away from Dad, who will put them in the washer dryer and wash her cells away. Dad would never think of keeping her smell. He would use the sheets again and maybe not recognize them as the exact ones Mama died in. If he asks where his bed sheets are, I'll lie and say I have no idea where they are.

Aunt Corrie rushed over to the house that day, fifteen minutes after Mama passed. She pulled back the bed sheet, which angered me and made me jealous that she had the authority to do something like that.

She put pennies over Mama's eyelids, or tried to, but Mama's eyelids were too round and the pennies slid off. She picked them up off the floor twice and then finally gave up. The one on Mama's right eye stayed on but the penny on the left eye wouldn't. Mama wouldn't settle for death. Instead I felt her hovering over us and saying No, Corrie, put those filthy coins away. What in the hell are you thinking?

I know that Mama was saying that because just at that moment when the penny slid off her left eye for the third irreverent time, I suddenly realized that the kettle was hissing violently. I had forgotten to turn off the hot water for the tea. The boiling water shot out of the kettle's spout in spurts and launched through the air. Mama's spirit felt like it was in the kitchen, like death had vomited her back up because she would have none of it. I remember laughing hopefully at that thought and secretly waited for Dad to call downstairs that Mama had opened her eyes. What I can't tell my father or anyone else is that maybe she isn't dead at all. Maybe she's just invisible.



Woman with flowers
Lima, Peru

Leah Givens
WUMS II



Fruits of light

A. Burcu Babaoglan
Developmental Biology

A Scattering of Stars

In Memory of Laurel Clark, Astronaut on the Space Shuttle Columbia STS-107, Lost on February 1st, 2003.

* Quotes from Laurel Clark, transmitted from space.

“..it is glorious. Even the stars have a special brightness...”*

It would be difficult to explain to you
the enveloping sanctity of space; how weightless
the breadth of eternity, how unbound –
to spring loose the human pulse, the breath afloat, heart
penitent yet euphoric, upon a purple galactic sea.

It is like an oblique streak of gradient light
behind the eyelids,
then the fluvial, silver sound of sky and silence
breaking quietly on the mind.
More peaceful, more silent than snow,
it is like inhaling into one’s own soul
the crisp white clarity of stars.

Almost ceremonious, I ascended the
throne of the Most High
in a fulgent white vessel,
trailing my glittering scarves of stars behind me,
a fluid train limned with gold.
I saw everything; I saw everywhere –

“lightning spreading over the Pacific, the Aurora Australis
lighting up the entire visible horizon....the crescent moon
setting over the limb of the Earth, the vast plains of Africa
and the dunes on Cape Horn, rivers breaking through tall
mountain passes, the scars of humanity, the continuous line of life...”*

I bathed in starlight and saw
the crescent moon curled at the knees
like a baby sleeping,
and I loved him like a mother
watching him while I swept
the great halls of stardust,
while I wound lucent threads
around a blue ball.

It is not that you could veritably understand,
but I tell you nonetheless: the human mind
cannot shine like metal or machine.
It is not polished, not timely,
but implicitly flawed.
So it happens –
somewhere between sunrise and set,
between God’s ‘Book of Life’
and the record of all my days,
my eyes are suddenly starless.

All at once I have arrived
into a house of blue–white brilliance where
God comes to give me wings
of gelid green isinglass and luminous light.
I fly without effort, without pain, without regret,
longing to show you –
that the circumference of love is as immeasurable
as space itself.

Listen – even from this height of divine happiness,
I am singing Scotland the Brave to you.

“Life continues in lots of places, and life is a magical
thing.”

Linda Ketchens

Center of Computational Biology



If you weren't already

Dana Sacco
WUMS III

Heads

He leaves a wet spot on her lip as he pulls away. She thinks that spit is gross, the thought comes unbidden, and as quickly as she thinks it she realizes this is not spit but initiation, an invitation to a world she feels very much a part of despite her 9 years of age. She knows instantly that this is bad, but with the knowledge comes the confusion of a child just starting to understand that the grown up world isn't always black and white – girls are not pink, boys are not blue, and little unpink girls who kiss little unblue boys are not dirty, not evil, not getting pregnant like she saw on TV. But what of a man?, she wonders. His face is still frozen in midair a few inches from her, his hands trying to cup her face but her head is so small that her ears are covered too, sounds muffled so that everything suspends for a moment in time to fix it in her imagination and haunt her well into her teens and maybe twenties. This picture of his head, her field of vision framed by the big hands on her small face and his hair sticking out from the wool cap pushed to the side, it will come to her in a heavy swoosh exactly four years, three months, and two days from now when she hears on the 5 o'clock news that a man's body has been found naked with his head cut off and then they will say his name and, though she knows it's irrational, she will wonder if this is somehow her fault, if she stole his head in her own fantasy, and she will want to give it back, to give back even that fleck of spit, if it will only mean he is still soft and pink with wet lips somewhere. But she is only 9 years old now and cannot yet know his sad ending. She knows only his messy blond-brown hair and his pink shiny cheeks and the beard that makes it so that she cannot even pretend he's the 15-year-old camp counselor she's made a habit of little-girl-flirting with. She knows she's a bad one, she knows this is only the beginning of a string of pictures of frozen heads connecting the moments when she feels pure and evil and naked.

The spit dries on her lip. He smiles and then the picture goes black.

Shana Kusin

WUMS III



Rick's bicycle

Ivana Rosova
Molecular Genetics

Ode to a lost I.D.

Oh I.D., I.D.,
Where do you be?

You were my friend,
The useful type,
With a picture of me
And a magnetic stripe
We took a midnight trip to
the SHAC
I used you to enter...
But when I came back

To my room
I found
That you'd disappeared
Very weird

Eleanor Oakley
WUMS I



Offerings

Karmella Haynes
Molecular Genetics

Hand me downs

Clare Ridley
WUMS II

II. *Mama's funeral*

It's been seven days since she died. Friday should be a gentle day for a funeral. After all, you have the weekend to receive people's sympathy and recover. All I feel ahead of me are two days of the gentle buzzing of the refrigerator interrupted by whichever old neighbor or relative comes over and talks too loudly. The only thing worse than the silent house, which is unbearable, is people coming in and making noise. There isn't life here anymore. Why do they insist on coming in and trying to bring it back? I've set rules for myself, though. No sneaking in her bedroom and sleeping on her side of the bed. It's not warm anymore. I've lain down on her side of the bed every single day, but I bolt out of bed when I hear Dad coming because he'd ask me what I was doing. I think seeing me lying there would make it harder for him, which I don't want. He hates to see people grieving, especially me.

I keep repeating the story of my Mama's death to myself over and over again as everyone who put up with and hopefully loved Mama waits to mourn her reluctant passing.

Right before the funeral two old ladies in designer imposter suits accost me. They pause about five feet away from me, close enough for me to know they're hovering but far enough away for them to whisper to each other and look at me. When they catch me looking at them, the thin one approaches.

"Crystal, I'm Jean Larson. I met you at the Atlanta Flower Show a few years ago but you probably don't remember who I am. I just want to tell you that I'm so sorry. I've been a friend of your mother's since she was a little girl, a few years younger than you. Honey, I know this is very hard but your mother was such a special lady. Such a special lady."

Don't tell me how special my mother was. I knew it every day of my life. "Thanks. I feel like I'm five years old all of a sudden."

"I know, honey. I know."

When I was five years old I used to be brutally honest. I made my grandmother a card for Thanksgiving with a turkey on the front, crying big, salty tears. On the inside it said, "If you don't stop smoking it will die soon. Happy Thanksgiving. Love, Crystal." A few months later she stopped smoking. Honesty used to get me what I wanted.

The fat one nods in agreement. "I know I speak for my husband Jim and I when I say..."

"Where is your husband?"

Her face suddenly turns white. "Jim is so sorry he couldn't make it. He's in Alabama with our new grand niece—a bite-sized little baby girl, and he just knew there wasn't any way he could get back in time. He has a bad hip, and..."

When I was five years old I used to be brutally honest. I made my grandmother a card for Thanksgiving with a turkey on the front, crying big, salty tears. On the inside it said, "If you don't stop smoking it will die soon. Happy Thanksgiving. Love, Crystal."

Oh please.

"...but he's so sorry he couldn't make it."

The skinny one chimes in, "Everyone at the garden club will..."

"No one in the garden club cares or they would have shown up to the funeral!" I run off and sit on the front pew next to Dad, blocking them from view.

Father Peacock rolls his thick Irish accent over a passage in Romans that is meant to make all of us accept Mama's degeneration into brownish particles of earth. (Romans 6:3-9):

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"

I feel like Father Peacock is just saying that to get God off the hook for taking my mother.

"We were therefore buried with him through

baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

I don't know what this man is trying to say. I don't see anyone here living a new life, Mama included.

"If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin."

Dad is bowing his head next to me and nodding ever so slightly as Father Peacock talks about freedom from sin. He molds his hands around a pathetic bunched up Kleenex that is too battered to absorb any tears. But there is no moisture in the Kleenex. It's practically disintegrating in his hands. I wish he would say something out loud, finally.



She probably isn't coming back. I can't believe that. It doesn't make sense for her to disappear. I look over at my father, whose eyes are beginning to run against his will. It's so bizarre, so unacceptable that we are just bodies with some of God's breath, like a car battery inside, and once the battery runs out the breath stops the body turns brown and decays. My Mama's body has probably gotten stiff. Those soft, squishy underarms of hers that I always loved to play with are cold.

The air feels too much like liquid. I can't see a damn thing through this fuzzy liquid. I surrender my head into my Daddy's lap and my body pulses against his sharp, cold belt buckle in rhythmic sobs.

"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him."

Yeah right.

Thank god at this point my little five-year-old cousin Lizzy farts incredibly loudly about six rows back and giggles. I blow my nose, sit up with sudden animation and look over, almost as if I hadn't died with Mama. Some heads on the other side of the aisle turn, but they are the heads of people under thirty. My other cousin Paula starts to cackle and I hear an "Ow!" and then a hiss and then a snort followed

by silence. My mother must be smiling too. Father Peacock has a cold and a thick accent and he keeps hocking slightly between passages when he thinks the microphone is far enough away from his throat not to amplify the sound. Mama is wrinkling her nose at him. Nasty man. She never ever liked him. I wrinkle my nose at him too.

The rest of the sermon I don't catch. Some day I plan to ask Dad what people said. Aunt Corrie gets up and says something about unfortunate and untimely passings, but I deliberately block the sound out with my left hand. One of Mama's friends from college gets up and speaks, but I don't know her.

I'm wearing the black flats that Mama helped me pick out two years ago for the winter turn around social that she said were cute but that I never put on because they look too conservative. She always said they looked so nice and made my ankles look small and my calf muscles look shapely. I thought I looked like a school marm. But now since I don't have to please her anymore I feel like it's my responsibility to.

When everyone leaves and walks by to console us my father looks like he is suddenly in the army and I try to copy him. Shoulder blades thrust back. Feet turned out, one hour away from midnight in both directions. Knees locked to stop the bloodflow. He doesn't allow himself to cry. He'll do that at home when he's in the shower or in bed at 3am when he thinks I'm asleep and won't hear him. His back is so straight that it's arched and he looks forward with dull eyes. He offers his hand out stiffly, like a salute to our loved ones paying tribute to my mother's life and death. He needs someone to come in and check on him at night. He needs to be able to refuse hot chocolate from someone. But I know I'll get tired of having him turn me down. Maybe I'll come knock on his door tonight, but I'm not sure if I want to wander back to my room by myself.

The comforters are passing through. This is one of the times when I'm not really supposed to speak. I just stand there like a reserve soldier with my eyes down, opening them periodically to nod to people after Dad greets them, and shut them back in time for Jean Larson and the other woman to pass. This is the moment when people make the most effort to be sincere and you know how much they actually like you or ever liked you.

Uncle Harry, Dad's brother, limps up and grasps Dad's bicep but doesn't look at him in the face. He hasn't looked Dad in the face since Dad told him he



Faucets of Duplicity in Multiple
Terezin, Czech Republic

Matt Vesely
MSTP II

should stop feeling sorry for himself and get a real fucking job.

"Frank?" Uncle Harry says with his eyes down.

Dad looks up at him after ten seconds but Uncle Harry still doesn't look up. The army wouldn't take him because of his legs.

"Harry."

Dad and Granddad never mention that specifically, but when all three of them are in a room the Granddad and "his son" stand together and exclude Uncle Harry unless the women are in the conversation too. I don't know if Dad actually dislikes Uncle Harry for being a gimp, but the two of them talk like opposing lawyers when they're together, both withholding information. They only speak once a year for thirty minutes on Christmas Day.

"Frank, if you need anything, you just give me a call."

"Thanks, brother."

"Crystal, you too."

"Thanks."

"I guess I'll be seeing you around, then, brother." He releases Dad's arm and pushes past us.

I asked Mama once why Granddad didn't hit the both of his sons, only Uncle Harry. Mama said that Grandmother stepped in and laid claim to Dad early, saying, "Harry, this is my son. Don't touch my son." Dad has Grandmother's own father's name, Frank. My name isn't a family name, just one my mother liked, so I tiptoe around Granddad.

Then comes Aunt Corrie, Mama's sister. They used to be close. Well, I'm not sure they were close, but they used to spend clucking around each other, as Dad used to say, before I was born. I see pictures of the two of them in our house, smiling it looks like. I never know if my Mama is ever really smiling in the pictures. I don't know if she ever really smiled and meant it.

She began to get migraines right after she gave birth to me. That's also when she began to have troubles with high cholesterol too, and a bad back. She swears it wasn't my fault, but I could just feel it, that I



Vatican spiral

Neda Tahmasebi
WUMS I

had taxed her body. I know she believes it was me who took the youth and free time, the joyous, selfish time, away from her, and left her in the kitchen making three versions of dinner for each person in the house. She lived in our kitchen. Mama went and used her math major from college to help people get out of credit card debt. She had work suits and she even had a secretary she shared with a few other people. After she had me she was a short order cook. I'm never going to end up like Mama, even if that means living by myself and being selfish and lonely.

On Tuesday I looked through her work suits, as I do once or twice a year when I want to punish myself. Her cream-colored suit with the square shiny black buttons with fake gold rims was still hanging there. That's the suit she wore before she had me. Buried under a stack of papers in the back of her right desk drawer, there's a picture of her at her work desk, smiling behind a plastic spill proof mug. She looked like she was actually smiling there. She had her own paycheck then, and didn't have to ask Dad if she could buy a new pair of sweat-pants because the old ones had streaks of blue in them from the washer dryer. She could buy what she needed without asking. Deep creases across her forehead and frown lines suddenly appeared in pictures of her as I got older. These weren't normal age lines; they were resentful lines of dependency and boredom. I wonder if Mama ever smiled at Dad before they got married and had me. I bet she did.

Aunt Corrie surveys Dad and me. I close my eyes and straighten my back. Just looking at her makes my temper short because I've always felt like she doesn't like me. Of course, teaching ballroom dancing to an auditorium full of distracted seventh graders who don't want to be there might make me dislike kids, too.

She has a pointy chin. "Frank, Crystal. You guys know that I'm here for you. I've got some more food to bring over this afternoon and I want to check in and make sure y'all don't need anything. Oh, give me a hug, Crystal!"

"That hurt my shoulder. "Thanks."

"Do you want me to stand here with you, drive you home?"

"I think we'll be fine, but thanks, Corrie. Crystal, you want to ride home with Corrie?"

"I don't know what I want to do. Whatever's easiest."

"I'll take you home and we can go by the Crystal and we can get the double-sized special to go."

"OK. Thanks." I used to love going by that place because my name is obviously on the sign, but I'm trying not to eat much. I'll break the news to Aunt Corrie after we get in the car. I actually kind of like her, but I'm not sure. She has Mama's chestnut hair (Mama's was chestnut before she started dyeing it auburn), just like me, with sun streaks and curls underneath.

"That would be great, Corrie. Then I could just take care of a few things and Crystal wouldn't have to sit around and wait."

"Great, then. I'll pick you up out back in a few minutes." She shot off down the aisle to find her car. She's usually in a hurry.

Grandmama steps up and squeezes me tight. She holds me for a long time, then moves to Dad and clutches him so long I want my turn again. "I can't believe my daughter's gone." Then she breaks down and Dad has to support her with his body so that she won't fall over. She's thinking she was supposed to go first. Maybe I won't have children so I won't ever have to feel that. I hold onto her back and rest the side of my chin against the back of her neck. She smells musty, but that's alright. "I'm sorry," she says. "I'll come visit next week. Crystal, you can always come and stay with me up in Alabama if you get lonely."

"Thank you."

Finally Granddad marches up, grabs his shoulder and says, "Son, I know you know she's gone. I know she's gone, and so does everyone else in this room." He pauses, stuttering, about to say something else but stops. Granddad only spent a couple of months in World War II but I guess every minute takes its toll. "I'll try to drop by this weekend to check on things."

Granddad doesn't touch me.

"Crystal. How are you?"

"Fine. Thanks, Granddad."

He wanted a grandson. He flits his eyes over to me and then brushes past Dad. I turn around to watch him go. He limps the tiniest bit, like Uncle Harry, from a battle wound perhaps, but this could all be my imagination. I watch Granddad until he disappears through the doors of the church and his shadow leaves. I feel everyone sigh silently with relief.



Untitled

Gina Garvin
WUMS III

Anatomy, Day 1

It's best not to think about it:
the smell less *dead* than *embalmed*
saturating pores and hair,
preserving the 124 blue-clad innocents
in our inaugural moment.
We dressed for battle
behind gauntlets and shields,
and when those failed charms,
pocket of posies—or fabric softener sheets—
casually not thinking of casualties.
We all remember
the first cut:
eloquent arc
of sharp blade through dead flesh,
caress of tentative scalpels
on yellow fat we never knew
lurking under skin,
the paradox of gentleness
(still-elegiac fear of desecration)
and rough-and-tumble—
“This is what we call
blunt dissection” —

gloved fingers plowing
palm-deep in greased wetness.
Like swimmers in the nearby Mississippi,
we emerged dripping,
gasping with the weight
of three hours' inhaled knowledge,
until the boldest among us coughed,
expelling formalin vapors
with their pleasantries:
“Well, if we thought it was bad, imagine
what it was like
for the dead guy.”
And in solemn laughter
we renewed our pledge:
“Wednesday, same time, same place?”

Fang Bu
WUMS I



Untitled

Sunitha Sequeira
WUMS III



Blueberry

Ivana Rosova
Molecular Genetics

He Saw It at the Art Exhibition

Andy Zimolzak
WUMS III

Alone in a crowd he was wandering at the art exhibition, Stephen was. He saw a man who couldn't pronounce "precisionism" because he had a little too much cheese in his mouth and a little too much wine in his bloodstream. The plastic glasses of wine looked basically real, and nobody seemed to notice in front of the painting that looked less real than real life yet more poignant. A chandelier, and a shirtsleeved arm around a skirted waist: Stephen saw these things at the art exhibition. Watching the people, Stephen failed to watch the single person watching him. A pair of photographs of two opposite sides of a building: Stephen saw this, and he admired the black and white clouds roiling overhead, so he didn't see the pair of eyes on two opposite sides of a nose and the black and white stripes on a jacket and scarf. The assortment of crackers and the different cheeses could combine in twenty-four different ways by Stephen's count. The pale yellow cheese tasted the best to him—what kind was that? Brie seems kind of omnipresent at functions like this, and Stephen imagined the pale yellow cheese got jerked around. The Brie bossed it

around in well-concealed snooty tones and always made sure people knew that someone *had* served Brie here, even after it was gone. It left that waxy cornstarch shell thing; it liked to tease people with tiny morsels clinging in unpredictable patterns, beckoning them to bring in a knife and scrape at it for just one more mouthful if they dared. The pale yellow cheese, God bless it, simply gave of itself until no more remained. Stephen tasted all these things at the art exhibition. The sculpture was good, even though it was the only one there. Stephen wandered aimlessly but came back to stand in front of it a lot with his arms behind his back, almost as much as he stood in front of the food table with his arm moving to and fro. Stephen did all these things at the art exhibition. A large landscape in acrylic standing on an easel, a professionally framed eight-by-ten photo portrait, and a small canvas propped up like a domino: Stephen knocked over all these things at the art exhibition. He stood for what felt like thirty seconds, waiting for the familiar impact sound of a hand on his forearm to break the silence, but no, it would not come like the last time, for this was not the Tate Modern—no guards would escort him on his walk out. He resolved to add this to his list of things he observed today. He had watched everyone here, or so he thought, so now he should leave anyway, shouldn't he? A plate heaping with pale yellow cheese looks strikingly pretty leaving a room, passing a deeper yellow tablecloth and silhouetted against a blue shirt. Stephen did not see these things at the art exhibition. To see these things requires the right set of eyes: eyes bright and twinkling above a black and white striped scarf and jacket.



Hand me downs

Clare Ridley
WUMS II

III. *Homage*

For the past three days, like the Resurrection, people have been coming by to offer us dry cornbread and mushy peas, Hallmark cards telling us to be strong, and brief but overly-firm hugs smelling of clogged up sweat mixed with musty powder—usually from old women experiencing a sudden burst of physical strength. This is what Mary must have felt like before she knew Jesus had left the cave, not that any of that happened for sure.

I want to say to these people, “Air! Give me air!” but you can’t do that at times like this. The first few seconds of a stranger’s hug are a gift, unexpected. Then they become uncomfortable because who is this person who is gripping me so tightly? Our living room and kitchen have become collection plates for people’s sympathy. My third grade teacher even came by and dropped off some freshly made cookies. “These are for Crystal,” she told my father. Unfortunately, I was in my bedroom asleep. I want to call her and thank her.

It’s Monday and I’m taking a week off from school, I’ve decided. Just called my home room teacher, Mr. Davies, and told him I wasn’t coming back yet because I needed some time. Sure, I could have gone in, maybe it would have even been a distraction, but school really grates at me right now. I didn’t get into the honors class for English that I wanted to. Also, the sheer frustration of being guided all the damn time. Don’t tell me to sit still for forty-five minutes until you decide we can all get up and then change locations like a pack of farm animals. Don’t tell me I have to wait until 1pm to eat lunch when I have breakfast at 7 and I’m hungry from 10:30 on. I’m not a child anymore. Third, fourth, and fifth periods are a test of my ability to deny what my body so desperately wants. Everyone else complains that 6 hours is too long to go without food, but does the school care? No. So I sit and starve like I’m supposed to, and fighting my hunger’s so draining that I’m quiet in class. Full participation draws on resources I don’t have. It makes me so angry. They deny us food

Church window
Skiathos, Greece

Cawas Behram Engineer
Plant Biology



Crow in front of Cradle Mountain
Tasmania, Australia



and then say we should be active, inquisitive participants in class, when they're the ones who make us silent with hunger. At least I'm already in high school and only have to deal with this a little longer.

Then there's the question of college, which makes me feel nauseous. All of those drunk people failing out of class and dying their hair blonde just to get husbands, Granddad said once. He says it a little in jest, because his wife, Grandmother, went to college just to get a husband, which she used to admit herself. She got what she came for. First semester, she met Granddad, and he wrote all of her papers until she dropped out that winter. Before she died she asked me how school was, and at that point I was studying. I said it was a lot of work, and she just turned to the window and laughed, "All that education for nothing."

Granddad laughed and said, "Well, we know that's how you feel." Was he sticking up for me?

I didn't go in to check on Dad that night because he was on the phone all night, but I did help him shove off to work this morning. Got out the instant coffee and asked him how many spoonfuls of sugar he took. He doesn't take sugar. He managed to be almost normal (silent, but not quite smiling), but I was kind of relieved when he left. Seeing him sad made me feel like I should be upbeat for the two of us, and seeing him have a moment of energy—to heat up the nasty black eyed peas or something—made me want to show how depressed I was. He didn't seem to catch the bait, though. So I'm receiving the last of the visitors myself. I hate being the new matron of the house. It's not natural at fifteen and a half. I feel like if someone comes up the driveway and I'm not fixing a meal for Dad, there will be an unspoken, automatic scorn.

Alice, who used to be my friend, has just slid out of her car. After Mama got sick and I started how little I needed to eat to get by, I stopped talking to most people. They tire me out. But Alice and I used to laugh! We met by being partners in home economics three years ago, and it was hilarious when I tried to flip this omelet, but it kept flipping out of the pan and landing on the floor and we had to dust it off and put it back in so the teacher wouldn't notice but he did so we got a D on that project but we couldn't stop laughing. She called me once a few months ago to say hello but I never called her back. I didn't know what to say. I wouldn't know what to say because it's hard for me to laugh.

Alice's footsteps come closer. I can see her through

Hi

Ivana Rosova
Molecular Genetics

the grill in the front door that's clogged with dirt and lint, darker than the stuff behind Mama's bed. Alice has dyed her hair blond but the roots are showing. She's put a cheerful pink sweater on. We used to laugh so hard.

Now I have to greet her but I know I can't be my old self. I've only had one diet hot chocolate today, though, and it's already 1pm. OK. I feel like I can open the door and be alright. And then at least something in the house will be alive and warm. I open the door.

"Hi! Crystal. I just wanted to come over and bring you this. I'd have made you an omelet, but we both know about those..."

I kind of laugh. It was kind of funny. She's really going out on a limb, here. "Thanks. I like your hair. It looks nice."

"Oh. I fried it. It's tragic, but I can't cut it all off now. Listen, if you need anything, notes, food, movies, here's my number. We moved from the old house last year."

"Oh really? I had no idea. That's cool."

"Yeah. I haven't seen you in forever, which is kind of weird. What have you been doing?"

"I don't know. I kind of camped out around here after my Mom got sick."

"Well, you should call me."

"Oh, thanks, babe. For sure." I know what'll happen. I'll walk up to the phone and freeze and put the receiver down.

"Are you here alone?"

"Uh...Dad went back to work today, but I wasn't ready for school. You know."

"Oh. Yeah. Hey, I don't want to be rude, but do any of the lights in your house turn on? That might make things a little more...I don't know...cheerful? I'm sorry, I don't mean—"

"Oh, yeah. It's kind of depressing here." I turn on a side lamp near the front door.

"I'm sorry. I feel so bad. Do you want to come over for dinner? I'm sure my Mom would love it. I think we're having spaghetti tonight with garlic bread in front of the television. My little brother has to watch 'Sesame Street' while he eats, but if you don't mind that—"

"Oh, you're so nice." She really is, even though she doesn't always watch what she says. "But I should be here for Dad. You know, just in case he gets lonely. Thanks, though."

"Oh, alright. Well, it was great to finally see you. You have my number if you need anything."

"Thanks," I manage to yell out as the front door



Self portrait

Rose Veile
Dept. of Human Genetics

slams shut on its hinges. God I'm exhausted. It is dark in here. I'm willing to put up with Dad's being totally silent just to have someone else in the house. It would be nice to have a hug, one that's not a pumping squeeze, but offered and not forced on you. I think Dad would give me that if nothing else. I get some of the lights to go on after lots of twisting the light bulbs and blowing the dust out of the metal parts. I don't want anything to catch fire and I'm not sure if dust does. It feels so unnatural to have lights on in here. There's this fake yellow glow. Mama had Seasonal Affective Disorder, or whatever it's called, when you get depressed during the winter because you don't get enough sunlight. As part of her Christmas present last year, I brought home all of these yellow insect lights that would mimic the sun. Mama and Dad looked confused. They looked at each other and silently turned the yellow bulbs over in their hands before politely putting them back down. I don't remember Mama saying thank you.

I collapse on the sofa in front of the television. One thing I don't want is to become like these women in sitcom reruns with big brown hair that's all one color, tight sweaters in muted colors and padded bras. It's the 90s, people. The 80s are over. We can move on. These women stay in the living room all day receiving visitors and serving them tea that no one ever drinks. Maybe not all women in sitcoms do that...maybe it's only the one I'm watching that's especially bleak. Reruns from the early Eighties. These decorative women with no jobs must really get bored living in a world the size of whatever size house their husbands can afford. No wonder every little thing, a doorbell chime, a letter in the mail with no return address and unfamiliar handwriting, seems like such a big deal to them. Their universes have collapsed into two-bedroom apartments.



It's getting around dinnertime so the comforters have begun to dwindle. I begin to stack the offerings in the kitchen so that each person who brings something by won't feel like they have to compare their bowl of black-eyed peas with everyone else's. Or better, they might see no presents and take pity on us for getting no attention, and want to bring more and leave it on the stoop. Granted, most of it will be food

tucked into plastic Tupperware tins, covered with aluminum foil. Lately I've been trying to go around slightly hungry so that I always feel that uncomfortable emptiness I dread at school. It's different when you do it to yourself, because then the hunger is up to you. Since I started really being able to live empty a few weeks ago, I've felt this exhausted exuberance. I can go on so little. I'm prepared for anything. I have overcome. All the same, I feel safer having all that food around, because I trust my disgust with it enough not to eat.

An authoritative rapping comes from the back door. It must be family. No one else would dare to rap at us so harshly at a time like this. It requires a certain amount of presumption. It must be Aunt Corrie.

Yup, it's her. She frowns and hurries up the stairs. At least I don't have to pretend to be in a good mood.

"Hi, Aunt Corrie!"

"Hi, Crystal. You're not in school?"

"No. I'm grieving."

"Oh. Are they letting you stay home from school? Does your father know?"

"Yeah. I sent him off to work this morning with coffee and oatmeal."

"Well, anyway. I brought over some things for you." She seems a lot rougher than she did on Friday. Maybe she only acted sympathetic because Dad was around?

"Oh, thanks. Please come in."

"God, it's dark. Wait, are those the yellow lights you bought Evelyn in the living room? Why yellow? I don't remember. At least you won't have any insects!"

"Mom had that seasonal depression thing. She was staying in the house after chemo during the winter. I thought the yellow would be like the sunlight, you know?"

"Oh, is that right? That was thoughtful of you. I brought some crackers and cheese. Here."

Ritz crackers and generic cheddar cheese. "This looks great, thank you."

"You look pale, Crystal. Are you eating?"

"Actually, no. Not really. Kind of lost my appetite."

"Well you should go and fix something. Right now. Go. I've got some things to take care of upstairs."

"What sorts of things?"

"Oh, just some things Evelyn wanted me to take care of."

"Which are...?"

"Just things, Crystal! Why don't you sit down and get something to eat while I pop upstairs for a minute? Evelyn left some things up there that she said a while ago she wanted me to take."

"Oh. OK. I'll be down here."

"Get something to eat. And turn some lights on. It's like a tomb—it's so—dark. I'll be upstairs." She darts up the stairs with her raw bursts of nervous energy.

Smack-thump. Sliiide-splat. She's moving things off of a shelf. I can tell. Sounds like it's coming from Mama's closet...I'll give her ten minutes so I don't look suspicious, then I'll go up and pretend to have some business in Mama's top drawer and find out what the hell is going on up there. Crunch. What in god's name is going on up there? Is she rummaging through Mama's things three days after the funeral? Whatever she's looking for must be seriously important, because you don't just barge in and start thrashing around through a dead person's things. She must be looking for the will, or for some childhood treasure in a shoebox. I'm going up there. Why the secrecy? Why the Crystal, go-eat-cheese?

When I cross the threshold of my parent's bedroom, Aunt Corrie jumps. Cardboard boxes, two of them, lie receptive at her feet. Where did they come from? She didn't walk in with them, but they're new, and I've never seen them up here before. We don't keep cardboard boxes lying around the house just because. There's no room. She's folding sweaters and shoving shoes in the bottom of one of the boxes. She forgot to take one of Mama's shoes off her feet—I guess she was trying one on when I walked in and forgot it was there after I startled her.

"Hi Crystal." She's trying to act calm.

"Hi." So am I.

"Don't you have any work to do? How does your Dad feel about your skipping school?"

"You already asked me that. Why are you packing all of Mama's clothes into boxes?"

"She said...I could...She wanted...I could have them after she didn't want them anymore." She's moving quickly.

"Because she couldn't use them anymore? When did you ask her?"



Bayou sunset

Arsham Sheybani
WUMS II



Metal

Jason Hill
MSTP II

"Oh, a few months ago. She and I were just sitting around and I said, Evelyn, I don't have any clothes, just look at the hole in this knee. I haven't bought anything firsthand since Crystal was a little thing. She said, well, try on some of my things and see if they fit you..." She's smiling nervously and making circular hand gestures.

"So you asked her if you could raid her closet after she died. Is that what you're saying?"

"Excuse me, Crystal! That is the meanest thing—Why don't you go downstairs and do some homework? I know you're upset, but—"

"Because I don't feel like it. My Mom just kicked the bucket."

"Look, Evelyn wanted me to have these because I can't afford any of my own. There. You'll get plenty of her stuff. These are just old lady clothes. You wouldn't be caught dead in these things." She tries to get me to laugh as she holds up a polka-dotted silk shirt to her chest and waves it around.

"Really? So I guess Mama wouldn't either."

"Crystal. You just need to calm down. Why don't you go make some tea and go to bed?"

"Because you're raiding my mother's closet and she just died."

"She gave me a few sweaters and a few pairs of shoes. That's all. She told me to take them. That's what she said. Now you go start some dinner for Frank so that when he comes home he isn't starving!"

I hate her. So now it's my job to be the mother and have everything taken from me. At this point, I figure there's nothing much to say. She's taking them; they're gone. It doesn't matter that I'd never wear these clothes to school. I just want to hold them and smell them.

Aunt Corrie has some authority I don't understand and never will until I am someone's aunt and I'm stealing clothes out of a dead person's closet. Or maybe Aunt Corrie is right, and she's just bad at telling the truth. Mama must have wanted her to have them, or Aunt Corrie wouldn't be packing her entire closet in the car and running off with it in return for disgusting cheese and half-eaten crackers. It's possible, I remember Aunt Corrie talking about having nothing to wear, but I want them. I want to remember what my mother used to feel and smell like when I run my hand against her sweaters.

Then I catch a glimpse of something of Aunt

Corrie's. Her twelve-year-old car is sitting in the driveway. It looks even older though our window, crusted with dirt on the outside. I need to go stand near the car. Just touch it, look inside. See what she brought us, what I can take in return.

There's nothing in her car except old newspapers from last month, dirt-crusted flower pots, half of an Egg McMuffin, hopefully not as old as the newspapers, and some plastic cups filled with a brown, clotting liquid. I run back inside. She's probably watching me from the window. Once inside, I get a fork from one of the kitchen drawers. The drawer shrieks as I jerk it open and shut.

"Crystal?" she calls down from the top of the stairs.

"Yeah?" Now I'm almost feeling cheerful.

"What are you doing down there? You started dinner yet?"

"I'm doing it."

A fork's not good enough. I get a corkscrew and a knife. Out the back door as silently as possible. Behind the bushes as low as I can crawl, trying to get to the car without being seen. When I'm behind the car, I peer through one of the windows to see if she's watching me from Mama's upstairs window. I see a flash of dyed hair in the right corner of the window, and then it disappears. I wait a full three minutes, silent, breathing in slow motion. The people from the street can see me as they drive by. They probably think I'm out of my fucking mind, crouched behind the car like a thief.

I take the corkscrew out and watch the silvery spirals glimmer in what's left of the late afternoon sunlight. No one in the window. Silence. A far away car. I'll wait until it passes....then I grip the corkscrew in my fist so tight that my knuckles turn white and I try as hard as I can to plunge the corkscrew into her tire and work it in. It isn't sinking into the rubber. I try twisting it as I push, and fall over on my left shoulder twice as I shove my body against the tire using my legs. No. Not working. The knife is next, the one Mama spread the butter on toast with. It's such a friendly knife. I push again with my entire body, starting with my calves and going straight to my white and red knuckles. No breath. Ahhhhh. The knife sinks in. I've exposed my head to the window. I think I see some fabric brushing at the edge of the windowsill. Oh my god. What if she saw me? Hisssssssssssssssss. The tire's gone, sunk com-

pletely down. The hubcap grates against the ground, and I hear the scrape of a metal cylinder on concrete. What have I done? Need to hurry; Mama didn't have that much clothing.

Back inside, I get out some pots and pans quickly and make too much noise in the process. The aluminum pans clank together and Aunt Corrie yells something from upstairs but I can't understand it and at this point I don't want to know. I've got to get something on the stove. Right now. Dump slimy contents of Tupperware container into pan. Ignite burner. Suddenly I'm Martha Stewart. Aunt Corrie plods down the stairs at an accelerated speed with the second box and drops it with a splat near the back door. Her body slithers toward the kitchen door-frame, her eyes heavy. Could this be guilt? Does she realize for the first time that she has erred? I dump a plastic container of black-eyed peas into another medium-sized saucepan even though I don't want to eat. I should have to eat a few bites in punishment.

"Are you hungry?" I sigh. Martha Stewart would ask that question.

"Not too bad. A little."

"Why don't you have some cheese and crackers?" I offer. "They're right by the door. Over there. Yeah, by your foot."

"Oh."

"We have some more crackers if you don't want those. They're kind of broken!" Attempt at laughter. Why am I being such a bitch?

"No, I'm fine," she tensely assures me.

"Oh, OK. Well, do you have everything?" That's why.

"I think so. Are you going to be alright if I leave? Do you know how to cook everything and—oh, you're scorching the peas—no, stir, like this..." She shows me how to stir in an exaggerated motion, like some first grade teacher teaching the class how to cook from the front of the room.

"Well, thanks for dropping by." Why won't she leave? Suddenly I picture Mama scowling at me. I'm sorry, Mama. I promise to be better.

"Yes. If Frank needs anything, you tell him to give me a call." Aunt Corrie scowls at the black eyed peas and forces herself to look away.

"Will do."

I steal around to the front window to spy on her as she walks to her car. She stops dead. Pause. Hold. She drops the big box onto the ground. She takes

nine steps backward. Someone has slashed her tire. Oh...shit.

Why in hell did I do this? I know she deserved it, running off with Mama's things before her body was even cool, but why did I screw myself like this? Well, I guess technically, anyone could have done it. Our next door neighbor's son, Leigh, was convicted of murder twenty years ago. He chopped a man up with an axe and locked him up in the trunk of his car. Leigh could have done it. Or Alec, Leigh's brother, who keeps shotguns in the house, has bullets piled up on the kitchen table for when he goes hunting.

Options. Okay, I've brushed the tar off of the butter knife and put it back in the drawer. I haven't put the corkscrew away but she won't suspect the corkscrew, because everyone knows you can't puncture a tire with a corkscrew. I can't look at her anymore. I'll run upstairs and try to hide in the attic, or I'll climb out the kitchen window and hide behind the neighbor's house. Maybe they'll invite me in for dinner and I'll be in a safety zone.

But I'm pasted to the window. Aunt Corrie turns her head quickly to look in the windows of the front room, then begins to dart her eyes to the window where I am. I duck, wait, listen. No sounds of movement. Wait. I hear a car door opening, a trunk opening. She's probably loading the boxes into the trunk. Oh shit. What have I done?

I'm just waiting for her to run out, machete in hand, towards me and not stop until I'm cut perfectly in half. I peer back up. She hasn't left the car seat. She must be waiting for Dad. Then he'll call Granddad and he will cut me perfectly in half because he has no remorse. It's getting dark. Her shadowy silhouette leans, almost formless, against the headrest behind her.

It's weird that Dad still hasn't come home. It's a funny time to work late. Does he remember that I'm home? I run up to the phone in Mama's room, so that I'll have some warning time if she comes running at me. I pick up the receiver to call the dealership, but all of a sudden there are headlights in the mouth of the driveway. I put down the receiver. Dad's white car pokes its nose into the mouth of the driveway, but he pulls in a couple of feet and gets out of the car. Aunt Corrie gets out. Wait. There's another car behind Dad's. It's Granddad's car. Oh god. I'm going to get hit by someone, and hard. Mama isn't going to pop out of the woodwork to protect me.

I'm so ashamed. If she's watching, which for the first



Untitled

Ted Satterthwaite
MA/MD

time I hope she's not, she's going to refuse to look at me. How can she make eye contact with a daughter like this? You don't just go around slashing people's tires, Crystal! Corrie has a right to take these things. They're my own clothes to give away, and she needs them. That isn't a crime. Cutting people's tires up is a crime. You could get arrested for that!

Mama is right.

Voices in the driveway. Granddad is roaring, "Corrie, what happened to your tire? It's been slashed! That's a clean cut. Frank, you see that? You better call the police. Do you want me to call em? I'll call em right now."

Aunt Corrie murmurs something like the teacher in the Charlie Brown cartoon, and I strain to hear, but I absolutely can't make out what she's saying. The following pause lasts a dangerously long time.

"I'll go in. I'll check things out," Dad assures as he leads the two of them in through the back door. There isn't enough time for me to run up into the attic and I'd eventually have to come down anyway. Hiding would make me look guilty. The best thing, the absolute best thing, is to play it cool and pretend like I'm as surprised as they are. "Crystal?" Dad calls up, upset but not quite assuming some violence on my part. "Cryyystal? Where are you? Come down here a minute!"

I flush the toilet in the hallway bathroom, so that the old pipes will carry the gargling sound of water down to them. "In the bathroom. Down in a sec!" The skeleton of the house groans under my weight.

"Hi, Crystal," Dad offers.

"Crystal," Granddad states.

I'm fidgeting with the skin of my palms, behind my back. Like hiding my hands would help anything now. Do I have black tire stains on my hands?

"Do you know anything about Corrie's car?" Dad demands. "Someone's slashed her tire."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"Like, how?"

"Like, with a knife or some other sharp household object!" Aunt Corrie throws back.

"Oh my god. I'm so sorry, Aunt Corrie. That's terrible."

"Frank, are you just going to let your daughter stand here and take the Lord's name in vain twice without saying anything? Crystal, I know you lost a mother. I know this is hard—hell, it's hard for all of

us—just look at your father, moping around with his head pasted to his chest. But don't you ever, ever take the Lord's name in vain!"

Granddad and I aren't close because I don't admire him. He doesn't have my strength. When my Grandmother died, Granddad didn't cry at the funeral. He told my Dad that he expected him to keep his opinions to himself, too. Me, I'm brave enough to grieve.

"But I'm not a Christian so it doesn't matter."

"What?"

"What, Crystal?"

Dad looks totally defeated now. I feel terrible and I want to give him a hug. Aunt Corrie's looking at me like I'm the criminal and she's not the thief. Dad looks at Aunt Corrie and then back at me. Why can't he be on my side, just this once? He should have known better than to stay out late right after Mama died and leave me here completely alone in a dark house. But I don't want to count my chickens. He's never sided with me before.

"Crystal," Dad repeats, "What?"

"Dad, can we talk about this later? I thought we were talking about Aunt Corrie's tire."

"Hold on. That can wait," Granddad shoots out. "What is this you are saying to me?"

"I don't need to have this conversation right now. I'm going to Hell anyway."

Dad breathes. "Dad. We'll discuss all of this. Let's deal with the tire first, and then we'll deal with the other."

"I can't believe this—"

Dad interrupts Granddad. "Crystal. Do you know anything about Corrie's tire?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean just that," Dad's getting impatient, "Did you or anyone you know slash her tire?"

"Not that I know of."

"Frank, who is this standing here? Do I know her?"

"Dad. I'll deal with it. Hold on. Crystal?"

Aunt Corrie can't look at me. She sinks down on the sofa and shields the side of her forehead with her left hand.

"Crystal, I can't afford to replace this tire!" she groans and turns her head, though not enough to look at me.

"You don't know that it was me! Why is everyone on my back all of a sudden? What about Alec with all

of the guns, or Leigh with the chopped up guy in the back of his car?"

"I didn't say that you did it, Crystal."

"Well, Aunt Corrie just said it was me!"

"She only said she couldn't afford to replace it."

"Yeah. Right, Dad."

"I'm not going to go round and round with you. Was it you, Crystal?"

"Why would I do that?"

"Crystal, I saw you out of the back window!" Aunt Corrie yells. She hits the cushion of the sofa and her fist bounces back up.

"Why are y'all asking me if I did it if you already think I did? Y'all are just trying to shove me into a corner so I can suffocate! I just lost my mother. I'm here alone all day. I can barely feed myself and Aunt Corrie comes over and takes Mama's things and none of you..." I start sobbing, part real, part forced, "...even ask me if I'm alright or not, you just ask me what I've done wrong."

Nobody comes over to me. A huge part of me is truly crying. Aunt Corrie didn't ask me how I was doing before she started taking the clothes. Dad left me here alone all night. I've only eaten a couple of crackers and some diet hot chocolate today. They don't understand how tiring it is to be running on empty every single moment. No one even thanked me for the light bulbs.

"Crystal?" Granddad says.

"Leave me alone!" I manage to get out.

"Crystal," Aunt Corrie has finally turned to face me and almost appears patient, "Why don't you just admit that you did it?"

I actually hate lying. "But she was stealing Mama's clothes. She can't do that. All of her smell will be gone. All I've got is the sheets."

"Oh, this child, Frank, this child...I told you," Granddad said. "Frank, I told you."

"Be quiet, Harry," Aunt Corrie says.

"Thank you," I say to Aunt Corrie, almost expecting reconciliation.

"Don't talk to me," she shoots back.

"I won't talk to anyone." I run upstairs.





Works of Man and Nature
Stanley Park, Vancouver, British Columbia

Suzanne Wahrle
MSTP VI

Chaos Laws Violations

Beads drawn,
The authoritarian fates squint down gun barrels, flashing medals and badges.
Your fine-print papers are not in order, are out of order.
Prices, bribes, must be paid, and paid at a proper, obscene rate.
The primordial brig of curved chaotic space, over capacity, won't wait.

Flawed reason's flashing Hummer pulses twice, then a third time its siren,
Flings open wide its armored, uninviting doors.
You're going downtown, oh my brother, my sister.
Going down, hand pressing head down, sure as sunsets press dawns.
Going down mortified, bloodied, lawfully-brutalized, compounded pawns.

A world with avoidable unavoidable rules, how would that play out?
Gears bound to silent tumblers slipping, detaching, twirling frictionless, ridiculous:
I'd morph from my handcuffed existence to become, say, a ferocious cloud:
A great vapory fist blooming up roiling and cruel
Into that bottomless capsized scene-of-the-resort-crime blue swimming pool.

For a split second, or more, let all-encompassing Authority neglect duty.
Possibilities in Court's disorder?
Lessons when all around falls down? Spins out? Blows apart?
I once envisioned felonious possibilities and tampered-with lesson plans.
Then, too, the world seemed monstrous with angled deduction, induction, justice, shams.

Is the perceived unknowable precursor to any valuable, non-malicious indictment?
Is The Big Picture sum recognizable in absurd, manufactured evidence parts?
If The Man (Irrational Man?) can be a blind pig who steals my one measly acorn,
Should I just kiss goodbye my spreading oak dreams of a sane paradise.
Only to swear out even more frivolous complaints when the next ultimate sun begins to rise?

Michael Courtois
Department of Medicine

Hands

My hands and your hands
are sometimes like one voice, one
complete thought. Like me,
you might have written poetry yourself
if you'd only had the time between
nursing one baby and bottle-feeding another
heap upon heap of dirty diapers –
snowy cotton stained gray,
waiting the wash.

You pre-rinsed them in a the toilet bowl
and stacked them in a smelly, black pail.
You were always rinsing and washing –
not just diapers, but dishes,
chafed baby bottoms, tear-streaked faces, and
hands.
Water and detergents cracked your raw, red
knuckles
until they bled from so much wash.

Until then, I didn't know how much like you
my habits have hands, whether gesturing,
caressing, clasping and unclasping,
wringing each other 'round or nervously
worrying my throat –
Hands cupped even, under my chin
Under my cheek, when I sleep on my side.

It was sudden surprise
that afternoon when you slapped my face.
There was a snowstorm, I remember
standing your height, slapping you back.
That was the only time – you thought I was
hysterical;
I thought you a traitor, a stranger facing me-
A sudden stand off that wouldn't matter, our
hands
cradling our own chastened cheeks
while our similar fingered fury threw anger
one at another, daughter and mother.

My sister pulled you away
while I donned my coat to run, pulled
on plastic boots and sliced open the frozen door.
Pausing in the doorframe, my fingers catching
wind and snow, I turned and saw
your hands were my hands,
but your still opened palms
angrily gesturing and pacing the air,
then held more weight, carried more care
as they sank among nipples and bottles
into suds and sink.

Linda Ketchens
Center for Computational Biology



Identity

Shep Nickel
WUMS II



Coffeshop abstract

Leah Givens
WUMS II

Hand me downs

Clare Ridley
WUMS II

IV. Black-eyed peas

I wait for my bedroom door to suddenly fly open. It doesn't happen, so I'm left with the walls. There are no pictures of anyone on my walls, just an old girl scout picture from first grade of the entire troupe doing silly poses on a bench. I'm on the far left, sitting to my then best friend, Katy. She switched schools after the fourth grade. We grew apart before that, though, because she didn't mind staying a nerd and I did. I do miss the things we did together, though, even though her house used to smell like cheap floral air freshener. Everyone else's walls are covered with pictures of people smiling and being young and knit together.

There's a bright glare in the mirror on my chest of drawers. Darkness has already set in around my eyes. I can't believe Alice and I are technically the same age.

Dad gives a light rapping on my door and then opens it quickly without waiting for a response. The rainbow plaid shirt with orange stains up the right sleeve looks too lively for his thinning body.

"Crystal, why did you go and slash Corrie's tire? Is it because she was taking a few of Mama's sweaters out of her closet. Crystal, I was there when your Mama explicitly gave your Aunt Corrie permission to take as many of those sweaters as she wanted. They're not yours; they were Evelyn's and now they belong to whomever Evelyn wanted to give them to."

"I'm sorry, Dad. I don't know what to say."

"Neither do I, Crystal." He rests one butt cheek on the corner of my desk. A stack of papers crunch underneath his weight.

"I'm sorry, Dad!"

"We've been talking about this downstairs and we're not sure what to do. Is this how you're going to act whenever something goes wrong? Do you want to end up in jail?"

"Who is 'we'? I bet that jail was Granddad's idea."

"Crystal, stop it. That's not going to get you out of trouble." He stops leaning on my desk and stands up onto both feet evenly, his hand on the doorknob, pulling it at the socket and twisting.

“Sorry!”

“I expected more, Crystal. I expected so much more.”

I don't want him to see me. I get in bed and crawl under the covers and turn on one side facing the wall.

“Crystal, stop it.”

I look over the edge of my bed into the crack between it and my wall, where I used to hide when I was scared. I stick my face down there. The dust moves back and forth with my breath. I want it to stop moving. I remember the dust that moved with Mama's breath and then stopped.

“Can I at least look at your face when we talk?”

I see a small form underneath the bed. I twist my arm down and fish it out. Oh, it's Ginger, the grayish pink puppet with the black wooden bracelet on. Oh my god, I'd forgotten completely about her. She used to irritate the living shit out of me. Mama used to rattle her at me when I had to wake up at 6:30 for school. I used to say, “Mom, is that Ginger? I hate Ginger! Stop waving her at me! I'm not getting up!”

Then Mama would lose her temper. “Fine. Get up by yourself, then,” and leave the room.

I'd feel so guilty that I couldn't go back to sleep, and I'd chase Mama down the hall, begging, “No, Mama, no! I'm so sorry. Please do the Ginger thing again. Please! Mama, please do the Ginger thing again. I like it!” and start crying uncontrollably, as if I'd lost some irreplaceable opportunity.

I had blown my only chance. “No. Maybe another time,” she'd say. “I'm glad to see you're up, though,” forcing a smile. Then I'd go flop down on my bed and cry, angry, and come downstairs late anyway.

Ginger is gray with dust and she doesn't smell like Tide and Bounce anymore, but I push her hard against my neck. Mama was the last to touch her.

Granddad calls up, “Frank!” from the base of the stairs. “Frank?”

Dad calls back down. “It's fine. Leave us alone.”

Ha! Thank you Dad! Finally.

“Crystal. I don't know what to do either.”

He's disappointed in me.

“Will you just say something? Anything? Do you want to go out to dinner? Do you want to go to the Crystal and get some of those little hamburgers?”

“Ew!” I laugh a little and flip over so I can see him.

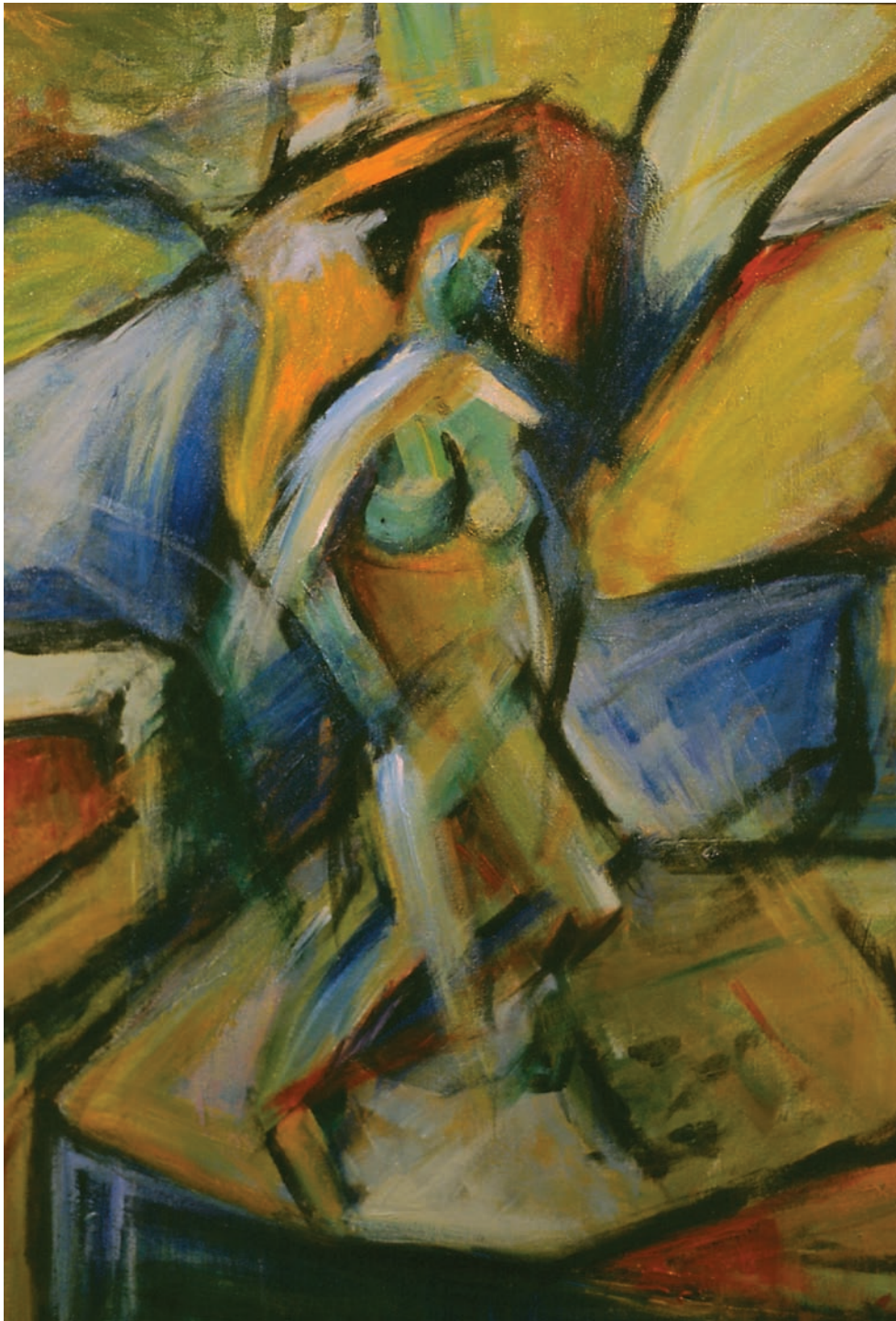
“That's my girl,” he says. “That's my girl.”



Fleeting moments

Buck Samuel
Microbiology





Colorful thoughts

Rose Veile
Dept. of Human Genetics

Collections

I become an expert in minutes
On black body radiation
Or equations defining spherical bodies
Or acute myelocytic leukemia
Or the music of Césaria Évora
Moments later I am mostly ignorant again,
But some of the words stay with me
Some of the ideas
And I become a mosaic of awareness,
A collection of nuance,
Like the crisscrossing footpaths of bent grass
Left by patrons of an art fair
On the museum's wide lawn

Sylvia Johnson
Molecular Biology and Pharmacology



Red waves

A. Burcu Babaoglan
Developmental Biology

Ode to a found I.D.

O ID, I'm so glad
you've emerged from your hidin'
without you, you see,
I couldn't do any slidin'
of you
through that little black slot by
the door
which meant I was barred
from reaching my floor
in Olin, the SHAC

all the portals were closed
but you've made it back home,
and with me
anastamosed

Eleanor Oakley
WUMS I

