Spring 1993

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Commonthought Staff

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COMMONTHOUGHT

Magazine of the Arts at Lesley College

Volume IV, No 1

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The thoughts, beliefs, and opinions expressed in this Literary Magazine are not necessarily those of the magazine, staff, or Lesley College.
Within the walls of Lesley College resides an abundance of talent composed of innovative minds and creative hearts whose spirits have joined together to make this year's Commonthought the best one. (Yes, you read this every year, but this time it's really true!) It is a physical manifestation of people's dreams, aspirations and emotions; it is a sanctuary for the literary and artistic expression of these concepts. As a collective editing effort of the Lesley College student body, this literary magazine has captured the essence of originality that makes this school unique. Without you, the contributors, Commonthought would not be possible (So keep those submissions coming!)

The creating of this magazine would also never have been possible without the cooperation and devotion of the editors and their staff. Once again, however, Anne Pluto must also be thanked for her endless efforts of assisting the Commonthought team by offering us shelter, a place in which we could hold our meetings and relieve our tensions and anxiety. Without her inspiring words, we would never have been able to consider her our "Biblical Babe."

I would like to thank all of you, contributors and staff, for making this year's issue so enjoyable to publish and an excellent senior year for me. Good luck to all next year!

Best Wishes,

Edythe A. Shapiro

Edythe A. Shapiro
Editor-in-Chief
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Back Cover
Uncovering Me...
V. L. F.

Where have I gone?
Who have I become?
These are the questions that haunt
A changed person.
Do you know me?
Do I know me?
When you change...
People change.
How does one really see me?
How does one really portray themselves?
They do not realize, that I haven't changed
The real me is only hidden
But not changed!
Hidden by something thick and heavy
Could it be guilt?
Could it be shame?
Could it be fear?
Could it be you?
Can I turn back?
Can I peel out of these thick layers
That hold me down?
Choke me, make me feel sick
Is there a chance...
A chance to "uncover me"?
To Sue
Jennifer Orvis

If my life were to end right now, I would say it was complete. Because I have felt true love and experienced true friendship with you.

But my life is not ending - in fact it is just beginning. And your love and friendship will go with me on my journey. Your strength and support will be a hand at my back, urging me to move forward and not to look back.

And when I return, I’ll come back to your love and friendship. And I will share all of my stories - our stories - because I am not going alone - You will always be with me.
Coogee Dusk
Richard King

The ocean's horizon calmly whispers endlessness while behind
a red sun melts through cotton clouds

a silver gull and a far off sail flaunt their wealth

cradled roughly among the ragged sandstone cliffs
I watch the sea

clear and cool, a bassist blue rhythmically pursuing the ancient rock like a cat's rough tongue licking and licking and licking her fur

white foam carves another second then fibers fade, mimicking the clouds

a warm breeze slides off the waves and runs her fingers under my shirt and through my hair
I inhale deeply and she fills my lungs
the sandstone
rising high
is honeycombs and ledges and alcoves and me
it layers into an approaching suburb
of pastel stucco an red roof and intricate fence

she has turned the sandstone to silk and
I am riding a Pacific wind
on a magic carpet
as affluent as I had dreamt
disappearing
inside the weightless pinks and oranges and blues
of a subtle sunset sky

endless
The woods behind the dining room are bad.

Can’t run in those woods. They are dark. Other boys race there but I refuse. It makes them frightened of me this strange defiance of their normal. It is the same with the way I fight – my blaze fighting with so much madness in it they back off. Boggs calls it Blitz-krieg fighting and that I got it from the mad Belge tribe Caesar couldn’t crush.

But I won’t run in those dark woods that have the chapel in them.

From the back of the dining hall the path leads through them to the chapel all set about by the big pine trees and a monkey tree right by the door that screeches at me as I come close and go into the smell and red light: incense and blood light from the red rosary window behind the altar where I kneel and beg. I know how to beg. the other boys rattle out the Hail Marys and Our Fathers, but I beg there in that blood light with the one red flame saying he’s there in the tabernacle and I’m here in confused adoration of...

On the walls the Stations of the Cross. Kneel at each one and work around the walls with head down and back breaking open. Feel it, says father Munroe, feel the pain he suffered for you: know the pain. Whip-bite, thorn-bite, wood-bite, nail-bite, spear-bite. Confession box where Father wants to hear my bad thoughts, hear my bad feelings. I can’t tell him. Make up little things to tell him, but he knows. It’s no good. Being good must mean not to think, not to feel, because all thoughts are bad, all feeling bad – except
thoughts of him and whip-bite, thorn-bite, wood-bite, nail-bite, spear-bite...

As I try not to think I go back to the field, back to lying on my back and drinking in the sun, clouds, air ... I am supposed to be thinking of him and pain but I can't because the pain is the black inside: why am I here? Tell me Father for I have sinned... Why did she send me away? Why will she not come back? Jamais. That's what they say.

If I tell Him what I feel, if I tell Him I am all of this: I am the woods I run through - I am the swimming pool under the trees with its aqua marine goat's eye looking up into His God's eye. I am the drive with its crunch of gravel as the big cars drive slowly up, turn at the door, drop and pick up boys who know as they come and go, while I am always here, other, part of the upper and lower field, each and every cinder in the track through the woods, all the fruit that hangs by the tennis court is me and what they eat is the flesh of me when they eat that... and I let it be... I can't tell Him that; can't tell him, or anyone, about the single black web inside: if I did I would start to fold, to cry as I never do but then would and never stop. Hold tight, hold tight - bite the finger so hard the tears turn to stone inside. Only my spider knows and she doesn't care - she just eats the wasps I give her and watches all.

This chapel hides from the light in this bad wood and this wood is bad because I am bad. That is what Father tells me as he whispers through the screen in his wooden box. His breath all mint and something else, something like the back of the kitchen all heavy. He says I am bad and my thoughts are bad and my feelings are bad. Squeeze my legs together when he says feelings because that's where they all are... or in my chest, that is bound about with wire so tight the air won't come. I must pray he says. Won't you watch and pray a while, he says - vigili et ora - he says as he says go along boy and pray at each station of the cross and feel what it is to be wicked in the face of our lord who suffered for your sins - go boy and sin no more. But I am sin as I am wood. I kneel and feel the floor bite in cold knees as I feel whip-bite, thorn-bite, wood-bite, nail-bite, spear-bite.
I try and try and try, but it does no good, it is loss I feel and sinking down inside. Outside is good but inside is bad. If I told Him what I thought He would kill me, He would tell me I will never see her and what Julienne said is true and I am bad because I would not cry when she went away – jamais, jamais, jamais! Elle ne reviens jamais!

Father forgive me – I cannot stop these thoughts so I push my pen into my palms and make blood and ink mix there and push my pen into my side but can’t make blood there – I bite my lip and taste blood there – but I still don’t feel what He wants me to feel. I am so small at the seventh station and see my eyes so big in the window and feel dreadful sorry and see the yellow hair stick up; my little bruised peach legs from grey flannel shorts; I am so small but am captain of the Romans already and can fight any single one big or small; but here, I am too small, too small to feel all this: I must break. My knees are blue knots below me and I didn’t cry when she went away: jamais, said Julienne, tu comprends!

Jamais, jamais...

I hate you God for taking her away and sending me here and you deserve to be on that cross with the pins stuck in you (like the voodoo doll Crighton showed me) and you looking down from that cross so ashamed – hold your head up – smile, don’t look all Jesus meek like that – look up and shake your fist at him who pinned you there after whip, thorn, nail, spear: after all their mocking insults that I could bear so should you!

I am bad and Father Munroe wants me to serve mass and has Boggs show me everything I must do and must obey Boggs because he knows how and do what he says and he tells me like he is Father himself and I hate him even more than before. Have to kneel up there by the altar at the hem of Father and be there in front of all the boys, in front of Mr Bull and Matron and Mr McHugh and MacAdam and ring the bells three times: bow and ring, bow and ring: wait for Him to come there – he comes down through the blood red window, down into the little silver house, into the chalice that
Father puts his thick lip into and sucks the red wine down... His blood I see and his flesh the white wafer that melts on my tongue and enters my soul that I dedicate to him and will think only and feel only for him and die if I don’t. He knows what I know and father knows and tells him I am bad and that is why he took her away – they all say He took her back – and sent me here to suffer as He suffered when He said wait and pray a while – ora et vigili – they tried to, in the garden they tried; they all failed... vigili et ora... I don’t want her to suffer like that with thorn and whip... but that is what must happen because of the black bad in me, like the bad woods and the woods I breathe and run in and Boggs is shaking and behind the stirring people means I must ring the bell now! I shake it and shake it and shake it, and Father looks round surprised. The sound is light and bright. He says his latin loud now and Boggs is coming over and shaking no... with his mouth, and we go to the side to get the things and Boggs says, wrong, it was the wrong time. He is all red as we go back, kneel and bow: it’s the wafer awful silence now, as he raises his hands with the big white host, one finger bent back on each hand, crooked, his palms together, hands folded like a paper airplanes for flight and I shake a third and last time and it is the deadly time of HIS coming, the canon. He knows what I thought and said about the cross and I am so close to him now and father’s face is all knots and his lips out and sucking wine again... he drinks the blood and will eat the flesh... and for a moment I forgot, and there was light, and it was warm inside.

Now it is done – ita misa est – the music pumps and fills and the boys all file out murmuring and Matron still praying – as she should – her head all pressed down and filling her hands like she’s doing sick.

I like it when Mr. Keys keeps open all the stops on the organ and we all walk out and it is light and it is the end and the dark bad wood is light for just that moment of leaving before it all closes about us again. Mr. Keys in his shorts that grown men shouldn’t wear, his long socks folded over and his knees like marble, his feet in brown shoes
bounce up and down in a dance on the long wooden peddles that make the deep notes boom like fog horns at night. He nods his little nod to tell me it is time to change the pages. His hair is all white with waves straight back from his thin little forehead above his eye brows that are black — his hair going back in big waves like the sea and all grease with not a hair ever out of place.

All the other boys gone and eating Sunday lunch already and I can go but must change out of altar boy clothes in the little back room and Father Munroe still there and I don't want to be there with him for he will be cross and the bad comes down again. He calls me in now and, hurry up boy, he says, and why was I not paying attention? Why was I dreaming and ringing the bell in all the wrong places and why must I be so bad and God is disappointed in me and my soul will have a black spot hard to clean now and I must pray and try to be good or he will send me to Mr. MacAdam who will show me how to be good with six of the best in one red line from his special bamboo... and hurry up he says. I have to help pull his black and red things off. The buttons up the front are black with a beautiful pattern on them; they shine and are hard to fit through the heavy thick black cloth and inside it is the redest silk red. He smells of the wine in the golden silver chalice of God the father almighty and I fold the vestments and I shake and want to weep but won't. Heavy stiff purple and lace. He takes the bottle and turns away and before he puts it away I hear him swallow and swallow and remember how his Adam's apple curse bobbed up and down like a sinker on the water with a fish caught tight below to make it bob and bob like that. He tells me he has to find someone else to serve, someone good like Boggs, but he will try once more with me, and now I should run and eat because the others will be finished and there won't be any for me if I don't hurry. I don't like the way he looks at me, it makes me feel a way I don't know how to feel — the boys call him short-eyes and I don't know why.

When I come into the dining room it is all sound, smell, boys, tables, masters, noise, hot, steam and busy as
bees: no one looks up at me. I am happy here and am all of them and the smell is cabbage and yellow cabbage water: it smells good with the wet potatoes and stringy red stuff; white slabs of wet bread with thick yellow butter in bricks. all clatter and McHugh winks at me when I sit down at our table, at the end, and he says,

—Well done Wardleworth, well done Wardleworth...

he says it my long ferocious idiot waddle name of a name I love in that way, and I know he thinks my name is funny, and he says it to be funny, but I like it when he says it, and I know the others hate me because they know I am his favorite now. And I am back to the world of: eat, sleep, hit, run.
Dedicated to Dorothy

Edythe A. Shapiro

When I was young,
I left for Oz,
In search of a fairy tale land.
I found one
Quite like yours
But my scarecrow has always had a brain.
(The munchkins
 carried switchblades;
They killed Glinda for the diamonds on her shoes)
And with that brain
He plotted a way
To rule their knives and
He became a tyrant.

"What can we do
With a brain" I asked,
"When our souls
Are only straw?"
The wizard answered
With a bottle full of ruby slippers,
Which I drank while clicking my heels.
And I thought that I was home,
When I awoke in Oz again;
I met a man,
Made completely of tin,
Who once had a heart,
But then,
It was shattered,
Like a broken scream.
And so,
About the shards,
The remains of his fragile pump
He built a monstrosity,
A fortress made of tin.
And like your man
he wielded an axe,
But not to the harm of any tree;
And with that reddened axe
He, screaming, stumbled after me.
I sobbed, "There's no place like home."
Eating the wizard's magic poppies,
I began drifting away, forgetting tin.
"Lions and
Tigers and bears" I said,
And, of course, one appeared
Lacking no courage
Except the courage not to look brave;
Which he'd prove
To me a thousand times
A day with fire-breathing dragons,
Speeding trains, and then
That wicked witch of yours.
"I'm not afraid"
He said with a grin.
I screamed, "Don’t, please!"
But he did.
The flying monkeys
Ate him alive.
And she laughed
As blood and brave fur
Flew through senseless sky.
I cursed my ruby slippers
As I pounded and kicked
At that glaring yellow brick.
’Till the wizard came and
Whisked me away
In his magic balloon.
“I hate it in Oz. I want to be home.”
He turned slowly towards me
And that’s when he said,
“T’m sorry my dear,
But I’m afraid you’ve never left.”
Feeling Faint
Diana Lin Daugherty

Tonight I'm dying
Racing is my brain
Trying to keep up with my body
that's leaving me quickly
but taking so long
not even time for regrets
just feelings
as everything leaves me
and I leave everything
taking nothing with me
not even myself

Spring 1993
Alone
I stood on the edge of despair
Wanting, waiting, pleading to be set free
I turned to God for the answers to my ever embedding problems
I asked him to shine the light on me and to set my spirit free

After many agonizing, hopeless, and endless months
My pleading prayers were answered
God's light and guidance was shed upon me
And I came out of the dark and into that light
I came into contact with my higher being
And my true self and spirit began to emanate from me
I felt tremendous positive energy
And it began to flow through me

Finally
When I saw that light, it changed my life
Forever!
Angel Myth
Judith Periale

Angels aren't blond and blue eyed guiles
with pink rosy cheeks and beatific smiles

An angel is an old man with rotting teeth and
three day beard, crowned with a wreath
of old smoke and gold dust.

Desert wisdom his
red eye enhances
With grizzled cheek he rasps
"take chances."
He will not fly with silken wing or
golden harp in hand.

He is the poem I share with others,
the human joke I understand.

The centered me in joyous dominion
who dances on a leaf
uncaring of opinion,
Who challenges with heartfelt screams
the core of me who dares and dreams of
cowboy boots and a red pick-up truck.

No...my angel does not have golden hair.

My angel is an old woman,
silent, squat and square
Her blunt sun aged hands heal
deepest pain.

Her braided hair will never be
seen atop a festive tree

Commonthought
all lit with a thousand candles.

Her fire is the spirit from a thousand souls
   hot sun fire... cool earth fire

She is my earth rituals and inner reaches
   the clay woman in my hand she teaches
   me the healing ways of women.

She is my drumming and rattle shaking
   heart beat with earth waking
   bliss...

No... my angel does not have golden hair.

My angel is young and mostly male
   with magic he does spin a tale
   of all things possible and rare.

He is sexual fun with laughter ringing
   throughout my body and my singing
   joy... joy... joy

He my inner voice does heed
   when women's softer breath I need
   to stroke and handle me with care.

He is my friendship and my fighter,
   the lover in me who makes life lighter
   my angel who stands beside me when
   at first not succeeding I "try try" again.

No... my angel does not have golden hair.

I have no love for angels of ethereal fashions
   who sit atop trees and hide their passions

My angels aren't blond with feathered wing
   who cannot laugh or love or sing.

My angels are the genuine thing!
Death by Suicide
Amanda M. McNuge

This paper was written for Sebastian Lockwood's Western Literature II class on April 10, 1991. It is a recreation of Emma Bovary's suicide in Gustave Flaubert's novel Madame Bovary.

As soon as Emma started to feel the arsenic taking its effects, she saw a familiar figure of a woman floating above the rickety old bed she was lying on. Emma screamed at this unexpected sight, and Charles, who was downstairs reading a new medical book that just was published, instantly ran up the stairs and burst into the bedroom to see what had his beloved wife so afraid. As Charles entered the room and walked to the foot of bed he saw Emma lying on the bed. She was white as a ghost, her hair was soaked, and drops of sweat were streaming down her face. Her clothes drenched in sweat, clung to her wet white clammy skin. The bed sheets were sopping wet underneath and around her. Even Charles, as a doctor, was horrified at the sight of his wife.

Charles asked, "Emma what is wrong with you? Why are you so sick?"
In a weak trembling voice Emma said, "Do you see her." Pointing up towards the ceiling.
"I know her, she's she's my mother!"
"Emma what are you talking about. We are the only two people in the room," replied Charles in a warm loving voice.
"What do you mean you don't see her! She's right there," pointing to the ceiling again. "I see her plainly as I see you. She is wearing the white satin dress with the puffy ruffled sleeves, and the laced shawl my father and I buried her in."

Charles walked around to the side of the bed to take a better look at her, since there was not much light.
given off by the candle, that was at the other end of room on an old second-hand cherry wood nightstand. He took Emma's pulse and felt her forehead to see if she was running a fever. It took Charles several minutes to find Emma's pulse because it was so faint and sporadic. Her temperature was extremely high. Then, all of a sudden, Emma started to shake violently on the bed and clutched her stomach as if it was being ripped apart from inside of her. Charles startled, stepped away from the bed and watched with amazement. She grew paler and started to vomit from the side of her mouth. The convulsions stopped as suddenly as they came, and she laid still on the bed moaning.

Charles knelt beside the bed and took Emma's hand, and pleaded with her to tell him what was wrong with her so he could help her. Emma told Charles that there was nothing he could do or anyone else could do to help her now.

Emma in a faint quivering voice said, "Death is near and I'm grateful for it. I will be happy soon for I will be rid of this wretched life I live. God, how I hate my life."

Charles astonished by these words from Emma asked in worried tone of voice, "Emma what have you done? Why do you talk this way?"

"I have done the only thing possible I could think of at the time. I ate enough arsenic to kill all the Knights of the Round Table and their horses," Emma replied in a cold hearted voice.

"Emma why? What have I done wrong? I have done everything possible to please you," replied Charles sadly.

Emma again was seized with convulsions and cried out with all of the strength she had:

"Charles go, leave me alone. I do not love you. I never did!"

Charles again was stunned by these cruel words that were coming from the wife he loved so much, and before he knew it he was running down the stairs, out the front door, and went to the pharmacist yelling:

"Arsenic. Arsenic. Oh my God, she ate Arsenic!"

Emma was left in the bedroom
alone, with the ghost of her mother still floating above her. Emma thinking that she was hallucinating, due to her high fever, closed her eyes thinking that the image would disappear when she opened her eyes again. But when she did reopen her eyes her mother's figure was still there looming above her and suddenly started to speak to her.

"Emma, my daughter, why did you choose to live your life the way you have? Why didn't you stay virtuous to your husband, Charles? He loves you more than any other man alive. Is it my fault because I was not able to show you what a wife's duty is?"

Emma gasped, "Mother is that really you!"

"Yes, it is." She replied in a hauntly voice.

"No, mother it was not because of you. I did not stay virtuous to Charles because I have been waiting for my Prince Charming to come and sweep me away, like they do in the novels I read, but today I finally realized that he will never come. I thought Leon and Rodolphe were my Prince Charming's; but they were not. No one will ever save me from the life I am so bored with."

"Emma, my daughter, that still does not give you the right to stray from your duty. You have committed the ultimate sin: adultery! Everyone becomes bored with life, but you must find something to occupy your time without straying from your duty to your husband because in the end it only hurts you and the people who love you such as Charles and Berthe."

"Yes, mother I know. I thought I was doing the right thing. I thought if I was happy, that I could make Charles and Berthe happy."

"Emma you're lying! You were only concerned about your own happiness, not Charles'. You were self-centered, thinking only of yourself, and not about the other people in your life, like your daughter. You never thought of the implications and ramifications of your actions."

"Please mother stop. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Help me to change so I can be a better wife to Charles and a better mother to Berthe."
"Emma there is nothing I can do. It's too late. I cannot save you from the sins you have committed. It is out of my hands. You ate arsenic and there is nothing I can do to reverse the damage that it is doing inside your body. It's killing you, and I cannot stay here any longer and watch you suffer. It is time for me to leave now. I shouldn't have come in the first place, but I had to see one last time incase I never see you again. I pray God will have mercy on you, and send you to heaven so you can be with me and not hell. If not I will always love you Emma." And the figure of Emma's mother slowly fades away and disappears.

When Charles came back into the room with the pharmacist, Emma was crying, "Please, mother come back, don't leave, I need you." And again Emma was seized by uncontrollable convulsions for several minutes that were so violent that they shook the candle off the nightstand on the other side of the room, which the pharmacist scrambled to before the candle had a chance to catch fire to the frayed worn out rug that it fell on. When the convulsions stopped, Emma was drenched in sweat again, and blood was seeping out the corner of her mouth and her nose, and she was gasping for air. And with her dying breath, Emma whispered to Charles "I'm sorry," and her body went limp. Charles tried to get a hold of her wrist to find a pulse, but Emma's skin was so slimy with sweat he couldn't hold on to her wrist, but Charles knew his wife was dead by her own hand and that he could do nothing to save her. Charles stood there over the bed looking at his wife's dead body surrounded in her own pool of sweat and blood, and started to weep.
Divine Liturgy
Anne Elezabeth Pluto

One: The Cemetery

The dead sleep
easily, grouped
in threes, they do not
mind us.
it is Christmas
Russian, I am not sad
yet, Nureyev dies in Paris
of a long and cruel illness,
Dizzy Gillespie in New Jersey
from painful cancer,
and we the living
lose our way
to your father's grave
a winter garden of Jewish stone
a dark pool, where the skeletons
of trees cast no light.
Your hands
beautiful, touch his name
three letters, beloved
husband and father I watch
you this silent winter
afternoon, all that silver
blue light cold inside
my dress
I hug my arms to my body
while it is you
I want to reach
knowing this is your time
to touch the earth alone
your long body
a graceful arc
across his stone.
You are his son
the one of the three
that lived, I am
sorry he never saw you
as a man.
Three geese fly above us
a winter triangle.
Two: Church of the Epiphany

Lost again, this time my mistake,
three tries to find it.
tucked away, a house of god,
Ornate, Russian, onion domed,
perfumed I did not learn
my religion and lead you
wrong through the icons
Christ and the angels
the rich suffer in hell
but it is Christmas
joyful the faithful move
to the Virgin, to the light
Nureyev is dead
in Paris, Dizzy
Gillespie in New
Jersey, and in Bethlehem,
David's Royal city
someone is watching
for a sign, the star
cast upon your father's stone
the cross I wear, the meeting
of god and the word
and the dance
Gabriel, dizzy
with his trumpet plays
for the faithful
I am surrounded
and the dead
they sleep so easily
on Christmas
while we
alive with our dark hearts
circumspect and wounded
examine the future
accordingly
in the flight of birds.

Russian Christmas 1993
Birth is the First Betrayal
Marcia Ann Lagerwey

I am thrown over this mountain of water
seasick with betrayal
the rush gush
warm water head squeezed
bent between legs
the world cracked breathless
over my body
smeared with white mucous.

If I had faith
the size of a mustard seed
I could move this mountain
instead
the water breaks
over my head
swirls
in a dizzying wall.
I am caught in the eye
barred from the swirling hole
moan after moan
the mountain moves
shifts its weight.
A voice
tears at me
whispers
"You must
believe."
Shaking
here in the middle I am born
in pain
spring forth full grown
rise from under
darkness
mountain of desire
float like an island
in the
sea.

Spring 1993
In the novel, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, the love relationship between The Marquise de Merteuil and The Vicomte de Valmont is dangerous. The relationship itself begins dangerously because Madame de Merteuil and Valmont think that everyone is a fool except for them. Letter LIV shows the way that Madame de Merteuil feels about this subject. She tells Valmont, "I never knew such a fool in matters of love..." (Laclos 119). To understand this dangerous relationship, the word dangerous must be explained in its context.

In a dangerous relationship, there exists Love, Innocence, Truth, Reputation, Knowledge or lack of Knowledge, Evidence, and Protection. Madame de Merteuil and Valmont have each component in their relationship. When all of these components are put together, there exists a dangerous relationship.

The first component to this dangerous relationship is Love. (It is interesting to note that in the French language the word lover means being in love). There are different degrees of love. Love can change over time. This change takes place when the individuals involved in the relationship change.

Valmont states in Letter XV:

Indeed, if to be in love is not to be able to live without possessing that person one desires, to sacrifice to her one's time, one's pleasures, one's life, then I am really in love. (Laclos 48)

At the time this novel was written, love existed outside of marriage. There is a lot of talk of seduction and pleasure between Valmont and Madame de Merteuil. Valmont writes in Letter XLIV, "I shall fly from pleasures to pleasures" (Laclos 100). In a dangerous relationship, love is blind. Madame de Merteuil writes in Letter CVI:

Wonderful! Vicomte, and this time I love you madly!... Yes, on my word of honour; when I read the fine account of that tender scene that you had been so "profoundly moved"; when I saw that restraint,
worthy of the best ages of our Chivalry, I said twenty times: That affair will be a failure! (Laclos 245-6)

Madame de Merteuil does not want to acknowledge the fact that Valmont is falling in love with Madame de Tourval.

Valmont and Madame de Merteuil have been lovers in the past. They do love each other. Between them there is communication, attraction (physical, emotional, and especially intellectual), and an understanding of what makes them who they are. Their letters are very passionate. In Letter XXXIII, Madame de Merteuil points out to Valmont:

And then, I am surprised you have not noticed that there is nothing so difficult in love as to write what one does not feel. (Laclos 79)

The letters that are written between Valmont and Madame de Merteuil show that they have a difficult time saying what they feel.

The second component to this dangerous relationship in Innocence. My definition of innocence is not to have knowledge of how things work. The innocence that exists between Valmont and Madame de Merteuil is in the fact that they write such revealing letters to one another. They tell the other all of their intimate secrets and adventures. They leave themselves wide open for the impending doom that reveals the truth of their actions. This is where reputations are ruined, the truth is exposed, knowledge is given to other characters through the existing letters, protection can no longer be of any value since the truth has been revealed, and the overwhelming evidence of letters are the true destruction of Valmont and Madame de Merteuil. All of these components make the relationship between Valmont and Madame de Merteuil dangerous.

When Madame de Merteuil and Valmont are together in a dangerous relationship, the destruction of both of them is inevitable. This is because when their attributes are closely looked at separately, the selfishness that both of them have in incredible.

Madame de Merteuil turns love and sex around to fit her conquests and her elaborate games. She has a desire
for power and uses control mechanisms. In Letter LXXXI she says to Valmont, "It well befits you to try to gauge my methods and to judge of my resources" (Laclos 175). To describe Madame de Merteuil would be to say that she wants pleasure and power, is selfish, angers easily, gets jealous quickly, and is quite vulnerable by writing the letters that end up revealing all of the plans that she has for revenge.

Madame de Merteuil gets angry at anyone who makes her feel pain. She puts on strong emotional armor to protect her from the world around her. The whole reason that she began her plot to bring Valmont to the country was to ruin Cecile's innocence. To ruin Cecile's innocence is to give her to a man on their wedding night not only with her loss of virginity, but possibly to make her pregnant. She wants to get even with The Comte de Gercourt (Cecile's future husband) for leaving her for the Intendante.

Madame de Merteuil acts like a man. She was able to set up her role in society after her husband died. Many men had the opportunity not to remarry after their wives died. Although her family believes that she should marry after the death of her husband, she decides not to do so. She knows that in her society she will never have to answer to anyone if she remains a widow.

Madame de Merteuil has no friends. When describing her life to Valmont in Letter LXXXI she says, "I had no intimate friend..." (Laclos 179). Her own quest for knowledge of the society around her put her in isolation most of the time. Valmont may be the first person that she considered a friend. A friend is someone that you can share you deepest thoughts with. Madame de Merteuil and Valmont have that. Madame de Merteuil is especially complex because in claiming to avenge her own sex, she avenges her own life. In Letter LXXXI she tells Valmont, "I must conquer or perish" (Laclos 184). Madame de Merteuil does not think that she can lose. She believes that she will always conquer any situation that is put before her. In Letter LXXXI she states:

I had descended into my own heart and I
studied in it the heart of others. There I saw that everybody keeps a secret in it which he must not allow to be revealed - a truth which antiquity appears to have known better than we and of which the story of Samson may be only an ingenious parable. Like a new Delilah I always used my power as she did to surprise this important secret. (Laclos 182)

Valmont is a man that is infamous for his games that consist of control and sex. He is truly a master of manipulation. In Letter IV, Valmont tells Madame de Merteuil:

You know I always desire keenly and sweep away obstacles; but what you can not know is how much solitude adds to the ardour of desire. I have but one idea; I think of it by day and dream of it by night. I must have this woman, to save myself from the ridiculous position of being in love with her - for how far may not one be led by a thwarted desire? (Laclos 28)

Valmont equates happiness with contentment. But he does not allow himself to truly give of himself to another woman. Valmont gets close to giving himself to another woman when he becomes Madame de Merteuil's lover. He tells Madame de Merteuil in Letter IV, "You have shared all the secrets of my heart" (Laclos 28).

Valmont is also guilty of leaving behind a trail of broken hearts and being amused by his adventures. When Valmont hears that it is Madame de Volanges that is telling Madame de Tourval about him, he decides to embark upon a new adventure. In Letter XLIV, Valmont tells Madame de Merteuil:

Ah! Her daughter must certainly be seduced, but that is not enough, I must ruin her; and since the age of this accursed woman protects her from my attacks, I must strike her through the object of her affection. (Laclos 102)

Valmont is intrigued by the adventures that he decides to become involved in. Valmont wants happiness, pleasure, love, power, control, and revenge. He is a master at writing beautifully versed letters that are not filled with lies. He takes specific actions in his adventures to see what type of reaction he will get. In Letter XXXIV, Valmont brags to Madame de Merteuil about his letter writing to Madame de Tourval:
I was congratulating myself, you may be sure, on the idea that she would either keep my letter or that if she wished to return it she would be compelled to be alone with me; which would give me an opportunity to speak to her. (Laclos 81)

The elements that bring Valmont and Madame de Merteuil together in a dangerous relationship are the following. They are both partners in the crime of letter writing; they have another person to tell everything they feel to; they both like a challenge or they would not get involved in the adventures that take up all of their time; they are very competitive with one another; and they talk about the other's pursuits and they criticize the other claiming they would have handled the situation differently. In Letter XXXIII, Madame de Merteuil says to Valmont, "Your conduct is a masterpiece of folly on the contrary assumption; and to tell you the truth, I am afraid you are deluding yourself" (Laclos 78).

Valmont and Madame de Merteuil can be helpful to one another because they both discuss their involvement's with the other. They can keep their games alive through revealing themselves to one another. The most important aspect of their relationship is that they are scared of really loving one another. In Letter CXXI, Madame de Merteuil says:

Do you know, I sometimes regret that we are reduced to these resources. In the time when we loved each other, for I think it was love, I was happy: and you too, Vicomte!...But why trouble about a happiness which can never return? (Laclos 30)

Both of them are so wrapped up in their adventures and plots to destroy other individuals, that they cannot see that love is what brought them together and what will destroy them in the end.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

First Love
Stacy Spumberg

In the dream:
Love enters our hearts.
Lust invades our innocence
Our bodies tangle together
In a knot of youthful ecstasy.

Awaken by Mass Avenue traffic:
The dream dances into my consciousness
Teasing my sense of reality
He is gone again
Chilling my soul.

Four years ago:
Others pass between us
A flickering facade?
Love fades to friendship
While I secretly yearn for old warmth.

for T. A. E.
Fall 1992
What's In A Word?

Anonymous

With every touch
I felt my soul wasting away.
Twenty years of dreams
and built up expectations of a wonder.
Interrupted.
Shattered within minutes.
As I bask in my shame,
I feel exposed to the effects of this sorry experience
you called "love,"
that I called "sex."
The intensity of your lips.
The urgency of your hands on my thighs.
I drowned in your persistence
and responded eagerly to your touch.
Yet every fiber of my soul
cried desperately for you to stop.
You didn't.
You persuaded me into thinking
I was ready.
But I wasn't.
No amount of soap
could cleanse my soul
of its shame.
No prayer
could return the innocence.
Upon hearing the word "Love,"
I feel empty, numb.
I question the validity of the word these days,
because I have come to understand that
had you truly "loved" me,
you would have waited
for my mind and my heart
to develop and to understand
the sweet words
you whispered in my ears.
I can not tell your story,
I can only tell you mine.

I can not know your mystery,
... and only mine in time.

I can not write your sonnet,
I can only read my own.

I can not live your sorrow,
I cannot stop your pain.
I can only stand beside you
and wait to hope again.

I can not quell your hidden fears.
I can only face my own.
    I can never birth your child
    or find your answer
    or meet your God.
I can not weep your tears.
But, to stand in truth of knowing
of who I am and why.
To greet my inner pain as friend,
to own my fear, and cry.

Then I can justly stand with you.
I can hold your hand in mine.

In honesty I share your thoughts,
your mystery, . . . your time.

I can not take your love my friend.
I can only give you mine.

I can not give you God, my friend.
That truth is ever thine.

*September 22, 1992*
Dovid, you need to work harder. How do you expect to have your haftorah ready for your Bar Mitzvah next month? You must memorize the trops!" From Mr. Rosen's wizened face a thick yiddish accent boomed at me. "You will get up on the bimah and look like a schmigegy if you do not memorize the trops!" He finished.

"But Mr. Rosen, I do work. I just can't..." I started.

"Oh no, Dovid, you can! You must want it enough. You are about to become Bar Mitzvahed; become a man. Act like a mensch! Just work a little harder this week, it won't hurt you!" Mr. Rosen insisted as he made emphatic hand gestures. The power in his hands was like that of Moses parting the Red Sea: palms towards heaven, fingers spread as if they held heavy air.

I slumped down in my chair, Mr. Rosen's cutting words and gestures were intimidating, yet, resentment swept over me. My name is DAVE, not Dovid. Why couldn't he call me Dave, everyone else did. Yet, I swallowed my anger and sighed. "Yes, I'll work harder this week, Mr. Rosen."

"Good boy, now go home and wish your Ema a Yom Tov for me. I'll see you next week?"

"Yes Mr. Rosen, Yom Tov." I waved as I took of my keepah. Relief swept over me as I climbed down the synagogue stairs. I wondered why Mr. Rosen pressured me so much. The trops seemed almost impossible. Why do I even want to learn them? I kicked a rock around the gravel lot. The sun still peeked out as the pink clouds were trying to eat it up. It would soon be Shabbat. Mom would be lighting the candles and Dad saying the blessings. Thinking of Mom and Dad reminded me why I wanted to learn the trops. I knew it meant so much to my parents. I would much rather play soccer than learn the trops. After my Bar Mitzvah at least I could use soccer; when would
I use my haftorah? I sighed, but knew I had to make Mom and Dad and even Mr. Rosen happy, so I would learn my haftorah. When I got home Shabbat dinner was ready. The smell of kneadle soup and kreplach wafted through the house. It was good to be home.

After Dad said the Hamotzi we passed the challah. "How was your meeting with Mr. Rosen today?" Dad asked as he broke off a healthy piece of the braided bread.

"Oh, it went well." I lied. I knew Dad wouldn't be happy to hear it hadn't. I felt bad, but justified it; by the time I was Bar Mitzvahed it would go well.

The week flew by and I did study harder. I found time to play soccer and learn my haftorah. I knew Mr. Rosen would be happy, best of all I felt good too.

On Friday Mr. Rosen greeted me and insisted on hearing my progress immediately. He led me into his cinnamon smelling study, that was cluttered with old prayer books. I started singing. The Hebrew and the harmonies flowed through my lips. "Baruch Attah Adonoy Ellohaynuh Mellech Haolom..." I made a few small errors, but overall even I felt proud. Mr. Rosen was ecstatic.

"Dovid, you did so well...so well." Tears formed at the corners of his brilliant blue eyes. His lip twitched a little. He came to embrace me, the coat he wore smelled of old moth balls. The sweetness of the sesame candies he often ate was intermingled with his stale breath. "I am so proud of you, Dovid."

"Mr. Rosen, there is something I wanted to ask you."

His arms let go of me and motioned to two old burgundy velvet chairs. As we sat he asked, "Yes, Dovid what is it?"

"I just wanted to know, why it is so important to you that I learn my haftorah?" I peered at him, bifocals perched on the bridge of his nose, his once robust face now lined with age. His bird's nest-like white beard that made me wonder if he had a chin. He started.

"Dovid, there is a reason. Now that you are to be Bar Mitzvahed you
are also ready to know." he signed as his eyes glazed with memories. The bluish veins on his hands jutted out like small rivers. As he pulled back his shirt sleeve, I almost expected to see the ocean where the rivers led. Instead just five tattooed numbers the color of ashes. "You were in the Holocaust?" I gasped. I had never known anyone who had survived the Holocaust, many of my own ancestors hadn't.

"Yes. I was only nineteen when the SS came to our little town, Cracow. I remember being terrified when they told us we would have to be relocated. I had never been apart from my family; I saw them take my parents away. They took my mother and father, no they did not take, they stole from me, the two people who gave me life. My sweet mother who would stay up late nights mending our clothes. I can still hear her humming old tunes as my brother and I would like in bed. The house would always smell faintly of her perfume; it was home. My father used to tug on his beard and say how much 'our very own song bird' brightened the dreariest of days. He was right. Father would leave early in the mornings for his office and come home at five every evening for dinner. While Momma would clear the table he would listen to the radio while relaxing in his favorite chair. Often he would fall asleep just sitting there and Mother would creep up very gently to wake him." He paused, I thought of what it would be like to be separated from Mom and Dad, the idea was terrifying.

He continued, "My brother Aaron and I were sent to work camp. The first day we were given moldy bread and old soup. It was disgusting, we did not eat. The Kapo said that the next day the food would be fresher and there would be more of it. Yet the next day the food was less and just as inedible. We knew we had to eat or we would die of starvation, so we ate. Day after day the portions grew smaller, and after a week we would fight for a place in line to get our tin cans filled with soup. We were always hungry, always. Aaron and I always tried to get work detail together, we clung to each other for hope. We would share any extra morsel of food that came to us.
Every night we would collapse from grueling hours of work, our stomachs swollen with hunger. Before bed we would hold hands and say the Shamah, praying to survive the next day. Each morning I would shake him to make sure he was still alive... Oh, Aaron. Aaron's being with me was my last thread of hope. We talked of what we would do when the war was over... If the war would ever end... He insisted the first thing he would do was to be Bar Mitzvahed. " Mr. Rosen took a breath that seemingly swallowed the whole room's air. The pain I saw in his eyes looked as though it was coursing through his whole body. He started to speak again.

"Before we went away, Aaron used to beg me to teach him from the Torah. He wanted so much to be Bar Mitzvahed; to become a man in the eyes of G-d... at home we would huddle over books of the Talmud., he always wanted to learn, always. He would beg me. 'Solomon, you must teach me! How am I ever going to be ready for my Bar Mitzvah if you don't?' He was so persistent, every day we would study... He never was Bar Mitzvahed. In Gleiwitz, our work camp... he died. Aaron was only twelve! He was robbed of his adulthood. In six months, oh, just six months, he would have turned thirteen!" Mr. Rosen's words were broken with sobs as I felt my own eyes tears. "One morning I went to shake him and he did not respond 'Aaron wake up. AARON, open your eyes! Oh Aaron. Please!' My only brother? The brother of my flesh, we shared the same womb! I taught him how to ride a bike. He was only a child... only a child!" I saw painful despair as his wrinkled hand formed a powerful fist. He looked almost surprised at his own clenched fist. He sighed as he released it, and continued.

"The guards had to pull me off his body. I had never felt so alone. I asked G-d again and again 'Why did you take Aaron from me?" My heart ached for Mr. Rosen, and our eyes met on this common ground. He spoke again yet in a deeper, more bitter voice. "Somehow I found the strength to survive. I did not know my fate after the war, if the war would ever end. I
prayed my parents were still living. One day the Americans came in to the camp and announced the war was over. Just like that. There had been rumors for months, and then one day it was over. I headed back to what used to be our home. The scarred little Cracow. I waited patiently there for my parents to return. I wanted to hear my mother's singing fill the house and it never did again. They were not alive. After the war ended I that felt my life was over. Everyone I held dear to me was in heaven and I was alone, so terribly alone. I missed my family, my dear mother, my wise father and Aaron. Oh, I tried to put them to rest, but I still needed their love, and I was alone in the world. I felt robbed. I found no comfort in the yortzite candles I lit or the Kaddish I said. Nothing took away the pain, nothing. The dull ache was apparent in Mr. Rosen's body even after all these years. He slumped in his seat with his hand held over his heart.

"But then, like all my forefathers before me, G-d led me. I knew than that I should help boys turn into men. To give the chance the Aaron was never given. To tell you the story of Aaron, for you can hold the flame he wasn't able to carry."

I stood and walked to Mr. Rosen. He didn't smell like mothballs anymore. I didn't know what to say, so I said nothing, just rested my hand on his shoulder. His head was bowed. "Shalom Mr. Rosen." I had never felt so trusted, like an adult before.

A month later I stood on the bimah. I was not nervous. I had never felt so proud to be Jewish. My heritage seemed more real than ever before. When the Rabbi placed the soft cloth tallis around my shoulders and pronounced me a man I felt warm energy surge through me. I looked over at Mr. Rosen, our eyes met, and he nodded at me. Aaron, this is for you.
Untitled
Mike Galvin

Hurrah old candle
Anointed w/spit
You passed in the night
Like the darkness you lit

I shouldn't have held you
So tight in my heart
Your wax fill like teardrops
And that tore me apart

Breaths can't extinguish
The love of the living
I light you again
Though the fire is killing
Untitled
Jennifer Eileen Peskin

M idnight lightning
A slender gleaming stroke
Pure and simple
Utterly taking the breath away
Sparkles without fireworks
Embracing the tiers
Spellbinding blackness
Envy
By the stars
Ruffled degrees of music
Shimmering sounds
The final,
whispered caress,
of the soft ocean breeze.
One Believed
_Barton Kuntsler_

i broke down for you, Kassandra
too saddened by your words
and prophetic tears
while all around me the city burned
you danced all night about the harbor
i am not a man easily persuaded
but i was
in the bloodthirsty rain of unhinged song
you chose not to believe your curse betrayed

the blindfolded lady who hears voices by the rocks
receives my questions
"only a woman can be a teacher in love"
she laughs
"even Socrates, old blowhard, knew that"
and then she turns silent
is she a woman?
a wave crashes and she disappears
the world is made of spirals
but whether they open in or out
no one tells
but you had the word, Kassandra
with the enigmatic answer
you said you'd speak
no more in riddles
now you dance with your brothers
and sleep with falling stars
in the blood-drenched east
they have made you their night-wandering queen

there's a priest i visit
who lives in a boathouse
full of tales of sailors
he's buried and known
we laugh when we're drunk
and roar by the water
praising women and wine
by the light of the moon.
Network of Life
Patricia Rose

Miles of shadowed crosses
measure the streets between us
Dusk they become the light
that guide the wayward home
Lives tangled and captured
in concrete and wire
We hold on to our distance

December 2, 1992
She was back in the bedroom, and the Beast was above her, his enormous sex like a knife within her, shredding her insides. His face transformed, and it was her father, her brothers, and finally a faceless, slavering corpse-thing, beating her and screaming obscenities. But she didn't scream, didn't fight, didn't resist, and her bonds seemed to melt away. She leapt up and fled.

She was in the yard now, before the tree. Chris stood, his back to her. She spoke his name and slowly her little brother turned. He held out his arms to her, arms covered in blood, blood that flowed from the holes through his palms. The skin of his neck hung in two flaps where she had slit the artery. "Whore of the Beast, you murdered me!" the corpse child shrieked. "Traitorous whore, you murdered us all!" came Brendan's voice behind her. She spun and found herself surrounded by her dead brothers; they beat and slapped at her screaming their accusations over and over. She couldn't stand the touch of their bloodsoaked hands, their hateful accusation. She caught a glimpse of her ancient grandmother standing beyond the circle. "Why don't you scream?" she asked her. Alpha spat, "To scream would show weakness. I will not be weak." Her grandmother shook her head sadly. "A woman's weakness is sometimes her strength. Scream, child. It's your only hope," the old woman said in her thick Gaelic. She found her voice then, and screamed, high and loud. Her scream broke the nightmare, and she was no longer Maureen, but Alpha, back in the desert by a dying fire, her horse stirring restlessly nearby.

She sat up, shivering, stirred the fire, and lay back down. She gazed at the blanket of tranquil stars above, the sparkling carpet of the heavens spread out like a diamond merchant's cloth. An overwhelming feeling of desolation gripped her, and the desire to weep was irresistible, but some-
how, no tears would come. Her eyes were as dry as the desert that surrounded her.

"So even this I am denied," she whispered aloud. "I will die alone, facing an enemy far beyond any power I ever dreamed of, unknown, unremembered, and without an heir or kin to weep my passage, and I cannot even weep for myself. Lord, why? Why me? Why was I chosen? Why did this visit itself upon me? Didn't my family suffer enough? Haven't I suffered enough?"

The stars were silent. The only answer was the wind sighing across the desert and the endless echoing silence of the desert night. Eventually, she passed back into sleep, but the fitful dreams possessed her again, and she wandered endless dream corridors, searching for something she'd lost. The feeling of being pursued gripped her. She was back in the farmhouse, but it had swelled to enormous proportion, and now it was a great mansion like those she had read of in her books, books that the fire had consumed. Her steps quickened as panic seized her: she could not get out. A nameless horror was on her heels, she could feel its hot breath on the back of her neck, sense its menace, the physical threat - her life was in danger, and she could not escape.

Alpha moaned aloud in her sleep, the sound swallowed by the endless empty night. In her dream, the walls of the house melted into great rolling fields of wheat and corn, and now she searched desperately for a place to hide, fleeing the horsemen riding up and down. They were looking for her, and she must hide.

A wolf howled near her campsite, and Alpha jolted awake. Another wolf answered from over the ridge, and she realized that the hoofbeats were real - a mile or two off, but coming her way.

Thank God she had camped in a hollow and built her fire in a pit. It was doubtful he had spotted her - the ridge was between them - but it wouldn't pay to be caught. She knew who was coming, and it would not be safe to meet him here in the desert. There was a town two miles east; she
might be able to out-run him. All this ran through her mind as she rapidly broke camp, rolling her bedding and tossing her book into her saddle bag. Her refuse went into the fire pit and sand followed it. It took her maybe two minutes. Before she mounted her horse, she put her ear to the ground. Her first estimate had been wrong - he was at least five miles away, but if his horse caught wind of hers, there would be a chase.

The wolf at the ridge of the dell whimpered - her final warning. Alpha led her horse out of the hollow and swung into the saddle. Her horse caught her anxiety as she urged him into a quick trot. She could sense the wolf pacing her, a ready sentinel and surer protection than any gun. Her own trepidation grew, though, and when the wolf barked, she pushed her horse into a gallop. A far-off howl told her it was none too soon; she didn't need to put her ear to the ground to realize that the race was on.

A light appeared in the distance, and as she neared it, Alpha realized it was a frontier meeting house, the closest thing she was going to find to a proper church. She reined in at the parsonage door, leapt off her horse and pounded on the door.

"Open up! For God's sake, open up!"

A young man opened the door, blinking owlishly through his spectacles in the light of his lamp.

"The minister. I need the minister," she snapped.

"I'm the parson. Christ—"

"Sanctuary. I am being pursued by the devil himself. I ask sanctuary."

"Granted, but—"

"Stable my horse!" she ordered, and raced for the church, passing through the front door like the wind. "Damned Protestants! There's no altar, no proper sanctuary," she spat. It didn't matter, though. This was sacred ground, sanctified by the faith of those who worshipped here, and that was what was important. Alpha went to the pulpit and began to compose herself.

She almost shot the minister when he came in the back door. "Good
God, don't sneak up on me! You came damn near to getting yourself killed!"

"I'm...I'm sorry," he stammered. "I just wanted to see if there was anything I could do for you. If you wanted to tell me who it is that pursues you. If it is the law—"

"The devil himself or one who stands very high in his favor, Padre, is about to arrive on your doorstep. And I'm going to kill him on sacred ground."

The young parson ignored the last remark. "Who are you?"

"Who am I?" she replied, "I am Alpha."

"Surely your parents didn't baptize you that," the young padre persisted.

"The name I was given at birth has no relevance, no meaning."

"But your family—"

"I have no family! She who I was died by his hand a year ago, and I'm going to repay the kindness. I am the only one who knows how to kill him; hell, I'm the only one with the power to kill him."

"Why do you talk of killing?! Is there no better way to settle a dispute?" the minister asked in disgust.

"When you deal with a rational human being, yes, but not when you deal with a thing like him," she replied. "What could this person have done to justify—"

"He destroyed what exile, grief and hardship could not conquer."

"Excuse me?" he asked, puzzled.

"You see, I did not beg when he first touched me; I grew even more silent as he continued. That angered him. The only scream he got from me came when I found my father and brother. He prefers to see his prey die on their knees, begging him for one more breath. That I live and still pursue him gives him great pain and annoyance."

"What happened to them—your father brother?"

"He tortured them and left them for dead, and if the superstitions you preach are true, they went to heaven and joined my mother and three older brothers." She stopped, the memory of the nightmare returning. Her voice thickened as she continued: "Have you ever watched a brother die, Father? I
have seen four of them die, two shot like dogs in the street, one in my arms after protecting me from a trooper who would make an example of two children, and the fourth...God forgive me, but there was nothing I could do for him. There was no hope. He asked me for one thing, the little one I raised like my own, and that was to end the pain. That bastard left him for dead, but he only put nails in his hands and feet. No, I had to end his suffering with a knife to his throat and tear him from the tree."

The minister shuddered in disgust. She glanced up, "What's the matter, Father? Your own god, or his son at least, died that way, nailed to a tree and left to hang and bleed to death slowly while the crowds gathered and mocked him. Does it shock that one small boy could be left in the same state, intended for bloody and evil sacrifice? Does it upset you, Father? I will not tell you what they did to my father. Old Wolf cut him down from the noose, what was left of him. I arranged their bodies and I set the fire so none would desecrate the grave. All that spoke of the old life burned with them. I burned with them. And after that jackal is dead, I don't care if I go into the fire."

"Surely..."

"What? Surely I'm not serious? Oh, little minister of the deaf and soulless God, I am deadly serious. There is nothing left within me but anger and hate. There is nothing recognizable of the woman that I once was left, no tenderness, no kindness, no emotion that could even vaguely be described as 'love.' I do not feel that the Fates intend for me to survive beyond this night, and so long as he dies with me, I don't care. I am weary beyond my years and there is no solace to be found."

"What you're saying to me defies belief, but the truth is in your eyes. Whatever the truth may be, you believe it as you tell it."

"Doubt me, little father? Wait. Do you hear those hoofbeats? He will be here in minutes, and he will attack immediately. He has to do it before dawn, or wait for sunset. He does not want that; he is a creature of little patience. Prepare yourself, Padre."

"I still find all of this difficult to believe, at best."
For the first time, she turned to face him directly. She slowly raised her head and looked him straight in the eye. She smiled, a smile such as Winter would wear, a smile that warmth and joy never touched. "Dear God," he whispered.

"Truth is always stranger than fiction, and usually twice as ugly. The Slayer of Dreams waits in your dooryard, and he's out for vengeance. Prepare yourself, Father. I was raised Catholic - I do not know how a good Methodist would deal with a meeting with the devil, but I hope you Protestants can fight as hard as you can sing."

This time there was humor in her smile, but it was brief. "Do you pray at all?" he asked.

"Pray? Every night. I ask for my aim to be true, my hand steady, my will as steel. I ask that I die on my feet and not on my knees; that I see him die at my hands. I ask that I be delivered from this nightmare, but I know when I rise in the morning that there is no such thing as deliverance. This god we're all raised with turned a deaf ear to his own son; why should he care about a weary woman who has forgotten that her place is in the kitchen, not the saddle, who refused to die of shame after being dishonored, but instead swore to hunt down and kill the creature? Do you really think God listens to people like me? Hell no. There's too many of us."

"Yes, well...I am not a Catholic priest, but I do know some of the rituals. We had a couple of Catholic families in the town, you see and... Well, there is a small shrine in the back, if you need to pray, and if you would like the last rites..."

"Shrive my soul and prepare for heaven?" She laughed bitterly, "I need no vindication from God or one of his self-appointed representatives. The only vindication I need is this," she patted the holster on her hip. "Wait...the shrine - who's statue is in it?"

"There is a crucifix and a statue to Mary."

"Show me," she ordered.

She followed him past the pulpit and stood back as he drew the red drape. Behind it lay the tiny shrine. He withdrew to their watchpost.

Alpha stood before the statue of the Blessed Virgin, Mary, Queen of
Heaven, with her bare feet crushing a serpent. "I have turned my back on your son and his callous father, but dear Mother, protect your daughter this night. I am a woman, whose hands were meant for healing and nurturing, not destruction and death, but this is the fate dealt to me. Grant me the strength to play it out. Guide my hand that they did not die in vain."

She caught herself making the sign of the cross. "Old superstitions die hard," she remarked out loud, sinking into a pew. The young minister started. "Just commenting on irony, Padre. What is your name, by the way?"

"Christopher. Christopher Jameson. Minister Jameson to the congregation. Dr. Jameson for official purposes."

"Christopher was my little brother's name. It means 'light bearer.' Are you a light bearer, Christopher Jameson?"

"I try to be."

"Good aspiration," she remarked. The sound of hoofbeats filled the churchyard, and Alpha leapt to her feet. "The devil is upon us," she hissed. "Go to the pulpit, Christopher Jameson, and pull out your Bible. Don't bother screaming quotes from it at him; it doesn't work. He's far older than Christianity, although he's harrassed Christian, Jew and pagan alike over the years."

"Then why the Bible?"

She grinned. "It will give you strength. You're going to need it." She turned and strode up the aisle to the shrine. She stepped into it and drew the curtain. Jameson hesitated a moment, but then followed her orders.

"Light the candles," she whispered. Again, he did as he was told. Soon, it was black in the room but for the candles around the pulpit, and the glow that came from behind the shrine's curtain.

Just when all seemed quiet and the impending showdown just a figment of her imagination, there was the sound of bootsteps on the porch, a slow, even, steady tread. Behind, in the shrine, Alpha mastered her fear. She silently recited the litany of names: brother Sean, dead at 17, brother.
Michael, dead at 20 in Australia, brother Brendan, dead in her arms at age 16, beautiful, brave Brendan, Mother dead when she herself was just 12, two years after Brendan, flight and exile, and her own little Christopher, her light bearer, dead with Father, just 8 years old. For you, Chris, she silently pledged. For you, my little light that he extinguished. The cold hate flooded through her and her dancing nerves quieted. Tonight was destiny; she would rise to it and see that she got her hero's death. There would be no Valkyrie on this battlefield, but there would be the wolves, and there would be deliverance.

The door swung open on silent hinges and the huge frame of a man filled the entrance.

Alpha dropped to her belly and began to crawl down the back of the pulpit and up the far aisle.

Jameson looked up from his Bible, "Greetings, friend. Have you come to hearken to the Word of God? You are..." But the words died in his throat. The form strode forward into light and Christopher Jameson saw the face that would give him nightmares to the end of his days.

"Where is she?" came the sibilant voice.

"Sweet Jesus, save me," the minister whispered.

"He can't save you now, prayer seller. Where is she?"

And from behind him there came the sound of laughter. He spun around to find her at the opposite end of the little church, facing him down the aisle. "Right behind you, you bastard."

She saw his face, then. Her blood turned to ice and her knees to water; she knew that face, it haunted her nightmares and chased her down endless dream corridors, and in the worst of them it brutalized her body yet again, but the hate burned still within her. The litany ran through her head once more and her courage did not desert her. And his gun was in his hand.

Life went into slow motion at that instant. Her own gun went up - Old Wolf's voice whispered in her head that he must draw first, but that she must take the first blood - and two shots rang. Hers went true: she saw
the great burst of blood as it passed into his heart. His bullet hit her a second later, piercing her shoulder, reopening the old wound. She switched hands and fired off the remaining shots, each one entering his heart. He went down slowly, staring at her in disbelief.

"Prophecy...you cannot..." A second later, he breathed his last.

"Oh, yes, I can, you son of a bitch," she growled.

The young minister stood clutching his pulpit, seemingly grafted to the polished wood. Jameson stared at her, horrified. "So you saw him, as he really is. I knew you did. I saw it in your eyes when I came up behind him. You knew he wasn't human. Do you still think there might have been a better way to settle my dispute with him?"

She paused to check Jameson's face. "I thought not. Oh, and by the way - he's not dead. In order to destroy him, there is a ritual. To rid the world of this abomination, I have to perform it. Care to watch?"

"But...but you're bleeding. You've been hit," he pointed out.

She glanced at her shoulder, "Yes. I knew it would happen. The Wheel must come full circle." With that, she bent and grasped the body under the arms and began to drag it out the door. It weighed far less than she expected, but then she remembered Old Wolf's words: "The body is but a shell; open the shell and destroy what you find within. It can change its shape - and it will take whatever form it must to distract you and prevent you from killing it. You must not waver. No matter what form it takes - remember, it is a sham, a fake. Evil can only mock Nature."

She dragged the body into the graveyard. Alpha was glad that the meeting house was on the outskirts of town - the less notice, the better. She drew the pouch the ancient Indian had given her from an inner pocket and began drawing the circle. The Old Wolf had told her its contents, but she had forgotten them. Instead, mad Ophelia's litany of herbs ran through her head, violets, rosemary, and rue, rue with a difference. Oh, yes, the herbal abortive for casting out monster
children, children of rape, children of incest. Mad Ophelia, raped by her scheming father, and she, mad Alpha, raped by the corpse thing under her hands.

"Do not pass over this line," she told Jameson. "If you break the circle, you set it free. There is no way you can help me or prevent it from hurting me. Just sit there and bear witness."

The circle complete, she began a small fire in the center. Reaching into the pouch, she drew from it a fine powder and cast it upon the fire. Blue flames leapt up, licking the night sky. "May the gods guide my hands, Old Wolf," she whispered. Taking the long silver knife from its sheath, she knelt upon the ground and began to slit the carcass open, starting at the forehead and going down. Despite the atrocities the creature had perpetrated against her body, she was loath to cut below his belt, but she forced herself. She nearly retched when she discovered there was nothing there...nothing. She had to quarter it. "Oh, gods," she moaned softly. She realized than that there was no blood; her leather gloves had nothing but dust on them. She began the litany of names again.

Finally, the first cut was made. She began the cut across the waist. The skin started to ripple and bubble, like the thing was boiling. She ignored it, and finished the cut and ripped apart the pieces. There was a wet, tearing sound, and on the desert floor in front of her lay a coyote and a rattlesnake, covered in blood and badly wounded. They glared at her with eyes that did not belong to beasts. She screamed and nearly lost her courage then, but from outside the ring came a mournful howl. The wolves had come, just as Old Wolf had promised.

"Alpha," the snake hissed and tried to raise itself to strike. She dodged it's feeble attempt and drew the second knife.

"Brother," the coyote whispered, and before her, in the steaming corpse, sat her little brother. The snake and coyote were nowhere to be seen. Her little Christopher reached for her. "Please, dearest sister, I'm so scared. Please, please take me away from here. Please, I'm so frightened," he begged her. Tears welled in his eyes, those clear blue eyes, and his soft curls, so
frustrating to a little boy, fell over his eyes. For the first time since taking the name Alpha, tears spilled from her dry desert eyes. She started to reach for him, but drew back. Now why did she do that? "Oh, Chris, where have you been?" she whispered, and her memory clouded over, there was something wrong with Chris, but she couldn't remember what. And where had he been?

"Sister, why are you wearing men's clothes? Father would be furious! Please, sister, take us out of this horrid circle. I wish those awful wolves would stop howling. Why don't you shoot at them?"

"Chris, where have you been?" she asked again, thoroughly puzzled. Why was she wearing men's clothes? And carrying a gun? And why did she have knives in her hands?

"Alpha! Take us out of here!" Christopher demanded.

Alpha? she thought. The spell was broken. "Mother, forgive me," she cried and plunged the twin daggers into "Christopher's" throat. A soul-curdling scream rent the night and a fountain of blood shot towards the sky. Christopher disappeared and in his place she faced...herself. The fetch laughed madly. "What did you expect? Did you really believe the Indian? You killed your brother. You killed your father. Just as you killed your brothers and mother. You dishonored yourself." The doppelganger howled with laughter.

Alpha staggered back from it - it smelled of the grave and bore her image, as she had been, but corrupted, filthy...She backed further away, wanting to escape, ready to beg for deliverance, and the thing advanced, its long red hair in tattered elflocks, spattering drops of blood as it shook its head and roared with maniacal laughter.

It forced her back to the verge of the circle. One more step and she would break the confining ring. The wolves had fallen silent, frozen in their own terror. All is lost, I have failed, the last remaining rational thought escaped. It was then that Christopher Jameson found his voice.

"Get back! You'll cross the line! Get back, for the love of God and your brother, get back!"
"Alpha....Remember."

She heard Christopher Jameson and Old Wolf, and stood fast. "DREAMSLAYER!!" she screamed, "Come on, you bloody bitch," she challenged, advancing on it. "You aren't me. You can't be. I have no such evil within me. And if I do, with these daggers I cast it out!" Alpha leapt at her shadow and plunged both daggers within its breast. A double scream rent the air. Before her again, writhing on the twin blades, were the rattlesnake and the coyote, both in their death throes but trying to strike her. With a heave that took most of her remaining strength, she flung the bodies, daggers and all, on to the fire. Another scream ripped through the night. Alphacought herself starting to faint but somehow managed to retain consciousness. She heaved the quarters of the body into the fire, and after then she flung the pouch Old Wolf had given her. The third scream, the death scream, rose then out of the flames and faded in the night. When its last echo had died, the wolves began to howl.

"Oh, Christopher," she gasped, pitching forward. She couldn't reach the fire to cast herself within it. As she drifted gratefully into unconsciousness, she saw the first ray of sunlight on the horizon, and it seemed that Old Wolf stood there before her. "Sing my soul home, Old Wolf," she croaked, and she remembered no more.

The Old Wolf stopped the horrorstricken minister from crossing into the circle. "We must wait until the fire has died."

"But she will die!" he exclaimed.

"Alpha is dead already. She was alive for this and this only. Whether or not she will decide to allow Maureen to live again is another question. Her body will heal. She is strong. It is her soul that has been damaged, and that will take more than sleep and the healer's arts to cure. Enough talk. Now, we wait."

The fire did not die until the first rays of the sun shone directly upon it. Hissing as if water had been poured upon them, the last embers flared and fell to ashes. The Old Wolf crossed the circle, cast salt upon the ashes, and buried them. When this was done, he
bent and lifted her lifeless form and carried her into the bed Jameson had waiting.

When Alpha/Maureen regained consciousness, she found the Old Wolf sitting next to her bed, keeping watch.

"I'm... I'm alive. I'm still alive," she said in bewilderment.

"You are. You expected not to be?" he replied.

"No. I thought I was going to die. You promised me..."

"I promised nothing."

The pain she had kept at bay for a year overrode her control, and in a despairing echo of the wolves' howl, she cried, "Why?! Why, Old One? Why am I still here? Why am I alive? Why am I still breathing, still existing? You promised me the deliverance of death once the Beast was defeated. Why was my deliverance denied?! Have I not suffered enough?"

The Old Wolf regarded her with a mixture of sternness and compassion. "I never promised you death, not the death you desired and sought. I promised you the death of Alpha when the Beast went into the fire so that you could go back to being Maureen, back to living." He paused to gaze at her troubled, sorrowing face. "Oh, Child," he sighed, "There is no deliverance in death, only an ending - the final silence of the soul. You have passed beyond the time of pain and banishment. Now is the time to pass into life. You have reclaimed your honor - now reclaim yourself. Only a coward chooses death over life. A warrior fights to stay alive, glories in life, not death. A warrior protects life and wars only for that reason. You have fought your war. Now enjoy the peace you have earned. The only barrier to that peace is that which you have erected. Will you break down this barrier? Will you join the celebration of Life?"

"How? How? I have no home, I have no family, I have nothing. How do I begin to live when there is nothing left?" she asked, desperately.

"You must search your heart for those answers. When you find them, seek me."

"Where?"

"We gather at the full of the moon. Farewell."
"Old Wolf!" she cried, "Wait!" But he was gone, and she knew he would not relent. She would have to wait out the month.

Christopher Jameson had left her alone in the old one's care, but her presence troubled him. Although he would never turn out a troubled soul, his parishioners would talk about the strange young woman. Christopher Jameson knew enough about gossip to know how badly it could damage a young preacher, so when his housekeeper questioned him ever so subtly later that day, he said Maureen was a distant cousin who had suffered a long illness and was sent west to recuperate. Mrs. Gates clucked her tongue sympathetically; there were enough stories like Maureen's in the world, and who better to care for a young unmarried woman, than a cousin who was a man of the cloth? Jameson breathed an inward sigh of relief; soon the story would be all over town, and there would be no need to worry.

She was strong enough to get out of bed the next morning. She moved about the parsonage like the unquiet dead, always in motion. On the rare occasions she was still, Christopher would find her in the yard, near the great willow, staring west. He approached her once, as she stood in the fading sunset, and asked her what she looked for.

Not looking at him, she replied in a far away voice, "The end of the world lies there. And I am here." The lost, longing note in her voice shattered his heart. "Will it heal?" she asked the empty desert, "Will it never heal?" Her question hung in the air unanswered. It was then that she looked up and realized he was standing there. With a start, she was gone, silently, disappearing into the darkness of the house.

She was careful after that not to let him catch her, but still she kept her silent vigil, abandoning her room late at late for the cold seat by the willow tree. Although she moved like a shade, he still heard the soft click of the latch as she let herself out into the night. Twice, after she'd been there almost a month, she went so far as to take her horse out, but she didn't ride far. After the second time, Jameson decided to confront her.
She sat on the porch, heartbreakingly beautiful in her sorrow. He hated to speak and break the spell the silence wrought about them. "Maureen..." he began softly, "Maureen, will you speak with me for a moment?" She looked up from the little volume of Shakespeare's sonnets she read from constantly. He continued, "I must ask you...Will you be leaving soon?" Her quizzical look made him rush into his next sentence. "Not that I want you to go...you are welcome here for as long as you'll stay...forever, if you like. But, if you're going to leave, 'follow the wolves,' please...tell me first. Please say good-bye."

She smiled sadly, and answered, "That courtesy, at least, I owe you. I will not leave without saying farewell."

"You are leaving then?" he asked, not concealing his disappointment.

"I have to. I'm not whole, yet, Christopher," and a look of pain crossed her face as she spoke his name, "I can't stay here like this. I'm not Alpha any more, but I'm not Maureen either. I don't who I am or what I am or even if I am."

"Do you know --"

"When? Tonight. The moon will be full; the wolves will gather. I must have an answer."

So it was that at moonrise a light tap came at his door. Without waiting for his answer, she glided in, dressed for the road. She bent and kissed his brow. "May your God bless you," she whispered.

"May He guard you & guide you," the minister replied.

"I will return if I can." And then, like a wraith, she was gone. Christopher Jameson didn't leave his chair, though he longed to. He listened to her movements in the stable, heard the great black she rode neigh softly, anticipating the road as much as his mistress. The stable door swung shut silently but for the click of the latch. At last, the hoofbeats began, heading west and quickly receding.

She rode hard into the night, glad to be free under the night sky again, instead of caged like a wounded animal. The night was perfect - clear,
cool and vast. She loosened the restricting binding on her hair and let it free, soft, loose and streaming behind her like a flame-colored banner. Following instinct rather than a road, she guided her horse over the uncertain ground before them, coming at last to a deep dell. There she stopped, picketed her horse at the rim, and descended to await the wolves.

A few minutes before midnight, the wolves began to arrive. In ones & twos the great, grey wolves padded into the hollow, gathering in a circle, each taking their appointed place. Their luminous eyes caught the starshine & moonlight, reflecting the night.

One place remained unfilled, untouched, the place directly opposite her in the ring. It was not until the stroke of midnight, when all were silent and in place, that the Eldest entered the hollow. The Old Wolf entered from the westernmost point and paced to the place of honor. When he took his place, the entire company sent up one long, triumphant howl, and for a small eternity, the world stopped and paid homage to their vigilance and fidelity. When at last their great cry ended, the Indian, ancient no longer (but for his eyes, oh, his ancient eyes) sat across from her.

"I have come for answers, Old One," she began.

"What answers would you have?" he asked.

The wolves did not stir; the great circle remained unbroken. All eyes, however, were upon her, waiting.

"How do I join your celebration?"

The Old One stood, rising to his full height. He seemed to fill the dell and the sky. He reached out his hand to her. "Brave, beloved child, now comes the true test of courage. Will you rise and take my hand, cross the barrier, or will you succumb to the blackness? Will you reclaim yourself or concede defeat in the true war?"

She froze. A million images spun through her mind, images of blood, death, dust, pain & hate, spinning, spinning, like the wheel of fortune, and yet, the image that stood out, the image the wheel finally stopped
on, was the Great Wolf. Her heart began to strain at the chains binding it. He reached out his hand once more, and she met his eyes. The chains burst.

"Will you celebrate this gift of life with me?" he asked. She rose and took his hand, feeling the strength, the ancient blood, flowing within him, overpowering her. Maureen crossed her final barrier.

An hour before dawn, Christopher Jameson awoke from a dream where wolves danced and howled. Maureen/Alpha stood over his bed, her hair falling over her shoulders like a red river. "Thank you, little father," she said with a smile, "I have found my healing." She kissed his brow a second time and then was gone. Nearby, a wolf howled. Jameson fell back to sleep. He would have dismissed it all as a dream but for the little volume of sonnets on his pillow. On the leaf was inscribed, "To the Lightbearer, with thanks..."But if the while you think on me, dear friend, all losses are restored and sorrows end."
Sure he's grumpy
Wouldn't you be?
All those years with your wings crushed
your long tail coiled like a spring
all your barbed scales rasping the wrong way
against smoke-strained brick no room
in that place to breathe your own joyous flame
no one ever acknowledging your presence

Then she move in a magical woman
who hears your sighs as she paces
the empty rooms teacup rattling in her hands
At first you want her afraid want to smell
the fear seeping through her skin you want
to stretch out full-length and bare your fangs
the way your ancestors did through the eons

but you've been alone so long jammed away
ignored and she hears you she knows you
are breathing she smells your smoke
You start to feel a little less cramped
like you could open the hinges of your wings
and once again fill them with air
You take the woman into your iridescent back
flash the blues and purples of your scales
flick your ruby tongue and you fly with her

You sail over the housetops the mountains
the ocean back across the dimming light
of ages lost to man's disbelief back
to the days when dragons roared on hilltops
their volcanic throats sending spumes of flame
into the star-tossed night You take a sacred oath
to protect the woman your believer your savior
from all the evils of the harsh world You fold
yourself back into the chimney and with one breath
light a fire to boil the water for her tea
As I lie here in my bed
feeling all alone,
memories of the past
are starting to unfold.

I toss and turn
trying to sleep,
but all I can do
is lie here and weep.

Will I ever be happy?
I don't really know.
If you asked me right now,
I'd have to say no.

This thing of the past
is tearing me apart,
like someone took a knife
and put it through my heart.

For now I guess the only thing
that I can really do
is hope that maybe someday
the light will come shining through...

THANK YOU HONEY FOR BEING MY LIGHT!!
I Think of You Again  
*Peggy A. Wright*

A shower of laughter  
beats on steamy mirror  
Remembers licking moisture  
sliding down cheeks  
and sleek thighs  

Trails of futures fade  
Winding through mists of tomorrow  
Tears splash surprise into our faces  
And open our hearts to sweet,  
electric murmerings of love  

Tonite  
I sleep with your memory  
Nestled in the curve of my mind
The Most Special Gift
T. M. Bailey

Once there was a fair young maiden who was deeply in love with a handsome young minstrel. It just so happened that the young musician's Very Special Day was coming up shortly, and the young girl searched desperately to find the Most Special Gift to give her love on his Very Special Day. The maiden was in a quandary, because she did not know what the Most Special Gift in the world was. All she knew was that was what her love deserved. She asked her family, she asked her friends, and she asked all the townspeople, "What is the Most Special Gift I can give to my Most Special Love?" She got many different kinds of answers:
"A book of love poems!" said one.
"Riches!" said another.
"Bake him a pie. That's the way to a man's heart," said a third.
"Buy him something he likes," someone said.
"But I don't know what he'd like," said the young maiden.
"Well, then, take him out to a feast and a beautiful show, he'll be sure to enjoy that!"

But none of the gifts seemed to be the Most Special Gift. So the fair maiden looked inside herself and thought "What is the Most Special Gift I can give to my Most Special Love?" And she thought, and thought, and thought. And then she realized that the Most Special Gift she could give to her love would be something only she could give him; something so uniquely hers that she decided she would give him something of herself. "But, what of myself can I give him?" she thought.
"I have only my Mind, my Body, my Soul, and my Heart. I need all of these, so how can I give any one of them away?"

The maiden was more confused than ever, but she tried to decide if she could give any of these parts of her away. "Well," she said, "I cannot give
him my Mind, because my Mind is my own. I can share my Mind with him when we talk, but it cannot be his Most Special Gift.

"Then, can I give him my Body?" thought the young maiden. "No, because until the time comes when my Body belongs only to him and to me, it must be mine alone."

What of my Soul, then? Could that be his Most Special Gift? No, thought the young maiden, for until my love possesses my Mind, my Body, and my Heart, he can never possess my Soul.

The young maiden was afraid she would not be able to give him her Heart, either. But she knew her love for him was so deep and so true, that she would never love another with the same intensity as long as she lived. She knew, however, that she could not yet give her love her entire Heart, so for his Most Special Gift, she would give her Most Special Love a piece of her Heart, and hope he could claim the rest of it someday. And she was happy because she knew that—no matter what—she could never love another man as much as her Most Special Love, because not other man could ever have every piece of her heart, as he could. And that was the way she wanted it. So, she took the most precious part of her heart—which is reserved for only the deepest and most powerful kind of love—and she wrapped it up and put it in The Most Beautiful Box of silver and carved glass to give to her Most Special Love on his Very Special Day. And when her most Special Love opened the Most Beautiful Box, he found not the piece of her Heart, but instead the Most Beautiful Ring of Silver with the initials B.N.D.I.L. carved in it. The initials stood for "But Never Doubt I Love," which told the story of why the young maiden gave her Most Special Love the most precious part of her heart. She knew by wearing the ring he would always carry the knowledge of how deeply she loved him with him wherever he went. And she hoped he could come to claim the rest of her heart someday, and her heart could be made whole once again.
The Wedding Ring
Cathy Pepe

The morning I decided to take my wedding ring off, it wouldn't come off.

At first I didn't understand why. It had ordinarily been so loose because I had lost some much weight from the nervous breakdown, but that morning I couldn't lift it up past my knuckle.

Then I remembered the beer. I had a twelve ounce can of Coors after work the night before, courtesy of Tom, the dishwasher. Tom is an old guy with big spaces between his bottom teeth. He always wears a Red Sox baseball hat to hide the fact that he is balding. Tom calls himself "old Ring-tailed Tom." The first time I ever heard him refer to himself that way he had called the restaurant on a busy Friday afternoon to say he'd be late for the night shift.

"Marion's Corner," I answered the phone.

"Old Ring-tailed Tom here," He announced.
"Who?" I asked.
"Old Ring-tailed Tom, Ring-tailed Tom."
"If you want to talk to Tom," I said, somewhat confused,
"He's not here yet."
"No," He laughed his high pitched laugh, "I'm Tom. Old Ring-tailed. you know, like the cat."

So anyway, right after I remembered Tom and the beer he gave me, I also remembered I had drunk another half a Budweiser that Marion's husband, Walter, had offered to me by sloshing it into what was left of my glass of Coors. Walter, who is always drunk every Friday night, has a big wart on his chin that always looks like it's on the verge of falling off. I always wonder if it bugs Marion, as much as, it bugs me.

When I couldn't pull the ring
off the next morning, I thought perhaps it was an omen. Maybe it was a sign from God that I was being too hasty. I thought for a moment that maybe I should have considered giving my husband an additional seven months to decide if he really wanted me or not. Then I remembered that someone had once told me drinking beer swells up your fingers. So I planned the removal of the ring for later, when naturally, the swelling would go down.

It was a slow Saturday at Marion's restaurant, as usual. And, as usual, I was trying to break up the monotony by eating. I tried to pace myself but I knew I was usually at the height of boredom whenever I started reaching for the Cheez Doodles that Marion served along side her famous clam rolls.

At first there seemed to be a dent in my ring finger and it was sort of pinkish where the band had once been. There also seemed to be a vague tan line, but very vague since it was mid-October.

It was a very monumental thing to do, I thought, to finally take that ring off. I had always envisioned it coming off at a more bittersweet moment like it would happen in a movie. Perhaps there would be some special music playing in the background. There would be a slow motion action scene of one hand taking off the gold band and then, a big crescendo. But nothing happened. I didn't even notice the song that was playing on the radio. The only thing that I remembered was that the guy across the street was making circular motions with a rag across the hood of his truck.

I had to tell someone what I had just done. It seemed meaningless unless I immediately told somebody or someone immediately noticed. I began to imagine how various people would react if they did notice it was gone.
"Say," the mailman, who always ordered a tuna sandwich on untoasted white bread, would say, "your left ring finger looks very bare. Did you just take a wedding ring off? It looks pinkish."

I'd reply "Yes," Then again, maybe I wouldn't say anything at all. I would just turn on my heel and bring him his coffee and the rest of the conversation would have to be implied.

I glanced around the restaurant. It was empty except for Marion. Tom was downstairs bringing up a case of frozen lobster meat. As I approached her, Marion was standing at the stove wearing her bone colored high heels that she wore every Saturday. She was stirring a huge pot of linguine and a cigarette was dangling from her lips. She didn't look up as I walked towards her. She simply put down her long stemmed spoon and walked out into the dining room as if she knew I'd follow.

"Well," I paused and then announced, "I just took my wedding ring off."

"Oh yeah," she mumbled, not bothering to remove her cigarette as she did. I noticed she didn't usually move her lips very much when she talked anyway.

"Hon," She said, pointing to table number seven, "That tablecloth's got spaghetti sauce on it. Get it off, will ya?"

I obediently grabbed a sponge and attempted to wipe it, but it wouldn't come off.

"Marion," I called. She was in the back peeling onions. "It won't come off."

She came out and handed me a green wiry pad. "This'll do it." She assured me.

I attacked the red spot again, this time with considerably more elbow grease.

"Nope," I reported. "It won't work."

She pointed to a bottle of Fantastic spray cleaner. I squirted it directly on the stain and even tried the wire pad again. That sauce was just too embedded into the embossed plastic to disappear.

I swung back in to the kitchen.
past Marion, who was not draining the linguine into the sink. I carefully re-placed the cleaning stuff into the cabinet above her.

"It still wouldn't work," I reported.

She was partially bent over the sink, the same cigarette was hanging from her bottom lip.

Without looking at me she said, "Keep trying Hon, some stains are harder to get off than others."

"Those who oppose abortion say that their conscience tells them that abortion is wrong.

They claim to be pro-life, yet they choose to protect the rights of the unborn over the rights of the born; they choose the life of the potential over the life of the existing.

My mind tells me that this is wrong."

T.M.M.
Charlotte Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre* tells the story of Jane's life. Jane Eyre, as her name suggests, is connected with the air around her. Nature and the weather play an important role in the novel. The weather outside relates to the weather inside Jane herself. Mother Nature plays an active role in Jane Eyre and she can be referred to as a character in the story.

The mention of weather is numerous throughout the book. I will focus on Mother Nature's form during the turning points or important parts of Jane's life. On Jane's first night at Lowood she awoke to hear "the wind rave in furious gusts, and the rain fall in torrents" (43). Rain in the story is cleansing and it signifies a new direction or road that Jane has chosen. It rains when she leaves Gateshead, her first night at Lowood, when she mails her letter looking for a governess position, it rains when she travels to Thornfield, when she agrees to marry Mr. Rochester, and when she returns to Mr. Rochester. Rain is cathartic and prepares Jane for a new life.

Jane walks through the rain and stands in it many times and it does not seem to bother her. She walks back to Lowood through heavy rain after posting her letter of advertisement, and another time she stands in the rain waiting for Mr. Rochester to return home.

When Jane leaves Gateshead and then later when she travels to Thornfield, the air is misty. When it is misty, visibility is poor, it is the weather fitting Jane's feelings as she travels into the unknown. She is not able to see far into her future, as she is not able to see far in front of her through the dreary weather. Also, when Jane leaves Moor House to find what has become of Mr. Rochester, the morning is overcast and dark as she goes off to satisfy her need to find out the unknown, that of what has happened to "her master". The overcast and misty sky represents the anxiety that Jane feels in her travels.
through to the unknown.

Jane has a connection with nature and the weather throughout the book. Even Jane's name, Eyre, links her to nature and the weather. Jane speaks of nature as her mother and as someone who takes care of her: "I have no relative but the universal mother. Nature" (335). "She (Jane) clung to Nature with filial fondness" (356). The weather and nature is seen as a positive, motherly force; Mother Nature is Jane's mother. Because Mother Nature is her mother maybe this is the reason that the rain does not bother Jane when she stands or walks in it. She never complains of the foul weather because unconsciously she knows that it is her mother there with her, taking care of her and symbolically cleansing her and preparing her for a new part of her life.

Strong winds are present throughout the novel. There were wild winds when Jane left Gateshead, her first night at Lowood, after she agrees to marry Mr. Rochester the first time, the day before the wedding, and when she returns to Mr. Rochester at Ferndean. When her mind is troubled and/or thoughtful the wind is strong and nature displays Jane's troubled and anxious thoughts. The strong wind embodies Jane's expectant and anxious feelings. It is the day before her wedding, that was not to be, she remarks, "It was not without a certain wild pleasure I ran before the wind delivering my trouble of mind to the measureless air torrent thundering through space" (302). Jane is troubled over seeing a woman (who we find out later to be Bertha Rochester) come into her room and tear her bridal veil in two. Mother Nature is there to receive Jane's troubled thoughts and give her a cathartic release. The wind blows not only on Jane's troubled thoughts, but on her anxious feelings. Although she may be happy to leave Gateshead, she must be anxious about her future as she is her first night at Lowood, and after she agrees to marry Mr. Rochester, and again when she returns to him. Jane's troubled thoughts and anxious feelings are present when the strong winds blow.

As Mother Nature's child, the weather fits Jane's moods and feelings.
She travels into the unknown through misty weather, the wind blows through her troubled and anxious thoughts, and the day after Mr. Rochester's first marriage proposal it is a beautiful day of which Jane says:

I was not surprised, when I ran down the hall, to see that a brilliant June morning had succeeded to the tempest of the night; and to feel, through the open glass door, the breathing of a fresh and fragrant breeze. Nature must be glad some when I was so happy. (281)

She was not surprised because she is connected to nature; she even mentions that connection, "Nature must be glad some when I was so happy." Jane's "mother" is happy that her daughter is happy so a brilliant day results.

When the weather does not reflect Jane's feelings she does not take much notice of it and it is only a casual comment in her narrative. This does not happen very often, the one example of this I found is on the day she leaves Mr. Rochester. She says that she thought it was a warm summer morning, but her feelings did not coincide with this weather so it was not fully noticed or regarded by her. The warm sunny day may be the sign of Mother Nature's approval of Jane's decision to leave Thornfield.

Jane's connection to nature and the weather can also be see by comparing her to the chestnut tree in the orchard at Thornfield hall. The tree is among the garden, symbolic of the Garden of Eden. It is a strong, sturdy tree as Jane is strong and sturdy. But, one night it bows to the power of Mother Nature and is split in half, yet its strong roots hold it together. It is the night that Jane has agreed to marry Mr. Rochester that the tree trunk is split in two. It is as if Mother Nature knows of the wrong against her child, that of Mr. Rochester already having a wife, and she is calling out her protest in a fierce storm that shakes the night and splits the tree. Like the tree, Jane is struck down throughout her life, from her life at Gateshead, to Lowood, to when her happiness is lost when she finds out Mr. Rochester has a wife. Yet, like the tree, she stays as one and survives, "a ruin, but an entire ruin" (302).
The biggest blow (to Jane's chestnut tree) is when Jane's heart is split in two, like the great tree, between staying with Mr. Rochester and not making him suffer, or leaving because of her strong morality. Leaving him symbolically "killed" her, (Mr. Rochester could be held responsible for both the tree's death at the fury of Mother nature and Jane's "death" as a result of his secret) she even goes out and buries herself out on the moors. Although she buries herself for warmth it can be seen as a symbolic burial of the death of her past life and the happiness she almost had.

Jane even speaks to the chestnut tree and tells the two pieces that they did the right thing to hold fast to each other, just as Jane holds fast to her morality which is her firm base and solid roots (as the tree is described as having). Jane said that there was still life in the tree even though it looked dead. She felt dead inside when she left Mr. Rochester, she looked sick, like death when she arrived at Moor House, yet there was still life within her. Jane is a strong person and the life inside her would not die as the life inside the tree did not die. The tree got its life from "faithful, honest roots" (302) as Jane is faithful and honest and gets her life from these attributes. She is faithful to Mr. Rochester as his servant, to her work and students, and even to Mrs. Reed who Jane does not abandon on her deathbed. Jane is honest, sometimes painfully so, like when Mr. Rochester asks if he is handsome and she says "No, sir."

Jane tells the split chestnut tree that it will not longer have pleasure and love, but it will have the companionship of its two parts. The fate of the tree may be clear to Jane, but her own fate (yet to come), so close to all she is telling the tree, is not known by her. When she leaves Mr. Rochester she loses pleasure and love, but she stays with her morals and gains the companionship of Mary and Diana. As she finishes speaking to the tree the blood-red moon breaks out from behind the clouds and shines between the two branches for an instant, and "The wind fell, for a second, round Thornfield; but far away over wood and water, poured a wild, melancholy wail: it was sad to listen to, and I ran off again"
It is as if Mother Nature is listening to Jane and knows that all she is saying to the tree will relate to her and her life after she learns of Mr. Rochester's deceit. Mother Nature gives Jane a sign and tries to tell her, but Jane runs away. It is as if Mother Nature is trying to warn Jane and protect her like a true mother would.

Although the tree may be in the "Garden of Eden", like the original Garden of Eden, all in it are not free from harm. Jane thinks she is in the Garden of Eden when Mr. Rochester proposes to her, but Jane's Eden will be destroyed and her pleasure and love lost just as the tree's pleasure and love is lost.

When Jane learns that Mr. Rochester has a wife the weather takes an unexpected twist to relate to her emotions. She had been so happy the day before when she thought she was marrying Mr. Rochester, her life was bright and green as summer, but in twelve hours time that life was shattered and destroyed by a cold winter storm in the midst of summer. The storm was the truth, that Mr. Rochester was married and had a wife living and that he had not been candid with Jane. The entire season changed to fit Jane's mood, from the weather of midsummer to the weather of winter. In winter, things of nature die, (the chestnut tree had foreshadowed this death with its own) all Jane's dreams and promises of a happy future die as well as her own self. She was prepared to become Mrs. Rochester, and when that did not happen she was in a limbo and had to try and find her self again, "And yet where was the Jane Eyre of yesterday? - where was her life?...Jane Eyre, who had been an ardent, expectant woman-almost a bride- was a cold, solitary girl again; her life was pale, her prospects were desolate" (324). When she had been an "ardent, expectant woman" it was summer, but not that she was a "cold, solitary girl" it was winter. The direct connection between her feelings and the weather can be seen here in her own words. The connection is also beautifully illustrated in the description of the land after the winter storm, "ice glazed the ripe apples, drifts crushed the blowing roses; on hayfield and cornfield lay a frozen shroud: lanes which last night blushed full of flow-
ers, today were pathless with untrodden snow..." (324). These descriptions are all examples of Jane's hopes and dreams dying in one fell swoop; her summer happiness being destroyed by a winter storm (the summer the prospect of her wedding, and the storm being Mr. Rochester's secret). Yesterday Jane's dreams were blooming and growing like the earth in summer, and today they are lifeless and she feel dead like the earth in winter.

Jane's connection to nature and the weather is a strong one throughout the novel. When she is at Moor House and Hears Mr. Rochester calling her she comments that, "it is the work of nature" (465). When Jane returns to Mr. Rochester at Ferndean and after she agrees to marry him, she notices that there is a hot summer sun shining and no breeze. It is the heat of their love, the approval of Mother Nature, and there is not wind because Jane is not anxious or troubled and she has not doubts about her happiness with Mr. Rochester and their love for each other. The storm of nature within Jane has ended and her happiness is complete.

Bibliography

Resident Alien

Portia Brockway

A comfort I have not known except in hours of sleep holding someone who was not who I thought
In a room full of whispers with those who do not communicate with themselves or with me
In a great hall of secrecy, not looking at Resident Alien in one's own homeland, workplace

Self, not knowing how to make blindness meet insight in the world of farcical denial, in the place of abstention from speaking our hearts.
Startingover

Episode One: "Do I Really Want to Do This Again?"

Motherhouse Collaborations

Scene 1: Thursday. 9:00 a.m. Loft. VICKY is in the kitchen making her second pot of coffee in one of her many coffee pots. She is wearing a white shirt, jeans and cowboy boots. Her shirt is open to the third button, and her long hair is mussed. There is a one hundred dollar bill hanging out of her back pocket - which she does not know is there. She looks like she's just had (quick) sex. She is in a very good mood. Enter BRIDGET. The first thing she sees is the $100 bill hanging out of her pocket. BRIDGET freezes & a look of astonishment passes over her face. VICKY turns around and smiles.

BRIDGET

Faith, begosh and begorrah, what part of Chinatown were you in this morning?!

VICKY

I just went down to the Double D Baking Company to get some scones. Why?

BRIDGET

I don't know how to tell you this, Dr. Mars, but there's a big bill - and I don't mean Rochester - hanging out of your ass pocket.

[VICKY slowly reaches around and gingerly pulls the bill out of her pocket. She laughs.]

VICKY

It must be from Bill.
BRIDGET
Well, it better be from Bill! I hope there’s no one else who’d be mussin’ you up and giving you money!

VICKY
[Laughs.] Do I look that bad?

BRIDGET
You don’t look bad at all - you look radiant, as a matter of fact, just like a new bride. But I advise you to be buttoning up your shirt before you go and have word with Father DeRail. You don’t want to be shocking the priest before the wedding.

VICKY
I don’t think there’s much that could shock Father Stephen.

BRIDGET
That’s right, he’s a Jesuit. Those bastards could take on a whole army of deadly sins and still come out with their cassocks unmussed - unlike you and that groom-to-be. Did he get off all right this morning.

VICKY
[Raising an eyebrow.] More than once. Not bad for thirty-five. He’d kill me if he’d heard that.

BRIDGET
Let the carnage begin. [Pause.] Well, being elected unwilling director of the rehearsal dinner, I have to tell you where the little fiasco will be taking place.

VICKY
Oh?

Spring 1993
BRIDGET
Brace yourself, it's going to be a bit of a haul - and I don't recommend driving the Porsche down there.

VICKY
Bridget, where are we going?

BRIDGET
Well, thanks to the generosity of our magnanimous Mr. Can't-Fix-It, the one and only - thank God! - Stifford O'Boyle, we have the full run of the Irish American Club of lovely downtown South Boston.

VICKY
[Laughs.] It makes perfect sense.

BRIDGET
Well, I'm glad you think so, but I don't think that shootin' fool at 911 will agree. After all, it ain't Biba.

VICKY
If the economy doesn't pick up, Anheim's is going to look like the Ritz for his wallet.

BRIDGET
Oh, Vicky, I like Mr. Rochester, but—

VICKY
But what, Bridget?
BRIDGET
But when it comes to money, you better be wearing the pants - and selling
the Luchasie boots.

VICKY
Well, I've already convinced him to end the $100 hair cuts.

BRIDGET
A step in the right direction. You can't tell the difference from that preten-
tious hair parlour on Newbury Street. What the hell ever got into that nut's
mind? A hundred dollars for a hair cut! What, did you cut his hair this
morning and he left you a tip?

VICKY
No, I just pulled it little and screamed. [Chuckles and buttons her shirt.]

Scene 2: 911, Statler Building, the commercial house owned by BILL
ROCHESTER, the "shootin' fool" himself. Camera follows BILL from the
elevator. Like VICKY, his hair is mussed, his tie undone, and his shirt unbut-
toned to the third button. Unlike himself, he is smiling this morning. He
enters the front office of 911. RORY, the publicist is behind the front desk,
flipping through AdWorld. She looks up, sees BILL and drops the magazine.

BILL
Good morning, Rory. Anybody call from Hollywood?

RORY
Well, seeing how it's only 6:30 out there, I don't think anyone's up yet.
You look happy this morning. Is this a new look?
BILL
What do you mean?

RORY
Well, you’ve got your shirt and tie really "cazh" this morning.

BILL
[Looks down, realizes how he looks and where he’s come from, blushes, and hastily fumbles his tie into a knot.] Is this better? Just in case they do call from Hollywood, at least I’ll look like I’m ready to make the movie.

RORY
Do you want coffee or did Vicky already pour three pots into you?

BILL
Yeah. [Pause.] Y’know, that’s Vicky’s only bad habit - she drinks coffee like water. And then she wants to talk. She wants to drink coffee and then talk. And when I’m not looking - and I know she does this - when she’s with that Gary Keats, that big director idiot - she smokes. He rolls her cigarettes and I know it!

RORY
If that’s all you have to worry about - a cigarette once in a while with a co-worker - you’ll have a fine marriage. What are you guys gonna do about Bridget? That’s Vicky’s real problem - when she and Bridget get together, they’re as thick as thieves.

BILL
Trying to throw Bridget out is like trying to separate Siamese twins. And she owns one-third of the loft. Besides, I like her. I honestly, truly like her. She’s
a pain in my ass, and then when those two get talking about Shake-speare and Gary comes over, Vicky tanked up on all that coffee she’s been drinking all day, Bridget hyped on Pepsi, and “my three sons” from downstairs! Jesus, Gary supplies the cigarettes and the six of them argue about Shake-speare until you wish the C.O.R.T. would burn down.

RORY
And how could you forget Ned? He’s the best looking one in the bunch!

BILL
He’s so good-looking, I forgot him. [Laughs.] Y’know, I kinda like it when all those academia nuts come over. I’m getting the college education I never had - without having to pay for it. It’s a trip having two and three half doctorates hanging around. And I’ll give them credit for one thing - they always bring their own booze and leave the leftovers. You know we’re hosting an earl in a couple of months?

RORY
Yeah, I heard. Bridget was up here with Vicky one day to use the laser printer. She told me all about it. Evidently, he’s really cute, but Bridget’s claimed him.

BILL
Not if he’s under forty. She likes ‘em in mid-life crisis stage.

RORY
What about Miles? Every time I try to get a date with him, he’s planned something with Bridget. Ned’s the same way.
BILL
You don't want theater people - they don't make any money, even when they are working. Stick with movie people.

RORY
Like you?

BILL
Very funny. You can be replaced.

RORY
Yeah, and I'll be like Vicky and write a book. This place should be good for a few laughs.

BILL
Hey, don't knock my wife's book!

RORY
You mean your wife-to-be. If the other one ever writes a book, we're all in trouble, especially you.

BILL
Yeah, right. What'll she call it? Mrs. White's Lies - or What the Crow Didn't See. [Shakes his head.] Rory, when I came in here, I was in a good mood —

RORY
Yeah, for once!

BILL
That good mood is rapidly deteriorating. I will be in my office.
[Enter BILL COLLINS, ROCHESTER’S second-in-command. COLLINS enters cheerfully, with coffee & pastry.]

COLLINS
Good morning, all! [Sets stuff down on desk, claps BILL R. across the back. BILL R. staggers a bit.] How’s the groom-to-be? I just ran into the wife-to-be. She was with Gary down at Arlington Street.

BILL
Was she smoking?

COLLINS
I didn’t notice. But she was beaming. I noticed the two of you have the same hairstyle this morning - have a nice breakfast?

BILL
[Blushing.] Yeah, it was great. Too bad it’s not like that every morning. She’s usually got two acts to finish before she goes to work.

RORY
And what two acts would that be?

BILL
Four and five. Pick a play. And anyway, the climax is always in Act 3. She always gets that done before we go to bed.

RORY
I didn’t know you knew anything about Shake-speare.
BILL
Hey, I get quizzed nightly. Did you know there are 120 shopping days ‘til St. Crispin’s?

RORY
Huh?

COLLINS
Don’t get him started on Brannigan.

BILL
Y’know, one night I was so mad at Vicky. She’s sitting there watching that Henry movie for the 55th time, and she’s telling me how beautiful it is, how moving it is, and of course Bridget had to stick her two cents in, that by the time we got to bed, I told if she thought he was so incredible, to go marry goddamn Brannigan. Little Irish jerk.

RORY
And what did she say to that?

BILL
She would, but he’s already married.

COLLINS
Bill, you know she’s nuts about you. Oh, by the way - she gave me a message for you.

BILL
What?
COLLINS
I'm supposed to take you to the rehearsal dinner tonight.

BILL
I can drive myself. I'll give you a ride. Rory can sit on your lap.

COLLINS
We'd better take my car - it's less obvious.

BILL
What do you mean? Wait a minute - where is this little shindig?

COLLINS
Think of it as a rehearsal for the movie.

BILL
Where is it?

COLLINS
You know where Saint Cecilia’s parish is.

BILL
Jesus Christ. The turf of Red and Blackie O’Boyle. We’re going to South Boston?

COLLINS
And not the lace curtain Irish side either.

BILL
Where the hell is it? Pete’s Pub?
C'mon, Bill. Cliff and Nita are doing this for you. He wouldn’t take you to Pete’s Pub for your rehearsal dinner - he might for the bachelor party —

BILL
Bachelor party? Oh, God. I forgot about that.

COLLINS
Don’t worry about that - that’s tomorrow night.

BILL
All the more reason to start worrying now. Who’s on the planning commission for that one?

COLLINS
Sid Palmer and Jack Mars.

BILL
I’m not going. Southie is one thing - at least I can pass as a native over there. But my crazy brother-in-law and that tasteless lawyer? No, absolutely not. If I know those bastards, they’re planning to drag to every cheap strip joint in the Greater Boston area. And it’s not the strippers that I’m leery of - it’s the cheap paint remover they pass off as wine.

COLLINS
Oh, Bill, would you just calm down? If it was somebody else’s bachelor party, you’d be the director of the planning commission—

BILL
Yeah, but I’d rent a decent place and screen the entertainment myself. The
one thing this movie's done for me - it's introduced me to the finer side of 
seedy entertainment.

COLLINS
I'll keep that in mind in case Ned gets married.

RORY
I don't think Bridget would appreciate that.

BILL
Are you kidding? If he ever asks her to marry him, Vicky'll be writing fake 
Shake-speare for the wedding and casting me as some dead husband.

COLLINS
Bill, get a grip.

BILL
Forgot about get a grip! If I need a grip, I'll hire one!

COLLINS
O.K., O.K. We've got a lunch date at Biba with the Carp. There is one snag 
here, though. I didn't want to tell you this, but he wants to shoot on Satur-
day morning. It seems the fleet's coming in and it's a prime opportunity for 
some "down home" pictures.

BILL
Since you've become our go-between, you can just break it to Vicky tonight 
that the groom is working on the wedding day.
COLLINS
I figured I'd direct the shoot. You'll be hungover anyway from the paint remover El Sid will be plying down your throat Friday night. I suggest you just stay at the Park Plaza and sleep.

BILL
No, the salt air will do me some good. It's supposed to be a great curative for hangovers. Anyway, what the hell am I supposed to do until one o'clock? I can't go hang out with Vicky. Go snake out the tub with Cliff? Go to breakfast with my parents? Or better yet, Vicky's parents and her nutty brother - who of course, is friends with all of her ex-boyfriends - I can't wait to see who's in the wedding band. They'll start out with I Knew the Bride When She Used to Rock 'n' Roll. Although I did make Vicky swear on a Russian Orthodox Prayer Book that the Transplants would not play the wedding. What else could I do? Pick up my son from my ex-wife's place? Listen to her babble about the doctor she's married to and how much money he makes and how nice the house on Beacon Hill is. Have coffee with her and the doc! That overpaid quack. Meanwhile, my wife the doctor of letters, makes a quarter of what he's pulling down for doing something that makes a hell of lot more sense. Jesus, I'd rather work.

Scene 3: The Loft building, Chinatown. The basement. 3:00 p.m. CLIFFORD O'BOYLE, Mr. Can't-Fix-It, the original superintendent from Hell, trudges up the stairs to the first floor apartment which he shares with his wife Anita.

CLIFFORD
Nita!

ANITA
Yes, Cliff? Cliff, did you wipe your feet? I just washed the floor.
CLIFFORD
Jeezus, Nita, I’ve got to call a real plumber in this time. Christ Almighty, if those bastards on the top floor don’t get haircuts, I’m going up there with the hedge clippers and cut it myself!

ANITA
Now, Cliff, stop. They’re nice people. The Rochesters are getting married, and we’ve got to plan for the dinner tonight.

CLIFFORD
I wish we were still in Allston with the pool - we could have had it right here at the house.

ANITA
Clifford, you wanted to rent it to the kids when they got married to help them save. In a couple of years when you retire for good, we’ll move back.

CLIFFORD
I’m ready to retire right now! Jesus, that goddamn tub! I’m gonna teach that Mr. Hollywood how to snake his own damn tub! Christ, what do they think I am? Ed Norton?

ANITA
We’d be a lot better off if you were Art Carney.

CLIFFORD
Thanks a lot, Trixie. What time do we have to get over there? And don’t tell me I gotta make a speech for Cecil B. Rochester.
ANITA
Cliff, just do it for Vicky. You like her. She's a sweet girl, and so smart!

CLIFFORD
I don't care how many Ph.D.'s she has - sweet girls do not - hear me, do not - live in sin.

ANITA
Well, they had Bridget as a chaperone.

CLIFFORD
That one! Poor Charlie Daly - God rest his soul, he was a good cop - she probably paid someone to shoot him! - he must be rollin' over in his grave, seein' his wife living like this. Nita, don't you think it's a little weird he three of them living like that? They're getting married - Bridget ain't moving out - who's knows what the hell goes on up there! I'd like to be a fly on the wall—

ANITA
Cliff, you've been watching too much Phil Donahue lately.

CLIFFORD
Phil Donahue! I watch Geraldo! Nita, get something straight - I do not watch Phil Donahue. He's a disgrace to his Irish name.

ANITA
Clifford, please. The days of the IRA have passed - at least in this neighborhood. Now, what time are we leaving? I have to pick up the cake at Blackbird's - and I don't dare send you there! - and we should be at the Irish-American at least half an hour
before everyone else arrives.

CLIFFORD
All right, all right. I'll call the plumber and grab a shower
while we still have water. Let Mr. Hollywood worry about his tub later.

ANITA
Clifford, there had better be water for the bride on Saturday. Besides, Mr.
Rochester is staying at the Park Plaza until after the wedding.

CLIFFORD
Well, Mr. Rochester's staying at the Park Plaza. You'd think the streets were
paved with gold. Maybe they are with the price of his parking tickets.

ANITA
Now, Cliff, they're planning a traditional wedding, sort of.

CLIFFORD
Isn't that sweet. [Knock at the door.] Who the hell is that? [Goes over to
apartment door and opens. KURT WINKLE, with a lit cigarette hanging out
of his mouth, is standing there, looking annoyed.]
Whadya want, Lord Byron?

KURT
How are you, Stiff? Good afternoon, Nita. How are you?

ANITA
Hi, Kurt. I'm just fine. Are you three bachelors coming to
the rehearsal dinner tonight?
KURT
No, we can’t make it. Besides, we’re not in the wedding party.
We will be at the bachelor party. How ‘bout you, Cliff?

CLIFFORD
Wouldn’t miss it for the world - sending Mr. Hollywood into wedded bliss!
Besides, Sid Palmer’s plannin’ a hell of a send-off.

ANITA
I hope you boys are going to behave!

CLIFFORD
Give me a break, Nita, it’s a bachelor party.

ANITA
Clifford, act you age, not your shoe size! Aren’t you a little old to be
gallivanting around with all these college boys?

CLIFFORD
College boys! That ass upstairs never set foot inside a college until he
had to pick up Dr. Mars at that Jesuit convent.

ANITA
Clifford, please! That’s quite enough. Now, call the plumber and
take a shower. I’m going to pick up the cake.

KURT
Speaking of plumbing...
CLIFFORD
What’s your problem? Is there a problem, Wordsworth?

KURT
Cliff, you’re so charming. Nita, you’re a saint.

ANITA
You’re such a nice boy. Come to the dinner tonight. There’ll be plenty of food, and I know everybody will be happy to see you. Bring the boys. The Rochesters won’t mind - they’re not like that. Y’know, I heard Vicky wanted to wear black.

CLIFFORD
That does it! I told you she was a witch!

KURT
Spare me. Nita, thanks for the invitation, but we’ve all got plans tonight. Look, Cliff, when are the pipes going to be fixed? I’m a little sick of these half-assed showers.

CLIFFORD
Keep your shirt on. I’m calling the plumber now.

KURT
Well, that’s a relief. It’s good to know you’re taking charge.

CLIFFORD
I’m always in charge - I’m the director in this building.
The Turning Point of My Life!

Anonymous

I was diagnosed with Depression two months ago. This mental illness has become a turning point in my life. I am beginning to get to know myself and view life as well as education, differently. I am also beginning to realize that love, friendship, and my family are very important to me. Most importantly, I am learning to love myself and to be me, not what other people want me to be.

My attitude and personal view toward education have changed completely. My current GPA is 3.44. Education used to play a major role in my life and still does right now, but in a different way. For example, I used to think education was my whole life. In other words, the primary purpose of attending college was to learn and to do exceptionally well. I felt it was more important to get A's in most of my courses than fully comprehend the course contents. In addition, I felt doing my best was not enough. I used to push myself to the point where the stress level was so high that I would not be able to tolerate not getting that A. If I got a grade below B-, I felt like a failure.

Another reason for pushing myself so hard to get the good grades is because I want to please my parents and keep my GPA up in order to maintain my scholarships. Furthermore, I have high expectations for myself. For example, I expect myself to do well every semester. The price I paid for the good grades was to sacrifice my social life and to stay home every weekend to study and tried to complete all the reading and writing assignments. I felt like a "super nerd" with no life!

Now, as I look back, I feel that I am setting myself up to become a failure because I have put too much stress and pressure on myself regarding my academic grades. In addition, I have paid a high price for my grand expectations. I have begun to realize that education is important, but it is only part of my life. It doesn't matter
what grades I get as long as I have tried and done my best. It is much more important for me to understand the contents of each course. Moreover, I would never push myself beyond my limits again because stress and pressure are very overwhelming and scary.

My expectations combined with the academic and personal stress as well as pressure has led me to develop a mental illness called Depression. According to the pamphlet, Depression: What You Need to Know, produced by the National Institute of Mental Health:

A depressive illness is a "whole body" illness, involving your body, mood, thoughts, and behavior. It affects the way you eat and sleep, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about things. A depressive illness is not a passing blue mood. It is not a sign of personal weakness or condition that can be willed or wished away. People with depressive illness can not merely "pull themselves together" and get better. Without treatment, symptoms can last for weeks, months, or years. Appropriate treatment, however, can help over 80 percent of those who suffer from depression. (1)

Depression is a horrendous experience. I went through hell with it. I experienced symptoms like: constant worrying, anxiety, worthlessness, hopelessness, loss of interests in activities and appetite, insomnia, unable to concentrate, fatigue, thoughts of suicide, and uselessness. At first, I knew there was something wrong with me because I felt my body and thoughts were out of control. However, I didn't know I had Depression until my psychiatrist told me.

It was the love, encouragement, and support I received from my friends, family, professors, psychiatrist, therapist, and nurse that have helped me through this very difficult period. I would especially like to thank Siu Man, Tina, Laura Lee, Joanne, Annie, Dr. Accardi, Mr. Andrews, and my loving family for their unconditional support, love, trust, and understanding. I love you all!

Through this illness, I have become a much stronger person. I am more confident, outspoken, and not afraid to ask for help if I need it because there is always someone that I can depend on. I am able to accept and face
the reality that I have this illness. I work and cooperate with my therapist, who is also my psychiatrist, to understand and cure my illness. Yes, I am afraid this illness will occur again in the future because life is unpredictable. However, I will learn how to control the stress in my life, and I will not be afraid to reach out for help. Most importantly, I have begun to feel love and I have learned to love myself. Furthermore, I have begun to understand myself and to be "myself," not somebody else. I am taking one day at a time right now and trying to put my life back together.

Even though, it has brought back many painful and unpleasant memories as well as experiences, I feel proud of myself because I was able accept and face my problem. I have fallen down but I am able to pick up my feet and stand up again. It will be hard but I can do it! I just need time. The memories of those who have supported, helped, and encouraged me through this difficult period will always remain in my heart. I feel that I am a very lucky person, and I thank God that I have a second chance to live.

Bibliography

Contributor's Notes

NATALIE BARLOW A recent graduate of the Human Services program. One of her minors was literature. Natalie is currently working for the Department of Social Services in Allston as a case-worker.

PORTIA BROCKWAY A Lesley College employee, student, and yoga instructor. Her primary influences while growing up were in the yoga tradition, Quakerism, and Western Materialism. Portia is a lover of athletics, art, and all matters aspiring toward personal and community integration.

JUDITH C. CAMPBELL A graduate of Lesley in 1963. She has a Master's in Fine Arts from Goddard College. She's a practicing artist and writer who is experimenting with middle age. So far, she likes it.

DIANA LIN DAUGHERTY This author would like people to know that her life is not as miserable as her poetry. She would also like to start a non-sequitur society on campus because she likes elephants.

MELISSA FORBES A Senior in the Human Services program with a specialization in Counseling/Psychology. Melissa was also the Editor of Non-Fiction for Commonthought this year.

VICTORIA L. FURCI An undergraduate Senior in the Human Services program. Her hobbies include writing, poetry and drawing. She is also a fond fan of the fine arts. "LIVE and let LIVE."

MIKE GALVIN Works for the Registrar's Office and is currently putting together a pamphlet entitled "Inner Peace and the Southeast Expressway Commute". Lastly, he can't believe the Pixies broke up!

KERRY ANNA HUNTER A Humanities major with literature as a primary focus. She is working toward her Early Childhood Education Certification, and will graduate in the spring of 1994.
RICHARD KING A student at the Graduate School of Education. This is the first time he has been published in Womanthought/Commomthought.

BARTON KUNTSLER An Associate Professor in the School of Management. He enjoys reading, writing and Pythagorean arithmetic, especially if they apply to other worlds.

SEBASTIAN LOCKWOOD A novelist and poet. He has two novels in manuscript: Eely Isle and The Oak & The Olive,. He performs his poetry from a collection entitled Lion Up, with a band, at various Boston venues. He teaches at Lesley College and lives in Cambridge. He grew up in Canada, Brussels, and England and has traveled extensively in Italy. He is currently at work on a new novel entitled ORA.

AMANDA M. McNUGE A Junior at Lesley College who is planning on attending law school as soon as she graduates in 1994. With her law degree, she hopes to work in the District Attorney’s office prosecuting child sexual abuse cases. Amanda has been the Assistant Editor of Womanthought/Commomthought for the past two years. Her favorite pastimes are fishing and walking alone in cemeteries in the dead of night.

TERESA MEILE A Junior in the Undergraduate Education program. She considers herself to be a feminist, and her interests include writing, art, research and her boyfriend. She plans to pursue a career in psychological research.

MOTHERHOUSE COLLABORATIONS are Anne Eleizabeth Pluto and Riz.

JENNIFER ORVIS A Senior who chose to take the Fall semester off to travel cross-country to experience life and find herself.

CATHY PEPE A native of Woburn, MA until she left to attend San Francisco University, where she completed her undergraduate work in art with an emphasis in printmaking and photography. She is currently studying Intermodal Expressive Therapy, as a
first year student in the graduate school. She considers her art form to be a “slice of life,” for there is an artistic pulse in the most mundane of events.

**JUDITH PERIALE** Worked at Lesley College for three years. She loves to write fantasy journey stories and poetry. Singing whenever possible and meeting with her women’s drumming circle keeps her sane.

**JENNIFER EILEEN PESKIN** A Senior currently majoring in Social Science and Day Care Leadership. She is looking forward to student teaching in the Fall.

**ANNE ELEZABETH PLUTO** Today’s Shakespeare quiz is—“Thus far, with rough and all-unable pen, Our bending author hath pursu’d the story, In little room confining mighty men, Mangling by starts the full course of their glory.” Now tell me who said this?

**RACHEL LYNN POWELL** She has had a strong interest in art since six years old. Attended Rhode Island School of Design’s advanced per-college program in 1991. Continued Senior year with a study of “The Skinheads of Providence,” and also did many self portraits, all of which have appeared in **Womanthought/Commonthought**. She is now planning careers in photo-journalism and journalism.

**RIZ and Bridget O’Hara** are two of the many aliases of Lisa Risley - Aquizap, actor, writer, director, student, Shakespeare geek, aficionado of male beauty, and former Lesley staff member/student. After spending a year at UMass Amherst, she has realized that there is no place like Cambridge and is seeking refuge on campus in disguise of director of *The Merchant of Venice*. Please do not reveal her whereabouts to the Stratfordians or to Doctor Van Helsing.

**PATRICIA ROSE** The pen name for Patricia Pflaumer, the Campus Shop Manager at Lesley. Ms. Pflaumer is an English major at Boston College.
EDYTHE A. SHAPIRO  Editor-in-Chief of Commonthought and a Senior in the Undergraduate Human Services program. She hopes to heal the world through medicine and drive the world insane with her writing.

LORRAINE SINCLAIRE  "I don’t choose photography. It chose me.” An avid shutterbug since 1987, Lorraine has dedicated herself to black-and-white fine art photography. She has had two publications in (what was then called) Womanthought, and has appeared in two shows. Recently, she completed the second edition of her annual calendar. She is currently planning her next show, “Carpe Noctum,” which will open in late spring. Lorraine is currently working in the Off-Campus Programs office at Lesley.

CHERYL SMITH  The assistant registrar for systems at Lesley College. She has been writing poetry for almost five years and has been published in previous issues of Womanthought, as well as Poetpourri, Mid West Poetry Review, Worwicch Anthology, and Logos. She serves as the coordinator of the Bi-annual Narragansett Weekend Poetry Workshop in Rhode Island.

STACY SPUMBERG  Class of 1993, future social worker, former Womanthought Editor-in-Chief, current R. A., still using writing as a temporary escape from reality (and sometimes rediscovering it).

VALERIE STRILKO  A Sophomore in the Human Service Program.

PEGGY A. WRIGHT  A faculty member of the Independent Study Degree Program. She is currently working on a Ph.D. in psychology at Saybrook Institute. Her main interests include consciousness studies, Shamanism, cross-cultural healing/spirituality, and health and transpersonal psychologies.
Commonthought

is now accepting submissions for the Spring 1994 issue.

During this summer, send submissions to:
Amanda M. McNuge
25 Joan Road
Medford, MA 02155

If you wish to have your submission returned, please enclose a SASE.
Have you seen these eyes?

Is it time to call?

Primitive man... man

This is today's man

No, this is government,

Cheated by his peers on

America

Kicked by his hand

What a wondrous

place...