brainchild
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Dear Reader,

If this anthology has fallen into your possession, my part of the process is now complete. You now hold these pages bound together as one, the product of countless hours of hard work by students as diverse as their creative styles. Though few students are represented here in comparison with the hundreds, if not thousands, of members both past and present, Brainchild offers you a survey of the work you might expect to see from students enrolled in Kent State's Honors College. From Freshman Honors Colloquium all the way up through your senior semesters, being an Honors student will broaden your perspectives and open doors that otherwise would have remained inaccessible.

The Honors experience is always full of surprises, some completely wonderful, some completely challenging. Producing the pages you now cradle in your hands would fall into the latter category for me personally, but the experience has also been by far one of my most rewarding accomplishments through the Honors College. Working on this publication has taught me so much about the publishing process from start to finish: how to choose content, edit said content, format it all, and so on. As members of Professor Claire Culleton's Editing and Publishing class during the fall 2012 term, the team and I began with a set of Colloquium essays and a few average photographs. Our directions were to create an anthology for the Honors College with the hopes that it might one day be useful in promoting the College and its student body. The rest we were left to figure out for ourselves.

Things that would normally seem trivial suddenly became important as we professionally communicated with the contributors, edited out superfluous punctuation marks, and constructed the seventy-four page product from scratch in Adobe InDesign—a program none of us was too familiar with. You might say it proved to be one of those projects you feel will be nearly impossible to accomplish. But we did! By playing to each of our strengths, everything began to take shape. Once the magazine file had been proofread cover-to-cover, all of us remarked that it turned out better than we could ever have imagined.

For me, the project has provided one of those real-world opportunities that employers so eagerly seek out when leafing through a stack of resumés. Not only that, I've come away with an experience I can apply to my future career in publishing. I feel like I've learned something worthwhile that can put to rest every student's age-old question: “When am I ever going to have to use this?” In joining the Honors College, this is the kind of college experience you and your future fellow classmates may look forward to. The expectations set for you will be high, as they were for me as well as the entire Brainchild team, yet those same expectations will push you to your highest potential.

From our computers to your hands, we sincerely hope you enjoy.

Happy reading,

Alyssa Parnaby, Editor
Editors

Allison Hudec
Alyssa Parnaby
Britni Williams
Kelsey Misherer
Leanna Lostoski
Rebecca Hill
Sarah Cook
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An Honors student’s first exposure to the College is his or her experience in the Freshman Honors Colloquium, which is a year-long humanities- and literature-based course. Freshman Honors Colloquium is a great introduction for these Honors students just beginning their rigorous academic journeys. These classes are designed to give all Honors students a solid writing base along with an exposure to the general organization and workload of an Honors course at Kent State. Small class sizes ensure that the students can get to know their classmates as well as have a personal relationship with their professors. There are a variety of sections from which students can choose based on a topic of their personal interests.
For the past few years my mother and father have been going through a bitter and messy divorce, leaving me feeling alone and insignificant. I found comfort in a group of people that have influenced me more than anyone else has thus far: preschoolers.

Working for a Head Start preschool this summer with a fascinating group of preschool students has allowed me to reevaluate my own life. Disenfranchisement within a family is common, and finding something or someone that will make an impact on that otherwise miserable feeling will be the difference between happiness and depression. I'm lucky to have met those individuals early in my life and have already grown up because of them. The children I worked with were resilient and innocent no matter how much they had already suffered in their young lives. If I hadn't met them when I did, I don't know if I would have gotten out of my rut before I went to college. I was feeling really down for quite some time about my family splitting up, but after talking with these wonderful little kids I found peace again.

Unfortunately these children, at age four, seem to feel more like outcasts than I ever have. Most of the children I worked with were suffering through some sort of mental disability, which delayed their learning significantly. More often than not, the parents of these children didn't get an actual diagnosis. Many of the children had severe speech impediments, mental retardation, mood swings, emotional outbursts resembling bipolar disorder, and a few were diagnosed with autism. They knew they didn't fit in with the "normal" children, and I could sense that they were occasionally a little discouraged by them. When the children in my preschool room interacted with some of the elementary school children, they became quiet, shy, and insecure, often choosing not to participate in the planned activity or associate with anyone. But, being the determined and motivated kids that they were, they fought through that feeling every day with smiles on their faces. One hug could change their entire outlook, a characteristic that I admire deeply. Also, in my classroom there were several children suffering from abuse at home. I heard horror stories, vulgar statements, and mature language come from many of their mouths, not because they meant it, but because they heard it. The most shocking statement I have ever heard came from a child that we suspected was being sexually molested. Of course, this little boy had a lot of anger stemming from that abuse and could not figure out what to do with it. He was in the middle of one of his outbursts when he turned to me and shouted, "You are such an asshole!"

Oddly enough, there was a cynical smile on his face. He knew he was doing something wrong and that he could shock me. Once he saw the look of disappointment in my face, he proceeded to shout, "Suck my dick, BITCH!" This seemed to be a phrase he had heard plenty of times. It really hurt me to know that each time these otherwise glowing, joyful kids go home, they are beaten, neglected, and talked down upon. They tell me, "Daddy is mean. He just doesn't like me sometimes," and it breaks my heart. Children should not have to feel scared, unwanted, or unloved; rather they should fully enjoy their innocent youth.

Because I realize that they are forced to be timid, quiet, and cautious of their behavior at home so they don't upset their parents or guardians, I instead allow them to be creative, free, and uninhibited when they are in my classroom. I make it a daily point to hug my kids to let them know I love and care about them. I encourage questions like "Why?" and "What is this?" and am excited to give answers that hopefully satisfy their craving to learn. I feel that it is my job as their teacher to keep them safe and make them feel comfortable, while teaching them to grow, thrive, and figure out life. I knew what I meant to them, but I did not realize until I left my job what they meant to me.
My outlook on life has changed immensely since becoming a preschool teacher. The children made me realize how important it is to smile, laugh, and have fun once in awhile. They are able to forget about everything bad that has happened in an instant, be mesmerized by the simplest things, and "hug it out" when they have disagreements. Before meeting the children, I dwelled on every situation, even something as small as missing a question on a test. I could never forgive myself if I made even a simple mistake. I had a hard time letting stress go and held grudges often. Now I can understand that people go through worse things in life than a parents' divorce. I need to cherish what I do have instead of being devastated over things that I don't. For instance, my friend Amelia, a three year old in my classroom, was crushed when I told her that she could not play with the housekeeping items because the area was closed for the day. She let a tear slip, but after about sixty seconds said to me, "Oh, that is okay Miss Lindsey, I have a buncha other stuff!" As simple as that statement may sound to an outsider, I knew that she had just taught me a lesson. Why dwell over something that is impossible to get, when time can be spent with people or doing things that are already achievable? Another child also had a huge impact on me. I had the feeling that Robert was being abused. The instructors in child abuse classes always tell teachers to watch out for certain characteristics, like severe anger resulting from something minute and simple, dirty outfits and diapers, or a withdrawn and hazy stare. Robert exhibited all of those traits. The most prominent sign was his severe anger; one simple and easily fixed problem would set him off. Robert did not deal well with being disrupted. He would often play with a huge dinosaur floor puzzle before we had circle time for the day. If a child would offer to help him, Robert would be greatly offended and angry. He would throw anything around him: the puzzle pieces, his shoes, blocks, and chairs. He would punch, kick, and bite, but he would never try to use words to solve the problem, a solution most kids would turn to first. I could calm him down eventually by holding him and repeating that it would be okay, but it wasn't easy.

Other signs pointed to abuse, too. Robert was four years old but not potty-trained, and his parents showed no interest in doing so. But they did not change his diapers either. If I did change his diaper first thing in the morning, a couple hours later we would find diaper remnants and cotton all over our floor. Despite all of these factors, I began to notice that whenever I took him out for individual time, I got a smile out of him. I did all I could for him because I was aware that as soon as he left me to go home, the happiness that I worked so hard to have him experience would immediately fade. I made him my priority, and we became extremely close. In turn, he helped me notice when people were down. It's one thing to feel bad for a person, but it is another to act upon it and help them feel better. I realized the difference I could make in a child's life after spending time with Robert. I could have been that one factor that kept him from huge problems in his mental growth, like falling behind in school, or becoming a rebel due to his anger issues. He inspired me to be more kind-hearted and understanding because, as cliché as it sounds, a person is never sure what goes on behind another family's closed doors. They can recover from trauma and disappointment thanks to their strong minds.

Throughout my parents' divorce, I felt like I had no choice but to be sad. If I acted like my students, I would find a way to push through my pain and smile again. I wish that a hug could change my world, and I believe if I were to think like they do, it truly would. The world would be a good place again, and I would try my hardest every second so that good things, though they may not be a new toy, would come my way at the end of the day. If we as adults learned to act as those children, we would receive more than a sticker at the end of the day; we would receive that happiness. I believe that I, a future teacher, should look to my students for inspiration and advice.

* Names of children have all been changed *
Of Suitors and Flowers

by Sarah McIntosh

I was three the year the nice man died, ten at the time of the Great Crash, and I’m seventeen now. Every year since the time I was three, mother has always reminded me what she wants me to be. She would say, “Pammy dear, the best thing a girl can be in this world is a beautiful little fool.” It turns out she was right, in some ways. Ignorance is a splendid narcotic, but only if one is truly unaware. Awareness is a fool’s undoing; my mother came to this realization when everything in her little, contained dreamworld collapsed.

Mother never told me how it happened, but despite our family wealth, we lost quite a bit. I remember hearing bits of conversation here and there about “the Crash,” and later on, “looking for work.” We didn’t need to bother much with that at first. It was merely a thoughtful precursory warning. We hadn’t, by any means, lost everything. We were the actually quite lucky compared to many other families during this time. However, my parents made our life seem harder than it really was, simply because we had to alter our lavish lifestyle of the past. There was no more travel. My parents became contained to our home, unable to simply take a trip to escape. The floors of our new, modest house were bare of oriental rugs, and the plain wooden tables were devoid of any fancy vases or crystal ware. All of our “better” belongings were sold, a piece here and there, whenever there was someone with money to buy them. The sparkling memory of my parents fading past way of life was almost too much to bear at times. Mother and father grew their first (premature) wrinkles and grey hairs that year, all resulting from the stress of the times.

Our money lasted without much worry until the summer I turned sixteen. I walked into the living room and found mother crying in father’s arms. The worst had come to pass. “It’s time,” father announced, “for me to find a job.” The word “job” seemed to be stuck, suspended in the small space between his lips and the space around us. Mother tried several times to work herself, once as a seamstress and once as a secretary. Both times ended in disaster, since prior to that she had not worked a single day in her life. Father never wanted her to work in the first place. He always said it was “improper” for women to work. Mother never could be her own distinct person because of my father. As a man, he had the opportunity and freedom to be whoever he wanted. However, due to the Depression, the best he could be was a construction worker. He had a workingman’s build, but he still came home every night with a bent back and a nasty temper. Each day wore away at my parents a little more, until they became only shadows of their former selves. At one point in my life, mother had been right about being a fool. That was back when I didn’t know any better. I was at the age when I believed that everything my mother said was true. I know now the worst thing a girl can be is a fool. I’m nobody’s fool.

Since I have been confined to the worlds of both East Egg and the Valley of Ashes my whole life, I have always wanted to venture out into the world. Go to school, get a modest job, and save up so I could then travel as a freelance writer. I knew that I couldn’t rely on writing, but it was my only passion, and I had a strong desire to pursue it. That, and travel suited me, because I wanted to be anywhere else in the world than the Buchanan residence. I wanted freedom and most of all, not to get married. One look at my parents together, and I was put off from any thought of marriage. Of course, marriage is all my parents want for me in life. They want me to meet a nice (rich) boy, start a family, and live comfortably, knowing that I will be financially provided for. They are looking for their own meal ticket for when they get older, but of course they will not openly admit that. I have ambition, however, and I want to work. This difference of opinion is what brings us to the present day, where I have walked into the kitchen, only to find my father talking to a young man who was seated at the kitchen table.
“Ah...Pam. Come meet Edwin. He’s the son of my foreman! He’ll be running the business someday.”
He looked over at me, a smile lighting up his rough countenance.
“Hello...”
“Hello, Miss Pam. Your father has told me a lot about you.”
Of course he had. It was another marriage ploy. I shot my father a scathing look.
The look was ignored. “Pam, dear, go get your mother.”
At the mention of her name, mother came floating downstairs. She wore a look of complete surprise, even though she was used to this. Edwin was the fifth boy father had brought home from work.
“Oh my! Hello, Edwin dear. It’s nice to meet you. Can I get you anything to eat? To drink?”
“Thank you ma’am, but a glass of water is just fine.”
All of the boys were polite, unnaturally so. It was if father trained them before letting them into the house.
The boys lined up at the promise of a pretty girl, and father picked and chose, creating his little army of drones to court me. This attempt at a suitor was my breaking point; I stormed out past the table, my father and his little pet Edwin looking quite taken aback.
Whenever I got the opportunity to get out of the house, I went to my hidden garden. I never had many opportunities to leave my house and parents, so I relished each moment spent in solitude. The Valley of Ash has no garden, nonetheless anything even vaguely resembling welcoming shrubbery. We live in the very farthest outskirts of the Valley, so my garden was not the resort it could have been. I greeted the eyes of Doctor Eckleburg with a scowl; his all-knowing gaze encompasses all, including the discreet location of my garden.
I walked an old dirt road for what seemed like ages, until the trees and bushes started to get denser. A splendid canopy appeared over my head, gleaming a bright green and yellow with the sunlight that passes through it. My heart rose to my throat as I stepped through the gate, wrought iron surrounded by tendrils of ivy. The forest floor of my garden was very lush, carpeted with flowers and green vegetation. I lay down in the center, and felt at home as I let the sweet floral scent seep into my skin. The flowering climbers ascended up the sides of tall oaks, and the sun broke through the center ring of trees and lit up the flowers like little lanterns surrounding me. I just closed my eyes, and silently baked.
I broke out of my trance by the abrupt sound of whistling. I looked around, terrified. What if my father had followed me? What if my newest suitor was coming to drag me back home? Through the sunlight, I looked over to the shadowy edge of my meadow. I saw a human form rise up, and start to walk over to me.
“Hello, there. Sorry...didn’t mean to interrupt.”
The whistler was a man of great height and had an imposing demeanor. His curly, dark hair was untamed and wild, making him look quite natural and unique. It was rare in those days for a man to not be neatly trimmed and shaven, even after the Crash. Basic hygienic needs did not completely disappear with the money. He carried with him what looked to be a sketchbook and a box of writing, or perhaps drawing implements. No matter how intriguing he appeared, I still considered him to be trespassing.
“Who are you, and what are you doing in my garden?”
“Is it yours, now? I don’t see your name written on it.”
“I’m the only one who ever comes here. I consider it mine. It...it’s special.” I couldn’t help but stammer; his grin was quite disarming.
“What’s so special about this garden? I know a hundred other places like this. What’re you runnin’ away from?”
“Excuse me, isn’t it a bit impolite to question a lady without asking her name first?”
His forwardness was infuriating, but a bit intriguing. This man was not at all father’s choice of suitor for me.
“Well now! Looks like you’re a proper lady, huh? Tell me then...who might I be havin’ the pleasure of meetin’
“Today?” He stepped closer, until I could see his deep hazel eyes without having to squint. His tongue-in-cheek humor undulated right off of his cocked mouth. I stepped back a pace.

“My name is Pam Buchanan. Who are you?”

“Now, no need to be hostile, honey. Leon Wilde, at your service.”

“Mr. Wilde, why are you here?” I was still not swayed.

“Can’t you tell? I’m an artist. Just doin’ some sketchin’. Want me to draw you?” He grinned wider than before. He seemed to possess a certain unexpected gentleness for a man of his savage appearance. If I had the nerve, I would have flirted back and said yes, but I couldn’t muster the courage. I just stood there, staring at the ground, nervous, embarrassed, and wordless. I never bothered exchanging many words with my father’s picks not out of shyness, but out of sheer disinterest. The loss of words was completely out of character for me, and I was getting more intrigued by this Mr. Wilde.

“How do you know I’m running from anything?”

“It was a shot in the dark. Pretty good one though. Your eyes show it. You’re scared. You don’t belong here, but you wish you did. You don’t even want to go back home. Why is that?”

He had been stepping a bit closer, punctuating each sentence with a step. He grabbed my right hand with his left, and reached out to touch my cheek.

“How can you possibly—?”

“Shhh, don’t gotta tell me it all now. How ‘bout you let me show you another garden. One about ten times bigger and way better ‘en this one?”

I couldn’t believe it. I met this man not more than ten minutes ago, but I wanted nothing more than to trust him. Giving up what little control I had seemed absurd, but I could tell that he was a man worth taking a risk for. I wanted to believe that he would be an encouraging and supportive addition to my life. He was not one of my father’s chosen suitors.

These outings with Leon became more frequent throughout the year, until it was hard to think of a day where I was without him. We shared dreams, secrets stories, everything we owned, real and intangible. He told me of his travels to distant lands, including most of Europe and even beyond. He spoke with such excitement and raw knowledge. He had learned so much from his travels, and was all the more attractive due to his vast wisdom. I was a bit envious, but I felt I could feed off of his great enthusiasm and adventurous attitude, and feel as if I myself had just returned from a long voyage.

Despite my clandestine meetings, life went on in the Buchanan household. However, my parents became more strict as I continued to sneak out. One day, without warning, I was locked in my room, only told, “It’s not proper for a young lady to go sneaking around.” I started to be locked up more frequently. No amount of banging, yelling and crying convinced them to let me out. My parents finally did the worst possible thing and set up an arranged marriage between myself and the dreaded Edwin. The next time I snuck out, I told Leon everything that had happened and that I wanted to run away. He told me he would wait for me every night at the garden. He said he would continue this until he finally got to see me again. I believed him.

The perfect spring evening came, and I found both mother and father asleep, along with my bedroom door lock undone. I packed up all of my belongings into a small, brown suitcase and left. If I had known it was going to be so easy to just get up and leave, I might have done it sooner. This time, I turned my back to Doctor Eckleburg completely. What he knew and saw would not affect my parents. They would know I left from the short, terse letter I left them. However, they probably would have never concluded that I left for love. I would let them continue to live their lives as the fools that they had always been. No one but the stars and the flowers in the garden needed to know what I was doing. I made it to the garden, and there he was, smiling gently, embraced by a soft moonlight. We both glowed a generous, ephemeral glow, and the shroud garden could finally be found by our eternal glow.
Joseph Conrad uses the various settings and symbolism in his novel, *Heart of Darkness*, to show the character development of the novel’s protagonist Marlow and uses this development to show the reader his personal views on imperialism. The emphasized elements of setting and symbolism create the meaning of the story and give it impact, and Conrad sends his message through the voice of his character and through that specific character’s development. The issue of imperialism is a main theme in *Heart of Darkness*, and through the literary techniques of setting, symbolism, and character development, Conrad shares his views on imperialism with his readers.

The various settings of the novel have a great impact on the development of Marlow, and each place displays a different point in his life and progression. Throughout the novel, the reader sees Marlow in three distinct settings that coincide with his progression: in Brussels as a young man eager to travel the world, in the Congo as a man who is in a state of confusion and change, and on the River Thames as a man whose youthful will has been sobered by the harsh realities of the world. The settings also directly correlate to the development of Marlow because his environment is what causes his view of the world to shift. For example, in Brussels, Marlow begins to feel uneasiness, which begins his questioning of the task in which he is about to participate. When he describes his entrance into the doctor's office, he states, "there was something ominous in the atmosphere" (10). In the Congo, the atmosphere is dense. While traveling up the Congo River, Marlow says, "The reaches opened before us and closed behind, as if the forest had stepped leisurely across the water to bar the way for our return" (35). Marlow spends his time there unsure of what is to come and in a state of confusion, which is partially attributed to the setting itself. It is here that his views of the world begin to shift because what he sees changes everything he believes. He must work through thick mystery to see the truth beneath the shiny façade of imperialism. The last place the reader sees Marlow is on the Thames, which is dark yet calm, showing that Marlow has accepted the world as a dark place. The city is described by the other narrator, who says, "The air was dark above Gravesend, and farther back still seemed condensed into a mournful gloom brooding motionless over the biggest, and greatest, town on earth" (3). Here the reader sees darkness on the river used by explorers and imperialists, which shows that Marlow is sure of the horrors of imperialism but has accepted that he cannot change this evil.

In addition to setting, Conrad also makes use of symbolism to show the progression of Marlow’s character. There are several significant symbols that tell the reader how Marlow feels about the events of his past. The first one is Marlow’s reference to Brussels as the “whited sepulchre” (9). By comparing the city to a whitened sepulchre, Marlow is saying that it is a place full of death and decay, but white and pure on the outside. This symbol shows the reader Marlow’s take on imperialism and the endeavors of the Belgian government, which he likens to an immaculate façade that covers up death. Conrad also makes symbolic use of white versus black. Throughout the novel, Marlow constantly points out how the black natives are white or good, and the white men are dark or evil. For instance, Marlow notes the whites of the natives’ eyes and a native who “had tied a bit of white worsted around his neck” (17). In these two examples, Marlow portrays the natives as a symbol of pure goodness. This shows how Marlow has come to learn that the truth of colonization is not as it appears. When he first went to the Congo, he did not know the horrors he would find there, but as he later reflects on the Thames, the reader can see that he has changed. It is Conrad’s use of symbols in Marlow’s reflections that allows the reader to see this change and development in his character.

Although the setting and symbolism of the novel develop the character of Marlow, they also give the reader a look into the life and beliefs of Conrad. It is hotly debated whether or not Conrad was a racist, yet there seems to be
no argument that Marlow is a fictionalized Conrad. For this reason, the development of Marlow through setting and symbolism can be comparable to the development of Conrad as a sailor and a man. Conrad took a similar journey to the Congo where he witnessed several of the same horrors Marlow witnesses in Heart of Darkness. From the way he shows the character development of Marlow, Conrad indicates to the reader that he too dislikes imperialism and has seen how dark the world is. In the novel, Marlow expresses his disillusionment when he says, “The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves is not a pretty thing” (368). It seems that Conrad is speaking through Marlow and showing that the act of exploiting a country and race is something horrific, corrupt, and truly despicable. It is clear that Conrad, like Marlow, had lost hope that the world could be a bright and admirable place, not a dark and evil one. It seems he was disappointed in the world around him and wanted to convey that to the readers of his novel, which he does through the voice of Marlow.

Conrad used setting and symbolism to develop the character of Marlow, as well as show the reader his personal views on imperialism. The message of the novel, which is the notion that the world is a dark and evil place, is conveyed to the reader through these elements. The reader is left with a concrete idea of Marlow’s feelings on imperialism, as well as Conrad’s clear opinion on the subject. Without the use of these elements, Conrad’s novel would have had little impact on the reader and society and would not have clearly painted the world as an appalling and cruel place.

Reference

William Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* describes Larry Darrell and his journey to understand the existence of good and evil. India becomes the pathway for his answers as it brings a significant change in his life: "that wonderful day, with the brilliant sunshine, the colored, noisy crowds, the smell of the East, acrid and aromatic, enchanted me...My heart began to beat like mad, because I'd suddenly become aware of an intense conviction that India had something to give me" (Maugham 262). Like Larry's first thoughts of India, I still remember that shining sunshine, those bustling crowds, that pungent smell, all of which I absorbed when I first went there. My first steps in India evoked an inner realization just as Larry's first steps bolster his conviction to find answers. Larry believes that India has something to offer him, something that would never be offered to him again. India also offered me that certain something when I traveled there to visit my relatives that I still cherish today. Even though Larry and I had different opinions, thoughts, and pursuits, India became a place of realization for both of us. There are defining experiences in everyone's lives that take their paths toward new perspectives and destinations. The experiences that Larry and I underwent in India brought us to a place in the path of our lives where our thoughts and values evolved and influenced how we journey through our lives each and every day.

Throughout *The Razor's Edge*, Larry steers away from the traditional American lifestyle of finding a job and raising a family as he chooses instead to focus on the questions of life that remain unanswered for him. At a young age, Larry witnesses his comrade die in World War I, and this traumatic experience leaves him questioning why evil exists. He goes on a quest, roaming the world and reading for hours on end in search for answers. When Larry arrives in India, he is awakened by the spiritual values of the Hindu beliefs of reincarnation and the Absolute. These beliefs answered his questions because reincarnation serves as a way for all living beings to be punished or rewarded for deeds from their past lives. This conclusion satisfies Larry, but India has more to offer him. His journey eventually leads him to a turning point in his life where he finds his inner peace. "I was ravished by the beauty of the world...I had a sense that a knowledge more than human possessed me, so that everything that had been confused was clear and everything that perplexed me was explained" (275). Larry's astonishing view of the mountains at sunrise gives him a realization that clears his mind. In this moment of clarity, Larry realizes that there may be no solution to his questions when he says, "The best I can suggest is that when the Absolute manifested itself in the world evil was the natural correlation of good" (279). Leaving India with this notion, Larry changes his perspective on life and leaves his financial support in order to pursue a life that gives him happiness. Like Larry, when I went to India, I gained a better perspective about life as well.

The moment I stepped out of the airport, an unfamiliar scent hit me while I took in the sepia-toned, sun-kissed surroundings. The cars honked incessantly at the indigent people that overflowed into the messy streets. Relatives scurried towards me through the heavy crowds, ready to embrace me affectionately. My grandfather placed a garland around my neck; the sweet aroma of the jasmine flowers filled my nose. An ease grew between use as a connection of warmth and familiarity strengthened. I realized how much I had lost touch with my roots as I reminisced about my upbringing.

I had been raised with Indian values and morals. As I grew older, I was faced with the difficulty of balancing my American lifestyle and Indian heritage. I was pulled further and further away from my Indian background as my American side became the dominant part of me. As the balance tipped in favor of my American lifestyle, I grew ashamed of my Indian heritage. I was afraid to express my culture to others; I was afraid to be different. I was torn
between being accepted by my peers and expressing the individuality I needed to learn how to fully appreciate and embrace all aspects of myself. My voyage to India became a learning experience as it revived an appreciation of my Indian culture.

As the weeks in India went by, I started to grasp the Indian traditions of my relatives. I would listen to my grandfather’s stories of the past, indulge in the spicy cuisine, apply henna to my hands, and embrace the many vibrant features that surrounded me. Larry would have understood the effect India was having on me: “Nothing that happens is without effect. If you throw a stone in a pond, the universe isn’t quite the same as it was before” (280). My defining moment occurred when my grandfather tossed a stone into my pondering thoughts. It was the day before my flight, and my grandfather asked me to sit next to him. He gazed at me with his deep, glistening eyes while I walked towards him and took a seat. I waited a few moments, and slowly a grin spread across his face. He presented me with a piece of advice: just be happy with who I am. It was the simplicity of what he said that caused the ripples in my thoughts. I smiled back at him, and our connection grew stronger as I decided to take his advice and make it my life philosophy. After this moment, I realized that although I acknowledged both of my cultures, by refusing to accept one of them, my happiness was incomplete. I learned to embrace all aspects of my life with this new belief as they intertwine to define my personality. I now consider myself fortunate to be a fusion of the two diverse backgrounds.

Today I can say that I am happy with how I lead my life, and even though Larry’s ending is unknown, I feel that he is content with his life as well. There are rare moments in our lives that provide us with a profound clarity of our identity. These moments are what define us; they change our perspectives and build a new path to follow. Valuable advice, insightful experiences, and radiant people encourage every step we take in this journey of accepting ourselves.

“As the weeks in India went by, I started to grasp the Indian traditions of my relatives. I would listen to my grandfather’s stories of the past, indulge in the spicy cuisine, apply henna to my hands, and embrace the many vibrant features that surrounded me.”

Reference

The Chinese proverb “Women hold up half the sky” calls attention to the simple fact that women are half the population in the world and therefore share the same duty as men in making sure the sky doesn’t fall and crush us. The proverb does not create the image of women sitting submissively in the shade of a tree while the men attempt to hold up the sky themselves, for surely the men would fail. The sky is far too heavy for the men to carry alone. Yet we live in a world that still undermines the importance of women and the value they can bring to our society. In many parts of the world today, girls are uneducated and women are marginalized; those same countries have an overwhelming number of people in poverty. However, once the inequalities and injustices brought upon women are recognized, the world can move forward by rethinking the long-held assumption that women are second-class citizens with little to offer to society. Giving girls and women a chance to succeed in life can solve many obstacles people are facing today, such as poverty, overpopulation, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

The underlying problem for girls and women in areas where their opportunities and rights are limited is their societies’ lack of faith in their potential. This attitude is shown even before a girl is born. In China, concerns about overpopulation are so high that the Chinese government enforces the “one child policy,” which permits a couple to only have one child or otherwise face the consequences of fines, forced abortions, or in some cases forced sterilization (Rosenberg 2011). The negative effect this policy has on girls is comparable to what All Girls Allowed refers to as “gendercide.” The traditional assumption that boys and men are more likely to earn and provide money for their families as compared to girls and women remains prevalent throughout the Chinese culture. Due to the belief that boys are a greater investment than girls, families would much rather have baby boys. In many cases, parents whose first child is a girl will go to extreme measures to get rid of their daughter, including “abortion, killing them directly after birth, or abandoning them” to ensure their second chance at having a boy (All Girls Allowed, Inc.). These common practices have had a tremendously negative impact on Chinese society, including increased levels of child trafficking and suicide being the number one cause of death for young women in China (All Girls Allowed, Inc.).

The view that boys play a more valuable role in society is not unique to China. In many countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, girls are given less food and medical treatment than boys because their growth and development is deemed not as important (Mullins). In turn, girls are dying from preventable diseases. According to Plan.org, “girls are more likely to die before their fifth birthday.” With this kind of blatant inequality between boys and girls, many girls are not even given the chance at life simply because of the traditional belief that men are superior to women.

Another area of focus in which women have been subjected to inequality is education. According to Plan.org, one out of every three girls around the world does not receive a secondary education. For families that live in poverty, oftentimes parents have to choose which of their children to send to school. The parents will almost always choose to invest in their sons rather than their daughters because they believe that their sons have more potential and that the education of men is more valuable than the education of women. I witnessed this practice first hand when I spent a couple of months living with a host family in Honduras. My host family was extremely poor and only ate the food grown on their farm. About halfway during my stay, my host mother decided that she needed more help with the farm and cleaning around the house. In order to compensate for this, she pulled my host sister out of school. While her two older brothers continued to further their education, my host sister stayed home to work long hours on the farm. She was only eight. As with many other young girls throughout the world, any chance of her making something more of her life faded...
The moment she stopped going to school. The odds of her becoming a doctor or teacher or someone her community could respect diminished while the likelihood of her becoming an illiterate housewife following in the footsteps of her mother became evermore probable.

The issue of girls not being given a chance at birth or at school does not just affect their own futures; it affects the futures of their families, communities, and countries as well as the entire world's future. It may be hard to believe, but the most powerful force of change on the planet is a girl. This is most clearly shown through statistics: On average, girls with seven years of education marry four years later and have 2.2 fewer children as compared to girls without those same years of education (GirlEffect.org). This significantly benefits many poverty-stricken countries that do not have enough resources to support their populations. It is no coincidence that many of the world's poorest countries also have the highest fertility rates. However, when women are educated, they are more likely to use contraceptives and refrain from engaging in prostitution. They tend to be able to rely on other jobs instead, and so the population does not grow as quickly. Similarly, in developing countries, HIV and AIDS rates decrease as the educational level of women in those countries increases (Ueyama 2008). These positive effects result when girls are simply given the opportunity to go to primary school, but the effects are even greater when girls continue their educations further. On average, if 10 percent more girls go to secondary school in a particular country, that country's economy will grow by 3 percent (GirlEffect.org).

When comparing countries that encourage women's education and contribution to society to those countries that limit the opportunities and rights of women, one can see a large gap between their economies. A recent study done by the World Economic Forum found a clear correlation between sex equality (measured by economic participation, education, health, and political empowerment) and gross domestic product, or GDP, per head. The research clearly shows that girls and women who are educated will have a positive impact on themselves, their families, and their communities.

One of the most notable facts about women and education is that when an educated girl earns income, she reinvests an average of 90 percent of it in her family, while a boy will only reinvest 30-40 percent into his family (Fortson 2003). Despite these statistics, 99.4 percent of international aid money is directed towards men. Clearly, women hold the keys to many of the world's problems, yet the majority of people still overlook a woman's potential and value in favor of men. There are, however, small steps being made by a few organizations aimed at giving more opportunities to women, knowing that doing so will benefit more than just the primary receiver of the investment. I had the opportunity to work with one of these organizations first hand while spending a summer in Costa Rica. The partner agency my group collaborated with was called Grameen Bank, and its mission was to "[help] the world's poorest, especially women, improve their lives and escape poverty by helping to provide access to appropriate financial services" like small loans (Grameen Foundation). Through the new and upcoming concept of microfinancing, women in my host community who made jewelry and clothing were given small loans that enabled them to start their own businesses. These women were suddenly self-employed and able to provide for their families. What these organizations hope to achieve is for women to feel empowered and mobilized to create even more change throughout their communities. They are more likely able to create such change when they maintain their own businesses because the men in the community will begin to respect them and their ideas. This, in turn, will hopefully create a rippling effect within the families and across generations as children can look up to their mothers as self-employed businesswomen.

Specific examples of the positive effects that can occur when girls and women are given opportunities are seen quite frequently in many parts of the world. A study conducted in Kenya found that educational performance improved when girls received free textbooks and academic scholarships (Kristof and WuDunn 2009). When the girls' test scores rose, the "boys also performed better, apparently because they were pushed by the girls" (Kristof and WuDunn 2009). An in-depth study of the effects of microfinancing for women in Uganda showed a correlation between the reduction in poverty in the country and the amount of loans given to women within the preceding five years (Nathan, Margaret, and Ashie 2004). Rose Athieno, a woman in Kenya who received a microfinancing loan from an organization called Kiva to
start her own business, later wrote to Kiva, “Today I’m a very respected woman in the community. I have come out of the crowd of women who are looked down upon. Due to the loan that I received, you have made me to be a champion out of nobody” (Kiva). With success stories like these, one could only imagine the positive effects of investing in even more girls and women in developing nations.

One success story of an investment in a girl that I can certainly attest to is the story of my younger sister, Kendra. Like many of the countless baby girls who are abandoned in China because they are viewed as less valuable than boys, Kendra was found deserted on a street corner just three days after she was born. From there, she was taken to an orphanage where she encountered many others who were left in the same condition as she was – forgotten, without families, and without much hope for their futures. Fortunately for my sister, someone decided to give her a chance. My mother adopted Kendra when she was a year old. From that point on, our family loved her, cared for her, provided her with an education, supported her in all her endeavors, and never once doubted her capabilities to succeed in life. At eleven years old, Kendra is a straight-A student and a talented athlete. Had my family not adopted her, it is very likely that she would still be in a Chinese orphanage, unable to fulfill her potential because no one would have given her an opportunity to do so simply because she is a girl. Kendra’s situation proves that if girls are given the resources and opportunities to succeed, they can benefit immensely and show positive results from their efforts.

The world must rethink what it means to look at a girl, not as a burden and not as an object, but as the answer to many of today’s most devastating problems. By investing in a girl, the entire world will benefit. She will not be the sole beneficiary; indeed, a better life for her in turn means a better life for her brothers, her father, her future husband, and her future sons. By allowing her the opportunity to have an education and a chance at life, she will create a positive rippling effect throughout her family, community, and country. As an educated mother, an active citizen, and worker, she is the most influential force in her community able to break the cycle of poverty. This is just as much of a gender issue as it is a world issue. Girls like these hold the future of the world in their hands and, we must not forget, half the sky as well.

References


Many Honors students exercise their literary creativity by writing poems in their free time. They can also choose to enter their poems in one of the Wick Poetry Center’s competitions. The center provides poetry scholarships, workshops, and readings to encourage young and seasoned poets alike to continue developing their poetic voices.

The Wick Poetry Center also offers an annual chapbook prize for Ohio writers which publishes the winners’ chapbooks through the Kent State University Press. The winners also read their chapbooks publicly on campus to show others what they’ve accomplished.

The Wick Poetry Center also offers more than $30,000 in scholarships at Kent State each year.
I used to nestle myself
into the soft, warm banks
of your lap and listen.
From your mouth flowed wise words, almost
too gentle to hear, that left me
wanting more and always too shy to ask.
Naïve, I'd dip my toes just beneath the surface,
hoping the water's wisdom would soak
into my pores and saturate me
with your stories of olden days –
of D-Day, broken windows
and baseballs, Dad's old pet crow.
Your two gnarled hands, etched
with wrinkles, wound
around me in currents.

Already, those days are slipping
from my memories, replaced with a dry riverbed
my veins can no longer draw from. The river,
once strong and swift, fades away
quietly as if your presence was imagined.
And yet, I'm your living proof.
disengage
sever
spiral towards the earth
nature's anchor
cut
by her own hand
this slow
meandering
withering
death
never fails us

regrowth
cannot console
cannot succeed so regularly
arrested by the late frost
or the hand of intruding man
even if the green
goes untouched
proliferates
the pattern
is never the twin
of its predecessor

it's as it is with you
as it always has been
your laughter
in memory
has wilted
its anchor
cut
by my own hand

i have been given many seeds
seen many take root
had many grow
proliferate
in the space where
your ancient
seemingly permanent
trunk once stood

but they too
must go
must descend and join
this heap of broken images
each one
when shiny and new
must never be the twin
of its predecessor
i stare at my feet
at this heap
that surrounds them
my collection
forever more
like faded confetti
from a long abandoned
birthday party
from a long forgotten
childhood
sometimes
i find it in me
to toss these paper memories
in the air
watch them spiral out
around me
see them winking
in the light
but they are sun bleached now
and faded
withered
and wilted
i cannot hold them in my palm
and examine what they once were

they meander
instead
back to my feet
where
the pattern can never be the same
Cradled By a Morning Shine

by Eleanor Shorey

Boys trail half moons
of scuffed bicycle tread,
their white t-shirts
open at the elbows,
flapping sails in the wind.

They coast and call
to the girls sprawled
across front yards.
Each girl is consumed
with braiding hair

or hand clapping games
drawn from memories
of bass lines unspooled
between shared palms.
These children are cradled

by a morning shine.
They are cast in a glow
that will someday dim,
unaware of the bell jar
encapsulating their block.

The scope of their lives
is sandwiched between glass walls.
Each day passes in lazy rotation.
Boys without direction,
adrift on the asphalt, orbiting
in relentless constellations.
Presidio County’s very own ghost lights
in Marfa, Texas, the middle of nowhere
Population: 1,981

Its slow creep into the bend of the Rio Grande
and across the elusive border
held back by the desert and
locked in by mountains on all sides
a distant border of Chinati, Davis, and Chisos

The will-o’-the-wisps dance and slide
across Mitchell Flat between the crossroads
of Routes 67 and 90
An ever decreasing population
patrolled only by a sheriff
not even a police department to his name

Cowboys herding their lowing steers
feeling they found a kindred spirit
rode their horses in hopes of finding
ashes of abandoned campfires
only to find themselves without even their herds

The Marfa lights beckon with
faraway cars on a highway
The ghost lights across the desert
slowly drain the town dry
A century-long trickle bled away by the lights
Happily Ever After My Ass…

by Kati Oberle

All the Disney princesses made it look so easy.
Prince Charming is coming, sings the TV.
Her eyes fixated on the movies, her very first drug.
Sitting there on Grandma’s scratchy brown rug.

There she is blonde beauty of barely four.
Powdered sugar sweetness straight to her core.
Singing along, lesson embedded in her heart.
She’ll have a true love, they’ll never be apart.

Hour after hour, her future planned with laughter.
Of pastry-shaped wedding dresses and happily ever after.
She’ll be another glowing princess, just add her to the list.
Like Belle and Snow White, she’ll have an everlasting kiss.

At 18 years old, this princess now jaded.
Dreams of the right prince seem to have faded.
Hands her heart over to all the wrong men.
Who end up as slimy frogs again and again.

It starts to feel like there’s some sort of evil power.
She might as well be hidden, tucked away in a tower.
Chance meeting tosses her cynicism to the backseat.
One flash of charming smile, swept her off her feet.

They were a perfect fit just like the slipper made of glass.
She gets to join in the dancing at the ball at last.
Frosty horse-drawn carriage rides through the snow.
Everything made her giddy with love, head to toe.

Shine starts to fade, prince shows his true colors.
Angry, selfish, and unaware just like all the others.
Time starts to weaken what was once so strong.
Endless stream of apologies was his theme song.
“Where is my prince with bright blue eyes and golden hair
To love me, hold me, and erase every care?”
The one question running over and over through her mind,
She blames those lying princesses for making her so blind.

His crown, once precious, now fake, spirals to the ground.
Mixing with her shattered heart, scattered all around.
Crunching under their feet, as they take this last walk.
He stoops to kiss her forehead, thus ending this talk.

Getting back on his horse, around the corner he swings.
To get back to his new royal lady waiting in the wings.
This little princess has no idea how to move on.
Cinderella never explained the part after he's gone.
Beginning.
Begin where?
Where else but: one
One of three, I look to three.
Three pinpoints in the belt of man.
Man who marches nightly on
Onward, forward, going nowhere soon
Soon is a frustration, a fire
Fire in a heart dreaming as dreamers do
Do nothing but ache for guidance
Guide, dance, battle for a purpose
Purpose, where is mine?
Mine away at black velvet, sparks fly
Fly. Of a bird’s heart, stars are born
Born to a woman bound to hope
Hope that the salute sent in evening
Evens her chances of joining him there
There, always stepping, facing right
Right, as guides should be
Be ever in a journey, destination pending
Pending a night never to come.
Come. Night is waning.
Waning still.
Still.
"Torre Dell’Orologio" by Grace Spee (taken in Venice, Italy)
Each semester, the Honors College makes available a catalogue of classes called *Choices: The Honors College Schedule of Classes* that provides options of Honors classes in several different areas of study. These classes are usually smaller in size than regular university courses and typically require a higher level of involvement. Students are required to complete eight Honors experiences before graduation. The goal of the Honors College in creating these courses is to provide an elevated learning experience and to develop and hone writing skills. Smaller class sizes allow professors to interact one-on-one with their students in order to focus on growing their writing abilities.

According to the Honors College, “The intent of a writing requirement is to give students opportunity to collect, generate, and refine their thoughts on a given subject and to produce polished communications.”

Students in a variety of Honors courses wrote the following selections. They present a wide range of topics from students in many different fields of study. The essays demonstrate the diverse selection of Honors classes, as well as the varying interests of the students, showing that members of the Honors College come from many different backgrounds.
The following is part of a chronology amassed from a total of four trips to date to southwestern Pennsylvania and more than 50 interviews with the local community.

The whisper of the wind caresses Andy and Joy’s picnic, comfortably breaking the blanketing silence of Ryerson Station State Park. The two teenagers occupy a lone picnic bench near the park’s playground, an empty cooler and a lazy card game between them. The sun is dormant, an orb in the sky on a warm April afternoon.

“Yeah, it’s a change, but what are you really gonna do?” Andy mumbles. His answers are slow and methodical. He stares vacantly into space sometimes. His mouth curls and twitches to seek out answers for us. Joy, his girlfriend, doesn’t have much to add to the conversation, having only recently moved here from Flint, MI, and still learning the lay of the land.

“It’s definitely different,” she says with an indecipherable inflection in her voice. “It’s very hilly. In the middle of nowhere. Far from everything. I don’t know. I like it though. I like being here.” Taken as words on a page, her comments seem an apathetic, teenage sneer. But, like most other aspects of the people, places, and cultures within Greene County, nothing can be taken at face value.

Nothing can be stereotyped without first experiencing the genuine inclusiveness of an afternoon with a coal miner in Carmichaels. Nothing is too extraordinary after scouring a mountain of coal waste and feeling its magnitude beneath you. No emptiness can compare to an enormous, indented field of cattails once filled by a lively lake.

Like mumbling the Lord’s prayer among strangers, Greene County redefines what those on the outside try to use words to describe.

Today, at Andy Franko’s picnic bench, in Ryerson Park, near Wind Ridge, PA, in Richhill Township, Andy Franko’s telling us about how the four cracks in his bedroom wall developed.

“They went under it,” he says. “They said it takes six months to a year to happen … My room’s the only one that got affected by it.”

In Greene County, there’s much talk about “they.” Love them or hate them, they’re here to stay. They buy community pools and football stadiums. They sponsor school achievement awards and extracurricular programs. Their histories are as engrained in the local community as General George Washington and Chief Nemacolin. “They,” as we would come to find out, was actually much more than an enigmatic plural pronoun for the companies that produce and supply energy to the rest of the country. It was also a way to describe — not quite in an adversarial way — others within the local community with a different stake in the energy production in a different way. “They” not only means CONSOL Energy, Dominion East Ohio, or Chesapeake Energy; it also means the new RV camp of gas drillers in the Jacktown Fairgrounds, or the Burns family who’ve padded their bank accounts with trickled-down dollars from the gas boom — or it could refer to Heather Franko who, presently smoking a cigarette inside her trailer, visibly frustrated, says they told her property would be safe. Her son’s room wouldn’t need repair. The pipe leading from her stove would not be bent at an acute angle. The roads she drives wouldn’t be cracked.

“The coal mine tells you, when you’re on the main line, you’re not supposed to have damages, your house is one of the safest ones that they’re going to go under — apparently not.”
If what the coal companies said was true, local officials would not have drained Duke Lake, one of the only commonly shared goods that for so long had managed to escape exploitation in the undermined western part of the county. But the state's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) did just that seven years ago after inspectors noticed cracks in the aging dam that contained the sixty-two-acre lake. An investigation concluded CONSOL Energy's Bailey Mine, one of the largest underground coal mines in the country, had caused the land around the lake to sink. Called mine subsidence, this process cracked the dam in 2005.

It's also caused streams to disappear because the water seeps into chasms in the ground. It's fractured the foundations of houses and businesses. And, when Duke Lake was no more, it fractured an entire community. But Heather chuckles and sips her Mountain Dew. She wanted to say it then, but she saved it for later, tucked inside a vignette about one of the families down the road who fought CONSOL Energy for encroaching on their property without permission.

She told her friend: “This is coal country — what do you expect?”

What should Heather and Andy expect? What should Greene County expect? The hollowed countryside has for decades been historically rich with the nation's finest coal seams. One of the first coal ventures into this rugged terrain was Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co., which brought its coal interests in 1917 to the banks of the Monongahela River — the eastern border of Greene County. Carving the village of Nemacolin into a wild hillside, the company built duplex houses, general stores, movie theaters and even a swimming pool for its miners. Streets with names like Roosevelt, Grant, and Bliss snake through the elevated town named for the Amerindian chief who helped early settlers weave through the Allegheny Mountains of Maryland and Pennsylvania. The company operated the community into America's glory days of coal mining, during which Nemacolin Mine was considered one of the largest coal mines in the United States just two years after opening.

Company towns were not uncommon back in the day. As completely privatized communities, “patches” as they were called were often built around mines with corresponding names, typically in regions so isolated that it was necessary for the company to provide security, justice, garbage collections and other goods and services. Greene County fit that bill. The United States Coal Commission found in the early 1920s about half of all Pennsylvania coal miners lived in company towns. In the rugged terrain of Southern Appalachia and the Rocky Mountains, percentages were as high as 65 to 80 percent.

The entropic expansion of coal mining has since paralleled the diffusion of its culture in Greene County. From its inception as a thick-stroked portrait of turn-of-the-century industrialism, it became not just an industry but a way of life. For fifty-nine years, the annual King Coal Festival has featured a parade, carnival rides, even a beauty pageant — Ashley Avolio was crowned Greene County's “Coal Queen” in a packed Carmichaels High School auditorium in August.

However, patches like Nemacolin declined in step with their industry. Cars and highways destroyed their seclusion and therefore workers’ dependence on them. In 1986, when they ran out of coal to mine, the town’s miners staged an exodus and headed west to look for work in other parts of the county. Within a decade, a few small-time investors from neighboring Carmichaels had leached the duplexes and converted them into low-income housing.

Regardless of the subjective boundaries of “coal country,” Heather's family homestead is undoubtedly the capital — and a rogue capital, at that. Isolated deep among the rolling hills of western Greene County, justice here is either invisible or in the pockets of enigmatic energy companies. Her trailer is a dizzying drive down Jacobs Road, a ten-minute excursion that branches off PA Route 21, climbing breathtaking heights and twisting down into wooded valleys. Semi-vacant properties scatter the land partitioned by coal companies, confirmed by leases.

“Down here, it's CONSOL,” Heather says, pulling out maps that indicate changing patterns of land ownership in the county, flipping through areas of the county that changed hands from citizen to company. "CONSOL everything."

It's out here that Heather's mother, Shirly Jacobs, takes a momentary break from cleaning up an Easter dinner of ham and biscuits. The topic of conversation returns to Duke Lake, to the locals who sell their property to mining
interests. “They.” Shirly lights up a smoke, allowing memories to flood back to her.

“It was beautiful having that lake here,” she says. “It gave the kids in this area something to do. It’s just changed a lot of people’s lives.”

“I caught my first fish in that lake,” Heather loudly butts in from the kitchen, dishrag in hand, “And everybody on the other side heard me. It was my first bluegill. I’m still so proud of that damn fish. I’ve never caught one since.”

Shirly shakes her head angrily.

“People have sold out to them because of the money, and I understand that. Folks that live down here are poor folks — they ain’t rich. Normal working people. Anyhow, they’ve sold their homes out, and the coal mine comes in — knocks them over. So you’ve got miles and miles that there’s nobody living where there used to be families there.

“They’ve done good for, like, building different buildings and donating money — they donated money to build a school out in Cameron, West Virginia for them folks — but — ”

Silence now, as the mantra — and the dilemma — that splits the local community of Greene County becomes the clearest its ever been. Visibly incensed, Shirley puts out her cigarette and, for a fleeting moment, channels her grandson’s unfocused gaze, her eyes bloated behind thick glasses. Succinctly captured in an unsolicited conversation that could’ve been just any other dinner-table rant, Shirly puts “they” into fifty-nine years of aggregated experience.

“I just don’t like my peace being taken away from me. I love where I live.”

“I’m still so proud of that damn fish. I’ve never caught one since.”
Quality vs. Quantity: American Craft Beer

by Matt Cutler

It was three o’clock in the morning, and it was cold. The bars were closed, their lights turned off, and the only thing illuminating the gathering crowd was the golden glow of the streetlights. A local, likely an OU student, sauntered down the road, probably drunk, heading home for the night. He turned the corner onto what is usually a deserted, quiet, and quaint city street only to be confronted by a crowd of more than two hundred congregating on the sidewalk, taking up a whole city block. With foldout chairs and blankets, the crowd braved a February morning in Ohio. Occasionally a student would wander over and ask the crowd what was going on. Was it a concert? A sports game? A ticket release? Why would so many people endure the cold at this time of the morning?

“Beer release!” the crowd shouted in a somewhat uniform response, raising their Styrofoam or plastic cups in the air.

Jackie O’s Pub & Brewery in Athens, Ohio, is a gem of a pub, and one of the few microbreweries in Ohio, even though most of the young men and women in this old college town have no idea this place even exists. Why? Because they don’t sell the Big Three—Bud, Coors and Miller. In fact, they only sell what they brew themselves. By law, in the United States this is the only way, short of a wholesale distributor, that a small brewery can sell its own concoctions: by selling out of a restaurant—hence, the brew pub. And let’s face it; beer and food complement each other like Glenn Beck and the uneducated. It’s not a bad business venture at all. In just a couple of hours, Jackie O’s would open its doors, and this thirsty crowd would spend the rest of its morning enjoying the fruits of the brew master’s labors.

Standing on the sidewalk, wrapped in a blanket, sipping on a warm German porter to fend off the chills, I couldn’t help but feel sorry for the college kids who walked past us. How could they not know this place was here? Why were they drinking the thin, tasteless product of an American mega-brewer every weekend when just inside these big wooden doors was a wonderland of flavorful, palate-bruising beverages, made right here in their own city?

The beers being released that day would range in flavor from sweet to smoky, from bitter to sour – flavors that often scare away newcomers to the world of American craft beer, one of the fastest growing corners of the market. By 5:00 a.m., as the doors opened and the crowd poured in for breakfast and brew, I realized that there was a story to be told here. These self-proclaimed beer enthusiasts, many of whom have driven through the night from out of state to be here braving the cold, are quite a mixed lot. The conversations one could hear in this group range from beer talk to world travel, from farming and engineering to chemistry and computer science. There are some unique and memorable characters that frequent these beer releases. Over the morning, I met a young engineer from Honda, a chef from a five-star restaurant in Chicago, a car salesman, two biochemists, and a man nicknamed Patches, who tours the country following beer releases like a hippie following the Grateful Dead. If you were to ask Patches how he’s able to pull it off, what he does for a living that allows him such freedom, he would reply, “Oh, I wash some dishes, take out the trash, mow the yard and whatnot.” He’d then laugh robustly and tell you all about his wife, the engineer for NASA. She tags along with her husband on her off weeks.

The one thing that everybody in this heterogeneous group had in common was a passion for craft beer. They were all left wanting more from the standard American pale lager and the overindulgent mentality of the average drinker. Through one experience or another, they had all been drawn by their taste buds to an atmosphere—nay a subculture—that had been steadily expanding for the last thirty years. During this time, an art form developed; the brewing process has been made personal again, taking it back to its pre-industrial days. The focus is on quality, not
quantity. A plethora of ingredients have been put back on the table, creating an experience for the palate that has become uniquely American.

What is an American craft beer? There are over 1,700 breweries in the United States today, providing more diversity among styles and brands than any other market in the world. Over 90 percent of these breweries are producers of craft beers; that is, they are small, independent, and traditional. According to the definition of the American craft beer, created by the Brewers Association in order to track its progress and trends in the market, a brewery's annual production cannot exceed six million barrels; less than 25 percent of the company can be owned by a non-brewer; and its product line must be an all-malt based creation, or only use adjuncts to enhance flavor, not cut costs (Hieronymous 2006, “Small, Independent” 1).

Though 90 percent of America’s breweries produce craft beer, a major problem exists in the market. Americans drink over $97 billion worth of beer each year. American craft beer, however, only accounts for 5 percent of the market, yet there are more craft brewers here than anywhere else in the world. Imported beer controls an average of 15 percent of the market, and the rest, a whopping 78 percent, is controlled by the Big Three. Anheuser-Busch InBev alone controls almost 50 percent of the entire market (Korty 2005). There are many reasons why Miller and Coors have become the monsters of industry that they are, including practicality, guerilla marketing, and political pandering.

The Big Three have spent trillions of dollars since the end of Prohibition to convince Americans that they crave a light, tasteless beverage. The pale lager—Budweiser, Miller Light, etc.—originally gained popularity in the United States due to market practicality. Early American settlers did not have access to the malt and the hops that they were used to brewing with in Europe. Naturally, they turned to more cost-efficient and accessible ingredients such as corn and rice (what we now call adjuncts). The pale lager gained popularity in the southern states first, where men toiling in the heat year-round nurtured a preference for a lighter, clearer, more refreshing beer. Brewers caught on to this trend and realized they could lighten the color and kick of their brew by increasing the amount of adjuncts in it (Hieronymous 2006, “Early Times,” 1). The problem with this method, from the beer enthusiast’s point of view, is that adjuncts decrease flavor; barley malt and hops should reign supreme in beer.

With advancements in refrigeration technology (pale lagers are kept cold during fermentation), the American market was quickly heading the way of the pale lager. Heavy winter porters that were used to survive the long winter months for centuries were no longer a survival necessity (Korty 2005, 3). This, combined with the aggressive marketing techniques used in the decades after Prohibition, allowed the Big Three to put a stranglehold on the market. As the standards of the American palate declined, so did the world’s respect for American beer.

Further complicating things for small breweries is the so-called three-tier system, a federal law implemented after Prohibition designed to separate the brewers, the distributors, and the consumers. The problem with the three-tier system (from a craft beer fan’s perspective) is that it makes access to wholesale distributors difficult to attain for small brewers. Using this system over the last fifty years, the Big Three have consolidated with distributing interests to the point where Anheuser-Busch, through some of its subsidiary companies, has control of a large portion of the distribution industry, and even has shelf placement control of over 60 percent of its wholesalers. They also own over eighty brands of beer, including Heineken, Rolling Rock, Beck’s, and Stella Artois.

Have you ever wondered why you see the same beer placed in the same way like an advertising banner in the middle of every grocery store? It’s no coincidence; it’s a marketing technique used to muscle out the small guys. Anheuser-Busch even goes so far as to threaten to pull their products off a wholesaler’s shelves should that wholesaler decide to sell craft beers. Considering they account for 50 percent of all beer sold in the US, the wholesalers often have no choice but to comply (Baron 2009).

Believe it or not, the National Beer Wholesalers Association has its own lobby. That’s right; there is a lobby for the beer industry, and it’s bigger than the gun and tobacco lobbies combined (Baron 2009). They have been pandering
Congress for years, fighting to keep the three-tier system in place (a natural defense against small business) and putting up big money to implement business regulations designed to further complicate things for small, craft brewers (Korty 2005, 5). Each year, Anheuser-Busch spills more beer off its production lines than Samuel Adams brews and bottles (Baron 2009). Facing odds like these, what is it that keeps the craft brewers doing what they do?

The answer is simple: passion and a die-hard adherence to the creed of the craft brewing industry to only make the beers brewers want to make. The brewers, like their supporters, come from all walks of life, united in passion and creativity. Many of these people had other jobs in other lives, but have now dedicated themselves to their craft. Jim Klisch of Lakefront Brewery was a police officer before he became a brewer. Even before he retired from the force, he says he spent his “days off and [his] vacations brewing.” Dr. Kenneth Allen, owner of the Anderson Valley Brewing Company, was a chiropractor for thirty years before he delved into the industry. Steve Hindy, co-founder of Brooklyn Brewery, was a foreign affairs journalist who spent six years in Beirut and Cairo. Rick Reed, of Cricket Hill Brewing, says he would still be in the computer industry had he not begun to homebrew. Alan Newman, brew master, and his “squire,” Bob Johnson—two of the most colorful characters you will ever meet—say they got into craft brewing because they were “unemployed and unemployable” (Kermizian 2004).

Since 1979 when Jimmy Carter made home brewing legal, these business-minded artists have been carving out a place in the market. The niche they’ve made for themselves is quickly expanding, along with the breweries themselves. While no one knows what the future holds for the craft beer industry, one thing is for certain: passionate, individual brewers create a better tasting beer than the faceless corporate giants do. While the Big Three put pressure on the microbreweries, causing a small number to close each year, the rate of growth among the surviving breweries is exploding—the Big Three should be worried (Korty 2005, 6). Not to mention the fact that when you buy craft beer, you are supporting that community. Jackie O’s in particular served me a breakfast that morning that included locally-raised beef and pork, locally-prepared cheese, and locally-grown vegetables. For the same reason that people support restaurants that buy locally, these brewers deserve support for the courage and creativity they bring to our tables and the jobs and support they bring to our communities. The only thing left for you to do is find a brewpub near you. If there isn’t one within driving distance, ask around for a specialty store near you. Be adventurous—you may find you never want to return. Cheers.

References

I barely saw him in time.

It had only been two weeks since my returning from Kuwait as a Marine reservist. Adjusting to normal life—even if normal meant my career as a homicide detective—had been challenging. After I’d gotten home something had occurred every night that required my attention, and usually I stayed around the police department until the next morning, interrogating suspects or writing reports. I had fervently hoped and prayed that tonight would be different.

I slammed on the brake, clenching my teeth and hoping against hope that I wouldn’t hit him. My truck did a dramatic donut before skidding to a halt across the wet pavement—only inches to spare. The dark figure that had stumbled out in front of me just stood there, as if in shock.

My radio crackled in the background, delivering a status report on a traffic jam that had plagued downtown Hattiesburg throughout the late afternoon. It had been cleared, the announcer continued, but not without three minor collisions and multiple visits from the police. I took a deep breath, willing my nerves to quiet their ringing alarms.

Another erratic flash of lightening lit up the darkening sky. The fresh scent of the rain weighted the air, bringing cool, moist relief to the otherwise humid, sweltering weather. Large raindrops dripped steadily from the pecan trees, blowing in the breeze to moisten the dry tree trunks and turn them a dark, wet brown. Overripe sweet gum balls from their own tree plunked to the ground, producing a carpet of wet, prickly globes.

Grabbing my police department issue rain slicker I threw open the door and advanced towards the man, bent away from the wind and shielding my face from the torrents of rain. He stood stock still, shocked.

"Hey!" I shouted above the blowing rain.

The man suddenly looked up at me, wiping water from his eyes with the back of his hand. He gave a wet cough. "That detective...where does he...I need..." His erratic speech emphasized his panicked state.

"That’s me," I broke in. "You’re at the right place. Who are you?"

Garrett struggled with his response, as if he didn’t have enough time to answer. "Chase...Chase Garrett. You gotta come with me, man."

I shook my head. "What’s going on?"

He swore and looked away. "I need your help...my mom’s place," he answered, jerking his thumb over his shoulder. "Come on! We have to hurry!"

"Can you tell me what’s going on?" I was noncommittal. "It’s my mother," he began, his voice faltering. "Stuff was knocked all over the place, the furniture was turned over..."

"Whoa, whoa, whoa," I held up my hand. "Calm down. Start from the beginning."

He cleared his throat. "I was late...the traffic. Eight o’clock..." He sniffed and wiped his face. "That’s when I found her."

I leaned forward. "Your mother?"

Garrett nodded tearfully. "She was on the floor...and the blood..." Garrett broke down into dry sobs, his entire lanky frame shaking.

Frowning, I motioned with my flashlight. I had to shout above a fresh wave of rain. "Get in!"

Leaping back into my truck, I grabbed my cell phone and quickly dialed my partner.

Gary Burkette is the best detective in the Homicide Division. Often described as cold or gruff, he’s
analytical, has great instincts, and is such a good investigator that he is often loaned out to other divisions to help crack an unusually tight case. None of these visits take very long. Gary appears, silently observes all the collected facts, considers them briefly, and then makes his recommendation. Seldom is he wrong.

It’s impossible to tell exactly how old Gary is. Most of the younger cops figure Gary is climbing towards retirement age, but their admiration for him is so great that these observations are never voiced aloud. The older officers still maintain the opinion that Gary is in his mid fifties, but even they are unsure. The combination of his shaved head, weathered yet taut skin, lightning-like reflexes and incredible stamina keeps them guessing.

Of course, these shallow observations are only a small part of the Burkette legend. Gary rarely socializes with anyone from the Police Department, and none of us have a good understanding of who his friends are outside the Division. There’s a deep, dark scar which runs from just behind his right ear down over his shoulder—and it seems to predate his cop days. Yet no one has been able to get the scoop on that either.

Gary’s habits are private, to say the least. We know he works out religiously in a full-contact martial arts dojo just north of town, likes root beer, and carries a backup Colt .45, but beyond the occasional small talk, nothing else. A few of us worked up the nerve to check his phone logs late one dull night—but when we pulled them up on the screen there sat a single, chilling note: “Got you.” No one has tried anything since.

Smiling at the memories, I waited for him to pick up. After two rings he answered with his usual, gruff, “What now?”

“Got a discovery tip and a possible shock victim towards my place,” I began. “I need whatever you can send me ASAP!”

Gary took a noisy sip of what had to be his fiftieth cup of coffee for the day. How the guy gets any sleep is beyond me. He put down his cup.

“Wait a minute. You’re at a crime scene?”
I chuckled. “Well, I would be if you’d give me half a chance.”
“Okay. Gimme a second. I’ll have someone out there in fifteen.”

I tossed the cell phone into my pocket and turned to Garrett. He was wrapped in a dry towel, hunched with grief, and sobbing quietly. I leaned towards him.

“Can you ride and show me your mom’s place?”
His nod was almost imperceptible. “Sure.”

I pulled my Ford F-150 back onto the road and flipped on the dashboard emergency lights. Within ten minutes of driving against the hard, pelting rain we eased off the road into the driveway that Garrett specified.

No patrol cars had arrived yet. Garrett’s pick-up truck sat just off the gravel driveway, dark and empty. I did notice that the driver’s door stood open, rain pouring into the cab. The garage was open as well. Making a mental note to ask Garrett about this later, I shifted up into park and glanced around for a closer look. Gary’s SUV came around the bend, entering the drive behind me. He stepped out and squinted against my tail lights and the rain.

“You been inside yet?”
I shook my head. “Nope. Just got here.”
Gary nodded. “Head out. I’ll take care of our friend here.”

“Uniforms on potential witnesses?” I asked.
Gary’s smirk was barely visible through the night. “Don’t worry. I’ll get that going too.”

I nodded my thanks and headed for the door. It was closed but unlocked. Garrett had obviously left for my place in a hurry. Quickly pulling on some gloves, I eased the 9-mm from my belt and gently pushed open the door.
Clearing the place was my number one priority—but after assuring myself no one else lurked in the shadows, I returned to the front room.

Garrett had been right—furniture and other items were tossed around the home with apparently very little respect for their size or weight. The coffee table had been up-ended and now stood tossed into a floor-to-ceiling bookshelf.

Books—mostly mass-produced paperback fiction and a few well known classics—lay scattered all over the living room floor as if they’d been violently shaken from their shelves. Shattered glass from the overhead light fixture sat small heaps—crunched into the carpet by a heavy footstep.

From what I could tell, the room had once been a tasteful, well-appointed space—small but completely functional and comfortable. The lights were out, but as I progressed through the mayhem I came across a switch and turned them on. It was then that I saw her.

An elderly woman lay facedown on the far side of the room, under a wide window that no longer existed. Papers, books, and a few what-nots were scattered precariously across her body. A telltale crimson stain was pooling on the floor around her upper half. I advanced across the room, gun leading the way, picking my way carefully through all the ransacked objects. I arrived at the spot and knelt closer.

She was dead, alright. The exit wound of a very forceful gunshot was clearly visible just below her left shoulder blade. I took stock of her surroundings, the positioning of the body, and the demolished room, trying to reconstruct her last few moments in my head. There was a step in the doorway, and Gary appeared. He stood stock still for a moment, shocked.

“Good grief.”
I nodded, turning to face him. “It’s something, isn’t it?”
He did a slow three-sixty. “Perp must have been looking for something.”
“Appears that way. The rest of the house but it looks to be the same. How’s Garrett?”
He jerked a thumb back over his shoulder. “Not great. Going into shock, but I called some medics.” Gary paused for a moment. “He wearing your clothes?”
“Gave him my spare set from the truck. He walked all the way from here to find me through the storm.”
Gary considered for a moment. “Odd. Did you see the truck?”
“Yes. Maybe it wouldn’t start. No visible signs of tampering, right?”
Gary shook his head. “Not yet, anyway. I’ve got a tech working on it.” He was silent for a moment. “The keys were still in the ignition—maybe he flooded it out or something. Poor fellow’s been through a lot.”
I nodded. “Unfortunately, I can’t eliminate him as a suspect yet.”
Gary shrugged. “Soon, maybe. What’ve we got?”
I turned back to the body and motioned towards the wound, just as a couple of CSIs walked in the door and started working their magic. I directed Gary’s attention to the gunshot.

“Large caliber, .40 or .45 at my best guess. Fairly close range—less than half the room’s length, I suppose.”
“One shot?”
Again I nodded. “As far as I can tell. Poor lady didn’t surprise him. He came prepared to kill her.”
“And this is...?”
“Garrett’s mother, Mrs. Julie Garrett,” I said, looking down to see a photo album that lay open on the floor. Almost torn from its place in the book was a family portrait with a caption. I paused. “Seems like they were close.”
Gary pulled on a pair of blue crime scene gloves and moved through the wreckage towards me. He laid two fingers gently on the side of her neck. He frowned.

“Cold. Stiff. It’s been several hours. What’d you get from Garrett?”
I stood and took my time answering. "Said he was coming for his normal weekend trip to visit her, but traffic held him up through town. By the time he got here it was eight o’ clock and she was already dead."

"Long dead, if you ask me," Gary interjected. "We’ll see what the ME says."

I gazed around the room, trying to reconstruct the last few moments leading up to Mrs. Garrett’s murder. The window behind her had been shattered as the bullet left her body—leaving a pile of broken glass outside in a side flower bed. I pointed my flashlight towards the ground and analyzed it best I could. There were no footprints—not that I expected any—and the glass hadn’t been disturbed.

Facing the window, there was a door to my right, set in a wall perpendicular to the one that held the window. Gently pushing it open I observed a home office and bedroom, complete with a comfortable sitting area. A television was still running—it appeared that Mrs. Garrett must have come from this room when she heard someone enter the front door. I shook my head. She’d probably been expecting her son—definitely not her murderer.

I wondered why there was only one shot. Most first-time murderers don’t stop at just one. They let loose two or three to ensure their victim is good and dead. I wasn’t pleased by the implications. Most murderers fire more than once, but do professionals? Snipers usually just need a single shot. Federal agents and law enforcement like myself are trained to double-tap, but rarely need the second round. Same for the military.

Perturbed by this train of thought I continued to take in the scene. Oddly enough, considering the general destruction of the room—a cordless telephone sat nearby, only half out of its receiver. At a casual glance it would seem that someone had taken or tried to place a call—but had been interrupted suddenly and had hurried away without taking care to replace the phone properly. It didn’t appear to have been used very much, either. I could clearly make out one set of fingerprints that pressed through a thin layer of dust on the device.

Gary’s deep baritone shook me from my oblivious analysis. “Something seem odd to you?”

I turned, trying to notice a discrepancy. “What do you see?”

Gary pointed at the carpeted floor. “Two different shoe sizes,” he answered thoughtfully. “And I don’t think Mrs. Garrett’s foot would be as big as either of these.”

I dropped to one knee to study the prints more closely. Sure enough, two distinct pairs of shoes had implanted their mark in the carpet.

Gary pointed. “Look—no mud. It’s not even damp.”

I felt the carpet through my rubber glove. He was right. A faint outline of muddy Mississippi red clay ran around the other print, but not this one. Gary followed my gaze to the door mat.

“Only damp from the one pair,” he answered before my question was fully formed. “The other was here before the storm.”

“Garrett’s boots were water logged by the time he arrived at my place,” I offered. “He clearly encountered the rain at some point.”

Gary nodded. “I’ll have a tech make some casts of each footprint. Then we’ll compare them with Garrett’s boots.”

It was my turn. “Have you seen the door?”

“No signs of tampering,” Gary responded.

I paused. “Well, if Garrett got here around eight, and his mother was already dead, then there’s only a few things that could have happened, right?”

Gary nodded, finishing my thought. “Either the door was unlocked to begin with, the killer got in another way, or Mrs. Garrett knew her murderer.”

I nodded my agreement, but another possibility came to mind. “Or,” I began, “the killer locked the door from the inside after killing Mrs. Garrett...and left a different way.”
“Detective, you should see this.”
A crime scene tech in a forensic bunny suit stood holding out a small plastic bag filled with a pliable, tacky material.
Gary and I both started towards him, picking our way through the trashed living room and dodging the other CSIs.
“Explosives?”
The tech nodded. “Attached to the gas line underneath the kitchen range,” he answered. “Ignition malfunctioned, though. Wouldn’t have gone off.”
I looked on as Gary bent down to examine the package more closely. “Somebody was interested in incinerating all the evidence, apparently.”
“Somebody who knew what they were doing,” Gary supplied. “And it didn’t malfunction,” he continued. “They never flipped the switch.” He disappeared into the kitchen to check out the lines where the explosives had been discovered. His observation however, lingered with the tech and I as we considered the new development.
I frowned. “Why not?”
The CSI raised an eyebrow. “Why...what?”
“Why didn’t the killer blow the place?”
“Maybe they didn’t find whatever it was they were looking for,” the crime tech suggested. “They clearly tore the place apart for some reason.”
I nodded, considering. “That’s the whole question, isn’t it?”

to be continued . . .

To read the rest of Philip’s story, visit his blog at literaryjourney12.blogspot.com.
The Honors College encourages its students to embark on their own study abroad or study away experiences. Whether you want to study at a different university or a different country for the summer, a semester, or a year, the Honors College can help you pick the experience that is right for you. Students have unique educational opportunities available to them through study away programs, like learning a new language, taking non-traditional classes, or experiencing a new culture. No matter what program you may choose, studying away will change your perspectives on life and the rest of the world. Stepping out of your comfort zone is the first step to an unforgettable experience.

The Honors College and Kent State University have many different study away programs to choose from. Many students with a variety of majors decide to travel to Florence, Italy, to study at Kent State's renovated, thirteenth-century Palazzo dei Cerchi located in the heart of the city that birthed the Italian Renaissance. Surrounded by some of the greatest artistic and architectural works of the Renaissance, students will find that their classrooms extend out of the Palazzo into the streets, buildings, and museums of Florence itself. Honors students can also enroll in specialized Honors sections of classes in order to gain additional Honors Experiences abroad.

Students interested in international business, affairs, and politics often enroll in the Geneva program in Geneva, Switzerland, in order to expand their professional horizons. Through the Geneva internship program, students can gain valuable experience at international non-profit and non-governmental organizations. Students also have opportunities to visit historic places, meet European officials, form new friendships, and experience different European cultures.

Kent State's NYC Studio in New York City allows students to study the fashion industry in one of the fashion capitals of the world. Students can intern with major fashion companies in the city while learning about the fashion industry through the New York Study Tour. Students will partake in guided tours of the different areas of the fashion industry, listen to guest speakers who work in the industry, and also familiarize themselves with New York City.

The Honors College offers scholarships and stipends to help finance your study away experience and make it a reality. If you would like any additional information about these and other Honors study away programs and experiences, please visit the Honors College website, http://www.kent.edu/honors/studyaway, or you can contact Carolyn Sampson at the Honors College (csampson@kent.edu) or Sarah Hull in the Office of Global Education (shull14@kent.edu).
Clockwise from bottom left: Margaret Kluk overlooking Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, Italy; Salena Holmes in front of Florence Cathedral (Santa Maria Del Fiore) in Florence, Italy; Michelle Bing in Times Square in New York City; Anne Stephan in the Roman Forum in Rome, Italy; Emily Brownlee in front of Notre Dame in Paris, France; Tessa Reeves in front of Il Ponte Vecchio in Florence, Italy.
Left: Grace Spee in front of Palazzo dei Cerchi, Kent State University in Florence, Italy. Above: Leanna Lostoski in Venice, Italy. Below: Natalia Wojdak at Cinque Terre, Italy.
Megan Gooch in front of the Trevi Fountain in Rome, Italy. Tradition says that visitors to this fountain who throw a coin over their shoulder will someday return to Rome.
Some Honors students choose to embark on a typically three-semester endeavor of intense research and creativity at the end of their undergraduate career. First, students test the water with a Thesis Proposal Semester, where they work closely with a chosen faculty advisor to research topics in communication, technology, business, the arts, and sciences. Once the proposals have been accepted by the Honors College, students begin to complete the bulk of the project—the writing, the volunteering, and the creating—which weeds out all but the most dedicated students. After the project has been completed, students must pass an oral defense, where a faculty panel thoughtfully challenges the assertions made within the thesis.

The completion of a Senior Honors Thesis or Project gives students a leg up on graduate school admissions and experience for later dissertations and theses. Students have also used these projects to present at conferences; others have published books or articles for the first time. These students would agree that the project is an invaluable opportunity presented through the Honors College.

The abstracts for the theses and projects contained in this anthology represent the culmination of ten credit hours, countless sleepless nights, and a lifetime of academic curiosity for each of these Honors College graduates.
Like any emerging educational-technological innovation, distance-learning (DL) teaching is attracting scrutiny from professors, students, and administrators. Although there are many ways to teach DL, many professors are encountering similar sets of difficulties in their DL courses. These problems include: dispelling misconceptions about online classes, accreditation discrepancies, translating one’s teaching style into an effective online persona, communicating online (teacher-student and student-student), and collaborating effectively in online groups. Through careful observation, research, and study, this thesis aims to identify the cause of these problems, as well as it seeks to offer solutions to the pedagogical strain of an asynchronous environment. This research offers insight into the ways the online classroom affects students and professors in Business Writing and Technical Writing because those courses, already regarded as cold and demanding in the classroom, seem especially challenging in the DL environment.
The Cycle of French Piano Duets: Fauré’s Dolly Suite, op. 56, Debussy’s Petite Suite, and Ravel’s Ma mère l’Oye

by Joanne Chew Ann Chang

The nineteenth century brought tremendous growth to the piano duet repertoire. The keyboard was further developed and transformed to the modern piano, which allowed composers to exploit the capabilities of the instrument through piano duet compositions. As a response to the vast development of the modern piano, French composers of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries began producing today’s masterworks of the piano duet repertoire. During 1886-1910, the growth of piano duets in France is evident with the three composers and works discussed in further detail: Gabriel Fauré’s (1845-1924) Dolly Suite, Op.56, Claude Debussy’s (1862-1918) Petite Suite, and Maurice Ravel’s (1875-1937) Ma mère l’Oye. A biographical description of each composer and a harmonic analysis of each composition are provided in this paper. All the three piano duets reflected different writing styles and interpretations of each composer. Fauré composed the Dolly Suite based on children themes of Hélène Bardac, or more commonly known as Dolly, the dedicatee of the suite. A light-hearted work, the Dolly Suite successfully portrays the composer’s sensitivity in composition. An early work of Debussy, the Petite Suite does not reflect his later Impressionistic style. He wrote these pieces based on ideas of the Baroque dance suites. Similar to Fauré, Ravel’s Ma mère l’Oye is a set of enchanting pieces based on children’s tales. The Mother Goose Suite reflects one of Ravel’s finest compositions of his innovative, imaginative, and intricate compositional style. These three piano duet masterworks by the three important French composers—Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel—are notable works to be studied in the piano duet repertoire.
The initial research was conducted as a way to create relief housing in response to the 2010 Haitian earthquake. The work of Magnus Larsson inspired the use of the bacteria Bacillus pasteurii through his research on the desertification of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Through a series of laboratory experiments it has been found that Bacillus pasteurii is a biofilm forming bacteria; and this biofilm can be used to bond grains of sand into a microbial sandstone. Additional experimentation was performed to test the compressive strength of the material samples.

The results of the research establish a methodology for the production of the material in a laboratory. The compressive test on a small scale was the final element of this study. There is potential for extending this research of the properties of this material through increases of scale and through reconsidering the potential for strengthening of the material through process refinement.
James Joyce wrote *Ulysses* during a period when time and history carried political importance, especially in Ireland. This study examines the imposition of Greenwich Mean Time on Dublin, Ireland, and the forces that have controlled Ireland’s history, namely England and the Catholic Church. By studying Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, one witnesses the temporal and historical struggles taking place within individual characters in Joyce’s 1904 Dublin. While time and history create obstacles for Joyce’s characters, Dedalus and Bloom use their active memories as creative forces to help regain their autonomy and identity.
Targeted drug delivery via nanoparticles is an emerging field that has great potential for the improvement of cancer treatment. The goal of this project is to develop a multi-component drug delivery system that targets and selectively delivers the chemotherapeutic drug, Dox, to cancerous cell lines that overexpress the cell surface glycoprotein, CD44, a receptor for hyaluronic acid. Ten nm gold nanoparticles (GNPs) were used as the delivery vehicle for a thiolated derivative of Doxorubicin referred to as MPDOX. In order to target the tumorigenic cell lines that overexpressed CD44 receptors, reducing end thiolated hyaluronic acid was used as the targeting ligand. After the individual facets of the nanoconjugate system were synthesized, the optimal conditions for stable nanoconjugate assembly were determined.

The stability of the nanoconjugate system was then assessed with a salt stability assay that determined the level of protection hyaluronic acid provided for the nanosystem in the presence of a salt solution. The presence of both the targeting ligand and drug on the resulting nanoconjugates was then demonstrated by UV absorbance to confirm the formation of the full three-part nanoconjugate system. After the composition of the nanoconjugates was determined, MTS assays were performed in order to generate dose dependent cell viability curves and IC50 values for treatment of two ovarian cancer cell lines (A2008, C-13) with either the free drug or the nanoconjugate system at various time points. The IC50 values were then compared to determine the type of treatment that was most efficient.

When compared to the free drug, equal levels of cytotoxicity were observed in the cancerous cells. However, it was noted that a decrease in cytotoxicity in the non-targeted cells was not observed. It can be concluded that future work is needed to enhance of efficacy of the nanosystem to target cancerous cell lines over non-cancerous cells. Confocal studies were then performed to visualize the uptake of Doxorubicin and MPDOX in cellular compartments. The findings from this project may provide new insights that can be helpful in future cancer-tissue-specific targeted drug delivery.
My senior show, entitled “Nameface,” consisted of twenty-two diptychs, or pairs of paintings, hung along
the walls in a continuous, horizontal line that also included a television showing an animation, as well as a link to
namefacelook.com, which is an accessible archive of the work for free, public consumption. Each diptych displayed a
portrait of a famous art dealer or collector on the left beside the palette used to paint it on the right. Both were done on
canvas and stretched over identical, eight-inch by ten-inch wooden panels. I found that in the gallery and on the website,
each piece was viewed in a matter of seconds. The consistency of the show's components in composition, content, and
material allowed the viewer to immediately think of questions about the creative process. The first questions that every
person asked were: What are these abstract paintings? How do you know these people? The twenty-two portraits in this
series were painted from photos of people that I do not know. Each painting is a slowed-down representation of my daily
internet activity on “Scene and Herd” as an artist and an art news consumer. I feel an anxiety toward the prestigious
presence of dealers and collectors. They represent people that I don't know but care about, because if they cared about
me, then it would be easier for me to make a living from my art. This inexperienced yearning for their acceptance,
combined with a total lack of personal connection, motivated me to download, transfer, print, archive, and reproduce
their snapshots as a series of paintings and online images. Upon completing the paintings, I realized that promoting a
redefined awareness of “Scene and Herd’s” existence was the work's main intent. This understanding of each diptych as
two arrows, or links, to their photographic source inspired me to build the website and the video in an effort to provoke
a critical analysis of how looking at “Scene and Herd” affects how I see my paintings as objects designed for criticism
and ultimately acceptance or rejection.
Honors students who have completed the Senior Honors Thesis are eligible for the Portz Award, provided by the National Collegiate Honors Council. Three Portz Scholars are selected each year and are featured at the annual NCHC conference. The Kent State University Honors College has an impressive record of six Portz Scholars; the following abstract is a submission for the award in 2012.
Lumbar lordosis is the most critical element of human bipedality because it obviates reliance on a bent-hip-bent-knee gait as practiced by African apes. These apes lack lumbar mobility because their most caudal lumbars are trapped by dorsally extended ilia. Early hominids show an opposite state—emancipation of their most caudal lumbar by reduced iliac height and expansion of sacral breadth. Could these anatomical shifts have been our earliest adaptations to upright walking? Are there parallels in other primates?

New World atelines use their prehensile tails for suspension, which also induces lordosis. Their pelvis and lumbar columns show striking parallels with those of hominids, suggesting a parallel origin of this unusual adaptation.

HoxD11 partially determines the position of the lumbosacral transition, which might bear on this issue. In mice, a bipartite enhancer controls its spatiotemporal expression. I examined a possible correlation between HoxD11 enhancer variation and lumbar column length by amplifying, cloning, and sequencing its bipartite enhancer in multiple species. Newly generated sequences were analyzed with published orthologs of several other primates, mice, and zebrafish. New World monkeys appear to exhibit unique variability in HoxD11 transcription factor binding sites. These may influence the spatiotemporal position of their lumbosacral transition.
Biographies

Matt Cutler
Matt is a double major in History and English. In addition to both reading and writing, he enjoys playing the guitar, hanging out with his kids, and getting lost in the woods.

Audrey Fletcher
Audrey is a Magazine Journalism major from Canton, Ohio. She is a member of the Daily Kent Stater staff and plans to take part in other student publications while at Kent. In her free time, she enjoys playing intramural soccer. Audrey’s essay took form in Sara Cutting’s Honors Colloquium.

Hannah Kelling
A triplet from the small town of Morrow, Ohio, Hannah enrolled in Kent State determined to make her mark. She is a Multimedia Journalism major and has spent time on staff at the Daily Kent Stater as well as several other publications. Hannah enjoys the unlimited expression of photography, choral music, poetry, and outdoor adventure.

Lindsey Kerr
Lindsey is from Canton, Ohio, and graduated from Canton South High School. She is currently a junior majoring in Early Childhood Education and after graduation would love to move south to pursue a teaching position with kindergartners. She is a new member of the Chi Omega sorority who loves reading, spending time at work, and being with the children that she nannies.

Michaela Kline
Currently a sophomore, Michaela is an International Relations and Justice Studies major from right here in Kent, Ohio. Her favorite pastimes include traveling, rock climbing, backpacking, and speaking Spanish. Her work represented in this anthology, “Half the Sky,” took shape as an assignment for Matthew Shank’s Honors Colloquium.

Leanna Lostoski
Leanna is a native of Kent, Ohio, and is currently a senior English major at Kent State. She hopes to someday work in the advertising industry and has already interned with the agency GO2 Marketing as a proofreader. In the fall of 2011, she studied abroad in Florence, Italy, where she was able to pursue her favorite hobby, photography. Leanna also enjoys reading and playing with cats in her spare time.
**Sarah McIntosh**
Sarah is sophomore English major with a Writing minor from Shaker Heights, Ohio. She is also looking into picking up a Japanese minor. Her other pastimes include reading, writing, and listening to music. Her work “Of Suitors and Flowers” began as a creative writing assignment for Matthew Shank's Honors Colloquium.

**Daniel Moore and Jacob Byk**
Dan, a junior News major, and Jake, a sophomore Visual Journalism major, are both involved with the journalism program at Kent State University. Their co-submission, “The Fracturing of Greene County,” is part of a larger freelance project in which they have invested their time. They aspire to see their project in a larger publication such as *The New York Times* or *National Geographic*.

**Kati Oberle**
Kati is a senior from Euclid, Ohio. She is pursuing a degree in both English and Psychology with the hopes of making a career out of her writing. When she isn’t working on a poem or short story, Kati can be found working, cooking, or watching television with her roommate.

**Alyssa Parnaby**
Alyssa is currently a senior at Kent State pursuing an English major and Writing minor. In her time at the University, she has had the opportunity to intern with Skycasters, a satellite internet company based in Akron, Ohio. There, she was responsible for writing the instructions for a mobile satellite trailer. Alyssa’s favorite hobbies include reading, dancing, and scrapbooking. She will graduate this upcoming May with plans to pursue a career in publishing.

**Hannah Potes**
Hannah is a fourth-year student at Kent State pursuing a dual degree in Photojournalism and Spanish. Since her freshman year, she has had the opportunity to work as an intern at both the *Lexington Herald Leader* in Lexington, Kentucky, and at the *Jackson Citizen Patriot* in Jackson, Michigan. She takes great pride in her work and is extremely grateful to have gotten to know every subject she has photographed over the years. Hannah credits Kent State in giving her the chance to develop her skills and portfolio while learning from an amazing group of staff and fellow students.

**Rasha Sajid**
Rasha is a junior Integrated Life Sciences major from Columbus, Ohio. Rasha’s essay was the product of Gary Hubbell’s Honors Colloquium.
**Philip Shackelford**
Philip is a project archivist, writer and researcher, and a History major in the Honors College at Kent State University. Originally from Ripley, Mississippi, Philip is also a classically trained pianist and draws on a variety of experiences for both his fiction and nonfiction writing. Currently conducting research on the Air Force Security Service, a Cold War era precursor to Air Force Intelligence, Philip hopes to publish the results of his research in several articles over the next year.

**Eleanor Shorey**
Eleanor “Ellie” Shorey is a senior member of Kent State's Honors College. Majoring in English, Ellie is active with the Wick Poetry Center and very much enjoys creative writing.

**Grace Spee**
Grace is a senior Psychology major. Currently she is writing a thesis through the Honors College on the effects of maternal depression on adolescents. Her photography featured in this issue of *Brainchild* was taken during her study abroad experience in Florence, Italy, during the fall of 2011. Grace enjoys reading, drawing, and watching shows on the BBC network.

**Rita Steckler**
Rita Steckler is a senior studying Molecular Biology and Business Spanish. From Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Rita enjoys creative writing and outdoor activities such as hiking and kayaking.

**Kelsey Wile**
Kelsey has lived her whole life in Canton, Ohio, and she commutes to Kent State from there still. She enjoys writing poetry partly because she has for as long as she can remember, but also because it helps her cope with the fact that the world, as she says, “is an ugly place that is, against all odds, filled with beauty.” Kelsey will graduate in May 2013 with a Bachelor’s degree in Integrated Language Arts, and she hopes to teach English in an inner city high school.