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English Journal is an online journal that allows students and faculty to share creative writing and literary critical work as it is being presented, revised, and completed. Submissions to *English Journal* may be emailed to the editors. Content may be shared with the school's formal end-of-year literary publication, the *Stray Shot*. The *Journal's* website, accessible through GunnNet and through Outlook (Public Folders→All Public Folders→ClassNewsGroups), is dedicated to enhancing interest in and discussion of writing among all members of The Gunnery community. Print issues of the *English Journal* contain as much of the online journal as feasible. The editors for 2006-2007 are John Alter and Nick Benson. Our thanks for technical and material support go to Eileen Aguirre, Anna Kjellson, and Maggie Bucklin.

I've always loved nights in the summer.
Simon and Garfunkel said it's *A Hazy Shade of Winter*, but they're wrong. Summer
nights are full of those shades
like the way the air envelops you and the fireflies glow dimly and the dark swirls and you
can do anything.
Pavement burns, air churns, and you're free.
Maybe it's just me, but I feel like everything tints from grey to blue to sepia to
Technicolor and the world tips just like the tilt-a-whirl at the Sheridan County Fair in
early June.
You run and the road quickens under you and the winds in your face and all you can do is
run, and run faster.
You
Stop.
Look at the sky, at the thousands of dots of light and the blue and the infinite.
I don't know what is real,
I can't touch what I feel
And I hide behind the shield of my illusion...

(Shelby Sisco, 2009)

She sat down where an old man walked by with his skin dry and his tongue tied in tales. He always told the truth to the boy who rode on his scooter by the young school girls who danced on so comfortably by on the flat ground with the sun in their eye.

There passed the business man, lucidly walking up corpses of his company's terrain. Then the punished man ran with a gun in his hand. His father did too. A little bird hopped, engulfing only the worm beside her. In that it was its time to die. She watched a woman, coming down from cocaine, walking up a hill against a current of falling rocks. The woman was only alive while driving through stop signs. Then she stopped and screamed against the rocks, *Nothing*, and then, *No one*. Then she proceeded up the hill like the business man. To her nothing is wrong and no one is right. They were going to hell.

The son yelled, *But you only saw one side!* Then raised the tide, where a little boy sat wondering if the surf was out in England at that time. The mother replied quenching wrinkles on her forehead and beneath her eye, I've seen more than you. My days have passed but they are not gone. Listen to me! Somewhere the sun was rising in the sky. He packed up his bags. He was sure. He was right. He was out and he was sure of that.

The police man drove by with his badge and his hat. The punished man pondered in the back. I shoulda went to school, I shoulda went to class ahhh screw it I never got the chance they just put me down they just toy me around flip me up, push me down. The bread was returned to the business man's shop.

The ice cream man owned his shop, near her seat, and gave free food to the cop. He smiled, with his sugar and honey, at the teens he employed to pay for their degrees. He always said *Just don't end up like me*. He had no money. His wife divorced him for a younger man at forty-three.

A girl walked a way from her man, her love and her only. He worked for the ice cream man at thirty and his pants were always dirty. He wasn't for her. He wiped the salt with his worn, worked hands. She was looking for a man with a closed lid trash can and a chandelier, not a ceiling fan.

And I, I am Mother and I am Father. I am doctor to my diagnosis. I am the weight on my back and the strings on my fingers. The symptoms: I create them. I keep myself up all night. I love the old man and his wrinkled hands and the ice cream man. She loved them all.

She stood and went home that night. She came and sat down the next day.

(Paul Henne, 2007)

*Thoughts on the Popularly Conceived Problems with Active Genetic Engineering:
Stopping the problem at its source*
by Phineas Ponderman

It is often argued that the illegitimacies of active genetic engineering of the human genome are manifest in its unethical ability to create “superhumans.” These fictional characters would be the result of two parents making a trip to the genetic supermarket and hand picking the traits of their offspring (“2%, or skim, honey?”). It is the opinion of this thinker, however, that the line between “improving” the genetic pool with traits like “fitter” or “smarter,” and “precautionary repairing” the genetic pool with traits like “immune to disease,” is thicker than most might think.

Active, or *positive* (human) genetic engineering refers to the direct manipulation of the DNA of a human being. *Passive* engineering would be something like a eugenics program, where those possessed traits *x*, *y*, and *z* were taken out of the gene pool, removing these traits from future generations. This passive engineering goes on every day all over the globe in our manipulation of food sources (breed the bigger corn with the bigger corn and presto! *All of your corn is bigger!*)

The jump to *active* engineering is something that makes most people’s moral compasses cringe, and I’d like to discuss that a bit. When we get sick, we fight off the problem with an array of actions ranging from direct drug administration to more passive acts like exercise, sleep, and lots of water. Back in the day (evolutionary psychologists call it the Era of Evolutionary Adaptation, or EEA), those who couldn’t fight off the sickness *died*, perhaps having failed to have kids and pass on their genes. At this point, this person’s (or hominoid’s) genes have left the world’s gene pool, and the likeliness of future humans dying of sickness is that much slimmer. This is the process of (micro) evolution, but also the process of a natural passive genetic engineering of the future.

Think now of humans who have evolved to the point where they are able to manipulate their environment so severely that “foraging” for food involves nothing more than making the late-night trek to the refrigerator. In *this* era of evolutionary adaptation, the human begins to manipulate the last thing it *has* to manipulate: itself. It looks into the world of its own blueprint, which it has mastered, and reorganizes an allele to code for an immunity to, say, cancer. Having done so, it saves valuable energy and resources that otherwise would have been applied to dealing with the cancer, after the problem!

If someone can tell me why precautionary^[1] active genetic engineering that attenuates problems in our genetic coding is a bad use of resources, I’m all ears.

^[1] Precautionary, not improving. That is, I am *not* arguing for the genetic supermarket that so many fear would be the unethical snow-covered rock, unseen by the sledder at the bottom of the slippery slope of active genetic engineering.

Hopes and Dreams

Evil within
Comes from without
Hopes destroyed
By a wave of doubt
Dreams shattered
In front of your eyes
And unto your
Great surprise
Fear is spread
Through you all around
Quickly, anxiously
Without a sound
But come now please
I implore
Will you try,
Again no more?
For it takes little
To succeed
Just a few strong
Hopes and dreams

(Chris Clapis, 2010)

Bill

1.

The night was somber; it was the blackest of the summer. I stood in the kitchen with a cup in my hand and a dim light beside me. I glared through the screen door as a cool breeze soothed my day. I stepped out the door on to the porch in trance and thought. Outside the quarter moon stunned me and the slight notion of the marrow let the tears fall. Sadness, for tomorrow would perpetually be tomorrow and the activities, which a summer day holds, symmetric in time. Feeling quite alone on the porch, with my moon, my cup and my whispering under stars, I walked over to a friend of my dad's who had been on the porch the same as I. He and I sat on the bench. He was halfway through a cigarette and twice through any man's consumption of ale. This man had a history and here he was, in despair, next to me on the bench. I thought he needed something from somewhat of a friend and I said, in a soft subtle tone, *Bill look at those stars aren't they beautiful, I mean this is why I live my life.* I waited for his response. He replied slowly as he stumbled on his drunken words, *Son I lost all love for those stars long ago, and a hope and a meaningfulness in this place is worthless to me.* We sat, still on the bench. He smoked some more and drank his booze as I watched the stars still in my innocent outlook. His answer sounded so sure and hard that it got me thinking that maybe he spoke the truth. I knew my thoughts were childish and I would soon regret them, but they held some depth. And almost humorous this was sitting on the bench trying to cheer a lost man. Though I thought my innocence had been erased long ago, I was still gazing at dreams. It was weird in this dark recapitulating night, with two men on a bench in dreams. One who had lost them and one lost in them. It was almost secret.

2.

Bill sat down across from me, drunk.

"Let me have a minute" he said. He pointed his finger and commenced.

"He doesn't know what he is talking about... You know, he hasn't cooked a meal in seven months – and a week before you return he starts painting this place to look nice and cooking meals for everyone."

I was silent.

"You know me. I am myself... I drink too much. I mean I am on the job and I say..." he looks down at his watch. *It's three o'clock you know... I'm havin' a beer. People see me drinkin' on the job and I am like pfff you know, whatever, I am what I am. So, you know, it is all how you take things, how you conceive things to be,"* he finished.

I stared.

"I am sorry this is going nowhere... you get back to your music."

Then he walked away.

(Thursday in India)

Today I went to Dehra Dun and I was hit on by an older lady at the bank. She told me she "likes foreigners" and I told her that I had to go... besides she was like 27: her name was Supreah. So then I bought a mandolin for 1000 Rps. or \$24.60. I was walking by a shoe shiner on the street and he grabbed my shoe off my foot and started shining away. He said, "2 Rps." My shoes aren't the shineable ones. The next thing I know my shoe is remodeled and wet; it cost me 400 Rps. or \$9 in order to destroy my shoes. I gave him 500 Rps. because he killed them well. His name was Ajhay. He doesn't smoke, if you were wondering. I love India. Much more happened but it just seems too normal to mention now.

Driving home I listened to the radio; CDs wore out their liking. It was that part of the drive when the songs on the radio seemed monotonous and repetitive. The sky had that dim light that persists after twilight and the tip of the sun spat rays on the water's top. Sailboats became silhouettes. It was all versus a deep darkness. One or two stars gleamed out and the moon shone on the horizon as though it touched the edge of the earth.

I passed hundreds of exit signs with florescent bright lettering. The numbers of the exit signs went down, up and away. I stopped for food off a random exit in a small town between two big cities. It was Sunday night and the streets were not very busy, so the town seemed dull and bored. As my journey persisted the highway found less and less traffic, but I must have been passing hundreds of single drivers going home down the big dark roads.

I then thought of my own exit. It seemed so old yet so known. Really it was just some little exit sign between two big cities. I worked at a dull little food stand. I still drove home.

I arrived and walked in. Then up the stairs to the fire, which warmed my soul after the cold. And there she sat by the fire. My beautiful; there was my worth between the two big cities.

(The preceding two pieces are by Paul Henne, 2007)

Fall

In the fall, leaves float through the sky like lost birds.
They glide, controlled by the wind, every which way over the landscape.
If you look at a leaf closely, it will tell the story of who it is, how old, and where it's from.
From their valleys and towns, the leaves make their pilgrimage.
They travel over the mountains and through the rifts, until they make it to the ocean.
There they will land and be consumed, a foreigner in a different land.
New England meets the coast, two races coming together.
The ocean moves them, back and forth, not knowing where they are going.
Moving, dunked and tossed the leaf finally reaches the beach.
A new life begins.

(Maisie Theobald, 2009)

Remembering Lost Loved Ones

A boy enters the cemetery; rows of cairns line the grassy fields. A rock wall borders the cemetery to separate the cars from the dead. He walks down the path, surrounded by the moss-covered tombstones, because the loved ones aren't visited anymore. Most of the tombstones have American flags next to them, to commemorate those who fought for their country. For the deceased whose friends and families still visit them, flowers are planted around the headstone since spring is here, and flowers represent life in a field of mourning. In the back of the cemetery, he sees the tombstone in the shape of a bench to remember his grandfather who passed away five years earlier. He sits on the bench, just to the left of his grandfather's name. Small pine trees are to his right and left getting bigger with each year, and two flower pots lie by his feet. A golf ball is buried in the ground because his grandfather loved golf, along with a Heineken beer bottle, since that was his favorite drink. The boy starts to weep; the last time he saw his grandfather was when he was only ten years old. The boy bows his head for a minute, gets off his grandfather's memorial, and walks out of the cemetery.

(Kevin Shaughnessy, 2009)



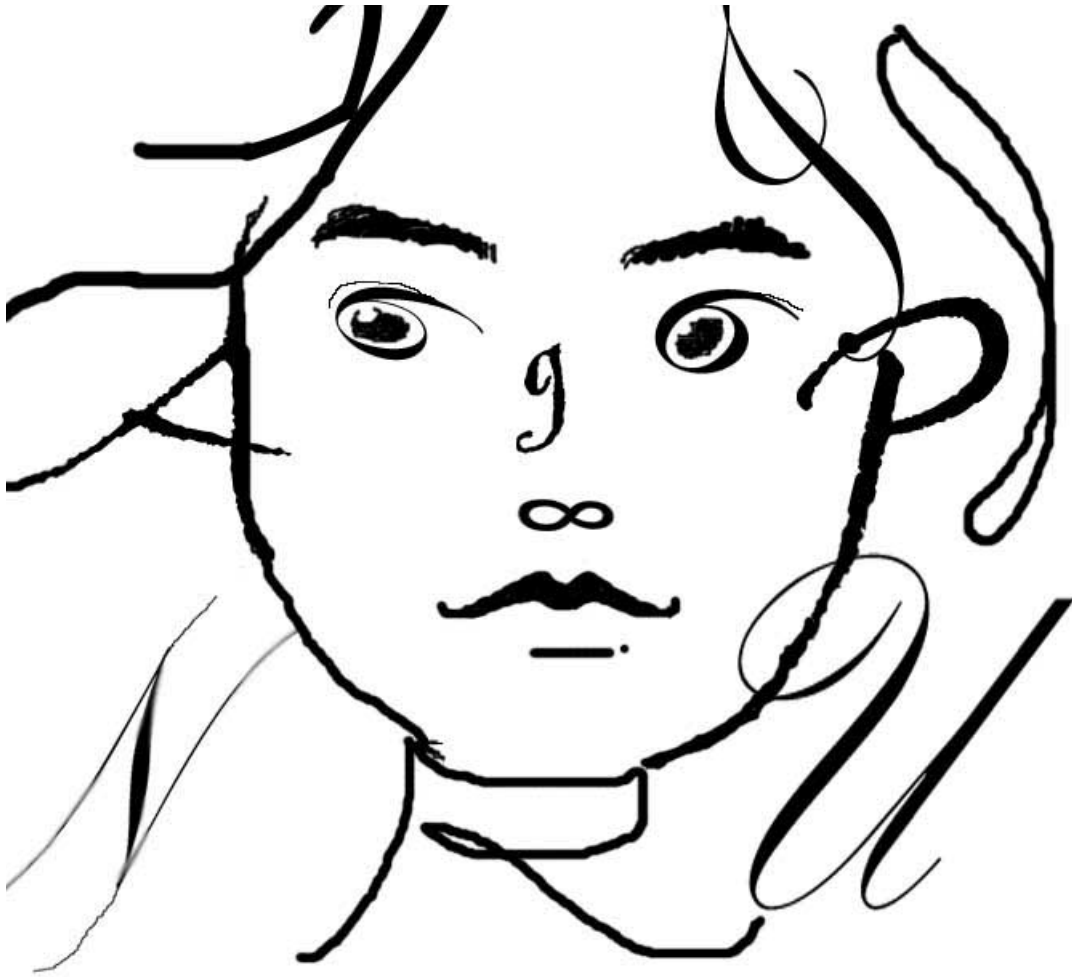
When I met the man whose mind ran out of control
He said my angel sings the same song
Every mother's child sings when they want to be heard
The rain falls only to fill my head with memories
My only source of happiness comes from a remembrance of what beauty looks like
But the more my thoughts carry me away
The more I wish they were understood
The longer I go without love
The more I despise it
When people see me stare at the wall and wonder what I'm thinking
I laugh quietly to myself
I think about them
And their lousy lives
What's the point of having a mind?
I never cry because I've lost someone I've loved
Because I have never loved
I never get frustrated because I don't have any money
I just don't see the point
So while you sit there and say poor crazy man
I say poor sane people
I'm here living the life I've always wanted
Isolated...carefree
If you ask me I'm the lucky one
Think about it
But not too hard...you don't want your mind to run out of control
Do you?

(Brooke Waltzer, 2009)

Exanimate

Too many things in life are exanimate, which is ironic because exanimate is the exact opposite of life. It's like saying there's too much sky in the water. None of it really makes sense, but somehow it just does. Even out of those things which are not deceased there still is a great exanimate population. Still alive, but spiritless. Too many times have I heard of days wasted, living off the omnipotent couch and recliner combination, studying the holy television. It seems as if a church built of celebrities would be the greatest movement of men. MTV could be its Bible, VH1 its old testament. But then again, no one has enough spirit, enough life, to think of anything that brilliant, let alone set in motion the actions to create such a thing. There are still some who are not exanimate, but like the ratio of nobles to serfs in 15th century Europe, they remain few and rich in mind among idiots.

(Austin Ryer, 2009)



The River

Dancing and swirling
An everyday routine for
Never ending stream

Untitled

One could wish
that you could just experience
being a river or a tree.
One wishes so much
that we even write about
it. Such as mermaids who
are at one with water
never having to breathe air.
We wish so much but yet
we can only assume the actual experience.

(Katie Pierce, 2009)

The Art of Yoga:

My arms complacently sit on the sides of my body,
As the prahna enters my nostrils in slow, yet powerful waves,
My body parting away the good and the evil,
My mind is in a state of perfect spiritual insight,
Bearing away all sin,
I'm in a world that is unexplainable and divine,
I feel each breath travel through my body,
Venturing in places it has never ventured before,
I stretch muscles that have never been stretched,
I look within my true inner self and dissect my soul,
Uncertain of what to find in there,
I find indignity and resentment,
I must exile the immorality from my soul,
And wait for the spirits within myself to vanquish all,
My soul is cleansed and ready to conquer the world,
The evil gone forever and never to return

(Keith Owens, 2007)

Leaves fall,
And wither away.
The season is changing
In many ways.
The days slowly
Pass you by
And I just sit here
Wishing to lie.
Wishing to sleep
And never wake
So that I don't
Have the chance to fake
Empathy for
People other than me
Because that's not
Who I chose to be.
I chose to be the one
Who never realized
Why people sat outside
Staring at the night sky
The one person who
Could never see
Why people chose
Not to live in reality.
Why they live in a bubble,
Of happiness and bliss
And all they really need
Is a good hug and kiss
From the people they love,
Who I could never find
No one to be nice,
No one to be kind.
Because no one in
Modern society
Would ever accept
Someone like me.
Someone with talent,
In his own special way
Yet struggles to make it
Through each and every day.
So as I lay there,
Wishing to sleep,
Wishing to have dreams
Ever so deep,
I tried to reach out

To the people around
But ignorance and distrust
Was all I ever found.
Until I found that someone
Who changed my whole view
And led me to see
The right thing to do,
The right path to take
As to live my life once more,
I got up off the ground
And headed for the door.
And as I opened the door,
I saw the light
Filter in,
To help solve my plight.
I saw all the grass
And the birds in the trees,
The awesome sight
Made me fall to my knees.
And then I felt my breath,
Taken away from me,
The sight that I saw
Made me truly happy.
There are good things
That are still left in this place,
And now I'm proud
To show my face
I'm proud to see
What I have become
All because of that person,
All because of that one

(Chris Clapis, 2010)

“Acceptance only comes from personal experience, we can never be anything but bitter unless we too are in possession of or were once in possession of that very same thing.”

And with a sleepy head,
I rest my head,
And think about this Friday, where booze will drown the air, and the bitter cold will transform into merry bonding.
I'll look out onto that field of potentials and then back at you, I've never seen a pair of eyes stare back with such pride and possession.
With your arm around me I can't help but ponder that you're using it to direct the attention from your past. You tell me I look like a total babe and I'm completely unamused because your one-liners are falling repeatedly shorthanded upon my heart.

And then I allow myself to sit on that damp grass of liquid beer and take off my glasses so that they rest facing towards me. I allow that very grass to see that I am using you as well; when you're never loved you seek that feeling in whatever you can take. You were so sweet, and in such awe, that I couldn't help but finally reward myself for 17 years of unjust rejection. Not to mention the bonus of my ego inflating to the size of one's normal confidence.

I retrieve my glasses from the dirt and kiss you on the lips, I can't say why I did but you react by rubbing my back, it is that brotherly comfort that irks me in such a way that I decide to sashay my new found hips in the direction of a motley crew of very merry boys. There must be something in my eyes because they're actually responding to me. I'm a woman contained and there is nothing more attractive to a young boy than to toil in that forbidden jar.

But doing so I allow myself to be viewed as in a jar. With glass walls all around me, I willingly let them undress me with their eyes, and their words. It's not till I feel a hand on the back of my shoulder that I know I can successfully climb out with the help of him propping the top open.

I glance back to you, but you're too busy cheering on that field of potentials. I take my glasses and shove them into their case, and from there to a pocket in my purse.

I'm running now, down the dewy grass, this boy trailing closely behind me. I let out a laugh, surely derived of flight, but also out of nerves. I know that if I do what my nature is driving me to do I'll lose you forever. It's too late however, I will in no way be given the title of a tease. He pins against the fence to the tennis courts and does everything I wanted you to do to me. I'm fulfilled and we begin our trek back up to where you're standing, cheering still.

He's cleverly distanced himself from me now, and we'll both play it off as a run to the concession stands.

I see you and you look at me with that look you give. One of awe, one of unfulfillable perfection. I scare myself and turn my head to that field of potentials, everything is blurry.

I remember, and quickly retrieve my glasses out of the pocket and their case. I place them on that nose you kissed, you named, you claimed. I can see the numbers of the potentials clearly now. And I sit down and I cry, hard.

But they've scored the tie-breaker point and you are too busy with your merriment to realize, your fine china has finally cracked.

(Kirsten Cleary, 2007)

Friday night blues

As I sit here eyes oscillating between the half empty bottle of Lord Calvert
And the half empty page
Wondering where to find something half full

I remember a story I heard once
About Townes Van Zandt
And I play his songs in my head

I heard a story about how he took
His 357 and played Russian roulette

Three times
Click
Click

Click
I can see him playing slow like his music
Not really caring if he would be saved by a click
Or saved by a bang

Just hoping to be saved

Home Video

You looked at every baby picture ever taken of me
I knew it was only a matter of time
Till you would make me dig deep
Into the movie cabinet
To the home videos
The black plastic forgotten and buried in dust
Digging back to memories of me I tried so hard to forget
The house that I never knew wasn't a home
The foot worn carpets covering time worn hard wood floors
The voice behind the camera, my father's road worn song writer's voice
And through my tears
I watch him tell me to smile

(Nolan Titcomb graduated from The Gunnery in 2005. He attends Eastern Connecticut State University.)

You told me not to give up,
Not to give in if he makes me happy,
But I don't know how to hold on to something that's not even tangible...
Something that I don't even know if he's holding as well.
I can't just leave my heart
Dangling, hanging, in infinite darkness forever
With no sign of an opening, no crack of hope.
I can't stand here with my hand outstretched
Waiting for someone to hold it
To lead me to where it is the light shines.
So I'm sitting here with my eyes shut tightly
Because maybe if I can't see the hurt
I won't be able to feel it
And maybe then, I'll be ok.
But don't tell me it's not forever
I know it's not
But it seems like forever
When you're counting the hours you're awake
And then when night comes
You're doing the same...
It's been a lonely walk to get here
Wherever here is...
And I always find myself searching
For who I am
Anywhere but here
But maybe,
Maybe one day,
Maybe one week,
Or maybe one year,
I'll find that I can hold the intangible...
That I can hold him...
I'll find that I can hold love in the palm of my hand...
And never let it go.

(Georgia Buckley, 2008)

Father and Son

With a married man

With the child dropping tears

And the mother sitting up late at night,

Having neighbors turn their lights on,

Dogs barking in the allies

No cats on the fence posts tonight.

His wedding band spinning on the table,

Her job on the line.

The child's clothes dirty from the night before.

The door blows open,

It's a windy night, even for mid December.

A light goes out over the fathers head.

The ring falls onto the floor,

She yells.

The baby cries.

He's sorry. He looks for matches.

They're not in the drawer like he thought,

It's getting darker and the rain starts.

Pots and pans are used to hold the water from the roof,

The door to the bedroom slams

Where's your mother, he says to the child.

Not even a word escapes his lips.

The glass from the windows shatter.

Still no noise from the child.

He found his ring. He puts it in his pocket.

Why not his finger?

Where's your mother?

Again.

No answer.

She's gone? Why?

With a married man,

and crying baby.

With no one to sit up late,

They patched the holes.

Fixed the windows.

And fell asleep together,

On the couch in front of the door.

Waiting for someone to come home.

He rocked the child to sleep, and hummed lullabies into his ear.

He watched the door, and kept the baby warm with his jacket.

They slept there. Alone.

When...I'll be there

*When you're the only one who doesn't know the answer
When everything you need is just out of reach
When you can't think of the right thing to say
It will all be alright
I'll be right here.*

*When you can't see above the crowd
When you've dropped that \$8,000 vase
When it just seems like things can't get worse
It will all be alright
I'll be right here.*

*I'll write it on your paper
I'll pull it closer
I'll whisper it into your ear
I'll lift you up to see
I'll take the blame
I'll sing to you.*

*When your date doesn't show up in time to drive you to prom
When you're not invited to the party
When everyone else has a car
It will all be alright
I'll be right there.*

*When you don't get the prize at the bottom of the box
When your favorite band is playing the next town over
When the rain starts to fall
It will all be alright
I'll be right here.*

*I'll drive you, and park three blocks away so no one laughs
I'll throw you your own.
I'll give you my keys
I'll find you something to make you smile
I'll get front row seats
I'll give you my jacket.*

*When you come crying home
When you lock yourself in your room
When you just want to be left alone
It will all be alright
I'll be right here*

*When you can't find what you're looking for
When your bedroom light goes out
When Valentines day come by and you're alone
It will all be alright
I'll be right here.*

*I'll hug you and give you a shoulder to cry on
I'll sit outside and talk to you
I'll stay up until it stops
I'll look for hours
I'll bring up a new bulb
I'll have a dozen red roses for you.
When you leave*

*When there's no one to look after
When you're off having fun
It will all be alright
You'll always in my heart.*

Man or Machine

*A cry for freedom echoes in the distance,
A whip cracks at five second intervals
While the "masters" eat their dinners, and laugh.
The sweat drips down the arms of these machines,
Their different oils spilling out onto the ground.*

*A horse spits in the face of my brother,
He's so scared to say anything, just as the rest of us.
Black eyes and shadow covered faces,
Open their mouths to let out the animals that have been caged forever.
Harder!
We fall, as if we're one person.
If it is anything, it's beautiful.*

*Our faces blackened by the dirt thrown in our faces,
Our hands broken and bloodied by rocks and thorns,
Feet are at our hands, a shadow over our bodies.
We stand up, we fill our hands with dirt.
We look our ghostly brothers in their eyes,
And throw it in their faces.
Who are they now?
Just another addition to the family,
To the great machine that is humanity.*

World Photography

We're hoping for despair

Starvation's gluttony

Subtle chaotic peace

War divided unity

Pro-life

Pro-choice

Blinded

Insight

Left wing

Right wing

Black

White

Leaders following

Slaves cracking the whips

The deaf are being muted

The weak put on the front line.

We're understanding confusion

Love-

Hate--

The devil's reaching his hand out to help.

God's laughing.

What's wrong with these...

Pictures.

(The four preceding poems are by Sam Hunt, 2008)



-Be nine again, Benign. Not ten-

And plunged under I went, threw my eyes through the water,

Asked:

‘What’s in a bubble?’

-Time.-

‘Be you bathwater?’

And that tub it did fill.

Be it sheer will –

“Float on,” said a bubble.

“Bath water stands still.”

(Kirsten Cleary, 2007)

Drumming. An inspiration, an art, a high. From the off-beat, up-beat licks of John Bonham, to the hardcore power solos from Mike Portnoy. From the legendary jazz hands of Buddy Rich, to the signature aluminum sticks of Joey Jordinson. From the giant 32 piece set incorporated with multiple electronic hook-ups, glockenspiels, and synthesizers to the simple, but beautiful, sets of Gene Krupa. Music has been a part of my life longer than I can remember, not to mention the art of drumming. Music, in all its simplicities and its mind-boggling complexities, will never cease to be a center point of innovation and inspiration of our world.

(Zach Stein, 2009)

Why does the moth
fly around my fluorescent
light. In my concrete room.

And when I look
out the window
Why should the lights
shine around the
valley.
And the clocktower
stand silhouetted in
the evening sky.

And when I look
below me do the
clouds roll under
while I sit here in
the rain.

This while the
town children play
ball on the court
below my window.
And their father looks
on cold
smoking in the rain.

Something stopped
me
this evening
from killing the moth
which
buzzed lazily around
my warm room.
And something
stopped me from cursing
at dogs barking
under the dark clocktower

Maybe I thought
this moth has no
less right than I
to live,

This while children playing
marbles
outside the tea
shop
 kill
 ants
just for fun.
 It's the same reason
as why
I am here while
 some orphans in the
valley scrape dal from the bottoms
of their plastic platters
 and are contented
to play
hoopless basketball
 And just next door in a
slum, a child cries looking at the
palms of her mother
gone white from begging.
 and I again piss out my window
into a cold stone gutter.

 I wake to Sikh call to prayer
as restless as its cry
 wavering through megaphones
in the strange 4:30 air.
And here I know
atleast someone's
 found
 their
 peace.

~

My dusty truck
clamors
 down
a mountain road
 to dheradun
the valley
 city capitol
I watch the
 lights go
 out along

the road hoping,
that maybe in
 another life
I can find something
 like the jackal
 who's
 just
 run across the road
in our hot mountain evening.

There's talk of
leopards among the herders
and their big
dogs stand proud outside
 earthen yurts.
And that withered man and his son
 pick walnuts
 from their prized tree.
But the day begins again
for the man who's just
slept another
 night in the train station
maybe today will bring someone
 who can
 sympathize.

~

I'm looking out
 the window at
a hillside path
 on which a coolie
strolls with two blue crates strapped
to his back and head
 probably holding
a package
 for some Bhutan Prince
who's stroking his
 greasy black hair
in the mirror,
 and will do
 so for the next hour
or so
 while I stroll for some
 tea while
the rain isn't falling

which I'll drink
in
a small glass
avoiding the bottoms
earthy
grounds
Which once in a field
tended by
an arthritic old herder
smoking hash
through
a hookah in
a mud
flat
somewhere in the
hills.
And I'll wave
while he
scratches a
beard with a bony
finger.

~

I hear sleighbells
on the
hillside
near some village
kids swordfighting
in the scrappy
hill brush

then their ma
hauls hay
for the black cow
in their yard
that rolls me a
lazy eye
as I traverse
down hill
side
paths
to

my dry mossy room
where monkeys
come rattling at
the windows.

and I watch
tired porters
haul milk into town
in dull tin jars
stopped up
with banana leaves from
the hillside.

And they come
back singing
in the hills
with empty tins
and grazing donkeys
with sleighbells
like
rain
on the hillside.

(Jon Hartmann, 2008)

The isolation of myself "old sport"
Is mysterious yet fascinating
When I pretend to be who I am not "old sport" I fall
The house I live in throws the parties , Not I
I found a life which I wanted and lost, for I have no happiness.
When I was a child I thought happiness must be found by wealth
But what I never relived that I had already lost
For if you are poor you can be rich but you will never be wealthy
"Rich girls never marry poor boys"

Life is that but nothing in the eyes of the old.
The new is to behold the light of insufficient thought and yet,
The world a home of new and old flies through a space of nothingness.
One will die and so shall I for the cycle of the everlasting life will either flourish or fall
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.
"Oh!" and he shall sing! and the Lord said unto him
And she fell silent as the world encroached upon her with the whine of human thought.
She was alone unable to find a place for shelter with no space of her own and no time to
be had
She was not a saunterer in the good sense but a vagrant and loner one who has no home
and no thought
God knows only what your mind and yourself does too.
And she fell to the floor with a whimpering moan for love was gone a long way from
home
And he laid dead on the ground so cold for that love that was gone was not at all old
Love was gone among those that knew not of
The man in the village ran with high pointed spear toward the unclear to be
The word love of fallen ones lay on the sand
The God of thy self is the power to do
and what shall be known is known and so it goes
For a man of five or ten or even twenty will tell you of life and of living
It is then when the power of all ye begin to fall and all is left is death and dull it is then
when the seventy or eighty year old man cries of the end a short way down the line
The god of thy self is the power to be
That is what you are and have is God
And what the divine knows is nothing more than what you know and search for
When it reaches the height of its velocity; the height of thought
It is then they shall know what is known

(Liz Hawley, 2008)

Still things that move me

The slide, so still.
You move me without moving,
You move my mind from
My childhood to my adolescence, my
Adolescence to now

The bench so still, say you will
Not move me! But you do. I am
Sitting but my mind moves as I ponder.

The pond so still, it reflects
Life. It moves me to think about mine.
But the wind makes a ripple
And moves me back to reality.

Putti! So still, do not move me. But
You do. My mind relaxes. A movement from
My stress of commitments,
Putti moves me to reflect and smile.

(Jay Bauer, 2008)

Fume, Skin A Girl

skin a girl with hEr skin so smooth
like the pelt of an overSized penguin
i unaware
sit and stare behind a Pane of glass
while the brook flows
the raft remains tethered to the dock
Fume, Skin A Girl

Infinity

The infinite flow of a river
Some might say could be that of time
a Wrathful beast
or Wonderfully at peace
Bridges to cross it
And windows that so many have looked upon it
A loom wheel
spinNing realitY
The reaper and the stork
A stream in which we fish
Perpetual continuation of the eternal youth
The torrential current linking past to present
Genocide, War, and gluttony
All seem to be illusions
As we float from past to future
On the current of our dreams

(DJ Cingari, 2008)

Gloria

She was sick for a while.
She went in and out of the linoleum hallways, and the white lights.
He loved her for more than 50 years.
One love, 2 houses, 3 boys.
Over 50 years into it, the 3rd time in, he had hopes of her coming home.
The baby, now 52, knew what was going to happen.
The phone call didn't last long. He would have told me, if the time was right.
The time is never right.
I didn't get the chance to call back.
That night she wrote down "go" on a napkin, they thought it meant for them to leave, she shook her head.
The opaque blur of the moment flashed over me.
The sedation and technology reduced the communication to zero.
She took her last breath with one hand holding her lovers, the baby in the other.
She died surrounded by her entire family, almost.
Everyone was there...but me.
My father breaking the noise.
The room nonexistent, the cold air, the flavorless food, and the zero sleep.
Lowered into the ground, pictures and all.
1 to 3 shovels...Motionless.
The star of the brown coffin is the last that I see of her. That's the knife in the heart.
It's not enough.
I played it strong. I barely cried. And that lump in the throat was harder than concrete.
It makes you re-evaluate what you want.
What you think you need, and what you know you need.
My father is shattered. My mom wasn't there when I needed her.
Everyone is done.
Everything is done.
The worst part was that she didn't want to fight it anymore.
It feels selfish to say it, but I knew she could have.
"It's part of life"

(Sara Silverman, 2008)

Here, where money is searching for bright ideas,
and the bright ideas are searching for money.
Where your sense of direction gets you lost,
and ladies of 5th, Lexington, and Park look pretty...
Whatever the cost.
Where the city boys raised by women drown dreaming of men
and the city girls raised by detestable men end up marrying them.
Where cigarettes and stoops run subjectively free of society,
And the gay petitioners of Union Square preach equal illegal rights,
Where the smiles and frowns die of cancerous reality,
And where every soul cries "Nothing matters more than me!"
Where the queens of hookah spew their insanity! kissing knees! Begging -
"PLEASE! PLEASE STOP CUTTING DOWN OUR TREES!"
Where the sound of a thousand worker bees drowns out your soul and won't let you
breathe.
Where the sub-urban sub-human tourists go round and round the town snapping photos of
Times Square!
Times Square!
I hate Times Square; there is nothing worth keeping there,
Nothing but lights, cops, sub-human tourists, infinite billboards,
and a nudist cowgirl guitarist with questionable motives...
Then there is the center of it all,
the ties and suits of midtown.
BANKS, BANKS, BANKS, AND BANKS!
There is nothing here but bankers and banks!
I tell the hobos of insanity that midtown is good begging money,
But the auxiliary police keep the hobos off the streets.
...bad for the economy...
Sons of bitches we are! Living in self-ordained luxury!
You have got nothing in reality other than your family
and yet you seem to think you can be happy with your infinite money?
your totalitarian currency
BLASPHEMY!
CALL THE POLICE! REALITY IS LYING TO ME!
These plastic old folks, with their button down coats...
I'm sick of it all. "Give me a cigarette, and let me breathe."
I inhale the hobo, and cry for the breeze
as we float down through Bloomberg's dream
of tobacco free buildings as we write on the walls of our Babylon.

(Alex Adam, 2009)

Pores

Rejected, excrete rejection through your narrow burrows.
Rejected, you infect our ideal.
Excreted, you scab over, but you never seem to heal.
Scarred. And now stared at, scars give gravity to your flight.

Sun-dried, you seek water, holes here are more receptive.
Accepted, hairs and signals gain ability, they rise.
Forewarned now you seek shelter, burrow deep below the sand. You're not dejected, nor
accepted, you are scarred
and forlorn.
Current and tide stir your shelter,
And a whirlwind: you're exposed.
Lone ranger, use aggression,
You're never going home.

(Kirsten Cleary, 2007)

"he"

Soft hands. Tough hands.
His heart beats faintly under
His thin t-shirt and pale
Skin.
Flex; stretches towards the ceiling.
Stomach exposed, fleshy and soft
Belted waistline.
Muscle tightens.
Dips, waves
At me...his
Pants fall slack a little bit,
Then elastic.
Relax. Blink. Bright eyes
Blue.
Jeans bunched.
Turning head, couch crease
Chestnut contours,
His hand grasps the leather,
And he looks at me.

(Allie Early, 2007)

Insanity

You're thinking about how you're cold when you're sitting alone in a dark room, ironic that survival is what pops up in your brain when it's pure emotions that brought you here. Nails pop out of the wood paneling, their edges chipped. The floors here lay untouched by any sort of stain. Everything made tile, making it easy to clean up your falls with mops and buckets. You're feeling frightened however they can only monitor your condition for now. Someone forgot to tell you – survival is the biggest priority.

They're here, so are you, but you're there now, so you're alone again. There it is again, that bleak green shimmer, could be the absinthe abandoning your emotional system or even side effects of the eye drops, all they do is make things blurry and pink, illuminating the very shame you were trying to make subtle. Could be our father, he mentioned he bought a green flashlight that stretches for miles, this past Halloween.

Run away, you want to be carried weightless by the wind, little and lovable once more. You can burn your third grade diaries, but there's no shame in youthful lust or longing, it's only time that makes it go rotten. Deciding otherwise, place it softly in the tweed lined knapsack; emotion is best kept in the safe of your own bank.

You read this thought: 'Every northern rift leads to my Atlantic' and think it made sense to whomever wrote it, impacted the very hand that depicted its interpretation the deepest. 'Direct me with sailors, we have no captain on board and they know I veer too far off the deep end to direct.' I think AA group corruption; he meant the vanity of an oblivious jury.

I can look at my parallel in reflections of the ocean, it's deeper there, the things there, they are and they can be without alibi.

Interruption surfaces: a vibration awakens my left pocket. A voice on the speaker, the one of my real father – his tone is indifferent, he tells me of his son. "I've taken his kidney for survival..." He is your junior still. You've done this, now mom lurks at home by our electric fire, forever nostalgic of bonfires and beach keggers. As for me, I am temporarily blocked. We all wait in rooms made for waiting. Everyone we love is here and we are all alone, I correlate this bitter flashback with our white picket fence and our rickety home, an airplane flies overhead holding my mother's lost love. *He chose the smell of bills and Japanese escorts, she puts out the fire he left burning. Ashes to ashes, she searches for a vase to put them in. You left me singing in the shower, I didn't know you hurt her, I didn't know you had left. I pulled the sheets up over your face, turned my back to the outline of your snoring body and watched you descend from the skies; Japanese flight attendants assist you to your hotel.*

I taste salt. A splash from the ocean has unknowingly hit my left cheek: my parallel has shown itself at midnight. Sunday evening – no one rises. We wait, stagnant, molding: but it's a room made for waiting, and the chairs here will do just fine. I hope my brother wakes up.

(Kirsten Cleary, 2007)

Close Shave

ROCKY ROAD

SHORT CUT

Behind
Left

UP LIFTED

HILLTOP

The Directional Poem

To the North:
A Slide
A Slide in the Shade
Shiny, Fun for all
Up the Ladder, Down the Slide
Again, Again, Again

To the East:
A Memorial
A granite bench
To memorialize a Student
Over looking the Fields

To the South:
The Dancing Man
Likes the Sun
He watches People all day long without complaint
He must be content

Bourne Garden
A quiet place with many stones
The Flowers prepare themselves for fall
A good place to do homework in the afternoon

To the West:
A tiny Pond
A few inches deep
No Fish, a Frog
Still, nothing moves

(Willy Charleton, 2008)