

*Slipping down that graduated slope with Corinna Gilley,
Kurt Einhart, Gina Johnson, Phil Juliano,
and The Dream Journal.*

The Blotter

June 2012

MAGAZINE



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FRONT COVER, an imp apparently
doing the 1980's "safety dance," by
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[c l m p]

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"Graduation Speech, 2012"

Sometimes what you think are very good, very clever ideas don't pan out as such. I've always appreciated the term used by the manufacturers of fireworks, and commandeered by the scientists who make nuclear explosions (somehow these are related in a weird, cosmic way)...*fizzle*. When the atoms don't come apart just the way you planned. When it rains on your Fourth of July shindig. *Fizzle*. When she doesn't laugh at your joke. When you choose a major. *Fizzle*.

I suspect that many of you had grand plans, once upon a time. Or did you? Has the "current downturn" been going on so long that it has painted over all of your other thinking, spilled a nasty taste into every mixed-metaphorical drink you've poured since you were bright-eyed high school students drilling for this very parade? Really?

Or is this just a fizzle? A sequence of less than stellar decisions based on circumstances that often were or appeared to be out of your personal control, followed by plenty of due-diligence, for which the results are *enh*, followed by more *enh*, with more *enh* yet to come? Is this how use of the comment "whatever" gained such rhetorical prominence in the English speaking world?

I know that this is a terrible, absolutely perfectly awful time to say these words, but I don't know what to tell you. Yes, it's depressing printing out what seem to be pointless and embarrassing resumes. Yes, it is disappointing to look out the windows at the world and see such banality. Indeed, people are chock-full of fairly crappy advice. Wow, that sure is a great deal of student loan debt. I understand your discouragement, acknowledge your reasons for being worried. These are tough times. I'm not going to give you the old standard NPR essay comparison list – you're all college graduates – but let's just agree that it's not, say, as tough as World War I.

When he graduated from college in 1916, my grandfather was accepted to Wharton. The war in Europe – a long time coming and truly no surprise to anyone paying attention – interrupted his continuing education. If you asked him, he might have remarked that professors lectured about America joining the fray because of Wall Street's fears of a total, exhausted collapse of the European economy that was intolerable to the investing community. Or how the press continued bludgeoning the Lusitania drum, the bayoneted Belgian babies, in order to turn isolationists into hawks. He also

knew that those fellows on the stools at the local saloons often mumbled that the elitist *collitch professor* in the White House had better do something!

So Grandpa heard a lot of the similar stuff to what you're hearing. And rather than wait to be drafted (a situation I hope you never have to experience) he joined the Navy and with his undergraduate degree he was made an Ensign.

Now this really happened. Someone in what was then called the War Department noticed that Grandpa had a degree and was attending Wharton, so they made him a Medical Officer and almost immediately put him to work assisting with induction of new recruits – health tests, inspections, etc. I'll repeat myself for the sake of clarity – “was attending Wharton, so they made him a Medical Officer....” Got it? Let's move on.

Grandpa, all shiny and new in his officer's uniform was given the task of what is gently called “short-arm inspection,” which is, in effect, looking at each recruit and draftee for signs of venereal disease then giving a direct application of medication...or a shot, if you will. Grandpa tried to explain to the medical officer in charge that someone had made a mistake. Get back to work, Ensign, he was instructed, you have a job to do. So he did just that. Here came a young *idjit* with a case of something, and Grandpa gave him a shot. In the pecker. With a needle full of some kind of early 20th century medication. Without the least bit of medical training. Give him a shot, were the instructions. Grandpa did. The needle broke off in the guy's...business. God in his infinite wisdom cannot explain why Grandpa thought the shot was to be given into the man's willy, but there you go, and there he did. At which point the afflicted fellow screamed bloody murder.

“What the hell is wrong with you?” Grandpa was asked. “I was fol-

Continued on page 15

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CAUTION

...People passing underneath will catch it in the face and teeth and they don't like it any more than you.

“Whale”

by Corinna Gilley

My father once saw a whale and I didn't know about it.

The cell phone on the desk rang just as Broadway pulsed into fluorescent life outside my window. I tiptoed over to check if it was my editor, but the display announced my mother. A very late-night call from England. I shifted the new lamp to the crook of my arm and flipped the phone open.

“Mum,” I said. “Everything okay?”

“Hello, darling,” she said. “I can't get back to sleep, so I thought I might just call for a chat.”

“You can't sleep? Why not?”

“I don't know. Just getting old, I suppose.” She yawned.

I winced from the sudden

pressure of the lamp against my ribs. “Mum, did you have an appointment yesterday? Is that why you can't sleep?”

“Don't obsess, dear. We just went to the shops. The biopsy isn't back yet, but Dr. Mark's anyway quite sure they got it all out last spring. I don't even have an appointment; he'll just call when the results are back. I got a very nice hat at Debenhams'; you know one of those flat ones with a crocheted flower at the side? Blue. Dad bought gloves. How are you?”

“I'm okay. Busy.” I glanced at the lonely line on the computer screen. Outside, a car alarm went off, the noise multiplying as it swelled in the canyon of high-rises. I tucked the phone under my chin, crawled under the desk and plucked the cord in. The lamp lit up the space, illuminating the apple core that had missed the waste basket last week and now laid quietly, fodder for dust bunnies.

“Actually, I have good news, I guess,” I said and switched the lamp off again. “I got the job.”

“Oh darling, you did? That's fantastic!” The sleepiness in her voice was gone and I smiled. “Did you already sign the contract with them?”

“Yes I did, mum, yesterday. For three years. I'll be busy, too; I'm already behind with my first article. It's about Dry Eye Syndrome. You know when the eyes get dry and itchy?”

“Oh, that happens all the time to me! And now I can just click on their website and find what you have written! Really, honey, I'm so proud of you! You can keep the room now, so close to everything!”

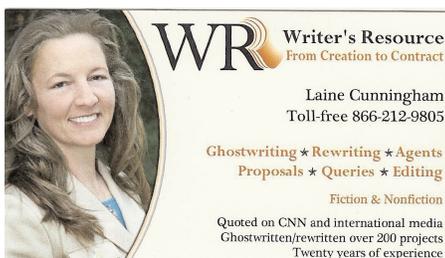
“It doesn't leave much time for anything else.”

“You'll get used to the pace. At least you don't have to do math or science!” She giggled. “Remember how dad had to help you with that to get you through High? We weren't sure you would make it!”

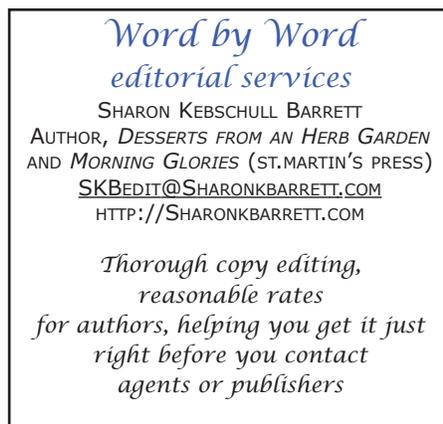
“Ugh.” I touched the fleecy brownness of the apple core with my naked toe. I remembered. My dad had sat me



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down every Saturday for remedial lessons in everything he excelled in and I dreaded.

"Most importantly," he'd started pedantically, "you must remember to structure everything clearly. An organized mind is half the rent." He would clear his throat and rearrange the snack he brought with him to eat while I would be struggling for answers to his questions. Then, inevitably, his voice would drop and he announced: "Don't worry about using *space* when you write. We'll pay for the paper."

"Well, you know it doesn't matter now," my mum said cheerfully. "Did you celebrate? Did you go anywhere?"

"No," I mumbled. "Deadlines and all that."

"Oh, of course, darling," mum said. "You know that's always the reality of it." There were some noises in the line as she shifted the receiver around. Then she continued: "No big news here. Wait, I suppose I did meet Mrs. Runcyman at Debenhams'. We were both looking for socks, I for dad and she for Allen. Can you imagine?" She happily launched into gossip. I listened to her from my desk-cave.

Fishing for socks in a bin, Mrs. Runcyman had confided that her barrel-chested husband was at odds with their only son, Dan. Mr. Runcyman owned a

mildly successful muffler business in the outskirts of Blackpool, and wanted Dan to start working there so he could take over in a few years. Dan didn't know what he wanted.

Mum went on for a bit, giving me all the dirty details of who-said-what and what-broke-when. I imagined how her voice in Blackpool splintered into tiny sound pixels that scintillated over the ocean, dancing in front of a satellite who ordered them to navigate asteroids, skyscrapers and taxis so they could reassemble in my phone. Or maybe something akin to animal magnetism conjured the pixels back together after their voyage. Shouldn't there be a delay

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between her saying and me hearing something?

"...it's not like Dan has anything else lined up, so now Allen said he has to start in a week, even though Irene doesn't think he really means it, but you know Runcymans, and that's been, let me see...that was just after dad saw the whale. Five days ago, I think." She drew a deep breath and yawned.

"Ha," I said supportively. Then her words trickled through.

"Wait, what? Dad saw a whale? Where?"

"Ooh, you know. Nothing. It's just that time is almost up for Dan and now that I think about it, Irene seems

more than a bit nervous about it all."

"Tell me," I insisted. "What whale?"

My mother yawned again. "It's nothing. Your dad saw a whale in the pond."

I crawled out from under the desk and stood up. The lamp hit the table with a resounding clang as the cord yanked it back. I knew the pond.

My dad spends his day in his lab and the lecture hall, where he demonstrates with Sisyphean devotion of the existence of the brain, the heart, the liver and the stomach to texting college kids. Sometimes, he eats his lunch in the neglected wooded area behind the science building. There is a bench and a small pond. My dad sits on the bench and eats his sandwich, and then he goes back in. And then he

goes home to his house and a few square inches of backyard. There is no other casual pond in his life. Only that one: a few feet of water in a circular bed of concrete.

"What was that sound?" my mom asked, alarmed.

"New lamp. But dad doesn't see whales in ponds!"

"Why do you need a new lamp? What's wrong with the Swan?"

I tried to control my voice. "Maybe the swan worked in my nursery, mum. It looks silly here."

"You know I bought that swan just around the corner of Buckingham Palace, don't you? I think the queen might be able to see that vendor from her window. Well, some window."

"I didn't throw it away. It's not bright enough; I can never see my keyboard. And it is really not important right now." I was going to get this out of her. "Is dad okay, mentally? What exactly did he see?"

Mum sighed. "He says



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the water started to churn.”

“He says the water started to *churn*? The *pond* water?”

“...and then he saw a whale come out.”

“Seriously? How does he know it was a whale?”

“You know, it was gray and I suppose he said it had those barnacles on it. He thinks it was a humpback. It just curved out of the water like they do and then it went down again.”

“Couldn’t it have been a board or something?”

“He said it was really big. And it hit the water with its tail when it went down. Everything got wet.”

“Did you, I don’t know, do something about it?”

“It’s fine, darling. It’s just one of those things. Don’t tell him I told you.”

“What things? Why can’t I tell him?”

“He wouldn’t want anybody to know he saw the whale. It was just something that happened.”

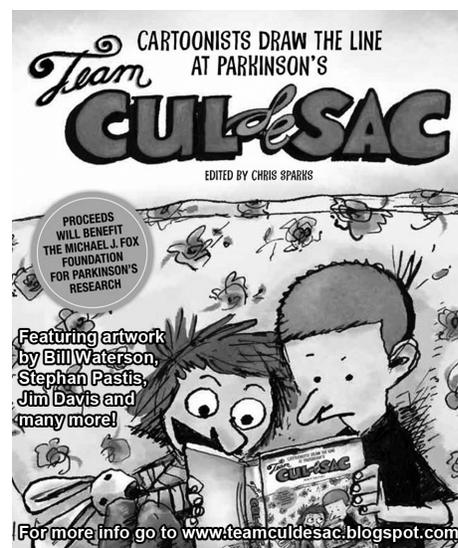
I managed to lumber into another topic, and a minute later my mother said she wanted to try and catch some more sleep. She hung up and I slumped into my chair.

Pain took a stealthy hold of me. A hand cut by a knife slipping off a carrot, or a femur broken in a ski accident: those pains were soft pillows. This pain was visceral, spreading from all the same organs that my dad exposed daily to his students. Maybe that’s how a sword with a ruby hilt felt when it impaled one’s liver; or the point of a halberd that pierced one’s lungs amid the cheers of a crowd in billowy dresses and feathered hats. I hugged my knees to my chest and rocked, latching on to the aimless triangles that meandered over the computer screen.

With sudden force, the neon sign below my window flicked its bright red light into the now dark room. I stopped rocking and went to the closet.

The swan was perched on the only shelf, steadfastly hold-

ing in its beak the small pink lampshade that illuminated my childhood. The cord I had wrapped around its neck had unraveled like the spurious scaffolding of my life, and swayed in unison with the frayed tassels of the shade in the sudden eddy of air. The red light pulsed off the crystal eyes like a heart. I closed the door again and sat down on the floor, leaning my head against the closet. Behind the door, the swan’s fringe swayed, and I knew its ruby eyes, alive in the dark, were mocking me.



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“Essay”

by Gina Johnson

Ed. Note: We asked Ms Johnson to take a swing at writing an essay for us on what it's like being out there in the world of student loans, major declaration and the everloving hunt for a career. We also asked an esteemed professor to grade Gina's paper, and that professor wisely told us to stop being so silly. We therefore feel very good about the state of higher education in our nation. Anyone who says that we're not "manufacturing" anything good in this country needs to take a road trip to a college town, have a seat in one of the corner pubs (they're in every college town) and listen to the kids and

the teachers. It'll definitely be worth the gas money.

I remember the moment I decided to be an English major. It was not a dark stormy night, it was not the best of times and certainly not the worst, and the clocks struck not thirteen but about twelve fifty-two. I was a bright yet naïve high school senior who was proudly presenting her homework in front of her fifth period English literature class. Ponytail bouncing, I enthusiastically revealed all of the illusive literary devices I'd extracted from the assigned text

with the dexterity and determination of a very stern dentist, just as I'd been taught to do. My sweet, somewhat elderly teacher beamed and said, "Gina, have you considered being an English teacher?" I smiled back at her, having always wanted to teach *something*, and thought, "Well, I do love books..." not fully understanding that loving books wasn't necessarily a useful prerequisite for being an English major.

Like any good English student knows, every essay must have all of the appropriate parts: an introduction which states one's thesis, approximately three body paragraphs each with a clear topic sentence, and a hearty conclusion probably beginning

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with “In conclusion” just in case you thought the author may be about to make another compelling point. Essentially, from the time most of us are old enough to understand that “essay” means writing a lot about something you may or may not understand, we’re encouraged to use this foolproof formula to produce effective essays, and by the hundreds. What they don’t tell you is that this formula *also* isn’t necessarily a useful prerequisite for being an English major.

There are probably a hundred stories that start this way...tales of bright young girls falling in love with literature and composition in high school and dreaming of reading Faulkner on the quad at any number of universities, hoping to someday

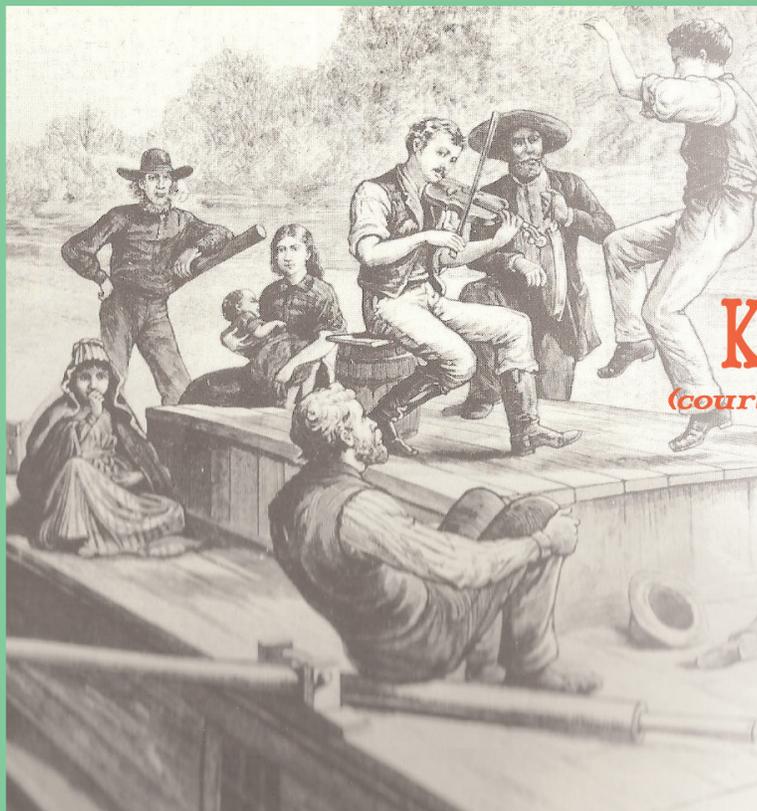
inspire other bright young students just as some sweet, somewhat elderly woman did for them. This is the part of the story right before bad things start to happen. This is the opening scene where two young teenagers recklessly drive off into the sunset for a weekend alone in the mountains, laughing and singing along to the radio...the happy introduction that Poe could never be bothered with. Despite the cries of our audiences, normally in the form of worrisome parents, we enter the creepy old house off the beaten path, i.e. the study of English literature. Some will emerge victorious, ponytail still bouncing and with light still in their eyes. Most of us, however, well...

Thesis Statement: Being

an English major is really, really hard.

Our young heroine (me) enters the house. The parlor seems kind of nice in an old, intimidating sort of way; she has always loved antiques and recognizes a few of the home’s furnishings. *I could stay here awhile*, she thinks with only a note of hesitation. But then, suddenly off to her left, a noise! She stupidly investigates, and with little warning, finds herself cornered by the first of many strange and terrifying creatures: British Romantic Authors.

Having survived countless “reading quizzes”, a favorite torture device of English teachers at every level, she faced the beast with little fear. However, she found herself completely



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unprepared for its wrath. Quote the last line of "Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey?" Explain William Blake's religious beliefs and their origins? Name *where on campus* John Keats is quoted, *and which line?* It quickly became clear that the books and poems she had so loved were no longer present. What began as a stroll through their pages and verse was now a tale Stephen

King would dream up (and probably has), where everything you love turns against you in the worst way. She bolted from the room, narrowly escaping with her GPA still intact. But the fight was not over.

Along her cautious search through the house for an escape (the door she entered the house through labeled ACADEMIC ADVISING was no longer func-

tioning properly) she encountered a few old friends. Relieved, she dashed up to Huckleberry Finn, an old southern gentleman she'd spoken rather pleasantly with a few times in high school. Good ol' Huck, however, had changed. Gone was his innocence. Years of abuse from various disgruntled Teaching Assistants had turned the child-like classic into a disturbing, homosexual pedophile. She ran from him as fast as she could, only to find William Shakespeare, one of her very favorites. *Surely*, she thought, *this god-forsaken house cannot have gotten to Will!* But, alas, the playful old playwright's best works had been reduced to those of incest, abuse, and... copyright infringement? The horror!

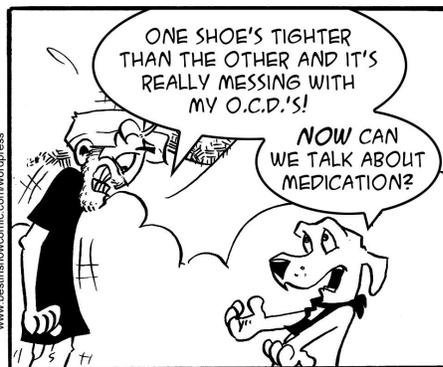
Finally she found a door labeled ART HISTORY and gladly turned the room full of pretty paintings into a retreat. Though she had to occasionally re-enter the rest of house of horrors, her little room in the back corner served very nicely as an escape when she needed it. She found a few treasures hidden among the ruins of the things she used to love...a lovely room

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Best In Show



by Phil Juliano

of African-American poetry still somehow existed, shoved away in another corner no one ever bothered. And, Edgar Allen Poe, really quite at home in this dreary place, happily skulked the hallways during her second year in the house. *Though really*, she wondered, *what could this place possibly do to Poe?* She was sad to see him go (though glad to be rid of the incessant rapping).

However, not even Poe and her hidden room of art could help her keep avoiding the worst creature of all: The English Paper. This beast was impossible to please. If it asked for 10 pages, sometimes it complained that there wasn't enough in her 10 pages, that she needed to stuff more in there somehow. Other times, there was too much stuff in her 10 pages and she needed to get rid of some of it, while still maintaining the length.

Sometimes it wanted her to reinterpret the prompt it gave her; other times, it wanted to her answer the question exactly as it asked it. And, while most of the time it despised the handy little formula she'd perfected in high school, occasionally it would scold her harshly for ignoring it. This creature haunted all of her classes, even creating conflict between her and her beloved art history over a misinterpreted metaphor that the English beast would have loved. Finally she had enough, and locked herself in her art room for good.

Conclusion: I am terrible at conclusions, but being an English major...no, nevermind, it didn't help with that at all.

This is my story. I would imagine there are many like me, too scared to speak up because they, like me, are in the process of acquiring teacher recommen-

dations for graduate school applications and don't want to bite the hand that grades them, in a sense. While yes, an English degree will hang on my wall, the thought of repeatedly teaching the beast that *Huckleberry Finn* has become, or worse, *Heart of Darkness*, has successfully scared me away from being an English teacher. Instead, someday, I will hand my kid a book and say, "Here. Read this. And enjoy it. Don't you go inferring anything and don't you dare tell me you found Jesus in there somewhere." Meanwhile, I'll just keep playing with my paintings. They're much quieter.



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“The Devil and Donald Trump”

As Rita watched, the motorman lumbered back through the first car carrying his stick, that ignition key-slash-accelerator tool of his trade. He apparently hadn't abandoned all hope. Therefore, although all hell had broken loose and everyone from New York was talking or shouting at everyone else, and everyone not from The Big Town -- and therefore recognizable by their wide-eye'd fear of the freak-show and lame clothes and worse haircuts and whatever -- clung to their loved ones, it was not the madhouse every-

one-for-him-or-herself kind of thing like you got in other cities. Rita, from Gramercy, had her earbuds in and Squirrel Nut Zippers shuffling so she couldn't hear the craziness.

“S'go,” said the motorman. The shouting stopped and people started moving. Had he been conductor he might have said “Everyone Move To The Back Of The Train.” But no “Please.” Never “Please,” because that would have spooked everyone. “Please” meant the end of the world, hell freezing over soon.

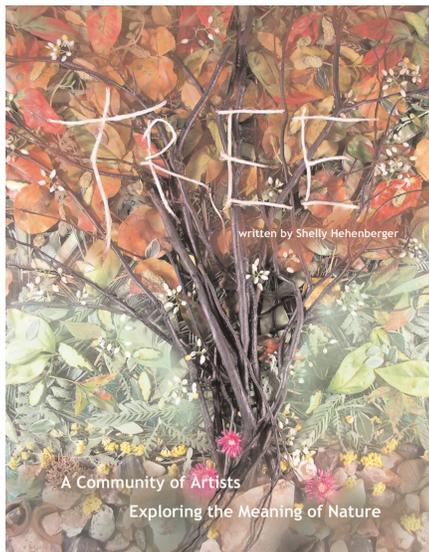
Transit cops didn't even say please when the Towers were hit, and people listening to them hadn't panicked and a lot of lives were saved as the rubble and dust came down.

Rita stood, to follow the others, then took a peek out the front glass. Knuckled her eyes, like Bugs Bunny waking, before he took a whassupdoc carrot chomp. There, in the edge of light from the subway car was a man. A man as thin as if born from pipe cleaners, dancing a happy jig back and forth across the tracks, skipping over the third rail with abandon. Her first thought: homeless, crazy fool. Second thought: he's a good dancer. Broadway good, like Gregory Hines. Maybe it is Gregory Hines. No, she amended, Hines was dead. This nut on the tracks was picking things up and throwing them -- trash and scrap and such -- all the time dancing. Then something hit the third rail and it sparked and banged like gunshots and Rita saw the dancer's face. Smiling teeth from ear to

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ear. Eyes as black as a grave. Like an imp. The thought sprang unbidden into her mind. Spawn of the damned, dancing gaily around in the C train tunnel. Only in New York, she mused with perverse pride. The creature pirouetted with awful glee and tossed a handful of rags on the sparks and a fire started, billowing greasy smoke. The lights in the car flickered and the imp pointed directly at her. Rita's neck chilled, as if sudden air-conditioning had come on in this old car, as unbelievable in itself as the bouncing demon on the rails. A touch on her shoulder made her exhale in a silent nightmare scream. Her neck snapped around as she squeezed tight to avoid voiding onto her cross-trainers.

"S'go. You don't need nothing like that getting its eye on you, hey kid?" The motor-man had returned. A last glance out the window and he led her down the train and out an emergency exit up to the street.

CONTRIBUTORS

Corinna Gilley of Hewitt, NJ writes, "After studying for years the behavior of slate-colored boubous, marine iguanas, and dancing honey bees, I found that my true alliance lies with the whales of Melville, the lycanthropes of Russell, and, yes, the five frogs a single sentence squished to death in Cannery Row." *Ed. note: Personally, I've been raising rabbits and chickens for years.*

On **Kurt Einhaus**: Kurt has always had a passion for art. Combining that with his interest of science fiction and fantasy, his work involves expressing related themes in a fine art format, contributing a new angle on the subject beloved by many. Born and raised in Cincinnati OH, his influences include both classic and contemporary, ranging from the works of NC Wyeth, Jeffrey Jones, Phil Hale, Ashley Wood, Egon Schiele, and more. Kurt's work is in many private collections throughout the United States. Check out his website: www.kurteinhaus.com. *Ed. note: We appreciate Kurt's illustrating our little piece about the NY subway system as we remember it from the early 1990's. Good times, good times.*

Gina Johnson is one of our interns here at *The Blotter* and was a very good sport when I asked her to "write me something, wouldja?" And by that, I mean a very generous person with her time, because she was simultaneously working on grad school applications. That is what we call "multi-tasking." I am not so skilled. I mean, I can cook eggs, and I can cook bacon, but if you want them both, pick up a fricking spatula, OK?

Phil Juliano suffers the slings and arrows of all mankind, only farther north than you or I. Or is it "further?"






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Sleeping in on a Sunday morning one doesn't expect to be able to travel back to Dreamland, that's asking too much. Just a little peace and quiet, the sound of springtime rain on the deck outside, the room still dark with curtains pulled, and nothing out there on the horizon that desperately needs doing. Head still hurts a little from last night – nothing worth telling here – and I'm thinking about nothing in particular that will lead me to a predetermined place and time. Mouth gummed up, must have been snoring, and that little debate one has that discusses the finer points of getting up and keeping one's eyes closed while shuffling to the toilet to take the edge off of the bladder, or just staying here for a little while longer, no emergency, no accident waiting to happen.

A flurry of colors and images rattling around behind my eyelids, what a luxury it is to not move, not be startled into full-blown awake. No alarm, like every other day of the week, every other day of the year. No roommate (years nineteen through twenty one of my life. No neighbors with radio blasting car-washing habits (years twenty five and twenty six.) No gardener with a leaf blower (thirty-one through thirty-three). No diapers to change (forty one through forty six). Of course, I'll be called on to assist with any as yet-undone homework. That's to be expected. But right now, right here, somehow, my entire family understands that occasionally I need a small, inexpensive break. *This is living, this is style; this is elegance by the mile*, to quote pith-helmeted Lionel Jeffries.

So where is everyone else? Have they gone to church? Did they eat breakfast? I am a bit peckish. What did they have? Is there any left? Can it be reheated? Should I get up and see, maybe do the dishes? Run a load of laundry? My face is badly in need of a razor, and a shower wouldn't hurt at all. Just five more minutes.

EIC - cyberspace

Final Tidbits: Well, it turns out that you can go home again, sort of, so that your sister can give you a smack upside the head and demand a retraction about her reading habits. Consider it done, my dear. She reads all sorts of stuff, not just nonfiction. Hey, hey - for all you who love our Dream Journal, this June the Loft and Paper Darts are collaborating for a Northern Spark project centered around capturing dreams. One piece of the event will feature a loop of submitted videos of people talking about dreams they've had. You can read more specifics about the event as a whole and the submission process at <http://www.paperdarts.org/blog/2012/4/6/invited-to-dream-big.html>. So far they've had a fair number of submissions, but we would definitely like more. Anywho, go, buy your Dad or Grad a copy of *Tree*, published by PencilPoint Mountain (www.pencilpointmountain.com), an imprint of The Blotter Magazine, Inc. What is an imprint? It's that mark you leave on a college bathroom floor when you forget to use Comet Cleanser every week like you promised your mom you would, you grubby fellow. Want redemption? Make a donation to The Blotter (www.blotterrag.com.) Buy a Blotter t-shirt while you're there, we're almost out and want to place another Merch order. And, as always, visit your local independent bookstore, faithful to a fault and with plenty of air-conditioning! Stop spinning in circles, asking, "I wonder what Kim Kardashian would wear in this humidity?" Open a book, turn on some tasty tunes, eat a slice of watermelon, call your Dad - he's got some questions about last weekend for you, and give someone you like a kiss, they deserve it, and if they don't, well, you do. Got it? Good!

Continued from page 3

lowing your instructions,” he replied. “Why did you give the man a needle in the...why did you give him a shot there?” Legend has it that Grandpa shrugged at this point. Where else would you give a man a shot but in the place that needs it? Right? Longish story short, after some discussion, the officer in charge of assigning Grandpa to the medical corps was embarrassed for not knowing that Wharton was a business school, not a medical school, and Grandpa was appropriately reassigned as supply officer and assistant paymaster to the USS Powhatan.

Is there a point here, other than the tip of a needle? Well, you never know what events are going to occur to put you on the right path. And don't let circumstances bully you around when you get out there, because that will happen if you let it. Don't rush to get in that perfect position and grind the old mill. Have a little fun with the first jobs you get when you hit the street. And, metaphorically speaking, give the world a shot where it needs it, if you are able.

Back to I went to college (back when it was referred to as just that, as in “he's goin' to college, isn't that good news? God, we were so worried about him. He had almost no other prospects...”) we were coming out of a period of rampant inflation and directly into a recession. I didn't know at the time but I was very lucky to have the job I did. Of course, when I went into college, I was lucky that an institution of higher learning was even willing to accept me (let's just say that I wasn't very studious in high school, shall we?) I took courses, learned to study. Made friends with people who I liked to talk with. Still talk to them all these years later. We agree on a lot of things, and disagree on many more. Maybe in the end we all grasp the single truth that life isn't permanent. I don't know.

But here's the thing – and there's no getting around it – you have to go forward anyway. You have to go look for something to do and find your “thing,” and hopefully it will be enjoyable for you to do, rewarding in some fashion. My suggestion – because it wouldn't be a graduation speech without one – is be nice, that'll be a pleasant change for most of the world, and remember the words to one of the songs from your childhood. By an oddly named fellow named Yanni. Come on. Sing along with me.

Willabee wallabee wee...
An elephant sat on me...
Willabee wallabee woo...
an elephant sat on you.

Garry - chief@blotterrag.com

