

# The York Review

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# THE YORK REVIEW

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Volume 7

Matthew Knaub

Spring 2001

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Joann McCoy

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Unlabeled

Letitia Spangler

**EDITOR: JENN COSSENTINO**

Emerson was Here

**LAYOUT: MATTHEW SPEICHER**

In Life, the Movie  
Coming to Theaters soon

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# THE YORK REVIEW

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(Publication of the English and Humanities Department)

## Volume 7 Number 1/Spring 2001

<i>The Candy Lady</i>	Matthew Knaub	5
<i>Untitled</i>	Joann McCoy	6
<i>Untitled</i>	Letitia Spangler	7
<i>Emerson was Here</i>	Christina Jaffe	8
<i>My Life: the Movie- coming to theatres soon</i>	Christina Jaffe	9
<i>Days in the Life</i>	Mike Tager	10
<i>Dance by the Light of the Moon</i>	Danielle Ayers	20
<i>Where are you Rupert Brooke</i>	Bettina K. Jaffe	23
<i>Ithaca</i>	Joan Concilio	24
<i>Lachesis Ignored</i>	Jerry Kimbrough	25
<i>Fledglings</i>	Bettina K. Jaffe	29
<i>Skylarking</i>	Bettina K. Jaffe	30
<i>Unusual Occurrence</i>	Becky Shannon	32

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# THE YORK REVIEW

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<i>Untitled</i>	Alex Meidunas	38
<i>Doorknobs, windowpanes, and ashes</i>	Christina Jaffe	39
<i>Untitled</i>	Joann McCoy	40
<i>Percolators and Praise Songs</i>	Kelly M. Archibald	41
<i>One morning I did not wake and found myself</i>	Matthew Davis	44
<i>Untitled</i>	Letitia Spangler	45
<i>Waitin'</i>	Jennifer Browning	46
<b>NOTES FROM THE CONTRIBUTORS</b>		48

## *Special Acknowledgement*

The Editorial Board of *The York Review* would like to thank the following people for so generously giving their time, support, and expertise to this literary magazine: Professor Dennis Weiss, chair of the Department of English and Humanities; Lance Snyder, Art Director of the York College Public Relations Department; Sandra Coy, secretary of the Department of English and Humanities; and Penny and Woody Wagaman, of Harvey Printing Company.

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## *The Candy Lady*

Third Place Award for Poetry, Hoffman Writing Contest, Fall 2001

There is a woman to whom the children flee,  
when all is all but lost.  
She calls to them from across the hills,  
with her soft, almost silent song.  
They hear her always, but from afar,  
and hardly ever recognize.  
Her words, the map by which can only be heard,  
by those young ones with empty minds,  
free of dreams and ambition.

She leads them away from their simple ways,  
with her enchanting hymn.  
They follow without questioning her means,  
for they believe she is the savior of their future.  
The children see not the boys and girls,  
dead off in the pathway, lying in the gutter.  
They walk blindly through the fields,  
searching for the bridle trail to happiness,  
no matter what their condition may be,  
trusting in the sincere melody.

She cries out to every child,  
and touches every soul,  
in order to fluctuate their fertile moralities.  
She fills the valleys with a provocative voice,  
and coats the ghettos with her mellow tone.  
To the children who she reaches she is known as the candy lady,  
but to those who know not, she is a mere figment of the imagination.  
She fills their heads with false information and miseducation,  
and lies to disfigure their innocent minds.

-Matthew Knaub-



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So it's on nights like these that I don't mind all that much  
about staying in this god-forsaken place-  
nights when I'm walking,  
loner along that subtle, quiet, politely winding  
bicycle path.

And the rain  
and the wind  
and the pitch darkness  
and the silver reflections all stir  
through the leaves of  
oven-baked marmalade-  
crisp in their acid freshness.

It's on nights like these,  
when I'm walking home,  
alone with a bag  
and a coat not warm enough,  
it's on nights like these that I don't mind so much.

And the once sharp leaves melt  
with the advent of moonstone rain  
my eyes catch them, defiantly  
clinging in drip formation,  
not yet ready  
for sodden winter grays.  
And they rustle, these broken sunset  
leaves, and they toss themselves  
all about, struggling to maintain  
beauty, reluctant to sink with the fallen.

Just for one absolute second sputtering,  
stop-stuck-struggling,  
to make itself new again, I don't mind,  
and so, I let tears down and they think,  
think, mulling over an ever-looming,  
cunningly emerging collapse.

And just for one moment I don't  
mind decomposing I don't mind  
myself so much I don't  
mind this particular world with all  
its mediocre and terrifying things and  
just for one moment, beneath solitary black,  
I become inexorable  
indefatigable unwavering



against the scuttling gossamers  
of a nervous November darkness.

-Letitia Spangler-

### *Emerson was here*

"Emerson was here"  
my professor says with a hint of mischief in his voice.  
I had quoted the enigmatic transcendentalist  
Only moments before  
And then I had retreated into daydreams  
Only to be recalled by a gently teasing voice referring to me as Emerson.  
And now I can't go through the rest of class  
Without carrying that phrase around in my head  
It amuses me  
To think  
Of Emerson as an early American Graffiti Poet  
Leaving the spray paint tag  
"Emerson was Here."  
Maybe he would have been in one of those modern day  
Anti-sprawl movements and he would have  
Covered massive concrete block corporations with those words  
And other words that would make the collared men feel  
Like they were missing something  
A somewhat poignant joke,  
Which only a few got  
And I wonder if Emerson were here  
Whether he would be pleased when he could  
Make his professors laugh.

-Christina Jaffe-

*My Life: the Movie- coming to theatres soon*

You ever get the feeling your life is really just  
someone's almost finished screenplay,

My friend does Jon Cusak better than Jon Cusak  
and for my sister I would cast Winona Ryder  
cuz she's good at that wide-eyed idealist part  
(Winona that is. my sister- she's the real thing)

and the director's called and told me  
we don't have enough angst  
so I say, "I'll get some next time I'm out,"  
okay, and a pack of cigarettes too, he says  
you're all too addiction free.

in the past there were times when I would say  
"You are not Anthony Hopkins  
and I am not Emma Thompson"  
even though I was almost certain we were

Nowadays it has to be an action movie, or a sci-fi thriller.  
could my life be a chick flick that guys would want to see?  
Unlikely, unless I was a schoolteacher by day - spy by night-  
"Elementary Espionage"

I would make my film a cross between an MGM musical and  
a Merchant Ivory Production  
I'd get Gregory Peck to play my Dad  
and Jimmy Stewart to be the boy I sit on porch swings with and fall in love with

I like the gentleman they've picked to play my leading man  
but they can't decide whether to make him  
a surgeon, or cop, or a struggling stand-up comedian  
or an inspirational teacher  
("can they get that guy from "West Wing"- No, he only does independent film versions  
of college girls' poems)

They want to rate it PG-13- to bridge the target audiences.  
My friends and I wish they'd rate it R- parental guidance under 18  
(because then maybe our parents would come.)

They wanted to do a product tie-in  
but Jane Austen pics on the back of pop-tart boxes won't sell well  
they know  
they've tested it on focus groups.

But my life is too nebulous for the silver-screen.  
It's more like a series of interconnected short stories, that bridge time, place and adolescent mood-swings.  
It's not a star work, but an ensemble piece of the colorful people who make up this odd hamlet of the world we call college.

But if my life were a movie I could  
finally find out what the heck a gaffer does  
and have cool credits like  
no emotions were hurt during the filming of this production  
only the mooses'

-Christina Jaffe-

### *Days in the Life*

By Mike Tager

March 22, 2001

"Congratulations John. You can start on Monday."

Cameron looked up grinning fit to eclipse the sun. "Yeah? That's great man. I guess that fifth year in college paid off, no?" Standing and offering his hand, John straightened his gray, ratty suit. His red hair and fair complexion often got him admiring looks and seemed to cry for trust and affection. They served him well here. "Um... is it alright if I start on Tuesday? My wife and I need to do some celebrating."

"No problem Johnny, but be here on time Tuesday. We have some serious work to do and you are needed here." John's new boss is short and portly, with bad teeth and worse breath. The very opposite of John with dark features and completely lacking in charisma.

"Alright Cameron.... I'll see you then."



October 18, 1994

"John? Where are you going," Maria asks, sitting up in bed, watching John dress in the darkness.

"I have to get home. My mom is going to check on me in a few hours," John said, not looking at the fragile girl in the bed. At 17, John is already a handsome man, albeit smaller and somewhat more ill looking than most young men his age. "Don't worry about it babe, I'll see you tomorrow in school.... It's not like I can run from you," the last said under his breath, John turns and moves quickly to Maria, giving her a kiss on her cheek.

"John?"

"Later," he says as the door shuts, leaving a girl to cry in the darkness.

July 4, 2015

"Daddy? Come see the fireworks. Mommy's already out there!" The excited girl bounces around and John absently tousles her hair. Her dark features often remind him rather unpleasantly of his first boss. Despite this, John loves her fiercely, with all the power a man has for his firstborn.

"Daddy is on an important phone call luvey. Go back outside with your mother and little Marcus, I'll be out shortly." With this kind admonishment, Claudia scampers away; ready to frolic under the night sky and John turns his attention back to the phone. "Maria... I told you not to call anymore. I'm married now and happily..."

August 15, 2004

"Ms. Hawthorne, I told you before. I'm married."

July 4, 1995

"John, come out here. The fireworks are about to start and your brother is waiting for you down by the creek," John's father says, coming up behind his son, who is busily talking on the phone.

"I can't dad. I have to take this call," he answers, turning his back on his father. With less than a gesture, John is thrown away by his father's bulk. "Who is this? Maria? My worthless little brat will call you tomorrow!"

With that he hangs up. "Go outside now. Give your mother a kiss. We'll talk later."

December 30, 2056

"Hi pops. How is life treating you here," John's son Marcus asks. John turns to talk to the irritating child and forgets his left side will not obey him.

"Well son, I still can't shit without help, my back is fucking killing me and it was your mother's birthday last month. Not to mention your sister's last week. I think I'm doing damn fine. And yourself?"

"Um... pops, I brought someone to see you," ignoring his crotchety old father, Marcus leaves the room and brings back a little girl, no taller than a foot with vibrant red hair and brilliant blue eyes. Johnathan's heart stops at her sight. "I named her Claudia... I thought you might like to see her."

February 1, 2027

"Mr. Richter," the doctor asks, looking around the emergency room.

John stands, holding his wife's hand in his and looking around for his son who left a moment ago.

"I am deeply sorry but there was nothing we could be done. By the time Claudia got here, there was too much internal bleeding and from the impact alone..." John let the man ramble on. His daughter was dead after all.

December 22, 2009

"It's a girl Mr. Richter."

May 15, 2003

"John, after you finish taking a dump, I need to talk to you ASAP," Cameron the toad politely informed John. Taking a few moments to tidy himself and finish his limerick on the bathroom stall wall, John left the bathroom and traversed the several feet to his hated boss's office.

"Private Juan, reporting for duty sir," John quips, inwardly hating his



own duplicity in toadying to a man he hates.

"At ease soldier. I have news from the front," Cameron amiably retorts, taking his worker's informality in stride. As John sits, Cameron smiles and says, "You've been assigned a very lucky gig. You're going to work with Ms. Valerie Hawthorne, a rich bitch extraordinaire. And a might fine piece of ass to boot... I've been told." Winking, Cameron hands a picture to John. "Don't you wish YOU could marry something like that instead of just handling her divorce?"

April 14, 1997

"Hey Jono! Stop powdering your fucking nose and get out here," Mike yells from on the couch. "The fucking party will be over by then you junkie asshole and I don't know about you, but I need some goddamn vag tonite or I'll hurt myself whacking off again. Get your kraut-mic ass out here," John's roommate yells, throwing the occasional random object at the bathroom door as John snorts his two hundred away.

"Look you little fuck, so help me, if you aren't out of this damn apartment in five minutes I will bust a cap in your ass that so large that you will NEVER forget it!" Running outside to deal with the perpetrator, John forgets that his roommate is bigger and stronger than he is as well as having the advantage of surprise. John lets out an eloquent, 'Whumpf,' as he gets tackled.

"How many times have I beaten the hell out of you in your junkie state cause you forget I can wait right outside the door? Stupid bastard.. let's go." Giving John a hand up, they both walk out of the grungy apartment, one high as a kite and the other grimly amused by the other. As they left the apartment building, Mike lays his hand on John's shoulder and says, "You know bud, Lisa called again. So did Maria or whatever her name is. What's going on with you? They both seem royally pissed.. well, Maria always sounds pissed or strung out and after what you told me....," seeing the dangerous glint in John's eyes, Mike veered away from the subject, "But anyway, what's up with that Lisa girl? You seemed to really like her."

John doesn't answer and they continue into the night.

April 29, 2002

"Lisa... will you marry me?"

October 27, 2035



"Today we say goodbye to a loved one. It never is easy to say farewell to one who is close to us. Lisa Richter has been a mother, a daughter, a friend and a wife. She has gone to a place where she will be reunited with her loved ones... and where, if we are patient, we will see her again."

May 1, 1994

John sits alone in his bedroom, listening to his father screaming and his mother crying. Again and again he hears the sound of striking and of shrieking. He winces every time. His younger brother Samuel quietly cries in a corner of the room, staring out at the night sky. John does not realize it, but he is weeping too. Soon the sounds stop and the door slams. His father will be going off to vent his rage on a more suitable target. John bows his head and prays for sanity and strength.

September 24, 2008

"John... I can't keep this up. I think of you all the time. I want us to be together," Maria says, staring at John as he dresses silently. This is the third time they have been together since the first time-years ago. Again, John can hardly stand to look at her.

"Maria, I've told you that we can't be together."

"Then why do you do this to me... to us? I love you and I know you love me. Why can't we be together?" She has started crying and John's heart turns cold.

"You know why. Why are you making this so hard?"

"Because I fucking love you, you asshole!"

"I can't be with you Maria."

"Why not?? What do I have to do to change?"

"I don't know... stop being a nigger?"

"Fuck you asshole! Get the hell out," Maria screams, throwing everything within reach at his face, screaming and crying hysterically the whole time.

As he leaves her apartment, he cries softly to himself, wondering at his own hypocrisy.

January 18, 2026

"How long did it go on John," Lisa asks, not looking at him.

"Years..."

"When did it start? The night after our goddamn honeymoon?"

"No... before I met you. Highschool..."

"It's not that Maria bitch is it? You swore to me," she screams, slapping him across the face twice.

"I'm so sorry Lisa. I love her," John says softly, touching his face.

"You are supposed to fucking love ME!"

"What can I say... I'm..."

"I know, I know: I'm sorry. You are so goddamn pathetic. With a fucking nigger too?"

"Don't call her that Lisa ... please. This is hard enough."

"Get your shit out of my house. I can't stand to look at you." She turns away and puts her cigarette out violently, trembling. John only looks at her and turns to leave. He hears her crying now, through the closed door. His newly acquired daughter stands before him, thumb in mouth. She is so small and slight, confused by what has just happened. He goes up to her.

"I'm sorry this has happened to you sweetie. Come on... I'll take care of you." John takes the small child's hand in his and leads her away.

July 9, 2004

"I'm sorry Ms. Hawthorne. I'm a married man. I want to keep this on a business level."

March 4, 2024

"I'm pregnant Johnny," Maria says in the small café, looking directly into his eyes.

"Am... am I the father," he manages to get out, heart stopping.

"Of course you are. You are the only one I've been with in years."

"Oh shit... what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to have it of course. Don't worry, you won't be responsible in any way."

"I... I won't?"

"No... I'm done with you Johnny. I just wish it hadn't of taken me this long to figure out." Johnny says nothing to this, he knows she is saying what is right. "I wish I had the strength to do this years ago. Goodbye Johnny," Maria says, as she gets up to leave. Her hair is longer than ever, John notices, almost to her waist.

"Wait."

"What is it Johnny?" She turns to face him, looking into his blue, teary eyes.

"If... if anything ever happens to you, send her to me? I want to be there, just in case." Her eyes soften at this.

"Why can't you be a total asshole so I could hate you perfectly." John says nothing, merely stares. "Alright," she sighs, "I don't plan to go anywhere though."

January 16, 2026

"John Richter?"

"Yeah? This is he."

"My name is Carlo Stebbs, from Child Services."

"Oh... hello. Can I help you?"

"I believe so. You are acquainted with a Maria Jamieson?"

"Um... yes. Why," John asks cautiously, nervous sweat breaking out across his face.

"Well... she passed away three weeks ago. You are listed as father for her daughter, Lily."

June 21, 2000

John looks across the card table at Lisa. He can't get over how beautiful she looks. It might be the alcohol talking, but he doesn't think so. She notices him smiling and laughs. She reaches across the table and pats his cheek. "You look cute like that," she says, smiling.



"Like what?"

"Like... that. I don't know. Go away," she says, sticking her tongue out at him. He smiles and gets another drink.

July 22, 2000

"I love you Maria," John says, kissing the sleeping head softly.

"What John," Lisa turns her face to John and smiles groggily.

"Oh... I love you."

August 11, 2000

"So how did it go John-o," Mike calls from his seat on the couch.

"Hold on," John answers from the bathroom.

"Are you fucking powdering your goddamn nose again? I thought you..."

"I'm taking a crap actually Mike."

"Oh... you are clean right?"

"Can we wait until I wipe?"

"Heh-heh, yeah bud," Mike says, creeping up next to the door. As it opens, Mike waits until John comes out and grabs him. Not expecting the swift jab to the brow, Mike winds up on the ground, gasping as John steps on his stomach.

"I told you I'm clean asshole. That doesn't work anymore." John then lets his friend up.

"Fuck... that hurt."

"To answer your earlier question, it went great."

"Sweet... did you get laid?"

"None of your business jerk."

"Alright buddy..."

October 22, 2004

"Come in here John," Cameron the toad says. As John walks in, Cameron says, "Close the door." He waits until John sits down and then says, "John... I'm letting you go."

"What? Why?"

"Because you just aren't working out here. And with the Hawthorne case and all..."

"I'm getting fired because I wouldn't sleep with her?"

"John... I'm going to level with you," Cameron says. He leans back in his chair, hands folded over his ever-increasing stomach. "Hawthorne is an important client. She's loaded and her family and company have been using us for years. We like to keep her happy. And she requires certain favors to keep her happy."

"Are you telling me that..."

"Yeah I am. She requires a little extra. Which is why you were tapped. Now either satisfy the bitch or you are fired."

"That's fucking illegal."

"So sue me John."

October 29, 2004

"Anything you say Ms. Hawthorne."

May 5, 2047

"I'm so proud of you Lily," John says, hugging his tall daughter fiercely. She has his light eyes and hair and her mother's long, beautiful hair. They get a few odd looks due to her obvious mixed heritage, but John has long become immune to the hostile stares and muttered words.

"What'd I tell you dad? First in my class," she smiles at him, eyes glittering.

"Well... you sure as hell didn't get it from me. Your mom was salutatorian." John grows silent after mentioning Maria.

"Love ya dad." They embrace again.

December 31, 2056

"I'm sorry Mr. Richter... your father passed away last night."

"He's... he's dead," Marcus says softly.

"Yes sir," the nurse says. "He went in his sleep we think. It was probably quite peaceful."

"Yeah..."

"Would you like to see him?"

"No... not yet."

"Well... he left this on the table. I think he was writing in it last night." The nurse hands Marcus the small book and leaves him.

December 30, 2056

Dear Diary,

It's strange. I have another grandchild now... she reminds me of so much I've forgotten. She looks just like her mother and her sister... not like me or Marcus at all. Such a pretty thing. So innocent. So pure. Like Lily when she was small.

So many regrets. So many missed chances. And some serious fuckups along the way. I wanted to talk to Lisa so many times before she died. I loved her and she didn't know. And I hurt her so badly. And Maria...

I wonder how Mike is doing? And Cameron the toad? I haven't even thought of them in years... until just now, after Marcus and Claudia left. It's like... I don't know what its like. I just wish I could do things different. Not very different I guess. Maybe not different at all... I don't really regret anything. Or do I?

January 1, 1977

"It's a boy Mr. Richter.



## *Dance by the Light of the Moon*

First Place for Non-Fiction, Hoffman Writing Contest, Fall 2001

By Danielle Ayers

The house is empty now. The daffodils have been bulldozed. Paint has been peeling off the green shutters for as long as I can remember, but now they hang on their hinges. The house was never beautiful; it was always in desperate need of repair. Aesthetically speaking, the house was downright ugly. But it holds so many memories for me. I stand across from the house on the other side of the road in the graveyard; the graveyard she spent half of her life living across from and now she lies beneath the soft earth, with a headstone of her own. I used to play on other people's headstones when I was little, looking at half lichen-covered pictures and trying to read vanishing words.

The house looks sad now. But I remember when I couldn't wait to reach it. When it held expectation, mystery, laughter, and beauty. It wasn't that long ago. I remember . . .

\*

She would always greet us at the door. Hugging and kissing us with exuberance. She smelled like face powder and Emerald perfume. My oldest cousin used to mispronounce Granny, and it came out "Nanny" and the name stuck ever since. Everybody who wasn't her peer called her "Nanny Gilman." Her real name was Frances Poole Gilman and she was unfailingly popular, her exuberance displayed to all she loved. I remember how she used to greet everyone at church, kissing them all, saying "Hello, baby" to even grown men. I used to think it was funny. Nobody else I knew did that.

Nobody else's grandmother danced at church functions. I remember how Nanny and two teenaged girls came dancing into the fellowship hall with tambourines dressed up like gypsies, singing at the top of their lungs, dancing wildly. My mom slid to the floor covering her face in her hands. I thought it was wonderful! Just like I thought it was hysterical when she'd take out her false teeth and distort her mouth.

Music bubbled out of Nanny. She would break into song at any given moment. She had no use for classical or modern music, but still sang the jazz and swing songs of her youth. She would stand in the middle of her living room and sing "Buffalo Gals." She'd do it every time I'd ask, which was almost every time I'd visit.

"Buffalo Gals ain't ya commin' out tonight  
Commin' out tonight  
Commin' out tonight  
Buffalo Gals ain't ya commin' out tonight  
To dance by the light of the moon!"

She would hold out "moon" for as long as she could, tossing back her head, throwing up her arms and shaking her hands like a Flapper. She was always dancing. She would break out into the Charleston at any random moment. Mom does it skillfully, with the ankles twisting back and forth sharply in a way I can't ever master. Nanny loved to be the center of attention as well as lavish attention on others. But what I loved most about going to Nanny's house was not only the attention she would bestow on me, but the permeating mystery of the past.

The past clung to the house thickly, like a morning fog. Nothing was thrown away, and the unused rooms upstairs were packed with old toys, dried fingernail polish, and even an old diary one of my cousins used to keep. But what spellbound me most were the pictures and the stories Nanny would tell of her childhood.

The pictures were kept downstairs inside the coffee table, which had a little door that opened on the front of it. I loved opening the door and pulling out a pile of pictures, some faded and yellow, other still glossy. I was enchanted by the faces that stared back at me. The faces were real people, some dead while others were alive somewhere, old and wrinkled. There were pictures from Nanny's childhood, one of her and her brother holding a white rabbit. Her brown hair is chopped in a straight bob with bangs. Another picture is from her youth; she stands in a modest bathing suit from the twenties smiling at the camera, her hands clasped behind her back. There were lots of pictures from her "wild" single days. Nanny with various friends at clubs, alcohol and long skinny cigarettes in their hands, the kind Miss Scarlet is holding on the box of the *Clue* game. They remind me of glamorous movie stars from black and white movies. I can almost imagine the smoky atmosphere as the sensual notes of the jazz music float through the air. Other pictures show Nanny in a light white summer dress standing in front of a fountain in Washington, D.C. Another is of her walking along a busy 1930's street.

As much as I loved the pictures, nothing compared to Nanny's stories. She would sit in her recliner, fuzzy slippers on her feet and usually in a loose fitting dress. I would lay on the floor or sit at her feet.

"Tell me a story, about when you were little," I'd ask.

"We lived on a plantation," Nanny would often say proudly. "My mama never had to do laundry her self because she had colored women to do it for her." Nanny always seemed very proud of that fact. Maybe it was because after she married she lived in near poverty; she clung to the few things in the past that revealed a higher social status.

But Mom cautioned me about taking Nanny's stories as literal truth. "She likes to exaggerate," Mom said. "She didn't live on a plantation, just in a big white farm house. I saw it in Georgia once."

I was a little let down. I had imagined a house on the scale of Tara in *Gone with the Wind*. But no matter how much Nanny may have exaggerated, I really didn't care. I just listened fascinated, transported by her voice to the Lithonia, Georgia of 1918.

\*

We were at a wedding reception, in line for food, when Nanny leaned over and whisperingly asked me, "Have you started your period yet?"

I remember being slightly shocked my grandmother was asking me that.

"No."

"Don't worry, I started late. All the other girls at school started before me. They used to talk about it in the bathroom, so I'd pretend like I'd started too and carried around pads with me. The doctors always told me I'd never have children. But obviously they were wrong. I got married older than most women, especially for that time. I was forty when I had your mother." I remember looking at her "mother's ring" that had her four children's birthstones on it and thinking how beautiful her hands were.

I have a picture from that wedding. It's of me dancing with Nanny; I'm laughing and she's wearing a pink dress. There's also a picture of her dancing with the groom. She was always dancing. She would break out into the Charleston at any random



moment. My mom does it skillfully, with the ankles twisting back and forth sharply in a way I can't ever master.

\*

"I hated my step-mother," Nanny told me. "She was jealous of my father and I, that we were so close. She'd always try to cause trouble somehow." She'd always tell me this after telling me that her mother died when she was just eleven. She didn't like the fact that her father got married again.

Other times she'd tell me about how she met Pop-pop. I looked at their picture right after they got engaged. He's tall and handsome; she's short and pretty wearing a nurse's white cap and dress.

"I was given a tour by the head nurse of the hospital when I first saw your grandfather," she might start, adjusting her rather large glasses. "I asked her who he was and she said, 'That's Dawson Gilman, but don't set your sights on him, because he doesn't pay a bit of attention to the nurses.' I decided right then to get his attention. So I was walking down a flight of stairs one day and saw him sitting with a patient in the lounge area. I quickly turned the heel of my shoe and fell down the rest of the stairs. He came over and picked me up, and that was that. One day I was working and he came up to me and asked—when I was finished work—if I wanted to get married. I said yes, and we got married in the courthouse."

Nanny and Pop-pop had a disturbing relationship. Pop-pop lived in half of the house, where there used to be an apartment rented out to other people, and Nanny lives in the main house. They rarely spoke to each other; Pop-pop ignored her and Nanny said nasty things to him. They divorced, but lived in separate parts of the house long before they divorced. Pop-pop moved over to the apartment side after a newly appointed Catholic Priest told him he was living in sin. In the sight of the Catholic Church his marriage was not recognized, and his children were illegitimate, because Nanny wasn't Catholic, or something like that. Mom remembers that Nanny yelled at the Priest to get out of her house. Nanny divorced Pop-pop later to get money to pay for all of her prescription medicines.

\*

After Pop-pop died from a heart attack at a horse race (he was the healthiest of all my grandparents, his death was a shock) Nanny had a lot of money she hadn't had access to during her married life. She couldn't live in the house by herself, so she moved into an apartment. I was so happy Nanny could have nice things now, in her old age. But Nanny got sicker and sicker. She lost control of her bladder. She didn't sing anymore. Nanny wouldn't come live with us, even though Mom tried to get her to. Mom says she wished she'd made her come anyway. Finally she had to go into a nursing home for a while. She had a view out of the window and pictures and flowers, but she was bitter. I didn't like visiting her there. The smell of the nursing home nauseated me and Nanny hardly talked. Her strength ran out, she hated it there. She didn't stay long.

I was curling my hair getting ready for a birthday party when the phone call came. My sister ran to my room yelling, "Come quick!" We ran downstairs. My mom was sobbing on the phone, standing by the ironing board.

\*

Whenever we'd leave Nanny's house, she'd whisper important things in my ear, just for me. I wish I remembered what they were, but they were special. It's really not



important I don't know what they were, the fact that she made sure I knew I was loved and was special is all that matters. As we'd drive out of the gravel lane she'd run behind the car, throwing kisses with her hands, her dress fluttering . . . dancing.

***“Where are you Rupert Brooke?”***

“It’s not what the world holds,”  
he said.  
“it’s what we bring to it.”  
So I offer tea,

forgotten poems,  
midnight conversations  
about philosophy  
and pop music,  
(*We read Nick Hornby.*)

tender whispers,  
grace-  
before meals

and almost never during muddles.

I bring my books,  
my journal,  
the memoirs  
of an old fashioned girl  
in a postmodern world

a reverence for questions  
and letters,  
with a strange devotion  
to gentle boys  
who serve platitudes over midnight tea.

“It’s not what the world holds,”  
I say.  
“It’s what we hold on to  
as we enter it.”

Wonder,  
Ideals,

a worn copy of A Room of One's Own.

We know the ideals are not always true  
I know that even Virginia Woolf left her daring plunge  
to drown  
but there is still the belief,  
that our words  
will be enough to off-  
earnestly you interrupt,  
hold my hand,  
and ask, "Is there honey yet for tea?"

-Bettina K. Jaffe-

### *Ithaca*

Spring Grove smells like the beach tonight  
And we drive past Weis or the boardwalk  
It's all the same tonight.  
Close my eyes and imagine reality;  
Alone on Ocean Boulevard  
Kayte's car and the seagulls in:  
Melancholy mania.  
The timelessness of now,  
The unique sameness of friends,  
Strikes hard with ten o'clock  
Or maybe midnight.  
Could be anywhere  
But not here  
Tonight.

Joan Concilio

*The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want and if they can't find them, make them.*

-- George Bernard Shaw

*Success is a matter of luck. Ask any failure.*

■ --Earl Wilson

### *Lachesis Ignored*

Jerry Kimbrough

Archie Mendezzi was about to have an archetypically bad day.

The funny thing was, he knew it even before the day began.

\*\*

"I think...no, I *know* I'm psychic," he had told his younger brother Manny on Wednesday two days previous whilst pacing back and forth in front of the family room's fireplace. "Want to hear my theory?"

Manny didn't, having heard his brother's telepathy theory twice already, but he listened because it was kind of interesting and because Archie's voice drowned out the cacophony of shrieks and gasps coming from upstairs (his sisters were watching one of those Psycho Sorority New Year's Massacre movies; he had watched thirty seconds of it, proclaimed it "retarded", and had promptly bolted to his room and cowered under the blankets for an hour until Archie eventually coaxed him out of hiding).

He also didn't mind because Archie's theory took about ten seconds to explain. According to him, Archie could actually wake up in the morning, sit up, and instantly be able to divine whether or not the day was to be good or bad. "It's not really telepathy, I guess," he told Manny solemnly. "More like a subset."

"A subset," repeated Manny.

"Yeah," mused Archie. "A subset. Like a separate category from all other psychics."

Manny nodded patiently.

\*\*

Archie woke up at eight in the morning on Friday and glared accusingly in the general direction of his digital alarm clock. For some reason, he was *very* irritated with that clock this morning, so he grunted angrily at it and punched the snooze button hard enough to crack the plastic readout.

He sat up in alarm, blinked twice. Looked at the clock.

This didn't bode well. He swung his legs out of bed and stood up, glancing around warily. *Damn it*, he thought. He'd started off days badly before – he'd had ceiling tiles fall on his head, fallen *up* the stairs and broken his ankle (how he managed to do that is something that baffled him even now), and through some quirk of fate, almost every liquid or food that he spilled on himself ended up on the crotch of his pants. But he'd never broken a clock before. Definitely didn't bode well.

He only had one summer class today, and he hadn't missed it yet. That was good. But he was getting a paper back in that class, a thorough examination of the world's superstitions that he had laboriously worked on for the past month. If he'd already broken an alarm clock in the span of five seconds after waking up, then the paper would



doubtless receive a pretty shitty grade. Or the destroyed clock could just be a random, freak occurrence of bad luck.

But he doubted it. He sighed, ran his fingers through his hair, and grimly marched to the bathroom for a shower.

He somehow avoided getting toothpaste on himself while brushing his teeth, yet somehow managed to spill one droplet of coffee directly in the center of his white T-shirt. He endured this humiliation without too much surprise and changed into a dark shirt to mask future beverage stains during the course of the day.

The paper was admittedly pretty damn good, he thought. The first half covered about six hundred major superstitions that went back as far as Pagan Europe and the Middle Ages, and he had found most of the research fascinating. The second half was a highly conjectural analysis of how superstitions affect people's ideas of luck and fate, and *that* was the part of the paper that made him most nervous. He wasn't sure whether or not Proust would see it as an arguable thesis, for while Archie was really quite good at forming theories, he was rather poor at substantiating them. But still, the paper was *damn* good, and he forced himself not to worry about it. He'd be fine.

He glanced at his wristwatch. Time to go. He abandoned the remainder of his soggy Count Chocula and headed for the door.

\*\*

The El Camino's engine wasn't turning over, and *that* gave Archie quite a scare until the aging car finally wheezed into life. He breathed a sigh of relief; but still, he guessed, this was probably just the calm before the storm. He knew he wasn't going to make it to class on time.

But he decided to try some positive thinking, a suggestion from his mother, and repeatedly told himself that he *would* make it to class, sure he would – in fact, if he wanted to, he could probably skootch his way to the university on his ass and still get there on time.

He was just pulling through the faux-iron gates and applauding himself for his skillful driving when he felt a dull thud shudder through the Camino. His body jerked spasmodically. Glancing in his rearview, he saw a white Ford Bronco and surmised that there was indeed some type of connection between the thwack he had just felt and the car behind him. Archie in turn exercised his psychic abilities again and predicted that he would be beating the shit out of somebody in roughly thirty seconds.

This particular prediction failed as he found himself confronted with a brawny, muscular gentleman who appeared (at least to the trembling Archie) to be about eight feet tall. Archie didn't kick any ass that day, unfortunately for him.

The large oaf explained that he hadn't seen Archie's car in front of him (which made literally no sense to Archie, considering his car was bright orange and visible in pitch blackness, but Archie was feeling pretty openminded at the moment so he let it slide) and that he would call the police from his cellular phone. The behemoth's eyes followed Archie as he warily circled the car.

The El Camino wasn't all that badly damaged, considering. Archie gave the rear of the car a cursory glance, then quickly turned and hurried to the passenger door of the Camino (his hands were shaking badly and he didn't want the hulking brute to see him scared) to retrieve his registration. He was going to miss his class, and he wasn't going to get his essay back – which wasn't necessarily a bad thing. As he and his new friend

waited for the tow truck to arrive, Archie briefly tallied up the random spurts of bad luck: the clock, the coffee, his lateness to class, and the series of dents across the rear of his car. And...oh, two flat tires. That meant a pretty long-ass walk home.

But it still wasn't too bad, yet. Could be worse.

\*\*

Archie still felt the briefest stirrings of hope regarding his essay as he sidled his way into the classroom. He tried not to mull over the scathing look that Proust shot his way and ducked sheepishly into his seat. Instead of taking notes, he doodled (he wasn't enthralled by Proust's lecture today, anyway – something about classical conditioning and Pavlov, really interesting, sure) and glanced around the room, trying to figure out whether or not Proust had returned everyone else's papers.

Proust's voice suddenly rose to an almost booming crescendo, and Archie looked up in alarm. He caught the middle of the sentence – “—whole, I was *very* pleased with everyone's papers...” (Proust was big on verbally italicizing words, and the emphasis on the word *very* brought on another surge of hope to Archie).

The beginning of Proust's sentence was: “Although three or four papers were *severely* lacking in the *research* department, on the whole...”

Archie shuffled his feet nervously as Proust called each student's name. Archie's paper was (conveniently) last in the pile, and he tripped over the floor as he blundered his way across the room to accept it from Proust. Someone tittered. He blushed fiercely and shuffled back to his seat.

Proust had apparently liked a lot about Archie's paper. His title page, for instance, was “very professional”, and his use of footnotes was similarly “very professional”. Apparently, Proust had also disliked quite a bit about the essay, including the content and pretty much everything else.

One of Archie's favorite comments read: “This reads more like a book report than an interpretative essay, Mr. Mendezzi – while it is well documented and insightful, your paper doesn't even *attempt* to connect superstitions to society until the eighth page”. This was the longest comment Archie had ever received from a professor, and he was as distressed by the manner in which Dr. Proust had actually italicized the word *attempt* as he was by the numerical grade scrawled on the last page (which Archie took care not to look at too often).

Archie made a mental note never to get out of bed on a Friday again. Never.

\*\*

There was a small group of students clustered around Proust's desk after the class ended, and Archie curiously joined the throng.

What he heard threw him slightly off track. Proust had made an offer to any students who had failed the essay (which included Archie), and this offer entailed that the paper be rewritten in five days, making it due the following Wednesday.

It was almost too good to be true, and he thought long and hard about the implications of this new situation as he walked down the hallway towards the front doors. Now, he technically *hadn't* failed the paper, which might mean that his entire telepathy conjecture was wrong. And if that were true, then he would have to endure the verbal jibes of his ten year old brother, and that would be too much to bear.



His backpack suddenly split open, scattering books and papers onto the linoleum. Archie instantly regained faith in what he had decided was called "Shitty Day Telepathy".

\*\*

During his two mile walk home, Archie fumed. Archie had called the tow truck service from a pay phone outside the university and discovered that his El Camino was located at a Shell gas station about ten miles away. Other than the two flats and the dent, it was okay, driveable. That much was good.

Still, he was in the midst of a two mile walk, and Archie *hated* to walk (even though it was a sunlit, cheery spring day, Archie still would have rather been sleeping). Fumbling in his pocket for a cigarette, he somehow tripped and spilled facefirst onto the pavement, scraping hell out of his left palm. He groaned and cursed and eventually rolled over to his back and lay there for a moment, panting wearily, then sat up.

Something moved in the leaf pile next to him.

He shrieked and backed away in terror, then regained his composure and stood. There appeared to be a human body lying under the brittle leaves, and he gingerly shifted a few leaves with his sneaker.

A grizzled man, roughly in his fifties, was lying under the leaf pile. Judging from his clothing (patched and torn, grimy), Archie guessed that he was homeless.

It looked like someone had attacked him, as a wound in his stomach was bleeding freely. Archie blanched and took another step back, stomach turning. He hated blood. His mind whirled. This guy was going to die if he didn't do something – but was it his business?

He decided he really needed that cigarette, so he pulled a Marlboro Light out of his pocket. Something clattered onto the pavement.

*A cellular phone.* "What the *hell?*" Archie said aloud. It looked to be the same model being carried by the behemoth who struck his car – but it being in his pocket made no coherent sense whatsoever. He fingered it contemplatively.

*I had watched the guy put the phone back into his pocket.*

Not pausing to think about the oddity of this situation, Archie quickly dialed 911, told the operator the details, and hung up. He took a long, hard look at the old man, who lay panting on the street. The old man's eyes opened briefly and looked directly at Archie. Archie looked away, unnerved.

*There was no way the phone could have ended up in my pocket. No way whatsoever.*

And Archie walked away, though he felt the old man's eyes were still on him.

*How odd,* he thought.

\*\*

His mind was a blank slate until he arrived home at about eleven. Manny had just woken up and blinking owlishly at Archie in greeting. "You left your Count Chocula on the table," Manny said accusingly.

"I know," said Archie quietly, and sat down across from him.

Manny looked at him querulously.



"Did you predict a bad day? Did it come true?" Manny looked at him consolingly.

"Sort of," Archie said. He explained what had happened.

"So if your car hadn't broken down," Manny asked, "you wouldn't have been able to save this guy's life, would you?"

Archie was silent for a long moment, and then nodded. "Right."

"So it's good to have bad luck as long as you save someone's life?"

"Apparently so," Archie said.

\*\*

He decided that night that he wasn't psychic. Not even a little bit.

\*\*

And he ended up getting an A on the rewritten paper. And the old man survived. And he got quite a hefty bit of cash from the behemoth's insurance company, which was enough to buy him a new, functional automobile.

And that coffee stain from Friday morning came out with a little Tide. No problem.

### *fledglings*

Today I thought of calling you.  
I wonder--do you still wear eyeglasses  
that you gently wipe with tissue?  
Do you write villanelles  
on the backs of playbills?  
Listen to the wind through the kite's string  
Will you remember and sing me that song,  
the one in Hebrew about fledglings  
who always fly together?  
Will you forgive me  
for youth and trembling  
for not understanding  
youth and trembling  
and Hebrew songs  
about fledglings  
who always fly  
together.

-Bettina Jaffe-

## ***Skylarking***

-a one-act play by Bettina K. Jaffe

“Into the darkness they go, the wise and the lovely.”-Edna St. Vincent Milay

Scene 1: *a city street, a trunk sits on the curb*

*A deliriously happy and intoxicated couple stumbles past laughing. At a window, above the trunk, is a young man in a disheveled suit and five o' clock shadow. He is smoking a cigarette and looking at the trunk. He can not see what the audience can--a young woman curled up in front of the trunk, sleeping. She has a curious look--part child, part sensualist. Her dress is pulled up above her knees and she has one high heel on and one off. She is beautiful and tragic.*

Scene 2: *A man walks by on his way to work. He carries a newspaper and a silver flask. He hits the trunk with his rolled up newspaper and shakes his head.*

**Man:** *sadly but with a touch of contempt--The Fitzgerald's are at it again, I see. exits stage right*

**Scott:** *It is just morning and she has not returned. He takes out a pocket watch, looks at it absently, and puts it back in his pocket. He is talking to no one in particular, continuing to smoke his cigarette.*

*He puts out his cigarette in a flowerpot on the windowsill just as Zelda awakens and lights a cigarette. The gestures, although subtle, must mirror each other exactly. She is still hidden in front of the trunk.*

**Scott:** *now holding a wineglass, he begins to speak despondently*

*Damn her. Damn her drunken serenades on the rooftops of taxicabs. Damn her poetry eyes. To hell with her intellectual suspicion and her haunting presence in my writing, my dreams, my thoughts. I hear her even now. He swallows the contents of the glass defiantly.*

**Zelda:** *She sits Indian style and begins humming a jazz tune. Her soliloquy is both distraught and whimsically satirical.*

*My dearheart is a writer. When I met him he had this thoughtbook and I told him I wanted every page to be ZELDA! I was so desired and he said, “now I know why they lock princesses in ivory towers” and I said, “Darling I'm yours!” She thrusts her small wrists out theatrically, her bracelets clinking. Show me the prison! She smiles weakly and imitates Scott's voice. Would New York do? She smooths her dress wrinkles and stares beyond the audience dreamily.*

**Scott:** *She'll return. willing her to with her loveliness. God, why can't I remember when everything was possible, when I felt sure of her love... and of my success. Her extravagance provokes these terrible feuds but it is herself maddeningly that prompts these lost monologues.*

*He raises his glass as if to make a toast and laughs bitterly.*

*I could write a thousand books and she would still remain inexpressible. I want to give her everything, I promised her the whole world or at the very least a pocketful of peace...but this is all we know. All I know is to lover her; I love Zelda-voice breaks-and that's the beginning and end of everything*



**Zelda:** I was born for fiction. Mamma named me after a gypsy queen in a novel.  
*Tone changes-*Scott, why couldn't you love me then-when I was a little girl and just as spoiled but not as rotten. I was independent, flying on a swing from our magnolia tree, walking on open roofs. Now I walk on tightropes for you, dear, suspended passion for the sullen crowds. Oh, *she looks indignant*, I once told you not to mourn for memories but there was a time, an enchanted late autumn when we were only for each other. I should have known it was only a sweet prelude to our grand romance. Does this seem familiar? *She puts her right hand to her head and wonders.* Was this in one of Scott's stories? Maybe any minute I will hear him calling Rosalind! Daisy! Nicole!

**Scott:** *anguished-Zelda!*

**Zelda:** *peers out contritely, almost impishly, over the trunk*  
Are you done mooning, my dear?

**Scott:** *sadly, softer and relieved, Zelda.*

**Zelda:** Tell me again why you love me.

**Scott:** *sighs, Because you're my girl, America's first flapper-brave and beautiful.*  
*lowers his voice-* and damned.

**Zelda:** *stands on the trunk and raises her hand towards Scott*

I'm still your wife. *She smiles but it is not clear if this is a question, a reminder, or a declaration. She lowers her voice.* And your heroine.

**Scott:** pleading, "Zelda, my love, will you come back to me?"

**Zelda:** *distracted, she does a little dance on the trunk, getting into 1st position, 2nd position (mechanically), and then awakening from her reverie.*

Of course, I was just waiting for you to ask, goofo. *She looks at the trunk as if this dilemma of what to do with the trunk hasn't happened a hundred mornings...She places her hands on her hips.*

**Scott:** I'll send someone for the trunk later...

**Zelda:** *blows him a kiss and steps gracefully from the trunk*

I'm coming!" *She begins to walk off stage, rambling*

I do wish your name was Paul and that it was always...*voice trails off*

*Scene 3: Scott is still at the window. He takes his already loosened tie and lights a cigarette just as Zelda throws her cigarette butt on the ground and eagerly stamps out the ash. As she does this her wraps fall from her shoulders sliding down her arms.*

*Scott blows a kiss to the vanishing Zelda.*

*An old woman in faded glamour walks slowly across the stage. She is wearing a ratty fur coat, dangly earrings, and a vacant expression.*

*Scott takes another drag of his cigarette and lets the wineglass fall, fall and shatter upon hitting the trunk.*

*The voice of Zelda is heard off-stage (as if behind him)*

**Zelda:** Darling!

*Scott turns from the window. Lights fade.*



## *Unusual Occurrence*

By Becky Shannon

In supermarket a woman and a man both in their early twenties are making their way towards each other not paying much attention to where they are going. As a result their carts crash into each other.

GABRIELLE: *(Startled looks to see who SHE collided with.)* PETER! Why do you always shop like you are in Europe or something?

PETER: *(Sheepishly smiles.)* Hey Gabrielle, sorry about that. It's faster this way.

GABRIELLE: I didn't expect to run into you here.

PETER: I stopped by your apartment and Susan told me that you were here.

GABRIELLE: So why were you looking for me?

PETER: I didn't say I came looking for you, did I?

GABRIELLE: *(Laughs.)* It sure sounded to me like you were.

PETER: *(Teases.)* Don't sound too full of yourself.

GABRIELLE: I'm not. You avoid supermarkets like the plague. *(Thoughtfully.)* That must be because you always get kicked out of them.

PETER: Ok ok all joking aside I did come in here looking for you.

GABRIELLE: Why?

PETER: I was thinking about us and maybe its time advance our relationship.

GABRIELLE: *(Surprised.)* We've been together awhile and I can see us married sometime.

PETER: *(Smiles.)* I was hoping to hear something like that.

GABRIELLE: I'd be mad if you didn't want to hear that.

PETER: True so why don't you abandon the shopping and we'll go somewhere fun.

GABRIELLE: *(Laughs.)* I think I'll pass till I get some shopping done. Joining me?

PETER: *(Frowns but quickly exclaims.)* Man, you're no fun! I'll help if you feed me tonight. I need something in return.

GABRIELLE: Something in return for what?

PETER: You take forever. Besides I came to find you, not shop.

GABRIELLE: Sorry, Peter but it should be me getting something in return not you.

PETER: Hey now what do you mean by that?

GABRIELLE: I seem to recall the time when you decided to play Frisbee with a frozen pizza.

PETER: *(Laughs.)* You have to admit that was fun.

GABRIELLE: *(Laughs.)* Although you accidentally hit the old woman and she chased and kept hitting you with her purse?

PETER: *(Makes a face.)* That part wasn't fun.

GABRIELLE: Ok we'll stop talking about that. *(SHE continues down the aisle. HE randomly throws things into the cart.)*

PETER: Ok.

GABRIELLE: *(SHE notices HE'S not paying attention to what HE'S getting.)* Umm Peter don't you think you should actually pay attention to what you're buying?

PETER: Nope, not at all. I couldn't resist the fun of it.

GABRIELLE: *(SHE gives HIM a strange look.)* The fun of it?

PETER: Makes it more fun to be surprised when you get home. *(Looks thoughtfully at a bag of rice.)* I really need to get pretzels. I'll be right back.

PETER: *(HIS voice over the loudspeaker.)* Gabrielle, I knew from five years ago we were meant to be from our first date when we went to the Frosh Hop together. We got closer and closer. So that is why I would love for us to spend the rest of our life together so will you marry me? *(SHE is looking stunned and embarrassed. SHE moans. HE comes running back in the process knocking over a stack of soup cans.)*

GABRIELLE: You did not just propose to me in a supermarket! Of all the places you picked a supermarket!

PETER: Honey, calm down. You shouldn't care about the where. I proposed and you should be happy. Besides I had planned to do it this afternoon but I couldn't persuade you out of your shopping. Then when I saw the rice I was too impatient to wait till later. You did want a proposal didn't you?



GABRIELLE: That's not the point! I don't think you could have been more unromantic if you tried!

PETER: I can be romantic.

GABRIELLE: Oh really. How?

PETER: *(HE looks around.)* Come with me. *(HE goes and SHE follows perplexed.)*

GABRIELLE: *(Mutters.)* Please tell me that we're leaving. *(HE stops grabbing a bouquet of the flowers. Kneeling.)*

PETER: Gabrielle, please put me out of my misery and say that you'll marry me since I'm so madly in love with you. *(SHE covers her face in embarrassment.)*

GABRIELLE: *(SHE moans.)* Yeah, granted I'll give you that it was a bit more romantic than an announcement but Peter we're in a supermarket, which doesn't lend itself well to romance!

PETER: *(HE sadly sighs.)* Gabrielle, is all this just you trying to put off telling me no?

GABRIELLE: *(SHE shoves the shopping cart out of HER way. It crashes into the shelf. SHE hurries over and hugs HIM.)* Awwww I'm sorry Peter. I didn't mean it that way. This has just completely shocked me. It's really sweet how hard you're trying. *(Smiles.)*

PETER: *(Confused.)* Oh ok. I see.

GABRIELLE: Why are you confused?

PETER: It's because I still don't know how you feel. I mean you yell at me for proposing here because it's not romantic but then you go and tell me that it's sweet. What am I supposed to think?

GABRIELLE: Peter, I'm truly sorry. I didn't mean to do that. Every girl dreams of being proposed to but we all dream of it in an extremely romantic way. Supermarkets are nowhere on the list of a romantic place to be proposed to.

PETER: I'm really sorry. I just got the idea and I didn't want to wait till tonight to propose and it seemed like such a great idea so I immediately acted on it. Just simply answer a yes or no or tell me that I should propose to you somewhere else.

GABRIELLE: *(Sighs.)* I think I've given up on getting you to propose to me somewhere romantic.

PETER: Are you still mad about last year when I proposed to you in the car?



GABRIELLE: No I'm not. After all this is a step up from one in a car.

PETER: I know you said then that you weren't ready it yet but was there another reason?

GABRIELLE: *(Looks sorry.)* Yeah there was. It didn't help that you had almost crashed the car when you asked me. *(HE looks embarrassed.)*

PETER: *(Jokes.)* Well you crashed the cart so we're even. So do I get a yes now?

GABRIELLE: *(Thinks. Smiles. SHE enthusiastically hugs HIM.)* Peter, of course I'll marry you! It's the sweetest thing how you proposed! And how you're willing to make it even better for me if that's what I want!

PETER: *(Hesitantly hugs HER back.)* You're not putting me on or anything are you?

GABRIELLE: *(Confused.)* Why would I do that?

PETER: Because I'm getting the feeling this is all a big joke to you or something.

GABRIELLE: It's not like that at all! I only reacted that way because like I keep saying it's a supermarket.

PETER: Oh ok. But in my favor I picked a unique place to do so.

GABRIELLE: You sure did. But, I think that we should finish the shopping now.

PETER: Wait! *(SHE stops and turns around facing HIM.)*

GABRIELLE: What?

PETER: I forgot the ring! Do you want me to propose to you all over again with it?

GABRIELLE: No I think that two proposals are enough. But I do want the ring. *(SHE walks back over to HIM. HE takes it out of HIS pocket, opening it and showing it.)*

PETER: Here it is. *(Anxiously.)* Do you like it? *(SHE gives HIM a huge smile.)*

GABRIELLE: It's gorgeous. *(HE places it on HER finger. SHE holds her hand out admiring it. HE now starts to head down the aisle.)*

PETER: Come on Gabrielle. You said that we should finish our shopping. *(SHE starts. SHE catches up to HIM and starts putting all of HER stuff in HIS cart.)* What are you doing?

GABRIELLE: I don't feel like pushing the cart around anymore. We'll just take the one.

PETER: Ok that's fine. *(Laughs.)* You could have asked me first. *(HE helps HER place the rest of HER stuff in HIS cart. THEY then continue down the aisle and HE starts grabbing a bunch of bags and boxes of cookies.)*

GABRIELLE: *(Laughs.)* Peter, you have like five different kinds of cookies. Are you throwing a party for a bunch of kids?

PETER: *(Shrugs.)* I like them.

GABRIELLE: Do you really need all of them? Maybe you could put a box or two back.

PETER: *(HE gives HER a pleading face.)* Please let me keep all of them. Tell you what I'll even let you have a box.

GABRIELLE: *(Laughs.)* Should I feel special?

PETER: Yeah you can have your favorites the chocolate chip cookies although they're my favorites too.

GABRIELLE: *(Laughs.)* Wow I feel so special. *(Pushes the cart with them still there.)*

PETER: All right that means I get to keep them!

GABRIELLE: *(Calls back)* Can you act any younger?

PETER: *(PETER catches up with HER.)* I can act five if you want.

GABRIELLE: *(Laughs)* You just were.

PETER: *(Making a goofy face)* You know you like it.

GABRIELLE: *(Tries to hold back HER laughter but cant.)* Realize we're out in public?

PETER: No really? Are we?

GABRIELLE: *(Laughs.)* We are. *(HE pretends to look shocked.)* Oh shut up and just push the cart. *(SHE gives the cart a slight shove towards HIM.)*

PETER: Fine I see how it is. I'm just here to push the cart.

GABRIELLE: You were the one that came looking for me and decided to tag along.

PETER: *(Throws up HIS hands in mock despair)* All right I give up. I can't argue that.

GABRIELLE: *(Laughs)* That's better. *(THEY reach the end of the aisle and SHE looks over at the magazines. Pointing at them.)* That is what I want to wear for the wedding!

PETER: *(HE glances over.)* You mean the dress on Modern Bride cover?

GABRIELLE: No not that! The outfit on the cover of Women's Fitness.

PETER: Why would you want to wear that? Wouldn't you much rather wear a wetsuit?

GABRIELLE: Not for the ceremony. Why?

PETER: Ok what are you planning for the ceremony?

GABRIELLE: I want to have us bungee jumping!

PETER: Wow that sounds great! You always come up with the best ideas! *(THEY continue down the next aisle.)* But would we have the priest do that also?

GABRIELLE: Hmm I don't know. I doubt we could find a priest willing to do that.

PETER: Maybe it would be better if he were above us or something.

GABRIELLE: Yeah just so long as everyone could hear each other. But where should we put the guests?

PETER: If we could just somehow picture it would be like we could figure out where to.

GABRIELLE: *(SHE looks around and then grabs some cans a the shelf.)* We can pretend that we'd be up on this shelf. *(Pointing to the fourth shelf up.)*

PETER: That's a good idea. How about we have the guests here. *(Moves a few of the cans to the floor in front of the shelf.)* Yeah I think that looks good.

GABRIELLE: That looks good but we should have the priest in front of them. *(SHE pushes back the cans and places another one in front of them. SHE starts shoves the cans around.)* My family should be on the right side I think.

PETER: *(HE looks at the way the cans are now.)* I'm not sure that I like it that way.

GABRIELLE: But I do.

PETER: *(HE tries to move some of the cans but instead knocks a few off the shelf.)* Doesn't my opinion matter?

GABRIELLE: Awww I'm sorry. I didn't realize that I was making you feel that way. We'll work it out later. *(Glances at the cans and laughs.)* Look at the mess you made. We should clean it up. *(HE sighs but begins picking up the cans. SHE helps HIM.)*





## ***“Doorknobs, windowpanes, and ashes”***

Bob Dylan once was asked by a reporter:

“what are you certain of?”

he answered

“doorknobs, windowpanes, and ashes.”

I think I understand the minstrel’s reply

he spoke of tangibles, worn realities which mark our daily existence

Certainties keep us safe- give us places to dry off, hang our coat, and come home to find  
some kind of comfort

but they cannot be all there is,

because then life is reduced to doorknobs, windowpanes, and ashes.

and all we see is knobs we cannot turn

and panes which can’t be broken

and ashes that cannot be re-lit

the irony is that panes are glass- we can’t escape the colors

and doors cannot stop us from hearing the sobbing or the yelling

promises broken can be slipped under doorways

window-views are like green-lights across the harbor

we cannot wait for life to just waltz into one of our parties

there is hair to touch and cool water to drink

and a constellation whose name you can’t remember but

its the one you walked beneath

once upon a moment

and I’m not sure of certainties

but I know that there is a world out there which we can only

taste and smell and touch and see if we

carry with us a measure of faith

and doors become entrances and exits

windows (frames for the most enchanting pictures)

and ashes (a reminder that we are human)

mortal men and women who cannot afford to

reduce their life to “doorknobs, windowpanes, and ashes.”

-Christina Jaffe-



"Bookends, windowpanes, and ashes"

Hop Dylan once was asked by a reporter:

"What are you certain of?"

He answered:

"Bookends, windowpanes, and ashes."

I think I understand the minister's reply.

As a sign of belief, worn collars which mark our daily existence



one kind of control

they cannot be all

knobs, windowpanes, and ashes



## *Percolators and Praise Songs*

By Kelly M. Archibald

Brain candy. That's what she called her 3:30 class. Playing the piano with the school's Jazz Band: if it was good, they licked it. Her and twenty-some guys, it was just like hanging out with her cousins. Laughs, jokes, a non-stop moron-a-thon for an hour and a half: it was the highlight of her week. But in the middle of their rock number, she thought of her brothers. They were probably home, playing with the dog, having fun. All she could see in her mind's eye was their laughing faces. She heard her mom, calling them in for dinner and squawking about tracking mud as the street lamps hummed in the falling twilight. The air was thick with salt.

"Earth to keys, you still with us?" the director asked.

"Yeh yeh, sorry sorry," she grinned back. As she looked back at her music, she noticed the bridge was to be played in a "very legit style." She laughed.

After band, she went down to where the evening's talent show was setting up. The band on stage was doing a Godsmack number, and the singer sounded amazingly like the singer from Souled for Spite, her favorite band from back home. Her cousin was their rhythm guitarist, and the rest of the kids were teammates from her years on the Waves. She loved them all individually, and all together, so much it was crazy.

She remembered the last time she saw them, doing Primus' "The Ballad of Bodacious." David sang, and Steve came out with a KFC bucket on his head. Kaleb went nuts, ripping his shirt off and diving into the crowd, as Krazy Ed and Guy danced a polka in the background.

She sat down on the couch by the stage door, listening to the strange band and thinking of her compatriots. All of a sudden, homesickness enveloped her, devoured her like a wave. She couldn't move, and was overcome with nausea and an overwhelming urge to throw herself to the ground. Why, she thought. Why? Why am I in Pennsylvania? Everyone else is home. Why do I have to be the only one here? Why did I even leave?

All she wanted to do was drop out. Her roommates pissed her off, the locals scared her, her classes didn't interest her, the city smelled, and she longed for a familiar face. But she was the only one. Alone. Two fat bitter tears rolled down her cheek as she vacantly stared at the modern art hanging in the lobby. She shivered uncontrollably. Pennsylvania was a cold place.

Coffee, she thought. Coffee: a temporary fix for an epic upset. Coffee had always been a thing that warmed her, body and soul. It was the only addiction she still allowed herself, and she decided that it was what she needed just then. When no one understood, when no one else was there, she always had joe. Oven-roasted and freshly ground, nothing cured heartache like a cup of coffee. Liquid love. Yes, she decided, coffee was exactly what she needed.

She stood up and straightened her skirt as she slung her backpack over her shoulders. She whispered a quick prayer for safety as she hopped on her skateboard and propelled herself across the lobby and out the door. She loved her skateboard. It was a Gravity longboard with green trucks and blue peeling grip tape. It was five years old, and she had beat it to death. On her third set of bushings, she had reshaped and rebuilt the board once already, and it needed it again. She had long ago lost count of the wheels she

had ruined. She called it Betsy, named after Davy Crockett's rifle, because it was bad luck to have anything without a name. And besides, Davy Crockett was just awesome.

The only problem with having Betsy up at college wasn't the fact that the security guards chased her, but that there were hills. Keturah still couldn't handle them, but she rode down them anyway. She had only severely gotten her lunch twice, and had only had to leap off the board once to avoid being hit by a car. Two wipeouts in two years wasn't that bad, but she prayed for safety anyway.

Down the path, past the fountain, she felt the wind blow the hair out of her eyes, and she filled her lungs with the damp evening air. She wove back and forth on the path, counting the sidewalk's rhythm in her head. Da-duh. Da-duh. Da-duh.

From across the quad an angry voice boomed, "Girls don't belong on skateboards!"

She hollered back, "Jesus loves you." What do you say to a comment like that? Closed-minded dinosaur.

As she whipped down the hill, she picked up speed. No cars, no cars, please, no cars, she chanted as she flew past the gym. She felt more and more alive yet scarily closer to death every second as she picked up speed, secretly envying the birds who get to travel at such speeds all the time. She crossed the bridge, and her muscles relaxed as she started to slow down on the level ground. Across the parking lots she rolled, hopping odd chunks of car and debris as they came. Down the steps of her dorm she jumped, and right in the open front door. As she rode through the lobby towards her hallway, Bill behind the desk called out.

"No skateboarding inside Keturah," he said unconvincingly.

"I know," she called back, and continued rolling towards her room. She stopped at her door, kicked up and caught her board, then keyed her way in. Shutting the door behind her, she clicked on the lights and looked around. Ah, sanctuary, solitude, she thought, no one's home but me. She dropped her bag by the door, leant her board against the wall, and went over to whistle hello to her two goldfish, Rosie and Patricia.

She filled her coffee pot with water from the hallway water fountain, set the filter on the filter stand, poured the grinds in, put the filter top on, put the lid on, and plugged her percolator in. She lowered her shade and put a tape on: a little Andrew Peterson to calm her nerves and a little Zao to remind her of how alive she was.

The percolator filled the room with a beautiful aroma, making that sound "Pop Up Video" only wishes it could have. Her friends at college teased her incessantly for being so old fashioned as to use a percolator when Mr. Coffees were so readily available. What would they think, she often wondered, if they found out she still used a manual typewriter for all her assignments.

"Oh Lord," she whispered defeatedly as she grabbed her Psalter, "I'm all **kinds** of homesick." She tossed it up on her chair as she grabbed her Grandmom's afghan off her bed and wrapped it around herself.

When the coffee was done, she fixed herself a cup, set it on top of her closet, and climbed up into her massive chair. Her dad had made the chair for her three times the proportions of a normal chair. She felt like the lady on "Saturday Night Live" when she sat in it; the bench of it was up to her chest. But it was the most comfortable thing in the world; she kept it loaded with corduroy pillows, and it was softer than a cloud.



When she was all situated in her airy loft, she reached over and grabbed her mug. She took her first sip of pure warm unadulterated caffeinated joy, and settled back in her pillowy nest. As Daniel Weyandt sang about a place where blood and fire bring rest, Keturah let herself once again think about home. Smiling faces, warm laughter and inviting places flooded her memory. Smells, sounds, touches, she felt a bubble rise up in her chest. There was no reason to keep a false front of courage here; it was just her and her coffee. Slowly the tears trickled down her cheek as she sat there in painful resignation. Sometimes the best way to beat something was to just let it beat you. Temporarily.

She didn't sob, but let her emotions run their course. She didn't even wipe away her tears; they were flowing freely and gave her coffee a salty tinge. As she took another sip of her coffee, she brushed open her Psalter and prayed the Lord would take her to the passages she needed to read. "A broken heart You do not despise, O Lord," she affirmed. She paged through, her tears relented, her heart sensed the Peace the Lord brings with His divine touch, her eyes glancing over the inspired wisdom of sages past. She stopped.

"In You, O Lord, I have taken refuge;

Let me never be put to shame...

Turn Your ear to me and save me.

Be my rock of refuge

To which I can always go...

For You have been my hope,

O Sovereign Lord,

My confidence since my youth...

I will ever praise You....

But for me, I will always have hope;

I will praise You more and more...

Though I have seen troubles,

Many and bitter,

You will restore me again" (Ps 71: 1-20).

What was it called, Blessed Assurance? Yes, she thought, I will always have hope. Even though I can be a severe moron, God will always be there for me, which is too amazing and wonderful all at the same time. He will restore me again.

All of a sudden, life in Pennsylvania didn't seem so bleak. Life away from home didn't seem so lonely. The One Who loved her enough to give His life for her also cared enough to take her daily troubles too. Lighting her way and giving her hope, she realized that He was bigger than any of her circumstances could ever hope to be. God was awfully good, and filled with His love and peace, she felt equipped to handle life once again.

She wiped the last of the tears from her eyes, set her cup back atop the closet with the rest of her dirty mug collection, and stretched all the negative emotions and stress right off her chest. She curled up in her pillows and blankets, and quietly fell asleep listening to the Peterson kids sing about the ninety and nine.



*One morning I did not wake and found myself*

One morning I woke.  
I wasn't awake, but I stood.  
The morning sun trying its best  
to climb above the thunderstorm  
that washed away night.  
I strode down  
the lightning lit hallway to the door,  
I wasn't awake but I went outside.  
Took the humidity—  
drank it. Feeling it fill my lungs.  
Feeling the innocence of the morning.  
Something was there;  
thoughtlessly on the porch.  
There was no wind and the sun  
still shone only enough to see  
the fog that blanketed my world,  
everything around me. The storm  
slowly making its way:  
but with vengeance for time.  
I sat there;  
Not awake—still asleep.  
I felt you here in your absence,  
not missing your thoughts and smile.  
The porch,  
the water  
in the air.  
The fog;  
The light that created it.  
I heard it say everything I wanted to hear,  
think everything  
I wanted to say,  
see everything  
I wanted to feel.  
Something greater than love.  
Familiarity—  
so common to forget:  
something encompassing and omniscient in life.  
The fog rolling around each drop  
of rain—  
falling to its death.  
Hearing the satisfaction of life it provided,  
and then—  
I knew myself for a moment.  
That mystical figure that plagued

thoughts and dreams.  
I knew what I wanted to become.  
I knew what It all was as I stood  
regretting the effect of time on the body.  
I knew him and I was at peace.  
I returned,  
Still asleep,  
To my room;  
opened the windows and slept  
with her by my side.

-Matthew Davis-

Why do I hafta rot in here?  
Six years of waitin'.  
Now I know,  
no more questions.  
"To see young there is a reason,  
and a time to every purpose under the heaven  
A time to be born,  
And a time to die  
I'm waitin' to die. Easy, easy, easy."

My arms locked behind me  
Guards on either side  
I start to walk and walk

*"Ego paene in somno"*

Last night a car made  
of soapbubbles floated down  
the street and past my  
bedroom window. I instantly  
knew it, for it belched  
and huzzied and whistled all  
the while, nudging its  
way through the crepuscular gray.

-Letitia Spangler-

## *Waitin'*

Honorable Mention for Poetry, Hoffman Writing Contest, Fall 2001

I wait  
Alone.  
I'm sittin' in this small, dark room.  
Down the hall a toilet flushes  
Feet wearin' slippers shuffle  
round and round the little cell.  
The big clock,  
across the way, on the wall  
ticks off every second.  
They've always ticked so slow,  
now's it seems real real fast.  
Time is slippin' away  
Far away from me.  
I sit on the edge of my bunk  
Fingerin' the picture  
My girl and my baby, *mi pequenc bebé*.  
Ripped and yellow it is  
round the edges.  
I'm just waitin'. All alone.  
Not sure I'm human anymore  
Been a long, long time.  
Every day's so depressin'  
Men just kill themselves,  
I wait to die, *para morir*.

I don't got a watch  
but I don't need one.  
My last meal is settled  
In my belly.  
Summer's gone  
so Texas air gits cool at night.  
Noises from outside is more quiet now.  
I can sense the time.  
I'm just waitin', *el esperar*.  
The hallway talkin' gits silent  
when we hear the boots echo.  
I wait.  
The photo in my pocket,  
I stand up and face the bars.  
Waiting. *Esperar*.



Before I asked , “Why me? *Por qué yo?*  
What’d I do?”  
I been readin’ books and mag’zines.  
I’m no Albert Fish  
I didn’t eat nobody.  
I ain’t like those Menendez *hombres*  
I wouldn’t never shoot my parents,  
Don’t even know where they is now.  
Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold  
they’s already dead.  
They don’t gotta suffer.  
Not like me.  
Why do I hafta rot in here?  
Six years of waitin’.  
Now’s I know,  
no more questions.  
“*To everything there is a season,  
and a time to every purpose under the heaven  
A time to be born,  
And a time to die... ”*  
I’m waitin’ to die. *Estoy esperando.*

My arms locked behind me  
Guards on either side  
I start to walk and walk  
and walk  
It’s a long walk  
.Recorrer y el recorrer  
but it ain’t long enough.  
Too soon I’m done walkin’.  
Time to sit down,  
for the last time.  
The wait is over.  
*El dios de mayo tiene misericordia en mi alma.*

-Jennifer Browning-

## Notes from Contributors

**Christina Jaffe** is a junior Elementary Education major with interests in writing, literacy, politics, and literature. She enjoys writing short stories, essays, and occasionally, poetry. (She would gladly attempt a television script if Aaron Sorkin is reading this!) She is happiest engaged in long conversations ornamented with comfortable silences. She writes because it is a way (as Vita Sackville-West put it) "to clap the net over the butterfly of the moment."

**Matthew J. Knaub Adachi** is a first-year student majoring in English and Spanish, and minoring in philosophy-thinking and shizit. He'd like to send a shout out to all his peeps-Unity and HCS, madde props. "Holla"

**Letitia Spangler**, a freshman English Literature major, is delighted to have her creative work included in this edition of the York Review; she is a contributing editor. In her spare time, she enjoys exploring zazen, being insidious, and most importantly, attending to her social duties as the Queen of Inertia.

**Jennifer Browning** is from Troy, Ohio; she is a junior Public Relations major, with minors in English, Speech Communication, and Marketing. She is on the e-board as the PR Officer for the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA); she is also a Student Ambassador and a member of the Alpha Chi Honor Society.

**Jerry Kimbrough** is a 21-year-old fledgling caffeine addict who will, if luck permits, secure his English degree in May of 2002. He is an Aquarius/Capricorn mix, his favorite

flavor of coffee is Starbucks Kenya blend (or the Breakfast blend, depending on how groggy he is at nine in the morning), and his hobbies include hacky-sacking (badly), watching the seven thousand channels he gets through his digital cable connection, napping extensively, and defending himself against his roommates' frequent attempts to beat the living hell out of him (especially you, Ben).

**Becky Shannon** is an English major with a writing concentration going into her senior year. It was fun working on the York Review and I hope to do it next year also.

**Kelly M. Archibald** is a South Jersey native studying Writing and Literature, graduating in May. She is an avid waterman, loves her family, likes hardcore, and enjoys being outside. Of all the things she learned in college, the most important thing has to be that all God's promises are YES through Jesus.

**Matthew T. Davis** is an Information Systems major from Manchester, Pennsylvania, who is interested in "anything computers." He would love to write more, but can't find the time or the people to read his writing.

**Bettina K. Jaffe** is an idealist without illusion. She is majoring in English secondary education and English (literature concentration). She likes to say she feels "very young and at the same time usnpeakably aged." While, she keeps a picture of Virginia Woolf above her desk, it is Robert Kennedy who is her hero. She collects dreams. Bettina would like to thank

her friends for their gentleness and Nathan for his goodness

**Joan Concilio** is a mathematics major who will graduate in the Spring of 2002. She hopes to attend graduate school, but meanwhile enjoys a full-time job at the *York Daily Record*. Joan enjoys reading, writing, playing the saxophone and spending time with her family – her mother, her fiancé, Josh; and her daughter, Sarah.

**Alex Meidunas** is a senior Fine Arts Major.

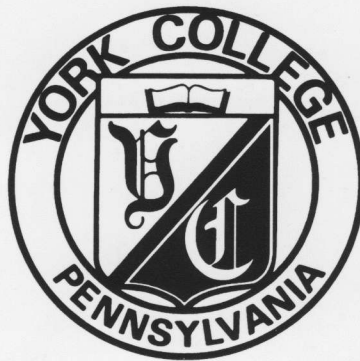
**Danielle Ayers** is a (not yet graduating) senior at York College, majoring in English and Graphic Design. She is looking forward to working at a camp this summer and reading only the books

she wants to read. Whenever she's not reading, writing, or creating artistic masterpieces, she enjoys biking, hiking, traveling, caramel mochas, and writing mediocre songs and clumsily playing the piano.

**Mike Tager** is a junior English major from Baltimore, MD. He is not the next Stephen King or John Grisham. Nor does he want to be Faulkner, Hemingway or Shakespeare. As has been said, 'One is but the sum of many small parts.'

**Joann McCoy** is a senior Graphic Design Major who is graduating this May.





# The York Review

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