

SFHS WRITERS@WORK



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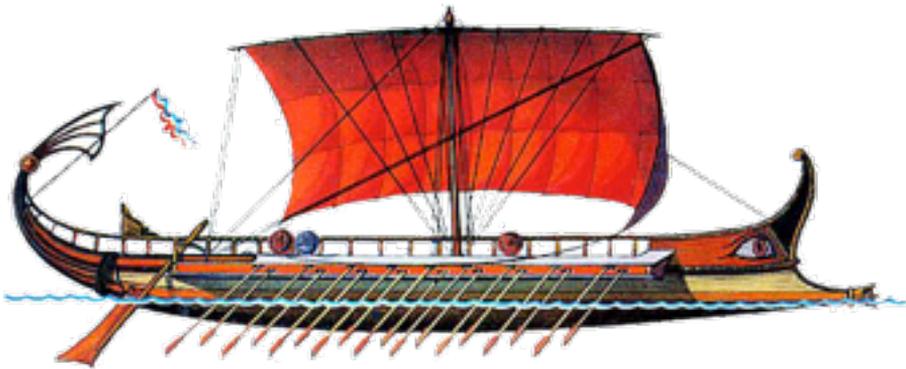
SFHS Writers @ Work 2014
The Odyssey

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“‘tis a good reader that makes a good writer.” (Emerson)



Back in 1948 the British writer George Orwell wrote a disturbing novel which he called **1984**. It depicted a futuristic society where people were afraid to talk to one another, where no one trusted each other, where media was censored and history was rewritten to conform to Big Brother's rigid rules. This never happened in the actual year 1984, but every day we see disturbing signs that Orwell's grim vision might be talking shape. Every time a book is taken from library shelves, every time an author is threatened with arrest, every time someone says the we should only read the right kind of books, the spirit of Big Brother lives on. Put all the Big Bothers where they belong and follow Winston Smith's first act of rebellion. He simply picked up a pen and he wrote down his thoughts! We hope you enjoy the writings of your fellow students here at St. Francis.

Contents

Tyler Morano	Sky Scrapers 4
	What the Stars Keep Alone 5
Hans Schober	What Are We Fighting For? 6
Ryan Kawalerski	When Man Encounters the Cloudy Night 7
Austin Taylor	Hunting 8
Steve Wong & Matt Pronko	Sonnet on Sonnet 9
Quincy Adams	City Built on Sand 10
Evan Loomis	The Passing 11
Adam Gargano	The Iron Horse and the Wood Nymph 12
Jack Hayes	Consciousness 13
Nick Novak	Brotherhood 14
Tom Roselund	The City That Never Sleeps 15
Robert Ricotta	What a Day 16
Ken Sha and Sean Scannell	Why Is the Sun In the Day and Moon Night 18
Tyler Morano	Paradise 20
John Osborn	Resolution After Dark 22
Brien Pacholec	Through the Ashes 24
Tom O'Malley	Solving For X 25
Francisco Guzman	Man vs Fate 27
Jack Hayes	Consciousness 30
Gregory Jacobs	About a Poem 31
Michael Miller	Rise Up 32
Chris McAllister	Shock 37
Evan Michalski	The Good Old Days 39
	The Legend of Blackbard 40
Xavier Strittmatter	The Doctor's Demise 43
Tanner Kendall	Upperclassmen Take Action 47
Andrew Phillips	The Sense of Independence 49
Tim Wroblewski	The Lesson 51
John Roberts	After Frankenstein 52

Tyler Morano

Sky Scrapers

Sky-scrapers,
Ere was the light
Of the sparkling blue ocean,
As brilliant rays of heaven delighted
The mind's eye,
The love of the world still lived.

Sky-scrapers,
Ere were murals of
Orange hues across the evening sky,
Others with white clouds across
The morning ocean,
The love of the world still lived.

Sky-scrapers,
As black, toxic haze smothers your landscapes,
As it corrupts your little suns,
As desires stifle what is true love
And beauty,
The love of the world is gone.

Tyler Morano

What the Stars Keep Alone

When the stars sleep alone,
Faintly hums a tone
Of silence...

Where the stars sleep alone,
Kindly whispers are cold
And darkest...

Why the stars sleep alone
Remains so unknown,
And farthest...

How the stars sleep alone
Remains so unknown,
And farthest...

What do stars keep alone,
I wonder, in deep space,
As their bodies glow so far away?

I long to know beyond--
Beyond the trees and sky and clouds,
But space is infinite.

Hans Schober

What Are We Fighting For?

What are we fighting for?
For glory or pride or rank?
Do we fighting to save the “good guys”?
Or are we fighting to kill “the bad”?
Are we fighting because we want to?
Or do we fight on the word of “the man”?
Do we fight to protect the unprotected?
Or are we fighting for control of the weak?
Do we fight because our fathers did?
Or do we just break our mothers' hearts?
Do we kill for the thrill of it?
Or is killing the only option?
Are we fighting because we are different?
But don't we all fight for our lives?
Are our causes not the same?

Ryan Kawalerski

When Man Encounters the Cloudy Night

When man encounters the cloudy night,
 O cloudy, gloomy night!
 With lack of passion you who takes a hold of men,
 Night of prose, whose blinding darkness grasps at our minds,
 A sigh of despair in your name echoes deep inside me.
 Your character is sorely luring, O blackest night,
 O night of weak-witted amalgamations.
 In every land we find you;
 At all times we may find you.

I have not - since changed - desir'd thou,
 Emotionless the character by which you reveal yourself to man.
 Many days I heartily quip of your constructions.

But, oh, what a wonder is the day!
 The day of knowledge – when we learn of culture, society,
 The day fill'd with sweet perfumes and beautiful rays of brightness.
 Show me your magnificence, as I move to you,
 I move, become one with you, and we become married as one, my love for you everlasting.
 I now understand you, recalling your complexities,
 And through your simplicity I am drawn to discovery.

Precious expression of thought comes from thou,
 On whimsical winds there lie written truths.
 Extraordinary deliverance of truth, O wondrous day!
 The cloudy night is receding,
 For you have demonstrated your brawn.
 O day! O day!
 Tell us your many stories.

Austin Taylor

Hunting

As the sun rises, I wake up at dawn.
I prepare to put on my camouflage.
I see nothing in the woods but a fawn.
I grab my shotgun and I leave the lodge.

As the day goes by I rack up the kills.
I hit a bear, a rabbit, and a moose.
Stacking up them deer, building up them hills.
I trap a beaver, and a Hamburg goose.

I take in the smell of the fresh burned shells.
I was not alone and that made me tick.
My rage rises to the sound of hells bells.
It was a cougar and I left real quick.

Even with the death of all these creatures,
We must love wildlife and all its features.

Sonnet on Sonnet

Steven Wong and Matt Pronko

Could I ever dream to write like Shakespeare?
Could I write a sonnet as well as him?
His perfect work is something that I fear.
My potential in his bright light seems dim.
Each stroke of my pen seems to be in vain,
although creating art can never be.
For it's not prestige I wish to attain,
Or works to be read for a century.
I will think for myself an idea that's mine,
Full of personal thought and emotion.
Some are more course, while others are more fine,
From the sky to a fish in the ocean.
So to the greats shall I not be compared.
If love of creating is what we shared.

Quincy Adams

A City Built on Sand

A City Built on Sand,
Once filled with the men who outlined the framework.
Through the gates and the bombardment of the sky,
Awaited a fate no man should relate.
The rum was scarce, and the floorboards erupted,
With a tremendous force that no man can bear the burden.

The people drowned swimming in the wreckage of their land,
Once fruitful now quavering, free of the land lubbers
It was hopeless as the sand gave way,
For it would soon be the sea's.

What the remainder of the city foresaw was bleak
The city fell to the drink port side.
The cinders arose like the ashes of a phoenix.
The water like ink, perhaps an new visitor.

The squid, Turtle, shark, and fish
Habitually in contrast,
But what they found harmony.
In accord and in discord found life and home,
Or at least just as much as those who had endowed it.

Evan Loomis***The Passing***

As I saw the dull yellowed eyed creature open;
I passed.
Passed in the bloom,
Passed in the night.

Passing with different accents on life,
Passing while my emotions run wild
At this catastrophe.
Passing that night wretchedly.

Collecting my instruments around me,
With my pulse beat, beat, and beat,
Gazed at him while running,
Capable of great emotion.

Leaving in dismal plains,
Leaving wretchedly,
I passed
Wretchedly.

Adam Gargano

The Iron Horse and the Wood Nymph

The iron horse sounding the scream of a hawk arrives in town.

It imports lumber from Maine, Thomaston lime, Spanish hides and I smell the stores
and their odors that remind me of foreign parts.

I hear the iron horse make the hills echo and I hear the bells.

I hear the bells of the town when the wind is favorable and
it imports this melody into the wilderness.

Every needle and leaf of the wood modulates and echoes the melody
Producing a vibration of the universal lyre.

The repetition of the bell through strained air and woods now sounds
Like notes sung by a wood-nymph, echoed by the iron horse in the hills.

Jack Hayes

Consciousness

A hallway full of people,
Speaking, laughing, and shouting as they walk,
Connected by the cans and string of their voices and ears,
But the mind remains untethered.
Each individual trapped on the lonely island of personal
consciousness,
They see and hear, but never fully understand,
Each eternally isolated within themselves,
Never to stray from the recesses of their own thoughts.
Never to emote as another.
Never to experience the musings of their comrades.
Never to truly comprehend another.
A perpetual disconnect of the metaphysical.
A constant state of isolation.
Forever I prisoner within an individual mind.
Forever severed from all others.
This is the curse
Of consciousness.

Nick Novak***Brotherhood***

Together, five days a week or more,
If our friendship continues after school
It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor,
You'll be accepted, there's only one rule.
You come to games and bring your school spirit
When we play those daisies from Delaware,
Or the tigers, who always take the hit.
And if a friend I'd hurt, show that you care.
We all have good friends within the school, but
everyone treats you like a brother.
We all have different ways to be cool.
Sports or dramas, we accept one another.
I love my school, I wouldn't leave.
I've made friends forever, that I believe.

Tom Roselund

The City That Never Sleeps

The sun goes down, but the lights turn on.
Stories upon stories of lights black out the stars at night.
Every mouth, every horn, every car, every jumbotron,
Blended because whipping wind cause sounds to take flight.
Scents different with every forward step taken,
None dominant to the nose for more than four.
Vendors line the streets and leave you shaken.
Cons lurking making protection a priority for sure.
Natives of the concrete jungle hustle every which way,
wishing and praying tourists would disappear.
Tourists walking slowly, picking a place to stay.
Bringing in revenue to support the native mans career.
The city, so large, so beautiful, attract's people from all around,
For she leaves no glory for the common man to be found.

Robert Ricotta

What a Day

Leron pulled up to the coffee shop in his brand new Porsche and parked it next to his old friend Fulbert's van. The two had decided to grab a drink to catch up on old times. Leron left his car and walked through the plaza parking lot toward the establishment. "Hey Fulbert," Leron said as he joined his pal at a table.

"When did you get a Porsche?" asked Fulbert abruptly. Leron ignored the rude greeting and answered the question.

"Last week. I won it in by using one of those keys that the dealership sends people. Pretty crazy, right?"

"Yeah," Fulbert said harshly. "I never even bother with those things. It's just a scam to get you to come to the dealership."

"Well, apparently it's not a scam. Not at my dealership, anyway. I'm just glad I gave it a try. So how are you, sport?"

"Alright, I guess. Things haven't exactly gone my way lately. I just failed a few of my exams. I just got a lot of hard teachers. I'm just unlucky."

"Well, how hard did you study?" Leron inquired.

Fulbert sighed long and hard. "I didn't study," he confessed. "There was no point. The teacher was just too bad; I didn't learn anything."

"I don't know if that was the smartest thing to do, buddy. I mean, I studied for all of my finals and aced them. Maybe you should have tried that."

"Well you go to an easy school. I have it tougher." Fulbert never felt that Leron knew the difficulties he went through. The world was just out to get him. How could someone who got through life on his luck understand? Fulbert took a sip of coffee, so Leron took his silence as an opportunity to change the subject.

"Actually, I just graduated," Leron shared. "I completed all my credits in three years."

"It must be nice to have to go to only three years of college. I have to go to four. I'm done sitting here. Do you want to take a walk?"

Leron responded, "I'd love to!"

The two walked around the plaza and entered a new video game store that opened up there recently. Leron held the door open for Fulbert and entered after him. DING DING DING!!! Fulbert and Leron clasped their ears in haste. "What the heck was that?" the two asked each other as they spun around to see an employee standing there.

"That," stated the employee excitedly, "was our alarm alerting us that we have had

patted Leron on the shoulder. A smile grew on Leron's face as he followed the man to the checkout counter, where he received a \$250 gift card to the store.

"Don't I get anything?" Fulbert looked at the clerk with hopeful eyes.

"Sorry, pal. I can't afford to give away any more money." Fulbert stormed out of the store, upset. Leron chased after him. Both men were silent as they continued walking. Leron knew how Fulbert felt, but did not do anything to help. The two entered a music shop at Fulbert's suggestion.

"I'm gonna go in here and buy an electric guitar that I've been saving up for," he said. "It better be in there, or I'll be pissed."

As they entered, the clerk was pulling out his cell phone. A guitar was lying on the counter. The clerk was drawing a name, for a contest, out of a jar. A banner on the jar said Donate Five Dollars For A Chance To Win A FREE Guitar. Fulbert approached the counter. "I'd like this guitar," Fulbert said as he stroked the instrument gently.

Without looking up the clerk said, "No can do, guy. This guitar is going to the winner of this contest, here," The clerk stated as he tapped the jar.

"You're joking... You're not joking," Fulbert observed. "Well who won the guitar?"

"A man named... Leron? That can't be right," the clerk said. Fulbert turned red.

"Leron? LERON?" he said angrily. Fulbert lifted the guitar over his head and smashed it into Leron's head. Leron lay face down on his stomach, unconscious.

"DUDE," the clerk yelled. Fulbert ripped a string off of Leron's guitar, and placed it between Leron's neck and the ground. Fulbert placed his foot on the top of his friend's head. Lifting up on the string he carefully sawed away at the flesh of the now awake man. "What the hell are you doing?" the clerk yelled as he pushed the panic button underneath the counter. Leron tried to scream, but his throat only spit blood out of its already perforated tissue. A few minutes later, when Fulbert finished mutilating the body, he dashed out of the store. As the police officer rolled up to the crime scene, Fulbert was struck by the vehicle, and lay on the red pavement. Dead.

Ken Sha and Sean Scannell

Why Is the Sun In the Day and Moon At the Night

In the beginning, when the world was created, neither lightness nor warmth existed. The whole world was shrouded by infinite darkness. The people could not bear such bleakness; therefore, they asked the Creator for lightness and warmth. The kind-hearted Creator solved the problem for his loving people with the his mighty power by creating a ball of fire. He named this ball the Sun. The Creator then saw that the universe was unbalanced, so he created another ball. This one he formed from rock. He named this second ball the Moon. The people rejoiced in His creation and for many years there was happiness. The Sun and the Moon were happy together and they shared the sky. There was never any night because the Sun always shone. Eventually, the people began to love the Sun more because she provided light and warmth. They prayed to her and asked her for guidance, all the while the Moon was being ignored more and more. This made the Moon jealous of her sister. The Moon started to stray farther and farther away from her sister in the sky.

Now among the animals on the Earth, the most devious was the Woodchuck. One day, the Woodchuck was getting into mischief and got caught. This was a common occurrence, as it was never dark enough for the Woodchuck to get around without being seen. As he was being punished, the Woodchuck saw the Moon hanging in the sky and thought of a terrible plan. When he was released, he climbed up the highest tree he could find and whispered to the Moon, “Why is it that the people should love the Sun more than you. Well, let me tell you. It is because she gives the people lightness and warmth, while you do not. Maybe if you were to take some of her light, they would love you as well.” At first, the Moon was horrified by this idea, but as time went on, she saw her sister getting more and more attention. The idea became more and more reasonable in her mind. Consequently, on a day while her sister was not paying attention, she reached out and snatched some of her light. She then traveled far away and sprinkled the light on herself.

It was now time for the Woodchuck to make the next move. The Woodchuck again climbed the highest tree he could find and said to the Sun, “Sun, is it just my imagination, or are you a little dimmer than you were earlier?” Confused, the Sun crossed over a lake and looked at her reflection. “Why yes, I do believe I am a little less bright, but how?” The Woodchuck said: “Earlier, I believe I saw the Moon take some of your light,” said the Woodchuck, “maybe you should smear some mud on her to get back at her.” The Sun, fueled by anger, took a large amount of mud and snuck up on the Moon. She then dumped the mud on the Moon's back, covering half of her body. The Moon became furious with the Sun for pouring mud on her. The two had an argument that ended with the Moon traveling as far away from the Sun as possible. Now, the Moon and Sun stay as far away as possible, but they continue to rotate so that they can still observe everything in the world. The cunning Woodchuck, who has contributed to this great phenomena, now has a time when he can get up to mischief and not get caught.

Tyler Morano

Paradise

I used to think Paradise was through salvation. Though as I strolled across those waving fields of flora and as the sun walked over my head, it had become a tangible world. It was no longer a distant land controversial to philosophers, but bright nostalgic acreage surfacing as I strode to nowhere. There was no care in the world; except, I did.

Several nights ago (as dates had been lost to the wind), I dreamt of ruins. The city had lost the life it once possessed. The once illuminated signs hung upon disheveled towers as cement fell off the concrete floors. People as emaciated and unkempt as the buildings kept themselves hidden, shying away from my eyes. "Was it I that they feared?" I thought. A woman then walked up to me and asked a frightening question: "What have you done? ... What will you do?" Astonished, my eyes opened and I found myself beside my wife in our wonderful home. It was just a dream. I had been musing over the dream every night since, and my wife tires of its mentioning.

"What?!" Vivian cried out. "John, you must be kidding! You actually take it seriously? It's just a dream, honey! Ask anybody around, and they'll say the same." Vivian, my beautiful wife, with her chestnut eyes and long brown hair, had a voice that warmed the heart. She is beautiful in all regards: her appearance, her kindness, and her smarts. And she says it's a dream! No—yes, it must have been! A figment of the imagination, a slight bump in the road—that's all it was.

"You're right, nothing comes of it. I'm just worried about its meaning. While nightmares happen all the time, it was so real, the city," I recalled. After our conversation, I left for my children's room, hoping to return to normality, and there they were playing together. Rosy was five and Max just three, the two most perfect children in the world. As I hugged and kissed them I thought, "How could my children live in such a place?" It was impossible.

Yet again I woke to breakfast's smell of its sizzling bacon and fluffy pancakes, one I thought I would soon savor. The morning perfume hastily became skewered by

a stench of decay. I frantically began to search for the source of the rancid stench, reminiscent of a skunk. It intoxicated the air, yet it had not yet fazed my children or my wife.

"Dearest, what do you go on looking for? Is it your keys, your wallet? I could help you--"

Vivian stopped as her face mangled in distraught. The distasteful air exhaled from me.

Despite all of the scrubbing, washing, and cleaning, the fume would not disappear. The poison of a cobra had embedded itself in me... A cobra? What were these evil creatures I thought of?

I knew not the cruel world that I had seen, but only from there could these animals have descended. Did this world exist or not? I could not say anymore.

I now stand in my bedroom, searching for the truth, but only moments ago had I discovered its path. The day after the odor appeared, I asked my children what their ages were to test their memories. Surprisingly, Rosy said four, Max exclaimed, Two!

Nervously, my wife whispered, "They know their ages! Why—why are you so surprised?" Soon afterwards, Vivian fell to her knees and screamed, cursing her dishonesty. Her guilt revealed the escape from this accursed bubble.

But there is nothing. I peruse the nonexistent writings of my wife's notebook hopelessly, but no words lie upon the pages. No... the words were illusions! Everything was an illusion. I run to the bedroom door and slowly open it, only to discover a sight unknown to anyone. My eyes, my real eyes, opened and fell upon Vivian, Max, and Rose, all sealed within glass containers and perfectly preserved. Mechanical arms bathe, feed, and quench them, and light scanners examine their bodies. Outside of their chambers are rows upon rows of these devices, with the ruined city as their home. I remember.

The paradise I was living in was isolation, an escape from the stresses of work and supporting my family. The machines had been panaceas, eradicating all of the worries of America, but now it is clear that they were a disease. The mild pandemonium of my previous life is incomparable to the strict order of that feigned existence.

I have escaped. However, now I must forge a true paradise.

John Osborn***Resolution After Dark***

Storms tormented down on the small city that night. Darkness surrounded everything, so obtrusive, yet so accepted. During those times, immorality and evil flooded the streets as much as the rain. Little flashes of light still flickered erratically through the streets, yet those bursts were suppressed by the murky essence hanging over the city. However, one light penetrated the mist.

On that very night, a business man walked down an abandoned street. Water dripping down the side of his hat, he trudged on through the gloom. Suddenly, a gruff figure leapt from the comfort of shadows with knife in hand. The business man spun in surprise, and upon seeing the knife, slowly raised his hands. But before the criminal had time to utter a word, someone tapped him on the shoulder.

Behind the criminal there was a past, a problem, a predicament. But in that moment there was a hooded man. A man who wore a hood to save others, not destroy them. The man's name was Lucien Cadman, and he was fighting the night. He was no extraordinary person until one day, when he awoke with his mysterious power. After gaining this power, he resolved to go out every night and make a difference, no matter how small. And there he stood that night, making a difference for the businessman.

"Get away from me, freak!" snapped the would-be mugger.

"I'm sorry, but no. I'm going to need you to step away from that man."

"Yeah? And what are you gonna do you skinny punk?"

"Good," stated Lucien, rolling up his sleeves to reveal his arms. Through his veins ran light, shimmering like a star and pulsing with power. Before both victim and captor knew what was occurring, the unlikely hero gave a look of concentration. Not the thoughtful or casual type, but rather the sort that one must pull from the very depths of their being; the type that hurts. An immense light then erupted from his palm, and the dark alley exploded into waves of brightness, permeating that small darker corner of the city.

All three men dropped to the ground for a few moments, but the criminal was the first to rise. He walked over to the hooded man and tried to peer below the hood at the man's face, but all that could be seen were the eyes, gleaming with goodness.

"Thank you," said the felon, walking away. Lucien watched him go, a quirk of a smile dancing across his face.

"Why did you let him leave?" inquired the business man in awe.

"He's changed, and so have you sir," responded Cadman with a chuckle. He got up delicately and started hobbling back down the alley, content with the knowledge that both of those strangers departed with light in their veins.



Brien Pacholec

Through the Ashes

Millions watching the horror from the comfort of their homes.
Thousands live the hellish nightmare on the lone island.
The cameras could not capture the screams for help, the screech of
the metal beams melting, the explosion.
They could not capture the stench of smoke, flesh burning, fuel
catching flame.
They could not capture the paranoia that was taking place hundreds
of feet above the ground.
They did capture something never caught before, hopelessness.
People making the decision to fall into heaven rather than burn into
hell.
Then the unthinkable happened.
Mouths dropped to the floor just as fast all one hundred and ten
stories.
For some; the nightmare was over.
For others; it was just beginning.
So many saw nothing but darkness.
Thousands of tons crush the remaining air out of their lungs.
Days went by, loved ones waiting for that call.
Unspoken heroes, trying to make a difference.
It was over. A nation in mourning.
Out of the darkness arose a light. A symbol of unity.
The flag stood tall and proud.
Waving in the wind.

Tom O'Malley

Solving For X

He signed his name with an X. It wasn't just a simple letter surrounded by the indecipherable formality of an official birth certificate. No. This was a meaningful X: his mark - a letter that revealed so much about my great-grandfather to me. He was surely artistic. Confident. Proud. His X became an algebraic equation full of hidden history and unknown quantities. It was a storehouse of fact and the timeless promise of hope. Even though he could not read or write his name, his signature X reached out to me from over a century ago and communicated something about the history of my family. And myself. I studied his X on my grandmother's Birth Certificate where it was surrounded by Church Latin and a few other clues. Elsewhere on the document, under profession, the clerk had written "boatman". From where I stood I could see the Black River. Did he fish in these waters? "Boatman" had a meaning both vague and mysterious. I planned to solve for this X by force of reason, luck and imagination. Already I could feel his life lived in this place so long ago. His x had brought me here to Ireland, the place of his birth.

Meg and I arrived in Dungarvan, County Waterford, after traveling in circles through the towns and villages of the Emerald Isle. We both felt strangely at home here where cars crawled along on the left side of the road and where the best way to travel is by bicycle or by foot.

It is a great joy to walk through the villages of your ancestors. And walk we did. Along the beach at Glencolumbkille, where fishermen still ply the North Atlantic in currachs that bob between the tidal waves. In Sligo we sipped ale with the locals at Ellen's pub and learned that everything Mr. Yeats wrote about was true. Here Queen Maeve and her mystical cohort appeared with regularity. There in the shadows cast by the glowing turf fire, I had no doubts. The next morning we walked to the peak of Knocknaree to overlook the emerald quilt of three counties spread before our tired feet. We felt like gods enchanted by the cool Atlantic mist. Later, we spoke of poetry in the town pub where the locals could recite the Yeats canon by heart. It was there I abandoned the safety of American logic for the twisted gyres of the Celtic imagination, and I haven't traveled in a straight line since.



O we passed through Galway and turned east. So many Castles and Manor houses were collapsing in ruin, but never torn down. They were eternal reminders of History and the troubles that others call war. Finally we arrived here in Dramore near the birthplace of my Grandmother Mary Osborne. It was a village so small we could only find it by rumor and luck. We climbed the unmarked hill to stand in the crumbling cottage where she was born. All around us the local sheep grazed as they had a century ago. Later we visited the simple church in Aglish where she was baptized. Still later I held the register where her name was written alongside her father John.

At the onset I thought I had traveled here to discover my heritage. Now I felt the river in my veins and spoke the poetry in my heart. My great Grandfather had surely reached out to bring me here by giving me a grand equation to solve. His x equalled an eloquent gesture made so long ago. A man's life reduced to a single letter that now enriched mine tenfold.

Francisco Guzman

Man vs Fate

Whether a man likes it or not, dreams occur without control. Dreams seem to show the elements of life, both good and bad. However, for one man, dreams were completely different. Eli was a normal man, with an extraordinary gift. Eli dreamed like any normal human being. However, when he dreamed, it was about the next day. The next day in his life in which lead him. For Eli, this was a gift he could only dream of, but one dream changed his life forever.

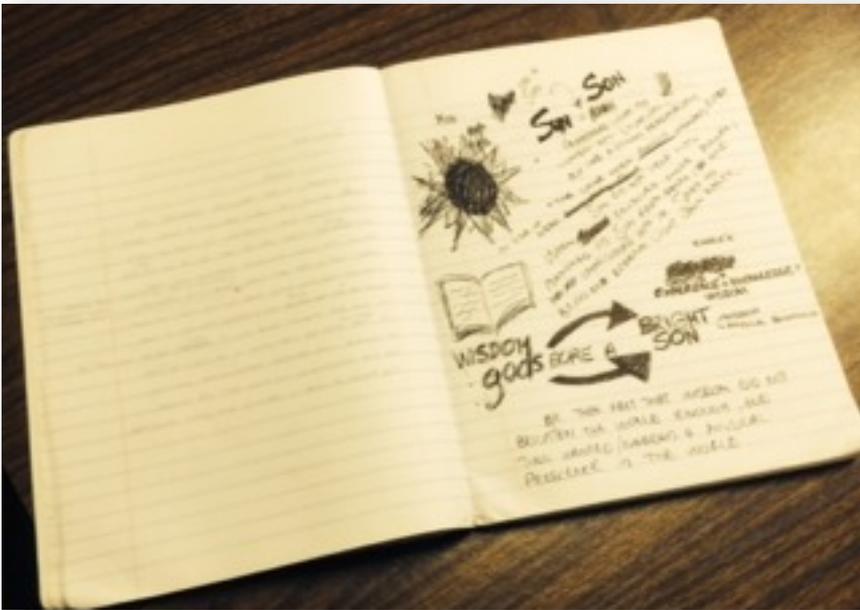
It was a normal day living the dream of a life, a life where his night time dreams led to fortune. However, the dream in which Eli dreamed was life changing. The dream began like any other. Eli getting ready for the day, and going about daily life. However it was Superbowl Sunday. Eli hosted a party and the party was insane. Although full of friends and family, Eli felt uneasy but went on with the party, drinking, having a good time. Now it was halftime and Eli's team was down by 7 points. It did not truly matter because he was time for the halftime show. With everyone seated watching the show, Eli finally felt relaxed. While watching the show, Eli felt a thud on his head. A thud that made everything go blurry and the room was completely silent. After the hit all he could see was a broken beer bottle thrown next to him. Eli turned around to try to make sense of what was going on, but all he saw a silhouette of a man running out of sight. Confused, Eli grabbed his head. He could hear his friends and family shouting, "ELI! ELI!" so he went took his hands off his head to signal to them that he was okay. When he did so he saw blood all over his hands. The blood covered his hands like a blanket and before Eli could react, he fell to the floor and blacked out...

Now when Eli woke up, he had a decision to make. To live this day like it was his last. Or to try to avoid the fate of dying and live to see another dream. Knowing his experiences dreams before, Eli was terrified. Since Eli knew everything, he never consulted a higher figure. However, in time of need and desperation he decided to ask God for help. Seeking only the smallest bit of information or hope, Eli felt like it did not help at all. Eli managed to make his decision by himself. He would live the day like it was his last.. On Eli's possible last day on the planet, he immediately defied his dream the night before. Eli was skeptical about doing this because he had never done it before. In his dream, Eli began the day going to the store to purchase food and drinks for his party, for it was

Superbowl Sunday. However, Eli wanted to go the Super Bowl In New York City. Before then, Eli felt it was necessary to cleans his slate with the man above, just in case anything did transpire. As he arrived at the church, his mood changed. It changed in a way in which Eli could not control. In a way that any of his dreams have never done. Knowing that this did not feel normal to Eli he began to worry, knowing that something bad must come from defying the dream. Eli almost viewed his dreams as a god, for they controlled everything that he did in his life. But Eli learned this was not the case. Eli kneeled at a pew...but he did not know how to begin. Whether to ask for forgiveness or for fate to turn out differently. It was different for Eli to not know what was going to happen and what he was going to say. Speechless, he just stayed still, for what seemed to be forever, but Eli did not have forever. Puzzled and feeling like he wasted precious time, Eli fled out of the Church and purchased a plane ticket to New York City along with his life savings.

Careful with every move he did, he boarded the plane and sat down.. Knowing that today could possibly be his last day on earth, Eli began to notice and appreciate the small accents about life. Eli noticed how beautiful the stage between winter and spring was. Eli noticed how the death of nature during winter made spring that much more significant and better when everything was reborn. The day completely different than Eli's dream, frightened him . Nonetheless, while on the plane, Eli thought about his friends and family. He felt guilty that he left in a haste without contacting any of them. But that was in the past for Eli because his time was ticking. Eli arrived at the "sold out" game, but money talks. Eli was able to rent out a suite for a substantial amount of money. Not only this, but since Eli was a little bit early, he searched for some females that would like to accompany him for the game and festivities, fully paid. It is New York City and Eli found three very good looking women to accompany him. Eli was feeling amazing, but never truly enjoyed it, knowing that in a way he was avoiding death. The game began and Eli knew that time was ticking. He made every second of the game count, the party inside his sweet was insane. The party was absolutely insane because Eli wanted to at least attempt to live his last day like it was his last. Exhausted but still willing to party, it was time for the halftime show. Eli was scared seeing that the score was the same as his dream. But, Eli sat down, and watched it from his suite. While watching the show, Eli felt a thud on his head. A thud that made everything go blurry and the room was completely silent. After the hit all he could see was a broken beer bottle thrown next to him. Eli turned around to try to make sense of what was going on, but all he saw a

silhouette of a man running out of sight. However, this time Eli saw that it was a woman. Trying to fight death, Eli feels the other two women going through his pockets. Eli attempted to grab one of the with the blurred vision and coordination he had, but it was useless. As the other two women escaped, Eli chuckled, knowing he lost the battle against fate.



Jack Hayes***Consciousness***

A hallway full of people,
Speaking, laughing, and shouting as they walk,
Connected by the cans and string of their voices and ears,
But the mind remains untethered.
Each individual trapped on the lonely island of personal
consciousness,
They see and hear, but never fully understand,
Each eternally isolated within themselves,
Never to stray from the recesses of their own thoughts.
Never to emote as another.
Never to experience the musings of their comrades.
Never to truly comprehend another.
A perpetual disconnect of the metaphysical.
A constant state of isolation.
Forever I prisoner within an individual mind.
Forever severed from all others.
This is the curse
Of consciousness



Gregory Jacobs

About a Poem

a poem about poems is too hard to Fathom
a poem about poems is too hard to Imagine
GrAmMaR and STYLE and spelling and mEtEr
so many Rules and so many Laws
but who wants to follow
all of these things make a poem Lame
no Freedom, no Purpose, no Meaning, no Fame
Freedom with words comes with Freedom of Heart
All Rules and Laws make this entire world dark
learn well your grammar and never stammer
write well and neatly and speak most precisely
Limiting Feeling and Color and Soul
they limit all humans and
fill them with Blight
they are Tasteless, Controlling, and Soulless outright
so SCREW Rules and Laws
they're useless
no meaning
a poem about poems requires some Thought
some Guts and some and some Knowledge
and above all some Heart

Michael Miller

Rise Up

"Treyvon! Get your ass back in this house right now!!"

"No Ma, I'm sick of this house, this neighborhood, why do you let him do this to you!?" Because he is good to us and always has been "good?!, you call that good? Naw man. I'm out" "Where do you think your going" "I'm going to the park" The basketball court is my home. My real home.

The walk back through the neighborhood from the court is long and gruesome. Passing by crack houses, prostitute houses, gang houses, everything imaginable. They run our small town of Compton Michigan. No one gets out without an okay, the authorities are cowards. Hiding in their newly state funded dodge charger cars. They look the part but certainly don't act it. I might have seen a cop car 3 years ago, at the earliest. It feels like an eternity, this is a loving hell hole.

"Aye Trey, what's good my brotha?!"

"Hey Nate, nothing everything is alright." Nate was a well known gang member an avid enforcer of their law. We actually grew up right down the street from each other until thankfully my mom moved us to the other side of the town. "Hey man where you going?" "Home" I replied. I didn't like him or his gang friends or anything about them. They were like an al-Qaeda group in an Afghanistan village. They were the law, and as much as the people hated it they are powerless. In there law was lawlessness, gunning down anyone who stood in their or tried to cry out for help and reform. If they had the police scared away how much could anyone really do. Your stuck, this town is stuck.

"Trey you better stop walking away from me and talk man" "why?"

"Hey man I know we grew up together but that don't mean you can be showing no disrespect to me. Especially in from of my crew. "

"yea Nate I get it. I just want to go home" "Fine get outa here before I bust a cap in you bruh. No more disrespect you hear?"

"Yea i hear ya"

After a few more minutes of walking I finally rounded the corner to the walk way that led to my house. The old, raggedy siding. With the paint falling off and the roof looking like it is going to collapse any second. The fresh scent of alcohol and weed loomed in the air. Notifying the entire street my step father was home. The stench of the man was unbearable and instantaneously attacked my nose as I opened the "white" door.

"It's about time you got home boy. You spend to much time playing basketball and not enough around the house."

"You know maybe I wouldn't have to play basketball so much is you weren't such a drunk and your could get life together"

For the next few minutes i received a physical lashing, this one particularly harder than usual. If only I could fight back. Though a wretched and stench filled man he was a brute, and a man pure size and strength. Luckily for me my mother intervened. The only woman I know who was strong enough mentally and physically to stand up for me. She is a blessing to me. And I am thankful for her every day.

The next day was my first varsity basketball game. This is my junior year and it is going to be huge for me. It is time for me to but my name on the map for college scouts so I can get out of this town. I need to get out of this town.

"Ladies and gentle men welcome to this court side broad cast of WildCat basketball, brought to you by Compton tire, the only wheel that can spin you a deal. Tonight we can look forward to a tough matchup between your Compton Wildcats and the Lakeside Rush. What a way to start the year huh Tim?" "That's right Brad, these two rival schools played each other at the end of last season to advance to the state playoffs and Lakeside got it done in their home gym." "What do you think are the keys in tonight's game?" I think that if Compton is going to win they need to get junior guard Treyvon Dobson involved early and often. And for Lakeside they need to go down low to their big man Darius King who led the state in scoring last season."

"All right Tim well it's almost tip off time here in Rupp arena. Let's get underway!!!"

Just before I was about to take the floor Nate and a member from his crew came up to me on the bench. "Hey Trey. We need this one. We have territory set on this game with the rush gang. You better win or else" "man get out of here I'm playing ball!"

"Yea well you better be"

That was the last thing I needed. Was those thugs getting in my head before a game. I'm not going to let them hold me down anymore. This is my time. "And king wins the tip off, we can look for him to be a dominant force all night. No one on Compton can match his size. He is 6'10 225 pounds and is dominant. And the rush immediately go to him as king slams one home!!, Dobson is now pushing up the floor and he pulls up for three and BAAAANG! What a big shot for Trey Dobson, his first varsity shot is good from 3 and this rookie looks ready to play!"... "Welcome back ladies and gentle men to the fourth quarter. The Lakeside rush lead this one by 2 with just 6 seconds left in the game and it is Compton ball." "Coming out of this timeout i really think that coach Grey had drawn something up for Dobson. He has scored 28 of the teams 62 points and has been on fire all night long." Well let's see what they do." "Dills inbounds to Dobson, 5 on the clock, he pushes up the court with a pick to his right, now just three to shoot, king presses from the paint and there is no room to pass. Dobson pulls up from 25 feet. It's good if it goes... "ERRRRR" it's no good!, Lakeside wins as Dobson's buzzer beater fails to connect." "It was still a great effort tonight by Compton, this young team will have a very bright future and a good season coming up." "Well that wraps it up here court side thank you for tuning and your final score Lakeside 64 Compton 62."

That was a tough loss. It's never easy to lose a game let alone be the one responsible for it. Walking out of the locker room Nate was waiting for me. And he was not happy.

"Hey man is you stupid or somethin? I told you what we had ridding on that game, but I guess you just don't get it do you?"

"I'm sorry man I missed. You think I wanted to lose. Forget about your stupid side bet, that had no bearing on me or that game!"

"Is you sure cause it looked like to me you missed on purpose. Yea, you knew what this game meant to the crew."

"I don't want anything to do with you and your god damn crew, all you have done is ruin this town, kill innocent people and chase out any form of justice. Is there no end to this madness?"

"You better watch your mouth boy!!"

"Who are you to be calling me boy! Get outa here man" I mean I pushed him. I had to, there was no other choice, I was mad, he was mad and it escalated quickly.

"Who you fronting? You sorry sucker, you gonna get it now!"

Chkch... BANG!!...BANG!!...silence.

...

Beep...Beep...Beep.

"Treyvon, ohh my baby, wake up honey, Trey wake up TREY!!!"

"Mrs. Dobson I'm sorry but your son is in a coma. We don't know when or if he will come out of it. But rest assured his brain is still active and he is still alive. I know this must be a very difficult time for you, I'm sorry."

(Sobs)"WHY? WHY?"

(7 months later)

Beep, Beep, Beep Beep, Beep Beep Beep,"AHH" suddenly I felt my heart racing, I was wide awake, and felt as if I just slept for an eternity and was ready for action. But everything quivered, as I tried to move everything was unstable, suddenly I realized I was connected to heart scanners, IV's and a respirator was right next to me. I was in the hospital... What happened?? I was alone and scared, so I cried out and suddenly my mother came rushing into the room, she was screaming and crying and laughing

"Oh my Lord Trey Hun you are okay! Oh my thank you thank you thank" I had no Idea what she was talking about or how I ended up in the hospital.

"Ma, what happened?"

"What?! You don't remember??"

"No I don't"

"You were shot outside of school, after your team lost the home opener last year"

"WHAT?!! Last year?!! How long was I asleep??"

"Two years."



It hit me like a brick wall. Everything stood still. 2 years is a long time. In no stretch of the imagination can 2 years be over looked. I'm now 18 years old. My friends all out of high school. Me, I'm not even finished. Where do I go? What do I do? I can't go back to school can I? Even if I can there is certainly no way I can play ball, there is no way out. No where for me to go, my mom and I are trapped. The only words after that I could mutter out were "I'm sorry mom."

There are no short cuts in life. Especially in the face of adversity, those who cut corners will be caught, they will fail. Failure in not now nor was it ever an option for me. I need to get out for me, but not only me. For my mother, the one person in my life who is my rock, my go to, and the one who has always been by my side, even when I wasn't by hers."

As soon as I was released from the hospital I went to back to Compton High and spoke with administration about my readmitted to the school. They that since I had never graduated before I could attend the school to get my diploma. But as far as sports went, they said that was a state matter. Basketball is the only thing I know, it was going to get us out then and it will get us out now. So I went back to work and every day until basketball season i worked out and trained every day and every minute that I could to get back into shape. Nothing will stop me.

It was finally here, the first day of basketball camp and I was ready to go. But before I could walk into the building state athletic representative stopped me outside of the doors. "Hello Mr. Dobson I am Mr. Clark and I will be reviewing your case for athletic eligibility. Your court day unfortunately is not until February." I walked away from the man knowing full well that this meant the hearing was pushed back by someone. It has never taken an athletic hearing that long to be scheduled. What's the point of even having the meeting at that point??? Basketball will be over by then and I will be stuck. I had to talk to coach and the team. So I ran inside and we talked before practice.

"Hey guys, I know we have talked about me possibly playing ball this year, but my hearing isn't until after the season and if I play in any game before then, then all of the games I played in can be forfeited."

"Well boys I am merely the coach, this is your season and your decision, I will coach the team placed in from of me."

I was afraid no one was saying anything, they were all just looking at each other. But somehow they all came together. And in one unanimous voice one resounding voice of joy that was music to my ears, they said "yes". I was overjoyed and could only say thank you! My teammates made the decision, they wanted to give me the opportunity to get out as well. We all wanted out, and we knew the only way to do that would be to win state.

So we went to work. We won our home opener 79-34. We started crushing people. No one in our league could stop us. We were rolling. And we rolled straight into the state playoffs. 25-0. We were holding teams to 36.4 points per game and averaging 74.7 points a game. I was

Before any of us knew it we were in the finals of the state tournament. We had a perfect 31-0 record and were ready for the test of our lives against 3 time defending state champions JFK High. They were they best, they had 4 division one prospect seniors. And we had one senior being me...

"Ladies and gentle welcome to the final chapter of your Compton WildCats season and the final chapter of the Michigan state playoffs. I'm Brad Tuggs along side with my partner TimOthy Charles. We are here tonight in the Big House, that's right Ann Arbor Michigan home of the wolverines. This is where Compton and JFK will square off for the state title!"

"You can feel the excitement in the air Brad and this game really is magical. Every of course knows about JFK's Fab Four of Johnson, Christionson, Hightower, and Crowbentux III. BU not to many people know the story of Treyvon Dobson. The young man from Compton who was shot after his first varsity game over a gang dispute and was in a coma for two years. The young man now back on the court and hoping to receive a scholarship for basketball so he and his mother can move out of poverty. The young man has had outstanding numbers this year and is being highly scouted and this game right here could make or break his chances.

"Right you are Tim we need to see if he can get it done in crunch time"

"Well the stage is set and we are underway here is the state championship game! JFK controls the tip and Hightower sets up the offense, dribbling to his left guarded by Dobson, Hightower picks up his dribble and has the ball poked out by Dobson, who is all alone down the court and WOOOOW! Trey Dobson just threw one down, what a way to start the state championship"

"Ladies and gentlemen if you are just tuning in you have missed an absolute thriller, Compton is up 72-70 with 20 seconds remaining in the game and JFK has the ball."

"Well Tim, I truly believe that whoever has the ball last will win the game."

"I could not agree more Brad. Well the ball is inbounded to Hightower who moves it up the court and kicks to Johnson, now just 12 left in the game. Johnson cross court to Christionson who defender falls and he is open for 3, the shot is up and he buries it!!! 6 seconds remain in the game and Compton calls a timeout" With the game hanging in the balance I had to say something. Coach drew up a play and I let everything go.

"Ladies and gentle Trey Dobson just fired up the troops for what will most likely be the last possession of the game. Again Compton trailing by one with passion. The ball is inbounded immediately to Dobson who pushes the ball up court to the right, looking to take it all the way he steps back and Dobson....

Have you ever had a moment in your life where time. Just. Stands. Still.

... CONNECTS!!!! COMPTON WINS COMPTON WINS THE COMPTON WILDCATS ARE YOUR NEW MICHIGAN STATE CHAMPIONS!!!!

Everything stands still except you and where you want be. Nothing can happen until you take your first step, and rise up.

Chris McAllister

Shock

In the evening, a man left his work. The weather outside was immaculate. He arrived to a quiet house, and parked the car in the driveway. The car shut off, and he softly opened a door into the house.

The man slipped off his loafers, and rid himself of all nonessential garments. He walked into a room where a woman stood, preparing a meal. He gingerly approached her and, in a sudden burst, embraced her.

“Hello, how was your day?” asked the man. “Never mind that, you are cooking! I will leave you be.”

The woman, who was cutting a raw sirloin, broke free from the embrace and struck the man instinctively. He responded swiftly and pushed her onto the floor. Both were so shocked that neither could make out a single sound. Finally the man grunted as he lifted the woman from the cold ground.

“This is the thanks I get for all the work I have done? Finish making my dinner this instant, I will deal with you later.” He left for the living room in a strange gait.

The woman, still in shock, had no choice but to finish preparing the meal. She continued to cut the steak with the faint static from the television intruding her once serene atmosphere. The glow of the screen was her only source of light as she turned on the stove.

The man blankly stared at the television screen. He began to look around the home, noticing the light fixtures, and the furniture that surrounded him. He seemed to favor the left side of the room, for it troubled him to turn right. There was a coffee table where a newspaper rested. By the position of the paper on the coffee table, he could only read a portion of its headline. It read, “Mental Hospital Pati...” The man attempted to seize the paper, but was unable because of the pain in his right abdomen.

At that moment, the wide-eyed woman walked into the room holding a dinner plate. On the dish was a half-charred steak and some uncooked peas.

“Thank you, now let me eat my meal alone,” said the man. The perplexed woman left the room and the man placed his dinner on the table next to him. He stood up from his seat, and walked into the other room in search of the woman.

He found her holding onto a child in the back corner of a bedroom. She seemed to have been crying, but the man’s vision was too blurry to tell. He approached the two, and took the child from her, almost without resistance. He nonchalantly left the room with the screaming child in his arms, but was slowed as he reached the doorway. The woman had wrapped her arms around the man’s calves to stop him. He kicked her temple and shook her off as he headed for the door he used as an entrance. The woman began to scream for him to stop, but, like his vision, his hearing



became impaired. He tripped over one of the many blurs in the room. He kept his balance, and pressed on.

At this point in the night, the man's world had gone completely black. The once ornate light fixtures became disgusting dark blobs. However, his blindness did not impede his quest. The opaque air did not frighten him, for he knew his exit was near. He stumbled again. The pair felt the entire floor being ripped from beneath them. The child had stopped screaming instantly. The woman no longer had the strength to cry. The man and child lay not even thirty paces from the distressed woman. She could not find her dependable vitality to search for her offspring. It had already been washed away. The woman, like the man and child, just lay there, lifeless. An eerie silence filled the house.

Many moments had passed, when the front door of the house opened. The woman awoke from her shock. "Honey I'm Home! Whose car is in the driveway?"



Evan Michalski

The Good Old Days

Back when the days were long and warm.
Back when the gentle breezes carried scents of roses.
Back when the bright berries grew under the sun beside the
creek.
Back when the warm fires crackled and popped.
Back when the cold water gurgled and gushed over the stones.
When the fields swished in the wind.
When the harvest was plentiful.

The good old day
s

The cold smoke falls like snow upon the desolate country side
Scents of smoldering flesh fill the air.
Blood is as plentiful as berries were.
Hot cauterizing irons hiss and spark.
The cold bloody water stagnates.
The fields of charcoal scrunch under boot.
The storehouses moan, riddled with shell holes.

The cold gray soldier sshhiivveerrss f i t f u l l y .

Evan Michalski

The Legend of the Blackbard and the Bloodring.

"Roland, give me that book titled The Legend of the Blackbard and the Bloodring, I want to read it," said Vlad.

"Can I assume it's the book about Delvin and Uladtric?" said Roland.

"Yes my dear friend, that's it!" exclaimed Vlad.

As Vlad opens the moth eaten book, he chokes on the ancient dust that billows out of it.

The Legend of the Blackbard and the Bloodring. Volume; 1

In the days when King Glodric ruled the vast empire from his castle in Lukomorye, there were rumors about the Lost Archipelagos off the coast of Darmatria. It was said the Bloodring resided in a fiery pit guarded by the Dragon Priestess of the Other Realm. Many times did adventurers attempt to take the mythical ring. Many times did these adventurers return as ashes swept away by the wind...

"Uladtric, I have decided we will retrieve the Bloodring and be the first to defeat the Dragon Priestess," said Delvin.

"But Delvin, what about the heroes who have returned in a pile of ashes, surely you do not want to become one of them!" exclaimed Uladtric.

"Never mind about that, I have Baldur's Dragon Blade, dragons can do me no harm!" yelled Delvin.

"But it's the Dragon Priestess, and she seduces men, and brings them to their fiery deaths in her lair," said Uladtric.

"I am faithful to my wife Lydia, and I have pledged myself to her. No other woman can drive me astray." Delvin boasted.

Lydia enters the room after hearing Delvin talking with Uladtric.

"Oh Delvin, " exclaimed Lydia, "You know I worry so much about you, so why are making me worry now? This Bloodring has caused peril in the hearts of many women. And I myself, do not want to lose you!"

"Fear not my wife, for I am prepared, unlike these other so called heroes. I am armed with Baldur's Dragon Blade. No dragon can stand in my path," said Delvin.

"Oh but what about her fiery dragon breath?"

"For that, I have my tried and true Spritemetal Scalemail. No flame can damage me. On that thought, Uladtric where are you?"

"I am here Delvin," said Uladtric.

"I you want to prepare my armor and weapons now, Lydia and I will prepare the provisions, then we take a load off at The Jolly Dwarf Tavern for some mead and steak!"

The Jolly Dwarf is a popular tavern in the village of Eoltria. Widely known throughout Lukomorye, and even the distant lands of Freymoore. The Jolly Dwarf attracts adventurers for the famous savory dragon steak and the thirst quenching mead. Delvin and Uladtric drink the night away and make merry with others: all while listening to tales of the ancient's great glories between drinks.

"Oh Uladtrish thish music and mead makesh me merry!" slurred Delvin.

"Hey it's the famous Blackbard from Lamascus, shing us a song about the Blooshring will you?" Uladtric said.

"That will be 5 dvaas. Thank you, and to the next song, the song of the Bloodring!" sang the Blackbard.

They speak of the Bloodring,
Their swords upon shields ring,
For the journey is full of peril
And the weak in heart shall never be merry.
The woman who guards is serpentine
And upon men is quick to dine
For only those who possess the Baldur's blade
Will make her their handmaid
Leap not unto the ledge, but into the fires
For the Bloodring hides in her desires.

With the end of the song, the tavern was quiet and all fast asleep, for the Blackbard had invoked a spell of tiredness and left the sleeping to dream about the Bloodring. Awakening hours later, the now sober drunks described their vivid dreams about the Bloodring with the most excitement and aching heads.

"Uladtric, I had the most wonderful dream, I dreamt of the Bloodring, on my finger!" said Delvin over the din of the tavern.

"Speak of the Menrudia, I had the exact same dream, but I was a vast and powerful god king with the world at my finger tips!" exclaimed Uladtric.

"I must have this ring for myself!" said Delvin, as he and the other patrons made a mad rush to the door.

Outside a bloodbath ensues as crazed combatants believe the ring was meant for them. Heads roll and the screeching sound of metal ensues. Delvin rushes into the heat of the battle with a scavenged battle axe and Uladtric conjures a healing aura around Delvin. Uladtric shudders as he hears Delvin yelling out his battle cry "FOR STROM," the god of

storms, Delvin's patron god. Before true chaos can ensue, the village guards, wielding paralysis staves, bring order to the midsummer brawl.

"Uladtric, summon the griffons and make haste for we must flee this fight, lest we want to be detained! Make haste for my dwelling!" Shouts Delvin as he runs towards Uladtric.

"Hold on tight Delvin, you wanted a speedy ride, well you got one!" replied Uladtric.

Delvin and Uladtric flee the scene just seconds before the Arch-Mage of the village froze all the unruly combatants with a net of paralysis.

Continued in Volume: 2...

"Roland, do you remember where volume 2 is, I was just getting so into this but volume two was ripped out of this compilation long ago..."said Vlad, rather upset.

"Did you check the chest in the root cellar? It might be in the corner near that old stone table." said Roland.

"Okay thanks, I'll check there too," responded Vlad.

End of Volume 1

Xavier Strittmatter

The Doctor's Demise

Bzzn!... Bzzn!... “Pick up, dammit!” exclaimed Doctor Hoover aloud. It was about 8:00, and the lab should already be closed up, even if Barnes had stayed late.

This was not the time for Barnes to have his phone on silent; his nerves were already shot without having to listen to his cell ding with no answer. This was the first time he had left the lab to be closed up by someone else since the incident almost two months ago.

Had it really only been two months? thought Hoover. This constant worry was all he could remember now; he could not comprehend what it meant to be safe or carefree anymore. Yes, it would be two months tomorrow. Two months since he had revealed the most important find of his life, perhaps the most important find in the last century, Formula 314-D. Well, it wasn't called that anymore, and it wasn't much of a reveal. All records of it had been erased from the databases at the lab, and his notebook of written records had been condensed, the original burned, and the final copy kept in a hidden vault within the lab along with all saved samples of the formula. He had actually made the discovery a month before that fateful day.

“Hey, Will!” came Doctor Barnes' voice distinctively over the phone. “What's up?”

Hoover's thoughts had drifted. For a moment he had a second of bliss, of just thought, no anxiety, but Barnes' voice jolted him painfully back to reality faster than he had left it. “Thank God!” he almost cried into the mic of his phone. “I didn't think you were going to pick up. Is the lab locked? Is it safe?”

“Of course, of course ... although funnily enough, I'm actually headed back down there to open it up again now.”

A half second of relief was replaced by dismay again: “Why are you going back if it's already locked up?” Hoover asked worriedly, thoughts of betrayal or worse flirting through his head.

“Funny story, locked my keys down there again, got out to my car and tried to use my lab set; this whole two separate key chains nonsense is messing with me.”

“Oh, okay; make sure you lock it up again right,” Hoover sighed with relief. Of course Barnes wouldn't do that to him; if he couldn't trust Barnes, he couldn't trust anyone. No one else had stayed as close or as supportive of him in this time of hardship. He was the only one at ChemExcell Institute that he had trusted with all the information regarding Formula 314-D; the only other person who knew all the pieces of the puzzle. The fact that he was a little scatter-brained only helped him be sure that he had good intentions. And it made sense; the institute had required that everyone who had clearance to the Super Lab wear their keys around their neck and under their shirt on a separate chain from their personal ones.

"I'm in the lift heading down, so I'm going to have to go. See you tomorrow. And don't worry; we've made it this far already..." The connection went dead.

The lab was far enough underground that there was no cell service. In fact there wasn't really anything down there; it was over half a mile under the ground. Only high-level employees of ChemExcell even knew of its existence; knowing its location was even rarer.

Hoover relaxed ... well, as much as he could relax. Barnes would take care of it. He was sure he would be thrilled to take the eight-minute, high-speed elevator ride twice more, unlock the lab by scanning multiple parts of his body, entering several codes, and then using his keys to get through the multiple levels of security, just to have to lock it up again. But he was a good man, and he would take care of it graciously.

Hoover left the bathroom of the courthouse that he had locked himself into in order to make the phone call and made his way to his car. He had been stuck in the courts since lunchtime dealing with more and more accusations against his character. Ever since he had refused to hand over the formula to the government when they first discovered it, he had been slandered beyond recognition through mostly completely unfounded stories of the utmost horror about his history and practice as one of the foremost biochemists in the nation. After the "stories" had emerged, his image had been crushed. Although he didn't have that many friends outside of the lab, they were all gone, even some of those within the lab, who well knew the stories were false (hell, they were starting to be brought in as accomplices to his "crimes" as well), began to steer clear of him because of the trouble he had caused them. He was under investigation for multiple "crimes against humanity," and the criminal accusations kept piling up. He had been prosecuted for over a month now, and it seemed to him that every day now a new story was made up about him. He thought that the public would have realized by now how crazy it all sounded, but they screamed for his immediate arrest with even more belligerence.

Dr. Hoover got into his car and started the drive home. He turned on the radio. He used to like listening to the local news on his way to and from work, until the stories were all about what an evil person he was. The weather man was talking about some possible snow from Lake Michigan, when it quickly turned to his story: "Another update on the developing story about Dr. William Hoover," a female newscaster began. "It was officially revealed to the public today that Hoover will be subject to a polygraph examination within the next two weeks to discover if his testimony denying the use of human test subjects in the lab was truthful."

Hoover punched the power button. These people knew nothing about the truth, about what this was really all about, about what he was really doing as a scientist. ChemExcell Institute for Advancement in Chemical Technology was by far the largest and most advanced non-government funded organization for scientific discovery in the world. He was one of the heads of the Pharmaceutical division in the Super Lab outside of Chicago. His main directive there was to discover a non-addictive painkiller alternative to opiates. Formula 314 was his crowning achievement. After years of development, it showed the most promise as a successful pain killer,



and it had no addictive effects. The drug was tested on animals, and it seemed to be perfect, but many of the side-effect tests were vastly inconclusive. A human subject was needed to gather more relevant data, and ChemExcell was not ready for such a drastic step with so many unknowns. Hoover agreed that it was dangerous, but then Barnes stepped forward and volunteered to be a test subject. ChemExcell agreed under certain conditions. At first it seemed to be working great, but then it happened. Barnes seemingly went insane for about half an hour, and they had to tie him down. Further analysis revealed hallucinogenic side effects, and the organization instantly ordered 314 discontinued and funds to be directed to a new idea.

But Hoover was not going to let so much of his life's work go to waste, and he spent hours and hours working after the lab had closed on modifying Formula 314. Then it happened, quite by accident, that he discovered that a derivative of his Formula had the ability to kill cancerous cells. He wasn't sure at first, so he stayed after hours even longer to confirm what he thought he had observed. Then he cured Barnes.

Barnes confided in him that he had been suffering from brain cancer for a while, and that after he had taken the test of Formula 314, the cancer had stopped growing for quite some time. He revealed that it was back, and that he was going to die soon. Hoover told him about his work with Formula 314 and explained to him the principles behind the cancer-killing version, 314-D. Barnes wanted him to try it on him, and after so much work on it, he was sure it could save him. Using a direct injection method of the drug into the cancerous cells instead of the oral drug that 314 originally was, Barnes made a full recovery and was not subject to any side effects.

They had revealed to their department executive at corporate what they were doing, and once it worked, he called a meeting with Hoover and the organization's executives to discuss what course of action to take. Their company did not really have the means to release this cure to the public right away. They wanted to manufacture it on a large scale first. Hoover insisted that since it was so cheap to make, it must be sold at very low prices to those who needed it (at this point over 50% of the world's population had some form of cancer and the other half knew someone who did). Hoover wanted to save people, to do something really good with his life, but then one of the executives named Alfred Winsincook excused himself and called up his friends in some government agency. He had been planted in this organization in such a high position to inform the government of such great developments. They were evidently afraid of such an advanced institution's power because they were not directly involved in it. Thankfully, this man was an idiot who alerted them to the fact that something was up by his behavior. If he had stayed quiet longer, he would have easily learned information such that the government would have the Formula in its grasp now. But instead, ChemExcell quickly realized what he had done when government agents began knocking on the door, and Winsincook was fired outright. Then it was over. The government demanded that the Formula be handed over and outright prevented the organization from revealing it to the public. What they wanted it for they still don't know. Perhaps control over its people, or maybe they just want

to have the glory of discovering it themselves, he thought. It didn't really matter to him anymore, though; he decided that the government was corrupt after everything it had done to destroy him and coerce him into giving them everything. They had been trying for a while now to get him to reveal the location of the Super Lab to them. In fact, they were trying to legally force him to reveal it in the courts, but his lawyer was good, and he defended him well and had delayed and frustrated the prosecution on numerous occasions. Hoover's only goal now was to thwart the government by somehow proving his innocence and publicly revealing his work.

As he pulled up to his driveway, Hoover resolved this completely within himself and went almost directly to bed when he got inside.

Early the next morning, Hoover set off to the lab. Once again, he instinctively flipped on the radio about halfway there. This time, though, he couldn't shut it off. "—and the fire seems to have been purposely set using many of the chemicals in the lab devoted to the discovery of alternate forms of energy."

"For those of you just tuning in," said a new voice, "We have recently received reports of an underground explosion, supposedly in the secret lab of Doctor William Hoover, where he committed his heinous crimes against humanity. Security footage recovered from the lab by the police and other investigating officials shows an armed assailant following one Doctor Henry Barnes into the lab, coldly murdering him, opening some kind of secret vault to take something from the lab, and then setting the fire and rigging the whole place to burn. The assailant resembles Doctor Hoover, and it is assumed to be him. Police pulled up to his house about fifteen minutes ago to put him under arrest, but they failed to find him there. Police are currently searching for him throughout the Greater Chicago Area, and roadblocks are being placed on certain major roadways as I speak."

Hoover stared straight ahead, his eyes dead, feeling nothing. He heard sirens, and looking into his rear-view mirror, he saw flashing lights a ways behind him. He doubted they saw him; they were too far back. He could probably get away. Up ahead the highway curved. Hoover pushed down on the accelerator as hard as he could, but did not turn the wheel; he slammed into the cement barrier, and then black.

Tanner Kendall

Upperclassmen Take Action

A committee composed of concerned upperclassmen, mostly seniors with some juniors, has pledged to take a stand against “dangerous infractions of the unwritten but nonetheless sacred rules of hallway navigation” as a privy member (who preferred to remain anonymous) said to this reporter.

Another committee member, who also requested to be anonymous, shared his stark and brutal story. “I was a witness to a terrible accident a few days ago. I watched a student get run over by a freight train in the form of a boy right in front of my eyes and I was powerless to do anything to stop it, and now that it has happened, my dreams and my waking hours are haunted. I wake up in a cold sweat every night, and walking through the hallways, I fear for my life. I’ve lost 10 pounds in two days, and my hair is going to gray. But I digress. Anyway, the poor boy went into shock within minutes of being trampled by a metaphorical elephant, but I held his hand as I saw the light leave his eyes. I screamed for the nurse, athletic trainer, anybody, I just wanted help, but no one listened, or maybe no one cared. He whispered to me ‘Why? I was on the right hand side of the hall’, then he got up, gathered his books, and went to class. I sat back and I cried like a baby. We need change, so this never happens again, and we need it now!” He said.

One committee member, who requested anonymity, stated, “I like to run to class, and especially to lunch. It really bothers me when people are in my way! How can I make it to class in under a minute when the halls are one big traffic jam?”

The major topic discussed was the need for pedestrians to understand that walking needs to be done on the right hand side of the hall. If the walker is not on the right hand side, it is appropriate to politely remind them to do so. If the pedestrian still does not move to the right hand side, then a report of the infraction should be made to a sub-committee formed to deal with these problems.

The committee was in session for hours, wrangling over details, striving to achieve covenant of hallway procedure and etiquette. After a triumphant emergence, the rules have finally been set in stone,

- 1.) Always walk on the right hand side of the hall.
- 2.) Always walk single file.
- 3.) Don’t walk too slowly.
- 4.) Don’t run, either.
- 5.) Always walk on the right hand side of the hall.
- 6.) Keep a moderate pace.
- 7.) Don’t stop in the middle of the hall.
- 8.) No hanging out in front of lockers.
- 9.) Move out of the main traffic zone if a stop in forward momentum is imperative.
- 10.) Always walk on the right hand side of the hall.

- 11.) No farting in hallways.
- 12.) Don't turn off the lights.
- 13.) No yelling.
- 14.) Keep moving when ascending/descending the stairs.
- 15.) Always walk on the right hand side of the hall.
- 16.) If the teacher is not in the room, the class must spread along the wall, taking up as little space as possible.
- 17.) Be aware of the auxiliary stairwell in Justin Hall.
- 18.) Always walk on the right hand side of the hall.
- 19.) Backpacks in excess of 20lbs must obtain a "Wide Load" sticker from a committee member. Violators will be apprehended and will face consequences.
- 20.) Absolutely always walk on the right hand side of the hall.

The members of the Committee on Hallway Navigation and Safety were quite pleased with themselves, and the tremendous feat they have accomplished. They deserve admiration and respect for a truly Herculean effort. At the breathlessly awaited next meeting, the formation of a Hall Monitor Corps will be put to a vote, and emergency protocols for a "black hole situation" will be defined.

Andrew Phillips

The Sense of Independence

He opened the front door to his empty house for the first time. There was no mother waiting for him inside, asking him about his day. He waited for his mind to flood with how he could occupy his time alone in the open home, but no ideas seemed valuable enough for this new freedom he had.

The boy walked across the room. He set down his bag and took off his coat. His eyes glanced around admiring the detail of the house that was only inhabited by him. He took a step and craned his neck to look up the stairwell.

“Hello?” he shouted. No answer. The house was indeed all his. A bittersweet feeling came about. His excitement of being alone was balanced by the uneasiness of having no one to make sure he didn’t mess up. The boy went to the fridge and took out the milk. He stopped himself while reaching for a glass, then unscrewed the cap and drank straight from the carton. The feeling didn’t quite live up to his expectations. Frustrated by this, he went to look for another activity. He approached the stereo and turned on the radio. Then he increased the volume a little bit, then a little bit more. The loud music was calming to him. He began to dance and sing, not bothered by what he might look like. A moment later a sound interrupted his fun and he ran over to the stereo and shut it off. He stood there for nearly a minute wondering what the noise was, then decided that it would be better if he kept the house quiet if anything were to happen.

The boy crept to the dining room peeking over his shoulders every now and then. He remembered something he had always wanted to try. He grabbed a thin tablecloth and a wine glass. He spread the tablecloth smoothly on the table and placed the glass in the center. Then grabbing at the edges, he yanked towards his body hoping to see the glass stay firm. Unfortunately, it jumped above the rippling table cloth and shattered against the floor. The boy cursed under his breath. He knew his parents would be unhappy if they found out. So he grabbed the garbage can and began to clean up.

When he finished, he thought about what he might do next. As he thought, the house grew quiet. So quiet that sounds that were normally unnoticeable became loud. Dirt crackled inside the furnace and the fridge coughed up ice. Every second was marked by the footsteps of the clock. The boy intensely listened to these sounds. The clock seemed to be a magnificent metronome and the house was a conductor to a great orchestra of objects inside. When the house orchestrated the objects to pause, there was a great silence, and the boy clapped. His claps echoed throughout the halls.

Next he served himself some ice cream. It was more than his mother would ever allow, especially at an hour this close to dinner. As he ate, he hoped that his parents wouldn’t find the

broken glass in the garbage can. The last few spoonfuls became a struggle. He had gotten too much for his own good, but finished with difficulty as he held his aching stomach. He thought maybe if he lied down on the couch for a bit it would go away and he could resume his activities. The seconds of the clock metronome grew loud again. He closed his eyes and tried to ignore it.

The boy awoke to the sound of a rattling knob.

“I’m home. What are you doing on the couch? Long day at school?” said his mother.

“Mom you’re finally home!” The boy exclaimed. “My stomach was just bothering me so I laid down and accidentally fell asleep.”

“Finally home? You were only here for twenty minutes by yourself.”

Tim Wroblewski

The Lesson

"Tim get up your pancakes are ready!" screams my mother from the kitchen. Ahhh the smell of Gameday. I always loved waking up to the smell of my mom's famous blueberry pancakes in the morning of Gameday. Every time she makes her pancakes, we've managed to win everytime. But this time it might be a different story. Today we play St. Sebastian in the championship game and everyone on the team has no hope. St. Sebastian hasn't lost a game for 5 years and has the best player in the country, Dwayne James. His 7ft wingspan and his 240 all muscle body makes him an unstoppable force on the court. I mean he already has offers from Duke and Syracuse and he is in 8th grade!

I woke up and a message from my coach saying, "Be at the gym by 5:30 so we can strategize and get ready for the game" I lean towards my alarm clock and it reads, "5:15." I jumped out of my bed like a kangaroo and ran downstairs. I rambunctiously looked for my jersey and sneakers as I try to figure out where my parents are and why they wouldn't wake me up. I sprint into the kitchen and out of the corner of my eye I see on the calendar that my brother Jack had a basketball practice at 5:30. So I rushed into the garage and grab my bike and started the long haul to the gym in the snow.

I finally reached the school at about 6:15 and I couldn't have been more happy to see the school. I threw open the doors and sprinted to the locker room. As I opened the door, Coach Jones just stared me down like I murdered someone. He just says one word to me, "Sit." Before I could explain why I was late the rest of the team ran out of the locker room and into the gym to begin warm ups. Coach Jones was still in the room as I was getting my jersey on and said to me, "Tim I don't know if i can play ya. I know its the biggest game of the season but you know my policy. You come late, you don't play. You can sit on the bench and cheer on your teammates and wear your jersey, but Tim I'm not gonna play ya." My heart literally sank into a bottomless pit. I couldn't believe I wasn't going to play in this game. I trained all season long to get my shot at Dwayne James and St. Sebastian. I was building up so much envy and anger that I almost left and I was going to go home. But, then something hit me. That something was what Coach Jones preached all season - responsibility. Responsibility for ourselves, our teammates, and our team as a whole. It was my fault that I overslept and I knew

I had to take responsibility for my action. So i sat on the bench with my teammates and cheered my heart out for them. Even though we ended up losing and I wouldn't be able to play basketball for King of Heaven anymore, I gained the biggest attribute I would be able to use and that my friends was Responsibility

Epilogue: This story was told by Tim Wroblewski, head coach of the Los Angeles Lakers before the 2030 NBA Finals against the Miami Heat. They would go onto to win the Series as it was Coach Wroblewski's first of many World Championships.

John Roberts

After Frankenstein

It was a dull and dreary day.
November I believe.
I passed a mother shuttering in agony
As the yellow flames
Continually burned
The fireman distributed infinite
Amounts of water
Vanished.

The yellow flames swallowed the house
Finished
A horrid sight it was
A mother's emotions burning
As the sight
Of a lifeless corpse was revealed.

What monster caused this catastrophe
Depriving a mother of her only son?