

ENJAMBED 2021



Enjambéd

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“Rebuilding”

What do we do after those moments happen? Whether it is the culmination of one's success, a pitfall along the journey, or most commonly, overcoming adversity. What lies ahead after these experiences? Every single moment leaves an impression in our lives. We take these into account and build upon them. We are learning, growing, and living.

POETRY

“Mis Colores” - Andrew A. Leung

Mis colores son
Fuertes, felices, tristes
Dame la vida

Amputation – Armanda Saldana

Click-clack, click-clack.

A haunting sound, shivers down the spine.

The crutches strike the wooden floor.

A bang.

The crutch strikes the bathroom wall

As he tries to urinate.

Click-clack, click-clack.

A big sigh, a groan

As he struggles to sit on the couch.

Plop, plop, the crutches rest on the couch.

“Time to change the bandages!”

He says to his wife.

A wince, another, as the bandages unravel.

A striking white.

The bone...at the end of the stump.

A nail piercing your foot.

“Ha ha..aahh...”

He tries to hide the pain, to no avail.

A wince, another, as new bandages are wrapped.

The wife grimaces as if she felt the pain too.

For the site of a missing leg, pain for her as well.

I shake my head.

Machismo.

Why did you not go to a doctor immediately?

“It’s cuz I thought it’d go away on its own.”

Black, black, up to the knee your leg was already.

Diabetes speeding the spread.

It hurt bad enough for you to miss work.

You, who didn’t miss work for illness.

Tu puto machismo.

And mine.

I saw you stay home for a week straight.

A strange smell.

“Have you not showered?”

I asked you not.

Men deal with their pain alone.

Show weakness to no one.

But the wife...

She too...

Home all day, with you.

And she couldn't...wouldn't...

A blame game.

As we sit at Denny's the day of the surgery.

“Mom, did you not notice something was wrong?!”

“Me?! What about you?! He's your father!”

“...He's your husband. I work. I go to school. I'm barely home. But you...”

Excuses. A simple conversation and..

“Enough! It's your father's fault for not saying anything.”

Machismo. Stupidity. Strained relationships.

Click-clack, click-clack.

The haunting sound, a reminder of...not showing weakness.

Stupidity.

He goes for a smoke.

A sigh, from three different spots.

warmth & blankets – Ashley Smith

she sat across her fireplace,
a chiseled wine glass in one hand
and the remote in the other.
she paused for a second,
and slowly closed her eyes.
the pops
and snaps
of the fire
began to marinate
and liven the stillness
of the moment.
She indulged in a few more sips,
slowly pulled away and
let her lips rest on the rim.
She smiled
and softly snuggled deeper
more intimately
into the couch.
Her feet felt incredibly warm under the
blanket
her heart full
and with the tv now on,
her favorite movie coming on at 8.

2 am rain on a Monday – Ashley Smith

the fan on low
two blankets coddling my body
the uproar from everyone in the house has now
become quick interludes of
sporadic snoring
the room is engulfed in black as I gaze at this
bright screen
the ignored apartment buildings now have
purpose as instruments while the rain plops,
falls, and spins onto them
the pipes carrying special tunes
this is why rain is music to my ears
the night is lively, nature having its own
concert
you had to have been awake to be there
a smile creeping on my face as this poem is
coming to an end

Turn Off and On – Belen Mercado

I need courage to trust again.

My mind is always anticipating pain.

I been hurt all my life and my algorithm of senses learned to be intelligent.

They were exploited and betrayed by many.

Some people say my fear is lack of self-worth.

But fear is primarily processed with sensation.

The gut-knowing feeling has no rational analyzation and foundation.

It is a soft-seducing voice with no insecurity or imagination.

It is the alarm of a damaged heart advising me to proceed with a lot of precaution.

Fear is a physiologically loud emotion of vulnerable-based experience.

An emotion so strong that secludes any power of sanity by exhausting my feelings.

I have no fear of vulnerability. Maybe is fear of trusting again by deciding to ignore red flags that cause so much pain.. I have the tendency to not see things for what they are. Making a deliberate choice to be wrong another time.

Maybe is true that my heart can't think, but my blood speeds fast every time I think people are going to damage my heart.

I feel the intuitive awkward snap.

Telling me there is a close enemy ready to cause harm. I am ready to build up my walls of protection. Leaving me in solitude and frustration.

I turn my trust off and on. Enjoying the power of numbing myself to be strong.

Rebuilding my trust is my goal, even when people want to see me collapse in the floor.

There is no guarantee that being a woman with good intentions will prevent me from experiencing pain.

But I won't be in peace unless I learn to trust again.

**“sincerely yours, your daughter” – Brenda
Sanchez-Barrera**

I can't call you without crying, so I don't call you at all.

One day, I'll regret never showing my face when you come around.

I hate myself for avoiding you,

I know I can't outrun my past but avoiding you is as close as I'll ever get.

I'm sorry you're the face I associate with my pain, but can you blame me?

I'm holding onto memories that run through my hands like water, never staying long enough for me to capture in one snapshot.

A snapshot of you and I, when I saw the world in your eyes and you were everything I needed to feel safe.

You'll never read this,

but I'll write this for you, anyway,

and spill my tears onto a page once again, to someone from my past who holds my darkest secrets and earliest memories.

I won't speak your name — it goes hand-in-hand with a voice crack and some tears.

I won't say your title because you never lived up to that, and as much as it hurts me to say, you don't deserve that title.

Still, I don't resent you,

I don't blame you,

I still miss you,

I still love you,

and god, I—

I wish I could call you.. it's been so long since I've heard your voice.

But as always, I'll make an excuse.

“Call you soon,” I promise. We both know I lie.

– sincerely yours, your daughter.

Ken Malloy Harbor Park – Chris Pigao

As a 15-year-old girl
I sat and watched
the ducks,
birds,
people minding their
own business
while my brother
who worked a triple shift
making means ends
is sleeping
cause we hit the occupancy
at our apartment.
and if Miguel or Constance
finds out
that's the end
and we have to move the corner
vacancies
like we always did.

I walked up the
hills on rainy
days and still if it wasn't
I walked them
anyways.
Such poor concrete
but at least it was
better than back
home.

There was nothing like
this and even so,
we were born
into the ground

that was hallow and
voided.

Until then, I watched
the water from that
pond and it still reminded
me that water
regardless of where it's at
is still just water.
and I just sat there
patiently
until 4 o' clock.

Flores – Daisy Aguirre

As the sun rises all I see is you at my side.
You get me through the night.
Are you the way? Are you the light?
With you I set aside all my pride.
All that you need I promise to provide.
Because of you, my sins are no longer scarlet but white.
I'll always remember meeting you for our first kiss at midnight.
I will forever be your guide.
In distance we may be apart
But I cannot wait to be in your arms
I'll keep you out of harm.
When I have doubt, feeling your love clears the way.
Till the end of time, my beating heart;
Will belong to you and never breakaway.

Vacancy - Jon Sebastian

I let the room out—
to world-weary wanderers.
Some stayed
for a while then
some prayed
to be a child again.
But I let the room out—
For a time, it was nice.
Some came from out West,
with palm trees,
some came from down South,
with saddles blazing,
some came from far East
with wonders I've never seen before,
and some came from up North.
For a time, it was nice.
They checked in and checked out.
Then one day
a bad, very bad one checked in
and burned the inn down.
I've rebuilt since, but
now thoughts don't come round here
no more.
I let the room out—
but there's still a vacancy.

No Limitation - Karin Guerra

With pain in the heart and a lock on the lips
A person feels trapped with no way of expression
It is their confidence that strips
As they endure all this oppression
When has there been a limitation to the voice of the nation?
Where is the acknowledgment of those who are neglected?
It is time now to face this discrimination
It is time now to address this indifference
So together we, the future both elderly and young, stand against
those who show hatred
And be a voice with no limitation

Ties to Another – Katie Colln

That feeling when you just know,
the one when your demeanor changes.
It affects your flow.
Your purpose in the world is no longer your own.
You've shifted and you've twirled.
You've found a new tie
to a
new you,
to a
new land,
to a
new hand
through a bond that cannot be shaken
cannot be ripped, torn, or lost.
A choice to be awakened,
we determine this ourselves.

We discover who we are.
We scour the inner bookshelves
of our minds and our hearts and more.
We dust off our curiosity.
We float.
We glide.
We soar,
tied only to the earth
by this new love and hope,
full of wonder, full of mirth,
singing a new tune with joy unbounded,
a new song with love unbounded
by the doubt and uncertainty of this world,
secure in the fact that our hands are now curled.

To Exist is to Grow – Katie Colln

What does it mean to live?

What does it mean to be?

How can I truly thrive,
exist outside of a dream?

To live is to grow. To find
and to know that you're here,
that you matter, that you change,
that you're more than before.

To live is to change. To be
willing to rearrange your
comfort and embrace new,
an existence that is true.

We're given only one life.
We're here only one time.
Without struggle, how do we grow?
Without pain, how do we know?

Be All - Rachelle Delle

We exert ourselves to what end?
Fighting against the very nature we tend
Inventing a civil war of confusion
An unknown genesis, no promise of conclusion
It began simply as self-preservation
A spark for heat, tools, killing to prevent starvation.
We tasted the potential of invention
Self-improvement became our new intention
We built our fortress of civilization
Where busyness displaces rest and relaxation
We tasted money and personal gain
Our metropolis spreading outward like a stain
Washing out the map, its edges filled to burst
We tapped every known resource, but still we thirst
With nowhere left to spread, we begin to mound
Crusting over like an inflamed scab, no cure to be found
Our fat bellies descended with greed
And still we feed beyond basic need
The land, sea, and sky are cut like a jigsaw
Arbitrary divisions according to invented law
With no regard to the advantage of unity
We write our name on each piece with impunity
The vital reality of interdependence
Lost in time, swallowed by the distance
Every time you are cut, we bleed.
A violent labor to succeed
No sense of place—insolated in boxes of concrete and steel
No sense of self—an existential interrogation of what's real
An empty legacy of designations, titles, and brands
Ah! But look what we can achieve with our own hands

TREADMILL – Ryan Ritchie

you had a girl and an apartment and cats and
all that stuff. now you've got you. this is
what you asked for, what kept you awake
those nights when all you wanted was
to run. it's two a.m. and you're drenched
in sweat. this is not the marathon you desired.

Caricature – Sylvia Martinez

I don't recognize
the curves of my face
when I look in the mirror

The slope of my jaw trembles
under the hands of disillusion;
The red in my lips
is an imprint of a sinner's thumb,
scarring amongst my cheeks
is evidence of a pain that echoes still.

The face that gazes back at me -
her chin upturned to the ceiling
as if asking for a challenge,
only to receive no answer.

She's a caricature I despise
a girl framed in pictures
I refuse to recognize.

Mango – Sylvia Martinez

I am watching Mami cut a mango
bought from la esquina
its yellow juices drip like the sun
on the counter and raw

She cuts steadily and with intent:
down in half, away from the core
Knife down the orange insides
blade halfway in, her hands sore

“My mom taught me this way,”
she’ll say, eyebrows furrowed
I want to press my finger there,
relearn the traits she has sowed

I have never met my grandma.
The absence of warm hands
a constant fixture; mi abuela
falling through cracks like sand -

But I have gleaned her, know her
through teachings like these,
can feel her hands atop of mine
guiding me and steering me

So when I open a mango and cut
it in half, away from the core -
down the lines and push the skin
from inside out, I feel secure

I take a bite, wonder if she bit
into it like I do, stitching
the quilt piece by piece
listening and gaining.

ART

Jacqueline Aguilar



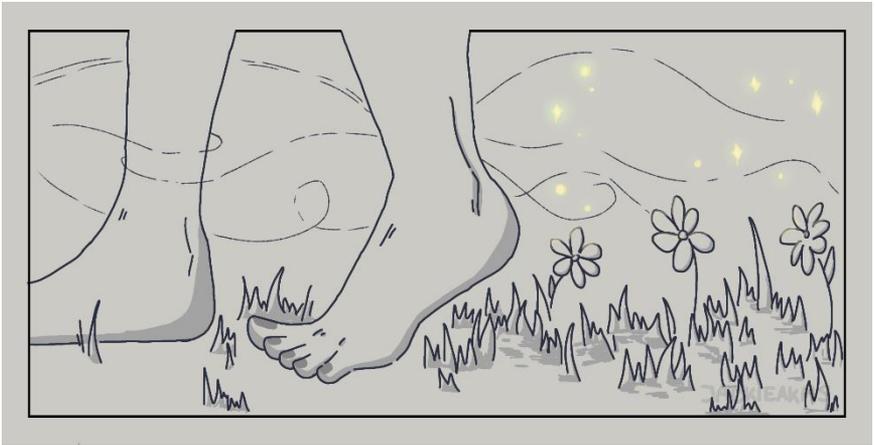
"Comfort Seeker"

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"Unwavering Balance"

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"Outside"

Jeannette Garcia



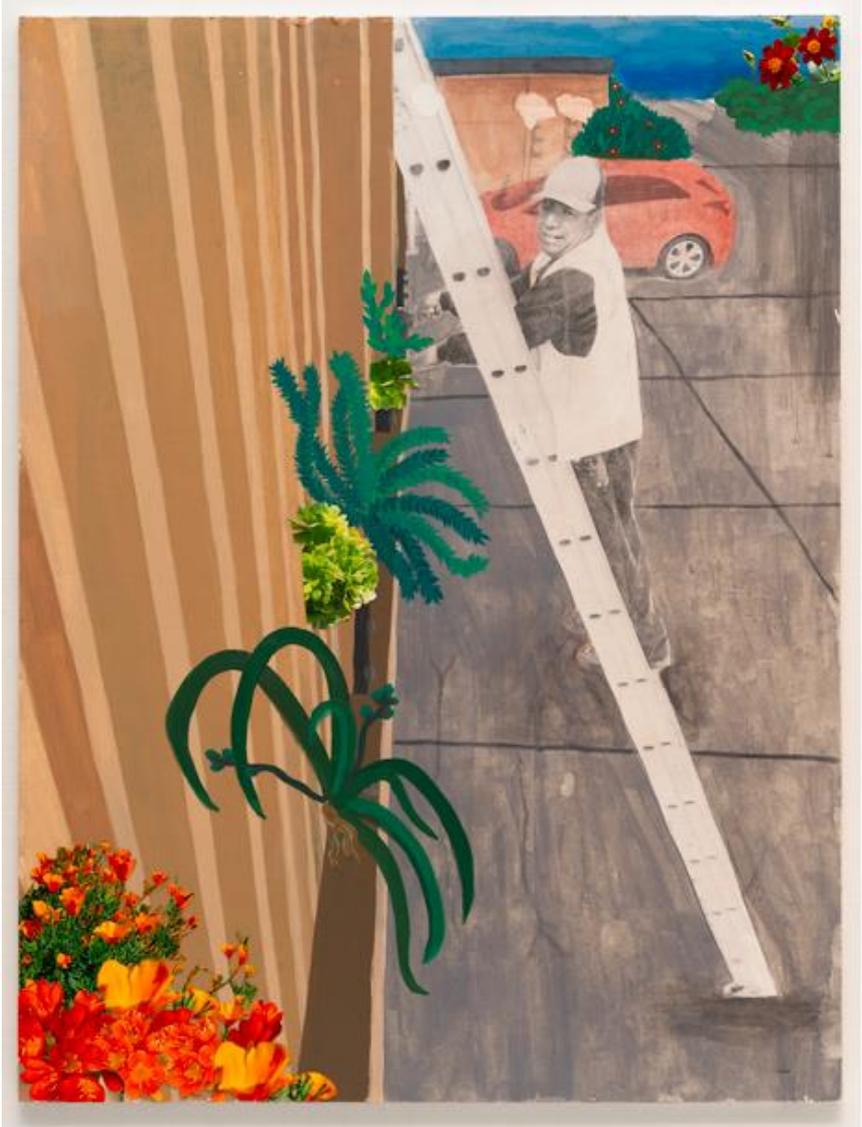
The Fruits of Labor

Jeannette Garcia



Clearing Ground

Jeannette Garcia



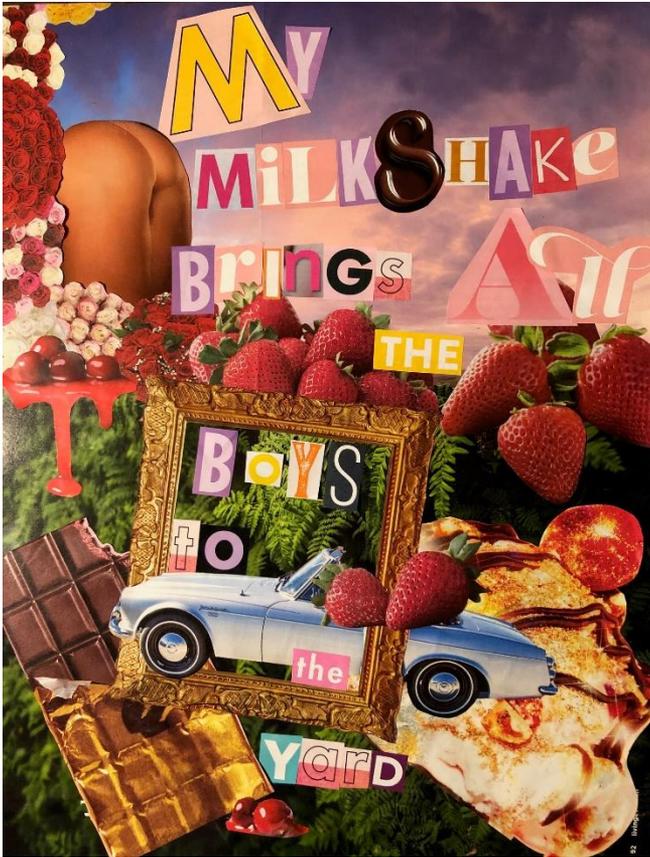
Self Supporting

Kali-Victoria Donovan



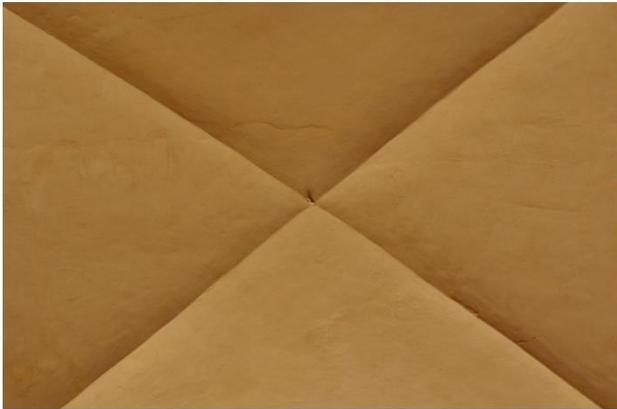
“Racist B*s Get Hexed by Witches”

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"My Milkshake Brings all the Boys to the Yard."

Nate Hertweck



Spanish Triptych:
"Klein Blue" / "Alcazar Gold" / "Tapias Red"

CREATIVE
NON-FICTION

Cindy Elizabeth (Mama) – Anisa D. Delgado

She radiates from the inside, out. Her laugh has always been the loudest in the room and it's contagious, shameless. She enjoys the holidays because it brings her family together with making tamales and going to see the Christmas lights at candy cane lane, but the summer is still her favorite. And on these warm days, and every day, you can always find her with a Diet Coke and chips in hand.

New Mexico is rooted in her, but California is her heart. Her golden-brown waves, hoop earrings, and red nails to match her lips are a signature of her that's a vivid picture in my mind. The second youngest of five, one of the apples of William and Jenny's eye. Her grandmother, her hero, always told her "beauty is, as beauty does" and this does not escape her.

There's a weight of compassion that she's carried since her youth. She holds her head high but does not use her strengths as a way to belittle others. The ability to find some kind of sunshine in her darker days is admirable. She doesn't enjoy confrontation; she thrives on togetherness. I hate to see her cry, especially if it's my fault. Her eyes are bright and sky blue, much like her outlook on one's possibilities.

Her favorite color is purple, the color of royalty, though she is the humblest queen I know.

As a mother, selfless. There isn't a thing she wouldn't do for us: Raymond, Katrina, Angel, April, Isaiah, me. Dad was drawn to her immediately, "she glowed, and was always the prettiest and warmest in the room."

She had a whole life before I came into her world: daughter, sister, friend, mother. How I wish I could've been there in her younger years, to watch her ride her bike down the block, play with her siblings and their many dogs, or belt out her favorite records like the Jackson 5 or The Bee Gees.

I asked her what she wants for Christmas: for everyone to have a good day. What she wants for her birthday: just a card. That's the kind of answers you'll get. If you ask her how she does it, what keeps her so cheerful? So hopeful for the best outcome? She'll say it's the Jesus in her, so I'll say that I'm blessed.

She was always there: every school performance, teacher-parent conference, graduations, and she's the loudest one in the crowd without a doubt. Your biggest cheerleader when you have none, or there with a tissue and some M&M's when you need to vent again over a boy.

I'm not her but I try to listen to what's important in her eyes: family, kindness, God. I would hope that my future daughter inherits her unconditional love or ability to make everyone feel important, and if not that then maybe her eyes or her laugh. Just a piece of her to have here when she's gone.

I've kept her notes she leaves in my lunch pail, or the gifts she gives me every Valentine's Day, whether I'm single or not. I can go on about her qualities or the daily things she does to make them easier or brighter, but simply, she is love.

¿Cómo se dice, “White Mexican” ? Check all that apply. – Anisa D. Delgado

Delgado, pero no acento.

It's being darker than your fair mom, but lighter than your olive-skinned dad.

Not having the blue eyes from the less than 10% German blood, but the bright and brown “Delgado eyes” , but no they don't make a difference here.

People have claimed to say that you “could pass” for ethnicities such as Italian, Persian, Filipino, just never Mexican. It's very rare that they guess Mexican. Your first name isn't even Hispanic, it's Arabic. Odd how some are quick to tell you what you aren't without being given permission to.

¿Cómo se dice, “White Mexican” ?

It's going to your Nane's house every week in elementary school and reading all the subtitles during telenovelas or having her translate for you. It's not being to carry a fluent conversation with the Elote man who passes your apartment on Wilmington boulevard after school. Not knowing how to dance to the Latin club music they played at homecoming, even though high school was about 86% Latino and statistically you fall into that category.

The first tattoo that imprints your upper left ribcage translates to “goddess” in Spanish, but your parents don't approve of tattoos in the first place, should've kept that to yourself.

¿Cómo se dice, “White Mexican” ?

It means being left out from work conversations amongst the García, Martínez, Ramírez, because your Spanish falls flat or is choppy, even though they could talk to you in English if they wanted. “¿Cuál es tu nombre?” they proceed to ask, already knowing the answer. “Delgado...yeah I know” you respond, as they look you up and down, eyebrow raised. You don’t have to say anything, you both silently nod, and they simply decide you don’t “look” your last name. It was a long year trying to order food from the kitchen.

It’s feeling stuck between several places, sometimes wishing you could just fall completely into one checkbox. The ones that you find on applications or surveys to determine your ethnicity or background. What’s your ethnicity? Check all that apply. But you’re a mutt, so it’s a little grey.

¿Cómo se dice, “White Mexican” ?

It’s making tamales every year for the holidays and knowing Mom makes the spiciest guacamole that beats La Cocina Mexicana hands down. It’s not having to use subtitles while watching Jane the Virgin by your early 20’s and feeling, unfortunately, impressed that you hung on to the little of Spanish 2 from junior year.

It’s knowing that you aren’t full Mexican but understanding that every other part that makes up those checked boxes is just as important. Native American. Spanish. German. Etc. You’re more than your last name and that’s okay.

“Julio³” - *Anonymous*

I: Abuelo Julio

Do you remember when you told me about the time you came to the U.S.? Like all your stories, it started off in El Salvador. With the war. You said you couldn't live in El Salvador anymore - not with the way things were. You wanted your little family to have a better life, a safer life. Only then, your little family was just your new wife, Tio Julito, and Tia Julia. This did not include my dad. You didn't say that though.

You said you weren't sure where dad and Tio Carlos were. Dad was still somewhere in Guatemala; Tio Carlos was with Abuela Rosa.

Maybe.
Probably.

Though, you had no idea where Abuela Rosa was anyway. It had been a while since you had last seen her. And it had been even longer since you last spoke with her. You told us you came here separately from your wife - only to get here and have a door slammed in your face.

You said you were homeless for a while. You ate food off trash cans. You spoke no English and weren't sure of where you were. You got into contact with old friends - or rather, you met men who used to buy your shoes. The shoes you made in El Salvador. M***z shoes. I wondered aloud why you chose a last name that wasn't ours for your company and you said it was to hide your real identity.

You told me that connections were the most important thing. You never know when you'll need to know a janitor. Or a plumber. It's good to know a lot of people. You never know when the guy who used to buy your shoes in El Salvador would be giving you room to stay in los estados.

You never complained. You never expressed a longing for your life back home. Back with the soles that had M***z printed on them. The name that I still censor out of fear. And it always made me wonder: how I would have felt to leave that all behind?

II: Dad

Julio. A name I'd never say in front of you because it sounds too awkward spilling from my mouth. It feels foreign and disrespectful. I don't think I've ever said 'Julio' in my life. Out loud. Until now. To me, you're just dad.

To your mom you're an estranged figure. She left you in El Salvador when you were in your teens. But even before she left Santa Ana, she had left you as a baby at Mama Carmen's. She met you again when you crossed. She knows you had three kids. She hasn't seen them in almost a decade. She knows you're okay though. And I suppose that's all she needs to know anyway.

To grandpa, you're the eldest. You're the son he's had the privilege of getting to know over the years; the son he has repaired his relationship with. The son he also left with Mama Carmen. To grandpa, you're chato and you're the son who visits him during a pandemic to make sure he's okay. You're the son that drives him to his cancer treatments.

To Mom, you're the man who refuses to get to places on time. You're the man she met out in Guatemala and the father of her three kids. You're the one she lived in Mexico with. You're the man who still hasn't learned English and the man she has to defend when you're getting into trouble. You're the man she still hasn't married in a church, but that's perfectly fine because she doesn't need to anyway.

To me, Mel, and Len - you're the dad who tells us to study and stuffs us into a car at 6am in the summer to take spontaneous trips. To Vegas, where we slept in cars and had

our eyes sparkle at pretty water shows. You're the dad who years ago drove us on May 1st to Pico and Olympic Blvd. We walked for hours and used my cheerleading pompoms to adorn the stroller. You're the dad who brushes off the traumas of war, the traumas of hearing people scream and getting killed. You're the dad that never lets us forget where we come from.

To the rest of the world, you're Don Julio. Tio. Primo. Mister joo-lee-oh. To the rest of the world, you're a happy man who speaks broken English.

They say: Hi, how are you?

You say: I'm good and you?

They say: Can you clean the toilets better this time?

You say: Oh, sure! No Problem.

III: Tio Julio, I'm Sorry

I'm sorry for your fifth-grade graduation. I was in a stroller and waving at you as you walked. I know you laughed at seeing my pregnant Mom in the crowd - and I'm sorry it wasn't your parents out there looking proud. I hope they won't be mad I said so.

I'm sorry for getting mad at you for stealing my juice boxes and for bringing home girls who put too much chile in their popcorn. I know you felt bad because you would bring home happy meal toys to make up for it. I'm sorry to say we still grow silent when your name gets brought up.

I'm sorry I didn't understand at a young age why they deported you. I didn't grasp the idea of not seeing you. I didn't know why we had to pay for cards to call you - or why you only had a few minutes to talk. I was foolish enough to end my phone calls with hurry back and see you soon.

I'm sorry I didn't understand deported meant permanent. My last words to you were: I got a scholarship award. Your last words to me were: I've gotten more than that, try harder.

For years I failed to understand why they took you away or why no one seemed to care that you were in danger. They say people like us should go back to where we came from; but, god, doesn't everyone say that? What if we tell them, you deported my Tio and they killed him a month after?

I never said goodbye. I was 2,821 miles apart from the guy who was like my big brother.

Tio Julio, I'm sorry.

I'm sorry they failed to understand you.

IV: I am not Julia

I think I was supposed to be. I was supposed to be many names before Mom settled for a name that was easy to understand in English. She failed to realize, then, that so many people would not know how to pronounce it anyway. It's fine, though. Once I say it the English way, there's a sigh of relief from the audience. Thank goodness we don't have to say it the other way!

Mom wanted me to be Coco - and dad told her she might as well name me Piña.

Years later, they talk about how I narrowly escaped the line of Julios and Julias. And I wonder how life could have been. I wonder if Julia was more outgoing. I wonder if she would have been disappointed in me and glad, I didn't steal her name. I wonder if I would have lived up to it.

On other days, I'm thankful for my strong-headed Mother, who refused to make me the eighth Julia in our family. But, I'm also glad she never named me Coco. I don't think I would have lived up to that name either. But perhaps I could have sported Mom's name pretty well. Margarita. Or if not that, then the name she used during her stay in Mexico, after she ran away from Guate and headed out into the unknown world. Karina. People call me a carbon-copy. Of Mom. I wonder, in fear, if I'm becoming the woman who raised me. I wonder if I have her temper. I probably do. I wonder, sadly, if I have her resilience. Her motivation. Her power. And I think to myself - I wouldn't have lived up to her name either.

There are nights where I think about Mom's unborn son. How I wish he would have been born so he would be that next Julio. I often wish so dearly that he would have been the first child. That he would have taught me everything I needed to know, because I don't think I can be that for my siblings. I don't think I can be the namesake I want to be. I wish he was there to pave the way for them and let me cross over. But he's not here and I'm not Julia.

The tricky thing about names is - they're supposed to mean something. Carmen in our family means a nurse from El Salvador who raised so many and loved them unconditionally. Juana means the most stubborn woman on the planet - yet the only woman de corte left in our family. Melany means an artist and a strong young woman, ready to tackle the world. Lenin means a smart young boy, who still has so much to learn but will get through it. Pj and Kisha mean the most loved beings on this planet. The apple to our eyes.

Maybe names aren't important at all. Maybe it's what you do with your name and what you set out to do. Maybe these names are just scribbled and scratched all throughout my notebooks - begging and pleading me to never forget. Maybe I don't want anyone to forget them either.

Bunnyman: An Inside Look on Oshawa, ON – Chris Pigao

Setting:

Oshawa, Ontario, Canada. A little town 45 minutes away from Downtown Toronto. Small, yet very industrial. There were parts that were very urbanized. The Oshawa Center comes to mind. The huge shopping center that usually was the dubbed “the OC”. There were big chains like HMV, Hudson’s Bay, Old Navy, etc. The food choices have popular fast food chains such as Tim Hortons and McDonalds right across from each other. Shoppers Drug Mart’s demographic had the elderly people. The 18-35 range stood in the middle, right where all of the imported big chain clothing stores lingered. There used to be a Cineplex Odeon at the entranceway and a Zellers. They closed down both and made them into a parking garage.

If people got tired of the OC and wanted to get away, there were paths right by the River that span across the city. The trails often led people to other parts of the city. You can take the Simone Road entrance path to the Harmony creek and somehow end up near Whitby or Courtice. People often took the path towards the Ontario Lake. It would be filled during the July 1st, Canada Day festivals. The trails were beautiful and somehow, people ran into each other during their trecks. The town had a good mix of nature and urbanized areas. Surprisingly, there is not that much litter on the ground. This town actually got the environment right. Ethnically, it has a variety of races. There’s a good mix of white, black, and Indian races with a small Korean and Chinese population. There are Filipinos there as well, since they do hold the Durham Annual Filipino Fest every spring

or so. Most Filipinos live in Scarborough, even opening the first Jolibee restaurant in Canada. Unbeknownst, there are barely any Hispanic or Latino populating the area. There is a Mexican restaurant, however, that would not justify if there were any Hispanic or Latinos in Oshawa. For example, “New Hong Kong Express” should be under the assumption that it would be owned and operated by Chinese. In this case, they were Thai. The owners of the local sushi joint would be assumed Japanese; however, they were Korean. Regardless of stereotypes, Oshawa has a diverse cast of ethnicities.

Money:

Although urbanized, the primary source of income was agricultural and factory-based work. There were huge greenhouses and various home improvement stores off the freeway. A little bit before the Square Boy Pizzeria was the General Motors of Canada factory. People can barely see the smoke from the factory. Needless to say, it was fairly regulated. What was not regulated were the amount of car companies competing with each other. There were dealerships surrounding that area. The lots were never stock piled with cars. It always had a sizeable amount of inventory.

Nowadays, the biggest market is still business. The amount of the younger demographic going to University and studying business economics are fairly high. They get their degree, study finance, and work at the local banks or loan offices. People are also private contractors, working to fix houses and home improvement types-of-ordeals. The most common installation are back yard porches. Some of the finest mahogany woods were used as a small patio. Perfect for a summer day. If they needed to chill their drinks

in the wintertime, they could just leave the cooler on the back patio for a couple minutes.

Unsurprisingly, the demand for the medical field is also at an all-time high. Many of the younger generation become CAN's or Nurses and work at the local medical facilities or retirement homes. The number of elderly patients outweigh the amount of the younger generation. A lot of foreign workers begin their work in these facilities, later moving onto the city. Most of them are content with staying and eventually buy homes in Oshawa. Regardless of banking or nursing, their salaries can afford them a nice, cozy two-story home (for less than 50K).

Schools:

Speaking of cozy two-story homes, Oshawa had a great number of schools in the area. Oshawa was the ideal place to raise a family. It was a strange thing to see elementary students with no dress code turn into high school students with a uniform. It must be due to the part that the schools were regulated by the catholic churches in Ontario. The kids live a simple, happy life and often come home at 3. Most of them can't wait to watch YTV (Ontario's children's television channel) to catch the latest anime and cartoon block. The older high school kids are occupied with club activities like soccer or basketball. If they weren't into sports, they often helped out as a member of the church. They could be altar boys or become a member of the Knights of Columbus. Anything to get out of the house.

As for higher education, all of these students had to go away from the town to go to University. Some went to Peterborough for degrees in Nursing, others went to Ryerson university in downtown Toronto for business. There were

local trade schools here (ala ITT tech in the United States) but they had low enrollment.

Entertainment:

Not many forms of entertainment there. There was once a roller-skating alley midpoint between Oshawa and Whitby, but it closed down a while back. It was a popular venue for Canada Day. There are a few “fun centers” with old, beat-up arcade games. Most of those centers would be right next to a Cinéplex theater that always showed the latest Hollywood hits.

There used to be a music venue in Downtown Oshawa called “The Dungeon”. Apparently, Hamilton Ontario’s infamous screamo band, Alexisonfire, performed there. Amongst the schoolkids, that was the place where everyone shot up heroin. That place ceases to exist, mainly because musicians don’t perform in Oshawa anymore. Either way, the kids out here are eager to drive so they can party in Toronto or hang out at Canada’s Wonderland.

Bunnyman:

The local legend of Oshawa. Middle aged man, wears simple, everyday jeans and a plain shirt. He’s a pretty tall person. Maybe clocking in at around 5’8, maybe even 6 ft exact. Every town has their one infamous local that roams around the streets. Most of them for not for being popular and well-liked. Actually, the bunnyman is quite the opposite. He’s odd and eccentric to some. He doesn’t have a bad reputation or any criminal records, he’s just marginalized as an odd person. He’s not a homeless man nor does he have any physical deformities. What is his appeal amongst the

people of the town? He wears a pink bunny rabbit headband. That's it. That was the appeal. It's an oddity for a small town like Oshawa to have a grown man wear bunny ears. Everyone here is a simple, rule following person.

Now, some might think, "Well, he's wearing a bunny headband? What's the big deal about that?" To everyone in Oshawa, it's a huge deal. They want to understand why. Many don't even know his real name. According to a message board, his real name is "Chris". With the lure of this man, the internet does not seem like a reliable source for this. Some people have conjured up ideas. The most common one is this account:

"Well, I actually talked to the Bunnyman while I was waiting at McDonald's at Thickson and Dundas in Whitby. He's such a nice guy. I politely asked him why and he said, 'It's for my daughter. She passed away from cancer. She loved Easter time.' Such a heartbreaking story."

-Common Oshawaian

However, there are other witnesses that claim otherwise. Some of them local rumors, others on messaging boards like Reddit or 4chan.

"I heard he's a doctor that entertains kids."

- Unaware Oshawaian

"This man does not like people, and hates having to work for a living. So, he wears bunny ears on his head to get welfare cheques from the government because he pretends to be insane, and people won't bother him because they think he's insane. Fucking brilliant."

-funny junk use from Durham

“I heard he runs a bunny farm on the outskirts of the town. Right by the GMC factory.”

-Basic Girl Oshawaian

“The Bunnyman? That guy is a dick. I bought him an electronic chess piece. Just the other day, he yelled at me at the bus stop.”

-Chad Oshawaian

“My brother is a cop in Durham. He has a mental disability, but he is harmless. He wears them to protect himself from getting taken by aliens again. That’s what I have been told, whether it is accurate or not I do not know.”

-reddit user fryguy1987

You can often see him in the epicenter of Oshawa. During the holidays, he changes it up sometimes and wears antlers and a Christmas hat. Whatever the case may be, the origins of these ears are still a mystery to many inhabiting Oshawa, Ontario, Canada. Some may never find the answers to this. A select few know the truth, it’s hard for the people to comprehend it.

To the outside world, he is one like all of us.

**The Discourse on Dominance and Interstitial
Identities of Ethnicity and Masculinity in Parks’
Topdog/Underdog
by Andrew A. Leung**

Suzan-Lori Parks’ Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Topdog/Underdog* discusses two men’s struggles with race and masculinity in America. The two main characters, Lincoln and Booth, have differing ideals of dominance, ethnicity, and masculinity. In his employment, Lincoln accepts a subordinate underdog role to don a costume in whiteface though he is a Black man—this is a reversal of minstrel traditions where the theatricality of race and race issues was exemplified. However, he asserts his own kind of power in his command of Three-Card Monte and in his relationship with his brother. Booth, though, resists taking on the role of an underdog; he often resorts to violence to put on a façade of dominant masculinity to compensate for his sexual and financial failings. Lincoln resists the binarism and strict hierarchy of ethnicity and masculinity to define himself with an ambiguous and interstitial identity. He is neither completely a topdog nor an underdog, and his varied experiences in the play define him in an ambiguous manner. Booth’s unclear masculinity is demonstrated through his attempts to establish his authority as a topdog in relation to his brother, an underdog, although he himself falls short of this masculinity many times.

In order to gain employment as a Black man in America, Lincoln accepts a subordinate role in his work, dressing in whiteface and simulating being shot by customers. In fact, he goes to great lengths to perfect his act,

making it look extremely lifelike, underscoring the history and theatricality of race issues in America. Lincoln is satisfied with his role of dying and being shot at while being dressed in whiteface, calling it “honest work” (26) while asserting that the suit does not “make him” into a Lincoln (34). Through this, he mocks White America’s passion for masculinity linked with violence, making fools of those who pay for a chance to shoot a Black man portraying a White historical figure—he is earning money. He also reverses the longstanding tradition of blackface in entertainment. Lincoln’s Whiteness as Abraham Lincoln suggests sexual impotency and is the reason why he is met with American guns and violence in his work. His role as an underdog and his presumed loss of manhood are stressed when Booth accuses him of being impotent and a sellout “Uncle Tom” (26). Unfazed, Lincoln does not fight back because he sees through the theatricality and fiction of dominance between his brother and him, as Booth is unemployed. Though in public, Lincoln is complacent with appearing as the underdog, he proves himself to be the breadwinner within his family.

On the other hand, Booth is unwilling to take on a submissive role and asserts his identity as a dominant man, often through violence to compensate for his shortcomings. Unlike Lincoln, he is opposed to dressing in whiteface that would dampen his perceived masculinity; Blackness is associated with virility and manliness. In opposition to the impotent Lincoln, Booth says, “I need constant sexual release... If I wasn’t taking care of myself... I’d be out there doing who knows what, shooting people (49). Booth’s insatiable desire to become a dominant male is exhibited through his conflation of violence and sex. His various

boasts of sleeping with his brother's wife and winning Grace over again when it is a lie speaks to his inability to express his manhood in a nondestructive manner. The connection between violence and masculinity is hopelessly intertwined in Booth, reflecting American society's obsession with male violence and dominance. It is readily apparent that Booth accepts only a dominant role in order to be an African-American man in society, and he despises Lincoln's approach of confidence in his subordinate role that reflects his assured masculinity.

Lincoln redefines ethnicity and masculinity in an ambiguous manner in *Topdog/Underdog*, resisting binary and hierarchical notions of them. Though he is highly adept at winning Three-Card Monte, Lincoln leaves his life of conning people out of their money with the game. It is perceived as a zero-sum game, where one gets either all or nothing. Lincoln resists this binary to take on an ambiguous and interstitial identity when he elects to find work dressing as a White man though he is Black. The binaries and hierarchies of lucky/unlucky, winners/losers, and topdog/underdog are resisted with Lincoln's calmness and unwillingness to play the game or fight Booth back. Lincoln resists the violence and trickery linked to masculinity although Booth embraces it.

Booth continually begs Lincoln to teach him how to win at Three-Card Monte. In spite of his gratuitous use of betrayals and violence to attain his ends sexually and financially, Booth still is insecure because of Lincoln's expertise in the game. Booth is unable to attain the role of a topdog because of his adherence to the binarism of topdog/underdog and his resistance of interstitial identities.

Lincoln, late in the play, however, believes that he exhibits masculinity when he ultimately beats Booth at the game, becoming like his brother in his boasts. Manhood is associated with winning. Booth's angry question, "Who thuh man now?" (113), reveals the inadequacies of confining definitions of ethnicity and masculinity to hierarchical and binary terms. Though Lincoln has proven himself to be a man, a topdog, in winning the game of Three-Card Monte, Booth resorts to masculinized violence to reclaim the title. The text demonstrates the deleterious effects unbridled masculinity and racial and gender binarism can have on two brothers in a society obsessed with dominance and violence over subordinate roles.

Work Cited

Parks, Suzan-Lori. *Topdog/Underdog*. Dramatists Play Service Inc., 2001.

1140 – Ryan Ritchie

A man and a woman approached, three o'clock, as I stood on my brick porch. I was checking my Fitbit to see how many steps I needed to hit ten thousand, the same thing I do seven days a week, when I saw them a few feet from where the grass meets the curb. The man was wearing a cheap purple collared shirt and from fifteen feet away I could see the perspiration dripping down his cheeks and the puddle of sweat in the middle of his chest.

"1140," she replied when I asked what his glucose was. Since I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, everything has become about blood glucose levels. I check mine immediately after I wake, two hours after I eat each meal, before I go to the gym, anytime I leave the house, whenever I feel drowsy or anxious and just before bed. A year ago, a friend and I were at a comedy club and he said he wasn't feeling well. I could see his face turn paler than it normally is. He asked me to go to the bar for a glass of water. I gave him one of two glucose tables in my pocket because if I am outside of the house, there are at least two glucose tablets on me.

My friend isn't diabetic, but that's the only treatment Dr. Ryan knows to give his patients. Even in my dreams, I see sweaty strangers who have lost their wherewithal and I diagnose them with the only ailment about which I know something.

My therapist, an actual doctor, wants me to remember my dreams. This one happened last week, but I am writing about it now because taking two graduate courses, teaching two winter courses and leading a private creative writing workshop made me busy. That's ok — this time — because this dream stuck.

Some dreams wake me and I'll say, "Oh, I'll definitely remember that one." Five hours later, when I'm awake for reals, I'm asking myself if the dream was about shoes or donkeys. The remedy, my therapist says, is to keep a journal near my bed so I can document these nocturnal hallucinations. I haven't because my nightstand is full of glucose tablets, Synthroid, atorvastatin, two insulin pens, needles, lancets and water. Also because I don't want to keep a dream journal.

This dream didn't require a journal because the scene is still vivid. The woman told me the man would be fine. I don't know the exact high glucose number that kills people, but I know it's much lower than 1140. I went inside, got my meter and pricked his finger.

"1140," the machine read.

I asked the woman to let me inject him with my Humalog, the short-acting insulin I take before every meal. I inject between six and eight notches on the pen when I eat creamy soup, hummus and unsweetened chocolate milk. Getting him to a reasonable glucose — which for me is between 80 and 120 — might have required three pens.

She said no and his glucose was so high he couldn't talk. I begged her, pleaded for her to call 911. She was indifferent, telling me again that he'd be "fine." He lay on the grass, moments from death.

The dream ends here.

When I tell my therapist about this dream in two days, she'll ask who or what the dream represents. I could tell her I am the man and the rest of the world is the woman, that the only people who understand what it means to have food try to kill you are diabetics. I embrace the therapeutic process, but I don't know how much credence I give to dream interpretation. I like to think of dreams as my brain's

playtime and the time when I am awake is devoted to work. I get it. I give lectures and grade papers from eleven a.m. until ten p.m. I take a break at eight p.m. to eat and the rest of my night is devoted to writing. Playtime. This duality works for me because I can't write anything before nine p.m. — not anything I like, anyway — and I'd like to think my brain operates similarly. My body goes horizontal and my brain is given time to roam, to tell the stories I don't have time to write during the day. How else can I explain last month's dream when I was Danzig's bass player and the backstage security guard was someone from high school who I didn't like so I grabbed him in my arms, walked him around a corner and threw him into a river knowing he couldn't swim?

I don't know what the Danzig dream means nor do I know what the sweaty man on my lawn is trying to tell me. Maybe that's irrelevant. More importantly, to me, is the man. Wherever he is, I hope he's ok.

FICTION

Reaching – Andrea Morales

Ring ring!

No response.

This was the third time today that I was sent to voicemail.

Funny how the sound of the phone
makes my heart pound twice as much now.

I wouldn't have minded last year.

But this isn't 2019.

Ring ring!

This mailbox is full.

It's impossible to reach them.

I wonder where they could be?

Last I heard, they were admitted to the hospital.

I hope they're okay.

I send a text.

Good morning! I hope you're doing well! It's a shame we
can't come over and visit, but maybe we can FaceTime later?
Lmk when you're available!

Hours pass, and still nothing.

I get a text from a friend.

I just wanted to let you know that the funeral is going to take place tomorrow at 10am. I really hope you can make it.

Right...the funeral.

Body count: 1

Ring ring!

No response.

They're probably busy getting tested or something. I don't know how the hospital works.

I mean, it's been about 2 weeks since they were admitted, and they appeared to be fine last time I checked in.

Ring ring!

It's my friend from church.

"I heard that the family is in mourning," she recounts, "the husband also suffered a heart attack, but he's doing much better now. They're not sure what they're doing to do. Cremation is a cheaper option, but they really want a burial."

But she was doing just fine last week. I say back. That was the last time I saw her smiling face at church.

Body count: 2

Ring ring!

Nothing.

Soon, morning turns to evening. Perhaps I'll try again tomorrow.

Ring ring!

Someone's calling me.

My ear rings with the sound of my father's cracking voice. It's something I never wanted to hear.

“He passed away this morning at the hospital.” He tells me.

Body count: 3

This isn't true.

Ring ring!

The number you have reached is no longer in service.

It's too much.

The number you have reached is no longer in service.

Why now?

Ring ring!

The number you have reached is no longer in service.

The children.

Body count: 3 million

The sounds of the walls echoing with sadness and despair.

When will this all end?

....

Body count: ERROR! COULD NOT BE DETERMINED!

Maybe – Jon Sebastian

‘...what? He’ s your father, too.’

‘Oh, was he? Since when?’

‘He, is, God Dammit! Is!’

They were siblings by blood but not by love. They had it once upon a time—learned it on their own mostly—but could feel it fading along with the reception of this collect call.

‘You mean you’re just gonna sit on your ass in California while the last of our family withers in this hellhole?’

‘No. Of course not. I’m going surfing.’

‘I hope you drown, you bastard!’

She slammed the receiver back on the payphone rack and spun around, smashing her back against the wall and screeching her sneakers to the ground. Clumsy tears fell through tethers of blonde hair, down through her delicate hands, then danced on the linoleum floor. This floor had an immaculate sheen that constantly reflected a thousand dire faces.

The custodian coming back from break tossed a rolled-up Chicago Times into the recycle bin. As he washed his hands in his utility closet, with the zeal of a prizefighter wrapping before a bout, he thought to himself *the snow somehow makes you feel younger, but not when you’re shoveling it*. He dried his coarse hands, then—turning to tie back his gray pelt—saw a young woman crying on his floor through the window. ‘Maybe...’ he exhaled to himself then pushed through his closet door. He walked over to the young woman and whispered in her ear...

He plucked her off the ground and in tandem they walked down the desolate hallway toward the ICU wing.

They parted ways at the corridor.

She tiptoed into room 111.

'Daddy...'

He marched back alone holding the caution sign and unfolded it beneath the payphone with a surgeon's graceful precision, like he's done a million times before.

From: Mrs. Snuggle-Wump – Nathaniel Gilliam

Her fingers were stuck over the “keyboard” (the contraption was an upgrade from the typewriter, if one could believe it). Each finger hit a barrier as it neared a key. This was highly unorthodox and unbecoming of an Imaginary Friend of her status and tenure. She should be above hesitation!

And, yet, here she was.

Once this letter was sent, that would be it. The higher-ups would surely know what she was up to, if they didn't already, and she would be imagined up by another child in need. There would be no more observing. She would have to return to work. She had become her own worst enemy with all this dawdling. The keyboard was an enemy, too: the confusing nature of its existence had begun to put into doubt its usefulness.

She put an end to the mental rambling and relaxed. She took a far-too-large bite from the coffee cake on her desk, feeling a bit ashamed of her gluttony. She put her hands to her side, took a sip of her Earl Grey, and squared off against the computer screen once more. Her arms rose, fingers positioned above their opposition. With all the care she could muster, she touched the 'H' key.

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TO: Timothy Carlson <timmycc93@gmail.com>

FROM: Mrs. Snuggle-Wump

<snuggles4days@imagimail.com>

Hello, deary.

I hope this gets to you, as we don't really use this sort of communication where I'm from. Not sure how it works. My name

is Mrs. Snuggle-Wump, master of hugs and cuddles, and I was your imaginary friend. You forgot me some odd twenty years ago. Now don't feel bad: that 's quite natural! We're only supposed to be there for the formative years, lad. Too long and you grow a bit too reliant. Can't have that! Yes, usually we pop in when you're still being watered, then pop on out once you begin to bloom. You go on, none the wiser, and we find a new charge.

So you have to understand how extraordinary it is for me to send you a missive like this. Don't go thinking you're in trouble or anything, little one. You were a perfect little bundle growing up, and you've become a splendid young man! You could do a bit better to mind your P's and Q's, but nobody's perfect. Your punk-rock stint was quite good; I even got into it myself. I recommend *The Addicts* if you haven't given them a listen yet. Oh, to see you experience the world from afar has truly been a gift. Your years of schooling and university, your first love (that was a tad messy, wasn't it?), all of your accomplishments! I don't mean to gush, deary, but I've wanted so long to let you know how absolutely proud of you I am! I want to really stress that, so you don't think I'm nagging you in this next bit.

The real reason I'm writing is the change I'm seeing in you, and not for the better. The last year I've watched you become more and more withdrawn from the world. You barely leave the house unless it's for work. You don't ring up your friends anymore. Have you spoken to your cousin in the past three months? You lot were two peas in a pod when you were just babes. I know you still miss your parents, dear. Mr. and Mrs. Carlson were a good sort, and it's a shame what happened to them. I know it occurred recently, and I'M sorry I couldn't have been with you for it. You've started punishing yourself for it, lad. No one could've known what was going to happen, especially you! I can't fathom why you wish to take on the burden of blame for their passing. You don't deserve that kind of self-imposed cruelty, little one.

I'm not saying you still can't grieve. All I'm asking is that you let others in. You deserve all the love and care you desire, and you shouldn't deprive yourself of comfort. Let yourself cry and weep and be vulnerable. Let the ones that love you see your darker moments and let them help you. Find safety in those that are willing to embrace you and cherish you. You've always been there to light up their days; let them brighten yours in kind.

I have to keep this shorter than I'd like, as cross-dimensional communication is especially frowned upon. Keep your diet up: you've definitely slimmed a bit (though I'll miss those chubby little cheeks of yours)! Daniel's imaginary friend tells me the young man has been worried about you, so do send him a letter as soon as you can! You're doing splendidly at work, and if you don't get a promotion soon you should drift on over to a company that can appreciate your effort! Most importantly, stay safe. I love you, Timmy.

*Best regards and warmest of wishes,
Mrs. Snuggle-Wump*

P.S. You should spend some more time with that nice Pauline girl. She fancies you, that one!

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She must've scanned through the words twenty times by now. She was on her third cup of tea, this one heavy on the milk to dilute the caffeine. The letter was as good as it was going to get, wasn't it? If she kept up her fretting she'd put off sending it for another week. She hovered the cursor over the 'Send' button, absentmindedly moving it to and fro.

Click

Without any further pomp or circumstance, the newfangled contraption sent her letter. She let loose all the stress that had been keeping her rigid these past few hours. She could already feel her connection to Timothy weakening.

It was a dulling of a particular sense: everything was in crystal clarity, except for her thoughts of him. The higher-ups were working faster than she had thought they could. They probably didn't appreciate her making contact like this, so the reset would be severe. She could feel her very nature being poked and prodded, taking away the specifics of Timothy but leaving in the lessons that were learned. It wasn't fair. He was supposed to be the one she held onto forever. After they were done, Timothy would just be a number on a record somewhere: Child #3456, Boy. Concord, New Hampshire. October 1995 - December 1997. Status: Resolved. It wasn't fair, it wasn't fair, it wasn't...

Within a few moments, Mrs. Snuggle-Wump's reset was done. She was a new amalgamation of her entire being, sans any lingering oddities that might've prevented her from doing her work. She wiped the moisture from her eyes with her handkerchief, not quite remembering why tears had been shed. She dutifully got to work. She updated her guides on how best to comfort children who had lost a guardian, she added a new lesson plan that should keep little ones engaged, and she put the kettle on in anticipation of another cup of tea. She was in a Rosemary mood, so Rosemary she would have. Her work continued and various other teas were made. She nibbled on cakes and chatted with coworkers as they bustled 'round the office, all the while waiting.

It came one day. She could feel herself being called away by the whispers of a child in need. She closed her eyes and focused on that tug, easing herself along to its source. She was briefed as she traveled, learning the ins and outs of her new charge. Young girl, not even a few months past three. Single-parent household. Mother's caring...bit distant due to work, but she tries. Crippling fear of the dark.

With a **pop** she was there. It was nighttime, maybe a little past eleven. The room she was in seemed typical, for a child. There were a few posters up, each with a superhero of some sort. Very flashy and colorful, it was. A nightlight stood on the dresser in the shape of an 'S' over a shield. It staged the room in bright red and yellow hues and gave Mrs. Snuggle-Wump more than enough light to see the shaking, tiny bundle of covers on the bed. She eased down onto the edge of the mattress.

"Now, now, enough of that. You're not alone anymore, deary."

The shaking subdued. A mess of curly hair, followed by brown eyes, peeked up from below the cover. The little one pushed the covers away, recognition showing on her face as she realized her wish for a friend had been answered. She wrapped her twiggy little arms around Mrs. Snuggle-Wump as much as she could. She burrowed her head into her, a whispered 'thank you' barely audible in the silence. Mrs. Snuggle-Wump took her in, cooing and running a hand through the child's untamed mane. She sat with her until the whispers turned to snores, and then she hugged her even more.

This is the one, Mrs. Snuggle-Wump thought to herself.

This is the one I'll hold onto forever.

For More Information, please visit us at our Website:

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