Silhouette

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Male Nude 2

_Silver Gelatin Print_  

Nichole Flanery
Because of You

Silver Gelatin Print

Mandy Tudor
The Leaves! The Leaves!
They turn and burn!
Their blazing hues could iron smelt!
From Summer’s labors now adjourn,
Octobers Fires at last are lit!

Dry and clean, now fills the air,
As the leaves and weeds and grasses tinted
By Frost’s anxious fingers, for
He has no need of brushes; He
Pulls his pallet from within his canvas green.

Thru chest deep fields of tawny weeds,
Undetected, Deer do pass,
Noticed only by the Milkweed pod,
Their colors blend in with the grass.

Maples Red holds fast to Autumn
Sunset’s glowing orange ember
Tho’ great heaps of ripened tinder
For these Fires have been amassed,
All will be extinguished,
Come November.
Homage to Alexander Rodchenko

Silver Gelatin Print

Lacy Davis

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Amongst the boxes and books of a life—
mounds of toys, an electric cord mass,
a mess of belongings,
Mountain ranges of clothing,
piled in black garbage bags
of course—
boxes upon boxes,
books upon books,
rows like
city streets and high-rise buildings
of
papers, pictures and notebooks.

Research
Material
Possession.

Of dollar wallpaper that falls
down in the corners
and wrinkles along the wall;
It’s not supposed to do that!

Or perhaps it wasn’t properly installed
I’ve never been good at those things.

Life isn’t supposed to do that
flyby
that breaks the sound barrier
sending shock waves to
rattle the glasses in the cabinet.
Memories stir
the inner workings
at
no place more profoundly
than home—
the very site where
joy and misery
melt together
into one of those little butterscotch
candies trapped in a drawer for three years,
maybe four.

Bubblewrapped treasures
preserve ties to those that bind
with
contents of love splashes and
pain stabs—
Nothing blends
fresh and stale emotion
better than ceramic.

Pain isn’t supposed to last so long
yet pass by so fast,
finding a new you
through the heartaches and mourning
of a decade folding in on itself,
meeting yourself
again,
in the city of your life—
located inside a somewhat shitty apartment
with the upstairs tub
and downstairs kitchen
floor
due to meet each other
sometime in the near future.
Still,
I remember fondly the tree-house days,
the twin tower silos,
where Lang’s Farm doubled as Manhattan.
I continue to feel the warmth of
the blue stars that softened the light
shining over three girls
who dwelled
among the infernal blue hearts
that slide and peel—
the tender’st of writing is always on the wall,
pointing somehow to a noble journey that is a life.
In the late, late hours of the cool dark lonely nights
I would lie upon my pillow above, amidst and beyond the fright
One to one, on and on goes the conflict and so too the spite
Two coffins, I’d see glass coffins
Mother on left, father on right

Just a child, labeled infant
Too young said to be the wise
Was it something, I’d pose the question
Twixt two coffins, from dusk to light?

Children hear but do they listen?
Adults see but lack insight
I’d place parents in two glass coffins
Daytimes for children, parent’s the night

What is hidden and is shadowed
What is concealed, the wrong from right
Shattered coffins, glass cold coffins
Children break them when parents fight
Family Photo

_Ultrachrome K3 Print_

Crystal Redoutey

Published by Digital Commons @ Shawnee State University, 2006
Aching for a cure to this frustration
waves of elimination radiate in this
the chiller, the clincher: no climax
undulate and pulsate, words thicken
words surrender only to freeze
fingers frozen; keys lost, perhaps broken
break the chains of the glow only to wait
bond together the pieces only to destroy

Southbound, earthbound
crush the stuff of imagination
lost from these heavens
desperate... unforgiving
plummeting into the furious
careening into the sickness
keys lost, perhaps broken

Sort through this muck of imagination
garner the force of procrastination
let this flow, forget this shit
climb hard, climb harder
again ascend and reclaim those heavens
mend keys, set fingers, reattach
stronghold of mind and motion

A veritable sea of benevolent calm
the cure to the sickness froths and churns
an unimaginable ray of climatic calm
bonding together the pieces into the art desired

(sea of calm ocean of words forgotten fables reclaimed in
ascendance to the surreal)
Fertility

*Water Color*

Margaret Allard
Lessons in Teaching from Sister Mary Martin de Porres

Jim Flavin

It’s axiomatic that teachers teach. We are paid for our expertise, and we are expected to have mastered our disciplines and to be able to illustrate that mastery by coaxing our students toward clearly identifiable goals. We stand before our classes as secure members of educational communities, we speak with some authority, and we evaluate the progress our students make toward their own mastery of subject/skill areas.

However, I want to suggest that what many people do not understand about teachers is that good teachers are first and foremost life-time learners. When as a young man I headed off to college, I assumed that I would get an education in four years, secure a job, and get into the serious business of living life to its fullest. After four years, however, I realized that there were some few things about my chosen discipline (English) that I didn’t know, so I went on for two more years to get an M.A. That two-year extension of my educational program revealed that those few things I didn’t know had somehow multiplied into quite a large number of things I didn’t know. However, I was broke and in need of money, so I went to work teaching, even knowing that I had a lot yet to learn.

With six years of teaching behind me, I went into a Ph.D. program at Miami (Ohio) University, and when I graduated six years later, I understood that my knowledge of my discipline was extremely limited. I had studied intensely, but that study was focused on a fairly limited group of writers, on a relatively short historical time span. In short, my eight years of graduate studies had ironically revealed to me just how ignorant I was in many areas of my chosen field. And I have spent a lifetime attempting to shore up those areas so that my students would not discover the real limits of my educational background.

I think my experience is not unusual. Good teaching is not a matter of having and dispensing answers. Effective teachers, I believe, never preach, for preaching implies a level of certainty that comes only with complete mastery. Rather, they probe, they question, they enquire. But always they learn. Sometimes the learning is related to the discipline. I remember vividly the
embarrassing discovery I made in class years ago that *viz.* in a text did not mark a place where an illustration would have originally occurred. And I remember equally as vividly another embarrassing discovery I made last year, in my 38th and final year of teaching. It taught me how to avoid turning a mere stumble into a full-blown collapse.

Attend, you teachers-to-be to the following: My students and I are discussing the Native American writer Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*. We are at a particularly tense moment for a character named Sister Mary Martin de Porres. She has walked down to a car where a man has told her his murdered wife lies dead in the back seat. He has killed her, he claims. Shattered her skull with a tire iron. Sister Mary Martin de Porres is afraid, as she should be. Cautious. Her mind races. She thinks. Anticipates. If her first steps have been tentative, she is at last committed to duty. When she finally looks, she sees not the body of a woman but that of a deer. The sight startles.

I read the following sentence to highlight the tension she feels: *Suddenly and without warning, like her chest were cracking, the weeping broke from her.*

Only the Chippewa gods know why I read the sentence as *Suddenly and without warning, like her chest were crapping, the weeping broke from her.*

The moment I utter that unfortunate word, I try to act as if nothing unusual has happened, hoping I can segue into a related issue without drawing attention to the error. However, I am not at sentence end before laughter and guffaws tell me there is no hiding.

I am a teacher. A good one, I think. Quick on my feet. Not afraid of a straight-forward discussion of this unfortunate disconnect between eye and tongue. Duty calls. Unlike Sister Mary Martin de Porres, I know no fear. No caution. Neither hesitation nor second thought slows my pace. I wrap my mind around the event and begin to proclaim.

"Now look," I say, lifting my eyes quickly from the page, my voice calm, appropriately severe, but not threatening. "You all are going to be teachers some day, and one day in the future you may well make a mistake like that. What do you do? The first thing you do is hope nobody was listening."

"Oh we were listening," a student on the front row says. Giggles all around.

"Yes, we all heard you say 'crapping'" a student from the back row smirks.
They delight in having caught me, as I would were I among them.

But I am a teacher. It’s my job to out-duel them here. To make a lesson of it for them. To force them to see the more important truth.

“It’s to your credit that you were listening,” I say, “and take a lesson. Should this ever happen to you the best thing to do is go right on to the next sentence as if nothing happened. It’s a kind of silent denial. Let your students think they must have misheard. You want them to believe that teachers don’t make those kinds of mistakes. So let’s proceed.”

I turn back to the text, to a passage I have read again and again in the context of cracking, believing I have things under control. I will let them see the quickness with which the errant tongue is forgotten here. Let them see the poise required to get beyond those unavoidable mistakes we all make as teachers. Let them see how adroitly the teacher can get beyond the crap.

Composed and confident, I now read the next sentence: It came out of her with hard violence . . .

“Well this is an unfortunate turn of events,” I think, but I soldier on, believing I now have the worst of it behind me.

. . . loud in her ears, a wild burst of sounds that emptied her.

By the time I finish the sentence chaotic laughter has destroyed the structure of the classroom. Eyes water. Fists pound desks. Shoes tap delight on the classroom floor.

I am a teacher.

“Maybe,” I offer, amazed at myself, “moving on to the next sentence without reading it first is not the best thing to do after all.”

Our laughter stirs the air the way prayers of forgiveness shatter a dark cathedral silence.

That Sister Mary Martin de Porres is one wise nun.
Man with Pig Face

*Drawing*

Rick Dickerson
Untitled

*Ink*

John Haskins
The Apple Trees

James Weaver

These days
Lonely men stand together alone by the cistern
Wanting not to accept rather to forget, the hound
Sleeping under the apple
All made over in blossom.
Men should die in winter, should walk out
To that spot of soil carved out for them
And fall in. But they do not.
Sometimes they die in spring
With no money to be buried their gray
Body a homeless man on a cold slab
In the basement of a mortuary.

Those days
You carried your grandchildren
In the wheelbarrow under the odor
Of flower and dumplings, a line
Of black ants ascending the tree, fat
Green apples swelling above them. You
Chewed Mail Pouch, ate chicken five
Days a week, spat and told stories
In weathered words about
   survival, not victory.

On some evening, in some spring
The whippoorwill answers himself, or is answered,
Under the voices of children
Hanging like blossoms in the tree.
Egg Shell Series #12

Ultrachrome K3 Print

Crystal Redoutey
Blooming

Charlie Gibson

That's when I knew I had enough
When my skin began to slough, sour
Better get my shit together
Better bring in a new outcome
Questions pondered make no sense
Non-dairy creamer in decaf. Coffee

With the sun rise
Flames that fill the night's sky
Radiant flashes of orange
Hot sun that blazes
Through the universe
To reflect but penetrate

Strata
History lay down in layers
Turned like pages of a book
Undressed to tell a story
Destroyed exposed
Exposed to the elements, brought to the surface
The gravel mines are where the football players take the good girls who will cling to them in the dark. The players have the girls squeeze themselves between bars put in place by the local authorities after mutilated house pets were found leading up to the entrance. Students have come in and painted symbols they’ve found in books they’ve stolen from the local library. They wanted to rebel against Baptist parents and have painted pagan designs in red to look like blood. They’ve bragged to their friends that they worship a dark lord. They’re not reading the text. They only paint the pictures.

It’s dark down there, and wet after the rain. Flashlights cause a red glow. The good girls must be careful not to trip on large chunks of loose gravel. They might stumble—not into the waiting arms of a football player—but into the debris left behind by the rebelling Baptist boys, and what might be ketchup for the hotdogs they’ve roasted over the fire they’ve built, or what might be blood, because maybe they were the ones responsible for the dead dog and trail of slaughtered hamsters.

The caverns aren’t mapped and good girls and Baptist boys enter and wander with the knowledge that they could become lost. Maybe lost is what brings them to explore these rock halls in the first place. The football players bring condoms and the good girls let them go a little further than they would in the backseat of their parents’ cars, because the sooner it’s over, the sooner they can squeeze back through the bars and get to the safety of the Buicks. The players toss the used wraps into the debris with what might be ketchup from the Baptist boys, or what might be the sacrifice of their previous virgin.
The Partners

Oil on Board

Charlie Haskins
How the Jester Roams

Can’t be a fool forever
but I sure do love what I’m feeling
roaming this world without meaning
(do you feel what I’m feeling? )
runnin’ and runnin’; the circles are crazy
c’mon baby, we’ll run our own road
(do you see what I’m seeing? )

This is the high life, or so I’m told
carefree, risk-free, totally free
riding the winds of instability
(do you know what I’m knowing? )
soarin’ and soarin’; the circles are crazy
c’mon baby, we’ll fly azure skies
(do you hear what I’m hearing? )

The song on the wind has an oath
a regular, veritable eulogy of sorts
when the sky loses its allure
(do you crave what I’m craving? )
climbin’ and climbin’; the circles are crazy
c’mon baby, we’ll own space in our lifetime
(do you think what I’m thinking? )

crazy, crazy, these circles are crazy
so free from this
so free in bliss
Untitled

Anonymous

What is mind?
No matter.
What is matter?
Never mind

Untitled

Oil on Board

Jeremiah Fort

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Untitled

Oil on Board

Jeremiah Fort
Wish

James Weaver

This time the sky above the earth below
Find me a bed in soil not too wet
But moist like lips like feathers
Taken off the soaked chicken
Her head beside the apple still trying to cluck.
Cast some prayer toward me
As if I lay dying as if I were dead
And leave a bone from your finger
And a hair from your head.
Egg Shell Series #9

*Ultrachrome K3 Print*

Crystal Redoutey

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The fearful are moved by silence. They descend the telephone wire’s long black nerve to a gray cell blinking at the end of the line. It is a low-voltage circuit, pulsating injured thoughts. The searches last for hours. Their sentences are sterilized instruments of the surgeon’s appalling chore. The sleeper is a lifeless animal, an incessant bleater sheeping the night, still enough for the flies to land. Her closed eyes are two black lungs, polished, crushing a spine on which neurons race for no purpose, locating no command. The brain claims the body’s right of living as the depression folds into a seam. The edges are sharp enough to sever the fingers from helping hands. The fearful search for blood to evidence some injury. If they could only see the wound—its poultice is dullness, a lucent shriek in the stillness. The nucleus divorced from function loses its future—is catalyst of ruin.
If I had a hammer

*Oil on Board*

Charlie Haskins
Untitled

Charcoal

Jacob Thompson
Iraq

Oil

Margaret Allard
Notes for a Very Funny Story about Being Punched in the Face

Rob Chestnut

Stephen Toler has been punched in the face by a total stranger everyday of his entire life.

That's good. That works as an opening. It's odd. Odd is interesting. And people like to see others in pain.

But maybe first-person.

I have been punched in the face by a total stranger everyday of my entire life.

Is I funnier? I is funnier. It allows people to laugh. They know the narrator is ok. Ok enough to tell the story, at least. Stephen Toler could be a tragic loser instead of a loveable loser. But the name is good. Maybe not the last name. Stephen is good.

Why does this have to be funny? Maybe this shouldn't be funny. Funny is too easy. Try something else.

Maybe you.

You have been punched in the face by a total stranger everyday of your entire life.

Second-person is odd, and odd is interesting. You could be interesting. And tragic.

Is this literal? Has I/you/Stephen Toler actually been punched in the face everyday, or is this an odd and interesting exaggeration to make a point. What point? This sounds like whining. People don't like whiny characters. They like to see others in pain. Yes, it is literal. Someone has physically punched him in the face once a day, every day. The same person? Yes. That will be my foil. No, a different person everyday. The world is against him. But he is whiny. He is a loveable loser. Like Steve Buscemi. But overweight. Buscemi is a good last name. Stephen Kemp. Stephen Toler. No, I.
Was he punched as a baby? Was he punched the day he was born? Could be funny. The doctor punches him in the face instead of slapping him on the butt. Doctors don’t really slap babies on the butt, do they? They wouldn’t do that. Where did that come from? Yes, the doctor holds baby Stephen – baby I – baby you – up for the mother to see, tells her it is a boy, then punches him. Good. No, that is monstrous. No, that is just monstrous enough to be funny. Maybe this shouldn’t be funny.

Maybe this would make a better opening. Set up the scene in a very traditional, tender way. The miracle of birth and all of that. Then out of nowhere the doctor punches the baby.

Even though Stephen or Stephanie was nearly two weeks early, Emily Toler’s excitement of being a mother could not, would not, be diminished. She had dreamed of being a parent since she was seven years old, and she had dreamed of getting this enormous weight out of her for the last two months. And both were occurring. Dr. Reynolds, who had been constantly speaking to Emily despite being obscured from her view, suddenly raised upright, holding the crying baby. “Mrs. Toler, it is a boy.” Emily sighed, then laughed. “Stephen. Little Stephen.” As Emily fell back into her pillow, realizing that it was finally over, finally beginning, the doctor turned his focus back to the child. As he placed little Stephen down to be weighed, his face contorted in confusion and consternation. Dr. Reynolds, quite suddenly, shouted “you son of a...” and punched the baby.

That isn’t funny at all.

The doctor shouldn’t do it. No, the mother does. That is funny. And the mother should still say “you son of a...” But his mother wouldn’t be a total stranger. Maybe some random person comes into the delivery room, bringing flowers or something, and punches the baby. No, the doctor should punch him. The doctor could still count as a stranger.

Why do people want to punch him/me/you? Is there something utterly disagreeable about him/me/you? What could be disagreeable with a baby? Everything. But people like babies. And loveable losers. And seeing others in pain. Stephen just has bad luck. He is the world’s punching bag. The world is cruel, incomprehensibly cruel, and Stephen is a victim of this. But he is loveable. And the story is funny.
It should be a woman. All the other stories focus on men. This one should create an interesting female character. But she will be punched everyday. That changes the tone. That doesn’t seem funny. It should be a man. The next story will focus on a woman. But women should punch Stephen. And children punch him, too. Children’s punches wouldn’t hurt, though.

Stephen Toler has been punched in the face by a total stranger everyday of his entire life.

Stephen should be in his mid-to-late twenties. He grew up during the Reagan administration. 80s Cold War commentary. Mutually Assured Destruction. Sense of absurd fright and violence and victimization to the core. Stephen is a loveable modern loser. Maybe the punches take a temporary reprieve during the Clinton years. Maybe he was only slapped during most of the 90s. Maybe he has been punched in the back of the head since 2000. Where is this going? What is the story? What happens? It can’t be just a recount of selected punches. Yes, that is exactly what it is. No plot. Just character. And selected punches.

No. That’s dumb. That isn’t funny. It should focus on the first day that he isn’t punched. That’s good. That works. One day he goes about his normal day, goes to bed, then suddenly wakes up panicked because he just realized that he wasn’t punched. He anxiously watches the clock in his house, apartment, until midnight. He is relieved and worried. He doesn’t like getting punched, but he doesn’t know what life is like without getting punched. Good. Now it is funny and meaningful.

11:59 turned to 12:00. Stephen, alone and confused, could not do anything but blink. He sat there for several more minutes before he could generate a coherent thought. “What now?” The routine of every day for twenty-eight years had now given way to something else. Something different. “What now? What’s going to happen today?” Stephen rubbed his bruised face and smiled.

And it ends with him coming to terms with his new life, with this new possibility of a new life, with a renewed sense of hope, then some total stranger runs up to him, says “sorry I’m late” and punches him in the face.

Is that funny?
Pain

*Silver Gelatin Print*

Mandy Tudor
Male Nude 1

Silver Gelatin Print

Nichole Flanery
The siren call urges me forward.
Ivy adorns the crown, twisting, turning, flowing down your back.
The eyes of Eos gaze upon me, calling me away from Procris.
Lips coax. Just one touch is ecstasy.
My tongue longs for the sweet nectar of our youth.
A hundred fauns and nymphs pale in your presence.
Your lascivious frame launches not a thousand ships,
But a thousand and one desires from which I now drown.

Oh carnal muse, teach me of flesh and of the world.
I'm lashed to the wheel no longer.
Heaven holds no appeal to this once pure heart.
Take my innocence, to Hell with condemnation.
Caress my body with Promethean flames as I drink in your essence.
Cut me now, so that I may bleed forever.
Bloodsucking bitch and muse of my heart
Drive me forward with ancient oaths of passion,
And awaken the urges most primal,
The desires sacred.
Untitled

*Oil on Board*

Jeremiah Fort
Taking blithe souls the way harlots take men,
Her bobbin eyes buoy upon meandering prize. Her guise
Stabs not out of malice, but rather, wont:
She is too vibrant to demand dusting,
Too familiar to ask directions to the powder room.

She slips into the pungent garden, zips up the long, lush dress—
Executes a saucy saunter toward her horizontal guests.
Her throat-chords swallow their spirits like a great magician’s cloak.
They bow their heads—of feigned love speak—
Their mouths expelling crackling teeth.

Between her full set, Osiris’s long-lost slick & lily-whit Spur
Snaps clean in two as she beckoned it do—a brutal purr for purr.
(Birds call and call in foreign tongues, peck under the empty benches
At morsels of the dead ones.) The seeds trickle deep into the
fable-telling hole,
Then fatten it cerulean tongue on a stillborn miracle.

When the guests tip forward to exit in a paralleled blind trust,
She claws like ivy atop a carved statue, dipped and cast in lust
And lingers there, still as a sarcophagus, a piquant Roman delicacy,
Claws cool and shining as a pair of smiling galoshes,
Keen daggers rooted in fleshy pads that pulse in anticipation
For the coming storm.
Night Watch

*Oil on Board*

Charlie Haskins

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Aquel Hombre Extraño

Esta es la historia de un hombre que, aparentemente, era un hombre extraño. El era un hombre extraño porque caminaba por la calle besando todo. El besaba las farolas, besaba los semáforos, besaba los árboles, besaba las paredes, besaba a la gente que se encontraba, besaba las puertas, besaba los coches y besaba ... todo lo que podemos imaginar, incluso besaba su casa, su sofá, su televisión, su mesa ... todo.

Un día, las autoridades consideraron que era peligroso porque era imposible que un hombre besara a todo el mundo por la calle. Entonces, aquel hombre extraño fue considerado extraño y peligroso por las autoridades y lo metieron en la cárcel. El fue metido en la cárcel.

Sin embargo, aquel hombre extraño seguía besando las paredes de su celda, besaba a su carcelero, besaba su comida, besaba el jergón donde dormía, y besaba el suelo y el techo.

Las autoridades siguieron percibiendo su comportamiento extraño y vieron que aquel hombre extraño no consideraba su situación... y decidieron terminar con esa situación y ejecutar a aquel hombre, que por ser extraño, fue considerado peligroso.

Finalmente, el besó a sus ejecutores y besó las balas que lo mataron. Fue enterrado en lo alto de una colina y, desde ese día, los pájaros descubrieron que el mundo tenía labios.

That Strange Man

This is the story of a man who, apparently, was a strange man. He was a strange man because he was walking along the street kissing everything. He kissed the streetlamps, he kissed the traffic lights, he kissed the trees, he kissed the walls, he kissed the people he was finding, he kissed the doors, he kissed the cars and he kissed... everything we can imagine, even he kissed his house, his sofa, his television, his table... everything.
One day, authorities considered he was dangerous because it was impossible that a man was kissing everybody on the street. Then, that strange man was considered strange and dangerous by authorities and they him put in jail. He was put in jail.

However, that strange man kissed the walls of his cell, he kissed his jailer, he kissed his food, his kissed the straw mattress where he slept, and he kissed the floor and the roof.

Authorities continue perceiving his strange behaviour and they saw he didn’t think it over... and they decided to finish that situation and execute him because that man, for being strange, he was considered dangerous.

Finally, he kissed his executioners and he kissed the bullets that killed him. He was undertaken on the top of a hill and, from that day, birds discovered the world had lips.

Untitled

Ink

John Haskins

https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/silhouette/vol2006/iss2/1
Arrested at Sun Down

Silver Gelatin Print

Julie Rothgeb
I didn’t want to go to the Laundromat. It was boring and I hated the music that they played there. The Bee-Gees, The Monkees, The Beatles, The Who, the Eagles.

Mom and I lived in an apartment on one of the only brick-paved roads in Portsmouth. There was a Goodwill, Moose Lodge, a crack-house. We didn’t have money, but we had love; we lived on that. She never scolded and I never... rarely disobeyed.

The Laundromat, Plummer’s, was only a couple blocks away, but we drove regardless. A red Vette. Chevette. No rear-view mirror. Broken passenger seat and the huge cooler in the back seat to hold it up. Rust. Red. Rust. I loved that car.

We loaded our baskets in the rest of the back seat. Whites. Darks. Reds. Jeans. Towels. All perfectly separated. I think mom wore her only clean clothes, a pink sweat suit with gay-whites. Those are shoes. I was wearing a sweatshirt, my beloved blue sweatshirt with Mickey Mouse. I don’t think I ever let her wash it.

We trudged through the door. I carried one basket, towels, I think, while mom carried the other baskets. Three high. The cold burst of Laundromat air burned my nose. Bleach, Tide, burnt dryer sheets. Metal buttons on over-alls and jeans clanged against the sides of the dryers as they whirled and tumbled. Beach Baby poured out of the speakers on the ceiling although it was cold and we were no where near the beach.

We dropped the baskets on the laminated and duck-taped tables. I wanted to get the detergent. Mom handed me a couple of quarters. Chink. Pull. Drop. I loved that part. She did the rest of the work. Methodical. Silent. Waiting. I sat there, Indian style on the table with coloring books and my entire life to contemplate.

I couldn’t tell what mom was thinking. She never smiled when we were there, but constantly looked around. Was someone coming? Was she afraid of something? She never told me this was a dangerous place, a shady place.

Just as we came in, we left. Trudging. Lugging baskets back to the car. Mom looked anxious. Tired, maybe.

I sat in the seat and put my seatbelt on. By the time I heard the click of the seatbelt Mom had jerked the car into drive, accidentally, and slammed our little Chevette into the guard rail.
“FUCK!”
My jaw dropped. What does that word mean? Mom had never said that before. She looked at me with huge, swelled eyes. I looked at her as if she was about to ground me. I didn’t say anything. I wanted to know what it meant, but she was in no position to answer my question. I never asked.
I pondered this f-word. What does it mean?
Fuck.

Untitled
Charcoal
Jacob Thompson
Homage to Alexander Rodchenko

Silver Gelatin Print

Lacy Davis
This is a non-fiction piece I wrote in October of 2003. One week up at OSU, I spent a few hours everyday hanging out with “Help Is On The Way,” the popular homeless black rapper (he even has his own t-shirt he tries to sell to everyone). Every night we would end up at Buckeye Donuts, and this is how every conversation went, despite a few minor differences. After hearing about his experiences with meth and crack, his actions revealed the effects the drugs had on him.

Help Is On the Way-

His teeth were reminiscent of peanut brittle. His tongue smacked inside his mouth when he spoke, crackling almost, sending words and spittle across the empty space between us. Robert was an extremely interesting man. Happy, but homeless. Horny but homeless. This dark skinned man had the elation and excitement of a child first learning to speak. Always beginning each sentence with a grit of the teeth and a flinch of the eyes. Always ending each with a grin as wide as his skull. “God doesn’t punish us for our sin, he punishes us for our lack of sin,” he would always say. Revealing that bumpy, peanut brittle smile. Not smiling because he thought of himself as clever, smiling because he could. “You wanna know why I’m homeless?” revealing that grin. “No,” I would say, just so I could hear the story again. In a trepid anticipation he would begin, “Oh boy this ones a doozie, can ya get me another coffee?” As usual I would throw a dollar on the counter, impatient to hear the story. He settled himself as if ready to tell a long tale. “Well, one day, back in 1981, my second baby’s mama came home, and found me in bed with her seventeen year old sister. The girl asked me to teach her, and man I sure did teach her. She was the finest lil black girl I had ever got my grubby fingers on. Perfect lil nipples and a perfect ass big enough for my hands to grab all around.” Suddenly some frat boys came barging in and screamed, “Help is on the way,” and Robert rose with his hands in the air, leaning over to grab for his change cup. As he danced towards the boys he would begin to rhyme and sing right in the middle of Buckeye Donuts. As the frat boys would point and laugh at Robert’s performance, I would take a drag of my smoke and sip my coffee waiting to hear the rest of the tale.
Hoping one day he would even finish, or even remember to finish his tale. After earning some pocket change, Robert sat down and took a long swig of his coffee. He would then look at me with his peanut brittle grin and ask, "You wanna know why I'm homeless?"

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The Silhouette is committed to celebrating the art and ideas of the students and faculty of Shawnee State University and of the community at large. The Silhouette welcomes any submission of artwork, poetry, or prose for possible publication in the magazine.

Membership of the Silhouette staff is open to any student or community member interested in participating in the publication of the magazine. The staff includes an editor-in-chief and an editor and other members of the following branches: prose, poetry, layout, art, and publicity. Meetings are held once a week. The staff is responsible for publishing two magazines per year (one in the fall, one in the spring).

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