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Volume XXIV



SIGMA TAU DELTA
INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY

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LETTER FROM THE CO-EDITORS IN CHIEF

We are incredibly proud to present the 24th volume of *The Purple Patch*, featuring student work from the 2024-2025 academic year. As fellow college students juggling hectic academic schedules, late-night editing sessions, and meetings fueled by coffee, creating this journal has been enjoyable and challenging. *The Purple Patch* is still a place where students can express themselves creatively, through poetry, painting, and academic writing.

Upon starting this edition, we were both a little anxious. It was like stepping into big shoes when we took on this project as Co-Editors in Chief. Although we had been on the editorial board for the previous volume, we were still taken aback by this task. At first, it was a little intimidating to be in charge of a board, train new editors, and shape a journal that we are so passionate about. However, our apprehensions were replaced with enthusiasm with each meeting and submission. It is a privilege to have led that journey together, and this volume reflects that adventure.

We want to express our sincere gratitude to the School of Arts & Humanities for supporting student-led initiatives like this one and for encouraging creativity. Your ongoing contributions enable *The Purple Patch* to continue. We also want to express our gratitude to the faculty members who made donations to Sigma Tau Delta. Your support will enable us to send students to the national conference in New Orleans next spring.

Naturally, we also want to express our sincerest appreciation to Dr. Claire Schmidt, our academic advisor. Your encouragement, guidance, and enthusiasm for student voices have had a lasting impact on both this journal and us individually. Many of us have developed as writers, editors, and thinkers because of the environment you have created. You have influenced how we view ourselves in this scholarly community.

Finally, to every student who submitted their work, thank you. Whether your piece made it into this edition or not, your bravery and vulnerability are what kept this journal alive. And to you, our reader, thank you for picking up this journal, for valuing student voices, and for being part of this community. We hope this volume speaks to you as deeply as it spoke to us while putting it together.

Chané Higgo & Alexandra Sutter
Co-Editors in Chief

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CREATIVE NON-FICTION

Could Not Have Dreamt It Better

Estefano Del Aguila Delgado

I would watch hours and hours of documentaries about wildlife on a tiny old TV in a room shared with three other people at that time. I shared a room with my little sister, two years younger than me, my mom, and my aunt. A bunk bed at the far right side with two regular twin beds on the side, as the older brother, I had to sleep on the top of the bunk bed. We lived in a big old house owned by my great-grandmother with all my family on my mother's side. It was weird for everyone how fond I was for wildlife because nobody in my family had any sympathy for these subjects.

It was my seventh year old birthday. I woke up so excited that I might not have used more than one step on my way down the bunk bed. I was barefoot and the floor felt cold. My mom and uncles rushed to the room as they thought I had fallen. When they realized I was alright, they all greeted me and started giving me presents, action figures, card games, and candy. When I heard a call.

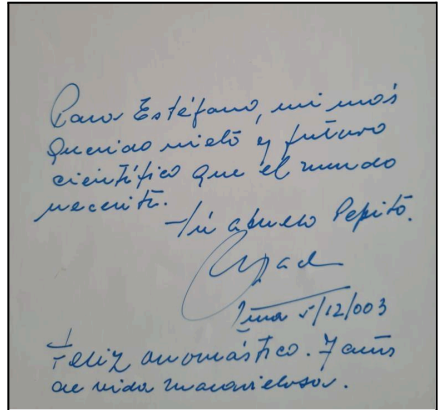
“Son!” It was my grandfather. He would call me son even though he was not my biological father, but I never questioned it.

After a narrow corridor, my grandparents' room was to be found. I rushed over there and jumped into their bed as I would usually do every weekend. I squished between them under the blankets and put my cold feet against my grandfather's legs. He did not like that at all, but it was my birthday, so he let it slide with a smile. A big old man with a belly like an air balloon and a short beard rough as sandpaper. My grandmother, on the other

side of the bed with feet even colder than mine, kissed me and hugged me, wishing me a happy birthday.

“ I got you something, I think you might like,” he said.

It was a National Geographic reptiles and amphibians book. I could not believe it. I hugged him as hard as I could without even opening the book. On the first page, there was a footnote with his signature. “For Estefano, my dearest grandson and future scientist that the world needs. Your grandpa Pepito. Happy name day. Seven years of wonderful life.” He wrote.



Obtaining that book made my fascination with animals grow stronger. But this time, reptiles were the ones that I got obsessed with. Watching Steve Irwin’s and Mark O’Shea’s TV shows and how they handle snakes, lizards, and crocodiles made me think maybe I could do that someday. Maybe that is what I want to do for the rest of my life. I used to dream about catching snakes all the time and the thrill of it, how the scales would feel against my skin, how big would it be, which species would be the one I would get to catch, if it would be venomous or not, and how would I feel with the accomplishment. Since those days forward, catching a wild snake has been at the top of my bucket list.

Years passed, I finished high school, went to college, failed at college, and my dream of catching a snake seemed to be forever lost. I would tell family and friends how important it was for me to fulfill that chimera. They would tell me I was crazy, that I should not be trying to look

for snakes because it was dangerous, and that there were no snakes in Lima, so it was pointless for me to still think about it.

A couple of years later, after a failed attempt studying environmental engineering in a university in Peru, I quit college and started working as a medical interpreter for some American company, the dream of catching a snake kept fading away.

One last opportunity was presented to me as I got a sports scholarship to go to a college in the United States in the state of Missouri to study biology. The degree I always wanted to follow. Maybe my dream was still possible. My second year at college found me at twenty-seven years old. I had many field trips where my classmates and I were told snakes inhabit those areas, and we were encouraged to look for them by our professors, such as Van Meter State.

Park, Marshall Junction Conservation Area, and Grand Pass Conservation Area. Regardless, I was never able to find one, I was so disappointed; perhaps it was not meant to be. I will never find a snake, I thought. Even when a girl found a snake in one of these field trips at Marshall Junction Conservation Area, and I got to handle and admire it first hand, it did not feel right. In the end, it was not I who found it. Finding and catching a snake would help me show everyone that a little kid's dream was not a fool's dream.

Months passed, and our ecology class had a five-day trip scheduled to Reis Ecological Station; herpetology class was also part of our crew. This research station is located in Mark Twain National Forest, and the Huzzah River goes through, the perfect place for me to find a legless friend. Professor Reinkee and Professor Hiler told us that we should expect to encounter many types of wildlife, including snakes and amphibians. "This is it," I thought. I was so excited. I told all my friends on campus that I was going to catch a snake, and there was nothing in this world that could stop that from

happening. Again, they laughed at me and said that I was a weirdo and a fool. I smiled back at them and told them that I was prepared to do anything to make it happen, regardless of what they thought of me.

It was the second day of the trip at Reis Station, and I had not caught any snakes. But at least this time, I was not the only one; everyone was sad and disappointed we had not seen any snakes. The herpetology class was even more worried since they had an assignment that involved catching snakes and recording the catch with a description and a photo. So there I was, walking in the middle of the forest a little bit behind everyone with Professor Hiler and my classmate Evan, a former US Marine. We were going to a specific place where there had been. Of chad been course, I was happy and excited for the lizards, but my stubborn mind could not think about anything else but snakes. Suddenly, Evan screams:

“SNAKE!”

I turned right and saw Evan and Professor Hiler running all over the shrubs trying to catch this big dark slender shape crawling around at an incredible speed. Evan fell trying to catch it, afterwards I saw this creature going in between Professor Hiler’s legs, coming in my direction. Everyone else was running back while observing the whole scene from afar of how this little guy had escaped an ex-marine and an expert herpetologist. I had my big lens camera in my right hand. Without even thinking about breaking it, I threw it to the ground. The moment I had waited all my life had come, I could not fail, this was it.

There I was standing in front of this big black snake, trying to predict its next move, it managed to escape my first try, and I had to turn around and start watching it leave. Everything became silent for a second as I

dove into the crawling serpent. I must have flown at least two meters in the air. When I landed, I managed to grab its body, but since the grass was high and everything happened so fast, I could not see the head, that is when I felt a bite on my left hand. It was weird because I felt no pain, instead, I felt pure joy. I had it. “That was amazing!”

Professor Hiler exclaimed.

When I looked up with this beautiful being in my hands, I saw everyone standing next to me smiling and congratulating me. The world stopped, there was me lying on the ground bleeding from my left hand, appreciating which, for me, was from that day forward, my forever friend, a meterish Coluber constrictor. It was not long before the snake was comfortable crawling through my hands with no intention of harming me. People started asking me if I



was right. I was in a state of shock, did not say a thing, did not reply to anyone, I could only manage to smile and try to get myself together. When I was finally able to talk, I said: “If you see tears running through my eyes, it is not pain. I am just too happy. I might cry”

The Worst Meal Ever in my Life

Safaiou Sow

I had the worst meal of my life because I did not learn to cook early. It's important to learn how to cook because it helps you eat something healthy, understand what you are putting in your body, and save money. My parents used to encourage me, but I refused to learn. Let me tell you about the worst meal I have ever had.

The worst meal of my life was not just about food that tasted bad; it was about a meal that was poorly cooked and made me sick. In 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, I traveled to Malaysia for the first time to pursue my studies after I graduated from high school. It was also my first time leaving my home country of Guinea and living on my own, and I was living in the city of Kuala Lumpur. Although I was not with my family, I shared an apartment with a student from my country. My brother had lived there for two years and had made connections with other international students from our country, Mamadou and Abdoul. At that time, we shared our money to cook because it was cheaper than eating out.

However, one day Mamadou left for the UK, and Abdoul went to the USA. I was left living alone and, since I hadn't learned to cook well while we were living together, my only skill was cutting vegetables, so I wasn't unprepared by their departure. One day, I decided to cook on my own. I called Mamadou to ask for instructions on how to prepare a dish I wanted to eat: Jollof rice. Jollof rice is not only one of the best-tasting meals, but it is also incredibly important in my country because everyone makes it, and we even fight over it. It's one of the most popular meals in West Africa. I began cooking, but the smell was not as expected, so it smelled like burnt food. Despite this, I continued to stir, add ingredients. When I finally tasted the

food, it wasn't good. The rice seemed too undercooked, and the taste was too salty. I managed to eat half of it before I put the rest of it in the trash. A few hours later, I began to experience severe stomach pain and ended up vomiting everything that I ate. The food was poorly cooked. Because I knew that I needed to improve my cooking skills, I started to either learn how to cook better or eat out until I got to know how to cook well. Despite the higher cost of eating outside every day, I chose to eat outside.

I started going to McDonald's and eating pizza, burgers, hot dogs, and similar foods non-stop for about six months without adding anything healthy to my diet, which led to health problems. As someone from Guinea, where our food routine is variable, for example, sometimes we eat beans or eggs for breakfast, rice with soup, jollof rice, cassava, or fufu for lunch, and salad with fish or well-cooked pasta for dinner. My meals depended on what we wanted to eat. I only had pizza, burgers, or sandwiches twice a week for dinner, and they were well-cooked by our mother. We do not buy it out even though it's fast food. Since I wasn't used to eating out

So regularly, I began to develop constipation and wasn't going to the bathroom as often as I should have. This led me to feel depressed and start overthinking. I was drinking soda like Coca-Cola and Pepsi, only sugary drinks, and with all public places closed due to COVID-19, I couldn't exercise. My health started to get worse, and I gained weight. Eventually, I experienced a headache and went to the doctor, who informed me that I was prediabetic. Despite my disastrous first time cooking,

I continued to practice and was asking for help, advice from my mother and sister via FaceTime with them until I improved my skill. This story reminds me each time I visit my country and see someone, especially my little brother or someone who isn't learning how to cook. I am reminded of that difficult time in my life, moving to a new country where I ate bad

food because I did not have the skills. I didn't have the skill not because I couldn't learn, but I refused whenever my mother told me to go to the kitchen so she could show me how to cook. I used to say that the kitchen is for women, not for men. I said this because, in my culture, women traditionally cook for the family, though this is now changing. Cooking represented for me a woman's work. That was my argument for not learning how to cook. It tells me that they could face it too if they do not learn the skill early. Looking back, whenever I'm home with my brother, I take him to the kitchen twice a week to teach him some cooking skills. This story is important to know because it highlights the value of learning to cook if your family used to do everything for you. Knowing how to prepare your meals can help you stay healthy. If I had known how to cook better, I wouldn't have ended up with such a terrible meal that I couldn't even finish.

Finally, my struggle with cooking taught me how important having that skill was. I realized that cooking isn't just for women; it's for everyone. Everyone needs good, homemade food to survive, food where you know exactly what ingredients are used. I also learned that refusing to learn how to cook can lead to poor health, sickness, and even life-threatening conditions, as it contributed to my prediabetes. In the end, learning to cook wasn't just about avoiding bad meals, but it was about taking control of my health and adapting to life's challenges with resilience. Cooking is also a process that can help you adapt to challenges because it encourages you to make the best of what you have through creativity and effort to achieve the best result. That's why I like cooking what I eat.

The Best Meal of my Life

Raguso Manuel

I think I have had plenty of good meals in my life, but there is one meal that I will never forget. It was February 11th of 2024, a normal Sunday in Naples, but like every Sunday in Naples, lunch was abundant and with the best food cooked by my mother. Sometimes on Sunday we don't even have dinner because of the big lunch. I remember that my sister, my father, and I were waiting for my mother to bring the first courses to the table so we could all eat together.

The first course, as usual in Naples on Sundays, was a plate of gnocchi seasoned with tomato sauce and provola cheese inside, one of my favorite courses, because it is so good and it's part of Neapolitan culture. Once the course arrived, we started eating and talking about the past week. I don't remember the exact conversation, but we talked about how my sister Arianna was doing at university. She was doing great as always in her degree course in international marketing and management. We also talked about how I was doing with basketball and school. At that time, I was a senior in high school and a senior on my Basketball team. I remember my mom, Marianna, saying that she would have liked to start going to the gym to distract herself from my imminent departure to the States. This was making her sad. My dad, Raffaele, didn't say anything at all.

Then the situation became interesting, because we started to talk about my imminent departure for the States. We were discussing the college and the basketball career I would pursue if everything went well. While we were talking, my mother brought to the table the second course of the day, a steak called "tracchia" seasoned with the same tomato sauce as the gnocchi

that also accompanies the sausages. This kind of steak is very tender and valuable. The steak was amazing, but another amazing thing happened. My dad is in the army, so he is always quiet and doesn't talk that much, but that day while we were eating the steak, he came out saying he wanted to put on a movie called 'Draft Day'. It was a film about the NFL draft day, but it focused on the Managers and agents aspects, not the players. The film started, and the whole family was curious to see what it would be like. In the beginning, there was a manager of an NFL team who was trying to find the best player for the next year while he was negotiating with every team in the league. My mom and my sister started to get bored because it was a sports film without any love story or anything like that. Fortunately for them, my mom brought the last course to the table.

This time, it was a dessert. I call this course the special easy cake. My mother has been making this cake since I was a kid. It is special because she puts all the love she has into making this cake. I still remember the first time she made it, I think I was 8 years old. The cake is easy because it is a very simple cake, yet it tastes incredible. It is made from a mixture of cocoa, flour, yeast, sugar, and milk, and once it's cooked, a layer of icing sugar is added on top. Once we had eaten all the cake, and I ate most of it. My sister and my mother got up from the table. The lunch was finished. My sister went to her room, and my mother started cleaning the dishes in the kitchen. My father and I stayed at the table to finish watching the film. The film was almost over. I remember, at that time, I was a year younger. I felt both excited and anxious at the same time about the big trip that was waiting for me. I didn't know what to expect, but I was happy to share that moment with my dad. We hadn't done many things together throughout my life. Now, the film continued, and the last scene began. There was an agent who had just 10 minutes to negotiate with five different teams to secure the best player for

him. He made the right decision at the last minute, and the whole office behind him started celebrating. It was a nice scene, but before the movie ended, there was another one. In the short scene at the end, the agent called the player he had secured and told him that he was in the NFL. The player was on the phone listening to the agent with his mom and dad close to him. Then he hung out and hugged his parents.

The film was over, and something that I had never seen before happened. I turned my head and looked at my dad. For the first time in my life, I saw my dad get emotional, there were almost tears in his eyes. I started yelling and called my sister to come and see this unbelievable event. I took out my phone and snapped a picture to remember the moment. In that photo, you can see my father running away with his face a little red. He got emotional because he thought the thing that happened to the player in the film would have happened to me. I will never forget that day.

The lunch was amazing, my family was amazing, and my father did something that I will carry with me forever. Now, when I look back at that meal, I feel grateful for having a family like mine. That moment with my dad has helped me throughout this year. Every time I feel tired or overwhelmed by classes and practices, I think about that meal, feeling safe, motivated, and strong. It reminds me of where I came from and why I push myself to the limit every day. To conclude, I would say that this was the best meal of my life. It had the best food, my family, and a meaningful moment that made the meal truly unforgettable.

The Moment That Started It All

Maria Herrero

This is the story of two souls who crossed paths in a manner that neither could have imagined, but once they met, they knew their lives would never be the same. The tale of how Manuel and María de los Ángeles came together is a combination of fate, shared ambitions, and a deep connection that led to a lifetime of love and family. Despite living in the same town my grandparents did not properly get acquainted until my grandmother started visiting the Banco de España in Valladolid every afternoon as a client, and my grandfather, who was a very diligent and detail-oriented man with great precision and much dedication to his work, was employed there by chance and attended her through her visits.

My grandmother began to pay more attention to my grandfather when, upon leaving work, she saw him going with his brother Alberto to the corner café every afternoon. The café was the place where everyone went to relax after a long day, and it was a well-known place in Valladolid. My grandma also had a friend who liked my grandfather's brother, but at that time, it was frowned upon for women to go without a companion, so my grandmother and her friend, not knowing them at all, could not enter the café alone. Maria de los Ángeles and her friend Antonia liked Manolo and Alberto, so they started thinking about some way they could see them when they were alone. After a few days, my grandmother decided to bring her little sister, who was not considered a proper woman yet, to the café to see if my grandfather and his brother were there. Two weeks had passed when my grandfather and his brother realized what my grandmother and her friend were doing, so they invited them to have coffee with them to get to know each other better outside of their office.

As they spent more time together, they discovered common interests. Both shared a passion for soccer, especially for their city team Real Valladolid. My grandfather used to go to the stadium every Sunday, and when they became friends, he invited her at least once a month to watch their favorite team playing in their favorite stadium, José Zorrilla. They used to go alone, but sometimes they also went with my grandfather's family, so she knew his family very well. They also discovered their passion for the cinema, their conversations were most of the time about trendy movies, and they spent a lot of quality time together going to see their favorite ones at the cinema and enjoying them like little kids.

It did not take long for their friendship to turn into something more. Despite my grandfather's reserved personality, he started to feel drawn to my grandma's compassion and openness. He admired the way she carried herself with confidence and grace, while she, in turn, appreciated his integrity and quiet strength. One of my favorite memories is when my grandfather told us all these stories, and the excitement on his face every time he talked about how he fell in love with my grandmother makes me believe in true love and eternal commitment to a person. When we were children, my brother and I loved to be told these stories over and over again, and that's why I remember them so clearly and fondly.

One evening, my grandfather decided to build up his nerve and invite my grandmother to dinner at the prominent restaurant La Parrilla de San Lorenzo in Valladolid after months of simple friendship. They used to spend time sharing their thoughts and laughing during their coffee breaks. The love between them turned into total unification, thus revealing to everyone that they were meant to be together, and at that moment, they became a serious couple.

They spent numerous years getting to know each other before deciding to marry. A small number of relatives formed the group that attended their wedding, as they wanted something private and family-oriented. My grandparents were moved by great love when they welcomed their three children, consisting of two twins, my mother and my aunt, and a little boy, my uncle. Their names were Aurora, María de los Ángeles, as my grandma, and José Manuel.

Since then, my grandparents lived their lives teaching their family principles such as honest work ethics along with compassion and humility with other people. With all this, I want people to know their story is a testament to the idea that true love often grows from friendship, shared values, and mutual respect. It is a reminder that love is not just about passion but about choosing each other every day, through the ordinary moments of life. Their legacy lives on through their children and grandchildren, who continue to be inspired by their remarkable journey together.

Summer of 2013

Donna Sutherland

Editor's Choice Winner

The Summer of 2013 was quite normal and simple. Nothing special happened except it was the summer before everything changed. It was the summer of laughter and a certain type of nostalgia that haunts everyone. As I am Diana, who once lived on West North Street during the Summer of 2013. Diana would begin her routine of waking up around noon to make herself some refreshing iced water. She would use a spoon to scoop the water out of the tall blue plastic cup. She knew they were limited on food from the middle of the month till the end. So, she would eat the water because it was slower than drinking it, which meant less time in the kitchen. To find herself opening the fridge to stare at the emptiness on the shelves. Then she would sit outside on the wooden porch with her feet touching the blazing hot concrete. The sun would hit her so perfectly that she felt like she could be a model right from a magazine. She would watch the cars go by and wonder where they were headed for the Summer. As she waited for her neighborhood friends to wake up. She would sit on the porch and listen to retro music like Led Zeppelin, Elton John, Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, The Beatles, and others as the sounds went through the screen door. Although the music was created in another decade, it seemed as if the artist wrote every song to match the feelings that the hot summer sun waves gave off during the Summer of 2013. Inside sat her mother, who would play Solitaire on the coffee table with one hand and in the opposite hand have her lit cigarette as she did every day. Then her father would tidy up the house to get ready to read this old medical book that Diana believed was from the early 1900s. To diagnose himself with whatever upcoming disease was popular during that century. She often wondered why

her mother stayed with him, even though she knew that her mother simply did not want to raise a child by herself because she was disabled. However, 13-year-old Diana sometimes enjoyed her father's company and thought one day she could love him, but on most days, she missed it when it was just her and her mother. Diana would wonder if things would always be the same.

One by one, the other children started running out of their homes, and soon enough they were all out and ready to begin the summer chronicles. The first friend that would come out in the mornings was 12-year-old Issac because he had a little sister that he was always trying to avoid. In second place would be 16-year-old Nelsie, because she needed to get her first smoke before her parents began their errands. In third place would be 13-year-old Carlos, mostly because he stayed up late playing video games and lived down the block. Lastly, it would be 14-year-old Leeanne because she needed an hour or two to fully wake up. Everyone would meet at Diana's porch until all the friends were there. They would begin by catching up, even though every evening they played street basketball until the streetlights came on. But today was a new day, they all thought, sometimes they would walk to the gas station and get a thirty-two-ounce soda. On occasion, they didn't have to pay for it, because one of the cashiers was the mother of Leeanne, who lived down the street. None of the children who lived on West North Street were popular when school was in session. But after school hours, they lived on West North Street, which connected all the children and allowed them to have a whole group of friends. Diana would eat at the other families' houses for dinner most summer day nights because all the parents knew that the young girl's parents couldn't work. But all the kids would be on her porch in the morning to catch up, then they would all shift to the next neighbor's house to play some ball. All the friends used each other's families for some necessities that they weren't receiving at home, mostly because of the lack of income.

Around three O'clock, they would all walk down the street to an old woman's house, who would hand them the cheap popsicles that were rectangular, and the popsicles were displayed in clear plastic, and everyone always consumed a little plastic when biting the top off with their teeth. The popsicle was okay, but the juice was everyone's favorite because it would be ice-cold and full of flavor. On the fierce summer days, they'd walk down to LeeAnne's house, whose mother was a cashier at the gas station. LeeAnne's older brothers graphitized their mudroom and put in multiple stereo systems, which would vibrate everyone's entire bodies when the music played. They would all sit in there with a fan and listen to the newest rap music because Leeanne was well into rap artists. She had the newest kicks and famous rap artist posters. She read People's magazine, which gave her the latest scoop on the messy lives the celebs lived, and always watched MTV. We would watch her brothers play football, and the boys who lived on the other side of the block would come and play. The girls would play softball since Diana and Leeanne were on the local team. Leeanne's parents would provide rides to the pool, drinks, and new games for everyone to try. They even made a clubhouse, although they were a little too old to call it a clubhouse. Out in the back yard of Leeanne's property, from an old shack that her dad used to use as a hunting cabin. After his back problems started, he had no use for the cabin. They made seats from old tires. They stapled curtains up on the ceiling. They made a bonfire pit close to the clubhouse. However, it was not used much after it was decorated. That's because, on the other half of the street, Issac got a new trampoline in the Summer of 2013. Which kids would jump on after their popsicles and before their final game of street basketball? When the parents would have their adult gatherings, some of them were allowed to play outside longer. They would usually play Kick the Can, Hide-and-Seek, or race one another. Except for Carlos, who always had to be home at eight o'clock.

Every family on North West Street was poor, with families that tried to give them the best childhood they could give. However, little did the kids know that this would be the last summer they were going to be kids. Without them knowing, they still tried to be adults as much as possible. For example, Nelsie would smoke cigarettes behind her house. So, she wouldn't be caught. Diana wouldn't smoke because her parents do, and she doesn't want to end up like them. She also believed that Nelsie had many more issues than she led everyone to believe. Nelsie would dress up as masculine as possible and usually would try to sneak off without her parents knowing. The summer of 2013 was the summer they all had a great idea while Nelsie was smoking to climb this old garage that no one ever used because it was breaking apart. In between the garage and the house was a worn-out trampoline that no one jumped on anymore because Issac had a new one. Anyways, all the neighbor kids climbed into the garage, and then Nelsie decided that she had a master plan to jump from the roof of the garage onto the trampoline and do a flip. Well, Nelsie accomplished her flip. However, before she landed, the trampoline bounced back and threw Nelsie onto the side of her house. Which left her with a broken arm. All the kids climbed down the garage. They rushed to grab her mother and then scattered back home before they had to answer any questions about what happened. The next morning, the whole block had Poison Ivy from the garage that they had climbed.

Once the school year had started again, slowly things began to change. The first was that Issac moved because his family saved up enough money from his father being a truck driver to buy a better home. Diana was most disappointed because losing Issac felt like a sign that things were going to change. Soon enough Carlos became more distant as he tried to fit in more at school and no longer wanted to be outside. His only desire was to become an excellent video gamer. The family who provided the basketball goal started a

mechanic business and decided to move to a better neighborhood and to have a house that could household their growing family a little more comfortably. Following this, Nelsie began having more problems with her family and would often move out and then move back in. She also started messing around with drugs. On some occasions, she would spend time in a mental institute. Diana assumed that this was probably because the mechanic's family was the only one to give Nelsie the structure. Her own family didn't necessarily care what she did if it didn't look bad on them. Next, the older woman who would hand out popsicles moved, and the house was torn down. Then, a couple of years after the Summer of 2013, one of the friends of Leeanne's brothers ended up being severely high on drugs. Did a hit-and-run. Then ran from the police and shot himself in her front yard. Leeanne was never the same after this and tried to portray herself harder than she was. As if she had to be this "don't mess with me person" to hide her grief. Diana kept sitting on her porch during the summer, waiting for someone to come out. Except the lives that once used to greet her on her porch had changed. After a few years, when she was older, her father went to a bar and came back in a drunken rage and pulled a knife out and held it to her mother. Then he was arrested, and Diana never saw or heard from her father again. Diana shifted her feelings of anger, betrayal, and abandonment to the whole street. She started to crave being out of the house and away from anything that reminded her of her father.

The neighborhood of West North Street left its scars on the lives that remained after the glorious Summer of 2013. However, that Summer is what haunts all the children who once felt the true essence of being a child. The nostalgia in the Summer of 2013 on West North Street with the warm sun, the blazing concrete, the sounds of music, and the excitement of seeing friends. Sparked the ghostly memory of all the children playing basketball during the

summer right before the first year of college began, when Diana sat on her porch for the last time, waiting to say Goodbye to anyone that she knew. Although no one came out and all that was left was the memory of the Summer of 2013 before everything changed.

What turns a Meal into the Best Meal of your Life

Oliver Lazib Baladi

When I'm asked about the best meal of my life, I don't think twice about which meal that was. It wasn't my grandma's trademark recipe for flødekartofler, my dad's perfectly cooked beef tenderloin with rice and sauce, or even an extra-good round of uramaki sushi rolls with salmon and avocado, which is normally my favorite meal. None of those delicious meals can compare to what I refer to as "the best meal of my life." I had the best meal of my life on March 12th, 2023, at a steakhouse on the streets of a small town called Bacalar in the southeastern part of Mexico.

On yet another hot and humid evening on my travels through Central America, my fellow travelers and I had arrived at the infamous Lake Bacalar, which, due to its many beautiful shades of blue, is also known as "the lagoon of seven colors". Our group of 17 young and adventurous boys and girls, who were all strangers a few weeks earlier, was on the second half of our month-long journey, and finding local restaurants in small towns was nothing new for us at this point. Being such a big group, it was not always equally easy to collectively agree on what to eat for dinner. This is why we, on this particular evening, decided to split into smaller groups. All the girls went for sushi, and half of the boys wanted pizza. Though I, Casper, Mikkel, Benjamin, Olav, and Tobias were in the mood to enjoy the culture we couldn't explore back in Denmark, and so we set out on a mission to find a local gem.

We searched high and low through the streets of Bacalar for what seemed like hours, ending up disappointed numerous times as many of the recommended places were either extremely crowded or closed. The sun was

setting as afternoon turned into evening, and still, we couldn't find a place to eat. "Can we please just eat at the next available place?" Benjamin asked. "We can't be picky anymore, my stomach is eating itself at this point". We all felt the same way, so in agreement, our little group settled for the next half-decent-looking place.

The lucky winner was a tiny, family-owned restaurant called El Barril Grill. This place looked exactly like something we had already tried a thousand times before, but as hungry as we were, we didn't care anymore and got a table in the center of this cramped patio-like space. There was barely any space between us and the table behind, and the noise from the kitchen was overwhelming, forcing us to speak louder than normal. The table was unstable, the chairs were hard and uncomfortable, the air was heavy and smelled like barbecue, and sweat ran from our foreheads as heat from the kitchen hit us. Despite all of this, the El Barril grill still maintained its charm. Strips of lightbulbs gave the setting a nice, cozy vibe. The decorations were as Mexican as you could imagine, with bright yellow and orange stone walls and big, dangerous-looking cacti that occupied every corner to contrast the intense colors.

I had only known my company for about three weeks at the time, but we had spent every hour of each and every day since we took flight from the other side of the globe, so I had the feeling of having known them for years. We enjoyed a couple of Coronas - the signature beverage of our trip - and talked about the thrilling river-rafting, stomach-twisting skydiving, and breathtaking waterfalls we had already experienced, while also amusing ourselves with the thought of all the reef diving, cave exploring, and so countless other exciting experiences which awaited us in Belize and Guatemala. Time flew by so quickly, and all of a sudden, our food came.

One by one, the waiter presented us with our orders: Casper and Mikkel split a dish of three different types of meat, Olav got a t-bone steak, Benjamin and Tobias burritos al carne, and I got chicken fajitas. We raised our glasses in unison and toasted in a Mexican manner, “Arriba, abajo, al centro Y pa’ Dentro” before we each dug in to what turned out to be some of the best food we’d ever stuffed ourselves with.

The waiter had presented me with three fajitas, each the size of a small hand, on a matte black and hot frying pan. After the first bite, I was shocked. “This is amazing!” I said. “Like, extremely good!” The warm tortilla perfectly wrapped the wonderfully seasoned chicken, which was complemented by the melted cheese and fresh vegetables to add a soft and comforting texture. I looked up in absolute disbelief and search of recognition from the other guys, and everyone had the same hungry and excited look on their faces as Casper said, “I’m usually an atheist, but this gotta be proof of something more between heaven and earth!” We devoured our dishes as if we hadn’t had a meal in weeks, while also insisting on sharing our food in the attempt to prove that our dish was the best. Not only did the food taste heavenly, but I’m convinced it also improved the guys’ vocabulary, as the guys started to express all sorts of big words: “This food could simply not have been made from mortal human hands and resources,” Tobias said. “The mix between everyday ingredients was never supposed to be this mouthwatering and flavorful”, Olav uttered. But they were right. I will never forget that meal, and one day I will go back to Bacalar to enjoy the fajitas that opened my eyes to the beauty of true cuisine. That was, without a doubt, the best meal I ever had.

The moral of this whole story might just seem to be the biggest recommendation towards El Barril Grill, which isn’t completely wrong. Though the true lesson and point I wanted to make is that even the most

simple, everyday dishes can turn out to be the best meal of your life if you find yourself in the combination of amazing company, just the right amount of starvation, and a beautiful setting.

The Best Meal of My Life

Samuele Serpelloni

The best meal of my life was not just about the food; it was about the experience, the company, and the atmosphere that transformed that dinner into something close to perfection. It was a warm summer evening in Verona, in the north of Italy, where every corner is full of history. I had spent the day exploring the beauties of Verona with my family, such as Corso Cavour, Via Mazzini, and Via Roma. By the time evening came, at 8 pm, we made our way to Il Desco.

I had lived in Italy my entire life, tasting the delicious cuisines of every region I visited. However, this particular evening stood out from the rest. It was the night before my leaving, the next day I would have taken a flight to the United States. Because of that, my family wanted to make it special. So, on an August day, they took my brother and me to Il Desco, one of the most famous Michelin star restaurants in Verona.

The moment we entered the hall, I saw the elegance of the design, with these warm, dark colors that matched the ancient style of its interior, perfectly representing the romantic beauty of Romeo and Giulietta, a sign of Verona. The service was impeccable, from the moment we entered to the moment we left. The staff was really nice, they welcomed us, treating us like important people rather than just normal customers. We were seated at a long wooden table near an open window that offered a view of the Dietro San Sebastiano Street, with the perfect temperature and soft live classical music.

The meal began at 8.30 pm with some of their breadsticks and bread matched with salt butter. After we ate those, I looked my family in the eyes

with a big smile, showing them that I was already amazed at how good the meal started. They smiled back at me. Followed by the second plate that was a raw filet of salmon with coffee powder and a salty capers sauce.

The idea of the chef here was to combine foods that usually are not a good match and transform them into a new type of taste and flavor. At first I was a little confused, but I trusted him and I remained speechless at how good it was.

Between the start of the meal and the first course, my dad shared a story about his first Michelin-star experience in Paris with his best friend, where they both felt completely out of place. "We couldn't even pronounce half the menu," he laughed, "so we just pointed and hoped for the best." As the fancy dishes kept coming, they pretended to know what they were doing, nodding seriously while secretly Googling things under the table. The highlight of the night was when the waiter brought out a soufflé so delicate, my dad thought it might float away. "We just stared at it, too afraid to breathe," he joked. "But when I finally took a bite, I realized—food could be art. Expensive, but still art." He told us that because for my mother, my brother and me it was the first time in a Michelin-star restaurant, and he would have liked to get us used to it and not feel out of place.

Next came the *primi piatti*, the first course, which was from dish three to four. The waiter arrived and explained the dish, which was a deconstructed egg with foamed albumen on top that tasted like a cloud, mixed up with crunchy crumbled bread and the yolk beneath. Here my brother and I tried to act serious, but after we looked each other in the eyes, we started laughing, knowing that this plate would have been amazing. The fourth plate offered a grilled eggplant, reimagined with spicy tomato passata. The chef's idea for the third one was clear: he demonstrated that it is the work

behind it that matters, not just the raw materials, because he transformed something basic like bread and eggs into something artistic and tasty. He also surprised my father, who is difficult to persuade.

The main courses, the secondi piatti, were the fifth and sixth, and they were matched with the Pinot Nero, which is a red wine. The fifth, the favorite of my mother and me, was a creamy saffron risotto topped with foie gras. The characteristic that made this risotto stand out from all the others that I ate was the mastery of the basics. The rice was cooked al dente while the sauce was created with red saffron flowers amalgamated with butter. Right after came the sixth course, a hearty pork stew, topped with rich brown sauce and aromatic basil oil. These two dishes were the best of the dinner, bringing to our minds the simpler versions my grandmother loved to cook.

For dessert, they were incredible: the first one was ice cream with cocoa flakes and jam, and the second one was their view of pastries. The ice cream was creamy, delicate, and soft like a cloud. The pastries were four different types: the first one was a lemon and honey gelatine, the second one a dark chocolate supplì, the third a mini coffee cake, and the last one a green pistachio macaron. All these desserts were an explosion of taste, and they were small because, as the waiter said, they were meant to be eaten in one bite. Each of these bites had a different flavor, and the freshness of the gelatine was perfect to conclude the night.

To conclude, the food had been exceptional, but it was the experience that made the meal truly unforgettable. It was the warmth of the atmosphere, the laughter with my family, and the passion the owner shared with us. We didn't just share a meal; we shared food, laughter, and a significant moment, the night before my leaving, marking a touching milestone as I was about to leave for the first time. It was a moment I knew I would carry

with me forever, like the taste of that perfect meal, and the feeling of connection it created.

The Best Meal of my Life

Daniele Filippo Condrutz

Reggaeton music and barbecue smoke were coming together in my room through the window. Jaconis family was celebrating like there was no tomorrow, pumping music through the speakers and grilling. It was August 15, 2019. That's why it was a very loud day. This day is a holiday in Italy: Ferragosto (the middle of August). Jaconis' family was doing nothing wrong, that's the way everyone celebrates Ferragosto!

That day I was at home with my mom and Nola, my dog. Inside the walls of our house, there was a completely different situation; it was a pretty silent day, not many words were said, and not too much noise. The silence felt overwhelming. It sort of amplified the feelings I had in that moment and all the thoughts in my head, because with that being a silent day, I had all the time in the world to think about all the things that It wasn't going well in my teenage life. Things were not going well in sports, things were not going well in school, and also things were not going well in our family.

My mom and I have the strongest relationship there is. We always tell each other that we feel a certain connection, mentally and emotionally. It happens very often that when I feel a little bit down, she asks me if there is something wrong,

Then I would look at her, surprised, and ask her why she is asking. She always comes up with the same response: "I just feel it". That's exactly what happened that day. She knocked on the door and told me:" I know you are not feeling great but I want to try to make your day better. Let's do something together" At first I was hesitant and acting like I was fine and I didn't need anything, but she kept insisting and I realized that at the end of the day it wasn't a bad idea.

My mom grabbed the car keys while I was putting the leash on Nola, then we just went outside. The first open place we saw on the road was a McDonald's, so we instinctively decided to go with that option. I felt a strange feeling deviating from the tradition that day; there was no one on the street or in

the city that day because during Ferragosto everyone stays home, so it was very unusual to go outside to eat. I wasn't feeling like I was missing out on anything; it was great.

So, I ordered a chicken wrap with some fries and a Sprite, while my mom just got a crispy Mcbacon and a bottle of water. After our order arrived, we parked and started eating in the car. I finished my meal pretty fast; my mom, instead, was calmly eating her hamburger. "You are eating too fast," she told me. "No, maybe you are the one who's too slow," I replied. I remember looking at the back seat to see if Nola was okay, and I gave her some of my fries. She looked hungry and thirsty. Even if I have an older sister, I look at Nola like she's my little sister.

When we all finished our food, and my mom started a conversation about life in general, we got comfortable, and I started talking about some of the problems I was dealing with at the time. I don't remember with clarity what the problems were, but I remember well my mom looking at me and talking to me in a way that I didn't know I needed.

We talked for a little while but then decided to go for a walk in the woods with Nola. That's when the real-life conversation started, and that was a great time. Looking back at the fact that she thought about my problems and put them first, even if I know that she had her own more important things to handle, makes me feel grateful and lucky.

During that walk together, I felt so relieved from all the stressful thoughts I had. I remember telling my mom: "That's the best Ferragosto meal

I've ever had in my life". And she agreed. That's why this is the first memory that comes to my mind when I think about the best meal ever. There was so much power in these simple moments that I can say that that was a pivotal moment that even changed the next few days, and it flipped the situation I was in. I was able to live through a stressful situation in a peaceful way, and all that was possible just by talking to my mom and listening to the advice she had.

But also thanks to a very normal meal on a very special day.

The value of Friendship and the Fragility of Life

Brad Storrer

Driving through the Eastern Cape and up the Narrow, Curvy road to Grahamstown, everywhere I looked brought back a memory. The smell of wet manure as I drove past the dairy reminded me of jokes that were made every time we passed it in the school bus. The nervous feeling you got for being back at school and what was installed for that term. I was filled with excitement, I was going back for the annual derby day, St.Andrews College vs Kingswood College.

It was an excuse for all the boys to be back with our friends and to be back at school. I am not sure if I was more excited to be playing golf later that afternoon or to finally be able to go to the one bar in Grahamstown that evening. Nick Jones, Michael Owen Jones, who we call Moj, and I met before our round of golf at Michael's house. We would meet Nick Lake, who was from the Eastern Cape, at the golf club. Ignoring the need for food, unpacking our bags and getting organized for the weekend, we rushed off to the golf course filled with excitement to reminisce about the memories we created there.

It has been over a year since I left school, and I still remember the sharp tingling feeling I had in my stomach walking into the gates, a skinny, lanky young boy filled with nerves and fear. Living in Zimbabwe but going to high school in South Africa scared me. I would be far from home, knew no one at the school, and Mum and Dad weren't there to pick me up on a Friday afternoon. Over the next 5 years, the boys I met that day would become part of my family. We became inseparable as if we were brothers, and saying goodbye to them after our final exams is the hardest thing I have ever had to do. Living alone and not seeing them for over a year has made me realize just

how much I miss them and need them in my life. I have been fortunate to live in the modern world we live in today. I FaceTime them often, we send memes back and forth, but it's just not the same. Luckily for me, the time has come for me to be with them again. Not only do I get to see them today, I get to see them at the place we first met, our school, St. Andrews College.

Sharing a beer on the clubhouse balcony, we lose track of time, realizing that we were not only late for our tee time but Nick Lake hadn't joined us yet. Lakey had built himself the reputation of always being late and always having the most fascinating reasons as to why he was over an hour late to most things. Not thinking much of it and being in the holiday mood, we pushed our tee off time back and ordered another beer. 30 minutes passed, and my phone rang, "Brad, I need help." I lie in bed to this day, and I can still hear the worry and pain in Lakey's voice. I knew straight away that something was so very wrong. "Are you ok?" I asked. I could hear him frantically breathing as if he had just seen a ghost. "I have crashed the car, and I am stuck in it. please hurry"

The drive to the crash along the slippery red mud road may have only been four minutes, but during those four minutes, every terrible thought I could imagine crossed my mind. Worried, terrified, and for some reason an extreme amount of frustration. Frustrated as to why I didn't offer him a lift. Was one of the happiest days I've experienced in over a year turning out to be one of the most infamous for the rest of my life? When we got to the scene of the crash, the first thing I saw was the car, completely totaled, wheels facing the sky, and the windows and windscreen completely shattered. The car was not in the shape of a car anymore, and I could not see how there could be enough space for a human to sit in it. I could not see Nick, not in the car and not standing anywhere around it. Moj slammed the car to a halt, I jumped out, the car still moving. From around the back of the crash, Nick popped his

head up. His hands were shaking, he was wobbly on his feet, and I could see tears running down his face; he knew that he was not alone. Before I could say anything, Nick, in his normal joking way, but in a terrified voice, said, “Sorry, I am late.”

The next few hours consisted of calling his parents and trying to calm Nick down on the side of the road as we waited for them. “My dad is going to kill me “ is all he would say. When we were back home and Nick had gone to the doctor for a check-up, I realized just how lucky he was to be alive. Seeing the car back on all 4 wheels and getting a good look at the damage. The wheels were bent, and the back door was no longer on the car. I realized that the fact that he walked away with his life was a miracle. I did not only witness a miracle. I learnt many valuable life lessons that day, Life is fragile! I have taken many people, experiences, and moments for granted, expecting I will get them back or see them again; that is a lie I tell myself. Life can be taken away from you in the blink of an eye, so live each and every day to the fullest. Reach out to people you have hurt and say sorry, tell your family and friends that you love them, you might not get that chance again.

POETRY

Affair

Shayne Mobley-Koutsky

I wake up in bed alone.
Walk around nobody's home
God, this is not fair
I think my wife is having an affair
I'm not quick to jump to conclusions
But I can't live under this illusion

Her taste is not the same
No, I am not going insane
Phone is hidden behind a curtain
This doesn't make it certain
She changed her hair
Is she trying to make men stare

I can't keep living like this
Everything feels bad even my piss
Hatched a plan, it's time to act
Grab her hair, test it so it's a fact
Damn it, I finally caught her
Turns out I'm not his father

Reply from Hallmark
(upon suggesting they publish my Owed)

James Menz

Mr. Menz:

Herewith we are acknowledging
Your poetry submitted,
and are obliged to bring to mind
the faux pas you've committed:

Your rhythm awkward, syntax flawed
And imagery nonsensical,
Your use of verbs is strained at best,
Your grammar; reprehensible.

Consistently the verse observed
Was married in form and tense.
It violated pronoun law,
Eschewing antecedents.

Kindly leave to our counsel
What appears upon our shelf.
Go back to shoveling snow and keep
Your writing to yourself.

Leadly Vines

Donna Sutherland

Lying on the fence from overgrowth.

They watch the light that fades into surrounding shadows,

They watch the traffic go by,

Wondering if their dead limbs will be clipped off, they whisper their name in the wind, hoping someone will hear. *Ficus Pumila...Ficus Pumila...Ficus Pumila...*

No one comes, so they wait, repeating *Ficus Pumila...*

As patients as they can, before the virus travels throughout.

Hopeful for the weather to zap it off in one of nature's heavy storms.

Fear seeks in as they feel the virus suffocate their veins, causing their beautiful leaves to quiver.

Finally, limbs start falling, but it's too late, the Anthracnose virus has spread too far within.

They watch their last sunset disappear and the last neon shimmer of the moonlight appears.

Next Morning, the mower began, as humans never miss when their beloved *Poa Pratensis* grass that grows to fully for human pleasure.

Soon they will be forgotten, with all their limbs buried in the compost, never to be known that the *Ficus Pumila* once grew their dark, vibrant, green, leaves on that brown wooden fence.

Hopelessness

Estefano Del Aguila Delgado

Nature seems so pale today
Shows its claws and fangs in full display.
A venom gland, for her content
Our forest dry, we deserve no rain
Food is scarce, the ocean dead
A silent grave, from green to red.

The roller coaster

Shayne Mobley-Koutsky

The grass after a rainy week
Grows and grows too much to keep
You cut it and shave it like your ass
Looks good for now, it won't last

Meet a girl, have a good time
That week, she calls you mine
You argue, a bottle shatters
In the end, did it matter?

There's a dog, hair is golden
You can't help but hold him
Fingers slip, freedom makes him dash
Here for a moment gone in a flash

With your friends at the bar
You move away but not far
The friendship should manage
But the distance is too much damage

Life will be good and bad
Some days will drive you mad
Like a Beatle said in the past
All things must pass

Give and Take

Alexandra Lorenzo

If death were on the table
I'd ask him if he was able
To take away what he gave
I'm not sure I'm ready for my grave
I've pushed harder than what people see
Why won't anyone believe me
I fight every day I breathe
Yet I still feel empty in the breeze
I'm not sure I'm ready, please
I should still have time
I shouldn't have to give up what's mine
But if the fight is done
Will I be the one to come undone
You can't take back what you never gave
I think I'm ready for my grave

Owed To Cabin Fever

James Menz

What began a holiday card,
White blanket in December,
Spun and poured to a winter harsh
We'll wish not to remember.

Spurred by steely faith I stood the test
Of mind and back, though,
Powder mounting I think it best
To trade in car for backhoe.

Water, water everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink,
'Tween snow, then rain, then snow again,
The street's a skating rink.

Whilst wretched fate again doth show
More snow called in the Five Day,
A plow truck rumbles through the court,
Again blocking my driveway.

Biting guts drive sheets of ice
Like frigid locusts swarming.
Four foot drifts cursh 'gainst the door,
Where the Hell is global warming.

The Stick

Donna Sutherland

As Men began down the narrow path,
Becoming clearer as they approached,
Can it be? It must be,
Deceitful as it may, to camouflage with the appearance of a stick.
Exquisite is the word for such a creature,
For its skin shimmers in light, but easily fades away in the shadows.
God's creation to perfection in its beauty but evilness lays within the poor
creature.
It will rise tall, with a single bite takes a man from heroic to deceased and
forgotten.
Hooking its diamond eyes into their soul, piercing their braveness away,
Juggling the options to escape before the creature claims him for the day,
Killing is too easy for such a creature, first it must taunt the prey.
Letting the men be aware that it's ready to win, with its rattle of warning.
Men will be men and snakes will be snakes at the end of the path.

San Francisco

Shayne Mobley-Koutsky

Stayed in halfmoon bay, for a day
Around the crescent mountains
Our worries and pain drifted away

The Californian Sun never sets
At night nobody rests
Winter slumber never nests

War

Estefano Del Aguila Delgado

This innate human nature,
forever present, for good or ill.
From Alexander the Great's conquering fate
to Putin's nuclear state.

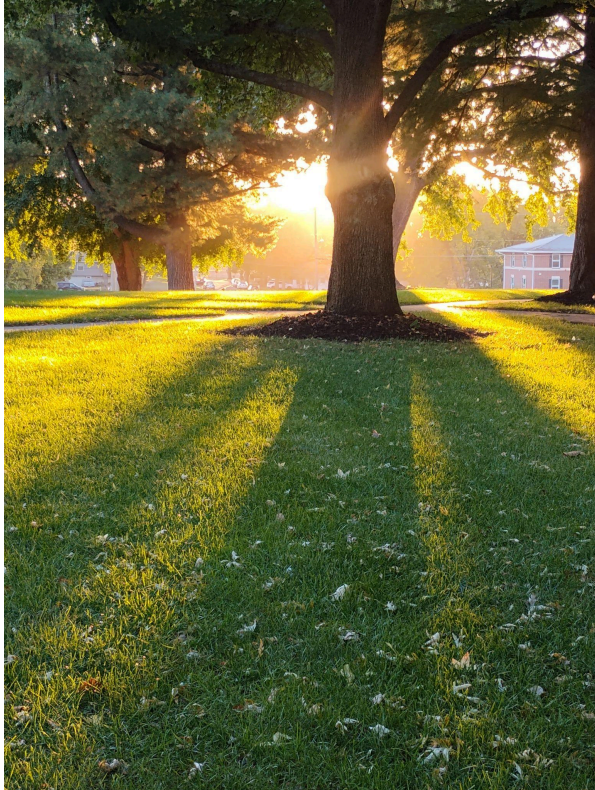
Empires rise and fall,
Warriors clash their swords and spill red blood
World of ash, Russian bombs
Nothing left but acid rain.

So much sorrow, so much lament,
a world in ruins, our only fate,
Is there a glimmer of hope? You might ask
Ask the pope, fool at task.

What is it to achieve?
power, wealth, or gold?
to burn every bridge,
a tale already told.

I won't comply. I must resist
War crimes must cease.
Utopic you might say,
I will fight till the end of days.

ARTWORK



Untitled
Angelica Mancilla



Untitled
Angelica Mancilla



Untitled

Angelica Mancilla



Untitled

Angelica Mancilla



Pete the Seaslug

Juliana Blackburn



Personal Series: B&W

Kaya McCory



Personal Series: B&W

Kaya McCory



Personal Series: B&W

Kaya McCory



Personal Series: B&W

Kaya McCory



Personal Series: B&W

Kaya McCory



Untitled

Kaya McCory



Untitled
Kaya McCory



Untitled
Kaya McCory



Small Man

Kaya McCory



Untitled

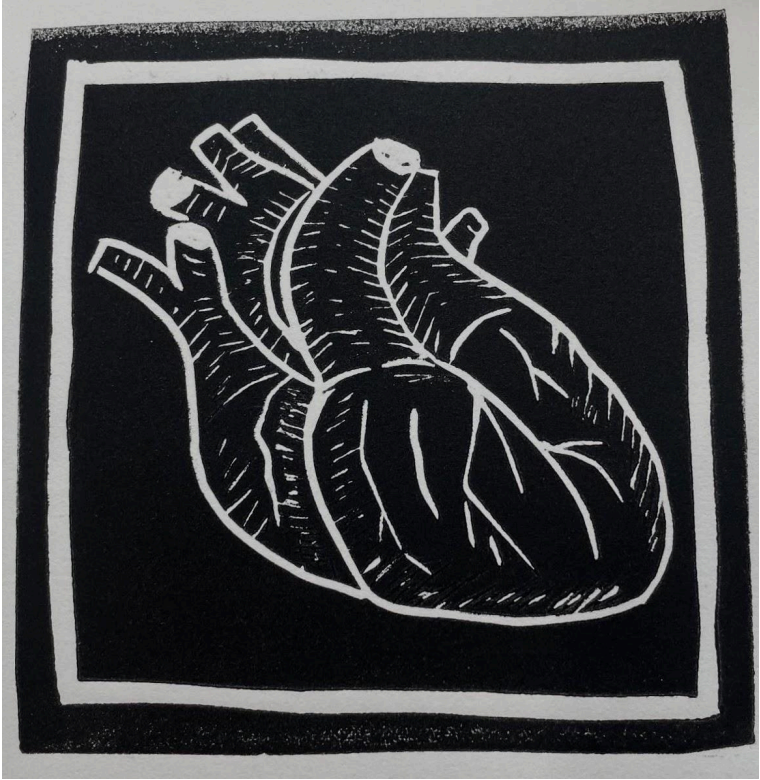
Kaya McCory



Lost
Kaya McCory



Untitled
Boe Chaplan



Untitled

Boe Chaplan



Untitled (Ink Print)

Boe Chaplan



Silent Guardian of the Storm

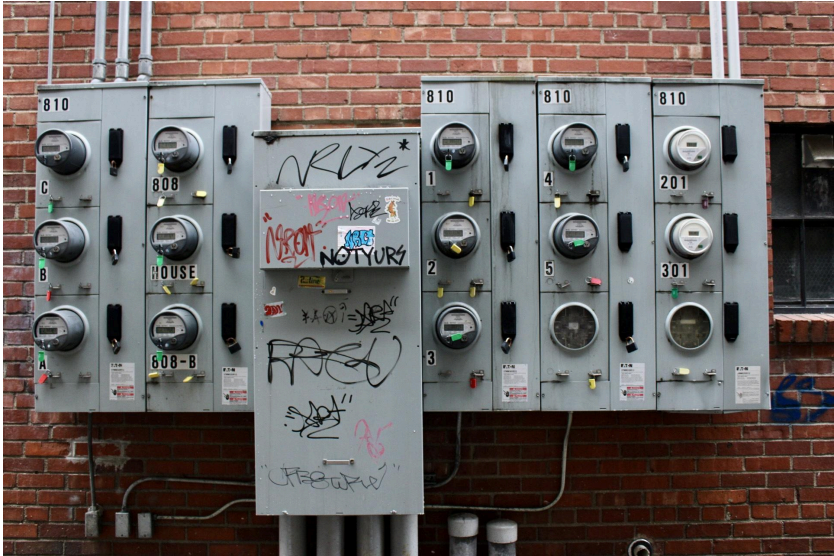
Estefano Del Aguila Delgado



Sky is Not the Limit
Estefano Del Aguila Delgado



Self Portrait
Juliana Blackburn



Skewed Choas

Juliana Blackburn



Still Life
Juliana Blackburn



“Unknown”

Kaya McCory



Spring's Warm Embrace

Keira Saulter



The Light Shining Through

Marissa Schaldecker

Editor's Choice Winner



Leave the Light on

Olivia Bettencourt



Secret Staircase
Olivia Bettencourt



Where to?

Olivia Bettencourt



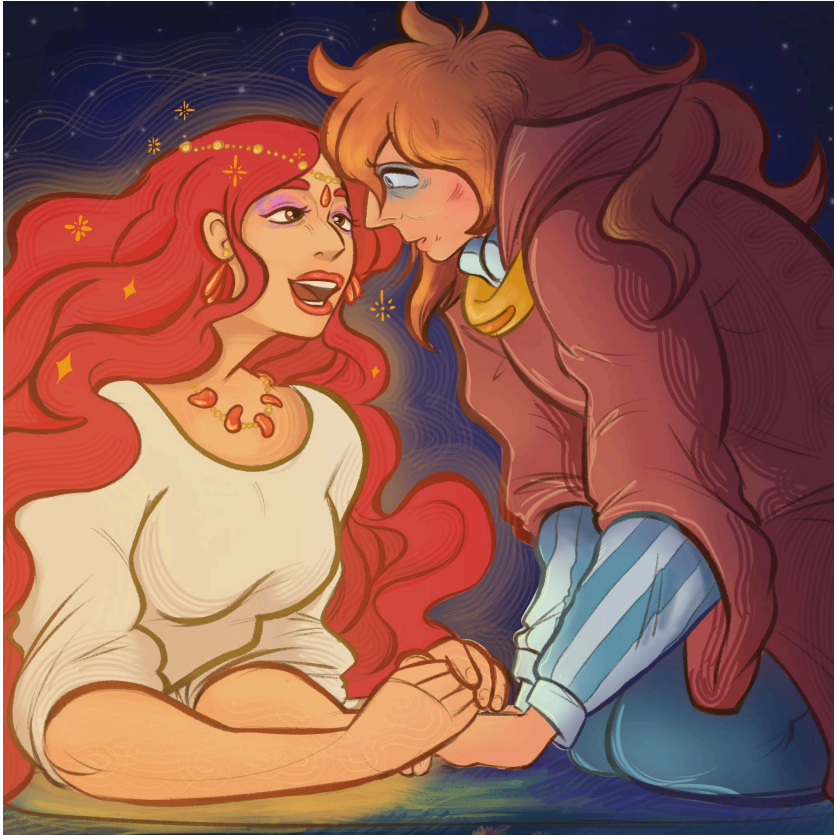
Enjoy the Show

Olivia Bettencourt



I Just Needed A Background!

Sophie Cott



Ponyo's Mom and Dad

Sophie Cott



Samuel the Trans Man Will Eat Your Insides

Sophie Cott

FICTION

The Ghostly Letters

Donna Sutherland

New York Democratic Republic Newspaper: Date: February 03, 1991

Hello to the residents of the City of New York. This month, I want to contribute my space in the newspaper to promote safe road awareness. I know the city is hectic, but please remember to watch for pedestrians and drive slowly and safely. Wear a seatbelt and never be on your phone when operating any transportation. To start this month, I want to share some letters from a young seventeen-year-old woman, Anne Kate, who is now deceased, but her story was never told. The letters were sent to me from her family about a month ago, and I thought this would be the perfect time to share the letters since school is starting. Which leads to busier traffic and more hectic mornings and evenings. Do not forget to send in your questions and concerns to us.

P.O. Box

-Journalist Evelyn Harper

August 20, 1931

Dear Kathrin,

I have missed our conversations so much since you moved away to the prominent Univeniversity. I can only hope that everyone is treating you nicely. I know you are doing great because of your smartness and all those nursing books you read before you were accepted into the academy. That had to pay off for something, right?

Unfortunately, since you left, Ma and Pa haven't spoken to one another lately, and I feel too awkward to ask why. However, it seems as if there is little that I can do to help-as if there is too much between them. Dinners are way too quiet.

So, I asked if I could take my plate to the porch and eat. They allowed me to eat outside. The unfortunate part is that they also avoid each other's eyes, If they happen to see one another, they will be damned to Hell. I know I am not supposed to say that, but I think the Lord and Ma would forgive me if they noticed the loneliness that fills the hallways and dinner table and even follows me to school.

Along with the distance when Ma and Pa aren't trying to avoid one another, they will observe me as though I have a sort of sickness or something. In fact, for the last couple of weeks, they have had Dr. Picket come to our home once a week on Wednesday and visit me. How strange! He asks me all sorts of questions, like, "How are you feeling? Have you taken a bath or gone to town lately? Are you in contact with any of your girlfriends?" I answer as honestly as I can, but it all seems to be a little intrusive. I don't need to go to town because I don't need anything. WHY in the world does Mr. Picket need to know if I am keeping up with my hygiene or if I am communicating with others? How whacky!

Following, Ma gives me two tiny white pills every night before bed. I have no clue what they are, but she seems so distant. If she were poisoning me, I still wouldn't want to pester her with questions when something is troubling her and Pa.

I miss you so much, but dont worry - your room is exactly how you left it. I haven't touched or borrowed any of your fabrics.

Please send me a letter back as soon as you get this!

Your sister,
Anne Kate

New York Democratic Republic Newspaper: Date: February 04, 1991
Wow! The feedback that everyone has sent in is fantastic! Let's thank my editor, Jonathan Barrow, for fixing my million and one grammar errors! Right, let's move on to the letters. I know everyone is curious about Kate's possible sickness. What was wrong with her parents? But please be patient; I have one editor on the payroll. I had no idea these letters would be such a hit, but I am glad everyone is invested because this is a meaningful story on the importance of vehicle safety. Anyway, enough of me. Let me give you what you came to read - another letter from Anne Kate.

-Journalist Evelyn Harper

September 02, 1931

Dear Kathrin,

Hopefully, you haven't forgotten our address or your family since you became a busy city girl. I am kidding, but I still haven't received your letters. I have been reading more and more. I am kidding, but I still haven't received your letters. I have been reading more and more. Hopefully, I can attend Des Moines University with you next year.

We can share a boarding room near the downtown strip. We can watch the milkman live from a couple of sawbucks a month by working at a local parlor, sharing clothes, and saving enough money to buy our car. Oh My! Wouldn't that blow your wig?

I am sure we would dance and meet plenty of sweet men Pa would like too.

I know I am writing a bunch of booshwa, but I think it might cheer our parents up if I went to school with you. I didn't care much about books before you left for school. On our school breaks, we could drive back home together, and visit our parents. I think we ought to save a Lincon before we plan the trip for fuel bucks. Hopefully they wouldn't still be distant if we both became successful, independent women.

Currently, School is kind of boring. I just don't have the same likeness of the other women in school anymore. I don't know why. Mrs. Craft says, "You need to write more positive essays". I don't know why, but I have been very interested in life after death it is strange. Every time I write an essay, my mind always goes to life beyond the grave. Did you go through that phase? Who am I kidding, of course, you didn't! You were the dream girl. Remember, when tall Johnny would steal flowers out of Mrs. Leiker's garden every day before school and then carry your books for you at the end of the day?

I heard he moved to Iowa and started an apprenticeship to become a Mechnaic. Anyway, in my last letter, I mentioned how Ma and Pa were avoiding each other, it might have to do with the farm. You know money has been tight for everyone. Then Pa of course last year hurt his back in the accident.

So, he has been slacking on the farm. I help as much as can but after my chores, feeding the cows and chickens, cleaning the barn, and the few horses we have left, there isn't much to do that he wants my help with. Sadly, we had sold your colt, Maggie, to keep up with the bills for the next couple of months. As well as hire some help while Pa is hurt.

His name is Jake Brown, he is nineteen years old, and he is here all the time, but he moved here to live with his grandparents. The Browns remember? They used to send over baked goods all the time during winter.

He arrives before the sun is up and begins tending to the corn and animals. He seems to be hardworking, but time is tough right now. I hope he isn't trying to take advantage of an old man who has a hurt back.

Between us, he has charming qualities, but the man has no future, right? He isn't good at speaking, but he does make gentlemanly gestures. I think I shall investigate and report back to you.

So, don't let this interfere with your studies. Once again, though, please write back.

Your Sister,

Anne Kate

New York Democratic Republic Newspaper: Date: February 07, 1991

I apologize for the late publishing of the letters, with the overwhelming cases of drive by shooting that took place on February 5, 1991, in downtown Brooklyn took more importance. Everyone who is mailing angry letters, please take a minute for the families that were traumatized by the gang violence. This devastating event is one of the reasons I thought to share these letters. The citizens of New York need to understand grief and find it in their hearts to let go of anger and move on with their lives in a respectful way. Thank you.

- Journalist Evelyn Harper

September 27, 1931

Dear Kathrin,

I know its been a while since I wrote my last letter, but I have so much to inform you about. I have been going into town more because Ma and Pa trust

me to run more errands. Like going to the store and picking up a few things, or going to the library.

Of course, I must go with Jack accompanying me on the 5-mile walk to town. Pa doesn't want me to get picked up by one of dem bootleggers.

Strangely, I have kind of warmed up to Jake. He is very charming indeed. Last weekend on our walk home from town it started pouring. When we began to race back home, he handed me his jacket so I wouldn't ruin my dress entirely.

Even though you would suspect me to whine about being wet and throw a tantrum right there. I didn't! I laughed the whole run home, and so did Jake. When we got back, Ma had supper done, and Jake and I were freezing our tails off.

So, she asked if he wanted to come eat supper with us. After a little convincing with my eyes, he accepted. I know you are reading this and thinking I am fast. But it isn't even like that. Well, I don't know. He hasn't said if we are even friends. But that night at Super Ma, Pa, Jake, and I all laughed and conversed in a way that filled the whole house. It was truly magical.

I felt something, I don't know what, but it made me smile. I guess I haven't felt like that since you left. Pa turned on the radio and we listened on the porch till it stopped pouring cats and dogs.

Then Jake went down the road and over the bridge to go home to his family of 5 siblings. He said that he must help provide for his family right now because his Pa died in one of the Colorado mines. His Ma was taken over by grief and dropped all of them off at their grandparents.

I feel bad for him...I almost started to tear up, but I was able to change the subject. I told him the best thing to do would be to act like it never happened.

Unfortunately, I don't know if that night with Jake at dinner changed anything for our family. Cause I see Ma talk privately to the mailman through my windows in the morning. They do this every day at the end of the month. I know because that's when we must load the truck up with all our earnings from the vegetable crops. When I walk upstairs to change into my town shoes, I see them out the window.

You don't think Ma would have an affair behind Pa's back, do you? I just know that other than avoiding each other Ma is always in her room crying and Pa only sleeps for a few hours. I hear them being awake in the middle of the night when I walk downstairs to grab a glass of city juice. That's silly, I guess. But I wonder why they are so close. Maybe it is because I am so happy after I mail a letter to you, that I race to him and hand it to him personally. Then every day till I write the next one I ask him if I have received anything. I never do. Kathy, why aren't you writing back? Well, maybe they have become closer because they see excitement, and Ma is wondering too, so each month she asks for an update on the letters that you never send back. I wonder if she might be expecting me to give up, but I won't. I promise.

Another update before I end this letter is that Mr. Picket comes by kess bow abd since I have been going out more with Jake, i think Ma must think I am getting over whatever illness I had because I am only taking one pill now at night. One night I heard Mr. Picket say that the experimental drug seems to be working. So, I giuess Ma signed me uo for an experimental project to receive money. I onlythink this because I heard that big researchers oay to test their drugs on people. I'm not mad because i know we need the money.

Anyhow, I will pray that you are okay and mail me a letter back.

Love you so much,

Anne Kate

New York Democratic Republic Newspaper: Date: February 08, 1991

I smell romance in the air, perfect for the month of love. Although what is going on with this family? What are they not telling her? Will she be okay? Keep picking up your newspaper to read the newest letter released. The number of letters received from this letter series is bodacious. Well, the only way to find out what is happening is to continue posting more of the letters.

– Journalist Everlyn Harper.

October 20, 1931

Dear Katharin,

I was debating writing to you because of what Ma told me...is it true? Could I be going crazy? Let me explain, after I wrote that last letter, I went searching through Ma's things. Thinking that if she were having an affair, she would keep some kind of record of whether it was happening. If she didn't, then how long would she be able to remember her great secret?

I knew that Ma saved everything that she liked, even new haircuts from her clippings of magazines in that old blue shoe box under her bed. So that was the first room I checked, and then all over the house.

Then I thought about how they always talked near the mudroom. I remembered because my bedroom window is right above the mudroom, where I would see them have their monthly meetings.

I searched everywhere in there. In old boot. Even in your jacket that still hangs on the second left hook on the wall. I checked behind the canned goods on the shelf. Then I took my last step when leaving the mudroom in defeat.

I heard a squeak. I remember how we used to play hide-and-seek all the time. I would always hide in the cellar, and you would find me instantly. Then I

would jump out and try to scare you. Which, you always acted like I did, but never really were surprised. So, I checked the cellar, and with no shock, on the shelf were several old jars, covered in dust. A box filled with blankets and candles in case we had a tornado.

However, as I looked even further back, I saw an old shoe box that I couldn't remember being there before. When I stepped closer, there was no dust covering the shoe box either. When I lifted the lid off the blue shoe box, I was surprised. Inside was a stack of letters that had been mailed. That I had sent to you!

I was instantly filled with rage. Why was she saving them? Now, I was even questioning the experiments that she was doing with Dr. Picket. How come everything was different in the house? I grabbed the shoe box and ran out of the house, in search of Jake.

I told him that "he needs to come with me, and we need to leave right now to get all these letters mailed"! Jake said, "Why, in such a rush? I need to finish up with the horses". I showed him the letters and explained how I have written you letters every month since you left for college. I have been anxious and was wondering why you haven't been responding to me. Then, now I found them in the crawlspace by the mudroom where Ma and the mailman have the morning meetings. I was speaking to him, with a higher tone than a whisper but rapidly fast, barely taking a breath. My freckles were popping out of my bright red skin, and I didn't have time to cool my body down. I only had one thing on my mind, my letters to you.

Then suddenly, he took a step back. Then he reached out to grab both of my shoulders and bent his knees a little to get to eye level with me. He paused and looked at my eyes and said that he understood.

For some reason, it calmed me for a second. Then I suddenly had an emotional cloud of grief. I closed my eyes till it was gone. Rapidly, after his

touch left my body for some unknown reason, I felt my familiar friend, anger. When I opened my eyes, I saw Jack had already run past the oak tree that grows at the end of our pasture.

So, I raced as fast as I could, with my tightest grip on the shoe box to meet up with him. After we mailed the letters. I took a long walk and didn't come home till way past supper.

Ma and Pa were very upset, but I didn't speak to them, and I just went into my bedroom. The next morning, they called me downstairs.

At first, I was reluctant, but I needed to understand why Ma was keeping the letters. When I reached the dining room, I saw both Ma and Pa sitting at the table with worried expressions. What could they be worried about? I am the one who should've been worried. It was obvious they were plotting something horrible behind my back to keep me from talking to my own sister. Pa said, "Darling, please sit down, we have something we'd like to discuss with you". As I sat down, I noticed that they had a yellow, thick hand towel over something on the table. Although I couldn't make out what could be under there.

Pa started, "Mickey the mailman came by today. He gave us these letters back, again..." My body turned instantly red, but not because of anger, because I was feeling a sense of *deja vu*. My mind began to race, and my stomach felt like setting dynamite in the coal mines. Ma said, "Honey, now listen carefully, because I know you have been going through a lot since your sister passed away, but..."

I screamed, "SHUT UP! SHUT UP! YOU LIARS! You are only saying this because you're both twisted in your way. I don't know, but you must have the devil in you. Yeah! That must be the only explanation why you would keep me from my sister."

Pa, trying not to make the situation any worse, said to Ma, “Remember what Dr. Picket said, that denial can be a hard thing to rid someone of. We must remain calm. Or she might do something irrational” i then stood up, “What do you mean, “irrational””? Ma answered quietly “Last time...well last time you...” “Spit it out, Ma, last time I what”? Ma, almost in tears, whimpered, “You took the whole bottle of pills that Mr. Picket gave to you.” Suddenly, I couldn’t take it anymore. I had to leave.

So, I ran out of the dining room into our living room and out the screen door. Behind me, I heard “Wait! Wait,” from Pa! It was too late, I began to have a rush of emotions and scenes moving more rapidly through my body and mind.

I needed to get somewhere quiet and undisturbed. I ran into the middle of the pasture and lay down in the tall grass with the sun beaming on me. I woke up to the moonlight to Jake’s warm, callused hand.

He was gently shaking my shoulder to wake me up. I sat up in confusion, and he said, “Follow me”. We walked to the back of our house and down the hill. Under an apple tree, which you and I used to play tag around when we were children. Then I saw it as Jack pointed to it.

It was a gravestone that read “Kathrin Kate, a beloved daughter and sister, August 20, 1910 - June 3, 1929”.

My legs began to tremble. I fell with my arms hanging over the top of the stone. I remembered it wasn’t just any accident that hurt Pa, it was the car crash. When he was dropping you off at the university. There was a couple with guns and hooch racing from the police in a fancy new stolen car. When they turned onto the main highway, they hit you guys. The car flipped three times into the ditch. Textbooks went flying out. You went right through the front window.

Pa was only hurt badly because the steering wheel saved him from flying out too. When Ma came back from the hospital, they said the last thing you said while you were lying in the field, seconds from passing away, was to “write letters so I can keep in touch”.

I remember now that the doctors thought you delirious and didn’t understand what was going on. I have also come to terms that you are gone. So, I want you to know that I will never forget you and I will try to honor your memory by living the life that was taken from you. Next year me Jake and I are going to move to university. I will be staying in a woman’s boarding home for nurses, and Jake is going to try to get a job as a mechanic and find a small housing place for himself.

I will keep your memory alive,
Anne Kate

New York Democratic Republic Newspaper: Date: February 09, 1991

I know, last week’s letter was incredibly depressing, but this is why our actions matter. Remember how every person can be affected by your actions. So please remember vehicle safety. Such as keeping your eyes on the road, not speeding, staying in your lane, etc., are vital. Fatal accidents can affect more than just people behind the wheel. Their families will go through a traumatic situation when song the ones they love. So, keep everyone’s heart safe by keeping streets safe. To know what took place after the letters for Kate Anne became a well-respected nurse and opened her own home for wounded soldiers who were sent back with PTSD from WW2. Jake unfortunately lost his life during the War, but before he was sent off, they ended up having a son that became the grandfather of our current well-respected police sergeant from precinct 30, Brown Surely.

– Editor Evelyn Harper

The Roof

Zach Keali'i Murphy

Editor's Choice Award

The sounds of suctioning fill the fluorescent-lit room as Stephanie uses the dental ejector tool to suck the remaining saliva, toothpaste, and blood traces from her patient's gaped mouth. Stephanie's father's girlfriend, Tracy, rushes in through the doorway. "Your dad is on the roof!" she says.

Judging by the frantic look on Tracy's face, Stephanie assumes her dad wasn't on the roof to string holiday lights or repair broken shingles. She wipes the drool from her patient's chin. "You're good to go," she says.

"And the pizza burned the roof of my mouth?" the patient asks.

"It'll heal on its own," Stephanie says as she takes her rubber gloves off and darts out the door. Stephanie and Tracy scramble to the parking lot and hop into Tracy's Ford Explorer. The car screeches out of the parking lot and onto the busy avenue. Stephanie sits in the passenger seat, gripping her knees. Between Tracy's bright red hair and the copious amount of product emitting from it, Stephanie is surprised she doesn't come with a "Highly Flammable" warning.

"I can't believe this is happening," Tracy says. "I came home for my unch break, and there he was."

The car's engine rumbles like a disgruntled bull. Stephanie observes the blinking orange Check Engine light on the dashboard. "Is this thing safe to drive?" she asks.

"I begged and begged him to come down," Tracy says.

"And what did he say?" Stephanie asks.

He kept saying, "The view is nice up here." The car makes a popping sound and fizzles to a halt. "You've got to be kidding me," Tracy says, slamming the dashboard and stomping on the gas pedal.

"We're about three blocks away," Stephanie says. "We'll have to get there on foot."

"Can we just leave the car here?" Tracy asks.

"Well, I don't think it's going anywhere else," Stephanie says.

They exit the car, slam the doors shut, and run as fast as possible. Stephanie is still in her dental scrubs, and Tracy's red hair remains steadfast in the wind.

"I hope we're not too late," Tracy says. She takes her high heels off and traverses the sidewalk in her socks.

"Getting him to come down might be the problem," Stephanie says, picking up speed.

Out of breath, Stephanie approaches the front yard of her childhood home and sees her father standing on the roof. “Hey, Dad, what are you doing up there?”

“Hey, pumpkin,” he says.

Tracy catches up to Stephanie. Stephanie uses her hand to shield her eyes from the sun. “It’s time to come down, Dad. Everything is going to be okay.”

“Don’t worry,” he says. “I’m not going to jump. I’d rather stay up here.”

The neighbors gather around. A voice shrieks from the crowd, “What’s going on?”

Stephanie rolls her eyes. “It’s none of your business, Shannon.”

Stephanie’s father gets down on his knees and lies on his side. “I think I’m going to nap up here,” he says. He closes his eyes and nearly rolls off the edge of the roof. The crowd gasps.

“Dad, I’m going to need you to stay upright,” Stephanie says.

Stephanie’s father gets back to his feet and takes a deep breath. “I want to be closer to her,” he says.

“Who?” Tracy asks.

Stephanie’s father sighs. “Rita,” he says.

The neighbors retreat to their respective yards. Stephanie glances over at Tracy and sees the glow dissipate from her face. She gazes at the empty porch swing and thinks about how her father hadn't even said her mother's name out loud since the day she was cremated. She tries to recall the last time she could carry a smile, and her heart tugs on her chest. She looks up at her father as he loses himself in the sky. At this moment, Stephanie realizes her father may never come down.

ACADEMIC PROSE

Shady Traditions

Lucía Valdivia Escabias

When I first read “The Lottery”, by Jackson, I was impressed. The story was published in 1948, and it talks about a village that is going to enjoy the annual Lottery day. It was a sunny day, and everybody was in the town square, nervous and excited about the Lottery. Nothing bad could happen, but when Tessie Hutchinson was selected as the winner, this tradition started showing its dark side. She will die in a suffering way, being stoned in the center of the square, even by her own family. My reactions when I first read this short story changed from the beginning of it to the end; at first I felt moved and impressed, but by the end I felt disappointed and disgusted, because I really noticed the lack of empathy this society shows, which ultimately suggests how traditions can bind communities when critical evaluation is absent.

I felt moved at first because the narrator shows a cozy village, which is having fun on a sunny summer day. There were children playing, adults talking, and I could almost breathe the relaxed atmosphere that they were enjoying. “Mrs. Summer declared the lottery open. There were lists to make up - of heads of families, heads of households in each family, members of each household in each family” (Jackson 1266). It shows how every citizen of the village is signed up and will take part in this apparent nice tradition. At this point, I was amazed to see how so many people were being organized to do a joint activity together, and enjoy themselves on this notorious day for the village.

By the middle of the story, I started to get nervous, especially when I encountered the line, “Bill Hutchinson went over to his wife and forced the slip of the paper out of her hand. It had a black spot on it, the black spot Mr. Summers had made the night before with the heavy pencil in the coal-company office. “All right, folks,” Mr. Summers said, “let’s finish quickly” (Jackson 1266). I started to worry because, as the narrator reveals, this tradition was supposed to be something cheerful and pleasant for the villagers, so I couldn’t understand why Bill doesn’t look happy about his wife’s victory. It doesn’t make sense to me. Bill’s unwillingness to celebrate his wife’s “victory” raises immediate suspicions. As well, the urge for Mr. Summers to hastily conclude the lottery further alarms me. I mean, he started the event, and right now he has his winner, so if he wants to end it quickly, it implies that something unpleasant is going to happen, and probably the winner will suffer the consequences.

The next part of “The Lottery” is still rumbling inside my head. As the story progresses, my feeling of unease intensifies. I discovered a society of villagers who are copying the behavior they have seen since they were children, without rethinking the integrity, purpose, or benefit of the custom. “Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still remembered to use stones. The pile of stones the boys had made earlier was ready” (Jackson, 1266). Every time I reread this quote, a shiver runs through my body. I felt so disgusted after discovering a society without any empathy for each other. It signifies the complete desensitization of the community to violence. “Tessie Hutchinson was in the center of the cleared space by now, and she held her hands desperately as the villagers moved in on her. “It isn’t fair”, she said. A stone hit her on the side of the head (Jackson, 1266). It shows nobody cares about Tessie, about her feelings, about his unreliable dreams, or about how painful it will be for her

to be stoned to death in the middle of her village square, even by her own family. Nobody thinks about what has led her to be in this position. No one mulls over that next year, the winner may be themselves. I cannot understand the lack of empathy and scruples those citizens are exposed to.

As sociologist Tracy G. Cassels articulates, empathy is the ability to perceive what other people are feeling and appropriately share that emotional state, enabling us to react properly to social situations (Cassels, Tracy G., Heidi Y. Chan, W. Victor Chung, and Geoffrey T. Birch, 309). I consider this quality as the main one in any human. For me, it is heartbreaking to discover that this village is so inhumane, being able to kill a person for tradition. In my experience, no tradition in which I have participated has caused any social issues. In Spain, where I am from, we also celebrate an annual Lottery day, but it doesn't end by killing someone. Contrary, this tradition brings a lot of smiles for the lucky ones of that year, because they win a huge amount of money. I guess this could be the reason that explains why I did not expect such a bloody and harsh plot regarding the outcome of the Lottery in the village.

I felt incredibly disgusted and profoundly disappointed with the general attitude displayed in this village. It totally reflects the dark and often troubling side of human nature. I cannot see any benefit or positive part that could come from choosing a person from the village, ending up stoning her to death. It has opened my mind, making me realize the lack of awareness and empathy that a person can develop depending on the environment in which they are raised. If you are brought up in such a tradition from an early age, it is very difficult to be critical and see how harmful it is. Traditions could be preserved over time because it is the relative role of copying another individual's behavior (imitation), and copying the context of the behavior and its results (emulation) (Kolodny O, Feldman MW, and

Creanza N, 2). If this society of villagers is copying the behaviors they have witnessed since they were children, it explains why they regard such actions as completely normal.

I believe the villagers don't experience the pain that should accompany violence or harm. I am convinced that these behaviors contribute to a perverse normalization that is resulting in a kind of affective dumbing down. Beyond my own experience, it sounds kind of crazy. Since I was born, my family has always encouraged me to be empathic, help as much as I could to others, and never do what I would not like to be done to me. "Largest developmental differences emerge in participants' expectations about how others feel about outgroup misfortunes" (Tompkins, R., Vasquez, K., Gerdin, E., Dunham, Y., and Liberman, Z, 2700). This study reflects that there are many ways of reacting to the same situation depending on the person and the concession they have with the affected person. However, in my view, it does not justify that an individual enjoys or rejoices in provoking an external evil, which could be perfectly avoided.

In conclusion, "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson exposes the dark implications of blindly following tradition through the horrible experience of Tessie Hutchinson. The evolution of my feelings throughout the story highlights a profound disillusionment with it. Initially, I was captivated by the lively atmosphere of the village, feeling a sense of connection and excitement because it reminded me of the previous traditions I had taken part in Spain. However, as the narrative unfolded, my emotions shifted to nervousness and disappointment as I witnessed the lack of empathy among the villagers. "The Lottery" left me with a heavy heart, illustrating the dark aspects of human nature and society's tendency to overlook moral values in favor of traditions. It has taught me to continually challenge and evaluate the

traditions I encounter in my life. I would always have a strong reminder of never accepting harmful practices because they are customary.

Walter Lee Younger's Struggles in "A Raisin in the Sun"

Lucía Valdivia Escabias

Walter looked at the two women with a frown on his face.

Walter: "Nobody here is ever going to understand me."

Walter finally left the apartment, slamming the door behind him.

Hansberry

The following text analyzes a passage of "A Raisin in the Sun" by Lorraine Hansberry, which was published in 1959. The story is about an argument between Beneatha (the young sister) and Walter (the main character) over contrasting their personal goals, dreams, and financial difficulties. The play is focused on Walter's emotions and frustration. He wants to develop his own liquor store in order to improve his family's economy and future, but from his point of view, nobody in his family is supporting him. This passage demonstrates Walter's disappointed and misunderstood feelings about Beneatha and Ruth, because he doesn't know how to communicate with them, resulting in an unsuccessful performance for his personal goals and the development of family empathy.

First of all, the author's choice of words to the actor and the director, "Walter looked at the two women with a frown," shows Walter's physical frustration and misunderstanding of his family attitudes towards his future projects and dreams. The frown symbolizes his lack of understanding regarding his family's attitudes towards his ambitions. He felt annoyed with his sister's selfishness and his wife's indifference towards his dreams. When Walter looked Beneath and Ruth, he expected some gesture of supposed or comprehension towards him. Walter felt disgusted due to the perception that they do not appreciate his aspirations for a better future.

Additionally, Walter doesn't know how to communicate with Ruth and Beneatha. His exclamation, "Nobody here is going to understand me," illustrates the huge lack of communication that this family has. Understanding involves trying to listen to the other person, empathize with him, and put yourself in their situation. When Walter tries to express himself, he feels that Ruth doesn't pay attention to him for some reason, they both can never make an agreement or reach the same final idea about their close future. Besides, Walter's conversations with her sister, Beneatha, always end in the same situation; neither of them tries to understand or even listen to the other. Those situations reflect how this family is unable to communicate with each other, and how this emotional landscape is compounded by a pervasive sense of isolation.

The main claim, "Walter leaving the apartment and slamming the door," represents a great deal, showing a physical action revealing his dissatisfied behavior with Ruth and Beneatha's attitude. He felt unheard by his own family. The door slam is a physical manifestation of Walter's anger and a rejection of the stifling atmosphere of his home. It is a way of expressing finality when words fail. The loud noise the door makes reflects Walter's necessity to finally end the conversation and leave the apartment, showing his nonconformism. After this moment, part of their day is set in a disgusting way, because they have home struggles that are expected to affect their routine and work. Walter left angry, disappointed, and annoyed; Beneatha shared the same feelings as her brother; and Ruth was overwhelmed and stressed. This family argument strains their relationship. Walter decided to leave, he is gone, then they can't solve the differences anymore.

In conclusion, Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" reveals the tumultuous emotional landscape of the Younger family, particularly

highlighting Walter's frustration over his perceived isolation and misunderstanding. The play illustrates how the character's individual ambitions and economic pressures create barriers to effective communication, leading to a cycle of frustration and conflict. Through Walter's journey, Hansberry ultimately calls for a greater understanding and support within families grappling with the pressures of financial strain and individual dreams.

Yunios' Vulnerability

Lucía Valdivia Escabias

“How to Date a Brown Girl, Black Girl, or Halfie” by Junot Díaz is a short story that presents how a young Dominican-American boy, Yunior, navigates dating girls of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. The story is written in second person, with Yunior directly addressing the reader, offering “advice” based on the race and social class of the girls he’s dating. Anne Margaret, in her article “Caribbean Collusion: Junot Díaz, Edwidge Danticat and The New Yorker Fiction Podcast”, explores how cultural stereotypes influence personal interactions and inform the performance of identity in the context of race and gender. Castro argues that such performances expose the assumptions linked to racial and ethnic identities, as evidenced by Yunior’s behavior aimed at meeting the perceived expectations of his dates (Castro 16). The passage that I have chosen provides a philosophical response to the topic of race, individuality, and masculinity, talking about the anxieties and social expectations that envelop the character of Yunior and dissects the vulnerability and failure of the boy’s attempts at coming to terms with his subjectivity through sexual conquest.

Díaz reinforces traditional stereotypes regarding race and gender dynamics throughout the narrative. Castro’s article claims “Assumptions that accompany racial and ethnic identities, ultimately revealing the performative nature of Yunior’s identity as he adopts his behavior to meet the presumed expectations of his dates” (Castro 16). It means that Yunior adopts specific behaviors that portray a certain code of conduct over what he assumes others want from him.

This perspective echoes Castro’s assertion that Yunior objectifies women. I disagree with Castro’s interpretation, because I think she overlooks

that Yuniór simply wants to get to know the person better, making them feel comfortable, taking advantage of what he thinks he knows about their culture.

Díaz reinforces traditional stereotypes about race and gender relationships. Yuniór's characterization of a "local girl" illustrates how girls from his neighborhood are shy and reluctant to have sex. Phrases like "she won't be quick about letting you touch her (Díaz 101)" imply a certain familiarity with a local girl's behavior because of cultural expectations that cannot be easily broken. Yuniór's interactions reveal his own insecurities and cultural dislocation, which leads him to conform to stereotypes rather than embracing authentic connections. Castro pointed out that Yuniór replicates the inequalities he encounters within a racially and socially stratified dating environment, ultimately suppressing the agency of women he claims to desire (Castro 17).

My interpretation of this could highlight a broader commentary on Yuniór's internal struggles and insecurities, which reflect a lack of authenticity in his relationships, because he thinks about his fears and possible situations that may develop, even before they happen.

Yuniór's vulnerability and failure of the boy's masculinity is reflected by using the term "white girl", which paints a picture of a different stereotype of white women being sexually liberal. Basically, it shows how local girls are objectified, placing them based on race and sexual desire. According to Yun, "stick her to the plastic sofa covers and then she will move close to you" (Díaz, 101) He is coerced into a performance dictated by societal expectations of masculinity and race, ultimately reflecting his own fears of inadequacy and cultural dislocation. Castro argues that, similar to the social climate condemned, Yuniór recreates the same inequalities he faces in

his everyday life to gain the acceptance and respect of his male counterparts, thereby suppressing the agency of the very women he lusts after (Castro, 17). I have always believed that his behavior says a lot about the vulnerability of boys of color who are in this society, and the pressure that they have to fully fill what society perceives them to be.

In conclusion, the passage from “How to Date a Brown Girl” can be viewed as a philosophical response to the topic of race, individuality, and masculinity. In my reading I look at the tensions and societal pressures that surround the character of Yuniors and examine the frailty and failure of the boy’s attempted male subjectivity via “sexual success”. However, in Castro’s article, clear; this thesis is broadened and articulated systematically when locating Yuniors’s story seriously within the racial and social templates of gendered treatment of women and influencing masculine behavior.

What does 'authoritarian leader' mean for Georgia?

Nikoloz Chitaia

In his speech, Iago Xvichia, who is a member of the Girchi political party and also a Member of the 10th convocation of the Parliament of Georgia, talks about the problem of authoritarian leaders in Georgia. He says that Georgia needs to escape from these leaders because they are very bad for the country. Xvichia explains that Georghasave big experience with authoritarianism. He believes that when one leader falls, another takes over, and this is the main problem of the country. Xvichuses uses the term "One Ring" to describe the power that leaders hold, and he thinks this "One Ring" is something that needs to be destroyed to make Georgia better. He says that people need to ask how to destroy this power, but most of the politicians don't answer this question because they also want that power. According to Xvichia, whoever gets that power will become a dictator because too much power in one person's hands is bad for the country.

I think that Xvichia's speech is true because authoritarianism is a big problem for many countries that were part of the Soviet Union, and Georgia is one of them. It is true that one leader falls, and another one comes to replace them. This cycle seems like it cannot be stopped, and it is bad for Georgia's future. But I also think that Xvichia's argument is not enough because just removing one leader and replacing them will not change the problem. The problem is the system that allows any leader to get too much power, so even a new leader might become an authoritarian.

Xvichia says that the "One Ring" of power must be destroyed, but he doesn't explain how to do that. It is not enough just to talk about removing leaders; the country must have a system where no one can hold too much power. In order to stop authoritarianism, Georgia should work on building

stronger political institutions. For example, there must be more free media and a strong civil society that can hold democracy. Only with these things, the power of any leader will be limited, and no one will have too much control over the country. Without such systems in place, even if a new leader comes in, they may become authoritarian too.

Also, I think that Xvichia is right in saying that politicians do not answer the question of how to destroy this "One Ring," because they all want the power for themselves. But, I also think there is a deeper problem in Georgia's politics, and that is that there are no debates between politicians. Many political parties are focused on gaining power, and there is no room for new ideas or leaders who are not part of the same system. In order to fix this problem, Georgia needs political reforms that allow new voices to come forward and change the political landscape. If there is no true competition and diversity in politics, Georgia will continue to face the same problem of authoritarian leaders.

In conclusion, Iago Xvichia's speech brings attention to the serious issue of authoritarian leadership in Georgia, and I agree with him that this is a big problem. However, I also believe that the solution is not just to replace one authoritarian leader with another. Instead, Georgia needs to focus on creating a system that prevents the rise of authoritarianism in the first place. This can be done by making reforms in political institutions, free media, and allowing people to become new politicians. Only then can Georgia truly escape from the cycle of authoritarianism and move toward a more democratic and stable future.

The Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Ratchanont Thamasonglar

What is One Piece? One Piece is one of the most popular cartoons in the world, which is published by Shonen Jump from Japan. One Piece is considered to be the Shonen big three along with Naruto and Bleach. Even though One Piece is very popular around the world and has so many fans who like it, this cartoon still has so many problems that make some fans dislike it. Due to this reason, her son Melissa Ojeda, one of the anime fans, started to make her argument on the CBR website about the One Piece issue. This essay will summarize Ojeda's arguments in the title why she considers One Piece to be the worst of the Shonen Big Three, while explaining the rhetorical concepts Ethos, Logos, and Pathos, and analyze the author's use of rhetoric. Ojeda's article is successful in persuading readers that One Piece is the worst in Shonen big three in terms of establishing Ethos by use some goodwill expressions to support the claim; use of Logos through cause and effect which is successfully; and also use of Pathos by appealing the audience fear of pain is successfully too.

The summary of Melissa Ojeda's arguments on the CBR website, the website that focuses on content related to cartoons, graphic novels, and fantasy. The purpose of her writing this article is to argue and disagree with the people who think One Piece doesn't have any problems and it is a perfect cartoon. According to Ojeda's article, she claims that there are 10 reasons why One Piece is the worst Shonen big three. 1. One Piece has the worst Pacing 2. One Piece has a way too long length 3. Women all look the same 4. One Piece has so many boring arcs 5. One Piece female characters are underutilized 6. An overstatemejokekes 7. Too many transformations during

fight 8. Everyone in One Piece has a tragic story 9. Usopp's design has racial undertones 10. One Piece's fights drag on too long (Ojeda).

First, Ojeda is successful at establishing Ethos through the use of some goodwill expressions. Ethos is one of the rhetorical concepts that is about using the reputation, experience, and values of the author and expert to support claims. The ethos that the author uses in this source is this sentence where she says, "Bleach does a great job of utilizing its female characters, and that's something One Piece needs to improve on." (Ojeda). This is the way of using Ethos by expression of goodwill. According to this quote from Ojeda, to be honest this claim is totally successful from my point of view because it supports her claim pretty well that One Piece is not perfect and needed to improve on something because if you are really watch One Piece you will see that is so many women character in One Piece is literally have done nothing much compare with Bleach which a women character could able to fight by herself and have more role than One Piece in terms of proceeding the story. In addition, using some goodwill expressions to support the claim is better than using bias. The ethos that Ojeda uses in this quote is perfectly successful because it supports her claim pretty well without bias. Therefore, she is successful with Ethos, and next is how she uses Logos.

Second, Ojeda is successful in using Logos through cause and effect. Logos is one of the rhetorical concepts that is appealing to the reader's common sense, beliefs, or values. Since One Piece has so many arcs and many episodes, some of it is fun and interesting but some of it is boring. This could be one reason that some fans don't like One Piece. Same with Ojeda she said "This isn't an issue when an arc is fun and exciting like the Enies Lobby Arc, but for an arc that is universally hated like Skypiea, it can be difficult for fans to get through it" (Ojeda). This is related to the way of using

Logos by cause and effect. The cause is the funny arc and the not funny arc. The effect is it's not an issue to watch when it's a fun arc but it could be difficult to finish the arc when that arc is not fun. From the example quote that was given before, from my point of view it is successful because It really shows me why some people like it and why some people don't like One Piece. Also shows that One Piece is not perfect for everyone and I had to admit that even though I'm a One Piece fan, some arcs it's literally not fun. Due to these reasons Logos that are used in this quote are successful.

Finally, Ojeda using Pathos by appealing to the audience's fear of pain is successful. Pathos is one of the three rhetorical concepts that is about using feelings, desires, fear, and emotions to influence readers. Pathos that Ojeda uses to support her claim is "Some fans may like that One Piece has so much content, but for everyone else, the idea of watching so many episodes is incredibly daunting" (Ojeda). The word "daunting" is literally related to feelings and emotions and this is the way of using Pathos to support her claim by using fear of pain. In this situation the fear of pain is the pain of watching so many episodes of cartoons. From my perspective this Pathos is successfully to support the author's claim because I feel it too. Before I started to watch One Piece, I didn't feel like watching it because it seemed too long. According to Ojeda, the idea of watching so many episodes is incredibly daunting. It's successful in terms of using Pathos.

In conclusion, Ethos that Ojeda uses to support the claim by using some good will expression is successful; Logos that she uses through cause and effect is successful; and Pathos appealing the audience by fear of pain is also successful. In addition, since I have been watching One Piece until the latest episodes and I'm a One Piece fan, I agree with most of her reasons and also do not agree with one of her reasons. According to her reasons why One Piece is the worst, what I'm not agree with is, One Piece female characters

are underutilized. Because from my point of view One Piece female characters are utilized. Many fans might expect female characters from One Piece to be able to fight like Bleach but I don't think the same way with them. I enjoyed that the role of female characters in One Piece is to support a male character when they fight. I think that is how female characters are utilized in different ways from the other cartoons. Therefore, I'm not agree with one of Ojeda's claims that One Piece female characters are underutilized, and the rest of it I agree with her claims.

End Violence Against Children

Rubén Baquero Martínez

The "Together, let's #ENDviolence against children" advertisement by "End Violence" is an emotional call to action to stop violence against children around the world. This advertisement was published three years ago on YouTube and has reached more than 1,300 views on this platform, showing its impact and importance in public conscience. The main purpose of the video is to make the audience aware of the magnitude of child violence while inspiring action and mobilizing resources to combat this serious problem. This video is addressed to all adults around the world, regardless of their nationality or ideology. The more people who are aware of the importance of taking action for the safety of children, the better for the cause. However, there is a main audience, which would be the political leaders and the civil society organizations, which have the power to create a radical change in society in favor of this purpose. Emotional testimonials and shocking figures about the existing violence against children can be seen throughout this video, while trying to emphasize the collective responsibility to protect the most vulnerable in our society. This ad successfully uses various rhetorical resources (to establish credibility by ethos, emotion by pathos, and logic through logos) to persuade the audience and generate in them the urgency to take action due to the pain and disgust that this situation evokes.

Nowadays, in a world defined by global humanitarian crises, violence against children is a very serious problem that affects millions of them around the world. Published on December 15, 2020, this video is set in a historical context marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, an extremely contagious viral disease that caused a massive collapse in the development of

society, as well as worldwide isolation for several months. This disease had a huge impact on the lives of people around the world, causing major problems to healthcare and the global economy, while at the same time causing an increase in cases of domestic violence and child abuse. Throughout the video, thanks to the emotional images it presents, we can see how the pandemic caused an increase in violence against children isolated in their homes, a violence mainly exercised by those who should be their protection and their first source of trust. In addition, we can also contextualize this video in a historical context marked by countless refugee crises in the last decade, especially in European countries, due to the conflicts in Syria, Africa, and the Middle East. In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which included among its main objectives the protection of children's rights. As a result, they decided to create this video to emphasize the relevance and urgency of children being able to grow up free from violence in times of crisis.

The first rhetorical device used by the author to persuade the audience is ethos. Ethos, in the rhetorical context, refers to the credibility that the author establishes with his audience. In the video "Together, let's end violence against children", the author uses ethos effectively by using personal credentials. They present themselves as an organization that is committed to protect children and therefore can be trusted. In addition, the author uses an expression of goodwill through the different images that are shown in the video. With them the author is able to show the suffering of many children these days, as well as the work and positive impact that the organization has had on their lives, advocating for the need to be conscious and take action in relation to child violence.

The second rhetorical device used by the author to persuade the audience is pathos. Pathos refers to the emotional appeal that the

author uses to persuade his audience. In this image we can see a girl with clear signs of suffering on her face. It is especially evident in her tearful undereye circles and in her painful eyes. In this example, pathos is used effectively by showing an image that generates empathy and concern in the audience. Images of children suffering violence or abuse evoke emotions of sadness or indignation, which helps to generate the need to fight against child violence. In addition, the use of voiceover in an emotive tone, and the use of words such as "violence", "exploitation", "fear", "abuse", and "lifelong consequences" help to transmit to the audience the importance of the problem and the pain of all these children.



The third and final rhetorical device used by the author to persuade the audience is logos. Logos refers to the logical or rational appeal that the author uses to persuade his audience. In the video, logos is used when facts and data about the existence of violence against children are presented. For example, it states that "every year one in two children experiences violence, exploitation, or abuse globally. That's over one billion children who don't feel safe, even around the very people they should trust the most." In addition to giving these data, the author also presents some concrete solutions to address this problem, such as "empowering school teachers to take a stand in the classroom" or "compelling politicians to make child safety a national priority." By providing these data, the author tries to show his audience the large amount of children who suffer violence.

In conclusion, "Together, let's end violence against children" is a video created by the United Nations, which uses ethos (to establish

credibility), pathos (to establish emotion), and logos (to establish logic) to appeal for a change towards a world in which children are free from violence. A change created from the collaboration of both politicians, teachers, and individuals from all around the world, creating a world more aware of all the suffering that countless children experience every day.

Exploring the World of Hackers and Cybersecurity Solutions

Rubén Baquero Martínez

According to the website “What is hacking” “hacking is the use of unconventional or illicit means to gain unauthorized access to a digital device, computer system or computer network” (IBM). In other words, computer hacking is a term that refers to the act of obtaining access to other computer systems without prior authorization. Some of the most common examples are taking advantage of security vulnerabilities in other systems to obtain certain information or modify other people's data. In this essay, after explaining what a hacker is and the different types of hackers that we can find, I am going to talk about some of the problems they cause and the methods and solutions I would implement to detect and prevent these attacks. These methods would consist of knowing the hacker's motivations and thinking, implementing machine learning algorithms in computer systems, and performing penetration tests and continuous reviews on them. This essay, in addition to all those people who want to know a little more about computers and hackers, is focused on those cybersecurity analysts / engineers who are responsible for analyzing and safeguarding computer systems, networks, and data from potential threats.

First of all, it is very important to note that the term “hacking” does not necessarily imply illegal activity. We must differentiate between ethical hacking, which simply works on identifying and fixing security vulnerabilities, and between malicious hacking, which does involve looking for some kind of benefit in an illegal way. As mentioned on the website “What types of hackers are there and what differentiates them?”, it is very common to confuse or erroneously associate the word hacker with

cybercrime. However, “hackers are only those individuals with great knowledge of computer systems” (Pires). This means that we first need to know the main motivations and purposes of these individuals, as well as their level of experience, in order to know what type of hacker they are. According to this website, we can classify them into several groups.

First, we find the white hat hackers. They are cybersecurity professionals hired by governments or private companies whose mission is to protect their systems from external digital threats. These ethical hackers strictly follow rules and regulations, and to achieve their goals they usually focus on identifying vulnerabilities and gaps in network security and fixing them by building strong defenses before other cybercriminals get access to this data. As Gary Rivlin explains in his book “Becoming an ethical hacker,” “ethical hacking is an expansive ecosystem of professionals who defend our apps, data, devices, and networks against cyberattacks” (Rivlin). Furthermore, in an increasingly digitized world, ethical hackers are more in demand than ever. Through their work, they contribute to creating a more secure and trusted digital environment. Secondly, we meet the black hat hackers. They are those computer experts who operate with malicious intentions. This type of hackers access the systems of other companies without authorization in order to steal valuable data (such as financial data), sell it on the deep web, or to cause damage to that particular company. In other words, black hat hackers act on their own Behalf.

These are the two most known types of hackers, however, we can find other groups such as the gray hat hackers, which are in an intermediate position between white hat hackers and black hat hackers. They carry out their operations without official authorization but without the explicit intention of harming external entities, which makes them a diverse and ambiguous group in their actions and intentions. Green hats are entry-level

hackers who act as apprentices in their search of improving their hacking skills. They attempt to collaborate with more experienced hackers, and while they are not malicious by nature, their inexperience and curiosity can sometimes lead them to exploit systems and networks without authorization.

Finally, we can also find hackers hired by governments to perform cyber operations for the benefit of a state (their main objective is to obtain sensitive information from other countries to provide better security and prepare against possible threats, whether of a military, political or economic nature) and hackers who use their skills to promote political or social causes (their main objective is to expose information, whether it is related to a specific company, an individual, or a government). These hackers are known as hacktivists. In the book “Ethical Hacking,” Alana Maurushat defines hacktivism as “the clever use of technology that involves unauthorized access to data or a computer system in pursuit of a cause or political end” (Maurushat). It is often assumed that hacktivism incidents are done to bring media attention to a particular cause. While this is true for many incidents, there is also a growing movement of silent activists who see the current political landscape as a long-term information war (Maurushat). One of the best known hacktivist groups is Anonymous, made up of anonymous hackers who stand up against injustice.

Once we understand the terms of what a hacker is and the different types of hackers we can find, it is important to know some of the problems that black hat hackers generate today. According to C.Jordan Howell, black hat hackers can cause privacy breaches, identity theft, ransomware attacks, financial fraud, damage to critical infrastructure, and even spread disinformation (Howell). This means that black hat hackers often threaten the privacy of both private organizations and individuals by accessing their personal, financial, or medical data without authorization. In addition, using

phishing techniques or malware, they are able to steal identities, leading to situations of bank account theft or other similar crimes. Mazen Gazzan explains how “currently, ransomware attacks have targeted many Cyber Physical Systems (CPS), causing severe disruption of critical services and infrastructure” (Gazzan). Hackers use ransomware to encrypt files or crash computer systems and then demand a ransom in exchange for restoring access. These attacks cripple entire companies, causing significant financial losses, such as the attacks suffered in 2021 by Colonial Pipeline (a major fuel supplier for the East Coast) and JBS (the world's top meat supplier), which had to pay ransoms of \$4.4 million and \$11 million, respectively (Gazzan). Finally, hackers spread disinformation or fake news, which can potentially shake confidence in some institutions, influence electoral elections, or simply cause panic in the population (Howell).

Nowadays, several common errors are made that can lead to an increased probability of becoming a victim of a cyber attack. First, we can find the fact of addressing vulnerabilities and threats only after an incident occurs (Iftikhar). Taking only a reactive approach results in receiving significant damage before any action is taken. In addition, we find that the use of basic security measures, such as the use of firewalls or anti-virus software, are not enough on their own, as cybercriminals are constantly developing new ways to avoid these protections. Finally, static security protocols, such as fixed passwords or single-factor authentication, are highly vulnerable to attacks such as phishing. “Most computer users have become savvy enough to avoid obvious attempts at what security experts call "phishing" -- phony email messages, often purportedly from financial institutions, that ask for personal information such as account or Social Security numbers” (Bank). However, Bank explains that nowadays “a new wave of more sophisticated attacks, called spear phishing, is being

succumbed to, targeting specific companies and government agencies” (Bank). In such events, attackers create email messages that are designed to look like they came from the recipient's company or organization, such as an information-technology or a human-resources department.

The first method I would introduce to detect and prevent hacker attacks would be to know the hackers' motivations and their way of thinking. In the article "Breaking Bad in Cyberspace: Understanding why and how Black Hat Hackers Manage their Nerves to Commit their Virtual Crimes," it is argued that "general stress theory holds that negative emotions can lead to anger and frustration, and that individuals experiencing stresses or stressors engage in crime to escape them. These negative emotions are especially important in the context of hacking, as it could be a source of inspiration for illegal behavior" (Silic). Some examples of these tensions can be the failure to achieve a positively valued good, such as money, or the presentation of a negatively valued stimulus, such as a political event or social injustice. These stresses can lead individuals into a depression in which they try to seek escape, usually by engaging in illegal activities such as hacking. In addition, because the costs of committing these illegal activities are very low, the profits they make are higher. However, in order to successfully perform their illegal activities, hackers must use techniques to manage their nerves to moderate and mitigate the fear of being caught, while demonstrating their strong technical skills and knowledge (Silic). These nerves are managed through calculated risks in which each hacker evaluates and understands his potential losses and gains. For example, if a hacker is frustrated by U.S. government policies or activities in the Middle East, he would evaluate his capabilities and choose a target for which he can control his nerves. If it is a hacker with very high levels of programming and a lot of experience performing these types of crimes, he might consider hacking into the

Pentagon's computers. However, if it is an intermediate level hacker, a more realistic target would be to hack into a newspaper's website which supports these activities. In addition, hackers consider their actions to be non-violent and not harming anyone, which leads them to be calmer and control their nerves. "Hackers consider that their acts can even be seen and accepted as admirable" (Silic). Finally, most of them usually have a backup plan in case of an emergency. "The presence of this Plan B is very important for managing nerves, as it reduces the psychological discomfort associated with uncertainty" (Silic). This allows them to eliminate risk factors and make them feel more comfortable during their attacks. Some backup plans may be to become white hat hackers and therefore not have to go to jail or face any kind of penalty. By understanding why hackers attack computer systems, we can anticipate their movements and strengthen our defenses more precisely.

The second method I would use to detect and prevent hacker attacks would be to implement machine learning algorithms in the computer systems. The article, "Preventing Cyber Attacks using Artificial Intelligence," shows how the integration of artificial intelligence into cybersecurity measures helps present defenses against a wide range of cyber threats (Garg). "Intrusion detection and prevention, threat hunting, vulnerability assessment, and fraud detection are some of the applications of artificial intelligence (AI) in cybersecurity that make it possible to identify, analyze, and mitigate the likelihood of success of cyber attacks in real time" (Garg). For example, anomaly detection algorithms are able to identify unusual patterns or unusual behavior in the data. This is very useful for being able to detect malicious activity that may indicate an attack by black hat hackers. An example would be if a user suddenly gets access to a dataset or a digital platform that he has never been able to access before. In this case, a pattern of anomalies would be able to alert of this event. A second example is machine learning algorithms,

which are able to analyze immense amounts of data, identify patterns, and even predict future behaviors. These algorithms would be able to recognize patterns associated with already known attacks. For these reasons, by implementing machine learning algorithms in the computer systems, we could respond more quickly and effectively to the hacker's attacks.

The last method I would use to detect and prevent hacker attacks would be perform penetration testing and continuous reviews in the systems. Penetration testing are those tests that help identify vulnerabilities in computer systems before they are exploited by black hat hackers. By simulating real attacks, vulnerabilities in the security of the system can be easily discovered and patched before they become major problems. By detecting and correcting these vulnerabilities before other hackers do, the risk of an attack is significantly reduced. Preventing these attacks is always more effective and less expensive than dealing with the consequences of a successful attack. Cyber security is a field that keeps evolving every day, with new ways of attack being created and new vulnerabilities emerging. For this reason, it is very important to perform these penetration tests and to carry out continuous reviews in order to constantly improve the security defenses of our computer systems.

The Pyramids of Egypt

Rubén Baquero Martínez

This primary source is a seven-minute video uploaded on Tiktok by David Garcia Guercetti. His username is @das.lebatic and he shared this video on networks on January 19, 2024. This video was titled “Quién construyó las pirámides de Egipto? No sabemos...,” in English “Who built the pyramids of Egypt? We do not know...,” and has reached more than 7.5 million views and almost half a million likes. In it, through an analysis based on current knowledge of modern engineering, he critically examines how the construction of the pyramids of Egypt (the only wonder of the ancient world that has reached our days) is not possible with the technology they were supposed to have at that time. Its audience is anyone interested in this topic, although it is certainly focused on those interested in ancient history and technology, or even Egyptian archaeology, with the purpose of providing information about a possible theory or alternative perspective of how it was the process of construction of this monument. To make this statement, he bases his argument on four problems or uncertainties. He begins by commenting on how they managed to cut each of the blocks that form them, continues with the problem of their transportation, and after talking about the precision with which they are placed, he ends with their construction time. From my point of view, although some of his statements do not have real evidence to support them, it is certain that the technology at that time must have been more advanced (maybe even more than nowadays) than what has been described.

First, the author explains some of the characteristics of the pyramids. He tells the viewer that this wonder consists of three pyramids, the

largest of them known as the Great Pyramid of Cheops, and the other two called the Pyramid of Chephren and the Pyramid of Mycerinos. All the explanations that David provides in the video are based on calculations made with the Great Pyramid of Cheops as a reference. He says that this pyramid, also known as the Great Pyramid of Giza, is approximately 150 meters high (three times the height of the Roman Colosseum), with each side of its base about 230 meters long, is made of 2.3 million irregular blocks of different sizes, weighs about 7 million tons and is built with two types of stone: limestone and a very hard stone known as pink granite.

To help understand the first question, David introduces Moh's scale, a system used to classify the hardness of materials. According to David, this scale goes from 1 to 10, with each number representing a higher level of hardness than the previous one. Pink granite has a hardness of 7 according to this scale. However, copper has a hardness of 4. What does this mean? David explains to the viewer that the tools that the Egyptians used in all their constructions of the time were made of copper, but as Moh's scale explains, this material does not exert enough mechanical wear to cut a harder material, in this case pink granite. For this reason, he explains that the task of cutting these blocks is too complex for the materials they had available.

After doing some research, I found it is not that simple to classify these materials on the Moh scale, as this only classifies minerals such as feldspar and diamond. For example, copper is a metallic element, not a mineral, and therefore its hardness would have to be measured using other scales such as the Brinelli scale, which is suitable for metals. In addition, pink granite is an igneous rock composed of several minerals. It is true that some of them, such as feldspar and quartz, have a hardness of 6 and 7 on the Moh's scale. However, it is also composed of mica, with a 2.5 on this scale. Finally, limestone, the most abundant stone in this construction, has a

hardness of approximately 3. Taking all this data into account, it is true that although copper is the material with the least hardness, I consider that they could have used it to cut the huge blocks by adding techniques such as the use of sand to act as an abrasive, helping to erode and cut any material more easily. Therefore, this author's statement does not hold up because his arguments have not been clear.

The second question David raises is the problem of heavy engineering. He says that the blocks to build the pyramid were taken from a mountainside 50 kilometers north of Giza across the Nile River. They had to cut, move, and cross on wooden rafts 2.3 million blocks (some of them even weighing 100 tons). He explains that after cutting each one of them downstream and putting them on land, they had to transport them 8 kilometers across the desert to where the pyramids are located. Therefore, David considers impossible the fact that they could perform this task with the technology they were supposed to have at that time.

Unlike the previous problem, I do consider it much more complicated to perform this task with the supposed resources of that time. Even today, there are very few maritime cranes capable of transporting 100 tons from land to water. The fact that they were able to lift it on some kind of platform without it sinking into the water is impressive to me. I believe that even today, accomplishing a task of this level would be very difficult and a masterpiece of engineering. Therefore, I agree with the author that it is not possible to do all this with supposedly infinitely less technology than today.

The third problem presented by David is something even beyond the reach of modern engineering. It is the precision of its construction. In the video, David says that the pyramid's termination is less than one centimeter from exact squareness with respect to the base. He explains that nowadays, modern buildings of the same size have approximately a 1 meter error to

the normal / theoretical perfect center of gravity. He tells the viewer that dividing the resulting margin of error by the number of pieces (1 centimeter / 2.3 million blocks) gives us that the precision with which each of these stones was placed is impressive, about the size of a cell. In other words, it is as if each of the blocks were placed with the precision of a microscope.

Contrary to David's claims, there is still no conclusive evidence or calculations that there is a centimeter error with respect to the exact squareness of the base of the pyramid. However, it is true that the precision with which the pyramids are built is impressive. Much more if we think about the year they were built and other extra features such as the fact that they are aligned with the Celestial mechanics with an amazing precision. In addition, they are an exact copy of Orion's belt, and the area of the base and the area of the sides is closely related to the Phi number and the golden ratio (according to the article "Fibonacci, Da Vinci and the Golden Ratio" these concepts were discovered 3500 years later with DaVinci and Fibonacci). Finally, the construction of its internal passages is also amazingly precise. It has been proven that by using a laser or other device to measure the alignment of these tunnels, it is possible to verify that their trajectory remains constant along the entire slope. Despite this, David's claim does not hold up due to the lack of corresponding evidence.

Finally, David talks about the time of its construction. He says that the construction of the Great Pyramid of Giza was carried out over a period of 20 years, between 2580 B.C. and 2560 B.C. According to his explanation, for these calculations to be accurate, a block of stone should have been placed every two minutes. Something completely impossible. David ends the video by encouraging the viewer to reflect on these reasons in order for them to create a personal opinion regarding this issue.

After doing my own calculations (which are to divide the number of blocks, which would be 2.3 million, by the 20-year period, then divide the resulting number by 365 days, then divide by 24 hours, and divide 60 by the number we obtained) I have found that the time it would take to fit each of the blocks is wrong. A fact that in any case is still completely incredible, and that in my opinion makes impossible the fact that they built it in only 20 years.

In conclusion, I do not consider that with these statements, David is trying to say or incite anyone to think that the pyramids of Egypt is not a human construction as it is often commented. I do not believe that his video has any intention of proving extraterrestrial life. However, I do consider that it makes a deep criticism and incites reflection of ancient history that we were always told from a linear and increasing perspective, in which we first discovered fire, then agriculture and farming came along with the invention of the wheel, until we reached the creation of the Internet a few decades ago. History is always explained as a series of events represented in a linear and increasing way of human technology and culture. And in that same linearity, constructions appear in the middle that we cannot explain from modern engineering, which would force us to break with that linear and increasing model and to accept that in some other era or cycle there were civilizations with technologies that we do not understand today. Explaining history in this way might be a more honest, representative and interesting way of telling the story.

Summary of 2024 presidential election debate

Safaiou Sow

The U.S. presidential election of 2024 has been remarked a good debate between Kamala Harris and former president Donald trump which took place in Philadelphia. During the 1 hour of the debate the former president argued about immigration issues, but I'm going to focus on a clip posted on youtube by CNBC television. I strongly support Donald Trump arguing that people are entering from the border illegally, however I deny the incident where he said immigrants are involved in the country. Now let's give a brief summary about the debate.

On 10 Sep. 2024 during a debate between former president Donald trump and Kamala Harris for the presidential election 2024. "Former President Trump Claims that Immigrants Are 'eating Dogs' in Ohio" Former president Donald insisted that people are not going to Kamala Harris rallies, he insisted that people who are going there were giving money to be there. Then, he emphasized that he has the biggest rallies in the history of politics. Former president Donald Trump believes that people are going to his rallies because they want to bring their country back. Moreover, he also argued that the country is being lost because she is allowing millions of people to come to the country illegally. Consequently, he claimed that Haitian immigrants are eating the dogs, pets, and cats in states like Ohio specifically in Springfield. He also warned that If Kamala Harris becomes president the country may end up like Venezuela. Now we finish talking about what happened in the debate. Let's give our point of view.

I reaffirm that millions of people are coming to the country illegally by entry to the border. Because when I was in New York in December 2023 during the holiday, I met three people who had come from the border and

were asking how to find a job. I asked them if they had a Social Security number, and they told me they had come through the border without documentation. When I asked them how they entered the country, they told me that they crossed the Arizona border with thousands of other people who came from almost everywhere in the world, and they affirmed that every day more people were crossing. This shows that people were coming throughout the border illegally. Then, this is an important point of view he made because it may help people to know who they are voting for. It could be difficult to vote for a person who allows people to enter the country without a document that helps them know where those people came from. Moreover, I support that the current vice president Kamala Harris is one the reasons that is happening in the country as she is one of the people who decide for the country. While I liked that he argued about the border crisis , however I did not like where he mentioned Haitian immigrants being involved in incidents in Springfield.

However, I strongly reject the notion that Haitians people are eating dogs or pets in certain states, as it seems like he's fabricating a false narrative. He insisted on creating false information to discourage Kamala Harris voters by focusing on the border crisis. Trump's speech was based on hate speech as he does not like people to immigrate to the country, and for that he used a false story to grab people's attention. Trump was trying to grab voters' emotions by giving them a story without proof. His style to make up a story is not appreciable. He was expressing and presenting things that weren't based on facts or evidence, and his style was not showing professionalism and the authority to speak. This speech could be a problem because it may lead to conflict between the population from the country and immigrants. For example when he claims that people who are eating the dogs are Haitians immigrants, whenever someone loses his dogs in the neighborhood it may

accuse the haitients immigrant from that neighbor, and may lead to conflict between the population. It makes someone furious and sad to hear a former president create such false stories about a community instead of focusing on discussing what he could do to develop the country. I argue that if it was true we could hear people complaining before even the debate, and he claimed that he saw it on television, but no one saw that news until during the debate, so not because someone has a background from another country we should accuse them or hate them. Trump could just focus on how to make America great again by talking about solutions like how to get immigrants to be documented by providing them the opportunity to get a working permit and a valid id. Other than creating a false story about people. Now we finish talking about what I rejected during the debate. Let's conclude.

Finally, while I reaffirm Donald Trump's argument that people are entering from the border illegally, I strongly deny the incident where he said Haitian immigrants are involved in the country. This was one of the themes in the debate between Kamala Harris and former president Tonald Trump during the debate for the presidential election 2024.

Steve Jobs’ “Stanford Commencement Address” Speech Rhetorical Analysis

Samuele Serpelloni

Steve Jobs was an American inventor, designer, and entrepreneur who was the cofounder, chief executive, and chairman of Apple Inc (Tyler, Piccotti; Adrienne, Donica; and Catherine, Caruso). Today, people still regard him as one of the greatest inventors and business leaders because his created innovations back up today's technology. In 2005, he was invited to speak to the new graduates at Stanford University; he gave the speech on June 12. In this speech, he told three personal stories from his life, where each one of those had the purpose to give to the new graduate and whoever was going to listen to this speech gave inspiration and courage to follow what they love in life. His commencement speech persuades through ethos, as it is built upon his personal experience, a journey with which people can relate; through pathos, he appeals to emotions through the rewards of following passion and warns against settling for less; and through logos, he persuades with an explanation of how challenges can help them grow, and that in order to achieve it they must remain strong and confident in their path.

This is the commencement speech at Stanford University for the new graduates, students, staff, and professors, and later for all who watched this famous YouTube video. Jobs told three stories that took place in his life. The first story was about “connecting the dots.” He thought he did not need college and followed his feelings by leaving college. It ended up changing his future in ways he could never have imagined at the time. The second story was about “love and loss.” He discussed the loss of his job at Apple and how terrible that had been, but it turned out to be a pivotal point because it helped

him restart and create Pixar and NeXT. This experience taught him that when you truly love what you do, it can carry you through even the toughest moments. The third story was about “death.” After being diagnosed with cancer, Jobs learned that remembering our mortality can help us focus on what really matters in life and encourage us to follow our hearts.

First, Steve used ethos to give hope about success, gaining the attention of the audience, with the storytelling of his journey that people can relate to. Ethos is how the author gives credibility using examples and his authority. To show his credibility, Jobs shared his personal experience, saying, “I never graduated from college. Truth be told, this is the closest I have ever gotten to a college graduation.” And by admitting to this, Jobs' speech became even more credible since he demonstrated humanity and honesty. This made in the new graduates a feeling of pride for what they had achieved and understanding of those who had not graduated. It also helped them come to terms with understanding that even the person who never graduated can be successful. Jobs used his personal experience to identify with the audience, telling an anecdote of his life that, using his words, “It was not all romantic.” These words were used to describe how difficult his start was after dropping out of college. He gave specific details like “I did not have a room” and “I slept on the floor.” Therefore, by being open about what worked against him, Jobs connected with the audience on a personal level, reminding them that success comes from overcoming difficult obstacles.

Next, he used emotions to relate to the audience emotionally, emphasizing that not a single person should settle for anything less but instead follow their passion. He spoke about being diagnosed with cancer, stating, “About a year ago, I was diagnosed with cancer,” followed by the statement, “Death is the single best invention of life.” By sharing his difficult

times, he was able to emotionally connect to the audience. He used the “fear of loss” to remind them, dramatically, that death is inevitable, so they must start appreciating life more and follow their passion before it’s too late. In this context, Jobs said, “Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life.” Here, he used an “expression of anger” to show the audience that he cared about them and their future, advising them to start understanding what is important to them and to follow it with courage, regardless of what others think. He added, “Your work is going to fill a large part of your life... And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking. Don’t settle.” Through this, he employed the “promise of fulfillment,” pointing out that a significant part of their lives will be spent working, so they must find something they love, making that time more valuable and joyful. Therefore, he encouraged them to keep searching for what they truly love and not to settle until they find it.

Finally, Jobs used logos to show the graduates that challenges in life help people grow. He employed “cause and effect” reasoning and “examples” from his life. He said, “After six months, I couldn’t see the value in it. I was spending all of the money my parents had saved their entire life. So I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out OK” This shows how one action leads to another. He was brave enough to drop out when he thought it would be alright despite the uncertain outcome that actions could have led. He reinforced this message by saying, “You have to trust in something—your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever,” emphasizing the importance of believing in something that motivates people to keep going. Jobs also provided a concrete example of how decisions made in challenging moments affect future self-success. He explained, using the “if... then” technique, “If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts.” By sharing this, he

supported his argument with a real-life example, showing how his experience influenced the creation of a product that changed personal computing, making his message stronger.

In conclusion, throughout his speech, Steve Jobs told the audience the importance of following what they love in life and never giving up, using three personal stories. He shared this using logos with “if... then,” “example,” and “cause and effect;” pathos with “expression of anger” and “promise of fulfillment;” and ethos with “identification with the audience” and “personal experience.” The speech was successful, as the audience applauded many times, and shortly afterward, it was posted on YouTube by Stanford’s official page, gaining over 45 million views and half a million likes.

The Best Asado of My Life

Santiago Zingoni

If we won, we'd take the top spot, it was in Madrid, my hometown, six years ago. I was really excited, but this game was in the morning, at 10 a.m. and I woke up at 8:40 a.m. when I was supposed to wake up at 8:15 a.m. so I couldn't have breakfast, but that didn't matter because I was so excited for the game, it was the most important of all the year, we were second and they were first, that's why if we won we'd take the top spot. The game ended the best way possible, with a last-minute goal to give us the win. After the game I was so happy, but at the same time I was starving, because as I woke up late I couldn't have breakfast, the game ended at 12 p.m. and in Spain we eat at 2 p.m. so I had to wait 2 hours while starving! I wasn't sure I could make it.

That day, we were going to eat at my grandparents' house, but I didn't know what was on the menu. All I knew was that I was incredibly hungry. The two hours dragged on, and when we finally arrived at my grandparents' house, I thought I'd be able to eat right away, but the food still wasn't ready, and no one told me what we were having. I could barely hold out any longer! Another 25 minutes passed, and finally, they said the food was ready but still didn't tell me what it was. When I sat at the table, I was finally greeted with the sight of what I was about to eat: Asado, my favorite meal. And after the exhausting wait, I was beyond ready to devour it.

This was undoubtedly the best meal of my life for two main reasons. First, the day had started off great with our soccer win, and I was so tired, so the food would taste even better. And second, I was about to enjoy my favorite food while starving, the Asado. This is my favorite meal not only because of the taste of the food, which is incredible, but also because it is like

a tradition for my family. Almost every weekend, we get together and eat this, and I can see my grandparents, aunts, and cousins. It was something that I didn't value so much before, but now that I am that far from my family, I really miss it. I miss it because it was the moment I could talk with all my family, everyone saying how it was their week, having fun and just spending time together, also another moment that I love is when me, my brother and my cousin after finish eating start playing soccer together at my grandparents garden, I really miss this also.

The Asado in our family usually has Argentinian sausage, which we also eat with bread, and this is called choripan. Then we also used to have chicken legs and different types of meat, but my favorite definitely is the entraña. Also my mother used to put some salad on the table but I didn't enjoy that part much. Another thing that we used to have in the menu are empanadas, these are like a baked stuffed pastry, filled with ingredients like cheese, meat or vegetables, I loved when these were on the menu and they were made by my grandmother, the meat ones are my favorites, they are amazing.

With this essay, I have come to draw two conclusions. One of them is that many of the best things in life come after some suffering, as was this situation, in which I was waiting desperately, but then the wait was totally worth it. The other conclusion I reached is that we don't really value things so much when we have them, but rather, we tend to do so more when we stop having them. This is happening to me now, since when I was in Spain, I didn't value barbecues every weekend so much, and yet now I really miss them.

An example that demonstrates how distance can be overcome

Victor Aparicio Reques

During the 70s, there was a boy named Diego Aparicio who lived in a small village called Valdearcos de la Vega in Valladolid, Spain. Diego was an exemplary and charming boy. He was very responsible with his obligations and had incredible marks. He loved sports, especially soccer, and was passionate about movies. His favorite film was 'Rocky'. On the other side of the story, there was a girl whose name was Nuria Reques. She lived in Vilanova i la Geltrú in Barcelona, Spain. Nuria was also a great student. Her passion was biking. She had one of the best bikes of that time, and some days she rode a bike more than 20 miles. Valdearcos and Vilanova are more than 400 miles apart. In Europe, 400 miles is a huge distance, but they still had a lot of things in common. Both of them were studying engineering, they played soccer, they loved to watch movies... However, their paths had never crossed.

Nuria's best friend, Raquel, used to travel to Valdearcos for vacation at the end of every summer. When Nuria was 18, Raquel invited Nuria to go with her for a couple of days. She was undecided at first because that summer had been tough for her for several reasons. All her friends had traveled during the summer, but she stayed at home because her parents did not have much money. Moreover, she had finished high school that year and was about to start university. She was scared about this step and could not stop thinking about it. However, she eventually decided to go. She just wanted to finish the summer as it had to be finished, enjoying herself.

Nuria was shy, so when she arrived in the village, it was difficult for her to talk with people whom she had never seen before. Luckily, Raquel had

a lot of friends in Valdearcos, and Nuria was introduced to them. One of those friends was Diego. While Nuria was introducing herself, a blond and handsome young man caught her attention. This boy was Diego. At that moment, Diego was 20. However, Nuria did not catch his attention.

That night was the birthday of a girl in the group. The group planned a surprise party for her. During the whole party, Nuria was watching Diego, but he did not look at her. Raquel encouraged her to talk with him, but she was too embarrassed. Eventually, Raquel decided to go speak to Diego. She asked him about her friend Nuria, and he said that she was a kind person, but he was not interested in her.

“Es maja pero no es el tipo de chica que me gusta,” [She is nice, but she is not the kind of girl I like]. Diego replied.

When Raquel told Nuria about Diego’s answer, she was the most upset person in the world. However, she felt that something was about to change. Everyone went home when the party ended. Nuria was so disappointed that night. The next day, Nuria and her new friends went to the village swimming pool. Nuria knew that it was the last opportunity to talk with Diego because she was leaving that night. While all their friends were having fun in the swimming pool, Nuria still put on sun cream. Suddenly, she saw Diego coming to his towel, which was located next to hers.

“¿No vienes a la piscina? Aren't you coming to the pool?]- Diego asked. *“Sí, cuandoacabe de ponerme la crema entro. ¿Podrías ponerme un poco por la espalda, por favor?,”*[Yes, I will come in once I finish applying the lotion. Could you put some on my back, please?]. Nuria answered.

“¡Claro!” [Of course!]. Diego said.

They began to talk for a while. They realized that they had a lot in common. Both of them loved animals, especially dogs. They also enjoyed

watching sunsets and shared a passion for soccer. Diego supported Real Vallad, Olid and Nuria supported Real Madrid. Fortunately, these clubs had a good relationship. When they left the pool, Diego gave Nuria his home phone number. As soon as Nuria arrived at her house in Vilanova, she called Diego. They talked every week by phone. At first, their conversations were long and intense, but within the past few weeks, they became shorter and always had the same topics of discussion: soccer and classes. However, Nuria came back to Valdearcos the next summer and started dating Diego. It was never easy. Diego's family never saw the relationship correctly due to the distance. They thought that it was not a good idea and encouraged him to break up with her. Despite all those misunderstandings and obstacles, Diego and Nuria keep their relationship. Five years later, after Diego completed his studies, he moved to Barcelona. They purchased a house in a village named Viladecans and from that moment on, they lived together for the rest of their lives. Six years later, their first son was born, and they named him Victor Aparicio Reques.

This is how the relationship between my parents began. This story means a lot to me and my family. It shows clearly how we are. Currently, I find myself in a similar situation. I am separated from my family, but it does not mean it is a problem. We usually talk two or three days a week, and I still feel very connected with them. That story says a lot of things about my mom and my father. It shows they fight for their objectives and never give up despite obstacles. They have demonstrated this several times. I am so proud of them. This narrative is an example that love can overcome any distance and obstacle.

“Yes, You Can be an Entrepreneur Too”

Victor Aparicio Reques

The video “Yes, You Can Be an Entrepreneur, Too,” published on the famous YouTube channel TED on August 22, 2024, is a speech about racism in the entrepreneurship world. Mekuria-Grillo, an entrepreneur from San Antonio, Texas, gave the speech. Currently, she is the Co-founder and CEO of Formation Ventures. This startup is dedicated to dramatically increasing

the number and success of Black entrepreneurs starting in high school, through educational and new venture support programs. The speech's audience is primarily composed of adults related to the business world. She has suffered a lot in the past due to racism, and her principal aim is to prevent other Black people from experiencing the same pain she did. I believe this initiative is necessary because we must solve this problem, even though it should never have existed.

In this video, Mekuria-Grillo shares her journey to becoming a successful entrepreneur. She explains that she has always been interested in entrepreneurship and innovation, as her parents had started small businesses. Despite being exposed to entrepreneurship during her childhood and adolescence, she did not begin her venture until she was 39, she admits. She decided to become an entrepreneur when she saw other black women around her entrepreneurs. Now, her job focuses on working with young black folks to demystify entrepreneurship so they can create jobs in the future. To achieve her goals, she suggests to the audience “to share the multiple pathways to entrepreneurship with young people so that they can see themselves reflected in them. She shares the origin stories of other entrepreneurs who have walked a path that our young entrepreneurs might

want to explore. She helps them understand that they can show up as an entrepreneur in a way that feels authentic to them and that there's no one way to be an entrepreneur.” (Mekuria-Grillo). Additionally, she provides role models for Black entrepreneurs, such as Tope or Shontay.

When someone like Mekuria-Grillo, who has a lot of experience in entrepreneurship, speaks on this topic, people should listen to and take notes. Mekuria-Grillo’s argument that there are very specific challenges for black entrepreneurs is extremely useful because it sheds light on the issue of racism in the entrepreneurship world. As she expresses, she desires to change the narrative around who becomes an entrepreneur in the US. With this speech, Mekuria-Grillo shows the audience that she is a woman who loves her life she is a resilient person. She is fighting for all those black entrepreneurs who want to create their businesses in the future. Not everybody can talk and fight against this challenge, and she has done it without fear; ear, this is why I admire her efforts to solve this problem. Hopefully, she will achieve her goals and solve this serious challenge. It is a difficult task, but if everybody is aware of this problem, the entrepreneurship world would change for the better. I also agree that near-peer mentorship is one of the best ways to bring role models closer, a point that needs emphasizing since so many people still believe that role models are not valid in situations like entrepreneurship. This is why I think there should be more mentorships given by entrepreneurs. They are very important and useful for young people who dream of creating their own businesses. Having a role model and a person of inspiration is the first step to success.

On the other hand, I disagree with Mekuria-Grillo’s view that relationships are critical to entrepreneurial success. It has been demonstrated

that several famous entrepreneurs have created their businesses without external help. One example of this could be Jan Koum, the WhatsApp founder. Koum comes from a humble family. He started working as a computer programmer in several companies. Simultaneously to his job, he started to create Yahoo! and WhatsApp nine years later. Another example may be Phil Knight, co-founder of Nike. Knight started selling shoes in his car trunk. His business was growing step by step, and a few years later, he created one of the most famous sports companies in the world. Yes, relationships can indeed help you when you need ideas, money, or anything. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are crucial for entrepreneurs. I strongly believe that entrepreneurship is possible without help, as has been demonstrated over the last few years. There are factors like luck or external factors that nobody can control and will never change. However, there are others, such as racism, respect, and support that we can control. We all have to be focused on improving those factors.

As I said at the beginning, the project initiated by Mekuria-Grillo is the first step towards creating a fairer entrepreneur world. Black people are facing racism in the entrepreneurial world, which is incomprehensible in the 21st century. However, the issue is decreasing every day. Not everybody has the same opportunities due to factors like place of birth, family background, and financial situation, which can pose significant obstacles. In my opinion, there are factors that nobody can control and will never change. However, there are others, such as racism, respect, and support, that we can control. We all have to be focused on improving those factors. During the last few years, people have indeed become more aware of racism thanks to people like Mekuria-Grillo. I strongly believe that I can help with this problem. To stop racism, it is necessary to start with education. As she says, people have to be educated to make jobs, not just do jobs. One of my dreams is to create a

business related to sports and support young people to achieve athletic and personal goals. This is a perfect way to educate people at the same time that creates jobs. But until this project is due, my task is to be respectful to everybody and try to make as many people as possible aware. I am sure that in the future we will do it.

**Coping with the pandemic through hobbies: A reflection on Roxanne
Gay’s “I’ll Never be Able to Cook the Bad News Away. But I Try
Anyway”**

Andrew Mittl

The COVID-19 pandemic changed lives for everyone around the world, with changes happening in people's routines, relationships, and mental health. Roxanne Gay's article "I'll Never Be Able to Cook the Bad News Away. But I Try Anyway" shows an example of some of the effects the pandemic had on people, and how new hobbies became an important part of getting through it for a lot of people. Her reflection on cooking as a new way to deal with stress and using it as a way to cope shows more about human resilience during harder times. Going from her words, along with research on behavior during the pandemic, this essay will explore the psychological impact of quarantine and how people used hobbies like cooking or gaming to help themselves get through these new, tough circumstances. I will also reflect on my own experience during the pandemic, and go over how I changed between some hobbies and habits, both healthy and unhealthy, and how these different things got me through the pandemic. Together, both my perspective and "I'll Never Be Able to Cook the Bad News Away. But I Try Anyway", as well as further research, I'm gonna compare these perspectives and show how hobbies provided an escape from reality during a tough time.

Roxanne Gay's article talks about how the idea of cooking, while it might not cure some of the world's issues, says, "It is so very relaxing to have clearly defined tasks and instructions on how to perform those tasks." From reading this passage, words like 'relaxing' show that it brought her something where she could ease up, while also showing the structure created when she

talks about having defined tasks and instructions. This shows that this was a hobby for her that offered her a personal sense of control and ease during the pandemic. She describes her attempt at making puff pastry “but it was a trial, indeed,” and it required lots of patience with all the folding, rolling, and chilling layers of dough and butter (Gay 2020). This article resonated with me because it shows how even though there were challenges in cooking, it created a sense of control and allowed me to keep focus.

During the pandemic, I was cooking more often for similar reasons. I was still working during some of the pandemic, but there wasn’t anything I could do after finishing, as everything had closed. But once my work had eventually closed down so I needed to find something else to do. At first, I started cooking because we needed to because most places were closed, eventually it became something I enjoyed, and I found myself wanting to learn more and get better. It also made me feel productive and like I was achieving something, and this wasn’t something as easy to come by consistently during this time. Gay’s reflection on cooking meals, even if they couldn’t “temper the terrible news,” this phrase shows that although the cooking brought her comfort, it still can’t completely hide some of the bad things happening, but it was still something that could help distract and ease whatever bad things were going on around her. In my experience, this is similar to what I also used cooking as a way for me to seek comfort in preparing meals, and it gave a feeling of normalcy and achieving something in an otherwise weird and chaotic time.

The psychological benefits of different hobbies during this time were widely observed during the pandemic. Gay writes about making new meals and learning new skills, making things like “pretzels, bagels, cinnamon-raisin bread, scones, croissants, layer cakes,” and more, writing that having these tasks during the day gave her structure and accomplishment

(Gay 2020) that she hadn't been able to find due to the pandemic. From these different types of food she made, we can see that she accomplished something during this, as some food isn't difficult to make, but learning some of these foods listed, like croissants and some of the others, these are more advanced and require a lot of practice to get better. This use of cooking as something productive and useful aligns with the same things that were found in the *International Journal of Home Economics*, which mentioned that lots of households embraced cooking homemade meals as a way to be productive and also keep healthier eating habits during lockdown (Rathi 2022). In my experience, learning new recipes and improving my cooking skills mirrored Gay's experience of finding routine and comfort in cooking, even as the rest of the world seemed to be unpredictable and having no routine. Cooking provided me with a new way to keep myself busy and keep my mind engaged, and it was a way to distract myself from the restrictions in place, like not being able to see family and friends, as well as not being able to go anywhere in public with either of them. Learning new meals and getting better, some of my favorite things to cook were steak, pizza, pasta, as well as many other things. But in particular, I worked on perfecting my steak cooking abilities, through seasoning better, getting a perfect medium-rare, and perfecting it in as many ways as possible. This hobby was a great way for many people, and me, to find something meaningful and try to accomplish something in an otherwise unproductive time for many.

While cooking was something that kept me grounded during the pandemic, gaming was also something that I could use as an escape during the pandemic. For Gay, cooking was something she used as a distraction, it allowed her to focus on "clearly defined tasks and instructions" instead of focusing on the uncertainty and stress going on around the world (Gay 2020). In my experience, another thing as well as cooking that I did during my free

time, gaming was another hobby I was using, and it helped me find a way to stay entertained and also challenging myself, for example, games like GTA V Online was a great way to do this as it had lots of different missions and tasks you could complete, and this could be done with multiple friends which also meant it could be enjoyed together, as we weren't able to see each other in person for a while. Research from *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* shows how gaming took a massive rise during the pandemic as a way to help people feel connected and provided a social outlet for people to interact online while also giving people an escape from what was happening (Dimock 2021). Whether people were playing single-player games or playing online with friends, gaming was a vital part in getting people through a tough time and helped people psychologically handle quarantine.

Looking back at what happened during the pandemic with others, and comparing to my own experience, we can see that these hobbies were not just a way for people to pass the time, but a way for people to learn new skills, be more creative, and interact with other people online.

As mentioned in “Leisure activities and hobbies may provide helpful distraction and diversion and may help reduce stress and improve affect” (Taylor 2010), even though this is a source from way before the pandemic, it shows that new hobbies could help in stressful times even before. For me, cooking was something where I could continue to learn and achieve something, while gaming was a way to escape from reality and also do something with my friends and communicate online. As Gay suggests, while hobbies like this don't seem significant, it was a great way to help many of us get through and adapt to a tough time. For me, it also got me through and provided me with skills I can use for the rest of my life.

7 Steps to Prepare for Your Future Career

Axel Duclos

Are we prepared after the studies to find a job? After many years of studies, people get a degree which helps to find a job, but a majority of graduate students do not know exactly what work they want to do for their future. In fact, people held around 12 different jobs from their 18 to their 52, and half of them are between 18 and 24 (Parris). The text that I am going to summarize and respond to is a blog written by Jennifer Parris, who is a career writer, in the site FlexJobs. This blog is called “7 Steps to Prepare for Your Future Career” and was written on the 24th August 2020. This article was written to help young people to find their first job during the Covid-19 period. First, I am going to summarize this article, and then, I am going to discuss them. According to Jennifer Parris, the seven steps to prepare for your future career are to research growth trends, find potential employers, talk to other professionals, learn, consider volunteering, interning or part-time work, professional development, and evaluate our personnel brand, while I do not agree totally with them.

First, Jennifer Parris claims that the research growth trends may help to find a career trajectory by knowing what you need to do to grow up in the hierarchy. Then, she says that you need to find potential employers, even if you are not ready to apply, to know what secteur hire the most, who offers the options and benefits that you are looking for. Talking to other professionals may help to see what the life in this job looks like according to Parris. For her, learning about the job on social media, podcasts, blogs permit you to know the problems and the hot topics of the industry. She argues that volunteering, interning, or part-time work are a huge plus on a resume because it gives you experience, and permits you to know if you really want

to work in this field. Then, she suggests that professional development like completing a certification or earning a degree may be helpful or required for certain jobs. To finish, she believes that evaluating your personal brand means that you have to do the perfect resume as you can and know your skills, your strengths and your weaknesses.

When I read those advices, I agree with them but not entirely. First, I disagree with Parris' view that you should research the growth trends, because I think that it is not a good idea to research what you can do to grow up in the hierarchy of your work, because I think that is important to do step by step and to not project yourself in the future, especially when it is your first jobs. Then I agree that you should find potential employers, because my experience confirms it when I had called with coaches to get a scholarship in the colleges. Even if I was not interested in this university, I had a call with the coach and I got better and better. Indeed you can get an idea of the salary, the hours you will work, and I think she could add that doing interviews, even if you are not interested in the work, is a good idea because it will train you to be better in interviews for a job that you really want. Then, talking to other professionals is a good step because you will see the missions, the advantages, and the inconveniences of the job. I do not think that learning on social media, or podcasts is a good idea because many things are not true on social media, so it is not a reliable source. Then, volunteering, part time job, or interning is the best advice because it gives you experience, so you know the world of work, and employers are looking for people with experience. Yes, it is true that getting a degree is also good advice because without it, you may not do the job that you want to do. But it is expensive, and some people can not afford that, so it is good advice only if you can pay for it. To finish, knowing your strengths and weaknesses is a good step and a plus for your interview.

Not going back

Filippo Condruz

During the September 14th rally in Pennsylvania, Kamala Harris delivered her speech in front of a very hyped audience. This was the first speech after the viral debate she had with Donald Trump. The mood was very high and she took that to her advantage to expose the main points of her political plans: Bringing down the cost of living, investing in America's small businesses, reproductive freedom, national security. While also trying to let people understand that she's the best option for office rather than her opponent Donald Trump.

Kamala Harris opened her speech comparing her approach to make a change to Donald Trumps, then proceeded to expose the main points of her campaign. To do so she expressed how her values go against what Donald Trump is promoting. She reiterated the concept of "not going back" referring to Trump's statements. During the initial part of her speech It's very evident the effort of letting her audience perceive her optimism and faith towards the new generation of leaders. I liked the approach she had with this initial part of the speech because we can perceive her attention towards the younger generation and the importance she gives them when it comes to the future of the nation. This also led some young supporters to put up signs stating: "A new way forward", so I think that young voters really appreciate her support.

A very smart move and something that made her supporters nod in agreement, was sharing a little bit of her background and past experiences that let her achieve success and effective results. She talked about her experiences as an attorney general in California and how she was able to deliver 20 billion dollars to middle class families facing foreclosure.

Using the examples of her experiences as an attorney general Harris smoothly transitioned to the topic of national security. She kept recalling her background and her childhood experiences to express her appreciation for small businesses owners and the advantages she plans to give them.

Stating that small businesses owners are not just business leaders but also civic leaders. This is a point that in my opinion needs more emphasis because it shows how prepared Harris is and how her experience can make lots of people trust her more, so that's why I consider it a smart move, because it has actual facts for us to understand what she can bring to the table. But also shows the respect she has for the middle class and the small business owners.

To show everyone that she cares about people, she then puts an accent on how she's going to help families in need. Her plan includes helping families on everything, from health care to groceries. Another goal of hers is helping and supporting new parents with child tax credit. She then concluded by showing her intent to provide Americans with good paying jobs, not just for those with a college degree. Stating that as president, she will eliminate unnecessary degree requirements for federal jobs, increasing job opportunities for people without a four-year degree.

Kamala's perspective on American families is extremely useful because it sheds light on the difficult problems that families face everyday. Regarding the last statement about increasing job opportunities for people without a degree, I'm of to minds because on one hand this gives many opportunities for a lot o people to live a great life but on the other hand the risk is that getting a four year college degree will lose a little bit of his value and maybe people will tend to seak good paying jobs instead of education. But overall it is a great thing for people that for various reasons will not be able to attend any college.

She concluded her speech showing the risks of having Trump as the president of the United States talking about him giving benefits to rich people. But the main focus was on the Trump abortion ban. So she expressed her will to sustain reproductive freedom. Kamala Harris is surely right about her will to protect reproductive rights and with her concept of “Not going back”, to fight for freedom and especially the fundamental freedom of a woman to make decisions about her own body without government interference. The thing that makes me strongly disagree with her opponent Donald Trump, is the fact that more than twenty states have a Trump abortion ban and many, with no exception for rape or incest. I consider this immoral.

In Conclusion, I think that she had a pretty effective speech and she did a good job in her intent to prove to everyone listening that she’s the best option to become the president of the United States. Her perspective on the various topics she dealt with is encouraging and her faith and optimism are empowering.

Calm Anxiety with this Technique

Elena Sánchez Campos

This primary source is a two-minute video uploaded on Tik Tok by an account that uploads complete video clips about the mind. The username is @mentalidadseiko and they shared this video on networks on April 5, 2024. This video was titled “Calma la ansiedad con esta técnica” (“Calm Anxiety with this Technique”) and has reached more than 2.5 million views and almost one hundred and ten thousand likes. This video is a little fragment of an interview with Cristina Martinez. The complete video can be found on *Youtube* in the channel “*SegurCaixa Adeslas*”, where you will find it by the name of “ENTREVISTA COMPLETA - Herramientas para gestionar la ansiedad - CaixaBank Talks” (“FULL INTERVIEW - Tools to manage anxiety - CaixaBank Talks”).

However, in this essay, we are going to focus on the tiktok clip, which is a talk about anxiety. Although it begins by explaining a little bit about what anxiety is for the speaker, the real point of the video is the grounding technique that encourages us to practice when a person around us is suffering an anxiety attack. The target audience of this text is people who may be interested in learning more about how to manage anxiety, whether they experience it themselves, have loved ones who suffer from it, or want to understand how to react in anxiety crisis situations. It is also directed at those seeking practical and accessible tools to deal with these situations. While the goal of the video is to inform and educate about a specific technique to manage anxiety attacks, with the intention of educating and informing us on how to handle anxiety attacks. In terms of the angle, the focus is on offering a practical solution to confront anxiety. I find it a very useful video so that everyone can have a clear idea of how to deal with it. However, I believe the

video simplifies a complex issue. Although grounding techniques work for some people, anxiety manifests itself differently in each individual, and a two-minute clip cannot fully reflect all aspects of it. It would have been helpful if the video mentioned that, in some cases, it is necessary to get professional help in addition to these techniques.

The video begins with Martinez explaining what she perceives as anxiety. She begins by telling us that anxiety is the disease of control. For her, anxiety emerges when a person feels the need to have absolute control over their emotions, their environment and their reactions. She says, the more we try to exercise this control, the more we become slaves to uncertainty and, paradoxically, the more our anxiety increases. Her goal in speaking on this topic is to make people suffering from anxiety understand that anxiety is not an invincible enemy, but a state of mind that can be managed with the right tools. I partially agree with her perspective because anxiety tends to emerge from the need for control. However, anxiety is also influenced by external factors, such as trauma, genetics, and neurochemical disorders. Although her explanation makes her audience reflect, it runs the risk of oversimplifying a disorder that is deeply complex and varies from person to person.

In the second part, the interviewer asks Cristina how we could help a person with an anxiety attack, if it happens. To which Cristina answers that the first thing we should do when someone suffers an anxiety attack, is to provide an environment of calm and security. Anxiety can generate intense physical and emotional symptoms, such as palpitations, excessive sweating, difficulty breathing and catastrophic thoughts. As experts in mental health emphasize, although these sensations can be frightening, it is crucial to remember that they are not dangerous and that the fear of losing control is a cognitive distortion. Therefore, transmitting calmness and confidence is the first step in helping the person in crisis. While I agree with this, I think it is

easier said than done. If a person is experiencing a severe panic attack, it may not be enough to keep calm around them. People have different provoking factors, and what works for one may not necessarily work for another. Perhaps including alternative strategies for different types of anxiety responses would have made the video more comprehensive.

Then, she goes on to tell us that one of the most effective methods to handle an anxiety crisis is the grounding technique. This strategy involves reconnecting the person to the present through a progressive sensory exercise. A key strategy is to ask the person to dismount to feel the ground, which helps keep him or her grounded in the present moment. As she said, one of the most effective strategies is the 5-4-3-2-1 method, which involves identifying 5 things they can see, 4 they can touch, 3 they can hear, 2 they can smell, and 1 they can taste. This exercise interrupts anxious thoughts and helps regain emotional control. This exercise allows to interrupt the flood of anxious thoughts and return the focus to the immediate reality, helping the person to regain control of his emotional state. In addition, they can be combined with deep breathing exercises to enhance their calming effect. I find this method particularly interesting because it provides a concrete way to regain control during an anxiety crisis. However, it is important to recognize that this technique may not work for everyone. Some people may find it difficult to concentrate or follow the steps in the middle of an anxiety attack. It would have been helpful if the video included alternative exercises or emphasized the importance of adapting techniques based on individual needs. In addition, it would be valuable to discuss how these techniques can be integrated into daily life beyond times of crisis to help prevent the anxiety from becoming aggravated in the first place.

I wish I had known about these techniques earlier, because I once watched a close friend of mine suffer a severe anxiety attack, and I had no

idea how to help her. We were in a crowded place and suddenly she froze, her breathing became irregular, and she began to cry without control. At that moment, I panicked. I tried to calm her down by telling her to “calm down,” but I quickly realized that my words were not helpful. I felt impotent and frustrated because I wanted to help her, but I didn't know how. If I had known about grounding techniques, such as the 5-4-3-2-1 method, I could have helped her at that particular moment. Instead, all I could do was hold her hand and wait for her breathing to regulate itself. That experience made me realize how essential it is to become informed about anxiety and how to help someone who suffers from it.

The video ends by telling us that the moment we connect the person with the here and now, we get them out of that state of agitation. We reconnect them with the breath, we help them to calm their thoughts, and that anxiety crisis passes infinitely faster. I appreciate the hopeful tone of the conclusion, but I think it lacks acknowledgment that for some individuals, anxiety is a recurring struggle that requires continuous treatment. While grounding techniques are valuable, long-term strategies such as therapy, medication, and lifestyle changes also play a crucial role in managing anxiety.

With this video, from my point of view, they want to conclude that anxiety is a complex phenomenon that feeds on the need for control, but can be managed through various strategies. From grounding to deeper therapeutic methods, there are multiple ways to help those who suffer from anxiety. The essential thing to remember is that anxiety, while unpleasant, is not dangerous and that with the right support, people can learn to manage it and reduce its impact on daily life. While I appreciate the video's intention to educate and provide practical tools, I believe it oversimplifies a disorder that varies so much from person to person. Anxiety management is not a

one-size-fits-all approach, and while techniques such as grounding are helpful, they should be considered part of a larger strategy and not a stand-alone solution. The video is a good introduction to anxiety management, but would benefit from a more qualified discussion of the complexity of mental health and the importance of professional advice when needed.

A Response to "Sunday" on Whindersson Nunes' TikTok

Andrey Bastos

Whindersson Nunes, a comedian, talks about his private struggles behind the scenes in the video "Sunday." The post was made on November 3, 2024, and His message is clear: fame doesn't protect him from mental health issues, and the pressure of the fame can often have the opposite impact of what is supposed. In this essay, I'll discuss the main points of the film and provide my own interpretation of Whindersson's arguments. The key themes of Whindersson's message are that, with his reputation as a comedian, he confronts loneliness, despair, and the demands of celebrity. He talks about how much he misses his family and the good old days. He feels like something is always not present, even with all the wealth and success. Whindersson also discusses the value of being open and honest about mental health, adding out that while money can buy many things, it cannot buy happiness. He wants people to realize that all well-known people have difficult moments, and that such challenges can often be hidden behind smiles and the glamour of celebrity. Finally, he invites individuals to discuss their feelings more honestly because this is the only way to combat the prejudice associated with mental health.

I agree with Whindersson's initial argument that popularity can't protect a person from mental health issues. His open discussion of his depression is important since it's something that many people can identify with. He feels empty despite obtaining all the things society asserts a necessary for happiness—fame, riches, and success. This statement, in my opinion, is significant because it serves as a reminder that nothing can be solved by stuff. Because of Whindersson's honesty, I've come to understand that everyone fights internally, even those who appear to have it all.

I also agree with the author's different light about the loneliness that follows celebrity. He tells about how difficult it is to be far from his family and how much he misses them. I can identify with this since we often feel alone even when we are enveloped by people. Whindersson's realism on how fame could cause it more difficult to connect with others helps to dispel the urban legend that famous people lead ideal lives and are always content. Because it makes him accessible and human to his audience, I appreciate that he indicates this weakness. It's easy to forget that popular people have personal problems, and Whindersson's statements serve as an example to me of the need to show compassion and support over simply appreciating someone for their reputation.

Additionally, Whindersson's message gets me to reflect on how society defines mental health. I believe that, particularly in the area of celebrity, mental health worries are still frequently disregarded or ignored. Whindersson is strong in expressing his difficulties. He demonstrates that it's acceptable to share your vulnerability and emotions, and that doing so is a strength, not a weakness. Since society needs to grow, I 100% agree with this. Support to discuss mental health issues without anxiety about criticism or ridicule is necessary for a growing number of people. Whindersson's statement that money can buy many things but not happiness is among the video's most significant moments. While I had heard this before, it spoke to me when he stated it in his terms. It's simple to believe that everything would be ideal if you were richer, successful, or popular. Whindersson demonstrates that despite all, he still faces personal challenges. This, in my view, provides an essential signal that pleasure or peace of mind are not assured by success on the outside. It's an important lesson for everyone to remember.

In conclusion, I learned from Whindersson's film about how difficult celebrity can be, in particular terms of mental health. I believe that

his message of truth and transparency around loneliness, depression, and the pressures of celebrity is essential in the modern world. He shows everyone has challenges whatever how successful they appear to be. I support his message and believe it's critical that everyone, whether or not they are famous, have more honest discussions about their mental health. We should confront these problems head-on without let worry about rejection or cultural norms encouraging us.

Ritual and Violence: Dangers of Blind Obedience in “The Lottery”

Andrew Mittl

In Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery”, the story explores the danger of following tradition and using violence, but some critical analysis of the story simplify these themes too much. In particular, Arbitrary Condemnation and Sanctioned Violence in Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery” by Patrick Shields argues that the story shows societies blind obedience to outdated rituals and the use of violence in these rituals. Shields claims that, like the villagers who carry on with the ritualized killing, society too often enforces punishment without true regard for justice, swayed by biases of class, race, and tradition. However, after a close examination of “The Lottery”, the story shows weaknesses, and it isn't just blind conformity and just being violent for nothing. Although Shields sees the villagers lottery as a critique of capital punishment, blind obedience and violence, the undertones in Jackson’s characters and the ritual show more than just conformity, rather than a critique based on justice. By exploring Shields’ points and comparing them to moments in the lottery, we can see how the short stories’ themes go much further than Shields’ interpretation.

The first major claim by Shields is about how tradition clouds the villagers rational judgment, suggesting that the villagers conforming and participating in the lottery mirrors societies passive support for capital punishment. He describes the villagers carrying on the ritual “in a trance-like state”, simply because in the story Old Man Warner says “There’s always been a lottery”. However, this quote and the character is far from being mindless obedience, but rather it demonstrates a reluctant acceptance of the ritual's violence. For example, Mrs. Adams mentions that “some places have already quit lotteries”, suggesting that there are possibly other alternatives.

But instead of questioning the tradition, the villagers dismiss this claim, with Warner saying that abandoning the tradition would see them “go back to living in caves”. This response is not just blind obedience, but more a fear of change and the potential for less stability in the community. Shields' claims on ritual miss these points as Jacksons' story shows more fear of instability from the villagers, rather than blind acceptance.

Shields also argues about the selection process in capital punishment and the randomness of the lottery's victim. He suggests Tessie Hutchinson's random selection emphasizes how real world executions often rely on “variables unrelated to the act itself” with things like “race, gender, and class.” However, the death of Tessie in the story actually shows how cruel it is for communal conformity rather than random selection, as she herself initially supported the ritual, until she became the victim that was chosen. When Tessie says “It isn't fair, it isn't right,” she criticizes the lottery only when it affects her, showing her initial complicity to the ritual. Shields compares this to biased judicial practices, ignoring the collective responsibility of the villagers that Jackson is trying to portray. Tessie's last minute objection to the ritual and her fate mirrors how communities continue rituals as long as they can while they still personally benefit, a theme that Jackson uses through Tessie's hypocritical turn, rather than a critique of the randomness of the selection.

And for the last claim, Shields further suggests the meaning of the black box, suggesting it is a symbol of the outdated nature of capital punishment, noting that when Mr Summers suggests replacing the box, “it will upset the villagers because tradition is involved.” Shields sees that the villagers are attached to the box and it is indicative of the society's reluctance to move on from outdated traditions and systems. However, Jackson uses the black box not as a symbol of resistance to change, but to represent the fact

that humans are generally reluctant to question the ethical foundations of tradition. While Shields argues that the box is a representation of a broken system, Jackson's description of the villagers handling of the box implies that they are aware of its fragility, showing that they are knowingly continuing a failing institution. This isn't the same as the blind obedience that Shields suggests in the article, but more of a conscious, flawed decision to keep this ritual going. Therefore, Jackson's portrayal of the box suggests the villagers' accountability, rather than a simple aversion to change.

In "The Lottery". Shirley Jackson shows conformity, collective responsibility and the human capacity for cruelty, and showing a different meaning to what Shields critiqued, with his focus being on capital punishment. While Shields sees the villagers' obedience to ritual as a reflection of societies support for unjust systems, the narrative from Jackson suggests a much more complex issue with the morals within the communities. By portraying the characters who rationalize violence for the sake of keeping stability and avoiding change, Jackson wants readers to consider not only the dangers of outdated rituals, but the duty for people to question harmful practices, even if it benefits the majority of people. Shields' analysis therefore overlooks the deeper themes portrayed in "The Lottery".

From Letters to Words

Elena Sánchez Campos

Editor's Choice Winner

Javier and Esther, my grandparents, met at the Santa Clara high school in Santander, Cantabria, Spain. It was 1965, and they were both in baccalaureate. One day, in history class, the teacher matched them up to do a project on the Spanish War of Independence. The assignment was to research Santander's role in the conflict and submit a detailed report with references to newspapers of the time.

At first, they did not seem to have much in common. Javier was a reserved young man of few words, more interested in soccer than in books, while Esther was a passionate reader, fascinated by the novels of Miguel de Unamuno and the poems of Antonio Machado. Javier always preferred playing soccer with his friends to reading books, while Esther enjoyed reading much more. Her room was full of books, and she was often seen with a book in her hands. When they started working together on the project, their conversations focused only on homework. But little by little, Esther began to talk with great enthusiasm about the authors she liked, and Javier, although he didn't understand much about literature, began to notice something in the way she spoke. He liked the way her eyes lit up when she talked about a book or a character. Suddenly, Javier realized that he was beginning to pay more attention to Esther, not only to what she said, but to how she said it, to her gestures and the way she spoke with such passion.

One afternoon, after one of these meetings, Javier took a sheet of paper from his notebook and wrote her a short letter, asking her what other books she liked and whether she believed that literature could change the way a person saw the world. He didn't have the courage to give it to her in person,

so, the next day, he carefully folded it and slipped it between the pages of Esther's history book when she was distracted. To his surprise, that same afternoon he found a reply on her desk: a sheet of paper written in neat, elegant handwriting, where Esther told him of her love of literature and recommended Unamuno's "Niebla".

Thus began an exchange of letters that at first focused on books, but little by little became more personal. They talked about their dreams, their fears, their families, their good and bad days. They wrote in the mornings, at breaks, sometimes at home, and passed notes discreetly to each other in class or left them in strategic places for each other to find. Sometimes Javier would leave a letter on his desk, sometimes Esther would put a note in his history book. They felt comfortable sharing their thoughts through those letters. It was through those written words that a deep bond was born, a connection that went beyond friendship.

However, there came a time when written words were not enough. One day, after one of their meetings at the library, Javier decided to accompany her home. They walked together through the streets of Santander, by the sea, talking no longer with pen and paper, but with their own voices, looking into each other's eyes instead of imagining each other in the distance. It was a very special moment. They talked about simple things, like how the city had changed, what books they liked, or what worried them. As they walked through the streets of Santander, with the sound of the sea in the background, Javier began to feel something more for Esther. From that day on, although they continued to write letters to each other, they also began to spend more time together, taking long walks in the park or having a drink in a cafeteria in the square, where they spent hours talking.

When they finished high school, Javier decided to take up a military career, and that meant a change in their lives. For a time, distance separated

them. Javier was assigned to different cities in Spain, and was in the army for about six years. Although they could not see each other much, the letters never stopped coming. Even though they were far away, the letters kept their connection alive. Javier, even though he was in other cities, always looked forward to Esther's letters. He would tell her about his days, the things that were happening to him and the doubts he had about his future. Esther also felt the same way. Every letter she received made her feel that Javier was still close, even though he was far away. From time to time, she would walk around Santander, reading them, imagining that he was by her side. In each letter, Esther found not only news, but also the same affection as always, the same connection that had begun in the high school library.

Time passed, and although the distance could have cooled their relationship, the opposite happened. When Javier returned to Santander, he knew with certainty that he did not want a life without Esther. The years of separation, the crossed letters, had only made their relationship stronger. When they met again in Santander, it was as if time had not passed. They sat talking as before, sharing their thoughts and memories. They felt that the years of letters and distance had only reinforced their connection. Soon after, Javier asked Esther to marry him, and together they began a new period in their lives. They married and started a family, raising four children with the same passion for life that had always connected them. Their story, which began with a simple project in a high school library, turned into a love that lasted a lifetime, a love that grew and became stronger with the years, proving that sometimes the deepest connections begin in the most unexpected way.

My grandparents always tell me this story with great emotion and enthusiasm. My grandmother always tells me about how happy they were when they sent letters to each other and met in Santander, while my

grandfather tells me with love about those special moments they spent together, even though he was far away. Besides, I have been lucky enough to read some of those letters, and it really moves me to see how they expressed themselves with such tenderness and sincerity. I love to see the way they did it, because nowadays I think that letter writing is getting more and more lost.

Solutions to Unhealthy Food at Missouri Valley College

Axel Duclos

Unhealthy nutrition is an important issue in the United States, affecting millions of people, including athletes, and especially, college athletes. While athletes need balanced, healthy nutrition to support their demanding physical regimens, food insecurity and poor nutrition options on college campuses remain unsolved challenges. This essay focuses on malnutrition at Missouri Valley College, particularly among student-athletes, and explores how the staff of this college can improve the quality of

Although nutrition may seem to contribute just 1% to athletic performance, it deeply affects the remaining 99% by affecting factors such as sleep quality and training adaptation (Fleming, 2024). Moreover, research indicates that food insecurity is severely prevalent among college students. Brown et al. (2023) found that 23% of student-athletes experience food insecurity, which is a slightly lower rate than non-athlete students (32%), which represents one athlete out of four struggling with food insecurities, against one out of three for the non-athlete students. To solve this problem, first, I am going to explore the problems of unhealthy food, then I will explore the solutions that other people have already done, to finish by exposing my solutions.

Unhealthy food utilization poses short-term and long-term health problems. Junk food, often rich in fats, salts, and sugars, provides a short-term energy boost, but it quickly leads to tiredness and hunger (Si et al., 2022). This rapid digestion has many problems for the academic and athletic career of the student, because they become tired and hunger faster, which leads to a lack of energy and concentration, which can result in bad grades, or injuries.

Long-term utilization of unhealthy food aggravates health issues such as hypertension, which is a high blood pressure, and stroke, which is damage to the brain from reduced blood supply. Those diseases are linked to excessive cholesterol and sodium intake (Si et al., 2022). Additionally, junk food's addictive properties, because of the high amount of the hormone dopamine (hormone of happiness) released by the brain when eating this food, create cycles of overconsumption and poor health, because the body wants to feel this feeling again and again. These risks are especially problematic for student-athletes, whose bodies demand consistent, high-quality nutrition to perform optimally. Poor eating habits not only decrease their physical performance but also threaten their overall health and academic success.

For students dealing with food insecurity, the problems are even higher. Brown et al. (2023) found that students who experience food insecurity report higher stress levels and poorer academic performance compared to their healthy food consumers. Athletes, who already face significant time pressures from training and competitions, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of malnutrition, as it compromises their recovery and performance.

Economic factors often compound the challenges of accessing nutritious food. According to Li and Whitacre (2022), rural areas experience higher obesity rates due to limited access to healthy food options and lower economic growth. Missouri Valley College, which is situated in a rural area, faces similar challenges, as many students may rely on cost-effective but nutritionally poor food options. These limitations are aggravated by the cost of living, which is increasing, and especially for food, making it harder for college dining services to provide balanced meals without increasing significant expenses.

Moreover, unhealthy eating habits are often implanted early in life. Pope et al. (2023) highlight that barriers to healthy eating begin during childhood, particularly in underserved communities where access to healthy food is limited. These habits of unhealthy nutrition often continue in adulthood, creating a cycle of poor nutrition that is difficult to break, especially in adulthood. Colleges have a unique opportunity to help students by educating them about healthier eating habits and providing them with the tools and resources to make better choices.

Some colleges have successfully implemented initiatives to promote healthy eating and combat food insecurity. For example, the University of Missouri has adopted varied approaches to combat the issue. First, they have created cooking classes. Those classes teach students how to prepare healthy meals, like vegan dishes and international cuisine, which give them cooking skills, and habits for the rest of their lives. These classes also advance a sense of community and shared responsibility for nutrition, which has benefits on many points and on the long term, such as the health of the students, but also on the nature and the environment, because healthier food, like vegan food or bio food are better for the nature, pollute less.

Then, the work with local producers is a solution that this university is trying. The university has access to healthy and nutritious food because they work with local producers and farmers. They also support regional agriculture, get stronger links with their local community, and lower the pollution by working with the local producers. Moreover, this university created its own community gardens. These gardens allow students to grow their own vegetables, encouraging sustainable habits, creating a sense of community around those gardens, sensitize them to healthy agriculture and respect for the food, and increasing their access to healthy foods. Moreover, this creates a feeling of satisfaction when you eat the products that you

cultivated for a long time. These solutions illustrate how creative strategies can address food insecurity while attending healthier lifestyles on campus.

Missouri Valley College, being a college in the same state, with the same problem can adopt some of those strategies, but not all of those strategies because the facilities are not the same, and the finances neither, to improve student nutrition, particularly for athletes. First, Missouri Valley College can work with local producers, like the University of Missouri has already done.

Collaborating with local farms and suppliers can ensure a constant supply of fresh, high-quality produce, which may increase the cost of the foods, so the cost of the tuition for the students, but the benefits for student health and performance are more important than the expenses. Moreover, supporting local producers also helps the community to grow up and ensure stronger links for the future.

Then, the college can increase the availability of vegetables. Expanding vegetable offerings in dining halls is a straightforward but impactful change. Indeed, instead of exposing fries or pizzas everyday, the college can add the amount of vegetables, and not put them in the back of the dining hall. Many vegetables are missing, and some are just once every two weeks or every month, like aspergers, or cabbages. Vegetables provide essential nutrients that support athletic recovery and long-term health, so there should be more choice of vegetables for the students.

Then, the college can add classes or interventions on the problems of unhealthy food, and the solutions. Hosting classes or regular interventions about the importance of eating healthy food would educate both athletes and non-athletes. These sessions could involve professionals in this domain such as dietitians and local chefs, to emphasize the connection between nutrition, performance, and overall well-being.

Then, the college can augment dining hall options. Dining services should prioritize diverse, balanced meal options that procure different nutrition needs, including vegan and gluten-free diets. Investing in menu development and hiring skilled chefs could elevate the quality of meals served on campus. Moreover, the college could create an athlete specific meal plan. Athletes do not have the same nutritional requirements as non athletes. Creating different meal plans for athletes would address their unique nutritional requirements. These plans should focus on providing adequate proteins, complex carbohydrates, and healthy needs to optimize performance and recovery.

Improving nutrition on college campuses has benefits that extend beyond the immediate student population. Healthier eating habits reduce the long-term risk of important diseases, which in turn lowers healthcare costs like some heart or blood problems. Moreover, injecting these habits during college helps students transition into healthier lifestyles after graduation. Colleges have a responsibility to prioritize student well-being. Combat food insecurity and promote healthy eating not only supports academic and athletic success, but it also encourages a campus culture that values the health of the students.

In conclusion, healthy nutrition is a critical issue for college campuses. This problem affects one in four student-athletes and contributes to both immediate and long-term health challenges. Missouri Valley College can try to solve this problem by implementing innovative solutions, such as partnerships with local producers, increased vegetable offerings, community gardens, and athlete-specific meal plans. By prioritizing student nutrition, the college can reinforce student-athletes' performance, improve overall well-being, and set an example for the other colleges.

Essay #1: The Narrative Essay

Lucía Vizcaino

It has become common today to think that we become adults when we turn 18, or perhaps 21, depending on the country. While I agree with this from a legal perspective, I have always believed that our experiences are what truly shape us into adults, sometimes earlier or later than the legal age. In fact, I realized I had become an adult when I was just seventeen years old. To illustrate why I hold this belief, I will share the story of the moment I realized I had left childhood behind.

It was early morning when I woke up in Madrid, a city that wasn't mine, to catch a plane that would take me to a completely unknown country. My parents stood with me at the airport entrance, offering words of encouragement as I prepared to pass through security, fully aware that those moments would be the last we shared until December. Suddenly, leaving home felt much harder than I had anticipated. My family had gathered at the airport, all smiles and goodbyes, but I could see the worry in my mother's eyes as she hugged me tightly. 'Cuidate,' she had whispered, and in that moment, it hit me: from now on, I would be responsible for everything—my studies, my soccer, my life. There would be no one to pick me up if I stumbled, no safety net to catch me. I had been looking forward to this independence for so long, but as I stood there with my bags and boarding pass in hand, I felt the weight of it in a way I had not expected.

I finally had the courage to enter that huge airport alone, with my suitcases and a feeling of uncertainty that flooded my chest, even though my body felt overwhelmed and my legs trembling. But the excitement of fulfilling my dream of playing soccer and studying in the United States in my adolescence made me not pay too much attention to the worries and

problems at that moment, so I made my way through the crowd and managed to find the plane that would take me across the Atlantic Ocean.

Once inside, everything was quiet. I could sense the nervousness of the woman sitting next to me, who was biting her nails and moving her legs anxiously, the excitement of the child behind me for his smile and his kicks to my seat, and the sadness of the young woman who had just said goodbye to her family and friends as she prepared to return home. It fascinated me to think that all of us, sitting there and waiting for the plane to take off, had our own stories, our own aspirations, our own fears, and, above all, our own reasons for flying so many hours on August 1st. My nerves began to increase and I began to realize what was happening. But before I knew it, exhaustion overcame me, and I drifted off to sleep.

The noise of the plane's engines woke me up, and when I looked out the window there it was, I had finally arrived in the United States. Getting off the plane made me realize that maybe, that day I had become an adult. As I made my way through the airport, everything felt different. The accents, the fast-paced way people moved, the sheer size of the place, it all made me realize just how far from home I really was. I kept reminding myself that this was an opportunity of a lifetime. Studying in the U.S. and playing soccer at a collegiate level was a dream come true. But now that I was here, the reality of being on my own, in a foreign country, was more daunting than I had anticipated.

Navigating the airport was my first challenge. It sounds simple, but when you're alone in a massive, unfamiliar place, even the smallest tasks can feel overwhelming. I struggled to figure out where I was supposed to go. I was supposed to meet with my teammates at the exit of the airport, but it was a much more arduous task than I could imagine. For the first time, I realized there was no one to ask for help, no one to guide me through this. I

had to figure it out on my own. The realization that I was responsible for myself now, that no one else would solve my problems for me, was sobering. It was the first of many moments that day when I began to understand what it really meant to be an adult.

But just when I was beginning to feel the full weight of my new reality, a group of 15 girls appeared. They were the teammates I was looking for. Girls who, like me, had headed that first of August from different cities of Spain to the United States, but that, in most cases, was not the first time they did it. They greeted me with open arms at that daunting airport, and their presence made this transition to adulthood feel a little less overwhelming and a lot more enjoyable.

This experience taught me that adulthood isn't just about reaching a certain age; it's about facing new challenges, taking responsibility for yourself, and finding the strength to navigate the unknown. Although it's common to think that we become adults when we turn 18 or 21, I believe that our experiences are what truly shape us into adults, sometimes earlier, sometimes later. For me, that moment came when I was seventeen, just a month ago, standing in an airport, with all my dreams inside the suitcases.

“The Weight of Weariness in Lorraine Hansberry’s- A Raisin in the Sun”

Andrew Mittl

“Weariness has, in fact, won in this room. Everything has been polished, washed, sat on, used, scrubbed too often. All pretenses but living itself have long since vanished from the very atmosphere of this room.”

Hansberry (1186)

In Lorraine Hansberry’s “A Raisin in the Sun,” the play demonstrates the struggles of the family and what they have to go through in their daily lives. Their struggles are not only seen through the dialogue, but also described through their living space. In a short, yet powerful, passage, the room in this passage is used as a metaphor for the family's struggles and weariness. This passage highlights the sense of fatigue that has overtaken the family home and their emotional and physical struggles, the description of worn and overused shows the family’s hard work just to maintain the life they already have, and the room atmosphere mirrors the family’s emotional state and shows how life’s challenges have drained them.

The first conclusion is how the sense of fatigue and exhaustion has overtaken the family home, showing the emotional and physical toll it has taken on the family and their struggles. The use of the word “weariness” and how it has won in the room shows just how deeply tired the family is from their struggles. “Weariness” doesn't just mean fatigue here though; it is something that has conquered and overtaken the room and the people in the room. In this scenario, the room is also a representation of their environment and reflects this burden. The passage then goes on to say “polished, washed, sat on, used, scrubbed too often.” These words show that these objects have been worked on repeatedly, much like the actual family. Each of these words

shows a sense of overwork and continual effort, which still ultimately leads to depletion. All of this together and the sense of exhaustion shows that they don't get actual rest, but simply a brief pause in a continuing cycle of struggle and fatigue. In the last sentence, where it says "All pretenses but living itself have long since vanished from the very atmosphere of this room," the word "vanished" further shows how everything except for basic survival has gone away, with the atmosphere of the room taken over by the weight of life. As weariness is taking hold of the family, it shows that just basic living has drained the family of living their life, and the room mirrors the family's emotional state, where weariness isn't just about fatigue, but how deeply tired they are from their daily struggles in life.

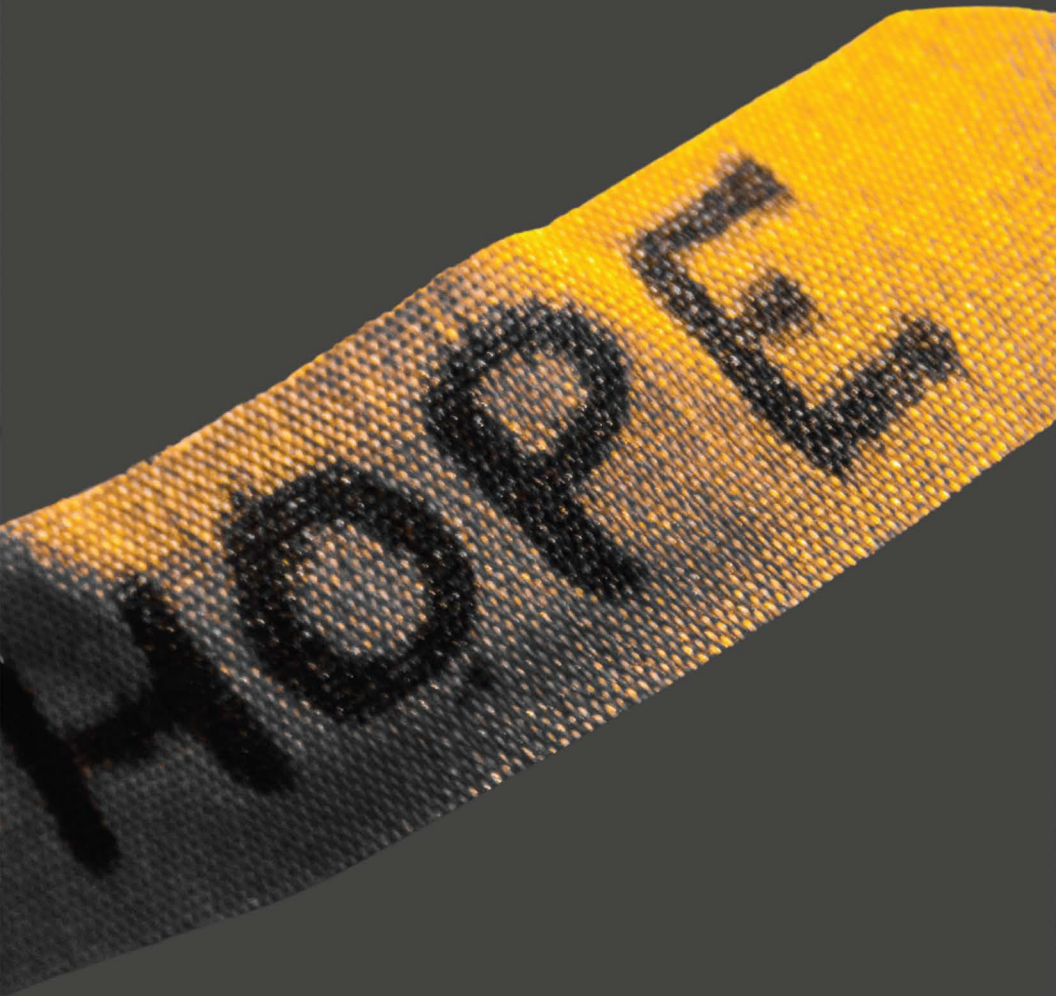
The next conclusion is how the family's work and efforts are reflected in worn objects. The use of words like "worn" and "overused" shows how hard the family worked just to keep what little they already have, and shows the toll that just basic survival has taken on the family, and takes away false ideas or beliefs they might have once had. Also, the repetition of "polished, washed, sat on, used, scrubbed too often" shows their daily challenge to maintain any order, but one that wears them down and tires them out, rather than lifting them. The phrase "scrubbed too often" also demonstrates that their hard work and efforts are not about their improvement, but rather just survival. Their actions are actions of necessity, and not their own choice, with all their efforts seeming increasingly pointless the more they keep going. Just as with the last conclusion, the room, which was once a symbol of hope for the family, has been reduced to weariness and fatigue. Everything in the room has been "used" or overused, similar to the way the family has been drained and overused by life's demands. The "vanished" word also implies that the dreams they once had have been slowly fading away due to the harsh circumstances and realities that they live in. The

room and objects in this passage have become a metaphor for how much the family has sacrificed and their hard work.

And for the last conclusion, the atmosphere of the room mirrors the family's emotional state. The room is used as a metaphor to emphasize the family's struggles, where their challenges have not only affected their surroundings, but their emotions as well. The phrase "weariness has won" demonstrates this struggle, while "weariness" stands for both their emotional and physical exhaustion. The verbs "polished, washed, sat on, used" don't just describe the room's condition, but also the family's existence of a constant effort that brings them little comfort and stability. The line "scrubbed too often" is also a sign that no matter their efforts, they still can't overcome the challenges of life's daily demands. Even the "atmosphere" shows this as the air itself shows the burden of their lifestyle and emotions. As "All pretenses but living itself have long since vanished from the very atmosphere of this room," the room feels like a place where all their dreams have slowly disappeared and faded away, leaving behind only what's required for survival. This passage it shows a picture of how the room is used to show that the family's emotional state and how life's daily challenges have emotionally drained them.

In conclusion, this passage from "A Raisin in the Sun" demonstrates how the weight of weariness has taken over the family's home, showing that they have been both physically and emotionally drained from the challenges of life. The use of worn and overused objects shows their efforts to just survive, while the atmosphere of the room mirrors the family's struggles. The use of wording in this passage by Hansberry is used well to demonstrate the family's battle to maintain just the basics of life, and this has left them drained and their dreams fading, therefore leaving them with only survival. The passage is just a small part of the play's larger themes of their survival,

resilience, and the toll of their dreams slowly going away.



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