



Snow White's Library

Sarah Allison

glide

Wright Memorial Public Library
Art & Literary Zine

In Celebration of Wright Memorial Public Library, founded 1939
and in Memory of Cecile Cary (1939-2018)



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Wright Memorial Public Library

1776 Far Hills Ave. Oakwood, OH 45419

wrightlibrary.org

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"If birds can glide for long periods of time, then... why can't I?"— Orville Wright

The idea of *glide* began as we anticipated the 80th anniversary of Wright Memorial Public Library on February 14, 2019. The community was invited to contribute poetry, prose, and artwork that was specific, though not limited to, Oakwood, Dayton, and Montgomery County. We were looking for images and ideas that celebrate and reflect on the many facets of life in the Miami Valley: past, present, and future. History, of course, would be a topic due to our rich local history, including former Oakwood residents and library namesakes, Orville and Katharine Wright. We encouraged exploration about what it means to be alive in 2019, as well as what the future might bring.

We were thrilled with the large and diverse number of responses from contributors and are pained that the budget did not allow us to include everyone's work in the *glide* print edition. We are thankful we were able to put many more of these excellent pieces into a special digital print edition *glide on*, available on the library's website.

We believe you will be moved, challenged, and surprised by the way these writers all push possibility and say, "why can't I?" and of course, "why can't you?"

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Cover: Sarah Allison, *Snow White's Library*

Near the White Oak Camp

my favorite forested path
 skirts the edgings of a former polo field
 now the back nine of a community course.
the old oaks and ashes still keep watch over
 their neighboring fairways.
 sometimes i see them leaning into each other
 bark scraping,
 branches intertwined
 like two old friends
 navigating an icy sidewalk.
the merest breeze has them chafe and sway,
 squeaking and rasping
 and murmuring old memories
 of that same sward
 whose divots were torn by pounding, digging hooves
 when the last century was newer
 than ours is now.
is it their creaking sounds i hear most days
 or the ghostly whispers
 of freshly oiled leather saddles
 and jangling reins and harnesses
 as the riders urge themselves,
 their steeds,
 their mallets
 towards the successful completion of the final chukka?

Robert J. Guizzo

Two Boys from Dayton

From Hawthorn Street to Hawthorn Hill
These brave brothers pioneered the way
Their steadfast feet, their iron will
Made aviation what it is today
There are no other brothers
Or siblings I can name
That can surpass the Wrights
And eclipse their storied fame
Just two boys from Dayton
Who dared to touch the sky
To soar among the heavens
To hope, to dream, to FLY

Mike Daugherty



Hats Off

Amy Dallis



Wright Brothers 2018

Paul Arnold



A Brief Detour

by Josh Bales

The newspaper landed on the desk with more gusto than Will had intended when he tossed it. It slid across the battered oak top just enough to bump the small *Flyer III* prototype model and send it tipping over the desk's edge. He heard the cheerful sound of the model fracturing into pieces as it hit the floor.

"Well," Orv said, from his desk across the room, "if that isn't an omen, then I don't know what is."

"Maybe we should just skip the *III* and go directly to the *IV*," Will said.

Orv emitted a small, sharp laugh. "Certainly couldn't hurt at this point." He went back to scribbling in the notebook in front of him.

The mood in the shop was grim. They had just spent a frustrating week at Huffman Prairie attempting to demonstrate their aeroplane for several newspapers. The wind, or rather the lack thereof, along with some mechanical issues meant the *Flyer II* wouldn't stay in the air for more than a few seconds. After several days, the newsmen gave up and began to leave. Orv, slightly more the optimist, tried to paint the renewed lack of media interest as a good thing. "It'll allow us to focus on our work, and keep competitors away," he'd remarked. But underneath that optimism Will knew his brother also worried that if they didn't make significant headway soon, one of those competitors would beat them to the punch and secure the lucrative government contracts first.

"I'm going out for a bit to clear my head," Will said. He grabbed his bicycle, a Van Cleve Special leaning against the shop wall, and walked it out the door. He left the *Flyer III* where it was.

#

The sun shone brightly, and the May morning air was crisp but did little to improve Will's spirit. He rode east on Third for about a half-mile, passing a few homes and businesses. He passed a few people on horses and wagon, and even two automobiles. One was an Imperial, he believed. Will crossed the Miami, then turned north to ride alongside it. He was riding aimlessly, lost in dark thoughts. Even though he'd meant it as a joke, maybe Orv was right that the demise of the *Flyer III* model was an omen. Since shuttering the bicycle shop the year before, their already meager research budget had become even tighter. Perhaps they should consider reopening the shop, he mused. It would mean less time spent on aeronautical research, but maybe that wasn't a bad thing.

The path veered east again and he crossed over Main Street. He resolved then to broach with Orv the subject of reopening their bicycle business. He was about to turn around when the world began to vibrate around him. It started small but very quickly felt like God himself was shaking the earth. An earthquake? No—he had never experienced an earthquake before, and this sensation felt vaguely, unpleasantly familiar. Then it clicked into place: the motor on the *Flyer I* beginning to fail and the craft shaking so hard around him that, to this day, he could still feel it in his teeth. His analysis stopped as the world tilted and he was thrown from the Van Cleve. The ground came rushing up towards him, and then—blackness.

#

When Will awoke the sun was no longer out, and it was hot and humid. Still groggy, he got to his feet and checked himself over for anything that felt broken. No broken bones, just many bruises.

He looked around to see if anyone else was harmed. (And also, admittedly, to see if anyone had witnessed his fall.) Two things became quickly apparent. One, no one was within his immediate surroundings. And two: something was very *wrong*.

Dayton's modest skyline had changed.

The familiar spire of Steele High School was not where it should have been. In its place stood a much taller building, one of glass and steel, curved on one end. In front of him was a large white structure overhanging what appeared to be a pavilion. It had not been there five minutes ago. A number of other buildings that should have been there were not, replaced by structures that were larger or just unfamiliar.

Shaken, Will picked up the Van Cleve and wheeled it up a grassy embankment towards the pavilion. He needed to figure out what had happened. Was this some sort of hallucination? Or was he dead, and in some bizarre Heaven or Hell?

He paused to take in the bridge stretching across the Miami. A handful of automobiles were traveling back and forth across it. What struck him was just how *different* these motor cars were. They were larger and sleeker, more colorful, and made the ones with which he was familiar look boxy and drab. Then he caught sight of something even more alien—a monstrously large concrete bridge in the distance, upon which many more automobiles operated, many going alarmingly fast. And they were so *loud*.

He continued his way up the embankment, focusing on the ground a hundred feet ahead, trying to shut out the noise and calm his breathing. The hot air was sticky. He undid the top button of his shirt as he walked.

The structure with the large white covering was indeed a pavilion. The concrete floor was empty but for a few small green tables scattered about. One table at the other end was occupied by a lone figure. Will assumed it was a human. Probably. He was not certain of much at this point. He veered away from the

probable human and followed a path that led him past several small reflecting pools. Verdant greens and brightly colored blooms surrounded him.

The path opened onto a plaza made of red brick. More of the green tables were here, a few of which were occupied by figures recognizably human, even if their manner of dress was strange. A street ran in front of the plaza. Will assumed it was Monument Avenue. More automobiles sped recklessly down it.

At one of the tables, a man in a jacket and tie was seated, reading a newspaper. Perhaps this fellow would be able to help him suss out how he'd fallen off of his bicycle and into another time. Will had read the works of H.G. Wells, and was also not an idiot. Somehow inadvertently following in the footsteps of Wells' Time Traveler seemed the most reasonable, if not insane, explanation at this point.

As he reached the man, Will caught sight of an object across Monument and froze, saying nothing.

After a long moment the man, sounding slightly bewildered, said, "Uh, can I help you?"

Will heard the man, but did not respond. He wheeled the Van Cleve across Monument, eyes still fixed across the street. The tires of an automobile squealed, emitting a loud shriek, as it came to an abrupt stop. Like an angry bird, Will noted, distantly. He reached the other side of the road, and gently set the Van Cleve on the ground.

Towering above him was a full-scale sculpture of the *Flyer*. His and Orv's Flyer.

Will let out the breath he hadn't realized he'd been holding, and gulped in lungfuls of air.

He walked underneath the sculpture, craning his neck to get a better look. His critical eye observed a couple of differences from the *Flyer II*. The rudder and elevator were much bigger, and appeared to be set back farther from the wings. These were things he and Orv had been experimenting with, theorizing that they would drastically increase the aeroplane's stability. Unbelievable, he thought.

At the base of the sculpture was a small tile. The hair on his arms prickled as he read the words engraved on the tile:

1905

Wright Flyer

They'd done it. Or, rather, they *would* do it, next year. On a low wall that partially wrapped around the sculpture, were etched the words "1905 Wright Flyer III."

Feeling somewhat lightheaded, he leaned on a statue of a bronze figure running alongside the *Flyer III*. Will peered at the statue's face and recognized his brother, mustache and all.

"Are you okay?" a voice asked from behind him. Will turned and saw a young woman regarding him somewhat warily. She was short, with dark brown hair that melted into orange at the ends.

"I am, yes. Just, uh, feeling a little dizzy. It'll pass."

"Is that your bike?" She gestured towards the Van Cleve.

"It is."

"I like it. Where did you get it?"

Will let out a short laugh. "The answer to that question is surprisingly complicated. You see, I—" He stopped mid-sentence, distracted by an object in the sky. "My God."

It was barely visible, a small dot moving northward across the sky, but he knew what it was. Given the craft's altitude while still being visible, it must have been huge.

"Yep, that's an airplane," said the girl, sounding bemused. "Never see those around here."

He took a few steps forward to track the aeroplane as it quickly receded into the distance. He glanced back at the girl, quirked an eyebrow. "Is that sarcasm or—"

The girl's eyes were wide, her mouth moving. Will turned and saw one of those sleek and large automobiles, twenty feet away, rushing towards him. He realized, belatedly, that he was standing in the street.

Abruptly the world began to shake violently, the ground tilting. Will's eyes involuntarily closed. He could feel the auto's presence inches away. He—

#

—waited, bowels clenched, but the impending pulverization did not happen. His eyes blinked open. An older man with a bushy mustache was staring down at him, looking both concerned and angry. Will realized he was on his back, on the ground.

"You need to watch where you're going, fellow," the man said around his mustache. "You could've damaged my auto."

Will gingerly got to his feet. The Van Cleve was next to the Imperial that he'd seen—when, an hour ago? A lifetime ago?

"You rode that damned bicycle right in front of me."

He was back where he'd started, by the river. The sky was cloudless once more. The town was back to the way he knew well.

Muttering an apology to the man, Will mounted the Van Cleve. The frame was slightly bent, but it still rode fine. Well, mostly.

#

Later, Will would not remember the bumpy ride back to the shop. The bizarre trip furiously replayed in his mind. That he'd cracked his skull on the ground and experienced a hallucination was the most likely scenario, but he couldn't wrap his brain around the shaking and tilting aspect. Ultimately, it didn't matter. Even if it had happened, no one would believe him. Will didn't relish spending the rest of his days in an asylum, so he told no one. Not even Orv.

At the shop, his brother was still seated at his desk. "Good God, man," Orv said, standing. "Are you okay? You look like you went a round with Joey Gans."

"I'm fine. Just fell off my bicycle." Will eyed the empty corner of his desk. He walked to where the pitiful wreckage of the *Flyer III* model lay, picked up the pieces, and set them on the desk.

Orv laughed. "Better falling off a bicycle, I reckon, than some version of that."

Will looked at the bits of wood in his hand and saw the possibilities. "We can do this," he murmured. He looked up at Orv. "Let's get back to work."

Neon Movies

Walking into the place I thought that I'd never get there.
Not that I wouldn't find it, I knew well where it was
I'd already driven by the place like three or four times
And something inside thought "that might be a safe haven."
So, finally, finally, I got in the car
And headed South on Interstate I-75.
No distractions, just me and my thinking thoughts,
Headed toward the one place I've ever fully felt at home.
The rich brilliance of the technicolored world.
I soon stood, ticket in hand, waiting in the lobby.
Soaking it all in, the little round tables and chairs
The buttery smells, the white yellow popping
Sound of the soda machine clicking on and off.
Waiting to hear the magic words, You May Enter.
Please find your seats, your movie will soon begin.

Samuel Huntington

Haiku

Information is fickle
But wisdom endures
For eighty years; Wright?

Susan Iwinski

The Tree Tower at Cox Arboretum

We mount the curving staircase to the sky.
Like its creators we can dare to dream.
Ascending into air, we climb so high
that all of nature's art becomes our theme.

We view the garden from majestic heights.
Like birds we can look down upon the world.
As we admire the grove of pines, such sights,
such beauties are before our eyes unfurled.

We are exposed to life forms, landscapes, flowers.
From this perspective we are free to see.
Our observation now improves its powers:
the Arboretum grows just like a tree!

The tower's gift resides in its long views,
in hours spent while heeding Nature's muse.

Betsy Hughes

This Really Happened

Mary won first prize in the school contest
for a poem about her best friend.

The runner up was Richard
for his personification of trees.

Charlie, who submitted an obscure poem
by William Wordsworth, came in third!

David Lee Garrison

Reflective Sabatini
ate macaroni
as the typhoons of Singapore
cleaved ballroom floors
and forty-four trinkets
drank saki and rye
when the splendid asparagus
danced the hocus pocus
and the grasshopper's toothbrush
combed Yoda's fair hair.

Pete Mitas

Commas

I'm never sure of the proper placement
of commas in sonnets. But they tell me
they go in the middle of a statement,
where pauses for breath might naturally be.
It sounds very easy, I think again.
I'm sure I can follow this simple rule,
composing without grammatical strain,
or appearing like a sophomoric fool.
But then my editor reads every line,
responding with marks and commas in red,
as if her breathing is different than mine,
leading me to believe I've been misled.

In order to avoid these offenses,
henceforth I will use shorter sentences.

Gerald Greene

Really stuffed
the piñata skipped desert
as Willy's wombat
threw its womb at
the tomb of
the unsharpened pencil
and the palindromic butler
lurched through the fog
— as the Sasquatch
lay bleeding in the snow.

Pete Mitas



Fields of Gold

Tariq Shaikh



Sunset Over the Great Miami River

Jerry Allison

Morning Commute

They find a young black bear in Boardman, Ohio,
pick up another in Youngstown the same week.

The woman slips into her car at dawn
as she does every day.
She has not heard the news.

What she sees is the glare of a bumper,
twin tail lights — fiery red,
reflection of sunrise she falls behind
As she heads past six stoplights,
past a Wendy's and Best Buy
and the large Kroger Supermarket that just went up.

But just beyond the horizon, hovering there,
are miles of forest — tall oaks blocking the sun,
coolness of waterfalls from overhanging cliffs,
ferns and columbines the bears like to brush against
as they head out to morning forage.

The woman keeps her eyes on the road,
the steely glint only inches away.
Beneath the overpass, in the concrete drainage ditch,
a blue heron listens to the cars passing by,
then with the long S-curve of his neck,
he cocks his head and ever so slowly
raises his closed beak.

Kathy B. Austin

Offering

My morning walk presents an offering:
Tucked among a thicket of copper leaves
Rests a single buckeye, round and smooth, with
A pale heart etched upon its chestnut skin.
I pick it up and hold it in my hands,
Amazed that such a wonder can be found
In the mud and muck of the woodland path.
But isn't that the mystery of grace?
How we are broken open by small things
And laid bare for the world to do its work
Of forming us into a better shape.
In faith, I press the buckeye's heart to mine
And wish for you a blessing, knowing this:
It is a gift to love and to be loved.

Amy Dallis

Touching Things

by Bill Vernon

My house is the earliest built on my street: 1929. The building's stucco is therefore a constant problem, with cracks and bulges patched and finished so many times in unmatchable patterns, it now resembles an awkward quilt. A blown-up aerial photograph once covering a whole wall in a branch bank a mile away on Far Hills Avenue showed the house sitting alone with countryside extending around from just west of it nearly two miles to the east. There were green pastures and planted fields all the way to Gentile Air Base, a supply depot over on Wilmington Pike, so my house was the only human habitation in the grand panorama. (Four miles away from Gentile, Wright Patterson Air Force Base researched and developed aerial photography, beginning in the 1st World War, but I don't know if my picture was an AF product.)

I once stood before that bank's line of tellers until I thought they must be suspicious of me, staring up at that picture like a man planning a financial withdrawal by force. I was in fact trying to steal the past from the images, but failing. Bernie, who built his house in 1930 across the street from mine, told me that for many years he'd walk his German shepherd all the way through those pictured fields and farther, then back. "There were footpaths," he said.

Now he's gone, his dogs are gone, the picture's gone, and I can only imagine what living here then must have been like. Of course the fields now are all built up. Streets lined mostly with houses intersect across the terrain in a tight grid. For decades, a railway line not in the picture ran diagonally through it all. Now a paved bike trail replaces those rails and ties. I've walked the area several times all the way to and through the Gentile base. Its land and a few of its buildings are now part of a city of Kettering business and housing development. The way there from here is crooked, broken, and frankly, if you stay on the main streets and let the traffic interfere with your musings, ugly.

My house is, of course, not very old compared to others in the Dayton, Ohio region, but who needs a clay-caulked log cabin to recognize longevity? I hear these walls, floors, and frame creaking and think of more than the repairs I need to do. For hours every day, this place fits around me like rocky armor, as if I'm inside a cave, and the atmosphere of the rooms I spend the most time in wrap around me like warm, extra skins. The tats I've needled onto their surfaces vary, producing an odd mixture of family, geographic, and Francophile nostalgia: color posters of cafes, Paris sites, painterly reproductions, landscapes, animal and human portraits.

Presumably, this mixture reflects my taste, values, and jumbled thoughts. Thinking too much, certainly not as clearly as possible, I tend to go dreamy or anxious and lose touch. Therefore, I leave the house and hike to rectify that, to maintain a kind of sanity beyond the self-indulgence that sometimes provokes buying, eating, passing time, hanging images on walls, improving the house in general, or talking. My home, in other words, expresses and imitates something I think of as mind. What anchors together that floating arrangement of ethereal matter is the real world, by which I mean what exists beyond myself.

That's a large part of the mooring that keeps me balanced. Thus, a serious case of cabin fever drives me from the house every day, copying the practice of my long buried neighbor and his dog without uttering anything like the German songs or poetry Bernie liked to bellow in the healthy open air. Rather than listening to my own voice, I prefer to hear the call of cars, birds, dogs, horns, whatever. Their noise is part of my immersion into existence-not-myself.

What touches me first after locking the door behind me and walking off the porch, often before exiting the driveway, is immensity. How the land and air and sky spread off farther than I can see. How, as I turn off my street onto Hathaway and head south, new things and changes appear although everything's very familiar. I'm also conscious of how my city surrounds me although I can't see its ends, and of how many similar cities spread out from here and surround it. The subdued roar way off on the edges of my hearing suggests the combined hum of industry, of running motors, of people doing, of irrepressible activity.

In other words, before I go the one block to Beverley Drive, before I pass my old friend the black mutt that always barks warning and wags his tail in welcome, I feel hope. My feelings shift toward a positive mode.

Likewise, the smells of pines, the earth dug up in 93-year-old neighbor Hank's flower bed, the wet, sweetly decaying leaves in the gutters overwhelm the relatively sanitized air remaining in my lungs from the house. Richness and possibility are at hand. Underfoot, the tar of the street and the concrete of the sidewalk solidly propel me forward. There is substance here and security, a community that takes care of itself, even someone like me, alone on the street just passing through after the short stay fortune will allow me.

By the time I pass Hawthorn Hill, the Orville Wright mansion/museum, I'm touching things more deliberately. It's chilly out, 30 degrees, but I've shed my gloves in favor of balling my fingers beneath the long sleeves of a sweater for warmth. That allows me to unsheathe my hands whenever I want in order to reach out and feel things with my bare skin. At Dixon and Harmon it's a metal pole supporting a street light. The smooth green surface slides beneath my fingers and chills them so they retreat like startled turtles back under the sleeves. A block farther my right palm drags over the rough bark of a burr oak slowly enough to let me feel the silken pattern of moss in its grooves.

So my walk goes, picking a leaf off a stem now and then, squeezing it between my fingers, crushing it if it's brittle, feeling its tensile texture and shape if it's vibrant enough to hold together. Where blooms of lavender linger near the sidewalk, I strip off a few by running my thumb and two fingers up a stem, rub the blooms together, then bring their remaining faint aroma up beneath my nose. In season I like to pick up new walnuts and scratch their green husks to smell their tangy scent. These pleasant smells remind me of childhood experiences. Fully grown buckeyes still in their jackets provide missiles I throw at tree trunks, the way the pitcher I once was hurled baseballs toward his brother's mitt.

Knuckle-banging metal pipes, though, is how I most often mark my trip through the day. The practice is like recognizing that part of the world is a percussion instrument. Gently tapped, the keys my knuckles find answer with song. Sign or fence post, light pole, exhaust pipe for something that needs release from underground, the greater in diameter the deeper the tone, pong, dong, and ding they respond.

The circle out from home curves through several neighborhoods and an Olmsted brothers-designed park, passes contiguous holes on two different golf courses, and returns me back onto my street. I pick my way the whole six miles, fondling, picking up, examining, discarding, brushing aside, bumping into and off of, learning again that the world has substance and I do too. My fingertips, a bit more abraded and dirty than when I started, tell me that I've been somewhere, done something, experienced real things, and expressed in a physical way the tenderness I feel for the things that life allows me to touch. Or the things that touch me.

Then I'm unlocking my door and going back inside my home. It is my point of departure, the place where I start and finish, the brain inside the skull, the soul inside the body.

Winter in the Library

Ten degrees outside,
homeless people in the library.
The minute hand of the clock
drops like a guillotine
and the front door opens,
letting waves of night roll in.
Readers shudder, feeling as fragile
as the pages they turn.

At the information desk
a librarian listens to a woman
who has written a book of poems
and wants to know
how to get it published, soon,
as she is in her eighties.
The first few snowflakes
thud softly against the windows.

David Lee Garrison

Credo

Inspired by Walt Whitman

God's presence in the world is manifest
in every blade of grass — the here and now.
With radiance in daily life we're blessed,
divinity endowed in us somehow.
It is outside our selves in nature's sight,
direct and vivid, beautiful and true;
it is inside our selves in inner light,
afflatus, holy breath, which surges through
creative, vital marrow. Yes, such grace
is in the present moment, growing green
and democratic in its every place,
where poems of all the people we can glean.
While leaves of grass are blowing without fear,
our liberty will never disappear.

Betsy Hughes

Librarians

Yesteryear

The library was quiet when I sneezed,
with gusto from the dusty book I held.
The person at the desk did not look pleased,
and made me fear I might be soon expelled.
I felt it coming when it was too late
to grab a tissue or to use my sleeve,
as nature overcame I couldn't wait,
or stop this mighty, blasted, nasty sneeze.
The problem is I've done this thing before,
and so you'd think I'd always be prepared
with tissue to prevent what they abhor,
avoiding steely looks that make me scared.
Librarians have rules about this place,
and vigilantly guard such sacred space.

This year

The library was quiet when I sneezed,
and no one seemed to hear or even care,
which made me feel much better if not pleased,
as friendly rules supplant what once was there.
I felt it coming like a mighty blast,
and failed to cover mouth and nose in time,
because it came upon me very fast.
I'm glad that it's no longer called a crime.
Embarrassing as this thing was to me,
it's not the first time I have sneezed like this,
but now the library is more carefree,
and noise like mine no longer seems amiss.
Such sound is tolerated and okay.
Librarians are friendlier today.

Gerald Greene

160 Years at Wright Library

by Anthony Wenzler

As I celebrate my 80th birthday today on February 14th 1939, the new Wright Memorial Public Library has asked me to describe my life over the years. What comes to mind are all the changes I have witnessed in this great country and in my hometown of Dayton, Ohio. What a magnificent time to be alive! When in history has one person witnessed so many advances in science, transportation, machinery and technology in just 80 short years?

I can remember buying our first bicycle from the Wright brothers bicycle shop. These two sons of Dayton, for which this library received its name, also brought us the airplane, giving us the opportunity to explore the skies and obtain heights and speeds never thought imaginable before. Sadly, Wilbur Wright died too soon to see this library, or all the great things that are possible because of their invention. Their airplane not only helped end The Great War, it brings our mail from New York to San Francisco overnight. Just a little over ten years ago, Charles Lindbergh was the first to fly alone across the Atlantic Ocean. Two short years ago, we lost Amelia Earhart as she was attempting to be the first female to fly around the world. Because of Wilbur and Orville, and other great pioneers like Lindbergh, Post, Hughes and Earhart, the sky is the limit for what airplanes can do for humanity.

Transportation has changed in many other ways in my lifetime. Way into my forties, we used horses for transportation and labor for both businesses and farming. My father would plow the fields with a team of two horses from sunup to sundown. Tractors can do it three times faster now. Thanks to Dayton's Charles Kettering and his electric starter, we now drive cars, trucks, tractors and ride on public buses. Trains are still a favorite way to travel, though the steam locomotive is being replaced by the faster and more reliable diesel locomotive, modernizing our most reliable form of travel.

When I was young, we relied on candles for light in our house and on gas for our streetlights. Now, we have the luxury of electricity in our homes and to light our streets. I used to buy a block of ice each week to keep our food from spoiling, but now electricity gives us the convenience of an iceless icebox from Frigidaire that was made right here in Dayton. Earlier in my life, we cooked our food on a wood stove. My wife carried our carpets outside and beat them with a round metal wire to get the dirt out, and washed our clothes in a barrel with a washboard. Electricity has brought us the convenience of electric stoves, washing machines, irons and vacuum cleaners. Electric saws, drills and gas powered lawnmowers replaced the hand drill and push mower. Farms that are too remote to get electricity, like Centerville or Springboro, can rely on their Delco Light Generator, again brought to us by Mr. Kettering. I'm sure if you ask a librarian in this great new library they will have a copy of the January 1933 *Time Magazine* with Mr. Kettering on the cover.

Thanks to another great Dayton company, NCR, we have the modern cash register. No longer do we have to be great mathematicians to work behind the counter at the neighborhood grocery store. The modern cash register tracks and holds secure the daily sales. To imagine such a complex machine 60 years ago was unheard of! A pad of paper and pencil kept track of sales back then.

There was a time I had to go to the corner or down to the neighborhood store to get the news. My only entertainment at home was to read a book or tell stories. Now the radio brings news, weather and entertainment right into our living room every night. It is now possible to contact people from all around the

world and gather news faster than ever before right in my own home. Going to the movies was unheard of at the turn of the century. In just the past twelve years, talkies have come to the theaters. Now we cannot only see our favorite actors, actresses and the train that rushes by when our hero saves the damsel in distress, but we can also hear them.

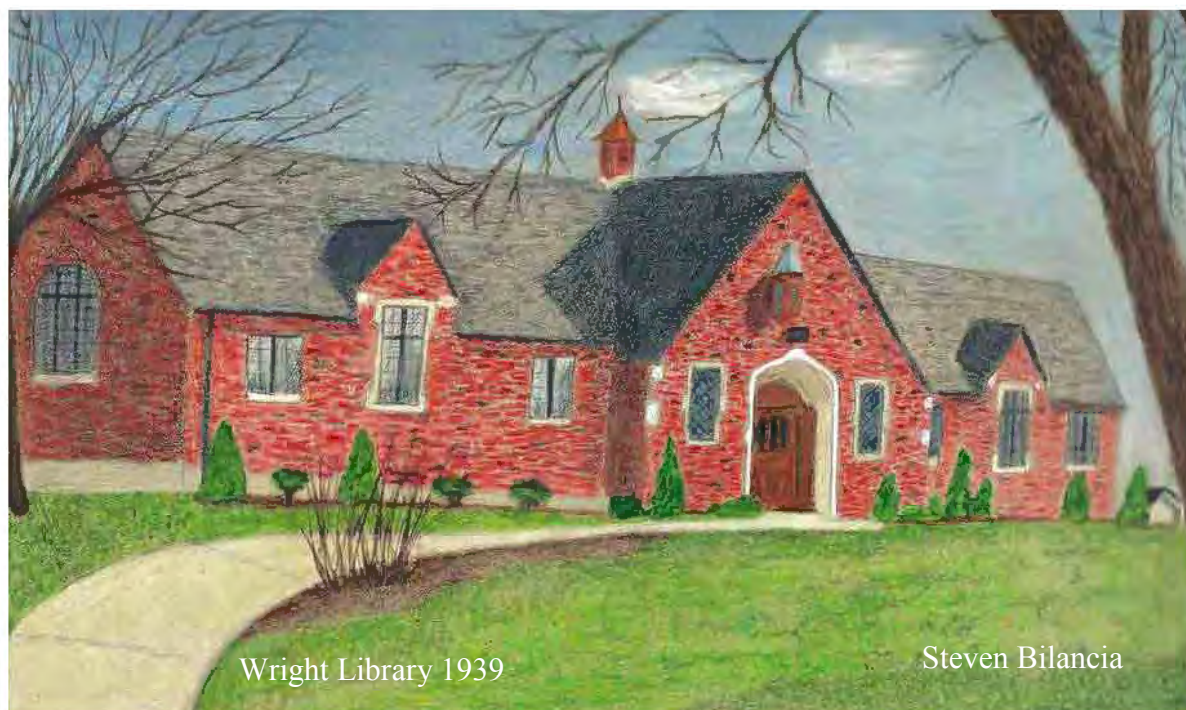
The folks at the library asked for my thoughts on the next 80 years, and what I think might be in store for us. It is hard to think of moving farther than we already have, but I will try. We have done so much in such a small amount of time. Some recent inventions that I have read about seem to have no future: the FM radio and television seem unnecessary and unmarketable. We already have AM radio. I do not see the need for FM unless it is used for strictly news and weather. The television is just a novelty. We already watch movies on the large screen and listen to our favorite shows on the radio. I cannot imagine sitting and looking at a small screen for any length of time.

I think airplanes are the future and in the next 80 years, our cars will be able to fly, leaving the roads less congested. We won't have to worry about road conditions or traffic jams. With our cars being able to fly and roads being elevated, our buildings will become taller, towering even higher than the Empire State Building. Apartments in the sky will replace the single family home.

The jet engine, though fascinating, seems highly impractical. To fly an airplane over 300 miles per hour is preposterous and unnecessary; we already can fly coast to coast in under 16 hours. How safe would it be with airplanes flying that fast all over the skies? Could an airplane and its pilot survive going that fast?

Because of lessons learned from the Great Depression, government projects like the Hoover Dam, this new library and introduction of Social Security, poverty will become nonexistent by the turn of the next century. Dayton will continue to grow over the next 80 years, becoming the largest city in the State of Ohio due to the growth of new businesses and already established businesses like NCR, Frigidaire and Delco, to name a few.

It would take longer than my 80 years to list all of the great things that been invented in my lifetime. Truly, 1939 is a great time to be alive.



Wright Library 1939

Steven Bilancia

The Man Who Sent Wilbur on the Wright Path

by Sara Kaushal

If any fact is known about Dayton, it's that Wilbur and Orville Wright created their heavier-than-air Flying Machine in Dayton, Ohio. What many don't know, is that it almost didn't happen.

Wilbur had set his sights on Yale. A star athlete in football, skating, and gymnastics, Wilbur intended to leave Dayton behind. It was playing sports in the Winter of 1886 that changed the course of history for Wilbur and the future of flight.

During a game of "shinny" (an informal street hockey game) with the kids in the area, eighteen-year-old Wilbur was smashed in the face with a hockey stick by neighborhood bully, Oliver Crook Haugh. The impact knocked out most of his upper front teeth and Wilbur had to be fitted with false teeth as a result. Wilbur suffered intense pain in his face and jaw and subsequently experienced digestive issues, heart palpitations, and severe bouts of depression. It is not known for sure if the incident was intentional or accidental, but Milton Wright, Wilbur's father, wrote in his diary that young Oliver "never was without the wish to inflict pain or at least discomfort on others."

Wilbur recovered slowly, over the course of seven years. For weeks after the incident, Wilbur withdrew from normal activities and socializing, worrying his family deeply. As he started to improve, he spent the next three years avidly reading and studying. Although Yale was never mentioned again, Wilbur continued to educate himself and became interested in flight. For the Wright Brothers, the rest is written in history.

Oliver's life, however, took a different route.

Starting with a dependence on cocaine toothache drops for his rotting teeth, Oliver soon became addicted to drugs and alcohol and spent time in the Dayton Asylum for the Insane. The first time Oliver was suspected of murder was in 1891 when his fiancée's father died under suspicious circumstances. A link could not be proven in the murder, and Oliver was never charged. Oliver studied medicine and became a doctor, opening a practice two years later. He eventually had to shut down his practice due to the suspicious and untimely deaths of some of his patients. Facing severe financial troubles, Oliver is reputed to have married several women for their money, many of whom then died under suspicious circumstances. It is assumed that Oliver used drugs to control the women he later killed.

It is estimated that Oliver killed over thirty people in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana and was even suspected of being the Cincinnati Strangler for a short period of time. Of all those murders, it was his last three victims that caught up to him. In November of 1905, Oliver learned that his parents had cut him out of the will. Furious, he threatened to kill them if they didn't put him back in the will. In the early hours of November 5, 1905, a fire broke out in the Haugh house. Oliver ran to the neighbors for help. Precious time was wasted as Oliver gave conflicting information about his family and their whereabouts. Were they in the house or not?

Unfortunately for the Haugh family, they succumbed to the fire. After investigation, it was learned that Oliver bought large quantities of oil before the fire, along with a bulk order of hyoscine. Haugh had been taking small doses of hyoscine during his last stint in an asylum. In small doses, hyoscine was part of his treatment for addiction. In large doses, hyoscine had a paralyzing effect. Did Oliver drug his family and set the fire?

Oliver pled not guilty to the crime on the same day his family was laid to rest. They were laid together in a single casket because there were so few remains left. Despite the evidence against him, Oliver spent the rest of his life claiming innocence to the crime, referencing The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in the Dec. 30, 1905 edition of the Clinton Mirror. In his last statement, Haugh wrote:

"They say I murdered my father, my mother and brother with hyoscine for the sake of the money. Then they say that when I have taken enough of the hyoscine the man within me disappears, and Hyde is the power. It seems as though I must do something – destroy something. My only recourse is to get out into the street – out into the open country – away from men and women, lest I murder them. It is possible for me to have killed

these people and know nothing of it. It is possible for me to have committed all the other murders of which they accuse me, and in my normal condition be in ignorance, for in my normal condition I am another man. All that I do know is, that if I die for these crimes, I shall have at least established the proof of the theory on which I have always insisted – that two beings, one of good, the other of evil, may exist in the same man, and in that respect at least I shall have rendered a distinct service to posterity.”

On December 17, 1903, Wilbur, along with his brother Orville, flew the first heavier-than-air Flying Machine. While Wilbur and Orville took the walk into the limelight, Oliver Crook Haugh took a walk down a different path. He was executed for murder by electric chair on April 19, 1907.

Of all the killing Oliver Crook Haugh has done, the one thing he could not kill was the potential of Wilbur Wright.

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My Library

I walk in and I’m met with that old familiar smell.
You know the smell. The one of old books, old pages
that have been thumbed through for years. The lights
so bright, you can see the different color spines next to
each other on the wall. The sensory overload and
excitement of getting ready to read ...no, live these
books. How ironic, a building that has its own story,
filled with other people’s stories. That’s my library.

John Highley

Butterfly Trio

Transformation

Butterflies
symbolize
leap
from creep
to bright
in flight,
so you whose sighs rise in the night
metamorphosize from dark to light

Negotiation

Take a cue
from Ant and Blue.
Blues secrete
a sticky treat
Ants find sweet,
and in return
they keep from harm the larval worm.
So quid-pro-quos
make friends of foes.

Interpretation

The French let caterpillars thrive
to see the butterflies survive.
Among Latinos it is said,
“Butterflies?” – “Souls of the dead.”
But Japanese believe just White
alone are spirits in flight.
To Christians, change to winged perfection
signifies the Resurrection.
And all the Makers who see true
find they reveal fine dot, line hue.

Cecile Cary

Forgotten Wind

A fresh wind arrives
from the few places
that have escaped
the darkness of intent.

From distant mountains,
it grazes the vital waters
of our dreams,
picks up the smell
of scoured snow,
the faint memory
of sage and evergreen,
blows past the bend
of prairie grasses
that led us West.

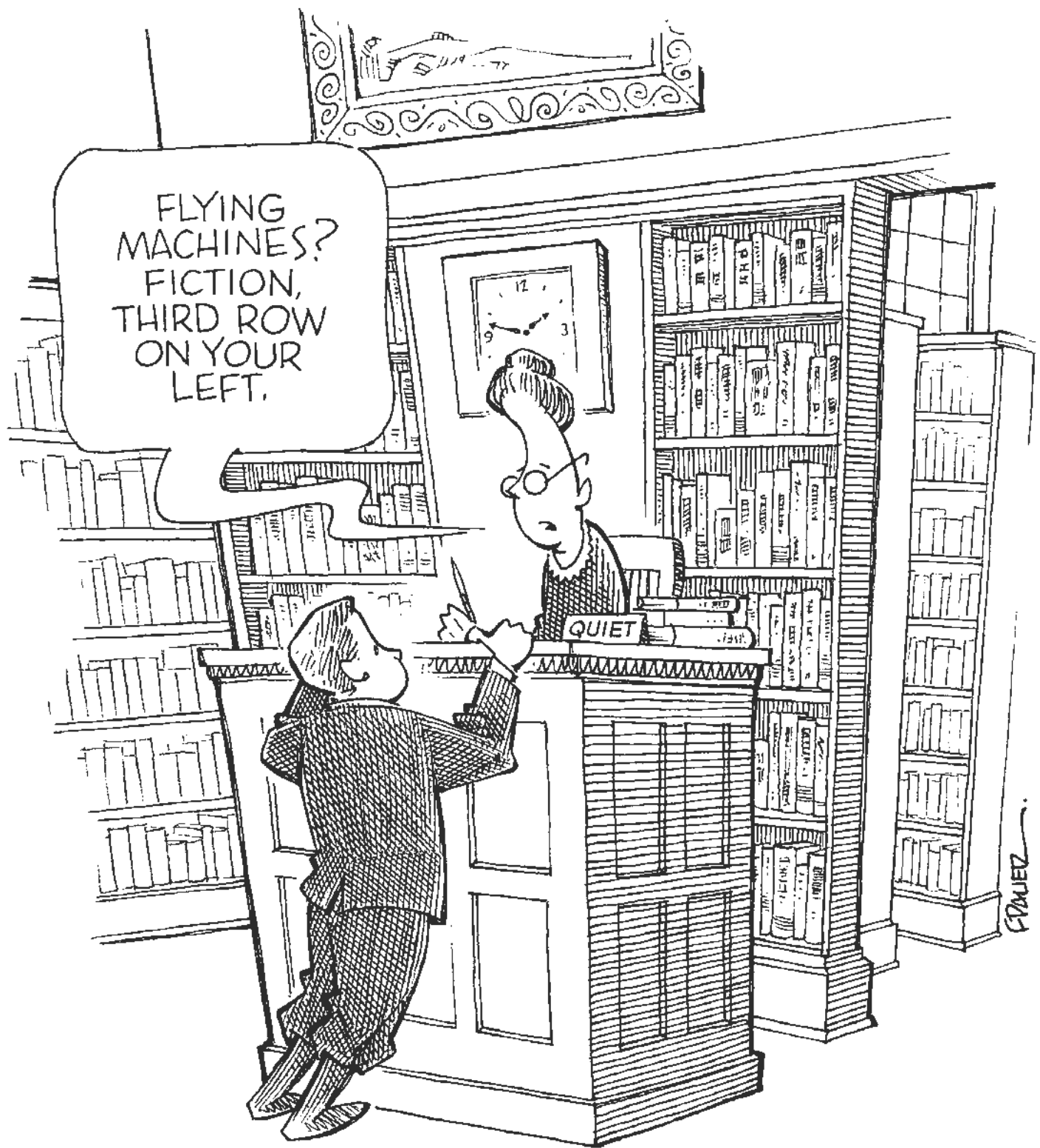
This wind surprises us,
speaks of times forgotten,
long hidden within our lineage
as it bypassed
a smattering of settlements
and the rusted beige
of small towns,
the ghosts of boom and promise,
and when it reaches us,
we breathe it in, sweet.

Kathy B. Austin

Orville Wright Speaks to the Society of Library Architects

work your way down the aisle
between stacks of ideas
bursting from overhead bins
like cheap thrills hawked
by state fair hucksters find
a window seat and look into
the expanse of future
spreading itself thick with jet
fuel and stories look
through the frozen glass
waterfall at the city teeming
with what could be you flying
on a buttress of thought and
word, lift and thrust holding
up the wings of your mind
course down the cool chrome
runway soar through the vast
vertical expanse MACH
through the ceiling and the sky
sit down next to Plato and ask
him what he does for a living
pass Chaucer a plastic cup of
tomato juice eat peanuts
with Dante stretch your
legs into the aisle, into the
aisle's aisle pull a
magazine from the seat-back
pocket and let ideas sail from
your mind like a fleet of paper
airplanes soaring straight and
without apology into the
geekosphere, page after page
turning in the frenzied tilt and
roll of boundless inspiration

Jennifer Hambrick



ORVILLE WRIGHT, 1883

The Maple Street Terror

by Jeff Wilson

It was a hot, clammy late summer day. The early morning showers followed by a humid afternoon hinted that fall was coming soon, better than any date on the calendar. A few weeks would pass, and those long, bright summer days would be gone; everyone would be back in school with only Halloween to look forward to.

I never purposely spied on my brothers and sisters, but discovered early that a little blackmail was sometimes profitable in our large family of sibling rivals. The social currency of our realm at the time went something like this; “If you tell on me, I will tell on you.” The threat was often enough to guarantee silence. I knew where John hid his girlie magazines, Judy knew Bill was not at basketball practice, and who he was making out with at the time, Jackie knew I was the one who dropped and shattered mom’s prized ironstone pitcher and bowl set. And everyone had something on Jackie. As the youngest in the family, I watched my brothers and sisters closely; noting any inconsistencies or clues to anticipate trouble before any family dramas would occur.

On this Saturday afternoon the house was unnaturally quiet, always a bad sign. Dad was at the hardware store, Mom, Jackie and Judy were shopping, Bill was at basketball practice with the Betts brothers, (of course he was), and I had just finished the Battle of Little Big Horn on the front porch with my Fort Apache Playset. This time, Custer won. But where was John?

I left the front porch mostly to see what John was up to, and when I rounded the corner of the Addison’s place next door, I saw John hurriedly take some white bed sheets from the Addison’s clothesline and scurry off. I wasn’t surprised about John’s theft, he was always planning some outrage, but I was puzzled why he needed the sheets. Later that day, old Mrs. Addison stopped by during dinner and complained that someone had stolen her sheets off her clothesline, and was thoroughly confused by the event. I watched John closely knowing the truth, but kept quiet, as he unexpectedly snickered and somehow managed to make it sound like a cough, and left the table.

In the early sixties in our neighborhood, in Cambridge, Ohio, the long hot summer was the best part of the whole year. Back in those days, there were no I-Pads or sophisticated video gaming systems, TV was still in its infancy, and not many folks had air conditioning. Back then, busy Moms encouraged their kids to go outside and play so that they could finish the household

chores. In those days, parents had a naïve, trusting view of the world, and believed that living in America was not unlike an extended episode of *Mayberry R.F.D.* It sounds unbelievable today, but it was customary and not unusual for children to be allowed to have the run of the neighborhood at all hours of the day until dark. Nearly every day was spent rounding up enough kids for a football game, Kick the Can, a bike race, or small larcenies at the Royal Blue grocery store.

The very best attraction for us, was the Haunted Mansion on Maple Street. Everyone knew for certain that it was haunted. Long abandoned, and left with every piece of household items and furniture intact, the old house stood on Maple Street, dark, sinister and silent. Early on, one of our number of domestic terrorists discovered an unlocked door, and we inevitably found our way inside. In retrospect, the house wasn’t really a



mansion, but just an aging, neglected, Victorian pile that once was the gem of Maple Street. A thick layer of dust covered every room; there were old daguerreotypes of the family that had once lived there, and an overwhelming, shadowy sense of decay and death. Our explorations of the Haunted Mansion never lasted more than a few minutes, the absolute limit of our frayed nerves. It was here, in this dark place that our story begins.

I'll admit, I had been watching John closely since the events of the day before, but lost him in the late afternoon. Certain now, because he was missing, that 'the game was afoot'; I was surprised to see our battered station wagon pull into our driveway with Mom and John inside. Still suspicious, I approached and discovered Mom had only taken John shopping for school clothes and gym shoes.

Somehow, John had managed to persuade Mom to buy him a pair of Red Ball Jets! At the time, Red Ball Jets were the first canvas-topped rubber sneaker to be mass marketed in America. John would instantly be the envy of the neighborhood. Daily commercials on TV loudly proclaimed Red Ball Jets could make you 'run faster, and jump higher' than anyone of the block. Deflated, and more than a little jealous, I watched John happily pull the sneakers on in the driveway, and proudly rub the distinctive Red Ball logo near the heel of the shoes. I turned, and walked away knowing this would not be the end of it.

It began that very night. I had given up monitoring John's whereabouts, and found myself on the front porch watching the lengthening shadows as the night approached. From down the street, near the intersection with Maple I heard running footsteps, a curious metallic sound, and a surprised scream, followed by another, and yet another. In the awful silence that followed, my brother Bill had emerged from the house, and we both stared open-mouthed at each other, unable to understand.

Bill bolted and ran down the street towards Maple and the Haunted Mansion, and I followed close behind. We found a small crowd of kids surrounding Mary and Becky Balts, nearly in hysterics. They said they had just seen a ghost.

Within a few minutes a small crowd of neighborhood kids had turned out, and we peppered them with questions. It took a while, but Mary and Becky said that they had just crossed Maple Street past the Haunted Mansion, and suddenly a ghost appeared and chased them, and they were nearly caught. Bill and I looked at each other, and I could read Bill's doubts in his face. I was at first unconvinced, but looked closer at Becky's face and saw her terror as she said quietly, "I saw his face, it isn't a ghost. It is a scarecrow. We never should have gone into the Haunted Mansion." Bill and I exchanged serious look, and didn't say much as we walked the Balts' sisters home.

The events of that night were only the beginning. The following night the Stimson kids, little Joey and Sarah were surprised by the specter in white tattered shrouds wrapped in chains that relentlessly chased them clear to Court Street downtown. Later, that same night old Fred Deshler spotted the ghost tearing past on the street as he left the Humble Gas Station. For the better part of a week the Maple Street Ghost terrorized our neighborhood, and seemed to content himself with chasing kids, sometimes with a tortured howling for effect.

One night, the sightings abruptly ceased. To this day, no one has been able to offer a plausible explanation for the events for that week so long ago. It remains just a small town legend, local folklore bereft of evidence, and any corroboration.

That is, until now. I'd like to offer my version of the story on that last night, and close the door on this riddle. It was late Thursday night, and I had put off taking out the trash as long as I could. Honestly, I wasn't very keen on the idea, I was more than a little scared to be outside in the dark, all by myself, with only a



howling ghost for company. Mom reminded me that Friday was trash day, and I had “Better get to it; else there would be trouble with your father.” Given the choice between the two possibilities, I quickly chose to take out the trash.

By the time I managed to build up enough confidence to leave the safe confines of the kitchen it was completely dark outside. I had to move slowly as the stairs outside were poorly lit, and I was carrying the bundles of garbage to the trash barrels. It took a while, and as I returned to the safety of the door leading to the kitchen I came face to face with the Maple Street Ghost!

Unable to breathe, rooted to the spot, I can still remember his terrible face, and heard a frightening howl begin. And I have to admit, I ‘lost some water’, as the saying goes. The monster seemed surprised for a moment, but regained his composure, silently put his index finger to his lips, and turned to go. As he turned to go, his white tattered shroud fluttered at his feet, and I saw dimly the unmistakable Red Ball Jets logo.



Majority of Situations

by John Wiley

“Bye mom!” Alistair yells as he runs down the stairs to the front door. “I’m going out with Britt.” *And I was supposed to be there ten minutes ago.*

“Wait a second,” she says. “What are you guys doing?”

“Dunno. Probably see a movie.”

His mom looks at him knowingly. She opens her mouth to speak, but stops when the aroma of burning cookies creeps into the room. “Be safe,” she says as she hurries back to the kitchen.

*

Alistair arrives at the club twenty minutes later. Waiting for him out front is his best friend, Britt.

“You’re late. I was almost beginning to worry,” she says when he meanders over to her.

“Sorry,” he kisses her cheek. He takes her hand in his, leads her to the rainbow canopy that marks the entrance to the club.

“I’m going to the toilet,” Britt says when they get to the dance floor.

A few minutes later, Britt exits the restroom and sees a small crowd on the floor. In a corner by himself she notices a miserable looking boy her age.

“Hey,” she says.

He looks up. “Hi.”

“I noticed you standing here alone and –”

“You felt sorry for me?”

“Not at all. I was going to see if you wanted to dance on account of this being a dance club and you not dancing with anyone.”

“Oh.”

“Are you okay?”

His face turns red. “I’ve never been dancing before and I came by myself. I was hoping I’d meet someone who would want to dance with me...”

“What did I just ask you?”

“But –”

Britt grabs his hand and pulls him to the dance floor. “What’s your name?”

“Lucas!” he yells over the music.

Britt takes him to the center of the dance floor where Alistair is dancing. “Alistair, this is Lucas. Lucas, Alistair.” She says as she walks to the bar.

28 “I’m sorry,” Lucas says as he turns to walk away.

“Wait! Don’t you want to dance?” Alistair asks.

“Kinda.”

Alistair smiles and pulls Lucas closer.

*

“I have to get some water. Want anything?” Alistair asks Lucas an hour later.

“Yeah. That would be good.”

“Great. Go find a table, I’ll be there in a minute.”

At the bar Alistair sees Britt. “Two bottles of water,” he tells the bartender.

“How are you guys getting on?” Britt asks.

“He’s not bad. Really shy.”

“He said this is his first time here. He’s probably just nervous.”

“Hmm...” Alistair smirks as he pays for the waters. “Wanna get outta here?” he asks Lucas when he gets to the table.

All of the color drains from Lucas’s face. “And go where?”

“Restaurant?”

Lucas takes a drink of water. “Okay then.”

*

“Where do you live?” Alistair asks.

“Turtle Creek.”

“Really? I live there too.”

“Yeah, my family just moved here,” Lucas says.

“Are you going to be a senior next year?”

“Yep. You?”

“Yeah,” Alistair says as he eats a fry. “So, does your family know?”

“That I went to a gay dance club? No.”

“Do they know you’re gay?”

“They know. We just don’t talk about it. Your family?”

“No. My dad is a minister. It wouldn’t go over well.”

Lucas glances at his watch. “Crap. It’s after midnight.”

“When’s your curfew?”

“Twelve.” Lucas stands up.

“Do you wanna meet up again some time?”

“When?”

“Meet me out front of this place tomorrow at noon.”

Lucas nods and runs out of the building.

*

At quarter after twelve, and no sign of Alistair, Lucas decides to go home.

“Where you going?” Alistair asks.

Lucas turns around and sees Alistair. “You’re late.”

Alistair smiles cheekily. “Come on. Let’s go shopping.”

“I don’t have much money.”

“Not a problem.” Alistair says. “I’m buying.”

*

“So, where do you want to go first?” Alistair asks once they get to the mall.

“I usually just go to Wal-Mart,” Lucas says with a shrug.

Alistair grabs his chest. “Are...you...serious?!”

Lucas blushes. “Stop,” he laughs.

“Come on,” he says, taking Lucas by the hand and leading the way.

*

An hour later, Lucas and Alistair sit across from each other eating pizza. Alistair has five large shopping bags around him, Lucas has one small plastic sack.

"I can't let you keep buying me stuff," Lucas says.
"It's not *me* buying it, but my parents." Alistair smiles.
"I feel so guilty though."
"It's really okay," Alistair says, smiling.

*

"What did you think?" Lucas asks as they walk through the nearly emptying parking lot at the movie theater.

"Umm..."

Lucas laughs. "I know, me too." He inhales the cool night air. "I'm just glad I didn't have to pay for it."

Alistair jokingly shoves him.

"Hey!" Lucas laughs. He pushes Alistair back, but they both stumble and fall against a van.

Lucas on top of Alistair, both of them smiling nervously.

"Hey, your eyes have some green in them," Alistair says.

Lucas blushes and turns his head, his cheek rubbing against Alistair's.

Before he realizes what's going on Alistair is kissing him. His first kiss. A few seconds later Alistair stops. Lucas blushes before kissing him again.

*

"That boy changed you," Britt says. It's two months later and she's eating with Alistair.

"What do you mean?"

"Well...you're good now."

"Hey!" Alistair laughs. "I've always been good."

Britt smiles. "I know. But I mean, like, you don't like going out with me anymore."

"I know, but it's different with him. I think I love him."

Britt holds Alistair's hand. "That's sweet, but what about my problem?"

"What problem would that be?" he asks.

"What am I supposed to do without my best friend?"

Alistair laughs and stands up. "I gotta go."

Britt sighs. "Lucas?"

"Hey, you introduced us."

"But I didn't think you'd turn in to...this," she says, gesturing at him.

"You're really upset about this, aren't you?"

Britt shakes her head. "No. I'm glad you're happy. It's just..."

Alistair hugs her. "You'll never get rid of me. But..."

Britt smiles. "Go on."

"Thanks. I'll call you."

*

"We had so much fun last night!" Alistair tells Britt the next day.

She's standing in front of her closet taking inventory for senior year. "That's great."

"I'm supposed to meet him for dinner tonight."

"Oh."

"What?"

"School starts next week and we made plans to go to the mall tonight."

"Crap. Can we go tomorrow?"

"I work. Today is my only free day." Britt slams the closet door and sighs.

"I guess Lucas won't mind going to the mall..."

"Forget it."

"Why don't you like him?"

"I don't have time for this. I have to find a car to borrow." Britt tosses the phone on her bed.

*

"I have a proposition for you," Lucas says that afternoon as they walk along the river.

“What?”

“I want to tell our families about us.”

For the first time since they met, Alistair is the quiet one.

“What? I thought you loved me.”

Alistair shakes his head. “I told you about my dad. There’s no way I can tell him.”

“My family wasn’t thrilled when I told them. And chances are they aren’t going to be thrilled when I tell them I have a boyfriend. But I love you and I don’t want to hide you from my family.”

Alistair goes white.

“It isn’t that bad Alistair.”

Without a word, Alistair runs to his car.

*

Alistair roams the mall looking for Britt. He checks several stores before finally finding her. “Hey,” he says as he walks up to her.

“God!” She jumps in a start. “What do you want?” Britt notices his eyes are blood shot. “What’s wrong?”

“He wants me to come out to my family.”

Britt hugs him tightly. “Maybe it’s time,” she whispers.

Alistair backs away from Britt. “You don’t understand.”

“Then tell me. Explain to me why you can’t tell your parents who their child really is.”

“My dad –”

“You’ve been using that excuse as a safety net for too long. You need to do this for you!”

Alistair looks hurt that Britt would yell when he needs her support.

“Is it really so bad to tell your family that you’re gay if it means being able to have Lucas in your life?”

Alistair wipes his eyes. “I can’t do this.”

“I know it’s scary. But sometimes the scariest thing is the thing you have to do.” She hugs him.

*

“Did we get any mail?” Alistair’s mom asks, peaking her head around the corner when he comes in. “What’s wrong? Alistair, what happened?” she asks when she sees his tear-stained face.

Alistair’s heart starts to race. “I need to talk to you and dad.”

“Okay, he’s in here.” Alistair follows his mom into the living room. “Turn off the TV Joe.”

“Why?” his dad grumbles.

Alistair sits on the sofa and closes his eyes as he takes a deep breath. *God, I didn’t know it was possible for hands to sweat this much. I can say it. It’s two simple words. I’m and Gay. Simple. I can say this. I think I’m going to throw up.* He puts his hands on his stomach.

“What’s wrong?” asks his mom.

I’m going to upset them so much. I’ve been their little boy forever. They’re going to be so disappointed in me. Alistair begins to cry.

“Please tell us what wrong,” his mom chokes out.

Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale. God! I’m not getting enough air. I’m going to vomit. My heart, it’s beating too fast. And my hands, too much sweat. Heartbeat, air, breathe, sweat, vomit, gay, hell, vomit, heart, breathe. Alistair takes several deep breaths to calm himself, and when he does only one word fills his mind. *Lucas.*

“Ali, please,” his mom begs.

Alistair starts to cry harder.

Alistair’s mom sits next to him and hugs him. “It can’t be that bad.”

Out of energy, Alistair opens his mouth and softly says, “I’m gay.”

“That’s okay, baby,” his mom says.

Alistair looks up at his dad shaking his head disapproving, and sobs into his mom’s shoulder.

“Shh, it’ll all be okay.” She kisses the top of his head. “Just give him time.” She looks up to the sky as a tear runs down her cheek. “Just give him time.”

*

The first day of senior year Alistair and Britt walk in looking great.

"Have you talked to Lucas yet?" Britt asks as they walk to homeroom.

"No. I called a couple of times but haven't heard back."

"What about your dad?"

"He still isn't speaking to me, but mom keeps saying to give him time." They stop in front of the door to homeroom.

"That's good I guess." She looks at the clock. "See you at lunch?"

"Sure."

*

Alistair sits at the lunch table when someone walks up behind him. "Hey Britt."

"Not Britt," Lucas says.

Alistair stands up. "Hey."

"Sorry I didn't call. It's been a confusing week."

"That's understandable. It hasn't been the best week for me either." Alistair looks around. "I told my parents."

"How did it go?"

Alistair sighs. "Could have gone better. But it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be."

"Good. I told my parents about you. They didn't want to hear it, but eventually they realized they had to listen or risk losing me." He pauses a beat. "So, we're talking. It's a start."

"That's great." Alistair smiles.

The two guys stand in awkward silence when Britt walks up. She sighs and stands between them. "Would you guys just kiss already?"

They look at her and laugh.

"Look, I know that what you guys went through this summer was rough, but look at it this way; the majority of situations, no matter how bad, are better than a spider in your nose and a rollie pollie in your ass. Can you honestly say that you'd rather have a spider in your nose than having never met each other?"

Lucas and Alistair laugh as the three of them sit down to lunch.



Duality

Pedro Rivera

View from Across the Room

~*Scioto River Afternoon*, oil on panel by Michael McEwan

I shall try to tell the truth, but the result will be fiction.

~Katherine Anne Porter

The Scioto River is broad here,
heavy with mud. Placid. Lazy.

No burbling mountain stream this!

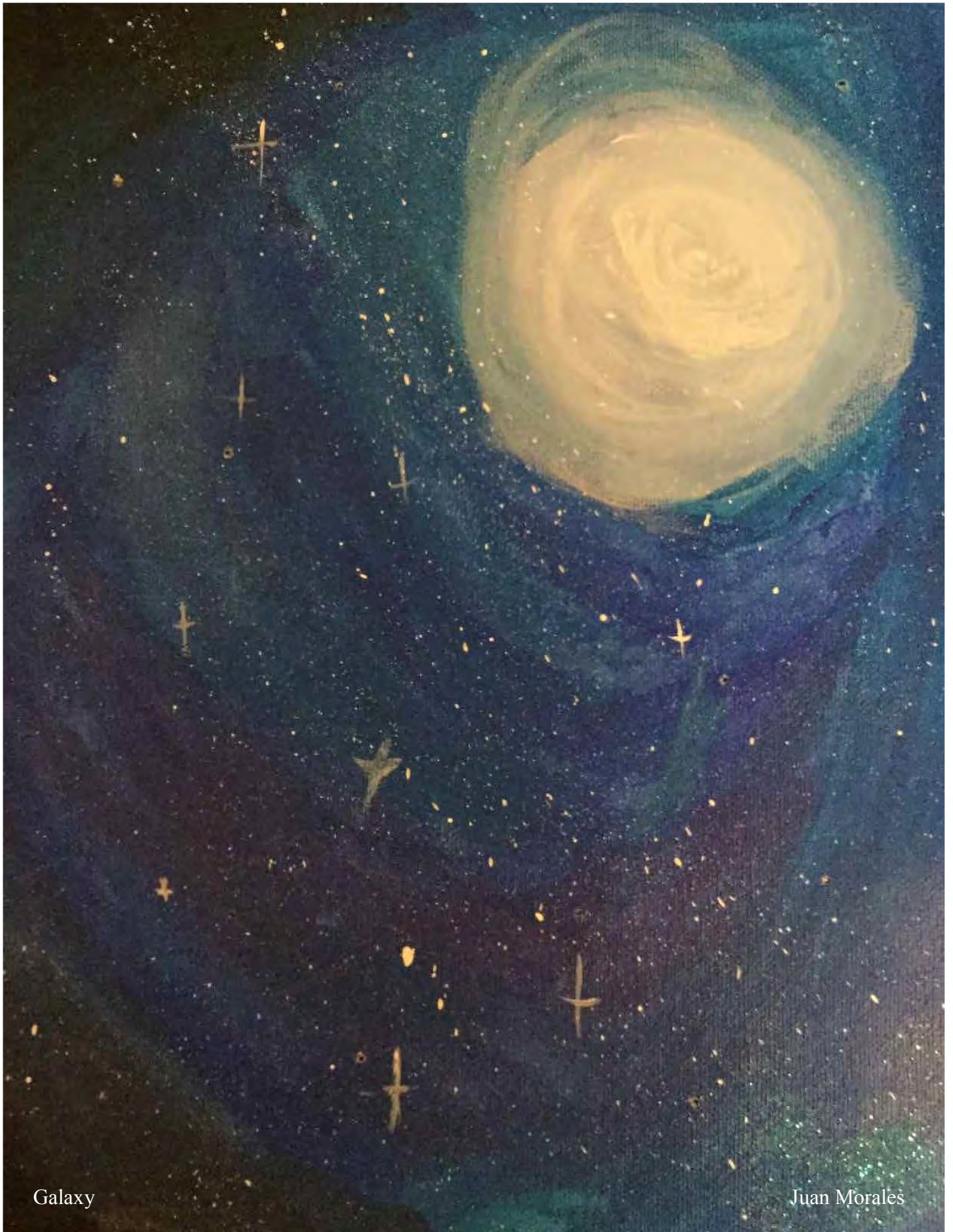
The trees along the shore catch its dunny color
and blur in the golden haze of a summer afternoon.

The reflection of the white sky
stripes its center and the eye,
first measuring the river's width,
follows it down to the bend.

This rendition is all about the light,
like Monet with cataracts, but
without the waterlilies, of course:
a muddy river infusing the air with
the torpid ache of summer.

I enter willingly and float,
feet lazy in the water until,
with the trick of forced perspective,
the river vanishes
and all that remains
is the lambent air
framed with
gold.

Paula Unrau



Galaxy

Juan Morales

Little Dipper

I look up every night at the sky. Lately I've been looking for the little dipper. I think it's because I can relate. To be so small but still a shape that gives people the impression your purpose is to provide them with a drink. To quench a thirst.

To be considered as more than an object first is every objects dream. To be considered a real thing.

I asked her why she is tilted today, she said she just needed a break, how she was tired of the weight.

She promises me it's not that bad as lips are usually the softest part of people, and they always return her once she's empty. How she's really good at waiting.

She says it is always her choice each time she fills herself up again. How it's a purpose other shapes can't fulfill and there must be a reason.

On days I don't see her to wish her well. I still think about her and hope she's filled. Being held between two warm hands and embraced by the softest lips.

Maybe one day I'll be close enough to hold her myself. To show her it can be done in a way that will never leave her empty. I wonder if she'd ever agree to that kind of love.

Brittany Webb

What the Moon Will Buy

The moon Adam saw
rising above fruit trees

has been layered with words
over centuries of human vigil

but it never says a thing,
does not answer questions.

We drink its milk in wonder
and shiver in its cold hands

for we know what it's worth.
It comes with no guarantee,

pays no ransom for our lives.
A dollar or half dollar

or silver quarter in the sky
buys only one more night.

David Lee Garrison

Who I Portray

I am the best at
Pretending to be the best
The smartest idiot
I am always there
But never present
Like a star
Existing but not always visible

I am buried under who I portray
An actor that never breaks character
I am a never ending opposite day
Constantly making the opposing choice
I am overwhelmed by outside voices
Making my own
Harder to hear

I am the sum of my failures, not my accomplishments
I am every pass I did not catch
Every free throw missed

I am a pot of hot water,
The more I boil
The less there is of me
I am a sword that was once sharp
But has inevitably dulled over time
An eternal hibernating bear
I am as fast as the slowest snail

I am lost hope
Broken promises
The wishes you never got
And the ones you haven't thought of yet
I am everything on your bucket list.

Caleb Wilcoxson



Peaches

Gabriella Stauffer

Station 32 (From Pilgrimages)

A famous poet's house in Dayton, Ohio?
Have you been there? No one ever took me when I was young.
So I made sure that my students went there.
They were amazed to discover that the house became the first
African-American's house to be on the National Register back in 1935.
LaVerne Sci, the curator, always read "Jump Back, Honey, Jump Back"
And the students began to enjoy poetry and dialect.
When Margaret Walker and Sonja Sanchez came
To the University of Dayton; when I attended
The First Day issue of the Dunbar stamp at Dunbar High School;
When I sat and heard of Dunbar's struggles and successes --
Operating an elevator downtown, the marriage, the TB,
The William Dean Howells review, the poetry readings in London --
All these invaded my mind and conquered the pride
That as a Daytonian I felt. *Hubris*, though, a Greek vice.
When our Herbert Woodward Martin, impersonating Dunbar,
Always sang to the poetry audience before I read my poems,
I felt in his presence that I belonged.
I had no dialect to mark me, but I could sing
In my own way and write while I wore a mask.
These days I can sit in the house with its restored
Wallpaper and authentic furniture and imagine the rhyming,
The stories from his mother's South, and the singing,
Mixing words with their organic roots to the stanzas
That spoke of his emotional strifes.

Gary Mitchner

On Alberta Street at K

(For Chris Ewen)

Tea Kettle Farewell

Before the doors were opened
to the scavenging crowd,
I made a final tour of the house
that was the family home;
each room a page in a memoir.

In the kitchen a tarnished tea kettle
sat forgotten on the stove top,
a patient, faithful servant,
waiting to add warmth
to family gatherings.

In honor of its years of service
I heated water in the kettle

for a cup of tea

and watched until a rising plume
of steam signaled its readiness

to pour a lasting memory.

Susan Iwinski

You were conceived in late January. Eisenhower was
president and Sputnik not yet launched. Everything

was in abeyance. Daffodils were still dormant and
hyacinths asleep beneath a crust of snow. Eisenhower

was president and the X-15 had not exceeded Mach 6.
UD students across Alberta Street picked their steps along

icy walkways beyond the vast library lawn. Buses down
on Brown Street released and claimed intermittent streams

of satisfied workers going to and from their cherished
jobs at NCR where benefits were said to be the best in

Dayton. (Those multi-windowed buildings filled all that
space between Brown Street and Main.) Eisenhower was

president and there were no major wars. Your dad was too
inventive for an NCR assembly line, no matter how well lit

and compensated. He worked at Bowser Morner Testing
Labs on Bruin Street where he devised and built fantastic

rigs to run environmental tests. (Bruin Street had yet to
be swallowed out of existence by the new Route 35.) You

were conceived in the upstairs back apartment on Alberta
Street at K. Eisenhower was president and McCarthyism

hadn't touched our world. Everything was warm and
bright. Diamond-shaped panes framed our view.

We pulled heavy white drapes across the bay window
looking down on K Street. Everything was suspended.

Marietta Ball

The Missing Benches

by Bethany Kmeid

While enjoying the sights in Dayton, you may have noticed a small bronze bench with a beautiful green patina upon which two charming bowler hats rest. I first spotted one of these benches in Dave Hall Plaza, while taking a few pictures of the *Flyover* sculpture in 2013. I snapped a few shots and knew that I needed to learn more about this bench, which was obviously referencing Dayton's beloved Wright Brothers. Like so many good ideas, I soon forgot all about it.

Then one day about a year later, I was walking around River Scape and crossed Monument Avenue to take a few pictures of the magnificent building that is the Engineer's Club of Dayton. It was there that I noticed an identical bench situated in a place of honor right in front, and was reminded of the first bench, and my forgotten intentions to research the history of it. I set out on a mission to learn everything I could about the benches.



*Clockwise from top-left:
Wright State campus,
Carillon Park, Engineer's
Club of Dayton, Woodland
Cemetery. Source: Bethany
Kmeid*

According to the Ohio Outdoor Sculpture Center, there are supposed to be nine benches sculpted by artist David Evans Black, located around the Dayton area at: Dave Hall Plaza, the Engineer's Club, the Air Force Museum, Carillon Park, the Dayton International Airport, the Dayton-Wright Brother's Airport, Wright State, and Woodland Cemetery. The bench is designed to be reminiscent of the bench shown in the famous photograph of the Wright Brothers' first flight.

Upon discovering that there are nine benches in total, I felt compelled to make a project of searching for all nine, and capturing them in pictures. Some of these benches are easily spotted – like the first two I discovered - while others are a bit more difficult to find, as I had to ask around and hunt down the bench at Wright State. When I went to the Air Force Museum, I spent an hour walking around the grounds and exploring, hoping to spot at least one of the benches, but my search was fruitless. I then spoke to groundskeepers, volunteers, and staff members, and mysteriously, nobody has any recollection of the two benches that are supposedly there. As I was unable to locate either bench at the two airports, I am left with four missing benches.

I have explored all around Dayton in search of each of these benches asking questions when I can, but in the end, I was only able to locate the five of them. Every time I visit somewhere old or new around the

Dayton area, I keep an eye out for one of the four missing benches, and hope that I'll stumble across them all of them someday.

Interestingly enough, David Black also designed the *Flyover* sculpture that started this whole project. The sculpture is located in the median of Main Street, just north of 5th Street, and the design is a representation of the Wright Brother's 120 feet, 12 second flight in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina on December 17th, 1903.

It wasn't luck that made them fly; it was hard work and common sense; they put their whole heart and soul and all their energy into an idea and they had the faith.

– John T. Daniels, who witnessed the first flights by the Wright Brothers.

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The Silver Radio

My father, Leonard, painted his radio.
It rested on his cluttered workbench

in the basement of our small, coal-heated family home
located within a dirty industrial town in southern Illinois.

Working on weekend projects, my father would listen to this small radio
as it spoke the play-by-play of St. Louis Cardinal baseball games.

When in fifth grade I first took real notice of this newly painted radio,
I found it to be somewhat puzzling, although I did not ask the reason.

My ten-year-old smarts assured me that nobody paints a radio,
especially in the bright silver color used by my father.

This strong man had survived the Great Depression, had fought in WWII
under General Patton, and had married his high school sweetheart, Rosemary.

His many remaining years were to be centered on family, factory, fixing,
and forging manual skills within his all-too-poetic son.

But why this silver radio? I actually did not reflect upon it all that much.
It was merely one of the many things that I did not understand about this man.

Sixty years later, using my seventy-year-old smarts,
the reason suddenly occurred to me.

My father must have adorned that tiny radio
simply because he had paint remaining from another task.

This would have been, I finally realized, typical of his life.
Nothing would ever be wasted, or left unused, or thrown away.

Perhaps his simple and Spartan younger life had, to some degree,
held captive the remainder of his life. And the grip was tight.

“You do the best you can with what you have.”

“Money does not grow on trees.”

My father was big on platitudes also.
He was a good and decent man.

Robert Flavin



Portrait of My Father

Robert Flavin

Shadows and Benefits of Doubt

by Onita Morgan-Edwards

As if I did not have a grocery store visit to make, a movie to watch, or a nap to take, I RSVP'd via Facebook for the two and a half hour Saturday afternoon event. *Let's Talk: White Privilege* was the topic at Oakwood's Wright Memorial Library. Oakwood, Ohio—situated south of Dayton—is described by the Visitors Bureau as “one of Dayton's most historic cities.” My mother, a black woman, born in Washington, D.C. in 1936, gives me the impression there is no place she is afraid to go. With this mantle, I psychologically prepare to go and hear what white people have to say about their White Privilege.

Before I head to the library on that sunny Saturday in October, my daughter and I spend an hour at Faith & Friends' Under the Chocolate Top event (Jefferson Township, Ohio). Event-goers clamor tables for chocolate drizzled popcorn, cookies, and other treats. I chat with a vendor whose area bustles with foot traffic, people peer at the chocolate-covered two-inch letters, ampersands and octothorpes on sticks in milk and white chocolates then shuffle their way to the next showcase. Someone tells me that white chocolate is not chocolate at all. My daughter, Nina, enjoys chocolate. Milk and the so-called imposter. She is not prejudiced against anything sweet, really.

When I attempt to enlighten Nina about racism, she seems at best disinterested. At 16-years-old, she is enthralled in peer relationships, cheerleading, and working part-time. She, for a long time, bucked for position in our family. I assume because she is the youngest coming after two brothers. Nina is opinionated and has some leadership traits. She periodically calls me from school in a huff, challenging the teaching methods or information she is not supposed to. This is Nina's critical thinking at work, her way of not agreeing with everything people tell her. This is her way of grappling for dignity as a young black woman in America. I neither encourage her nor dissuade her. She must find her own way.

Later, I scan the tree-lined street where the library sits just across from single-family homes. Without a shadow of doubt, Oakwood *is* charming. I breathe deeply, conjuring all the hatred for racism I can muster and wonder why I even need to be here. Before I cross the library threshold, I wonder why the Angry Black Woman stereotype is actually a thing. I wonder why I need to prepare my children to interact with police. “Don't ask questions,” I say. “Hold your arms up high—higher,” I preach. “Don't make any sudden moves,” I say sternly, “or your body could lie on asphalt four hours in August like Mike Brown” (Missouri, 2014). Or, you could be strangled to death on a street corner like Eric Garner (New York, 2014). Or, you could be shot to death in Walmart like John Crawford III (Ohio, 2014). Or, you could be pursued and shot with snacks in your hands like Trayvon Martin (Florida, 2012). Or, you could be shot while playing with a toy gun outside a recreation center like Tamir Rice (Ohio, 2014).

Attending events creates anxiety in me. I don't know who the friendly white people are and it's difficult to feel comfortable in public spaces designed to bring people together. I worry about being the only black person there, about making conversation with white people with whom I might have nothing in common, and about white people calling police on me for some infraction, whether real or perceived.

Of 50 or so people at the event, a handful (maybe eight) are black, and a couple (who are likely husband and wife) may be of Latin descent. How will this go? I wonder, as I claim a chair near the front of the library's lower-level community room, next to an older white man who may be in his 60s. The chairs face the screen assembly style. We watch the documentary *White Like Me*. I take notes grunting in agreement with author and narrator Tim Wise. The man sitting next to me, his hair grayed, sparse with the blondish hair he used to have, comfortable in his environmentally conscious t-shirt and a pair of shorts crosses his arms. This is a difficult subject.

After watching *White Like Me*, we separate into groups of 7-8 people. We read the Conversation Café Agreement, which includes:

Open-mindedness: Listen to & respect all points of view.

Acceptance: Suspend judgment as best you can.

Curiosity: Seek to understand rather than persuade.

Discovery: Question assumptions, look for new insights.

Sincerity: Speak from your heart and personal experience.

Brevity: Go for honesty and depth – don't go on and on.

These preemptive rules are to ensure that the participants are respectful toward each other. This is an opportunity for the majority to listen to the minority. We introduce ourselves, respond to the documentary, and have as open a dialogue as we can with strangers about racism. The group I'm in includes a library staff person as group moderator, one white man, three white women, and one other black woman.

When I send my two youngest children out into the world, (my 19-year-old son and my 16-year-old daughter), I pray for them. I prepare them. I scare them. Best case scenario, we live and get to go home. Each day I prepare for an onslaught of challenges. My teenaged son is in constant danger. He has a target on his back whether he understands it is there or not; whether white people believe it is there or not. My daughter has a smaller less threatening one but she has one. My target fades and reappears depending on my environment and because I am middle-aged, I have more experience with the hostilities of America than my children do. I tuck away my rage when white people at work refer to me as "girl," or when they say off the cuff remarks they think are relative to my black American experience. I just want my family to make it home—away from the fray and divisiveness created by people that often behave with hostility toward us, as though better off without us. Even well-meaning whites sometimes say things that are inappropriate.

The standard has been that black people discuss race only when white people feel like it.

Let's Talk: White Privilege is the colloquial race-relation quick fix for now. Diversity, has been the buzzword of nothingness for the last decade. Oakwood, Ohio's population is 8,993, based on 2010 Census data and racially, well:

White - 95.5%

Black - 0%

Other - 2.7% (includes persons claiming two or more races—1.3%)

Hispanic or Latino - 1.4%

What does it mean for black people to live in a nation where white people can resent our existence, our seeming infringement on the benefits of life in America? White Privilege, White Fragility, White Fear Weaponized. What does it all mean to me, a black woman, living in Dayton, Ohio? What does it mean to attend an event about White Privilege where 80% of the people attending are white? What does it mean that white people might be uncomfortable about my presence? Moreover, what's behind the craze of whites calling police on blacks for everyday things (campaigning for votes, playing golf, selling water, barbecuing, parking, incidental touching, waiting in coffee shops, babysitting, putting one's feet up on a university lecture hall chair, swimming, or waiting for AAA when your car breaks down)?

I tell my children don't put your hands in your pockets. Say hello to the store clerk following you around while you shop so she knows that you know she's following you; buy something or don't but do not behave nervously. Get your food to go. Don't hang out at coffee shops. In fact, go through the drive-thru whenever possible. Always look people in their eyes so they get a sense that you're a good kid and may believe you mean them no harm. Look like you're going somewhere. Take a purse, backpack, binder, planner, something, but prepare to be accused of something throughout your lifetime. People don't trust you because they do not often trust themselves. "You know people see in others what they are themselves, right?" I ask my children.

Mind your business at work. Don't tell white people anything about your personal life—especially any struggles or personal habits. They can use these as leverage and/or get you fired. Do not make friends at work. Black or white. People believe there are not enough resources for everyone to eat. Race is a real thing. There is a race to obtain all the resources you can, store them away, and keep others from getting any.

Be careful where you decide to live. Your neighbors will see you everyday but if you lose or forget your key and have to slide up the side window to get into your own house, someone will call the police on you like the neighbor of Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. did. Never seem angry when a white person criticizes you. Nothing makes some of them angrier than not being able to exert power over you. Do something intellectual with your life. It's not necessarily easier to change a system from the inside than from the outside. Remember Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Malcolm X—considered the "militant" was an outsider. Dr. King—considered non-violent found a way inside. They suffered the same fate and they were both preachers' kids. Learn how best to interact with all kinds of people. Smile at white people even when they

are rude, disrespectful, or impossible to deal with. Be careful of your tone and volume when speaking to white people. They can be fragile. Remember, they have the power.

The police are not your friend and it doesn't matter how many Donuts with Cops events you've been to or whether you reminisce fondly over the officers who bought us pizza the day your dad died. They are not—I repeat—your friends! Be careful hanging outside with groups of friends. This could be a harassment opportunity for police.

The kinds of movies and literature you consume might reinforce stereotypes of black people. Do not sit in the back of the bus. Rosa Parks fought for you to ride in the front of the bus. Spend your time wisely with people who can help you be better.

For God's sake, be compassionate and empathetic toward people who have needs that aren't being met and give people the benefit of the doubt even when this courtesy is not extended to you. Don't believe everything you see or hear. People lie everyday about all kinds of things. Don't trust everything you see on the news or read in newspapers. Information is fluid. It changes rapidly and what's good for you today could kill you tomorrow. Be aware of your surroundings. There are no safe spaces for blacks in America. You need to know that. Please know that. Learn to navigate systems that minimize your accomplishments, diminish your dreams, and exterminate your existence. Be careful! I love you. Come home.

"I don't see color," says one participant during the *Let's Talk: White Privilege* conversation. Wait. What! Why not? I think to myself. I nod at her comment because I want to appear cordial and easy-going, but my hatred for racism rages just beneath my milk chocolate-colored skin.



Frank Dixon, *The Sound of Dayton*

Bill Franz

Memories of a Mother

by Gabriella Stauffer

When Darcy tugged the leash on that chilly Sunday morning, she pulled me straight out of my three week funk. I had been staring off into nothing, eyes on the concrete, when she tugged sharply to the right, and I followed with little persuasion. Darcy's calming, cloudy white fur swiveled as a lone gust of wind swept through our part of the alleyway and, slowly, it dawned on me that we were not on our pathway home, but on another, unfamiliar path. But, I didn't tug Darcy's leash or chide her. She knew where she was going.

Steadily, we made our way past old, empty trash cans and piles of leaves until we were on a thin, crumbly road. There was no one there, but birds and trees grinned thoughtfully at us. Darcy told me not to worry, in her calm, silent way, and I was filled not with worry or dread, but with soft anticipation for our upcoming destination. As we turned around an old, sun damaged building, I realized where we might be heading. I looked at Darcy, but her sure face told me nothing of her intention.

Then, I saw it: The parking garage, standing lonely in the wake of a large, abandoned factory. I could even see the vacant hole where the dumpster had been several years prior, lid tilted open hungrily. We waded our way through a line of overgrown grasses and the broken chain link until we stood on cracked pavement in the shadow of a two-story abandoned parking garage. Darcy stopped obediently, her fur pressed against my leg. I exhaled a puff of factory smoke out of my wide dumpster lid of a mouth to build up strength before entering, but Darcy stepped forward without waiting for me.

I remembered the broken bottles and cracked support beams, the cigarette butts by the staircase. The dinky parked cars and stone-faced people. But even with the cars and garbage and people gone, it still felt *full*. My heart ached at the intrusion of memories: taking walks with Mom and Darcy on Sundays, learning to drive and watching her grip the wheel, always so small. Always speaking in squeazy, stressed sentences and scooting forward on the seat to see better. I stopped, looked at my dog, and took off my hat because it felt right.

I missed her. I hadn't driven the car, or gone on long walks, or eaten French toast sticks from the freezer section of our favorite corner store. I hadn't really allowed myself to think about her. But sitting there, on the cracked ledge of the second level of my favorite parking garage with my big, white dog, I let my memories live.

Cookies

by Riley Smith

"So shines a good deed in a weary world."

I had an absolutely terrible day recently, being sick in only the way that a person with a uterus can, and the single best parts of that day were two small acts of kindness back-to-back.

After spending almost all day in the dorm – I attend Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio – I decided to go to the library to read. (The book was fantastic, by the way, Adrian Tomine's *Sleepwalk and Other Stories*.) I stopped at the coffee shop in the library, and my eyes were immediately drawn to the fresh cookies for sale on the counter. Two little brown circles covered in purple, yellow, and orange sprinkles and dipped in peanut butter. I knew I was low on iron, and they sounded damn good, but counting the dollar bills in my hand I realized I didn't have enough money to buy the cookies.

Without missing a beat, as I'm trying to do the math out loud with the woman behind the register, a guy next to me in line pulled a dollar out of his wallet and offered it to me. Even though it was incredibly thoughtful, I politely refused, and told the barista I'd just take what I had originally come for: a hot chocolate

with whipped cream. The barista, that kind and beautiful soul, gave me the cookies for free, and I suspect a little extra whipped cream too.

As I found a free seat in the library and set all my things down, I reflected on that wonderful little moment. I had the money to pay for the cookies, but I wanted to use only cash and not my credit card. Also, I have a horrible problem with spending too much money at Starbucks. Back when I was on one of the university's meal plans, I had special dollars that I could use to buy Starbucks, and I would buy a cup of tea every morning without fail. It was far too easy to just blow through the money, and now that I am using my own money, I'm trying to be more cautious and more adult-like.

While I am still learning to be an adult, I have always been an optimist who sees the best in others. It's one of my deeply ingrained personality traits, no matter how often I might complain or engage in my generation's nihilistic humor. Optimism is fundamental to who I am. It was first fostered in me when I joined my middle school Optimists Club. The Optimist community is rather large in my hometown of Kettering. A women's club and a men's club meet weekly. Both offer scholarships to graduating high school seniors and engage heavily in community outreach.

A program that the men's club, the Dor-wood Optimists, do every year is called the Avenue of Flags. Residents can rent as many American flags as they want from the Optimists and they will put them in the yard on their own flagpoles. After studying abroad in London for five months, this was newly jarring to me, and honestly it still is. I saw the Union Jack maybe three times in the entire five months I was in London, so I have been struggling to readjust to the omnipresence of the American flag and the ideals surrounding it. It's not that I don't think the flag is an important symbol of our country. It is. It stands for how we stood up to our British tyrannical government, and doing that, struggling despite being so heavily outweighed, must have taken a lot of optimism, strength, and courage. But I personally no longer view it as that; it's just my nation's flag (which, honestly, I'm not always that proud of), and I wish people would tone down what to me is their over-valuing of it, like they have done in England.

Now that I'm back in America and it's fall, I'm looking forward to the holidays. My family buys our Christmas tree from the Dor-wood Optimists Club, or at least we try to. They set up in the parking lot of a strip mall near the high school, and increasingly they set up closer and closer to Thanksgiving, and sell out before early December. The past couple of years we've had to scour Home Depot and Lowe's instead of buying from our wonderful local Optimists. We (meaning my mom, who can only stand the chaos of the holidays for so long) prefer to wait until December proper to get our tree. We love having a real tree, but the longer we wait, the more likely the Optimists are sold out already.

I remember being elected President of my Optimist group one year. I convinced my best friend, Betsy, to join, and together we helped run a fairly successful book drive. I stopped attending the Optimist Club in high school, as marching band took up most of my free time, but I have not stopped being an optimist.

It's hard, sometimes, to be kind and good and optimistic in this world. I have a generally soft heart. And I'm just an emotional person, ever since I started getting my period, and especially around 6th grade. I have a vivid memory of walking to the bus stop down the street – which is coincidentally where my aunt and her partner live – and promptly bursting into tears for no discernible reason. I ran home as the bus approached the stop, and spent a good part of the morning at home. I don't remember if I ended up going to school that day, or if my mom called in sick for me.

The world right now is not making it easy to be kind or optimistic, even on a small, personal level. Yes, my feelings are shared by many current college students. I hate the president. I feel like the people running this country are going to run it into the ground. Capitalism sucks. But little things tear me down, too. My favorite TV show, *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*, was cancelled shortly after the season two finale aired. I cried and mourned for a few days. Every time I think about my beloved Dirk Gently, my heart hurts. I think the show was cancelled because BBC America didn't think it was as viable as shows like Doctor Who—even though I'm pretty sure it had an even bigger audience for season two. There was a Dirk Gently panel at San Diego Comic Con in the same hall as Doctor Who, which I think is generally reserved for shows that are going somewhere. In short, I believe that BBCE is full of cowards, and they broke my heart.

Back in the library, sipping hot cocoa and reading my book, I saw my new friend, Calvin. He was struggling like nobody's business. He'd been sitting at that table since before I'd arrived, and I hadn't seen him

put his pencil to the paper yet. He kept running fingers through this wavy brown hair. Honestly, it was a sharp look that I wanted to emulate. Oddly enough, Calvin, because of his short, thin build, reminded me of Elijah Wood, who played Todd Brotzman on *Dirk Gently*.

Calvin was facing a wall that was likely caused by one thing: math. I let some time pass, watching as the other people around us left. Finally, it was just us two on the supposedly quiet floor. We technically weren't supposed to talk, but there was no one else around, so I got his attention and asked him if he was okay.

He smiled at me, just like an optimist would, and told me it was calculus. Of course it was. Nothing could make a person's brain implode like finding a limit. I had barely managed to pass the Advanced Placement Calculus II class, though I absolutely did not pass the exam. It was completely my fault. I took calculus and statistics at the same time. Both of my teachers were wonderful and thorough educators, but two different math classes at the same time were too much for my brain to handle. I maxed out.

Calvin was smiling through the struggle. I believe in paying it forward, so I offered him one of my cookies. It had nuts in it, and I didn't know if he was allergic, but he seemed to like it and smiled at me before returning to the dreaded numbers. I don't normally like nuts in my cookies, but they contrasted well with the soft cookie.

The world sucks a lot, and right now it feels like we're rapidly descending into a nuclear war, or a national crisis, or some catastrophic cataclysmic thing. But there is still good: good people to rally around, good causes to fight for, good times yet to come. The good moments aren't always the big grand ones, like the commencements and the trans-Atlantic travel. Sometimes, they're the quiet, little moments. Smiles and shared commiseration and chocolate that lift those moments when all you want to do is crawl under your bed and sleep for a few years.

That day didn't end great for me, or maybe it was such a mix of good and bad that they cancelled each other out. I had to skip band because I needed a shower, but I got to skip band, which I complain about as much as I enjoy. I had takeout for dinner so I didn't have to make my own food (which, effort) and I didn't have to suffer through campus food (which, no). I passed out around 10pm because I was exhausted, and I slept so well, partially because I went to bed much earlier than I normally do. Maybe it's the optimist in me that believes it was a better day than it was. Being on my period really sucks, and being an optimist can be a crushing weight, but sometimes, there really are good people out there, strangers and friends, who make living just a little bit more pleasant. Especially when they give you free cookies to help ease life's struggles.

Writing Cursive In The Dust

by Judith M. Guenther-Adams

I was minding my Ps and Qs. There. I've said it. I've wanted to use that silly sentence for a long, long time. I'm a Handwriting Tutor, you see, and as one of the very last of the Boomers, it is a kick to drop an anachronism into the conversation and watch for reactions. Not that I get many. Reared on and by electronic devices, buffeted from any serendipitous occurrence, and cosseted from birth to grave, today's youth have pretty much scrubbed emotional response from their perfect little faces.

Actually, unlike many of my peers for whom the ice floes would have been the last great adventure had there been any ice floes, I've carved a nice little niche for myself as a tutor teaching cursive handwriting. Of course, handwriting hasn't been in an educational curriculum for most of my lifetime. Mention the Palmer Method or Zaner-Bloser script to anyone currently involved in education and, at best, one might get a faded glance of pity.

Today, even signatures are voice-imprinted; however, there is a certain class of folk, folk with credits and pretensions to culture, who feel that it is important for their offspring to learn to write. Many of them want only that their darlings learn to write their name in cursive. And, I have to admit, it does open virtual doors and rate an impressed nod of the head from a concierge when one signs on with a flourish.

Personally, I think, well, not to undermine my own livelihood, but the ability to write one's name in cursive is no more mastery of the form than "s'il vous plait" is a mastery of that lost language, French.

The better class buy in for the full course and believe me, it is not inexpensive. There is the matter of finding the blank paper and making the writing implements and the ink since they no longer are available commercially. Naturally, virtual writing is included in the instruction, but I hold to the classic view that handwriting must be mastered with paper and pen. And, it takes time. Goodness. Even my signature-only clients are with me for months.

Back in the day, teaching Latin would have been the equivalent of the work I do. Then, Latin was the primary dead language not used in any country on the planet but considered helpful in a variety of auxiliary ways to the overall development of an educated person. Of course, back then education primarily took place in buildings constructed for the purpose of teaching. There were classrooms peopled by a number of students and often under the tutelage of a single teacher, but I digress.

Today, there are a variety of psychologists/counselors/etc. who feel that writing cursive is useful in developing empathy and compassion. Something about the flowing nature of the activity, the fine motor development quite different from that developed in Game Instruction and Intellectual Programming, the visceral experience of transmitting thought to actual paper that one can hold, erase, spit on, whatever. Frankly, I never bothered to study the theory other than to memorize a few catch phrases that work to capture the interest (and the financial credits) of my clients' parents.

As a Boomer, I was becoming as rare as a wild predator and I had to scramble to find a way to make myself relevant in the world. Those few of us who ourselves have a fine hand and who caught the wave early (another anachronism) have secured our place on the planet for as long as our organ implants and our will hold out. Eager to give their offlings every advantage, the high-credit population clamor for our services. My reputation is good, and I am as busy as I choose to be.

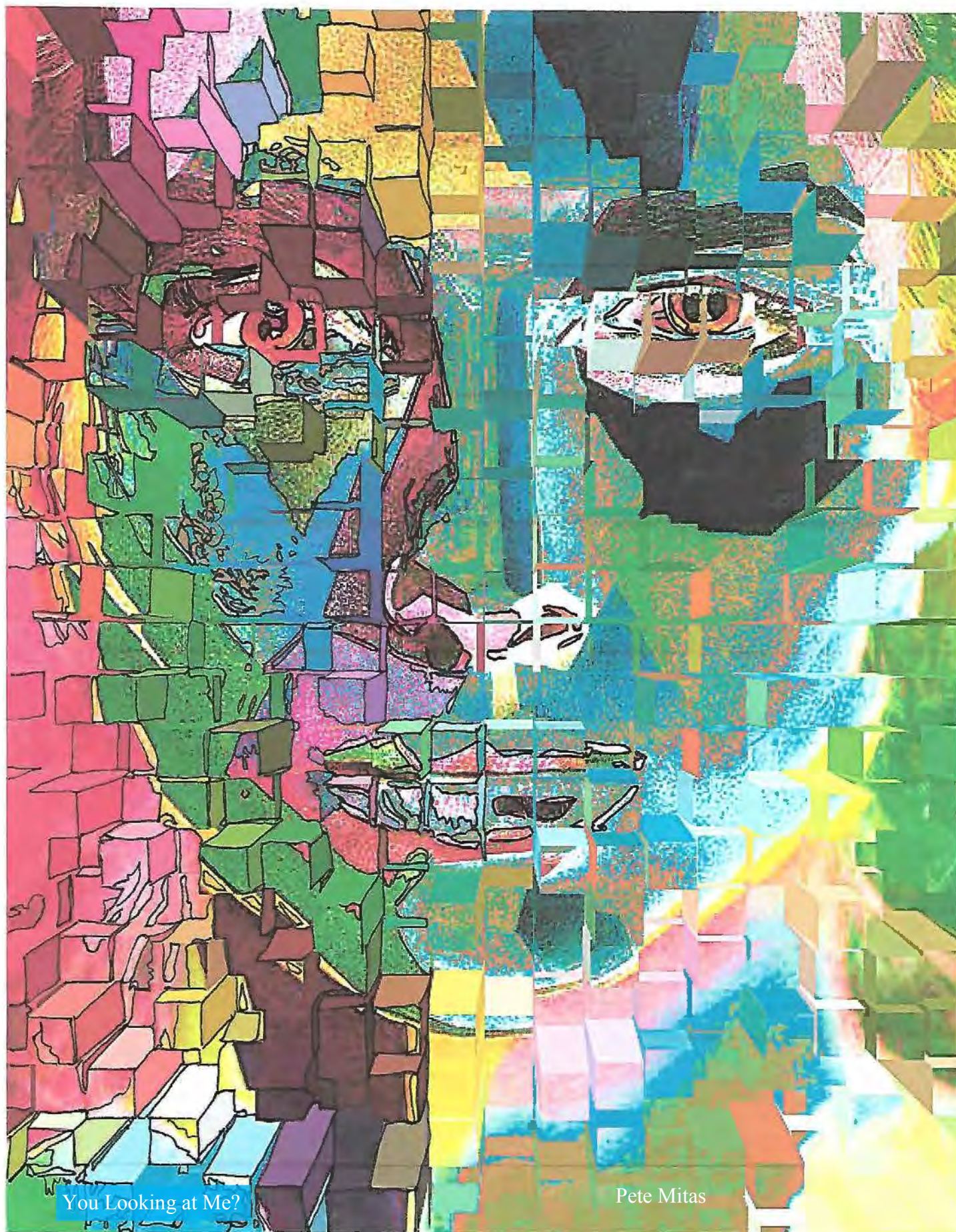
If writing cursive does indeed develop the fading qualities of compassion and empathy, I, quite frankly, have not seen it. Occasionally, I can charm my way into a smile, perhaps even a glimmer of interest about my past from my students, but more often they approach this piece of their education, as they do other components, with aloof disinterest. Some work hard and develop an excellent technical skill; other apply only the minimal effort needed to make a passable signature. In that sense, youth haven't changed in my long life.

An event not long ago shook me to the core and sent me into a spin of self-doubt and inner reflection on the wisdom of continuing—the very fact of which is evidence that I am indeed a Boomer and headed out the door. I happened to be at the residence of a very well-connected family unit, instructing their two darlings on the finer points of a capital "Q" when the ritual massacre of the last elephant alive was broadcast as a crowning achievement of the IHSC (International Human Safety Council). This event had been promoted across every social media platform for months. With the removal of this last massive wild predator, mankind finally would be able to roam anywhere on the planet free from fear of attack by animals of any kind. There was no mention that the elephant is an herbivore, and no acknowledgment that this beast had been bred, born, and reared in captivity. With large viewers naturally in every room, I could not escape the images and the pontificating.

While I should be used to these extinction events by now, I found my heart racing and my head exploded with blind stabs of acute pain. The children, however, barely looked up from their earnest efforts at "Q" while the elephant was injected with a lethal dose of something vile, slumped to its knees, and finally rolled to its side and exhaled rather loudly its final death rale. At that, the attending crowd, paid players to be sure, began a joyful chant, "It's extinct! It's extinct!" I recoiled in horror while my two charges concentrated on their errant "Qs", totally oblivious to the final passing of the world's largest land mammal.

So much for the tenderizing properties of cursive instruction. Not that I'd say a word to anyone about my opinions. This profession is my relevancy ticket to remaining in society. Just for the record, "minding one's P's and Q's" is significant in cursive instruction. For whatever reason, the muscle memory required to make these mirror image lower loop letters is extremely difficult for today's youth. Don't know why; don't care. An extra study session for my schedule and another financial credit for my account.

As I've missed so many elements of my early life that have passed from existence, I'll miss the elephant. Not like I miss my significant others, my own children, my parents, but in an oddly deeper, broader way. Like I miss the tiger, the lion, the wolf. And green. I miss green.



You Looking at Me?

Pete Mitas

Contributors

Jerry Allison says he is fascinated by the way the sunlight sets on the river near his home. “The best light is after the sun has already set, and the afterglow disperses along the water’s ripples. Every sunset is different, depending on the weather and the time of year. It brings me peace and the understanding that every evening will follow a new morning in my life.”

Sarah Allison describes the cover photo as “a fresh snowfall on Wright Library’s lawn where Snow White and her literary friends are just out of sight, peeping into the empty windows after an early closure.” Previously published in Transylvania University’s *The Transylvanian*, her photography has been featured in juried shows and exhibitions. When not photographing, she’s found with a cup of tea, a book, and her felines Ollie and Monty beside her. She is a Youth Services Associate at Wright Library.

Paul Arnold was born in Dayton and lives in Miamisburg. He is a Fine Arts graduate of the Ringling College of Art in Sarasota, Florida, and has been painting acrylic portraits for the past two years.

Kathy B. Austin's poetry has been included in the anthology, *From the Tower*, as well as two Wright Memorial Public Library anthologies. Her poems have appeared in *The Writing Path I* anthology published by the University of Iowa Press, the *Poppy Road Review*, and various local publications. She has been featured on 91.3 WYSO’s *Conrad’s Corner*.

Josh Bales is a writer and raconteur living in Dayton. His website is at www.joshbales.net.

Marietta Ball lives in Xenia, Ohio where she writes fiction and poetry. Her novels, *HORSES CAN SEE IN THE DARK* and *WHICH OF A WIND* are available on Amazon and CreateSpace. Her poetry has appeared in various publications and is sometimes featured on Conrad's Corner, the poetry spot out of WYSO in Yellow Springs.

Steven Bilancia moved to Dayton 12 years ago from New Jersey. He has worked in the art industry since 1999, and focuses on the fine arts in a variety of mediums, including color pencils and acrylic paints.

Cecile Cary (1938-2018) was an English professor and Shakespeare scholar at Wright State University for over 30 years. When she retired in 1999 she devoted her life to literature, the arts, and teaching. Her poetry reflects a deep intellectual curiosity and love of nature, and her poems were published in many local journals. She was an active and beloved member of Wright Library Poets.

Amy Dallis is a lifelong Daytonian with a passion for writing, visual arts, and improving the lives of older adults through her work in the senior living industry. Amy’s writing has appeared in literary journals and her artwork has been exhibited locally and nationally. She is an ardent fan of Emily Dickinson and Impressionist art and is powered by coffee and sunshine.

Mike Daugherty focuses on all aspects of history near and far through MikeDoesHistory.com and other social media platforms. A local history buff, the Wright Brothers have been a recurring topic. His poem was written expressly for this publication.

Robert Flavin is a 1968 graduate of Loyola University Chicago and served four years in the military. He taught high school mathematics for 32 years and then taught darkroom photography as an Adjunct Instructor of Art at Sinclair Community College. He is currently Adjunct Instructor of Mathematics at the University of Dayton. Robert and his wife Lynn live in Washington Township.

Bill Franz created his piece for CareSource’s new building as an abstract take on some of his well-known Dayton scenes. In retirement he has become a volunteer photographer, doing photo projects for the Humane Society and for almost two dozen other organizations. His FaceBook page is Dayton at Work and Play.

David Lee Garrison was named Ohio Poet of the Year in 2014 for his book, *Playing Back in the DC Metro*. The title poem was featured by Poet Laureate Ted Koose on his website, www.americanlifeinpoetry.org, and was read on the BBC in London. His latest book is *Carpeing the Diem: Poems About High School* (Dos Madres Press).

Gerald Greene is the author of poetry collection *Kaleidoscope* (CreateSpace, 2017) and *Turning Losing Forex Trades into Winners* (John Wiley & Sons, 2008). His blog is “Short Stories Rated G” on Facebook. His writings have been published in *Guide Magazine*, *Insight Magazine*, *Compass Magazine*, *The Flash Fiction Press*, *Deronda Review* and *A Story in 100 Words*.

O. Ervin Gruia moved to the Dayton area in 2016, and was captured by the audacity of the Wright Brothers to ignore conventional wisdom and innovate. The Wright Brother Series of paintings are done in focus-point impressionistic style, braiding his passion for impasto in the sky and sand, with an object of interest brought into focus with realistic brushwork.

Judith M. Guenther-Adams says, “Written some years ago, this story no longer seems like pure science fiction.”

Robert J. Guizzo recently retired after teaching for 43 years at Oakwood High School. The inspiration for his poem combines the Adirondack trail at Hills and Dales Metropark that he hikes with his wife, a presentation at Wright Library by WSU professor David Schmidt on the history of Hills and Dales, and a map he showed, circa 1917, annotated with the words “Polo Field.”

Jennifer Hambrick is a Pushcart nominee and the author of the poetry collection *Unscathed*. Hundreds of her poems have appeared in the *Chiron Review*, the *Santa Clara Review*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, the *San Pedro River Review*, *POEM*, *The Main Street Rag*, and elsewhere. She has received awards from the Ohio Poetry Association, the Haiku Society of America, Tokyo’s NHK World TV, and in many competitions. Her blog is Inner Voices at jenniferhambrick.com.

John Highley loves to write poetry and short stories and draw.

Betsy Hughes taught English at The Miami Valley School for 30 years. Her first book of sonnets, *Breaking Weather* (National Federation of State Poetry Societies Press) was winner of the 2013 Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition. Her recently published

chapbook of sonnets is *Bird Notes* (Finishing Line Press, 2017). Betsy enjoys participation in the Wright Library Poets.

Samuel Huntington says his poem is about “the love of movies and the necessity to escape into the wonder and majesty of the imaginary world.”

Susan Iwinski attends the Wright Library’s poetry group and says she’s “inspired by the people and the poetry.”

Sara Kaushal writes for the blog daytonunknown.wordpress.com with her best friend, Bethany Kmeid. Her essay is an adaptation of one of her favorite posts.

Bethany Kmeid is the media manager for daytonunknown.wordpress.com, which is written with her best friend Sara Kaushal. She’s lived in the Dayton area for over 25 years, and loves the rich history of the area.

Pete Mitas was found muttering to the Queen of Clubs, he began playing with words and phrases while waiting for the bus, driven by Gus, the lip-reading pelican. He blogs at petemitas.wordpress.com and remains disappointed that Gus left the RTA and opened a Dairy Queen in the Bronx.

Gary Mitchner is Professor Emeritus of English and the Poet Laureate of Sinclair Community College where he was chair of the English Department and taught for forty years. He directed the Writers’ Workshop for many years. One of his poems was included in *The Best American Poetry*, 1991, edited by Mark Strand. He has published in *The Paris Review*, *The New Republic*, *Shenandoah*, *Western Humanities Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, *Flights*, and many others. Currently, he teaches poetry classes at University of Dayton Lifelong Learning.

Juan Morales was born in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico. Having grown up in the American South, the Caribbean, and the Midwest, his love for cultural diversity grew immensely. Juan enjoys the artistic exchange between experiences, family, and environment. Juan is involved in the community as a volunteer, including volunteering at Wright Library, and is an excellent high school student.

Onita Morgan-Edwards received a Bachelor of Arts in Management from Antioch University Midwest and is currently working toward an MFA in Creative Writing at Ashland University. She facilitates a writing group with juvenile detainees. Onita is a widow and mother of three who lives in Dayton with her two youngest children.

Frank Pauer was born in Dayton, and spent three years in advertising art and many more as a newspaper staff artist. He began designing pages due to how badly his drawings were displayed, and then went on to do both at the University of Dayton. After designing the UD’s alumni magazine for the past 27 years, he is enjoying his first year of retirement.

Brandon Poa works in both 35mm and medium format film photography. He has been exploring the grey area between being a skilled craftsman and an artist. Before returning to Dayton to attend UD, he spent the last thirteen years living in South East Asia.

Pedro Rivera’s personal work and vision can be described as spiritual and mythical, expressed within the realm of abstract expressionism and contemporary realism. His work can be seen across the country in museums, exhibits, corporations, and private residences. He has spent many years living in Dayton, and will soon be moving to the Milo Artist Community in Columbus.

Tariq Shaikh shows the world what his eye sees and how he sees it—through the camera lens!

Riley Smith is a senior English Literary Studies major at Otterbein University. Her desire to write has led her to try many different genres; from journalist with her high school newspaper, to historical essays, and now many critical analysis. For her piece, she drew from an experience she had at school as well as her experiences growing up in the Dayton area.

Gabriella Stauffer is a student at Oakwood High School. She is involved in arts of all kinds—visual, performing, music, and writing both poetry and prose.

Paula Unrau describes her work as “rooted in the everydayness of the world and in the geographies I have considered home: the Great Plains, the Himalayan mountains, the dirt of central Texas, and now Ohio. From these places I strive toward the numinous. When I have stronger stuff to say than I know how, I visit the ancient Greeks who provide a terrain for the heart that a girl from the Midwest might not have inhabited. Sometimes even the prairie is not enough.”

Bill Vernon says that writing is his therapy, along with exercising outdoors and international folk dancing. Five Star Mysteries published his novel *Old Town*, and his poems, stories and nonfiction have appeared in a variety of magazines and anthologies. Recent publications include stories in *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Bull*, *Chat*, *An Asian Literary Journal*, *The MOON Magazine*, *Subprimal Poetry Art*, *Indiana Voice Journal*, and *Entropy*.

Brittany Webb writes her way through the details of the little things between the big things—like conversations with chickens and children.

Anthony Wenzler loves history and telling stories, and he’s combined the two in this story.

Caleb Wilcoxson is a junior in high school. He enjoys building computers and all things tech, and likes learning other languages and about other cultures. He also enjoys writing and drawing.

John Wiley has written three novels and one novella, which were either traditionally or self-published. In his free time he likes to go to concerts and hang out at the park with his dog. His story is a reworking of a longer story he wrote in college before coming out. He says it’s a fantasy version of what he wished his high school experience had been.

Jeff Wilson is a life-long Dayton resident. He self-published two books on Ohio’s unique and diverse history called *Ohio Legends I* and *Ohio Legends II*.