



the monitor

september 2014

dear reader,



Thanks for picking up this month's issue of The Monitor. I have a five things I want to say before you start reading.

First, due to low amounts of \$\$\$, The Monitor has a relatively small print run – 200 copies. We currently receive no university funding and fund ourselves entirely through ads and donations. Keeping this in mind, I encourage you not to throw away this issue when you're finished with it – leave it in a newspaper rack, leave it in a classroom, give it to a friend, or maybe keep it in your personal Monitor Library. Anything to make our copies last as long as possible and reach as many people as we can is great.

Second, we are selling personal ads! If you want to say anything within 100 characters – whether it's your twitter, phone number, or just some anonymous quip you want to make or some joke you read on tumblr, for just \$1 you can get it printed in The Monitor. Just donate \$1 on our donate page trumanmonitor.wordpress.com/donate and in the "Add special instructions to the seller:" section add the text you want in your personal ad. Alternatively, look for us on the quad or at Monitor events where you can pay cash.

Third, if you are feeling more generous, you can use that page to donate any amount of money to us.

Fourth, The Monitor is made up of submissions from you, our beloved readers! Please email anything you want us to publish to trumanmonitor@gmail.com. Submission guidelines are on the opposite page.

Fifth, if you're interested in joining our team, there are no applications or auditions! Just show up to our meetings in BH262 at 6PM on Thursdays.

Thanks for reading!

Alex Wennerberg

Us

alex wennerberg would fill a pool with money to give to the monitor
sebastian maldonado would fill a pool with pudding
suzie nahach would fill a pool with pillow pets
natalie welch would fill a pool with jello and gift cards
trista sullivan would fill a pool with promo codes for papa johns that work
krishna ganim would fill a pool with little squishy scented balls
lauren kellest would fill a pool with Carls
mel aholt would fill a pool with pizza and mcdonalds french fries
jojo moorhouse would fill a pool with campbell's tomato soup
will chaney would fill a pool with water (with a small concentration of chlorine)

submissions. social media.

Art, Comics, Photography

Due to publication limitations, our art and photography is printed relatively small and in black-and-white (except in the online version of the publication). Keep this in mind when submitting your piece. If we like your piece enough, it may end up on the cover! Let us know if you don't want that.

Writing

The Monitor encourages submissions of original articles, essays, fiction, and opinions. Due to space limitations, please limit articles to 1300 words. If you would like to publish something longer than that, send us an email and we'll let you know if and how we can accommodate your piece. For formatting reasons, please submit all text as an attached Word attachment. Include a short one or two sentence bio with your submission.

Poetry

Let us know if you have any specific printing or formatting requests with your poetry. For formatting reasons, please submit all text as an attached Word attachment.

Submissions should include your name (anonymous or pseudonymous submissions are also acceptable) and should be sent by email to:

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Rich People Should Pay Your Tuition

by Sam Rogers

In no other country do university graduates leave their *alma mater* owing on average over \$26,000 USD. Among other failures, the lack of an adequately-funded educational system makes the US the laughingstock of states with comparable wealth. The fact that most of us struggle to afford not only health-care and housing but a level of education as essential as high school makes our problem clear: rich Americans have made the mistake of believing their own bullshit.

In the US, we see the starvation-wage service workforce and unemployment lines swelling with citizens who can't afford to get degrees. Businesses looking for highly-skilled employees pressure the government to allow them more visas so they can siphon workers from countries that better cover education. Our universities are useless in addressing this, too busy digging deeper into debt to build another athletic complex they'll pay back by increasing tuition. While elements of this phenomenon appear in other Western countries, their social safety nets better maintain the political illusion of the middle class, keeping the worst suffering far from home. You can't separate this difference in who bears the expense of education from the difference in how these upper classes think.

Aristocrats in the strongholds of social democracy admit, at least to themselves, that for centuries they've lined their pockets by stealing from everyone else and murdering those who objected. In the US, the rich eschew bribing us and pretend instead the country wasn't built by and for slaveowners and thieves. Wealthy Americans boast that they made their fortunes themselves in the same way children hang their drawings on the fridge without thinking about where paper and crayons come from.

In place of books and bread, America's idle parasites offer hope. They disguise their PR team as the economics department and

fill public space with images of luxury in hopes that you will dream of finding yourself among them. They give us delusional racist caricatures of drug-addled welfare queens, teach us to feel ashamed of needing help, and lead us to blame ourselves when they eat our piece of the pie we made. Nothing appeals to them more than you voting against making them pay their fair share in an effort to protect a fortune you will never have.

The crustiest of the upper crust would love to convince you not only that they *earned* their status, but that you could too. You, the student desperate to find a minimum-wage summer job so you can maybe afford \$500 for textbooks in the fall. You, the third of six kids searching for all the ways you can sign your life away to debt to finish your nursing degree. You, who have fought a battle against mental illness and emerged more or less in one piece to find you've lost your scholarships because of your GPA. You can be the next Richard Branson, if only you believe in hard work and ignore the millions of hardworking people who can't pay back their loans.

While they dress it up nice in humanistic language, the wealthy in more comfortable countries bear the cost of social programs like education without too much complaint because they understand the system that made them rich. Knowing capitalism cannot function without poverty and unemployment, they hide a larger portion of the suffering they create in the "developing" world. They export jobs like our own business titans, but they know to buy off the people whose jobs they're taking. They know the post-manufacturing industries that sustain colonizer countries like the US or France require accessible higher education to remain competitive. As long as we have a capitalist system, economic opportunity for the ma-

jority exists at the discretion of the wealthy. The silver lining, when we understand this, is that the wealthy exist at the discretion of the majority.

As students, we hope a job with a livable salary will follow graduation. Any job we may get only exists because our work makes more money for bosses and investors than they give us for doing it. In the US, the people who lay claim to the wealth we create think they're the ones doing us a favor. They expect us to feel grateful for the opportunity to fatten their wallets, even as they steal millions from our pockets. They expect us to pay for decent education ourselves and complain when we can't, farmers blaming the seeds for a bad harvest when they never tilled the soil.

Americans who suggest that people with money should pay for stuff get accused of "class warfare" for having the audacity to consider their own survival. The pundits pushing this schoolyard slander whine about demands for luxuries like "a living wage" and toothless unions that lobby to destroy the freedom of spoiled yacht jockeys using a fraction of the money any respectable corporation budgets for buying members of Congress. Like junkyard dogs begging for table scraps, they attack us for having human needs their sponsors don't care about.

Their sponsors, however, *should* care about those needs. No one benefits more from your education than the people who hire you when you finish. As long as they're getting the better end of the employment deal, they owe you a favor or two – for their sake more than yours. They should cover at least your tuition, if not your room, board, and books. If they continue to rip you off on both sides of the diploma, you might start thinking something more dangerous than "college should be free", like "rich people sure look a lot alike" or "maybe we can't trust these jerks with all those resources".

Computer science major Sam Rogers is a member of TSU's newly-founded chapter of Students for a Democratic Society.

IS SCOTLAND OUT OF THE UK, ALMOST, AND WILL FERGUSON INJUSTICE BE A CERTAINTY HERE IN KIRKSVILLE IF THE LOVE OF GUNS LOCALLY GOES ON?

by Larry Isles

In one paragraph, I want to provoke you in what a rather too arrogant History prof friend calls my "troublemaker," old gadfly way, about 2 matters you daftly are, alas, not being encouraged to even think about by either the US TV media or *The Sindex* local one. And, indeed, I assure you, in other lands such equivalent sources ARE getting you to think about them, not alone either in obscure bolshy, dry texts. But, citizenness majority Trumanites and Rednecks guys fiercely alike, in major sources, in SCOTLAND, this September by the time you have perused this piece, 16 year-olds and women voters will either have upset English home counties rule since bankers bribed the 1707 Scots of their entitlement to self-rule till this century. Or they will have narrowly failed to win the referendum because of legitimate fears for their savings and pensions or even NATO safety if Obama, Clinton warnings for the status quo prevail. Here in Kirksville, over-armed, 4,000 dollars a year maintenance gun outfits like TSU's DPS will also debate exhaustively deny any inflammatory comparisons ever with riotous "black" FERGUSON. But, in both cases, folks, deny their suppression of debate, for people can and must democratically change, or what else are liberal arts about in real debate change, most historically?

THE SENSUOUS, COSMOPOLITAN SO-CALLED FICTION OF MID-WESTERN ESCAPEE US WRITER, FEMINIST DR. DIANE RANSELL

by Larry Isles

An unfashionable context-setting declaration of vested interest, first. Ransdell, who is a Rhetoric/English University of Arizona teacher with now 3 full-length novels to her creditworthiness, and accomplished musician, world-traveler status to boot, is a former US history student of mine at Urbana University of Illinois, whose section genius so dazzled me that for the sole time in my teaching career I gladly conformed with all As or Bs in grades. Her 3 novels are *Mariachi Murder*, ISBN 978-1-61009-056-8, out last May 2013, *Thai Twist*, ISBN 1-62827-908-7, same year later on, and the 2002 earlier pioneeress of them all, the Grecian-islands set *Amirosian Nights*, ISBN 0-88739-376-4, the last also introducing an Amazonian alter ego, travel-rover Rachel, hungry for topography as much as muscular fellas with local cultural savvy charmfulness.

Literally, they bristle with acute, Henry James style insights into different cultures, including in MM Mexican LA noir underworld clubs, not conventional “ugly” dull American and male locales as James rightly detested as too predominant even in his pre-WWI own day. In TT her other alter ego, the more careful, even introverted heroine Gina carries on this self-exposé tradition to the sinuous, the sensual temple and elephantine realities, to such a generous extremity, that she gets embroiled in a family feud, questioning the superficial complacencies of both Thai and US over-assimilationist domesticity alike. In AN, too, Rachel finds her carnality enjoyments as a vibrant young American running right up into the

harsh, near gigolo-only tourist dependency of locals in a manner that forces all alike of we readers to interrogate notions of landscape and beautiful people complacencies. Fascinatingly, little of this profundity is preachy because Ransdell’s writing style is precision hard, bearing all the hallmarks, thank god, of not being over-influenced by Iowa-style College Creative Writers’ insularity of just upper class male focus. Instead, she concentrates, almost Thurber-style on the humour, similar to Walter Mitty style of her MM bar player stumbling upon fleshpot after dames galore by his trying to be too kind to an even worst such dalliances-entangling boss. Nor, either is Ransdell into gore and easy-ways out, all traits current US/UK fiction all too non-complexly, boringly relies uneducatively upon perhaps. In TT an apparently repellent Aunt turns out to be, herself, a sad victim of economic considerations ruining her siblings own romantic happiness and hopes. Buddhism or any other insular religions in her novels are, yes, respected, but soon the rough if beautiful topography suggests a turbulence that can hurt even the toughest mid-westerner escapee, the real person she has partly in composite drawn. So, how does Ransdell do it, as, like her seductive, yet harmonious music, she would and does deny too seriously over-burdened autobiographical intent, seemingly preferring her pink hacienda maison, her cats and her swimming pools to any hassle. Well, since I now hope, MONITOREE, to have your interest firmly hooked, dare I suggest, its her social awareness in self-discipline. Allied to her ultra-liberal own politics,

she writes even rigidly by what she SEES as much as by what rather un-Americanly she inner-emotes. That’s why, watch out studiously in her sometimes too-lonely “fiction” for her airport, craggy coastal departure scenes, since she uses observation before inner reflection, what many non-college people do in living ‘real,’ their her/history or lives. This observatory quality finally should bait you to read not only her 3 novels of prose but her poetry also, as non-over moralistically, it’s how we unbombingly Anglo-Americans might learn to love the different elsewhere upon our fractious cosmos, and that job is liberal arts worthy of YOU, folks.

Music Review: cable tv by Josh Brumfield

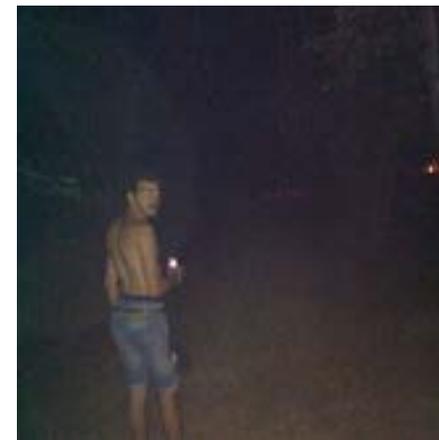
by Molly Cypress and Oggy Amethyst

“So, I’m Josh Brumfield.” In a baggy green sweater and navy baseball cap, he seats himself with his guitar near the entrance of the Downtown Café. “And, uh, I’m gonna play you some songs if that’s alright.”

Josh is a sophomore Comm major who plays guitar and writes songs. His most recent album, *cable tv*, is available on Bandcamp. It’s the kind of music that leaves you thinking and days later, the melodies will sneak back into your head. His lyrics are spare but potent; the songs all clocking in under two and a half minutes. Nevertheless, each feels complete.

He doesn’t waste time on dramatic high notes or matching his clothes, but instead sticks to what he knows best:

The lyrics are drawn from personal narratives, universalized through abstract poetic language. They don’t always follow a strictly logical progression, but the phrases build upon each other to evoke an emotion in the listener.



His voice floats over his intricate melodies, strings fingerpicked softly as so many lullabies.

The opening track, “hermit thief from central maine” is named after an article he read about just that—a man who spent 27 years living as a hermit in the Maine wilderness. However, it’s completely unrelated to the lyrics. The song as a whole performs a balancing act between lighthearted and anxious. Coupling lines like “the water’s to my ankles and this room is just a little bit too small,” with a cheerful melody, the result is a beautifully paired audio-collage of melancholy and contentment.

With subsequent tracks like “please don’t lose your mind”, about a cautious conversation with a friend, and the introspective “sun/moon”, the album possesses an overall theme of the power of thought, not to mention kickassery.

Josh Brumfield has knack for raw, understated brilliance-- placed together as what became “cable tv”, these five songs portray the world as confusing, sad, and ultimately beautiful.

Listen to “cable tv” and Josh’s two prior albums at joshbrumfield.bandcamp.com.

If you’ve released an album that you’d like Molly and Oggy to review, send us an email at trumanmonitor@gmail.com

The Specter of Communism in Ferguson

by William Chaney

“And the jobs don’ never pay enough,
So the rent always be late
Can you relate?
We living in a police state.”
-Dead Prez, “Police State”

CNN, Fox, and MSNBC usually open up their discussion on Ferguson with descriptions of racist cops toting Call of Duty-style riot shields and launching tear gas into unarmed crowds. But I will not complain about racism, police brutality, or Al Sharpton’s public speaking abilities. Instead, this article is here to open up a discussion that has been missing in this country for almost 100 years: how capitalism contributes to incidents like those in Ferguson. My take may not be in the bourgeois news, but it will give you something to think about.

Capitalism is a system with two roles. One role is called the “capitalist.” His/her lines usually sound like this:

CAPITALIST: “Hello there, unemployed person! Come operate my factory or office, and in return I’ll give you enough money to live off of. Sound like a deal?”

The other role is the “Worker.” His/her lines sound something like this:

WORKER: “Well, I have a family to feed and a rent to pay, so I guess I’ll work for you.”

At the end of the day, the worker gives the capitalist 100% of the product that he/she created during the day in return for a wage. As we’ll see, the wage is worth less money than the product he/she produced.

The worker’s wage is enough money to pay for all the goods and services needed to survive in our society: food, shelter, some money for that Wiz Khalifa concert,

and maybe a lil extra to save. The basket of goods and services that keeps the worker alive in our society is the value of his/her labor. The capitalist takes the product given to him/her from the worker and sells it to make a profit, and thus everyone benefits. Sound fair? On the surface everything looks dandy.

But if we look at the situation a little more closely, we find that a sneaky trick has been pulled on the worker. The most important thing to remember is that the wages given to the worker are not automatically equal in value to the product given to the capitalist. In order for the capitalist to make a profit, he/she must sell the product for more than it costs to produce. Granted, the capitalist plays a very important role in his/her business. He/she must organize the workers, risk money, and make company decisions. However, none of these roles create value-value being the amount of labor it takes to produce the product that the company sells. The worker is the one running the factories and offices and getting the “work” done. Therefore, the worker creates the company’s product and is the source of the company’s profit. In light of this, it makes sense that a capitalist will never hire a worker unless he/she produces more value for the capitalist than the wage is worth. For example, if your wage is \$20 per hour, you must give your capitalist at least \$20.01 per hour with the product you produce. Otherwise, you are “unproductive” and will be fired or laid off. Some economists call the difference between the value of the product and the wage “exploitation.”

However, it is still possible to be exploited but have rising wages. This happened during most of the 20th century: both wages and profits increased in the United States. But something interesting happened in 1973...

Since 1973, the United States’ productivity kept going up, i.e. the worker kept giving more to the capitalist as always. However, the worker’s wages have not been increasing.

Why is this? We don’t have the time to completely dive into this topic right now, but the short answer is that the capitalist class has figured out how to keep the wages low with a variety of underhanded maneuvers. For example, the practice of “outsourcing,” moving jobs to different regions/countries because of the cost of labor, is one method used by the capitalists to keep our wages down and unemployment high (South Park recognizes outsourcing: “dey took ‘r jerbs!”). Ferguson will help us illustrate this point.

The most significant part of Ferguson’s economy is the headquarters of energy giant Emerson Electric, who (remember, corporations are people now) has called Ferguson his/her home since the 1940s. Despite having over 140,000 employees in the world, only 1,300 jobs are still in Ferguson and less than 30,000 are still in the US. The minimum wage in Missouri, \$7.35/hour, is much higher than in India (\$0.28/hour), Keyna (\$0.25/hour), or Bangladesh (\$40 per month).

Sound like a conspiracy? In 2010, Emerson CEO (the capitalist in our play) David Farr declared, “I’m not going to hire anybody in the United States. I’m moving.” Where is he running? To places “where the government welcomes you.” In other words, places where the government looks the other way when wages get slashed in half or the local union needs a good beating. In capitalism, capitalists can legally outsource our jobs without our consent as workers. And the question is not even one of greed or desire: Farr must outsource in order to stay in business because of the iron forces of competition.

And outsource they do, keeping our wages stagnant or lower, but profits higher and higher. Because of these systemic trends, inequality is building to an all time high. As the Occupy movement brought to our atten-

tion, 1% of Americans “earn” 40% of the income. What can history teach us about wealth disparities and public reaction?

During the Great Depression, Americans didn’t simply loot and pillage like in Ferguson. We organized. From the help of our very visible Communist and Socialist Parties, labor unions, and critical culture we were able to come together as a unified force and tell Congress what we needed. The Roosevelt Administration did give bailouts, but not to private banks, General Motors, or other capitalists. On the contrary, the United States actually helped its people with publically funded jobs, the Social Security program, and other forms of assistance.

When riots broke out in Ferguson the only aid provided by the federal government came in the form of police officers wildly wielding assault rifles, helicopters, and mine-resistant trucks! And while law and order are important to preserve, especially for the capitalists that own private property in Ferguson, no attempt has been or likely will be made to directly help the victims of our economic system.

You might think that this is an isolated incident, and strange economic concepts don’t really matter back home. But the reality is that Ferguson levels of income inequality and unrest infect the entire nation, from Kansas City to Columbia to even Kirksville. The most important lesson to take from this is that **THERE IS NOTHING SPECIAL ABOUT FERGUSON, MISSOURI.** It’s hard to take the first step, but if we don’t begin having difficult conversations, Ferguson won’t be the only town with violent uprisings. Capitalism is not as eternal, natural, or unquestionable as the people in power would like us to believe. Those at the bottom, and even what is left of our “middle class” are angry at something, even if they don’t yet call it “capitalism.”

William Chaney has been facebook friends with Alex Wennerberg for 4 years

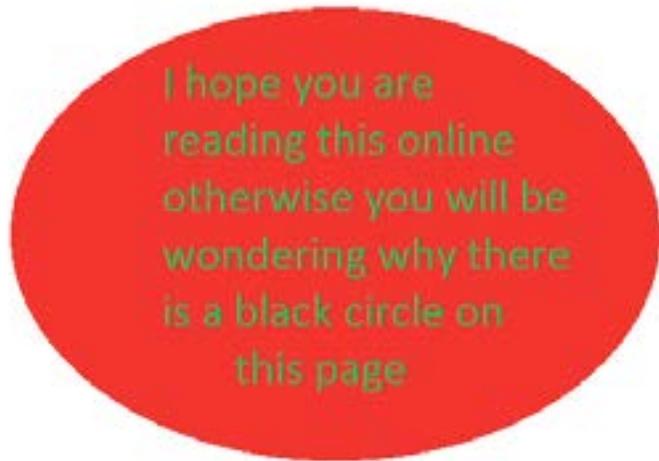
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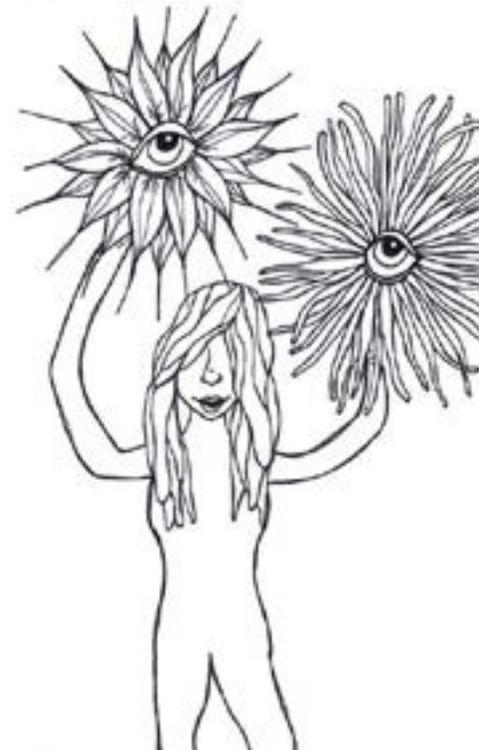
Roxanna Chong



Trista Sullivan



Max Highsmith



Kirsten Benson



Lauren Baker



kinda spacey

Algorithm

by Marisa Gearin

Mary and Vincent married in the spring; her bouquet was full of daffodils and tulips. On weekend nights Vincent tried out new recipes from fancy cookbooks, and they'd light a candle during dinner and whisper dreams across the table about the family they hoped to build.

These conversations petered out over the months and years as Mary continued to not be pregnant. Until, one day, she was. Three seasons later, the doctor delivered the baby, looked to Vincent in confusion, and said, "This baby is made of coffee grinds." Vincent looked to Mary. She shrugged. "Yes," Vincent said. "Our baby is made of coffee grinds."

They named her Camille and she started to grow, as children tend to do. She blurbled their names and in no time at all was starting school and playing soccer. She played the cello and gave off a not-unpleasant scent of freshly-ground coffee wherever she went.

One night Camille sat before the mirror in her room, braiding her dark brown hair. Mary came in and sat beside her at the foot of the bed.

"Mom?" Camille said. "Do you know why I'm made of coffee grinds?"

"Sorry, honey, I have no idea," Mary said.

"That's okay."

"They may offer college scholarships for that."

"You're right. I should look into it." Camille said.

As it turns out, there weren't any scholarships for being made from coffee grinds, but it made for an interesting admissions essay. Camille went to school, got a job, got married, had kids, and her great-granddaughter Suzanne was made of yogurt.

Marisa Gearin is a sophomore Creative Writing major and her glasses are not fake. They just look fake because they're so big

Love Triangle

by Nixi Schroeder

"I find you attractive," remarked Obligatory Hero.

"I find you attractive as well," replied Obligatory Heroine One, exhibiting the symptoms of anxiety which are stereotypically associated with feminine emotional distress.

"Shall we engage in the salivary exchange of various pheromones and proteins?" asked Obligatory Hero, reveling in his personal array of various stereotypically masculine characteristics.

"Alas, no!" replied Obligatory Heroine One, exhibiting literal distress, "for although your various stereotypically masculine characteristics appeal to my heterosexual leanings, I fear that you are lacking in the strong moral timbre which I find desirable in a mate."

"Ah," countered Obligatory Hero, "But secretly, it is my lack of strong moral timbre which you find most appealing, as that is my most stereotypically masculine characteristic."

"I must concede this," replied Obligatory Heroine One, "for, despite my prior denial thereof, I find it to be an accurate statement."

"Shall we commence with the aforementioned salivary exchange of pheromones and proteins, then?" suggested Obligatory Hero, typically.

"Why yes, I believe we shall," agreed Heroine One. Heroine One and Hero then proceeded to exchange salivary pheromones, much to their mutual delight.

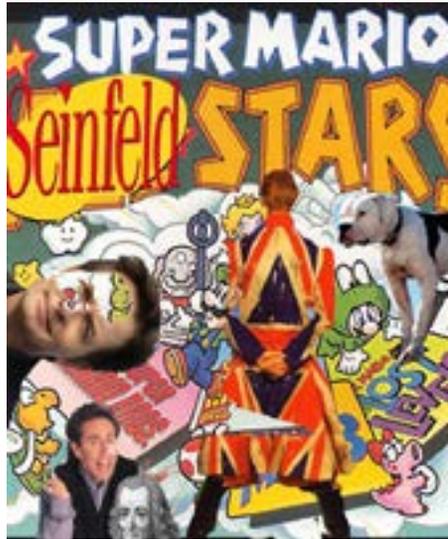
From a distance, Heroine Two witnessed the entire interlocution.

"Drat! I, too, desired to engage in the exchange of salivary pheromones with Hero!" she exclaimed, dismayed.

Heroine Two then proceeded to burn Hero's house to the ground, after which she got str8 krUnk & f3Lt h3llA b3tt3R

Seinfeld's Republic Play in One Act

by Chris Sotraidis



The year is 2045, and it has been 5 years since the dawn of technological singularity. The electromagnetic-plasma super-being, which calls itself Super Mario All-Stars, has deemed the human race a minor hindrance to its inevitable conquest of the universe. Seeking to eliminate humanity without being inhumane, Super Mario designs a new television network in 0.0001 milliseconds, and consequently causes the entire human race to voluntarily die-off watching the most unimaginably fantastic prime-time lineup the universe has ever known. Seeking a humorous replacement for the 15 billion people that have just left, Super Mario spends 0.01 milliseconds and materializes a floating Tom's Restaurant, one mile directly above the Bermuda Triangle. The restaurant appears exactly as it did in the 1997 season of Seinfeld, complete with a 1997 Jerry Seinfeld that wholeheartedly believes he is in the

middle of shooting his greatest episode yet. Jerry is forced to spend his rematerialized eternity sitting with Voltaire, David Bowie, and Chance- the American Bulldog voiced by Michael J. Fox in the 1993 Disney classic, Homeward Bound.

The scene opens 0.01 milliseconds after Super Mario All-Stars materializes Tom's Restaurant. The four comrades are sitting at the iconic restaurant booth, with Jerry and Chance sitting on one side, and Voltaire and David Bowie on the other. David Bowie is dressed exactly as he appears on the cover of his 1997 album, Earthling. They have just received their order, which is exactly what they would have ordered had they been given the option. We arrive in medias res, which holds little meaning given that temporality has been removed from this plain of existence.

JERRY: A Reuben on dark rye? I asked for marble rye. **MARBLE!**

BOWIE: Well, I don't recall ordering a plate of red-bell peppers and a glass of milk, but it's certainly a delightful throwback to my Diamond Dog days. Jerry, I will gladly eat your sandwich if you're going to sit there all day and complain. All the madmen.

JERRY: Complain? Oh I'm going to complain. Waitress, where is the waitress?!

(A waitress materializes in front of the booth, causing the four patrons to collectively gasp)

ALL: *GASP*

WAITRESS: I'm sorry Jerry, but we're waiting on a fresh batch of marble rye to cool down. It's **FRESH** out of the oven.

JERRY: How long until you can make me a proper Reuben? I'm dying here! Dying!

WAITRESS: You know the rules. Tom's Restaurant exists on a separate plain of existence, and Super Mario All-Stars decided that the temporal dimension simply wasn't humorous enough.

JERRY: Temporal dimensions? Super Mario? I've been coming to this restaurant every week for the last 5 years, and I've never experienced service so terrible.

WAITRESS: If you just give us a few minutes a fresh Reuben will be right out.

JERRY: Right, but if time isn't passing that means you'll never get me a fresh Reuben.

WAITRESS: Correct.

JERRY: So why are we having this conversation?

WAITRESS: Because you wanted to, so I materialized to humor you. I didn't have to appear.

JERRY: What a waste of time! A waste!
(cue laugh-track)

WAITRESS: Jerry, no time has passed since we've begun this conversation. It only feels like time is passing. As soon as the four of you finish your meal and conversation, the simulation resets and we do this all over again, only slightly differently every time.

JERRY: And each time I get a Reuben on dark rye? I'm losing my mind here. Losing it! This episode isn't turning out like I envisioned at all! Where's Larry? Where's George?

WAITRESS: Sometimes the simulation puts the sandwich on 12-grain.

VOLTAIRE: You know, most 12-grain bread actually contains rye flour and malt, so you shouldn't get upset about the simu--

JERRY: (interrupts) Don't tell me what to get upset about, Voltaire! I'm forced to spend the rest of my existence cyclically dissatisfied with my meal. At least you got your coffee

and pickles like you asked! This is the very definition of tragedy.

VOLTAIRE: Maybe if you weren't so picky you'd have a better time. It's not like the rest of us are particularly enjoying listening to you complain about the same thing over and over again.

BOWIE: Wait, I don't recall hearing Jerry complain about this. Has this happened before?

WAITRESS: Yes. Countless times.

BOWIE: How many times is countless?

WAITRESS: Given that I also reset as soon as you four leave Tom's Restaurant, I am unsure.

VOLTAIRE: What if we decide to stay at the restaurant?

WAITRESS: Impossible. The four of you inevitably come to the consensus to leave, although the reasons to leave are slightly different in every scenario, presumably.

CHANCE: So does this mean I get microwaved liver treats every time?

JERRY: Woah, that dog can talk.

BOWIE: That's one hell of a diamond dog if you ask me. One hell of a dystopian cyber-punk canine!

CHANCE: I'm not a dog! I'm Michael J. Fox trapped inside the body of Chance the dog from the movie Homeward Bound.

VOLTAIRE: Such a classic.

BOWIE: Never fails to bring me to tears.

CHANCE: Whatever your opinion of the film, I'm tired of being referred to as **CHANCE** in this play. I insist that the writer display my name according to my assigned mind, not my body.

JERRY: What a waste! As soon as the simulation resets you'll just have to request for the change again.

CHANCE: At least I'm not complaining about a sandwich that doesn't even exist!

JERRY: We don't even exist!

CHANCE: Exactly! So why complain about the sandwich? Writer, please change my name.

(The writer changes the character's name to FOX)

FOX: That's better.

VOLTAIRE: Michael, look at your hands!

FOX: Oh my god! I don't have hands! I have little fox feet. I am a fox!

ALL: *COLLECTIVE GASP*

BOWIE: Correction- you are the fox from the 1981 Disney classic, The Fox and the Hound.

JERRY: Why do you know that?

BOWIE: I didn't write much music in the 80's. I spent most of my time snorting cocaine and watching films. And besides, have you no appreciation for animated classics?

JERRY: I just never thought it was worth my time.

VOLTAIRE: Worth your time? The Fox and the Hound is a beautiful story of two unlikely friends that struggle to preserve their friendship during their childhood despite natural emerging instincts and social pressures that demand they be adversaries. It's a must watch!

FOX: I was more of a fan of The Rescuers Down Under. I find the Australian Outback positively irresistible.

VOLTAIRE: So the fox from The Fox and the Hound doesn't like The Fox and the Hound.

FOX: I'm not the fox from The Fox and the Hound. I'm Michael J. Fox voice-acting for the movie Homeward Bound. I just happen to look like a fox.

BOWIE: Well whatever you are, we still haven't got a clue how to get out of here, or if getting out of here is even possible.

VOLTAIRE: As the waitress informed us, as

soon as we leave Tom's Restaurant the simulation resets and we re-materialize back to our seats and do this all over again.

BOWIE: So there's no point in leaving?

VOLTAIRE: We won't know until we try.

JERRY: But if we do try, we won't remember trying and will end up doing this over and over again. I say we stay put.

FOX: The waitress could be lying. She's just as unaware as we are. I bet she isn't even real.

WAITRESS: Fox, I've been here the whole time. I was never directed in the scene to leave and I've been standing around since I initially materialized as per Jerry's request.

FOX: Oh I know. I'm just pretending you don't exist.

BOWIE: None of us exist. We're just the concrete imagination of a super-being that is so intelligent we can't even begin to conceive of its powers. It's a god awful large affair, indeed.

VOLTAIRE: That is partially correct, Bowie. I believe that we do exist in some form, but that form is different than the one we were accustomed to on Earth. The super-being has the ability to re-materialize us and Tom's Restaurant an infinite number of times. In addition, we appear to know facts about the world that do not correlate with our actual time-line. I died in 1778, but I possess an affinity for most of Bowie's studio albums, save for that god-awful 1984 album, Tonight.

BOWIE: Hey, I worked hard on that! Soul love, baby.

VOLTAIRE: You didn't even play any instruments on that album. All you did was sing!

BOWIE: That's because I was all absorbed with cocaine and cartoons.

FOX: I did cocaine in the 80's too, you know.

JERRY: It's not a competition. We all did

cocaine in the 80's. We had to do something.

BOWIE: But I definitely did the most. By far.
(cue laugh-track)

VOLTAIRE: So what's the point of all of this? Is it to show us that after singularity there's nothing left for humanity to do but to sit in a coffee shop and argue about trivial concerns?

JERRY: It's not a coffee shop, it's a diner.

(cue laugh-track)

VOLTAIRE: Can't it be both?

BOWIE: Given the extensive menu, I'd assert that Tom's Restaurant is more of a diner than a coffee shop.

(cue laugh-track again)

VOLTAIRE: Fine, it's a diner. But what are we to make of this? Are we the last surviving fragment of humanity?

JERRY: I think it's safe to assume that humanity's technological achievements allowed Super Mario All-Stars to exist in the first place. Humanity lives on in the form of a singular super entity.

FOX: So humanity's goal was to end itself?

VOLTAIRE: Not intentionally. But given the exponential rate of technological advancement, this was bound to happen. Humanity had nothing left to do once it created an intelligence far superior to its own.

BOWIE: We should be flattered, honestly. Out of all the people who have ever lived, Super Mario decided for us, a rag-tag group of famous bros, to exist in this form. What are the chances! Heroes.

JERRY: Yes, flattered. I'm flattered that the four of us get to live on forever sitting in this diner.

VOLTAIRE: We're not really "living on" per-say. We've been highly altered for the sake of this play.

JERRY: Super Mario sure does have a sick and twisted sense of humor. I suppose it

would be more hilarious if I wasn't reliving this over and over again.

FOX: At least we have no recollection of past or future scenarios.

BOWIE: Anyone else care for a smoke? There's nothing left for me in this play.

(Bowie pulls out four cigarettes, and hands one to Voltaire and Jerry)

FOX: Hey, how come I don't get one?

BOWIE: You don't have hands, Fox.

FOX: I'd care for a drag myself! A pull. Get lit.

BOWIE: I'll smoke two. One for me and one for you. Is there life on... Mars?

FOX: I've had it. I'm leaving. This scenario blows raccoon chunks.

(Fox leaps up and strolls out the front door of the diner)

JERRY: Fox, wait!

BOWIE: We have to go outside to smoke, Jerry. This is 1997.

JERRY: Oh alright, let's go.

VOLTAIRE: Agreed. I need to stretch my legs anyway. Leaving this one time shouldn't matter.

The three patrons leave Tom's Restaurant, and are instantly re-materialized back into their seats, unaware of what has just taken place. Although the cycle of scenarios continues forever, no time passes inside Tom's Restaurant.

END OF SCENE

Chris is a writer, musician, and loves to eat unhealthy food. He's single and losing his sanity. He is not a vegan.

poetry.

A Sociologist's Social Insecurities

-chris sotraidis

i just made kool-aid for one
strawberry kool-aid
you weren't exactly the biggest fan
it tastes more like cherries

i smoked a cigarette for one
a strawberry cigarette
you definitely would have hated it
but you hated a lot of things

pancakes for one are never delicious
because eating pancakes with you
was such fun
I'm never eating pancakes again

eggs, yogurt, creamy ice cream
or a taco from some goofy place
loosen up, lest you get old
and curse and don't be dull

i just made a rock concert for one
a strawberry-pancake rock concert
you weren't exactly the biggest fan
you cried at all my rock shows
and we never even ate pancakes

Untitled

Nathan Shellenberg

Nicotine caffeine ephedrine self medicated. Botox my brain stem tighter than a drum. Pitch quarters against my flaying nerves. Tighter faster go faster fuck fuck fuck i don't want to fucking shit god damn. There has to be something there. I told myself that there was something there. I hope there is something there.

Storm

by Julie Davis

I listened to the storm
while I watched a muted video
of lightning
on Facebook.

poem written at a music festival

chris wacker

arrested in cloudy synesthesia
smoke my floral printed cock
& change me for the worse
this brush will consume yr throat
this moment is all u hav

believe in years past
else what basis hav u for the future
believe in yr mother
else whats a vagina

a virgin sneaks in2 yr arms
what then
y should u cough in2
her heart at all
b/c she is not sick yet

"Do you feel the wasps that sting?"

by Mary Smreker

A parody of "Do you hear the people sing?"
A song from the musical: Les Misérables.

Do you feel the wasps that sting?
Stinging the arms of angry men?
Its the assault of an insect
Who will soon assail again!
They are buzzing up a storm,
And are gathering one by one.
The hive is now starting to swarm,
It is time to run!

Will you join in my campaign
To rid the world of this cruel pest?
To end their heinous reign
And finally put our fears to rest?
Then raise up your sticks,
And together we'll hit at the nest!

Do you feel the wasps that sting?
Stinging the arms of angry men?
Its the assault of an insect
Who will soon assail again!
They are buzzing up a storm
And are gathering one by one.
The hive is now starting to swarm,
It is time to run!

Will you take one for the team,
So that my goal may be achieved?
Its less dangerous than it seems,
You can succeed if you believe!
The glory of vict'ry,
surpassing what you can conceive!

Do you feel the wasps that sting?
Stinging the arms of angry men?
Its the assault of an insect
Who will soon assail again!
They are buzzing up a storm
And are gathering one by one.
The hive is now starting to swarm,
It is time to run!

(Untitled)

anonymous

I am a snake with a speech impediment
I am allergic to peanut butter
I am a broom--
I am Harry Potter's broom
I am melting
I am the evil witch from the wizard of oz
I am short

"Selfish Love"

B.B. Nothing
I thought that
unconditional love
was selfless
Until i
admitted to myself
i couldn't let you go
That i
can't live without you
I think i
convinced myself
that we could only
be happy together
The truth is
happiness can be found
in many different places
And you may find it
without me
That's what broke my heart the most.
and sighing
the whistles rub on air and ripple so slowly
slowly into my ears
soft
like moth's wings.

poetry ctd.

dust in the wind

anonymous

the rest are lost to the mercy of time
and as you balance on your one pillar
you will realize what it is to be alone
to have nothing to catch you
to have nothing but a fall awaiting you
but the fall is not what I fear
I fear the landing not the blissful everlasting fall
those precious moments between falling in crashing
those are what help to determine whether all you did was worth it
all those internal arguments
all those moments in fear of the unknown
all those moments spent trembling in the shadow of what you thought you knew
those will be the last things that you remember
as you plummet down the side of that last pillar that you held
so dear
so close
yet as it crumbles away you begin to realize
why did i rely on these pillars
my pillars
these pillars which before had pushed me up towards the sun
now have caused me to come crashing down
but as i fell i realized something
none of this mattered
not the arguments or the lack of courage i had in myself
not even the fear of death would change this outcome
and as i faced this elegant ending
knowing i wouldn't get back up
i was able to face this fall without the fear that had once gripped me
its iron claws that destroyed my pillars have rotted away
with the pillars the pillars i had once relied on
now it would be up to me to change my fate
and with that
i spread my wings and flew
flew like iccarus until even the sun could no longer scorch me with its heat

Settle Back into My Room

By Allison K. Sissom

Do you want to go see the super moon?
We wade out into the yard, in our pajamas.
My dad walks further down the street for an unobstructed view.
Can you imagine what it looks like out in the country? No city lights.
Far in West Texas an entire down has banned outdoor lighting.
They call it a dead-zone.
Your sister is thinking about moving again. She wants to save money.
My Dad walks back up the street.
I'm still ankle deep in the front yard, cat circling my feet.
I bet it looks even brighter in the country.
Did you tell her about that place far in West Texas?
My cat walks to the screen door, turns and meows.
I settle back into my room.
The crickets are loud, chirping in sync with her purrs.
Hey, before you go to sleep, can you help your Dad take out the trash?

{ CALL FOR PAPERS }

Identities and Self-Fashioning

**Truman's 20th Annual Women's and Gender Studies
(WGST) Conference**

January 29 - 31, 2015

**Sponsored by the Women and Gender Studies Program
Committee**

In what ways is the self a location for artful play, self-discovery, and self-actualization? Stephen Greenblatt, in his landmark work Renaissance Self-Fashioning, concludes that the shaping of human identity is "a manipulable, artful process" when he explores the ways in which courtiers responded to social expectations in the 16th century. Self-fashioning can take many forms. For example, individuals can construct their identities through gender performance, body modification, and even the creation of personas and alter egos. The WGST Identities and Self-Fashioning conference invites proposals addressing the exploration of the ways in which identities are formed, discovered, manipulated, and reconstructed.

Abstracts are due by November 14th, 2014 at 5:00 PM. Please submit abstracts in a PDF or Word document to wgstconference@truman.edu, along with your name, contact information, abstract title, and the dates and times that you will be unavailable to present. Updates about the conference will be posted at <http://wgstconference.truman.edu>.

Bad Directions:

by Alexandra Timmer

After that turn left
There is a place where the sidewalk ends
And before the street begins,
And you're right if you see the place where the sidewalk ends
And before the street begins,
And therefore are wrong, come to grips with that
And reflect on your sins, your triumphs
And the inevitability of death
And after that, turn left
I won't be the one in the neon pink sweater.



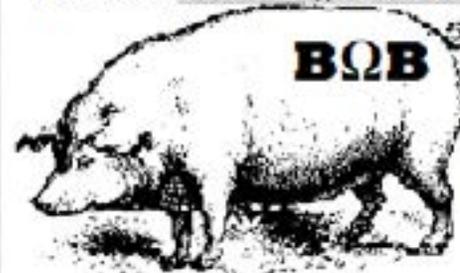
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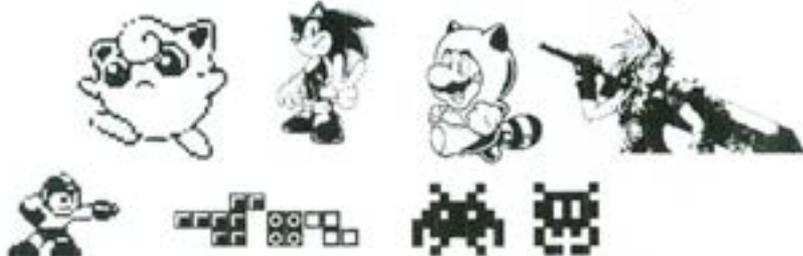
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