

estuary

acadia's creative arts magazine

Edition 1.2

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Abby Whidden

Lady With Feather Hat and Boa

A response to the painting of the same name by Gustav Klimt

A *Lady*, indeed:

body, mummified in
feather boa, black/
face, stencilled on
hard-boiled head, brittle/
hair (fire) castrated by
midnight hat, royal/
(one curl escapes, evaporates into indigo light).

(But your eyes clash:

lazily-lidded, threatening
to abdicate your eggdom,
to elope with the peasant curl,
to fight--but not by fighting because their lidded light
is smoke, as if your hatted hair burns
inward, scrambling your
cerebral vortex
from the
yoke)

Ya got stuff up there, Lady:

Strip

unbind yer hair
unwind yer feet
step from slippery oil
from canvas page

leap

)use yer turpentine tongue(

Woman with Eyes, Tell:

Ann Dickinson

Sewing Machine

she'll give you broken needles
gifts that this family doesn't need
She wears away with fever
withdraw and without
grating all the uneaten years
the fears my family have not forgotten
she hides behind beauty
velvet, taffeta, chiffon
astounding renditions
translucent trends
My sister
My ailing sister.

she's says she's famous, rich, secure
she lies
lies in a bed that stitches her down
stripping to prove something
anything
crooked seams give way
patterns and addictions
she spools her sexual self
hemming edginess
aborting alterations
My sister
My broken sister.

she has a machine of her own
but how to repair the broken Singer?
 get rid of broken needles
 adjust the tension
 replace the light
 clean the feed dogs
 oil the model

she has it up and running
patching creases, wrinkles, kinks
old patterns fade
new gifts have been made
My sister
My singing sister.

Bridget Brennan

The Tight Walls of Havana

I'm just
Crashing around
Still walled in the resort
The blue pool the
High walls on four sides
 I don't want to dance here
To these lyrics I don't know
The tanned skin smiling and swinging
The steel drums, the maracas, the bongo drums,
Is a blur, just a blur,
The skies flood and the pool turns green,
 I won't dance with your people
The traffic honks beyond the brick barriers,
The men pile in trucks with machine guns ready,
Just outside of these four walls, just outside,
Che Guevera pounds his fist on the street
Just beyond these walls, just beyond,
The woman holds her baby close,
The child throws rocks at the soldier,
The men head to jobs they don't choose.
Just beyond these walls, just beyond,
Castrated socialism scars the streets
 I won't dance with these people
Just these same dancing parrots in here, between these walls,
Flapping like puppets around the pool
Convincing me Castro is not in the city
I'm the puppet now
One more bite of watermelon will kill me
 I don't want to dance to these steps I don't know,
Stop feeding me your fruit
One more outburst of rain will kill me for sure
 I won't dance with your people here
No, not in these four walls.

Christine McNair

Girl Guide

Blue daughters float into church.
The bright scream noise of the girls
tumbles down the stairs while their blue
bodies push through strands of paper-cut flowers.
Fingers clutch offerings from mothers
(white-smiling cupcakes with pointed chocolate chip eyes).

Mouths dance like moths under the wicked eyes
of saints pressed into jewelled windows in the church.
Flat against the wall, the leaders (who are also mothers)
watch them run and scream until one finally says, *girls!*
and they slap back to attention in their patrol flowers.
They pull up their socks, tighten their uniforms, all blue.

Pinched at the waist, the blue
white scarves and uniforms tug at the eyes
of the patroller. She snivels at the flowers
Amelia has pocketed before entering the church
not tidy, she says and greedily calculates the dues. The girls
cluck their tongues like mothers.

They spiral into a horseshoe while their mothers
or leaders stand waiting, their scarves tipped with blue
On my honour I will try, trill the girls
if there's a duty to be done then I say aye,
my duty is to try and my honour is to love. The church
smells of thin white flowers.

Hands clenched like sleeping flowers,
girls watch as leaders or mothers
bring out plastic wrapped badges in the church.
Lucky girls have no space on their blue
sashes while Amelia's eyes
sit (pinned) on petal girls.

Quick flash of glue and then girls
are cutting windows into paper-cut flowers
or tying blue wool into God's eyes
and wondering what it will be like to be mothers.

Day is done, gone the sun... ..the blue
noise of taps scrapes along the ribs of the church.

The twin eye of the steeple watches as mothers
arrive to pick up girls who twirl their skirts at their hips like flowers
singing *blue-bells, cockleshells, evey, ivy, over* in front of the church.

Elsa Pihl

The Thin Blue Line

every minute there are worlds colliding
raindrops fall in puddles
people enter into each other's bubbles
and the chicken crosses the road
there is hope for all the meetings
never ending moments of familiarity
when a cat and dog sniff noses
before they realize they are enemies
the before time is so precious
when the opinion hasn't yet arrived
you don't read a book back to front
each page turns to a surprise
under the same sky we are living
into the same air we walk
along the same roads we travel
but in our own worlds we remain
a global vision of unity
when the trees will no longer fall
individuals will find each other
and soon the flowers will grow

Ivy Evelyn

Nicole

Intertextuality Piece - Response to ['Nicole'](#) by David Silverberg.

The eerie moon has risen,
Its shadow rippled by the restless sea.
There she waits,
Nicole,
Arms folded, dull silver light streaming through the frosted glass window.

The wintry breeze sweeps across the sea
Cold and unfeeling

The sea, the restless sea,
Her heart, her restless heart.

The sea, there is calm in its rage, there is quiet in its roar.
Nicole.
Her soul leaves at night,
Its naked, formless body leaves to wonder in the subzero temperatures at the ocean's
feet,
Where the waves bellow their loud unfeeling operas.

It leaves, like a self-inflicted torture,
Every night when the moon is high.
A nomadic wanderer,
Pulling tattered memories closer for protection against the harsh salty breeze.
It returns at daybreak, fleeing the sunrise,
Like a vampire that prowls the night.

Johnny Burton

Bright and Full of Colour

She stands on a strong branch from which she'll fly,
in a world where landscapes are created with simple turns of her wrists,
into the great rainbow somewhere, sometime,
as the characters of her pictures do,
to remain always shining brightly, full of colour,
before those who love her.

Kamia Creelman

Dear Michelangelo

Dear Michelangelo,

Your painting slices
from throat to groin

Rips open the cut
tears flesh past ribs
Exposing searing helplessness
bleeding ulcers in my gut
Cracking caked indignities
swallowed unnoticed
. . . I thought.

How much time have I?
Before a lifetime's eternity
of hatred's boiling acid
seeps through my thinning skin
etching inevitable age

Sincerely,
Kamia Creelman

Lise Comeau

Ah the SENSEs

I feel a certain sense of disparity
Whenever your presence makes itself obvious
Hmmm...about senses...
The senseless meanings my words seem to have,
The insane effect they have on
These colliding worlds.
I may look senseless and cold to the touch,
But I feel and touch
As any sensitive person does.
I know I may seem irregular
To you
To me,
From a bird's eye view, even,
But I just revolve around me.
Just like you revolve around yourself.

Lise Comeau

C'est Quoi Le Plaisir?

Voilà l'horloge qui sonne.
C'est le temps.
Les martyrs sortent premiers
Ensuite, les démons.
Dans le catastrophe de la vie,
Il faut parfois endurer la malaise,
Le chagrain du plaisir,
Si ce sera si beau,
On aura aucune peine et la vie deviendra laide.
Le plaisir sans chagrain,
C'est la plus grave pénitence.

Marla Landers

feelgoods

kid, grab yer poems and run. autodeflate them
and flatten them
under your tongue; tell the nice
men at the border you're sucking a mint.

(birds in their weenests agree) -
blackmarket poems in rollpapers make a good smoke.

Matt Corkum

she walks on

a dark clouding sky over the grey sea.
the wind moans. she shifts her weight onto her right foot.
bare skin on cool sand.
her toes sink deep into the damp mud.
the angry waves break offshore.
the tide rolls in.
the water glides along the shoreline.
one ripple after another.
slowly swallowing the beach.
she steps forward, leaving a fresh footprint vulnerable to the eroding tide.
she walks towards the water.
her hair gives in to the breeze.
it flows.
the wind dries the tears on her cheeks.
she licks her lips, chapped from the cool air.
once moist, they glisten in the last fleeting rays of daylight.
fog rolls in.
the sun hides behind immense clouds.
it sleeps now.
the water reaches her ankles.
she feels the steel cold of the sea.
her knees slip below the waterline.
the water rises to her waist.
the cold numbs her senses. past her breasts.
past her shoulders.
to her chin.
she looks up.
the sky is grey with sorrow.
she walks on.
the footprint slowly fills with water.
the sand slides down down down
until there is nothing but the neverending shore.

M.S. Hogan

Fake Letters to A.B.

i read her letters
never lifting my eyes from the pages
crossing this all too familiar campus
and her words were crushing
but expected
and i thought
maybe she never got my message
never understood my poetry
never took my compliments as a threat
my stare as an addiction

M.S. Hogan

Six Pillows in my Bed

there are six pillows in my bed
an even number that feels odd
no matter how i place them
they can never take the shape of her perfect body
and they don't make me laugh
and they don't smell salty and sweet
actually
at least two pillows fall off the bed every night
crowded but lonely

Steve Fortune

Incantation

Enter my grove
Reside in my ritual
Nourish the clove
That craves the habitual

Tickle the stream
That coyly recoils
In ripples that gleam
Like honeydew oils

Wade through yourself
Discover your blood
Self-baptize yourself
Rejoice in your flood

Stray from the lake
Come whisper with me
Indulge and partake
In seminal spree

Teresa Patterson

The Homestead

Trunks of many-circled oaks rise
from the white blanketed earth
Their bare extensions stretching to the limits
The weary path winds its way
to the long forgotten homestead

Cold winds waft through the grey withered logs,
Voices seem to whisper
Crackling icicles crash in the snow
like shattered memories.

Wade Ells

[PHOTO ALBUM]

sandiegoself-portrait
reflecting] [my imagery

how I envy you

you with your californian hair
(planted first beneath newyork summersun
watered now by lajollashorespacificocean)

you with your ears
lulled by applegreenwaves (rushing in

touching

f l o w i n g a w a y ~

you with your eyes
seduced by seventeenyearold californiagirls

slipperysexy under boardwalk showers
(hotplastic highschool breasts squeezed
in powderbluebikinis)

you wearing your wetsuit
flexing (tanned) surfingtriceps within

how I miss you now

with my palesick mirrorimagery

following

me along e a s t c o a s t supermarketchrome...

Andre Harewood

Full of Grace

A thousand Hail Mary's won't help me now.

Scott and I had known each other for five years and we were the best of friends. We went to the same school and flirted in advanced math class. He was a tall one, everyone said so; he towered over my small frame like a giant, but he touched me gently, like gossamer. He would tell me how beautiful I was, how old I looked for my age, how I made him feel, and the like, habitually. "Blokes his age only want one thing, Maria," my friends would continually tell me, but I didn't listen to them. I liked the way he talked to me, the way he made me feel, the way he touched me when I let him touch me. I let him touch me a lot.

After graduation, Scott moved (or was it *ran?*) away, leaving our lower class industrial town to rot in its own effluent, leaving me to sink like a bag of drowning kittens in hopes of mercifully ending the relationship which I foolishly held on to and did foolish things to maintain. Summer was going to be long and my parents and I managed to scrape enough money together to secure my first year of higher education; I was going to get better schooling than they did. At least, I thought so.

The sickness lasted for a few weeks, every morning religiously. I went to the doctor and he prescribed some medication that didn't help; it seemed only to make me fat, and only fat around my stomach. My mother suspected, but Dad hadn't even considered the possibility. I wanted it to be like on TV: the kid has a problem, confesses it and gets a few days confinement. Dad backslapped me, calling me a little whore, a filthy strumpet, a fat tart; when Mom tried to stop him, he hit her, too, but that's expected.

The next day after we had put some ointment on our bruises and Dad was at work, Mom and I talked about what we could do. An abortion was the best thing I could think of, but Mom offered a solution that might benefit all of us. She pulled a pamphlet from her church purse and handed it to me to read to her. "Catholic Coalition something-or-the-other offering monetary assistance for women with unwanted pregnancies as an alternative to abortion." I dialled the number on the sheet of yellow paper and Mom talked with the woman on the other end. "Oh, yes, she's pregnant, almost five months pregnant now," Mom said. The receptionist

asked about Scott. " The boy? He's her age. He's not here, he ran off months ago. No, he doesn't know." Mom asked about how much money they'd give us and what the terms were for us getting it. " Is that all?" Mom asked, " Well, it'll do if we get her on social security."

As you can guess, I wasn't going to any school in the fall. My time was divided between shopping for the baby, using the extra money to buy things for the house and Dad's ale, dodging the reporters who wanted to interview me and getting home to watch Dawson's Creek when the day was all over. I was a superstar on every news channel for a while, until the Courts issued writs against the news crews posted outside my front door. I replay the headlines over in my head a lot, " Twelve year old girl gets money from Catholic Church not to have abortion." I dance around my room with the Tickle Me Elmo doll I got for my last birthday, thinking that the baby and I can play with it together when it's born. If it's a little girl, I'll name her Grace. I hope it's a little boy, I'll name him Scott. My own little Scotty, just what I always wanted.

Ann Dickinson

As I Fly By

A tattered seagull used to listen to the way we'd rustle our dishes each day. He'd swoop low and lower to pick at our left-overs. He'd always be alone, making all the guests think that he was is so profoundly precious. I guess I never saw the symbolism that they saw. Now imagine how annoying I used to find him. Imagine how I felt when he stole my sanity away when the air was misty and the clouds conquered the sky.

When I got to work that day everyone was in a particularly bad mood. The day would be slow. It was foggy and you could see it in the staff's faces. *the day wasn't going well*. On a normal day, when the sun was shining and Nova Scotia was a great place to live, we were quite the attraction. Our cute, iridescent light shining on the water, our smiles when an ignorant tourist asked us if we ate anything but lobster. *days like that I wanted to spit in their chowder*. The day would be lonely, our only company would be our seagull and the crashing waves. The water hit the rocks so hard and so loud that day it sounded like a drum in my stomach, beating louder and louder. *or was that my heart?*

I took my break outside. I normally didn't smoke and I never used to sit outside when the weather was so miserable. I guess I needed the space of the sky to clear my head. I sat on the picnic table that needed a paint job. *maybe I needed one too*. Being a waitress for three years is tiring. It was too long. The wind blew my hair all over the place, I don't think I noticed, on a normal day that would have killed me. The wind also blew salt in my eyes. *or were those tears?* As I sat there, lost in my own thoughts, conjuring my lost dreams, I noticed I had only four minutes left on my break. That's when that damn seagull showed up.

He was making an awful racket down close to the water's edge. I crept up behind him, I did not want to startle him and have him fly away. Our eyes locked together, I was mesmerised by how he looked right through me. *was he trying to tell me something?* I moved closer to the water's edge. I couldn't tell if the seagull was following me or if I was following him. I could hear a drum louder than thunder, and I knew that band played for me. *what was the name of that song again?* I moved closer. I could almost feel the cold water roll over me, letting me escape deep into the ocean. I don't know if I thought about jumping. I don't think I was thinking at

all. It was all happening so fast that I'm sure on a normal day I wouldn't have felt that splash upon my face. *I must have been crazy.* I took a deep breath and looked around, no one was looking for me, I had forgotten about that seagull. I had forgotten where I was. *I had forgotten who I was.* So I did what I never thought I'd do, that I didn't know was in me to do. I turned around and left all the drudgery and misery behind. I went home, packed my things and moved away from the ocean. *I never wanted to see a seagull again.*

Heather Colquhoun

In the Shadow of Greatness

A Granddaughter's Perspective on Watson Kirkconnell

As I walk along the many paths at Acadia University, my mind often wanders to thoughts of my grandfather, Watson Kirkconnell. As president of this university, he must have walked these same paths and looked up at these same trees. The campus has not changed much in 40 years, except that he is no longer here, and I am. It seems strange to think that a man I never knew, a man who died two years before I was born, is so important to me. Reminders of my grandfather are everywhere. They are inescapable. But being Watson's granddaughter is something that is not always easy. While I take great pride in my grandfather and the vast contribution he made to the humanities, this vast contribution is often very intimidating. I feel as though I must make my mark as well and make him proud of me. In essence, I feel pressure to be like him.

Of course, I did not always feel this pressure. As a child, knowledge of my grandfather was limited to what I saw in his house and what my parents told me. My memories of 101 Main St. are fairly scarce because my grandmother died when I was seven, and that was the last time I set foot in the house. What I do remember comes in flashes of images: the hallways with large bookcases on either side, stuffed with books, the maze of an attic (or so my childhood mind recalls), the swing hanging from a large tree, and the pond out back. My grandfather was obviously an avid reader and a nature lover. I used to dream a lot about these four things and I plan on visiting the house once more before I leave Acadia University. It would be interesting to compare my childhood vision with the reality. Granted, the house will look quite

different now, but my mind will not let me rest until I see the house and property once more.

My mother would tell me all about my grandfather. He was a very kind, honest, humble, witty, and industrious man. It is this last characteristic that stands out in my mind. Watson Kirkconnell had an amazing work ethic. One story that I'll never forget is that of my grandfather, sick in the hospital, asking for a pencil and paper so he can keep writing. This is a powerful image for me that I sometimes call to mind when I feel like giving up on an essay or anything else that seems too difficult. Even though his body was deteriorating, his mind remained strong and was never at rest. When I was older, I was able to make a further connection with my grandfather by reading the poetry he wrote while in his hospital bed. My favourite poems are "The Mopster," in which he describes the lady who mops the floors, and "Three a.m.," in which he talks about all the aches and pains he feels in the middle of the night. They are both humorous portrayals of his hospital life, and I can only admire my grandfather all the more for being able to create laughter out of a situation that could easily have become morbid. This was his way of dealing with adversity. He would immerse himself in his work much like I do, when faced with problems in my life. The most prominent project he did as a way of coping was *European Elegies*, written the year after his first wife died giving birth to their twin sons. Watson translated elegies from all over Europe, performing verse translation from over forty languages. I always find this hard to believe and, apparently, so did his publishers. In response to Watson's letter concerning his completed collection, they wrote this:

As you ask for our "candid advice," we will say quite frankly that we think you have undertaken too big a task. We do not believe that there is any living man so intimately acquainted with forty different European languages, past and present, as to be able to translate poems from these languages (Perkin I6).

They were obviously unaware of my grandfather's ability. His collection of elegies was eventually published and rave reviews followed all over Canada and Europe. An Icelandic review acknowledged Watson's incredible achievement by saying of the collection that "One thing is certain, since Tennyson achieved 'In Memoriam,' this book is the most glorious wreath that any man has laid at the grave of the beloved dead" (Perkin I7). The older I got, the more I became aware of the copious amounts of literature my grandfather wrote. His status had a lot to do with my coming (and almost not coming) to Acadia University.

Acadia was not my first choice of university. I had my heart set on the foundation year at King's College. When scholarship offers were given, Acadia's was substantially greater. This made me sit back and think about why I was only keeping Acadia as my back-up option. It was a great university with a wide range of courses offered, a beautiful and small campus, and a plethora of family connections. Of course, the family connections were my problem. Many people would jump at the prospect of having connections to a university, but my teenage soul had not significantly rebelled yet, and this was the perfect reason not to attend Acadia. I was revolted by the idea that I would be attending simply because my brother, both my parents, two aunts and several cousins attended before me, not to mention my grandfather having been the president! A stop must be put to this tradition and I was going to be the one to do it. Fortunately, my reason overruled my stubborn ways and I decided to come here. It was a decision I have not regretted. I probably would not have been able to avoid my history for long, even if I had attended King's instead of Acadia. It is a part of me, and this has been especially evident in my two and a half years here at Acadia.

One of the first things I noticed was that a room in the library is named after my grandfather and contains his collection of Canadiana and all of his papers. The honours bestowed upon him cover the walls in this quiet, air-conditioned room and his cap and gown are enclosed in glass. I then discovered that a Kirkconnell Scholarship is given to a student with high marks, and with excellent writing ability and overall knowledge of literature and the world. This was to be determined by an essay competition held in the BAC. I felt strangely obliged to at least try for this scholarship, even though I was already receiving a decent sum from the university. When the day arrived and the time came to write the essay, I almost fainted. The essay topics were beyond what I was capable of. I attempted one of the easier questions, but left the competition feeling like a failure. This was ridiculous, of course. I simply did not have the foundation of knowledge yet that is needed to write such an essay. This was, however, the beginning of the pressure I put on myself to prove myself worthy of being Watson Kirkconnell's granddaughter.

Since I am proud of my connection with my grandfather, I often tell people, including my professors. But then I feel as though more might be expected of me. Fortunately, I have yet to have a professor who increased their expectations because of who my grandfather was. My mother was not so lucky. She felt even more pressure to achieve since her father was the president of Acadia University when she attended. She told me about one terrifying incident she had with her History professor one year. She went into her classroom in University Hall and, as usual, the professor had already filled the blackboard with notes. She frantically began copying

them down like everyone else, so she was only partly paying attention to the lecture. All of a sudden, the professor turned to my mother and said, "Miss Kirkconnell, what is the answer to that question? You should know what it is. Your father is the president of the university." When she was unable to answer him, he turned to the daughter of the Dean of Theology. My mother stills thinks about this and gets upset at the professor. It is easy to fall into the trap of setting expectations according to someone else's life and accomplishments. But this sets you up for feelings of failure.

Not only do I feel like a failure sometimes, but I also feel left out. Although I have been recognized as Watson Kirkconnell's granddaughter in an article written for the Alumni Bulletin, I do not appear in his biography, *Morning in His Heart*, or the genealogical account of his family in *Climbing the Green Tree*. I had not entered the world yet. This is a fact that bothers me greatly because I want him to know he has a granddaughter. I want him to know that I exist. Sometimes I do think he is watching over me. I can almost hear him saying, "Heather, why did you leave that paper until the last minute?" He would not be saying it sternly, but with a slight grin and a sparkle in his eye. The work ethic I admire in him is something I have not been able to emulate. Despite this, I have managed to keep my renewable scholarship. It is a constant stress that I feel. I must keep an A- average. If I do not, I will lose my scholarship and disappoint my parents. Of course, this stress is mostly in my head. My parents would understand and I believe my grandfather would as well. In Senator Norman Atkins' speech at Fall Convocation this year, he mentioned a letter my grandfather wrote in response to Atkins' bold request for financial aid while he was attending Acadia. It went like this:

Dear Mr. Atkins-

Your grades for the past two years are scarcely of bursary quality. We usually expect bursary holders to be just short of scholarship status. I am willing, however, to make you a conditional proposition. If at midyear examinations in January 1955 you make at least C-minus standing (65 percent) in all your courses, including French, I shall give you a bursary of \$100 for the second term.

I do not know whether you had counted on driving a car this year. By walking, you can give yourself a substantial bursary.

Yours sincerely,
Watson Kirkconnell

His generous and witty response gives me hope and confidence when I begin worrying too much about what people might think if I lose my scholarship.

My grandfather would probably tell me my worries have no justification. I have already shown capability in much of the same things (although in a lesser form) that he did. I pick up foreign languages quickly, excel in public speaking, enjoy reading, love singing, and I have, I believe, a similar sense of humour. If he were alive today, I am sure we would be watching Monty Python movies together, marvelling at their comedic genius. I must focus on these similar qualities, and not the fact that I am in my third year of an undergraduate degree when, at the same age of twenty-one, my grandfather had obtained his Master's Degree. I am not my grandfather, nor will I ever be. I live in a different era, face different obstacles, and therefore, should set different goals. If I aim for these goals with even a fraction of his fervour, I am sure I will accomplish whatever I set out to do. As a child, one of my grandfather's "favourite pastimes was 'the single-handed building of hundreds of yards of neatly graded paths, about two feet wide, up and down the pine-clad slopes of the acre of land that was our home base and thence out into a wooded wilderness . . . ' This childhood activity might be seen as a parable of his later life"(Perkin II). Watson Kirkconnell forged many paths in his life, both physical and intellectual. Left in his intellectual wake, I cannot possibly walk along all the same paths. I will drown if I set my expectations that high. Instead, I must recognize that the footprints on the snowy hills of University Hall are now my own, and I alone must choose their direction.

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Mark Gardiner

Kitchen Windows

I'm letting the wind hold my head. (Vaguely remembering the warm American Pacific variety) Trying to retrace and reconstruct. I'm losing myself. Pulling through the coke-stick rain. Hydro-bullets. World washed in violet. Trudging over history erased by the pavement. Just industrial nature. It's so very cold. It's getting harder and harder to breathe. Ice like and sour vapour. Can lungs suffer freezer burn too?
Cool down and explode?

The shadows seemed so warm and inviting.

(Light a mental cigarette. Signs have turned to black.

Lost for a minute or two or three...more.

I have a secret picture. Would you like to see?

Flash.

I know where I am now. Keep going.)

Only light is from unsuspecting kitchen windows. Revealing pastel vomit walls chipping and cracking. Cherished possessions placed on the shelf to be admired and hated. Constant reminders. Volatile wishes hang and fall from windowpanes. They escape and bury themselves while you sleep. People accept everything. Almost everything. (There are lovely imperfections. You're just not included.) I can't give up this sadness flowing through me. The only thing I've been able to keep alive. Nurture and care for.

You're just trapped in your own bad horror movie. Watching from outside yourself somehow. Screaming at yourself not to do things. Not to go in there. So many thoughts swimming through so many sounds. Over the dead water draining to the underground. Over the break away trash gliding along the pavement. Over the howling of rabid insomniac animals patrolling. Searching for victims. Unknowing. I don't know who I am anymore. This will never ever end / go away / disappear and I'm lost again.

Steven Fortune

Writing is Such Sweet Sorrow

A wordy, pretentious take on the nature of writing

I am sure you know how it feels: diving humbly into a seemingly doable task, only to be drowned by circumstance. We have all had to, or will at some point in time, pamper that abrasive rash that leaves us sore with resignation in the wake of a fruitless endeavour. Yes, frustration is as ubiquitous in everyday life as death, and it lives most comfortably in the mind of a writer.

Admittedly, this is a subjective statement, for the moment at least. It may raise the uncomprehending brow of the casual reader, who reads a work of literature while giving nothing more than a passing consideration to the source. Though I speak now from a writer's point-of-view, it is the view I wear less frequently. More often I am inclined to be that casual reader, reading a work of literature, marvelling at how effortlessly perfect the words look. In other words, I cannot read a poem by, say Robert Frost, without thinking 'Hey, he's just using simple vocabulary here. I can do this'. I know for a fact that once I have finished this rant, I am going to shake my head in disbelief over the time it took me to write it (For the record, it has taken me about forty-five minutes to get this far). Only in the writer's point-of-view can I fully appreciate the fact that there is much more to "writing" than jotting down a wealth of words that make sense.

Having said that, I should note that I am not naïve enough to think that everyone spends that length of time on writing two paragraphs. William Shakespeare was the son of an illiterate. Robert Burns was born in poverty. It is quite possible that these guys were simply born to write. On the flip side, Frost had accumulated over two decades of writing before enjoying any widespread publication. He had to have patience, the same patience required by those who write only for the intrinsic thrill that literary expression provides. The latter group may hold no intentions of profit, but there are a good number of them who struggle for their art, just the same.

No profession is driven harder by emotion than writing. Doctors, teachers, lawyers, and other esteemed groups will never touch the depths of a writer's emotions, though they often garner much more respect. These occupations carry definite roles.

They offer clearly defined schedules and the assurance of a salary, regardless of any lost causes (in the bounds of reasonable conduct, of course).

Like any artist, a writer has no such stability, no security blanket of the sort. They can toil over their works for countless hours and run the risk of getting very minimal returns. For instance, the financial livelihoods of musicians and (maybe to a lesser extent) novelists depend all too much on the wobbly, pendulous tastes of the general public. How dear the finished article is to the writer's heart is irrelevant. If the public does not buy it, the bills do not get paid. No wonder the scientists will have little to do with us.

Writing is more about thinking than doing. The best writers are the most organized thinkers. After all, it is the mind where all of the writing takes place, isn't it? The hands are mere vehicles. As a reader, I did not have to worry about organizing my thoughts. I paid no heed to the hollowness of my own imaginative capacity. I was too preoccupied with the thoughts of the writers. And perhaps that is why my early attempts at writing (and probably a lot of my current stuff, too) proved to be such a shock. I had never worried about the prospect of organizing my own thoughts. They were there in my head, somewhere, and that was all that mattered.

If you are indeed writing however, you are doing it because you feel the need to address issues that are dear to you, and you hope to receive feedback, which constitutes the building of new perspectives on those issues. If the potential feedback is to be of any relevance to you, your issues must be stated clearly, and that clarity depends greatly on logical organization.

Hopefully, the readers of this piece have seen it as an honest work, and not the self-indulgent product of a prissy little university student. Hopefully, this piece has made sense to some people other than myself. But for those who are reluctant to support the fulfillment of these hopes, I offer a confession. The personal reflections I have stated here were in part, but only in part, an attempt to nurse the wretched writer's block I have been fighting as of late (remember, nearly an hour for those first two paragraphs).

So, even if you did not like this essay, I hope you can find solace in the fact that you have helped me out immensely just by sticking with me this far.

For those of you who still feel cheated, all that I have left to offer is an apology for swallowing up the spare time you spent on reading this. You could have been reading Shakespeare instead.

Tegan Zimmerman

Puppy Love

"Great!" she yelled, "Look! You've got black hair all over my dress!"

The dog rolled over and smiled, raising his noble head for an act of affection.

"You're a bad, bad, dog" she said, "You don't deserve a pat. Go lie down in the kitchen."

Lowering himself down on his rug, he hid his face as a human would on a windy winter's day, masking his hurt-filled eyes with his paws like a scarf to protect himself from her cold, harsh glances.

When the dark veil of night had fallen she mumbled to herself in between yawns "Lazy dog, all he ever does is sleep," as she shook the end of his limp leash in her hand. He did not stir, as if posing for a portrait, daring not to move a muscle, not even his heart.

Ashley Roberts

Eight



Denice Rego

Playtime



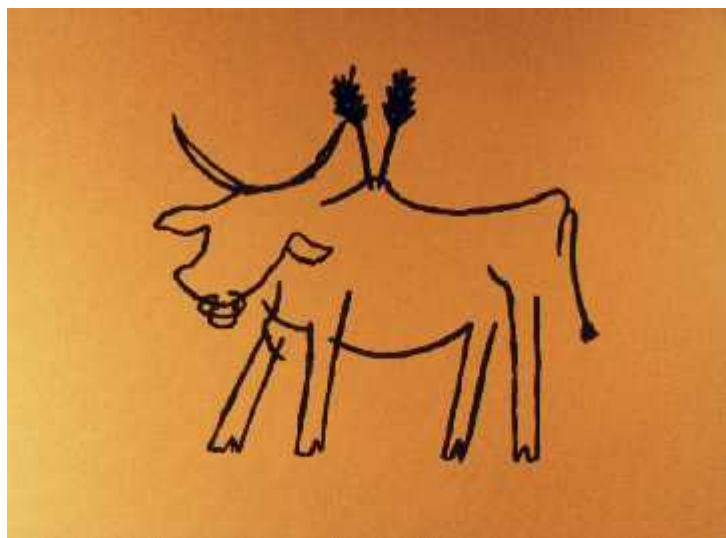
Hayley Sinai

Spirit Dance



Jen Lussing

Bull



Lauren Everett

Maggie May



Melissa Bevan

Landscape



Tim Beers

The Malachi Crunch Blues



Tracy Noble

Tiger



Verilea Warren

Untitled



Heather O'Brien

Untitled



Khanh Chhang

Untitled



Margaret Whidden

Untitled



Mitchell J. Smallman

In a Few Days: A Neo-Naturalist Cyber Tragedy in One Act

Dramatis Personae:

Tojo Fenderson: A young secretary, male. Aged 19. A man too young to be tired.

Maeda Rubin: Mid/late twenties, female. She is rapidly losing the compassion that made her what she is.

Ms. Gory: Early 30's, female. Looks much older than this, a wiry woman with no time for such trivialities as scruples and pathos.

Tongue: Genderless. A criminal.

Guard #1: Enjoys her cog in the wheel.

Guard #2: Finds enjoyment where she can.

SCENE I

[Blackness. Only the sound of the click-click-clicking of a modern computer is heard. We see a dim light coming from above, revealing a bit of Tojo's face. He looks drearily at the screen of a computer, which now is turned on to illuminate his face some more. As the computer screen blinks, we hear more typewriters, dozens, perhaps hundreds more. And no other sound. The typewriters fade out as the lights come up, though they still have a dreary, greenish blue tinge like that of a dirty fluorescent light. Tojo sits straight backed in perfect ergonomic posture at his desk. A phone on his desk rings. Tojo doesn't notice until the third ring, at which he picks it up.]

Tojo: Yes. Yes. Yes. Goodbye.

[Tojo shuts down his computer, and puts a few files away. Maeda enters with a briefcase, heading towards an offstage door.]

Maeda: Any calls, Tojo?

Tojo: Yeah, one from Mr. Francis. Wants you to call him back about the Petrosoft stock.

Maeda: Really? I wonder what could be up with that, now?

Tojo: Sounded sorta indifferent.

Maeda: And this is different from usual how?

Tojo: It's indifferent too, I guess. I just thought he might...

Maeda: Think when you know stocks, son. Type till then. I need these proposals by 3:00.

Tojo: Yes, Miss Rubin.

[She exits. Lights dim. Tojo types at BLAZING speed, not even looking at the keyboard. The sound of the other typewriters rears up again. He ceases typing and looks around, tired. He stands up, stretches and sits on the edge of the stage. The typewrites lower in volume but do not disappear. Tojo seems relieved by the space. The typewriters ease off and the lights come up as Maeda returns.]

Maeda: Done with the proposals yet?

Tojo: I was done ages ago.

Maeda: Good job, Mr. Fenderson. Oh, by the way, do you have your company will package done up yet?

Tojo: No, why?

Maeda: (casually) Oh, turns out Petrosoft just bought out Nevis, which doesn't have the funds at present to support its security teams. Meaning if they're anything like most black-chip companies, the downsized workers will probably mount a front on the stockholders in an effort to get the companies to reconsider.

Tojo: Mount a front? You mean, like, an assault? Like, a lethal one requiring me to fill out a will?

Maeda: Probably.

Tojo: We're a blue chip company, aren't we? Our security is only for internal affairs, isn't it?

Maeda: Yes, so make sure you're protected in case of death.

[Pause.]

Tojo: I started working here to AVOID this crud.

Maeda: You can't avoid it completely. You want to avoid danger, work at McDonalds or sell drugs. There's too much money on the line to let businessmen get in the way of business. I wouldn't worry though. Unions tend to be disorganised, and there's a lot of people who owned stock in Petrosoft. They may never even hit here.

Tojo: Just cause lightning might not strike me doesn't mean I should go play golf in the rain.

Maeda: I don't follow you.

Tojo: I mean...nevermind Miss Rubin, you have work to do. Don't worry about me. I'll deal.

Maeda: You'll be fine, Tojo. I promise.

[She exits.]

Tojo: No. I won't.

[A long pause as Tojo reflects.]

Tojo: A will. (He gets up and types at the computer, he may be dictating what he writes, but he types so fast that his speech pattern does not change.) If anyone finds this, I have nothing to leave but a big fat "I told you so". I don't know why, but I've just heard my death sentence. I don't have the information, or the details of why, but I know they're out there, and I know they'll find me before I find them. Just because I can't PROVE it doesn't mean it's not real, it only means I can't explain it yet. I'll try to avoid it, but it's an invisible force. To my parents, thanks. To my friends, thanks. To my co-workers...

[A pause, as Tojo thinks of his response.]

Tojo: ...Thanks for nothing.

[Fade.]

SCENE II

[The same desk Tojo sat at has been moved to a different position on the stage. Behind stands Ms. Gory, typing at the computer while standing. Tojo enters, Ms. Gory does not notice. Tojo takes a folded up sheet of paper and places it on her desk. She looks up, glaring. Uneasy, Tojo unfolds the paper. She picks it up, and places her reading glasses on.]

Gory: And what might this be?

Tojo: My resignation. Business life is burning me out.

Gory: (looking at sheet) Mr Fenderson, we have more than adequate counselling facilities for our employees...

Tojo: No, I've made up my mind, I'm going to retire.

[Pause.]

Gory: You do realise that you won't qualify for a retirement package for another 46 years.

Tojo: I'm quite aware of that.

[Long silence as Ms. Gory looks over his sheet.]

Gory: I'm sorry, you'll have to fill out some more forms, and due to your short time within this company, an exit interview will be required for your resignation to pass.

Tojo: Fine then, I quit.

Gory: I'm afraid you can't do that. (recited) Here at Utility Net, complete break resignations are not part of our mandate. We appreciate...

Tojo: Didn't you HEAR me Ma'am? I quit!

Gory: We appreciate your talents and abilities, and stand by our decision...

Tojo: I quit!

Gory: We stand by our decision in hiring you. Further more...

Tojo: I QUIT!

Gory: (forcefully, she obviously does not like this part of our job)
FURTHERMORE, we do NOT want your skills being used by another company,
and we will protect our employees with all of our resources.

Tojo: I see. That's it.

Gory: (no longer reciting) All of our resources. So if you want the company to be
forced to protect itself, you just walk home.

Tojo: You're threatening me.

Gory: You're threatening us.

Tojo: I don't want to work for software companies anymore, though!

Gory: Say that when your unemployment runs out. You wouldn't be here if you
weren't a damn good software employee, and you'll be looked as such by our
competitors.

Tojo: I'll get another trade, I'll go back to school.

Gory: You got here after school on a scholarship we gave you. I doubt you'll get
another if we have anything to say about it.

Tojo: How did you know that? That you paid for my school?

Gory: All of our employees your age got scholarships.

Tojo: How do you know how old I am?

Gory: If you were one of our more senior employees, you'd know better.

Tojo: This is fucked.

Gory: So are you if you keep thinking this way. Your exit interview is next
Thursday at 3:34 PM.

Tojo: That might mean something if I was going.

Gory: (sneering) Mr. Ferguson, *I advise you to go.*

Tojo: Thanks for the advice. Keep your forms, sorry for your time.

[He exits.]

Gory: Not as sorry as you'll be for yours. (picking up phone) Mr. Cordell? Yes, we have a maverick resignation? A Mr. Tojo Fenderson? Yes, just so you're aware. Yes, he probably will. So, lunch tomorrow?

[Fade.]

SCENE III

[Set is same as Scene I, Maeda looks over Tojo's computer.. Tojo enters.]

Maeda: Tojo! Where were you? I know you skipped lunch, but that doesn't mean you can take it anytime during the day! I needed you to dictate some memos to the Object Programming Team!

Tojo: Miss Rubin, I was down at administration, handing in my resignation.

Maeda: What? Why? Has another company contacted you? Damn it, if Francis wants my secretary, he had best hope his security team...

Tojo: No, no, no, nothing like that. In fact, that whole mess is why I'm leaving. If I wanted to die for something, I'd do it for my country and join the army.

[Maeda sighs.]

Maeda: Sit down, Tojo.

[Tojo sits.]

Maeda: Didn't they prepare you for this in school? You can't be that dense that you don't know that it's dangerous to be a skilled worker for a large company in modern America.

Tojo: Of course I know that. Everybody knows that. But I just thought...

Maeda: What?

Tojo: I just thought that...that...

[He waits for her to interrupt again, but she lets him find the words.]

Tojo: I thought that only happened in black chip companies, over like, stock...and stuff. You know, ones involved in the Mafia and stuff.

[Maeda shakes her head.]

Maeda: Tojo, you're a victim of marketing. "Join Utility Net, and die so some fat ass a million miles away gets rich of your hard work". It doesn't reel them in dear. "Join Utility Net, Be Respected and Make Lots of Money" is a bit more effective. Essentially both are true. But you have to pay the price of one to get the other.

Tojo: They didn't tell me this at school. They made it sound great, and intriguing.

Maeda: Isn't it great and intriguing?

Tojo: To be honest, not really! I spend most of my day sitting on my ass waiting for the meagre amount of work you give me and reading the Internet Encyclopaedia cause the damn computer is monitored like a hawk! I feel useless anyway.

Maeda: You do that meagre work better than anyone in the building, or the state.

Tojo: Well, why don't I get a promotion then?

Maeda: Because you are utilising the skills you have. You wouldn't be good in a different position as compared to someone who's trained for it.

Tojo: So I'm stuck here?

Maeda: Stuck is a bad word. Confirmed is better. I don't see what's the matter. You have benefits better than 98% of the population of earth, you make enough money to get you whatever you want...

Tojo: Except safety!

Maeda: Yes, but you have *security*.

Tojo: I wouldn't call being riddled with arrows for writing up papers for you a job with good security.

Maeda: You're over reacting. There's so little a chance of that happening, I shouldn't have even mentioned it.

Tojo: But could it happen?

Maeda: Well, you have to...

Tojo: Could it happen?!

Maeda: Yes.

[Pause.]

Maeda: It's a whole lot less dangerous than trying to get out. You don't like your life at work, use your ludicrous secretary paycheque to buy a better life at home. That's what I did.

Tojo: I'll use it to buy a freakin' armoured car, that's what I'll do.

Maeda: (concerned) Tojo, I think I'm gonna get you an appointment with the counsellor, it'll give you something to do.

Tojo: Damn! Is there something wrong with me for not wanting to die?

Maeda: You just seem so intent on leaving, and that's just as dangerous.

Tojo: But at least then...

Maeda: (looking at watch) Shit! Meeting, and now I don't even have those graphs for the programming gals! Get on that, I gotta go!

Tojo:(as she exits) But I don't WORK HERE ANYMORE! (yelling to himself and the world) JESUS CHRIST!

SCENE IV

[A doorway. Two Security Guards, in unisex uniforms, stand, billy clubs at their sides. Tojo enters and walks between them and the doorway, and a loud BEEP is heard.]

Guard #1: Hey bud, did you forget to check out?

Tojo: Can't, not time yet, won't let me.

Guard #2: Too late for lunch, where you gonna go?

Tojo: Home.

Guard #2: Did you notify your supervisor?

Tojo: No, she's in a meeting.

Guard #1: Then just go back and wait. Won't kill you to sit with whatever you got till closing time.

Tojo: I'm not sick, I'm just LEAVING.

[One of the guards puts his finger to his ear, as if listening to a radio signal.]

Guard #2: You Tojo Ferguson?

Tojo: (hesitant) I'm...yes, I'm Tojo Fenderson.

Guard #1: (Looks to Guard #2, nods) Come with us.

Tojo: Look, I'll do all the paperwork later, I...

[Both guards grab him underneath the arms.]

Tojo: Hey! Wait! Let...stop!

[Tojo struggles free, but just as he escapes their grasp, one jabs him in the stomach with his club, doubling him over. The other wrestles him to the ground, and the lights go down on the exact moment before the first guard strikes Tojo in the back of the head.]

SCENE V

[A prison like room, you can only tell by the lights that clearly indicate a barred window. Tojo lies face down, unconscious. Tongue sits beside him, looking at his/her nails. One of the security guards is still there, keeping watch, but he faces outward. Tojo moans, and realises his surroundings in horror.]

Tojo: You can't possibly do this! This is illegal! I've been assaulted and imprisoned!

Tongue: He's not listening. He hears it every day.

Tojo: (seeing Tongue for the first time) They kept you to? When did you quit?

Tongue: I didn't. I stole some very important files and sold them to Detrasoft.

Tojo: That must have been hard.

Tongue: Not really, considering I don't work here.

Tojo: You mean they've imprisoned you even though they have no jurisdiction over you?

Tongue: (points to guard) They do now.

[Tongue lights a smoke.]

Tongue: So you tried to quit, eh? Not smart. Not smart to get involved in these places in the first place.

Tojo: Tell me about it. I shoulda been a lawyer like mom wanted.

Tongue: No money in that. There's too damn many of them.

Tojo: Well, look where all my money got me now.

Tongue: Ain't it the truth.

Guard: Put out that cigarette. If I have to warn you again, it will be twice as bad as what we did to you LAST time you were caught.

Tongue: (face is afraid, voice is angry, like a cornered animal) Fuck you.

[A slight pause; Tongue puts out cigarette.] Tojo: So what are they gonna do with me? I thought for sure I was dead.

Tongue: Nah, you still have to have an exit interview, right? They'll bombard you with so many shrinks and quacks you'll be convinced the sky is green if they want you to.

Tojo: Excellent. What are they gonna do to you?

Tongue: Ask the authorities what to do, which is most likely kill me, considering the other shit I've done, and than Otto the Wonder Gorilla over here will call in the security crew to pump me full of arrows.

Tojo: They can do that? They are the law?

Tongue: Nothing so cliché. The hand of the law extends to the people nowadays. People with money anyway.

[A long pause.]

Tongue: I don't care. At least I'll die a criminal.

Tojo: You're proud of that?

Tongue: Of course I'm proud of that. Anybody can work at a place like this, you just have to go to school and do what you're told. And everybody does, except criminals. You're too young to remember what it used to be like.

Tojo: What do you mean?

Tongue: When "criminal" meant "drug dealer" or "terrorist". It must be so strange being you. You've never lived in a world where...where...where there were things like illegal drugs. I bet you've never even seen a gun.

Tojo: In a museum. They talked about how our wonderful government stopped them from being made.

Tongue: What's your conception of crime?

Tojo: I don't know anymore.

Tongue: Well, mine's bravery, and a lot of people my age feel the same. Product of environment I guess. Everyone has a desire to be brave. Criminals are the only defined brave people left. No more wars to fight since only America can afford them. Well, I suppose fire-fighters a brave too.

Tojo: I shoulda been a fire-fighter. What am I saying? My wanting safety got me into this mess!

Tongue: I doubt that. You wanted the freedom to choose your danger.

Tojo: Maybe that was it.

Tongue:(whispering) Then choose it now.

[Tongue pulls a small pistol out of his/her clothing.]

Tojo: (whispering) Holy Shit! You weren't kidding! You did do some nasty things, if you got one of these!

Tongue: It's an heirloom, actually. Just pull right here.

Tojo: I...I can't! That's insane! Those things kill people!

Tongue: Yeah, but it won't be you.

Tojo: Why didn't you do it by now?

Tongue: I said I wanted to be brave. I didn't say I was.

Tojo: No...yes. Give it to me.

Tongue: So you'd rather die than live without freedom? You do realise that most of the population of earth would kill you to get where you are?

Tojo: Are you going to give it to me or not?

Tongue: Consider carefully my friend. You can just apologise and get your job back. You are nowhere near the point of no return. I've passed, and have no choice. You have choice.

Tojo: I can deal with a prison like this. I can feel the walls if I want. I don't have to pretend everything's okay in here...life is supposed to be awful in here. But back out there, the walls...are invisible, and I can't pretend that I can get past the bars anymore.

Tongue: There is another way. (Stops whispering) Know anybody else that could do your job?

[Tongue nods behind the Guards back.]

Tojo: Uh...yeah.

Tongue: If you really want to leave, don't quit, get voluntarily downsized, and make yourself seem inadequate. Who is it?

Tojo: My...cousin.

Guard: What's his name.

Tojo: Fred Fenderson...lives on Albany Road.

Guard: How many words a minute does he type?

Tojo: Uh...120.

Guard: Pretty good, can't beat your 213.

Tongue: You type 213 words a minute?!?!?! My god.

Tojo: Yeah, so what? He's...he's not a troublemaker.

Guard: Neither will you be, in a short time.

Tongue: Man, 213, they're gonna have a death grip on you! Most companies kill for secretaries that swift.

Guard: You should be proud. We're proud to have you as an employee.

[Tongue and Tojo look at each other, and Tojo takes the gun.]

Tojo: Too bad I won't be at the next company picnic.

[Tojo stands and puts the gun at the back of Guards head. Lights go out abruptly, and a gunshot is heard, which echoes. Throughout the next scene change, the sounds of sirens are heard.]

SCENE VI

[The scene is bare, only two security guards holding a limp and obviously beaten Tojo in front of Ms. Gory. The two guards have futuristic bows and sling of arrows slung over their backs.]

Gory: We are sourly disappointed in you, Mr. Ferguson. Your criminal record you have recently obtained bodes poorly for Utility Net. Due, however, to your inexperience in the field, prior record and exceptional skills, as well as our own mistake of holding you with a known criminal, we are willing to overlook this incident. We are sending you to counselling...

Tojo: Kill me.

Gory: I beg your pardon?

Tojo: Kill me.

Gory: I assure, my young sir, we most certainly will not! Your skills are FAR too valuable to just squander! We'll just have to keep you under surveillance in counselling until you get these suicidal thoughts out of your head.

Tojo: You've...even...taken that choice away from me.

Gory: And a good thing too, you poor, confused young man. I doubt you really want to die.

Tojo: That's why I want to leave.

Gory: I don't follow you.

Tojo: I don't want to die for this company just because we bought some Petrosoft stock.

Gory: What? Really? Is THAT what all this is about? Mr. Ferguson, I assure you, if you are worried about your safety here at this branch of Utility Net, we can transfer you to a high security branch.

Tojo: (surprise/relief) You...you can?

Gory: Of course! Can't have you working to well in absolute terror now can we? If you have concerns of this matter, please, tell us! We need this information to help you, not these deep flowery meanderings! "Kill me" indeed! Would you like to be

moved to Beta wing in the high security sector? It'll be a bit more work, and we'll expect the same performance from you.

Tojo: (confused) All...alright...sure...that would be great Ms. Gory.

Gory: We'll have you out by the end of the week. It's still early, you can go back to work now, Mr. Ferguson.

Guard #2: At least let him go to the infirmary! Have a heart!

Gory: Oh heavens yes. Get patched up son. Glad all this was cleared up. Just go the Administration building across the street.

[Tojo makes no reply; he stares in a sort of daze. Fade.]

SCENE VII

[Tojo is in a scene that looks exactly identical to the first one. The typewriters roar up again, but this time in full lights. Tojo's posture is slack, his shoulder hunched as if he has run a marathon. The type writers lower in volume but do not disappear. Tojo tries to suppress a whimper, and it is unheard over the typewriters...the first time. Tojo slowly breaks into sobs, eventually progressing into a frantic mesh of emotions that causes him to bolt up out of his chair. He backs up against the wall, panting.]

Tojo: It's okay Tojo...this is what you wanted. No one's going to kill you here. (whimpering) This is what you wanted...

[He sits back at his desk and regains his ergonomic posture. He sits but does not type. After a while he looks up at his hands, holding them up to the light, turning them over in wonder. He places his hand on the table/ground, and grabs the computers keyboard. He lifts it in the air, and repeatedly brings it down on his hand. The sound of bones crunching is not hidden, but intermixed with sounds of feedback and chaotic computer noise. Tears stream down Tojo's face. He picks up the keyboard with his now broken hand, but drops it in pain. He makes a few more attempts, trying to break his other hand. He falls to his knees. A pause. Tojo then bites his hand viciously, and after a few moments, blood trickles from his mouth and down his arm. Maeda enters, some folders in her arms.]

Maeda: Tojo, you left these forms back at the...WHAT THE HELL ARE DOING?

[Maeda, shocked, turns Tojo around. Silence as he looks up at her...he slowly raises a bloody hand runs it down her face, not making eye contact. Stunned and confused, Maeda storms offstage.]

Tojo: (monotone, now consciously lying to himself) This...is what...I wanted.

[Maeda, Gory and Guard #2 enter. Guard #2 once again has a futuristic looking bow and arrow slung over shoulder. Gory heads directly for Tojo, and grabs him by the wrists, observing his gnarled hands. She stares at Tojo in contempt, but says nothing. She lets go, leaving Tojo to stare at his hands and absorb the consequences. Gory nods at Maeda and they both turn away from Tojo, backs to the audience, upstage. The Guard grabs Tojo forcefully, but seeing Tojo applies no resistance, gently begins to place him face down on the floor.]

Maeda: It's a shame really.

Gory: I don't want a repeat of this incident, Miss Rubin. This is the fourth employee in a few days.

Maeda: Some people just can't take direction you know?

Gory: Well, learn to keep a closer eye.

[Tojo lies face down on the ground. The guard slowly draws an arrow from the sling and notches it. The Guard then points the arrow at Tojo's head. Fade.]

Curtain.

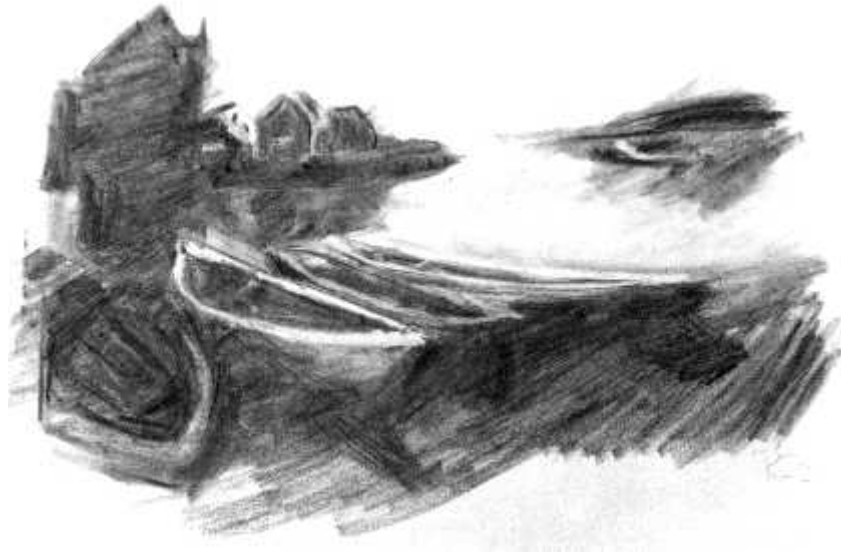
Peter Kyte

Monument Too



Rob Barrett

Untitled



Vanessa Tingley

Two Men Dancing

