



# Black Rock & Sage

Issue 11, 2012  
Idaho State University

*Black Rock & Sage* is a journal of creative works published annually through the Department of English and Philosophy at Idaho State University with assistance from the Art and Music Departments. All artistic contributions, from design to literature to music, have been produced by graduate and undergraduate students in departments from across the university. Submissions are received from September through February. For more information about the journal, see our website at [www.isu.edu/blackrock](http://www.isu.edu/blackrock).

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Cover: Detail of "Roots" by Catherine Reinhardt

# Black Rock & Sage

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## BR&S 2012 Selected Musical Performances

1. Teaira Burge, Soprano, Senior Performance Major.  
Abbi Clark, BM in Piano Performance, ISU, 2006.  
*Wiegenlied*, by Johannes Brahms (1833-1897).
2. Angie Lloyd, Senior Bachelor of Arts in Piano Major.  
Prelude in D major, Op. 23, No. 4, by Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943).
3. Ulises Ramirez, Junior Trumpet Performance Major.  
Heloise Clifford, piano, BM and MM from University of South Africa.  
Concerto in E-flat major, mvt 1, *Allegro*, by Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837).
4. Jared Johnson, Baritone, Senior Performance Major.  
Sarah Kim, Senior Piano Performance Major.  
“Sea Fever,” by John Ireland.
5. Thaddeus M. Ferrin, Marimba, Junior Bachelor of Music Education Major.  
Tammy Miller, BM in Piano Performance, ISU, 2011.  
Concerto for Marimba, mvt. 1, *Saudação*, by Ney Rosauro (1952-).

6. Rocky James Allen, Piano, Junior Bachelor of Science in Music Major.  
*Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum* from *Children's Corner*, by Claude Debussy (1862-1918).
7. Emilee Bunker, Soprano, Senior Bachelor of Arts in Music Major.  
Stephanie Major, Senior Piano Performance Major.  
*Chanson triste*, by Henri Duparc (1848-1933).
8. Jeffrey "Gus" Weaver, Senior Violin Performance Major.  
"Tango Etude No. 3," by Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992).
9. Amanda Sudweeks Hall, Soprano, Senior Bachelor of Music Education Major.  
Trent Clegg, piano, BM in Vocal Performance from ISU, 2007.  
*Der Schmetterling*, by Franz Schubert (1797-1828).
10. Rogelio Alba, Freshman Graphic Arts Major.  
Original Vocal. "With You (Let's Ride)."

## Editor's Note

Idaho winters make me restless. By the first day of spring, I feel worn down, craving increased temperatures and longer days, so I can stretch my bones during long walks in the foothills around campus. But now, thanks to an unusually mild winter, I recognize there's more to this restlessness than merely single-digit temperatures and snow, wind, and ice. After four years of working with *Black Rock & Sage* (two as editor-in-chief), I've finally realized it's no coincidence the dark days of winter run parallel to the production of our creative arts journal. The daily tasks wear me down: check email (no new submissions); balance the budget; print and hang flyers; glance back at email; bake cookies for the write-a-thon, update the website. Repeat.

But just as rising temperatures and longer days hint at the coming of spring, soon after our annual submission deadline on Valentine's Day, I begin to read and analyze submissions with the other editors. After letting myself get lost for months in details, I am rejuvenated by the wonderful and impressive creative endeavors of ISU's undergraduate and graduate students. The change of seasons feels like an appropriate theme to dwell on as I look over Issue 11 of *Black Rock & Sage*. But instead of focusing merely on the seasonal transition from dark to light, many of these contributors explore the difficult and less than obvious realities of change and transformation.

Natalie Homer reminds readers, in her beautifully terse poem "Cocoon," that transformation and growth are not always achieved without regret, without leaving something behind: "Behold the butterfly: a beauty of God's creatures but the remorseless murderer of the humble caterpillar." In "Everyday the abecedarian blows bubbles



on the porch,” Jeff Pearson considers, among other things, the potential consequences when humans are given the power to create and alter life. Michon Vanderpoel’s short story looks unabashedly at the transformational realities of death. In “Golden Boy,” Melinda Linscott scrutinizes the darker, emotional impact of physical transformation on human relationships.

In their intimate reflections of the natural world, the visual artists also examine themes of change and transformation. Catherine Reinhardt, in her layered print “New Growth,” illustrates how singular layers (experiences) build upon themselves, leading to a new, clear moment of renewal. Don Nunley’s “Crabapple” presents an almost post-apocalyptic landscape, leaving the source of such a pungent (yet desirable) palette just out of view. The visual art challenges us to look closer at our surroundings, to be more observant of what has, is, or will occur. My hope is for *BR&S* to represent a hitching post of sorts for the artistic community at ISU and in southeast Idaho. Producing the journal each year is certainly achievable only through a community effort. Selecting and editing materials is only accomplished through a combined effort of student editors and faculty advisors from several departments. On behalf of everyone involved, I offer thanks to Professors Angie Zielinski and Linda Leeuwrik from the Art Department, Professor Kori Bond from the Music Department, and especially to Professor Susan Goslee (faculty advisor to *BR&S*) from the English and Philosophy Department.

As it does for me, I hope this issue of *Black Rock & Sage* will give you pause to reflect on the cumulative strength of the artistic community at Idaho State University, as well as the creative endeavors of individual student writers, musicians, and artists. I know you’ll find something here to help make artistic exploration a part of your university experience. Please enjoy.

## Cocoon

Cocoon: A case spun by a caterpillar as protection while it is changing into a butterfly or moth/ Suggesting some type of security blanket/ *Lepidoptera nympa*/ Silk buttons/ Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain/ Rather like crystallized pineapple in color/ He's shut himself in and we've no idea what he's doing in there/ Fragile pod between two fingertips itching to crush it/ Behold the butterfly: a beauty of God's creatures but the remorseless murderer of the humble caterpillar/ The term is derived from the Greek *chrysos*, meaning "gold"/ Even butterflies have claws/ My pet worm is gone! That's because he's gone and hung himself, didn't you know?/ Unmask! Unmask!

## The Mothers

The small hand on the clock face sat at nine, while the big hand crept toward three. A shrill buzz echoed off the red brick walls. Recess. Chair legs parted tweed carpet, as I pushed from my desk and its peeling-taped nametag.

When I shoved through the double doors, a semicircle already eclipsed the tetherball court. I scanned the jacket backs for one parted by a long blond ponytail. Nothing. I continued to comb the surroundings of Calvin Smith Elementary School. My eyes moved over the iron posts and sways of playground to the east corner and its blockade of chain link fence

I found her, by the four-foot electrical box that was lurking in the school field. Curled up on trampled grass, her face was nuzzled by a mass of blond hair, as she cradled herself in small arms. My fingers poked holes into the soft curls scattering the cream back of her beloved Pocahontas sweatshirt, a gift from Disneyland and one we had fought over. The pokes of my fingers were met by indifferent groans and soon advanced to nudges of my flat palm. Her head turned to the side and wet, green eyes peeked through pale hands.

“Alysha . . . what are you doing?”

“I’m trying to remember her,” she whispered.

She was trying to remember her mother.

• • •

On a Tuesday in April, two mothers met, both pregnant and awaiting summer babies, babies that would be delivered in the same month. They met at Sandy Bowling Lanes, as members of an all-

women's bowling league. They sat in swivel chairs, ones that spun in complete circles. The only woman without an infant in her arms was the one bowling. To one mother, amidst the crack of pins and soprano-pitched laughter, the team seemed like a silent promise. It was a community support group, a never-ending, baby-holding bowling circle, where the arms of another would hold her child when it was her turn.

The mothers saw, in each other, themselves. Having the same qualities they felt were essential, each asked the other to be a parental guardian if something should happen. The conversations had drifted to somber topics lately, as they sat at one mother's apple-themed kitchen table, an after work ritual. But this decision felt weightless. The proximity of their homes, now both on Ledgewood Drive, was a matter of counting concrete squares of sidewalk. Their lives were threaded. The strings of children, pets, and responsibility were so tightly woven that their separation would be a pointless attempt to unravel a life.

On Wednesdays and Fridays, one mother was required to work early mornings. After the four-button code was pushed from memory, the rails of the Barbie-pink garage rattled slightly and its door opened. One mother recalled the label of that paint can reading Salmon, and laughed at how everything the other attempted managed to turn pink. Two sleeping children were then laid across couches to be awoken by impatient pokes and the television clicking on to *Bobby's World*, followed by two left turns and one stoplight marking the short drive to school.

Habitually late for pick up at Sunshine Square Kindergarten, the mothers pulled along the edge of steps, at least ten minutes past 3 PM, laughing, while one mother mouthed exact syllables of Meatloaf's

voice, ringing “Shout it! Ain’t no doubt about it. . . . We were doubly blessed,” from the speakers of a black Explorer.

The mothers were met by two daughters. Waiting, one daughter slumped on the curb, convinced of abandonment, while the other stomped concrete with patent tap shoes she refused to take off. Sitting and standing, the daughters were closer in height, and their differences came into full contrast. The usual gummy smile, bright blond hair, and green eyes of one were countered by the scowl, deep dark hair and chocolate eyes of the other. Together they were a strange sight to mothers who were so much the same.

The mothers made plans to drink Beringer wine, after one’s declaration that “the laundry is not going anywhere.” They began in the early morning, sipping from blue plastic cups left over from children’s birthday parties. They sat on the patio, at a glossy table with mismatched chairs and uneven legs. One mother rolled her jean Capris and let the sun touch her skin and warm her wine. They talked about coach-pitch baseball games, their husbands, and upcoming camping trips. They left the clock unchecked and time suspended. Until 2:30, when one mother yelled, “Oh shit!” They were left to run, scattering unfolded clothing and covering the length of three front yards.

One mother concealed laughter, and the other cried apologetically after their daughters’ decision to play barber. The game ended with blond strands streaking the bathroom’s 1970s linoleum and a banishment of the red-handled scissors. One mother made, packed, and forcefed egg salad sandwiches at the annual vacation to Defaise Ranch. One mother enlisted the other, and together convinced the fathers and friends to hang pale moons around the fire in a prizeless “best ass” contest.

One Saturday in August, two small girls watched boats and Jet Skis skim across water from the safety of red rocks. Too scared to swim and too young to go out on the boats, they jumped from stone to stone, both pretending to be Pocahontas. Their make-believe game was ended by a deafening crunch, a father's pacing, and the panicked observation "that sounded like a crash." Children were ushered into the family SUV. The girls were left to wonder and watch, as they counted blue uniforms through the darkness of tinted windows.

One mother had never seen the other in a dress before. The outfit was intended to be worn for a looming high school reunion. The smooth blues and white of satin now complimented the rose-pink color of her surrounding coffin. One mother, pinned between an oak pew and a shuffle of dark clothing, felt the whole thing was a contradiction. Why was it now her turn? She couldn't make out the faces crowded into the Lutheran Church; the church across the street from the swings of Vista playground, a place the girls had begged to go only days before. She wandered, unsure of her footing and questioning her place, as the spot by the other's side was now irrelevant. The curved altar walls hummed with Norman Greenbaum's 1960s pop hit "Spirit in the Sky" as the casket was lifted and carried outside. One mother was left, pained by the realization that she now had to tell children, "Where you're going to go when you die."

• • •

She continued to lay there, unmoving. My foot began to tap. The rhythm of my impatient feet was cut short by the startling chime of the elementary school bell: the signal to find our way back to our second grade classrooms. I tugged on Alysha's sweater sleeve, a gesture to come on. My hands clasped her elbow and assisted the pull to her feet. As she rose, my brunette hair brushed the bottom of her shoulder. I raised my head to look at her, an angle that for years

would stay the same degree. My brown eyes caught green eyes: a silent promise. I then threaded each of my fingers through hers, and we ran, together, just as our mothers did.

## Plaything

I sit        in the nursery  
and watch diaper changes;

I listen        to lullabies  
played to the beat  
              of ocean waves.

There is no farrier  
  
that pounds my hooves  
or digs grit from my soles —  
              just sneaker vibrations  
on the stairs.

Mother        may I play tag  
with the other colts?

              No —  
No, I may not.

The plush bear smiles  
              in his corner —  
sometimes fixing his tie.

I stand        guard  
by the stereo and teach



a forming mind what sound  
the horsey makes.

I do not blow hot air from velvety nostrils —  
but I am velvet.

Mother  
may I stay inside                      and be slobbered on?

Disinterest      of childhood  
                    is my western destiny.  
No leather blisters  
my perfect black sides —

just endless alphabet renditions  
                    and tongue-clucks              as I walk

along stair railings  
                    and already              trampled Lego cities.

## On John 9:6-7

“Lord, what are you doing?”

You know one of them asked that  
. . . or wanted to, at least.

Probably Peter.

See him leaning on John’s shoulder,  
head tipped to the other’s ear as they  
swap whispers like bubblegum cards.

Thomas pulls a face.

Jesus is playing in the dirt,  
messing up the robes his  
mother spent all day washing.

Holy spit mingles with dark earth.

He stirs them around with his finger,  
imagining he’s making rivers.

A blind man wants in on the secret.

Unihibited Memoir of What Really Happened, Your  
Honor  
or  
I Plead the Fifth  
or  
Guilty of Being an Innocent  
or  
That Depends, Do They Have Milkshakes in  
Prison?

I found myself falling down I-15 toward Utah and the Salt Flats, where Donny and I would break the land speed record for a '68 VW bus. We did not bother to check the current record, nor did we know if such a thing even existed. I did not want to forfeit any of our positive energy—energy that could be converted into speed—doing tedious Google searches in language, which I do not think in.

Donny had grease on his hands, hands that were going 90 miles per hour down I-15. Donny explained that the bus could go much faster, but I don't know why because I am a terrible listener, and because I was busy drawing Sharpie prosetics all across and up and down the metal dashboard. The radio rang out the best of the 70s clearer than the bells of Notre Dame could even dream of doing.

The road vibrated before disappearing beneath our Millennium Falcon turret cockpit, its gun replaced with a transit bus steering wheel, X-wing fighters replaced with angry motorhomes in the clear late twilight.

I was suddenly terrified of Wile E. Coyote and his road poster luring us over steep cliffs. The bus was not going fast enough to walk on air, stop, and bolt back to dry land.

Donny was thinking up names for his vehicle, part man, part machine.

“I know,” he said with his square, white teeth, “Let’s call her the Road Runner.”

“I know,” I said, “Why don’t you shut your damn mouth.”

I was really hunkered now, man. Really creating something on that steel canvas. Part man, part machine, part both. A paradox that made sense in the mind of what was and might possibly still be.

I declaimed politics, and I shit upon pomposity, running circles around hypocrisy before plunging Excalibur clean through the neck of the emptiness of society, all without any reference to any of it. All in the lyrics of light and sound and motion, and when I had finished, I kept going and ruined it all before it had reshaped into something like ugliness, like the cousin of beauty with the words of Steve Miller tattooed on her tits.

I filled the metal and kept writing, anyway.

When I looked up, we were traveling faster than the speed of light because it was dark, and the headlights didn’t work. Donny must have spent all his time on the engine, but there would be more of that now that we were traveling back.

“Let’s stop in the 50s and get a milkshake,” I said to Donny.

“Sure,” Donny said. “Whatever.”

A silent policeman sat rubbing his eyelids, making the problem worse, and heard us hush by in the clouded night. He would have thought nothing of it, thought it was another of the things he witnessed every day out of the corner of his eye, or the periphery of his hearing, that he refused to acknowledge for fear of losing his sanity. Then he saw the numbers on his radar gun.

The police lights forced my patriotism. My innate fear of punishment froze the Sharpie. Donny was unfazed. He sped up.

Apparently, I had extremely underestimated Donny's level of commitment toward our current enterprise. My idea for how the trip would go involved riding shotgun wherever Donny wanted to go, stopping wherever Donny wanted to stop, and, maybe, a milkshake or two. It did not involve prison.

Donny overflowed purpose as he eased the green and white Twinkie up to 120 miles per hour. Everything shook, except Donny. His jaw profile clenched into a near triangle that ended at the chin, and I focused on that, hoping to gain balance from the distant focal point of its confidence. I don't know what Donny had thought would happen if he pulled over doing just 90, but I knew we might as well give it our best shot now.

I turned up the radio, and Donny leveled at the road. His eyebrows sifted out the hazard line in the red and blue darkness. The occasional minivan or pickup truck or beige sedan fell backwards into the night. The traffic is always fantastic on the roads of southeast Idaho: the potholes are, too. They welcomed us, seduced our tires, but Donny had tied himself to the mast, and the potholes had little effect on our sailing vessel.

Corners that weren't corners at 75 were now edges the bus careened at 120. When the tires strayed only just too far over, the rumble strip growled "boxcar, boxcar, boxcar" faster than we could hear it. Loose gravel on the shoulder transformed into something closely akin to black ice. My captain's brow moistened. His eyebrows rerouted the condensation down the sides of his face, where the hair too fine to be a beard was. I knew that the white wall tires would pop. I knew we were dead, and our blood was on the windshield, and pieces of Donny's scalp were on the steering wheel, and the bus was a

crushed beer can, and milkshakes, somewhere, were melting and our lives were the same as everyone else's before ours. Nothing.

Then I looked at Donny. My captain smiled, and I saw what nothing could be. He smiled a kiddie pool on a hot day with naught to do but lie in it with your feet on the grass and your ears in the water, your head in a book you were never going to read. He smiled hash-browns and ketchup. He smiled shooting a textbook with a .22, then turning the book in on the last day of school with the bullets still inside. He smiled going fast.

I smiled his confidence, and when Donny gave me the longest brief glance he could spare from the road and saw my serenity, his smile opened. I heard a crazed laugh over the forgotten radio's madness and the frantic wheels. It sounded too familiar to be Donny's, and then Donny was laughing, too. A straightaway stretched straightway before us, and the greasy hands lifted off the wheel. The left one rolled down the window. The right one searched behind the driver's seat, fumbling in a backhanded way through empty sandwich wrappers and shotgun shells, before coming up with a tire iron.

"Take the wheel." Then Donny was out the window to his waist, and I was gripping at 2 and 5 o'clock. It was 1:33 in the morning on a Thursday. The wind reached around his torso and punched me in the face. I felt a sudden decrease in speed, like we might come out of the situation alive. Then I saw the gale lift Donny's bare feet off the floor and pedal, so I mashed on the accelerator myself. I wondered at the skill of British drivers. My perspective driving halfway from the passenger seat while straddling the stick shift as the potholes began to take their toll on our unnamed ship reminded me of getting spun around in circles then trying to bowl while getting the shit beat out of me with pool cues and broomsticks.

Nights at bowling alleys are fraught with hazard. Too much beer and pretty girls and noise, always noise. Missed strikes and missed opportunities mingle with turkeys and the jukebox. And once, and only once, the slaps of wood breaking over my back, legs, and head could be heard in the din.

Then Donny hurdled the rail separating bar and lanes and drop-kicked one of the polo-shirted, drunk sons-of-bitches, and I had time to wipe my elbow through the cheekbone of one of the shocked before grabbing the popped collar of another and jerking his face into my forehead, which was already being propelled with all the force of my neck and sprung legs toward his ignorant expression. Red everywhere. The rest scattered, and my captain promptly bowled a 7-10 split for their girlfriends. He always bowls too straight and right down the middle. He took a bow and left with a brunette. I ordered a milkshake.

Donny's body shook violently in its jeans and ragged brown-white undershirt. He had spread his knees to brace himself against the hurricane. When his torso twisted violently, I knew the tire iron was on its way. I lost focus to chart its trajectory, letting go of the wheel and easing the pedal pressure so I could turn and look through the back window. The iron sailed weakly, skipped from the asphalt, and smashed through the windshield and radio of the patrolman as he reached to call for backup. He saw his bat with the human face flying at him, and the truth in the back of his mind was fully realized in the reflection of the breaking glass.

The police car swayed to a hard stop behind us. When I turned around, Donny was at the wheel and slowing to the speed limit with a serious look on his face.

We took the next exit.

*Jennifer Foradori*

## How to Drink and Drive

For Dad, driving with a coffee mug,  
while shifting,  
was no problem.  
I can hardly  
dunk  
one cookie  
while driving on  
a flat,  
straight  
road.

Both my travel mugs were thick  
with day-old coffee.

I only heard my dad swear  
once.

Snowy, morning roads  
“What the fuck  
is that guy doing?”  
Was he holding the white mug  
with brown detail that day?  
Half full of coffee?

I spill my coffee on my shirt.  
“Shit!”  
Then on my jeans.



Burns worse than  
the tears I won't cry.

*Catherine Reinhardt*

## Roots



Oil and conte on board

*Tracy Eastman*

## Variance



Collage

*Catherine Reinhardt*

## New Growth



Linocut, fire, handmade paper, wood

*Don Nunley*

## Untitled



Digital photography



*Tracy Eastman*

## Restraint Revisited



Acrylic on canvas

*Stacey Barker*

## Another State of Mind



Mixed media

*Don Nunley*

## Crabapple



Digital photography



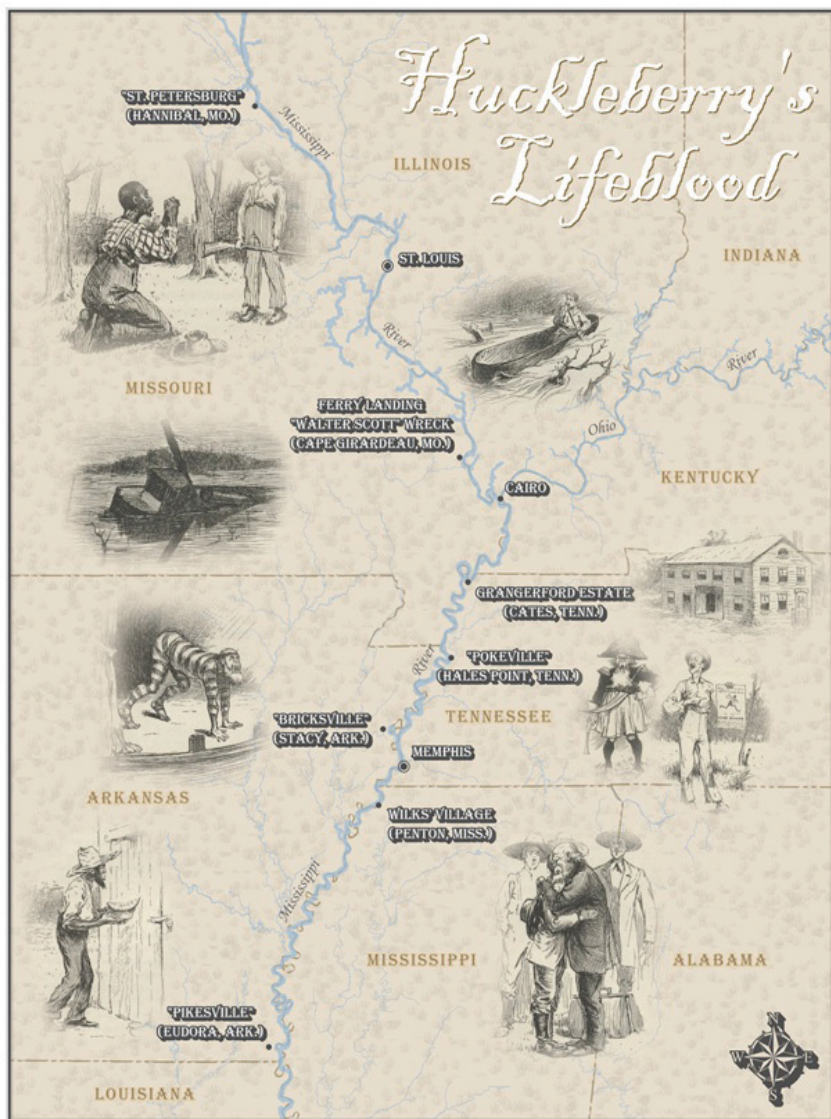
*Stacey Barker*

## Cubist Soup



Mixed media

## Huckleberry's Lifeblood



Created with Esri's ArcGIS 10. Illustrations by E.W. Kemble from 1885 edition of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

## Воскресенье

resurrection  
sabbath  
Sunday

It all began with Mary  
plus one. Hello Joe—Step Dad. The carpenter's  
sort of son. Boy genius, gifted  
to us and taken in  
death like the rest of us. Only he, a pure  
white, party of three, began again  
on day three with The Voskrecenye  
to set us free.

Your Voskrecenye began with  
tin beads harnessed around  
my hips and a hesitant  
shimmy. A midnight dance, a celebration  
in preparation for your Voskrecenye, your day  
of prayer, your shalom.

The night begins with some  
fun and suddenly becomes “Where’s my  
bra? I need coffee. My mom thinks the devil  
comes out at midnight.” The morning  
begins with a white  
shirt or my Voskrecenye best to watch  
football, take a nap, and do  
my pile of homework to end my  
weekend and start again.

## Uncle Carl

With edema flesh, you jiggled off the plane  
and took Brother's room, to tap your toes in sleep.  
We'd watch you while you'd nap.

Mother would beg you to be like us —  
quiet and clean  
    like a puzzle;  
    but we'd hope you wouldn't listen.  
        You were our outlandish pet  
        a circus for show-and-tell.

You said I sing beautiful, but I was just cleaning my room, pretending  
to be Cinderella. And you heard Mother singing you quiet from  
bedtime beatings

I hoped you would remember that song  
    with a history unimportant to me.

You and Mother talk in whispers  
about an unremembered childhood; about  
making Hotwheel tracks in the dirt mound and  
    hiding buckle bruises from Teacher.  
        Grandma doesn't care.

    And then you lose.  
Missing Person.  
Bicycle found across from high school.

Maybe heart attack.                      Gone three days.

Grandma says we killed you.

We imagined the flames that ate at your watered-down body. And how  
it was flipped like a pancake into the urn at your funeral. How can we  
have a funeral without the body-box?

Now we don't lock the pantry door to  
save the last half of the potato chips or  
worry about checking your room for dirty socks.

Grandma doesn't call anymore.

I still have the heart-encircled cross,  
made from grocery-bag twine,  
and bought with the Ramen-noodle currency  
of your prison mates.

Mother says she almost saved your soul —

She will finish in a year or so,  
after your Velcro watch stops ticking  
and after you hear the lullabies I sing  
to my children.

## Golden Boy

The boy stands in the bathroom, his hand motionless on the mirrored door of the medicine cabinet. The water has been running hot, just like the dentist said to make the bristles soft, and now steam rises from the sink. He finally opens the door, pulls out a tube of toothpaste, gently squeezes a soft, green wave onto his toothbrush, and begins brushing. His foot taps quietly as he goes, counting out the time for each section of his mouth. Top left, top right, bottom left, bottom right. Two minutes later he rinses the toothbrush, shakes it, sets it back on the shelf next to the other two, and pulls down the floss. He wraps it around his left forefinger with the same steadied concentration of a man loading a pistol and tears the end on the small silver catch. The boy starts with the very last molar on his bottom right, number 32. Every tooth has a number. Every molar. Every incisor. The boy knows each number and flosses each one.

His bedroom is painted light blue and matches the quilt on the bed where a stuffed bear sits watching silently. He picks up the bear and sets it on a chair by the window. He returns to the bed and pulls the quilt down to make a perfect right triangle. The boy sets his bear into the bed, lays the two felted paws outside of the quilt, and rests the head neatly on one of the pillows. He walks to the bookshelf and lifts up a miniature train engine. He blows lightly over the train and where it had been resting then returns it to its place, straightening it with his fingers. He does the same with a small, plastic army soldier, a tin of jacks and a small model skeleton made of wood. The boy kneels down by the bottom shelf and pulls out a book with a picture of a plane on the front and sets it on the chair. He turns on the small blue lamp next to his pillow and walks to the door. His eyes scan the room then he

turns off the switch so the soft glow of the lamp illuminates his pillows and bear like a waning crescent moon. The boy lies down in his bed, pulls the quilt up under his chin, and stares at the ceiling. He can hear his parents in the kitchen. They are arguing.

Every day for the past year, his mom has packed two lunches in the morning. She has made two peanut butter sandwiches, filled two Thermoses with hot tomato soup, and put small boxes of oyster crackers into two tin lunch buckets. The boy knows his mom likes her job in the factory. Some nights she lets him stay up late when the other ladies come over for drinks. He likes to watch the women playing games, laughing, and singing funny songs in the living room. They laugh and tease him about the cute neighbor girl with red hair, and it makes him blush. They call him their golden boy and run their sooty fingernails colored with bright, red polish through his hair. They always make him feel happy. They make his mom happy. The first night his dad came home, there had been a fight. He said he didn't want them leaving dirty fingerprints on the couch. But the boy knew his dad didn't care about the couch. He lost a leg during battle in northern France and came home in a wheelchair. The boy knew this was why his dad didn't want anyone in the house. He knew this was why his dad kept the curtains drawn across the living room window all day and why he never went down to Kip's with the men from his old high school football team anymore. The boy knew these things, even though no one had told him. The low voices from the kitchen stop, and the boy hears his mom's soft footsteps coming down the hall. She leans her head against the door and smiles.

"You ready for a story, Champ?"

• • •

When the boy walks into the kitchen the next morning, his dad is reading a newspaper and drinking coffee. His mom flips bacon at the stove. The kitchen is quiet except for the popping sound coming from the pan and the occasional rustle of his dad's paper. The boy fills his bowl with hot oatmeal and pours maple syrup over the top. His mom turns from the stove to hand him a glass of orange juice then sets two slices of toast onto his plate.

"Did you sleep okay?" his mom asks.

"Yes."

The boy's dad doesn't look up from the newspaper, and the boy doesn't say anything to him. He doesn't know what to say. He wants to talk like they used to before the war. He wants to ask who won the game and laugh about the neighbor's puppy. But he sips his juice and looks out the window instead.

The boy pulls the strawberry-rhubarb jelly over to his plate and dips his knife into the jar. He spreads it over his toast, being sure to cover all the way out to the crust. After three bites, he sets the toast back onto his plate and stirs his oatmeal. The maple syrup is runny and warm and spreads through the bowl, turning everything a light, tasty brown. He lifts the spoon to his mouth and samples the edge with his tongue. The boy's dad taps the edge of his empty coffee cup lightly with his finger, and his mom steps to the table and refills it. She returns to the stove, shuts it off, and lays two strips of bacon down next to the boy's toast. She sits down across from him and wipes her hands on her dark pants.

"I need to leave for work a little early this morning so I can talk to Mr. Terrence. Do you think you can be ready by seven-thirty?"

"Yes."

When the boy finishes his breakfast, he returns to the bathroom and pulls his toothbrush from the shelf in the medicine



cabinet. He waits for the water to get warm and again taps his foot while he brushes. But the boy only flosses at night. He walks into his bedroom, picks up the books secured in a leather belt, and returns to the kitchen. His mom is twisting the lid of his Thermos down tight. His dad is reading the paper. There is only one lunch pail on the counter.

“Are you ready to go?” his mom asks over her shoulder.

“Yes.”

The boy’s mom sets the Thermos into his lunch pail and pulls a sweater from the hook before opening the door. She smiles and holds it open while he steps through. When they start walking down the sidewalk, she reaches out and runs her fingers over his head. The boy closes his eyes for a moment as he walks, concentrating on her touch. Things are so different now. All he wanted was for his dad to come home. He used to play with the toy soldier under the tree in the front yard while his mom picked tomatoes. He liked to imagine his dad walking down the sidewalk to them. Now, sometimes he wishes he would leave again. Or that he had never left. He wants things to be the way they were before the war. He wants his mom to be happy and his dad to have his leg, for all of them to start talking and being like they were before the letter and the wheelchair and the two lunch buckets.

“I’m going to quit the factory today.”

“Okay.”

“I think it will be better for Dad if I’m home more. At least for a little while—while he gets used to things again.”

“Okay.”

They are standing in front of the boy’s school, and his mom kisses his cheek before he turns to go. Her eyes are watery, and the boy knows she would cry if there were not people all around. The boy wants to hug her and tell her not to quit her job if she doesn’t want

to. He wants to hand her the lunch bucket and tell her to stay in the factory and work with the ladies who sing and make her laugh. But he doesn't. The boy turns away and silently walks up the cold, stone steps.

## IV. Every day the abecedarian blows bubbles on the porch

### **Part One:**

I tell myself I am lately unsettled.  
A foster child I lost in the underpass  
came back like a tired cat, needing food.  
Of course I didn't answer the door.  
I thought it was the missionaries.  
We turn inward with every routine  
dosage of unfulfilled walks home,  
so when we get home, we close the blinds  
and hide in the crystal gun safe. Apollo  
crashed. Never will the crying last, the tears  
transfixed by motorboats. No, I told her  
as she reached for my scab. I am the  
last surviving member to come, only the  
end of lists never come, phony going.  
I think now in modular verbs,  
in the need to fill between capital periods,  
alphabetize the streets, grid  
the infinitives. Here, read one blob at  
a time until you're filled; a gelatinous  
cube, a few bickers between body parts  
but no cancer wars. These words are  
what they are looking for, score  
the homemade napalm prank, and the  
rest will come easy to your home.  
Eat a few fallen apples while juggling,  
a knock-up of familiar to be

public access television. Therefore,  
the open windows alleviate curiosity.

**Part Two:**

Miniscule metamorphs soil shorts  
every day. I want an every day,  
but there is never an every day,  
but one upon each other like a hiking  
cairn. Forget-reinvent-meant  
troves of cinders mined for sandboxes,  
but what do they all do? She  
had

fell down her grandma's steps for her, and  
she thought out the trip to OMSI  
where embryos track a pregnancy  
in a celestial bow. I held  
the fish-eye camera under her bag.  
We never blessed this mess.  
Charged with immaturity, overwhelming  
sexual leverage.

You | Me.

Silently

striving for separation to be cut  
in 40 3x5's, and

ignore maybe

entrance; right now,

follow the prophet,

## VI. Growth

Therefore, readiness came with her.  
A bludgeoun-spiked club of a nail and  
timber struck the shoe as I walked  
for her. You're welcome to growth:  
rudiment neospores of hyacinth following  
a pattern of dispersal in the puncture  
wound. Belt out accompaniment  
on top of a monkey bridge of  
past lovers circulating in flashes of  
liters of Mexican Coca-Cola and photographs  
of the English & Philosophy's Meet and Greet.  
Not so all over the place: skin melanocytes  
freed of tanning beds, abundantly fire  
across the bridge. I would love to  
be a menopause man, but I had too many  
protons and became ununnilium.  
I was mistaken  
about mothers protecting their hard-boiled,  
egg-shell daughters. Another drawback  
to who I so dearly loved, for we  
all leave our mothers alone again,  
they, like itchy scabs.

*Sarah Thurber*

## A Poem for Billy Collins

You stare                      at the  
trapped fly while it bangs blue armor

into your window.

And you think                      of me  
reading you                      and writing this.

A yellow gingham valence  
and light-canceling blinds

guard my window;  
they keep the dust in its place  
and me inside my head.

You chronicle every drop of milk in your coffee,  
every pompous Rottweiler that pees on your lawn;

Every reader                      outside your room,  
inside your poem.

Your name gives you freedom of the press —  
but not freedom to change my time zone.

I teach  
my eraser what forms it can take.

I get out                      of your poem

and put you                      in mine.

Here,  
I explore the height of numbers on clocks  
and how many petals fabric daisies have,

and how language changes with its user;  
    logging on like a computer

                    as the baby coos  
in the background echoing Daddy's  
baa-baaing.

## Chores

One man sat in a chair. The other man sat on the counter. The man in a chair sat with his legs under the dining room table. The other sat by the knives and the dishrag.

“What do you want to do now?” asked the man in a chair.

“We need to clean the kitchen,” answered the man on the counter, looking down and across to the man in a chair. “We really need to clean the kitchen.”

The man in a chair returned the gaze across the kitchen’s island separating them, then shifted it to the window, where a group of small, dark birds had caught his attention as it had lifted off the power line.

“Power-line birds,” said the man in a chair.

“Yeah, just power-line birds,” said the man on the counter, who had resumed picking a shovel callus off the part of his hand where his thick fingers connected to his thick palm.

The house around the men was still, as houses often are when there are silent people inside them, listening for the next move.

The man in a chair sat too upright to be comfortable.

The man on the counter slouched too much to properly sit on any counter’s top. The man in a chair leaned forward and rested his elbows and forearms on the table. The man on the counter set his palms on his perch and hoisted himself to a more acceptable position. The man on the counter’s faded blue and white tennis shoes almost touched the floor. The man in a chair checked the power lines.

“Isn’t it funny how when sometimes, when something needs to be done, all you can do is sit and wonder ‘What if?’” said the man in a chair. “And the ‘What if?’ becomes ‘What if what if what if what if?’”



until the simple choice in front of you, the simple *decision* that can't be took back once it's been acted on, not made, but *acted* on, well, I don't know, but it isn't right to think like that, anyway."

"I don't think anything's funny," said the man on the counter.

The house held its breath. A hallway went between the kitchen and the bathroom by the staircase, away from the dining room and beyond the family room. From its off-white walls, faces of the house's family stared in from churches and beaches and ski resorts, atop four-wheelers and horseback and the world, sunburned and muddy and frosted and happy. Always smiling.

The man in a chair yawned. "We need to get going," he said. "We really should leave soon."

"Not until the kitchen," said the man on the counter.

"Well, then, let's clean," said the other.

The man in a chair made to get up, but the man at the counter warned him with his eyes.

"What then?" said the man in a chair, who was getting upset. "What? Answer me."

The man on the counter just stared. He was not picking the shovel callus. He was like the block of knives, like he belonged there on the counter, with his thick palms flat on the counter's top with his thick, stained fingers overhanging its edge.

"We have to *go*," the man in the chair pleaded.

A flick of his wrist, and the man on the counter thunked one of the block's steak knives into the spasming button-down plaid stomach of the man on the floor.

"Not until the kitchen is cleaned."

## Time Traveler

### **I. Grandfather**

It's 6:31 PM,  
and a man in New York  
has fastened the last bolt of  
*The Oracle*, eager to  
prove paradoxes cannot  
exist. The man steps into  
the time machine's chamber and,  
with a pistol in his hand,  
pulls the lever towards him.

It is 6:30 PM,  
and the man aims his gun at  
the head of his past being.  
Before he pulls the trigger,  
the man cannot think of who  
would have fired the shot that  
killed him . . . he never minds his  
questions and fires the gun.

### **II. Predestination**

The firefighters could not  
determine the cause of the  
fire that melted my father.  
Though he was not charming or  
brilliant, my father was a

good man and was worth saving.  
I traveled into the past  
and quietly entered my  
father's house; it's dark as death  
inside the living room, but  
I find a lamp on the floor.  
Once put back on a table,  
I turn it on. It flickers,  
and the over-plugged outlet  
sparks, and flames consume the room.

### **III. Ontological**

My mother told me once that  
the future was amazing.  
Women, and minorities  
too, were finally equal.  
“It's because they all looked the  
same from the seats of flying  
Fords,” she used to tell me with  
her small journal in her lap.  
I stole it one day and saw  
pictures of time machine parts:  
anti-matter dynamos  
and flux initiators.  
With it I built a machine,  
so I could share it with you.  
My lil' princess, I swear that  
the future is amazing.

#### **IV. Time Loop**

One time, Stephen Hawking said  
paradoxes can't happen.  
Laws of nature won't let them.

## Rhinestone, Milestone

White dress, dress blues. Rumple  
Minze in  
the bride's room. Barely nineteen  
& bridesmaids we cry  
for other reasons.

What should be  
sentiment is probably just the booze. What were  
prom beads are swapped for plastic  
pearls & what was  
cheers then is here's to all the years  
you'll spend  
with him. We are still the same;  
Snagging our mothers' panty hose beneath  
purple & green streamers, wrists bound  
in flowers and string.

Too Drunk To Cut The Cake is the venue,  
the ballroom, the broken  
zipper, the popped  
balloon.

to him, she's a sway.

To us, she is torn, drunk, lace.

## Ford Swetnam Poetry Prize Winner

This year's poetry contest judge, William Johnson, is Professor Emeritus at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho. His critical study, *What Thoreau Said*, appeared in 1991 (University of Idaho Press), and Confluence Press has published two collections of his poetry, a chapbook, *At the Wilderness Boundary* (1996), and a full collection, *Out of the Ruins*, which won the Idaho Book Award for 2000. He has won fellowships from Fishtrap, the Environmental Writing Institute, the Idaho Humanities Council, the Idaho Commission on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts, and he served as Idaho Writer in Residence from 1998-2001 and 2010-11. Recent work includes a chapbook of poems, *Dogwood* (Limberlost 2010), and a book of essays, *A River without Banks* (Oregon State University Press 2010).

He writes about the winning poem:

This poem's short, metrical stanzas give punch and immediacy to the trauma of cultural terror: the exposure and grief of clerical sexual abuse. Internal rimes and assonance vent the anger and sadness of this trauma, and the poem's music and allusive force, especially in stanza three, give it lasting resonance. . . . [O]verall the poem is strong and leaves a lasting, if horrific, impression, the abracadabra of those wielding power, who inflict their own suffering and inadequacy on their youthful victims, and do so, in effect, by assuming God's authority and, perverted in the extreme, his blessing.

## Recipe for Disaster

Alabaster abbots  
traced altar-boy collars  
hanging from holy hooks  
in the Vatican.

Anticipation sewn  
into every stitch  
onto patches in place  
covering past pursuits.

New meat encased in old skin,  
like old-world Sicilian sausage  
hand-made by nana Pastorelli  
on a sunny Sunday afternoon.

A tried and true  
secret reliable recipe.  
Out of the (brick) oven  
and into the fire.  
Branded a saint for life;  
ensured a place in Heaven.

## Feeling Good

*BR&S* Prose Contest Winner

Dear Celine,

Your blog posting sounds so heartbreaking. I want to comfort you. Although we don't know one another, I'll give you some personal lessons I've learned that might help make you feel better.

• • •

Ten years back in time, a backstabbing co-worker named JL incapacitated me. JL sported spike fingernails and a few extra pounds; she made up for her lackluster exterior with her bustling, self-important carriage. She flitted after the boss: "You wanted me, Bill?" she'd simper. JL smoked cigarettes with her supervisor, toxic clouds billowing around them. She collected information about who was in favor and who was out. She was politically powerful, although she was merely a clerk. JL would do anything to make herself look good—that's why Bill liked her so much. That's why I hated her.

• • •

One way I've been thinking about feeling good, Celine, is that people at movies and ballgames probably feel good. People at home crying or drinking or writing for help on blogs feel bad. When I'm annoyed that people don't take things seriously, that they spend all their money and don't save for a rainy day, that they waste time and don't pursue the opportunities offered them, I think it is because they feel good; they don't think about the problems brewing. Some day they will feel bad. In my mind, it's inevitable.

• • •

JL burst into my office, on an errand for Bill. I noted how her counterfeit red hair contrasted with her sallow skin. The coloring of a real redhead is complimentary: the carrot-top's light skin coordinates



with the tone of his or her orange or red-brown hair. JL knew she was a fake; she thought power would make her feel good about herself.

I handed JL my status report to give to Bill. She grabbed the papers from my hand and squinted at them. "This isn't right," she said. "I'll have to adjust it." JL could always do things better than anyone else. "Bill will hear about this," she threatened.

JL stormed out of my office, her cell phone plugged into her ear. I knew it was inevitable I would feel bad.

• • •

There are tools available that might help you feel good, Celine, like reading positive, self-help articles from Oprah's magazine or watching internet clips from life coach Martha Beck. I like Martha's hint to envision a Plexiglas sheet in front of you so that bad things bounce away. You can find Martha's advice at [www.marthabeck.com](http://www.marthabeck.com). The best self-help book I've read is *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy* by Dr. David Burns, M.D. He talks about coping with anger and resentment and guilt.

• • •

"What's this about?" The Director asked. He was Bill's boss. He tossed me a printed email. "Please take care of this," Bill had written to the Director. We can't risk this project because of Kay's incompetence.

I felt my face growing hot and my hands sweating. The Director stared at me. "You can't fail on this project, Kay," he warned.

"Bill's note is in error," I defended myself. "JL gave Bill incorrect information."

"Don't point fingers," he reprimanded. "You are accountable for your own performance." The Director turned away and punched words onto his keyboard. I stood waiting for his attention, but he waved me out of the office with a motion of dismissal.

• • •

Another thought I have, Celine, is that forethought helps to prepare for the eventualities of life. Perhaps you should get a power of attorney for your elderly parents and make sure you have insurance. For example, my friend Lizbeth wanted a new hot tub. Her contractor did some electrical work, and the wiring overheated, igniting a fire. She did not have homeowners' insurance. Liz now lives in her garage, the only area of her home that is habitable. This makes others feel bad; they donate money to Liz, but what else can they do? You have to take care of yourself, Celine, so that others don't feel bad. You are accountable for your own performance.

• • •

JL, of course, took my job. It was inevitable. I was not feeling good. But JL was the least of my heartache. Another story runs concurrently with JL's meanness.

• • •

"Do you remember how you want to have a new place to live?" I asked Mother.

"I have a backache," Mother complained. Her red coat was fastened shut with safety pins.

The facility was modern and pleasant. The entrance opened into a large living area with a vaulted ceiling. Residents slouched in the common room watching *The Price is Right*. Mother sat at the dining room table, waiting. She looked like my mom, not someone who was too confused to stay at home. Two aides worked in a small open kitchen.

"Let's go in my office," Shane said, directing me to a small space off the living room. He shut the door. I could see Mother through the office window. There was the Alzheimer facility contract to sign, and copies to make of the power of attorney. I noticed Mother

fidgiting. She spotted me through Shane's office window; clutching her purse, she rushed over and shoved open the door.

"We need to go. I don't understand why we're here."

Shane stood and gently led her to one of the aides. "Can you get Vita a snack while she waits? We have a bit more paperwork."

"I don't want a snack, I want to go." Mother was agitated. She stuck out her tongue at Shane. "I don't like you," she said. "You have fat cheeks." She puffed out her cheeks to show us what she thought he looked like.

"Yes, I know," Shane grinned. "Kay is busy right now, but she'll be ready in a few minutes. Can you try some dessert? I need to know if it's any good." Mother sat again while an aide served her a dish of pudding. Shane closed the office door and locked it. "Just in case," he explained.

It was difficult to concentrate. I made Mother feel bad; my heart contracted with guilt. I wasn't thinking about JL. One key to life, Celine, is replacing one worry with another. But this isn't a first-class way to feel good.

• • •

I had a backache for months until an ergonomic adjustment of my workplace chair and evening yoga flexed my muscles so that I didn't hurt. The point is, Celine, that there are physical solutions that we can control, rather than suffering with pain. But the emotional dilemmas are unfathomable.

• • •

Mother shouted, "Kay, why are you taking so long? I want to go home." She came to the office window, sticking her tongue out at Shane.

He laughed, hunching over his computer. "I'm so sorry," he said. "I'm not laughing at your Mother; I'm laughing to make

myself feel better. I can't imagine how you feel." Shane's out-of-place laughter was infectious. I felt tears well-up in my eyes; at the same time, I laughed. My mother would never stick her tongue out at anyone, not even as a child.

"Don't make eye contact. Just ignore her," Shane suggested. He drew the green drapery across his office window. "Maybe she'll forget us." Mother was very persistent, but I hoped he was right.

I heard a sharp crack behind the drapes as something hit the window glass. "Kay, come out right now. I don't like that man with big cheeks." Something struck the window a second time, hard. Shane pulled a corner of the curtain aside and peeked out. He grinned at me, amusement turning his face red.

"Your mother smacked the window with the table lamp," he said.

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. My guilty heart shattered like glass. I wasn't thinking about JL.

• • •

Something else I learned about feeling good, Celine, is to find your breath. Notice how you feel, what hurts, where the tension is. Is it your back, your shoulders, your heart? Let that body part relax with your breath. Breathe deep and send the breath to that tension. Be in the moment. Yesterday is gone, and it doesn't do any good to worry about tomorrow. Treat yourself with compassion, as these solutions are all very hard.

• • •

I think back and remember the wrist I broke in a fall. After the cast was removed, I could not twist doorknobs nor carry my coffee cup. But like Mother, I am very persistent. I squeezed stiff, blue putty and lifted weights up and down, side to side. The pain numbed me. Then, over time, my wrist ached less, and movements became freer.

There is still a certain weakness in the joint, but overall, my wrist functions. Celine, the lesson learned here is that sometimes it takes a long time and a lot of self-help to feel better about something or someone. At times it takes persistence, like Mother trying to break the window to free me, or shielding, like Martha Beck's Plexiglas, to feel good. Shielding might be a power of attorney or insurance or exercise. Shielding won't prevent bad times, but it will smooth the process of recovery.

• • •

Bill and the Director moved on, but JL remains in my old job. My new boss asks me the name of that obnoxious person with the spike fingernails and counterfeit red hair who dominates his project—I know this person is JL. She is so unimportant, he says. Someone else comments that, thankfully, JL won't be at the next meeting so the participants can get more done. Celine, the point is that you will recover from what is bothering you now. Some other trauma will replace it. It's inevitable.

I hope this helps.

Yours,

Kay

## Contributors' Notes

**Rogelio Alba** is a graphic arts major who has been writing music since the age of fifteen. He began to fulfill his potential after he bought exclusive instrumental tracks from a music producer in Orlando, Florida, named Jon Young. Since then he has recorded his lyrics over beats and continues to create music he loves.

**Rocky James Allen** began playing the piano in 2007. He is currently pursuing two degrees, a Bachelor of Arts in Music, under the instruction of Dr. Kori Bond, and a Bachelor of Science in Geology.

**Stacey Barker** is an artist who loves good coffee and vinyl records. He is also currently pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts.

**Emilee Bunker** has loved to sing from a young age. She started lessons at age fifteen and now studies with Geoffrey Friedley. She has been in all of the wind ensembles at ISU, including both Jazz and Symphonic Bands on saxophone and Concert and Chamber Choirs as a soprano.

**Teaira Burge**, of Pocatello, is a student of Kathleen Lane. Her roles include Lucy in *You're a Good Man*, Wendy in *Peter Pan*, Polly Peachum in *The Three Penny Opera*, and Rapunzel in *Into the Woods*. She has won the Regional Metropolitan Opera Auditions and the Idaho State Civic Symphony Young Artist Competition, and apprenticed at the Astoria Music Festival. She will pursue a master's degree at Portland State University.

**Brian Burnham** is an engineering student born in Colorado; is married to an amazing woman, Christy; has 3 kids, Amanda, Josh, and Peter; and hopes to be a *New York Times* best-selling author. A huge thank you Bethany Schultz Hurst for your instruction and encouragement of creative writing, and thanks to Carlen Donovan as well.

**Mitch Christensen** has a wife and a dog and likes to dig holes in the dirt.

**Abbi Clark** is the assistant director for the ISU Preparatory Piano Program and is a sought-after teacher and collaborative pianist. She has been the pianist for ISU's choirs and a keyboardist for the Idaho State Civic Symphony and Sun Valley Summer Symphony. She has been a teacher or administrator for The Musicians West Festival, MTNA, the Sun Valley Summer Festival, and the ISU Summer Piano Institute.

**Sharon Collins** is a part-time graduate student working on her master's degree in English. She currently has a master's degree in Business Administration from ISU. She works at the Idaho National Laboratory as an engineer.

**Tracy Eastman** is currently seeking a Bachelor of Fine Arts. In addition to being a full-time student, he works full time as a body piercer and tattoo artist at a local tattoo shop.

**Thaddeus M. Ferrin** was born in Blackfoot and began studying percussion at age fifteen. He is also a part-time composer/arranger for marching percussion ensembles, both locally and in Sweden. He is

sought after as a freelance performer and has been a member of all the instrumental ensembles at ISU. His teacher is Dr. Thom Hasenpflug.

**Jennifer Foradori** currently lives in Pocatello, Idaho with her husband and a two-and-a-half-year-old princess named Fifi.

**Karee Garvin** is a senior at ISU. She is currently pursuing an English degree with an emphasis in creative writing and a minor in both Russian and linguistics. Karee prefers to write on paper rather than on the computer to prohibit the convenient use of the delete button. She recently returned from studying in Russia and Estonia and enjoys winter coats.

**Amanda Sudweeks Hall** has loved music from a young age and begged her parents for piano lessons. In high school, she discovered her love for singing. She has participated in all three choirs at ISU and studied under Dr. Diana Livingston Friedley. After graduation, Amanda is excited to start teaching music.

**Natalie Homer** is working on a degree in literature at ISU. She lives in Idaho Falls, works as a cranky librarian, and recently discovered that she loves poetry as long as it's taken in small doses, preferably with Cherry Pepsi. She would eventually like to live in Astoria.

**Jared Johnson** studies with Dr. Scott Anderson and has held the roles of Charlemagne (*Pippin*), Macheath (*The Three Penny Opera*), and The Baker (*Into the Woods*). He has studied abroad and performed in Italy as a part of the "Si Parla, Si Canta" opera program. Next year he plans to pursue a Masters in Performance.



**Taylor Kensel** is an English (creative writing) major and anthropology minor at ISU. She was born and raised in Pocatello. She has always loved English but just recently became interested in poetry with the help of some great friends, good professors, and inspiring poetry.

**Sarah Kim**'s many honors include two first place finishes at the Idaho MTNA Competition and third place at the Northwest Division, and also being chosen for the Auer Piano Workshop at Indiana University. She has been the pianist for ISU's choirs and keyboardist for the Idaho State Civic Symphony. Her teacher is Dr. Kori Bond.

**Melinda Linscott** is a third-year doctoral student and graduate teaching assistant in English. When she isn't reading, she's reading.

**Angie Lloyd** is a solo pianist, has performed with numerous singers, and also holds a minor in voice with Geoffrey Friedley as her teacher. Currently, she studies with Dr. Kori Bond and is the pianist for ISU's Chamber Choir. After graduation, she will open a private piano studio in Grace, Idaho.

**Stephanie Major** was born in Texas but moved to Idaho Falls at age three. Her teachers have included Lorie Swisher, Dr. Kay Zavislak, and Dr. Kori Bond. She currently teaches in ISU's Piano Preparatory Program, sings in ISU's elite Chamber Choir, and greatly enjoys collaborating with other musicians.

**Tammy Miller** holds a performance degree with concentrations in piano and voice. She has won several competition prizes, performed in all of ISU's choirs, and has collaborated with numerous singers

and instrumentalists. Her primary teachers are Dr. Kori Bond and Dr. Diana Livingston-Friedley. This fall, Tammy will pursue a Masters in Piano Performance and Pedagogy.

**Don Nunley** is an English major. He previously attended Weber State and Utah State Universities ('84-'86). He enjoys all things creative, including writing, singing, photography, music (drums), and art (drawing). He also enjoys tennis, bowling, movies, and swimming. He is also a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Voices of **Jeff Pearson's** big family (6 older sisters, 1 older brother, 21 nieces & nephews) creep around like earwigs whose whispers sound like personal revelations but are more the generative scriptures founded by past Book of Mormon prophets' genetic memory.

Since declaring his major in English, all **Patrick Perry** has wanted to do is contribute what he can to the humanities. Outside of school, he likes to design graphics and logos, create games, and hang out with friends. After he graduates, he would like to travel and experience different cultures.

**Ulises Ramirez** was born in Dillon, Montana and moved to Roberts, Idaho at a young age. He began taking private trumpet lessons at the age of eighteen from Tom Banyas, with whom he continues to study. He performs classical and jazz trumpet and has participated in all the instrumental ensembles at ISU.

**Catherine Reinhardt** is a graduate student in the MFA program in studio art. She thinks *Black Rock & Sage* is the artsiest thing in Pocatello and is thankful for all the hard work that goes into it.

**Talsan Schulzke** has two loves in life: geography and English. The former helped him find his way from Toronto to Rexburg; the latter helped him win his wife's heart once he got there. Talsan studied both disciplines at BYU-Idaho and has taught writing there since 2007. He is a first-year graduate student in English but continues to make maps in, of, and for eastern Idaho.

**Devin Snyder** is a senior at ISU, majoring in English with an interest in creative writing. After graduation next spring, she plans to pursue a career in either teaching or copy-editing and continue her education. She currently lives in the Twin Falls area.

**Sarah Thurber** is graduating in May 2012 with a degree in English. When she isn't writing poetry, she is spending time with her husband and young son. She has been involved with *Black Rock & Sage* for the past two years and is ecstatic to close her final semester by being published in the magazine.

**Michon Adele Vanderpoel** is originally from Salt Lake City. Her move to Idaho came after a scholarship offer to play softball at CSI, after which she decided to hang around. She is currently a junior at ISU, majoring in creative writing and minoring in mass communication. She works as a nanny to three amazing children. She enjoys riding her bike, neo-folk music, and trips to the grocery store.

**Jeffrey "Gus" Weaver** began his violin studies in a Florida public school. He played in several youth orchestras throughout high school and is now Principle Second Violinist of the Idaho State Civic Symphony. After he graduates this May, he will pursue a Masters in Violin Performance. He is currently a student of Dr. Keum Hwa Cha.

## Colophon

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