

The Malcontent

Winter 1991

Awakening

I
dream of Zambia
and Soweto and
Egypt and then
the Nile,
and when I awake
I smile!

Shaunda Holloway
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(Untitled)

I would say
She speaks of loveliness in her form
and grace and soul
But she doesn't
Why would the nightingale be content
with speech
When she could
Fill the lowering night with crystalline
magic and overtone purity
And would sing

And I could say
She walks in beauty of her form
and grace and soul
But I don't
Why would I limit the swan
to walking
When she can
Soar across the morning and float
and stream and hover
And can fly

Ben Ide
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(Untitled)

Sitting in the half light,
The words stream from my pen.
Should I conserve on what I'm writing
Or cut back on what I send?
There's no sense in fighting
What I often cannot start.
It's just functional murmurs
of my ailing heart.

There's no use my denying
It's no good for my health.
With chocolates, cards and flowers,
There's cancer in my wealth.
And if my charming powers
Have changed from sweet to tart
Blame the faintly fluttering palpitations
of my failing heart.

So if my words take action
(And if the timing matters)
In all I do and say,
Then let the rhyming flatter
'Cuz I've done nothing all today.
You'll have to do my part
In writing compositional linguistics
of my broken heart.

I don't mean to hurt you,
Although I often do.
I'll hurt you much more often
Before our time is though.
If your resolve should soften
From an occasional dart,
Remember it's just rhetorical rhetoric
of my token heart.

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Waiting for a Blue Streak in the Corner of My Eye

I'm sitting in a shopping mall waiting for a blue streak in the corner of my eye. I've been here for two and a half hours. I'm supposed to stay here six hours more, if I don't die of boredom first.

I don't work in any of the stores and I'm not the mall manager or the janitor, either. I'm also not a shopaholic, spending my waking hours worshipping in this temple to the religion of consumerism. I'm the night security guard, the guardian of the mallway, ever vigilant sentinel of the entrance doors, protector of the public restrooms. In my hands is trusted the serenity of the mall and the harmony of consumer spending.

I sit at a little desk near the front entrance of the mall. I watch the people come in, and go out, the doors. Once in a while, I'll hold open a door for a shopper burdened with packages. I don't do that very often. People might expect me to hold open the door for them all the time. Then I'd never have the time to sit around and perform my sacred security duties.

My job also requires me to walk the mallway looking for "disruptive persons or groups." This means preventing kids from skateboarding inside the mall, and escorting violators off the property. Being softhearted, I usually just banish them to the far end of the parking lot. Often my "patrol" consists of wandering about the mall saying, "Hello" or "Good Evening" to the people I'm supposed to watch, impressing upon them the fact that they are being carefully guarded as they shop. I guess that's supposed to make people feel secure.

The mall I've sworn to defend is not very large. There are no major chain stores here. All the shops are small, exclusive, and expensive, catering to "upscale" customers. Most of the shops close for the day at six o'clock in the evening. That, by the way, is the time I drift in to begin defending this mighty megalith of rampart consumerism. The rest of the shops close at nine o'clock.

It would be nice if I could lock the mall up and leave when the last shop closes. Unfortunately, I have to wait for the restaurants to close.

There are two restaurants, and they are located at opposite ends of the mall. At the south end, is an oriental restaurant. It specializes in a raw fish counter or, to the more sophisticate, a sushi bar. It's the only restaurant of its kind in town. It also appears

to have little business after eight o'clock in the evening. It always closes before midnight, sometimes as early as ten o'clock. I have a high regard for anything in this mall that closes early.

On the north end of the mall is a steakhouse restaurant, specializing in steaks, seafood, and booze. It has a lounge with a bar, and a large dining room. Dinners are expensive, and yet, it's always crowded on a Saturday night. Just my luck that's one of my guard nights. The dining room shuts down at ten o'clock. The lounge hops until two o'clock in the morning, with live entertainment on the weekends. It's a partying bar, a young booze-hounds paradise. And the steakhouse is the only place that's still open in the entire mall after the oriental restaurant closes.

The greater part of my job is sitting in a very large building waiting for a restaurant to shut down for the night. Only then can I lock up the entrance, turn on the mallway burglar alarm system, and go home.

I haven't always been a security guard. It's only been a few weeks since I started working here part-time nights and weekends. I've had several part-time jobs in the past, but they've all been at fast food restaurants. That's where I first encountered the blue streak in the corner of my eye.

I'm older now. I've set aside greasy burgers and special sauces. Now I reach for that higher plane, the mystical position of guardian. I also didn't want to work very hard anymore and being a security guard best fit my goal of a "little to no work" job. My position requires only minimal brain power or other higher cranial functions. I'm very good at it. Not using my brain is second nature to me.

The pay for being a guard is fair, about a dollar per hour more than minimum wage. That executive salary also convinced me that this was the right part-time job for me. My official training took one hour. Some old guy who works during the week showed me where the keys were and which doors to lock up. He even left a printed list of instructions in case I forgot what to do. Only a complete and total idiot could mess this job up. I came close to doing just that my first night alone.

Everything had proceeded according to the checklist left by the older guard. All the shops in the mall had closed for the night. The lounge in the steakhouse was still open, but it was going to close at two o'clock in the morning. All I had to do was wait, and try to stay awake. It was a struggle I barely won.

Just before two o'clock, the last customers, and that night's band, drifted out of the lounge. A few of the customers literally staggered out of the mall to their cars. One lady missed the driveway and drove her car over the lawn. I had visions of the other drivers following her.

Meanwhile, the band was taking their own sweet time moving their equipment out of the mall lobby and into their van. Twenty minutes passed and they were still not finished. I was getting annoyed. I wanted to go home. I stood there trying to glare at them through sleepy eyes. I was not very successful. One of the band members told me I looked tired. He suggested that I should go home and get some sleep.

Finally, after another twenty minutes, all the equipment was out on the sidewalk, and I was able to lock the lobby doors. Then I walked to the loading platform at the back of the mall. The steakhouse restaurant workers are supposed to leave through their kitchen exit, and then through the loading platform door. Which is what they did. Too bad I was in the lobby with the band. I didn't see anyone from the restaurant leave. At two-forty-five in the morning, I was alone in the mall and I didn't know it.

Since it was my first night, I had no experience to fall back on. Were they still in the restaurant or not? I had no way to tell. I tried listening at the kitchen door. There was no sound. I went back to the lobby and called the restaurant on the pay telephone. There was no answer.

At three o'clock in the morning, I got an idea. I called the burglar alarm company that monitors the mall.

"Oh, yes," they said, "the steakhouse secured at 2:00 A.M."

I mumbled a "thank you," or something close to it, and went back to the loading platform to lock up. I had wasted a whole hour waiting for people who were already gone to leave. At least, I got paid for it.

Nowadays, I'm a bit wiser. I found an emergency exit door, with a window, on the other side of the restaurant's kitchen area. Now if I don't see any of the restaurant workers leave, I just look through the window to see if the kitchen lights are on or off.

I check my watch for the hundredth time. It's almost ten o'clock. I've been guarding the mall for four hours now. I have one more hour to wait before I find out if I will be visited by a blue streak in the corner of my eye. I lean back in my chair and look out the entrance doors into the parking lot.

Being a security guard is ninety-nine percent hoping that it is a boring night and one percent waiting for something to happen, or someone to visit you. I really don't want anything to happen tonight. If anything did happen, I'd probably find myself at the wrong end of it. And then I'd have to write a report to my supervisor explaining the whole situation, and how I got myself involved with the wrong end of it as opposed to the right end of it.

I came close to something happening one night. The owner of the jewelry store was frightened by a rude customer.

According to the jewelry store owner, some guy dressed in those expensive casual clothes all the would-be-in-crowd wears, bought something truly expensive, and paid for it with one of those golden, jewel-encrusted, obscenely high credit limit, charge cards. When the store owner politely asked the customer, "Would you like to have your credit card carbons or shall I rip them up and throw them away for you?", the customer got nasty.

"You use my carbons and I'll blow your head off!" he barked.

I don't know about you, but I would've figured out real quick that this guy had a few parts missing in the mechanism of his brain. And that maybe, just maybe, he liked to pull the wings off flies, or the arms off jewelry store owners. The store owner was no dummy, though. He just smiled, handed over the carbons, and did his best not to wet his pants.

The rude customer left the jewelry store and went next door into the steakhouse. The frightened jeweler, for some stupid reason, called me instead of the police. I listened to his near hysterical story with professional security guard disinterest.

I left the jewelry store and walked over to the restaurant. I wanted to get a look at the rude customer. I peered in the door, but I didn't see anyone who fit the description the jeweler gave me. I should have walked into the restaurant, maybe even into the bar, but why look for trouble? I wandered back into the mall and walked back to my desk.

The jewelry store closed early, the store owner nearly flying through the front door in his haste to leave.

An hour past. A group of people came out of the restaurant. There! There he was, looking just as the store owner had described. I moved toward him. A plan formed in my brain. I was going to confront the

rude customer and ban him from the mall forever! I drew closer. The words "Hold it right there, Sleazeball!" formed in my mind. I walked up to the group, my eyes fixed on the rude customer. I opened my mouth and squeaked "Good evening" to the group as a whole.

The rude customer, focus of my security guard wrath, walked by, down the mallway, and out of the building. I followed meekly behind, my evil plans deflating like a leaky balloon. At least, I saw what kind of car he drove and I wrote down his licence plate number. Of course, since he paid for his stuff from the jewelry store with a credit card, the jeweler already had the rude customer's name and address.

I stood in the entrance and watched as the rude customer drove out of the parking lot, and into the sunset. He called the jeweler the next day and apologized for his behavior.

The mall is quiet now. I'd like to say that it's been a totally quiet night, but that would be misleading. Three rather loud young men came into the mall a few minutes ago, and went to the steakhouse. They looked like they had spent the day at the beach with their brightly colored shirts and shorts, and their equally bright, sunburned faces. They were also tossing a red frisbee around in the mallway.

It's not often we get a frisbee team in the mall. They did liven the place up for a few minutes. I was also hoping that one of them would take a header into a plate glass store window. I know some people on the town's volunteer ambulance crew, and a "person falling through a plate glass window" accident would be unusual and different compared to the heart attacks and motor vehicle accident victims they normally handle.

I check my watch again. It's almost eleven o'clock, and my anticipation is rising. Just a few minutes more and I will find out if all my patient waiting in this near deserted shopping mall will be rewarded by the arrival of a young woman with blue eyes, and shoulder length blond hair, driving a vanity plate sporting blue Oldsmobile station wagon, a blue streak in the corner of my eye. Or perhaps, I'm waiting for the non-arrival of this phantom automobile and its pilot of the highways.

The driver is Kestrel, my friend from my fast food restaurant days. She visits my lonely guard station every Saturday. Kestrel still works for a fast food restaurant, spending her early morning hours selling egg with assorted other stuff on top sandwiches, and gallons of coffee to go. I try to visit Kestrel almost

every morning. I always buy a coffee. I don't know if it's good coffee or not, I wouldn't be able to tell. I hate coffee. I buy a coffee as it's the cheapest item on the menu. Most days, I barely have enough money on me to buy that cup of coffee, let alone an egg with assorted other stuff on top sandwich.

Many a morning, I find myself hunting under the car seats looking for loose change that may have fallen out of my pockets. Every penny dug out of the car carpet, or from the bottom of the glove compartment, is as precious as gold as I count up toward the sum needed to buy a coffee and visit Kestrel. Occasionally, I surprise myself by actually drinking the stuff. Kestrel lives on coffee, light, no sugar, and she laughs at my grimacing face as I try to sip that hot, brown liquid and talk to her between customers.

I didn't see Kestrel this morning, though, or yesterday either. I last saw her Thursday night. We were in the parking lot of the local public library.

"I gotta rush," she said, leaning out her car window, "I'm late, and I've got a million things to do." Then she took a drag from her cigarette and playfully blew the smoke at me.

"I'm not working the next two days," she added, "So don't look for me, okay? I'll stop by the mall Saturday night."

Before I could say more than "Okay, see ya," she was a blue streak in the corner of my eye.

Agonizingly slowly, the days passed. It's Saturday night, and the mall is quiet. Through the glass entrance doors I watch as a fog drifts over the parking lot. I sit and ponder the fog, waiting for a blue streak in the corner of my eye.

I like Kestrel. She brings a warm feeling to my heart. When she visits me, Kestrel parks her car in the fire lane in front of the mall. I wander out and lean into her driver's window. We talk about this, and that, and other things, her life, my life, our dreams, and just everyday stuff.

While we talk, magic messages crackle in the background from her portable police scanner. Kestrel dreams of being a police officer someday. She keeps trying to get me to sign up to be auxiliary police officer, and give up my mall crawling. I always laugh, and tell her that it would be too much like a real job.

When Kestrel is happy, I can feel her joy with life like a cool breeze. She will talk non-stop, full of

energy and excitement. When she is sad, Kestrel gets quiet, thinking and brooding over her life's less pleasant reminders. I do my best to listen carefully, and give her whatever small comfort that I am able to give. Kestrel is my friend. I accept her the way she is, the person that Kestrel wants to be.

Kestrel likes to drive. She loves going on mystery tours, driving around aimlessly, visiting somewheres and somewhere elses. Sometimes, when I'm not guarding the mall, I'll go with her. It doesn't matter where we drive to. The fun is in getting lost and being with each other. Those are the nicest of days, the kind that are not repeated often, but held close and cherished through all the empty days to come.

The empty days are legion. Late at night, alone in my thoughts, I spy them, row after row, waiting patiently to present themselves to me, one day after the other, each to embrace me for its set time, and then move aside for the next. I cannot see the end of their ranks, nor would I want to. Why should I spend what is left of my time counting what went by and what remains to pass? Life is for today, a new beginning with every sunrise.

My philosophic musings are interrupted by a pair of headlights cutting through the fog. A blue Oldsmobile station wagon pulls into the fire lane. The quick, bright flash of a cigarette lighter beckons me, as I step out of the mall, impatient to lean in the window of a blue streak in the corner of my eye.

Edward Hoyer, Jr.

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The Malcontent

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Not so very long ago, in a someplace not that far away either . . .

Photo Wars

Brother shot an elephant last night. He used a 35mm Fujitsumatic Tele512X Autofocus, with flip flash, and adjustable wrist strap. The elephant retaliated with an old Polaroid XL-70 Switchpack, with electric eye lens, two shutter speeds, and built-in strobe-flash. Brother was then at a loss. He would have to send his film out for processing. The elephant only had to wait sixty seconds, then peel the developer paper from the finished photograph.

In a counter move, Brother suddenly began to shout out numbers at random. The elephant, having no watch, was counting to sixty seconds using the "one people, two people" method. Brother's shouted numbers confused the elephant. He pulled the developer paper off of the photograph too early, and ruined it.

In a counter-counter move, the elephant grabbed Brother's camera with his trunk, opened it, and proceeded to throw the film into a nearby tree. Brother, enraged by this counter-counter move, stomped his feet, and charged at the elephant.

The contest was never settled beyond this point, as the appearance of the man-, and elephant-, eating tigers caused both contestants to flee in opposite directions.

Brother is tentatively planning a multi-media rematch next year. He is working on transferring his old 8mm home movies onto video tape, and adding a narration backed by the music from the movie "Tattooed Coeds from Leather Hell." No plans have been heard from the elephant, although some of his more recent work did appear in the latest issue of *Photo Afrique Magazine*.

Coming soon:

Photo Wars The Elephant Strikes Back

Authors should query the editor first before sending unsolicited manuscripts. Authors who do send unsolicited material do so at their own risk. A self-addressed envelope with proper postage affixed should accompany all unsolicited material if its return is requested.

(Untitled)

To the greater glory of the empire of his soul
 He took her as his own
 Wrapped her in false affections then let her go
 As she was supported only
 By her blinded trust and a brash sense of romance
 She shattered when she fell
 Startled that her faith could be so misleading
 So unutterably misleading

She sat there with the wind knocked out of her
 In the ruins of her passion
 And realized that though it was only the first time
 It would not be repeated
 So while caught up in the motion and emotion
 She took up arms against
 Her sea of troubles and by opposition
 Ended them finally and forever

Meanwhile in the inner sanctum of his soul
 Something clicked of its own will
 And his ego turned its searchlight to the outside
 To seek for what it lost
 Or never possessed in his self contained society
 But he couldn't find her
 All he found was a small clipping from the paper
 But he wasn't sure if that was her last name

Ben Ide
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Germination

tender
 green
 plant-child
 reaching out
 wrapped up tight
 fresh young eager seed
 a stiff moist stamen
 to accept the sacred pollen of the Bees

James C. Smith III
 ©1991, James C. Smith III

My Negligence is My Horror

I curl my body in
 disturbed agony
 my cheek pressed against
 my knee
 I hold myself tight
 my arms wrapped around
 a once slim waist
 tighter
 I bury my nails in my side

Oh, God, my head pounds
 a cold bitter storm
 stirs
 its salty drops
 turn my eyes red
 thunder echoes a difficult decision
 lightning, a constant reminder
 I can't even consider
 snuffing out that light
 and I can't stand looking at it

The pounding is heavier
 and my sides are bleeding
 I can feel myself swell, huge
 grotesque with life
 I hate him, I hate myself
 I hate myself so much
 I won't live like this
 I should only die for this
 Help me,
 I don't want to kill anyone.

Ambrose
 © 1991, Ambrose

The Nile is Crying

The Nile is crying
 So many of us have been
 killed
 The Nile is crying
 Africa's legacy has not
 been fulfilled
 The Nile is crying
 We are truly divided
 The Nile is crying
 Education we must gain
 back
 The Nile is crying
 We carry the burden of
 racism on our backs

Shaunda Holloway

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(Untitled)

Tzo

Once there was this idea,
 almost a voice or rationality,
 that burned within me. And this
 almost voice, this almost rationality
 started as a tiny spark that said,
 "You're an independent person who will
 lose his individuality in the
 fusion of marriage."
 I heard it but I didn't listen to it,
 thinking how nice it would be to
 never be alone again.
 And then this small candle light said,
 "What if it is not your destiny
 to marry this person?
 And doesn't it
 gall you when she treats you like a child?"
 This time I laughed at it for using
 the word "destiny"
 but I did confess that sometimes
 she did treat me like an idiot.
 And then this warming fireplace
 spoke to me and said,
 "You know you are an intelligent and
 self sufficient being. A man. You
 can rely on your spirit and intellect
 until that perfect person comes around."
 And I thought to myself that
 maybe I could but it would be
 so horribly painful.
 And that burning fire of inner wisdom,
 that hot sauna-shower of self support said,
 "Do it! I will protect you." And so
 I told her that we were through and that
 we were leaving her. And then
 that roaring bonfire, that
 lighthouse beacon cutting through the night,
 that almost voice and almost rationality
VANISHED
 and I haven't heard from it since.

I am left alone with the
 feeling that I have been talked into
 jumping from an airplane by a man
 who neglected to give me
 a parachute.

Ben Ide

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We that
 shine, shine
 bright and bold.
 We that learn
 have a history to be told.
 We that love
 exchange care.
 We that live,
 We reject despair.

Shaunda Holloway

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The Yuppie's Defense

OR

**Why Do They Drive Brand New BMWs
 When My VW Needs A New Muffler?**

Tell me, please, where would this county be
 Without the electric potpourri?

Ben Ide

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A Nothing Tale

Once upon a time, long before anyone had thought of
 it, there was Nothing. Nothing at all. This is not
 unusual when one thinks of Nothing. However, this
 time Nothing was different. It was absolutely
 Nothing.

Everyone who heard about Nothing thought it was
 Something. Many people journeyed to see Nothing,
 expecting it to be Something. They were all
 disappointed, because there was Nothing. Nothing
 at all.

Edward Hoyer, Jr.

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Letters from Eddie

Self Knowledge

Sometimes, They look at you strangely. I know They always look at me that way. It doesn't surprise me. I stare back with just as much intensity. You see, I've got an edge on Them that most people don't have. And They know it. There's nothing They can do about it either.

Oh, They try to play "one-up," but it doesn't work. I've got Them, and I've got Them cold. It drives Them to distraction. You see, They think I'm crazy, but They don't know for sure.

That unsureness, that tiny bit of doubt, has weakened the armor of Their existence. They are defenseless against me. I have no doubts, no unsureness. I am complete in my knowledge of self. I am armored in proof, invincible against all They can throw at me.

You see, I know I'm crazy. And that makes all the difference in the world.

Save Yourself!

Now hold it! Just Hold it! You have gone too far. I don't believe I saw it in your newsletter. Honestly, I was shocked when I read it. Was that really necessary? How could you sink to such a level? I just don't believe it. You've got to stop. Yes, stop, and right now, too. Tomorrow will be too late. It may already be too late, but you've got to try. It's your last hope. Save yourself. Now. Stop. Now. Don't do it again. Convince people you won't. You must, you must try. You're lost if you don't. Doomed. For all of us, your sake and ours, trust me. Believe me. Listen to me. It's for your own good. I won't steer you wrong.

Perils of Thinking

It's too hot to think today. Or any day, for that matter. Thinking hurts your brain. Oh, I know that there are those who claim thinking can lead to self knowledge, insight, expanded creativity, and even help you balance your checkbook. But all this pales, and is minute, and trivial, compared to the dark side of thinking; **Evil Thoughts**.

Just one **Evil Thought**, and your life is ruined, your immortal soul damned for all eternity. You will become an outcast from polite society and the brotherhood of mankind. Granted, you might have a

hell of a lot of fun with your vile **Evil Thoughts**, but we're not talking fun here. No, we're talking about your salvation!

Stop thinking! Now! That's the key. Let no thought enter your brain. Be Pure! Be an empty void! Only by emulating nothing, thinking nothing, can you truly be saved!

The Right Person

Somebody once told me it's not what you say, or how you say it, but whether you're the *right* person to say it. We got into an argument trying to define how one becomes the *right* person. We were unable to come to an agreement on how best to resolve this point.

I am still troubled by this statement. It gnaws at my being, disturbing my inner peace. And I often wonder, am I the *right* person for some of the things I've said, or will say? Would situations have changed, turned out differently, if I had been the *right* person?

Sometimes, I am gripped by an unspeakable terror. What if I am the *right* person, and always was? Would the life I'm leading be any different had I not been the *right* person?

It is these times, when I am beset with difficult philosophical problems, that I can best relax, and ease my tortured soul, by pouring a cup of kerosene into my goldfish tank, igniting it, and then watching the fish as they swim beneath the dancing flames. For maximum benefit, I usually darken the room first. I always find this excellent relaxation for a mind deeply troubled by the myriad complexities of modern existence and interpersonal communication.

The End of Life

Today is the first day of the end of life as we know it to be. I know, this is a shocking, horrifying statement. But it is true.

Every day is the end of life as we know it to be, as every day there are changes, even in the most boring of existences. And when things change they are no longer the same, or no longer as we know them to be. So our life has changed, or is no longer as we know it to be.

Therefore, every day is the first day of the end of life, or things, as we know them to be, as every day something changes. Then again, I could be wrong.

The Point

It seems to me that I should be doing something, but I forget what it is. It's not to go to work. I'm already there. It's not to pay my bills. I never pay my bills. It's not to eat lunch. It's not lunch time yet. I don't have any money for lunch either, but that's beside the point. Or maybe it's behind the point. I know that if it were in front of the point, it might be mistaken for the point. But that's another point.

Excerpt from a Letter to a Friend in Colorado

I almost began this letter by asking, *So what's new?*, but I felt that was a little stupid. After all, everything is new when you move across the universe to a new job. Then I thought about asking you, *What's old?*, but that won't work either.

You see, first I'd have to distinguish between *old* that you've already related to me, which would be *old* to you and to me, hence *old-old*. And then there's things you've never told me which are *new* to me, but *old* to you. These would have to be classified as *new-old* items. I further postulated that your *new* could be further subdivided into things that just happened, or *new-new*, and *new* items that happened since your arrival, but are a little older, or *old new*.

Aren't you glad I wrote?

Sincerely,
Eddie Graffiti

About the author:

Eddie Graffiti is a 2nd year Master's student in the Graduate School of Artistical Expression and Information Resource Processing at the Regional University of Fundamental Knowledge and Yodeling (RUFUNKY). Eddie is majoring in 20th century pornographic paperback novel cover photography. As an independent study project, Eddie is also attempting to develop a workable model for an automated, computed-assisted, self-directed learning package, to teach the correct pronunciation of the word "library" to graduate students in the RUFUNKY Graduate School of Lieberry Science and Institutional Technocracy. Eddie writes letters to publications on the advice of his Oscar Owl doll, which he claims is inhabited by the spirit of Gomer Pyle.

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Ode to Ozzy

Ozzy's God!
I know that sounds odd,
but
Ozzy's God!

Ozzy's God!
To his glory we sing!
Yes, Ozzy's God,
but
Elvis is still the King.

Edward Hoyer, Jr.

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Your Picture When You Were Different

You showed me a picture the other day, a picture when you were different. I took the picture from your hand carefully, wondering if the you in it was someone I wouldn't recognize. My fear evaporated with my first glance.

It was you, sitting blackly, in front of a white wall. Black hair, black dress, black leggings, black shoes. I thought of a statement of mathematics: the subtraction of color from the sum of all color.

Your face betrayed the equation. Nearly as pale as the wall you eclipsed, your face was the sum, restrained, but not absorbed, by the power of the subtraction.

What were you thinking, as you were looking toward the camera, through the physics of the lens, past the mechanics of the shutter, your image enwebbed by the chemistry of the film?

I looked up from the picture, and our eyes met. You were watching me intensely, and I wondered, what you were thinking now, as you looked through the physiology of my eyes, into the metaphysics of my soul?

I handed the picture back to you carefully, for fear of disturbing the thoughts of the you, when you were different. As you put the picture in the pocket of your white blouse, your blond hair fell across your eyes.

"I certainly did look different," you said. And as you brushed the strands of sunlight from your face, your smile lit up the universe.

Edward Hoyer, Jr.

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Asian Petals

She sits in silence, taking
orders from above
They're all busy mapping her life so neatly
Like hand in glove
They look at their daughter, their
Innocent child
If only they knew "MAN THIS GIRL'S WILD!"
She's locked inside their little glass cage
And inside her emotions revel with rage
They're all trying desperately to turn
Around this "THING"
Yet she stands the silence
Clinging onto her ring
She prays to God to give her courage
And make her strong
So she can speak out and correct
Society's big wrong
For so long she stands the silence
And suddenly she cries
"I'M GONNA MAKE A DIFFERENCE, I'M GONNA
MAKE THAT CHANGE,
SO HOLD ON FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN
'CAUSE
SOON I'LL BE OUT OF YOUR RANGE"
They all shout at her;
"YOU'RE MAKING A BIG MISTAKE"
Family, friends, everyone STOP. . .
"GIVE THE GIRL A GODDAMN BREAK!!!"

Sarita Marwaha
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Hope

It was a dull, dreary day of failure's reminders,
broken dreams, shattered lives, empty ball-point
pens, and the sad pain of that ultimate realization
that there are no second chances and no free lunch. It
was a taste of the bottom of life's pit, and the taste
was beyond sour.

While foundering in the blackness of the sludge, a
blue streak in the corner of my eye and was gone. I
reached out my arm and found a slippery handhold.
And I began the long climb up again.

I cannot see the sky, but a blue streak in the corner of
my eye tells me it is there.

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See You Soon

Come with me
into a dimly lit room
that smells of perfumed
flower arrangements
and wax candles.

Kneel with me
and look deep into
this empty oak box.
Can you see your reflection
in the lacquered wood?
Like I can?

Give me you hand
to caress the satin
quilted red fabric
that lines these walls
and comfort smooth
cooling my weary shoulders.

Hear what I hear
mumbled prayers and pleas
the whispers
breaths choked
by tears
tell me
how lovely I look,
almost alive.

Ambrose
© 1991, Ambrose

Real Graffiti

Selections from the walls of *The Mansion Press* office
University of Connecticut, Waterbury Branch, 1971.

You once asked yourself when the joke ended and the
truth began.

How can I prove my reality when reality is not real
enough?

Nevertheless, anyone who truly questions deep
within himself will tell everyone to go screw.

If we but stop one second to question existence, we will
find strawberry jello instead of it.

If Alexander only knew of your pretensions, he might
have ordered all to see and hear your true thoughts.
Instead, he bought a German Shepherd and suffered
strange accusations.

When the crowd says exist, as only one or forty could
 never hopelessly ponder, the new question is:
 Would you wager to go to surreality without me?
 Of course, alternatives to credentials exist only of fog.
 How true.

Authors Unknown.

Circles

I was sitting in the laundromat watching my clothes
 in the washing machine, and wondering if the circle
 of my life is as perfect as the walls of the washtub, or
 as chaotic as the clothes jumbled and thrashed about
 inside. Then I realized that I'd put in too much soap
 again, and I watched as the mystery of my life
 disappeared behind a cloud of foamy white.

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Pleasure or Pain

I'm sitting in my car with two slices of pizza. They
 are on the passenger seat next to me in their serving
 box. They're fresh from the oven, too hot to touch let
 alone eat. Their aroma fills my car.

It's 8:45pm on November 5, 1990. I'm parked under a
 light in the middle of the shopping center parking
 lot. It's a clear and cool night, a three quarter moon
 somewhere above my car.

Except for the pizza slices, my only company is a
 photograph of Kestrel, which I keep velcroed to the
 instrument panel. It's my favorite photograph of her,
 although Kestrel once said that she'd seen better.

A half empty bottle of lukewarm, and flat, root beer
 perches on the edge of the dashboard. I bought the
 soda last night, and it spent a very quiet day under
 the driver's seat of my car.

I reach over and touch the crust of one of the pizza
 slices. The slices are cooler now. I pick one up and
 commit my mouth to pleasure or pain.

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Victim of Love

Men are such a waste of space yet he leaves
 His memory indented on her face
 As he leaves her she tries
 To be strong
 While he consoles himself saying "Hey I've
 Done no wrong" With him a new
 Woman inside her was born
 But now he's left her feeling neglected and
 torn
 He took her heart and soul
 And even took her cash
 What the hell makes him think he'll make it
 With his new
 "Lady Trash?"
 Everyday we're both thinking about you
 But in the end we know you'll
 Always pull through
 Don't worry big sister
 Don't lose your grace
 'Cause soon you'll find someone
 To take that bastard's place.

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Helter Skelter

I try so hard to find my own ground
 There's so many answers to questions
 That have to be found
 Why is the world we live in
 So cruel?
 Why must we live our life
 According to someone's rule?
 It's so easy for others to tell
 You how to play the game
 While they sit in silence and watch
 You from their domain
 Our beloved's don't think twice
 When they discriminate
 How can they so casually plan their
 Children's fate?
 Telling you what's wrong and telling
 You what's right
 If only it was them who had to face
 The fight
 I run for miles and in your heart
 I long to seek shelter
 But in the midst of the sun I stand
 Faced head on in the darkness of
 Life's "HELTER SKELTER"

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McCallum

It's in the water. It has to be. At least, that's what McCallum always insisted. Ever since They first synthesized It in the laboratory, McCallum had insisted that It somehow got in the water. Well, maybe "somehow" is misquoting him. They *put* It in the water would be a more accurate description of what McCallum really said.

"They put It in the water!" he used to cry, "Those blankety-blank-blanks put It in the water! And do you know why? Do you? Huh? Do you know why? Well, I'll tell you why! I'll tell you! I'm not afraid to say it! They can't stop me from saying it! No, sir! They can't!"

McCallum's tirades were unpredictable. As a result, he was the hit of the bar. People would crowd around McCallum, and listen as he railed on and on against Them and It. Of course, he would never say why They put It in the water. It might have been because he really didn't know why. But as far as McCallum was concerned, he knew They put It in the water. And that made him dangerous to Them.

Edward Hoyer, Jr., 9/13/77

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Midterm from Hell

The Questions

Discuss Nothing in general for at least 25,000 words. Try to name specifics, backup opinions with the proper references, and attempt to be knowledgeable. Limit generalizations to talking rabbits.

20 minutes 50 points

Discuss the relationship of what was not discussed in the first essay. Remember to define the conceptual individualistic qualities of the Universal Gravitational Constant, as compared with the rational ethos of wolverine tamers.

25 minutes 50 points

The Answers

1. Talking rabbits are pink with blue eyes. They don't exist, except when nobody's looking. Then they still don't exist, but they try hard anyway.

2. What wasn't discussed is only relevant. The situational defects of this stand are well endowed. The similarity between here and there is maybe. The

Universal Gravitation Constant won't help your personality any, but it might be the reason your belly hangs over your belt after a night on the town. Cosmically speaking, your dark roots are visible even at this great distance. Universal dissatisfaction is not affected by Planck's Constant anymore than talking rabbits. This leads to the conclusion that if you ain't got it, exposing it won't help. Besides, the Laws of Thermodynamics are useless when science is not what's making you hot.

As for the wolverine tamers, they really belong in essay one from test number five in a totally unrelated course to this one. This is commonly known as a trick question.

Edward Hoyer, Jr.

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Just Another Stupid, Banal, Poorly Written Poem About Love, Despair, and I swear I'm going to vomit if I have to read one more of these #\$\$%&@#~!! poems, let alone print . . . what do you mean there's one more page to fill?

It's raining out, and I feel wet,
if I was inside, I'd be dry, I bet!
Can't understand why you don't like me anymore,
what have I done to make you so sore?
Standing outside, in the cold and the rain,
my head is leaky, soggy my brain.
Perception's been dimmed, nothing's the same,
can't see your face, can't remember your name.
It's raining harder, I'm melting away,
but what does it matter, you don't care anyway!
I'm going now, I don't know where,
but I'm out to find someone who'll care.
Please don't be mad, and please don't feel blue,
you know very well, I could never hurt you.
I'm leaving now, I can live with my pain,
don't worry about me, I like the rain.

Mortimer Grimis

I don't believe I printed it. Somebody wake me up, or tell me "it's only a movie."

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