

Purple Patch

Volumes XIX & XX

Fall 2019 - Spring 2021
Double Issue

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Cover Image by Megan Redman



The *Purple Patch* is an annual not-for-profit publication dedicated to readers, writers, and those who appreciate the arts.

Expenses associated with its publications are underwritten by the Board of Trustees. The *Purple Patch* is published annually by the Nu Epsilon Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta located at Missouri Valley College in Marshall, Missouri.

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Letter from the Editor

I am honored to present the 20th Volume of the *Purple Patch*. This has been an unprecedented year in more ways than one, which makes it only fitting that this year's volume XIX & XX is also unprecedented, as it represents both the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years.

This year we have all experienced so much in the form of a global pandemic, social justice movements, and a presidential election. While things haven't been so easy for most, it has been incredible to see the amazing academic work that has been submitted to the *Purple Patch* this year.

This special volume of the *Purple Patch* I would like to dedicate on behalf of the Sigma Tau Delta – Nu Epsilon Chapter to the late Professor Virginia Zank, who began this great literary tradition. A special tribute written by Kelley McKay Fuemmeler in her memory can be found on page 131 of this volume.

Valley Will Roll!

Brittany Rieves

Editor-in-Chief

Nu Epsilon Chapter President



Artist: Brittany Hernandez

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Coming to America

Travelling to College

Kyle Comins

It is Monday evening in Johannesburg, South Africa; usually bursting with life, the global Covid-19 pandemic has quieted the night air. While this has been the norm as of late, it feels different tonight. Tonight, it is somber within my family home. My mom, dad, sister...even the animals it feels are on edge because in less than 24 hours, I fly to the United States. It feels extremely cold inside on this winter night despite the fire just in front of our faces meant to be warming us up. The slight chatter that dies out every time my mom sees me make a movement, double checking and packing the documents I may need while at college. My cat comes padding into the room and rests in my lap; usually a comforting feeling, this time it just serves as a reminder that he will not be with me from tomorrow. I start petting my cat with shaking hands but manage to bring myself to say it: "We have to be there by eleven tomorrow morning and not one, they have special Corona restrictions now". I cannot believe this was planned in one week with most of the information been told within the last half day. A week ago today, I was not even sure I would be able to make it to college in time for the semester, let alone three weeks early. While there is a flickering feeling of fear about leaving my family and home, I have only stress on my mind. What if I forget documents to travel out of South Africa or worse yet, into America? What if I get deported straight away? This was all unwarranted because by dusk of the next day, I was touching down in Chicago.

Stepping off the plane into the main terminal, it feels incredibly hot with my mask, slacks and beanie on. I pull off my beanie and a mop of uncut and unkempt hair falls out; staring back at me, behind the shaggy and tired look is optimistic eyes. I mumble to myself: "I've been dreaming about this for years and I am glad I'm finally here". I follow the directions on the billboards with a chuckle as I did not think the stories and movies were true: there are TSA declaration signs everywhere I look. I head to customs with a tinge of worry. South African passport holders are often kept in detention for hours. Alas, I am in and out of customs in under ten minutes. I head to the carousel with baggage, waiting patiently for my bags to arrive. As the minutes tick on, I become increasingly agitated and impatient. What if my bags are lost? Rackets, shoes, clothes, everything... what would I do? Time keeps ticking and I keep glancing at my watch, thirty, forty, fifty minutes pass and still nothing. I let out a sigh of relief as my bags come over the hump.

During all this waiting, and even on the short Uber ride to the hotel I would be staying at for the night, I am emailing and messaging coaches and hotels because I have not had the time to confirm accommodation. Where would I stay if I cannot get a room as I do not know many people in this country? One month has passed and I sit here in the stairway of Union waiting for the girl I like thinking about how it all managed to work out. The kind and understanding hotel concierge managed to get me a room at the discounted price. She added days to my stay up to an hour after I was meant to check out. A friend on my tennis team introduced me to a family that were at that point, complete strangers. They invited me into their home, feeding and housing me for almost two weeks. They are no longer strangers, not even close; they are family. What was a month full of panic and fear turned out to be an amazing adventure. Between the kindness of friends, strangers, and a hotel concierge; I managed to get to where I am today. I have no idea what my future holds but if my first four weeks here are any indication, I am going to have the time of my life.

The Lowest Point

Stevan Milosevic

What does being an adult actually mean?

For some, it is a capability to live alone, to be independent, to make money and work. Whilst on the other side, there are views that say that being an adult also means being independent in the manner of your thoughts and wisdom.

I figured out what I wanted early in my life, and I believe that it got me a step closer to being an adult. The last step is what I already mentioned, getting my life the way I want it, on my own. The story of that very step is still happening.

It was December 16th when I decided to leave Serbia and go to the US. After 13 days I had a visa, so you can understand that in the meantime I was running around all day to the point where I wouldn't even see my dogs for a day or two sometimes.

Soccer is the way of life for me. I feel emptiness without it, I feel happy around it. Never had a day gone by that I didn't think about soccer. Conditions in Serbia only allow you to play if you have money or agents. Which is why I decided to come to Missouri. I find this to be a fresh start, to allow me to use my potential and seize every opportunity I can. It is an easy decision right? I thought so too.

Having been so busy with paperwork I basically didn't have time for thinking about the new life, let alone talking to my folks at home about it. I bought a ticket, and whilst watching every one of my family members cry as they are not going to see me for probably a whole year, I laughed with joy, as a new chapter in my life is about to begin. I felt the rush of blood going through my veins as my pulse was just getting faster and faster. I couldn't be more thrilled.

First I landed in New York. 20th January at 8pm. A family friend Miroslav picked me up and left me in my hotel in Manhattan. He left me on Hudson street and said it's 200metres straight, but he can't go there with his car. Kind of confused. NY reminds me so much of Belgrade, as I see so many people and cars moving with such speed. The city won't stop. Finally, I entered the hotel, went to my room, and BAM....

....It all hit me at that very moment. Suddenly I realized that I am on my own. Truth hit me hard, and I knew that every help that I had back home was gone. The worst part was when I tried to call everyone I cared about and realized they were all asleep because of the freaking time zone. I am a 21 year old guy, sitting in a room, in probably the greatest city in the world, which in that moment feels like a prison I couldn't get out of. Every sheet felt like those itchy grandma sweaters that gave us rash as kids.

I spent the whole night just doing push ups, then thinking, sit ups, again thinking. And you know how you get tired the more you practice? Well that didn't happen to me. I was fueled with adrenalin caused by fear of being left alone, having more strength than ever in those moments.

After 4 hours, I was getting dizzy and dizzy, and finally I collapsed on the floor. Through a flashback I remembered all the shit I've been dealing with since I was a kid. Every single person in my life telling me I won't make it, every injustice and lie I've been told, and how I overcame everything.

I got myself together, stood up and said: "I am here for a reason, I have a goal, and I will not stop until I accomplish it."

Now at least I know I won't feel lonely ever again. I just need to remember all the reasons that got me to this point, and I couldn't have been prouder of myself.

When a whole world tries to crush you, it's only then when you know whether you are an adult or not, whether you are capable to live alone, be independent, make money, and work.

Looking for a Golf Scholarship

Andrés Rueda de Leon Cordova

In August 2016 I started looking for a golf scholarship in the US, so I could continue with my golf career without dropping out of school. I lived in Yucatan, Mexico, which is located in the southeast region of the country.

In Mexico, you can't play a sport while being in college at the same level as the US. When I decided to leave Mexico, it was pretty hard for me because life in the US is so different from life in Mexico. I joined an association named CPOA, that helps international and American students from finding a school through the end of their college career. They helped me make a curriculum and from there I started to receive emails from different coaches, in the beginning, it was pretty exciting but as time passed, the colleges that contacted me weren't what I was looking for. I had pretty big expectations about the school and the golf team. I always wanted to attend a highly recognized college and most of the emails I received were from junior colleges, something that I wasn't interested in.

During my junior year in high school, I focused on improving my golf game as much as I could and let the coaches know that I was getting better results and gaining experience. I started to take courses that would help me be prepared for the SAT and TOEFL tests. As the season passed my TOEFL test date arrived in June 2018. I felt prepared but I didn't know how to get to the test center. On my way to the center, I got lost; by the time I arrived at the test center I wasn't allowed to take the test. I was beaten down emotionally; the frustration of all the hard work studying and at the end not being able to take the test made me doubt myself thinking that maybe it wasn't my destiny to attend a US college. Iliana (my advisor from CPOA; her job was to help me with any problem I had or answered if I had any questions) talked to me about the situation and tried to calm me down. She gave me some solutions to solve my problem and the next month I took the exam and I felt great about it. It felt like I was a step closer to my dreams.

On August of 2018, two years into my journey, I started my SAT prep course. I went to classes in the evenings from 6-8 pm from Monday to Friday to October. The test center is located in Cancun, a town 3 hours away from where I lived, so we scheduled

our drive one day before. My dad came with me and while he was driving, we didn't talk about the test, so I wouldn't think about it. The next day I felt nervous but prepared, and as soon as I started the test, I knew what I was dealing with, but as time went on, I realized I was wasting a lot of time and I ran out of time in most of the English sections. I've never felt those nerves before and I felt so bad because I thought I wouldn't get a good score. Then I jumped into the Math section; nerves were there at the beginning but then I realized it was pretty easy. Math is one of my favorite subjects but at that point, I didn't know which topics were on the test. A week later I received my scores and at that moment I got goosebumps all over my skin. When the score showed up on the screen, I felt a big relief; I got a final score 1030 which made me eligible for most colleges in the US and once more I was a step closer.

In November of 2018, I started talking with a golf coach from Michigan. He told me that he was interested in me and my golf game, and after a few months he offered me a scholarship, but before he could make it official, I needed to retake the TOEFL test. I took the test and improved my score. Right after I took the test, I sent an email to the coach telling him that I accept the offer, but immediately he replied telling me that my golf game wasn't as good as he expected, and he reduced the percentage of scholarship from a 60% to a 20%. I rejected the offer due to many circumstances, and after that, I didn't receive an email from a single college for the next two months. It was hard how people like my golf coach, my friends from golf, even my family started pushing over and telling me that I was running out of time. Those were the toughest two months of my life.

In April of 2019, I started sending emails to colleges again because I rejected the idea to stay in Mexico. I wasn't going to give up at this point. In two years, I had sent over 300 emails to different colleges and I had no idea which colleges I had already sent my information. I found a website with different colleges from the NAIA and I sent 150 emails in two days and it worked. By the end of that single week, I had 8 coaches interested in me and asking me to schedule a phone call. During the next month, I talked with 6 of them and by the end of the month, I had 5 offers from different colleges. When I was about to make a decision, I received an email from Coach Dickson from MVC. After I did a little research about the college and the golf team, and I loved it. A week later I received the official offer and immediately accepted.

Now, attending a college in the US and living my dream in Missouri Valley College, I look back to the past and see all I've gone through, how people make me doubt myself by saying that I wasn't going to make it, or that I wasn't good enough. How people supported me and tried to get my hopes up though the obstacles like my parents, that always told me to believe in myself, my girlfriend, Paola, she was with me through the ups and downs and always encouraging me to send more emails and work harder every day. And my brother, Carlos, reminding me how proud he was. How coming from nowhere I

reached something that most people from my country are not able to do. All the hard work I put in my goal makes me believe that I'm able to do things if I try my best and never give up.

The most difficult thing I have ever done in my life

Facundo Redin

I have made many difficult decisions in my life such as telling my parents what I would like to study or breaking up with my girlfriend, but the most difficult decision I had to take it a few months ago. I had to decide if I was coming to study at Missouri Valley College or if I was going to stay at home. For the ones that do not know me yet, my name is Facundo Redin and I am from Argentina. This decision was so important because it was going to change my whole life. Studying in the US implies leaving my family and friends back in Argentina but the rewards are really great. I can get my degree in sports management and I can play soccer while studying. Also, I can get a better English level; this is really important if you want to get a job in Argentina and also in the US. Maybe it is not a huge decision for US people, but for international students it is really important. In my case, I have to leave everything behind to study what I really want. I would study sports management in Argentina but they don't have that degree in universities. Playing soccer is very different in Argentina. Back home, studies and sports are not related; you don't get a scholarship if you play any sports. Here I have the opportunity of applying for a job when I get my degree. I would like to spend some years working in the US as a soccer manager.

Last year, I made a soccer tape and I sent it to many universities in the US. There were many that were interested and gave me a soccer scholarship but they were not affordable for my family, but Missouri Valley College gave me a good soccer scholarship. I was really excited because I know this university is the best in the NAIA soccer division. I had three months to make my final decision. If I accepted that offer, I would be away from home for three years or more. I was thinking every day about my final decision. I couldn't focus in class or when I was hanging out with my friends. Finally, my family and I decided that I was going to come to Missouri Valley College.

After the decision, I was very excited and the day to leave my hometown came. All my family members and friends went to the airport to say goodbye to me. I felt very happy because I have a great bond with all of them. I was not sad because I know that I am going

to see them again soon. I started to feel nervous when I arrived at Kansas City Airport because I didn't know anyone there. The shuttle came and two hours later I arrived at MVC. It took me only one day to make friends. The soccer preseason helped me to contact people from different countries with different cultures. I felt relaxed because many of my teammates spoke Spanish, so it was easier to communicate. Soccer trainings are though. There is a very high level and I know that if I do not give my best, I will never reach that level.

The next weeks were excellent. I am doing great in my classes and I am having fun with many of my friends. There is always something to do on weekends like watching football or volleyball games. It is a great way to start my first semester here and I expect the other ones to be just like this. Now I realize that coming to Missouri Valley College may be the most difficult decision I have ever had but it can also be my best decision ever, because I am aiming for the future that I want. I hope to get my sports management degree here while having a great time playing soccer and making friends.

The Hardest Thing I Have Ever Done

– *Editor's Choice Award Winner*

Diogo Mata

Have you ever experienced a life-changing decision? Well, I'm living one. While I am writing this down I can't stop smiling, it's giving me goosebumps. As I started thinking and talking about coming to the U.S to pursue my dream, my parents showed a sense of pride in me fighting for what I love and they were thrilled by the way I demonstrated the life I want to fight for.

As a persistent muscled badass nineteen-year-old boy from Portugal, almost considered an adult because I'm an independent young man, I sent a tremendous number of emails to head coaches of universities across the entire US to get a volleyball scholarship. Even though I am an awesome guy I have a huge problem: being patient. While I was waiting for replies my leg couldn't stop moving like a grumpy old man impatiently waiting for his turn in the pharmacy line. I started to feel every tick tock inside my head. Big opportunities like this one don't come that easy, and I am really nervous about disappointing my parents and not doing what I love for the rest of my life

10th of August, 2020. The Big Day. The day I got accepted at Missouri Valley College. From there everything started to fly. In a week I had to accept that I was going to leave everything in Portugal: my relationships, my friends, my family, everything I built from mixed feeling of happiness, fear, excitement, responsibility, and, above all, pride. Pride for doing everything in my power to do what I like, what I consider self-love. All this in one click to accept, a virtual click that changed my life forever. as soon as i started to drag the mouse, my throat started to become dry and my hands started to perspire gallons of water.

I have never imagined feeling that the aisle of an airplane could increase in size. As I walked, my seat started to get further and further away. I felt an involuntary feeling of denial, of not wanting to accept something new, intimidating, and outside my comfort zone.

I never expected to actually come to the U.S. However, since I put my right foot outside the shuttle, the breeze of fresh air, the peaceful sound, and the sunset view gave me a sense of concretization and relief, like a big elephant leaving my shoulders. It taught me that I am a strong person. New life cycles have shown me that I have qualities that I did not know about myself, and last but not least, we must accept a path with obstacles in order to do what we love.

31 of January 2021. I'm living it. I already did a full semester and I could not be more proud of myself and what I became, even though I missed my first class and still dealing with games, bad weather and difficult schedules, all my sacrifice during the past few years, the injuries, family meetings that I missed today make sense.

Overcoming the Odds

The Most Difficult Thing I Have Ever Done

David González Betancort

Since I was eight years old, I have been practicing two different sports: soccer and trampoline. Trampoline is a recreational activity, acrobatic training tool as well as a competitive Olympic sport in which athletes perform acrobatics while bouncing on a trampoline. It is an individual sport, but at the same time you practice and live with your team. This story began in May, 2016; I was with my trampoline team in Tenerife, the neighboring island where I live. The reason for that trip was that the Canary Islands Trampoline Championship was held there, and I needed to get a good mark to qualify for the Spanish Trampoline Championship, the most important trampoline championship of Spain.

In the Canary Islands Championship, I was in first position, not for the first time, but the most important thing was to get the marks to qualify for the National Championship. That competition was held from July 1st to July 4th in Guadalajara, a city close to Madrid, in mainland Spain. However, one week before the trampoline competition, I was in another Spanish Championship, the National Soccer Championship, which was held in Malaga, in the southern part of Spain. I had to be careful not to injure myself, because I had the



trampoline competition on the next week. It was the last night with my soccer team, and the next day they were coming back to Gran Canaria, but I was taking a flight to Madrid to meet my trampoline team for the competition. On that night, one of the worst episodes in my athletic career happened. In the room of one boy from Malaga that we met there, I was leaning on the door leading to the terrace when, suddenly, one boy from Barcelona opened it, and he stuck the corner of the aluminum door in my foot. My white sock started to turn to red quickly, so I took it off and, when I looked at my foot, it was full of blood. I wiped it quickly and when I looked at it again, I could see my tendon. I would describe that image as seeing a small red hole with a thin white "stick" in the middle. It was so disgusting and horrible. We were all scared in that moment because we did not know what to do. My coach took me to the hospital that night. I was really scared thinking of the trampoline championship, and when the doctor came to see my foot, he told us that we needed to sew the foot and put stitches. I started to cry, not because of the stitches, but because he told me I could not compete in the championship. I had been training really hard that year, 6 days a week since the day we started the pre-season in August until that day in June. I left the hospital with 9 stitches in my right foot.



The next day I met my trampoline teammates and my coach in the Madrid's airport; after that we took a bus to Guadalajara. I remembered when my coach saw my foot, he was not believing what happened. He was "angry", I mean he was disappointed because we were thinking it was going to be impossible to compete in that state, and we were really excited about going to that competition. The first day there was the general training in the pavilion, and the next day the competition would begin. My coach and I were talking about the situation because we did not know what to do. I could barely support my right foot, and we had to make a decision. The decision was whether or not to disqualify me from the competition, because if the next day I did not compete, I would have to pay a fine to the Spanish Federation.

We decided to try my foot in general training. When I started running to the trampoline, my foot was hurting me a lot, but I keep running and when I jumped to the trampoline, my foot was paralyzed; I could not even move it but at the same time it was not hurting me. I got off the trampoline, and my jumping shoes were red, my foot was bleeding so I stopped immediately. I started to cry again and my coach was disappointed. He told me that he was going to talk with the federation because I was not able to compete the next day. I kept talking to him and I told my coach not to disqualify me, I told him I would compete the next day. He did not say no to my decision, because he was a gymnast like me, and he knew that we had been training really hard just for some seconds of competition, so he just told me to choose the decision but to think with my head. The championship started the next day and my group competed in the morning, and my decision was already made.

On the competition day, I arrived at the pavilion 3 hours before my turn to compete, and I was there with the doctors doing different healings and foot massages, and finally it was my turn. I did not talk too much with my coach. He wished me luck and placed himself next to the trampoline with the care mat. When the competition judge raised her hand to begin my turn, I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and started running towards the trampoline thinking that nothing had happened. I did my two jumping performances and they were amazing, one of the best of my life. That same afternoon, the judges put the marks on a screen and when I went with my coach to see them... I was Champion of Spain! We shout and hug each other. That afternoon I went to the medal delivery ceremony, and the president of the Gymnastiques Spanish Federation gave me the gold medal. The next day we went back



to my Island, and my parents received me really happily. I will never forget that moment because it was the hardest thing I have ever done, but at the same time it was the happiest day of my life.



Some Good Outcome After Bad Years

Mike Moser

The years from 2017 until 2019 were I would say mentally and physically the most difficult in my whole life. When I started the year 2017, I didn't know that this and the following years would change my life first in a bad way but maybe in the end also in a positive way.

It all started Friday the 10thth of August 2017 when I had soccer practice with my team the BSC Young Boys in Bern. It was shortly after 7pm when I tackled for a ball when suddenly I got stuck with my shoes in the turf. I felt immediately an immense pain in my foot and I knew this wasn't a good sign. I had to be carried into the locker room by my teammates while I was in tears. On the way to the locker room, I was scared and just hoped that it wasn't something too bad even though I saw the worried faces of my teammates.

When I came home, I called a doctor for an appointment the next day and went straight to bed. The pain in my foot and my thoughts about what this injury could be and how long I could be out prevented me from sleeping well this night.

The day after I drove with my father to my appointment at a sport medicine center in Bern. I was sweating because I was nervous about what the doctor was going to say until my father and I sat in front of him. He had some pictures of my foot and a serious look on this face. "Like you can see here, you broke your left foot pretty badly", he said. He kept explaining things about the injury, but my thoughts were already somewhere else. For me it was like my world fell apart at this moment and I felt sad, disappointed, and also angry. All I could think was that all I like and all I do is play soccer all day and mostly two times a day and now I couldn't do this anymore for a long time.

The next month was difficult for me because the only thing I could do in the beginning was to go to the gym but it just wasn't the same as playing soccer on a field. But step by step I could start running again, even though I still felt a little pain in my foot.

When I went back to go check everything after 4 month later with my doctor, he told me I could start playing again and that this pain will go away some time soon. I left his office relieved and happy that the wait had finally ended.

I finally had my first game in which I started again. It was a great feeling to play an important game again and I felt nothing else then joy. Saturday the 20th of march we played against FC Thun. We were in the 25th minute of the game and I had a lot of good actions and also some shots on target. And then I got the ball in the midfield and I saw a teammate on the other side of the field. I was on my way to hit the ball when my opponent hit my leg. I couldn't stop my foot anymore and instead of kicking the ball I kicked the ground of the field. The moment I touched the ground I felt the same pain I had when I broke my foot and it was the same foot like last time. So, I got carried to the locker room again and I called my father and told him, "it happened again, I broke my foot again..."

The day after we went to the same doctor and he confirmed that I broke the same foot again. But after he said that only a surgery would help my father and I quit his office and went to another doctor which I knew for a long time. He told me that I broke my foot again because it wasn't fully recovered the last time and that is why I broke it so easily again. At this moment I was very angry about the first doctor and I swore to myself that I will never go back to him again.

My new doctor which was located in Lucerne offered me another possibility than a surgery, "but it's going to be painful", he said. I just answered that anything is better than a surgery. So, in the next months I had to travel 2 hours with the train to get my special treatment which took about 20 minutes and this 3 times a week.

After some long months I went back to my doctor to see if I could start again but I came out of his office disappointed because it wasn't good enough to start again and I felt like I lost my time with this treatment. I kept doing my therapy for a month again, went back to the doctor and left his office disappointed and angry. This repeated itself during about a year. I would say that I lost my motivation, my belief, and joy during this time especially after the first six month. At this time, I could only go to the gym and watch my teammates play. It was horrible. After months of gym, I had enough of it and I hadn't the motivation anymore to keep going there even if I knew it was the only thing I could do. And watching the games of my team didn't help me, it made it worse. While watching my teammates I always thought to myself that I could have done this shot or this pass better than the guy who was playing in my position. It was hard, especially mentally because I couldn't do something to help my foot recover faster either, I just had to wait.

After what felt like years, I finally went on 10th of May 2019 I went back to my doctor and I finally got the green light to start slowly playing soccer again. I was incredibly relieved and happy that this horrible time finally has an end.

My motivation came back fast when I got good news but they also disappeared fast when I had setbacks. But I always knew that I had to be strong when I could be playing again because it wouldn't be easy to have such a big comeback. But I could say

that after these two years, which were the hardest ones in my year I came back to my old shape and form. Of course, it wasn't easy and I needed some time but I'm happy and also proud that I came out of this better and stronger because it would have been easier to give up than to keep going like I did. I noticed that I was mentally a lot stronger and that it needed a lot more to break me mentally. And of course, after such a long time without playing soccer, my motivation was higher than ever before because I knew the shitty feeling of being unable to play the sport I love.

And I think the proof for that is that I'm here in the United States playing soccer at a high level. I didn't have to prove it to anyone but I wanted to prove it to myself. And that's what I did. I think the best proof or reward was that I was in the third All-American team after my first semester here as a Freshman. At least some good came out of these bad years and that's what I will remember.

The Grind: A Personal Wrestling Review

Wendell Chesney II

In my life, there are about a million different things that I have done that lots of people would consider difficult. Despite everything that I have ever gone through in my life, from moving to Georgia in middle school to losing my mother when I was 15, wrestling is hands down the hardest thing I have ever done. My journey into the sport started fairly normally; I saw a friend Jayshawn do it on YouTube. When I saw him wrestle, the first thing that came to my mind was "cool". The way that he took a person down and turned him to his back was very satisfying, and I immediately wanted to try it for myself. He was on the team his freshman and sophomore years but later quit during my first year. Despite that, I decided to try it out, how hard could it be? Well, it turns out wrestling was very, very hard. I wrestled about 30 matches my freshman year. I won 12 of them. Most would say that my results aren't too bad for someone that just started the sport. I, however, saw it much differently.

I am a perfectionist. Everything that I do I want to do my best. So, when I started losing and losing a lot, it got to me. I was frustrated. I cried. I yelled and screamed at myself all the time. The biggest opponent that I faced wasn't the person that stood on the line in front of me, but myself. There were about a hundred times during the course of my season that I wanted to quit and never step onto a wrestling mat ever again. But something told me to give it another shot. I don't know if it was the Lord or it was my pride that pushed me to become something more, but I kept going. I trained constantly. At dinner I didn't eat my favorite foods that my dad cooked, they would have made me gain weight. When I had the chance to go out and have fun, I stayed at home and ran laps around my neighborhood. I lifted and used the weights in my garage. Even in the dead of winter I went outside and did stance and motion for hours. I never felt like I was getting better. To me, I was constantly taking eight steps backwards. One of the biggest problems for me is that I never allowed myself to slow down and see that I was making progress. I compared myself to other people on my team that had been wrestling for years and I kept wondering: "What am I doing wrong?" "What's wrong with me?" I lived in my head and believed that I was the worst person on the team. Before matches I had already beaten myself thinking that I wasn't good enough.

I improved (at least that's what my coaches said) my sophomore year and I was excited to see what was in store for me my junior and senior seasons, but things don't always go the way you want them to. Mid way through my junior year I pulled my ACL and had to sit out the majority of the time. My coaches didn't say a word to me, nor did they check and see if I was okay. That shook me. I was distraught and hurt. I thought they cared about me, but it seemed that I was wrong. I had serious doubts that I was going to wrestle my senior year. Around this time, I started playing lacrosse after my junior season. I saw a game on YouTube, it was Duke versus Syracuse. I loved how they moved and passed the ball so I went out for it and worked every day towards being better. I began to get good at lacrosse, so good in fact that I even got a couple college offers as well. Because I didn't know if I was going to wrestle, I was conditioning with the lacrosse team.

Throughout the entirety of the lacrosse preseason, I felt that something was missing, as if there was a hole inside of me that needed to be filled. I knew in my heart that wrestling was the only thing that could fill that void. Wrestling allowed me to push myself in ways that I couldn't have before. I loved the pain, sweat and occasional tears that came with training and sparring. I cared so much about winning that I based how good I was on whether I won matches or not. But wrestling isn't about how many times your hand is raised, it's about how much you can take until you can't push yourself any farther-and then giving some more. I swallowed my pride and made the decision to wrestle my senior year, even though I thought at the time that it was a complete waste of time.

Everyone wants to be "the guy". Regardless if it's in sports or academics. One of the biggest pills that I've had to swallow is that I'm not "the guy". I'm a role player, the person coaches put in every once in a while, to do one task and then as soon as I'm done with that there's really not much use for me anymore. I may work just as hard or even harder than the best people but no matter what happens, no matter how much I give I could never be the person that they count on, despite how much I wanted to be that person. Even when I did get those chances I crumpled and folded. I could never win when it really counted. I just wasn't as good. People say to never sell yourself short and to have the mindset that whoever is in your way, as long as you work hard, you'll pass them. It's not true. I know that firsthand.

The truth of the matter is that I am average. I'm not super good, nor am I terrible. I'm just there. Right in the middle. When I do improve it's only seen until someone else that's better comes along. After that I'm forgotten and sent to the side. Knowing that made me work even harder at my craft but it never really mattered. Hard work may get you far in other aspects of life like your job or career, but in sports? If you don't have "it", you'll never have "it". It's a constant struggle that will never bear fruit. The most you can do is put your head down and grind it out every day, hoping that you see a

breakthrough and everything will click together. But for the most part, it seems that it only happens in the movies.

I never really asked myself why I wanted to please my coach. I guess every athlete wants to do that and be the "coach's favorite". I was never that person and it took me a very long time to accept it. It rocked me to my core. To unwillingly accept a leadership role without having the leadership talent and skills. Even now when I go back home and workout with the high schoolers, the ones that know me still show me no respect. They still treat me as if I'm beneath them because they used to beat me when I was there. When I decided to sign to Missouri Valley, I got support from my actual friends, but a good amount of people on the team questioned the legitimacy. They still made fun of me, they still doubted my hard work and dedication. If there was anything more frustrating in life than reaching a goal and still having people doubt you and put you down, I'd love to see it. It was the worst feeling in the world. After everything I had done, I still couldn't get the recognition that I had been yearning to see. Most would say "fuck them, bro. You don't need their validation." But I couldn't let it go. I let what they said to me get in my head. For better or for worse, it made me wrestle with a chip on my shoulder. Every match and practice I had to go as hard as I could because I wouldn't let someone talk shit on me. I would never let someone put me down again, no matter who they were.

My senior year we had many transfers that were much better than me. Torres, a 138 pounder, and Tanner, also a 138 pounder. Both of them were in my weight class. I also saw that people that I had beat were passing me and beating me. I didn't know why. Sometimes my coaches would take away my practice partners and make me work with someone that wasn't as good as I was. Some days I just didn't want to be there. My awesome work ethic was what made me stand out, which is a nice way of saying that you're not really all that good at all. It broke me and I was depressed for a very long time. The best way I could show how little significance my wrestling career had at Brookwood was senior night. Every senior got a collage of pictures taken while they were wrestling. When I got my collage, the only pictures that were there were ones of me on senior night and some logos of "Brookwood Wrestling" to take up that empty space. If that isn't a clear "we don't give a fuck about you OR everything you did for our program," I honestly don't know what is. That pain will never go away. The only reason I came back there to wrestle was that I needed a workout and I had nowhere else to go. If I had somewhere else to wrestle, I would have never gone back to Brookwood ever again. The disrespect they showed me was criminal. I hated that collage so much that when I got home with it I just put it in the corner. My dad hung it up anyways. I wish he'd take it down sometimes. Every time I look at it I think about how dirty my coaches treated me. How they look at me now with bright eyes and want my favor. When I came back over spring break, they loved seeing me and treated me so well. I hated it and it made me sick to my stomach. The only reason I don't cuss them out and call them out

on their two-faced horseshit is that I don't want to cause a scene and the fact that they wouldn't let me wrestle there again.

After both of my sports had ended, I needed to make a college decision. My dad had made it crystal clear to me that I was going to college and that it wasn't up for debate. Honestly, going to school wasn't something that I really wanted to do. I thought going into a trade would be better. I had my mind on being a boilermaker. I liked working with my hands and they made a very good salary (around 70k a year just starting out). But with my dad's mind firmly made up, I didn't really have a choice. Surprisingly, I had multiple offers for wrestling at the college level, despite my lack of success. I received an email out of the blue from one of the assistant wrestling coaches here at MVC. I had never heard of the school at all until I received the message. I spoke to my dad and sister about it and I came to visit. I liked the school because it was small and quiet. The academics were up to par and the wrestling program is one of the best in the country. I want to become a champion wrestler but even though that may not happen, I am happy about my decision to attend school here.

To this day I still have no idea why this program wanted me, since the wrestling team here is one of the best. In my short time wrestling it has taught me a lesson that will stick with me for life: If you want to be the best at something, you have to be willing to sacrifice everything, even if it gets you nowhere. Wrestling breaks you down, mentally and spiritually. But it's able to build you into a stronger and better person. It's the oldest and toughest sport in the world. Despite coaches and other outside factors that soured my experience, I am (for the most part) happy that I began wrestling. Will I ever become a starter and be a consistent, winning wrestler? Maybe not. But though I have not gained success and recognition in performance, I have gained a rather plucky and persistent attitude. For me, the most important thing was a willingness to never give up. That might not be much for most, but for myself, it's something that has changed me forever.



Artist: Brittany Hernandez

The Lone Ranger
and
Tonto Fist Fight in
Heaven

Who Keeps Me Motivated

Ulisses Reis Sant'ana

Published by Alexie Sherman in 1993, "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven" is a short story of a Native American boy from Spokane who just moved to Seattle. While he was living in this big city, he underwent pressures of discrimination by people in the community, he also had terrible nightmares that shook him mentally. The short story Alexie made me feel both happy and sad at the same time. In the passage, "The most vivid image of that dream stays with me. Three mounted soldiers played polo with a dead Indian woman's head." I remember great experiences lived by my grandmother which brings me countless memories about her. My grandma was one of the most important people in my life, and it makes me feel happy when I see passages that I can picture her face again. However, because of her, I have strong bonds with indigenous people, so this sentence also reminds me how colonization was suffered for her tribe, and it is painful to think that my family was part of this brutality.

When I was little in school, I used to learn that the colonization of Europeans in America was something peaceful, and that generally many Europeans conquered the Indians through barter, when they presented materials such as: mirror, machetes, perfumes, brandy etc., in return for land and labor. Therefore, for a long time I believed that colonization was really an "agreement" between Europeans and natives. However, as time went on I learned that in fact colonization was very different, more than just an agreement but an invasion, and that during this period many Indians and many Europeans died. When Alexie says "At first it was small, just my tribe and the few whites who lived there. But my dream grew, intensified." This compares to the arrival of both the Portuguese in Brazil, as well as the Europeans in the United States and the reactions of the natives to their arrival. Historically, when someone unknown arrives on native lands, with suspicious intent the result is typically not positive and ends in conflict. Thus, when the boy shares that he saw in his nightmare "Whites killing Indians and Indians killing whites" that was basically the real reality of colonization, this connected me to my own grandmother's experience.

My grandmother was born into an indigenous tribe in northern Brazil, and when only 15 years old, she was forced to abandon her reservation and moved to São Paulo.

Due to my strong attachment to the indigenous culture in my blood, I always loved to learn things about the natives who lived such a simplistic and fantastic life. I used to sit with my grandmother and listen to the great experiences that she lived as a warrior woman. As we can see in "Moved by Terror: Frontier Violence as Cultural Exchange in Late-Colonial Brazil" "Following the arrival in Rio de Janeiro of the Portuguese royal court, in flight from Napoleon's armies, Prince Regent João declared war on the Indians" (Langfur, 2005) the colonization of the Portuguese in Brazilian lands can be summed up using the word "war". As soon as I grew up and learned how colonization really was, I never tried to ask about the difficult times my grandmother went through, most likely brought sad memories to her. Despite her sadness and displacement, she was a strong woman and made the best of her life. She had struggles, as many of the members of her tribe were forced into a different style of life, battling depression, using alcohol, suffering from poverty, and the death of her husband. She eventually became determined to set goals and was able to settle in the new city and have a family, and make changes that gave her joy. I was lucky to witness the joy part of her life. I benefited from her care for me, her traditional cooking, her love of my soccer skills and her encouragement for me to succeed and overcome any challenges, just like she did.

Although I have these incredible memories of my grandmother, the passage "Disembodied I could see everything that was happening" makes me reflect on sad experiences that my grandmother went through when she left her reservation. I imagine soldiers arriving at her reservation and starting a war against her tribe. At that time, she was only 15 years old having to flee alone, afraid, leaving her family behind, and knowing that she may never see them again. Similarly, during Spokane's boy's nightmare "Other tribes arrived on horseback to continue the slaughter of whites, and the United States Cavalry rode into battle." he shows that even though without the power of firearms, mounted on horses, the natives were also strong and were able to resist as long as they could stand. Therefore, in his nightmares, the boy from Spokane could describe the depressing burden that many natives carry as a result of colonization.

Nevertheless, I can see that colonization affected the natives a long time ago and currently still negatively affects the lives of many natives. As Christina shows in "From Conquest to Indian Health Service: The Continued Colonization of Native Americans," "To begin with, colonizers used harsh war tactics to initially decimate the Native American population. Colonizers demonized Native Americans in order to justify violent settler expansion. Because colonizers realized that they could not solve the "Indian problem" through outright genocide, the United States government supported cultural genocide as the viable option." (Tlatilpa, 2015). From this action we can see the brutality of not only the colonists, but also actions from the government of the country. This shows that the Indians were not accepted by anyone in the country, and that is why there is still discrimination that occurs against the natives. It is unfortunately frustrating

to think that colonization affected the indigenous population in many ways, in my grandmother's country of Brazil and in the United States as told by Alexie Sherman. Indigenous people suffered, unfairly, unjustly, and harshly.

It is possible to compare Alexie's short story with my grandmother's story because they both have similar experiences and events resulting from colonization. The boy and my grandmother did leave their reservation and find a new home, both going to the move to a big city. Both my grandmother and Spokane's boy suffered in similar ways, due to this change of environment, facing discrimination, depression, and anguish. A noted difference between the stories can be demonstrated during the passage "When I got back to the reservation, my family wasn't surprised to see me." I believe that this is where the paths of my grandmother and the boy differ slightly. Unfortunately, my grandmother did not have the opportunity to return to her reservation, and in my opinion that it is what made her stronger. Regardless of all the barriers she faced during her journey in the big city, she still managed to come out on top and create a beautiful life story. However, I believe that if, during hard times, she had the opportunity to return to her reservation and her family, she would return without hesitation. The sentence "my family wasn't surprised to see me" makes me feel that when some Indians leave their reservation they cannot adapt themselves while living in big cities, so they just end up coming back home. Thus, in this short story, Alexie portrayed the reality of the Indians who move to a big city very well, because when the boy returned to the reservation, his family knew he would come back.

To conclude, I believe that Tracey L. Connette in *Sherman Alexie's Reservation: Relocating the Center of Indian Identity* provided an accurate description of how the indigenous people might respond to their life. Connette had a positive point when she says "Sherman Alexie presents the Indian perspective of "looking out" at mainstream society. Rather than evoking a desire for one homogenous society, Alexie's narratives reveal Indian identity as a distinct identity compatible with other cultures" (Connette, 2010). Therefore, Alexie was able to transmit to us through this story how colonization was and the difficult life for the natives after that event. Although the reality presented during this short story is sad, I managed to have memories of a person who was an example of courage and determination for me. Even though it is hard to think about colonization as a whole, at the same time I am happy to see that there are some strong people in this world as a result of this. Finally, when I think about the native culture, I automatically remember my grandmother, and by that, I feel stronger and more motivated to face any difficulty in my life.

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The True Reason Why the Narrator Uses Humor

Sakina Komuro

He looked at me, confused at first, then laughed. "Shit," he said. "I was hoping you weren't crazy. You were scaring me." "Well, I'm going to get crazy if you don't know the words." (Alexie 384)

Sherman Alexie, the author of "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven," has the Native American narrator use a sense of humor in his story. Since the narrator is a Native American and minority in the United States, he has many experiences of being hurt emotionally because of discriminations that he received from white people. Thus, I believe that the narrator's use of humor is to protect himself from being hurt emotionally. That is because I also make use of humor when I don't want to be hurt emotionally by someone's dirty jokes or heartless words. Humor has an ability to make people laugh and also to protect themselves from being hurt emotionally and distract the attackers because humor can seize timing and make the attackers have less opportunity to hurt you. In "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven," Sherman Alexie wanted readers to know that the narrator continuously uses humor to protect him from being hurt by white people's heartless behavior and attitude to him and distract them.

First, I will explain how the narrator can be hurt in the story. The narrator has a brown skin and is a native American and minority in the United States. Many of white people judge the narrator by his appearance and discriminate against him on a daily basis. For instance, there is an expression that suggests the way white people treat the narrator on page 382 of "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven." "He looked at me over so he could describe me to the police officer later. I knew the look." This implies that white people look at Native Americans as criminals. Also, there is a test result that shows that the narrator is not paranoid, rather many of native American people are discriminated against by other races. According to "The Discriminations in the United States: Experiences of Native Americans," more than one in five native American personally experiencing in discrimination in the United States including health care, police and courts. This test result explains that discrimination against Native

American exists and shows the reason why the narrator is hurt emotionally. Next, I will explain why I believe that the narrator's use of humor is to protect himself from being hurt emotionally by being discriminated against.

First of all, the narrator uses humor to build a good relationship with people who discriminate against him. I think that if white people have prejudice and discriminate against Native American normally, but the Native American is gentle and humorous to them by using a sense of humor, I don't think that people can't be that mean to the Native American and can't discriminate against him or her when compared to Native American who are not as humorous as the gentle and humorous Native American. According to "Humor as a Protective Factor against Anxiety and Depression", the test result says that "positive use of humor (affiliative and self-enhancing) are positively correlated with optimism and negatively correlated with anxiety and depression, demonstrating a protective role." This explains that the narrator feels anxiety or depression because of discrimination that he received, thus, he uses humor to protect himself from being hurt. I personally experienced the same situation as the narrator when I was a child. I used to go to private swimming classes when I was around 8 years old and I was the slowest swimmer in the swimming class. Since I was a very slow swimmer and plus, I was shy and mentally weak, some of the older girls in the class continuously made fun of me and bullied me. However, I didn't escape or ignore the girls, rather, I tried hard to make them like me by saying funny stuff to make them laugh and get closer to them. When I look back at this situation now, I think that I wanted to prevent myself from being hurt emotionally by acting funny and being humorous to build a good relationship with the mean girls in the swimming class. This behavior is exactly the same thing that the narrator did when he wanted to build a good relationship with white people. He used humor to get closer to white people and avoided being hurt more than that.

Secondly, I believe that the narrator distracts people by acting funny and uses his sense of humor. When the narrator went to the 7-Eleven, he was continuously being humorous. Every word that came out of his mouth sounded funny even though the clerk at the 7-Eleven got scared of the way the narrator uses his humor. For example, the narrator uses a long pause and tries to be humorous in an ironic way. This behavior seems like the narrator is trying to lessen the opportunity of the clerk and seize the timing to hurt him and distract them by acting funny and using his sense of humor. I also have done the same thing as the narrator did. When I was a junior high school student, I was a gymnast. Since my weight was heavy for doing gymnastics, my coaches frequently made fun of me by calling me a raccoon dog or rice cake, whatever they want. This might sound very terrible to you, but there is a culture that makes fun of people by their appearance in Japan, and it is always taken as just a joke. According to "The Effects of Conformity to Others and Role Expectations of Entertainers on Humor Responses," it is clear that there is a way of thinking that it is funny or taken as a joke

when people attack someone, bully or being violent physically and emotionally in Japan. However, I used to not be able to take those Japanese jokes from my coaches just as a joke and was hurt emotionally. Therefore, what I did to those people who treated me like that was just acting funny or making them laugh by using self-degradation humor. At that time, I didn't realize that I was acting humorous or using self-degradation humor to distract my coaches, but looking back at it now, I see that I was just trying to distract my coaches not to hurt me more than that by using my self-degradation humor. Having done that, I was able to make them have less opportunity and timing to hurt me emotionally. This behavior that I took is the same thing that the narrator did at the 7-Eleven to seize timing and opportunity of the clerk to hurt him emotionally.

When I was a child, I used humor not only to make people laugh, but also to build a good relationship with the attacker and distract them. Acting humorous was much easier than being serious because if I was being serious, that means that I admit that I am emotionally hurt. Realizing that I am emotionally hurt would make me more sad and hurt, thus, I was pretending that I was ok and acting funny all the time to build a good relationship with the attackers and distract them. Now, I am an adult, but I use humor in the same way as I did when I was small.

To conclude, the use of humor of the narrator in "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven" is for self-defense. The use of humor has the ability to build a good relationship with people and get closer with them. Having done that, the narrator was able to protect him from being attacked by white people. Additionally, his sense of humor can distract people from attacking the narrator. The narrator continuously uses humor because he wanted to seize the timing and opportunity of white people to attack or discriminate against him. In other words, a person who is under attack can take control of a situation by using humor. Seriousness can't make a good relationship with the attacker and distract them because seriousness might make the attacker get freaked out. However, acting humorous is a much easier way to build a good relationship with the attacker and distract them.

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Political Commentary

“Women Against Patriarchy (WAP) 2020”: Responding to AOC’s Comeback.

– Editor’s Choice Award Winner
Mariona Bolao

On July 23rd, 2020 Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) issued a hearing of personal privilege after Ted Yoho (R-FL) along with Roger Williams (R-TX) verbally assaulted her on the steps of the nation’s capitol building. Misogynistic episodes are still very normalized and very few of them are taken seriously. The congresswoman efficiently responded to the republican’s excuses and stated that the time to make a change is now. As I see it, her taking action in front of the situation and reaching out to so many people, is the first step to get rid of a system that constantly objectifies and dehumanizes women with no remorse.

Three days before the hearing, as reported by CNN (Raju), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez was accosted by the republicans, especially Yoho, for having said that poverty increases crime. He called her disgusting, crazy and dangerous, among others, and when she recognized his comments as rude, him and his colleague started walking away, calling her a “fucking bitch” once they thought she was far away enough.

Two days after the incident, Yoho issued a public apology, where in less than two minutes, never making eye contact with any of the members in the chamber, read a text making excuses for his actions. He never directed his words towards the congresswoman, just referring to her as his “colleague”, while hiding behind the shield of being passionate about certain topics and loving his God, his country and his family (“Rep. Yoho ‘Apologizes’”).

Ocasio-Cortez pointed that the words were not at all harmful, as she has always resided in New York and worked a working-class job before her governmental role, where that kind of vocabulary is unfortunately still considered usual. She harshly associated the politician with men that she has thrown away from bars and restaurants for using that kind of language, and to New Yorkers that ride the subway.

Thanks to that, she mindfully indicated that her concern lied on where the disrespect was coming from. Many believe verbal abuse and violence only come from

impoverished and uneducated areas, but it is left clear that even the most powerful of men still take up this kind of behavior. She called out how Rep. Williams instead of defying his colleague for his manners, stayed quiet in front of the situation. I fully agree when she claims that this kind of situation is when we start realizing how normalized is the use of violent language against women and how easy it is to get away with it, unharmed. She also listed some names of men who have disrespected her verbally the past two years she's been in congress, among them President Trump, Governor DiSantis from Florida, and many other members of the Republican Party.

She concluded by stating that the reason she was standing up against Yoho's poor justifications was to fight for her nieces, women of her community and victims of verbal and violent abuse, and to remark the importance of calling out when someone makes a mistake. She highlighted how having wives and daughters doesn't make a man good, nor can it make up for the way someone speaks to or about other femme people.

As a result of this episode, AOC is capable of exposing how being a powerful man, showing to the world through social media that you're a family guy, having wives and daughters, being passionate about God, among many others, are not facts that automatically exempt you from accosting women.

Ocasio-Cortez's comeback wasn't left unnoticed. If we stop and think about it for a second, isn't it surprising how no man had any similar incident to report? That is why the event is taken as a sexist assault. Yoho directly attacked the congresswoman for her way of making politics. However similar her views are from Bernie Sanders', would Florida's representative even think of raising his voice to the senator? That isn't likely to happen. On the other hand, it is probable that a similar conduct is seen towards Ann Wagner (R-MO), despite them being in the same political party. Even Dean Phillips (D-MN), who has been openly active with the statement used to harass the congresswoman (poverty incites crime), questions why he's never been accosted by him before.

Additionally, in my opinion, the reason Roger Williams (or really any man especially from the Republican Party), stayed quiet during the exchange is because he thinks of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez as vulnerable, as someone who has no power and is going to let go of the event rather standing up for herself. Isn't that why women are thought to be easier targets after all? Particularly if they're younger women of color, they seem to have a bull's-eye on their back. It even looks as though Fox News is obsessed with anything AOC does, just like they are with other members like Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Ilhan Omar (D-MN) or Rashida Tlaib (D-MI).

At no given moment does she direct to Ted Yoho. How is that so different from him not addressing the New Yorker? She was listening; she patiently waited for an apology, one that never came. However, he was not going to hear what she had to say about the event, so she turned to another audience: she turned to those who would be paying attention, to those who could relate, to those who were eager to learn. She accomplishes that by the way she carries herself during the speech. Her direction to the

public is immaculate and the vocabulary used is impeccable. We can notice how confident she is with her words and at the same time how tired she is of the repetitive behavior. The story is not told from a point of view of sadness but from someone being sick and tired of always having to deal with the same issues over and over again. This is the kind of conduct that makes her either someone really easy to follow or for others to fear.

To me her statement is important not so much because I am a woman myself, but because I have two younger sisters. One of them, Adriana, is sixteen and is currently taking her Junior year of high school in Indiana. She is not comfortable with her host family. The host dad keeps making jokes that constantly demean women, people in the LGBTQ+ community, other races... His son, whom she has to see everyday, not only at home but at school too, constantly tries to make a move on her, invading her privacy and personal space. That man has two other daughters, sisters of the boy. I quote AOC, "What Mr. Yoho did [accosting women] was give permission to other men to do that to his daughters." ("Rep. Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) Responds"). You cannot be rude to anyone and expect them to treat your community with decency. When you disrespect with no shame, you are just opening doors for others to attack your circle. Expecting another outcome would just make you a hypocrite.

My other sister, Cristina, is eight. She is still a child. A school, every time a boy picked on her, teachers would tell her that they did it because they liked her. When she got home, I had to tell her how no one should ever annoy her just because they're interested. I taught her how to get back at them politely, just like my mom did with me when I was in her place. As Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said "They [her family] did not raise me to accept abuse from men." ("Rep. Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) Responds"). Disrespect is taught, no one is ever born with it. Verbal abuse is taught by romanticizing violence and by following gender norms that allow for some to control and for the others to be submissive.

To sum up, AOC highlights to the public the constant struggle women still have to go through on a daily basis. It is proven how it comes not only from impoverished ideologies but also from powerful workplace positions. I deeply believe her words state a meaning that should be heard everywhere, and all of us, doesn't matter what political views we have, could learn something about. This movement cannot be fought only by women in powerful positions. If we want to witness and experience a change, we confront the oppressors, and if they are not willing to listen, we speak to the masses, we hold ourselves accountable and we battle as if it was someone else who is put in our place.

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"Stable Genius": A Rhetorical Analysis of Donald Trump's Speech

Mariona Bolao

How come I, who can fluently speak three languages, am expected to form flawless sentences, while the most powerful man in the world jabbars and struggles to get a single thought out? Oftentimes clips will pop up in the news or social media of Donald Trump stumbling from idea to idea, where not even he knows what he is trying to say. Still, millions of people seem to understand him. At first sight, it doesn't look like his rhetoric is what gets him through his followers. It took me two weeks of insight and a lot of crying and screaming to understand how is it possible that his talking is so effective for some. But at the end of the day, as much as it hurts to say, Donald Trump is a rhetorical genius. This particular speech succeeds to persuade his spectators (who are mostly white, cisgender men, straight, or without a college degree), to really believe that Obama's Nuclear Deal is a waste of time and energy. The way he directs to the public makes them responsible to interpret the meaning of his words, making it easier for people to believe him.

On 19 July 2015, Donald Trump delivered a speech in South Carolina as one of the Republican presidential nominees. One of the topics he addressed was the Nuclear Deal that the Obama administration, among six other countries, had proposed and later passed, in which essentially every pathway for Iranians to make a nuclear bomb were to be blocked in exchange for removing economic sanctions against the capital. Just like some other conservatives, Trump thought the deal was not going to be enough to stop the foreign country to build the missile, especially as the agreement could "expire" by the year 2025 and it's estimated that we won't run out of uranium-235 until 2030. What should have been a statement in the lines of "the Nuclear Deal is bad because XYZ", ended up being a minute and a half long sentence in which he wonders about his uncle, his and his own education, Republicans vs. Democrats, the power of nuclear energy, women's intelligence and negotiators.

Aristotle came up with five terms to explain the function of rhetoric and how someone can take advantage of it to manipulate the audience. Turns out he has the hang of them.

What we call today credibility and authority, in ancient Greek it was called *ethos*. This rhetorical figure is used to give veracity to an argument or statement. In a normal situation, the author would give their credentials, mention the experts who conducted the experiment, and even show good moral reasons why they believe in their point. However, Donald Trump has the fame of saying “he’s always right” (Givas) and how “science doesn’t know” (C-SPAN). That is a very good reason to only use his personal experience and own conclusions to prove his arguments.

He even mentions it: “that’s why I always start off: Went to Wharton, was a good student, went there, went there, did this, built a fortune.” Because in Wharton they prepare you for every single career, despite being “Wharton Business School”. Then it makes sense that he states very often that scientists are wrong and they don’t know what they’re talking about. I guess a college degree gives you full authority to “spit facts” and always be right. Too bad for him that that’s not the case, just like when he says “built a fortune”. He inherited his money from his family and went bankrupt. Even if he has never stated that officially, some of his hotels, casinos and other businesses have, since 1991. The point is, all of his speeches are full of first person pronouns because he, himself and him are the only source of authority he ever needs.

Then how do so many people believe his words? He always identifies with his audience. He includes the public into a “conversation”. In this rant he mostly says “fellas” and “you know”. By calling someone fella or folk he is speaking to the listener as an equal, as someone who identifies with them. Especially to other men, as the connotation relates to “dude”. Particularly in New York, finishing someone else’s sentences is considered friendly. As we have already stated, he has trouble finishing his lines. Plus, he is from Queens, NY, so he might expect you to conclude his thoughts for him. I suppose that is why a certain group of people find him so appealing. Can’t relate. Anyway, you’re most likely to trust a friend than a stranger, because your friends don’t lie to you. That’s why all he says must be true. Even if there is every single proof in the world to contradict his words, the authority of a “folk” should always be trusted.

The term *logos* comes from the Greek “logic”, and is used by authors to prove a point by reflecting and reasoning. This strategy tends to be pretty easy to understand and is even easier to formulate. It molds the audience’s point of view by expressing statements that make sense. Or do they? From what I’ve seen so far, these declarations don’t leave room for thought for other possibilities. “It’s either black or white”, “if you cry, then you’re sad” or “you failed the exam because you didn’t study hard enough”. They can be valid, however, that doesn’t mean they are the only possibilities. What about gray? Can’t you tear up in joy? What if you did study enough but had a bad day

when taking the test? That suppression of reflection makes *logos* a really effective tool for Donald Trump.

At some point, he tries to convince the public that if he ran as the complete opposite, then the outcome would be the contrary too: "If I ran as a liberal Democrat, they [?] would say I'm one of the smartest people anywhere in the world". How is that there are people that actually believe that? Well, what's president Trump (other than racist or a narcissist)? A conservative Republican. He even says so some seconds before rambling that quote. Now, what are conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats? Complete opposites. Do people generally think that he's intelligent? Well, not generally, but he is clearly not brilliant, at least not on purpose. Does your political affiliation affect your IQ? It certainly doesn't. There we go, then! All it took was a little bit of reflection. Stating a relationship of opposites doesn't make them always relatable.

In his defense, though, I'll say that he uses facts and data too! He states that "nuclear is so powerful", "women are smarter [than men]" and my personal favorite, "it used to be three [prisoners], now it's four". It sounds like when you ask for someone's age and they respond with a "seventeen, going to eighteen". Thank you for the explanation, I thought you'd be turning fourteen. At least his subtraction and addition skills are on point. After all, he likes to say he's a "stable genius" (CNN). Anyway, presumably he doesn't believe the first two statements. If he really believed in the power of nuclear energy he wouldn't have withdrawn from the Nuclear Deal with Iran, just to almost cause a World War III at the beginning of the year. In addition, we all know how insolent he has always been towards women. You know, like when he said "grab them by the p*ssy" (Fox News) or "a person who is flat-chested is very hard to be a ten" (This Is What), just to name a few from the top of my head. What he gets from saying that women are smarter, is not looking like a complete asshole, and covering his obvious traces of misogyny.

Last but not least, *pathos* is an ancient Greek word that proposes emotion. It is pretty self-explanatory: the author persuades us by provoking feelings. There was a group of philosophers during classical Greece, the Sophists, that believed the only way to be right was to convince the public about your statement. It didn't matter if their affirmation was as nutty as "the sky is red," if they had the last word they were right. The most efficient way to talk someone into arguments of that scale was to simply twist their arms. As insane as it may sound, nowadays this is still a useful way to make someone believe your statement, and it is probably Donald Trump's most effective tool.

What drives me crazy, and it's probably his biggest strength, is the fact that not finishing his sentences lets his audience choose the ending they find more fitting for them. In addition, he uses words that are unclear, such as *they*, *people*, *somebody*, *anybody*... In the quote from this particular speech, "they just killed us.". Who is *they*? Well, that depends on who you want them to be. Who do you feel like blaming? In this context they could pretty much be either Iranians, as he says a couple of words before,

or even the Obama administration, who signed the deal he's babbling about. Either way, it's obvious that the word *killed* states fear. He doesn't need to explicitly say so, by eluding the subject and letting the public decide who he is talking about he gets to scare people about both of them.

Another fact he has on his side is the way he enacts his stories. His speeches are not meant to be read. To understand in a visceral way what he is trying to say, you have to listen to his tone and see his gestures. So not only does he use emotion on his words, but also on the way he directs to the people. Honestly, if I saw him on a soap opera every time he says "it's true" or "believe me", I would probably buy it! The most effective way he tends to articulate those statements is when he turns fear into anger. He accepts that rage and justifies it. Being furious makes us feel powerful. He keeps promising that by fighting this anger on his terms, the gain will be great. And one thing he knows how to do is blame it all on others and play the role of victim. He has a tendency to do so when after talking about himself adds a *it's true* or *believe me*. Just as he does in the segment mentioned previously: "If I ran as a liberal Democrat, they would say I'm one of the smartest people anywhere in the world – it's true!". But the more effort he puts in persuading his audience, the more they believe him, no matter how false his claims are.

Having taken a look at his ways to manipulate words, let that be by identifying with the reader, not finishing his thoughts and even by asking for a leap of faith in matters that don't concern him, I believe now more than ever that Donald Trump is a dangerous man. Looking forward to this upcoming election, it is crucial that we all take a step back and pay attention to his games with some reason and logic. Who is going to be the president after all, him, you, or any of the other million people that get their own conclusions from his speeches? Little to none of what he says is a full statement, meaning that only you can find significance to his words. He twists his promises however he pleases and ends up not keeping his word. He incites fear and blame towards those whom both he and his audience hate, all of that while making the experience feel like a friendly exchange. Truth is, this is dangerous. This is blinding. He makes you feel heard and understood, but really all that is an illusion for his ways of molding his act. I feel like now his tricks are being dismantled, but it is still essential to be logical in front of these situations and wonder if it is all real or a mere misconception.

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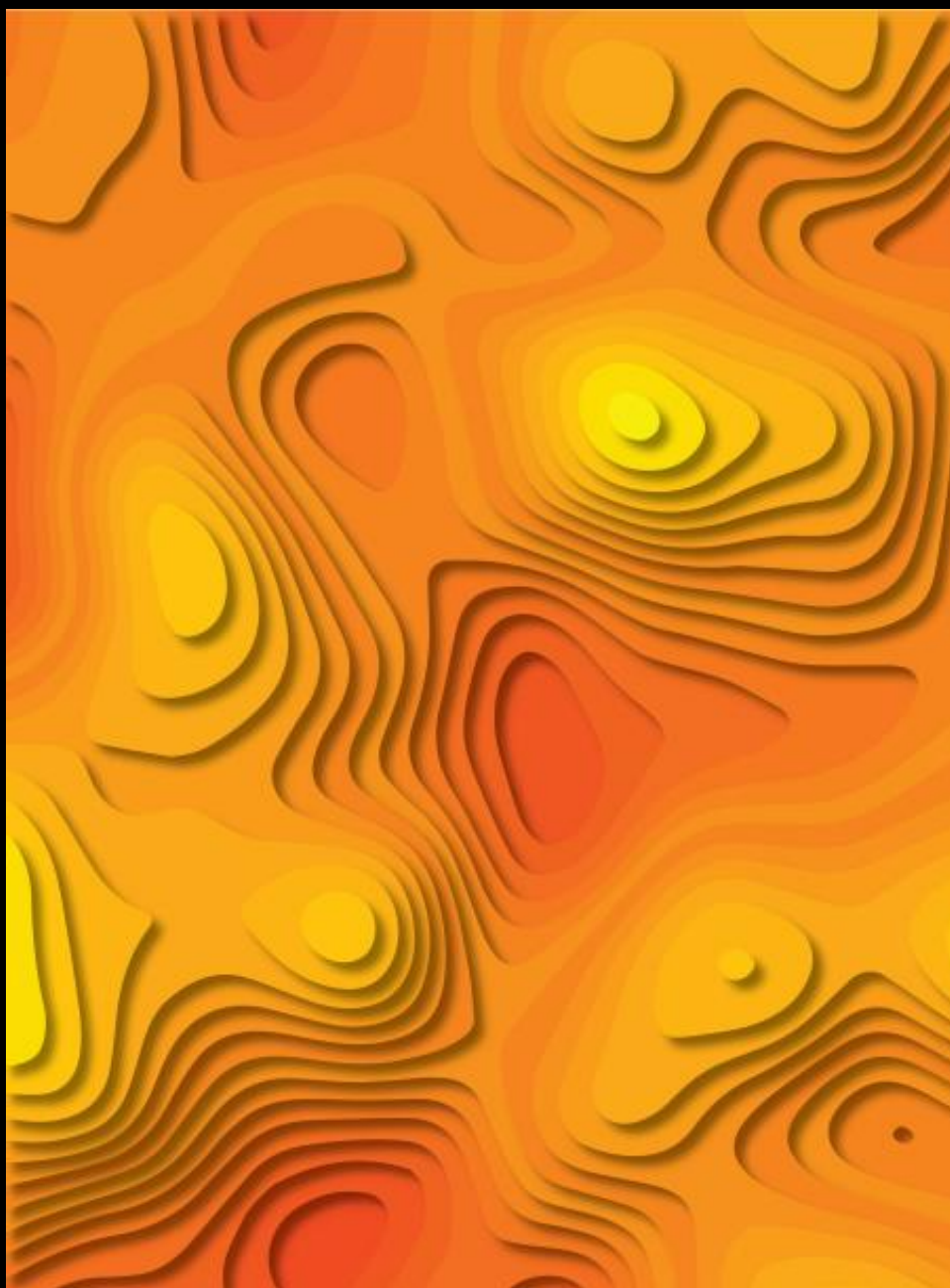
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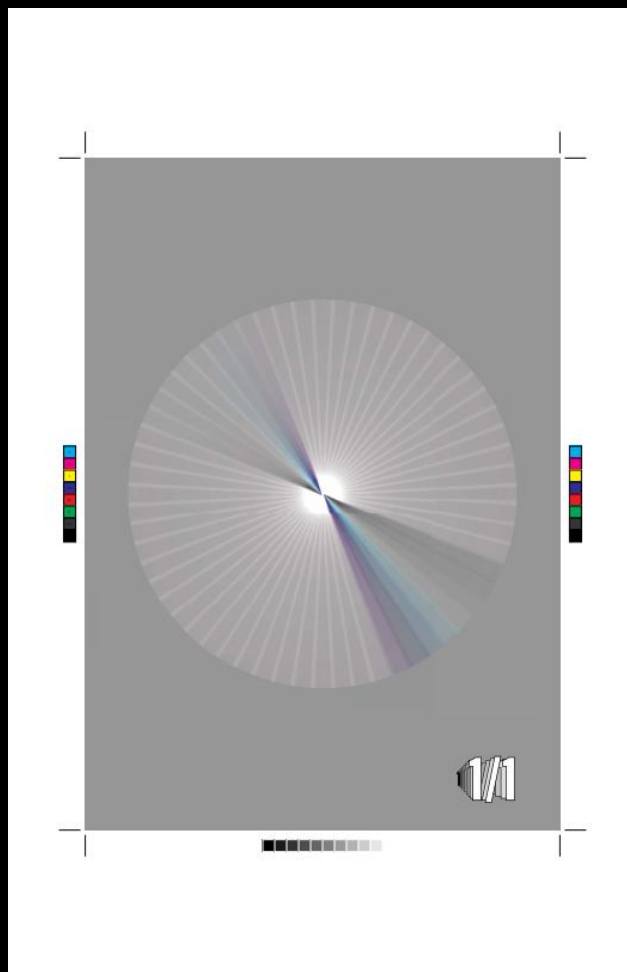
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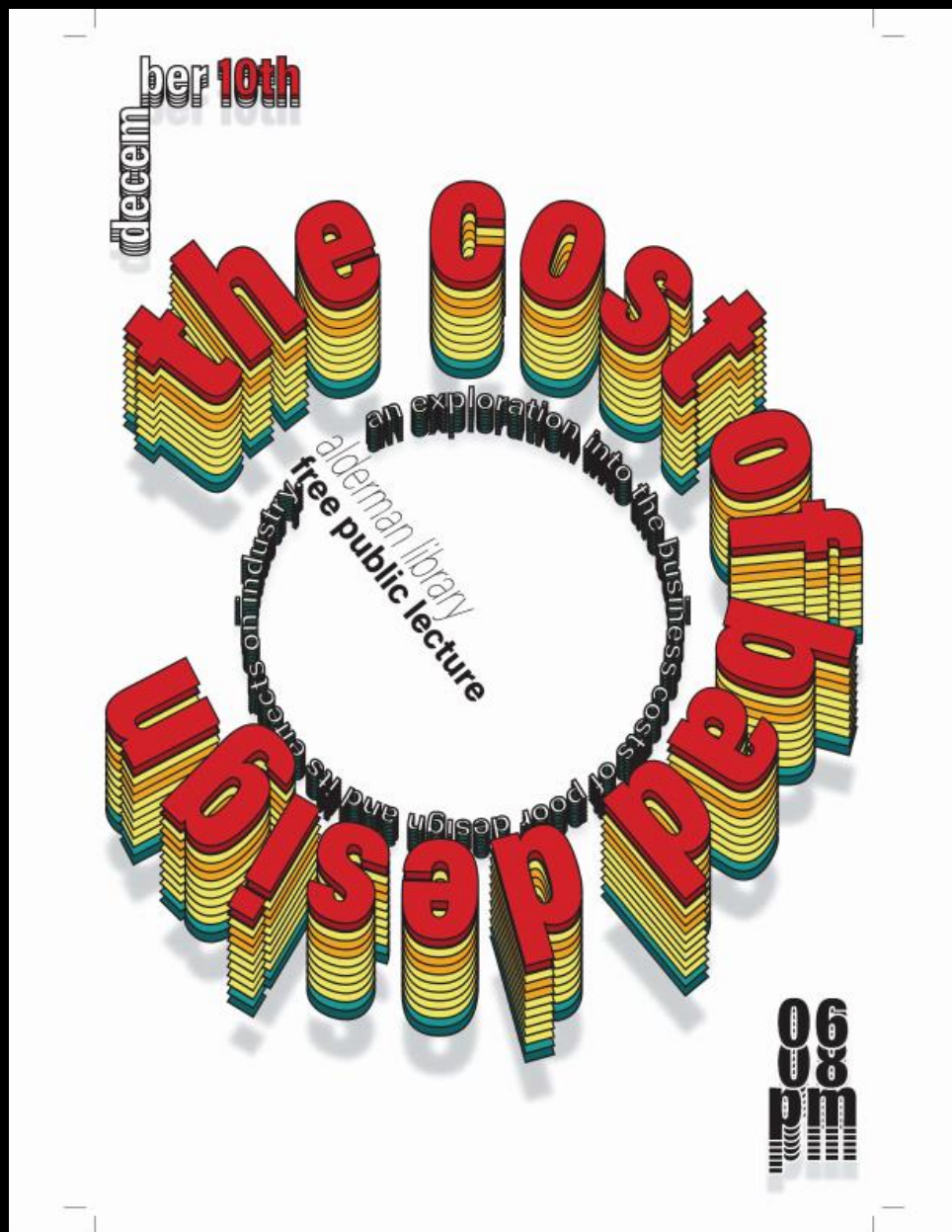
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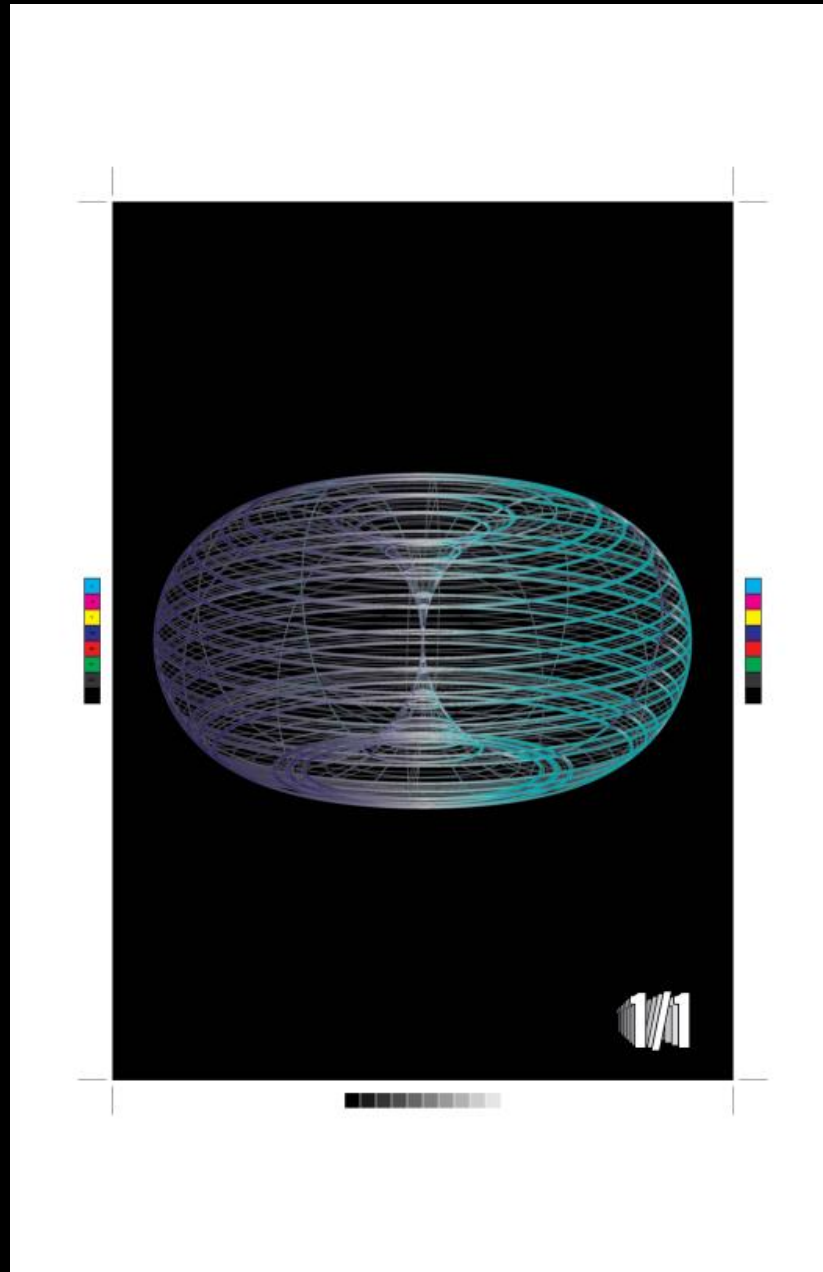
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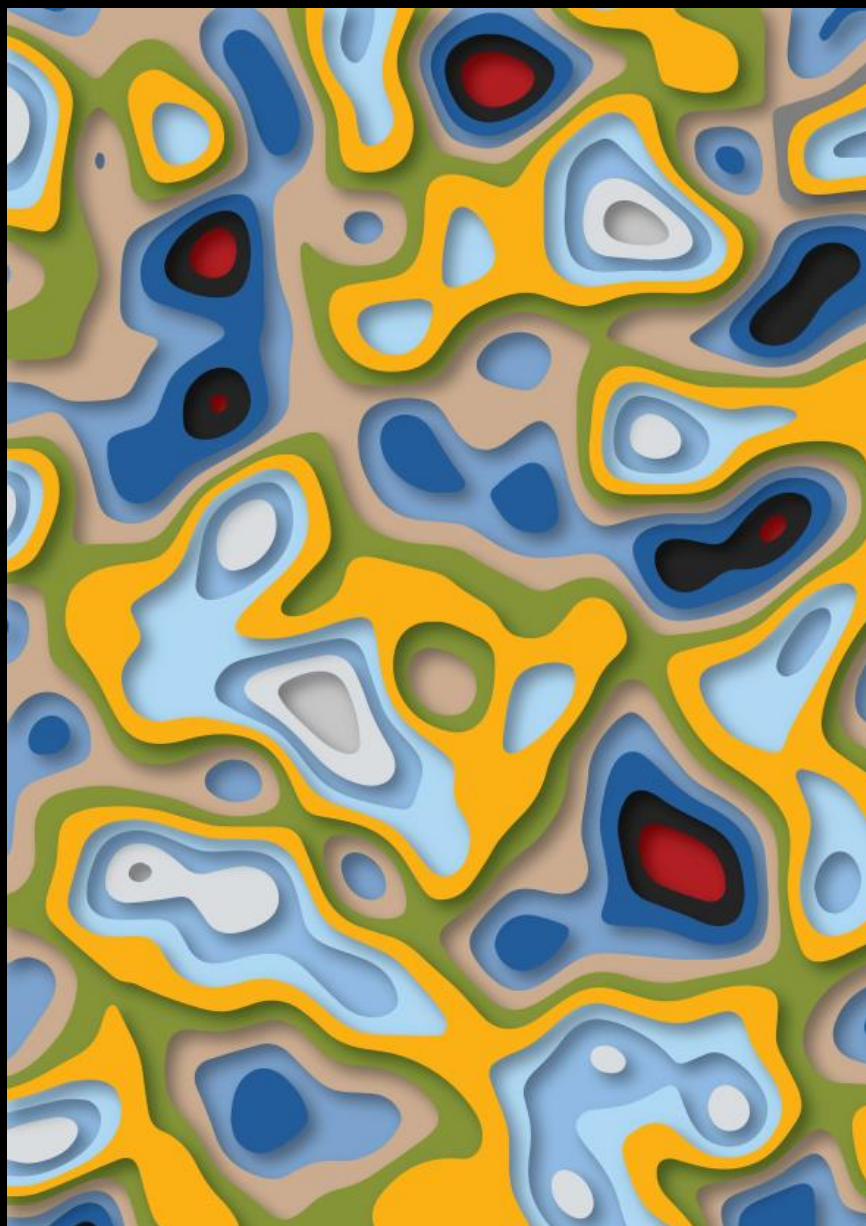
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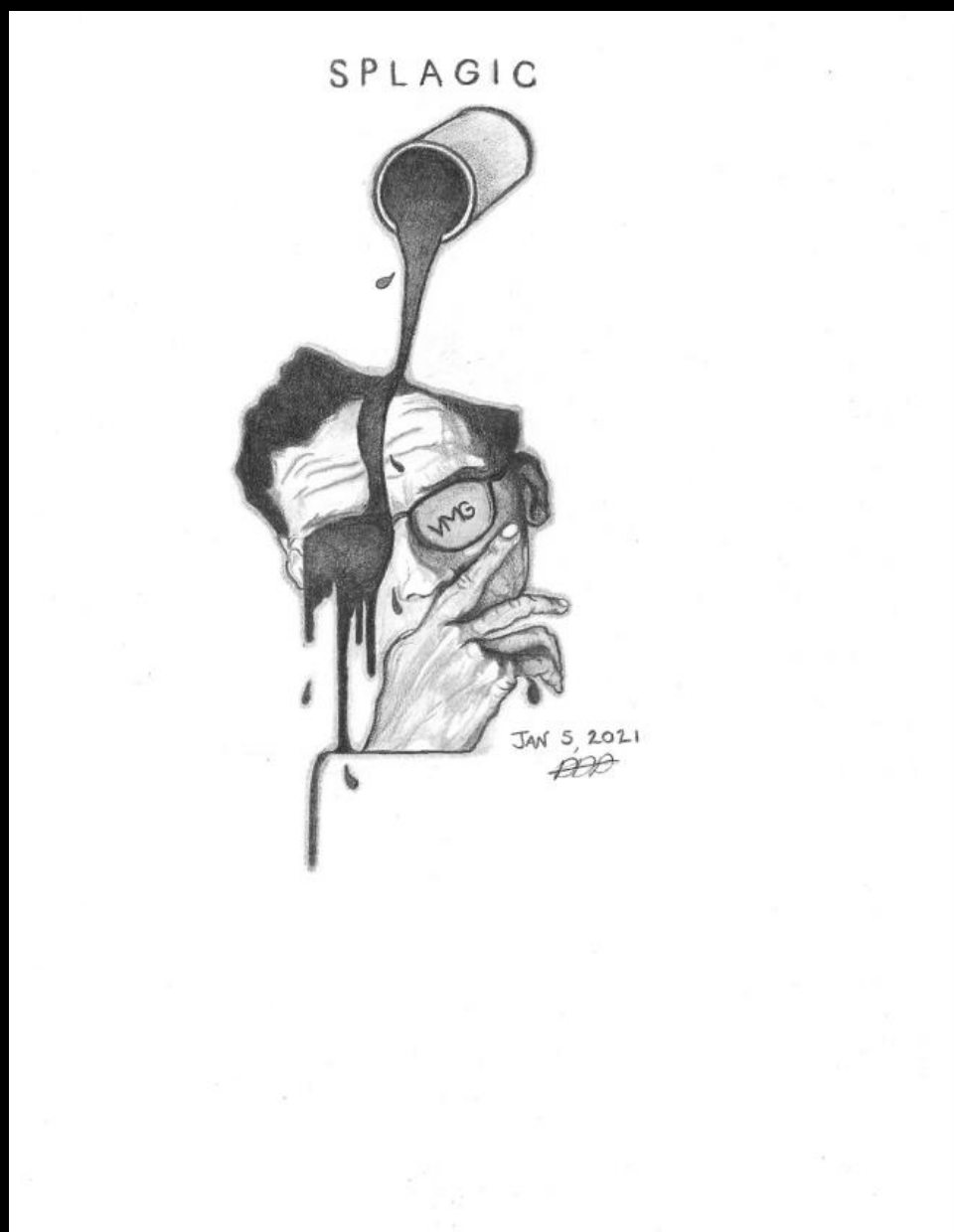
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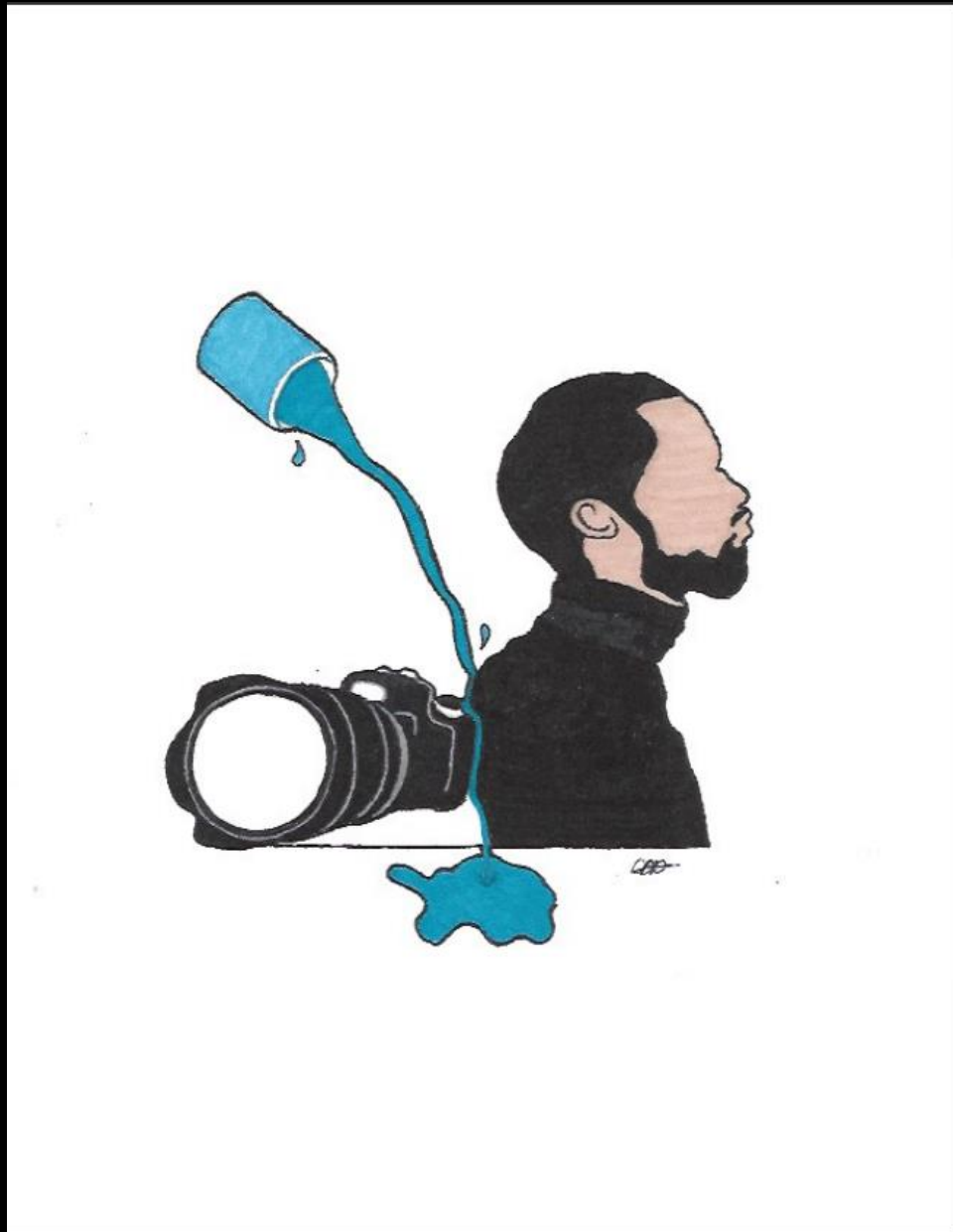
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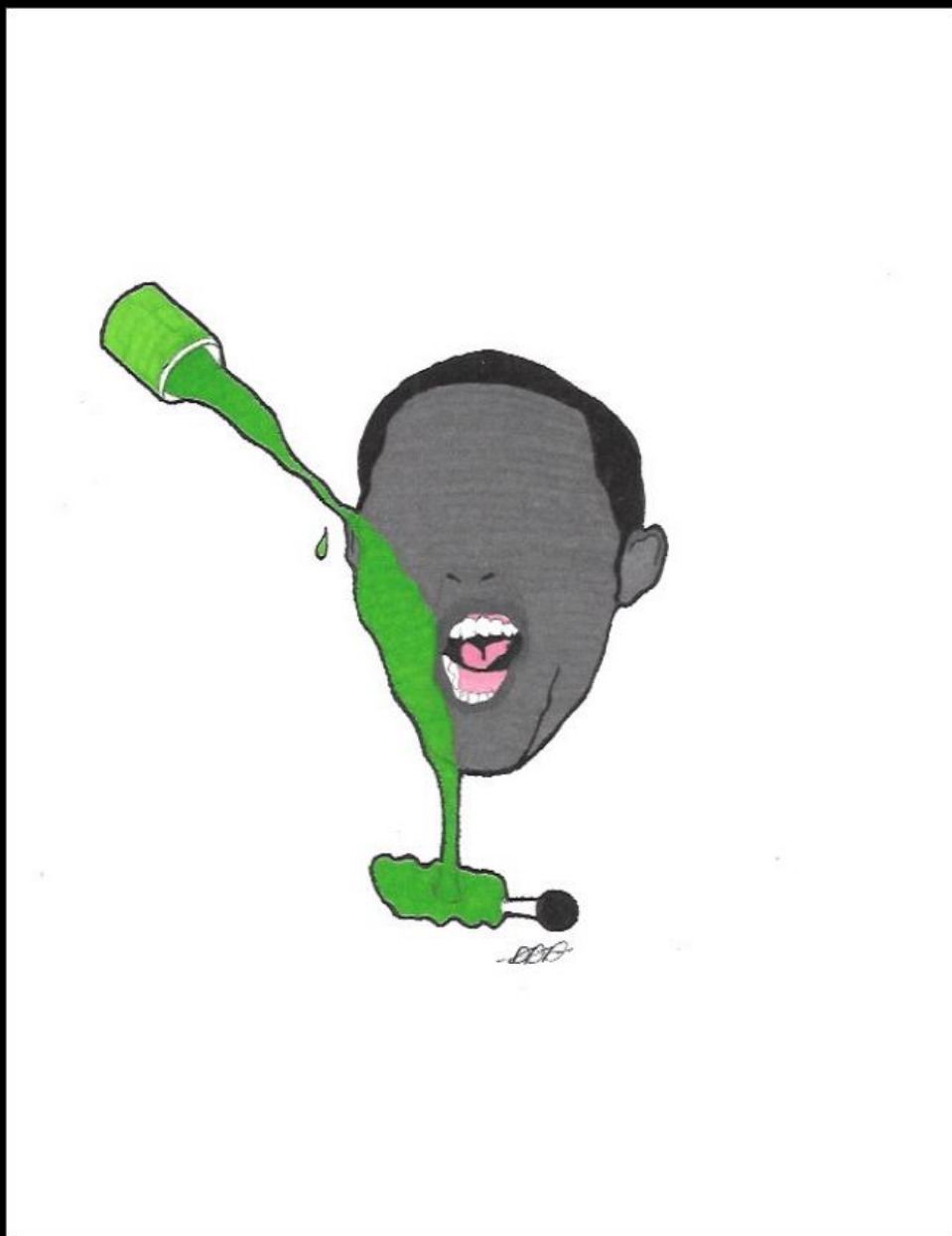
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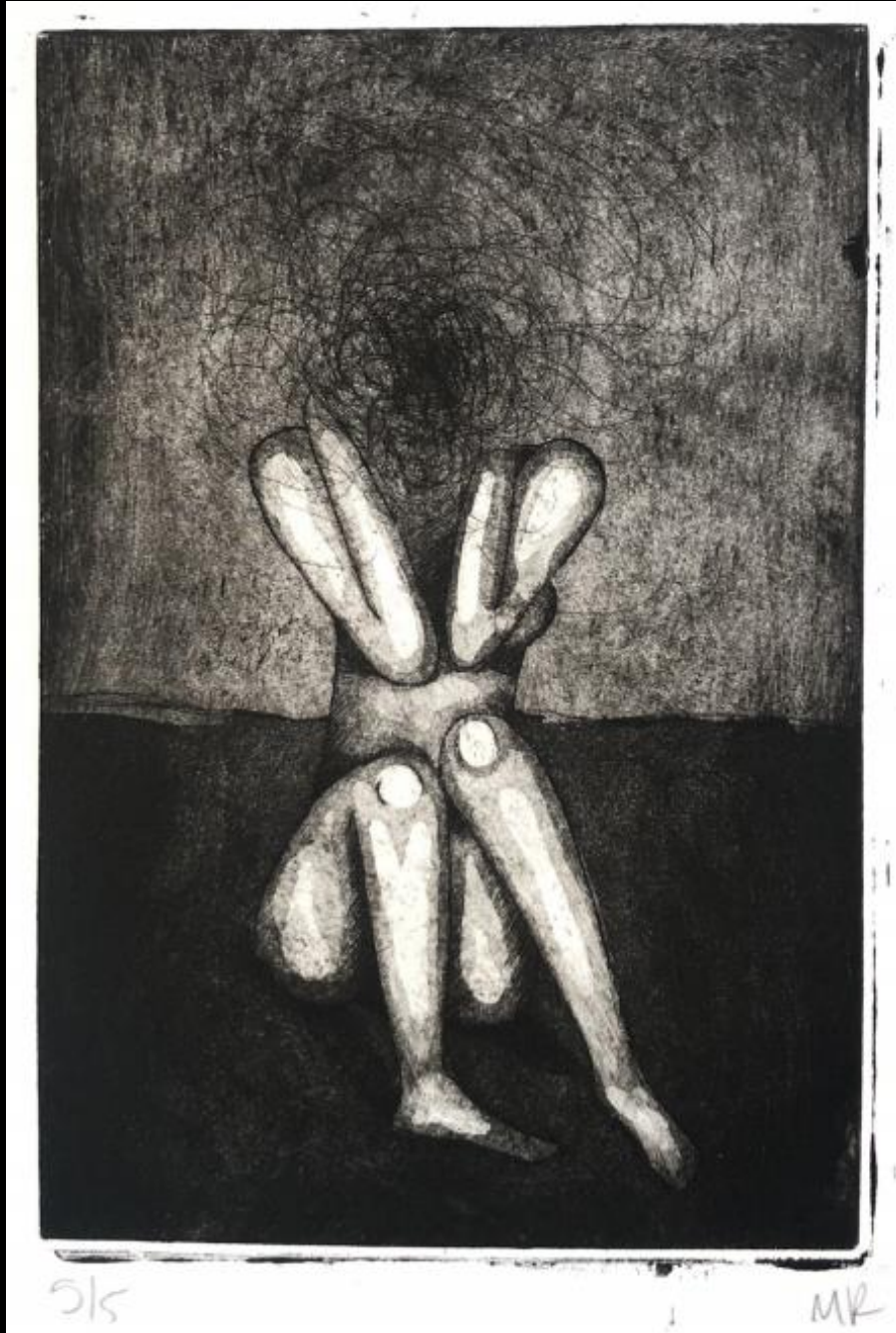


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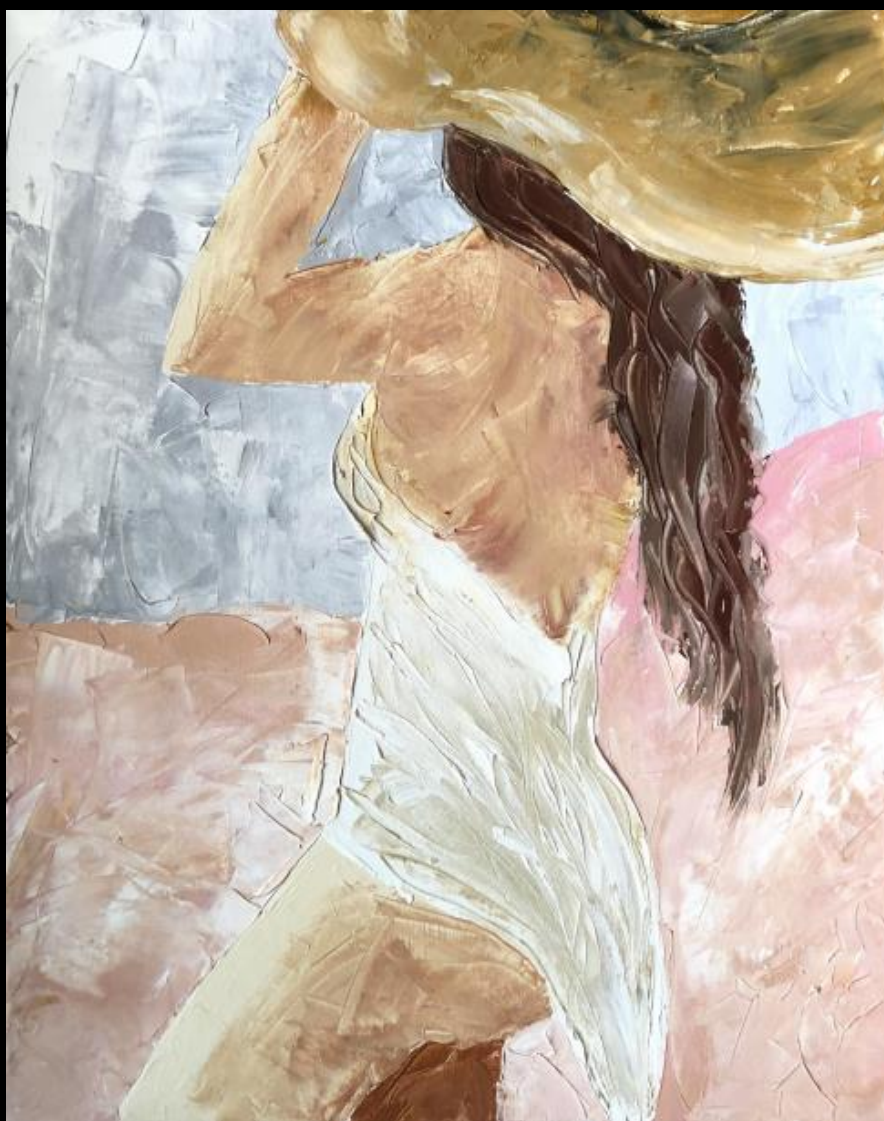
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Artist: Marybeth Fuller



Artist: Jordan Bass

The Environment

Wasted: The Effect of E-waste on the Environment

Abdoulaye Bademba Diallo

On June 22, 2019, Andrew Morton, of marketing company "Cleanities Recycling", wrote an article about The Effect of E-Waste on the Environment. Andrew Morton in his article "Wasted: The Effect of E-Waste on the Environment" argues that e-waste dumps are significantly increasing around the world with tons of waste a year. In addition, those wastes are not properly recycled which therefore is harmful to the planetary ecosystem. I strongly believe that E-waste actively participates in the pollution of the environment. Moreover, in my opinion, the recycling technique used is not that effective and hence, creates significant damage to the environment and most importantly to the living beings. Morton begins his article by noting that, with the evolution of technology and the planned obsolescence used by tech companies, electronic wastes commonly called E-waste is significantly increasing. The author gives statistics from the UN (United Nations) and some welfare organization such as there are tons of electronic waste produced every day, around 50 million a year. In addition, the rate is expected to reach 120 million tons a year by 2050.

However, one important alarming point Morton makes is that only 20% of e-waste is recycled. Most of the electronic waste dumps are abandoned in landfills. In order to break down the issue and show the impact of e-waste on the environment, the writer tries to focus on the environmental pillars which are air, water, and soil. In addition, Morton also tries to seek out how the pollution generated by electronic waste affects the ecosystem.

The first pillar that Morton focuses on is the Air, Morton argues that e-waste is dumped in undeveloped countries especially countries in Africa where the awareness of recycling is not fully respected and followed. The technique used to recycle is the burning technique which includes a large number of chemical toxic elements such as steel. Hence toxic gases emerge and mix with the air which pollutes the environment. Furthermore, water as the second pillar, the author states that e-waste also contaminates water by

polluting lakes and rivers. The writer ends with the last pillar which is soil, Morton states that the soil is also polluted by the water pollution through irrigation or directly from the chemical components of e-waste dumps. Soil pollution affects the soil texture and structure. In addition, the author also focuses on the consequences of e-waste to the planetary ecosystem. Morton argues that the victims are plants, animals, and humans. Finally, Morton calls to action and to take responsibility to protect our planet by recycling more, reuse our electronic devices, and by applying for a quote through the company "Cleanlites Recycling" who helps to recycle e-waste.

The article by Andrew Morton is interesting and insightful. I think that E-waste is significantly increasing around the world and it's becoming a threat to our environment and ecosystem safety. The article made me realize that e-waste is increasing because of planned obsolescence used by technology companies which consists of reducing electronics tools lifespan in order to make consumers purchase new gadgets every year. I strongly agree with this article about the alarming point which is the recycling problem. Only a small percentage of electronics waste is recycled in the world. This is alarming and very dangerous for our planet. In addition, one important point that the author pointed out which I fully agree with, is the burning technique used to recycle especially in Africa. In my opinion, this technique pollutes water and vegetation which are the main food sources for animals. In addition, They also inhale the toxic air which can create imbalances in the planetary ecosystem. For humans, the fact of breathing toxic air can lead to several diseases such as cancer or nervous system damage. Overall, this article made me realize a lot of things such as the increasing of e-waste and the issue of recycling. Those issues are very alarming for the planet environment and human beings. Everyone is concerned about the issue, therefore welfare organizations, The UN and humans have to take responsibility and act for the wellbeing of our planet.

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Life or Death: Gen-Z's Duty with Climate Change.

Mariona Bolao

On March 17, 2019, the *New York Times* published an article titled "Pictures From Youth Climate Strikes Around the World." Even though it consisted mainly of pictures of young protesters all over the Earth, it proves that an image says more than a thousand words. Gen-Z are those born between the years 1997-2012, and stand out for knowing what we fight for and how to be loud about it. We have grown up having access to resources that allow us to learn all about the issues we're facing, both nationally and internationally. Unarguably, one of our main worries is with climate change. While most of the American government consists of Baby Boomers (1946-1964), for Gen-Z, it feels like just a very few of them know what's vital to fight for if we want to keep living on a breathable planet. Then, how can we, as the youngest generation with legal adults, influence the US government to take a more serious action on the climate crisis before it is too late? Being educated on what's going on, knowing how to take action, electing representatives who will fight climate change and being loud members of social movements, are just a few of the parts we have to take into consideration as the future of the planet.

It's not news that climate change is real, and is killing our planet. According to many studies, including NASA's, the change has to deal with human activity taking place since the 20th century. There is a great deal of evidence: global temperatures have been up over 1.2°C since 1880, ice sheets are melting, warming up and raising the sea level, extreme events such as hurricanes are more likely to occur, the oceans' levels of acidity have gone up 30% since the industrial revolution... (Collins et al.; Newton; Shaftel et al.).

But what exactly has been causing global warming? Scientists have a widely accepted theory, spoken about in countless sources, one of them being David Newton's 2020 *The Climate Change Debate*. Anthropogenic endeavors have contributed to the emission of greenhouse gases. These molecules remain in the ozone layer, preventing the heat from escaping. Their chemical bonds are not affected by heat at all, in other

words, they don't break. Instead, they vibrate, warming the atmosphere even more (Collins et al.; Newton; Shaftel et al.).

We, young people, are going to face the consequences of this climate crisis. According to NASA, the temperatures will keep rising, just like our oceans; droughts and heat waves will become stronger producing more intense hurricanes, along with irregular precipitation patterns; the poles will become ice-free, raising the sea levels by almost eight feet by the year 2100... (Shaftel et al.) This is what our past generations are handing us.

The first protest I was ever allowed to go was in 2015 for this same issue. I was only 12, but I had been asking for permission for the longest time. In fourth grade, one of the topics in our environmental science class was this exact issue. I recall going home scared: I was sure I wasn't going to make it to my twenties because the world would be too ruined. Although that may not be the case after all, it was, and is, something we should all be acting on right now. The next year the first trial of electric buses was done in the city of Barcelona. It was not much, but it was a first step. It felt as if we kept on protesting we would get all we wanted and needed. By 2019 every single bus in the city and its surroundings are gas-free (Guerrero), and the same initiative has been taken in many other areas of the country. However, my friends and I kept discussing what else had to be done. Some Sundays during the summer we would organize groups to go pick up trash on the beach to feel like we were doing our part. Alas, a couple of electric buses and some kids picking up garbage weren't going to stop the climate crisis.

And then, Greta Thunberg skipped class to sit in a square in Sweden to silently protest for the little risks taken by the government to fight for their children. Suddenly we all had a voice to follow, and that was a 16-year-old girl with Aspergers. That was definitely a turning point for me. I could do more than recycling, reusing and reducing. I started thinking and envisioning the amount of work the government could do. At the end of the day, their main job is to represent us and solve our current problems. I was old enough to realize what all the numbers meant, and suddenly no action was too "radical". The planet is fucking dying, and we're all supposed to wait until we're old enough to get to power? Hell no, this will start now. "We show that we are united and that we, young people, are unstoppable" (Thunberg). The words by Thunberg at the UN Climate Summit in New York the year 2019 speak volumes. We have been protesting, we have been educating ourselves and those closest to us, we have been endorsing science, we have made changes in our daily lives to contribute to the health of our environment. However loud and clear we have been, the United States government hasn't taken a significant step to slow down the path we're heading on.

According to the World's Resources Institute and the preamble of the Green New Deal, the United States has been responsible for a total of 27% of global greenhouse gas emissions from 1850 to 2011, as well as a sum of 20% in 2014 (Damassa et al.; Ocasio-Cortez and Markey, 3). It is not news that the US is one of the most powerful and

influential countries in the world. For this reason, not only is their responsibility to prove that a nation with reduced carbon emissions and clean energy is possible, but also to start acting to heal all the harm they have caused to the environment.

As reported by Oil & Gas: Money to Congress, this year 2020 alone, \$32,076,768 were donated to members of the U.S. government by fossil fuel companies. A total of 76.73% of the money went to Republicans, 22.14% to Democrats and 1.23% to Independent parties. From only the top 20 acceptors, 15 of them have four things in common: they are white males who come from an accommodated family, over 55 and part of the Republican Party (Oil & Gas). They, who are undoubtedly the most privileged, do not have any interest whatsoever in dealing with the climate crisis, since they will most definitely lose one of their biggest donors. However, they have families with young children to care for, which should more than act as an incentive to take action. Nonetheless, climate change is going to affect poor communities before any of those kids know about the consequences of the global crisis (Plumer and Popovich). Not many of this information is well-known, but it is definitely out there for the public to see.

Just as it can be proven which candidates are not running to help their communities but for their own good, social media has been the most effective tool to find candidates that are willing to fight the good fight. This last cycle we have witnessed a never-seen elected of people of color (Jamaal Bowman, Ayanna Pressley), LGBTQ+ people (Sarah McBride, Mauree Turner), immigrants (Pramila Jayapal, Tammy Duckworth), individuals with only working-class job experiences (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Cori Bush), Muslims (Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar), making their way to powerful positions in the government. They are crucial, as "everyday Americans deserve to be represented by everyday Americans" (@NowThisNews). The power relies on the people: we elect those we want in positions of power.

We know our concerns. We want to fight against climate change. Since there has just been a presidential election, let's compare Biden and Trump's climate plans for the next term. First of all, Trump doesn't have a section on his website where he addresses the climate crisis (Trump). That should tell you a whole lot about the candidate. Joe Biden's agenda includes three issues to fight climate change and to bring clean energy to the country by 2050 (Biden). However, as reported by the United Nations in March of 2019, there's "only 11 years left to prevent irreversible damage from climate change" ("only 11 years left"). We're close to the year 2021, which means we have less than ten years to make that change. Having 100% clean energy and 0 carbon emissions by 2050 is not enough. Moreover, all his plans are based on electricity and energy, but they have little to say about industry and agriculture, which little to none replacements consist of a zero-net carbon footprint. In other words, his plan is not sufficient.

This is exactly the reason why Gen-Z should be mad at the lack of interest of certain politicians. It's as if they didn't take the matter as seriously as they should. Since they have some plans in their ballot it automatically means everything will be solved. But

again, it is not enough. However, there are members who understand the urgency and do want to fight for a livable planet for us and the future generations.

The Green New Deal is a resolution created by Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and Senator Ed Markey (D-MA), and endorsed by more than a hundred members of Congress. The plan lists immediate goals and pathways to follow, while addressing the nation's major social issues as well, among them systemic racism or regionalism ("systemic injustices"). It explains how the U.S., for being responsible for a large sum of the emissions of greenhouse gases and owning "high technological capacity," "must take a leading role in reducing emissions through economic transformation." The goal is to get greenhouse and carbon emissions down to zero by the year 2030, while allowing access to clean air, water and healthy food to all Americans while creating and securing millions of jobs (Ocasio-Cortez and Markey).

But how can all of this still be controversial? The plan is literally stopping the actions that harm nature while fixing systemic injustices. Plus, technology has taken a huge step forward, it isn't what our parents or grandparents remember being. Two main issues brought by conservatives and moderates are the economic and social/political sides of the plan (Zycher).

The Green New Deal pays for itself. It's not putting money in another "cause", more like mobilizing the side of the economy that has been paused for so long. It's going to be funded just like World War II and the New Deal were paid: Congress will issue the expenses and Treasury will pay. With whose money? Rearranging the national fund, on one side, and taxing millionaires, billionaires and major corporations such as Amazon, Facebook and Google on the other side. A new progressive tax would be imposed, where the amount you pay increases as your annual income rises. Not only would the government collect enough money to carry on with the Green New Deal, but would also cut taxes among struggling families and individuals, allowing them to make ends meet with just one minimum-wage paying job. Unsurprisingly, turns out that the majority of those who fight against the resolution are the same people who can afford to pay a little bit more taxes. It is not morally right that people live in poverty while others will never be able to spend all the money in their pockets. It's simply greed.

The Green New Deal will not be more expensive than keeping fossil fuels as our main source of energy. A study conducted by Stanford University found that the Green New Deal would only cost one sixth of what the American people are paying for in a fossil fuel system. Having a wind-water-solar energy system eliminates health problems, especially among children (for instance the highest rates of asthma seen in kids in the Bronx or the many infants with lead poisoning in Flint), and climate cost created by non-renewable sources, bringing the energy costs from \$5.9 trillion (\$2 trillion from energy costs, \$600 billion in health and air pollution expenses and \$3.3 trillion in global climate costs due to greenhouse emissions) to \$1 trillion a year. However, it is true that the cost

to jump to 100% renewable and clean energy has an elevated price of \$9.5 trillion, but it will pay back over a few years thanks to electricity sales (Jordan).

The Green New Deal works, and there's no financial additional costs to it. However, one of the measures taken by the resolution is nationalizing essential corporations, including those that work with healthcare, public education or energy and electricity. Not only are we creating enough products for every citizen that are currently unequally and unfairly distributed, but we are getting rid of one of the unsustainable sides of capitalism. Putting the product and the income before the people, while those in control are one or a small group of people, increases waste, since the numbers come from those who are not productive. A green economy needs to decrease consumption and use all our clean resources adequately. But that doesn't mean that the country is going to become a communist state. In fact, the deal supports democratic socialism, where society and the economy will be run democratically, but important decisions should be made by those affected most; private corporations shouldn't be in control of the country and its economy (Democratic Socialists of America). And before Venezuela's situation is brought up, a bad use and distribution of oil caused the country to sink. In comparison, look at Nordic countries like Sweden or the Netherlands, where the taxes are somewhat higher but healthcare and education are free, with the option of attending private hospitals or schools. The only way to get this type of progressive legislation to pass is by voting.

Gen-Z is a very diverse but at the same time united generation. One thing that might have influenced all of our views towards the world is pop culture, particularly movies and literature (Alter). As *The News Well* says, "pop culture helps people grow and be more accepting considering the vast amount of representation throughout the various genres." We grew up with Harry Potter, the Hunger Games, Divergent, and many other dystopian realities where the young main characters defied the authorities. How are we not supposed to act the same way now? Another unifying factor is without a doubt social media, especially TikTok this past year. They have connected us in a deeper level: we collectively decided to save tickets for a Trump rally to end up not showing up, we dye our hair and make certain hand gestures "to let other people know about the state of our mental health", we agreed that using fairy emojis in texts make them somewhat "threatening", and right now we are all working on a Broadway musical adaptation for Ratatouille. How do you explain that to other generations and make it make sense?

As a member of the generation I can see how much we care about matters considered as political problems and ways to solve them with our governmental institutions. We are not as partisan as our past generations, we follow people more by ideologies while also holding them accountable for their past actions. We tend to vote for progressive ideas (Voting Trends) and to protest for the change we deserve to see within our society, but most importantly, only less than 14% of the registered as young

Republicans (less than 3% of our generation in the U.S.) believe that climate change is due to natural patterns instead of anthropogenic activity (Norwood).

Although many of the candidates in the Democratic Party of this election endorsed the deal, the one that stands out for always remarking it is with no doubt Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT). He was also the closest competition to Joe Biden during the primaries, so if what we are looking for is a candidate with a reasonable climate plan, Sanders would have been the best pick. The election might be over, but we can still elect people on a smaller scale. There are going to be elections for the entire House of Representatives and almost half of the Senate the year 2022, which gives citizens enough time to get informed, how to register, how to vote... We have a term to think about different questions. What is your congressional district? Who's the current representative? Who is running in the next election? What are the major issues about your district? What changes do you want to see in your community? Which candidate best fits your needs? Who can represent you as a U.S. citizen the best?

Just because these elections might not look as important as a presidential one, doesn't mean they can't make a difference. Having a congressperson that endorses the Green New Deal is vital to pass the resolution. Those people in power are there because someone voted for them. As easy as we put them there we can take them out in the next election.

According to Statista there are 67.17 million of Gen-Z residing in the U.S. (Statista). If there's a total of sixteen years within the group, around 4.2 million people were born each year. By the year 2022, up to kids born in 2004 will be able to vote, meaning that 33.6 million votes will depend on us. We are the future of the country, and the world, so being the ones that will have to face the real consequences of our current issues, we have to start taking action right now.

We are now realizing that as young voters we have the power to influence our government. Our world is dying, and like it or not it has come to us to fix it. The most important part of this civil duty is making sure those who we elect are going to contribute for our causes and the common good. We must be aware of those who run to represent the country and vote as if our lives depended on it, because they do, at this point. Get to know who really fights for you, learn what issues and major resolutions for that problem are there, use your voice and your power, because they matter. We need priorities, and one of them is undoubtedly our environment. This time we cannot afford to believe the destiny of the world is pre-written or that God is going to get us out of this without us moving a finger. We must be leaders in our community and not be afraid to take a step forward. "We don't have time to sit on our hands as our planet burns. For young people, climate change is bigger than election or reelection. It's life or death" (@AOC).

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The Power of an Argument

Bartomeu Out

Dusan Milosevic

My favorite soccer club, Barcelona, is having a major crisis right now and one person that is probably most criticized is Joseph Bartomeu, club president. It's easy to blame everything on the leader but sometimes, like right now, you can clearly see that a leader is actually doing a really bad job. Three years ago, FC Barcelona Universe made an online petition and was responsible for the revolution that was supposed to happen. I found it so interesting because I love this club and I want it to return to the winning road as it was a few years ago, before Bartomeu came. This petition succeeded to persuade audience to sign it by using good examples of ethos, logos and pathos, more specifically, if...then, fear of loss, and identification with the readers.

"Bartomeu Out. Enough is Enough" is a petition made by the online group of FC Barcelona supporters named FC Barcelona Universe. It focuses on the current situation that hit soccer club FC Barcelona and about Spanish entrepreneur in the chair of president, Joseph Maria Bartomeu, and how he's not doing a good job in his position and why he should quit his position. Since he signed his contract with Barcelona, everything started going sideways. The author's main goal for this petition wasn't just to collect votes, it was also to introduce fans, and maybe the regular people that may not follow soccer that much, why our club is struggling and not on the level they should be. Barca started losing money, losing titles, started playing badly, etc. All of it is blamed on the president for a reason; he is just not following Barcelona's standards. Firstly, MSN (Messi-Suarez-Neymay), the most famous trio in the world no longer exists as he sold Neymar to PSG as soon as he got a wealthy offer for him. Suarez was sold for free this summer to a rival club, Atletico Madrid. These actions made club legend Lionel Messi to want to leave but, luckily, it didn't happen. Secondly, selling younger players and buying older ones without turning to LaMasia (Barcelona's youth academy) is another thing that made Messi mad and starting supporting this petition. Youth academy is the future and money maker for any club, so without respecting it and using it to its full potential, it can become a problem and a huge money loss for the club. Finally, the club didn't achieve results on the field that were set up for them, which is not entirely Bartomeu's fault but is a result of his actions, a red light that showed that something has to change.

FC Barcelona Universe was using all three rhetorical strategies in his petition but the first and maybe the most important one was ethos. The author was using identification with the readers the most as that is what every petition needs. The title, "Bartomeu out. Enough is Enough" shows a really good example of credibility, as it gives a strong message and connects really well with the readers which is very important and the first step of winning someone's attention into further reading and possibly signing the petition. Also, as the identification with the readers is important in the introduction, it is in the conclusion also. By saying and writing boldly "We urge all members please go and vote against Bartomeu, the guy has no vision for Barcelona. Our very style and values as a club is in danger" the author refers that that part of the paragraph is very important and should get more attention. By using words "we", and "our" readers get a feeling as they are wanted there and their opinion matters. Finishing the text by using "a diehard Barcelona supporter" is maybe the strongest thing that could be said in order to connect readers with the author as it shows how much heart and soul he put into writing this and how much he believes in it so that the others should be doing the same. That shows a really good usage of ethos in the whole paragraph.

The second rhetorical strategy the author used was logos in the sentence, "If you are a club member and believe that to restore the club we love the board should resign, join up with the will of many other fans by signing the vote of no confidence". This shows a really clear and good example of usage of if...then as it states and shows what we should do if we believe in this text or petition at all. Simple but powerful statements like that can turn you from reading this petition without intentions of signing it to actually thinking more deeply and taking action and contributing. Logos is used to explain a situation and what this petition fights for.

The final rhetorical strategy that I noticed was pathos in a speech that Bartomeu gave when he became president of FC Barcelona. "Good for Barca" shows a bit of fear of loss and my standpoint is that there is no self confidence in his speech. You can smell his insecurity as he was using weak words, and pressure and a fear that he could lose reputation, time and money if he does a bad job, as he did. Pathos is chosen here really smart because if you show direct words of the person you blame, you can make other, not case related persons to start questioning Bartomeu's status.

The author of this petition succeeded in persuading the audience to believe and try to make some changes in their beloved club by using ethos, logos and pathos, more precise, if...then, fear of loss, and identification with the readers. Picking website change.org to start it was really smart as that is the most famous website for making and signing petitions, so it was quite easy for everyone to access but also to understand because it was written in English instead of Spanish. FC Barcelona is a huge club in European's soccer and without a good and carrying leader, everything can fall apart. The first petition was made in order to collect and make Barcelona fans more unique and to

come together in these hard times, which it succeeded as FC Barcelona Universe's petition exceeded the votes needed for some radical change.

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The King's Speech

Daiki Morita

On September 3, 1939, King George VI gave a speech to a citizen of the United Kingdom to encourage people to fight for World War II. This speech is very important in the United Kingdom because people certainly know the time was a turning point in their history, and they also know that World War II is going to be severe. Even though King George VI had a speaking problem, a stutter, he got trust from citizens. He could not speak fast due to his stutter, but the speaking speed, fortunately, made him polite and confident. King George VI "The King's Speech" basically succeeds to convince the audience because his speech was composed of leadership which showed understanding about this non-peaceful situation to become one for fighting in World War II, reason with cause and effects for fighting which is to create peace again in this world, and emotion which is fear of loss how people will be worse without fighting.

This speech uses rhetorical concepts to make the speech more trustworthy and convincing. According to a textbook, *Writing Today*, the rhetorical concepts appeal to logos (reason), ethos (authority), and pathos (emotion). Logos is to analyze the reasons why he/she should do something. If it could not explain well, his speech would not make sense. Ethos is to show whether the speaker can lead people or sound credible, so it makes it easy to get trust if it could include ethos effectively. Pathos is an appeal using emotion. Sometimes, people will be moved by emotional reasons. People may not follow the speaker without emotion. (*Writing Today* page. 607) Logos, ethos, and pathos are very important and necessary to speak opinion. And King George VI also used them.

Before talking about his technique, we have to know a drama about who King George VI is. He had had a disease, stutter. His stutter came from strict education to be suitable royalty by his father. When he had to give a speech instead of his father, King, he was disappointed by the audience because he could not speak as well as normal people. Then, the audience worried whether the prince like that will be able to be the next King. Then, he thought that he wanted to change himself. Then, he met a person who can rehabilitate speaking problems. After a few years, he could get better at speaking in front of people because of peculiar practice. And he could boost citizen's fighting spirits for World War II.

This is a summary of King VI's speech. He said that people are facing war a second time to protect their principle even though they tried to discover a way of peace over and over again. The enemy's principle is to threaten force. It is selfish thinking, so we cannot admit the principle because our authority is not going to be free, and our peace will corrupt if the principle is established throughout the world. This is the problem. Therefore, we have to stand up and fight for ourselves, peace, and equality. There is no way to not fight with the principle. We are in the time to cooperate with fighting.

King George VI established leadership (ethos) many times in the speech by the admission of limitations. He explained that the most important thing in this world is peace and our authority. For example, according to King George VI, "he knows about the efforts in which people tried to keep the peace, but the enemy is going to break it. Even though we did right, the enemy forced their values, so we cannot lose. Therefore, he explained that our actions are not to make war but to protect this peace without war and equality." He tried to show what the enemy is and what the right thing is. Because of his clear guide, the British's dissatisfaction and worry were changed to the willingness to fight.

Moreover, he pointed out the reason why people have to fight (logos). He explained the cause and effect of fighting. According to King VI's speech, "the enemy is selfish because it is not going to create peace. Its principle is just to use force, so we have to reject the principle to protect our authority because our authority will collapse if the enemy's purpose was accomplished." He was concerned that the enemy's idea which is kind of a dictatorship makes it collapse and we are going to have to do something for only one person, dictator. Therefore, he showed the effect of fighting as it makes our peace and freedom. He could encourage people to fight, and he made sure the reason to fight. He could increase the necessity of fighting in World War II by expressing cause and effect. And also, he showed the only one way which is to fight, so he did not say other choices which are negotiation, running away, and so on. Consequently, people could focus on the one way; therefore, British people could become one due to the speech.

King VI rarely used pathos in this speech, but he used it with logos. He tried to refrain from giving worry to citizens by expressing his emotion. He expressed sympathy for fear of pain. Because of the expression of people, people can reconsider that they are in a bad situation facing the war. For instance, King VI said that "the enemy betrayed us even though we accepted them, so our policy may be broken by them." The explanation gave people irritation to stir up because he could completely make the enemy British enemy. To break the fear, people stood up to fight.

One year later from this speech, in September 1940, the Nazis attacked London. It is called Blitz. The Blitz had been continuing for about 8 months. It looked like the British were at a disadvantage, but the Nazis quit attacking the British because the British

defense was very strong. While the British were attacked by Nazis, King George VI and his wife stayed with citizens to fight with them. Because of his responsibility, Britain was not broken. King George VI was suitable as the leader of World War II because he had a strong patient.

In conclusion, King George VI succeeded to convince citizens to fight because his speech had leadership leading to fighting for peace, the reason why people have to fight, and emotion how this situation is severe for people. People believed that his explanation was right, and their minds changed to fight to protect the peace. His speech was great because it could include three ways, ethos, logos, and pathos, but the most effective side in this speech is that he could prove who he is, and he could prove that he is good enough as King to fight with citizens.

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The King's Speech, Tom Hooper, Director. Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush, and Helena Bonham

Introverts are Powerful

Nevertesonne Lahens

Life on Earth would get pretty boring if everyone had the same feelings and emotions towards every situation they encountered because you would never hear new ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc. This world would look like a place made up of robots or a game of Simon Says. Unfortunately, our society has painted a picture of a “perfect” person that everyone strives to be. Susan Cain, an American writer and lecturer, explains in a Ted talk in 2012 how everyone is naturally taught to be outgoing and social and how that is the normal or right thing to do as a human being (Cain). Cain also argues in her interview with Gareth Cook in 2012 how it is very wrong to pretend or be something or someone who is not truly you (Cook). Susan Cain strongly provides ethos, pathos, and logos to cause her audience to strictly take her side in both her speech, *The Power of Introverts* and her interview with Gareth Cook. Cain uses pathos by sharing some personal stories because of her fear of introverts losing themselves, logos by stating facts, and ethos by also sharing personal stories creating credibility.

Introverts, being left in the dark and ashamed for stepping out of the social norm, are forced to pretend to be someone they are not. Pretending to be someone else can actually cause you to lose a part of yourself along the way (Cook). The purpose of Cain’s speech and her interview with Cook is to prove to her audience, mainly introverts, that being different is so beneficial to our society and to use your powerful skills to the best of your advantage because those skills are key to creating a better world. Cain also has an intended target towards our society as a whole, trying to prove that introverts should never be shamed, but be encouraged to express their natural gifted talents. Cain, being an introvert herself with many stories to tell, is very beneficial as she proceeds to persuade her audience on this very important topic.

Cain’s use of pathos were excellent as she uses it in both her speech and interview with Cook. Pathos is used to persuade an audience by appealing to their emotions. Cain begins to tell her own personal story about the time her mother packed her several books before she went off to summer camp. Cain states, “This might sound anti-social to you, but for us it was really just a different way of being social” (Cain). Before Cain has the chance to fully explain her story, she already forces her audience to

think she is different because she has a "different way of being social", forcing them to listen to her story with a completely different mindset. Further into Cain's speech, she begins to explain the structure of our schools and workplaces. Cain explains, "They designed mostly for extroverts and for extroverts' need for lots of stimulation" (Cain). Cain continues to describe your typical classroom setup of desks with up to seven kids all paired up in pods, forcing kids to act as "committee members", preventing introverts from learning the way that helps them best, alone. (Cain). Cain provided this example because she has an audience full of parents whose number one priority is their children, creating an overabundance of emotion. During Cain's interview with Cook, she states "In our culture, snails are not considered valiant animals – we are constantly exhorting people to "come out of their shells" – but there's a lot to be said for taking your home with you wherever you go" (Cook). Cain related her concerns to snails so people would picture something so small and innocent, so they would be more understanding of introverts and feel bad that they ever felt like something was wrong with them (Cook).

Cain's use of logos are very beneficial to her argument as she uses it quite a bit throughout her speech and interview with Cook. Logos are used to convince an audience by use of logic or reason. Cain provides several facts throughout her speech with her first one being that "only a third to a half of the population are introverts" (Cain). Cain included this fact into her speech because she needed to educate her audience that one out of every two or three people are introverts, meaning someone they know is likely to be an introvert, causing them to pay more attention to her message. During her interview with Cook, Cain explained the difference between being shy and being an introvert. Cain argues, "Shyness is the fear of negative judgment, while introversion is simply the preference for less stimulation. Shyness is inherently uncomfortable; introversion is not" (Cook). This fact was shared strictly because Cain believed that by defining the two, maybe society would stop assuming introverts were shy and understand the difference. Cain provided many more facts in both her interview and speech, causing her audience to have no choice but believe her thoughts.

Ethos is very important and it is seen multiple times as Cain presents her speech and during her interview with Cook. Ethos is used to convince an audience of the author's credibility or character. In her speech, ethos is very easy to notice as her tone of voice says it all. Cain changes her tone of voice to catch her audience's attention. Her voice is so strong and demanding when she is arguing something important, but soft when she wants sympathy from her audience. It is almost certain Cain is able to persuade anyone to believe her just by sounding confident and bold on what she is presenting. Cain provides her own personal story and also states how the one story she was telling was one of many, making it clear she knows all too well about her argument (Cain). Cain also states how she has also been told several times that her introverted way of being was wrong. Though she always believed that these statements were wrong, she denied those thoughts and became someone she was not, a Wall Street Lawyer (Cain).

She explained this mistake of hers to connect and relate to her audience, creating a very reliable image of herself. During her interview with Cook, Cain was asked if she was an introvert herself. Cain responded, "Yes.... I also crave solitude. I also have a lot of other introvert characteristics, like thinking before I speak, disliking conflict, and concentrating easily. Introversion has its annoying qualities.... but I also believe that introversion is my greatest strength. I have such a strong inner life that I'm never bored and only occasionally lonely. No matter what mayhem is happening around me, I know I can always turn inward" (Cook). Being an introvert herself and knowing all the strengths and weaknesses, Cain is a very reliable source, allowing her audience to fully trust what she is telling them.

The main goal as an author is to be a credible source to your audience. Proving emotion, credibility, and consistency is a perfect path of success to gaining trust from the audience. Cain is absolutely a credible source because she went above and beyond providing all ethos, pathos, and logos, creating a large audience to follow and trust her word, causing her message to get out to the world, which is what every author strives for. Being an introvert myself, I could relate to everything she said, so I am confident that Cain is a reliable source for both introverts and our society.

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Two Kinds of Pain

Stevan Milosevic

Through the eyes and mind of the character Frank Underwood, the tv show *House of Cards* is trying to show us how to establish control over our own lives. The author William Dobbs did an extraordinary job of making his main character intimidating, emotionless and solid as a rock. Frank was showcased to only move forward and always see the big picture, know what to say and when to say it, and doesn't care about justice, or anything rather than himself. Dobbs says that he has no patience for uselessness, and according to the show, pain should be a tool for something much bigger than a temporary setback, as we are in charge of everything, and I couldn't agree more.

The main point Dobbs is making, is to highlight the two pains (Chapter 1). And by saying this, Frank is represented as an unshaken and firm individual, who will do everything for his purpose. Nevertheless, he falls and makes mistakes just like any other person, but what distinguishes him from others, is his motivation, and the fact that he doesn't get caught up in grieving. He always moves forward.

Another crucial point that needs to be underlined, is the control issue. Author is making his character addicted to controlling his, and everybody else's lives. It's not only that he wants all the control, he also hates everything that is dragging his attention from the big picture. He will tolerate nothing else but improvement. End justifies means.

We are entitled to nothing, and we should decide for ourselves, whether we are going to die in the past, or live in the present. But who knows what's better? Letting go of emotions, or clinging to them, whilst making our lives playful and blissful at the moment. I think this piece indicates that you cannot succeed without failing and experiencing pain. We can never grow unless we fall, but what we do with the experience we got is what makes the difference.

Control on the other hand is something that many want, but don't have, and also something that some have, but don't want. What I am trying to say is that the control can be a big burden to any of us, but as an individual, we decide if we want to take up on the challenge or not. Our lives are determined by our actions and thoughts, and even though some could argue that most of things in our lives depend on everybody else, I can firmly say that the responsibility for us is ours and ours alone.

Dobbs's perspective comes from a superior view, as he positioned his audience like a professor positions his students. He is trying to teach us how to handle consequences of our mistakes, and turn them into a tool.

Shouldn't we all sacrifice those little moments of short-term joy to get endless pride and comfort later? We are taught to study and work, to be in the system, but I want something else. I want to be the best, I want to put everything I have in my goal and not have a single regret in my life. Life in one place is no good life.

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Artist: Brittany Hernandez

The Narrative So Far...

No Ordinary Fish n' Chips

-Editor's Choice Award Winner

Nathan Ordway

Delicious, freshly caught, and fileted Walleye-pike sizzling on the grill; that's what normally gave me the motivation for our annual Canada fishing trips. However, the summer of 2016 changed my taste buds, and my Canada trips, and my life forever.

A frigid late July evening, as the sun was setting in Savant Lake Ontario, my Grandfather and I had just arrived at the dock of Turtle Island. This is our personal getaway on the lake, it's about 1,000 miles from the closest town, so we never have to worry about being bothered. It is a small island with a cabin on the east shoreline, or the "right arm" of Turtle Island, because the Island when viewed from the air looks like a turtle.

We leave to fish for our food in the morning, and come back to cook what we caught for lunch. We then repeat this for dinner, because we can never get enough of the fresh Walleye-pike. Since fishing is an exhausting event, a 2-hour rest and relaxation period before fishing for dinner is always needed. We also always take 2 boats when we fish to cover more area. On the day in question, it was my Grandfather and I in one boat, and my Cousin Luca and my Father Eric in another boat. My Grandfather was always the first back to the dock because he was always the first to get hungry, but today was special. My grandfather and I were not the first there. Luca, my cousin, had been the one driving my Dad all day. Neither my cousin or I are ever the first ones to the dock, because we love being out on the water. We usually catch Walleye-pike to eat because they are plentiful in Savant Lake, so easy to catch (they practically jump in the boat), but the most important factor is that they are mighty tasty. The second fish we hoped to catch wasn't for eating, but was a challenge to catch a true sports fish: the Northern Pike also known as "Muskie". They are really big, slimy, and over the top territorial creatures. Not a lot of people eat their meat and write home about it, so we had no clue if they tasted good. One of the main reasons they aren't good fish to eat is because they are very bony and hard to filet. On the other hand, they are still a blast to catch. That night was no ordinary fishing night

though. Luca caught a 49 inch long Musky on our way back to the cabin for dinner. It was a battle to get in the boat. When it was finally in the boat, taking the hook out put the fish in shock and we couldn't revive it in the water. My Dad and Grandfather were so upset because it was such a big fish that they decided we weren't going to eat it and that tonight we would eat Musky for the first time.

When we arrived at the dock, my cousin had been waiting there patiently with the fish over his shoulder and the filet tools ready on the table. He was so excited to see what it would taste like and I will admit his enthusiasm rubbed off on me. My Dad fileted all the Walleye first and threw them on the grill before we even touched the Musky. This was the main event of the evening. Fileting the fish felt like a science experiment. We didn't know where the bones or safe areas of meat to eat were located; it was a true shot in the dark. It sure was a long process full of learning curves, but we ate the "appetizers" while our research on the main course was in process.

When the Musky was finally ready to be cooked, all the other fish had been mostly eaten, and the homemade potato chips were awaiting the main course. We all gathered around the grill and watched my Grandfather (also known as the "Grill Master"), drop two slabs of juicy white meat on the charcoal grill and sizzle to perfection. He would flip each slab twice and let each side cook and darken. Then, he applied the best seasoning in the world. To some, it may have been some no-name brand from a local Supermarket in rural Thunder bay, Canada. But believe me when I say that it was the best seasoning I have ever tasted.

When it was ready we all sat down at the table with a hunk of a delicious Musky filet that took up an entire half of our plate with the homemade fried potato chips and onion rings on the other half. We bowed our heads and said grace. When my Grandfather finished the prayer with "Amen," there was a second-long period of everyone staring at their plates to admire the beauty before they dug in. It was the quickest and most delicious meal. It was not surprising it was also the most any of us had ever talked during a meal, exclaiming how delicious the Musky actually was. The meat was magically tender to perfection and the outside was blackened and seasoned by the grill unlike I have ever had before. To this day, it was the best fish and chips I have ever eaten. Nothing has ever topped that meal and I will always remember the day we had no ordinary fish n' chips.

Miracle

Arianna Loot

Growing up you can say my childhood was very interesting. I was born in Louisiana where my mother gave birth to me at five in the morning. She told me that the birth was quite difficult at first but it went smoothly with no complications. I lived in Louisiana for quite a bit where I stayed with my Grandpa and my Auntie Mimi, as I would call her. She was a funny, crazy woman. If you met her she would have cussed you out. It did not matter who you were, she cussed everyone out. She took care of me most of the time because my Grandpa could not do it. He wasn't able to go up and down the stairs a lot and he couldn't watch me all the time; he didn't have enough lung capacity to do so. She and my Grandpa were always arguing too and it was so hilarious at times. Their arguments would be about how my auntie used to always have to go get my grandpa some cigarettes even though he wasn't supposed to be smoking and my auntie would cuss him out, telling him, "Old man, your ass does not need to be smoking! That's why you can't breathe now!" Then all you would hear was my saying "Shut up old woman, go get my damn cigarettes now." Every day they were always at each others throat and I used to have the best time listening and watching, which was kind of bad because I used to cuss out everyone due to being around them so much.

My grandfather used to make me run outside on the lawn every day and jump over a table. He would tell me every time, "You can do it, girl! Get over that table!" while my auntie yelled, saying "Of course she got it, she is part of the Loot family! Come on now, you know we are the athletic ones!" As I got older I started to understand why my grandfather would have me running on the lawn and over tables every day when I was living with him. He used to always tell me, "One day you will be something remarkable in this world, watch." So every day I would race kids in the neighborhood in the middle of the street. No one could ever beat me in a race, not one dude, girl, dad, or mom. I was the fastest kid in the neighborhood at that time. When I left Louisiana I was going to 5th grade so I was about ten or eleven years old. From there I went to Nebraska where it snowed so much it was six feet tall; sometimes it would get to ten depending on the day. In Nebraska, it was much harder to run when there was so much snow every

day outside as tall as you are. When you walked out of your house you could smell the stench of ice and the sewer next to you. It was a strong potent smell that would make you throw up in your mouth.

After staying in Nebraska for two years we packed everything and left on to Texas where we stayed in a small town called Baytown. Here is where it all started for me. One day in PE class, that place where you smell the stench of sweat and tears from all the kids that had done the workouts and games. One day in fifth grade there was a game that we were playing called scarf tag and for this game, you were given a piece of fabric and you had to put it in your belt loop. Two people did not have a scarf and you had to run from those kids so they would not get your scarf. Every time we played this game I would always be the last one standing because no one could ever get my scarf. On January 13th, 2008 we played that game and my coaches came up to me asking me if I knew what track was and I told them my granddad would always talk about it with me and that he told me "one day I would be something special." I did not understand what he meant at that time but that day is when I understood.

A couple of weeks later the coaches gathered a team together on the 27th of January. It was my first ever practice as a track runner and I was so excited, you could see the big delighted smile on my face. For the first practice we had to run around the track more than once for a certain time and man, was I tired. After practice I called up my grandfather and told him how it was and what we did. Then he asked "How did you feel after?" I told him that the practice was one of the hardest things I had to do so far as a child. He told me "Arianna, just because it is hard does not mean you give up, okay? We don't give up in this family at all, you hear me?" I told him with admiration that I will achieve the great like he knows I can. After many long practices and we finally had our first track meet. We ran against four different schools. I was so anxious that you could see and smell it off of me. The stench of fear was so strong that a shark could smell it from the ocean. I had to recoup myself so that I would not be so anxious about my race, I took some deep breaths and remembered what my grandfather told me to help calm down my head and body before every race. With the help of my grandfather's techniques and my auntie yelling cheering me on in my brain I won my race. I became so much more confident in running. I was happy until some months went by.

One day I came home from school when I walked in the door. Immediately I could feel and hear the tension and fear in the room from my mom. My mom looked at me with this scared face and told me "Sit down." I asked "Why?" She said "Ari, do it please. I have to tell you something." I replied saying "You're scaring me, just tell me now what is going on, I can smell the fear on you, what happened?" She could tell I was getting worried she tried to come by me but I moved away. She told me "Ari come here and sit next to me" I yelled, "NO I DON'T WANT TO SIT DOWN NOW TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON NOW!!!" She finally had the courage to say it and the words that came out her mouth I thought I would not hear for a long time but the day I feared the most

came faster than I expected. She told me that my auntie Mimi had passed away. When those words came out I was so upset I started to throw things around the room. I was hitting the bed, the wall, anything that was by me, and as I was doing that I was yelling at the top of my lungs saying "NO YOU'RE LYING SHE CAN'T BE.....NO!!!!" The pain I felt I never felt before; it felt as if someone took a knife to my chest and stabbed me to death. I was so hurt and didn't know what to do. She was like my best friend, she was always there. I was crying for hours and hours, my world had crashed right before my eyes. I felt lost like I was in a deep dark cave trying to escape but I couldn't. I didn't understand the feeling I was feeling but I had it for weeks.

As the weeks went by, the less I wanted to keep running track. I just didn't know how to tell my Grandpa and my mom but one day I finally had the strength to say something. I told my mom and grandpa I didn't want to run anymore, I was done, broken. My mom told me "Honey, everyone will have to pass on eventually and when they do, know that they will always be there for you still no matter what. Do this for her, Ari. Don't ever give up. Remember her cheering you on outside on the porch in her rocking chair like always." I told her "This is going to be hard, Mommy. I don't know how I will do it". My grandpa said, "Ari, life will always have bumps in the road but you have to heal those bumps to make it on the other side." When he said that I just looked at him and didn't know what to say because he was right. I couldn't just quit. I have to finish this for her.

As years passed I became more and more excellent at running. I never gave up on anything. I looked forward to the road ahead. I knew that it may be super bumpy along the way but I knew that I would always heal through whatever hit the road. No matter how bad the damage is, I will get on the other side.

A Personal Story

Nevertesonne Lahens

Despite all the obstacles we face during our Thanksgiving, Christmas, and winter travels, getting to Florida from Missouri is half the adventure. In an attempt to get some epic stories of holiday travel gone wrong, me, Romeo, and Tita took a road trip down to Florida for Thanksgiving to surprise our families. It was the roughest seventeen hour drive we had to make. Romeo drove through Missouri hoping to make it home to Florida on time for Thanksgiving. After a few hours of driving Romeo got tired of driving and switched out with Tita in Tennessee. When they switched drivers I noticed an uneven side to the car so we checked it out. We found the car had a slow leak in one of the tires. We tried to patch it, but watched it slowly start to go flat after each attempt. Worst came to worst; we didn't have an extra spare tire to replace it. I was exhausted from trying to work on the tire the whole entire time. I just wanted to get home. We knew the store where we bought the tire was way too far to get to, and along with all the other auto stores, was closed and would be closed on Thanksgiving Day.

On our way back to Florida we realized we weren't going to make it for Thanksgiving eve. So, our Thanksgiving Day was filled with turkey, dressing, pumpkin pie, and trips to the local gas station every four hours to fill that damn tire up with air. As annoying as it was all the frequent stops to the gas station were worth it because the tire would deflate and leave us stranded. Romeo, Tita and I took turns through the night on "Tire duty" where we stuck our heads out the window every five minutes to see how we were doing on tire pressure. We did this so we could drive the car on the day after Thanksgiving to get the tire replaced and avoid a tow. In hindsight, I probably spent the same amount in quarters filling the tire as we could have spent on getting a tow. But the cost of a tow from Georgia to Florida would've been expensive. The day after Thanksgiving we were finally able to stop at a nearby auto shop for a new tire in Georgia. Me and Tita switched once we get into the sunshine state. I drove myself all the way to Romeo's house in Hollywood, Florida where I got picked up by some friends and was finally on my way home to Immokalee.

On our way back up to Missouri Tita got into a wreck on the highway. All I remembered was waking up thirty seconds before the crash and watch as the tiers lock

up and Tita loses control of the vehicle and then swerved straight on into a beam on the side of the road. Romeo was asleep in the back and woke up all casually and said "Hey, what happened?" while me and Tita were staring at each other like, what the hell just happened? We just stayed in the car in shock that we just crashed. We sit and stare at each other like, "this is for real," and then we break out laughing because it really happened. None of us were injured so we stayed in the car as another vehicle approached to check if we were dead. Soon enough the police got there and took care of what they could and then the car got towed because there was no way to drive it back to where we needed to get to. We then get a ride from one of the officers and get dropped off at a nearby Waffle House. Workers and customers watched us get out of the cop car at the waffle house and looked at us like we were some criminals on their first day out. They realized that was the weirdest thing they've seen all morning. Some people got curious and asked us about the reason he dropped us off there and we simply said we crashed a couple miles from here so he gave us a quick lift.

From the Waffle House a man who wanted to give us some assistance gave us a ride to the towing company to get our college things from the back of the car so we just had a bunch of clothes and shoes with us. We had to sell the car to the towing company because there was no way of getting the Mitsubishi back to Florida. Luckily Tita had an aunt that lived an hour away from where we crashed in Atlanta, so we got an Uber and headed that way. We arrived after an hour of driving and met Tita's wonderful aunt. We chilled for probably an hour while we figured that we could get a bus ticket from Atlanta, Georgia to Nashville, Tennessee where a couple friends from Missouri were going to meet us. Tita stayed with her aunt because she was going to college at Brewton Parker College in Georgia. So, we called another Uber to get to the train/bus station in Atlanta to go catch a Greyhound bus to Nashville, Tennessee. Moments after that we realized that we got the bus tickets for the wrong day. We got them for the wrong dates and we couldn't get a refund for our tickets.

Then, I called a friend named Haley from Moval. I told her about my situation and then she was just on board from the start, probably because me and her have a thing going on, if you know what I mean. She was glad to come pick us up but of course we paid for her travels to come and get us. Romeo gets a call from his mother, saying that he has an aunt who lives just outside of Atlanta and she could come pick us up but it would take about forty-five minutes. When we got to the train station, I made real good friends with a crack head who thought he could out hustle me for twenty dollars for a new jumpsuit. After ten minutes of telling him why I would pay twenty dollars for a jumpsuit-I-don't-even-know-where-he-got-it from, so I lied to him and told him I only had five dollars and was able to talk him down into giving it to me for just five dollars. We went on a little adventure to the corner store to get him what he wanted to eat and drink and then he walked me back to the train/bus station.

By the time we came from the store Romeo's aunt had already made it to pick us up. We went to a Colombian restaurant where we got some food to eat then headed for her house. After arriving we made ourselves at home where we basically spent the whole night watching nothing but old Rambo movies until my friend finally made it to us at one o'clock that night. We started our trip back home after a rough day of driving everywhere. The whole time all of this is going on I failed to notify my mother that I even got in a crash. She freaked out and said "You can't just get into an accident and choose not to tell me at the time of the incident!" She kept rambling on and on like always but the words that I spoke to her were "Mom, I'm an adult now. I ran into some trouble and I didn't want to depend on you to get out of it but look on the bright side we made it back to Moval in one piece. Overall, the trip was probably one of the most chaotic trips I've ever been on but nothing was better than getting back to my own room in the Moval.

To Sir with Love

Mariona Bolao

Life's a game of fate. A constant game of the universe rolling the dice that will determine your destiny. Except the dice has infinite faces and just a small fraction of them include an easy decision with a simple execution.

What really is difficult is what you don't want to get done, even when you know it's the best thing for you. When your heart aches and you don't seem to be able to move. When your eyes blur your sight and your throat drowns in thousands of feelings that slowly become a knot. Even if the action is as simple as walking out the door, you freeze, doubting if making the sacrifice will even be worth leaving him behind. Well, turns out fate rolled one of these complicated outcomes for me.

Let's go back in time, to the morning of September 2nd of 2019. My sister and my dad found a newborn kitten whose mom didn't want at their tennis club, yearning to be kept warm. He was a little black ball of fur, not older than two days. After two hours of me trying to convince my parents to keep him, they finally agreed, just because they doubted he would live past a couple of days. What were the odds, really? "Don't get too excited," they kept saying— but it was too late.

The first night was exhausting. He wouldn't sleep and kept screaming, looking for his mother, so I got out of bed and went to the living room, where he was. I laid down on the couch and put him on my chest so that he was able to hear my heartbeat. It worked. The following three hours he was quiet, and I stayed wide awake. I had to sleep on the couch for the next couple of weeks, but it was worth it.

Needless to say he survived, beating death itself. We took our time to name him—it had to suit all my family's expectations. He ended up being Sir Chitu, as my dad has been calling my sisters and I that since we were babies. Grammatically speaking there's no meaning behind that word; it's just something random that continuously came out of my mouth when I still blabbered.

Sir is possibly the best thing that has happened to me. Feeling left out is one of the worst fears I go through every day. My anxiety makes me have to deal with that constantly, whether I'm hanging out with my friends or just spending some time with

my family. As bizarre as it may sound, with him is just the two of us. Like finally I'm somebody's first choice.

When I had to study he would lay down on my bed until I had to leave, then he would follow me around. He would sleep at the end of my bed, except on cold nights, when he would cuddle with me to keep both of us warm. When I got home after school he would run to me and climb from my legs to my chest until I caught him. With him suddenly I was better. I helped him once, and he never fails to return the favor. He keeps me down to Earth.

Then an opportunity to go to an American college came up. I had an internal debate for the longest time, yes, mainly because of my cat. After sitting down with my teacher I accepted that going abroad was the best choice I could make. After all, scientific careers in Spain are not really well paid after just graduating from a genetics major, and getting my degree away would definitely get me somewhere better.

Deep down I knew what I had to do, it was just too much to accept.

I was laying in my bed one night, worrying about the upcoming final exams, when he climbed over my chest and started purring. Everything that made me go crazy disappeared. I listened to the soft buzz and suddenly my mind was calm. His head rested on my neck and I continued to pet him down his back.

Looking back, he didn't have to say anything in order for me to understand what he was telling me. Dreams don't come easy. Success comes with hard work and letting go of what keeps you from flying. Those things are always going to be there when you come back and when you need them most.

The semester has almost come to an end. Knowing that I will have him by me again in barely a week makes my heart ache with enthusiasm, but also with fear that he won't remember who I am. It's not like cats know what skype is, so even though I could see him from my screen every now and then, he didn't really know I was there. Although my sister keeps telling me that he has been sleeping on my bed as usual, I'm hoping that he is okay with my company at night until I have to depart again.

Leaving him behind was the most difficult thing I have had to do in a while. Even if he is just a cat to you, he means everything to me. I brought with me his blanket, and every time I need someone to bring me back to Earth I turn off the lights and lay down on my bed with it covering all of me. Then, the dice stops rolling and the purrs return.

In the Blink of an Eye

Joana Marucci

There is a universal truth we all have to face whether we want to or not: everything eventually ends. The day I realized the nature of all moments that bring us happiness is ephemeral, started early in the morning. My parents had flown all the way from Italy and Spain a couple of days prior to come see me walk in my cap and gown, something normal for my peers at the small high school in Central California I was graduating from, but new and exciting for my family. Where we come from, graduating high school is not a big deal, as it is seen as something everyone ought to do without question, so there are no big celebrations that come with the end of such an important phase (such a shame, if you ask me!) Although it was something they considered to be completely out of a movie, their excitement about the ceremony was obvious, which brought me a sensation of complacency, but also a fear to disappoint them. The preparations for the ceremony therefore, surprised me excessively once the day arrived: red and gold streamers around the bleachers, balloon arches decorating the entrance, hundreds of chairs perfectly positioned in the middle of the field. I had been told a million times how the day was going to be structured, at what time the morning practice would be, and how things were going to happen, and yet when I found myself sitting on my chair that early June morning, I could not quite believe what I was living was real.

As we sat down in the hot atmosphere of the Valley, I found myself forcefully using the graduation program to get some fresh air, while also attempting to dry up my glossy eyes to avoid my emotions to come out. The practice proceeded; there was laughter from friends, talks with teachers, and conversations about the anxiety for the night. When it was time for me to practice my part in the ceremony, I looked over to my best friend Danna, and saw her lips move into a "good luck;" I turned to meet eyes with my host sister Teagan, sitting a couple of rows behind me, and found comfort in her smile; and just as I started to rise, I heard Adam, the boy who I had had a crush on for most of high school, and who was coincidentally sitting next to me, mumble a "break a leg". As I walked over to the podium in my shorts and tank top with my sunglasses on to block the sun, I realized that the next time I followed those steps, the light coming to my

eyes would not be the sunlight, it would be the spotlights. Everyone looked at me as I slowly adjusted the microphone and tried to wipe the sweat off my hands; when I finally found myself capable of looking up at my peers, there was absolute silence. And then I let the words come out. The feeling that took over my mind and my body as I stood on that field gave me both tranquility and anxiety; I had never felt that way before, perhaps because of the magnitude of what I was about to do that night, but I proceeded and performed perfectly. Once practice was over, we were allowed to go home to get everything ready for the night, and I tried to make the most out of my last day; I had lunch with my friends one last time, I let my host mom curl my hair one last time, and I stared at myself with the red dress on in the bathroom mirror one last time. That was, after all, my last night in town.

To give you the context, the first sentence of this essay was also the opening statement of my high school graduation speech, the one I gave in front of over five thousand people and which was live streamed on YouTube after nerve wracking auditions and countless practices; it was also the day before I had to get on a flight to Spain after two years of incredible experiences in the United States. Everybody was there: my amazing American family, my closest friends, and my parents, who had no idea I was going to speak that night. The pressure was palpable. And yet as I stood in front of the crowd in my cap and gown, I remembered that earlier that day, in my shorts and tank top, I had performed perfectly, so I embraced the power I felt while wearing that red dress, and I let the words of my speech flood the football stadium. The feeling of nostalgia that seemed to have taken over my body for the past few weeks was momentarily gone, and all those instants that I had been so busy calling "last times" were suddenly the happiest memories of my life. My heart was pounding, my cheeks were flushing, and my eyes were watering, but as I used hand gestures just like I had been told to do over and over during practice, I realized I was genuinely happy. I was proud to be standing there. I was ready to be an adult and go out into the world. As I stood in front of the crowd, illuminated by the bright spotlights, and I spoke my last sentence into the microphone, I focused on my classmates: the dark red gowns perfectly positioned, the gold caps and the hanging tassels, the teary eyes of some, the sad smiles of many. And in the blink of an eye, it was all over.

A Life Changing Move

Allison Nally

It all started my freshman year of high school. We found out my step father's father had cancer. My grandfather, Cork, was the type of man who really kept to himself, got the chores done, and would do anything for his family and friends. This was a very unexpected event, he was having pain so they decided it was time to go to the hospital. Cork is not the doctor type, he saw life as when it is his time it is his time. His cancer was caught very late and the cancer covered his body with no possibility to remove it. He attempted with chemotherapy but he passed away about three months after undergoing chemotherapy which just made him weak. Two years later we ended up moving out to my grandfather's land because my grandmother was no longer able to take care of it by herself. I ended up having to transfer to a different high school. The move occurred over my spring break of junior year and that is when I had my big life change along with a little ghost encounter.

The school district I had attended since kindergarten was a part of a school with approximately five hundred students in each graduating class in Topeka, Kansas. When we moved all that changed, the school size dropped from about five hundred to about fifty students per class. I was leaving my best friends, my boyfriend, and my coaches. I was upset that I never got to tell them this was happening and I did not know what to expect from not having any friends at this new place. This was decided over the weekend and I had to enroll that Monday because my mother did not like me driving thirty minutes each way to school. This new high school was the school my step father attended when he was in school and is in a really small town so everyone knows everyone. In my old high school, I saw new people in the halls every single day so going to a high school in a small town was very different.

The day I went to enroll my mother and step father went with me. It started out with us having a conversation with the athletic director. I first went on a tour of the school while mom dealt with all the payments. On our tour the athletic director talked about softball and powerlifting which really helped me not get too overwhelmed. The school only had classrooms around the main office with a gym that was down the hall,

and combined with the middle school. My old school was so big there were hallways labeled A through H. I had never moved before in my life, so this was an enormous adjustment for me to make. After getting a tour of the school we made our way up the narrow blue carpeted stairs to the counselor's office, she had a bowl of candy right in the door way and two chairs that had some cushion on them in front of her desk. My mother and I were sitting there and then I received a text from my old high school powerlifting coach "Hey Allie, I saw that you have transferred schools, is everything okay". Tears automatically streamed down my face. This coach meant so much to me, he molded me into the competitor and lifter I am today.

Once I finally stopped crying, we finished up making my schedule and getting a parking pass for me to attend school the next day. After we got done, we started walking down this narrow staircase that led from the counselor's office and guess what happened? The bell rang for class to get dismissed! I instantly had everyone's eyes on me, talk about humiliating, everyone was staring at me like I had just peed my pants. I was not ready to attend the next day after all the staring. That night my mother, stepfather, and two sisters were all sitting in the living room watching two and a half men while eating dinner when all of a sudden, our lights started flickering. My stepfather said "That is weird, they've never done that before." (This happened at 8:10 p.m.) We just went on with our show, it only happened for approximately five seconds then stopped for the rest of the night.

The first day of school was different from what I was used to. The schedule was set up differently from my past high school. My old school had every class every day where my new school was on block scheduling. With this schedule we had our even classes Tuesday and Thursday and our odd classes Wednesday and Friday. Lunch was a nightmare, I had no idea who to sit with. I scanned the lunch room looking for a place to sit when one of the girls waved her hand at me to come sit. She saved me from having a mental breakdown in the middle of the lunchroom. She played on the softball team and the coaches had told the girls the day before to help me feel welcome. The lunch room was a tiny little area where everyone hung out in between classes and was also connected to the theater area.

When getting home from my first softball practice with the new team we all sat down in the living room, mom made dinner as usual and we were watching another show when the lights started flickering again. It was the same time at 8:10 p.m.! My mother got to thinking and asked my step father what time he was born and there the pieces fit together. He was born at 8:10 p.m., we believe it is our grandpa showing us he is still around and watching over our family no matter what. I was raised Christian and have never really believed in ghosts until this happened. We will forever miss him, he was taken too early from us and we definitely did not have enough time with him.

With my new school I eventually found that I enjoyed not having every class everyday especially when you are a student-athlete; you have more time to do

homework and your plate is not filled to the brim with everything due the next day. I made friends quickly in my classes and with softball but at times I would still feel left out. My senior year of high school I ended up playing four varsity sports and regret not moving out to that school district before. The light still flickers every night to this day at 8:10 p.m.

Creative Writing & Poetry

This House with Walls

- Editor's Choice Award Winner

Drake Tipton

My mom, she's depressed, she's bipolar, she's a manic chandelier swinging back and forth in moods. She's given' me this affliction of depression and anger and I may sound like I'm mad at her but I'm not. In this house with walls, you walk in and you see a dirty untidy house that you would never want to live in. When my mother walks in she sees herself, in every stain on the carpet, in every dirty dish untouched, she sees the house that she raised her children in.

This house with walls may look sad and pitiful and disgusting but to me, my mom, my sister, anyone that walks into my house and knows who we truly are knows that this is a reflection of our depression, of our anger, of our anxiety, and of how much we'd given up on the world.

Slowly we are rebuilding. Making things better. Pushing away the scum that is depression and bearing down the anger that we feel to people that don't deserve our time and our thoughts. This house with walls is who we are and the contents inside the house make us who we are.

The way we live inside this house is who we are. This house with walls is my mother's mind and slowly this house with walls has become mine.

FAITH IT UNTIL YOU MAKE IT

Lauryn Daxon

My mantra for the latter parts of this semester was to "Faith it Until I Make It." Going through the rigors of assignments and pressing on until I submitted that last assignment was sincerely pure bliss.

As believers we are reminded in Philippians 1:6 that "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

In life you have to "Faith it Until You Make It." You have to keep pushing, keep pressing and keep enduring and keep executing until you see completion.

As a chosen vessel of Christ I ask you to repeat this:

God, thank you for seeing me through this semester. God for you are awesome in all your ways. Lord, help me to go faith first in every endeavor. In Jesus' name, Amen!

#WalkwithChrist

Poetry Collection

Miyuki Pugrad

Slight

Just out of reach.
Your hand reaching out just to unlock with mine.
She tells me to breathe.
To listen and hear the trees.
But all I can here now is my own heart's scream.
Maybe it's just my head
I need to put it to bed to rest.
Not like the rest.
I must be calm within myself.
My own being.
Take out the noise,
Never my breathing.
Growing, learning.
Learning to love again.
Here I go again.
Ready to begin.
Beginning to end.

Untitled

As rain pours,
It showers
Feelings of desperation roll down my back
into the grates of the drains before me.
Before my feet where the soil and concrete meet
This storm is one of the better ones,
Loud and thunderous
Very prosperous as the rain
gives sustenance for the flowers
and weeds to grow rapidly one by one
Some seeds becoming overwhelmed by nutrients
falling into the drains of the sewers as well.
Only the strong ones stay, they say.
Only the ones that have a grip on the ground.
Only the ones that bring beauty to this earth,
but the most devastating part of it is,
where do the ones in the sewers go?
We have lost them
and
no one is bothered enough to try and find them.
They have lost them,
until the animals of the sewers bring them back up to the surface,
replanting them and unintentionally spreading the word that they are back.
On their backs,
one by one they fall off and make an appearance again.
Making another attempt to grow and prosper.
Hopefully the rain doesn't wash them away again.
But if that were to happen again,
they have also learned nothing from the depths of the sewers
and must be seen by the desolate concrete once more.

Flight Home

Taking flight.

The colors of the lights bring me memories back to LA

On the top of a parking structure in Santa Monica

Drawing the signs because the camera on my phone wouldn't portray its beauty
in its most beautiful way

The essence of the ocean reminding me that, we are still apart of mother nature
even on top of buildings,
in the middle of cities

As the city lights imitate the bright stars in the sky.

I look for happiness there. For security,

I hope one day I'll be able to see the light inside of me,

Bringing myself to the surface like the foam after the crashing of the waves on the
shore.

I am here to be this light that I have been looking for.

I've finally found her in Missouri.

My final ability to love and learn.

And spread kindness and laughter
amongst others who I care for and who I might find to care for

Especially when I find someone out of the blue,

I know its fate and God has put me in their life for a reason.

I, not knowing what the reasoning is yet,

but trusting the universe that I am here for a reason.

The light inside me sometimes dims, but never goes out as she finds herself
blowing in the wind, that her Aquarius friends make.

Not being snuffed out by the earth,

but embracing her fully because she is worthy.

My flame imitating the Pisces water flow in and out,

finding out that control isn't reality and it should be let go.

Remembering not to take things for granted but not letting the little things bug you.

Embracing each and every little insect that climbs on the windshield
as you road trip through life.

The plane is taking off now.

She's made it.

Rebirth

And I begin to realize why I love the wind and the water.
Because it flows and blows leaves across the ground only to be stopped by its own force.
Creating this momentum that can be stopped whenever it pleases and as it stops, the flow of
the river stopped within me.
I stop feeling.
Ruminating on feelings that take me and my being for granted.
Wandering about the leaves on the ground, if they will ever leave me.
When they do, they leave me wondering about the things I can and can't do.
And I think about the trees that grew those leaves, how some of their branches have broken.
How they aren't growing the healthiest of trunks.
But that's the roots of our family coming in to motion.
As we grow older, they say we don't fall far,
but honestly, I want to be as far away from that tree as possible.
Being like a seed that travels and flows through the wind to another state.
Another state of mind, of being,
having that lineage that connects me,
but using that momentum of the wind to follow my own path.
I want to find the point of it all, but first I must ground myself into the soil
and as I grow I feel more spiritual in the way that nature affect us all.
In that big wave of wind we imagine the beach as waves come in.
The trickling and crashing of water on the shore,
only being moved by the moon and the gravitational pull and pressures of the world.
But only if you think that pressure is too much,
you'll soon erupt like a volcano,
Underground, as your tantrums are silent.
Silently moving the earth,
its tectonic plates,
wishing and waiting to make the ground move under you.
Erupt as an island where you can be alone because you thought no one would love you,
but even in the most desolate places, they can become so much more beautiful,
as one day the wind will bring a seedling.
Bringing you life and love,
and as that seedling grows,
you can only think of this cycle that goes as round as the earth and why we are here to learn to
communicate with one another since birth.
You're grateful for that seed, for its ability to flow.
Be one within itself and watching that seedling grow to be,
because she was once me.

Untitled

The lightning brings fear to her eyes.
Her thoughts, her mind.
But think of Her as this.
Mother trying to communicate,
Beauty in destruction.
Fears driving us.
she's pushing you ever so slightly.
to everything you never thought you wanted & all I have to say is thank you.

Traffic

Branches waving their tresses at me
Showing me the way
The au natural traffic cones,
Making you stop look and listen
Left to see only empty emotions and riches
Right to make love in the most innocent of ways
Waiting for traffic to let up
The noise in your head beeping and bumping.
Bumper to bumper
The thoughts never came to a stop
Crash!
Anxiety attack.

Untitled

The lightning brings fear to her eyes.
Her thoughts, her mind.
But think of Her as this.
Mother trying to communicate,
Beauty in destruction.
Fears driving us.
she's pushing you ever so slightly.
to everything you never thought you wanted & all I have to say is thank you.

Poetry Collection

Daniel Velasquez Wilson

1.

*You have held me up and brought me down.
You have made me shine and blown me out.
You have made me better and made me worse.*

*This year is about to be fierce.
This year is about to be one of pierce.*

*With every year, comes a new team
With every dive, comes a floor burn
With every jump, comes a stomp
With ever serve, comes a grunt
With every game, comes a crowd*

*With every beginning, comes an end
Dear Volleyball this last year is full send*

2.

Lavishly late
I always procrastinate
Graduation Near
There is fear
What lives out there
The real world awaits
I'm not ready
My knees buckle unsteady
The weight is heavy

The Soft Kind

Helena Talbot

It was the soft kind of rain. The kind where you don't even realize it's falling. And then you get a glimpse of its gentle streams through a ray of sunlight, or the glow of a lamppost. Even then it's hard to believe it's really there, that this tender drizzle could have the same composition of a downpour. That enough of it could cause a flood. You struggle to believe it's truly raining, until you start to feel the moisture on your body.

The drops on your skin. The type of rain that feels like the best kind of love. The easy, gentle, merciful kind.

Poetry Collection

Dominique Garlington

1.

She's a walking metaphor for poetry in motion. When I look at her, I see me. I'll write smiles of our similarities and how her smile puts me at ease. I'll jot down haikus, all the syllables containing "I's," "love's" and "you's." When she says my name, my heart beats the onomatopoeias of a comic book. An anomaly of Monarchs migrate from my stomach to give her butterfly kisses.

Her eyelashes scribble all the reasons I chose to love her into my cheek. And when I'm close enough to hear her breathe, every air molecule carries another reason she'll never leave. My dreams send letters to her in my sleep and when I wake up she stamps my lips with hers and mail off another memory to keep.

2.

I fell in love with writing the day she fell out of love with me. I wrote her into my poems, hoping she would climb out of these words and kiss me like my pen does the page. But I can't wish upon a piece of paper. I fell in love with writing because I know other hearts are hurting. I found that I can stitch together these wounds with words. I can make people feel a little less lonely. I fell in love with writing because I know I'm not alone.

3.

Never eat out alone, even if it's just for a few minutes. The waiter will end up asking you if everything is ok. You hope he's just talking about the food, but he's not. You'll pretend that he is and say everything is fine. But it's not. You won't eat the crispy fries because those were her favorite. And you'll go through five glasses of soda just to try to taste her lips on your straw like you used to. You will stare at the front hoping that she, along with your heart, will come walking in. You'll get mad when she doesn't. Then you'll get sad because you know that she doesn't even know you're there. You'll finish eating and drive home on an empty heart. Maybe next time...

The Bee

On most days we just let our eyes do the talking. And I let your smile sting my heart because I know that's the closest I'll ever be to yours. I wonder if you die a little inside knowing that this is true. Still, thoughts of you pollinate my mind. I've grown gardens of poems hoping that one day I'll get to share them with you. Your lips are stained with honey, that explains why your words are so sweet. And if I didn't know any better, I'd put you in a jar for only me to keep. But that's no place for you. You were born to fly, you deserve to be free.

The Bird and the Bee

I never meant much to many. Just a shy guy that is usually overlooked. The guy that sits alone at parties not because he's just a loner, he's not. I'm not. I want to be heard, but sometimes I'm scared that no one will listen. So I go overlooked. And when I look for love someone else usually finds it instead. Like I would wish upon a star and someone else's wish would come true. When this happens as often as it does to me, you just get use to it. You become numb to the heartbreaks, so you sit alone at the parties wondering where your heart went.

Growing up, I've always wanted to learn how to fly.

Flower Child

He loves her. He loves her not. Before the first petal was plucked he already made a decision. Relying on a rose was just some sort of poetic justice. As the last petal fell she couldn't help but relate. A rose stripped of its beauty is left with nothing but thorns. And so he left. And she was left clutching the stem. Because that's what you do right? You keep holding on even if it hurts. She had to learn to let go. She found peace by picking up the pieces. Finding soluce in places not many would go. She'd get lost in the forest. She saw beauty in the trees. how they wanted nothing more then the warmth of the sun. She too had been yearning for warmth. Just the other day she spotted a rose growing from the concrete. She couldn't help but relate. Because no matter the conditions, love will find a way.

She will find a way.

The Sun Set

Sun set. I was told that if you blink, you just might miss it. I'd much rather watch her smile instead. To see her face glow like a lantern that found light for the first time. My arms are still learning how to hold her. Myfingers, they run down the beach on her spine, massage the sand castles from her back. her hair has more waves than the ocean and my hands have no problem getting lost at sea.

If words could move mountains, I'd put Everest at her doorstep. I'm still learning to feel deeply, to be nothing short of an avalanche. Her lips are my favorite wine glass and I could get drunk off her kiss. She was Cupid's favorite arrow, and I was one easy target. I'd call her my sunset, and I was told not to blink. Because if you do...

Rose

My hands were never meant to be held. Just clenched fists that carve goodbyes
into walls. Outstretched fingers begging hers not to let go. They are broken
bottles that hurt those that care enough to pick up the pieces.
I am a thorn.

You could get drunk off her touch, everyone's favorite glass of wine. She can
sweet talk a volcano, but never raises her hand in class. she leaves the curling iron
on, chips her nail polish the same day she paints them, sometimes she even
forgets to tie her shoes. She never forgot how to love me. But today today I
watched her laces laces flow down a river of sidewalk. her hair a sail to the wind.
She was my petal.

Freckles

I've fallen for the constellations scattered around your cheeks. My Fingers have
travelled across the solar systems next to your lips. Each a star I wished upon
hoping that you love me too. You are a galaxy I have no problem getting lost in.
Your smile, my favorite horizon to wake up to.



Like a skipped stone, the ripples one creates on their surroundings oftentimes persist long after the initial impact is made. The details of the size, shape, and smoothness of the stone slip into memory but its effect continues to be seen. Such is the impact of Virginia Zank on the *Purple Patch*. Professor Zank began teaching English at Missouri Valley College in 1993 after retiring from Marshall Public Schools where she taught for 28 years. Prior to her retirement from Missouri Valley College in 2008, her accomplishments included receiving the Governor's Outstanding Educator Award and the John McCallum Teaching Excellence Award. After her retirement she also received the MVC Woman of the Year Award in 2010. While these awards honor her immense contributions to English education, the *Purple Patch* truly exemplifies it. In the year 2000, under Professor Zank's mentorship, the students of Sigma Tau Delta undertook the colossal feat of creating a literary journal to highlight and showcase the thriving and vibrant creative minds on the Missouri Valley College campus. Through countless hours of work, together they brought a dream to life. Though Professor Virginia Zank passed away on August 1, 2020 after a long, bravely-fought battle with cancer, her memory lives on in the pages of this volume of the *Purple Patch*—a labor of love that meant so much to her. With each submission and subsequent publication, Professor Zank's wave carries on.

Kelley McKay Fuemmeler - President, Sigma Tau Delta, Nu Epsilon Chapter, 1998-1999

