



THE SCRIBLERIAN

Fall 2018 Edition

The Scriblerian is a publication sponsored by the SUU Writing Center. This online journal is the result of a competition organized by Writing Center tutors for ENGL 1010 and 2010, and General Education 1000 and 2000, students. The competition, which drew 87 entries, was planned and supervised by Chair Megan Warner and members Allisa White, Carl Anderson, Camry Gover, Chris Westwood, Cale Broadous, Emily Oliver, and Katie Baker.

Contents

Argumentative - English 1010

1st Place Winner: Andrew Jones "Arming Teachers in Public Education"	2
2 nd Place Winner: Jayden Crowther "The Greatest Skiing in the U.S."	6

Expressive - English 1010

1 st Place Winner: Gregory Kaiser "My First Christmas Gift"	11
2 nd Place Winner: Finley Caciola "Finding Joy in the Miniscule and the Mind"	18

Argumentative - English 2010

1 st Place Winner: Lucy Sharp "Writers and Overly Graphic Descriptions -- A Love Story"	20
2 nd Place Winner: Albert Hanks "Who Is a Beast"	23
2 nd Place Winner: Brooke Purtill "Inked: Expressive Professionalism"	26

Expressive - English 2010

1 st Place Winner: Melissa Harris "What I Learned When I Was 3"	32
2 nd Place Winner: Mikala Mikrut "The Best Way to Speak to a Monster Is From a Distance"	35

Quantitative - English 2000

1st Place Winner: Elizabeth Armstrong "Decisions"	37
2nd Place Winner: Mitchell Zufelt "Kurt Cobain Understands My Teenage Angst, but That Doesn't Make It Smell Any Better"	40

Argumentative- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Andrew Jones “Arming Teachers in Public Education”

For Professor Jodi Corser

Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Sandy Hook Elementary School, University of Texas, Stoneman Douglas High School, Columbine High School... Each of these schools share a tragic and grim place in American history as locations of mass shootings. These five events alone have a death toll of more than one hundred lives without mention of those injured. Any case would be too many, however the list is long and growing. According to study by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, recent years have seen an increase in gun violence, and the data suggest the trend will continue upward (Blair and Schweit 8). School shootings are among the most heinous and emotional topics of discussion in politics, nevertheless any rational person would agree society and government must spare no effort in safeguarding students. However, the methodology of providing a safe learning environment is a concept of great debate. Recent events have once again brought this conversation to the national spotlight. It is clear the existing state of affairs must be altered. One of the most major and controversial solutions is arming teachers to defend against a violent attack on the school. The premise is that providing weapons for school staff would provide security to a heretofore “soft-target”. State governments should implement legislation allowing public schools to arm teachers, faculty, and/or staff in an effort make educational institutions safer and more secure places of learning for young people. This policy would apply to public education institutions and permit carefully screened, well-trained, volunteer faculty to obtain a specially granted concealed weapons license which gives the individual the right to possess a firearm on school campus.

There is no question a school should be a safe place of learning and growth for children, youth, and adults. However, the data suggest this may not always be the case. In fact, research from Dr. Paradise of Auburn University states, “In total (n=343), there have been 420 shooting deaths and 558 shooting injuries at [United States] educational institutions since 1840” (141). Government research has determined that school shootings account for the second highest place (24%) of active shooter incidents, and the trend of gun violence is steadily increasing as shown in the figure below (Blair and Schweit 8). While the solution to this problem may be unclear, the need to act is undoubtedly evident. Critics to pro-gun policies may say the answer is in banning firearms altogether, or at least assault weapons; however, this is an unrealistic idea. As of last year, Payton et al. estimates there are currently 317 million firearms in America (1118). So far, there is no conceivable plan to rid the nation of the many



Figure 1. A Study of 160 Active Shooter Incidents in the United States Between 2000-2013: Incidents Annually (Blair and Schweit 8).

millions of firearms or assault weapons in American homes. Opponents of pro-gun legislation may also state stricter gun laws would prevent violence in schools. On the contrary, criminals who commit crimes do not obey the law. In the *Brigham Young University Education & Law Journal*, Grant Arnold observed, "As noted in the selected case studies, all of the school shooters violated the law and most of them, if not all, probably *knew* that they were violating the law. Yet having a law on the books does not prevent a madman bent on mass murder from committing such atrocities..." (504). If the status quo of maintaining schools as "gun-free zones" is ineffective in safeguarding public places of learning and tighter restrictions are not the answer, then consideration of arming schools should be undertaken.

The mechanics of adding weapons to the sphere of public schools must be well formulated. The best proposed plan follows a logical progression. First, state legislatures should pass law allowing individual school districts the freedom to arm themselves. Notably, this law should not *require* schools to implement guns on campus. Secondly, local governments should bring the decision for a school district to become armed to a vote before the community in which the schools serve. This would allow the people who live in the area to voice their opinion. Next, where voting has ruled in favor, school administrators would implement district policy encouraging school faculty to volunteer for exhaustive screening and subsequent training to receive a provisional concealed weapons permit (CWP) valid for use on school grounds. A local law enforcement agency should provide the training including live-fire exercises, scenario-based tactical situations, and crisis-level decision making. Funding for the training should be provided by the state as part of the original legislation. After training has been satisfactorily completed, the sheriff's department should then grant a special CWP to those who are willing to discreetly carry guns on the premises. School administration would be given a detailed record of who is in possession of said weapons on campus. This information should not be shared with the public in the interest of safety and anonymity for those who participate. Implementing such a course of action would place firearms in the hands of responsible individuals who have adequate training for defensive use of a gun to prevent loss of life in the event of an active shooter.

Such a drastic change to public schools brings up many questions and rebuttals. Firstly, some do not want armed personnel to become the culture in education. As previously stated, however, the new normal in the US is an increase of school shootings and death tolls. Change can be difficult, but the "new normal" cannot be tolerated. The current culture of schools in America must change, and safeguarding schools is the right action to take. Correspondingly, there is reason to believe public opinion would favor legislation to fortify schools by arming personnel. Based on a scholarly research poll from May 2017, 46% of secondary student parents support the idea of arming teachers. In the same study, it was found that 63% of parents believe that "implementing a policy to allow selected school personnel to carry firearms in school" would be somewhat to very effective (Payton et al. 1124). Considering recent events, these statistics may be even higher. With arming individuals at school also comes a concern of maintaining a healthy teacher-student relationship devoid of intimidation and anxiety. An ideal scenario with the proposed system would include student (and parent) ignorance of who is in possession of firearms on campus. Thus, the relationship between educator and student would be largely unaltered. As a side note, those who genuinely are opposed to guns on campus but would reside in a school district with the proposed policy could potentially open enroll their child in a neighboring, gun-free school. Thus, the freedom of choice about a child's education is maintained. Another apprehension is the safety concern of a faculty member being incidentally disarmed by a student or accidentally misplacing/mishandling a firearm. As stated, adequate training would be provided to prevent such avoidable mishaps. The opposition may propose an alternate, but not dissimilar plan, to hire security or law enforcement officers to fill the role of arming schools. While this is a plausible solution, it is not a

cost-effective plan. Schools are already underfunded and introducing more cost demands on the current education system would prove to be disadvantageous. Instead, the proposal for arming school faculty maintains the best, low cost and high benefit plan of fortifying public schools.

Those who are skeptical of placing guns on campus are certainly entitled to evidence to sway their opinion. Because virtually all public schools are “gun-free” zones, empirical and circumstantial evidence in support of arming school employees is scarce. According to a study by the American Educational Research Association, the case of mass shootings “represent a particularly rare subset of school-related violent deaths” to which there is little data for analysis (Borum 29). However, there are still several indicators which suggest arming school faculty is the right course of action. One strong line of evidence is found in the state of Utah where the law allows for concealed carry on *all* public-school grounds. In “Arming the Good Guys: School Zones and the Second Amendment”, Grant Arnold claims:

The data from Utah campuses reveal no incidents of the slightest misuse of a firearm by a person with a legal permit. Nor is there any record of misuse of a firearm by a permit holder in a K–12 school anywhere in Utah. There have been no instances of attempted mass murders at any school in Utah. (504)

If an entire state has not seen any negative repercussions from placing guns on campus, then a similar policy should be put in place elsewhere. With arming school staff comes the natural consequence of deterring crime which has been exemplified in the Middle East. According to Nadia Nedzel, a professor at Southern University Law Center, “Israeli schools have increased security in the form of an armed guard or armed teacher on trips, at school doors, and more widely at schools in dangerous areas. Israel has not experienced such an attack since” (434). While this is an international and more perhaps a peripheral example, the principle still applies. It is highly likely arming schools would deter violence, because a school in possession of firearms would no longer be defenseless and would pose a threat to the success of a deranged assailant. This is all to say implementing firearms in public schools is a well-supported proposal and certainly worth carrying out in areas which are agreeable to the policy.

With any change in the public education system, the advantages must be worth the trouble of reform. Implementing guns on campus would bring several desirable outcomes including real-time action in response to recent events and added safety assurance without major structural changes to the current system. Perhaps the foremost benefit to arming school staff is providing an immediate and actual change. While media outlets will continually bring up the gun control issue in the wake of school shootings, there is seldom a tangible solution presented. In a scholarly research review about the consequences of major active shooter events, Lawrence and Thomas observed there is a significant divide between the problem framed by mainstream media and the way Congress defines an issue, as well as what legislation comes from the debate (1205). This disconnect between news outlets and real legislation for positive change is a major obstacle. Instituting guns on campus is a viable and effective change which directly addresses the problem of mass shootings on school campuses, rather than merely pushing an agenda but avoiding definitive action in legislation. Similarly, the nature of the proposed change would require relatively minor administrative action to instigate. It is advantageous to provide added safety to our schools without placing unnecessary strain to already stressed school administrations. Overall, the proposed plan for placing concealed weapons in the hands of educators affords the most plausible and effective plan for protecting public schools.

There is no doubt public education should be a safe haven of learning; unfortunately, the need for defensive action to safeguard schools is a reality. While the topic of guns in America is typically taboo, it has entered the academic arena and should be judiciously considered. The best course of action is for state governments to pass laws allowing public schools the choice to issue concealed weapons licensing

to school employees, because implementing firearms on campus would add security to educational establishments and make school a safer place for students. As this important debate continues nationally, the informed citizen must rise above complacency and make informed decisions which will have the most positive outcome for young Americans.

Works Cited

- Arnold, Grant. "Arming the Good Guys: School Zones and the Second Amendment." *Brigham Young University Education & Law Journal*, vol. 2015, no. 2, June 2015, pp. 481-506. *EBSCOhost*, <https://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/elj/vol2015/iss2/6>
- Blair, J. Pete, and Katherine W. Schweit. *A Study of Active Shooter Incidents, 2000 – 2013*, Texas State University and Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-study-2000-2013-1.pdf/view>
- Borum, Randy, et al. "What Can Be Done About School Shootings? A Review of the Evidence." *Educational Researcher*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2010, pp. 27–37. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27764551>
- Lawrence, Regina G. and Thomas A. Birkland. "Guns, Hollywood, and School Safety: Defining the School-Shooting Problem across Public Arenas." *Social Science Quarterly*, vol. 85, no. 5, 15 Dec. 2004, pp. 1193-1207. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1111/j.0038-4941.2004.00271.x.
- Nedzel, Nadia. "Concealed Carry: The Only Way to Discourage Mass School Shootings." *Academic Questions*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2014, pp. 429-435. *EBSCOhost*, doi: 10.1007/s12129-014-9459-7
- Paradice, David. "An Analysis of US School Shooting Data (1840-2015)." *Education*, vol. 138, no. 2, 2017, pp. 135-144. *EBSCOhost*, proxy.li.suu.edu:2443/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=126936152&site=ehost-live.
- Payton, Erica, et al. "Parents' Expectations of High Schools in Firearm Violence Prevention." *Journal of Community Health*, vol. 42, no. 6, Dec. 2017, pp. 1118-1126. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1007/s10900-017-0360-5.

2nd Place Winner: Jayden Crowther “The Greatest Skiing in the U.S.”

For Professor Chelsea Campbell

Many people around the world travel to be able to ski in a beautiful place with the best snow they can find. There are different types of snow world-wide. There is also so much that goes into the weather and snow conditions in different parts of the world. Many people have claimed that the state of Utah has the best snow on Earth and from the evidence, it shows that it does in fact have the greatest snow in the United States. Utah is the best place to ski in America primarily because of the humidity levels, amount of snowfall, terrain, and the overall location.

One of the first major factors that go into good skiing would be the humidity levels in the snow. Humidity levels can cause snow to change dramatically. Skiers around the globe search for certain types of snow that is light and fluffy. When the weather is humid, the snow can affect skiing by causing a drag effect to a person’s skis. As a result, this drag effect cause skiers to go much slower when the snow is very wet. In contrast, humidity could also cause the skiing to be icy and slick. When skiers ski in a slick and icy environment, it causes them to lose balance when they are skiing downhill. Skiers have what is called, “edges” on the sides of their skis. Depending on the snow, those “edges” can either get caught abruptly or slide much faster. When those edges get caught, skiers end up crashing and injuring themselves. On the other hand, if skiers start to ski on a slick part of the mountain, they could end up going up to speeds of 50-70mph and losing all control of their skis. This is why it is so important to have specific snow conditions, and humidity has a big play into what the snow is like.

When snow is in a humid condition, the snow becomes wet and sticky to make for constricted movement while skiing. No experienced skier would ever wish for wet, sticky snow; The edges of all skis can be very sensitive to each type of snow and skiers need to understand that wet sticky snow, or “slush” can ruin an entire ski day. On the website mechanicsofsport.com, devoted to informing skiers about the best ski conditions it summarizes:

Because there is no snow crystal structure in slush, slushy snow is very heavy, and can make the skis very hard to turn and move around. When the snow is wet, the water will also start to create a vacuum between the ski and the snow, sucking the ski to the snow so that it cannot slide so easily. (mechanicsofsport.com).

From this information, skiers can understand that skiing in heavy snow will be much more difficult. Skiers can also understand that they will have a harder time skiing in this type of snow. Skiers wouldn’t be able to practice as many tricks in the air because there wouldn’t be softer landing zones for the skier. If they fall into this type of heavy snow, it could cause much more damage to their body rather than the light and fluffy powder. This makes Utah such a perfect place to ski.

Skiing in humid conditions are obviously not ideal, but it is very ideal to ski in areas of the world with small amounts of humidity. When there is no humidity in the snow, the skiing conditions become perfect in the sense that there will be that soft powdery snow. Skiers will be able to enjoy a soft cushion if they end up crashing. Skiers will be able to learn many more tricks and their skis will be able to turn with much more ease. With less humidity, skiers will not have to trudge through that slushy, hard snow. Less humidity can really affect a skier’s day for the good. Skiers will be much happier when there is less humidity in the snow.

Utah has this lack of humidity that causes the snow to feel like powder which makes Utah the perfect place to ski in America. Powdery snow makes skiing a luxury which makes many skiers around the world crave the feeling of this type of snow. The reason skiers like powdered snow is partly because it is a safe, easy way to ski. Skiers will not get a lag on the edges of their skis and they won't go out of control when they ski in this powdery snow. In the article "What Affects Demand for 'The Greatest Snow on Earth?'" written by Mark Holmgren and Vicki A. McCracken, they draw attention to the idea, "Utah's high desert climate enhances the demand for skiing in Utah. The dry air causes the snowfall to be what skiers refer to as 'powder'" (2). Also, Holmgren and McCracken conclude that, "Powder snow is attractive to skiers because turning, slowing down, and stopping are easier in powder than in heavy snow" (2). If the snow is soft and dry, it causes the snow to have that so called, "powder" feeling to it. That feeling is what all skiers dream of because they feel as if they are floating on a cloud. Utah's powdered snow gives skiers the ability to experience much more than groomed snow. For example, skiers cannot try as many tricks in the air if there is no soft landing. Utah's snow provides a perfect pillow for skiers if they want to try new somersaults in the air. Skiers will have peace of mind that they will be protected if they crash into a soft landing. Powdered snow is the ultimate way to learn how to become a great skier. In the article "Secrets of the 'Greatest Snow on Earth'" written by James W. Steenburgh and Trevor I. Alcott, they recognize that, "Although it is not possible to show that the snow in Utah is the greatest on Earth, nonscientific skier surveys do indicate the Utah's Wasatch Mountains have a strong powder skiing reputation" (1285). From this, travelers can understand that many other skiers have considered Utah to have some amazing snow. They will have a much better time learning how to ski if there are softer crash landings. If skiers can have a better experience they will travel very far to acquire this type of snow.

Just as humidity effects the quality skiing, skiers around the globe are also looking for a place to ski with high amounts of snowfall. If there is not enough snow on the ground, skiers can run into many problems and even crash. If there are only a few inches of snow on the ground, skiers are most likely to run over mountain terrain. Rocks, sticks, and other natural objects can completely damage a pair of skis. Powder skier Ed LaChapelle expresses, "The best deep-powder skiing is not found in the lightest snow, but rather in snow with enough 'body' to provide good flotation for the running ski" (qtd. in "Secrets of the 'Greatest Snow on Earth'" 1286). Skiers can tell by this quote that there is much more that goes into good skiing conditions. Skiers need more than just "light snow"; there needs to be exact conditions for the skis to flow on the mountain more easily. If there is a ton of snow that has fallen, it can help skiers have an amazing time skiing. If a skier was to ski on one foot of snow compared to six feet of snow, they would greatly feel the difference. A lot of snowfall isn't just great for the skier, but is also beneficial for the ski resorts. The ski resorts will have more options to work with when molding the snow if they have multiple feet of it.

Utah is the perfect place to ski because of the amount of snowfall that occurs. Clouds come over the large Wasatch mountains which extend from 11,000-12,000 feet above sea level. When these clouds attempt to come over this mountain range the precipitation counts are enormous. Skiers look forward to Utah's large overnight snowfalls. Some nights, Utah can get multiple feet of snow which is a skier's dream. Utah is so unique for skiers because of the amount of snowfall that occurs. There are many contributing factors that make up good ski conditions. Many are under the impression that the key to good skiing conditions is only the amount of water content in the snow but there is so much more. The amount of snowfall received is very important to consider as well as the elevation of each individual ski resort. "Secrets of the 'Greatest Snow on Earth'" also gives a comparison of the amount of snowfall from many ski resorts across North America.

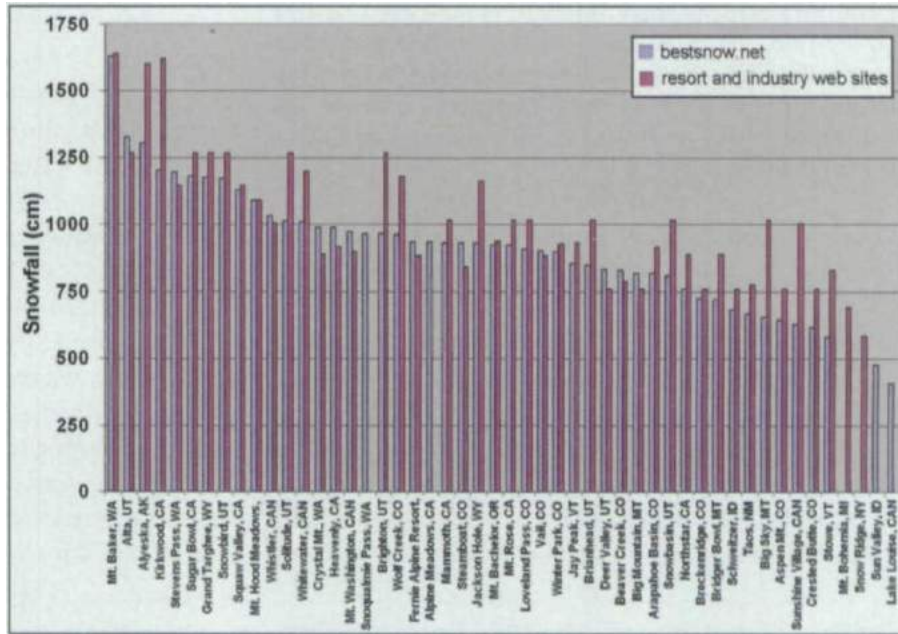


Fig. 1. Mean annual or seasonal snowfall at selected North American ski resorts as reported by bestsnow.net (Nov-Apr snowfall) and/or ski resort or tourism office Web sites (season or annual not specified). (Steenburgh and Alcott 1289)

Skiers can interpret what ski resorts in the United States have the most desirable ski conditions. Skiers can see which ski resorts receive the most amount of snowfall. It shows that Utah ski resorts receive some of the most snow in the United States. There were exactly seven ski resorts from Utah that received the most snow in the United States (Steenburgh and Alcott 1287-1289). Skiers will be able to enjoy a great ski day if they understand that Utah truly does receive high amounts of snowfall.

Another indicator of why Utah receives so much snow is because of the Great Salt Lake, which is in close proximity of the Wasatch mountains. In another article, "Orographic Influences on a Great Salt Lake—Effect Snowstorm" written by James W. Steenburgh and Trevor I. Alcott, they note, "Sensitivity studies show that both Great Salt Lake and the orography downstream are crucial to the development of a significant precipitation event" (2439).

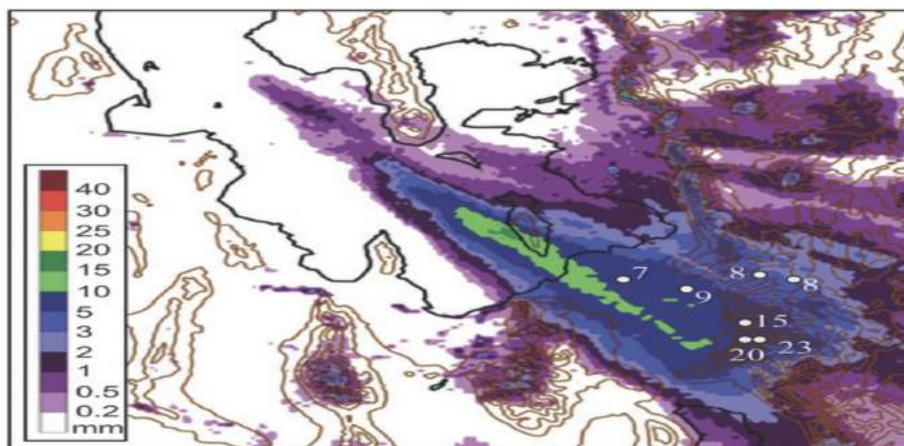


Fig. 2. Radar-estimated precipitation (mm, shaded, scale at left), and gauge-measured precipitation (mm, annotated). The Great Salt Lake is represented by the left solid black line while the Wasatch mountains are on the right of the graph. (Steenburgh and Alcott 2439)

Skiers can now understand another reason why Utah receives so much snowfall. The Great Salt Lake can have a large precipitation effect on Utah's Wasatch mountains. From the graph shown, skiers can understand how the Great Salt Lake causes this precipitation into the Wasatch mountains. Snow storms are more likely to occur because of this orography and lake effect. Travelers can now understand that Utah is the perfect place to ski because of the humidity and overall snowfall in Utah.

After looking at the humidity and snowfall levels in Utah, skiers must also understand that terrain has an effect on great skiing conditions. If a skier wants to become better at skiing, then they would need to have a steep decline on the mountain they are skiing on. Skiers must have steeper declines to keep up their momentum and be able to learn how to carve snow with the edges of their skis. When skiers have steeper declines, it helps the skier use the gravitational force that the earth gives. Skiers will also be able to learn at higher speeds if there is more of a decline on the mountain. The decline will be able to help a skier pick up acceleration, speed, and momentum. "The ski slope must also be sufficiently steep for the skier to maintain momentum and fluidly link turns" (Steenburgh and Alcott 1268). A huge part of skiing is to keep momentum so that skiers can easily move downhill and have no drag effect on skis. Skiers must ski on a decline that will help them keep their momentum for an enjoyable ride.

Utah's terrain makes it the ideal place to ski because of the various types of mountains and ski resorts. Because the Wasatch Mountains range from 11,000-12,000 feet above sea level, there is definitely enough variety in the slopes that skiers can choose from. If skiers would like a challenge with a very steep decline, they will be able to find this challenge in Utah's vast mountain range. On the other hand, if there is a skier who has just started skiing and does not need as an intense challenge, Utah's ski resorts offer small declines which make skiing a joy for beginners. Utah's terrain makes for the best ski conditions in the United States.

Looking at how Utah's terrain is perfect for skiing, skiers must also understand that the location is prime. Utah is directly in the middle of the western United States which makes it affordable and timely to fly to Salt Lake City. In the article, "What Affects Demand for "The Greatest Snow on Earth?" Mark A. Holmgren and Vicki A. McCracken recognize, "Skiers can reach any of seven different ski resorts (Alta,

Brighton, the Canyons, Deer Valley, Park City, Snowbird, and Solitude) in an hour's drive from the Salt Lake City International Airport" (2). Because of the closeness of these ski resorts from the airport, skiers are able to spend less money and time if they choose to travel to Utah for skiing. Travelers will be able to experience less stress and a more enjoyable time if they ski in Utah.

In the same way skiers believe that the skiing in Utah is the best, there are many skiers who believe it is not near as good as another state. Many would argue that Jackson Hole Wyoming has the best skiing in the United states. In fact, Karl Sander, journalist and expert skier since age 9, concludes, "Jackson Hole, our pick for the best resort in the US, ticks all the boxes: immense snowfall (over 500 in last year), one of the best lift networks in the country, and world-class terrain including a wonderland of easily accessed side and backcountry" (snowpak.com). Sander may be right about the high amounts of snowfall and terrain. Jackson is an amazing place to ski because of those reasons. Just like Jackson Hole, Utah has each of the amenities that were previously stated. However, after showing Utah's humidity levels, amount of snowfall, terrain, and overall location, Utah has even more to offer than Jackson Hole.

Utah is by far the prime location to choose for skiing. The humidity levels are very low which helps the snow become powdery. Skiers will have a much better time skiing in powdered snow rather than wet, slushy snow. Skiers skis will glide more easily in powdered snow and skiers will have the option to learn new skills. The amount of snowfall, just like humidity, makes Utah the perfect place to ski because skiers need high amounts of snow for good floatation. After reviewing the humidity and snowfall levels, Utah has varieties of terrain that include steep slopes and small declines. For these reasons, any type of skier will be able to choose from the variety of terrains in Utah. Finally, Utah's location makes the skiing easily accessible because of the proximity to Salt Lake City International Airport. In addition, skiers will experience less stress because of the shorter travel times and as a result will be more affordable for the traveler. Looking at all of the evidence, it's clear that Utah is the best place to ski in America because of the humidity levels, amount of snowfall, terrain, and the overall location.

Works Cited

Holmgren, Mark A., and Vicki A. McCracken. "What Affects Demand for 'The Greatest Snow On Earth?'" *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, vol. 23, no. 1, Jan. 2014, pp. 1–20. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1080/19368623.2012.746212.

Sander, Karl. "The 10 Best Ski Resorts in the US." *snowpak.com*, 2018, <https://www.snowpak.com/usa/best-ski-resorts>. Accessed 30 November 2018.

"Snow and Weather Conditions." *mechanicsofsport.com*, 2018, http://www.mechanicsofsport.com/snow_weather.html. Accessed 7 November 2018.

Steenburgh, W. James, and Trevor I. Alcott. "Orographic Influences on a Great Salt Lake-Effect Snowstorm." *Monthly Weather Review*, vol. 141, no. 7, July 2013, pp. 2432–2450. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1175/MWR-D-12-00328.1.

---. "Secrets of the 'Greatest Snow on Earth.'" *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*, vol. 89, no. 9, Sept. 2008, pp. 1285–1293. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1175/2008BAMS2576.1.

Expressive- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Gregory Kaiser “My First Christmas Gift”

For Professor Jennifer Sorensen

Every December my family and I have the tradition to watch a classic Christmas movie every night leading up to Christmas Day. We watch *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), *White Christmas* (1954), George C. Scott's version of *A Christmas Carol* (1984), and many more; we end this tradition with *The Muppet's Christmas Carol* (1992) on Christmas Eve. My favorite of these movies is the film adaptation of the book *The Christmas Box* (1993) by Richard Paul Evans.

It is a story about a young family coming to live with an aged widow in her Victorian home in the Avenues of Salt Lake City, UT. As Mary, the aged woman builds a relationship with the family she realizes that there are similarities between her life and marriage and theirs; she begins to worry about their family dynamic, and especially Richard.

In an exchange with Richard, she asks, “Richard, what was the first gift of Christmas?”

In jest, he replies, “I don't know...a tie?”

To which she responds with a motherly look and tone, “Give it some thought.”

This question sets up the rest of the story as Richard delves into Mary's past to understand this strange woman. He discovers that Mary's daughter, Andrea, passed away when she was four years old, because of this experience she begins to open her heart to Richard's four-year-old daughter, Jenna. The next discovery he makes is that Mary's husband was an absorbed executive focusing only on his work and not his family; he recognizes this flaw within himself as his own business begins to flourish. With Mary's failing health, Richard finally realizes the meaning of her question. “The first gift of Christmas was love. A parent's love. Pure as the first snows of Christmas. For God so loved His children that He sent His son, that someday we might return to Him.” (Evans, *The Christmas Box*, 1993, Richard Paul Evans). It was this idea of giving a gift of love that rang, clear as Christmas bells, within me the summer of 2014 as I prepared to give a gift to my Aunt Michelle.

My Aunt Michelle is one of the strongest women I know. She, basically, raised her three siblings. My aunt loved to quilt and sew, and with that talent, she served many people. Aunt Michelle put herself through school to earn two associate degrees and one bachelor's degree, along with a teacher's credential. She was an X-ray technician and helped many people during her career. In later years, Michelle became a special education teacher at Post High in Cedar City. Michelle was the greatest aunt someone could ask for, but she was not always that way.

Aunt Michelle never married and never had kids; being single, she became determined, stubborn, and selfish. She was the epitome of the age-old adage “my way, or the highway”. This attitude made it difficult to be around her, especially being a kid. Yet after being around and helping raise four nieces and a nephew, she started to learn more about being patient, as we got older. She then got sick, and all our lives changed.

The doctors diagnosed Aunt Michelle with stage three double ovarian cancer on Valentine's Day 2003 and while going through those long and horrendous treatments my mom had an epiphany. She told us, "Cancer is to Michelle what a spouse should be to us"; cancer was the "mirror" that Aunt Michelle needed to see herself from another's perspective, and it gave her the opportunity to evaluate her way of being. Thankfully, and in an answer to all our prayers, she made the decision to change. Aunt Michelle had amazing faith while fighting the disease that was slowly killing her. She became kinder, more understanding, and patient, not only with us kids but also with herself and with God. Cancer was the catalyst for her metamorphosis and I know that it is because of that course correction I wanted to do something for her.

Aunt Michelle viewed us as her kids and loved us as her own so she wanted to do something fun with us after we graduated; this led to her deal with our parents.

During a family council, our parents sat all of us down and said, "Your Aunt Michelle has a surprise for all of you."

Aunt Michelle was already standing at the head of our living room, so we all turned our attention to her. "Your gift from me, when you graduate, is that you and I will go on a trip together where ever you want to go in the world."

"What? That's so cool!" was all our reactions to the news. Anywhere in the world, my mind began reeling as everyone started naming destinations; England, Paris, Rome, Moscow, the list went on and on. Unfortunately, soon after this announcement, the events of September 11, 2001, would change our gift's clause from anywhere in the world to staying within the continental USA. My cousin, Kim, and oldest sister, Nicole, decided New York, New York would be their destination. They went together with Aunt Michelle since they graduated the same year. My second oldest sister Kandace also chose to spend a week in New York City. My third oldest sister, Lindsey, decided she wanted to see where America began. Therefore, her trip included Boston, Concord, and, because of my sisters uncanny love for Anne of Green Gables, Prince Edward Island in Canada. Then there was my trip!

"I know we've already gone here as a family when I was eight, but I would love my trip to be to Washington D.C. because I really want to visit the Smithsonian museums," I told my aunt.

"We should go there for the fourth of July. I've been there once already during the celebration and it is wonderful," she responded.

"That sounds amazing, Aunt Michelle."

A couple of days later we had another conversation about my trip with my parents.

"Hey Greg, I was looking at travel plans and we could fly into Philadelphia, spend a day there, then how about we add a week and go to Hershey, Pennsylvania, and end the trip with a week in Washington D.C.?" asked Aunt Michelle.

Beaming with excitement I responded, "Yeah, totally. Now, this is Hershey, like Hershey chocolate, right?"

“Yes, like the chocolate.” Aunt Michelle chuckles, then becoming very serious she says, “Also, Jeff and Kathy, I feel like you guys should come with us.” Aunt Michelle’s health had become unpredictable. Her battle with cancer had been going on for 11 years, and because of her toll-taking treatments, some days were definitely better than others were.

“We can do that,” was my mother’s reply.

As the plans continued forward and my siblings learned these plans, they became extremely persistent in asking, “Can we join?” One sister was very indignant that not only had she been wanting to go there since we first saw a documentary on PBS about Hershey, PA, but since her husband severed his mission in PA that they should be able to join as well.

In one conversation both of my brothers-in-law said, “We’ve never been on a family trip before.”

The result of these conversations produced additional planning for “stowaways” accompanying my aunt and I for the week we were in Hershey PA; my entire family was with us, all 13 of us. My parents, aunt, and I enjoyed the week in Washington D.C. You see, we turned it into a family trip for the first week because of my aunts questionable health, this was most likely going to be the last trip any of us would take with her. By this time, she had been fighting her cancer for 11 ½ years and we could see that the battle was close to an end; we did not know how close, we felt it would most likely be within a year, and with all this my trip began.

My Aunt Michelle loved photography, and because of that love, we always knew we would get many amazing pictures of our destinations. The photos transformed the trips into lasting memories for all of us. However, for her the trips became lasting memories because of the artwork she would buy of one of the places we had visited. She wanted something that would remind her of the trip she had taken with “her kid”; it was always a painting or a drawing. She was able to find one before the end of every trip, except mine.

Aunt Michelle, mom, dad, and I searched every day in Washington D.C. to find her something that she would love and remind her of our trip, but we came up with zilch, nada, and nothing.

As we searched one-day mom said, “Greg, why don’t you just draw the picture for Michelle?”

My heart leapt to my throat; I think I started to mumble something like, “I can’t do that.”

She then gave me that look like, “Yes. You. Can.” She was also saying, “This would be the perfect Christmas gift for her.”

You see, during my last couple of years of high school, I had developed a talent for drawing, so when we had failure after failure of not finding any artwork, and after this exchange with my mom, I decided to follow the thought I already had and I would draw this special gift for her. As I walked up to Aunt Michelle and dad, my hands were sweating, I felt like I had a million spotlights on me. I was also hoping that the store attendant they were talking to would say, “Oh, we have just what you are looking for.”

Then magically produce a painting. Yet reality does not follow dreams, sometimes.

When I got there the attendant was saying, "I've never seen anything like that in our store. I'm so sorry." My heart skipped two beats. I was standing there looking at Aunt Michelle in her wheelchair and she looked so distraught.

"Greg has something to tell you." I jumped; mom had appeared next to me.

My aunt looked up at me and I stuttered, very nervously, "Aunt Michelle, why don't I just make the artwork for you?"

She lit up, "What a wonderful idea. You would do that?"

With that, a shot of confidence came, "Yeah I would totally do it. You pick a picture, doesn't even have to be one we took, and I'll draw it for you."

"Thank you so much, Greg!", as she said this the light returned to her eyes.

After we returned home about mid-July, and as we were showing off the pictures we had taken to our family she chose a picture of her favorite sight. Her choice was a picture of Mount Vernon, George Washington's Mansion, which she had found online. The moment I saw it fear, nerves, and doubt became wild things running around my mind.

The image she chose was immaculate. It was an image of perfection as the picture captured the sun setting along the right side of the picture with the shade tree covering part of the estate; tendrils of light were adding contrast to shadows along the mansions face. Some of the trees and plants still had green but the big shade tree was already turning the colors of autumn; it looked like a lazy fall day. The picture radiated peace; there was a sense of security and safety. I could imagine George Washington on an evening like this, talking and walking with his wife Martha around their property then settling on the back porch in their rocking chairs with a slight breeze blowing the smells and sounds of autumn by. Now I had the task of capturing this astonishing scene with its amazing feelings.

There were many decisions to make, such as; how big should it be? Is it going to be colored or black and white; if colored, would it be chalk, acrylic paint, or marker; if black and white, would it be charcoal, pen, or pencil? There were fears and a lot of them for this picture. What if it does not look right, what if the proportions are off? I only had a few months to finish it amongst planning and preparing for my LDS mission to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Would I get it done in time? I began drawing late July/beginning of August. It took me a while to begin. I had a couple of failed attempts at the beginning, but I had to get it done. As the wild fears continued to come, I faced them and reminded them and myself why I was doing this. I was doing this because I loved my Aunt Michelle and I wanted to give her a gift from the heart. When I finally began the sketch, the lines flowed through me and slowly I began to see and feel what I felt from the picture she chose. It took up most of my free time to complete the sketch of Mt. Vernon. When I was almost finished, there was one final question to answer: When do I give it to her?

I had a few more weeks to work on it when I started thinking about when I should give it to her. I was planning on giving it to her for Christmas since I would be reporting to the Missionary Training Center in Provo, UT on November 5, 2014, but would that be the right choice. My aunt's health began to decline rapidly since we had gotten home from Washington D.C. Her body had become allergic to the chemotherapy, she was on oxygen, she could barely get out of bed for long periods before having to go back to bed, she had lost a lot of weight, and she was becoming weaker. Was she going to be here for Christmas?

My mom was reading a book to me as I was drawing when I interrupted her, "Mom, I keep having this come to mind; when should I give this to Aunt Michelle? Should I give it to her before I go to the MTC or should I wait, and have you guys present it to her for Christmas?"

Mom looked at me contemplatively, put the book on her lap, and after some silence, simply answered, "What do you feel about it?"

As soon as she asked the question, I knew I wanted to be there when Aunt Michelle received her picture. I worked almost all day, every day leading up to when I gave my aunt the gift. It was beautiful, and it turned out exactly how I hoped and prayed it would! The day had finally come, November 1, 2014, my last visit before I left for Oklahoma.

"Mom, where is Aunt Michelle's picture?" I ask as we park outside my grandma's house and I jump out of the car.

"It's in the back but say hello to your Grandmother first," she responds as she exited the car then began opening the trunk.

"Hi Grandma," I say as I hug the small stout woman, then I blurt out, not being able to contain the excitement, "Now can I have the picture."

"Here you go, impatient," my mother says handing me the framed picture with a playful smile.

"Thanks, mom," then I rush inside. I went into the side room holding the picture behind me with a big smile on my face. The smile slightly faded as I walked into the room. My mom had told me how Aunt Michelle was carrying on but expectations and reality never truly match up.

My expectation was my strong aunt, joyous as she was, walking toward me for a hug despite failing health. The room would be sunlit and everything would be perfect. I would hand her the gift, she would cry, and I would receive praise for my talents.

My smile completely faded as realities weight finally sunk in drowning my dreams. Reality was my frail aunt sleeping. The room dimly lit from the window behind her hospital bed. It was still, very still, besides the sound of the large machine next to me pumping oxygen to her so she could breathe. I knew the stillness well; the stillness was that of hospital rooms where doctors and professionals are making people as comfortable as possible because there is nothing left to do. I slowly turn and start to walk back out not wanting to disturb my aunt.

"Hey Greg," I hear weakly coming from the bed, spinning me around.

"Hey Aunt Michelle, how you doing?" I respond feeling a pit in my stomach and a not so convincing smile spread across my face.

"I've been better," she says with a smile on her face.

"Have you given it to her yet?" mom asks as she enters the house.

“No. Not yet,” I respond. I turn to my aunt, “I finished your picture, Aunt Michelle.”

“Turn on the light!” she says with more energy. As she straightens herself on the reclined bed, I pull the picture out from behind me and turn it towards her.

“It’s Beautiful!” she said beamingly multiple times, “I love it!”

A couple weeks later, November 20, 2014, I received a phone call from my Mission President telling me that my parents wanted me to know that Aunt Michelle passed away the night before. This will be a memory for the ages. “What was [my] first gift of Christmas?” My gift to Aunt Michelle from the heart.

Afterward

The picture I drew currently hangs on the wall of my bedroom. Aunt Michelle made sure that each of “her kids” received the artwork from their trip as part of their inheritance. While reminiscing on this experience and the night I got the phone call about Aunt Michelle’s passing I had the following teaching come: Do not take the time you have with those you love and those who love you lightly. Never say tomorrow, because tomorrow may not come, for either of you. Do as much as you can. Make as many memories as you can, and make them lasting ones.





2nd Place Winner: Finley Caciola “Finding Joy in the Miniscule and the Mind”

For Professor Chelsea Campbell

If happiness is not something we can see, why does the world seem to brighten upon good news? Happiness can be deceiving, and even a method of self-defense. Sincere happiness is rare, as joy is more commonly laced with bittersweetness, memories, or past sadness. We cannot memorize the sound of a smile, but we remember how it makes us *feel*, whether we're the grinning or the sober person. Feeling keeps us sane, feeling happy keeps us alert to new possibilities. Someone may spend a year alone and still know what it is to be held and treasured. Happiness can be invented and acquired, and it is constantly shifting. We find it impossible to keep up, and yet we flirt with recklessness by trying every day.

Whether it's seeing a patch of dandelions in the cracks of the sidewalk or two little lines that mean new life, happiness is something that can and will always return. One can't spend an eternity at rock bottom, even if their toes scrape the floor. Happiness is the feeling of sore cheeks and chests constricting while fighting—or welcoming—laughter. It is the hyperactive imagination that is only accessible during infinite car rides, it's seeing romance bloom between people who *might* stand a chance together, it's giving a friend a reason to smile once more. Happiness is the relief of a joke landing well among friends, the sight of whatever you feel is a success. It is the will to experiment, because maybe euphoria can be reached if *you* reach for new things; it's the comfort that hugs you as you complete routines and traditions. It is the feeling of adding a new space to the places you identify as “home”.

Upon studying self-preservation in humankind, Harvard psychologist Dan Gilbert has found that we have developed a “psychological immune system” that protects us from excessive sadness every time something goes wrong. We look on the bright side, we analyze what we can improve for the sake of the future; because there *is* a future. It *is* coming, and it's coming for us. Gilbert argues that happiness can be synthesized, however natural happiness is not an impossibility. Children can giggle for hours on end. The elderly can smile just for feeling the sun on their cheeks every morning, knowing they've made it to another morning even if they can't run in the sunshine. “The world will keep spinning on its axis without you, but think of all the sunrises you'll miss”, remarks Hannah Dains. Even those who wish they'd never woken up can find happiness in smiles from strangers. Happiness is the cousin of hope, though they are independent. One can survive with happiness and an absence of hope, as well as the inverse, but at some point one needs both to live.

Seeking happiness is scarcely selfish, until it breaches the line into gratification at another's expense. Happiness is not the feeling of towering over someone else. Satisfaction can't be bought through another's suffering; the vanquished have stolen the victor's humanity. Happiness is unattainable when humanity is lost. Happiness and its absence—sadness—are what keep us human, in the end. C. S. Lewis claims in an essay that happiness is not a human right, yet he doesn't argue that happiness must be earned to be had. If someone pushes down another to achieve happiness and doesn't, “He was in a position to enrich himself a thousand ways, and he didn't. Does that make him foolish or honest?”. Happiness is not selfish, not pointless, and not mandatory; and yet it can be said that happiness is not optional. Lewis's character Mr. B claims he had to take his chance at happiness, and his attempts caused anarchy in the lives of others.

Happiness is being able to put your heart into the hands of friends, lovers, and family, knowing they wouldn't dream of crushing it. It's hearing a friend shout your name from a short distance away, it's being able to weep into their lap when all your joy is seemingly absent. It's trusting someone to know your body and mind like their own, to memorise the narrow divots in your hands and come back even after an explosive argument. It's the decision to open the door or close it, when someone who hurt you comes back seeking forgiveness. We have the power to decide if our happiness will survive without them, or with them. We can pretend to be happy with what we have, and convince even ourselves with time. The sources of happiness never stop shifting, they mimic life and never stand still. We must hang on and try to keep up.

Works Cited

- Gilbert, Dan. *TED: Ideas Worth Spreading*, uploaded by TED: Ideas Worth Spreading, Feb. 2004, www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_asks_why_are_we_happy?language=en. Accessed September 5
- Lewis, C. S., et al. "We Have No Right to Happiness." *Pursuing Happiness: a Bedford Spotlight Reader*, Bedford/St. Martins, a Macmillan Education Imprint, 2016, pp. 226–231.
- Miranda, Lin-Manuel. "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story?" *Hamilton*, Lacamoire, Miranda, September 25, 2015. *Spotify*
- Dains, Hannah. "Hannah Dains - 'Don't Kill Yourself Today' | All Def Poetry x Da Poetry Lounge." *YouTube*, YouTube, 9 Dec. 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ktdf2KQ58c.

Argumentative- English 2010

1st Place Winner: Lucy Sharp "Writers and Overly Graphic Descriptions -- A Love Story"

For Professor Charla Strosser

Charles Perrault was born in 1628, while the Grimm brothers were born in the 1780s. Despite the many years between them, they used similar plots and ideas in their stories. Maria Tatar wrote an article titled "Sex and Violence: The Hard Core of Fairy Tales," that evaluates many aspects of the Grimms's writing. However, these are easily applied to the writing of Charles Perrault. Although the Grimm brothers and Charles Perrault wrote stories differently, they had very similar mindsets when it came to sex, violence, religion, and antagonistic characters.

While the Grimm brothers' stories were full of sex, violence, and other such atrocities, they did have their standards, mainly when it came to sex. For example, the few stories involving incest or fathers with wrong intent towards their daughters were very clear that this was wrong and claimed that "no good can come from such a sin" (Tatar 451). Among the sexual sins they had clear disdain for was sexual relations before marriage. Tatar explained this by giving the example of "The Frog King or Iron Heinrich." In all the versions of this story, the Grimm brothers were careful in their wording. In some, the prince and the princess fall asleep "immediately," while in others, they are married before they go to bed for the night (Tatar 450). Likewise, in Perrault's "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," it is clear that he did not favor sexual sins. When the prince first saw the sleeping princess, he knelt beside her bed to admire her, rather than actually doing anything at all to her sleeping body (Perrault 126). The very evening that the princess awoke, she and the prince were married (Perrault 127). Nothing in Perrault's story even implies sexual sin, so it can be assumed that he and the Grimm brothers hold similar standards on these points. While sexual sin is often a kind of villain throughout Perrault's and the Grimms's fairy tales, there is always a very real villain to deal with.

Fairytales always have an evil villain and often, this villain is related in some way to the protagonist. Fathers are used occasionally, but wicked stepmothers are clearly preferred. These wicked stepmothers are in countless of the Grimm brother's stories. In the story "Snow White," the wicked stepmother tries many times to kill Snow White out of jealousy for her beauty. In "Cinderella," the moment Cinderella's father dies, the wicked stepmother uses her as a slave out of spite. In "The Juniper Tree," the stepmother chops up her son and cooks him in a stew (Tatar 447). Perrault has a slightly different take on the wicked stepmother story when he tells "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood." Once the curse is broken and the prince marries the princess, the true villain is shown to be the prince's mother. The queen is part ogress and "whenever she saw little children, she found it hard to restrain herself from pouncing on them" (Perrault 128). There came a time when the prince became king and had to leave his wife and two young children in his mother's care, which proved to be a poor decision. The queen behaved similarly to the wicked stepmother in "Snow White," sending her steward to kill first the king's two children, and then his wife. The steward chose to hide the three royals and instead killed and cooked animals for the queen to eat (Perrault 128-129). Clearly, like the Grimms, Perrault has a flair for not only the wicked parental figure, but also for violence.

Maria Tatar claims that the Grimm brothers had a flair for violence, giving examples from "Cinderella," where the stepsisters cut their feet to fit into the glass slipper, and were later blinded by birds for their wickedness. In "Rumpelstiltskin," Rumpelstiltskin tears himself in two out of anger. In "Briar Rose," the

many princes trying to get into the enchanted castle, are killed in gruesome ways by the thorns surrounding the castle (Tatar 448-449). Perrault was no Grimm but he did not shy away from violence either. As is traditional for a Sleeping Beauty story, the evil fairy cursed the princess to be killed before another fairy altered the curse to a hundred-year sleep (Perrault 124). Later in the story though, Perrault introduces us to the ogress queen and informs us of her evil intentions towards her grandchildren and daughter-in-law. The queen not only sent her steward to kill and eat them, but; when she found they were alive she began to fill a vat full of snakes and other creatures with the intent of throwing her relatives into it. Luckily, the king arrived home and realized his mother's intentions with his wife and children. The queen was so upset that she threw herself into the vat and was violently killed by the reptiles inside (Perrault 128-129). As Tatar claims, "the Grimms seem to have favored violence over whimsy," and even "made a point of adding or intensifying violent episodes" (Tatar 448). It is easy to say that Perrault can be related to these statements, he seemed to have had similar views on violence as the Grimms. Perrault added unnecessary elements to "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood" that no one with a weak stomach would even have considered. Despite the casual violence and morbidity throughout their stories, Perrault and the Grimm brothers seemed to be somewhat religious.

The Grimms liked to use religion throughout their stories, in both subtle and obvious ways. They wrote stories such as, "The Devil and His Grandmother," "The Poor Man and the Rich Man," and "The Carnation" where the devil was a clear character that represented evil. In other stories, they used wicked stepmothers or evil fathers as representations of the devil. When Perrault wrote "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," he was likely relating the ogress queen to the devil. At the beginning of the story, she is only the prince's mother and there is no reason to be suspicious of her intentions. However, later on the story says that, "the king married her only for her money. There were rumors that she possessed all the desires of an ogress. Whenever she saw little children, she found it hard to restrain herself from pouncing on them" (Perrault 128). These are not qualities that a mother or queen could possess and are much more similar to traits that the devil would have. She attempted to eat her grandchildren and daughter-in-law, and when that did not work, she tried to kill them. Here is another representation of the devil, her choice of murder was a vat of snakes—a known symbol of Satan (Perrault 129). Perrault may not have been trying to liken his ogress queen to the devil, but there are many similarities between the two that make it easy for us to relate them.

It is clear to see that after comparing how the Grimms wrote their stories with Perrault's "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," the writers are not as different as they may first seem. While they add different aspects to their stories, they have the same mindsets about sex, violence, religion, and antagonistic characters. Some of Perrault's and the Grimms's opinions may have come simply from the time that they lived, but some of it was less common. Maria Tatar explains that the Grimms had a very difficult time making a storybook that was as child-appropriate as the brothers advertised to be. They were told that, "Future editions ought to state that the book was 'for parents, who can select stories for retelling'" (Tatar 454). Nowadays, the fairy tales told to children are hardly recognizable from the stories that people such as the Grimm brothers and Perrault wrote. It can be shocking, even to adults, to see how much different the current, familiar bedtime stories and Disney movies are from their ancestors.

Works Cited:

Perrault, Charles. "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood." *The Classic Fairy Tales, 2nd ed.*, edited by Maria Tatar, W. W. Norton & Company, 2017, pages 123-130.

Tatar, Maria. "Sex and Violence: The Hard Core of Fairy Tales." *The Classic Fairy Tales*, 2nd ed., edited by Maria Tatar, W. W. Norton & Company, 2017, pages 446-456.

2nd Place Winner: Albert Hanks "Who Is a Beast"

For Professor Charla Strosser

Fairy tales are not complete without a villain or a monster. Often times the monster comes in the form of a beast, whether as a hideous monster in appearance or as a hideous monster within. With regard to Charles Perrault's "Bluebeard," the monster, or beast, of the story is Bluebeard. On the outside he appears to be a charming and wealthy man, but on the inside he is a homicidal maniac who cruelly murders his wives. However, Maria Tatar points out in her critical article "Beauties vs. Beasts in the Grimms' Nursery and Household Tales" that Charles Perrault's version of Bluebeard depicts more than one version of a beast with another beast being the protagonist of the tale, Bluebeard's new wife.

Tatar's claim that there is more than one beast in many Bluebeard type fairy tales is supported by Perrault's version of Bluebeard because there is an element of intentional betrayal from both parties. In addition, passion is a negative driving force for both beasts, and they both feel justified in their cruel, individual actions.

One reason that Perrault's version of Bluebeard meets the assertion of there being more than one beast, as taken from Tatar's article, is that there is an element of intentional betrayal from both Bluebeard and his wife. The first example of betrayal comes from Bluebeard's wife when he gives her the keys to the entire house and tells her specifically to never use one key; however, she later runs to the door "so fast that more than once she thought she was going to break her neck" (Perrault 190). The wife did not betray by mistake. Bluebeard's wife intentionally broke his trust in her and figuratively flew to the door she had been instructed and consented to never open. Whether there was malicious intent or not, her curiosity proved her stronger desire, and by choosing to disobey, she completed her betrayal and established herself as a beast, and not just the beauty, of the tale. Tatar defines this example as betrayal when she talks about how Bluebeard may have never tried to kill her if she had not entered the room which contained the bodies of his previous wives (2). This point speculates that the betrayal Bluebeard would later commit is entirely dependent on whether his wife betrayed him or not. In other words, Bluebeard would not have allowed himself become even more of a beast had he not seen the beast within his new wife. However, in Perrault's version, she does betray him, he does find out, and she begs for her life to be spared; and yet, despite the fact that "She looked so beautiful and was so distressed that she would have melted a heart of stone...Bluebeard had a heart harder than any rock", and he decrees that she must die (191). Bluebeard's betrayal is darker than his wife's; with his betrayal, he sells his soul to the devil by deciding to murder one who was truly seeking forgiveness for her betrayal. This betrayal of forgiveness and his "heart harder than any rock" display his true nature as a beast (Perrault 191). Therefore, Tatar's article is clearly defended in its claims that betrayal is imperative to becoming a beast in a fairy tale, as proven by Bluebeard and his wife individually.

Another instance in which both Bluebeard and his wife are beasts are the way that both use passion in a negative way to exemplify their natures. In the critical article, Tatar talks about how passion, and not compassion, is the driving force that carries a fairy tale to its conclusion (4). If the wife in "Bluebeard" was slain, then the message could be that monsters do win in the end, and that good does not exist in the world. Fairy tales are meant to give us hope, and while the passion of Bluebeard's wife may come from curiosity, the passion of Bluebeard leads to cold-blooded murder, a crime that can not be overlooked in any way. Nonetheless, that does not excuse Bluebeard's wife from being a beast; Perrault narrates the tale by writing that after coming to the locked door, she paused to consider if this was a good course of action, "But the temptation was so great that she was unable to resist it" (190). This

brief description insinuates that her reasonable mind debated her natural tendencies, in which her natural, or beastly quality to disobey and satisfy her curiosity, won. She is of marrying age, and as such she will have logically outgrown childlike tendencies to disobey and she should be able to use her brain to make correct decisions; yet, she clings to her passions or temptations and she does not succeed in suppressing them. Bluebeard displays his passion when waiting to kill his wife, after giving her time to prepare for her death, by “roaring” and “shouting” and crying out loudly (Perrault 191-192). Perrault’s use of such action words implies that Bluebeard has given into his rage and desire for revenge, casting all possibilities of reason aside. The beast inside of Bluebeard had completely taken over, changing him from a charming man into a handsome, but evil, monster. Thus, it can be seen how the passion of these two characters helps them to fit the mold of a beast.

One final convincing reason both Bluebeard and his wife are both beasts is that they both feel justified in their cruel, individual actions. Tatar asserts that “It was Perrault, in his literary version of an orally transmitted tale, who took the first steps in the direction of converting a dramatic encounter between innocent maiden and barbaric murderer into a moral conflict between corrupt woman and corrupted man” (2). Symbolically, the immoral choice committed by the wife in opening the locked door with the forbidden key is one of sexual betrayal, whereas the immoral choice committed by Bluebeard is a deliberate betrayal of trust. While the wife begs for forgiveness for her mistake, the fact that she intentionally betrayed her husband implies that she thought she was justified. Bluebeard is not penitent in anyway in Perrault’s version of the tale, so he is a much darker and more evil beast, but both are beasts nonetheless. An example is found just after Bluebeard discovers his wife’s betrayal: “‘You must die, madam,’ he declared, ‘and it will be right away’” (Perrault 191). The phrase “right away” indicates that Bluebeard feels no remorse at his decision, which naturally implies that he feels justified in his actions. At the end of the tale, Bluebeard’s wife remarries a good man and retains a significant portion of Bluebeard’s wealth (Perrault 192). Even though she was the legal heir to his fortune, the choice to keep part of his inheritance for herself, instead of removing herself from it entirely, reflects the justification she feels, even after her blatant disobedience. While it may seem fair and just for her to retain his fortune, at least part of her is thinking that she has earned this money, and is therefore justified in her retention of his wealth. Thus, justification is an indicator of how the protagonist and the antagonist of the story are both beasts.

Hence, Tatar’s claim that there is more than one beast in many Bluebeard type fairy tales is supported by Perrault’s version of Bluebeard because there is an element of intentional betrayal from both parties. Additionally, passion is a negative driving force for both beasts, and they both feel justified in their cruel, individual actions. This will of course raise questions as to whether or not all fairy tale characters are beasts. Some may argue that Bluebeard’s wife is not really a beast because she made one small, simple mistake in which she intended no harm. Unfortunately, her mistake was intentional and without regret, so the consequence of her mistake was devastating enough to qualify her as a beast. With regards to Bluebeard’s wife, the possibility exists that she could learn from her mistake, and that she could also fundamentally change and be transformed into a true beauty both inside and out.

Works Cited

Tatar, Maria. “Beauties vs. Beasts in the Grimms' Nursery and Household Tales.” *Short Story Criticism*, vol. 88, 2006, pp. 1-6. *Literature Resource Center*,

<https://www.crsd.org/cms/lib5/PA01000188/Centricity/Domain/667/English/Fairy%20Tales/Beauties%20vs%20Beasts%20by%20Tatar.pdf>. Accessed Oct. 12th, 2018.

Perrault, Charles. "Bluebeard." *The Classic Fairy Tales*, 2nd ed., edited by Maria Tatar, Norton, 2017, pp. 188-193.

2nd Place Winner: Brooke Purtill “Inked: Expressive Professionalism”

For Professor Joy Sterrantino

There are stigmas that accompany virtually every physical feature: if a person has blonde hair, they are unintelligent and always down to party. If someone wears glasses, they must be nerdy, and if someone has tattoos, there is absolutely no way they could be a professional human being. Tattoos are a form of art that is growing in prevalence in the western world currently, but there is also plenty of discourse surrounding these pieces when it comes to professionalism in the workplace. Contrary to the stereotypes, tattooing should not be written off as a decision one makes when they lose a bet or drink too much; it is a means of expression intertwined with global history and a vast variety of cultures. Tattoos can have immense sentimental value, whether they are religious messages or uplifting, personal symbols for trying times. Their meaning and significance in the lives of many are not fairly reflected by the negative perceptions of the people who have them; in a century where we are steadily (albeit slowly) progressing towards social acceptance and freedom, these anachronistic stigmas should not be a reason for certified candidates to lose out on job opportunities.

The western world is slowly becoming more appreciative of art in all its forms, which is an attribute of the increase in popularity of tattoos. Other factors that have resulted in growing interest are media and celebrity influence: “Through the rise of the Internet and the increase in television of various formats of reality shows, the public has seen and been able to consult a variety of media sources which focus on the tattoo as their sole theme” (Walzer and Sanjurjo 73). Advances in technology and widespread use of social media platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter provide tattoo artists with exposure and popularize this form of art. These platforms also provide people with ideas and designs for the tattoo they might want and put the public in contact with revered artists. It is true that they have become something of a fashion trend, but our collective infatuation with tattoos runs deeper than the simple desire to look like everybody else. Some believe these works of art are ways to portray who we are on the inside; they allow us to show the world what lies within our hearts and minds. They provide people with the means to connect. When we use our bodies as canvases for art, “The unconscious is being invited to rise to the surface and show itself, to embody itself. And, as in so many of those practices, pain can be a tool for opening up the channel of communication” (Buss 37). We as humans found our relationships on mutual interests in artwork such as books, television shows, and movies. Tattoos are just another medium of art that allow us to establish common ground and familiarity with one another. In the end,

These motivations can be collapsed into two main categories - internal and external - that affect the acquisition of a tattoo. Internal influences, for instance, suggest that tattoos have some form of intrinsic value and serve as reminders, memorials or symbols. On the other hand, tattoos can represent the diminishing influence of parents and the growing influence of peers (Dickson et al. 1).

Whether the motive be superficial fashion trends or a genuine desire for artistic expression, “36 percent of young adults in the United States have at least one tattoo, and the annual amount of spending on tattoos in the United States is \$1,650,500,000” (Rima 706). Clearly, ink is simply becoming more ingrained and desirable in our modern society.

In spite of the fact that this art has become such a widespread aspect of our culture, there are plenty of cases of discrimination based on body art. Tattooed individuals tend to be seen as “less intelligent, professional, approachable, trustworthy and kind” (Search et al. 6). In a study which involved surveying

students in an undergraduate accounting program about whether or not visible tattoos were appropriate in the office setting, the college-goers deemed ink unprofessional and inappropriate, in spite of the fact that a quarter of those surveyed had tattoos themselves; they also reported that they had less trust in tatted office workers (Foltz). These views are based on an unreasonable way of thinking that is innate in human beings, which Professor Josh Adams touches on in his article when he writes, "There is a long-established history of reading the character of the individual from his or her physical appearance, or more specifically, from the ways in which he or she deviated from 'normal' and valued appearances" (Adams 150). We look for abnormalities in others and reach premature conclusions about their character based on their physical traits. This means we make frequent misjudgements about others since physical appearance and internal personality have no correlation in reality. A study conducted on personality differences between people with and without body modifications (including piercings and tattoos) concluded that there are "no relevant differences between modified and non-modified individuals in relation to demographic variables," which means "the traditional attitudes towards tattoos and piercings appear to be outdated" (Silke et al. 945). One specific stereotype that is common is the idea that tattooed people are less intelligent or ambitious than people without tattoos; however, "Researchers... have confirmed that although stereotypes still exist regarding tattooed individuals, a study of university students revealed no significant differences in the grade point average of students with tattoos and those without" (Foltz 1). These stigmas are simply not valid in practice, and yet they are preventing honest, qualified people from getting hired.

The misguided and negative perception surrounding body art mainly comes from the older population. According to a study of tattoos in dental hygiene education programs, "Older Americans are more likely to view tattooing negatively, with 64% of persons over the age of 65 viewing current tattoo trends as a change for the worse" (Search et al. 6). Clearly, this form of art deviates from traditionalist experiences, but to most people any sort of change qualifies as "a change for the worse." The elderly's rejection of tattoos as a popular form of art is simply a symbol of social progression, seeing as a great chunk of this population were also uncomfortable with the concepts of racial and gender equality as well as LGBTQ+ rights. These changes, while new and perhaps incompatible concepts when compared with past ideologies, are certainly not bad; we're simply becoming aware of subjects to be more open, accepting, and inclusive of in order to create a better quality of life for people in minority groups. We are slowly normalizing the concept that judging others by their appearance or other minute details yields inaccurate perceptions of them; as a society we are growing away from the ideology that gives us these negative preconceptions about others.

A contributing factor to these negative view of tattoos is the belief that they are simply a new fad that has come to resonate with millennials. In actuality, this form of art has an incredibly rich background that dates back to ancient history. Tattoos symbolize aspects of different cultures and the religious beliefs that coincide with them. For example, in many Greek and Roman cultures, "Tattoos were seen as marks of pride. Herodotus tells us that for the Thracians, tattoos were greatly admired and 'tattooing among them marks noble birth, and the want of it low birth'" (Lobell and Powell). This aspect of Greek culture holds this form of art as a symbol of high economic status, and therefore tattoos were sought after. The Greeks even included tattooing in their mythology - one story details a tattooed woman killing a man named Orpheus to avenge the god Dionysus, whom he had betrayed. Tattoos were also a huge part of South American culture. The Moche culture of Peru would use ink to represent phases of living and the afterlife. For them, "Tattoos... were symbolic of identity and life force. One interesting motif that is often found is a string of pupating flies ringing the neck, which symbolize death and rebirth" (Lobell and Powell). Farther north in Mexico, they were used to portray social status and power, and were utilized as a sort of aid to keep people in high social standings succinct and persuasive when

addressing the public. The placement was “Prominently around the mouth, which may refer, as it does in Classic Maya society, to the breath of life or the capacity of polished speech of these individuals” (Lobell and Powell). The cultural meaning of tattoos can also be seen in one of the more recent Disney movies, *Moana*, which tells a story based on genuine polynesian culture. In the movie, the antihero and polynesian god Maui is heavily tattooed. Each of the works on his skin detail his accomplishments, and he earns a new one whenever he achieves something worthwhile, which specifically revolves around his efforts to support mankind (Caldwell). All these meanings and cultures which include tattooing in their practices prove that this art form is not new or frivolous by any means. These pieces go back centuries, and there is so much unique mythology involved in them; they tell us how different civilizations operated. People were doing much more than placing pictures on their skin; they were displaying their socioeconomic status, telling stories, or even calling upon help from divine beings.

While in the modern day, some people still have tattoos that connect to this wide array of cultures and ancient belief systems, the motives and meaning behind our ink have changed. We may not be using the images on our skin to guide us through this life or whatever comes after, but in some cases we do still use them to represent our faith. Among Christians, tattoos of crosses are commonly used to express a belief in Jesus Christ, and they’re gradually becoming more prominent. In an article for the *Christian Century*, Tim Keel writes, “For most Christians the decision to get a tattoo is one that is filled with purposeful symbolism. Christianity is a sacramental religion that employs different rituals to outwardly mark an inward transformation” (Keel 19). Because tattoos are permanent, some religious people believe that getting one can be a symbolic commitment to God or whatever deity they worship. Their art will always be around to remind them of their faith. Similarly, people use tattoos to keep their deceased loved ones close. People actually get tattoos that have the ashes of their loved ones mixed in with the ink so that “The bodies of the deceased and the bereaved are literally interconnected. The border between living and dead matter is crossed as cremated remains become part of a living body. When the bereaved touch their tattooed skin they also touch the remains of their deceased relative” (470). This allows the living to carry their loved ones with them at all times and symbolically defies the finite nature of life because tattoos are permanent, similar to how they can represent eternal commitment to a higher power. Tattoos can also serve as distractions; soldiers also often get tattoos in acknowledgement of their time spent serving their country or as an expression of how their experiences changed them. They can also serve as a way to distract from bad wartime memories: “Returning troops often want tattoos to express their intense feelings, or even to blot them out -- if only for a short time. ‘A little bit of pain makes you forget about a whole load of it’” (Dorrel). These are each ways in which tattoos can be incredibly personal and uplifting for individuals. They can be utilized as sources of religious strength, connection with loved ones, and tributes to courageous achievements.

Beyond employing art on skin as a connection to divinity or loved ones who have passed away, it can allow us to represent who we feel we are, convey a story, or display crucial life lessons. They allow us to express our inner psyche, and there is something cathartic about having your innermost beliefs or thoughts presented on your skin for all the world to see. Tattoos can ground us and make us vulnerable all at once. Like any other piece of art, so much can be said in just a simple picture or symbol. They can be interpreted, discussed, and pulled apart to reveal the meaning, which can be fluid and specific to every individual who sees them. Every person has different life experiences. Every person has knowledge and trials and triumphs that others do not. We can learn from each other through storytelling and spark conversations from the things we felt were so important that we chose to have them imprinted on our skin for the rest of our lives. Tattoos are pieces that should be considered with the same reverence that we grant Van Gogh’s *Starry Night* or Michelangelo’s *David*. In the article, “Marked: Tattoo as an Expression of Psyche,” the authors assert that

Because both the “inner moment” and the manner in which we choose to express it outwardly are so unique to each individual, it seems that any tattoo should best be approached... by setting our generalized knowledge to one side and letting the thing itself speak to us in all its particularity. The wearer may have significant things to say to us, valid personal insights to articulate. (Buss and Hodges 36)

This ideology holds tattoos to the level of respect and artistic analysis they deserve. It demonstrates the notion that we as human beings have valuable messages to articulate to the world and that we can benefit one another by sharing our experiences. We are also able to commemorate important moments in our lives and create talismans that represent the good things in our lives. In a survey regarding motivation and meaning behind tattoos, it was determined that “Respondents acquire first tattoos to represent important role transitions and as a form of identity and self-expression. Most respondents' first tattoos are obtained as a symbolic way to celebrate relationships with family and friends, to signify personal growth or spirituality” (Dickson et. al 1). When people carry beautiful things with them at all times, they are constantly reminded of things that make life worth living. Everybody has tough days or stressful situations they must get through in life, and keeping little commemorations of cherished things can make the burden of tribulations a bit lighter. They are grounding and serve to calm people down when struggles feel bigger than one can tackle.

It has been established that tattoos function as many personal things, and that the preconceptions others have about inked individuals are based on false generalizations. When it comes to the workplace, however, there are several factors that contribute to employers' hesitation to hire people with certain pieces of artwork. A lot needs to be taken into consideration: how will clients and customers perceive employees? Could a company lose business on account of consumers taking offense to tattoos? While many people carefully mull over tattoos they want, some are less considerate. There are people in the world with visible tattoos that are actually offensive in nature; some feel the need to have profanity or vulgar, explicit images on their bodies forever. That isn't to say their tattoos lack significance and depth in their own unique way, but it is valid for employers to have qualms about those messages being displayed at their place of business. There have been arguments that requirements for employees to cover their tattoos are violations of the first amendment because they hinder freedom of speech and expression, and the supreme court is currently trying to define tattoos in the context of the Bill of Rights. For now, the judges have issued a statement that “When dealing with a specific tattoo that depicts something inherently offensive, the privacy interests of other employees and the need for an employer to prevent a hostile work environment provide the requisite justification for the demand of covering the tattoo to be constitutional” (Rema 731). However, when the image depicted is innocent and inoffensive, its visibility should be protected as free expression, especially if that image has any political meaning. While to a certain degree, the right of the worker to have tattoos is protected, the perception of the public should still be taken into account; after all, employees represent their businesses and their employers. Luckily, there are cases that reflect exactly how customers feel about tattoos.

Customers are not as picky as employers seem to think. One example of this comes from a nurse who was told she could keep her tattoos visible unless a patient ever complained or expressed concern regarding her body art. While at first she was worried her patients might be offended, “No patient has ever complained about my tattoos. They are a great talking point and have helped break the ice with a number of patients who ask me questions about them” (Smith 33). In occupations that require a lot of interaction with the general population, tattoos can help employees get to know their clients and develop more personable, friendly relationships with them, resulting in a boost in customer service. Allowing for tattoos to be visible in the workplace allows for diversity and in some cases makes customers feel more comfortable there; because tattoos are becoming more and more popular, perhaps

seeing a caretaker with ink humanizes that person. The clients realize that this stranger who is helping them out is just a normal human being, too, and that they have their own lives and interests and passions. This makes the interaction a much more pleasant experience. And as for customers that take offense to innocent, wholesome tattoos, the reality is that professionalism refers to how employees interact with others. Tattoos are not a part of any interaction unless they come up as a conversation piece; if an employee is qualified, kind, and personable, it is unlikely that clients and customers will have any complaints. "While some patients and families could take offense, 'one needs to look beyond a provider's physical appearance to the quality of care that person provides to their patients'" (Notini and Park 10). It would be shallow and superficial to look at a customer service experience and judge it based on anything other than the actual human interaction that took place in that instance.

Tattoos have become a thing of controversy in the business world. The reality is that nobody can determine attributes of others based solely on the fact that they have a tattoo. Ideologies that deem this form of art "unprofessional" are outdated and hold no validity. Inked folk can be exactly as personable, qualified, and dependable in the business world as those with natural skin; it is far past time to set aside these irrational conclusions about others based on outward appearance. We have come so far with that concept, and as a society we are grasping that a person's character cannot be judged by their race, gender, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation. We need to recognize that discrimination based on outward appearance is an unfair and old-fashioned way of doing things and that we place way too much stress on our physical forms. Our success and progress in society should be based on our actual qualifications and character instead of superficial things such as ink on skin.

Works Cited

- Broussard, Kristin A, and Helen C Harton. "Tattoo or Taboo? Tattoo Stigma and Negative Attitudes toward Tattooed Individuals." *Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 158, no. 5, 2018, pp. 521–540.
- Caldwell, Ellen C. "The Polynesian Origin Myths Behind Disney's Moana." *JSTOR Daily*, 6 June 2017.
- Colbert, Ron. "Teacher Candidate Fashion, Tattoos, and Piercings: Finding Balance and Common Sense." *Childhood Education*, vol. 84, no. 3, Apr. 2008, pp. 158–158.
- Dorell, Oren. "Troops Get Different Tattoos Leaving War." *USA Today*, 25 May 2007, proxy.li.suu.edu:2443/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=J0E202234050707&site=ehost-live.
- Foltz, Kristen A. "The Millennial's Perception of Tattoos: Self Expression or Business Faux Pas?" *College Student Journal*, vol. 48, no. 4, Dec. 2014.
- Heeisseis, Meike, et al. "In Touch With the Deceased: Animate Objects and Human Ashes." *Material Religion*, vol. 8, no. 4, Dec. 2012, pp. 465–488., doi:10.2752/175183412X13522006994818.

- Keel, Tim. "Tattooed." *Christian Century*, 15 May 2007, pp. 18–20.
- Kurutz, Steven. "Face Time for Tattoos." *New York Times*, vol. 167, no. 58045, 5 Aug. 2018, pp. 1–2.
- Leader, Karen. "'On the Book of My Body:' Women, Power, and 'Tattoo Culture.'" *Feminist Formations*, vol. 28, no. 3, Dec. 2016, pp. 174–195.
- Lobell, Jarrett A, and Eric A Powell. "Ancient Tattoos." *Archaeology*, vol. 66, no. 6, 2013, pp. 41–46.
- Notini, Lauren, and Bob Park. "Ethical Responses If Patient Is Offended by a Healthcare Provider's Tattoos." *Medical Ethics Advisor*, vol. 32, no. 12, Dec. 2016, pp. 10–11., doi:<https://proxy.li.suu.edu:2443/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=119758374&site=ehost-live>.
- Rema, Wendy. "The Human Body: The Canvas for Tattoos; The Public Workplace: An Exhibit for a New Form of Art?" *Drake Law Review*, vol. 66, no. 3, ser. 3, 1 July 2018, pp. 705–731. 3, doi:10.2307/1277417.
- Smith, Lee. "My Tattoos Sometimes Help Me Break the Ice With Patients." *Nursing Standard*, 25th ed., vol. 24, 24 Feb. 2010, pp. 33–33.
- Williams, D. J., et al. "'You Need to Cover Your Tattoos!': Reconsidering Standards of Professional Appearance in Social Work." *Social Work*, vol. 59, no. 4, 2014, pp. 373–375.

Expressive- English 2010

1st Place Winner: Melissa Harris "What I Learned When I Was 3"

For Dr. Julia Combs

When I was around 2 or 3, I spent my first summer with my Father and Step-Mother. I had never stayed with them for long because of how young I was. My Mother and Step-Father had gone to Washington to find a house and while they were gone, all the kids stayed in Colorado. There are 6 of us siblings, plus my 3 step-sisters and step-brother. With the exception of my baby half-brother - who went with my mother - and my other baby half-brother - born of my step-mom - I am the youngest. I've never spent this long away from my mother.

I don't remember if I was scared. Being so young, many of my memories are jumbled up. Some I remember vividly. Others I only remember with feeling and emotion. So many things happened at that home that shaped who I would become. A few short months would completely change my 3-year-old heart, mind, personality. And one such instance comes to mind clearly.

My siblings and I are playing outside, if you could call it that. The environment of home was more hostile than homely. It was less like play and more like feral dogs co-existing in the same area, left to defend themselves against the others. The yard is vast to my mind - there is a garden, a cage with my sister's pet rabbit, a large satellite dish, a wooden deck on the second story requiring stairs to access it. Attached to the side of the deck is a gate, accessing an enclosure for our dogs. The gate must always be locked, lest we incite the wrath of our parents. Underneath the deck is a dog run, small enough for the large amounts of puppies we have.

I have always had an affinity for animals and a desire to copy my siblings, as the youngest child usually does. My older sisters would enter the dog enclosure to play with the puppies. I want to pet the puppies too. I ask my sister Lindsay if she will let me in and pet the dogs with me - I cannot reach the lock on the gate. She obliges. I walk through the gate confidently, but Lindsay closes and locks the gate behind me. I realize that she is not coming in with me and the confidence drops like iron. I am a little afraid to be in there alone, as I was afraid of everything. She tells me to call for her when I'm done and she will unlock the gate.

I am overwhelmed by joyous puppies. I am 3 and, though puppies, these are large breed dogs, much larger than I. Assaulted by happy tongues and sharp claws, I feel okay for a few moments. However, as pain starts to swell in my skin and dirt and saliva cover my eyes, I want to leave. I call out to Lindsay but she does not come. I cannot hear the sounds of my siblings outside anymore. A panic response ensues as my mind tries to process apparent abandonment. Would they really have left me? Maybe they can't hear me? Maybe they packed up in the van and left me outside to die? How can I survive this new life?

A pit is forming in my gut, like a black hole swallowing up my existence, my being. I feel like at any moment I might cease entirely - and that that might be a relief. Light, courage, and breath are consumed. I have no control over this gargantuan beast, and I am falling in.

No one is coming for me.

Any rational person will tell you that I was probably not in danger. But I am 3 and I know nothing of the world. I begin to cry and yell at the dogs to please, please leave me alone, pushing them away with my small strength. I am backed in the corner and they won't stop jumping on me. I am not equipped to get myself out of this situation. I cannot reach the lock, I have no critical thinking skills, the dogs are so excited and I am so busy trying to protect myself from their overzealous jumping and pawing that I can't think anyway.

I don't know how long I actually spent in that kennel, but it was long enough to solidify in my mind that no one was coming for me and I was going to be tortured by these paws for the rest of my small existence. I felt that this kennel was all the world, nothing existed outside of it. Just me, alone and in pain.

One of my oldest brothers eventually came out of the house and looked down on me in the kennel from the deck. I don't know if he heard me crying or if my family noticed my absence or if he alone was aware that the 3-year-old was missing. I looked at him with utter fear and hope, searching for kindness and pity to come and help me. I did not find it. I was met with an uncaring voice that told me to come inside. I said that I couldn't reach the lock. I expected him to come down and open the door to free me.

He didn't. He told me to climb up the side of the porch. I tried, but with a combination of weak little muscles tired from fighting off puppies and a body full of adrenaline, I couldn't do it. I pleaded with tears, hoping to incite compassion or pity. I thought he would give in and come down, open the gate, pick me up and carry me to the house in safety.

He didn't. He told me to crawl through the dog run under the porch. I protested again, and yet again was not met with compassion. Fighting off the dogs, I crawled on hands and knees into the small, square space. The dog run was like a blind obstacle course. My skin and skull are jabbed by nails and wood as I try to navigate in the dark. As I came to a turn, my head would bang on the wood, which was my cue to contort my waist so that I am 90 degrees. Then, 90 degrees in the other direction. I maneuver my body until I am through the S-turns of the run. Surely it didn't actually take long for me to get out. But in my 3-year-old perception of time, it felt like an eternity. Soon I was breathing fresh air again, sniffles and tears and dirt and slobber but fresh air again. My brain suddenly remembered that the world was larger than that kennel.

I walked up the porch. My brother did not wait for me. I opened the sliding glass door that led into our kitchen/dining room. Everyone was there. No one said anything to me. My dad told me that I needed to hurry and eat lunch. I began preparing a sandwich, tears still sliding down my face.

So many things happened that summer. And so many things were subsequently taught to me. But I think that this one experience can really sum most of it up. I am alone, abandoned by those closest to me; no one will save me, no one will protect me - not even those meant to protect me; people are not safe and cannot be trusted; my needs are a nuisance; life is hell and you just have to figure out how to survive, somehow. I learned that I was the only who would take care of me.

I look at my nieces who are 3 and 4 (respectively), their father is my brother who came to help me. One of his daughters is a lot like me I think. As they grow up, in a wildly healthier home than their father and myself, I am filled with a weird concoction of emotions I don't really understand.

One I do understand though, and that is happy. A deep, heart aching happiness for those wonderful girls who don't have to grow up knowing the fear and pain that we did, that I did. They will be protected and their potential in life will be ushered in with gladness. They will flourish and the care free whims of childhood will not be robbed from them. I wonder what I would have been like, had I been in their place. I can only hope to offer that same protection to children I may have one day.

2nd Place Winner: Mikala Mikrut "The Best Way to Speak to a Monster Is From a Distance"
For Professor Charla Strosser

Humans have always feared the unknown. More often than not, it meant death. Throughout time, the term "monster" has been used to explain the inexplicable whether it was a strange shape or sound coming from an unexplored part of the woods or the man who will abandon all sense of morals to get to where he wants to be. Monster is such a broad term that Webster's Dictionary defines it both as "an animal or plant of abnormal form or structure" and "one who deviates from normal or acceptable behavior or character," which makes sense given that both of these examples are out of the norm. Monsters matter because they are a category in which society sorts the misfits, the unexamined, and the suspicious; there are exceptions to every rule and monsters are the outliers from whatever is perceived as "right."

There is a certain fascination that comes with witnessing something out of the ordinary. While women in the 1400s would hide their children behind their skirt to shield them from beholding a deformed man on the street, they would have no problem with paying money to observe him behind bars or glass. Putting a barrier or separation between normal people and mysterious forces makes them appear less realistic and thus safer. It is with this feeling of safety that people will engage in activities such as walking through haunted houses or watching horror movies. If they know they won't get hurt, then the fear is an exciting rush rather than a question of survival. Stephen King, American horror author, argues that "we're all mentally ill," (King, 16) and that perhaps the fear factor is braved to prove that it can be done. But more likely, it is "to re-establish our feelings of essential normality," (King, 16) because the people in the theater screaming at a screen to run away are far more sane than an actress knowingly advancing towards a monster. It is the monster that is used as a platform to define normality and make the average Joe feel like at least they're doing something right; so long as they're not dripping with green goo or hiding in a teenage girl's closet with a knife, they're succeeding at life.

This has been the mindset for centuries. Daniel Cohen, French economist and professor, brings to light how the Aztecs and the Incas were terrified at the sight of men on horses (Cohen). Having never fathomed the relationship, they assumed the two bodies were one, yet again using that term, monster, to define something unknown. But even way back then, the people were fascinated by monsters when it meant they wouldn't have to be faced. Cohen talks about how "griffin's claws or the roc's eggs were brought back" (Cohen, 139) from travels, making people believe that these creatures were real. They would buy these things valuing them as exotic and maybe even magical without even questioning why they resembled why perhaps their "feathers" looked like palm leaves or why their "griffin's claws" resembled animal tusks or horns. People just couldn't resist believing that there were rare creatures out in the parts of the world they wouldn't dare to venture; the idea of the unknown is scary and exciting, but the actual notion of leaving home could mean danger or even death. So why risk it? Venturing the unknown is hardly celebrated.

That's why most people's interaction with something they've never seen before or those woods that just don't feel right to be around are from the comforts of their own home or theaters. Horror movies satisfy the curiosity of what lies beyond Nancy's humdrum nine to five office job. Given that the horror genre observes the weird and creepy, it makes sense that the people who work on them aren't considered on the same spectrum when it comes to artistry. Michael Varrati, American screenwriter, columnist and actor, has written an article that examines just that. He believes it's absolutely absurd that people who

make monsters possible in cinema and literature are “routinely looked down upon by the ‘real’ artists,” (Varrati, 1) how could a comedy be viewed as any more or less artistic than horror? Well, because comedy involves believable characters in normal or at least semi-realistic situations. Horror is laughable simply because creatures are strange, they’re intriguing but not worth more than an prolonged glance of judgement. Again, the point of people still giving monsters their attention in this modern world is to remind themselves how normal and socially accepted they are.

A more concise example would be Frankenstein’s monster in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. This creature is certainly hideous, even learning language and emotion doesn’t stop people from fearing his grotesque presence. Zoe Beenstock wrote an article in which she addresses “whether individualism can produce sociability,” (Beenstock, 1). She doesn’t shy away from revealing the natural contradiction of human tolerance. It is often assumed that accepting others and celebrating individuality and differences is taught from childhood; and yet there are still hate crimes and separation. What people view as monstrous is that which is unfamiliar to them.

So perhaps humanity has not made so much progress in understanding others and the world after all. But that is okay, because the world is so vast that what really matters is that humanity consistently puts its efforts towards understanding and improving. In conclusion, monsters matter because they are a reflection of what is not yet understood and are the basis on which people judge normality. Without monsters, people would be left to judge themselves and their personal flaws and immoral behaviors. Monsters are a scape goat, something to point a finger at and say, “Well, at least I’m not THAT thing.”

Works Cited

- Beenstock, Zoe. "Lyrical Sociability: The Social Contract and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein." *Philosophy & Literature*, vol. 39, no. 2, Oct. 2015, pp. 406-421.
- EBSCOhost,proxy.li.suu.edu:2443/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=115185220&site=ehost-live.
- Cohen, Daniel. "The Birth of Monsters." *Monsters*, edited by Andrew J. Hoffman, Bedford/St. Martins, 2016, 134-139.
- King, Stephen. "Why We Crave Horror Movies." *Monsters*, edited by Andrew J. Hoffman, Bedford/St. Martins, 2016, 16-18.
- "Monster." Merriam-Webster, Merriam-Webster,www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/monster.
- Varrati, Michael. "Unfairly Maligned Monsters: Why Horror Matters." *The Huffington Post*, TheHuffingtonPost.com, 20 Apr. 2012, www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-varrati/horror-movies-books_b_1441467.html.

Quantitative- English 2000

1st Place Winner: Elizabeth Armstrong “Decisions”

For Dr. Kelly Ferguson

She spent her whole life waiting. People mistook her for being ungrateful. They didn't understand, though. It wasn't that she didn't appreciate the world around her, (instead she took it all in, every breath, every image, every moment) it's that she wanted to see more. Grace wanted to do more, to see more, to *be* more. It was her ambition that drove her. It was also her ambition that drove people away.

She had a boyfriend in high school. She called him Ian, despite the fact that it was his middle name. He was tall, with dark curly hair he often covered up with the same gray baseball cap. He wore it backwards. Her father hated that, and Grace eventually would take it off of his head and sling it on her own (facing forward) just so her dad wouldn't comment on it when they walked in the door. That's the way their relationship was. She couldn't tell Ian the truth- that her dad thought she was flat out wasting her time with him- but she couldn't let her father completely walk all over him either. She loved Ian, and she loved her father too.

They used to be close, Grace and her dad. She spent her childhood playing catch in the backyard with him, even though she hated baseball. The ball felt awkward in her hand, and she didn't like the feel of the laces. Even after she threw it, she still felt the imprint of them on her palm. But she dealt with it, if only to make her father happy. She felt she owed him that much.

He wasn't happy anymore, and she blamed herself. Her mother had left them when she was only three, and he had done his best to support Grace and raise her right. There were some things though, that a father just couldn't do. Like when Grace started dating Ian, and she finally understood all about the movies and the songs that talked about love. She understood what it felt like to get butterflies in her stomach, and to see Ian in everything she saw. Her father didn't understand it. She started to tell her dad about this when she broke the news that her and Ian were dating, and he just shook his head. Grace walked out of the room and flopped onto her bed, a silent tear falling to her pillowcase. She had never missed her mother so much.

She decided it was because her mother took his belief in love with her when she walked out the door that December night. She blamed the fact that he didn't support Ian and her on her mother. All her father understood now was that Grace spent less time at home. He would sit and stare out the window, wondering where his wife was, checking the clock, hoping Grace would be home soon. It was Grace's absence (the fact that she spent more time with Ian now than her father) that was breaking their relationship.

So Grace got used to it; being torn between two worlds. She was torn between Ian and her father, the two most important people in her life. And, she was torn between Ian and her ambition- her need to see the world, to *become*.

She sat on the couch, her notebook sitting on her blue jeans. She gnawed on the pencil and glanced at her laptop. She could go to Colombia, Ireland, New Zealand, London, Greece, and that was just the

beginning. Her list was growing each day, the more research she did. Grace's counselor had told her about the study abroads, and at first she couldn't believe that you could travel and go to school at the same time (and it was beneficial even!) and so she had come home that day, flinging the door open and beaming. She couldn't stop thinking about it. Her passport was tucked into the front pocket of her notebook, and she took it out and looked at it again.

"Babe, if you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?" she asked Ian.

He was sprawled out on the couch next to her, watching the Celtics highlights on YouTube from last year's season. He looked up at her, his green eyes almost hidden under his curly hair. He raised an eyebrow.

"A Celtics game, Gracie," he replied, as if it were the most obvious answer in the whole world.

She sighed, she had already gotten him tickets.

"We're already going. Where would you go, if you could go outside of the country?" Grace was irritated. Why was he content with watching basketball games all day?

"I already told you, Gracie. I don't get why I would even want to leave Springville. Besides, you're here." Ian pulled her closer and kissed her on the forehead. That's when he saw her notebook, open to a page with the title, "Fall 2019 Study Abroads."

"Why does that say 2019?" Ian pulled away his arm that was wrapped around her waist and sat up straight. "I thought we were moving in together."

Grace swallowed. "I meant 2020." But she didn't. She had meant 2019, and Ian knew it.

"Are you cheating on me?" He was standing up now, and his arms were crossed.

"What? No!" Grace's face was incredulous.

"Then what happened? Do you not love me? Do you not want to move in with me anymore?" He looked pathetic, someone so tall and strong, with an expression that was completely and utterly vulnerable.

Grace looked down. What was she supposed to tell him? She loved him. She loved him so much. But she wanted more, and if she stayed here with him, she'd be in Springville forever.

Her father walked in.

"What's going on in here?" He looked from Grace's tear-filled eyes to Ian standing above her.

"Nothing, sir, I was just leaving." Ian pulled on his grey baseball cap and turned on his heel.

Grace's eyes were going blurry now, and her father walked toward her. A tear splashed on her notebook, right where she had written, "Galway, Ireland."

And so, she made her decision.

Finally through the rush of the airport security and finding her gate, Grace turned and waved goodbye to her father. He didn't understand. She felt a clench of guilt in the pit of her stomach, because she knew all he was thinking about was that she was going to be gone until December. A feeling of realization washed over her though, as she stepped on to that plane and searched for her seat. She had left him a long time ago. She had left him the moment she had decided to date Ian.

She didn't want to think about Ian. After their fight that one day in the living room, the day he had found out she was leaving, he had walked out that door, taking their relationship with him. He would nod to her in the hallways, and he even gave her a hug and whispered, "Congratulations," the day they graduated from Springville High School together. Sometimes they called each other, but it was never the same. She never explained her decision, and he was left to wonder why she had made it. Grace thought it was easier that way. But at that moment, the moment he had read, "Fall 2019 Study Abroads," a small part of Ian knew he would never have Grace back. She knew it too, because there was nothing he could do to make her stay. Sometimes being in love just wasn't enough.

She was thinking about this as she found her seat and sat down. It was a window seat, and for some reason this made her uneasy about what was to come. She thought about Ian and how she was still in love with him. And she thought about her father, and the look on his face when she said goodbye. She knew that her leaving was doing nothing to help save her father-daughter relationship with him. Grace didn't understand. She had made this decision. So why wasn't she happy? Why didn't she feel the way she did when she had sat in her living room, scrolling through the different options of study abroads, dreaming about her future? It took everything in her to stay in that seat, to not run off the plane, back to Ian, back to her father.

Grace woke to the sound of the pilot announcing their descent. Groggy, she sat up and started to gather her belongings.

"Finally awake, are ya? Take a look." The man next to her wore a thick knit sweater that matched his gray beard, and there were smile lines that ran deep next to his eyes. He pointed, and so she turned her head toward the direction of his hand.

She gasped. It was the Cliffs of Moher, the ones she had spent hours looking at. And beside that, it was green and green and more green. There was a sharp divide between the deep blue of the Atlantic Ocean and the striking green color of Ireland's Coast. And somehow, with that gorgeous landscape laid out beneath her and with the knowledge that she would be landing soon, everything was okay. Those excited butterflies came back, the same ones that had gotten her through senior year as she thought about traveling. This was it, this was finally it. And so, she made her decision.

2nd Place Winner: Mitchell Zufelt “Kurt Cobain Understands My Teenage Angst, but That Doesn’t Make it Smell Any Better”

For Dr. Kelly Ferguson

Picture this.

A dimly lit room. Pungent aroma. Its thick atmosphere is suddenly cut in half by a sharp, electric guitar riff. Next come the drums, pushing the knife further through the haze. At once, a heavy bassist drops into the scene and the tension is broken. The whole room reeks of sweat, of too many bodies in too small a space. It smells like burnt hair on banging heads. It smells like chemical angst. It “Smells Like Teen Spirit.”

This repugnant imagery was poured into the streams of MTV in 1991 by the perennial grunge band Nirvana. Their heavy, aromatic song “Smells Like Teen Spirit” enraptured youthful listeners the world over. It was the catalyst for their tremendous fame and managed to become somewhat of an anthem for the young, the angsty, and the disillusioned. This, perhaps, shouldn’t come as a surprise, because there may not have ever been anyone so young, so angsty, and so disillusioned as was Nirvana’s lead singer, Kurt Cobain.

Cobain was the picture of rebellious agitation. You know the type: steely blue eyes like basins of chlorine, an apathetic wardrobe layered in the thick smell of distrust, and hair just long enough to make your grandma writhe in her cardigan. Kurt Cobain had it all. He always had. With an irrepressible passion for music and the deep emotional trauma of his parents’ divorce, Cobain was practically raised to be a rockstar. He was the perfectly curated ambassador for a generation of fractious young people with a resentment for their parents’ mistakes.

Fractious young people like myself.

--

I think the most exhausting aspect of puberty is the transformation of harmless children into hostile, vehement freedom-fighters. I don’t know for sure what causes it -- maybe the rivers of hormones or the unsympathetic minefield that is the high-school social order -- but adolescence tends to infuse people with the sense that they’ve been short-changed by the world. It did for me, anyway.

Picture this.

It’s four years ago. 2014. I’m in my dad’s car and it’s getting late at night. I’m pulling out of the high school parking lot, my car one among many that are shoving their way out and into the street. We’re pulling away from what was our school’s football game, but whether the team won or lost is already a long-gone memory. I’m a loser, regardless. Outside is cold, but alone in my car I can barely stand the heat. All the injustices of a frigid world are collapsing in on me at once. The girl I’m in love with is dating a guy with a colossal jawline while my own puny jaw is lined with acne, I’m going into another weekend alone, my parents won’t understand, and I hate my life and, as if that weren’t enough, I have a stack of math homework that needs to be done by Monday and I am miserably, deplorably bad at math.

I am seventeen, and I am certain that I’m in the pits of Hell.

And I'm a lot like Kurt Cobain, because I'm not satisfied with that.

Go back further. It's 1990. Kurt Cobain and the noxious Kathleen Hanna, a friend of his who came from an angsty punk-rock band of her own, are hanging out way too late at night and drinking far too much Canadian Club. Disenfranchised by a world that seems to have let them down, they take to the streets with spray paint and social justice.

They come to a pro-life teen pregnancy center. Painted words go up on the walls:

FAKE ABORTION CLINIC EVERYONE

GOD IS KING

More shots of Club. Cheers to a public service and then the two wind up back at Kurt's motel. His mind long since washed away in the alcohol, Kurt Cobain passes out on the floor, but now Kathleen has an insatiable drive to graffiti. A sharpie is all she needs to spew her vile inspiration onto the wall in big, turbulent letters:

KURT SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT

When Kurt Cobain woke up, it would be to the inspiration for Nirvana's most popular song of all time. "Smells Like Teen Spirit" became an anthem for disaffected youth the world over. It was only a matter of months after the nefarious graffiti incident before "Smells Like Teen Spirit" would pour into MTV and saturate the radio with its abrasive, virulent riffs. The song carried Cobain and his band to the top of the charts and on tours across Europe; soon enough, they found themselves hailed as the "flagship of Generation X."

Now, back to the present.

Back to the present because I *have* to stop and ask the obvious question: Why? Why on Earth did "Smells Like Teen Spirit" become so outrageously popular? Have you heard the lyrics?

With the lights out, it's less dangerous
Here we are now, entertain us
I feel stupid and contagious
Here we are now, entertain us
A mulatto, An albino
A mosquito, My libido
Yeah, hey, yay

That's not Shakespeare you just read. It's the chorus of "Smells Like Teen Spirit." It's a whirlwind of emotion that came as a torrent from the mind of Kurt Cobain. At first glance, these lyrics don't seem to make any sense. At second glance, they still don't.

The lights are out?

Are you sure that makes it less dangerous?

What is *it*, anyway?

A cry for entertainment. A burst of epidemic self-deprecation. A baffling string of four unrelated nouns followed by yeah, hey, yay.

What does it mean?

But I understood at one point. Rewind again, four years.

Back to being 17. Back to the lonesome driver's seat of my dad's Toyota Avalon, to the putrid inequity of adolescent life. Back to the depths of a teenage Hell where I never get the girl and I'm force-fed algebra. The sick injustice of it all is heavy on my shoulders; my stomach is churning and I start to sweat. I won't drive straight home tonight. Oh, no.

Windows go down, volume goes up. Cold night wind bellows into the car as I take the long route home. A sharp electric guitar riff slices the air. I don't remember the speed limit. I don't remember the football game. I forget to care about algebra or chiseled jawlines or *her* and I open my pimpled mouth to let out the words that are screaming from the car's speakers and from my soul:

WITH THE LIGHTS OUT IT'S LESS DANGEROUS
HERE WE ARE NOW ENTERTAIN US
I FEEL STUPID AND CONTAGIOUS
HERE WE ARE NOW ENTERTAIN US
A MULATTO AN ALBINO I'M A SKITTLE I'M A BEETLE
YEAHHHH

I don't care if the lyrics make sense. I don't care if I know them at all. The only thing to care about is myself -- my brazen, teenage self. Wrapped in the frigid dark of night, 'myself' is uninhibited. I'm an individual. I'm vindicated in my miserable angst by Kurt Cobain and the rest of the world can go screw itself because it'll never be a part of who I am right now.

Temporarily, I can't feel the depression. I hear only the guitars. Blind to the future. Without taste for the the cordial. And the only thing I can smell is Teen Spirit.

I have long since left that lonesome seat in the Avalon. Adolescence and all its vulgar pains are in my rear-view mirror, the reflections of football games and girls growing smaller and smaller as I get further away. As I squint after them, trying to make out the fading lines of their figures, I find myself wondering if they were ever really there at all. The supposed injustices, the presumably agonizing heartache -- now so far removed that I ask myself if it was all a delusion, a false perception of the world brought through vision obscured by hormonal haze.

Yet there had been something in that car that Kurt Cobain managed to connect with.

Perhaps he was deluded, too.

Look back at 1990. Look back at that toxic August evening with the spray paint and the sharpies and realize something that Cobain didn't.

“Teen Spirit” was a deodorant marketed to young women. It was the chosen anti-perspirant of Cobain’s then-girlfriend, Tobi. Kathleen Hanna, Cobain’s graffiti-partner-in-crime, felt Tobi had marked him with her scent. What she etched onto the wall was an assertion of truth:

KURT SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT

Kurt Cobain didn’t know what it meant. But he liked how it felt. He felt like a rebel, an anarchist, a radical sort of revolutionary, and the spokesperson of a generation. With the heavy drums pumping behind him and shrill guitars to cut the way in front, it didn’t matter if that was the truth. And I, in my car -- soaked in the same pulsating grunge music and fiery Teen Spirit -- am the same. And so, as if together, Kurt Cobain and I forget the cares of first-world life. We drown the anguish of adolescence and turn up the volume and clench our fists while we bang our heads and scream the senseless, violent lyrics of a song named after deodorant.