

An aerial photograph of a university campus. A large river flows through the center, with several bridges crossing it. The campus is filled with various buildings, including large brick structures and modern glass-fronted buildings. There are green lawns and many trees, some with autumn foliage. The sky is clear and blue.

Spring 2016

Voices

WRITING
CENTER

Joel

Elijah Thompson-Acquah

Two police dogs carry the fox inside the Parisian law enforcement building with a strap connected to their vests. As part of the K-9 unit of Paris, the two have their own room of solidarity. Six dogs in total can come inside this room; each have their own cage bed that is comforted with a clean interior beige carpet, a soft pillow and two feeding bowls. Their ceiling lamp is dimly lit. Their walls are blank white and thick. Their window that leads to the outside barely closes and always takes air inside the room. The dogs also happened to have a vast space where they could interrogate suspects, whether they be a human or an animal. Humans remain uncomfortable around snarling dogs, and animals who are just as guilty are menacingly questioned.

The fox was thrown onto a resting pad, which took a slight forward push. In front of him were two photos that matched his body appearance: messy, orange hair; a blackened left eye; crooked whiskers. A stiff, elderly greyhound was sitting on another pad in front of the fox. He was in uniform, wearing a small blue officer vest and a badge saying “*Captaine de Chiens Policiers*” on his left shoulder with the name “FERRARI” located at the bottom of the badge. He happened to not wear any pants also.

“You’ve gotten the wrong fox!” the fox pleaded with a French accent. “I have done nothing wrong! Honestly!”

“Are you sure?” the old dog Ferrari spoke with an Italian accent and then pointed with his long nose. “Because these photos all have your face. You look *exactly* like the fox that had robbed all the diamonds from the businesses around France! You have the same hairstyle, ear type and eye color!”

“But come on! There could be another fox that looks just like me. I mean, all I was doing was selling coats on the street—“

“During May? When it’s really hot!?”

“It’s best if you get your coats early and quick. It gets really cold when France hits the winters. So, why not have your coat soon so you don’t have to worry about it later on?!”

The fox had sweat pouring down all over his face. His mouth was twitching awkwardly, and his pupils were slowly dilating. The three police dogs can all see this happening. Thus, the old greyhound turned to the other dogs standing at the side of the door, and he nodded his head, signaling them to grab something for him.

“Get our things, Victor,” he said. The pit bull nodded back and left the room; the German shepherd kept guard of the door.

“So, do you have any affiliation to some underground uprising, *già?*” the captain said as Victor was leaving.

“N-no,” the fox responded.

“Are you familiar with the *Le Diamant* jewelry parlor?”

“Well, yes! But I was only standing outside of it! I mean, a lot of people go in and out of there, so I can probably do a—how do you say it?—*rivalité sympathique!*” The fox then chuckled awkwardly.

Ferrari was not pleased, raised an eyebrow to respond to the fox’s honesty. “But *Le Diamant* is not doing well in business nowadays. That place barely has any customers, and those who are happened to be very sly with their orders. I’ve checked, you *puttana*. People over there keep asking for the same thing, and it’s ‘the one that sparks’. It is said to have good powers as well. ‘The one who holds the one that sparks will be the one who sparks,’ they keep saying. I could tell you *definitely* have something to do with it.”

“I don’t know what the hell you’re talking about, *bon sang!*” the fox exclaimed as Victor returned with a taser and a net. “I just went there to have a business!”

“Hey, Michael.” Victor whispered in his ear. “Do you want me to get the lie detector?”

“We don’t need it,” the German shepherd replied calmly. “We already have him sweating like an idiot.”

“What do you want from me to prove that I’m not some sort of spy!?” the fox stood up on the pad. “To tell you my parents’ birthdays?!”

“Oh, no, no, no” the old dog shook his head. “I just want you to tell me about your little ‘business’...or perhaps your secret mafia.”

The red fox became more aggravated than he has ever been. He then leapt at Ferrari and tried to land a punch. But as quickly as he could, the greyhound dodged it, and the fox dropped onto the ground. The fox swiftly got back up to do a sweep kick, but Ferrari jumped and dodged that as well. The fox plopped on his side hard.

Barking loudly and angrily, Victor sprinted towards the red fox who ran back to his pad quickly. He pushed the pad with his foot and knocked Victor out of his way with a stronger force.

"I didn't know these pads have wheels on them!" the fox noticed.

"You like them?" the greyhound responded, grinning a little. "The police chief received them last Tuesday."

While Ferrari responded, the fox jumped onto the pad to give more of a push. But the other police dogs surrounded him with growling teeth. The fox didn't care, for he had used his cramped foot to move himself and the pad past them. However, there was no chance for him to escape because Michael charged him from behind with his body, making him fly across the interrogation room. The red fox slammed hard above the entrance, and he crashed straight down on the floor. He was then pinned down by Victor.

The old greyhound calmly walked to the badly bruised fox. He could see that the fox had tears flowing down his face. He also noticed that he had hands of black fur. And he became very displeased.

"You're not the suspect we're looking for," he said.

"What do you mean?" Michael questioned. "Doesn't he match the description you showed us? You know, with the photos?"

"But I think we have the wrong one." The captain held the fox's palms and showed them to the other two police dogs. The fox then wailed in pain, even after when Victor let him go.

"Look," the greyhound pulled out a photo of a similar looking fox while showing the hands. "This fox has black paws; the suspect has orange paws."

"Really?!" Victor barked. "You didn't show us he would have orange hands! I mean, heck, this guy could *honestly* have been selling coats!"

"That was what I've been doing!" the fox groaned.

"Well, I'm sorry, my fellow cadets," the greyhound apologized. "Honest mistake."

"Cpt. Ferrari," Michael called, "If the criminal isn't here, then where is he?"

Ferrari sighed. "I'm not sure, but maybe this fox knows."

“Seriously?” The fox groaned. “I break every bone in my body, get chewed by a pit bull, get accused and slammed by you mongrels... and *NOW* you ask for my help!?”

“Why, yes,” the greyhound Ferrari said. “Besides if you don’t help us, we’ll send you straight to the pound.”

The fox sighed. “Fine...”

“What is your name by the way?”

“Mathieu Chaput: Vender of *Manteau Coats*”

“How was business? Did you have a lot of customers before Michael and Vick came by?”

“Well no. Though, there was one woman wearing a scarf over her face, talking about how cute I look in a vest. She had a girl in the back with her eyes staring down a book. I also met this fox who liked my coats and—“

“Did his name happen to be ‘Joel Watson’?”

“Yes.”

Ferrari nodded and turned to the two other police dogs. “Boys—*that* is the guy we’re looking for.” He turned back to Mathieu and asked: “So how did you two first meet up... and how come my cadets ended up chasing you?”

Nobody likes Joel Watson. Nobody wants to even be around Joel Watson. A pretentious prankster, a jerk, an unlikable *merde*—this red fox has received the worst kind of names. He is only a young adult; he’d be 23 if he was a human. But the animals around him all wish for him to be dead.

Joel would nonchalantly walk down a sidewalk heavy with pedestrians and have a little smirk on his face with his face tilted to the clouds. Alley cats and walkdogs would groan every time they see him walking like a pimp. And he is anything but. He has uncombed orange hair, crooked whiskers, a slightly blackened left eye and a little stain on his foxtail.

The day that he and Mathieu met was when he was strolling near *Le Diamant*. Right in front of the diamond store was Mathieu shouting out summer discounts and displaying his somewhat unique line.

“Come here, come all!” Mathieu chanted. “Coats here for the large and small! Get your coats very early so you don’t have to worry about one in the winter! Coats are 20% off! Get your coats now!”

Joel noticed his charismatic selling. Standing there for a while, staring at Mathieu waving his arms to and fro and showing all kinds of coats, Joel put a little grin on his face.

“*Bonjour, mon ami!* I’m Mathieu!” He could see Joel walking up to his coat stand. “Would you like to buy some coats?”

“Well, give me a moment here, I’m just looking,” replied Joel with a slight French accent.

“What kind are you looking for on this fine day? Do you want yours thick or thin?”

“I’m not really here to buy something,” Joel was too busy looking at the cover of Mathieu’s stand, dotting his eyes to his right for a few times.

“Okay, well—would you please move along then? I’m having a bunch of customers at the moment.”

“Dude, I’m not seeing that.” Joel stood up to Mathieu with a raised eyebrow. “I’m like the only guy out here, and I see no big line behind me.”

“Well, you see—I receive orders digitally through this Internet thing and—“

“Do you have a tablet?” Joel interrupted.

“Well, uh—“

“If you get orders through Internet, show me a computer tablet.”

Mathieu looked worried because he realized he can’t trick another fox like Joel.

“Okay, honestly, I really don’t know how that works,” he confessed.

“And I guess you don’t even have customers, right?”

Mathieu squinted in suspicion and then sighed with disappointment in himself. “You’re my first one. Everyone kept walking passed me.”

“That’s because we’re animals, man.” Joel said. “They don’t understand what we’re saying because humans don’t know what a fox says. I betcha that all they can hear from us is silence, even when we’re talking right now.”

Mathieu sighed again and drooped. “My business is really struggling. I’m not really a salesman that I’ve hoped to be—or at least a salesfox.”

“Well, for one, you don’t know what a fuckin’ tablet is,” said Joel. “Maybe I could just take this coat stand off your back.”

“Oh please, no” Mathieu objected. “Coat selling is a very difficult profession.”

“Come on, man. I’m curious. I really want to see what it’s like to be a vender. Plus, honestly, you’re really bad at this.”

“But wouldn’t some fellows be suspicious of another fox taking my place?”

“Nah. Look at me and look at yourself.”

Mathieu and Joel looked nearly identical. Mathieu was wearing a small, buttonless brown coat and a brown straw hat. However, with his hat off, he and Joel have the same messy hair. They have the same crooked whiskers, the same blackened eye and same little stain on their tails. They even have the same eye and ear colors.

“Nobody would notice a thing,” Joel claimed. “I could take your place while you can have free time doing whatever. Maybe go to the park and watch swans being lovey-dovey and stuff.”

“Hmm, well, a swan’s relationship is like a TV soap opera, to be honest.” Mathieu was thinking about it. He could see that he and Joel were like identical twins.

“So what do you say? Can we swap?”

“Sure...”

So in the middle of the afternoon, with people passing by and minding their own business, Mathieu took off his hat and coat. Joel then took those clothing pieces from Mathieu.

Before those two were trading places, Michael and Victor were heading towards the curve of the sidewalk. The German shepherd and the pit bull were sent by their owners to search for any suspects that had been affiliated with the heist their boss had explained about.

“So what is this ‘one that sparks’?” Victor asked.

“I’m not sure.” Michael responded. “It’s maybe a doomsday device an alien sets off to blow up cities. To, you know, ‘rule the world’.”

Victor chuckled a little. “And that old kook is getting so worked up over that. What’s so special about a diamond anyways?”

“Vic, a diamond can get bitches to fall head over heels for you, even if it takes like a million bucks to get just one speckle of it.”

“So, is that what our owners doing? Sending us to find some folks so they wouldn’t buy all the diamonds? So they themselves can please their bitches?”

“Well, apparently not.” Mike points back at their owners and says, “They just captured that guy because they think he is a spy trying to continue this heist that is happening under this city. They want us to go after crooks like him.”

“Then whom are we supposed to look for, man?”

“Joel Watson: He is a notorious fox best known for committing criminal underground activity. Cpt. Ferrari said that he would take different disguises in order to hide his identity and that he has superpowers that could shock a 300-pound man to death. He also happens to have connections with other villains that have dangerous abilities. For all that I know, he must be the one looking the diamond so he could be the ultimate ruler of the world. And I don’t know how that could possibly happen because he’s just a little fox.”

Victor wasn’t really paying attention to the details. He was too busy staring at hot, fresh, chocolate éclairs at a nearby stand.

“Vic, are you listening?” said Michael.

Victor stopped staring and quickly turned to his partner, trying to figure out what he should say to prove he was all ears. “Uh, yeah, sure, man. I’ll do it for ya.”

Mike sighed. “What were you staring at? Chocolate éclairs?”

“Yeah...I’m just hungry right now.”

“But you know chocolate to dogs is like cyanide, right?”

“But I’m hungry!”

Michael rolled his eyes. “Just look for the orange fox, okay? And keep in mind that he could be wearing something shady, like a coat.”

Meanwhile, Joel already had Mathieu’s hat on and was about to put on his coat. But then, Mathieu had second thoughts. “Um, mister, can I please hold on to my coat? Because, um, I need it for important things.”

“What kind?” Joel questioned.

“Why...to make sure to be comfortable when the weather gets cold at any moment.”

“*Très bien...*” Joel gave the coat back to Mathieu so he could put it back on.

And while Joel was starting to move behind the coat stand, Mathieu asked, “Also, *mon ami*...what is your name? You look like someone that I should be familiar of.”

“Joel Watson. It’s spelled as J-O-E-L, but it’s pronounced as ‘joule’.”

Mathieu had a smile on his face, and it faded away once he heard his name. “Did I just...switch places with *him*?”

Michael and Victor, while finding their way through a swarm of pedestrians, found a fox with a brown coat, messy hair, crooked whiskers and a blackened eye. Immediately they started barking and chasing Mathieu. “That’s him, Vic!” Mike shouted. “That’s Joel!”

“No! My name isn’t Joel!” Mathieu pronounced it as “*Joule*”. “It’s Mathieu! The one you’re looking for is right beside me!” He pointed to the coat stand, but no one was there. Joel had already camouflaged through the shades of the buildings and escaped. The two police dogs forced Mathieu to run away, chasing him indignantly.

“Stop now! You can’t hide!” barked Victor. “You can’t outrun the K-9 police of Paris!”

The dogs and the fox passed through crowds of bystanders, who either only minded of their way or slightly turned their heads and turned them back to the horizon. Joel, on the other hand, after dropping off from his hiding spot under the shade cover of the *Le Diamant* building, observed the other animals fighting over a mistaken identity.

“That was a close call,” he said to himself. “I really don’t know why the police are after me. Could it be that they’re just looking for something to eat?”

“No, it’s that we’re stopping you from destroying the world!” Out of Joel’s sight came another canine cop.

“Oh come on! I just want to be alone and go to the park...and look at the swans!” he said.

“Well, too bad. You will be dealing with us at the police department.” He then handcuffed him to his right arm. “And we will have a nice, long talk.”

“Fuck.”

Are You Having Fun?

Elijah Thompson-Acquah

A joy-filled childhood is one of the most precious things a child could have. It can form the ways a boy or girl could view the world.

Donald Justice's sonnet "The Poet at Seven" follows this theme of youth, as it depicts the activities of a supposedly seven-year-old boy around a vacant lot before the boy is picked up by an adult. However, it has created a feeling of sullenness, which contradicts the pursuit of happiness readers would expect that the boy is seeking. In other words, the actions of the young boy are supposed to capture the essence of joy in childhood, but they are only depicted through a melancholic nature.

As one could imagine, the imagery in Justice's poem implies entertainment that kids would find when they're outside. For instance, the boy "[spreads] a dingy counterpane / against the length and majesty of the rain" and crawls under it "like a bear," which would form the assumption that he is playing with his imagination by making a table into a fortress or a cave (Justice 2-4). He could imagine himself as a bear and act like what he thinks bears do, or rather he could be making a simple tent as a hiding spot. In addition to making a fortress, the boy in the story "[cocks back and] releases" paper planes; "[spins] around" until he would get very dizzy and fall down; and looks at the sky as "he would squat / among the foul weeds of the vacant lot, / waiting for dusk and someone dear to come" (Justice 7; 9; 11-13). These are things kids would typically do when they're not watching TV or playing with electronic devices. Thus, how Justice asserts the imagery in this sonnet reflects the livelihood of youth by describing all of the activities the boy has done outside for an indefinite amount of time.

However, Justice has depicted the imagery of the sonnet by creating a tone of sullenness and despair in the boy's experiences. The diction utilized to describe the imagery influences the tone through negative connotations. For instance, instead of describing how much fun the boy is having from making a fortress, the poem describes the moment as if the boy is making the tent to find comfort away from suffering in pain. He crawls under the counterpane that was spread "against the length and majesty of the rain" in order "to lick his wounds in secret" (Justice 3; 5). This form of diction would imply that the boy has been hurt in bad weather, with the setting drenched in rain and the boy covered in wounds, thus creating the negative connotation in this situation. Afterwards, the boy plays with paper planes, but they are "frail as a mayfly to the faithless air" (Justice 8). "Frail" and "faithless" are negative-sounding words with pessimistic connotations, and yet it is typically fun to throw

paper planes around. The word “frail” is associated with weakness, meaning that the paper plane can be easily destroyed by a stronger force. The word “faithless” creates the idea that the atmosphere does not care about keeping the paper plane, or even the boy, safe. Also, the boy spins around “till the drunken ground / rose up to meet him,” and he squats “among the foul weeds of the vacant lot” until someone would pick him up “and whip him down the street... home” (Justice 10; 12; 14). In these lines of the sonnet, the words “drunken” and “foul” have the connotations of confusion and unconsciousness, implying that there may be alcoholism that threatens the boy’s life. Additionally, the word “whip” brings in the idea that this person picking the boy up is abusive towards him because the word is an onomatopoeia of a long object cracking against someone’s back for the cause of punishment. All of these activities, which are typically fun in a kid’s eye, are viewed as insufferable experiences. Through Justice’s diction, the boy seems to be abused by nature, breathing near foul senses, being whipped all the way home, and facing confusion when falling onto the ground.

Because of this, the negative tone of the boy and his surroundings connects back to the ironic execution of the theme of youth. When it comes to childhood, there is supposed to be joy, as one would assume. Nevertheless, the boy is seen to be suffering from tragedy. Donald Justice may have depicted this paradoxical imagery in his sonnet by incorporating the theme through the sonnet’s title. The title “The Poet at Seven” implies that the seven-year-old boy is telling the narrative through his hapless tone. As a poet, the boy writes down his experiences, or rather his “poem,” in the form of a Petrarchan sonnet. The poem follows a rhyme scheme of *abbaabba ccddee* and a rhythm of an iambic pentameter, which are usually accompanied by a whimsical feel. The boy has managed to manipulate the tropes of the Petrarchan sonnet to capture his depressing portrayal of nature by forming irony outside the details of the poem and onto its rhyme and rhythm. All in all, the theme of childhood is unable to express the joy of the seven-year-old through his own version of the admirably expressive sonnet.

The poem “The Poet at Seven” is a contradictory depiction between youth and emotion. When people are young, they find many ways to experience happiness and joy in their lives. However, it is not the case for the seven-year-old boy in the poem. According to the poem’s title, the boy writes his own story, taking the enlightening formula of the sonnet, which expresses a jocular rhythm and rhyme to explore the beauty of nature, in order to depict his deploring lifestyle in a negative selection of words. He is not having fun.

Works Cited

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Christmas Tree

Krista Johnson

With a child-sized pink suitcase with wheels, I boarded a Greyhound bus to my mom's best friend's house in Florida. My mom and I were leaving right before Christmas, right when we should have been out getting our tree. Real Christmas trees were a family tradition. Growing up, my mom, stepdad, and I would go out to the pop up store at the fairgrounds each winter and pick out the perfect tree. The decorating process never mattered much, but getting a good tree was an event; walking up and down the aisles, initially grabbing trees too fat or too tall for the living room, before finally finding the one we'd take home. There was some pride involved with having a real tree. There were the pine needles on the floor, the smell of evergreen in the air, the necessary act of making sure it was watered regularly. Most of my friends' parents opted for a fake tree. I was happy we were different.

I was worried the trip to Florida would mean missing Christmas but that didn't stop my mom from having us go. Eight years earlier when my mom told my father, Rick, she was leaving him, "for good this time," Rick hadn't slept in days. Their relationship had been defined by his life as a member of the Grim Reapers Motorcycle Club, and their shared trait of being drunks and drug-addicts. He was violent and ill tempered, but despite several beatings in front of my brother and sister, after a few drinks my mom was unable to play the obedient role of "old lady." She fought back, and even provoked him at times, a woman who was incapable of being taught a lesson.

She had tried leaving him before, but Rick had shown up to the houses of friends that were providing her shelter, threatening violence against them as well. This time around, with the delirious mind of a violent drug addict, he pulled up to my grandparents' house, saying he wanted to see his daughter before he left town for a while. My mom carried the nine-month-old version of me out towards Rick as he sat behind the wheel of his car. When he pulled out his gun, she had just enough time to turn around to run before a bullet entered the back of her right shoulder. After a few more shots in the direction of my grandpa, uncle, and older brother who barely had to time to react before they realized what had just happened, Rick drove down the street and shot himself in the chest.

He did not die though, nor did my mom, and now he was getting ready to leave prison. “He had a stroke, he can barely walk,” friends of friends had told my mom about the early release. Her fear, made worse by the drugs, told her that this wasn’t true though, and that he would come after her.

During the near two days it took to reach our destination, my mom became more and more irritable. A glossy eyed, fidgety woman wearing old clothes that had become much too big for her, the traveling and passing of time made her look even more unhealthy. By the time we arrived, I knew this was no fun vacation.

My mom drank every day we were there. Her best friend had left Iowa a few years back to “escape that lifestyle.” She brought her two sons and got off the drugs, found a new husband and had another baby. They were living a fairly normal life, so our arrival ended up being a big disruption.

Although their family didn’t do the real tree thing, they had their own traditions. Every kid in the house had a box of chocolates that counted down the days to Christmas. I watched as they popped out one piece each day. As the number of chocolates dwindled down, the more I wished we were back home.

About a week into the trip I walked onto the back porch as my mom called one of the boys a pussy in front of all of his friends. Devin was 12. The day before I overheard her say, “you’re never going to get a girlfriend with clothes like that.” This was also in front of his friends. With another jab at the young man, you could see his face turn red and his shoulders start to slump as his friends pretended they didn’t notice the remarks. My mom continued to drink her vodka orange juice, laughing at her own jokes. I crept back into the house before anyone could notice I was there. I stayed in the bedroom for the rest of the vacation, writing in my journal and wishing we’d just go back to Iowa. At home I never brought friends over to our house.

My mom and her friend started talking about staying, looking into schooling for me, and treatment facilities for her but I didn’t take the talk too seriously because I knew my mom was missing Dolfie. I overheard her telling her friend about the complications of their relationship, and I saw her dial his number nearly every night, not before she was drunk enough though.

Dolfie, the man I’ve always referred to as my dad, came into our lives shortly after Rick left and initially gave us some stability. After the shooting, my mom kept partying. But when she got with Dolfie, she got sober for a little bit. They bought a house together right before I started

first grade, an old, rundown house they were going to fix up. That summer we'd all go on bicycle rides in the neighborhood, and we went camping too. We painted my room lavender.

For my 8th birthday party we rented out the big lodge at Camp Abe Lincoln, the summer camp where my mom worked as the kitchen director. She filled it with 30 of our friends and family. Using a roll of paper that the counselors used for making signs with during camp activities, my mom covered the hallway that led out of the lodge. I wasn't able to see anything going on behind the blockade. When Dolfie came bursting through it riding a hot pink Huffy bicycle, my face turned beat red as I let out a shriek and ran over to get on it.

Giving good gifts was always a big deal in my family. My mom refused to give out money or gift cards, because she believed in the importance of having presents to open. She didn't care that we'd return and exchange nearly every item of clothing, she'd happily hand out the receipts after we tore through that paper.

But normal life wasn't something Dolfie was used to either; a member of a motorcycle brotherhood, he had lived a life of drinking and drugging just like my mom and Rick. It wasn't long before there were a lot of nights where my mom and I sat at the table eating dinner with his plate in front of an empty seat.

The work on the house often meant that Dolfie's friends would come over and help. On the deck way past dark, with flashlights on their heads, and music blaring, my mom would go out and scream at them all to get off the dope. It wasn't long after that I saw her with a beer for the first time that I could remember and I cried. It wasn't long after that she lost her job at the summer camp.

With Uncle Bam Bam's house across the street from ours, these friends seemed like family to me because they were always around, walking back and forth between the two, never ending parties.

I was starting to realize this wasn't quite normal but my mom would prepare these awesome dinners for everyone. She had a big, solid oak table that she adored and with the leaves in, you could sit like 13 people. There were many nights when we had huge meals and on these evenings it didn't really matter to me if everyone was drunk and high, or that they had kept me up all night the night before. All that mattered was that we were all together.

So when the day came I was told to pack up and catch the bus back to Iowa, I was ecstatic. It had been a long three weeks but I was happy we were making it back before Christmas.

Starting off in the warmth of the sun, adding on more layers as we made the climb back up the country, the thought of snow was bitter sweet. Despite my mom's poor attitude, making it home for the holidays kept me cheerful until mom made the mistake of confusing Rock Falls and Rockford, a mistake that meant we ended up nearly three hours away from home instead of one.

Sitting in the bus station, my mom used the payphone repeatedly trying to get Dolfie to answer so he could pay for the \$20 tickets we needed to get the rest of the way home. With each missed call she got angrier and louder, until desperation kicked in and she broke down crying. I sat, embarrassed of the scene she was making in front of strangers until an older man came up and handed her the money for our tickets. She called Dolfie again to let him know we were on our way; she left a message since he still wasn't answering.

As we pulled in to the station, I watched my mom look out the windows expectantly. When she saw Dolfie's truck, I saw a smile spread across her face that I hadn't seen in a long time. We grabbed our bags and hurried off the bus and when she saw him get out of the truck, she immediately dropped everything and ran towards him. Their embrace was like something out of a movie, with one of those hugs where he picks her up off the ground.

After we loaded up our stuff, we got in the truck and headed to the house. The conversation was upbeat, no mention of Rick showing up, or what Dolfie had been up to. Walking through the front door, it became quite evident what had been going on. With the stench of trash that needed to be taken out, the dirty dishes overflowing the sink and counters, and the endless Budweiser cans scattered around, I saw the look of happiness seep out of my mom's face as she took in the scene. I headed to my bedroom, passing the mini fake tree that had been set up, still undecorated.

Iphicletis

ByeungWook Park

Thebes, a central Greek city in Boeotia, had great power and an important role within the Greek polis. Amphitryon, a loyal Theban general, greatly contributed to making Thebes a strong polis by defeating many enemies around it to maintain superior power and as much territory as possible. However, Amphitryon could not be satisfied with what Thebes had. He wanted Thebes to have more territory with ample foods and up-to-date technologies. One day, on the way back from Thermopylae to Thebes after Amphitryon won a war, he went to the Delphic oracle to inquire how Thebes could be more developed. The oracle answered:

“A hero with outstanding power and wisdom will be from Thebes.”

Amphitryon thought that this oracle meant that he would have a son who would be a great general in Thebes. So, he came back his home quickly, and made love with his wife, Alcmene.

Zeus, the king of the gods, was also thinking about an oracle, which declared that the gods could not win without mortals' assistance in the Giantomachy, the battle of the Giants. Zeus was wondering whether he could find out a mortal hero before the attack. He was also curious whether there existed a mortal that was capable enough. So, he decided to create the mortal hero by borrowing a mortal woman's body and started to look for a woman with wisdom, bravery, and beauty. While he was searching for a woman in Thebes, he found Alcmene and thought that she was the person who could give birth to the mortal hero that Zeus wanted to create. So, Zeus made love to Alcmene after disguising himself as Amphitryon. Thus, Alcmene became pregnant with twins sired by different fathers.

On the night the twins were born, two facts surprised Amphitryon. The first fact was that Alcmene had twins, and the second fact was that one of the babies was a girl. He believed that the baby should be a boy who will be “a hero with outstanding power and wisdom,” according to the oracle. He was embarrassed, but he named the boy Heracles and the girl Iphicletis and decided to see how the babies would grow up.

Since there had been no female hero, Amphitryon and Alcmene considered Heracles as the hero who was intended by the oracle. So, they thought that Heracles would be the hero who would lead Thebes's army and contribute to development of Thebes. Amphitryon and Alcmene put much more effort to teach various techniques such as fencing and martial arts to Heracles instead of Iphicletis. This belief seemed

true when Heracles grabbed a snake in each hand and strangled them while Iphicletis cried from fear when Hera sent two giant snakes into the children's chamber to kill them. However, no one knew that not only Heracles but also Iphicletis was the hero that the oracle intended.

While Heracles learned how to use sword and bow, Iphicletis was interested in tactics and wanted to be a strategist. It was not common for women to participate in war, so Iphicletis was reluctant to ask for help. The fact that Iphicletis wanted to learn the strategies for the army could worsen her reputation because of misogyny, which was widely spread around the country at that time. Ancient Greeks thought that men were superior to women, and that it was improper for women to intervene in war. If she had mentioned her interest to others, people could have said that she was not capable of leading an army because Iphicletis was a woman. So, Heracles's labors were a big opportunity for her to learn tactics and wisdom by experiencing the real world.

It is widely known that Heracles was driven mad by Hera and killed his wife and children. This is the reason why Heracles was required to carry out 12 labors. However, there was one more labor that Heracles had to do. It has been known that killing the Nemean lion was the first labor of Heracles so far, but there was an unknown labor. The reason why the additional labor was not recorded is that ancient Greeks could not admit a female hero because of the societal environment where females were considered inferior to males. In fact, since Heracles was too arrogant during the first task, he failed to achieve it. Instead, Iphicletis went to help Heracles and accomplished it.

Heracles was looking for someone who had the capability to help him finish the tasks, and Iphicletis volunteered to help him. He also thought that his sister could assist him to finish the tasks successfully.

The first labor was to kill the Corinthian elephant. Krios, the King of Corinth, forced people passing the Isthmus of Corinth to pay money. Since the Isthmus of Corinth is the narrow land bridge which connects the Peloponnese peninsula with the mainland of Greece, people had to cross the isthmus to go to the mainland, and vice versa. Krios had a huge elephant 25 feet high and weighting 25,000 lbs, and people feared this monstrous animal. If the passengers refused to pay the money, Krios would tie people up and let elephant trample over them. Eurystheus gave the first task to Heracles to go to Corinth and kill the elephant.

Heracles thought that he could beat the elephant easily, but Iphicletis suggested that he come up with a strategy. At first, Heracles could not agree with his sister and thought he should not have come with her because he believed that there is no person or animal stronger than him and that he could beat anything with his power. However, it did not take that long for Heracles to realize that there are stronger creatures than

him. Indeed, the beast did not get damaged when Heracles's arrow pierced the animal's shoulder. However, Iphicletis already knew that the leather of the elephant is impenetrable. While Heracles was also not familiar with the monster and simply thought that he could beat the elephant, Iphicletis asked the elderly in a town in Corinth about the elephant and learned that the leather shields the animal.

So, she had a plan. She thought that they needed to go near the elephant and use the studded club to stun it. As long as the elephant was stunned, she believed that Heracles's sword could pierce the monster's neck. First, Iphicletis refused to pay the fee and was captured and tied up on purpose. It is no wonder why she was about to be killed by the elephant. However, the elephant, which was supposed to step on her body, did not follow the order of the king of Corinth. It was due to the strategy of Iphicletis. When she asked to the elderly about the elephant, she also got to know that elephant does not attack something that smells like its dung because it thinks that the object is its peer. So, she collected the elephant's dung and rubbed it her body before she was tied up by the soldiers.

The elephant was wandering instead of killing her, and King Krios and his followers fell in panic. At the same time, Heracles, wearing a cloth stained with the animal's dung, approached the elephant. As Iphicletis expected, the animal did not care about Heracles. Heracles pulled out his club and jumped high to hit the head of the elephant. Because of the amazing power of Heracles, the animal got stunned, and Heracles killed the animal by piercing its neck with his keen sword.

After the elephant died, Heracles could easily deal with the last of the people, including Krios. Thus, Heracles could finish his first labor due to his sister's wisdom. Even though it was Heracles who stabbed the monster, people who had been afraid of the elephant and Krios's tyranny showed their appreciation for Iphicletis. Even gods, including Zeus, were surprised by the strategy of Iphicletis and they said that she might be the hero who would assist the gods at the battle of the giants. Iphicletis wanted to participate in the other labors of Heracles, but the gods did not allow her to do that, because the labors were required to be finished by Heracles without any assistance from others. So, as people know nowadays, Heracles ended the 12 labors by himself.

After Heracles finished the other 12 labors, he became free. Iphicletis was also recognized as a hero by everyone. However, their happiness did not last long. Deianeira, a wife of Heracles, foolishly believed Nessus's trick that his blood would make Heracles love her forever. She spread Nessus's blood on Heracles's cloth and Heracles wore it, which caused his death. Iphicletis was also murdered by a man who was

jealous of her success. The murderer would say to people after he killed Iphicletis: "It is improper to let women have bigger power than men. I changed the abnormal situation to normal by killing her."

Thus, the two heroes gathered again in the underworld. When Zeus found out that the two heroes were in the underworld, he thought that they were capable enough to assist the gods against the giants. He let them join the Olympians to prepare for war. As the oracle predicted, the attack of the giants was very powerful. Those with snaky legs and long hair were really huge, and even the gods had a hard time with the attack. Heracles beat the monsters with his club, and his power was enough to damage them. Iphicletis also showed her wisdom. Since the number of giants was much greater than the number of the gods, it was important to defend against attacks from all directions. So, she suggested that the gods divide into groups and distribute their power to efficiently defend Olympus.

The gods were not willing to follow a mortal's order because this hurt their pride. However, they had to obey Iphicletis's order because Zeus, the king of the gods, believed in the Delphic oracle that the assistance of a mortal hero was necessary. He told the other gods to trust the strategy of Iphicletis. They got into four teams and did not allow the giants to come up to Olympus. Team Apollo overcame the giants including Porphyron, with bows, and team Athena dealt with the giant Enceladus with her gorgon shield. Team Zeus and team Dionysus also defended Olympus well. Thus, the giants at last were overcome. Heracles performed a great job among the gods, but all of the immortals agreed that they could not have won without Iphicletis's assistance.

Hera, who sent a snake to the little Iphicletis and Heracles, came to them and apologized for the past. The other gods also appreciated the assistance from the mortals. After the battle with the giants, Olympus could enjoy eternal peace under the rule of the three male gods, Zeus, Hades, and Poseidon. Iphicletis and Heracles also became gods due to their crucial role in the victory over the giants. Especially, Iphicletis was celebrated as the first female mortal who participated in war and became a god.

A creative rewriting of “Confusing Similar Things,” from The Annuals of Lü Buwei.

Sungwoon Kim

There was a man named Liqiu who was an expatriate from China. He had travelled to America to provide for his family in China after the firm he was working for was bought by an American company. He had to leave his family behind because it was too difficult for them to get visas and his pay could not support their family in America due to the high cost of living. Yet, Liqiu did not lose hope, since he was one of few people who got to keep his job.

One night Liqiu was out with his friends. They were all from China, but his friends did not have office jobs like Liqiu. Julie was busy running a restaurant and Simon worked mostly at night. Even though they weren't able to meet a lot, they bonded over their longing for home. Besides talking about home, they mostly talked about how to survive in America.

“Why won't you get an English name?” Simon asked filling Liqiu's glass with liquor.

“Why bother? I'm going back at the end of this winter,” Liqiu replied.

“At the end of the winter?” Julie asked, as she dipped more vegetables into the hotpot.

“That's when his contract ends. Time flies, right? Feels like it was yesterday when we first met each other. But it's been four years,” Simon answered.

“I'm looking for a job back home. Luckily I was able to get in contact with Jiaying. She's my old coworker and she started her own business. I hear that she's looking to expand. I might get the branch manager position,” Liqiu said.

“We'll miss you when you're gone,” Julie said.

“Me too, but I want to go to my son's graduation. It's been too long,” Liqiu replied.

Their conversation continued past midnight. It was when Julie's kid appeared, rubbing her eyes, awakened by her mother's absence that everyone knew it was time to go home.

“Can I get another bottle of kaoliangju?” Simon said, as he got up and put his coat on.

“Another? I think I'll head back home now Simon,” said Liqiu.

“This is for me. A couple shots to put me to sleep. Can’t fall asleep without them.”

“You should be careful. People are going to think you’re an alcoholic,” Julie said, worrying for Simon.

Liqui realized he was having a hard time falling asleep recently as well.

“Can I get a bottle of that too?” Liqui said.

A clock next to Liqui’s mattress said 2:43am when he got home. His room was empty with a pile of clothes next to his desk on one corner of his room and a suit hanging on the bathroom door hinge. He shoved the leftover food he got from Julie in the fridge without taking it from the plastic bag. As he set his alarm to 7 am, he heard two people arguing outside. This was not the first time, and he snuggled into his messy bed expecting to fall asleep to the sound of the voices.

However, he did not hear the lullaby he expected. All of a sudden, there was no noise outside. No voices, no sound from the wind, no people walking, no branches rustling. Nothing. To Liqui, this sudden silence was disturbing. At least, it was disturbing enough to alert Liqui to how dehydrated he was. He got up and poured himself a cup of water. As he was walking back to his bed he took a glance out the window. There, he saw a big black creature chewing the head off a man in the darkness. The creature looked up and saw Liqui with its red eyes. Liqui fainted right away.

The next morning he woke up on the floor. The alarm was ringing furiously. He was late for work. He picked up his stuff and ran out the door. Liqui looked out the window before he walked out. He did not see any marks of blood on the ground where he had seen the creature.

“You’re three minutes late,” said Liqui’s boss, as soon as Liqui entered his office. “I thought you were getting better with punctuality. This is America. If you start at 9 am you have to be present at 9 am, not 9:05 or 9:03.” He continued before Liqui could say anything. “Get to your desk. There’s a lot to do today.”

“Sorry, I’ll get right to it,” Liqui said.

Liqui was hardly ever late. In fact, his experience in the military had taught him to be punctual. Furthermore, with his exam scores and intelligence, he could have been a high-ranking officer, but he couldn’t pass the physical due to a leg injury he received during training. This is why he had moved to a corporate job.

People did not appreciate the work he did, but the results spoke for themselves. This was why he had been offered a promotion, but he missed his family too much to extend his contract. Besides, he knew he wouldn't be able to lead people who barely made an effort to know him. And he clearly knew it was time to go home.

On the way back to his apartment, Liqiu recalled what he saw the day before. Before going upstairs, he stood where he had seen the creature. There was nothing, no trace of blood. He tried to forget what he had seen, thinking that he was confused or it was all in his drunken state of mind. He went up to his empty room.

After doing some work he realized it was 1:15am. When he was stretching he got a phone call from his son.

"Dad? How are you? Are you well?" Liqiu's son said.

"Yes, I am well. How is your study?"

"It's going well. I'm excited to graduate. Are you coming to my graduation?"

"Of course! In fact, I am coming back for good. I will probably get a job back home. Isn't that exciting?" Liqiu replied without hesitating.

"That's great! Do you know when the plane is landing? Let me know when, so I can be at the airport! I have to go now. My class is starting soon. Goodnight, Dad."

"Thank you, son. Take care." Liqiu replied.

He hung up and lay on his bed, but he couldn't fall asleep. He got up again and had a couple of shots of the kaoliangju that he had brought home from Julie's restaurant. Simon was right. Liqiu was asleep within a minute.

A couple of days passed. His mediocre routine continued. He wasn't getting proper rest so for several nights he took a shot of kaoliangju to fall asleep. The red-eyed creature was fading from his memory. One night he was working at his apartment. It was about 3 am. He seldom finished all his work at the office even though he did not waste time like his coworkers. Liqiu took a shot and headed toward his bed. As he glanced out the window there were two people on the sidewalk again.

Liqiu felt the chill as he recalled the memory of a few days ago. He watched the two people from his room. Suddenly, one of the men turned into a big dark creature and bit off the other man's head and started to chew it. Liqiu was stunned but he managed to pull out his phone

and call the police. He stuttered in his broken English, trying to explain what he was seeing in front of him. The more nervous he got, the more he stuttered.

“How may I help you?” The police dispatch person asked.

“This man, a creature, just took off his head! Please come now! I live 111 Iowa Avenue, apartment 19.” Liqiu yelled as he stared out the window.

“Sir, calm down. We dispatched an officer. He will be there shortly.”

Liqiu waited in terror. Time passed. Liqiu waited. No-one came. Finally, he could not fight the fatigue from the late nights and all the work he had been doing. And the shot of kaoloangju he took earlier pushed Liqiu into sleep.

He woke up to a loud banging on his door. It was a cop. Liqiu checked the clock. It was almost 4 am. He looked out the window. There was nothing. The banging on the door continued. He opened the door.

“Is everything OK? I got a report of an attack?” the police officer said.

Liqiu was about to explain what he saw but realized that his story would sound completely crazy without any evidence.

“I’m sorry. Everything is all right,” Liqiu said.

Liqiu could see the disapproval on the cop’s face. The officer looked into the room. He spotted the bottle of *kaoliangju*. He also noticed the smell of alcohol from Liqiu but did not bother to say anything and left, warning Liqiu that the next time he made a prank call he would have to sleep in jail.

The next day, he could not focus on his work so he called Simon and told him everything. In disbelief, Simon told Liqiu that he would come by that night with a camera so they could document the red-eyed creature. Liqiu agreed.

That night while waiting for Simon, Liqiu bought a one-way ticket back home and texted his son the arrival date and time. Soon after, Simon arrived with his camera. They set up the camera and waited. 3 am arrived. Nothing was happening. A couple minutes passed and Simon stood up.

“Well, that’s the end of that. The mystery of the red eyed monster that never existed,” Simon said as he poured two shots of kaoliangju.

Liqiu was relieved but unsatisfied. Simon passed the glass to Liqiu. They cheered for a safe night and drank the shots. Liqiu took Simon's glass and headed to the sink. Simon approached the window to break down the camera. Then he saw the creature.

"Liqiu! I see it! Is that it?" Simon yelled.

Liqiu ran up to Simon and confirmed.

"Take the photo! I'll call the cop!" Liqiu said, as he picked up his phone. This time Liqiu knew what to say. He told the cops to come as quickly as possible as Simon continued to take photos furiously.

Several minutes passed and the cop didn't show up. Simon could not take it anymore. He could not just stand there and watch a person being devoured.

"I'm going downstairs! The cops are not coming. We have to save this man!" Simon said, as he burst out the door.

Liqiu tried to stop him but Simon was too fast and Liqiu's injury made it hard for him to run. When Liqiu arrived at the scene there was nothing. He looked around but there was no trace of blood or anything suspicious.

When he arrived back at the apartment the police officer was standing in front of the door banging on it. He noticed Liqiu approaching and yelled, "You! I told you not to make another prank call!"

"It's not a prank call! Follow me, I can show you!" Liqiu ran inside and got the camera.

He was worried that he had failed to catch the creature and concerned that Simon had disappeared but he was relieved to get help. But there was nothing. The photos Simon took were all black. As the police went through the pitch-black photos his face became darker.

"I warned you last time. You're coming with me tonight," the officer said as he was hand-cuffing Liqiu. He tried to explain but it was no use. Nobody at the police headquarters or even the high teenagers in the jail cell with him believed him. He remained in jail for several days until Julie bailed him out. Liqiu explained what he saw to Julie and told her that he had to find Simon.

"No, Liqiu. Are you hearing what you are saying? I called Simon! He told me he just came home that night and your crazy monster story never happened!"

Before he could say anything Julie left. Liqiu was confused by what Julie had said, and called Simon. After a long ring someone picked up.

"Simon?"

“Hello, Liqiu. How are you?”

It was Simon’s voice but Liqiu knew it wasn’t him.

“Who are you? Where is Simon?! I know he didn’t just go home!” Liqiu yelled.

“He didn’t. Simon is with me. You don’t have to worry about him anymore,” Simon’s voice said.

Liqiu said nothing, terrified.

“Just go home, Liqiu. Don’t ever look for me again or else you’re going to get hurt....”

Liqiu stood there and heard the phone’s dial tone. After a while, he started to walk home but stopped at the office on the way. People stared at him and whispered to each other. Some were intrigued to see Liqiu without his suits but most of them knew what had happened. When he arrived at his cubicle, his desk was already cleared out. He didn’t bother to go see his boss. In fact, he wasn’t worried about losing his job. Now he was determined to capture the creature and find Simon. From that day he stayed up all night, looking out the window at 3 am. But he did not see anything.

Several weeks had passed and it was the night before his departure. Liqiu was well rested because all he did was wake up around 3am to find this creature and fall asleep when the sun came up. But he was emotionally exhausted from worrying about this creature. Yet, he was glad because he was finally going home.

It wasn’t difficult for him to pack and clear out his stuff. His clothes fit perfectly in his bags and he threw out what was left. When he was done it was around midnight. He looked at the window wondering whether he should watch out for the creature but he decided to force himself to sleep on the floor. However, he could not stop thinking about Simon. Simon was the only friend he had besides Julie in America. Liqiu felt responsible for him since he had disappeared trying to help him. So Liqiu tried calling him several times. He didn’t pick up.

A couple of hours later he woke up to a phone call. It was Simon.

“Hey Liqiu, I just got off work. What’s going on? You called me a lot. Is everything OK?” Simon said.

“Simon, is this you? Are you OK?” Liqiu asked worried.

“Calm down Liqiu! Are you talking about the other night? I’m sorry but I don’t remember anything after we started drinking. It took me several days to sober up.”

What Simon was saying didn't make any sense to Liqiu, but he was sure that this was the real Simon from the sound of his voice. He considered asking more but he realized that the problem was over. At this point, he wasn't worried about the creature as long as Simon was all right. They talked and promised to contact each other when Liqiu return to China.

When Liqiu hung up, everything was peaceful. The thought of not figuring out what he saw bothered him but seeing the empty room and his luggage next to the door made him glad that his tedious time away from his family was over. He looked at the clock and it was 3 am. Even though he thought everything was done, he could not stop the burning urge to look out the window. Slowly, he approached the window.

'Just one last time,' he thought as he looked out.

Shockingly, his son was on the street this time. He could not believe his eyes.

"Son! Is that you?! What are you doing there?" Liqiu yelled, in disbelief.

His son did not say anything. Liqiu knew that couldn't be his son but he could not stop the urge to check it out himself.

"Wait there! I will come and get you," Liqiu yelled.

He ran out barefoot, in his pajamas. Despite his injured leg he ran fast enough to be breathing heavily when he arrived at the spot. He looked around but there was no one. Then his phone rang.

"Hi Dad, are you ready to come home?" It was his son. "I just got out of class."

Liqiu froze. He felt chills crawling down his back. He knew that he had made a big mistake. He could not say anything.

"Dad? Is everything OK?" His son continued.

Something Very Personal

Sungwoon Kim

As a Korean studying in United States, I have observed and felt the social changes around family in recent years. During the past year I had the chance to reflect on my surroundings and how they have influenced me. I completed a video project which shows the changes in my life as well as offering a reflection on what I have gone through. It began when I was thinking about my childhood during counseling, early in my time at the University of Iowa. I needed help due to a mix of the stress of a new place, the pressure of school, and not having been able to spend enough time to process my grandmother's passing away. A big part of the counseling was reflecting back on past events, which usually left me thinking about my relationship with my family.

In Korea, education is the top priority for a lot of people. A short article by Thomas Ellinger and Garry Beckham talks about how much Korean families focus on education. Mothers check in every once in a while to remind their child that while they are sleeping others are studying (Ellinger & Beckham, 1997, p. 625). Although it varies from school to school, students attend middle and high school an average of 222 days a year. Usually a day in school goes from 8am to 4pm with occasional extra study sessions from 6pm to 10pm. This might vary depending on the student but when a student is not attending school, they are attending a *hakgwon*, a private educational institute that usually focuses on improving test grades, to keep up with the competition (Ellinger & Beckham, 1997, p. 624). As a result of the intense focus on education, Korean parents think their children's educational success is their success, according to Dayoung-Bae and K. A. S. Wickrama (2015, p. 1030).

My family was not an exception. The fact that I am at the University of Iowa shows that my parents value education. Furthermore, they themselves moved to California when I was young for their own education. However, for me the biggest change was not moving to California, it was what happened in Korea. Specifically, it was attending an elementary school that had an English education curriculum and then moving to Gangnam and being surrounded by private educational institutions.

The elementary school I attended focused on English education. As a private school that focused on English education the tuition was not cheap compared to other schools, including other private schools. As my mother points out in the film, she wanted me to learn more advanced English skills so I could communicate with more parts of the world. In 2001, the year I entered elementary school, the school taught

half of its curriculum in English, according to their website. The school itself was shifting in response to the changes in Korean society. Now, as shown in my film, the school's assignments focus on a globalized world rather than focusing on Korea.

After elementary school I moved to Gangnam from Changdong. This was not only a big change for me due to the different cityscape but also the different life style. In Changdong my time was spent mostly at school and home but at Gangnam I barely spent any time at home due to extracurricular activities. Furthermore, spending more time outside in a crowded city pushed me to adjust to a fast paced lifestyle. My film shows the contrast between the two places, Gangnam and Changdong, and the change in my life, as well as how the society shaped the two regions. Changdong is not crowded and there are not a lot of stores around the apartments. In contrast, during the Gangnam sequence, you can see that entire first floor of one store is made up of real estate companies that sell expensive apartments. Images of apartments are followed by images of private institutes, showing that people with more resources in a society shape, consciously or not, the surroundings according to their values.

The change did not affect me alone. Even though my father's work was closer to Changdong, about a 10-minute drive away, than Gangnam, which takes at least an hour by car or public transportation, they decided to move. As my mother pointed out in my project, it was mainly due to my sister's and my own education. While there was no strong evidence that the students in Gangnam went to better schools or people from that area were smarter, news reports did show that there were a lot of students that did get accepted to prestigious colleges from Gangnam. Yonhap news agency presented data from Cheongsol education institute showing that 20.3 percent of students admitted to Seoul National University in 2010 were from Gangnam (Park, 2010). Furthermore, other data show that 22.7 out of every 1000 students in Gangnam studied abroad for college, while the national average was 3.6 per 1000 students, according to Joong-Ang Daily (장, 2013). However, as my mother pointed out during the interviews for my project, due to the high living cost of the area not a lot of people can move to this place. As a result, the place is full of wealthy families that can afford the high living cost. People with limited economic resources have to live in areas where the quality of education is not as good as Gangnam.

Unfortunately, this focus on education does not have a positive impact on many students in Korea. From my experience, my life as a student in Korea, especially at the time the National University Entrance Exam approached, was very restrictive. This is not only my personal

opinion. Among the 30 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries Korea had the highest stress levels, according to National Public Radio (Hu, 2015). Furthermore, the number one cause of death among teenagers is suicide.

In the end, I like to think that focus on education helped me. Despite the negative impact on Korean teenagers, my parents' value for education did allow me to experience more. The fact that I am studying abroad in an English speaking country means that I will have more opportunities than a person that only speaks Korean. In order for me to be here my parents had to leave their home, the Changdong apartment that my mother remodeled.

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Devin Van Dyke

Arriving at Hardin Library for the Health Sciences at ten AM was only fun because I knew registering with my high priority meant I would get first choice of classes. I'm not involved in health or its care, but since Hardin is usually sparsely occupied I enjoy its solitude and isolation for writing. I can also park my bike there in front of a big picture windows where it can be seen and then get some walking in as I go about my day. It also helps that I have a locker filled with books, writing, and snacks.

I went to what's called a computer lab here on campus. There are no beakers of bubbling chemicals, Bunsen burners, or experiments going on except what Facebook is doing to see how to better your experience. I sat down at my favorite machine with its unique nine digit alpha-numeric identifier, a7j3i02t5, and went to spaghetti.com, Google's biggest threat. It's an archival-search site: a server that stores every single webpage ever created and allows you to see the previous version of any site since the beginning of time. When queried as to whether I wanted sauce with my spaghetti, I said hell yes, vegetarian if you will.

I wanted to compare this year's mild winter to last year's double-deep snow. I plugged in an overhead shot of Hardin library covered in snow I printed from Google earth with the date March 15, 2015. Eyes closed, I mumbled my search mantra—please be fast and worthy—and pressed ENTER. Opening my eyes I couldn't help but notice that there was an attendant hangin' out behind the desk—that's weird—they got dumped last semester to cut costs. And I didn't remember one on my way in, but I'm getting on in years—maybe they instantly changed stuff—like maybe virtual projected Oculus 3D, but no headset.

The lab is more fun to me if there is no faux-authority figure present because I can vent compu-angst with verbally colorful and most-likely-offensive-to-some-maybe-all language. I took the snow picture with me outside to compare the blizzard year to right now, a year of moderate temperature and minimal snow.

Going through the door I was met by a hurricane-velocity blast of frigid wind and a wall of heavy dense snow. The new parking ramp for the VA was either obscured by the blizzard or it had just up and disappeared—like a Ferrari left with keys, running, in the middle of a Wal-Mart parking lot at four AM. Strolling toward the bus stop, I rushed on inhaling nicotine from my cigarette as I wondered how the temperature had

gone from no-jacket-balmy-fifty to it-hurts-to-breathe-zero with a foot of snow in only minutes. There was another hardy smoker in the shelter of the bus stop so I went in and said, “Instantaneous blizzard, huh?”

The guy looked at me quizzically and said, “What? It’s colder than shit right now and it has been for a month and a half, doofus. Or are you a rich guy back from vacationing in Florida?” I peeked out of the shelter and noticed the bus turn-out was smaller than I remembered and I knew you can’t redo concrete in these few minutes. Inhaling was getting difficult, smoke or no, because I was beginning to shiver from the cold or the panic of the time conundrum I stumblenetted into.

Back inside I quickly sat down and logged onto spaghetti.com, hold the sauce, and searched for the Olympic trials wrestling event of the weekend of April 9-10 2016 that I knew would happen in my real time. I clicked on a website to buy advance front row tickets for more money than I live off of in a year, and since I have none, chose “Pay at the door.” The attendant noticed my somewhat unusual behavior so as I was leaving I told her I had been having an interesting but fun day. I stood in the entry way and grimaced as I heard the wind howl and watched the snow swirl—my day was going from amusing to barely manageable crisis in less than an hour. It was the sauce. Without it, where I was at in time didn’t change! It might even have to be vegetarian sauce. My regular crises—losing my wallet or maybe being maimed by a car while in a crosswalk or say the sky falling—roll off my back with a little shaking, but the crisis of time shit conundrum made my daily crises seem like an untied shoelace. I ran back to the lab and began walking only when the attendant could see me.

I logged on and searched for spaghetti.com—this time I knew about the sauce—the question now was whether it had to be vegetarian or not. I found the wrestling meet and it immediately wanted me to confirm my very expensive seat and told me I would get to sit next to an as yet unnamed celebrity. I figured I had to do something so the system would know I was not some online-bot or something masquerading as myself.

Ordering popcorn to be delivered between the second and third matches only added thirty bucks to my “Pay at the door” cost. What the heck—if your gonna’ do something fictitious you may as well go all in—right? Now that I was certain that I had replicated my first search including the sauce, I looked over the top of my computer as I pushed ENTER to confirm my popcorn while staring right at the attendant. She was gone before my finger even registered the button had been pushed. Hopefully her absence meant I had moved in time. My spaghetti had to have sauce, and it doesn’t have to be vegetarian! I guess that means they’ll let carnivores cruise the knotted blob of time.

Running to the elevator all I cared about was going outside to be sure I was back where I started, Friday April 1, 2016, a day of drizzly dreary wanna-be rain. I was back, I could see that without even going outside. Sitting down at my favorite computer, I lost all manner of foul mouthed invectives and felt safe because there were no people to offend, or did the lack of audience for my creatively strung together profanities make uttering them less personally beneficial? If I could go back in time and retrieve the receipt for the down jacket I bought in 2011 whose zipper never worked and leave it where my past self would find it, I could screw the system, screwing me. But what if I changed the past in some preposterous non-positive way—made myself disappear or some other temporal tailspin bullshit? But, if I just up and disappeared I wouldn't even know it—I ain't worry'n about the possibilities—I'm goin' badass—to hell with it all—I will get that receipt for the jacket, put my foot down and stop the system screwing me—

I sat down at my favorite machine and called up spaghetti.com WITH vegetarian sauce, because I don't eat other animals. I bought the jacket Friday before the Homecoming 2011 game and tossed the receipt in my locker at the Field House. It was the last time I saw it. I wasn't sure if I had to do anything other than choose a day in the past and then hit ENTER. Then I glanced down at the calendar in the lower right corner and noticed it had changed the date to Friday October 11, 2011 1045 AM.

I clicked on the link for the home page and then the attendant reappeared instantly along with all the stuff the library used to keep on the shelves including a whole bunch of DVDs about medical stuff, plastic anatomically accurate manikins and dismantle-able human brains. As I glanced up one of the boxed DVDs slipped off the shelf, popped open, clattered to the floor and the disc rolled away in my direction.

The person behind the desk didn't seem to notice the shelf purging itself of boring shit. I remembered her counter-warming because of our conversations about how to match my shirts to my pants, that even I could tell didn't go well together. I set off on my mission to retrieve the receipt and stick it with a water bottle I knew I would use on Halloween as a prop for my customary costume of being an Olympic cyclist in matching spandex shirt, shorts, socks, baseball cap and wrist bands.

My past self would be at home. I never went anywhere on game days because the only word Iowa City knows on game day is Football—and not the European kind of Football. I had to navigate the crowds of fans and get to my locker at the Field House and retrieve the receipt from a stack of paper I had planned on recycling and place it in the loop that held the water bottle's lid to the body. It seemed like a simple enough plan when I dreamed up how to not get screwed by the system.

I walked through the entrance and descended into the dungeon of the locker rooms. Loud voices echoed in my ears as soon as I opened the door. It sounded like five or six guys were having an argument or passionate debate about something, but it was hard to tell because they were simultaneously yelling. I remembered my combination on the first try and as I was removing the water bottle to place the receipt where I would be sure to find it, the arguers went conspicuously quiet. Then I caught a whiff of alcohol and noticed an inebriated someone staring at me and behind him I saw two more overweight unshaven guys dressed in jeans with large belt buckles, tank tops and backwards baseball caps.

“Hey dude the game’s about to start up and we’re gonna’ win, know what I mean?”

“Hey man my buddy asked you a question. You’d be real polite if you gave him an answer.”

The third with the thumbs of both hands firmly planted in his front pockets, added his two cents worth, “You ain’t one of those Vermin State fans are you? ‘Cause we all got no guns to put you outta misery right quick, but we know how to use our hands like they’s weapons, you know?”

I needed to complete my mission first and utmost so I felt compelled to venture out of my shell and opted to reply verbally rather than use the softball bat and spare bike chain I kept in my locker. “Fellow fans, I go to this fine University and rooting for a mere college, especially one named Vermin is beneath me. I ask you who the hell would root for a school named after flies, cockroaches, mice, or coyotes?”

The obvious ring leader, whose buckle was a full six-inches across, spoke up. “Well we’re glad to hear you’re not a fan! Ain’t we boys?”

The cohorts in unison said, “Go Hawkeyes!”

Ring leader, “Wait until they get their next touchdown, idiots.”

“Yeah, okay, sure, yeah.”

The ring leader stepped a little towards me and said, “Say, you wouldn’t know where the exit is would you? We been wandering around in here the whole halftime trying to figure how to get out. I’m starting to wonder if maybe somebody spiked our cases of beer.”

I shoved the receipt into the loop of my water bottle and slammed my locker shut and said, “I’m exiting presently, I’ll be happy to show you out.”

After I politely ditched my new companions, I made my way back to Hardin to go forward in time to basketball season. If I returned the un-zipperable jacket, and got my money back, then whose conscience could possibly be uptight? Even a stogy aged grey-haired GOP any-or-all-business-as-usual-equals-God type couldn't utter a whisper about my having got my money back.

Through the door I went wondering why I didn't just keep the receipt on me rather than doing the whole hocus-pocus of getting the receipt and leaving it where it could be found. It had to be okay to get money from the past and bring it forward because the money would be worth less because of inflation. There would be no bizarre time-loop because I would be paying the loop off with the decreased spending power the money had in my present time. It seemed like a double-me-win situation because the money was mine to begin with, and spaghetti.com with sauce, not necessarily vegetarian, would allow me spend it mindfully.

I logged onto a7j3i02t5 and aimed the browser for March Madness because I knew by then the useless jacket would be in my locker. I got up from my machine and charged out into the night and my meeting with a receipt. The jacket showed right up but I had to root around in the locker a bit to find the water bottle.

At the store it was no big deal at first to get my money back—it was pretty easy—I presented the cashier with the receipt and jacket. When he questioned why I wanted to return it—I asked him to try and zip it. He told me to “stand aside” and that “zipping was beyond his pay grade,” whereupon he paged a manager who attempted zipping. After he stuck it and unstuck three times he told the cashier to give me my \$226.89. I slow-jogged back to the Field House fueled by the adrenalin of not having been nailed by the system, in this instance, yet. I also wondered about what other fun type things I could do by using spaghetti with sauce to travel into the past as I had just done.

The only problem was that March Madness fell right in the middle of spring break. I got my money back, but I was locked out of the main computer labs at Hardin. I slid my card through the reader in the 24 hour study area, and a red light showed. I did it again to no avail. Luckily someone let me in. I sat down at a computer and logged in and couldn't find spaghetti.com with or without sauce, vegetarian or otherwise. Panic mode—wait maybe it only works in the main lab. I dreaded the thought of being marooned in my own past condemned to a future of avoiding myself and being screwed by the system ad infinitum. It never occurred to me that my spaghetti with sauce would only work on, a7j3i02t5, but that seemed to be the case. I had to keep myself out of trouble until morning when the computer I used before would be available.

Trading cash for a meal and a few beers would get my layover off to a good start, and a free ride on Cambus to begin with would set the right tone. Hoping to be responsible, I didn't set myself an upper spending limit. Sandwiches are cheap in any time zone and even more so when you venture into the past and get stuck. It's also better to drink on a full stomach—I was warmed by my own sense of responsibility.

I needed a cheap quiet bar where I could drink real slow all night. Crew Cut is both—most of the time. Before being reincarnated as a bar it was a warehouse storing thousands of folding chairs some of which were rented out to drinkers by the hour. The renovation was done with one can of fire-engine-green spray paint to label the stage, dance floor and the porta potties for men, women and it don't matter or I don't care. The owner came by weekly when Hy-Vee delivered the kegs and set them on one of those cheap plastic tables you get at Wal-Mart. If you wanted your tap beer cold, it was up to you; however bottles of beer were kept in a motel sized refrigerator which chilled them when the bar was empty and likewise did almost nothing when it was busy.

I unfolded a rental chair leaning against the wall and set it behind the outside facing one-way mirrored window. It was fun to gulp warm beer and make faces at people as they passed by on the sidewalk oblivious to me. A heavy set guy walking along looked familiar and I recognized him as the guy I had seen an hour ago in my time, and months ago in his, as the character from the Field House with the huge belt buckle.

Opening the door to the limit of its hinges, he swaggered through on his way to the kegs like he was the owner. Clean shaven and wearing a tucked-in button-up shirt, he looked like a guy on his way to the top—except for the buckle—it was an oval three inches in length with what looked a miniaturized version of a White Tail Buck's ten-point antlers mounted in the center.

With his beer cup in one hand he came over to the window and flicked open a chair one-handed. I had to admire his technique—the wang of the metal chair opening caused everyone to look in our direction and he just ignored them. He smiled in my direction and said, "Makin' faces at the dumbasses outside?"

"Yeah. Hey aren't you the Hawkeye fan I helped to navigate out of the locker room at the Field House a few months ago?"

"Oh. Yeah, hey, you're that idi... dude who didn't know who to root for. Ha. Ha. We sure set you straight huh?"

"This coming from someone who got lost in a locker room. Hey what happened to your huge buckle—did you pawn it for beer money?"

“Fair question from a not-quite-academic. No, I got tired of it and sold it on e-bay as a historical dinner plate from the Wild West. Got two hundred dollars for it.”

“Whoa, you did good, how much did you have in it?”

“Good will, one dollar, tax included.”

I had been bested and I knew it. The guy was actually okay—I had probably not been able to brush off his rough edges when I saw him in the locker room. I decided to offer up a truce, “How about I buy your next one?”

His hand came off his cup and up to chest height as he offered a fist bump and he said, “Johnny Twaite, my friends call me Wait, cause I weigh more than em’ all.”

I bought him a beer and then he bought the next round while we made faces at the passersby. When we got around to it we both had a story of how we got to Crew Cut for these long rounds of drinks. He said, “My girlfriend kicks me out of the house every month so she can host a Toasters meeting. She told me it’s the best practice available for beatin’ me in our arguments.”

I laughed out loud and replied, “It’s easier to just give up and get on with the fringe benefits of make-up.”

“Yeah, but as men we gotta’ put up a fight to save face. And you know they’re gonna’ win every time.”

I raised my cup up and said, “You are correct.”

“And why my new face-making friend are you out on this fair evening getting sloshed drinking cheap warm beer?”

“Well, see, it’s like this. My landlord went on a trip far far away and I managed to lock myself outside.”

“I assume you intend to do the man thing and buck up and get plastered all day and all night and keep your stoic mouth shut.”

“Well not exactly. I called my mom and she’s going to send me her key for my house.”

“Whoa. Let me get this straight. You gave your mom a key to your castle?”

“Yeah but she lives in New York. She’s sending it via UPS air. I will be able to shut out the world by tomorrow afternoon.”

Wait sat there and took a long draw off his beer and took a baseball cap out from behind his back, put it on backwards and said through a belch, “Bull Shit.” He continued, “I don’t know about bein’ locked out, but I do know about getting a key delivered by tomorrow afternoon because I once sold a clump of fresh cut Kinnick-field-grass to a fan on the East coast and it couldn’t get there in a day.”

I stood up and said, "I'll go get us a couple of bottles of cold beer."

By the time I got back I had decided that since I had nothing to lose I would try the truth. I also thought that Wait felt the way I did about the system always trying to screw people. Before our beers had condensation on them I had told him my story about a7j3i02t5. He stared out the window for a minute and then said, "You know man, it don't matter much to me what your truth is—but I'll tell you what, you can spend tonight at my place after I get home and lose an argument—and if you can't fix whatever it is by tomorrow night you just give ol' Wait here a call and I'll see what I can do."

"Thanks Wait. I appreciate your offer. I'm pretty sure I won't stay back in this time—I went back enough times by accident that I think I'll be okay if I go and use the computer and stick to what seems to work."

The next morning when we said our goodbyes I asked him where he thought he would be in a few years and he said, "I don't know man—you go ahead and look me up—will it really be like we just got drunk and all?"

"Yeah—like no time passed at all."

Wait looked at me and raised his fist up and thrust it toward me and said, "Hawkeye!"

I thrust mine back and we connected and I said, "Forever."

I stepped through the screen door and heard it slam shut. The two steps to the walkway went fast. I took a few steps and then stopped and looked back. He was already inside. I took off my baseball cap and put it on backwards and started walking to Hardin.

