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The Molloy Student Literary Magazine Volume 9

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The Molloy Student Literary Magazine

Volume 9 (Spring 2013)

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The Molloy Student Literary Magazine, sponsored by Molloy College's Office of Student Affairs, is devoted to publishing the best previously unpublished works of prose, poetry, drama, literary review, criticism, and other literary genres, that the Molloy student community has to offer. The journal welcomes submissions, for possible publication, from currently enrolled Molloy students at all levels.

All submitted work will undergo a review process initiated by the Managing Editor prior to a decision being made regarding publication of said work. Given sufficient content, *The Molloy Student Literary Magazine* is published twice annually in Spring and Fall.

Interested contributors from the currently enrolled Molloy student community should send work via e-mail attachment and brief cover letter (including a two-sentence biographical statement) to:
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Enrolled students who are interested in becoming members of *The Molloy Student Literary Magazine* staff may e-mail letters of inquiry.

Excelsior!

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LITERARY CRITICISM

Tolkien: Creative Genius and Astute Scholar **Stephen DiGiorgio**

J.R.R. Tolkien is held in high regard among people who appreciate fantasy fiction, and rightfully so, but what is it that makes his fantasy so exceptional and how was he able to consistently enthrall his readers? Robert Foster, a scholar of English and Medieval Studies, explains that Tolkien's novels are good fantasy because, “Good fantasy offers the possibility of active, serious participation by the reader in an imagined world, which heightens one's sense of Self and Other” (Foster). Tolkien certainly actively, and seriously, engages his audience throughout *The Hobbit*, but how exactly is he able to accomplish this?

Tolkien's own expansive imagination certainly helped him achieve this goal, but credit also must be given to Tolkien's exceptionally vast knowledge of literature, which he constantly looked to for inspiration. For example, Tolkien's familiarity with classical Greek Literature becomes evident when one compares *The Hobbit* with Homer's *The Odyssey*. By comparing the overall structure of both books, specific similar scenes that take place, and the characteristics of Bilbo and Odysseus, it will become apparent that not only did Tolkien look to *The Odyssey* for inspiration while writing *The Hobbit*, but also that his respect and knowledge of literature is part of the reason he has been able to achieve such great renown.

Perhaps the most basic similarity between *The Hobbit* and *The Odyssey* is the overall structure that both stories share. Both stories are about the main character's quest to achieve something, but before fully accomplishing their goal, they both must undergo a Bildungsroman, or maturation process, in which they overcome character flaws that have previously held them back from being complete characters. For Odysseus, his quest is the long and arduous journey to be reunited with his wife on Ithaca, but before accomplishing this he has to overcome his hubris that gets him side tracked, and his infidelity to Penelope that prolongs his journey even further. For Bilbo, his quest is to go on an adventure with the dwarves in an attempt regain treasure from the evil dragon Smaug, but before Bilbo is able to

accomplish this goal, he has to overcome his cowardice and resistance to adventure that he displays at the beginning of the tale: “Poor Bilbo couldn't bear it any longer. At *may never return* he began to feel a shriek coming up inside. [...] the poor little hobbit could be seen kneeling on the hearth-rug, shaking like a jelly that was melting” (Tolkien 17). Although both quests are not identical, both protagonists go through a similar process in which they must mature to overcome their deficiencies of character in order to realize their final goals.

Another similarity the books share in structure is that they are driven by the protagonist's interaction with the various monsters they encounter along their journeys. All of these encounters with monsters serve the purpose of showing development within the characters by highlighting either what they did wrong or what they were able to correct and do right. Whether it be Odysseus' encounter with Polyphemus where he lets hubris get the best of him, or Bilbo's encounter with the trolls where he is desperate to make a name for himself as a burglar, both early instances serve to show where the character begins on his journey. Later monster encounters, by contrast, show growth within the characters, such as Bilbo rescuing the dwarves from the giant spiders or Odysseus overcoming the desire to be lured astray by the tempting Sirens.

Specific scenes that occur in *The Hobbit* are also extremely similar to scenes that take place within *The*

Odyssey. For instance, when Bilbo and the dwarves are fighting the trolls, Thorin “jumped forward to the fire, [...] He caught up a big branch all on fire at one end; and Bert got that end in his eye before he could step aside” (Tolkien 37). This seems particularly similar to the scene in *The Odyssey* when Odysseus defeats Polyphemus: “Now, at last, I thrust our stake in a bed of embers/ to get it red-hot [...] Hoisting high that olive stake with its stabbing point,/ straight into the monster's eye they rammed it hard” (Homer 9.420-428). Neither scene is exactly identical but it seems that Tolkien may have been inspired here by *The Odyssey* to have his smaller character overcome a much larger threat by stabbing it in the eye with a burning piece of wood.

Another scene from *The Hobbit* that is glaringly similar to a scene from *The Odyssey* takes place within the chapter “Barrels Out of Bond.” This chapter, in which Bilbo smuggles his dwarf friends out of the Wood Elf stronghold in empty barrels, bears a striking resemblance to the encounter that Odysseus has with Polyphemus, in which he smuggles his soldiers out of Polyphemus’ cave tied underneath sheep. These scenes are very alike for a few reasons. First, both scenes have the main character stuck behind a door which they have no power to move by themselves. For Bilbo, “Magic shut the gates” (Tolkien 157), making it possible for him to slip out with the ring on, but never able to sneak out with all of the dwarves behind him. In the case of Odysseus, a humongous boulder blocks the entrance to

Polyphemus' cave that only the Cyclops is strong enough to move: "no twenty wagons, rugged and four wheeled,/ could budge that boulder off the ground, I tell you,/ such an immense stone the monster wedged to block his cave!" (Homer 9.273-275). The predicament of being trapped behind doors they cannot move requires both protagonists to think their way out of a tough situation that they cannot force their way out of. This leads to both characters devising similar plans to sneak their friends out.

For Odysseus, his plan is to take advantage of Polyphemus' need to let his sheep out of the cave. For Bilbo, his plan is to take advantage of the gate on the river that the Wood Elves have to raise in order to send and receive supplies from the next town. The last thing that makes both scenes so alike is how both Bilbo and Odysseus are so worried about getting their friends out of a sticky situation that they almost forget to make provisions for themselves to escape. In Bilbo's case, he forgets that he has no one to help him get into one of the barrels and is forced to hold onto the side of a barrel all the way down the river. For Odysseus, he runs out of sheep after ensuring all of his friends escape, and is forced to sneak out underneath a ram instead of a sheep. This distinction sets Odysseus apart from the rest of his soldiers, just as Bilbo distinguishes himself from the dwarves by being the only one to escape without being inside a barrel.

The similarities of character Odysseus and Bilbo share may not seem apparent at first glance because Odysseus is obviously not a small hobbit just as Bilbo is certainly not a powerful Greek warrior. However, although neither main character is exactly like the other, they both share a certain characteristic that makes them similar. The characteristic in question is of course their wit. In crunch time situations, both Odysseus and Bilbo call upon their intellect to bail them out. This is very different from other heroes like Beowulf, Achilles, and Gilgamesh who all primarily rely on their outstanding strength to fight their way out of tough situations. Some examples of Bilbo and Odysseus making use of their quick wit would be the instance in which Bilbo encounters Gollum, and the instance in which Odysseus tricks Polyphemus into believing his name is “Nobody.” When Bilbo first meets Gollum, instead of trying to kill him with his dagger (he would probably fail), Bilbo relies on his wit to save him and accepts Gollum’s challenge to a game of riddles: “Very well, said Bilbo, who was anxious to agree, until he found out more about the creature, whether he was quite alone, whether he was fierce or hungry, and whether he was a friend of the goblins” (Tolkien 68). Bilbo is smart enough to take all of these things into account before trying to attack Gollum with his dagger, and understands that if he defeats Gollum in the game of riddles he might have a chance to find a way out of the goblin’s stronghold.

Similarly, when Odysseus employs his wit to trick Polyphemus, he demonstrates that he is able to think on his feet and avoids giving away any crucial information to Polyphemus (even though he is about to ruin this great idea in a few pages when he hurls insults at the Cyclops from the boat). Although both characters do not use their wit in the same exact ways, they both seem to rely upon it most in their moments of need.

Both *The Odyssey* and *The Hobbit* share a great deal of things in common, and it is highly probable that J.R.R. Tolkien gains some of the ideas for his own work from Homer. However, just because *The Hobbit* can be seen as inspired by *The Odyssey* does not take anything away from Tolkien's ability to write phenomenal fantasy. In fact, Tolkien's respect, knowledge, and appreciation for classic literature has only served to strengthen his ability to write great fantasy by drawing upon an already tried and true formula. Tolkien is able to achieve the "serious participation by the reader in an imagined world" that Robert Foster was talking about because he is working from a knowledge base that has already been proven to be able to accomplish this goal. By working with this framework in his mind, Tolkien has to simply add his own imagination to the mix in order to produce fantasy fiction worthy of praise.

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Shakespeare's Sister vs. Katniss Everdeen **Suzy Domanico**

In a "Shakespeare's Sister" from *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf introduces the idea that a woman's attributes are not taken as seriously as a man's. If a woman were to be respected and admired for her talents, she would have had to disguise the fact that she was in fact a woman. Society views a woman in a certain way and in order for a woman to be recognized, she must be fit into an assigned role. In Suzanne Collin's novel, *The Hunger Games*, the protagonist, Katniss Everdeen, must take on masculine characteristics in order to achieve success and win the hunger games and yet publically present herself as a stereotypical female in order to be

accepted by society. According to Woolf, in the sixteenth century, in order for a woman's talents as a writer to be taken seriously, she would have had to hide her gender, for if she had just openly displayed her work, critics and readers would have scrutinized it so greatly that the content and purpose would be distorted. Woolf says that a woman, "who was born with a gift of poetry in the sixteenth century was an unhappy woman, a woman at strife against herself" (601). A talented female poet at this time would have to face the idea that as herself she was not accepted.

In her extended essay, Woolf discusses what would have happened had Shakespeare had a sister with the same talents that he had. To sum it up, she would have ultimately been destroyed. Woolf explains this idea by saying, "it needs little psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts, that she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty" (600). Woolf would have seen Katniss as a girl in a battle between what the society sees as acceptable, and the person that she truly is.

In Suzanne Collin's novel, the main character, Katniss Everdeen, is a strong, rebellious, brave, and clever young girl who is able to hunt, provide for her mother and sister, and make deals and trades for goods in the black market. These tougher attributes are often identified with a male character in conventional fiction.

Collins had to give her main character these typically masculine qualities in order for Katniss to achieve success and be taken seriously as a contender in the Hunger Games. While Katniss was still a child, her father passed away leaving her mother inconsolable and unable to provide for their family. Katniss, despite her youth, assumed the role as provider for both her mother and her younger sister, a role typically allotted to male children.

In the beginning of the story, Katniss' younger sister Primrose is originally chosen to participate in the Hunger Games. Prim's character is that of the stereotypical young girl. She is naïve, sweet, and prissy. Prim is sure to be killed if she enters the games. There is no way an innocent and naïve girl would ever win a physical competition, let alone a fight to the death. Therefore, Katniss makes the courageous decision to take her sister's place in the games to spare Prim her gender-determined fate. Before saying goodbye to her family, Katniss speaks to her mother about caring for Prim: "You can't tune out again... Not like when dad died. You're all she has. No matter what you feel, you be there for her, you understand. Don't cry. Don't Cry." Katniss shows great strength in this scene. This is something a father would typically say to his family, but Katniss has assumed that male role for her family now. This strength is also part of what enables her to succeed in the games, as well.

The people of the Capital, who are lavish, require Katniss to be more delicate and feminine before they will accept her. When first arriving in the Capital, an entire team of specialists is hired to makeover Katniss. Katniss has to be waxed, wear makeup and fancy dresses, and even pretend to have a love interest for a fellow competitor. When first meeting her prep team, Katniss says, “So you’re here to make me look pretty,” to which one responds, “I’m here to help you make an impression.” In order to be seen as a contender, she must be molded into what society wants to see.

Katniss is assigned a mentor that will guide her through a series of interviews. She is taught to say the proper things and act in a certain manner in order to gain favor from wealthy people who sponsor the Hunger Games. During her televised interview, Katniss is asked to stand up and twirl around in her dress for everyone to see. These stereotypical feminine qualities are what society wants to see from this young girl. The Capital would have Katniss reduced to a simple-minded girl who is to be judged based on her looks and love interest. However, Katniss uses her cleverness to put on the façade of the typical girl the audience wants to see, while still maintain the masculine qualities she needs to win.

Katniss’ skills of hunting and wielding a bow and arrow, along with her cleverness, are what allow her to persevere through the Hunger Games. Contrary to those of the young woman in “Shakespeare’s Sister,” Katniss’ skills are what allow her to stay alive. Shakespeare’s

sister's skills, by contrast, are what drive her to madness and even death. Woolf says, "To have lived a free life in London in the sixteenth century would have meant for a woman who was poet and playwright a nervous stress and dilemma which might well have killed her" (600). Katniss' skills, as well as Shakespeare's imaginary sister's skills, were not accepted in the world of which they were a part. However, Katniss' skills had the ability to save her, whereas the sister's skills were seen as a curse and a death wish.

Towards the end of the story and competition, Katniss runs into Peeta, her fellow competitor, who is wounded. She uses her knowledge to gather the specific plants that can help heal him. The traditional damsel in distress is not found in Collin's story; instead Katniss is the heroic figure that does the rescuing. Katniss finds Peeta, nurses him back to health, and even risks her own life to retrieve medicine for him. But in order for the sponsors to send the medicine, Katniss must put on a show and display her feminine side. Only after she snuggles up to Peeta and even gives him a kiss do the sponsors deem them worthy of receiving the medicine. Sent along with the medicine is a note from a sponsor that says, "You call that a kiss?" inferring that her kiss was not up to their standards. No matter how hard Katniss tries to resist the stereotypical qualities that the Capital requires of her, in the end they always seem to get what they want.

Her rebellious side shines through in one of the last scenes. The Capital only permits one victor, and Katniss and Peeta are left to decide who will be the one to win the games and return home. Peeta says to Katniss, asking her to kill him, “They have to have their victor” to which she replies, “No. They don’t. Why should they?” Katniss does not believe that the Capital should be given what they want. Ever since she entered the games, the Capital has managed to make Katniss conform to who they think she should be. This is the turning point in the story where Katniss has finally had enough. Just because society will only accept one winner, this does not mean that they should be granted that wish.

In “Shakespeare’s Sister,” Woolf suggests that in the sixteenth century in order for a woman to be taken seriously as a writer or poet by critics, she had to hide the fact that she was a woman. Woolf even goes on to say that, “I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman” (600). Rather than expose herself as a female writer, Woolf suggests that Anon would rather her work be taken seriously and not be given the credit she is due.

Woolf highlights the difference between the way society felt towards male and female writers. Woolf says, “The world did not say to her as it said to them, Write if you choose; it makes no difference to me. The world said with guffaw, Write? What’s the good of your writing?” (601) This is exactly the type of thinking the

Capital imposed on Katniss in *The Hunger Games*. The same rules that apply to males do not always apply to females, whether it is a fictional futuristic story, or sixteenth century London. In “Shakespeare’s Sister,” Woolf’s character has to acknowledge that a woman’s talents are not respected the way a man’s would have been. In Suzanne Collin’s novel, *The Hunger Games*, Katniss Everdeen must face that same reality. Whether women have to hide their identity to publish their poems, or put on a façade of the stereotypical girl, they are being forced to conform to what society considers as acceptable.

ESSAY

Free Play: Living in Music **Peter Davis**

Questions

Pick up my guitar and play, just like yesterday.

– The Who

What does it feel like to go home? What does it feel like to return to something that feels like home – that takes you home? What does it feel like to experience something so personal it is, in effect, an extension of the self? What does it feel like to be home, yet constantly searching for new horizons? How does it feel to take chances, to risk, and yet be safely home?

How can one have a relationship with an inanimate object that, placed in your hands, seemingly comes alive?

What is it like to have joined a continuum that became a journey – a continuum that you purposefully perpetuate – a continuum that started when mankind was taking his first steps on Earth –a continuum that will, one day, slip away from your grasp, only to be picked up by another? To answer these questions is to ask other questions: What is it like to live in music? What is it like to share one’s music with others? What is it like to communicate with others within the music?

These are some of the questions I found myself asking while reading *Freeplay* (Nachmanovitch, 1990). When I began to examine my relationship to music, my musical instruments, and my life in music, I realized how fortunate I am to have reason to ask and seek answers to these questions. Some questions, however, will remain unanswered, for no matter how often we look behind the curtain, the music, like magic, will remain a mystery.

Let’s Play

Explaining what it feels like to play his violin, Nachmanovitch (1990) described:

[an] energetic impulse that moves...from the earth through the feet...into the shoulder and down the nerves and muscles of the right arm. The

informational impulse comes from past, present, and future, through the body, brain, and personality to descend, again, down the nerves and muscles of the arms and hands, right through the instrument.

(59-60)

From this string player's perspective, the description provided by Nachmanovitch (1990) is correct. When I play my guitar(s) (and when I sing), I experience a sense of energy, connectedness, and immediacy between my intellectual, emotional, and physical self. The result of this body-mind-soul connection is music – my music. And, incredibly, no two moments of my music (or your music, for that matter) are identical; every musical moment is unique. This speaks to music's ability to capture or reflect the present; by the time a musical note sounds, that note, like time itself, is gone.

Less Playing, More Music

So as not to disturb his friends and neighbors, Nachmanovitch (1990) learned to play his violin “so softly that my music could barely be heard a few inches away... I learned to tickle the strings so that they just whispered, yet whispered clearly and easily” (p. 64). In concert with this economy of playing, Nachmanovitch (1990) discussed the sense of physical relaxation, balance, and fluidity that is essential to playing a musical instrument:

I found myself paying minute attention to the muscle groups as I played...the more I played in different ways, the more I relaxed and strengthened the whole body. Playing the instrument means finding the graceful, balanced form for each action. (65)

This statement resonates with me; when playing at my best, my hands, arms, and shoulders are relaxed. My fingers traverse the fingerboard as gently and delicately as possible. Small moves can produce big results such as changing harmonic structure, adding/subtracting tonalities (e.g., intervals, harmonic complexities), and creating tension-resolution. For this to happen, however, the fingers have to be nimble and relaxed. Strength and tension are also critical to the process – strength to play the various notes, chords, etc., and tension enough to produce the sonic qualities you *choose* to produce, to be utilized in musical experiences and strategies you purposefully *choose* for a client. These qualities include delicate sounds such as harmonics; soft, breathy sounds; large, full strummed sounds; and staccato ostinatos such as those used in Rock n’ Roll/Blues. In fact, if you observe great string players (guitar, violin, etc.), you will notice the economy of movement in their hands. At times, their fingers seem to barely move at all. When I see this, an image comes to mind: that of fingers dancing on the strings, similar to a ballerina, gracefully dancing on a stage.

Practice Makes Perfect. ...Or, Does It?

Is the link between mind, heart, hands, instrument, and emotional expression found in one's technical skills and abilities? Does practice make perfect? Perhaps not, yet choosing to create specific musical sounds and textures to be used in chosen music interventions often depends on a person's ability to play/sing what they hear in their head, as well as what they feel in their heart. Nachmanovitch (1990), discussing the role of practice, supported this when he wrote, "There is a gigantic difference between...[what] we imagine doing or plan to do and...[what] we actually do" (66). Nachmanovitch (1990) added, "The most frustrating, agonizing part of creative work, and the one we grapple with every day in our practice, is our encounter with the gap between what we feel and what we can express.... Technique can bridge this gap" (66).

Music therapy is, at its best, intensely creative work that often requires moment-to-moment decisions, the ability to turn on a (musical) dime, and the ability to be musically expressive. This is seen particularly in the Nordoff-Robbins Creative Music Therapy approach (NRMT), where therapist and client engage in musical experiences that are fluid, changing, and often unpredictable from one moment to the next. NRMT trainees are required to devote considerable time and attention to developing their musical skills and abilities because, according to Nordoff and Robbins (2007),

“creative, responsive freedom in clinical improvisation depends on increasing a therapist’s...[musical] facility while widening his or her musical resources” (461).

Borczon (2004), supporting Nordoff and Robbins (2007), added, “If you feel free to move naturally in your thinking and in your music making while adapting to the responses of the client, you’re moving in the realm of being creative. Being creative is a gift, yet it can be learned and enhanced” (6).

However, strong musical technique is no guarantee of clinical success; an extensive skill set does not magically triumph over empathy, awareness, intuition, and the gestalt of a person – the entirety of who they are and what they bring to the therapeutic process. Nordoff and Robbins (2007) addressed this when they wrote “a *unity* [emphasis added] of technical abilities and musical awareness...increases a therapist freedom to respond therapeutically to the needs and challenges ...[clients] present” (XV). Nachmanovitch (1990) added support to this line of reasoning when he cautioned, “technique can get too solid – we can become so used to knowing how it should be done that we become distanced from the freshness of today’s situation” (67). This statement, I believe, can easily apply to music therapy. To keep the music “fresh,” it must be relevant to the particular place and person, not the last, not the next, and not the possibility that the music sounded “perfect.” (This does not, however, deny the continuum of the therapy process).

Less Can Be More

Do limits determine a “lesser” outcome, or can limits produce wondrous and rich results by providing a sense of clarity as to what resources are available, as well an understanding of the terrain upon which we will travel? To this point, Nachmanovitch (1990), discussed “[the] French word, *bricolage*, which means making do with the material at hand....[a] *bricoleur* is an artist of limits” (86). In effect, this concept refers to making do with what is at hand, via the imagination and the creativity inherent to all. I firmly support the concept of working with what you have. In my case, I work with my voice, my guitar, my imagination, my creative skills, my listening skills, and my expressive skills. Yet, with these finite resources, I can produce countless different sounds, textures, rhythms, tonalities, and moods that can have an emotional and physical effect on others. Add to this the voice, perhaps humankind’s most primary musical instrument, and I can produce lots of music using very few tools.

Of personal interest is the role our hands play in creating music. How does music travel from the brain (and the heart), and make its way to the hands and fingers, which then “play” the instrument? How do forms, shapes, subtleties, and pressures in the hand transfer symbolic, emotional, and spiritual information into an instrument, which then projects the information

in a language, music, that others can understand and appreciate? Nachmanovitch (1990) examining similar questions, spoke to the wonder that is the human hand when he wrote, “of all the structures that impose their discipline on us, the most ubiquitous and marvelous is the human hand....enigmas that baffle our brains are dealt with easily, unconsciously, by the hand” (81-82).

Set the Stage for Music

To play my guitar means inhabiting a personal, special place where possibilities abound. In this place, personal rituals are performed. I remove my guitar from its case. I place it on my lap or wear it on my upper torso. My body assumes familiar postures. My hands go to familiar places. I have entered the music room, and wherever that room (or physical space) may be, it’s time to play music. This concept of a unique, creative environment was referred to by the ancient Greeks as “the *temenos*...a magic circle, a delimited sacred space within which special rules apply and in which extraordinary events are free to occur” (Nachmanovitch, 1990, 73).

When I enter the music room for a session, I am aware of being in a place where special things can occur. The room has a purpose. It is unique. It’s a room where music can bring about communication, connection, new ideas, and personal growth. Recently, during my clinical

internship, I watched a client, “J,” enter the music room for his weekly session. When presented with his favorite instrument (a conga drum), J looked at the instrument with a sense of surprise and wonder; his eyes were bright and he displayed a broad smile. With the conga set in front of him, J assumed a relaxed, assured posture. When J began to play the conga, he did so with delicacy and grace, as if saying hello to a treasured friend. Witnessing this, I felt that, for J, this was a special moment in a special place. In the music room, J could stretch his boundaries and experience life in ways that might be otherwise unavailable to him. For a brief moment, J, playing his conga drum in the music room, occupied center stage.

Home

Having spent the majority of my life in music, I am familiar with entering the creative arena, the *temenos*. Yet, I continue to feel a sense of awe, wonder, and surprise when I enter the music room, however that room is defined. Years after receiving my first guitar and taking my first guitar lesson, I am more passionate about music than I have ever been. Today, when I pick up my guitar and play, I experience a sense of affirmation. In the music room, standing on familiar ground, I am seeking new horizons and new possibilities. Yet, I know that one day my musical

journey will end. But, on this day, living in music, I am fully alive. On this day, living in music, I am home.

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POETRY

Student Observer

Amanda DeVivo

Sitting here in the back,
I watch the students act, eager to participate.
I become impatient,
As I await my opportunity to be the teacher.

Hearing their thought-provoking ideas,
Makes me want to participate, too.
I have my own input to share.
But, for now, I can't.

For now, I am just labeled a student, myself,
Sent here to "observe."
My role is to sit in the back and watch the more
experienced.
For now, my role is to learn.

My mind scrambles, as I want to dive right in.
Frantically, I want to run to up to the front,
To share my thoughts and views.
I long to share my own knowledge.

But, for now, I must wait.
Forced to sit in the back with a muzzle.
Forced to contain my ideas in my mind.
I must act invisible, for now.

The Loose Tooth

Alexis Drennan

Like a tiny little mirror
bite sized reflections of me
you're amazing and so hopeful
of what you'll come to be

I don't want to let you down
please don't mimic my mistakes
please remember that you're beautiful
these words will never be fake

Please don't forget your innocence
It's so easy to lose you see
like change on a rollercoaster
or the remote to a tv

Please don't forget the feeling
There's a whole world to explore
Don't lose your imagination
your hopes, dreams and more

Don't forget to hold your breath
while wishing on stars
and railroad tracks
'cause the hand's moving
around the clock

Something You Can't Wish Back

Alexis Drennan

Life is a movie without a pause
a story with no bookmark
from training wheels to driving cars
and there's hardly time to park

You don't have to be the greatest
You've been perfect to me all along
In time you'll come to see
the years are so short
but the days are so long

Don't listen to the people
who try to knock you to the floor
try to always love freely
the way you did when you were four

The Sharpness of Music

John Elliott

Brittle is the husk,
subjected to fracture following trust –
The lousy skin of memory.
The comfortable refrain
loses a silent siren cut. Peel,
peel me bare.

Latent in the music:
a stimulant.
The refrain hits –
Ecstasy –
a single tear filled with smiles.
Visions resurface:
scenes more daunting than dreams,
vivid and malignant.
Joy in the moment,
the moment before woes.
In the words, the melody,
the faces, the smell of it.
Short-breathed and grasping at specters –
temporal woes.
No more than a tooth-split lip back to
a man and a radio, alone.

Music treat me kind;
Be patient with me.
Carefully and slow to the places I haven't got the means
to go.
High on memories makes for un-ascendable lows.

Music, remember me to those I am inextricably linked.
When my song is heard,
impact them with unbridled precision.
And make them swallow commonplace remarks.
And spare them no emotion.
Shine glaring lights down ghosted avenues –
Ecstasy –
A single tear filled with smiles.
And have them think of me often in the moment before
And hold, hold on,
release.
And in the void
Feel all of me.

Storm Chasing

John Elliott

Thunder's deep but dull.
Lightning can fracture the view from any window.
Lightning's whip cracks hard as the slip
of the strap of your dress falling to your hip.
The perfect storms they have them both.
Only simple things require oath –
that awful stigma that keeps me quiet.
Hunger pangs from your complicated diet.
I'm counting in short breath to your distance;
Mapping your smooth outline with persistence.
A well-made bed is deep.
Inherited wealth is cheap.
Lightning can fracture the view from any window.
Thunder's deep but dull.

Untitled
Christine Oliva

Rain gone away;
chrysanthemums now dewy
in damp terracotta skirts.

That dirt smells
clean,

the world smells
healthy;

wet
grass,

green and good.

I lean on woody trunk
and watch the nearest pine tower,
spread wide over a charcoal sky.

The moonlight outlines me,
my white dress and bent elbows
silhouetted on tree branches.

I feel autumn within and
without.

I'm enchanted by stars,
the cool
night,

and my shadow.

I
want

to make rabbits' ears
and flying
birds

dance...
as if I'm six again, singing

for robins and squirrels...

My shadow smiles at
me,
even if I can't see it.

Because this must be
how Peter Pan felt
even

had he grown up.

Untitled

Christine Oliva

Before me lies a pristine
canvas,
pure white and
free
of paint. Imagination
churns
creativity— my ideas for a
“masterpiece” unborn.

Bright-eyed and hopeful, I
begin
mixing paint upon my
palette.
I can dab that paint brush as I
wish—
it’s called “artistic license.”

But then, that teacher stops
aside
my newly coated
canvas.

She looks at it and turns to say:

“Oh, it’s really not quite *there*,
Miss.
See, you’re doing
it *all* wrong!
Mix *that* color,
with *this* other—
it really *won’t* take long!”
Though it doesn’t stop
there,
I must
confess.

She has *such* a short
fuse...
She looks at it again and states:

“How
really
do you
choose?

The
hue’s *not* right...

That
blue’s *too* bright...

This green's a
little *dull*...

I would do this— it'd look
better,
my miss— gives you something to mull.”

Well...

Our visions do
differ,

but I'm eager to please...
...I wonder if sometimes I live on my knees...
And while I still have
but
such big
dreams...

This hobby.... This painting...

How *fascist* it seems!

My Dearest Katrina & Sandy
Roger Smith

You swim. You
who unrobe with eyes wide
shut and dive into
molecules more shallow than broken
glass impressions. I see you, turning your back stroking
away from my oceans, floating
past my continents, oblivious
to the obstacles of my world. You
fish, searching for gills of
nourishment while I drown
praying for a chance to breathe
Again.

I've always understood the mechanics
behind swimming,
and cherished snorkeling (when it
wasn't for my most precious memories).
I don't want to watch Michael
Phelps conquer
the substance of my victimization. I've
never had a phobia of
two hydrogen atoms, covalently bonding with
one, single oxygen
atom,
until it left me with zero.
Sans home. Sans car. Sans clothes. Sans Everything.

PROSE

That Dreaded Day

Amanda DeVivo

I can't believe the day is here. The week had gone by faster than I could have imagined. My heart had not stopped trembling since the day I was told the dreaded news. My worst fear had come true. Yeah, I remember the day, the day he told us he was leaving; my knees felt weak, my heart felt shattered. Back to battle my husband Marc was going, back overseas to the unknown. It was only one week ago today that he got word and laid this awfulness upon us. Now, he must go – with no guarantee of return.

To outsiders looking in, we have it all. I have the perfect life. I have my handsome husband, two well-behaved sons, and this big ol' house with a staff giving us all the assistance we will ever need. But the outsiders, they don't see the pain. They don't see the devastation that takes over my son's faces every time Marc turns and leaves. It had been two years since he last left; we thought these days were through.

Last Thursday seemed like any other Thursday. I spent my morning like any other morning. I woke up to the birds chirping and the beautiful sunshine. I put on my robe and with the help of our maids, Josephine and Christie, proceeded to get the children ready to attend school. I made sure they dressed properly and brushed their teeth then sent them downstairs to breakfast. I laid out Marc's suit and went downstairs and waited his arrival. The children and I sat down to breakfast and waited for Marc before we began eating.

"Good morning, Father!" the children said in harmony, shortly after he appeared. "Good morning, sons!" he replied with a small simile. Marc had always kept his emotions to a minimum, especially with our sons. I think he wanted to make sure they grew up to become tough men like he was. It didn't mean he didn't love them unconditionally; he just wanted to prepare them for the real world. Chrissy brought in breakfast and we ate our perfectly scrambled eggs, with toast and sweet jelly in silence like always. We always ate in silence; everyone seemed more focused on the food than

the conversation, and that was ok with me. The boys then ran off to catch the school bus, and Marc readied to leave. “Goodbye, Honey,” he said, as he headed out to the car and off to the army base.

After he left, I went back upstairs to ready myself for the day. I planned to me three other wives for tea that afternoon. Meeting with the wives was always a production. Getting ready took hours – every curl had to be in place and your outfit had to be perfect. It was quite exhausting. If you didn’t look the part, you’d be outcast. When I was finally ready, I headed off to tea, like any other Thursday.

The day was coming to a close. I had returned from tea and awaited the children’s return. “Good day, Mother,” my son said as they both walked in. “Go straight upstairs and begin your homework before dinner,” I replied. I supervised as Chrissy and Josephine prepared dinner, and I awaited Marc’s return.

I heard the car coming down the long cobblestone driveway, and I rushed to the door to greet my husband with joy. “Hi, Honey,” I said with a smile, but that smile was not returned. We walked into the house. The children came down to greet their father, but he quickly sent them back upstairs. “What is it?” I said with haste.

“It’s happening,” he said calmly.

“What’s happening?” I said anxiously.

“They’re sending me back.”

My heart sank and my body froze. It was the four words I had hoped I’d never hear again. I wanted to

speak, but I couldn't get out any words. The tears began to flow vigorously down my face.

"Don't cry, Honey, its gonna be ok."

"But why?" I said, "but why?"

"Things are getting bad over there, I have no choice."

I began to pace abruptly. "But what if something happens?" I screeched. "What if you don't come back?" Marc forced me to sit and placed his arms around me. Rocking me back and forth, he said, "Don't say that. I'm coming back." I couldn't bear to look at his face, because both of us knew there wasn't an ounce of honesty in that statement.

I picked myself up and said, "When do you go?" more calmly.

"One week from today," he uttered softly.

"So soon!" I felt myself beginning to lose composure, again. But Marc jumped in and said, "No more tears. Let's make it a decent week, my love."

In the background, Josephine announced dinner was ready. My knees felt weak, but I rustled up the strength to head to the dining room. When the children came down, Marc told them the news. They remained silent as sadness consumed their innocent faces. We ate dinner in silence, that night.

Yes, I remember that day, the day that changed our lives; and now the week had past.

When I awoke this morning, it seemed the birds were not chirping and the beautiful sunlight did not seem

as shiny and luminous to me. It seemed the house was still and silent. Marc had already gone out back to ready his weaponry for his departure.

I did not know how I was going to remain composed, but I had to for the sake of our sons. Yes, I have all the help in the world but without Marc our family is empty. The fear and worry will not leave me until his safe return. Each day will be filled with uncertainty and despair about my husband's life.

On the outside, I have it all. On the inside, I am breaking.

I could hear that a few of our close companions and neighbors had gathered outside the house to see him off. I watched Marc prepare his belongings, and my body became tense. The sadness on my sons' faces as they watched him made me want to break down. But I held it in. Can't let anyone see you fall. Then the horn sounded as the car came down the long driveway. It was time.

"Ready?" Marc said. I wasn't, but I gave a half-witted smile and proceeded to walk. He held my arm and for one last second, I felt safe. We walked out the door at a slow pace, our sons following. Those gathered outside patted Marc on the shoulder as they cleared the way for us to walk through. I could see their lips moving, but I couldn't hear any words. I was numb. I noticed they were all smiling. I knew it was fake, just like mine. Underneath those smiles were feelings of sorrow. Everyone was thinking about tragedy – what if

something bad happened? I knew they were thinking it, because I was thinking it. But I wouldn't let it show. The walk seemed long and treacherous. When we finally reached the car, Marc patted our sons on their backs and said "Good-bye, sons." They smiled. He looked me in the eye and said "I'll be back, Dear." I leaned over and kissed his cheek, keeping my smile up. He got in the car and the car proceeded down the long driveway, as we all watched in silence. I stood there for a while, while the others had begun to disperse, processing his last words. Truth is, I'll never know for sure if he is really coming back. I hate to think the worst, but I must always be prepared. Deep down, I felt so scared, that could have been the last time I ever see him. I wanted to cry, but I didn't.

I turned to my sons, who were sitting off to the side in silence. "Let's go inside, boys." We walked back into our big ol' house, shut the door, and continued with the day.

Short Story
Christine Oliva

Tick. Tick. Tick. Tick...

The gentle ticking of the grandfather clock filled the living room. The movements of its smallest hand were marked by a soft ticking sound which could only be audible in silence. That, or one simply needed to be accustomed to listening for it.

The clock was the newest addition to these living corridors, and had been for apparently four years – something I wouldn't have known or particularly even inquired about had he not stressed this trifle on a daily

basis. He often considered “erratic” changes in schedule or décor a sign of abnormality. Only “the freakish in nature” required a change of scenery, and at first, I didn’t understand what he’d meant. I also thought this sentiment was a little *insensitive* of him to say . . . After all, the clock had been presented to him by his *mother* as a gift. She never lingered around long enough to see how this present was received, but I don’t think her son much liked it. Its discreet ticking sometimes had a way of making him twitch. . . I noticed quickly that he sometimes had a habit of twitching when things were unfamiliar to him or they didn’t go *exactly* as he wanted . . .

As the clock continued ticking, I had gone to the chest – part of the “accepted” furniture in the room – and had withdrawn my drawing utensils. Momentarily tranquil in manner, I sat myself by a window. Always perched by a window, gazing out. . .

I turned away after a while and gently picked up a piece of charcoal, a soft melody floating on the currents around me as I hummed and drew a fluid line – another and another – keeping my voice in tune with each stroke from my small, rhythmic hand. (I tend to forget the world around me when I’m drawing, lost in a world of myself.)

Suddenly, my insides jumped, cringing as a loud voice shattered my calm.

“Stop! NO. *QUIET!*”

The charcoal slipped through my grasp and fell to the floor, breaking in half. All I seemed to be able to do was stare at the pieces, frozen, *tense*. There came an abrupt banging on the door, even though it was wide open . . . He was pounding on it for the sake of just . . . *pounding* . . . but still my gaze remained locked on the floor for another long minute of eternity.

I was terrified to look at the clock. And although I hadn't peered up, I could feel his eyes burning hotter than fire.

*"I trusted you! How dare you **lie** to me!"*

I'd lost track of time . . . I'd been in our house since the moment I'd risen from our bed; it wasn't as if I'd escaped and *abandoned* him. Sometimes I wondered if that's essentially what his mother had done, relieving herself of a toxin and injecting it into me. From what I was told, he wasn't *always* this . . . strange. But I'd be lying if I said I wasn't terrified by these episodes. The very first occurrence, when he'd asked if I'd heard "the voices," I started giggling. I thought he'd gotten a hold of some wine and was just jesting. I didn't know it then, but he was completely sober, and until I looked at him, I assumed he was laughing along with me, as well.

But he wasn't.

Not at all.

He was very . . . *horribly*. . . angry and frightening.

Shortly after that, I discovered he had been listening to my "suggestions" and had somehow (rather

conveniently) become an aficionado of wine. “Do you even know . . . w-why I drink? I have to . . . have to drink to . . . LOOK at you!” Something he hadn’t even heard himself speak until my expressed reaction swept a brush of recognition over his eyes. He then managed to grab my flower vase from the neighboring table (with the flowers still in it!) and smash it against the wall – too far from me to cause harm, but just close enough to rustle the wind for the impacted blow.

I remember him walking up to the door in a fury, but just as his hand embraced the doorknob, he decided to take in my closeness. I was absolutely petrified as he took my wrist. Pale, fragile wrist raised in his hand like an unfortunate bird who had forgotten how to fly right above the gaped mouth of a hungry lion. There was no doubt in my mind that this man could harm me...

I flinched.

But before he could rip my hand free of my arm, he just leaned in and planted a kiss to my wrist instead.

How sweet of him.

How *fortunate* for me . . .

Most people would consider this the recollection of being in the presence of a pitiful, drunken man. If only it were that simple . . .

“Melinda said! Melinda *said* you’d forget,” he spat in contempt, causing my thoughts to snap back into the present.

“You’re all against me but *her*! You *enjoy* hurting me!”

I knew it was impossible to communicate with him over this. I'd tried to talk to him and understand, but the more I had attempted to help the worse it became. Sometimes he'd spew profanities, others he'd outright say I was tempting Death . . . (to put matters lightly).

My voice was timid. "Maybe Melinda would like a drink too? Maybe some wine will quiet her down –"

I couldn't finish. His fist collided so forcibly with the wall, it left behind the stamp of his brutality.

"YOU KNOW TOO MUCH WINE MAKES HER EVEN *MORE* BOISTEROUS!"

I stared in horror, my heartbeat accelerating in my chest and my breathing rapid. In the back of my mind I wondered how his hand hadn't been crushed, yet my subconscious echoed back,

*"Be grateful that **wall** wasn't you."*

Sometimes I wanted to just shake him and scream, "Don't you know? You don't have to be like this!" He must be so lonely, so profoundly isolated from all that exists outside the cacophony in his skull.

I swallowed thickly, "I'm sorry . . . you know, she hasn't come to visit us in a while. I must have forgotten. I'll put on some tea for her, then . . .?"

My question went unacknowledged.

Scowling, he directed, "Look at me when you speak." (Yes . . . *that* sounded more like him . . .)

I rose from my chair by the window and cut in front of him, guiltily feeling like a prisoner in my own home. How callous would I be if I left? The room . . .

the house . . . his life? He was clearly afflicted; I refused to be like his mother . . . It's not like *I* didn't care for him . . .

Caring for him was the most crippling part. *Loving* him made me contemplate my own sanity...

If I stood straight enough, perhaps I could meet his shoulder – though that was being generous – and if anything (even when he wasn't like *this*) I always had an overwhelming desire to withdraw inside myself, to shrink whenever he was near. He must have known this to some extent, I was certain, but nothing was ever voiced – and for that I was secretly grateful.

The heat rose to my cheeks, crimson surely seeping into alabaster as I tilted my head upwards ever so slightly, barely enough to meet his eyes. They were still burning, which made me quickly second-guess myself.

Always second-guessing.

It was an honest question that came from my lips next, so faint that it was barely audible if one was not listening for it. Like the ticking from that clock (which I had begun to hear again), *part* of me hoped he'd overlook my words as well.

“Melinda doesn't have to have a drink at all. Why not tell her to come back later? I was hoping it'd just be *us* –”

He shoved me – violently – then, and I stumbled backwards. I just missed colliding with the clock;

however, I could not prevent myself from falling. I curled up on the floor, my corset had now shifted into an uncomfortable position that dug into my rib cage and made me tear up in both eyes, a stabbing sensation to add to the tearing apart of my heart.

“You’re not even *real!*” I could see him begin to twitch, looking down at me as I lay there waiting for the pain to subside. I shifted my focus to his shoes instead, unable to endure that stare. “I should make *you* go away – *Tick! Tick! Tick!* – I hate that infernal clock – no, no! *I hate you!*”

No he doesn’t. He doesn’t hate me. He kissed me once, and I’m convinced that a kiss is never *just* a kiss... No, not that one he’d left on the wrist.

The *other* one! Like that clock, I too had been a gift, and he had *accepted* me.

His shouting relentlessly pushed through the haze of my mind. “Yes! Both useless! Best get rid of you *both!*”

He’s making me mad too, isn’t he . . . ?

But then his voice leveled, reflecting that split-second change in him.

“Well. Get off the floor, then,” he said firmly. “I’ll take my wine. I should have been finishing my first glass by now. I suppose I can overlook a change in schedule, just this once. Get up.”

I tried to remain composed and lifted myself from the floor as if nothing had ever transpired.

“Should I draw an extra chair then?”

His brow rose. “For?”

My mouth parted in a small o-shape.

“Melinda,” I said.

He burst out laughing at this, and I rubbed the sides of my arms, trying not to appear too unnerved. I was incredibly unsure how to handle such a reaction.

“Oh, darling,” he managed after drawing a long breath, “you amuse me.”

EXTENDED RESEARCH ESSAY

What Connects You and Me?
The Dualism and Friendship of Sal and Dean
In Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*
Travis G. Williams

There are multiple connections we can take from *On the Road* written by Jack Kerouac and from Allen Ginsberg's work. *On the Road* has intriguing links made from Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty – links that bond them to make the novel great and a friendship that draws roots from what it is to be an American. Ginsberg makes certain biographical references in his work that the public can connect to. George Dardess, Karen E.H. Skinazi, and Jason Arthur are three scholars

whose work helps define these connections and also help the reader understand why these connections were influential in the works of these two Beat Generation writers. Dardess's findings indicate a strong relationship between Sal and Dean that created the essence of *On the Road*; their bond was essential to the finding of the American Dream. Skinazi's article delves more into their relationship and presents an interesting analysis that Kerouac was drawing connection from his French Canadian roots into Sal and Dean; Sal being Italian and Dean being American, these two together have pros and cons. Jason Arthur describes how Ginsberg added subtle, personal marks in his poetry that allowed the readers of his time to jump into his own life. Their findings will support the points that will be made in this paper: (1) Sal and Dean's friendship is the driving force of the novel *On the Road*. (2) The dualism of Sal and Dean embodies what the American Dream is, and (3) Allen Ginsberg's biographical touches in his works helps connect the reader into his (Ginsberg's) personal life.

We will first take a look at how friendship plays an important role in *On the Road*. There are several things to note about *On the Road*. The novel is heavily centered on the actions and responses of Dean Moriarty and Sal Paradise. Moriarty influences Sal to go on his adventure throughout America. There is something burning within Sal, and Dean brings it out of him when he gets released from jail. In the early stages of the novel, Sal admits: "the only people for me are the mad

ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars” (5). Sal is heavily interested in what his friend Dean will do next after his time in prison. He knows that Dean is a very eccentric yet outgoing person and the friendship between the two is strong at the beginning of the novel. We should also take note that Sal had set the story up in a unique way with the crumbling of an old relationship and beginning with a new one. George Dardess, in his article "The Delicate Dynamics of Friendship: A Reconsideration of Kerouac's *On the Road*" sums up Sal by saying:

A comparison between the opening and closing paragraphs of *On the Road* gives a preliminary idea of the book's structural complexity. Where the book begins cautiously, with careful distinctions made between the narrator's present, his Moriarty past, and his present Moriarty past, it ends with a complicate paragraph in which temporal and special boundaries are obliterated. (201)

Dardess later explains how this disintegration sets up a new path for Sal by stating, "The book begins with the narrator's construction of distinctions and boundaries; it ends with his discarding them – a discarding which indicates his desire to suspend opposites in a perhaps

continuous state of flux. The book moves from hierarchy to openness, from the limitation of possibilities to their expansion” (201). That suspension of opposites is the relationship he and his wife had; it can be said that Sal is looking for someone who is like him, a person in a state of change; someone who is also looking for something, but is not quite sure what that is. Sal and Dean make a good match because they are both out for the same thing.

Since Sal Paradise is engaging in a new friendship, with Dean Moriarty, he is now able to experience new things by exploring what America has to offer and what Dean has in store for him. The two friends travel all across America; to each end of the country and with that mileage, their friendship picks up both pace and baggage. Through the ups and downs of their travels, Sal’s relationship with Dean has changed significantly. We have to consider how Jack Kerouac broke up *On the Road* to signify the importance of their friendship. Dardess shows how Kerouac managed to keep the novel neatly shaped:

The structure is evident in a narration divided into five Parts, the third of which contains what can be called the climax of Sal's and Dean's friendship. Parts One and Two record Sal's gradual development of excited interest in Dean, while Part Four records Sal's development of an apocalyptic fear of him. Accompanying the growing complexity of Sal's relation to Dean is an

out-fanning geographical movement. Each Part records a circuit of the United States with New York, Denver, and San Francisco serving as the main geographical and cultural axes. In Parts Two and Three, important detours are made from more or less straight lines of progress connecting one axis with another, the first detour by way of New Orleans, the second by way of Chicago. In Part Four, the friends spin off the board altogether towards Mexico City and the "end of the road." In Part Five, Sal and Dean go their separate ways, each friend towards opposite shores of the American continent. (202)

Sal and Dean, among other friends and acquaintances, go through many things when traveling. So when Dardess shows how Kerouac breaks down the gradual digression of their friendship, he is showing why their companionship means so much to them. It starts as a heavy interest of Dean; a "mentee to mentor" view. Sal sees Dean as his hero in the first part of the novel; he practically idolizes him. The admiration continues into Part Two of the novel. Sal is so bedazzled by Dean that he does not take notice of Dean's inappropriate behavior. He sees it, but does not confront Dean about it as though what Dean was doing was alright by Sal. Dardess makes a good point in how Sal uses the word "IT" to refer to Dean's activity. "Beginning with Part Three, however, Sal begins to confront the consequences of Dean's vulnerability to "IT," to ecstasy,

to the promise of being able to reduce time and space to smaller and smaller increments until they disappear altogether as measurements of activity. Where in Parts One and Two, “IT” functions as an ultimate mystery to which Dean’s relation is priest-like (and Sal’s is that of the neophyte) . . .” (203). In the earlier parts of the novel, Sal watches as Dean takes charge and propels him into the adventure of the American Dream. Dean’s actions mystify Sal; from his speech to the way he treats Marylou, Dean’s “IT”, his will to keep moving and burning captivated Sal who wants to start a new cycle. However, as the story progresses, Dean’s behavior begins to become more blatant. Dean has not only abandoned him in San Francisco, he leaves him in New Mexico. This is when Sal starts to realize that the two of them remaining friends is not possible. What makes Sal’s and Dean’s friendship so influential in *On the Road* is the fact that they both go through a lot of reach the ending. Jack Kerouac makes interesting use of time and space; each chapter is condensed into weeks or every months. He uses this quick time lapse to jump from place to place which makes Sal and Dean’s relationship change when they are in those different places. For example, their first destination was San Francisco, where their dreams supposedly lay. However, Sal arrives two weeks late and Dean has already left. This gives Sal time (a little more than fifteen days) to get to know Remi, Lee Ann, and a woman named Terry. Sal starts to experience a

connection that he never really had before with Terry; he starts to become part of her family. However, Sal still yearns for what Dean was already heading after. It is the moment in chapter 13 where Sal still wants that “it” and again, fractures a connection that could have lasted.

Terry brought my breakfast. I had my canvas bag all packed and ready to go to New York, as soon as I picked up my money in Sabinal. I knew it was waiting there for me by now. I told Terry I was leaving. She had been thinking about it all night and was resigned to it. Emotionlessly she kissed me in the vineyard and walked off down the row. We turned at a dozen paces, for love is a duel, and looked at each other for the last time. (Kerouac, 101)

Without telling the readers, Sal feels disappointed with the departure from Terry. He knows he is starting something with her and so do the readers. What is holding him back? Frankly, it is still too early for the book to end. With two more Parts to go, Sal still has a long journey ahead. “Well, lackadaddy, I was on the road again,” Sal says. What’s keeping him on the road? The readers know it as “It” but, Dardess points out that Sal mentions something having a burden of caring for another adult. This is when we start to see Sal’s point of view change about Dean. This is also the reason that makes their relationship so intriguing. Dardess says in his article, “When one adult assumes absolute responsibility for the existence –

“burdensome” or not – of another adult, he does so at what seems a great risk, since both parties sacrifice to each other their independence.” (204) Sal tries so hard to follow in Dean’s shoes, but in reality, Sal is in Dean’s shadow. He is walking behind him when Dean is speaking with Carlo, he is left in the dust in both San Francisco and New Mexico, and now he is behind him taking responsibilities for his actions. The risk here is leaving a possibly good life with Terry; he leaves her asking himself what will happen to Dean if he had stayed. Sal in the later Parts of the novel starts to see Dean for who he really is. He calls him a “holy goof” and an “Angel of Terror.” Sal sees the way Dean’s treating Camille through his outrageous behavior. Paradise knows that it is the end of the road when they get to New Mexico. They know that this place is raw and unexplored to them. For Sal, this is where he has to make a decision, a painful one. Dardess states how this responsibility is eventually placed on Sal. “To have responsibility for your friend means not only providing him with companionship or with money, not only defending him before a jury of his peers; it means also – and painfully – maintaining a sense of how your friend sees himself apart from the way you see him” (205). Sal does everything in his power to believe that Dean would help him find his “it.” Ironically, Dean is able to do that, but not directly. Sal does not tell Dean that he sees him as a “god” or role model; however, he allows Dean to be . . . himself. At the end of the novel,

Sal is left feeling exhausted and guilty. Before they depart, Dean says “[I] Want to be with you as much as possible, m’boy, and besides it’s so durned cold in this here New Yawk . . .” he knows Sal is keeping him together, as if he realizes Sal’s risk, his burden, at the last moment. Despite their sad departure, Sal still feels responsible for Dean’s well-being. He reflects: “And off we went to the sad and disinclined concert for which I had no stomach whatever and all the time I was thinking of Dean and how he got back on the train and rode over three thousand miles over that awful land and never knew why he had come anyway, except to see me” (307). In his heart, the friendship still continues; having the novel complete a full circle. They each go coast to coast; testing their friendship and at the end, it still endures.

Karen Skinazi, author of the article *Through Roots and Routes: On the Road’s Portrayal of an Outsider’s Journey into the Meaning of America* makes good connections of how the Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty characters show both the drawbacks and the benefits of the American Dream. Sal represents the outsider that uses his curiosity to connect to other outsiders – going beyond the limit of nationhood and bettering oneself. For Dean, he embodies the brash American that is stuck in the mainstream values of America. This prevents him from seeing new possibilities. When Kerouac puts them together, they create a mental picture of what America is. It is grand in

its own right, but it refuses to be separated by its own glory. The dualism of Sal and Dean is very reflexive one as both men are dependent on each other. Dardess would agree that whatever happens to one character, the other is affected in kind.

Skinnazi begins her article with a nice introduction taken from Pierre Anctil's preface in *Un Homme Grand* which says:

Kerouac, a man situated at the crossroads of two cultural traditions. He is simultaneously French America, hiding in the parish halls and the humble working-class neighborhoods of a hundred milltowns, and the American Dream, conceived out of boundless space accessible to all, a dream that unfolds like a goldsmith taking possession of his precious metal, progressively appropriating an entire virgin continent. (86)

What makes this introduction so powerful is that it encompasses the underlying plot in *On the Road*. What is the American Dream? What was Sal's and Dean's "It"? The "boundless space" in which the introduction speaks about can be seen as the open range of Denver or the unexplored possibilities of New Mexico. Both Sal and Dean, especially Sal, want to search America for their "It." The dualism comes into play where Sal presents the "old" conservative view of America's values. Readers can see it in Sal's character; the way he is laidback and reserved. He is the observer, the watcher of Dean. Dean, by contrast is the fiery, "new" view on

American value. Dean is the one that takes charge and possesses the spotlight. They are each connected because Sal cannot narrate his or Dean's story without Dean being himself and chasing his "It." Sal Paradise keeps his distance, but still feels he is a part of the dream of Dean. While Dean is actively searching for his "It", Sal is looking for his own without any real direction. One can make the analogy that Dean Moriarty is a bull. The American Dream or his "It" is the bright red cape, flowing in front of him and Sal is the reluctant bull-rider that has to go along for the ride and hopes his does not fall off. Although the bull may be the center of attention, the rider has also taken a persona because he is daring, risky, enough to take on the bull's challenge. As Skinazi explains:

Throughout *On the Road*, Sal appears to be hovering in the hero's shadow—in a luminal space that is both in and outside the spotlight, following the hero, Dean, in his conquest of the continent, but unable to appropriate the land as Dean does. As a result, Sal Paradise is both mirror-image and antithesis of the book's cowboy-idol, Dean Moriarty. (87)

As stated before, Sal is following in Dean's shadow. He chooses to go ride the bull and search for his possible "It." But Sal is almost unable to make sense of the vast world he is entering. Everything fascinates him; from the drunk people, to the wild ones. Dean is similar, but he is excited for a different reason. Dean wants to find

the next “high.” He wants to take on the world and be on top of it. Both characters mirror each other by their contrasting characteristics. Skinazi later says: “And this combination of sameness and difference results from the fact that Salvatore is an American like Dean, but unlike Dean, as he is also Italian—a duality that must negotiate” (87). Sal is on the path to finding his “It,” but he is not quite there yet, because he is following Dean. Sal’s pursuit of happiness can be traced back to the great Americans that came before him, people like Lewis Clark and Walt Whitman. Their ideas of being American influence Sal, so he tries to assimilate himself. Sal is not the character to put himself into the spotlight, but Dean is. Sal sees Dean as the perfect person to force him to “take the open road”. It’s as if Sal choose Dean to become his liaison, saying “Live the Dream for me!”, “Show me the way!” Sal knows that he cannot do it alone, so he chooses to follow Dean and mimics him. What makes the dualism so dynamic can be summed up by a few words said by Skinazi, “Sal cannot *be* Dean” (88). And rightfully so, their personalities are at both ends of the spectrum, but if you bend it slightly, you can reflect each of them. In order to make them compatible, Jack Kerouac places them into a world full of possibilities. Both Sal and Dean grow dependent upon each other: Sal needs Dean’s vibrant lifestyle to find what he’s looking for, while Dean needs Sal’s smarts and money to achieve his “fun” in the vast world.

Despite Sal's undying will to follow Dean, he still cannot find the answer he is looking within the novel. He keeps going back on the road, searching for that answer. Skinazi supports this occurrence by saying and quoting from the novel:

Italian American Salvatore goes on the road and time after time returns to the road because of Dean ("[T]he bug was on me again, and the bug's name was Dean Moriarty and I was off on another spurt around the road") (Kerouac, *Road* 115). He is not satisfied until he finds and discovers Dean. On the first venture, he heads straight for Denver and asks repeatedly, "But where is Dean?" (39). This question resonates throughout the narrative. (90)

Sal Paradise knows that he needs Dean to carry on, in fact Dean is the reason why he is on the road in the first place. So without his catalyst, Sal is in limbo. Sal's ultimate goal is to find out what makes Dean's "Dean." Sal understands that he is the "cookie-cut" guy who went to school and is "home" oriented. He also understands that he wants more than that, so he needs Dean to lead him through this unknown world to him. Even when Dean is not physically there, Sal keeps him on his mind, so that bug still remains. So near the end of the novel, Sal still doesn't find his answer. He still wonders about Dean's well-being; he does not believe that he has found the "It" he is chasing.

Another point that can strengthen the dualism Sal and Dean create is the fact that Sal lets Dean do the things he does, even if they are immoral. Sal is not an angel himself, but in probably most readers' points of view, Dean is not a very moral man. Readers pick Dean apart, mainly because of his infidelity. Sal makes it known that he has severed his connection with his past love, he also makes it known that "love was a duel." Readers sympathize with Sal. Dean on the other hand, does not make a public apology or appeal. He blatantly acts immoral and shows no regret. Sal tries to make sense of Dean's conduct and implicate it into the "It" they were searching for. But as the novel shows, Sal struggles with that reasoning. Skinazi describes the battle of trying to understand Dean's actions: "For Sal, it is the Myth of the West – the notion of the virgin land – that entices and intimidates him. This West is writ of glorious and incorruptible: he justifies Dean's criminality by claiming that "it was a wild yea-saying overburst of American joy; it was Western, the west wind, an ode from the Plains" (93). Since they are embarking on this new journey, Sal gives Dean's the pass on his immoral behavior. He says that this is the West that is doing it to him and Dean is embracing it. This is what it means to be an American; wild and free, like Lewis and Clark had discovered it. However, this idolization seems to fade when Dean behaves this way in excess. "When Sal arrives in the West, his fascination with the spirit of America as embodied by

the Myth of the West suddenly oppresses him, and he feels a deep and sudden desire to return to his (ethnic) roots” (Skinzai, 93). Sal repeatedly wants to return to New York and see his aunt. His “roots” can be seen as the old ways or how life should remain. Sal is frightened of Dean toward the end of the novel and wants to justify Dean because he takes on that burden.

There is also the aspect of Sal being the outsider or observer and Dean being the native or the action present in the novel. This confirms the duality between Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty. Skinazi explains how those “quiet” versus “loud” attributes create a nice yin and yang of the relationship: “The tension between insiderness and outsidersness is always present in *On the Road*. Sal suggests repeatedly that he is outside much of the action of the novel, despite his active involvement in the sex, drugs, poetry, and rolling down the open road. According to his construction of the narrative, the driving on the road novel is Dean’s, and Sal is a passenger” (96). All of the events happening around Sal are influenced or have something to do with Dean. Everyone is looking for a piece of Dean, but since Sal cannot be Dean, he is unable to give that to the people. Sal sits by and watches the story unfold because of Dean. Dean has control of the wheel, both on and off the road. And what is a driver on the open road without his fellow passenger? Sal seems to justify his passiveness by saying “I only went along for the ride, and to see what else was going to do” (Kerouac, 129).

Connections can be made through more than just two characters. Although Jack Kerouac had made various connections to his French-Canadian heritage to his two characters, Allen Ginsberg had made these biographical links extensively. Jason Arthur author of the article, “Allen Ginsberg’s Biographical Gestures” explores the notion that Ginsberg tried to reach out to the audience and share his life with them. Through his work, “Ginsberg has always exercised an editor’s control of the public face of his private life” (Arthur, 227). Arthur talks about Ginsberg’s works pre-Howl and how his poetry reflected some of his personal life. Arthur explains that Ginsberg didn’t intend his life to be public, however his poetic nature allowed people to read into his work. He says, “Ginsberg’s careful manipulation and publication of written materials not originally intended to be public (i.e., letters and journals) marks Ginsberg as a curator of his private life. His goal in part, as Schechner claims, is to “clarify the example” of his extraordinarily singular life” (227). Allen Ginsberg’s “The Green Automobile” is our first glance into his personal life. Although the text of the song cannot be found, it can be heard in the first few lines that Allen Ginsberg is homosexual. Most artists abridging and interpreting the song read them as this:

If I had a Green Automobile
I’d go find my old companion
In his house, on the Western ocean.

HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

...

We'd pilgrimage to our highest mount
Of our earlier Rocky Mountain Visions
Laughing in each other's arms
Delight surpassing highest Rockies.

The "laughing in each other's arms" usually gives the listeners a hint that Ginsberg may be homosexual. Whether this was intentional or not, Ginsberg eventually made his sexual preference known to the public. Arthur states that even Ginsberg was unsure how he wanted the poem to be read; privately or publicly.

In fact, Ginsberg is fond of equating "The Green Automobile" with the letters written that year. For instance, while apologizing to Cassidy for not having written in a while, Ginsberg explains that his writ copy of the "The Green Automobile," which he includes with the letter, proves that "though this letter is late I've been writing it, in other forms. (229)

These "other forms" could symbolize Ginsberg's struggle to write the letters as private consumption or public. Arthur then quotes from Oliver Harris, who wrote about the Beat Letter exchanges, about Ginsberg's debate: "... measures Ginsberg's identification of letter and literature, hinting at the reciprocal economy that makes letters poems and of poems letters . . . eliding the

distinction between the poem as publishable and public property” (Harris, 177). It is often said that authors give their work some biographical meaning; we have seen it with *On the Road*. Allen Ginsberg’s “The Green Automobile” may be the first we have seen of his openness to the public about his personal life.

Arthur dives further into the letters that were exchanged between Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassidy. He explains how Ginsberg’s biographical gestures were not easily done despite his poetic brilliance. Arthur states that the time period was once in which Ginsberg was very fragile; Ginsberg was battling his homosexuality and his personal family life. The letters to Kerouac were very in-depth and although they were meant to be private, the essence of them could not have been kept that way.

Early in the letter exchange, Ginsberg indicates a parallel instrumentality between letters and conversations. In a letter dated 1948, he claims to have “at last discovered my art, along the lines laid down in conversations and late letters” (1948a). The “art” Ginsberg claims to have collaboratively “discovered” is verse poetry, namely the sonnet, whose intellectual compression (what young Ginsberg marvels at as “a jewel of thought”) is the antithesis of the declamatory long line that drives Ginsberg’s mature poetry. (Arthur, 231).

Ginsberg had written many letters asking Kerouac to visit him. These letters are praising Kerouac for creating Allen's new "art." He feels that his art is less important, than the actual presence of the person who created it. This gives the reader a chance to read into Ginsberg's actual motive. "We thus see early on Ginsberg's preference for personal interaction over the isolating act of writing, a preference that eventually leads to poetry that draws on the intimacy of a specific audience" (Arthur 231). This "art" needed to become public in order to be enjoyed to the fullest; it was dependent of the public.

Ginsberg continues to write in this new form and eventually tells Kerouac in another letter that he has failed to write a manuscript dealing with "personal problems." Ginsberg criticizes himself about how he was a "poser", who "ventriloquially" evokes allusions and forms." Ginsberg is clearly battling trying to have his life reflected in his work; however, he is actually alienating himself from it. We can say that Ginsberg wants to welcome the readers into his life, via his writing, but he is not sure what the outcome will be. Arthur later shows that Ginsberg was trying to incorporate both his conversations and poems into the letters, but they often stand apart from each other:

Ginsberg's early contributions to the letter exchange tend to treat letter content and poetic efforts separately. The poems that begin to accompany letters are lengthily introduced but set

apart on the page, or appended to the finished letters, as though the poems are on display rather than organically related to the act of correspondence. The two kinds of text do not merge. (232)

Ginsberg desperately tries to keep his poetic self into the letters that were personal to Kerouac and Cassidy; however, it could not be done when his personal conversations were blatant. Picture going to a diner and ordering a meal of scrambled eggs and when the eggs get to you, there's an image of a naked woman made in ketchup onto of the eggs. They are totally unrelated and forcing them together hurt the image of the author, or in the example's case, the waitress.

This research has given me great insight of how there are works within the Beat Generation that make various connections. Not only are there character-to-character links present, but there are author-to-reader connections. These relationships can carry a story forward and may be very pivotal to it, while the struggle of an author trying to reach out to his/her writer can be easily seen. The articles by George Dardess, Karen Skinazi, and Jason Arthur helped this paper prove several points: The dualism and friendship of Sal and Dean was important to *On the Road* and Allen Ginsberg was trying to reach out to the audience even before his poem "Howl".

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