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The Molloy Student Literary Magazine Volume 11

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The Molloy Student Literary Magazine

Volume 11 (2014)

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Letter from the Editor

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Magazine, sponsored by Molloy College's Office of Student Affairs, is devoted to publishing the best previously unpublished works of prose, poetry, drama, literary review, criticism, and other literary genres, that the Molloy student community has to offer.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:
Dr. Damian Ward Hey, Managing Editor, *The Molloy Student Literary Magazine*: dhey@molloy.edu.

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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Note on Content and Editorial Policy:

Potential contributors should keep in mind that *The Molloy Student Literary Magazine* is not a vehicle for political content nor for other content of a controversial nature. This is because the magazine does not provide a mechanism to present the opposite point of view.

Due to reasons of space, not all accepted pieces may appear together in the same issue of the magazine. If, for example, a contributor submits multiple pieces and more than one piece is accepted, the Managing Editor reserves the right to choose which piece is included in the current issue. Accepted items that do not appear in the current issue may appear in an upcoming issue.

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The Molloy Student Literary Magazine

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Ants (Trapper Juan)

Kenneth Bornholdt

As Juan sat eating his meal, he noticed that there were no old people in the village. Most of the natives were young women and warriors. There were perhaps fifty children of varying ages, but no one in the village appeared to be older than thirty. It was very odd, he thought.

After they had eaten, Tikki, using sign language, made it clear that he was very interested not only in the weapon that Juan had carried with him to the village, but where Juan had come from. Juan drew a crude map in the dirt and, again through sign language, was able to convey to the chief the land that he called home. He then patiently showed Tikki how to clean the rifle and how to load and fire it. The warriors crowded around the two men. They, too, were fascinated by the weapon. Finally, Juan loaded the rifle, a Remington 30-06, and handed it to the chief. Tikki eagerly accepted it and aimed it in the air. When he pulled the trigger, the explosion sent the warriors scrambling and laughing hysterically. Juan placed a melon on a nearby log and showed Tikki how to aim at the target. The chief pulled the trigger and the melon exploded into a thousand pieces. Tikki erupted into laughter and handed the gun to one of his sons who proceeded to mimic his father and shoot at a melon. The result was the same.

Tikki made a gesture to Juan. He wanted to trade with Juan for two rifles. Juan was hesitant to part with his weapons but decided to see what was being offered. Tikki spoke and his wife raced to their hut and brought back a wide selection of gifts to trade. Juan picked through the many feathered headdresses and arm bands, the carved wooden statues, the wood and stone battle axes, and then something unusual caught his eye. It was a small, tarnished silver box approximately nine inches square. It was obvious that the Indians didn't craft this. Where did it come from, and how did it get here? Juan looked at the box with feigned indifference and put it aside. Tikki's brother came over to the pile and added a jade figurine and a pair of solid gold earrings. Juan held the jewelry in his hand and realized by the weight that the gold earrings alone would pay for the rifles. He told Tikki that he would take the jade figurine, the gold earrings, and the silver box in exchange for two rifles and 300 rounds of ammunition. Tikki nodded and smiled. Although he did not want to part with the silver box, he knew that the rifles would do much to insure the safety of his people.

"I must leave now, go back to my camp," gestured Juan.

"I will have my men take you back." Gesturing towards the gifts, Tikki told Juan to leave in peace.

They grasped arms and smiled at each other in friendship. Juan climbed into the canoe with the three warriors and they pushed off into the dark night. It was

pitch black as the canoe glided over the dark brown river. When they reached his camp, Juan brought out the second rifle and the ammunition and put them into the canoe. As the warriors moved off into the current, Juan smiled and waved goodbye. They were quickly swallowed by the darkness. Then, Juan packed his treasures in his canoe. He had decided to cut his season short and return to Lima as soon as possible. He was eager to see what the gold earrings and the silver box would fetch on the antiques market.

Evil Things in the Happiest of Places

Kristin Cardino

“Stop it, Jeremy!” I managed to giggle out as the two of us were walking down Toronto Avenue. He kept trying to tickle me as we were walking closely next to one another on this chilly March evening.

“Oh stop it, Melis! You love when I tickle you,” Jeremy said to me as we continued on our stroll to the park. While we were walking, I kept getting the chills and, as we grew closer and closer to the park, more and more this feeling of uneasiness started to run throughout my body. With each step we gained toward the park, the more nervous I became. I wasn’t really sure what kept making me feel this way; the whole night had so far been perfect. Nothing out of the ordinary happened; it was just a typical Wednesday night for Jeremy and me.

“Melissa? Hello, earth-to-Melissa?” said Jeremy. I guess my thoughts were consuming me more than I realized.

“What? Sorry... I was just thinking about how funny that movie just was, and how excited I am to go to our spot at the park. It’s been forever since we’ve been there!” I said back to him, finally forgetting the uneasiness I felt. It really has been a long time since we’ve visited our own little spot – four months exactly – with all the winter’s snow and cold weather, the fifteen minute walk to the park was just so impractical.

“I know. I wonder if they changed anything this winter. Remember the first time we came back last year, and they had installed all those new benches? I hope they put some more in,” Jeremy said.

“I hope so, too. You know how much I hate sitting in the grass.” Jeremy laughed after I said this. He was probably thinking back to the time where we came to the park and were sitting in the grass all night talking, and the next morning I was covered in bug bites and couldn’t stop scratching for weeks. Just thinking about it makes me laugh.

This spot was always a positive place for us; it was somewhere in which we never fought and forgot about all of the evil things that can take place in this world. It was a place in which nothing mattered except the two of us and that nature that surrounded us.

But as we were rounding the corner to the park, that uneasy feeling I had shot right back through me like a ton of bricks, and this time I couldn’t shake it off.

“Jer, maybe we should just skip this tonight. For some reason, I just have a really bad feeling about coming here right now. It’s been bothering me the whole walk over here.”

“Calm down, Melissa. Nothing’s going to happen it’s our happy place. Plus, it’s 9 o’clock at night... who’s going to be in the park? Plus, you know I’d never let anything happen to you. Just relax.”

“I don’t know, Jeremy; I just don’t feel right about this. I just feel like something’s off balance and

it's really starting to make me uncomfortable." I said this just as we were entering the park. The street lights were on, so we were able to see a few feet in front of us, and as soon as we walked in, I could have sworn I heard someone yelping. And we both saw someone in the distance run off and hide.

At first, I thought my mind was playing tricks on me, until Jeremy grabbed my hand tight and stopped walking. He turned around, looked me in the eyes, and told me to stay where I was; he just wanted to move a little ahead of me to see why that guy took off as soon as we got somewhat near him.

Of course, being the chicken that I am, I refused to stay by myself and told Jeremy I'd walk with him but would let him lead the way. I couldn't stay there by myself! What if that guy came back from behind us and tried something?

The closer we moved toward the area in which the guy ran from, the more nervous I grew. The yelping sound started to grow weaker and weaker. And with each step, crazy ideas were running through my head about what could have just happened before us.

I was so deep in my thoughts of negative things that I didn't hear Jeremy telling me to turn around and look away! Before I could even react to the words I heard, I saw a young boy lying on the ground right in front of us, barely conscious and bleeding from the head. As soon as the scene before me registered, I looked away

as fast as I could and, like clockwork, tears automatically started streaming down my face.

Because now the spot Jeremy and I once thought of as peaceful and positive – a place in which all of the troubles we were facing in our everyday lives were just forgotten for a few moments – was now ruined. No longer was this our happy little home away from home, our safe haven. It was now a place in which we would no longer be able to escape to; it was a place we now had to escape from.

Erised Brianne Schieffer

Not too long ago, my family consisted of a mother and a father. But in the span of what felt like no time and forever together, I no longer had a mother. When school started, she felt sick. By the time Halloween came, she had leukemia. By Thanksgiving, she was bald. By Christmas she was home. By New Year's, things were feeling more like they had. And by Valentine's Day, she was walking into a hospital for what would be the last time. She had leukemia, but that wasn't what killed her. Somehow, even when the big bad cancer was beat, it was a simple infection in a compromised immune system that did her in.

I lived at the hospital for over a week, sleeping in the waiting room when I got the chance, never quite getting any real rest. One day, I almost fainted walking back to the waiting room from my mother's bed in the ICU. At that point, the family convinced dad and me to go home and get some rest. We did that, and the next morning I grabbed a few things to occupy my time and maybe let me forget for a few minutes. One of those was the most worn book in my home: a ten-year-old, soft cover copy of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, with a long torn and missing cover and the spine split in half by the innumerable openings it's had to bend for. What better way to leave the harsh world of hospitals

and diseases than by drifting into the most influential and formative stories of my childhood?

So we returned to the contradictorily sterile yet germ-infested hospital we had left mom in. At some point, I sat down and started reading about an abused orphan with a prophesy for what might have been the hundredth time. And it worked. I forgot where I was for a little while. And then, like it always has to, reality came back in the same way as a train running into you.

The family had a meeting. We had pretty much known there was no coming back from where she was; for all intents and purposes she was brain-dead. We decided to stop fighting what we all knew was the inevitable. I almost didn't go in; I had already said goodbye, and barely even thought of her as alive anymore. But anyone who has let go of a loved one this way will tell you: They always seem to hold on just long enough (and I mean just) for everyone to say goodbye. And I finally did go in there. That was all it took.

Later that night, I sat alone in my room unpacking the bag from that morning. I opened the book to where I left off what seemed like weeks ago, but really only hours. And I began to read again. This time, it didn't work. I couldn't escape reality this time. But something else happened.

Harry found his way into a disused classroom, occupied by an ornate gold mirror. And in that mirror he saw the thing he wanted more than anything in the world. His whole family was there, whole and happy.

And even though Professor Dumbledore said he saw socks, hindsight says that he saw the very same thing as Harry. And I found myself connected to this world in a way I never could have been before that night. We would all see the same thing, Harry, and Dumbledore, and Jo Rowling... and I.

Winter Midnight
Kenneth Bornholdt

Winter midnight, wind sings
Down mountain trails
Snow swirls, dancing gracefully in the shadows
Piling drifts on mother earth
Pines shrieking melodies
To forest ears
Primal night, deep memories stir
The campfire warms us
As we watch, the storms fury
We wait the waning
Of nature's dialogue
Insignificant amid the chaos
In winter midnight.

An Indignant Sky
Caitlin Breen

An indignant sky
purple in fury
Frozen flurries faint,
taking refuge on lashes
snowcapped landscapes
The orange glow of the streetlight
eerie on the brilliant snow
illuminating the night
Muffled laughter
drifts
in between well clad ears
A winter warfare ensues
leaving all her soldiers
rosy cheeked and
breathless
Cars clumsily crawl
on ice and black sleet
The church bell calls forth
8 o'clock mass
And in such coldness
there is warmth
and peace
on
Christmas Eve

My Favorite Color

Angie Elkaray

The evanescent glow of a candle burning at night.

The middle signal of a traffic light.

The pencil of choice to bubble A, B, C, or D.

The bright, fuzzy band of a bumblebee.

The feathers of a *Sesame Street* bird; he's tall as a bear.

The fry cook sponge whose pants are square.

The school bus the kiddies are dropped off.

The hue of phlegm a sick child would cough.

The brick road that leads to the almighty *Wizard of Oz*.

The sunflower a boy gives a girl, just because.

The brilliant light of our adjacent star.

The cab you hail, in *The Big Apple*, when without a car.

The slippery fruit peel used in comedy.

The hair pigment of Dexter's sister Dee Dee.

The arcade character Pac-Man or "pie sans slice."

The sweet piña colada; made with crushed ice.

The bee-made sweetener added in tea.

The legume excellent hot or cold; chickpea.

The butterscotch wrapper on candy.

The walls of my room that make me happy

Snowflake
Angie Elkaray

A dreamy blanket of white sand
Its coat trickled evenly throughout the land

From a great distance a glistening flake is hard to
decipher
Yet a closer examination unveils like it's no other
Like a snowflake you and I are
Completely unique within

I like orange juice and you like coffee
I like varying shades of green hues
And you like vibrant shades of blue

You enjoy drama and company
I like certainty and familiarity

But from eyes afar
Friends are like blankets of snow

One and the same from great distances
Yet with a unique pattern underlying within

Open the Drawer

Angie Elkaray

Open the drawer
All atop another
Sock pairs
Balled up
A stocking, a legging
A plaid sock, or twoShort socks,
long socks
A sock that's blue,
My old socks
Forgotten
Thin in pieces
Threadbare cotton
Comfy socks
For cold nights
I look homely
But it's aight
Sparkly, tartan
Big and small
Why not?
I'd wear them all!
A monochromatic sock,
a striped sock
A gray sock, a white sock
The unopened "seggings"
Only worn once

Snow flake leggings
They plea,
Please, wear me!
A nylon, a wool
And polyester too
What the heck,
Mom took two!
I only have a few
Time to buy socks, woohoo

crash)

Angie Elkaray

crash)

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Shattered
Charisma Karnavar

As a glass can fall and shatter
Into a hundred pieces
My heart fell out of your hands
Though no one hears a heart break
Only one feels the shards piercing
Into thoughts
Actions
Words
Really I cannot fathom
What it takes to repair such accidents
If we knew there would only be one poem
One song
All conflict resolved
However there are too many involved
Caught in the same strife
Walking the same way about life
Searching for answers
Unavailable

Rumors

Charisma Karnavar

To mean what comes out of your mouth

Can be difficult to deny

Once its said

All else is dead

To the thoughts of the receiver "

Alone

Charisma Karnavar

I like to be alone
No annoyance
No interrogation
Nothing missed
You can be alone too
In the same room
I won't touch or pry your hurts
and tell you they will heal
Won't ask why or how
I will let you be
As I desire
To be
Alone

Sense

Charisma Karnavar

What makes someone worthy of information

Is it time

And place?

Or is it character

Does it make sense right away

May you sacrifice that privacy?

Those hid away experiences

Locked in memory

Now the script of another's imagination

Tortoise Eye
Joseph Ostapiuk

From my tortoise eye,
I see
how everything moves
so desperately.

The passing motions of a tireless regime,
moving by me,
without a mere glance

This helpless feeling.
Like a soldier on a beach,
barely breathing.
Vesuvius over Pompeii,
frozen and sealing,
the motions and dreaming
of a couple intervening,

How it must be,
to have that helpless feeling.

Cherry Blossoms

Joseph Ostapiuk

She was just tall enough
to reach their boughs,
bending; her golden tresses
flowing earthward,
each pale silken petal
a canvas to her eyes
and a gentle face to caress.
All seemed motionless
when she stopped to paint
their blossoms,
as if heaven had held its breath
and no birds sang,
and not a breath stirred through the trees
when she lifted her fingers
towards their leaves
so that not one would fall
from its branch.

And in her eyes I can see
the spring that once filled mine
and remember the arms
where not a joy or love
would ever be lost or forgotten.

Venus in Waiting
Joseph Ostapiuk

These otherwise phantom eyes,
they do soothe it
and deep are you,
burrowed within me,
through and through.
But still I find you
deeper than the depths
of the ocean
hidden in crevices and caverns unknown
plunging through darkness without refrain
Preserved as fine gem,
under the blacktop soil
where no sun lies its head
and Venus, waiting
lies in bed
Lying under these stars in tumultuous delight
with you, being the most heavenly sight
among the emptiness between planets
and the openness of the night
Where planets and angels abode
both so scarcely shown
to the onlookers of the night,
so is you, my Aglaea
my diamonds, my pearls
the Venus of my eyes.

But even the magnificence
of these planets looming
and these stars aimlessly shooting
winces to the color of the pale moonlight
in light of you,
my most heavenly sight.

And so,
as from reverie
my sullen wing'd seraphim
with crowned flowers and ethereal embrace
so did illuminate this darkened place
where the shutters have dimmed
and the blinds slowly fade
to seal my eyes
upon this dreamlike face
so forever,
whatever dreams I forebear,
will caress thine eyes
in angelic air

Now,
from these towers of azure,
these otherwise angelic eyes
I still do search for
And there so,
her ebony eyes are finding
these looming shadows
that still wander and wade through my soul

For in thy child eyes I do confound
Most wonderest mysteries
But in that darkness that forebodes us both
I would willingly embrace as one
And catacomb in thine earth

Passing

Joseph Ostapiuk

There's an entrance to the woods I should call my own,
for to no passer-by has it ever been shown
where leaves exceed and lean over the trail
as if a shadow had cast his form above my eyes
but under these white-December skies
where winter's fall lays its cloak upon the ground
I find myself wandering through the dreamless snow
towards the flowers that still show last
I know my footfalls should bring me back
to where I was once before
but I'd never dream of going back
I'd much rather be lost in snow
and never find another soul
or where the lamp-lighted streets cross through pastured
fields
where not a sullen eye wakes from the midnight drear

As each hollow crystal falls through my hands
I sit myself against the wood and the unstable sheet of
white beneath me
each moment melting into the next
like snowflakes upon my brow
betwixt the trees somewhere far off from here
there's an endless field of blanketed white
who knows no word but silence

I find my clarity in the snow
where scarce travelers ever go

Darkness

Ryan Roberts

Sometimes its in my thoughts
or on my lips
Sometimes it's the way she walks
Or that bewildering sway of her hips
I can't quite catch myself
I'm in a daze
In the corner, on a shelf
I look on with a haze
But my eye sees true
and I lock on
She is like the queen
And I'm only a pawn

This tension within, its been building
And she's just plucking my strings
everything she has I want, I crave
I lust.
I dream

I, shuddering at my thoughts
Heavy, heaping passion
no rationale behind them
in a split second they are gone
and she's walking away, and I have nothing to say.
But bye, see ya later
I never really tell her, I want her
But when she comes back, I will.
I hope she comes back...

Darkness

Ryan Roberts

Sometimes I look at the dank and dark...
these subway and bus steps
these smelly dank moist
when it rains
or cause someone pissed there
Yellow and grey steps.
I look at the darkness of the rails
these miles and miles of tunnels.
Questioning what the hell is out there
out of this metal cyclinder.
I see police everywhere, everyday
I see shady looking people
I see people sitting, standing, squatting, jumping,
I saw, one guy sitting there slumped over
He fell over, on the ground and hit his head
and didn't even move.
And then my train came...

These Me's
Ryan Roberts

Smiling always
Laughing always
Old ways of mine that have deserted me
So have you, yet you don't know it
Fleeing my heart at a speed not measured
you slowly dissipate in my wet mind
dissolving into nothingness
Surely I want to add more of your sweetness
but I stand next to myself, saying to my other self
"I would digress if I were you"
And the me listening, nods and sheds one tear.
"Why?" He asks
The other me says, "I guess on tear isn't enough huh?"
The third and last me, governs the other two me's.
He says, "Do it."
Now I've thrown away your sugary goodness, lost to the
garbage... The three of me walk away
Triumphant
Decimated
Sorrowful
Free.

Random Evening in January

Roger Smith

I wonder if snowmen write poetry.
If in the midst of pondering,
they take a bite of carrot nose
or spin a button
with the easing tendencies of
obsessive compulsive behavior.
I wonder if I ask a snowman if he writes poetry if he'd
answer me,
or would he
merely ignore my question and pretend
I can't speak as we do him.
Does he use a pen, type them straight as do I, or use the
sticks
we ignorant humans tormented his
creation with as arms,
seldom having fingers to correctly grasp
any utensil to scribe.
I wonder if snowmen write poems
about reindeer droppings,
their undoubted hatred of sunrise,
or the brainwashing institution
called love.
Are they as naive and
believe that it exists more so than the
term itself?

Are there even snow women?
The very thought of them
nagging, forces a chill of winter down
my spine and
I can now hear them asking who bought
the snowman that new scarf.
I wonder if snowmen divorce snow women then write
powerful
poems
about it, angry poems like
I hope she melts,
or poems about how he misses the
frostbite of her voice,
the un-sculpted sexual organs
they never have or
just random thoughts about them
standing,
imagining there was a heartbeat
instead of ice.
I wonder if snowmen write poems about
humans,
our interactions, how we treat them,
and furthermore how
we treat each other.
Even from their view we must be cold.

Upon the Dark Knight Roger Smith

as a child I cussed Batman
and called him a coward.
hiding in the shadows
crying as the millionaire orphan who
wasn't receiving lashes
like allowance, or being stripped naked
and tied down to
etiquette or
barbwire strapped to ideals like manners
then being force-fed to face fears,
while guzzling the duality
of a Bajan-American heritage.
I watched as he pulled toys
and devices out of
the tool used to mold me into a man.
no smoke bombs,
gadgets of illusion or technical distraction to avoid belt,
and the only utility
I recall was rum and discipline.
sidekick,
got hit and kicked to the side as
older sibling was taught
with the same broughtupsy and we
didn't seek commissioner gordon
or race to ACS

cause these were the teachings of
how to be a man from real life
heroes called parents.
the doctor played joker and locked me
in the mental ward of arkham asylum
when diagnosed,
and I've tucked my childhood thoughts
of Batman underneath
my own cowl,
and wear a mask every day.

The World of a Child

Lauren Spotkov

A child's ability to imagine is important,
But what if that ability didn't just belong to children?
What if everyone had that gift?
What if they have it now, and have only forgotten?
What if everyone from every age group viewed their
lives through a child's eyes?
What if everyone changed his or her thinking?
What if positive thinking replaced negative feelings?
And what if the negative feelings began to fade?
What would the world become?
What would happen if adults thought more like the
children that they used to be?
Maybe the world just might be better,
A most positive place.

The Story of Marge and Tom, The News and Weather People

Annie Darcy

It was raining when we got there. In Ireland, it's almost always raining. This was especially unfortunate for me since I had assumed that, since it was the summer, the weather was going to be warm and sunny. Sadly, that was not the case. We were picked up at the airport by my aunt and uncle. They were happy to see us, of course. My uncle, Tom, seemed a bit grumpy but I assumed it was because of the rain. Rain tends to make me grumpy, too.

I was still a bit tired from the flight, so I wasn't really paying much attention on the car ride home. The first thing I remember noticing was the sign on my aunt and uncle's door, proclaiming that their house was an eco-friendly home. Since I was still in my extremely passionate about the environment phase, I thought this was the coolest thing ever. So that perked me up a bit. We went inside the house and that perked me up, too. (I was glad to get out of the rain). The house was nice. It was a nice size. Not too big, but not too small, either. The curtains in the living room were a brownish-red color and the couch and chair, as well. The rug in the room was white. A similar color scheme was evident throughout the house with the white floor in the kitchen, the black countertop, and the brown wood of the dining

room table. The bedrooms had more color, with blue bedspreads and curtains to match. But perhaps that was only in the guest bedrooms. I never went inside the master bedroom.

After soaking all of these muted colors in, my surge of energy depleted and the tiredness I had been feeling caught up with me. So I did something that I never do and I took a nap. Before I knew it, I was waking up at around noon. (We had arrived in the early morning). I refused to get out of bed, however. Though I had slept, I was still feeling a bit deprived of energy. (I must have had the worst case of jetlag ever). My mother came in and tried to get me to get out of bed. And after about an hour of conversation of many things, including *Harry Potter*—my favorite books—she succeeded. I went downstairs and had lunch. It was a wonderful lunch of pasta with marinara sauce—my favorite. After lunch, each of us did our own thing for a while. I went to my room and read a book before deciding to come downstairs again.

When I got downstairs, I saw that my aunt and uncle were watching the news. My aunt greeted me with an enthusiastic “Hello Margaret” while my uncle managed a less enthusiastic, yet simple “Hello” before turning back to the TV. (Maybe he was feeling tired, too). My aunt asked me the usual things. How school was going, how my friends were doing, if I was looking forward to my vacation here in Ireland. I answered “good, I’m looking forward to high school” to the first, a

simple “good” to the second, and an “I’m looking forward to it a lot” to the third. She talked to me for a while before turning back to the TV, as well. Though I didn’t really want to watch the news, I sat down next to my aunt on the couch anyway. I didn’t want to be rude, after all.

After a while, my parents came downstairs and joined my aunt and uncle and me at the TV. My aunt said to my father (they’re siblings): “How was the flight, Henry?” My father replied that it was good, if a bit long. My uncle contributed with a “Flights are always way too long. And they tend to be very uncomfortable. And after all, you never know what can go wrong.” My father replied: “Planes can be very uncomfortable. And yes, it is possible that things can go wrong, yeah. Definitely. But fortunately it hasn’t happened yet. And please God it never will.” My uncle simply nodded and turned his attention back to the TV, which was still showing the news. My aunt suggested that we go eat dinner and so all of us went into the dining room. Though I noticed that my uncle left the TV on. (Not very eco-friendly, if you ask me.)

We had a nice meal and good conversation before returning to the living room to watch TV, again. My aunt suggested that since we were the guests, we should choose what we watch. My mother replied that we were fine with anything they wanted to watch. They wanted to watch the news. Not wanting to be rude, I stayed and watched with them. The news was followed by the

weather, which was followed by more news. Watching the news for the second time I noticed a story that was the same. And then another one. And then another one. In fact, all of the stories were the same as the ones that my aunt and uncle had watched before. After watching the weather the second time around—the forecast was rain. Can you believe that? Who would have thought?—I excused myself, claiming jetlag. But really, I just wanted to get away from the cycle of the news and weather. So I went upstairs and read my book until I fell asleep.

The next few days were pretty much the same. I won't write all about them here because that would be far too boring for anyone to read. Almost as boring as the endless cycle of news and weather was for me. But trust me, it was boring. Very boring.

Fortunately that cycle was broken when we took a mini-vacation to Roscommon—my aunt and uncle live in Dublin. The drive was pleasant enough. I liked seeing all the beautiful scenery lining the roads. There were even sheep on some of the fields on either side of the road. Definitely not something I would see in New York. We arrived at the hotel quickly enough for me. Though my uncle complained of the long drive. The hotel was called Glockson's and it had a far more interesting color scheme than my aunt and uncle's house. Pretty much everything there was red. The sheets on our beds were an exception. They were white. My aunt and uncle stayed in one room and my parents and I stayed in

another. After putting our suitcases in our rooms, all of us went to explore the town.

It was a beautiful place. Very small, but charming. Though I wasn't particularly interested in anything we saw, I still enjoyed myself. After walking for a while, all of us headed back to the hotel. We went to our rooms for a while and then went down to the restaurant in the hotel for dinner. All of us enjoyed our meals. Well, almost all of us. My uncle Tom complained that his was a bit cold. After we ate, all of us went back to the room that my parents and I shared to watch TV. (Our TV was bigger.) We watched a movie about King Arthur. I thought it was very interesting. Definitely a nice break from the endless boring cycle of news and weather. My parents and my aunt also enjoyed the movie. My uncle said that it was too unrealistic. (I wonder what a realistic King Arthur movie would look like.)

After a few enjoyable days in the hotel, it was time for us to go back to my aunt and uncle's house. So we all packed our bags and drove back to Dublin. Once inside the house, we all unpacked our suitcases and then ate lunch. After lunch we each did our own things for a while before getting together again for dinner. After dinner, we all retired to the living room to watch TV. My aunt again suggested that my parents and I, as the guests, should choose what we watch. My mother again said that whatever they wanted to watch was fine with us. Though she said it with less enthusiasm than she had

the first time. Probably because she, like me, anticipated what was coming. To no one's surprise, my aunt immediately turned the channel to the news. The news was followed by the weather which was followed by the news which was followed by the weather. Well, you get the idea. Not wanting to fall asleep from boredom, I again excused myself, claiming that I was tired from the long drive. My uncle said something about how uncomfortable the car had been and how he should really get a new one. I just said that it wasn't the car that had been uncomfortable, it was just the fact that the drive was long. He nodded and I gave an awkward wave before practically running upstairs to my room.

The next few days passed the same as the days had before we went to Glockson's. Though with less monotony during the day at least. We visited many relatives and they provided a much appreciated break from the incessant cycle of the news and the weather. But every night, it was the same. It seems that all my aunt and uncle ever wanted to watch was the news and weather. And apparently, they liked to watch it more than once. Maybe they thought it helped the message sink in more.

Fortunately, a few days later, when I had begun to run out of excuses to excuse myself from the endless stream of news and weather, all of us again traveled to a hotel. This time the hotel was in Tipperary, the town where my grandfather was born. The hotel was beautiful. It was surrounded by fields and forests and

the inside was like something out of a Jane Austen novel. It was, essentially, the perfect hotel for me. It was called the Anne Manor Hotel. The room that I had the first night we were there was also amazing. It was very big and also came with a wardrobe. (I didn't love the wardrobe so much for its ability to hold clothes but rather for the fact that it reminded me of the *Chronicles of Narnia*. Unfortunately, this wardrobe was not a passage into a magical world.) Sadly, after that night I had to get out of that room since a large group of people was coming and they needed the room. So I moved into my parent's room. Their room was a nice size, but I still preferred the first room I had. But regardless of my change in room, I enjoyed myself.

We stayed in that hotel for a few days. On the second day, my grandfather came to join us. He was staying with one of his many siblings. (He's the oldest of 9.) When he came, I was happy to see him since he and I are very close. Overall, my time in the hotel was very enjoyable. Unfortunately, that was not true for everyone that came with me. One day while we were still at the hotel, my uncle had the following conversation with my mother:

"I heard a rooster crowing this morning. It woke me up. Did you hear it, Molly?" (That's my mother's name, by the way.)

"No, I didn't hear it, Tom."

"Oh. Well you must not have had your window open."

“Well, no, I didn’t. Perhaps you should close your window. Then you won’t hear the rooster and it won’t wake you up.”

“I can’t close the window. Then it’ll get too hot.”

“Oh. Well....um...perhaps....”

My mother trailed off, since she could not seem to think of a reply. My uncle simply nodded and then fell silent. At this point, I was trying not to laugh. I was also wondering how it’s possible for it to be hot anywhere in Ireland. The weather hadn’t been that good throughout our whole trip. It certainly hadn’t been hot. Perhaps I should have switched rooms with my aunt and uncle. I would have enjoyed the heat.

Sadly our stay in the hotel couldn’t last forever. After a few days, we headed back to my aunt and uncle’s house. Again, we were subjected to an endless stream of news and weather. Until one day, even my mother, who’s always eager to please people, got tired of it. She suggested to my aunt that perhaps we should choose what we watch today. My aunt agreed happily and my uncle agreed as well, if a little reluctantly. We found a good movie. It was a romantic comedy. I can’t remember the plot of the movie too well but it was certainly a nice break from the news and weather. That was one night when I did not have to think of a reason to excuse myself early.

The next days, sadly, were again another stream of news and weather. But, fortunately, one of our last days of the trip was a wonderful day. It was my cousin

Evan's christening. Apparently, God was really looking down on him because it was the nicest day that we had on the whole trip. It wasn't raining and it was even a little—dare I say it—hot. I didn't have to wear a jacket over my short-sleeved dress. Though my uncle did remind us that it had rained while we were in the car driving to the church. The day was wonderful, not only because of the nice weather but because of the company we had. I had a good time with my cousins and even got to hold baby Evan for a while. My aunt Rhonda, Evan's mother, was certainly happy that the day worked out so well.

A few days later, my parents and I went home. My aunt and uncle dropped us off at the airport in time to check in for our flight. My uncle reminded us that we should make sure to be careful on the plane. "You never know what might happen," he said. I wasn't sure what he was warning us against. Terrorists? Unexpected storms striking down our plane? People giving us dirty looks? (Though I admit that the last would have been slightly deserved since I was saying "We're going down" the whole time the plane was landing. The only thing I can say is that I have a fear of planes. I was trying to reassure myself that the plane was, in fact, going down and that I'd be home before long. Though I can see how that would get annoying.)

When I got home, I was glad to be in my own house again. Partly because I felt that homesickness one might feel when one was on vacation. But mostly

because I was glad to be able to control what I watched on TV. It was nice to be able to watch something besides news and weather. My aunt and uncle were probably glad to have their house to themselves again as well. They didn't have to worry about my parents and I possibly wanting to watch something besides the news and weather.

My vacation to Ireland was enjoyable. Don't get me wrong. And I love my aunt and uncle. I really do. But there are only so many times you can watch the news and weather before you go crazy. Unless, of course, you're my aunt and uncle. Then you can watch the news and weather on a seemingly endless loop and remain perfectly sane. I wonder what their secret is.