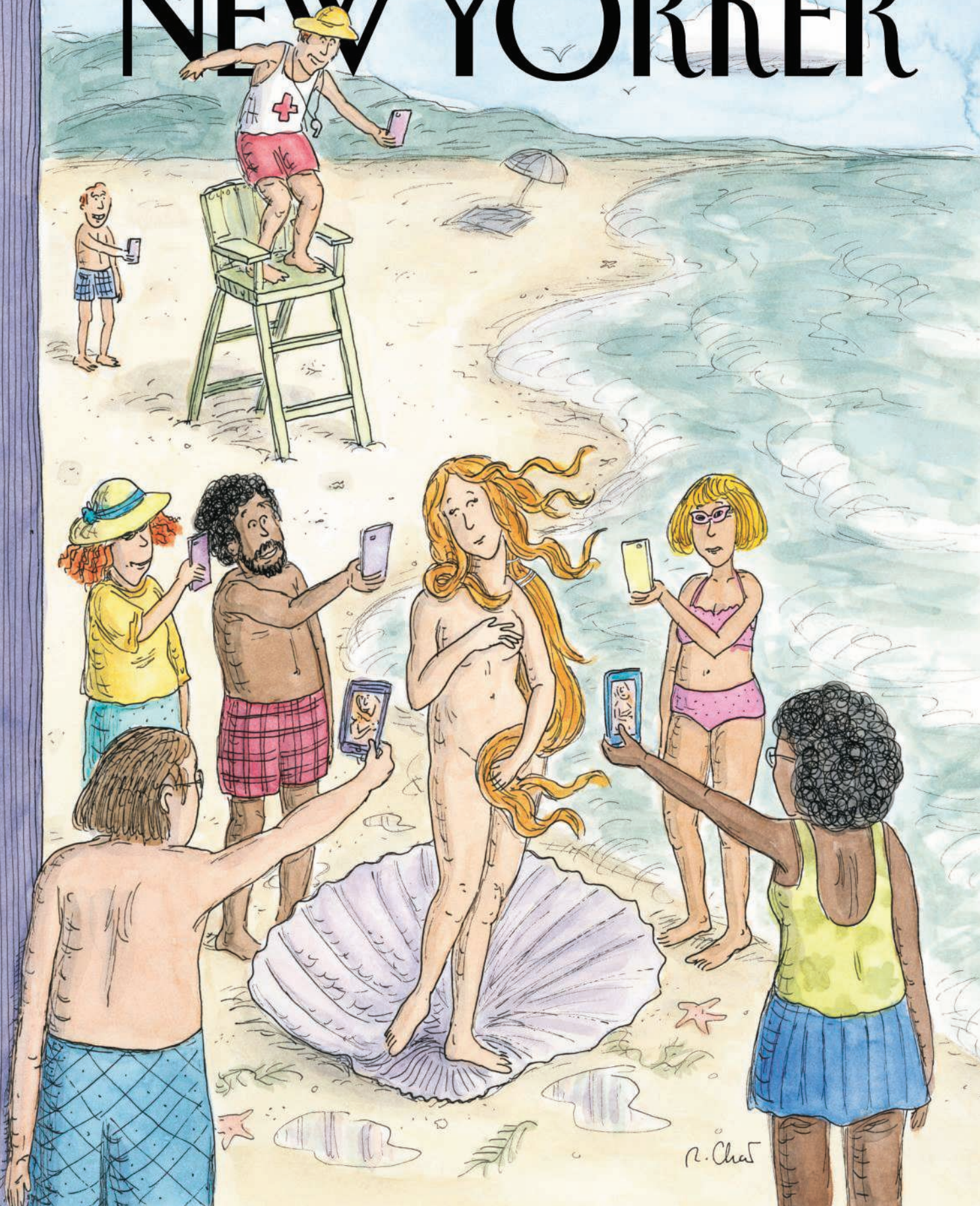


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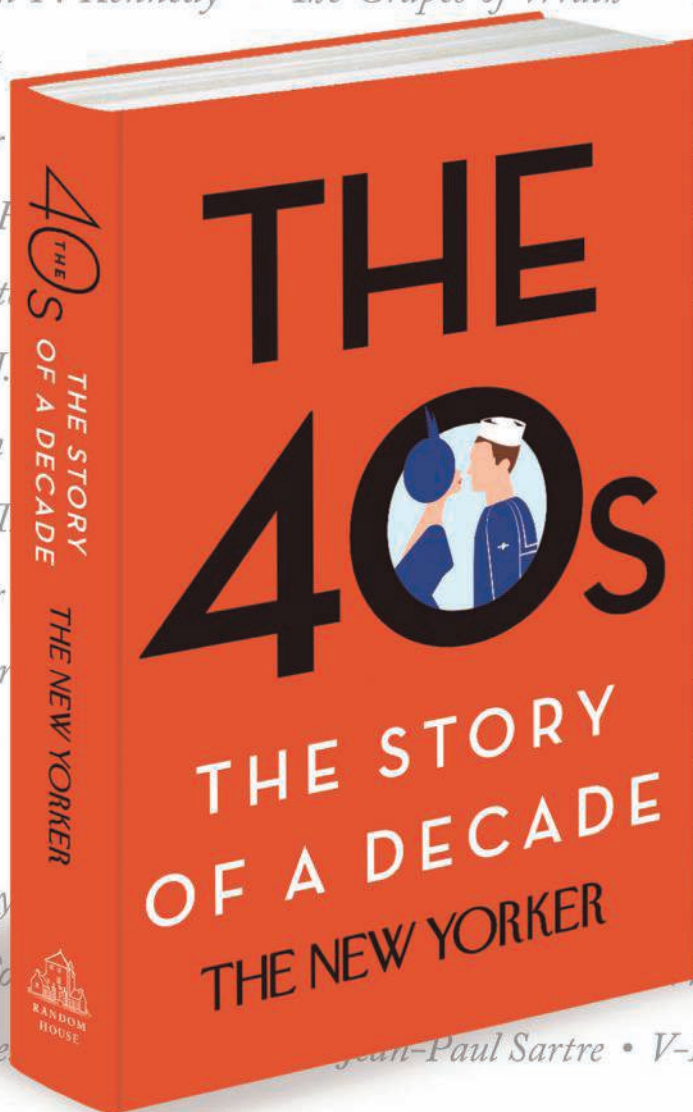
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VIDEO: How did the C-section become America's most common major surgery? An investigative documentary by Sky Dylan-Robbins.

AUDIO SLIDE SHOW: Peter Schjeldahl comments on MOMA's Christopher Williams retrospective.

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THE MAIL

PUT TO THE TEST

In Rachel Aviv's comprehensive article on the Atlanta school-testing scandal, a teacher, Damany Lewis, claims that he owes Secretary of Education Arne Duncan an apology ("Wrong Answer," July 21st). But it is Duncan (who was never an educator) who owes Lewis, other staff members caught up in the scandal, and also teachers, administrators, students, and parents across the country an apology, for trapping them in a system based not on evidence but on the unproved theories of corporate education reform. This movement claims to rely on data, but seems to ignore some shocking outcomes. Are we really to believe that Atlanta's students are better off without teachers like Lewis in the classroom? Is it really a better idea, to cite one of the reformers' planks, to hire inexperienced (mainly white) graduates of selective colleges, through programs like Teach for America, for short-term stints in difficult schools? When the interim indicators on the path to reform begin to look this absurd, it's time to question all aspects of the process.

Lazar Treschan
Brooklyn, N.Y.

As a teacher, I found Aviv's talmudic rationalizations for the behavior of the administrators and teachers of Parks Middle School in Atlanta very troubling. In the story of these teachers, I see moral twisting and turning, equivocation, dishonesty, lying, and (perhaps) criminal behavior. One person referred to some of this as possible civil disobedience. How could my profession have sunk to this level? In thirty-five years of teaching high-school English in New York City, I knew never to read my students' Regents essays, let alone finagle with their tests. My colleagues and I did our best for our students, and that included grading them honestly.

Jules Trachten
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Aviv quotes Tim Callahan, the spokesman for the Professional Association of Georgia Educators, as saying that teachers' best qualities "are not being honored

or valued, because those qualities aren't measurable." I work for a nonprofit that supports students who are at risk of dropping out. We track data on attendance, behavior, and course performance, and we speak the language of reformers. But what our school-district partners seem to value most is how we help kids form a strong, positive sense of self and stay engaged with learning. These efforts, known as identity formation, are harder to quantify; we rarely talk about our work in these terms, because it's often considered squishy and "nice, but not necessary." Students, and all the adults working on their behalf, would be better off if we had more nuanced definitions of what it means to be valuable and successful.

Cloe Axelson
Belmont, Mass.

As a recently retired Philadelphia public-school teacher, I applaud Aviv for showing the dynamic of intimidation and reprisal that has become the prevailing management style in many of our nation's "failing" schools. Many children living in urban poverty are so burned out by the time they reach first grade that they have not absorbed the developmental markers necessary for learning to take place. They are unable to harness frustration and instead find it a reason to give up. They lack patience, an attribute that could provide them with the mental focus to think a problem through. Philanthropists who are in the business of educational reform should put their funding behind mandatory preschool programs. In addition, arts programs and team sports that are being dropped from the curriculum should be reinstated; the lessons they provide about hard work, patience, goal setting, responsibility, and focus will reward students later on.

Kathran Siegel
Philadelphia, Pa.

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DAILY COMMENT

OPINIONS, ARGUMENTS, AND
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"It cannot be said too clearly,
and it cannot be said too often:
guns make violence happen;
gun-control laws make it stop."

—"No Time to Despair About
Gun Control," Adam Gopnik

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



JULY/AUGUST 2014 WEDNESDAY 30TH THURSDAY 31ST FRIDAY 1ST SATURDAY 2ND SUNDAY 3RD MONDAY 4TH TUESDAY 5TH

JULIA STILES, WHO GREW UP in SoHo and began acting at eleven, has morphed seamlessly from intense, guarded teen ("Ten Things I Hate About You," "Save the Last Dance," "O") to intense, smart-sexy action star (the "Bourne" trilogy), with a foray into cold-bitch territory, via a thankless role in "Silver Linings Playbook," as Jennifer Lawrence's uptight sister. Stiles's stage work has included Shakespeare ("Twelfth Night," at the Delacorte in 2002) and Mamet ("Oleanna" on Broadway), and now she's taking a break from her film and TV work (lately in the misguided Fox-sponsored Web series "Blue," as a woman who resorts to prostitution to support her math-prodigy son) to star in Scott Organ's "Phoenix," at the Cherry Lane. In the one-act dark comedy, which premièred at the Humana Festival in 2010, Stiles and James Wirt play virtual strangers who reunite after a one-night stand, with very different expectations for the future of their relationship.

NIGHT LIFE
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**RANDOM
HOUSE**



During Nels Cline's residency at the Stone, he performs in duets and with a number of different groups.

INTO THE SANDBOX

Wilco's lead guitarist revels in his avant-garde roots.

PERFORMING AT LE POISSON ROUGE last May, the fifty-eight-year-old guitarist Nels Cline stood off-center, at the edge of the stage. Tense but palpably joyous, he operated seventeen effects pedals that were perched on his road case and on a section of the floor with great precision, using his hands and his feet. He was there with his instrumental quartet, the Nels Cline Singers, performing material from a beguiling new record called "Macroscopic." Their set was an ever-shifting mélange of free-jazz improvisations, bossa-nova grooves, noise-rock blowouts, primal riffs, and country-tinged Americana, stitched together with such lyricism and craft that it suggested a new genre. Playing "Divining," from an earlier record, Cline made intricate pedal adjustments mid-phrase with his right hand as the song moved seamlessly from an ambient beginning to breezy jazz chords followed by a searing, distorted guitar solo. Yet it wasn't always so easy: Cline, who is best known as a member of the rock band Wilco, struggled for many years to reconcile his vast musical passions into a unified sound.

"I was going to quit music," Cline said last month, referring to a time in his twenties, "because of my idea that I had to choose." Starting out, he wanted to be able to do quiet ballads with chord changes, and also what he described as "straight, ritual pounding, with huge feedback and no lead guitar." He considered becoming a visual artist or a poet, but hearing transgressive punk bands like the Minutemen and Sonic Youth liberated him. "Punk was so free, so expressive, it bore a hole in me," he said.

At a weeklong residency at the Stone, Aug. 5-10, Cline showcases his complex experimental-music persona. The run includes a version of the Nels Cline Singers, but the most exhilarating way to hear him is in the purely improvised sets he'll be playing with a stellar assortment of downtown and West Coast musicians, such as the guitarist Elliott Sharp and the woodwind master Vinny Golia. "You just go into the sandbox right away—it's innocent," Cline said of these structureless forays. "There's no doctrine, no rules. There's just the satisfaction that we live in the world of sound for as long as we're in that world. An hour. An hour and a half, if we're lucky."

—Dan Kaufman



NIGHT LIFE

ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors lead complicated lives; it's advisable to check in advance to confirm engagements.

Bob Log III

Taking the stage wearing a shiny jumpsuit and a motorcycle helmet (with a microphone inside), playing fast slide guitar, the Tucson-born bluesman is ready for any obstacle. Whether balancing men and women on his knees while his bouncing feet kick a cymbal and bass drum, or composing songs about people's rear ends ("For a limited time," his Web site advertises, "Bob Log III will create a masterpiece for your own personal butt"; it costs \$199.99 plus shipping), Log is a one-man band with dexterity, ingenuity, and a touch of insanity (he's been known to surf the crowd on an inflatable raft). He's irreverent, too—his song "Boob Scotch" is an audience-participation ditty during which he invites both males and females from the audience to stir his Scotch with a part of their body that's not their finger. With Tucson's party band **Pork Torta**. (Aug. 4, at McKittrick Hotel, 530 W. 27th St. boblog111.com. Aug. 5, at the Wick, 260 Meserole St., Brooklyn. thewicknyc.com.)

Jurassic 5

In the late nineties and the early aughts, this Los Angeles group brought alternative hip-hop to a broad audience, performing at rock festivals like Lollapalooza and Bonnaroo. Their numeric name doesn't match the number of members (four m.c.s and two turntablists), but poetic license and boasting are both just part of the genre. The group is on a reunion tour, and at the live show DJ Cut Chemist and DJ Nu-Mark are positioned high like judges, while below the rappers Akil, Zaakir, Marc 7, and Chali 2na hold mikes and crouch like they never took any time off. (Best Buy Theatre, Broadway at 44th St. 800-745-3000. Aug. 2.)

Old Crow Medicine Show

This act, based in Nashville, Tennessee, blends old-timey bluegrass sounds with the high-energy attitude of punk. The fiddle-touting collective earned a stamp of approval from Bob Dylan when it took "Rock Me Mama," a half-baked outtake from Dylan's soundtrack sessions for the 1973 film "Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid" and transformed it into "Wagon Wheel," in 2004. Pleased with the rendition, which was a hit (first by Old Crow, and more recently by Darius Rucker, who sent it to the top of the country charts), Dylan asked the band to have a go at another one of his rough cuts from the same period. The band was thrilled, and with some arrangement advice from Dylan himself fashioned "Sweet Amarillo," the country-radio-friendly lead single from its new album, "Remedy." (SummerStage, Central Park, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 69th St., summerstage.org. Aug. 4.)

Tipica '73

Veterans of Ray Barretto's band formed this group in 1972, following a series of Monday-night jam sessions at an East Harlem club. Like all salsa groups, Tipica '73 is deeply rooted in Cuban musical genres. They began their career in the charanga style, a lush dance format that features flute and violin alongside piano, bass, and timbales, before they shifted to a more brass-heavy, conjunto-style instrumentation. The band secured a visa to perform in Havana in 1979, and, though the experience was deeply meaningful artistically, it effectively ended the group's career due to subsequent blacklisting by Cuban-American organizations and engagements that were threatened with violence. Since their initial breakup, in the mid-eighties, the members of Tipica '73 have reunited periodically and returned on occasion to their original charanga format. Here they appear with their uplifting first vocalist, Adalberto Santiago. With the **Williamsburg Salsa Orchestra**, an eleven-piece ensemble that filters songs by such indie-rock bands as Arcade Fire and TV on the Radio through a salsa prism. (East River Park. Summerstage.org. Aug. 5)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Kenny Barron

The masterly pianist, who recently turned seventy-one, remains the man to beat. He's one of jazz's most profound improvisers, and his recent work has only become more nuanced, economical, and insightful. His quartet includes the prodigiously talented vibraphonist **Stefon Harris**. (Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. 212-576-2232. July 31-Aug. 3.)

Jazz in July

The invaluable, long-standing series concludes with a multigenerational piano face-off between **Dick Hyman**, **Bill Charlap**, and **Christian Sands** (July 29); a tribute to Sarah Vaughan with Charlap and the vocalist **Cécile McLorin Salvant** (July 30); and a vocal and instrumental celebration of Fred Astaire, featuring the singer **Sachal Vasandani** (July 31). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.)

The Jazz Masters

The saxophonist **Dave Liebman**—who, thankfully, has returned to his tenor horn, offsetting his piping work on the soprano—is the only official N.E.A. Jazz Master in this prestigious post-bop quintet, but give the others time. The pianist **Billy Childs** and the bassist **Buster Williams** are on hand throughout the engagement; the superlative drummer **Billy Hart** is replaced by **Lenny White** on the final night. (Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. 212-581-3080. July 29-Aug. 2.)

Lee Konitz

Among the last of the undisputed patriarchs of modern jazz, the eighty-six-year-old alto saxophonist shows no sign of lessening his commitment to sculpturally considered improvisation. His approach may be cerebral, but the results of his always thoughtful playing can be thrilling. Konitz's considerably younger supporting musicians, including the intuitive pianist **Dan Tepfer**, provide him with shrewd interaction that brings out the best in this low-key icon. (Jazz Gallery, 1160 Broadway, at 27th St., Fifth fl. jazzgallery.org. July 31.)

GRANTA

THE MAGAZINE OF NEW WRITING

American Wild

New Mexico, the Gila Wilderness. I lay out in the cold with a blanket over my sleeping bag, a woolly hat on my head, the frost prickling on the skin of my face. I slept, and woke every now and then to find the constellations turned a few degrees above me, circling through the branches of the pines.

At one a.m. a gang of coyotes not far away started yapping, and soon the cause of their anxiety made itself heard, something quite different, low, adult, magisterial. I thought at first it was the wind which earlier in the evening had blown through the ponderosa pines but the note began to modulate, a broken fall, and I heard it for what it was. The howl of the wolf, lasting maybe forty-five seconds, about fifty yards from where I was lying, was a warning, not a proclamation. It was a slow single voice, proprietorial, low then lower, asserting its dominance over the coyotes in the night, all the power, and you could say the humanity, of it in the dropping of the pitch, more animate than the wind could ever be, more *meant*, a statement from the bass line of the world. Then it was gone, the silence as resonant as the voice had been. De-extinction at night, with the light of Jupiter shining through the trees.

From 'Chasing Wolves in the American West' by Adam Nicolson

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Boston Lyric Opera presents a "fringe" version of Jack Beeson's "Lizzie Borden" on July 31.

BEST REVENGE

A classic American opera comes to Tanglewood.

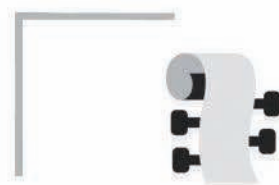
ONE OF THE WAYS in which New York City Opera earned its nickname as the People's Opera was through its lavish attention to homegrown composers. The postwar glory years of American high culture demanded big operas in big productions, and City Opera was at the forefront. Inevitably, most of them were chaff. But among the very best was Jack Beeson's "Lizzie Borden," which premiered in 1965 and, like its notorious antiheroine, has refused to go away.

Now City Opera is history, and the "fringe opera" movement, which tends by necessity to offer works limited in instrumentation and production values, reigns. How appropriate, then, that "Lizzie" has been remade in a fringe version by Boston Lyric Opera, which presents its acclaimed 2013 production at Tanglewood on Thursday.

Beeson, collaborating with the writers Kenward Elmslie and Richard Plant, made crucial changes to the story of the Borden case. The guilt of Lizzie, who was acquitted in 1893 for the murder of her father, Andrew, and her stepmother, Abigail, in Fall River, Massachusetts, is assumed, and the character of the young sea captain Jason MacFarlane is invented, giving Lizzie's sister a beau and enriching the "Electra"-like complexity of the plot. B.L.O. has cut the opera down from two hours to ninety minutes and reduced the orchestra to seventeen players. These changes give Beeson's lyrical, Expressionist-influenced music an extra edge, in a production brilliantly realized by a cast that features Heather Johnson, Daniel Mobbs, and Caroline Worra (a City Opera star).

Beeson's score is exquisitely crafted, but its survival, in the end, is due to the extraordinary dramatic insight of a composer who wrote his first libretto at fifteen. "Unlike many composers, Jack had the instinct of an actor, and he understood what an actor needed in performance," the great City Opera soprano Brenda Lewis, who created the title role in 1965, said in an interview. "I didn't need to look for the powerful motivations in the character of Lizzie Borden—they were already there."

—Russell Platt



CLASSICAL MUSIC

CONCERTS IN TOWN

Mostly Mozart Festival

New York's essential summer music festival sticks mostly to tradition this week, but the offerings are bountiful. A selection follows. July 31 at 10: One of the festival's most delightful innovations is the intimate "Little Night Music" series of short, late-night recitals in the Kaplan Penthouse (accompanied by a complimentary glass of wine or sparkling water). Leading off is the searching pianist Richard Goode, a perennial New York favorite, who plays two preludes and fugues from Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier" and Schubert's Sonata in B-Flat Major, D. 960. (Rose Bldg., Lincoln Center.) • Aug. 1-2 at 8: Andrew Manze, the brilliant period-performance violinist and a former director of the English Concert, is the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra's first guest conductor this year. The program features Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5, "Emperor" (with Steven Osborne), and Haydn's once-ubiquitous Symphony No. 104, "London," a work both buoyant and profound. (Avery Fisher Hall.) • Aug. 4 at 7:30: The Emerson String Quartet makes its annual appearance in the series at Alice Tully Hall, performing works by Haydn (the Quartet in G Minor, Op. 20, No. 3) and Mozart (including the Clarinet Quintet, with the exciting soloist Martin Fröst). • Aug. 5-6 at 8: Louis Langrée, the festival's music director, returns to the podium to lead the festival orchestra in a Schnittke showpiece, Haydn's Overture to "L'Isola Disabitata," and Mozart's "Prague" Symphony. He's joined by Christian Tetzlaff, a violinist of both technical and intellectual dazzlement, who takes a walk on the light side in Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 1 in B-Flat Major. (Avery Fisher Hall.) (For tickets and full schedule, see mostlymozart.org.)

OUT OF TOWN

Bard Summerscape: "Euryanthe"

Franz Schubert is the special focus of the Bard Music Festival this year, but before that arrives, in August, Leon Botstein will put a welcome emphasis on the work of Schubert's gifted contemporary Carl Maria von Weber, who, as much as anyone else, invented a new, Romantic language for music. "Euryanthe" (1823), a medieval romance, is hobbled by a weak libretto but contains a wealth of glorious sounds; Botstein conducts the American Symphony Orchestra in a production by the inventive director Kevin Newbury, with the acclaimed soprano Ellie Dehn in the title role. (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7900. July 30 and Aug. 3 at 2 and Aug. 1 at 7. These are the final performances.)

Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival

The big spaces of MASS MOCA (and the art within them) are perfect for this lively post-minimalist combine to put on exciting concerts. A vital mix of programs fills the festival's final days, including

a tribute to Steve Reich and Sol LeWitt, a rendition of Georg Friedrich Haas's in-the-dark phenomenon "In iii. Noct." (with the work of Anselm Kiefer on view beforehand), and, to close, a big Bang on a Can Marathon. (North Adams, Mass. massmoca.org. July 31 at 4:30 and 8 and Aug. 2 at 4.)

Caramoor

The final week of classical concerts at the elegant Westchester festival belongs to the MacArthur-winning cellist Alisa Weilerstein, who is out front in three concerts. The first, a solo appearance, features unaccompanied works by Britten, Kodály, Osvaldo Golijov, and, of course, Bach (the Cello Suite No. 3 in C Major); the others are collaborative. On Friday night, she sits in with the excellent young Ariel Quartet for music by Boccherini, Arensky, and Schubert (the String Quintet); on Sunday, she is the featured soloist in the grand-finale concert with Pablo Heras-Casado and the Orchestra of St. Luke's, an afternoon of music by Wagner, Elgar (the Cello Concerto), and Dvořák (the ebullient Eighth Symphony). (Katonah, N.Y. caramoor.org. July 31 at 6, Aug. 1 at 8, and Aug. 3 at 4:30.)

Glimmerglass Festival

July 31 at 7:30 and Aug. 5 at 1:30: When Tobias Picker and Gene Scheer's "An American Tragedy" (based on the Dreiser novel) had its world premiere, at the Met in 2005, Francesca Zambello, Glimmerglass's enterprising leader, was at the controls. Now Peter Kazaras directs Glimmerglass's production of a new, revised version, with a cast that features the young artists Christian Bowers, Vanessa Isiguen, and Cynthia Cook in the major parts and the veteran Patricia Schuman in the pungent character role of Elvira; the invaluable George Manahan conducts. • Aug. 1 at 7:30 and Aug. 4 at 1:30: Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Carousel," with Andrea Carroll and Ryan McKinny portraying the vulnerable young lovers Julie Jordan and Billy Bigelow; Doug Peck. • Aug. 2 at 1:30: If one Glimmerglass production this summer is truly unmissable, it's Zambello's staging of Strauss and Hofmannsthal's "Ariadne in Naxos," set in a New York country home and sung in a combination of English and German, with the regal title role taken by Christine Goerke, a breakout star at the Met last season. Catherine Martin, Rachele Gilmore, Corey Bix, and Carlton Ford take the other leading roles; Kathleen Kelly. • Aug. 3 at 1:30: Zambello directs Puccini's "Madama Butterfly," a production featuring Yunah Lee and Dinyar Vania in the leading roles; Joseph Colaneri. (Note: A young-artists performance of the work follows at 7:30.) (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

Tanglewood

The supreme music festival of the summer hits its stride. Aug. 1 at

8:30: Jean-Yves Thibaudet, always a dashing soloist, is featured in the Boston Symphony Orchestra's first concert of the week, an ardent evening of music by Tchaikovsky (the Serenade for Strings), Shostakovich (the First Piano Concerto), and Schumann (the Fourth Symphony); Marcelo Lehninger conducts. • Aug. 2 at 8:30: John Williams, the world's preeminent composer for the movies, and a Tanglewood presence for decades, conducts his annual Film Night with the Boston Pops Orchestra, which offers moments from many of Williams's most renowned scores accompanied by screened excerpts of the films. • Aug. 3 at 2:30: Juanjo Mena conducts the B.S.O. in Haydn's Symphony No. 6 ("Le Matin"), Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4 in D Major (with a winning soloist, Augustin Hadelich), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 2 in D Major. • Aug. 5 at 8:30: Rounding things off is the annual "Tanglewood on Parade" concert, a festive program of light classics on the Russian-American spectrum (Shostakovich, Gershwin, Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture"), with the B.S.O., the Boston Pops, and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra conducted by Stéphane Denève, Keith Lockhart, Andris Poga, Leonard Slatkin, and John Williams. Fireworks follow. (Lenox, Mass. tanglewood.org.)

Norfolk Chamber Music Festival

Norfolk is largely the preserve of the students and faculty of the Yale Summer School of Music

and Art, but a distinguished guest arrives for this weekend's concerts: the Emerson String Quartet, which, with the admired Yale clarinetist David Shifrin, performs pieces by Beethoven (the Quartet in F Minor, "Seroso"), Mozart (the Clarinet Quintet), and Shostakovich (the Quartet No. 12 in D-Flat Major). (Norfolk, Conn. norfolkmusic.org. Aug. 2 at 8.)

Maverick Concerts

Sometimes the warm, enveloping acoustic of the festival's woodland music chapel draws outstanding groups from as far away as Europe. Just in from Paris are the stylish and inventive young players of the Modigliani Quartet, who perform not only iconic French quartets by Ravel and Saint-Saëns (No. 1, Op. 112) but also a work by a composer important to the French chamber-music tradition, Schumann (No. 3 in A Major). (Woodstock, N.Y. maverickconcerts.org. Aug. 3 at 4.)

Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival

The flutist Marya Martin's long-running festival is notable for its consummate professionalism, its strong bond with the Hamptons audience, and its graceful touch. Featured on the opening weekend is a concert mixing fascination and delight—pieces by Mozart (the Piano Trio in B-Flat Major, K. 502), Françaix, the contemporary master Philippe Hersant, and Schumann (the Piano Quartet). (Bridgehampton Presbyterian Church. bcmf.org. Aug. 3 at 6:30.)



FRONT ROW

Richard Brody discusses the "Hollywood Melodrama" series at the Museum of the Moving Image.



DIGITAL EDITIONS

A slide show accompanies Peter Schjeldahl's review of the exhibition "Christopher Williams: The Production Line of Happiness," at MOMA.



DANCE

Celebrate Brooklyn! / Dance Theatre of Harlem

The beloved troupe, which came back in 2013 after a nearly ten-year hiatus, is in an unsteady state. The stripped-down staging of nineteenth-century material in "Pas de Dix" exposes the patchiness of the current crew's classical training, Donald Byrd's 2012 work "Contested Space" displays the dancers' striking contemporary chops in a disjointed and dispiriting indictment of the present, and Robert Garland's feel-good "Return" treats classical and Harlem steps with equal frivolity. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. 718-683-5600. July 31 at 7:30.)

Lincoln Center Out of Doors

Paul Taylor's 1997 "Piazzolla Caldera" is a divisive work. Some find it compellingly erotic, a masterly distillation of tango; others consider its attitudes ersatz and ridiculous. Here, unusually, the music is live, supplied by Pablo Ziegler's excellent New Tango Ensemble. Taylor's strange, cryptic "Fibers" (1961) and his lyrical, evergreen "Aureole" (1962) complete Friday's program. On Saturday, Camille A. Brown offers her "Mr. TOL E. RAnCE," an uneven and overly dutiful evocation of the legacy of blackface minstrelsy on

black performance. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. 212-875-5456. Paul Taylor: Aug. 1 at 7:30. Camille A. Brown: Aug. 2 at 7.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival

In recent decades, the circus has gone through a revolution, replacing old-fashioned animal acts with sophisticated stage effects and conceits. Australia's Circa offers yet another option: an intimate, pared-down experience that does away with props and fantasy and focusses on amazing acrobatic extremes. "S," at the Ted Shawn, uses only lighting effects, music by the Kronos Quartet, and a handful of performers clad in black rehearsal clothes to train the viewer's attention on astonishing feats of balance, flexibility, and strength. • John Heginbotham, a longtime member of the Mark Morris Dance Group, has recently struck out on his own, making works that belie a quirky musicality and an almost Dadaist sensibility. In "Chalk and Soot," a setting of nonsense poems by the painter Wassily Kandinsky, he teams up with the vibrant new-music ensemble Brooklyn Rider. (Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. July 30-Aug. 3.)

THE THEATRE



ALSO NOTABLE

ALADDIN

New Amsterdam

BEAUTIFUL—THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL

Stephen Sondheim

BETWEEN RIVERSIDE AND CRAZY

Atlantic Theatre Company

BULLETS OVER BROADWAY

St. James

CABARET

Studio 54

A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE AND MURDER

Walter Kerr

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH

Belasco

HERE LIES LOVE

Public

LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR & GRILL

Circle in the Square

MALA HIERBA

McGinn/Cazale

MATILDA THE MUSICAL

Shubert

LES MISÉRABLES

Imperial

NEWSIES

Nederlander

ONCE

Jacobs

PIPPIN

Music Box

ROCKY

Winter Garden

SEX WITH STRANGERS

Second Stage

STRICTLY DISHONORABLE

Flea

VIOLET

American Airlines Theatre

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG AND UNAFRAID

City Center Stage I

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

And I and Silence

Naomi Wallace wrote this play, set in the nineteen-fifties, about the bond between two teen-age girls, one black and one white, who meet in jail. Caitlin McLeod directs the Signature Theatre Company production. Previews begin Aug. 5. (Pershing Square Signature Center, 480 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

The Good and the True

The Prague-based theatre company Svandovo Divadlo presents a play by Daniel Hrbek, Tomas Hrbek, and Lucie Kolouchova, adapted by Brian Daniels, about the lives of the athlete Milos Dobry and the actress Hana Pravda, both of whom survived the Holocaust. Daniel Hrbek directs. In previews. Opens Aug. 3. (DR2, at 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

King Lear

The Public Theatre's free Shakespeare in the Park series concludes with the Shakespeare tragedy, starring John Lithgow, Annette Bening, Jessica Collins, and Jessica Hecht. Daniel Sullivan directs. In previews. Opens Aug. 5. (Delacorte, Central Park. Enter at 81st St. at Central Park W. 212-967-7555.)

The Opponent

Brett Neveu wrote this drama, about a young boxer and his coach. Karen Kessler directs the production, from Chicago's A Red Orchid Theatre. Previews begin July 31. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

Othello

Hamilton Clancy directs the Shakespeare tragedy, in the second installment of the Drilling Company's free Shakespeare in the Parking Lot season. Previews begin July 31.

OF NOTE PIECE OF MY HEART

This jukebox musical tells the story of Bert Berns (Zak Resnick), the young Brill Building hit-maker who wrote "Twist and Shout," "I Want Candy," "Hang On, Sloop," and many others, and died of a heart attack in 1967. The book, by Daniel Goldfarb, traces Berns's trajectory through flashbacks and a frame about his now grown daughter, Jessie (Leslie Kritzer), his widow, Ilene (a show-stopping Linda Hart), a mysterious crony named Wazzel (Joseph Siravo), and the battle over the rights to his catalogue; at times it feels like a family grudge set to music. But Berns has a hell of a songbook. If you've heard Solomon Burke sing "Cry to Me," hearing the thuggish young Wazzel (Bryan Fenkart) singing it to a gloomy Berns won't provide the same frisson—but when the whole cast comes together to sing the rousing "Piece of My Heart," some kind of redemption has been achieved. Directed and choreographed by Denis Jones. (Pershing Square Signature Center, 480 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

Opens Aug. 2. (Corner of Ludlow and Broome Sts. 212-873-9050.)

Phoenix

Julia Stiles and James Wirt star in this dark romantic comedy, about the tense dynamics between a man and a woman after a one-night stand. Written by Scott Organ and directed by Jennifer DeLia. In previews. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 866-811-4111.)

Poor Behavior

Primary Stages presents a comedy by Theresa Rebeck, about a new couple who spend a challenging weekend in the country. Evan Cabnet directs. In previews. (The Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. 646-223-3010.)

NOW PLAYING

Drop Dead Perfect

In this curacao-spiked pastiche, a wealthy matron and her nubile ward live in tropical splendor somewhere in the Florida Keys. Sure, the high-strung Idris (Everett Quinton) pops too many pills, and young Vivien (Jason Edward Cook) dreams of escaping to the Village, but they muddle along companionably until the arrival of a startlingly well-endowed stranger (Jason Cruz). This campy spoof by Erasmus Fenn (one strongly suspects a pseudonym) fuses "The Glass Menagerie," "I Love Lucy," the late works of Bette Davis, and several mambo records. The cross-dressing and bad puns ("Would you like a cock in the tail?") owe much to the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, which was founded by Quinton's late partner, Charles Ludlam. Though the director, Joe Brancato, encourages his cast to take the silliness seriously, the show only occasionally verges on gleeful derangement. But Quinton, kicking up his heels with psychopathic gaiety, is still zany after all these years. (Theatre at St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 845-786-2873.)

Ice Factory Festival

The annual festival concludes with the Vampire Cowboys' "Untitled Vampire Cowboys Project," a futuristic action play written by Qui Nguyen and directed by Robert Ross Parker, in which a young woman must battle to save the world from going to Hell. (New Ohio Theatre, 154 Christopher St. 888-596-1027.)

The Pianist of Willesden Lane

Sitting at a grand piano, photographs from Nazi Germany flashing behind her, the concert pianist Mona Golabek tells the story of how her mother, Lisa Jura, was separated from her family at fourteen after her father, a Jewish tailor forced to gamble for food, won a single ticket on the Kindertransport—the train that took Jewish children from Germany to the relative safety of London in the late nineteen-thirties. Lisa's last promise to her mother, whom she never saw

again, was to keep playing the piano, at which she excelled. She did—even during the bombing that destroyed the London hostel she lived in with many other Jewish children, who had become her second family. Golabek is not an actress, and her reading of Hershey Felder's adaptation of her own book on the subject lacks nuance, but it doesn't matter: the audience is moved to tears as she plays sections from the various beautiful classical pieces her mother managed to learn throughout her very sad and scary ordeal. Directed by Felder. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

Summer Shorts: Series A

Roger Hedden's mini tragicomedy "The Sky and the Limit" is a conversation between two childhood friends (Alex Breaux and Shane Patrick Kearns) after one leaps from a mesa during a hike, lands on his belly, and can't get up. Though Breaux and Kearns are charming as the good boy and the bad, under the direction of Billy Hopkins, they never quite embody their characters, and the tragedy feels empty. In Eric Lane's "Riverbed," directed by Matthew Rauch, a young husband (Adam Green) and wife (Miriam Silverman) struggle with the loss of their three-year-old daughter after she drowns. The actors, who speak in monologues, don't seem to have much of an emotional connection to the event or the material. The most satisfying of the three plays in the series is Warren Leight's "Sec. 310, Row D, Seats 5 and 6," a very fun, clever, well-observed piece in which three friends (Peter Jacobson, Geoffrey Cantor, and Cezar Williams) with season tickets to the New York Knicks reveal the progress of their lives over twenty years. Under the direction of Fred Berner, the actors get it right: being Knicks fans, New Yorkers, friends, and, mostly, guys. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

Urban Theatre Movement's Handball

SummerStage presents this play by Seth Zvi Rosenfeld, about gentrification in New York City. Brenda Banda directs. (Marcus Garvey Park, Madison Ave. between 120th and 124th Sts. 212-360-2777.)

OUT OF TOWN

Williamstown Theatre Festival

On the Main Stage, Chita Rivera, Judy Kuhn, and Roger Rees star in "The Visit" (beginning July 31), a musical by John Kander and Fred Ebb, with a book by Terrence McNally, about the richest woman in the world, who returns to her hardscrabble home town. John Doyle directs. On the Nikos Stage, Sam Rockwell and Nina Arianda star in Sam Shepard's "Fool for Love" (through Aug. 2), directed by Daniel Aukin. (Williamstown, Mass. 413-597-3400.)



TABLES FOR TWO

ROCKAWAY BEACH SURF CLUB

302 Beach 87th St., Rockaway Beach, Queens

IN 2011, ROCKAWAY BEACH WAS poised to become the next hipster frontier. McCarren Park Pool party organizers held “Rock Beach” indie-band concerts, the concession stand Veggie Island served kale juice and miso sandwiches, surfers and artists thronged the peninsula’s white-sand beaches—some even chose to forgo the hour-long A-train commute from Manhattan and moved there. But in 2012, just as the Rockaways seemed destined for a fair-trade knitting shop and a Café Grumpy, Hurricane Sandy brought fifteen-foot waves and ten-foot floods, leaving the place in shambles.

Now Rockaway Beach, undeterred and still scruffy, is poised for a renaissance, with a beautiful new boardwalk being built, a site-specific PS1 exhibition curated by Klaus Biesenbach, and Mayor de Blasio’s promise to make good on the \$4.2 billion Sandy recovery fund. It’s good news that Rockaway Taco (95-19 Rockaway Beach Blvd.), which opened in 2008, is still there. Lines are long for perfect beer-battered fish tacos, crisp plantain strips with mild, creamy guacamole, and fresh watermelon juice. Rippers, too, is thriving. The punk-rock-blaring, lime-green-walled Eighty-sixth Street concession, opened in 2010 by owners of Roberta’s and the Meat Hook, attracts beachgoers with Shake Shack-style burgers, thick fries (even better topped with a blend of melted Cheddar and American cheese), and a slightly sloppy but delicious grilled dogfish (i.e., shark) sandwich, on a soft sesame bun with black-bean spread, spicy mayo, and dill pickles. The sandwiches are cheap, the ocean views free.

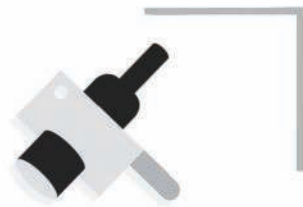
Hidden away, a few blocks from the beach, the Rockaway Beach Surf Club is fostering a scene that’s something like Venice Beach by way of Bed-Stuy. Owned by Brandon d’Leo, a Long Beach-born sculptor, and Brady Walsh, a Coney Island firefighter, the spot originated as a hangout where surfers could store their boards and commune. This year, they partnered with the folks from Lodge, in Williamsburg, to offer barbecue and brunch out of a food truck. It’s parked in the yard, which is outfitted with handcrafted reclaimed-wood tables, bamboo, sunflowers, and murals painted by local artists and neighborhood kids. (An ecstatic flowering skull extolls the mantra “Live Surf Die.”) The chef, Patrick Quinn, originally from North Carolina, designed the menu of beer-boiled peanuts in the shell, sriracha-honey smoked wings, vinegar-doused pulled pork, and masa-crusted shrimp po’boys. There’s also a tender kale salad with specks of quinoa and ultra-summery grilled watermelon with mint pesto.

On a recent clear, bright Saturday, various tan, bearded men popped in after surfing since sunrise to use the wooden outdoor shower and talk shop, debating the virtues of the super-rare ten-thousand-dollar surfboard vs. the seventy-five-dollar foam plank that even a first-timer could ride. They lolled in hammocks with their beers. It was 11 A.M., and they needed to rest before heading back into the waves.

—Shauna Lyon

Open weekdays for lunch and dinner and weekends for brunch and dinner. Dishes \$6-\$14.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LANDON NORDEMAN



FOOD & DRINK

BAR TAB DEAR IRVING

55 Irving Pl.

“You guys are going to think I’m drunk,” Gil (Owen Wilson) says, in Woody Allen’s “Midnight in Paris,” explaining that he’s been transported, via Peugeot, from the two-thousands to the nineteen-twenties. “So far I see nothing strange,” Man Ray responds. Gil: “You’re a Surrealist, but I’m a normal guy!” Allen’s film inspired this “cocktail parlor,” in which the rooms lead you back in time—from the sixties (zebra print, vintage *Playboys*) into the twenties (crystal-beaded curtains, Deco fixtures), through the nineteenth century (dark wood, tin ceiling; think contemporary Brooklyn) to eighteenth-century France (chandelier, lewd wallpaper). Dear Irving is run by the team behind the Raines Law Room, that hub of investment-banker first dates. Drinks are elaborate: the Hero of Little Venice is a rummy root-beer float; the Vice Versa (gin, rosé cava, grapefruit) tastes like the bootlegger didn’t scrub all the soap out of the tub. You can summon a waiter by flipping a wall switch, or head to the eighteen-hundreds, where barmen in snug vests seem to be performing closeup magic with jiggers. One night, a mustachioed patriarch reminisced about seltzer siphons: “We used to get those delivered to the house. Grandpa loved his seltzer.” His wife: “And now he has that terrible hair! You know what he uses? Mr. Bubble.” Their daughter gasped. “Like that stuff from the *nineties*?” The nineteen-nineties, that is.

—Emma Allen



THE NEW YORKER, AUGUST 4, 2014

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ART

MUSEUMS SHORT LIST METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

"Garry Winogrand."
Through Sept. 19

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"Christopher Williams: The Production Line of Happiness."
Through Nov. 4

MOMA PSI

"James Lee Byars: 1/2 an Autobiography."
Through Sept. 7

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

"Under the Same Sun: Art from Latin America Today."
Through Oct. 1

WHITNEY MUSEUM

"Jeff Koons: A Retrospective."
Through Oct. 19

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

"Swoon: Submerged Motherlands." Through Aug. 24

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

"Pterosaurs: Flight in the Age of Dinosaurs." Through Jan. 4

BRONX MUSEUM

"Sarah Sze: Triple Plot (Planetarium)."
Through Aug. 24.

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

"Urbes Mutantes: Latin American Photography 1944-2013." Through Sept. 7.

MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM

"A Dialogue with Nature: Romantic Landscapes from Britain and Germany."
Through Sept. 7.

NEW MUSEUM

"Here and Elsewhere."
Through Sept. 28.

OF NOTE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM "CHARLES GAINES: GRIDWORK, 1974-1989"

The intricate, rapturous drawings of this California artist, who is seventy, prove that rules-based art doesn't have to suppress beauty. This show of Gaines's early work, thoughtfully curated by Naima Keith, opens with mathematical sequences, in which the artist added numbers in rows and used the results to generate the next drawing; it continues with photographic works that render images of trees, faces, and Trisha Brown into glinting grids of colored digits. The influence of John Cage and Hanne Darboven is unmistakable in the eight triptychs that make up "Walnut Tree Orchard," begun in 1975, in which Gaines translated pictures of bare saplings into silhouettes of numbers, then overlaid each new grid on the previous ones to create a thrumming numerical grove. Through Oct. 26.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Jacques Sonck

The sixty-five-year-old Belgian photographer makes his American debut with an excellent series of black-and-white portraits, taken on the street in the nineteen-eighties. His model is clearly August Sander (the show's title is "Archetypes"), but Sonck's playful approach also suggests Federico Fellini and Jacques Tati—like the filmmakers, he is drawn to characters with plenty of attitude. Notable examples here include a little boy on a bike looking over his shoulder, a skinny punk wielding an ice-cream cone, and a businessman with a devilish smirk. Through Aug. 15. (Stephenson, 764 Madison Ave., at 66th St. 212-517-8700.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Will Adler

Surf photography is usually about the sport at its most spectacular—those moments when a single figure rides a crashing wave to triumph or wipeout. Adler, a young photographer based in L.A., takes a more laid-back approach in a series of atmospheric seascapes that focus on sensual pleasure, not athletic feats. Showing his prints unmounted and unframed helps him evoke a casual, idyllic summer mood of cloudless skies, uncrowded beaches, and liquid blue. The settings range from Tahiti to Montauk, but the landscapes all look like unpaved paradise, and the bodies are so elegantly poised that they could be dancing in a water ballet. Through July 31. (Danziger, 527 W. 23rd St. 212-629-6778.)

Jimmy DeSana

In this re-creation of a photography exhibition from 1980, portraits of nineteen-seventies scene-makers—William Burroughs, Ethel Scull, Jack Smith, Andy Warhol—are

displayed as if in magazine layouts, with groups of related images framed together. Some are candid party pictures; others are more formally posed. None are as distinctive as the outrageous, erotic pictures that made DeSana a cult figure before he died, of AIDS, at the age of forty, in 1990, and which have recently gained a new following. But since nearly all of the subjects portrayed here are also long gone, the show assumes a touching memorial quality. Through Aug. 1. (Coooney, 508 W. 26th St. 212-255-8158.)

Hito Steyerl

Few artists negotiate the porous border between digital space and the so-called real world as adeptly as this Berliner, and her recent video "How Not to Be Seen" is a small, slyly political comic masterpiece. Live footage, shot on location in the California desert (where targets painted by the military to test aerial cameras are now overgrown with weeds), is interspersed with computer-generated imagery. How does one avoid detection by drones? Shrink to the size of a pixel—cue dancers wearing pixel-shaped boxes on their heads. Other ways not to be seen: throw on a burka, buy a time share in a gated community, or, as Steyerl's text-to-speech narrator intones in its digital deadpan, "be a woman over fifty." Through Aug. 15. (Kreps, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-741-8849.)

"Bloodflames Revisited"

In 1947, New York's Hugo gallery organized the now legendary "Bloodflames" exhibition, which presented the work of Arshille Gorky, Roberto Matta, Isamu Noguchi, and others in an environment of swooping colored walls, designed by Frederick Kiesler. In homage, the curator Phong Bui has mounted an equally over-the-top spectacle, hanging works on yellow walls and installing scarlet runways above floors strewn with hay. Along with flame-red works by Lynda Benglis and Bill Jensen are neo-Surrealist objects by the Swiss artist Not Vital and the Brazilian sculptor Tunga. What's it all about? Who knows, but it smells nice. (The exhibition continues at 515 W. 27th St.) Through Aug. 15. (Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 27th St. 212-563-4474.)

"The Fifth Season"

To sum up the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: we're toast. The nearly two dozen participants in this terrific, if depressing, show propose an art for the Anthropocene, in which time has accelerated (Martin John Callanan's airport departure board cycles eerily fast), the seasons are out of whack (Charles Burchfield's "Summer" features a tree, December-bare), and no purchase of organic strawberries

will outweigh the ten billion metric tons of carbon spewed forth each year. An eighteenth-century theatrical scene, featuring an artificial sun, leads all too inevitably to Alexis Rockman's trash-strewn seascape, featuring a drowning elephant and a capsizing container ship. The ever sharp Pierre Huyghe and the young filmmaker Erin Shirreff also make strong contributions, but the most haunting work is an anonymous video from the destroyed power plant at Fukushima, in which a single man points his finger in silent accusation at the camera, at the polluters, at us. Through Aug. 8. (Cohan, 533 W. 26th St. 212-714-9500.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

"The Intuitionists"

This seventy-artist group show takes its name from the novel by Colson Whitehead, and not only that: the organizers swiped a paragraph from the book, split it into short phrases, associated those phrases with keywords, and only then invited the artists to respond. This baroque conceit fails to provide sufficient armature for the frequently small-scale, introverted, cartoonish, and often negligible work on display. But there are a few standouts. The German artist Manfred Kirschner incorporates a stern portrait amid intricate squiggles (his prompt was "and so little time"). And Chris Spinelli, reportedly inspired by the phrase "around the simple words," contributes a tight grid of thousands of dots affixed with unpredictable little extensions, a message in an unknown semaphore. Through Aug. 24. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 212-219-2166.)

"Open to the Public: Civic Space Now"

The masterstroke of the Occupy movement was that it assembled not on Wall Street, a public thoroughfare long rendered impassable, but in Zuccotti Park, a plaza owned by a corporation and reclaimed for the people. Zuccotti, looking a little forlorn these days, is one of thirteen New York case studies included in this vigilant exhibition on the need for public space in an era of privatization. New parks on Roosevelt Island or under the Brooklyn Bridge should be thought of as places for assembly and not simply pleasure, this show argues, but public space can be established even in accidental locations: on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum, say, or on the concrete dividers on the Upper West Side's stretch of Broadway. The show may even teach you to stop sneering at the pedestrian plaza in Times Square, designed by Snøhetta. Through Sept. 6. (Center for Architecture, 536 LaGuardia Pl. 212-683-0023.)



Edmund Lowe and Victor McLaglen play rivals in love and partners in war, in Raoul Walsh's "What Price Glory."

FRAMING THE CONFLICT

Hollywood's great directors on the First World War, at MOMA.

THE TRAUMAS OF THE FIRST World War preoccupied Hollywood directors even while the war was still being fought, as seen in the Museum of Modern Art's series "The Great War," which runs Aug. 4–Sept. 21. The program offers a wide range of superb movies, beginning with D. W. Griffith's "**Hearts of the World**," from 1918, the film that set the template for dramatizations of the war.

Its protagonists, the Boy (Robert Harron) and the Girl (Lillian Gish), are expatriate Americans whose families live in a French village. They meet and fall instantly in love, but their wedding is postponed by the declaration of war and the Boy's enlistment in the French Army. Griffith lends the local heroes the grandeur of legend. His vision has a Homeric scope, with its audacious cuts from the village to a German war room to the British Parliament and the French Chamber of Deputies. His focus, however, is domestic and intimate, concerned less with the horrors of the battlefield than with the interruption of romance, the disruption of families, the devastation of homes, and the victimization of civilians—in particular, the prevalence of rape as a corollary of warfare.

Raoul Walsh's intimate view of the war, in "**What Price Glory**," from 1926, adopts a different tone. It's a sprawling, rowdy buddy comedy and a sex romp, featuring two American soldiers in peacetime, the suave noncommissioned officer Quirt (Edmund Lowe) and the gruff enlisted man Flagg (Victor McLaglen), rivals in constant conflict over women, whose hearts Quirt always wins. When war breaks out, the two men, billeted in a French village, continue their tussle over the local siren, Charmaine (Dolores del Rio), despite stints in the front lines of battle.

The bumptious farce embraces the soldiers' outsized appetites for sex, drink, and roughhousing, and contrasts their boyish exuberance with the shocking intrusion of war's violence. Walsh depicts two battlefield campaigns, one impressionistic and devastating, which kills off the majority of the men in the company, and the other hallucinatory and horrific, with an outburst of bombardments that turn night into a hellish day. The military, in Walsh's view, is both the best and the worst of a man's world—as though the unfortunate fact of warfare were all that spoils a good war.

John Ford, Hollywood's greatest political filmmaker, brings a surprising film-historical

perspective to his underappreciated, rarely screened drama "**Four Sons**," from 1928. The action, set mainly in a Bavarian village, is centered on a widow, her family, and an elderly postman. Throughout, Ford echoes the films of the German director F. W. Murnau, one of the most famous filmmakers of the time. The mustachioed, uniformed, and potbellied postman is a dead ringer for the doorman protagonist of Murnau's 1924 drama "The Last Laugh"; Ford filmed on sets left over from Murnau's first Hollywood film, the poetic romance "Sunrise"; and he imitates some of Murnau's distinctive camera moves. The result is no mere homage, but a drastically different take on themes that Ford derived from Murnau's films.

The story begins just before the war, when Joseph (James Hall), one of the widow's four sons, emigrates to the United States. When the war begins, two of Joseph's brothers are drafted into the German Army; then, when the United States enters the war, in 1917, Joseph enlists on the American side. Ford displays great empathy for ordinary German citizens caught up in the carnage, and he briskly dramatizes the postwar revolt that gave birth to the Weimar Republic. The contrast with American social mobility, however, is the movie's core; where Murnau looks skeptically at the modern city, Ford shows a dynamic New York of vast possibilities of self-liberation (pointedly, for men and women alike), and of laws that bend to humane purpose.

—Richard Brody

OPENING CALVARY

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Aug. 1. (In limited release.)

GET ON UP

Chadwick Boseman stars in this bio-pic about James Brown, directed by Tate Taylor. Co-starring Viola Davis and Octavia Spencer. Opening Aug. 1. (In wide release.)

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

An adaptation of the comic-book series, about a group of superheroes who gather in space to save the world. Directed by James Gunn; starring Chris Pratt and Zoe Saldana. Opening Aug. 1. (In wide release.)

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Reviewed in Now Playing. Opening Aug. 1. (In limited release.)

REVIVALS AND FESTIVALS

Titles in bold are reviewed.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES

The films of Carl Theodor Dreyer. July 31 at 7:30: **"The Parson's Widow."** • Aug. 2 at 6:45 and Aug. 3 at 8: "Day of Wrath" (1943).

BAM CINÉMATEK

The films of Luis Buñuel. July 31 at 7:30 and 9:30: "The Young One" (1960). • Aug. 4 at 7:30 and 9:30: "Mexican Bus Ride" (1952).

FILM FORUM

"Femmes Noirs." Aug. 1-3 and Aug. 5-7 at 12:40, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, and 9:45 and Aug. 4 at 12:40, 2:50, 5:10, and 7:35: **"Double Indemnity."**

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"An Auteurist History of Film." July 30-Aug. 1 at 1:30: **"Annie Hall."** • "The Great War." Aug. 4 at 7:30: "Hearts of the World" (1918, D. W. Griffith). • Aug. 5 at 4 and Aug. 6 at 7: "The Better 'Ole" (1926, Charles Reisner). • Aug. 5 at 7: "The False Faces" (1919, Irvin V. Willat).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

"Star Presence on Screen." Aug. 1 at 7: **"Jackie Brown."** • "See It Big! Hollywood Melodrama." Aug. 2 at 2:30: "All That Heaven Allows" (1955, Douglas Sirk). • Aug. 3 at 6: "Suddenly, Last Summer" (1959, Joseph L. Mankiewicz).



MOVIE OF THE WEEK

A video discussion of Samuel Fuller's "Shark!" from 1969, in our digital edition.

NOW PLAYING

Annie Hall

Addressing the camera, speaking as a person his own age (fortyish), with the same experience (a Jewish comedian from Brooklyn), preoccupations (Bergman, Nazis, the Knicks, death), and ambitions (to dramatize his love life), Woody Allen created, in 1977, a signal work of first-person cinematic modernism. With a panoply of effects—including constant frame-breaking asides, split screens, superimpositions, flashbacks within flashbacks, an animated sequence, and the deus-ex-machina deployment of Marshall McLuhan—Allen joins the Catskills tumbler's anything-for-a-laugh antics with a Eurocentric art-house self-awareness and a psychoanalytic obsession with baring his sexual desires and frustrations, romantic disasters, and neurotic inhibitions. His eruptive display of the New York Jewish voice is a film counterpart to "Portnoy's Complaint," but one that's laced with a strain of bromance: Allen's alter ego, Alvy Singer, and his lifelong best friend, Rob (Tony Roberts), touchingly call each other Max and gibe with an intimacy that no woman can penetrate. Yet it's a mark of Allen's artistic intuition and confessional probity that he lets Diane Keaton's epoch-defining performance run away with the movie and allows her character to run away from him.—*Richard Brody* (MOMA; July 30-Aug. 1.)

Boyhood

Any film that takes twelve years to shoot should be commended for its stamina alone, yet no sense of grind, still less of fatigue, attends this Richard Linklater project. On the contrary, it stays light on its feet and unceasingly curious about its central figure—Mason (Ellar Coltrane), a Texas kid whose fortunes we follow from first grade to the dreamy start of college. It is chastening to be reminded just how rough that ride can be, physically as well as emotionally; now and then, as we jump from one year to the next, and as Mason's height or his haircut makes a similar leap, he barely seems like the same person. Other figures jostle and nudge him along, principally his sister (Lorelei Linklater), his devoted (if finally exhausted) mother (Patricia Arquette), and his semi-absent father (Ethan Hawke). Linklater delves into detail, and yet, as so often in his movies, the fundamental things apply: How does somebody grow? What's on the ledger of loss and gain? Do we live and learn, or is the living hard enough on its own? Pals, teachers, sour stepdads, and early girlfriends come and go, caught up, like Mason, in time's current. What a relief to find him emerging intact at the end, with happiness still in reach.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 7/21/14.) (In limited release.)

Dawn of the Planet of the Apes

The ape day is well under way. We have already had Rupert Wyatt's "Rise

of the Planet of the Apes" (2011); now it is Matt Reeves's turn to steer us through the dawn. (Will we be invited to stay for Lunchtime of the Planet of the Apes? How about Cocktail Hour?) Already, there are signs of strain in the saga; where Wyatt found something funny and touching in the pacts, as well as the contretemps, between humans and primates, the new film plows ahead with added solemnity and far more firepower but a fraction of the quizzical wit. The scene is one of nervous apocalypse; most of humanity having been erased, survivors eke out a life in the ruins of San Francisco. Jason Clarke and Keri Russell play a liberal couple who befriend the apes and enlist their help in opening a blocked dam. (Is this the first blockbuster to be predicated on plumbing?) The plan is supported by Caesar, the simian chief—played, as before, by Andy Serkis with expressive grace and a dose of high-grade C.G.I.—and opposed by his rival, a fearsome bonobo. For dramatic verve and emotional nuance, apes trounce people, hands down, and the movie suffers badly from the mismatch; all traces of finesse are trampled by the bombast of the climax.—*A.L.* (7/21/14) (In wide release.)

Double Indemnity

This shrewd, smoothly tawdry thriller, directed by Billy Wilder, is one of the high points of nineteen-forties films. Barbara Stanwyck's Phyllis Dietrichson—a platinum blonde who wears tight white sweaters, an anklet, and sleazy-kinky shoes—is perhaps the best acted and the most fixating of all the slutty, cold-blooded femmes fatales of the film-noir genre. With her bold stare, her sneering, over-lipsticked, thick-looking mouth and her strategically displayed legs, she's a living entrapment device. Fred MacMurray's Walter Neff, an insurance salesman, is the patsy she ensnares in a plot to kill her businessman husband and collect on the double-indemnity clause in his policy. And as Keyes, the claims investigator for the insurance company, Edward G. Robinson handles his sympathetic role with an easy mastery that gives the film some realistic underpinnings. It needs them, because the narration is often so gaudy and terse that it seems an emblem of period hardboiled attitudes. This defect may be integral to the film's taut structure.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; Aug. 1-7.)

Happy Christmas

In this comic drama, the director Joe Swanberg looks unsparingly at the bonds of family—its deep roots, its tenuous threads. He opens the door to his Chicago home and plays a role similar to his real-life one, a young paterfamilias named Jeff who earns a living in the movie business. Jeff is married to Kelly (Melanie Lynskey), a novelist who spends lots of time at

home with their baby son, Jude (Jude Swanberg, the director's son and a scene-stealing natural). Their routine is disrupted by the arrival of Jeff's sister Jenny (Anna Kendrick), who is at loose ends and in a protracted adolescence; she's as free-spirited and reckless as Jeff is practical and responsible. The movie is built from warmly and vigorously observed story crystals—Jeff's rescue of Jenny from her night of hard partying with a local friend, Carson (Lena Dunham); Kelly's quest to find more time to write; the trials of babysitting; the jousting and wrangling of Jenny's new romance with her pot dealer, Kevin (Mark Webber)—but Swanberg has a high and personal stake in it. Long-standing family grudges and new irritations give rise to a series of micro-crises balanced between ferocity and forbearance, breakup and reconciliation; the big-hearted, rowdy humor rises to something like transcendence.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

Jackie Brown

Quentin Tarantino's often hilarious 1997 adaptation of Elmore Leonard's "Rum Punch" is his most tense and sustained picture. Set in the sun-kissed Southern California suburbs, it's a great American movie about men and women testing the limits of their characters in middle age. The hero and heroine are a bail bondsman (Robert Forster) and a woman he's been hired to bail out, a stewardess with a money-smuggling sideline (Pam Grier). But the film proves equally compelling when dealing with her ruthless gun-runner boss (Samuel L. Jackson), his beach-babe moll (Bridget Fonda), and his fresh-from-the-joint old pal and partner (Robert De Niro). Forster offers an assured, attractive portrait of mature virility, and Grier, with her beauty at full ripeness, is effortlessly expressive.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of the Moving Image; Aug. 1.)

Lucy

The director Luc Besson grafts a visionary science-fiction story onto a bloody pulp-fiction framework. Scarlett Johansson plays the title role of an American student in Taipei who is kidnapped and forced to become a mule to transport a strange new drug. A pouch of it bursts in her body, and the substance ramps up the percentage of brain space that she can tap into. Her new powers aren't merely intellectual but also telepathic. Lucy travels to Paris to consult a neuroscientist (Morgan Freeman) and to thwart her kidnappers. The story's metaphysical shift is Besson's license to thrill; Lucy is a walking machine of special effects, and the director delights in her ability to pin opponents to the ceiling and empty their gun cartridges from across the room. But he also visits territory covered previously in films by Terrence Malick, contriving fantastic images that delve into the molecular and

range into the cosmic in order to conjure the seemingly supernatural scope of Lucy's transformation. Her effortless, mighty control over time and matter leaps as far into the wondrous as it does into the absurd; Besson's visions are exhilarating and imaginative, goofy and bombastic.—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

Magic in the Moonlight

As Woody Allen ages, beauty—old beauty, permanent beauty—has become emotionally paramount to him. In this new romantic comedy, set in the twenties in the South of France, he films on location at stunning old villas and lays on the dignified glamour—the lawns and potted plants, the gardens and blooming trellised walks. At the estate of a wealthy American family, Colin Firth, as a surly professional magician who exposes frauds, fights with an eager young American medium played by Emma Stone. Allen poses the rational view of life against magic, skepticism against romance—the debate goes on forever (it's like Shaw without irony), and you can see the plot reversals coming. It's a fussy, unimpassioned movie, pleasing in a minor way. With Simon McBurney, Marcia Gay Harden, and Hamish Linklater, as a fatuous young suitor who serenades Stone with a ukulele. Cinematography by Darius Khondji.—*David Denby* (7/28/14) (In limited release.)

A Most Wanted Man

In his last major performance, Philip Seymour Hoffman plays a German

antiterrorist operative in Hamburg, a high-functioning wreck named Günther Bachmann. Gut-heavy, relentless, sleepless, womanless, Bachmann summons his bulk to action and tears through rooms, issuing orders in guttural German-accented English. Hoffman's performance is overwrought but moving—a great actor carrying his sense of responsibility and his despair right to the end. Based on a brilliant John le Carré novel from 2008, the movie is fuelled by the writer's rage at the crude American counterterrorism methods that have corrupted regular German intelligence (Bachmann has his own unit). With Grigoriy Dobrygin, as a young half-Russian, half-Chechen Muslim who washes up in Hamburg and may or may not be a jihadist; Robin Wright, as a charming and treacherous C.I.A. official; Rachel McAdams, as an idealistic German civil-rights attorney; and Willem Dafoe, as a Hamburg banker. The adaptation by Andrew Bovell, who wrote the screenplay, and Anton Corbijn, who directed, is much condensed, but the Hamburg settings are dark, lurid, and vital.—*D.D.* (7/28/14) (In limited release.)

The Parson's Widow

Carl Theodor Dreyer's 1920 melodrama of life in a rustic Danish village delivers harsh wisdom on matters of the spirit and the flesh. His protagonist, Sofren (Einar Röd), is a passionate yet light-souled young theologian who earns his first parish

post—the precondition for marrying Mari (Greta Almqvist), his steadfast and fine-boned fiancée. But it comes with a catch: his deceased predecessor's elderly widow (Hildur Carlberg) exercises her right to demand his hand in marriage and wins his consent through literally diabolical means. Dreyer captures the actors in a dappled light and a depth of shadow that seem to illuminate the characters from within. Their earthy tread and sublimely iconic expressions are framed in a surprisingly free and evocative round of angles that conjure emotional outbursts and transcendent powers with equally blunt physicality. An earthly leave-taking plays like a real-time transfiguration but doesn't leave ordinary wonders behind. Silent.—*R.B.* (Anthology Film Archives; July 31.)

Sex Tape

The director Jake Kasdan deflavors this ribald tall tale of the bourgeois blues. After a decade or so of marriage and with two school-age children in the house, the thirtysomething Jay (Jason Segel), a music-business executive, and Annie (Cameron Diaz), a mommy blogger, find that they've lost their erotic spark. On a night without the kids, Annie pulls out a copy of "The Joy of Sex" and suggests that she and Jay record themselves enacting its every move. The result is bliss—until the recording leaks out and the plot shifts to the couple's panic-stricken efforts to retrieve it.

Diaz is familiarly effervescent, and Segel shares, once again, his gift for self-mortification in extreme physical comedy; the script evokes scenes from a marriage that nonetheless remains unexamined. The center of the story is pleasure, but the funk is stripped out; the children get the best lines, even while they're being used as props.—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

Snowpiercer

Violent, often absurd, but full of brilliant surprises. The South Korean director Bong Joon-ho transcends the clichés of the film's postapocalyptic premise. After a climate-change crisis, everyone in the world is dead except for a few hundred survivors, who are circling the snowy earth in an enormous high-speed train. At the rear of the train, the lower classes, living in filthy muck, mount a revolt against the swells in the front cars, who are protected by the fascist overlord Wilford (Ed Harris), a genius who cooks steak while wearing a silk robe. The proles encounter armed thugs and numerous obstacles, the most formidable of which is Wilford's chief ideologue, played by Tilda Swinton, who holds forth, in the tones of a Victorian schoolmistress, on the "eternal order" by which the privileged lord it over ungrateful scum. There's much fighting at close quarters with axes, clubs, lances, and various other medieval instruments. The deluxe front cars are a triumph of imaginative design.—*D.D.* (7/7 & 14/14) (In limited release.)

ABOVE & BEYOND

Americanafest NYC

Traditionally, Lincoln Center's annual Out of Doors festival ends with a weekend celebration of roots music. This year, with assistance from the Americana Music Association, a nonprofit devoted to the genre, it is expanding its offerings. The inaugural Americanafest NYC starts Aug. 4, with a free screening of Beth Harrington's film "The Winding Stream," about the first family of country music, the Carters. It is the New York premiere of the documentary, and Harrington will be on hand for a Q. & A. The festival continues with an astonishing array of music acts over the next week—headliners include Emmylou Harris, Rodney Crowell, and Cassandra Wilson. In addition, "We Are the Music Makers," a travelling exhibition of photographs and audio files documenting Southern musical history and the work of the nonprofit Music Maker Relief Foundation, is on view at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts through Aug. 29. (lcoutofdoors.org.)

"Uptown Bounce"

El Museo del Barrio is teaming up with the Museum of the City of New York, its next-door neighbor, for a series of free weekly block parties, subtitled "Summer Nights @ 104th & Fifth." The festivities take place July 30, Aug. 6, and Aug. 13, and include live music, gallery talks, art-making workshops, break-dancing demos, and food and drinks from local vendors. The first night, "Roots," has performances by the d.j. Tony Touch, the d.j. duo D'Marquesina (with video-art projections), and the conga player Chico Cruz. Both museums will be open until 9, featuring exhibitions such as "Museum Starter Kit: Open with Care," at El Museo del Barrio, and "City As Canvas," the first exhibition of

New York graffiti art from the Martin Wong Collection, at the Museum of the City of New York. El Museo del Barrio is also hosting a conversation with the folklorist

Elena Martínez, from City Lore, and sidewalk art by the Murciélagos Fumando Collective. (For more information, visit elmuseo.org or mcny.org.)

READINGS AND TALKS

"Word for Word"

The alfresco reading series in Bryant Park continues with Jason Mewes and Kevin Smith, of "Clerks." The two will discuss "Jay & Silent Bob's Blueprints for Destroying Everything." (42nd St. side of the park, between Fifth and Sixth Aves. 212-768-4242. July 30 at 12:30.)

Barnes & Noble

Stephen Carter, the author of "The Emperor of Ocean Park," talks about his latest novel, "Back Channel," a thriller about the Cuban missile crisis. (Broadway at 82nd St. 212-362-8835. Aug. 4 at 7.)

"Brooklyn Voices"

The lecture series, organized by St. Joseph's College and Greenlight Bookstore, presents Lev Grossman, a book reviewer for *Time*, who concludes his "Magicians" trilogy with the publication of the novel "The Magician's Land." He will be joined by other fantasy writers, including Lauren Oliver, Michelle Hodkin, Margaret Stohl, Erin Morgenstern, and his twin brother, Austin Grossman. There will also be a trivia contest and a reception. (Tuohy Auditorium, St. Joseph's College, 245 Clinton Ave., Brooklyn. 718-246-0200. Aug. 5 at 7:30.)

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT AFLAME

Because memory, particularly historical memory, fails unflinchingly, this summer feels like a uniquely horrific season of dissolution and blood. “You name it, the world is aflame,” Gary Samore, a former national-security aide in the Obama Administration, told Peter Baker, of the *Times*, the other day. “We always have a mix of complicated interests. That’s not unusual. What’s unusual is there’s this outbreak of violence and instability everywhere.”

The supposed tranquillity of earlier seasons is almost always an artifact of distance. And yet Samore’s “everywhere” is forgivable hyperbole. In eastern Ukraine, where hundreds of corpses, and a dozen or so planes, lay shattered in fields of wheat and sunflowers, Russian President Vladimir Putin has made clear his intention to base his legitimacy at home on defiance abroad. In Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, President Goodluck Jonathan’s government appears powerless to stop Boko Haram, which has kidnapped hundreds of girls to demonstrate its pious opposition to the values of secularism and education. The men of ISIS, a radical Islamic force with origins in Al Qaeda, have planted their black flag over swaths of eastern Syria and northwestern Iraq. Earlier this year, when President Obama was asked how he could claim that Al Qaeda had been “decimated” when jihadi flags were now aloft in Falluja, he resorted to a blithe formulation. “The analogy we use around here sometimes, and I think is accurate, is if a jayvee team puts on Lakers uniforms that doesn’t make them Kobe Bryant,” the President told this magazine. The tone at the White House is no longer quite so unalarmed.

Then there is the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. How to locate the source of the most recent explosion between the

two sides? The kidnapping and the murder of three Israeli youths—Naftali Fraenkel, Gilad Shaar, and Eyal Yifrah—led to the revenge murder, by bludgeon and fire, of a Palestinian teen-ager named Muhammad Abu Khdeir, which led to a barrage of rocket fire from Gaza into Israel, which led to an Israeli assault, from air, ground, and sea. The way you order and make sense of this brutalizing conflict depends on who you are. As Bernard Avishai wrote on our Web site last week, “You can unspool this vendetta back to the Balfour Declaration, in 1917.” What no one can do is look away.

It is impossible to ignore the cynicism of Hamas, which rules Gaza and knows what fear and retribution it provokes by firing thousands of rockets into Israel and hiding its arms in mosques and schools. Those rockets have increased in range, if not yet in accuracy, and have managed to terrorize Ashdod, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Eilat, and, crucially, Ben Gurion Airport.

Nor is it possible to ignore the bloodshed that Israel has exacted in Gaza. There are, at last count, eight hundred and fifty-seven Palestinians dead—a hundred and forty-nine of them children—and thirty-seven Israelis. The shelling of the Shejaiya neighborhood of Gaza City alone left more than ninety Palestinians dead, including at least twenty-one children. On Thursday, a school run by the United Nations in Beit Hanoun was hit, killing sixteen civilians and wounding around a hundred and fifty. And yet Israel’s Ambassador to the United States, Ron Dermer, suggested last week that the Israel Defense Forces should be awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for the “restraint” and the humanity of their assault—their “knock on the roof” warning shots, their text messages and phone calls alerting homes,



hospitals, and schools. The Bakr family of Gaza City, which lost four children to an Israeli strike on the beach, will likely decline an invitation to Oslo.

The politics are as disheartening as the casualties are heartbreaking. Last year, Secretary of State John Kerry cautioned that if the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, did not find a way to make serious progress on ending the occupation and creating feasible borders and mutual guarantees, the outlines of which have been clear for decades, the consequences would likely be catastrophic—from a third intifada to the end of a two-state solution. Moshe Ya'alon, Netanyahu's Defense Minister, made plain the leadership's attitude toward the peace talks by telling associates that Kerry was "obsessive" and "messianic." "He should take his Nobel Prize and leave us alone," Ya'alon said.

Meanwhile, the most malign and extremist elements within this conflict—Israeli and Palestinian—grow in strength and deepen their conviction that there is no chance of accommodation. Childhood memories of terror and

death accumulate, and cripple the moral and political imagination. Abbas, who, for all his flaws, really was Israel's most promising partner for peace in this saga, is seventy-nine, weak, and threatening retirement. Netanyahu, who voiced support for a two-state solution in 2009, appears to be reversing himself. Members of his ruling coalition, like Naftali Bennett, say bluntly that their peace plan is the annexation of much of the West Bank.

Last week, Reuven Rivlin, the scion of an old, right-wing Jerusalem family, took the oath of office as Israel's President. The post is largely ceremonial, but there was meaning in the occasion. Rivlin was replacing Shimon Peres, who was a co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1994, for his role in forging the Oslo Accords. Peres, who is ninety, is a champion of the two-state solution. Rivlin is a champion of the Israeli settlers. As he has put it, "I wholeheartedly believe that the land of Israel is ours in its entirety." Tragically, it is Rivlin's absolutist view that is in the ascendance for so many, both in Palestine and in Israel.

—David Remnick

ON THE WATERFRONT SWIM, SWAM, SWUM



Four years ago, three guys had an idea: that it might be nice to swim in the East River. "It came about pretty simply," one of them, Dong-Ping Wong, recalled recently, on one of those humid, ambition-melting summer mornings. "Just sitting and sweating near the river, and realizing, after years of living here, that it'd be sort of amazing if you could jump in, and kind of ridiculous that you couldn't." The N.Y.P.D. frowns upon people jumping into the city's waterways, out of practical concerns about the strength of the currents and the difficulty of exiting—no ladders, no ramps. Also, consider the quality of the water itself, which seldom conjures up images of the Caribbean. The guys decided that they should build a floating pool, one that would neutralize the current and filter out contaminants. No chlorine: that would be cheating. Just the river, with life-guards and without the urban jetsam. They called it +Pool, owing to the intended design scheme, which features four adjoining rectangles in the shape of a plus sign.

Wong, who is thirty-four, was stand-

ing in a boathouse at Pier 40, on the western edge of Houston Street, with his fellow wannabe swimmers Archie Lee Coates IV and Jeffrey Franklin. Using Kickstarter, they have raised more than three hundred thousand dollars for the project, mostly by selling tiles for the eventual pool, on which donors can request that their names, or short messages, be printed. One such tile, for instance, says, "Push here for hot dog." Another, from a man in Chile, says, "Close Guantánamo." Wong added, "One of 'em just says, 'Toilet,'" and giggled.

"'Toilet' is a good one," Coates said. He meant this in light of the challenge that he and his partners face as river-pool engineers. Before they can approach the city for permission to build, they need to figure out how to filter the water. Some days, the water is clear enough that you can strain it with a Brita filter. (This is not recommended if you hope to use the Brita again.) But when it rains hard—a quarter of an inch in an hour might do the trick—some four hundred sewer pipes around the city begin flushing untreated waste, using the rivers as municipal lavatories. "We're kind of pussies," Wong said, noting that none of them had yet taken the plunge, either in the East River or in the Hudson, where they are now focussing their studies.

The +Pool men, who are designer-architect types, were testing potential

filters. In a corner of the boathouse stood a tall Fluidyne system, a machine for pumping water up through a series of coat-liner-like fabrics, one of which they'd nicknamed Cookie Monster, because of its fuzzy electric-blue sheen. Pipes connect the machine to a floating dock outside, where more filtering experiments take place. Square holes have been cut into the dock, like sample pools, framed by three layers of screens, each separated by inflatable bike-tire tubing. In one of the sample pools, the fabrics have been fashioned in a corrugated pattern, yielding better results—more surface area for the fecal effluvia to cling to. A fourth experimenter dangled a black-and-white Secchi disk into another pool, to gauge the water's clarity. The disk disappeared from view at a depth of fifty inches, an improvement of two feet over the murkier chop splashing around beyond the dock's edges.

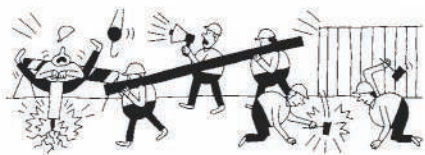
Later this year, they plan to publish a report on what they've learned so far. (Realistically, they don't imagine Opening Splash taking place until 2016.) For the statistically inclined, the figure to watch is the number of colony-forming units (of bacteria) per hundred millilitres. Beach advisories are often set at thirty-five. Back in the boathouse, an environmental engineer named Greg Grzybowski retrieved water samples from an oven where they'd been baking for twenty-four

hours, and held them under fluorescent light. A few samples glowed, indicating the presence of bacteria. Grzybowski performed some quick calculations. The raw river water scored a hundred and thirty-five: yuck. The cleanest +Pool water registered thirty—passable, but barely.

Grzybowski noted a brackish tank nearby, where a couple of pinkie-finger-size seahorses that had been fished out of the harbor were now bouncing around. “I would swim in a river that a seahorse swims in,” he said. “Maybe that’s just me.” A somewhat experienced Hudson River swimmer (north of Manhattan, that is) contemplated the conditions, and the likelihood of getting busted, and returned unhappily to an office in midtown—where, a few hours later, his phone vibrated with an emergency flash-flood warning. The skies opened. Grzybowski sampled again, and the C.F.U. count in the river exceeded 24,196, the highest possible measurement. “Pretty much raw sewage,” he reported. The would-be swimmer felt a wave of compassion for the seahorses.

—Ben McGrath

DEPT. OF INSPIRATION A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN



Ansel Elkins, a thirty-two-year-old poet, lives in Greensboro, North Carolina. “I need silence and stillness when I’m writing,” she says. “If my husband is home, even if he’s just puttering around without talking, I sometimes get bitchy.” She lives from grant to grant. Recently, she won the Yale Younger Poets Prize and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. She also accepts writers’ residencies. At Hedgebrook, an hour north of Seattle, “they put you up in your own cabin with a wood-burning stove, and they cook you all these organic meals. It’s lonely, but productive.”

In May, Elkins applied for a different kind of residency, one organized by the *Paris Review* and the Standard East Village, a sleek hotel. The gig offered

free lodging “to a writer who has a book under contract and needs three weeks of solitude in downtown New York City.” A few weeks later, Elkins was at a friend’s house, “picking ticks off the dog and throwing them in the fire, and I stopped to check my e-mail, and I won!” Her reward: for most of July, she would inhabit a twelve-foot-by-fourteen-foot bedroom on the tenth floor of the hotel, within blocks of Cooper Union, a homeless shelter, and several massage parlors and sake bars. Breakfast and coffee would be complimentary; lunch, dinner, and alcohol would not.

On a recent Wednesday, Elkins awoke from an afternoon nap and took an elevator down to the Standard’s well-appointed lobby, which has a kiosk stocked with aspirin, rolling papers, and condoms. A concierge wearing a paisley bow tie said, “Hello again.” Elkins is short—“between Lolita and Lil’ Kim” is how she describes her height—and she has tight curls, dyed auburn and fashioned into what she calls a “frohawk.” She apologized for her “hangover face”; a poet friend had taken her out drinking in SoHo the previous night. She wore a sleeveless linen top, white trousers, and cat’s-eye glasses. “I was thrilled to win this,” she said. “But my first thought was ‘Can I afford it?’” Packing for the trip, she set aside a batch of envelopes and slipped a twenty-dollar bill into each one. “I open one every day,” she said. “When I’ve used up the cash, I go back to the hotel.”

In the Standard’s restaurant, she chose an outdoor table, facing the Bowery, and ordered a coffee (free). An oil truck trundled north; jackhammers roared. “I’m not a morning person, but I’ve been getting up at seven,” she said. (Construction noise next door.) “So I come down here with a book until I feel awake, and I watch the parade of fine-looking men in suits. You don’t get that in Greensboro.” She gestured at the patrons wearing expensive sunglasses and canvas sneakers. It was her first extended stay in Manhattan, and the neighborhood was not quite what she had expected. “Isn’t the East Village supposed to be this bohemian place?” she said. “I’ve gotten a bit of a preppy vibe.”

Elkins spent her days indoors, napping and listening to Hank Williams

and revising her poems with colored pens. She had lost money on the trip, but not much. Most nights, she went out for three-dollar tacos on Second Avenue and walked back slowly, gazing up at the gargoyles on East Sixth Street. “This late-night walking is the one thing about the city that’s most saturated my work,” she said, mentioning a new poem, an ode to Mae West,



Ansel Elkins

that she began writing here. (“Singing in two languages—/ English and body;/ She jazzes that dazzling verse.”)

Once, when she returned to the hotel at 9 P.M., an elevator attendant asked whether she was on her way to a private party in the penthouse; she explained that she was going upstairs to work. She spent one Sunday with a notebook at the Museum of Natural History, gathering material for future poems. “I spent so long on the dead birds that I didn’t even make it to the whale,” she said.

Her room, No. 1006, is just wide enough for a queen-size bed. She rearranged the objects on her small desk—a fountain pen, an inkwell, the collected letters of Hart Crane, two hydrangeas—to make room for her MacBook. Dusk was falling, and the lights of the Empire State Building, to the north, were flickering on. “Want a drink?” she said. She opened the mini-fridge: a fifth of vodka, a six-pack of ginger ale, plastic water bottles refilled from the bathroom sink. “This hotel is great, but I wish they had ice machines,

like you get at a Howard Johnson,” she said. “The only way to get ice here is to call room service. And then you have to tip.”

—Andrew Marantz

THE PICTURES CRY, BABY



R.J. Cutler spent decades making documentaries about the wily likes of Bill Clinton and Dick Cheney. A burly man with a red beard and a regal manner—Henry VIII without the wives and the panoply—Cutler has a knack for eliciting his subjects’ candor. In his newest film, though, he sought not clarity but ardent confusion. “You know how when you’re walking down the stairs and you think there’s going to be a step, and there isn’t, and for a moment you’re lost in space?” he said. “That’s the feeling I wanted to explore.” This existential quest helped lead him to direct a ten-handkerchief teen melodrama called “If I Stay,” which opens in a few weeks.

One recent afternoon at Balthazar, the SoHo bistro, Cutler wore a gray suit over a blue polo shirt. Steepling his fingers toward the waitress and tapping them briskly, he asked her, “Any way I could get breakfast? Eggs-over-easy

kind of a thing?” As she glided off, he explained that his yearning for narrative began as he was editing “The September Issue,” a documentary about Anna Wintour and *Vogue*, in 2009, and found himself missing directing plays, as he had done in his youth. So he re-verses himself in fiction by helping to conceive “Nashville,” ABC’s country-music drama, and directing the first two episodes. Then he turned fifty. And shortly after that, he said, “my father described himself to me as ‘a young ninety’ just before he went in for the heart procedure he thought he needed.” He grimaced. “I’ve avoided hospitals since he tried to interest me in them as a kid.” (His father was a doctor in family practice.) “I wasn’t crazy about the three weeks I spent in the one where he was dying. And then a hospital set is where we ended up for this story.”

In “If I Stay,” based on a Y.A. book by Gayle Forman, Mia, a young cellist played by Chloë Grace Moretz, is in a coma after a car crash that killed her parents and her younger brother. Her spirit leaves her body and flits about the emergency room eavesdropping on friends and relatives, experiencing extended flashbacks, and wrestling with whether to join her family in the afterworld or return to her body, wake it up, and soldier on with her hunky indie-rocker boyfriend, Adam (Jamie Blackley). On the one hand, her family was pretty cool. On the other, Adam writes Mia a ballad that

counsels, “Breathe deep, breathe clear/ Know that I’m here,” and Hollywood studios are not in the business of breaking up couples with great skin. Still, Cutler hopes to elicit gasps at her choice. (At a recent journalists’ screening, the gasps may have been drowned out by all the unprofessional weeping.)

Last summer, Cutler polished the film’s script during eggs-over-easy breakfasts at Balthazar, plotting how to build in Mia’s memories of life with her family, those stairsteps of loss. (He also asked Joshua Leonard, who plays Mia’s father, to grow a beard, which made Leonard look a bit like, well, R.J. Cutler.) The director explained, “We shot the raw footage—stuff around the house, in the kitchen, tossing the football—handheld, with a Canon C500, so it would feel like home movies. And we used nearly every frame of it. It was the most vérité aspect of the film, so I knew how emotional it could be.”

As he tucked into his eggs, he said that the biggest novelties in directing a feature were having a script, a large crew, and around eight and a half million dollars—a budget that, though modest by studio standards, dwarfs the tab for a documentary. And then, of course, there was the godlike power of ordaining life as it ought to be, with swoony kisses, a swelling soundtrack, and the world’s shiniest hospital. He observed, “‘The September Issue’ begins with a closeup of Anna saying that a lot of people think fashion is silly—and that she thinks they’re wrong. With ‘If I Stay,’ I want you to feel that the whole story is being told from a larger, spiritual point of view. So the beginning is very theatrical.” He called up the sequence on his iPad and began to narrate it: “We open high in the sky, then dive through the clouds. Music, music, music, Beethoven, we find the road, and the car drives by. . . .” He snapped the iPad shut before fate intruded. “I’m very curious to know what it’s like, death—I always say to my wife, ‘I wonder if we’ll have the New York Times when we’re dead.’”

Would you want your obituary to describe you as a maker of features or of documentaries? He steepled his fingers again, tapping strenuously, and finally said, “My preference would be ‘long-suffering Mets fan.’ But I hope I have some time left before the question comes up.”

—Tad Friend



“Look, it’s not personal—it’s religious.”

THE FINANCIAL PAGE

COMPANIES WITH BENEFITS

In recent years, Warby Parker has become the eyeglass-maker of choice for hipsters. In a recent *GQ* taxonomy of the different varieties of nerd, all but one of the nerds were wearing a pair of Warby Parkers. The company's approach—selling stylish specs at affordable prices—seems obvious, but, in an industry where brand-name glasses cost two or three hundred dollars a pair, it counts as revolutionary. The company has a similarly unconventional approach to its corporate identity. Soon after starting Warby, the founders made it a “B corporation.” B corporations are for-profit companies that pledge to achieve social goals as well as business ones. Their social and environmental performance must be regularly certified by a non-profit called B Lab, much the way LEED buildings have to be certified by the U.S. Green Building Council. Many B corps are also committed to a specific social mission. Warby's production and distribution is carbon-neutral, and, for every pair of glasses it sells, it distributes another in the developing world, in partnership with a nonprofit called VisionSpring.

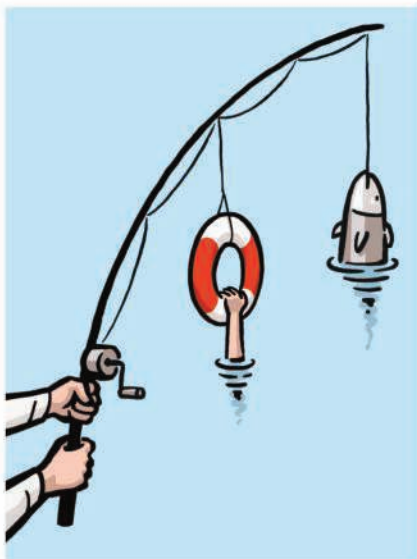
There are now more than a thousand B corps in the U.S., including Patagonia, Etsy, and Seventh Generation. And in the past four years twenty-seven states have passed laws allowing companies to incorporate themselves as “benefit corporations”—which are similar to B corps but not identical. The commitments that these companies are making aren't just rhetorical. Whereas a regular business can abandon altruistic policies when times get tough, a benefit corporation can't. Shareholders can sue its directors for not carrying out the company's social mission, just as they can sue directors of traditional companies for violating their fiduciary duty.

Why would any company tie its hands this way? Neil Blumenthal, one of Warby's co-founders, told me, “We wanted to build a business that could make profits. But we also wanted to build a business that did good in the world.” That sounds pretty, but it's a kind of goal that can be easily discarded when running a for-profit business. Becoming a B corp raises the reputational cost of abandoning your social goals. It's what behavioral economists call a “commitment device”—a way of insuring that you'll live up to your promises.

Being a B corp also insulates a company against pressure from investors. Since the nineteen-seventies, the dominant ideology in corporate America has been that a company's fundamental purpose is to boost investor returns: as Milton Friedman put it, increased profits are the “only social respon-

sibility of business.” Law professors still debate whether or not this is legally true, but most C.E.O.s feel huge pressure to maximize shareholder value. At a B corp, though, shareholders are just one constituency. Patagonia doesn't need to worry about investors' opposing its environmental work, because that work is simply part of the job. For similar reasons, benefit corporations are far less vulnerable to hostile takeovers. When Ben & Jerry's was acquired by Unilever, in 2000, its founders didn't want to sell, but they believed that fiduciary duty required them to. A benefit corporation would have had an easier time staying independent.

In today's fiercely competitive business environment, one might assume that a company that thinks altruistically is doomed to failure. To a free-marketeer, a B corp is just a way to waste shareholder money on do-gooding whims. Yet Warby Parker has had no trouble raising money from investors. And Dave Gilboa, another Warby co-founder, told me that, at the operational level, having a social mission can offer



distinct advantages. It's an important way for a company to attract and retain talented employees. Survey data show that workers—especially young ones—want to work for socially conscious companies, and will take less compensation in exchange for a greater sense of purpose. Such people often work for nonprofits, but B corps may soon become a more attractive option. Blumenthal himself came from the nonprofit world, having worked at VisionSpring before starting Warby. He says, “Your ability to have an impact on a large scale is just greater in the for-profit world, and that's chiefly because of the capital and the talent available to you.” Having a social mission can also be an important selling point with consumers,

as the success of the fair-trade movement makes clear.

It's easy to be skeptical of the mushy rhetoric surrounding B corps. Yet the desire to balance profit and purpose is arguably a return to the model that many American companies once followed. Henry Ford declared that, instead of boosting dividends, he'd rather use the money to build better cars and pay better wages. And Johnson & Johnson's credo, written in 1943, stated that the company's “first responsibility” was not to investors but to doctors, nurses, and patients. There were problems with this way of doing business: it was paternalistic and often inefficient. But what replaced it—the fetishization of shareholder value—has inflicted serious damage of its own, encouraging corporations to focus on short-term prospects and share price at the expense of everything else. The rise of B corps is a reminder that the idea that corporations should be only lean, mean, profit-maximizing machines isn't dictated by the inherent nature of capitalism, let alone by human nature. As individuals, we try to make our work not just profitable but also meaningful. It may be time for more companies to do the same.

—James Surowiecki

WHAT IS A WOMAN?

The dispute between radical feminism and transgenderism.

BY MICHELLE GOLDBERG



On May 24th, a few dozen people gathered in a conference room at the Central Library, a century-old Georgian Revival building in downtown Portland, Oregon, for an event called Radfems Respond. The conference had been convened by a group that wanted to defend two positions that have made radical feminism anathema to much of the left. First, the organizers hoped to refute charges that the desire to ban prostitution implies hostility toward prostitutes. Then they were going to try to explain why, at a time when transgender rights are ascendant, radical feminists insist on regarding transgender women as men, who should not be

allowed to use women's facilities, such as public rest rooms, or to participate in events organized exclusively for women.

The dispute began more than forty years ago, at the height of the second-wave feminist movement. In one early skirmish, in 1973, the West Coast Lesbian Conference, in Los Angeles, furiously split over a scheduled performance by the folksinger Beth Elliott, who is what was then called a transsexual. Robin Morgan, the keynote speaker, said:

I will not call a male "she"; thirty-two years of suffering in this androcentric society, and of surviving, have earned me the title "woman"; one walk down the street by a male transvestite, five minutes of his being

hassled (which he may enjoy), and then he dares, he *dares* to think he understands our pain? No, in our mothers' names and in our own, we must not call him sister.

Such views are shared by few feminists now, but they still have a foothold among some self-described radical feminists, who have found themselves in an acrimonious battle with trans people and their allies. Trans women say that they are women because they feel female—that, as some put it, they have women's brains in men's bodies. Radical feminists reject the notion of a "female brain." They believe that if women think and act differently from men it's because society forces them to, requiring them to be sexually attractive, nurturing, and deferential. In the words of Lierre Keith, a speaker at Radfems Respond, femininity is "ritualized submission."

In this view, gender is less an identity than a caste position. Anyone born a man retains male privilege in society; even if he chooses to live as a woman—and accept a correspondingly subordinate social position—the fact that he has a choice means that he can never understand what being a woman is really like. By extension, when trans women demand to be accepted as women they are simply exercising another form of male entitlement. All this enrages trans women and their allies, who point to the discrimination that trans people endure; although radical feminism is far from achieving all its goals, women have won far more formal equality than trans people have. In most states, it's legal to fire someone for being transgender, and transgender people can't serve in the military. A recent survey by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force found overwhelming levels of anti-trans violence and persecution. Forty-one per cent of respondents said that they had attempted suicide.

Yet, at the same time, the trans-rights movement is growing in power and cachet: a recent *Time* cover featuring the actress Laverne Cox was headlined "THE TRANSGENDER TIPPING POINT." The very word "transgender," which first came into wide use in the nineteen-nineties, encompasses far more people than the term "transsexual" did. It includes not just the small

As transgender rights gain acceptance, radical-feminist views have been shunned.

number of people who seek gender-reassignment surgery—according to frequently cited estimates, about one in thirty thousand men and one in a hundred thousand women—but also those who take hormones, or who simply identify with the opposite gender, or, in some cases, with both or with neither. (According to the National Center survey, most trans women have taken female hormones, but only about a quarter of them have had genital surgery.) The elasticity of the term “transgender” has forced a rethinking of what sex and gender mean; at least in progressive circles, what’s determinative isn’t people’s chromosomes or their genitals or the way that they were brought up but how they see themselves.

Having rejected this supposition, radical feminists now find themselves in a position that few would have imagined when the conflict began: shunned as reactionaries on the wrong side of a sexual-rights issue. It is, to them, a baffling political inversion.

Radfems Respond was originally to have taken place across town from the library, at a Quaker meeting house, but trans activists had launched a petition on Change.org demanding that the event be cancelled. They said that, in hosting it, the Quakers would alienate trans people and “be complicit in the violence against them.” The Quakers, citing concerns in their community, revoked the agreement.

It wasn’t the first time that such an event had lost a scheduled venue. The Radfem 2012 conference was to be held in London, at Conway Hall, which bills itself as “a hub for free speech and independent thought.” But trans activists objected both to Radfem’s women-only policy—which was widely understood to exclude trans women—and to the participation of Sheila Jeffreys, a professor of political science at the University of Melbourne. Jeffreys was scheduled to speak on prostitution, but she is a longtime critic of the transgender movement, and Conway Hall officials decided that they could not allow speakers who “conflict with our ethos, principles, and culture.” Ultimately, the event was held at a still secret location; organizers escorted delegates to it from a nearby meeting place. Radfem 2013 also

had to switch locations, as did a gathering in Toronto last year, called Radfems Rise Up.

In response, thirty-seven radical feminists, including major figures from the second wave, such as Ti-Grace Atkinson, Kathie Sarachild, and Michele Wallace, signed a statement titled “Forbidden Discourse: The Silencing of Feminist Criticism of ‘Gender,’” which described their “alarm” at “threats and attacks, some of them physical, on individuals and organizations daring to challenge the currently fashionable concept of gender.” With all this in mind, the Radfems Respond organizers had arranged the library space as a backup, but then a post on Portland Indymedia announced:

We questioned the library administration about allowing a hate group who promotes discrimination and their response is that they cannot kick them out because of freedom of speech. So we also exercise our right to free speech in public space this Saturday to drive the TERFS and Radfems out of OUR library and OUR Portland!

(TERF stands for “trans-exclusionary radical feminist.” The term can be useful for making a distinction with radical feminists who do not share the same position, but those at whom it is directed consider it a slur.)

Abusive posts proliferated on Twitter and, especially, Tumblr. One read, “/kill/terfs 2K14.” Another suggested, “how about ‘slowly and horrendously murder terfs in saw-like torture machines and contraptions’ 2K14.” A young blogger holding a knife posted a selfie with the caption “Fetch me a terf.” Such threats have become so common that radical-feminist Web sites have taken to cataloguing them. “It’s aggrieved entitlement,” Lierre Keith told me. “They are so angry that we will not see them as women.” Keith is a writer and an activist who runs a small permaculture farm in Northern California. She is forty-nine, with cropped pewter hair and a uniform of black T-shirts and jeans. Three years ago, she co-founded the ecofeminist group Deep Green Resistance, which has some two hundred members and links the oppression of women to the pillaging of the planet.

D.G.R. is defiantly militant, refusing to condemn the use of violence in the service of goals it considers just. In radical circles, though, what makes the group

truly controversial is its stance on gender. As members see it, a person born with male privilege can no more shed it through surgery than a white person can claim an African-American identity simply by darkening his or her skin. Before D.G.R. held its first conference, in 2011, in Wisconsin, the group informed a person in the process of a male-to-female transition that she couldn’t stay in the women’s quarters. “We said, That’s fine if you want to come, but, no, you’re not going to have access to the women’s sleeping spaces and the women’s bathrooms,” Keith told me.

Last February, Keith was to be a keynote speaker at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference, at the University of Oregon, in Eugene, but the student government voted to condemn her, and more than a thousand people signed a petition demanding that the address be cancelled. Amid threats of violence, six policemen escorted Keith to the lectern, though, in the end, the protest proved peaceful: some audience members walked out and held a rally, leaving her to speak to a half-empty room.

Keith had an easier time at Radfems Respond, where she spoke on the differences between radicalism and liberalism. Two gender-bending punk kids who looked as if they might be there to protest left during the long opening session, on prostitution. A men’s-rights activist showed up—he later posted mocking clips from a video that he had secretly made—but said nothing during the sessions. Several trans women arrived and sat at the back, but, in fact, they were there to express solidarity, having decided that the attacks on radical feminists were both out of control and misguided. One of them, a thin, forty-year-old blonde from the Bay Area, who blogs under the name Snowflake Especial, noted that all the violence against trans women that she’s aware of was committed by men. “Why aren’t we dealing with them?” she asked.

Despite that surprising show of support, most of the speakers felt embattled. Heath Atom Russell gave the closing talk. A stocky woman, with curly turquoise hair and a bluish stubble shadow on her cheeks, she wore a T-shirt that read “I Survived Testosterone

Poisoning.” At twenty-five, she is a “de-transitioner,” a person who once identified as transgender but no longer does. (Expert estimates of the number of transitioners who abandon their new gender range from fewer than one per cent to as many as five per cent.)

Russell, a lesbian who grew up in a conservative Baptist family in Southern California, began transitioning to male as a student at Humboldt State University, and was embraced by gender-rights groups on campus. She started taking hormones and changed her name. Then, in her senior year, she discovered “Unpacking Queer Politics” (2003), by Sheila Jeffreys, which critiques female-to-male transsexualism as capitulation to misogyny.

At first, the book infuriated Russell, but she couldn’t let go of the questions that it raised about her own identity. She had been having heart palpitations, which made her uneasy about the hormones she was taking. Nor did she ever fully believe herself to be male. At one point during her transition, she hooked up with a middle-aged trans woman. Russell knew that she was supposed to think of herself as a man with a woman, but, she said, “It didn’t feel right, and I was scared.” Eventually, she proclaimed herself a woman again, and a radical feminist, though it meant being ostracized by many of her friends. She is now engaged to a woman; someone keyed the word “dyke” on her fiancée’s car.

Russell appears in Sheila Jeffreys’s new book, “Gender Hurts: A Feminist Analysis of the Politics of Transgenderism.” Jeffreys, who is sixty-six, has short silver hair and a weathered face. She has taught at the University of Melbourne for twenty-three years, but she grew up in London, and has been described as the Andrea Dworkin of the U.K. She has written nine previous books, all of which focus on the sexual subjugation of women, whether through rape, incest, pornography, prostitution, or Western beauty norms. Like Dworkin, she is viewed as a heroine by a cadre of like-minded admirers and as a zealot by others. In 2005, in an admiring feature in the *Guardian*, Julie Bindel wrote, “Jeffreys sees sexuality as the basis of the oppression of women by men, in much the same way as Marx saw capitalism as

the scourge of the working class. This unwavering belief has made her many enemies. Postmodern theorist Judith Halberstam once said, ‘If Sheila Jeffreys did not exist, Camille Paglia would have had to invent her.’”

In eight brisk chapters (half of them written with Jeffreys’s former Ph.D. student Lorene Gottschalk), “Gender Hurts” offers Jeffreys’s first full-length treatment of transgenderism. Ordinarily, Jeffreys told me, she would launch the publication of a new book with an event at the university, but this time campus security warned against it. She has also taken her name off her office door. She gave a talk in London this month, but it was invitation-only.

In the book, Jeffreys calls detransitioners like Russell “survivors,” and cites them as evidence that transgenderism isn’t immutable and thus doesn’t warrant radical medical intervention. (She considers gender-reassignment surgery a form of mutilation.) “The phenomenon of regret undermines the idea that there exists a particular kind of person who is genuinely and essentially transgender and can be identified accurately by psychiatrists,” she writes. “It is radically destabilising to the transgender project.” She cites as further evidence the case of

HISS

At Lough Hyne parents rouse kids
to hiss but condemn the hissy fit
when the order to cease
is ignored, all incited and in the grip.

Over-leaning a stone wall, stirring
a pair of mute swans to eloquence,
the combined hisses
trigger a localized squall —

an infectious hyperactivity
that makes an outing in “nature”
an addictive spree, a confrontation
with beauty incarnate: the swans

disdainful of such mockery,
glaring back down their beaks
at parents whose cygnets
are floundering in the deep.

—John Kinsella

Bradley Cooper, who, in 2011, at the age of seventeen, became Britain’s youngest gender-reassignment patient, then publicly regretted his transition the next year and returned to living as a boy. Jeffreys is especially alarmed by doctors in Europe, Australia, and the United States who treat transgender children with puberty-delaying drugs, which prevent them from developing unwanted secondary sex characteristics and can result in sterilization.

Throughout the book, Jeffreys insists on using male pronouns to refer to trans women and female ones to refer to trans men. “Use by men of feminine pronouns conceals the masculine privilege bestowed upon them by virtue of having been placed in and brought up in the male sex caste,” she writes. To her critics, the book becomes particularly hateful when she tries to account for the reality of trans people. Explaining female-to-male transition is fairly easy for her (and for other radical feminists): women seek to become men in order to raise their status in a sexist system. Heath Atom Russell, for example, is quoted as attributing her former desire to become a man to the absence of a “proud woman loving culture.”

But, if that’s true, why would men

demote themselves to womanhood? For reasons of sexual fetishism, Jeffreys says. She substantiates her argument with the highly controversial theories of Ray Blanchard, a retired professor of psychiatry at the University of Toronto, and the related work of J. Michael Bailey, a psychology professor at Northwestern University. Contrary to widespread belief, Blanchard says, the majority of trans women in the West start off not as effeminate gay men but as straight or bisexual men, and they are initially motivated by erotic compulsion rather than by any conceived female identity. “The core is, it’s really exciting for guys to imagine themselves with female breasts, or female breasts and a vulva,” he told me. To describe the syndrome, Blanchard coined the term “autogynephilia,” meaning sexual arousal at the thought of oneself as female.

Blanchard is far from a radical feminist. He believes that gender-reassignment surgery can relieve psychological suffering; he has even counselled people who undergo it. He also accepts the commonly held view that male brains differ from female brains in ways that affect behavior. Nevertheless, Jeffreys believes that the work of Blanchard and Bailey shows that when trans women ask to be accepted as women they’re seeking to have an erotic fixation indulged.

The last time a feminist of any standing published an attack on transgenderism as caustic as “Gender Hurts” was in 1979, when Janice Raymond produced “The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male.” Raymond was a lesbian ex-nun who became a doctoral student of the radical-feminist theologian Mary Daly, at Boston College. Inspired by the women’s-health movement, Raymond framed much of “The Transsexual Empire” as a critique of a patriarchal medical and psychiatric establishment. Still, the book was frequently febrile, particularly with regard to lesbian trans women. “All transsexuals rape women’s bodies by reducing the real female form to an artifact, appropriating this body for themselves,” Raymond wrote. “However, the transsexually constructed lesbian-feminist violates women’s sexuality and spirit.”

It’s a measure of how much perceptions have changed in the past thirty-

five years that “The Transsexual Empire” received a respectful, even admiring hearing in the mainstream media, unlike “Gender Hurts,” which has been largely ignored there. Reviewing “The Transsexual Empire” in the *Times*, the psychiatrist Thomas Szasz called it “flawless.” Raymond, he wrote, “has rightly seized on transsexualism as an emblem of modern society’s unremitting—though increasingly concealed—antifeminism.”

One of the women Raymond wrote about was Sandy Stone, a performance artist and academic who this fall will teach digital arts and new media at the University of California, Santa Cruz. When Raymond’s book was published, Stone was a recording engineer at Olivia Records, a women’s-music collective in Los Angeles. In the late sixties, after graduating from college, and while still living as a man, she had bluffed her way into a job at New York’s famed Record Plant recording studio, where she worked with Jimi Hendrix and the Velvet Underground. (For a time, she slept in the studio basement, on a pile of Hendrix’s capes.) She moved to the West Coast and transitioned in 1974. Olivia approached her soon afterward; experienced female recording engineers were hard to find.

Stone became a member of the collective the next year and moved into a communal house that it rented, where she was the only trans woman among a dozen or so other lesbians. According to “The Transsexual Empire,” her presence was a major source of controversy in lesbian-feminist circles, but Stone insists that it was Raymond who created the dissension. “When the book came out, we were deluged with hate mail,” Stone says. “Up to that point, we were pretty much happy campers, making our music and doing our political work.”

Stone received death threats, but ultimately it was the threat of a boycott that drove her out of the collective. She eventually earned a doctorate in philosophy at Santa Cruz. In 1987, Stone wrote an essay, “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto,” which is widely seen as the founding text of transgender studies. It’s still taught around the world; a second

French edition is about to be published, and Stone has received a request to allow a Catalan translation.

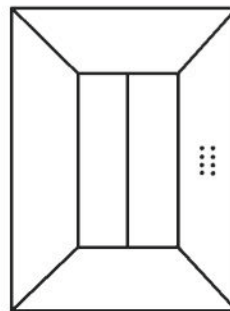
The last time that Janice Raymond wrote on transgender issues was in 1994, for a new introduction to “The Transsexual Empire.” Since then, she has focussed on sex trafficking, and last August a Norwegian government agency invited her to Oslo to speak on a panel about prostitution legislation. When she arrived, however, an official informed her that she had been disinvited; a letter to the editor of a major Norwegian newspaper had accused her of transphobia. Raymond says that similar things have “happened much more frequently within the last couple of years.”

The most dramatic change in the perception of transgenderism can be seen in academia. Particularly at liberal-arts colleges, students are now routinely asked which gender pronoun they would prefer to be addressed by: choices might include “ze,” “ou,” “hir,” “they,” or even “it.” A decade ago, no university offered a student health plan that covered gender-reassignment surgery. Today, dozens do, including Harvard, Brown, Duke, Yale, Stanford, and the schools in the University of California system.

There are young transgender-critical radical feminists, like Heath Atom Russell and Rachel Ivey, aged twenty-four, who was one of the organizers of Radfems Respond, but they are the first

to admit that they’re a minority. “If I were to say in a typical women’s-studies class today, ‘Female people are oppressed on the basis of reproduction,’ I would get called out,” Ivey says. Other students, she adds, would ask, “What about women who are male?”

That might be an exaggeration, but only a slight one. The members of the board of the New York Abortion Access Fund, an all-volunteer group that helps to pay for abortions for those who can’t afford them, are mostly young women; Alison Turkos, the group’s co-chair, is twenty-six. In May, they voted unanimously to stop using the word “women” when talking about people who get pregnant, so as not to



exclude trans men. “We recognize that people who identify as men can become pregnant and seek abortions,” the group’s new Statement of Values says.

A Change.org petition asks NARAL and Planned Parenthood to adopt similarly gender-inclusive language. It specifically criticizes the hashtag #StandWithTexasWomen, which ricocheted around Twitter during State Senator Wendy Davis’s filibuster against an anti-abortion bill in her state, and the phrase “Trust Women,” which was the slogan of George Tiller, the doctor and abortion provider who was murdered in Wichita in 2009.

To some younger activists, it seems obvious that anyone who objects to such changes is simply clinging to the privilege inherent in being cisgender, a word popularized in the nineteen-nineties to mean any person who is not transgender. Alison Turkos has heard complaints that the new language obscures the fact that cisgender women overwhelmingly bear the brunt of the current political attacks on reproductive rights. She replies, “It may not feel comfortable, but it’s important to create a space for more people who are often denied space and visibility.”

Older feminists who have not yet adopted this way of thinking can find themselves experiencing ideological whiplash. Sara St. Martin Lynne, a forty-year-old filmmaker and video producer from Oakland, told me, “When you come from a liberation, leftist background, you want to be on the right side of history,” and the debate “kind of puts you through your paces.” Last year, she was asked to resign from the board of Bay Area Girls Rock Camp, a non-profit that “empowers girls through music,” because of her involvement with the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival, which bills itself as an event for “womyn-born womyn” only.

Michfest, as it’s called, takes place every August, on six hundred and fifty acres of land in the woods east of Lake Michigan. Lisa Vogel founded it in 1976, when she was a nineteen-year-old Central Michigan University student, and she still runs it. The music, Vogel says, is only part of what makes Michfest important. Each year, several thousand women set up camp there and find themselves, for a week, living in a matri-

archy. Meals are cooked in kitchen tents and eaten communally. There are workshops and classes. Some women don extravagant costumes; others wear nothing at all. There is free child care and a team to assist disabled women who ordinarily cannot go camping. Vogel describes the governing ethos as “How would a town look if we actually got to decide what was important?”

She told me, “There’s something that I experience on the land when I walk at night without a flashlight in the woods and recognize that for that moment I feel completely safe. And there’s nowhere else I can do that.” She continued, “If, tomorrow, we said everyone is welcome, I’m sure it would still be a really cool event, but that piece that allows women to let down their guard and feel that really deep sense of personal liberation would be different, and that’s what we’re about.”

To transgender activists, Vogel’s stance is laden with offensive assumptions: that trans women are different in an essential way from other women, and that they’re dangerous. “The trope of trans women” constituting “a threat to women’s spaces has been tossed around forever,” Julia Serano told me. To her, it’s akin to straight people refusing to share a locker room with gays or lesbians. Serano, forty-six, is a biologist by training who now spends most of her time writing and speaking on transgender issues and feminism; last year, she lectured at schools including Brown, Stanford, Smith, and Cornell. (Sheila Jeffreys attacks her in “Gender Hurts,” using autobiographical details from Serano’s first book, “Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity” (2007), to paint her as an autogynephile who seeks to “reinvent ‘feminism’ to fit his erotic interests.”)

In the summer of 2003, Serano joined about a hundred people at Camp Trans, a protest camp near the Michfest site, which has run intermittently since 1994. Serano said that relations with Michfest attendees were often unexpectedly cordial. A few years ago, though, Vogel says, some protesters committed acts of vandalism—stealing electrical cables, cutting water pipes, keying cars in the parking lot, and spray-painting a six-foot penis, and the

words “Real Women Have Dicks,” on the side of the main kitchen tent.

Since then, as with the case of Olivia Records, the demonstrations have been supplanted by a boycott campaign. Last year, the Indigo Girls, longtime regulars at Michfest, announced that they wouldn’t appear again until the event became trans-inclusive. This year, the scheduled headliners, Hunter Valentine, pulled out for the same reason. Performers who do appear face protests and boycotts of their own; the funk singer Shelley Nicole says that her band, blaKbüşhe, was dropped from a show in Brooklyn because it is playing at Michfest next month.

Before Sara St. Martin Lynne was asked to leave the Bay Area Girls Rock Camp board, she hadn’t identified closely with radical feminism. Yet, as the campaign against Michfest—and against radical feminism as a whole—has grown, she’s come to feel strongly about keeping the event “womyn-born-womyn.” She said, “This moment where we’re losing the ability to say the word ‘woman’ or to acknowledge the fact that being born female has lived consequences and meaning is kind of intense to me.”

One of the trans women who showed up at the Radfems Respond conference, a thirty-five-year-old software engineer from California, with a tiny nose stud and long brown hair, agrees. She understands why trans women are hurt by their exclusion from Michfest and other female-only events and facilities, saying, “It’s not really wanting to invade space. It’s a deep-seated wanting to belong.” But, she adds, “if you’re identifying with women, shouldn’t you be empathizing with women?”

Sandy Stone shares this view—up to a point. Of the radical feminists’ position, she says, “It’s my personal belief, from speaking to some of these people at length, that it comes from having been subject to serious trauma at the hands of some man, or multiple men.” She adds, “You have to respect that. That’s their experience of the world.” But the pain of radical feminists, she insists, can’t trump trans rights. “If it were a perfect world, we would find ways to reach out and find ways of mutual healing,” she says. But, as it is, “I am going to have to say, It’s your place to stay out of spaces where transgender male-to-female people go. It’s not our job to avoid you.” ♦

THE UNATHLETIC CAMPER'S BASEBALL GLOSSARY

BY MARC PHILIPPE ESKENAZI

BASEBALL

A dangerous sport characterized by long periods of daydreaming, punctuated by intense bursts of unmanageable violence, panic, and people screaming at you.

"RISE AND SHINE, CAMPERS"

They're gonna force you to play baseball today.

BASEBALL BAT

A wooden or metal bar that can easily fly out of someone's hands.

SOFTBALL

A hard ball.

HARDBALL

A killer.

SPEEDBALL

All balls.

CATCHER'S MASK AND PADS

Protective gear that only the catcher is allowed to wear.

BATTER'S HELMET

A thing about which someone will say, "Where's the batter's helmet? Oh, Jesus, Eskenazi, put it back. You're not gonna get hit. Don't make me chase you."

"ON DECK"

A type of tummy ache.

"GOOD EYE!"

Something that you will yell at the wrong times. Like when you have just let a pitch go by because it was way too fast.

FOUL BALL

A moment when you think, Holy shit, I got a hit!

BABE RUTH

Someone who people tell you was also overweight.

HOME RUN

Something that you genuinely believe will happen when you swing. Every single time you swing. Even though it has never happened, you still think it will. You are so funny sometimes.

RIGHT FIELD

A quiet place, where you can sit for long stretches and play with dandelions.

Until suddenly you hear a clang and some shouting, and immediately understand that life is about to get much, much harder.

FLY BALL

When the sun drops a boulder into your eye.

SHORTSTOP

A position that involves mostly grounders, and that you think maybe you can play.



LINE DRIVE

The reason you can't play shortstop.

BASEBALL GLOVE / MITT

Something that you buy with your parents, oil up, place under your pillow, and carry around the house in the weeks before camp, never fully understanding how it works.

WALL-CLIMB CATCH

Ha ha—just kidding. Don't worry about this one, unless you want a trip to the infirmary. On second thought, go for it! Then you can talk to Beth the young nurse, and use the clean bathroom.

THIRD-BASE COACH

A young boy with temper and control issues.

INNINGS

The amount of time left before afternoon snack, divided by nine.

NEIL BRADDIKER

A handsome camp counsellor, who appears to have everything, and who coaches baseball, and can be seen flirting with Beth the young nurse.

"KID KENT KETCH"

Something Neil Braddiker actually says after his throw hits a kid in the nuts on parents' visiting day.

"NEIL B. HAS BEEN STEALING AND KILLING PEOPLE"

The contents of an anonymous note you will deliver to the camp director.

PINCH-HITTER

Something that you and your teammates request for you but cannot have.

PINCH-RUNNER

Something that you and your teammates request for you but cannot have.

PINCH-PLAYER

Something that you and your teammates request for you but still cannot have.

TWO OUTS, BASES LOADED, BOTTOM OF THE NINTH

The farthest you will ever feel from your family.

"WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?"

What the camp director says on your last day, after he finds that someone has stolen bags of line chalk and vandalized the field the night before an inter-camp baseball tournament.

CALLING YOUR SHOT / POINTING TO THE BLEACHERS

Something people will find funny only once.

CHARGING THE MOUND

A moment of indignant bravery, followed by an uncertainty about how to properly punch someone.

RAINED OUT / LIGHTNING

Proof that your Hebrew-school teacher was telling the truth.

"THANKS A LOT... FOR HELPING US LOSE"

Something that a kid will say to you after the game. He is not sincerely thanking you, but that pause will break your heart.

"OH, MAN! MAYBE"

Your polite refusal when asked, "So, will you come to one of the company softball games this summer?" You're an adult now. It can't hurt you anymore.

SPORTS

The reason you're like this. ♦

MONEY TALKS

Learning the language of finance.

BY JOHN LANCHESTER

*When it comes to discussing money, incomprehension is a form of consent.*

The most important mystery of ancient Egypt concerned the annual inundation of the Nile floodplain. The calendar was divided into three seasons linked to the river and the agricultural cycle it determined: *akhet*, or the inundation; *peret*, the growing season; and *shemu*, the harvest. The size of the harvest depended on the size of the flood: too little water, and there would be famine; too much, and there would be catastrophe; just the right amount, and the whole country would bloom and prosper. Every detail of Egyptian life was shaped by the flood. Even the tax system was based on the level of the water, which dictated how successful farmers would be in the subsequent season. Priests performed complicated rituals to

divine the nature of that year's flood and the resulting harvest. The religious elite had at their disposal a rich, emotionally satisfying mythological system; a subtle language of symbols which drew on that mythology; and a position of unchallenged power at the center of their extraordinarily stable society, one that remained in an essentially static condition for thousands of years.

But the priests were cheating, because they had something else, too: Nilometers. These were devices that consisted of large, permanent measuring stations, with lines and markers to predict the level of the annual flood, situated in temples to which only priests and rulers were granted access. Added to accurate records of flood patterns dat-

ing back for centuries, Nilometers were a necessary tool for control of Egypt. They helped give the priests and the ruling class much of their authority.

The world is full of priesthoods. On the one hand, there are the calculations that the pros make in private; on the other, elaborate ritual and language, designed to bamboozle and mystify and intimidate. To the outsider, the realm of finance looks a lot like the old Nile game. In *The Economist*, not long ago, I read about a German bank that had some observers worried. The journalist thought that the bank would be O.K., and that "holdings of peripheral euro-zone government bonds can be gently unwound by letting them run off." What might that mean? There's something kooky about the way the metaphor mixes unwinding and holding and running off, like the plot of a screwball comedy.

It's the same when you hear money people talk about the effect of QE2 on M3, or the supply-side impact of some policy or other, or the effects of bond-yield retardation or of a scandal involving forward-settling E.T.F.s, or M.B.S.s, or subprime loans and REITs and C.D.O.s and C.D.S.s. You are left wondering whether somebody is trying to con you, or to obfuscate and blather so that you can't tell what's being talked about. During the recent credit crunch, many suspected that the terms for the products involved were deliberately obscure: it was hard to take in the fact that C.D.S.s were on the verge of bringing down the entire global financial system when you'd never even heard of them until about two minutes before.

Sometimes the language of finance really is obscure, and does hide the truth. The 2008 implosion featured many such terms, epitomized by financial instruments with names like "mezzanine R.M.B.S. synthetic C.D.O." More often, though, it's complicated because the underlying realities are complicated. The lack of transparency isn't necessarily sinister, and has its parallel in other fields—in the world of food and wine, for instance. The French word *baveuse* means, literally, "drooling," which, in the context of food, we would all agree, is not a good look. *Baveuse*, though, is also used to describe the texture of a perfect omelette, where the outside is cooked

and the inside is set but still faintly runny. It's a useful term to know, because it helps you to recognize the thing more easily, but the cost is that you can talk about it only with other people who also know the term.

The language of money works like that, too. It is potent and efficient, but also exclusive and excluding. Explanations are hard to hold on to, because an entire series of them may be compressed into a phrase, or even a single word.

When I was growing up, my father worked for the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. His kind of banking wasn't at all the fancy go-go modern investment banking that wrecked the global financial system in 2008. It involved lending to small businesses to get them started. At home, my father couldn't bear to talk about money; his own father had been the type of control freak who uses money to express that control. If I brought up the question of my allowance, it appeared to cause him actual physical pain. On the other hand, when the subject was at one remove, he was vivacious and funny at telling stories and explaining how things worked, so much so that, forty years later, some of the things he said still make me smile. When he first joined the bank, it had a telegraphic codebook for communicating with the head office, in Hong Kong. The codebook quoted a typical message: "The marketplace is dominated by small Manchurian bears." Dad explained that the message indicated the influence of pessimistic small-scale investors who were either based in Manchuria or had made investments there. What I liked was the image of those bears, which I imagined were like the small bears in a Tintin book, causing the market stallholders to flee in terror as they ram-paged among the carts and awnings, on a furious quest for nuts and honey. Even as a child, I was struck by the fact that the decoded phrase itself was in need of further decoding. But the fact that my father worked in the world of money gave me a sense that it was, and is, comprehensible.

Many people don't have that advantage. They feel put off or defeated by anything having to do with money and economics. It's almost as if they didn't have permission to understand it. I did

have permission to understand it, if I wanted to, and ten or so years ago, while working on a novel about contemporary London, I began to teach myself how. One of the things that happens to you—or, at any rate, happened to me—as a novelist is that you become increasingly preoccupied with this question: What's the story behind the evident story? In my case, the story behind the story turned out to concern money. I realized that you can't really write a novel about London and ignore the City—London's financial center—because finance is so integral to the place that London has become. I started to grow more curious about the economic forces behind the surface realities of life. I wrote articles on Microsoft, on Walmart, and on Rupert Murdoch. I came to think that there was a gap in the culture: most of the writing on these subjects was done either by business journalists who thought that everything about the world of business was great or by furious opponents from the left who thought that everything about it was so terrible that all that was needed was rageful denunciation. Both sides missed the complexities, and therefore the interest, of the story.

That was how I ended up getting my education in the language of money—by following the subject in order to write about it. It wasn't a crash course. For years, I read the financial papers and pages, and kept up with the economic news. Every time I didn't understand a term, I'd Google it or turn to one of the books I was accumulating on the subject.

Take the earlier example of the German bank and *The Economist's* analysis that "holdings of peripheral euro-zone government bonds can be gently unwound by letting them run off." What that phrase really means is this: the bank owns too much debt from euro-zone countries like Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Ireland, but, rather than sell it off, the bank waits for the loan period of the debt to come to an end, and then doesn't buy any more of it. In this way, the amount of debt owned by the bank gradually decreases over time, instead of shrinking quickly after a selloff. In short, the holdings will be gently unwound by letting them run off.

Money people don't need to explain that terminology to themselves, or to



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Carter Goodrich, August 3, 1998

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anyone to whom they're in the habit of speaking. As for everyone else—you've already lost them.

What often vexes the language of money is something I've come to call "reversification"—a process by which words take on a meaning that is the opposite of, or at least very different from, their initial sense. Consider the term "hedge fund." It baffles outsiders, because it's very hard to understand what these Bond villains, as hedge-funders are in the public imagination, have to do with hedges. The word "hedge" began its life in economics as a term for setting limits on a bet, and showed up in that sense in the prologue to the Duke of Buckingham's 1671 play "The Rehearsal," a parody of the Restoration fashion for heroic moralistic drama: "Now, Critiques do your worst, that here are met; / For, like a Rook, I have hedg'd in my Bet." The word "rook" is being used in the now obsolete sense of a cheat or sharpster. The idea is that, by putting a hedge around a bet, clever gamblers can delimit the size of their potential losses, just as a real hedge delimits the size of a field.

At its simplest, a hedge is created when you make a bet and at the same time make another bet on the other side of a possible outcome. Say that at the start of the season you've made a bet that the Green Bay Packers will get to the Super Bowl, at odds of twenty to one. You put down ten bucks. The team advances to the conference championship, where it's playing the San Francisco 49ers. At this point, you decide to hedge your bet by putting ten dollars on the 49ers, who are three-to-one

favorites to win the game. You're guaranteed a profit, whatever the outcome.

The classic hedge-fund technique, created in 1949 by Alfred Winslow Jones, a sociologist turned investment manager, developed a more sophisticated version of the gambling strategy. Funds like his employed mathematical analyses to bet on prices going both up and down in ways that are supposedly certain to produce a positive outcome. This is "long-short," the textbook hedge-fund method. But many hedge funds don't follow such hedging strategies. A hedge fund, as the term is used today, refers to a lightly regulated pool of private capital, one that is almost always doing something exotic—because if it weren't exotic the investors could benefit from the investment strategy much more cheaply somewhere else. There will be a "secret sauce" of some sort, usually a complicated set of mathematical algorithms meant to insure better returns than the market in general delivers.

Hedge funds defend the fact that they're so lightly regulated on the ground that access to them is restricted to people who know what they're doing and can afford to lose their money. They're expensive, too: a standard fee is "2 and 20"; that is, each year you're charged two per cent of the money you've invested in the fund, and also twenty per cent of any profit above an agreed-upon benchmark. But what these funds typically aren't is hedged. Most hedge funds fail: their average life span is about five years. Out of an estimated seventy-two hundred hedge funds in existence at the end of 2010, seven hundred and seventy-five failed or

closed in 2011, as did eight hundred and seventy-three in 2012, and nine hundred and four in 2013. This implies that, within three years, around a third of all funds disappeared. The over-all number did not decrease, however, because hope springs eternal, and new funds are constantly being launched.

A hedge is a physical thing. It turned into a metaphor; then into a technique; then the technique became more sophisticated and more and more complicated; then it turned into something that can't be understood by the ordinary referents of ordinary language. And that is the story of how a hedge, setting a limit to a field, became what it is today: a largely unregulated pool of private capital, often using enormous amounts of leverage and borrowing to multiply the size of its bets. This is reversification in its full glory.

So is "securitization." A good instinctive guess would be that the word has something to do with security or reliability, with making things safer. Not so. Securitization is the process of turning something—and, in the world of finance, this could be pretty much anything—into a security, a financial instrument that can be traded as an asset. Mortgages are securitized, car loans are securitized, insurance payments are securitized, student debt is securitized. In 2010, during Greece's economic crisis there was talk that the government might try to securitize future revenue from ticket sales at the Acropolis. Investors would hand over a lump of cash in return for an agreed-upon yield; in this case, the money to repay the loan would come from tourists forking over cash for the privilege of wandering around the ancient monument. Another example of an exotic security is the Bowie Bond. In 1997, future royalties from David Bowie's assets were sold to raise a lump sum of fifty-five million dollars. In effect, Bowie was saying, "I have a lot of money coming in over the next ten years from my back catalogue, but I'd rather have the cash now." If Ziggy Stardust wants to stock up on shiny jumpsuits and needs his fifty-five million now, why not? Indeed, there is nothing inherently malign about securitization, any more than there is about most of the processes invented by modern finance.

But securitization, like other finan-



"No coal here, either—but you never know until you look."

cial maneuvers, can be put to malign use. In the run-up to the credit crunch, certain kinds of loans began to be securitized on an industrial scale. By now, the story is familiar. An institution lends money to a range of different borrowers. Then the institution bundles the loans into securities—say, a pool of ten thousand mortgage loans, paying out an interest rate of six per cent—and sells those securities to other financial institutions. The bank that initially made the loans no longer gets the revenue from its lending. Instead, that money flows to the people who bought the mortgage-backed securities, and the institution that lent the money no longer has to care whether the borrower will be able to pay it back: the basic premise of banking—that you lend money only to people who can repay it—has been undermined. In addition, the risk of that loan, instead of being concentrated in the place that it came from, has been spread around the financial system, as people buy and trade the resulting security. In the credit crunch, securitization fuelled both “predatory lending,” in which people were loaned money they couldn’t possibly pay back, and the uncontrollable dispersal and magnification of the risks arising from those bad debts. There’s no way of knowing any of this from looking at the word “securitization.” That’s reversification at its least appealing.

Reversification is just as often at work with words whose meaning seems plain. That’s the case with “austerity,” perhaps the strangest piece of political-economic vocabulary to have come along in my lifetime. In everyday life, “austere” means simple, strict, severe. But that general quality doesn’t really refer to anything tangible, which is a problem, since what we’re talking about here is spending cuts. Funds are either cut or they aren’t. The word “austerity” reflects an attempt to make something moral-sounding and value-based out of specific reductions in government spending that result in specific losses to specific people. For people who don’t use any of the affected services—for the rich, that is—these cuts may have no downside. They’re a case of you lose, we win.

The images and metaphors keep doing headstands. To “bail out” is to

slop water over the side of a boat. That verb has been reversified so that it means an injection of public money into a failing institution; taking something dangerous out has turned into putting something vital in. “Credit” has been reversified: it means debt. “Inflation” means money being worth less. “Synergy” means sacking people. “Risk” means precise mathematical assessment of probability. “Non-core assets” means garbage. These are all examples of how the process of innovation, experimentation, and progress in the techniques of finance has been brought to bear on language, so that words no longer mean what they once did. It is not a process intended to deceive, but, like the Nilometer, it confines knowledge to a priesthood—the priesthood of people who can speak money.

Using the language of money does not imply acceptance of any particular moral or ideological framework. Money person A and money person B, talking about the effect of, for instance, quantitative easing, may have different economic philosophies. Person A might be a free-spending Keynesian who thinks that quantitative easing—the government’s buying back its own debt from banks, companies, and sometimes individuals in order to increase the money supply—is the only thing saving the economy from an apocalyptic meltdown. Person B might think that it’s a formula for ruin, is already wreaking havoc on savers, and is on course to turn the United States into a version of Weimar Germany. They completely disagree about everything they’re discussing, and yet they have a shared language that enables them to discuss it with concision and force. A shared language doesn’t necessarily imply a shared viewpoint; what it does is make a certain kind of conversation possible.

This kind of conversation is worth having. The neoliberal consensus in economics presents itself as a set of self-evident laws. Low tax rates, a smaller state, a business-friendly climate, free markets in international trade, rising levels of inequality and an ever-bigger gap between the rich, especially the super-rich, and the rest—supposedly, these are just the

facts of economic life if you want your economy to grow and your society to become richer. Many people are eager to tell us that there is no alternative to the existing economic order, that we have to accept things as they are. That isn’t true. Marx was right when he said that “men make their own history, but not under circumstances of their own choosing.”

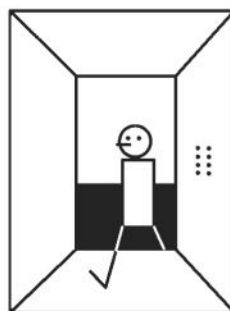
We didn’t create the world that we inherited, but we don’t have to leave it the way we found it.

My father once told me about the first colleague he ever knew to go to jail. This was in the fifties, in Calcutta, where Dad was his bank’s accountant, a rank roughly equivalent to deputy. A junior banker was found to have been stealing.

He did it not to be rich but to fund a life style that was slightly more lavish than he could afford, so that he could have parties at which he served imported spirits and cigarettes, and slapped his guests on the back, and said, “Only the best for my friends, none of that Indian rubbish.”

“Every case I’ve known of people stealing from the bank has been like that,” my father said. “People wanting the thing they can’t quite have—that causes more trouble than anything else.” I think he’d have said that this phenomenon was now operating across entire societies, as people tried to cure rising income inequality by taking on debt. That life you can’t quite have? Borrow, and it shall be yours. My father, who had his generation’s horror of debt, would have shaken his head at that. He would have pointed out that when the finance industry says “credit,” what it really means is “debt.” If you don’t know that, you are likely to get into trouble.

The language of money is a powerful tool, and it is also a tool of power. Incomprehension is a form of consent. If we allow ourselves not to understand this language, we are signing off on the way the world works today—in particular, we are signing off on the prospect of an ever-widening gap between the rich and everyone else, a world in which everything about your life is determined by the accident of who your parents are. Those of us who are interested in stopping that from happening need to learn how to measure the level of the Nile for ourselves. ♦



At around two-thirty in the afternoon on May 8, 1993, Marshall Morgan left his mother's house, on the South Side of Chicago, and drove off in her light-blue Chevrolet Cavalier. Morgan was borrowing the car and, in return, had agreed to get it washed. It was a warm day, and he wore denim shorts, a black-and-white pin-striped shirt, and black sneakers. After he got the car cleaned, he planned to return home and spruce himself up: he had a date with his girlfriend that night.

Morgan was a twenty-year-old sophomore at the Illinois Institute of Technology, where he played point guard on the basketball team. The season had just ended, and he had performed notably well, averaging eighteen points and three steals a game; he had been the runner-up for the Chicagoland Collegiate Athletic Conference's most-valuable-player award. His coach, Ed McQuillan, told me recently that Morgan was a "great kid" and a complete player, who was "quicker than hell, great on defense—he could shoot long, and he could drive and penetrate."

When Morgan didn't come home, his mother, Marcia Escoffery, grew worried. She and Morgan were close: she became pregnant at fifteen and brought him up, an only child, on her own. "All we had was each other," Escoffery told me.

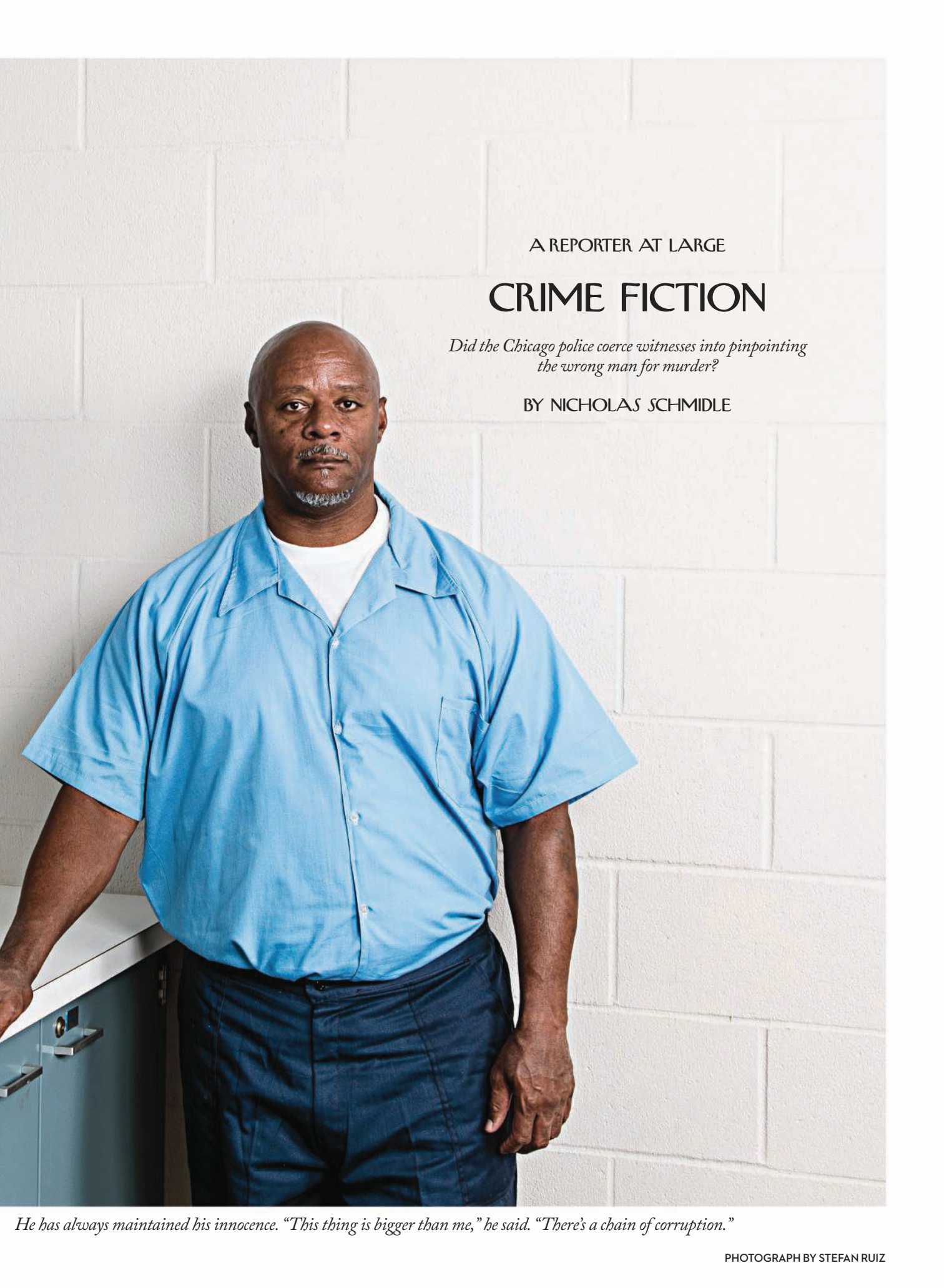
Morgan's father, Marshall Morgan, Sr., had recently come back into his life, after an absence of seventeen years. He had attended his son's basketball games and made other efforts at reconciliation: that day, he had booked a room for Morgan and his girlfriend, Lorena Peete, at a local Days Inn. Escoffery had warned her son to be wary of such gestures, but he welcomed them. "He would never back off from family," Peete told me.

Escoffery stared at the phone for hours. Morgan always called to say that he'd be late. After nightfall, she notified the police that her son was missing.

Morgan's disappearance made the Chicago evening news. Police created a toll-free number to encourage leads and plastered the South Side with photographs of him. Nine days after Morgan disappeared, the Cavalier was found parked in front of a run-down building on South Michigan Avenue, near Fifty-eighth Street. Neighbors had



Tyrone Hood has been in prison for twenty-one years, and could be up for parole in 2030.

A full-length photograph of a Black man with a shaved head and a goatee, wearing a light blue short-sleeved button-down shirt over a white t-shirt and dark blue trousers. He is standing in front of a white brick wall. To his left, a portion of a blue metal cabinet with silver handles is visible. The lighting is even, and the man is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

A REPORTER AT LARGE

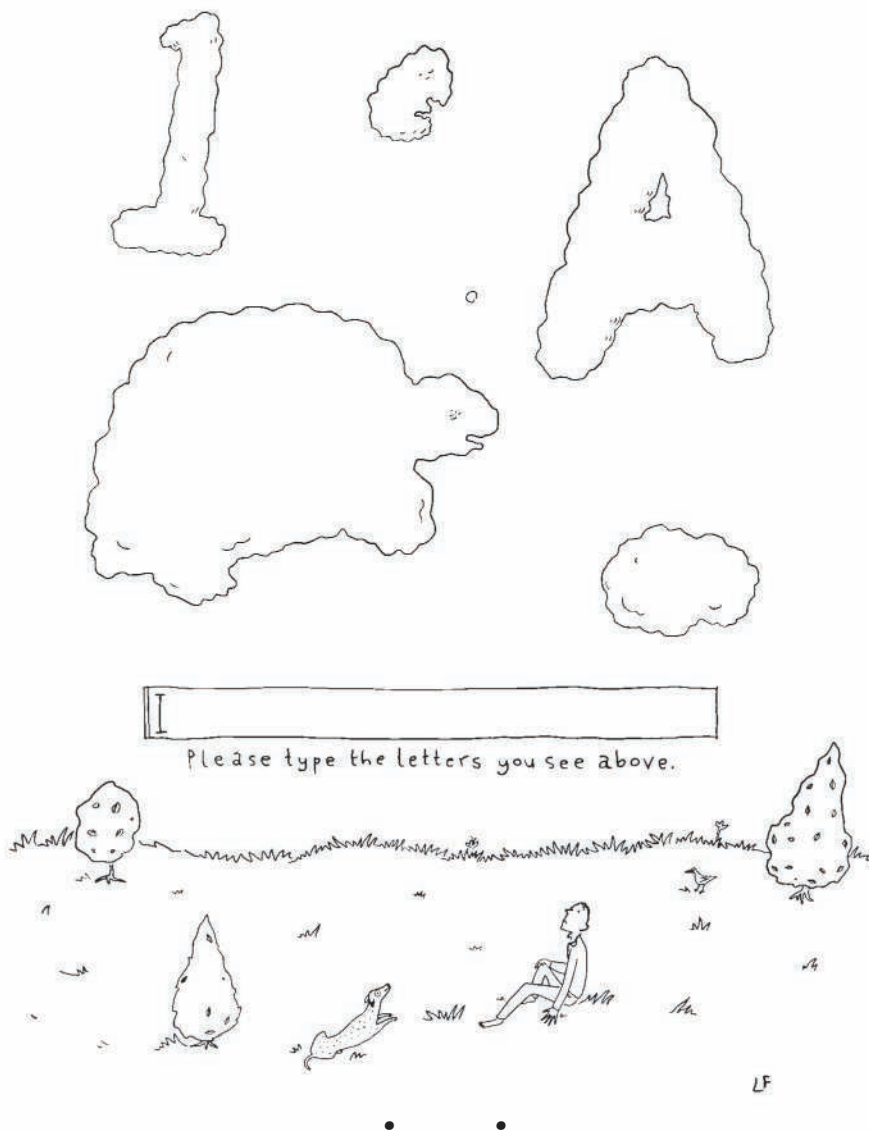
CRIME FICTION

*Did the Chicago police coerce witnesses into pinpointing
the wrong man for murder?*

BY NICHOLAS SCHMIDLE

He has always maintained his innocence. "This thing is bigger than me," he said. "There's a chain of corruption."

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEFAN RUIZ



reported a putrid smell escaping from a cracked rear window. A forensic team arrived to find a decomposing male corpse on the floor, between the front and back seats, with a .38-calibre gunshot wound in the stomach and two more in the back. The body was naked, except for a black-and-white pin-striped shirt. Dental records confirmed that it was Morgan.

Homicide investigators from Area One, the branch responsible for the neighborhood around Fifty-eighth and Michigan, took up the case. Even in a city that was averaging three murders a day, Area One detectives were exceptionally busy. Their territory included the notorious Robert Taylor Homes, twenty-eight public-housing towers whose stairwells were controlled by drug gangs. Robbery, rape, and murder were commonplace. "They were killing people left and right," Kenneth Boudreau, a veteran detective

who served in Area One, told me. The neighborhood was overwhelmingly black, but the police force was overwhelmingly white, and it struggled to establish authority. Tenants, seeing police below, sometimes threw trash from their windows. Many crimes went unsolved.

Cases that attracted significant media attention, however, often became known as "heaters," drawing the resources necessary to make arrests and secure convictions. According to a 1992 article by Myron W. Orfield, Jr., a law professor at the University of Minnesota, heater cases were diverted to "judges statistically far more likely to convict." Some cops tried to avoid the stress of such cases: in 2005, a retired detective told the *Chicago Tribune*, "You pray to God not to give you a heater case." Others, like Boudreau, didn't shirk the challenge.

Morgan's case was a heater. Crime-lab

technicians dusted the Cavalier, and three days later they pulled fingerprints from a Miller High Life bottle and a Löwenbräu forty-ounce that had been found in the car; the prints matched a set on file for Tyrone Hood, a resident of a South Side neighborhood eight miles away. Two detectives immediately began searching for him.

Shortly before 4 P.M., Hood was walking from his house to a corner store, the Munch Shop, when the officers, in an unmarked police car, pulled up alongside him. They informed him that his prints had turned up at a murder scene. Hood, who was twenty-nine, had a full, unpicked head of hair, and a tattoo of his nickname, Tony, on his left forearm. A married father of three, he cobbled together a living through temporary auto-repair jobs, construction gigs, and clerical work. He had grown up in a chaotic home, the eighth of ten children. An older brother had served time for robbing McDonald's restaurants. When Hood was seventeen, two thieves shot and killed his father. Not long afterward, Hood was arrested twice for aggravated assault—one of the incidents involved unlawful use of a firearm—and once each for marijuana possession, battery, and theft. He had served a year on probation for the weapons charge. Now, facing the cops, he dismissed the possibility of his prints being at the scene. ("Someone must have put them there," he later declared.) But he agreed to answer questions at the police station, to "clear his name."

On May 8th, Hood said, he had spent the day at home with his family; that evening, he had watched "Cops" with his wife, Tiwana. Later in the interrogation, though, he said that several people had come over, among them his friend Wayne Washington. When Hood was asked about his whereabouts on May 9th—Mother's Day—he initially said that he had been with his mom. Then he said that he had stayed home with Tiwana.

Kenneth Boudreau and his partner, John Halloran, took over the interrogation the next day. Boudreau considered himself an expert at separating a man from his secrets. "I have spent a lot of time learning how to interview people, and have been trained by the F.B.I.," he told me recently. "You don't have to beat people to get them to talk." Chicago cops, however, have long been criticized

for being overly aggressive. In 1931, a White House commission warned that the “third degree”—methods that “inflict suffering, physical or mental, upon a person in order to obtain information about a crime”—was “thoroughly at home in Chicago”; one preferred tactic involved beating a suspect in the head with a phone book, since it could “stun a man without leaving a mark.” In the late sixties, Chicago police officers shot and killed a Black Panther activist while he was in bed; his relatives received a large wrongful-death settlement. In 1982, a lieutenant named Jon Burge was accused of torturing Andrew Wilson, an alleged murderer of two police officers, who was in his custody. A doctor who examined Wilson found “multiple bruises, swellings, and abrasions,” and several “linear blisters.” Wilson claimed that he had been cuffed to a hot radiator and that “electrical shocks had been administered to his gums, lips, and genitals.” Burge was eventually fired for “systematic” misconduct.

Boudreau, a solidly built man who is now in his mid-fifties, told me that he had never relied on physical intimidation during interrogations. At the time of his encounter with Hood, Boudreau was an Army reservist. In 1990, during the Gulf War, he had deployed to Saudi Arabia; after the September 11th attacks, he had participated in the Ground Zero rescue effort. When he discussed interrogations with me, he spoke like a student of cognitive science. “It’s all right-brain, left-brain,” he said. “When someone is recalling something, they look left. But when they’re creating an answer they look right.” He claimed that people who spoke with their hands near their mouths were acting suspiciously, and theorized that “when someone’s tapping their leg you can see that if they had full movement they would be running away.”

Hood took a polygraph exam. Many scholars have questioned the reliability of such tests, but cops regularly use them. The polygraph technician detected “deception” in Hood’s answers. When Boudreau and Halloran pressed him over the inconsistencies in his story, Hood was impassive, telling them, “If I don’t say anything to explain, I will go to jail for a long time. If I *do* tell what happened, I will go to jail.” Hood later reported that Boudreau and his

fellow-interrogators, frustrated with his refusal to confess, slapped him in the head and thrust a gun in his face, telling him that he could go home “if he signed ‘the papers.’” (Boudreau told me that he had not engaged in any abuse; Halloran declined to comment.)

After forty-eight hours in detention, Hood still maintained his innocence. Boudreau and his colleagues couldn’t hold him any longer without formally charging him, and they didn’t have enough evidence to succeed in court. On May 22nd, they let him go.

Three days after Hood left the station, investigators pulled another set of prints from a beer can in Morgan’s car and traced them to Joe West, who lived two blocks away from Hood. On May 27th, two detectives went looking for West; they didn’t find him, but came across Hood hanging out at the Munch Shop with his friend Wayne Washington. The cops, recalling that Washington had figured in Hood’s alibi, asked him if he would answer questions at the station. Washington agreed. Hood, who said that he didn’t want Washington to mistake him for a snitch, volunteered to go along and face further interrogation.

At the station, Hood and Washington were ushered into separate rooms. Detectives also tracked down West and another friend of Hood’s, Jody Rogers. Boudreau and three other detectives questioned West, who initially denied any knowledge of Morgan’s murder. But after West was informed that his fingerprints had been found on the beer can he told a different story. Wayne Washington and Jody Rogers, in turn, provided details that complemented West’s account.

On the evening of the murder, Washington and Rogers said, they had been idling with Hood on a front porch in the neighborhood. Rogers suggested getting high, according to Washington, and asked him to roll a “mo”—a cigarette sprinkled with cocaine. Washington, who belonged to a street gang and sold drugs, said that he was thirty dollars short for the day and couldn’t afford to dip into his supply. He told the police that Hood proposed getting cash by doing a

stickup, and that Rogers, who was on parole for armed robbery, declined to participate. Nevertheless, Rogers told detectives, he offered his friends a .38 revolver, and Hood took it.

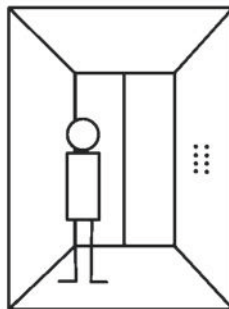
According to Washington, he and Hood set out on foot. After a few blocks, they spotted a blue sedan pulling up to the curb, and saw a man they didn’t recognize—Marshall Morgan—getting out. “There’s a vic,” Hood said, aiming the .38 at Morgan. Washington told police that Morgan gave Hood money from one of his pockets and was reaching into the other when Hood shot him in the gut; as Morgan doubled over, screaming for help, Hood and Washington grabbed his arms and legs and shunted him between the front and back seats of the car. Hood, Washington said, took the car keys from Morgan’s pocket, then climbed into the driver’s seat and sped away.

Joe West told investigators that, on May 10th, he had recognized Hood driving around the neighborhood in a blue sedan, and waved him down: he wanted to buy a dime bag of marijuana, and knew that Hood could help him find one. West got in, pushing aside a pile of empty beer cans and bottles at his feet, and they headed a few blocks east to make a deal. At one point, according to West, Hood ran a red light, and West, anxious about police, glanced backward and spotted someone sprawled across the floor of the back seat. West recalled that, when he asked what was going on, Hood

avoided the question and said that he was “zoning”—stoned. At a corner, West continued, Hood got out and bought a dime bag. After that, Hood drove him home. As West got out, he said, “You are some kind of crazy nigga.”

West told police that he watched Hood ease down the street and park a few hundred feet away; the dome light flipped on, and two gunshots rang out. Panicked, West ran inside.

With West’s statement in hand, detectives entered Hood’s interrogation room and charged him with killing Morgan. Washington was also indicted. The Cook County state’s attorney’s office assigned Hood’s case to



Michael Rogers. Rogers—no relation to Jody—was a prosecutor pointedly averse to compromise. Years of contending with violent criminals had left him with a dark view of humanity. The previous year, he and Boudreau had worked on a case in which three men confessed to raping a woman, strangling her, and setting her on fire. “Most of the people who live in the criminal world are riding their own trail down the razor blade of life,” he wrote in a forty-page memo that circulated around the state’s attorney’s office in 2004.

The memo offered advice to young prosecutors. It warned them about the “anti-state judge” who is “bent on screwing you for a discovery violation.” Rogers added, “You will want to punch this judge.” He portrayed appellate clerks as fifth columnists whose “only exposure to the criminal justice system [will] be some professor who is a former public defender who wore Birkenstocks to class.” Rogers cautioned against picking jurors who looked “like the defense lawyer or defendant,” and mocked appellate judges who, “for some reason,” believed that “the Constitution is more than a technicality.”

Hood hired an attorney. But he couldn’t keep up with the payments, and turned to a public defender named Jim Mullenix, who had spent two years living in Sierra Leone as a Peace Corps volunteer. “People like me root for the underdog,” Mullenix said. In their jail-house conferences, Hood insisted upon his innocence, even though the three witness statements—and Hood’s fingerprints on the beer bottles—suggested otherwise.

The judge, Michael Bolan, scheduled the trial for April, 1996. On the eve of jury selection, three detectives intending to bolster the state’s case visited a woman in Hood’s neighborhood, and asked her if she could help them confirm identities in some photographs. After they fanned several Polaroids—including one of Hood and one of the Cavalier—across the woman’s kitchen table, her sister’s fiancé entered the room in search of an onion and said, “I seen that guy before.”

The fiancé, a former prison guard named Emanuel Bob, pointed at a pic-

ture of Hood. Bob said that he had run into Hood “off and on” over the years. Three years earlier, on the night after the killing, Bob explained, he had been looking out his second-story window sometime between midnight and 3 A.M. when he spotted, about a hundred feet away, Hood sitting in the Cavalier. When asked why he hadn’t reported this to the police, he said, “I figured, ‘Well, they done caught the person who did it.’ It’s in the paper.” Rosemary Higgins, who prosecuted Hood with Rogers, felt that Bob’s eyewitness account sealed their case, and had come about “almost by divine providence.”

Hood waived his right to a jury trial, placing his fate in Judge Bolan’s hands.

Two weeks later, Bolan found Hood guilty of murder and armed robbery. At the sentencing hearing, Higgins read a statement from Morgan’s mother, who pleaded with Bolan not to show Hood mercy. “He took my son’s life so brutally,” she said. “He must pay for his crime so no other parent or child has to go through what I am going through.” Later, Higgins called Hood a “heartless killer” who possessed no “rehabilitative potential.” (Higgins, now a judge, declined to comment.)

Hood’s family and friends and former bosses lobbied Bolan for leniency. A relative characterized Hood as a “lovable and devoted father” with a “smile as big as the sun.” Mullenix pointed out that Hood had spent three years in pre-trial detention, and that much time had passed since his previous run-ins with police. Before his arrest, Hood had graduated from high school, married, brought up children, and earned twelve hours of community-college credit in automotive mechanics. A supervisor at Catholic Charities, where Hood had done clerical work, said that he was admired there. Mullenix submitted a review from the director of the PACE Institute, a social and academic program for inmates; it described Hood as “highly motivated,” and cited his inclusion on the honor roll and his publication of “inspirational articles” in the PACE newsletter as indicators of a “successful future adjustment.”

Bolan, unmoved, sentenced Hood to

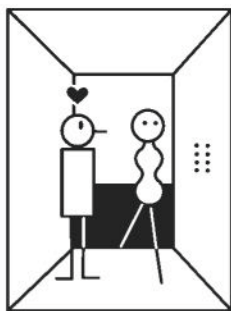
seventy-five years. Before leaving the court, Hood submitted a statement, which Mullenix read aloud. “Life is too precious to take away and not give back,” Hood wrote. “An innocent man’s life or freedom” was “about to be taken away.” The statement continued, “I pray that the truth will come out. In the Bible in Luke, chapter eight, verses seventeen to eighteen, it says, ‘Whatever is covered up will be uncovered, and whatever is hidden will be found, therefore, consider carefully how you listen.’ I say to myself, ‘Tony, they will find out that I’m an innocent man, just have patience for the Lord to help you.’”

Hood was sent to a maximum-security facility in Menard, Illinois. The prison, which sits at the foot of a bluff on the east bank of the Mississippi River, was built in the late nineteenth century, of sandstone blocks ornamented with Egyptian Revival and Greek Revival motifs. It looks like a derelict boarding school.

Shortly after Hood arrived, he listened as an inmate in a nearby cell killed another inmate by bashing a television against his head. Hood started lifting weights to protect himself from potential attackers. Eventually, he got a job at the fry-cook station in the kitchen. He worked there for three and a half years before moving to the knit shop, where he made T-shirts for the prisoners. He received a pittance, but the money hardly mattered. “The more time you spend working, the better chance you will be out of harm’s way,” he told me recently.

Menard is seven hours south of Chicago, and the distance deterred Tiwana and the kids from visiting. Calling was expensive, and Tiwana told me that she’s “not a writing person.” Some inmates encouraged Hood to forget about her. Women never wait, they told him.

One day when Hood called home, he could tell by Tiwana’s voice that something had changed. “She said she had company, and I knew right there, this ain’t good,” he recalled. He heard a man speaking in the background. “You ever heard of a Dear John letter? I got a Dear John call,” Hood told me. “I was, like, ‘How could you? You was one of my alibi witnesses—you know I didn’t kill this guy.’” He removed snapshots of Tiwana from his photo album, and



mailed them back to her. Eventually, he filed for divorce.

In 2000, Hood submitted a request for legal assistance through a pen-pal network for inmates. In a letter, he introduced himself as a victim of wrongful conviction, seeking someone to do footwork for him on the outside, so that he could mount a successful appeal. Months later, he received a reply from an Australian woman. The woman, Barbara Santek, had been attending an Amnesty International meeting one night in Fremantle, a town outside Perth, and had agreed to correspond with an American inmate. At first, she was wary of Hood's letter. Weren't judicial measures in place to prevent innocent people from going to jail? Moreover, she told me, exchanging letters with a convicted murderer "took me out of my comfort zone."

After they exchanged a few letters, Hood shipped Santek a packet containing trial transcripts, witness statements, and police files. In a letter to one of Santek's friends, Robyn Fisher, who also corresponded with him, Hood emphasized that he had always maintained his innocence: "If the prosecutor ask me to plea guilty to this crime and they will let me go with time served, well, I would have to say NO because I will be admitting to something that I didn't do, and that would be lying. And I would have to explain that to God on Judgment Day." After his mother became sick, Hood wrote, "This is why I work vigorously on my case, to get out before someone else bad happen and I won't be able to see her."

He urged Santek not to take his word for anything, telling her, "Read the stuff and make your own decision."

Santek began leafing through the contents of the package. Forty-seven, with blue eyes and a sandy-blond bob, she grew up as one of four children on a farm on the southwestern tip of Australia. She hadn't seen a black person until she went to boarding school, at the age of fifteen, in the coastal town of Busselton. After graduation, she stayed in Busselton, married, had two children, divorced, and married again, giving birth to a third child. Her second husband abused her, to the point of hospitalization, and she left him. She lived alone in an apartment on the beach, but compared life in Busselton

to "God's waiting room": "Everybody says, 'I want to live there,' but then you have it and it's really quite boring." Searching for something meaningful, she began attending the Amnesty International meetings.

She knew little about the law. But as she read Hood's papers she sensed that his case was far more convoluted than the outcome suggested. At various points before the trial, three of the main witnesses against Hood—Wayne Washington, Joe West, and Jody Rogers—had all, in some manner, recanted.

Three years passed between Morgan's murder, in 1993, and Hood's conviction. Eight months after Joe West told Boudreau about buying a dime bag with Hood and seeing someone in the back of the Cavalier, Mullenix, the public defender, arrived unannounced at West's door. Mullenix always tried to interview witnesses himself, in search of inconsistencies. "A lot of times, witnesses don't know *what* they've told the police," he explained. "When you meet the witness on the street and don't drag them to the police station, oftentimes they will say something completely different from what's in the police report."

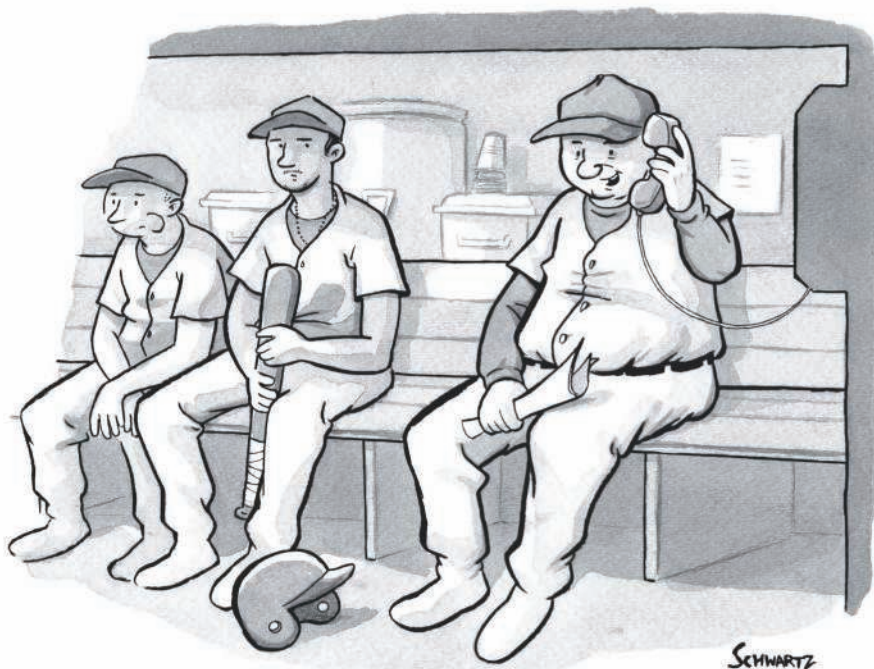
West invited Mullenix inside, and told him that everything he had said to the police—including the dime bag and riding with Hood in the sedan—was "a lie."

At the station, he recalled, detectives had grilled him about his fingerprints on the beer cans and accused him of killing "the next Michael Jordan." One officer, West said, had pointed a pistol at him. The only way to be released, he felt, was to pin Morgan's murder on someone else.

In a recantation, signed by West more than two years before Hood's trial, Mullenix wrote, "The story was just something he made up. He never met Tyrone Hood that day, he never saw Tyrone Hood drive a car, he never saw a body in the back seat of that car, he never heard 2 gun shots come from that car."

Soon afterward, Mullenix visited Jody Rogers, the parolee who had supposedly given Hood his gun. Rogers also revised his story. Three days after Hood's arrest, Rogers told Mullenix, police had dragged him from his house, telling him that he was "going down for a murder." At the station, Boudreau and Halloran gave him a choice: he could admit to seeing Hood shoot Morgan or admit to hearing him talk about it later. A third option, Rogers felt, was implicit: if he refused to cooperate, they could send him back to jail on a cooked-up parole violation. In truth, he told Mullenix, he never heard Hood say anything about a murder. He also signed a recantation statement.

Then, in August, 1995, Washington, Hood's co-defendant, appeared at a pre-



"No, you hang up first. No, you!"

CERES LAMENTING

1.

For Emma's three samples
of landrace maize,
the blue, the red,
the long-toothed yellow, my uncle

reserved
just east of the barn a plot
as yet
unpoisoned by the pesticide

which the cranes, who are also
endangered, unerringly
found
so when

the first green shoots had sprouted
they were one
by one
before their time extracted

from the earth and seed by seed
consumed.
When everything else
had gone to hell—

rich men jumping from windows and
the whole
of Oklahoma turned

to dust—this farm,

this godsent
quarter section and a half, was like
a fence against
confusion. Now

we say to the children, This fenceless
world . . .

2.

She hated the plow.
She hated the cattle.
She hated
that her sweet acres when the girl

had been taken away should still
contrive to be
conformable, even
the barley, even the grape, as though

her heart had not been torn
with hooks.
Well if they
could be reckless so could she.

And that was when
the blighted times we live in first began,
the dying rivers and

trial conference, and claimed that his confession also had been coerced. Halloran, he said, had slapped him, then tricked him into thinking that he could go home if he signed a prepared statement. (He made a few minor alterations so that it would look more authentic.) Washington's own trial, which was held in late 1995, ended in a hung jury: jurors obviously doubted his confession. Nevertheless, the state's attorney's office prepared to retry the case, and after Washington saw Hood get seventy-five years he consulted with his lawyer, who brokered an agreement with prosecutors. Washington pleaded guilty to murder; by doing so, he told me, he "would still have a chance to catch my kids and have a life." In 2005, after serving twelve years, Washington was released on parole.

Mullenix suspected that Boudreau, Halloran, and the other cops had taken shreds of truth—West's prints on the

cans, Hood's mention of Washington in his alibi—and sewn together a false narrative, one that they subsequently strengthened through coercion. But before Hood's trial began Mullenix's case collapsed: West fell ill and died of cancer, and Rogers flipped yet again. The prosecutor Michael Rogers had gone to see Jody Rogers at a Cook County facility, where Jody had recently been detained on carjacking and cocaine charges. Jody initially stood by his recantation. According to trial testimony, Michael warned Jody that admitting that he had misled a grand jury put him at risk of perjury. But he could offer a deal: if Jody repeated his original version of events at Hood's trial, he would avoid a perjury charge—and the state's attorney's office would recommend a lighter sentence in the carjacking case. Jody agreed.

When Jody testified at Hood's trial, Mullenix assailed his credibility. Under questioning, Jody admitted that, in vari-

ous attempts to evade police, he had used eight different first names and made up three different birthdays. He also conceded that he had negotiated an "agreement" in exchange for his testimony. "His testimony was simply bought," Mullenix declared, later in the trial.

Santek was dismayed as she finished reading the court files. Given the recantations and other irregularities, how could a judge have determined Hood to be guilty beyond a reasonable doubt?

The witness testimony wasn't the only aspect of the case that made Santek believe in Hood's innocence. Mullenix, she believed, had identified Morgan's killer.

One day in late 1995, as Mullenix was preparing for Hood's trial, he received a call from Renee Ferguson, an investigative reporter at NBC in Chicago. Ferguson had gathered information that she felt could be pertinent to Hood's defense.

the blackened vine,
 the rain that rots the seed in its furrow,
 the spavin, the sheep scab,
 the empty hive.
 And even in the midst
 of this calamity the girl,
 who was so young, you see, had room
 in her heart to be sorry
 about the lilies and the sage.

3.

Last night too—do all
 of our stories begin with rape?—the girl
 came back
 from the dead somehow. The crowbar,
 the bus, the whole
 ungodly mess of it lit and scripted on a
 stage
 and we could tell
 it wasn't quite business as usual, wasn't
 the thing
 we thought we'd bought
 our tickets for. The actors, yes,

were lovely to look at, all but one,
 which made
 the truth-and-rightness part
 go down like milk. But then
 the one with the ruined face began to speak
 and (*kerosene*)
 (*dowry*) then the damage
 wasn't safely in its grave.

And all this while
 the cunning
 counterargument kept seeping
 its way back in, no help for it, every

decision they'd made—the words,
 the few bare things assembled
 on the floor—informed
 with shapeliness, even

the anger, even the grief.
 Which may
 be what they meant,
 the old ones: up

to our elbows in wreckage, and April
 forever refusing
 to be ashamed.

—Linda Gregerson

A few months earlier, an administrator at James R. Doolittle, Jr., Elementary School, on the South Side, had contacted Ferguson after the school's computer teacher, Michelle Soto, was murdered. Police found Soto's naked body a week after she disappeared, wedged between the front and back seats of her Chrysler LeBaron, with a fatal gunshot wound to the face. Detectives investigated Soto's fiancé but did not arrest him. It was not a heater case.

Still, Soto's family harbored suspicions about the fiancé, and the school administrator asked Ferguson to look into the case. Ferguson discovered that he was a thirty-nine-year-old public-school janitor with a history of violence and insurance abuse, whose own son had been murdered two years earlier, and had been found wedged between the front and back seats of a car. The fiancé's name was Marshall Morgan, Sr.

Born in Chicago, Morgan, Sr., was

good-looking, with coppery skin and a groomed mustache. In 1972, he had married his high-school sweetheart, Marcia Escoffery; they named their one son after his father. Morgan, Sr., lived with Escoffery's family for a short time, and then he started staying out all night. Escoffery filed for divorce. "I told him, 'If you want to be free, be free!'" she said to me.

Around this time, Morgan, Sr.,'s relationship with a friend named William Hall turned bitter over seven hundred dollars that Hall owed him. As Morgan, Sr., later told the authorities, one night, when they were parked in front of a liquor store, he pulled out a revolver and "accidentally" shot Hall, killing him. Morgan, Sr., pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter and got seven years. He was paroled after two.

Once out, he remarried, divorced, and married again. In May, 1992, his third wife, Dolores Coleman, filed a restraining order, alleging that Morgan, Sr., had

choked her "almost to unconsciousness" and had put a gun to her head. They eventually divorced.

His finances crumbled. An affidavit indicated that his expenses exceeded his monthly income by more than sixteen hundred dollars. In September, 1992, he received a foreclosure notice on his house. The next month, he took out a fifty-thousand-dollar Allstate life-insurance policy on his son, the college basketball star, whom he had abandoned when he was a toddler. Young Morgan was murdered seven months later. Three weeks after his body was found, his father collected forty-four thousand dollars from Allstate.

The insurance money did not solve all of Morgan, Sr.,'s financial problems. In 1993, another woman, who claimed that he was the father of her baby, took him to court for child support, and the bank came after his house. Around that time, he and Michelle

Soto, the computer teacher, bought a split-level home in Country Club Hills, a Chicago suburb. Soto had recently separated from her husband, Reynaldo Soto, a marine. The Sotos' oldest daughter, Micaela, spent weekends with her mother and Morgan, Sr. Micaela remembers Morgan, Sr., spoiling her and her mother with jewelry. In February, 1995, as a testament to his commitment to Soto, he took out a life-insurance plan for her.

Their relationship, however, deteriorated as the year went on. One evening, Micaela recalls, her mother and Morgan, Sr., quarrelled at the house in Country Club Hills. "I could hear them in their bedroom," Micaela told me. "He was cussing. My mom said, 'I'm leaving,' and Marshall said, 'You better not.'" Soto ignored his threat

and left with Micaela. Soon afterward, she disappeared.

After detectives found Soto's body, they opened a homicide investigation. Soto's sister, Doreen Brown, told them that, two weeks before Soto disappeared, Soto had given her an envelope containing "important papers," telling her not to show the envelope to Morgan, Sr., if anything happened to her. "She knew she was getting ready to die," Brown told me, declaring that Morgan, Sr., "had my sister killed." Alonzo Burgess, Morgan, Sr.'s nephew, told police that he suspected his uncle of having planned a murder. According to Burgess, Morgan, Sr.'s ex-wife Dolores Coleman reported that Morgan, Sr., had told her he was "about to come into some money."

The police questioned Morgan, Sr.,

several times, and they detected inconsistencies. At his first interview, he neglected to mention the life-insurance policy for Soto; he later called the omission "a misunderstanding." He denied any involvement in Soto's death.

Laura Burklin, the Allstate claims adjuster who reviewed Morgan, Sr.'s death claim on Soto, suspected that he was involved in the homicide. He had recently received thirty thousand dollars on a stolen-vehicle claim, and soon after Soto's death he had sold the house in Country Club Hills, using what Soto's family members alleged was a forged deed. But, as Burklin told me, "if the police aren't arresting someone you have to pay the claim." In June, 1997, two years after Soto's death, a judge approved a final settlement, and Morgan, Sr., received a check for a hundred and seven thousand dollars.

In the months before Hood's trial, Jim Mullenix, the public defender, scrambled to incorporate this information into his defense. Everything now made sense to him—even Hood's fingerprints on the bottles. According to Mullenix's theory, Morgan, Sr., had killed his son and then grabbed an armful of loose bottles from a random dumpster and thrown them into the car to confuse detectives. Corliss High School, where Morgan, Sr., worked as a janitor, was two blocks from Tyrone Hood's house.

At Hood's trial, Mullenix argued to Judge Bolan that Morgan, Sr., had a suspicious "connection between two dead bodies" and needed to explain it away. He called Burklin, the Allstate adjuster, to the stand. Burklin told me that Morgan, Sr., was "definitely abusing insurance"—that he had started with an "unusual amount" of petty insurance claims, graduated to stolen cars and house fires, and "worked himself up to people." But she never had a chance to discuss Morgan, Sr.'s previous insurance claims in court. When Mullenix tried to bring them up with her, prosecutors objected, and Judge Bolan sided with them.

When Morgan, Sr., took the stand, aspects of his testimony contradicted the statement that he had previously given to police. He initially said that he saw his son that Saturday afternoon;



"Make me that happy."

now he said that they last saw each other in the morning. Previously, he said that he had given his son a hundred and twenty-five dollars for his date; in court, he revised that amount to three hundred and fifty. Mullenix highlighted these discrepancies and attempted to question Morgan, Sr., about murdering his friend in 1977. Judge Bolan rebuffed these efforts.

When Mullenix asked Morgan, Sr., about the life-insurance policy—"How much money did you collect from your son's death?"—Higgins and Rogers, the state's attorneys, objected. At one point, Judge Bolan told Mullenix, "Perry Mason does this. Perry Mason proves the guy in the back of the court did it." He criticized Mullenix for failing to establish a "relevant nexus" between the Hood case and Morgan, Sr.'s past. Any similarity between the deaths of Morgan, Jr., and Soto was mere "coincidence." He ridiculed Mullenix's argument as one more appropriate for the TV show "Unsolved Mysteries."

In late 2001, Barbara Santek ran across a series of articles in the *Chicago Tribune* titled "Cops and Confessions." The reporters described how the Chicago police had relied on "coercive and illegal tactics" to solicit dubious confessions. Among the articles was a profile, by Maurice Possley, Steve Mills, and Ken Armstrong, of Kenneth Boudreau, one of the officers who had culled incriminating statements about Hood from West, Rogers, and Washington. Boudreau, the article stated, had "helped to get confessions from more than a dozen defendants in murder cases in which charges were dropped or the defendant was acquitted at trial." Even in a police department beleaguered by false confessions, Boudreau stood out—"not only for the number of his cases that have fallen apart, but for the reasons." He had targeted suspects especially vulnerable to intimidation, including teen-agers and the mentally retarded, and stood accused of "punching, slapping, or kicking" them. One man, Derrick Flewellen, spent four and a half years in jail after confessing to Boudreau about a rape and a murder—"I wasn't going to get beat up again," he told the paper—before DNA evidence acquitted him. Between

1991 and 1993, Boudreau had allegedly helped elicit at least five dubious confessions from suspects who were later acquitted.

Santek felt sick as she read the article. She told herself, "These were the same guys."

In 2002, Santek came to America for an extended vacation. While in Pittsburgh, she began dating an engineer, and by the end of the year they had married. They started a family together in Pennsylvania, adopting three girls. Meanwhile, Santek and Hood continued to correspond. He wrote to Santek that, after two years of friendship, "I have riches and I can never be poor."

In 2006, Santek and her friend Robyn Fisher travelled to the prison to see Hood. Guards escorted them to a visitation room. "When he walked through the door, I wasn't sure at first if it was him," Santek recalled. His head was shaved, his mustache and goatee flecked with gray. Prison had changed him in other ways. "I learned not to get in nobody's business," he told me, as the possibility of violence lurked behind most prison interactions. "Some guys down here, they like to be right all the time, about anything."

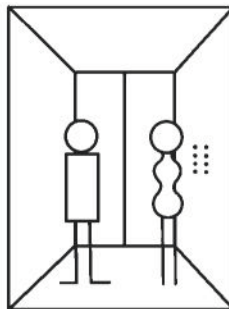
They talked for hours. Hood reminded Santek of her father—"gentle man, good values." She no longer worried that his letters had been a con. "Everything he had written over the years, he was that person," she told me.

A few days later, Hood wrote to Fisher. "During our visit, my mind frame was not in prison at all," he explained. "When it was time for me to lay down, I did hug my pillow and thought about Barbara with a slight smile."

Hood and Santek began talking on the phone several times a month, and he wrote to her frequently. "Your strength has sustained me," he declared in one letter. "Your courage has moved me. Your humor has cheered me. Your wisdom has inspired me." In another, he wrote, "There is not a statement in the English language, or any other language, that could possibly captivate the very essence of how much I truly treasure your Existence." Santek was falling

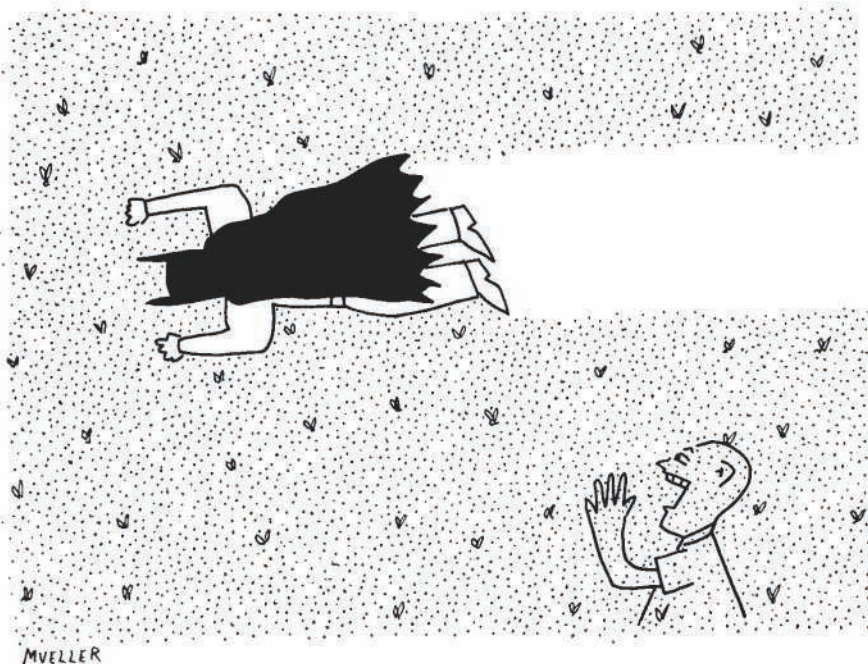
in love, too, and contemplated divorce. In the end, she stayed with her husband, but they began sleeping in separate rooms.

In early 2007, Santek decided to send a plea for help to Loevy & Loevy, a law firm in Chicago that specializes in police-misconduct and wrongful-conviction suits. To insure that her request would attract attention in the firm's mail room, she had Fisher send a parcel of materials, covered in international stamps, from Australia. Gayle Horn, an attorney there, agreed to take the case, on a pro-bono basis. When Hood heard this, he was ecstatic. He wrote to Fisher, "I'm taking the right step to obtain my freedom, and God is going to give me the rest of the steps that I need to walk out this place."



After assessing the case, Horn and her colleagues went out to reinterview witnesses. Wayne Washington reiterated that his confession had been false, saying, "The detectives told me that they wouldn't let me go until I confessed to murdering Marshall Morgan." Jody Rogers signed another sworn recantation. Then Jody's brother, Michael, who had corroborated Jody's false testimony at the trial, revealed something startling: the Chicago police had secretly been paying him for his cooperation. "Every time they picked me up, I got some money," he wrote in a sworn statement. "They told me if I had any problems with anyone in the neighborhood they would take care of it." This struck Horn as a possible infringement of the 1963 Supreme Court decision *Brady v. Maryland*, which prohibited the government from withholding information that could help a defendant's case.

In a separate civil suit centering on abusive interrogations, Horn's associates deposed the detectives involved in Hood's prosecution. When John Halloran, Boudreau's partner, was asked if he had hit Washington during an interrogation, Halloran replied, "I invoke my Fifth Amendment right to remain silent." Boudreau, however, told Horn's associates that he would answer questions. "I'm not Michael Corleone," he told me. "I don't take the Fifth." (In fact,



"Thanks, Batman!"

Boudreau invoked his Fifth Amendment right in 2005, before a grand jury probing abusive interrogations. He later clarified to me that he had never taken the Fifth in a civil suit.)

Russell Ainsworth, a partner at Loevy & Loevy, asked Boudreau if he had grabbed Jody Rogers's arm and twisted it. "I don't recall my involvement with Jody Rogers," Boudreau said. "I may have placed handcuffs on him. If I put handcuffs on him, it would require twisting the arms up behind your back. I'm not sure what you mean by the word 'twist.'"

"Did you push Jody Rogers into the wall?" Ainsworth asked.

"If I was handcuffing somebody, I would have them stand up against the wall," Boudreau said. "Can you define the word 'push'? . . . The word 'push' has many meanings."

Boudreau is now a sergeant, and oversees the police department's gang-out-reach program in area high schools. I met him recently at a diner in Bridgeport, an Irish neighborhood on the South Side. We had apple pie and coffee on tables set with jelly caddies and paper placemats. A cold front was rolling through, causing the awning out front to snap. When I went to turn on my audio recorder, Boudreau flashed a dimpled grin and said, "Nobody tapes me."

He told me that allegations that he had beaten or coerced confessions out of people were "fucking ridiculous." (Years earlier, Boudreau had said in a deposition, "The term 'excessive force' to me is relative. What may be excessive to one person may not be excessive to another.") In one affidavit, a convicted murderer, Kilroy Watkins, claimed that, during an interrogation in 1992 by Boudreau and Halloran, he was "handcuffed to a ring in the wall" and "choked and assaulted repeatedly by Detective Boudreau" until he was "forced into signing a false confession." In 2000, another convicted murderer, Jaime De Avila, said in a sworn statement that Boudreau had threatened to "plant a nigger at the crime scene" who would claim that De Avila had been the driver of a suspect's car. "You'll be surprised what a nigger will do," Boudreau reportedly said. "They will disrespect God before they will disrespect the police." Boudreau denied making such threats, and said, "Have you asked yourself why all the accusations are coming from people in the penitentiary?"

During the past two decades, Chicago has paid substantial legal fees and settlement costs related to Boudreau's discredited cases. In 2011, the city issued a \$1.25-million settlement to Harold Hill, a man who was exonerated by DNA

evidence years after Boudreau produced a rape and murder confession from him. When I asked Boudreau about the Hill case, he said, "I believe he did it—still to this day. I believe what Harold Hill told me." Asked if he had any regrets, Boudreau said, "I probably should have corroborated more of his statements at the time. Does it aggravate me when I see people walk away and escape justice? Sure. But I can't worry about that. I suppose if I worried about it I'd be biting the barrel of a gun."

Boudreau said that "gravy train" firms like Loevy & Loevy had helped to create a spurious wrongful-conviction industry. I later spoke with Martin Preib, a Chicago cop and author, who said that Boudreau was being maligned by a few firms angling for large settlements. Preib called Boudreau "an unbelievable investigator" and said that wrongful-conviction firms had "ruined the lives of some very good police officers."

The Chicago Police Department has frequently been accused of refusing to acknowledge internal problems. Two years ago, a bartender sued the city after an off-duty policeman pummelled her in a barroom. She alleged that a "code of silence" among officers impeded investigations into misconduct. A jury awarded her eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars in damages.

At the diner, Boudreau said, "I'll tell you what'll happen. Loevy & Loevy wants to get Hood a new trial. The state won't pursue it, Hood will walk, and then Loevy & Loevy will sue me." He took a sip of coffee. "I know in my heart that, when we die, we're going to either Heaven or Hell. I'm convinced that I will be standing at the gates of St. Peter with some homicide victims on my left and some homicide offenders who've made peace with the Lord on my right. And I know that Loevy & Loevy will go straight to Hell for what they do. They call it honor, but they are letting criminals walk free."

We discussed one of the statements attributed to Hood in the police record of his interrogation: "If I don't say anything to explain, I will go to jail for a long time. If I *do* tell what happened, I will go to jail." At the trial, prosecutors had brought up the statement repeatedly to imply guilt. Hood denies ever saying it.

"So I made it up?" Boudreau asked,

his lips pursed in amusement. "I'd like to think if I made up a statement I could make up something better than *that*."

One morning in August, 2007, Hood boarded a corrections bus heading upstate. He had received a message from the Cook County state's attorney's office, instructing him to report to Chicago for an interview. Days later, he was sitting across from two prosecutors. One of them opened a folder, and Hood saw a photograph of a man he recognized from his trial: Marshall Morgan, Sr. The prosecutors explained that Morgan, Sr., was about to stand trial for the murder of his girlfriend Deborah Jackson.

The circumstances echoed the deaths of his friend, his fiancée, and his son. On September 8, 2001, Morgan, Sr., and Jackson got into an argument about kitchen cabinets. In the middle of the dispute, he left for work, at Barton Elementary School, on the South Side. After a while, Jackson drove to the school and found Morgan, Sr., outside, picking up trash. He got into the car. They continued to argue, with Jackson driving. She stopped a few miles away, and Morgan, Sr., got out. She did, too, and followed him on foot. As he recalled, in a videotaped statement, she slapped him, and he "pushed her."

Jackson's purse slipped off her shoulder and, according to Morgan, Sr., a pistol tumbled out, hit the ground, and misfired. He grabbed the weapon and, after a brief struggle, fired it. The bullet pierced her elbow and her chest. He shot her again, in the stomach. When investigators asked him why he shot her twice, Morgan, Sr., said, "Out of rage, I guess."

The bullets did not kill Jackson, Morgan, Sr., said; when he popped the trunk and shoved her inside, he "saw her hands moving." As she bled out, he placed the pistol under the driver's seat and "went and caught the El" to complete his shift. The next morning, he moved Jackson's car and took the pistol, which he later threw into Lake Michigan.

Jackson's body was found a week afterward, and police questioned Morgan, Sr. For days, he denied knowledge of the murder, but eventually he made a taped confession. He told the police, "I wanted to clear my conscience."

Hood listened to the assistant state's attorneys, confident that they had all arrived at the same conclusion—that Morgan, Sr.'s murder of Jackson was "proof that I didn't kill his son." But they didn't consider it a vindicating event: instead, they asked Hood if Morgan, Sr., had paid him to kill his son. "I never seen the father, I never seen the son," Hood recalls telling them. A conversation that had begun with him anticipating exoneration had ended with the accusation that he was a hit man. He returned to his cell downstate. In 2008, Morgan, Sr., received a seventy-five-year sentence for murdering Jackson. (Morgan, Sr., denied requests to be interviewed.)

Gayle Horn, Hood's attorney, told me that, by targeting the wrong man, Boudreau and his colleagues had allowed a murderer to remain at large. "There was a serial killer—Morgan, Sr.—who should have been arrested and prosecuted in 1993," she said. "Instead, he went on to kill two other women."

In February, 2011, Rahm Emanuel was elected mayor of Chicago. He apologized for abusive police tactics, referring to them as a "dark chapter" in Chicago's history, and said, "This is not who we are." Meanwhile, the Illinois state government was establishing a Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission, to consider retrial for dozens of prisoners who were interro-

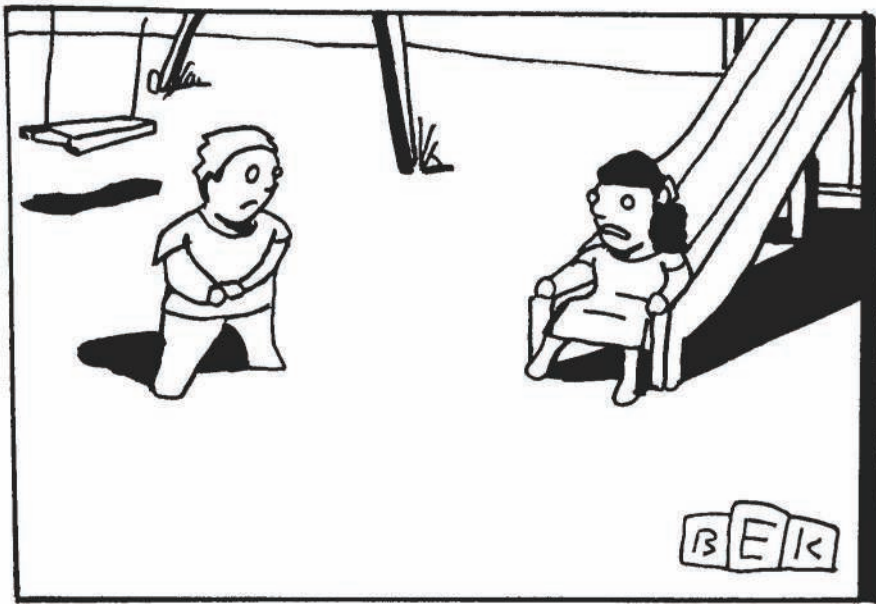
gated by Jon Burge, the detective who had been fired for "systematic" abuse of suspects. (In 2010, Burge was convicted of perjury and obstruction of justice for denying misconduct even when, according to the judge, a "mountain of evidence" suggested otherwise.) Cook County began exonerating prisoners at a record rate, freeing more prisoners a year than any other county in the nation. But was it enough? Did even more people deserve freedom?

In February, 2012, Anita Alvarez, the state's attorney, said in a speech, "My job is not just about racking up convictions. It is about always seeking justice—even if that measure of justice means that we must acknowledge mistakes of the past." Signalling a "shift in philosophy," she announced the creation of a Conviction Integrity Unit, to insure "that only guilty people are convicted here in Cook County." Her spokesperson, Sally Daly, told the *Tribune* that the unit would commence with Hood's case, which "merits further investigation and a full review."

Three months later, James Papa, the assistant state's attorney supervising the new unit, travelled to a prison in southeastern Illinois to interview Jody Rogers, who was now locked up for armed robbery. Rogers said of Hood, "The man didn't do it." He told Papa that he'd been intimidated by police and had always maintained that he didn't know anything about Morgan's



"Will you be needing any more repressed sexual tension before I leave for the day, sir?"



"I thought I'd be a successful fashion blogger by now."

• •

murder. Rogers said of Hood, "Let him out." Papa and his investigator drove to Michigan, to try to speak with Wayne Washington; Washington refused to talk without his lawyer present, and Papa never followed up. Papa and his investigator also flew to Florida to question Emanuel Bob—the man who had testified about seeing Hood sitting in a car, at night, from a hundred feet away. Bob stood by his story, saying, "Nobody could ever put words in my mouth." (According to the Innocence Project, nearly three-quarters of the convictions that have been reversed through DNA evidence have featured mistaken eyewitness testimony.)

At the Cook County criminal courthouse, Papa interviewed Hood, who told him that, before his arrest, he "drank mostly Miller products or rum." He described being threatened and roughed up by Boudreau and Halloran. Hood added that another detective had brandished a pistol and threatened to "put five slugs in him." Papa asked him if he had ever met Morgan, Sr. "Never," Hood replied.

Two months later, Papa visited Morgan, Sr., in Stateville, a prison forty miles outside of Chicago. He denied killing his son. "You can take a look at me all you want—I don't care, I am at peace with myself," he said. He also denied that he had experienced financial troubles during

that period, saying that he had given "most of his money" to "people who were in need." He had created a life-insurance policy for Morgan, he added, at the request of Morgan's mother, Marcia Escoffery. ("Bullshit," Escoffery told me.) "You have the right guys," Morgan, Sr., told Papa.

A year after Alvarez formed the Conviction Integrity Unit, Papa went before a judge to share its findings on Hood. He did not recommend overturning the conviction. He offered no explanation.

The decision left Hood, his attorneys, and Santek in disbelief. Santek filed a Freedom of Information request with the state's attorney's office, seeking documents pertaining to the Conviction Integrity Unit's investigation and its methods. A week later, a letter arrived informing her that the unit "has no documents that are responsive to this request," and noting, "There are no forms, protocols, or other documents regarding the creation, implementation or operations of the SAO's Conviction Integrity Unit."

Hood's lawyers petitioned Richard Brzeczek, a former superintendent of the Chicago Police Department, to review the memos that Papa had written after each interview. (None of them featured the phrase "Conviction Integrity Unit,"

perhaps explaining the fruitless results of Santek's FOIA request.) Brzeczek was appalled by Papa's interview with Morgan, Sr., calling it "superficial, cosmetic, and perfunctory, at best." Not only had Papa failed to push Morgan, Sr., on the claims about his finances; he had not questioned him about the strong similarities among the deaths of his friend, his son, his fiancée, and his girlfriend. Brzeczek concluded that Hood deserved a "legitimate reinvestigation."

Over the years, Brzeczek said, he had watched the Cook County state's attorney's office fight several "nasty, protracted battles" on cases that "it eventually lost." He added, "Most of the decisions were based not on legalities or what's right or what should be done but, rather, on 'How is this going to wash politically?'"

Craig Futterman, a law professor at the University of Chicago, is a member of the Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission. He told me that the Cook County state's attorney's office had "fairly consistently stood behind shaky convictions"—even ones that he described as a "shame and stain" on the city. He suggested several reasons that the office might resist rigorous reviews of certain cases. There were "economic incentives," given the potential liabilities, and "relationship issues" flowing from the office's "heavy reliance" on the testimony of officers. Internal investigations of abusive practices had the potential to "undermine hundreds of felony convictions that relied on the word of crooked detectives," triggering a cascade of overturned verdicts. Eighty per cent of Chicago police officers, Futterman said, have received three or fewer misconduct complaints in their careers; in 2012, a court document filed by the torture-inquiry commission listed thirty-eight incidents of alleged misconduct involving Boudreau—"an eye-popping number." Futterman continued, "If an individual police officer is exposed, how many other criminal cases might that undermine? If you have a proven instance where an officer lied to put an innocent person in jail, it calls into question all the other cases in which his word has been a primary source of information." He said of the Conviction Integrity Unit, "Its record is pretty dismal." He added, "Was it simply a P.R. move? Thus far, there's no evidence of more than paper reform."

Papa did not respond to several requests for comment. In an e-mail, Sally Daly, the spokesperson, said, "It would be inappropriate to discuss the specifics of the case," because of Hood's ongoing appeal. "More than 12 individuals were interviewed as part of the reinvestigation," she later noted, including people "located out of state." Daly added that, since 2012, the office "has vacated the convictions of 9 individuals following comprehensive conviction integrity reviews" and is examining hundreds of others.

One of the prosecutors litigating against Hood in recent proceedings is an assistant state's attorney named Kurt Smitko. Smitko, I discovered, had participated in the integrity unit's review of Hood's case, joining Papa when he interviewed Marcia Escoffery. Wasn't this a conflict of interest? Daly told me that Smitko "went along" for the interview because he "had a rapport" with Escoffery, but he "did not evaluate the evidence." Daly added, "There is no conflict."

I visited Escoffery on a snowy night in January. She and her sister, Sharon Murphy, led me into a living room with a baby grand piano, giant houseplants, and a bay window overlooking an ice-crusting street. It was Morgan's birthday. "Hell, he would be forty-one today," Escoffery said, blinking back tears. "I can't go out there now, but normally I go to the cemetery and take a six-pack."

I asked them if they thought that Morgan, Sr., had been involved in his son's death. "Logically?" Murphy said. "You take out life insurance on my nephew? You probably had something to do with it!"

Escoffery stared at the floor and nodded. From what she had seen at the trial, eighteen years ago, she believed in Hood's guilt. But she wouldn't rule out Morgan, Sr.,'s involvement. "He hadn't seen his son in seventeen years and then he got a life-insurance policy," she said. "How do I know he didn't kill him for money?" She paused. "If he did it, whatever the penalty is, go for it. Kill him, I don't care. . . . If they can help me prove that he killed my son, hell, I will pull the lever."

One morning in April, Santek was sitting in the parking lot outside the medium-security wing of the Menard prison, fixing her hair in the rearview mirror of a rental car. She and her daughter

Nyasia got out and headed for the entrance. Nyasia, a thirteen-year-old with long spiral curls, had visited Hood several times before, spoke with him regularly on the phone, and thought of him as a stepfather. A female guard checked their underwear for contraband after Santek signed in. "All the stuff he puts up with," Santek said, as we waited for Hood.

Hood entered the room without handcuffs. Nyasia nearly leaped into his arms. They hugged, and Hood kissed her on the forehead. He kissed Santek on the cheek. We had been assigned stools around a metal table, and Hood sat down on one, facing the guards. Aloe plants lined the sill.

"May I have a cup of water?" Hood asked a female guard. That morning, the authorities had turned off the water supply as part of a lockdown. The guard, somewhat grudgingly, obliged.

I mentioned to Hood that, amid the tightened security, Santek's daughter had had to run back to the car twice: once because she had accidentally left her cell phone in her pocket and once because Santek had forgotten to remove a lighter in her purse. (Both were considered contraband.) "You know what you just did?" Hood said to me, smiling. "You just let the cat out of the bag." Apparently, Santek sneaked the occasional cigarette.

"Only when I'm stressed," she said.

"It don't mean I love you less," Hood said. He winked at her and reached across the table to caress her hand.

Hood could be up for parole in 2030. He would be sixty-seven, and Santek would be in her seventies. His lawyers hope to get him out long before then. In 2009, Gayle Horn and another lawyer, Karl Leonard, filed a petition for post-conviction relief for Hood, arguing that the evidence against him had "unraveled," and that the officers involved had "a long history of similar misconduct." Morgan, Sr.,'s most recent murder conviction, they argued, demonstrated a "clear modus operandi: Morgan, Sr. has killed close friends and loved ones for financial gain by shooting them . . . and leaving their partially or fully nude bodies to die in and around abandoned cars."

The petition contained several com-

ponents: the claim that Morgan, Sr.,'s "pattern" of murder pointed to Hood's innocence; police misconduct; and constitutional violations related to the prosecution's undisclosed payments to Jody Rogers's brother. The judge, Neera Walsh, granted an evidentiary hearing about the payments, but dismissed the other components, calling the pattern of evidence against Morgan, Sr., "immaterial in nature," and rejecting the police-misconduct and innocence claims on procedural grounds. No date has been set for the payments hearing.

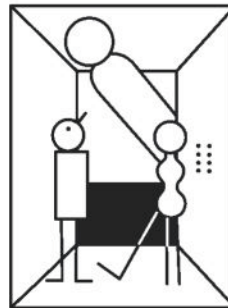
The state also agreed to conduct a test of "hair-like fibers," fixed to a strip of black tape, that had been found in Morgan, Sr.,'s trunk during the Michelle Soto investigation. Morgan, Sr., had claimed that the hairs came from a ferret that Michelle's daughter kept as a pet. The hairs had never been analyzed. In May, the results came back, and indicated that the hairs belonged to a human female. Horn told me she hopes that the judge will consider a new evidentiary hearing.

Hood, sitting in the visitors' room, steeled himself against getting needlessly excited—especially given that his fortunes depended on the discretion of Cook County judges and prosecutors. On an earlier visit, I had asked Hood if he ever got angry.

"Every day," he said. "How can you not think about it when you looking at what I'm looking at? Twenty-one years." He said he realized a while ago that "this thing is bigger than me," and that "there's a chain of corruption."

Hood knew four prisoners at Menard who, since 2010, had been cleared of charges and released. "I see people getting out of the penitentiary, right?" he said. "Exonerated. I read about how they were arrested, how they were exonerated. And

I'm, like, 'Wait a minute—what is going on? You got all this evidence pointing to somebody else? You got nothing pointing at me but some prints.'" He couldn't help feeling that justice was a kind of lottery, and that he was stuck holding a bunk ticket. "Do I have something written on my forehead saying, 'Y'all can just do something to me?'" he pleaded. "What's wrong with me?" ♦



FINDING THE WORDS

In a book-length elegy, the poet Edward Hirsch confronts the loss of his son.

BY ALEC WILKINSON

In October, 1988, my friends Janet Landay and Edward Hirsch flew to New Orleans to adopt a boy who was six days old. He was collected from the hospital by their lawyer, who brought him to the house where they were staying. Waiting for her, they stood in the street in front of the house. For several days, they worried that the mother, overcome by love or by guilt, might want the child back, but she didn't.

At the time, Hirsch was an associate professor at the University of Houston. He is now the president of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, but he is above all a poet. He has published eight books of poems, among them "Earthly Measures," which Harold Bloom included in "The Western Canon." Nominated by Robert Penn Warren, Hirsch had won the Rome Prize, which confers a year's residence at the American Academy there. Travelling from Rome to New Orleans took twenty-three hours, leaving Landay and Hirsch with "jet lag instead of labor," Hirsch wrote in a journal. Before leaving, they had told the lawyer their son's name, Gabriel. In the Book of Daniel, Gabriel approaches Daniel "in swift flight," which is how our son came to us," Hirsch wrote.

Hirsch calls his journal, which was written retrospectively, a dossier. By the time he started it, in the fall of 2011, he and Landay were divorced. He began it as a means of writing down everything he could remember of Gabriel, who died, at twenty-two, on August 27, 2011. The night before, around ten, as Hurricane Irene was arriving in New York, Gabriel told his girlfriend that he was going to meet a friend for a drink near Columbia University. A little after eleven, he sent her a text saying he would be home in an hour. After that, he didn't answer his phone. Three days later, Landay and Hirsch found themselves speaking to de-

tectives in a police station in Jersey City, New Jersey. An entry on Craigslist had led Gabriel to a party where guests were given a club drug, possibly in a drink. He became violently sick and had a seizure. An ambulance took him to a hospital, where he died, shortly after six in the morning, from cardiac arrest. Gabriel's life and death are too painful for Landay to discuss, she told me. Furthermore, she feels strongly that they are no one's business but hers and Hirsch's.

After Gabriel's funeral, Hirsch returned to work at the Guggenheim. "I was just wandering around the office, though, unable to concentrate, just staring into space," he told me recently. "Eddie walked around like a dead man," André Bernard, the foundation's vice-president, said. "I've never seen anyone look so terrible." Hirsch is Jewish, but he is not religious. He didn't feel that he could say Kaddish, the prayer that a mourner recites many times a day for eleven months. The foundation gave him a leave, and he moved to Atlanta, where his partner, a writer named Lauren Watel, lives, and, on the recommendation of a friend who said it might help him grieve if he wrote about Gabriel, he started the dossier. For a few hours a day, writing gave him something to think about other than "just my own sadness," he said. It also made him feel as if he were in Gabriel's presence. He would call his mother and his two sisters and hear stories about Gabriel. He spoke with Landay daily. On Gabriel's birthday, he visited New York and celebrated with Gabriel's friends and heard stories about him that he had never known. "Slowly, I became stronger," he said. "I wasn't healing, but I was stronger."

Hirsch spent four months in Atlanta, seeing very few people, and finished the dossier, which is a hundred and twenty-seven pages long. When he came

back to New York, his grief was undiminished, except that, with the dossier done, he no longer had any means of managing it. The dossier wasn't something he felt he could revise and publish; it was a private document and, because it was strictly factual, it was more a catalogue than a memoir. Hirsch sometimes describes himself as a personal poet, by which he means that nearly everyone important to him has appeared in one of his poems. He had written two poems about Gabriel when Gabriel was alive, one when he was adopted and the second when Gabriel was fifteen, but otherwise he hadn't allowed himself to write about him. "We adopted him, and we were supposed to protect him," he said. "It didn't seem like a child was fair game for a writer the way your parents are." In New York, though, unable to console himself by any means other than writing, he began a few poems about Gabriel.

"Some of the things he did were so funny, and some of the things were so strange, that I thought, I'll explore this," he said. He completed a poem about a night at a fair when he had carried Gabriel on his shoulders so that he could see a fireworks display, and Gabriel said, ambiguously, "Dad, I didn't come here to watch the fireworks." He wrote a surreal poem about Gabriel sprawled on top of a bus travelling through a tunnel and leaving the city, as if for the afterlife. "A teenage boy finds himself/Lying facedown on top of a bus/Racing through a tunnel out of the city," it began. By the time he finished four or five poems, he had grown dissatisfied. A tragedy had befallen him, but the poems seemed more like anecdotes than like poems, and completely inadequate to the weight of the occasion. Furthermore, he didn't want to write a few poems about Gabriel and have them eventually included in a book among

"It's so red hot, thinking about his life and what he might regard as appropriate for someone else to know," Hirsch says.



others that had nothing to do with him.

After someone dies, it becomes difficult to remember what he or she looked like. The closer Hirsch came to the end of his memories, while writing the dossier, the more he felt that he was losing his grasp of his son. He realized that, if he were going to write about him meaningfully, the factual tone of the dossier would have to be amended by his feelings. "I decided that what I wrote wasn't going to be just about Gabriel, it also had to be about losing Gabriel," he said. Once he started working again, he was plagued by the thought that Gabriel might disapprove of how he was being depicted. "The whole time, I'm desperately trying to be faithful to Gabriel's life, so that he'll come through," Hirsch said. "A person who's only suffering can't write a poem. There are choices to be made, and you need to be objective. I'm working, I'm making decisions, but it's so red hot, thinking about his life and what he might regard as appropriate for someone else to know."

After eight months, Hirsch had finished a narrative poem that is seventy-

five pages long. It is called "Gabriel," and it will be published in September as a book by Knopf. The poet Eavan Boland described "Gabriel" to me as "a masterpiece of sorrow." Hirsch's writing characteristically involves "material that is psychologically dangerous," the poet and critic Richard Howard told me. "His detractors would say that he feels he is someone who must reveal the truth, as opposed to being ironic, and he's contending here with these forces." Hirsch felt that for the poem to succeed it could not include any traces of sentimentality, otherwise he would be an unreliable witness. "Gabriel" begins:

The funeral director opened the coffin
And there he was alone
From the waist up

I peered down into his face
And for a moment I was taken aback
Because it was not Gabriel

It was just some poor kid
Whose face looked like a room
That had been vacated.

"Gabriel" is an elegy, but it is a peculiar one, "unlike anything anyone else

has done, a modern poem about modern circumstances," Richard Howard said. Elegies of any length tend to be collections of poems written over the course of years. The most famous elegy, perhaps, is Tennyson's "In Memoriam A.H.H.," which is about his friend Arthur Henry Hallam, who died young of a stroke, in 1833. It includes the lines "'Tis better to have loved and lost/Than never to have loved at all." It consists of a hundred and thirty-one poems and an epilogue written over seventeen years. Thomas Hardy's elegy for his wife is a series of twenty-one short poems called "Poems of 1912-13." Mallarmé never finished "A Tomb for Anatole," his long poem for his son who died at eight; it exists only in fragments. The closest thing to "Gabriel," at least in tone, might be "Laments," written in the sixteenth century by the Polish poet Jan Kochanowski for his daughter, who died when she was two and a half. There are nineteen laments altogether, most a single page or less, the last telling of a dream or a vision in which she returns to him.

Elegies also tend to occupy a spiritual ground—to accept an order of things, and to assume an afterlife. They address God respectfully. In the manner of the Jewish poets who began interrogating God after the Holocaust, and even to wonder if there could be a God who could preside over such horror, Hirsch invokes God in order to rebuke him. "I keep ranting at God, whom I don't believe in," he said, "but who else are you going to talk to?" From "Gabriel":

I will not forgive you
Sun of emptiness
Sky of blank clouds

I will not forgive you
Indifferent God
Until you give me back my son.

Finally, elegies typically elevate their subject. Embedded within "Gabriel" is a picaresque novella about a tempestuous boy and young man, a part Hirsch calls "the adventures of Gabriel." Eavan Boland wrote me in a letter that "the creation of the loved and lost boy" is one of the poem's most important effects. It represented, she said, "a subversion of decorum: the subject of elegy is meant to be an object of dignity. But here it is



"This commute is killing me."

just an unruly son, an unmanageable object of fear and love in a contemporary chaos."

Hirsch is sixty-four. I met him twenty-five years ago, through the writer William Maxwell. He is tall and rangy, his shoulders are sloped, and his carriage is slightly forward-leaning. He moves deliberately and takes small steps, suggesting a bear standing upright. When he laughs, his shoulders shake. He is the sort of person who will listen to and take seriously almost anything someone says to him. For more than a year after Gabriel died, his face was ashen. The gravity of his expression even now, especially in repose, might lead an observer to think, Something terrible has happened to this man. Occasionally, though, his careworn look is just from being tired. He has long periods of sleeplessness; one of his books, "For the Sleepwalkers," has a poem called "Insomnia." "He's someone for whom sleep is a disaster," Richard Howard said.

Hirsch's office at the Guggenheim foundation occupies a corner on the thirty-third floor of a building on Park Avenue. Two of the walls are glass, and the view of the city, the rivers, the sky, and the harbor is more like a mural than a view, or a Chinese scroll on which the scene is continually being painted. On the other walls are shelves with thousands of books of poetry, Hirsch's own collection. Having his books enclose him is a means of reminding himself who he is, he said, as we sat among them one day this spring.

In high school, Hirsch played football and wrote poems, "although it's generous to call it poetry," he said. "I had feelings that I didn't know what to do with, and I felt better when I started writing them. I thought of it as poetry. I did notice girls really liked it. Better than football. They liked the combination." At Grinnell, as a freshman, he had a teacher named Carol Parssinen, who "did the one thing for me that was more powerful than anyone else," he said. "She basically told me, 'You could be a poet—you have the imagination, the intelligence, and the passion—but what you're writing is not poetry. You're not joining what you've written to what you've read, you're just writing out your feelings. You need to read poems, and

you need to try and make something.'"

Hirsch read Gerard Manley Hopkins and was moved by the "terrible sonnets," six poems that Hopkins wrote between 1885 and 1886, during a spiritual crisis. "The feelings are so desolate, the despair is tremendous," Hirsch said. "When I read them, I didn't feel more lonely, I felt less lonely. I realized, Holy cow, these are sonnets—he shaped them into something, he didn't write them out the way I'm writing. I began to imitate what I was reading, and I started to become a poet, even though what I was writing were not good poems."

The way to become a poet was to read everything in poetry, Hirsch thought. His approach was intuitive. "I followed leads," he said. "Eliot dedicates a poem to Pound, who wrote 'The Spirit of Romance' about the troubadours, and then you read the troubadours and you're in the middle of thirteenth-century poetry." In his sophomore year, he said, "I discovered the Romantics—Byron, Keats, Wordsworth, Blake—and I was thrilled by the modernists: Eliot, Pound, Stevens. I was marching through poetry."

By his junior year, though, he had grown disenchanted with the moderns for what he regarded as their coldness. "I was crazy about Eliot, but then I read 'After Strange Gods,' where he says, 'Any large number of free-thinking Jews is undesirable.' That was shocking to me." He wanted something equally intellectual but more heated. "The defining thing I found was Eastern European and Spanish and Latin American poetry," he said. "I found the Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti. I read Czesław Miłosz and Attila József. I read the Turkish poet Nâzım Hikmet, I read the Russians, especially Mandelstam, Akhmatova, Tsvetayeva. What I loved was the moral seriousness. The high calling. The coming to grips with suffering. My teachers didn't know much about this poetry. They knew the history of English literature—I could learn that, too—but this other stuff was really cool. I felt I had a calling, and this was going to be my life's work."

Two strains developed in his writ-

ing. The first, which was democratic and descended from Whitman through William Carlos Williams and Philip Levine, was for putting people and experiences in poems that weren't usual poetry subjects. "Factory workers, waitresses, people I knew growing up in Chicago, speaking in language you didn't hear in poetry," he said. The other was "a

high aesthetic mandarin side. I wanted to write about Paul Klee and Gérard de Nerval and Cocteau. If you had told me, though, when I was twenty-four that I would write about Skokie, Illinois, where I grew up, I would have said, 'You're out of your mind.

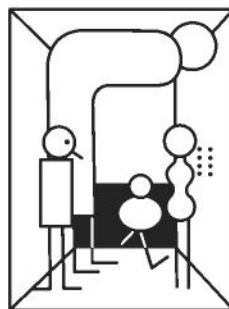
Why would I have Skokie in a poem?' But you become resigned. Your job is to write about the life you actually have."

Hirsch had a cousin who was a lawyer in New Orleans, who put him in touch with the woman at his firm who sometimes handled adoptions. In August, 1988, shortly before Hirsch and Landay left for Rome, the lawyer called and said that a young woman had approached a colleague. In October, the lawyer called to say that the woman had gone into labor. Gabriel was born on October 23rd. Landay and Hirsch took him to Chicago to see relatives, and were back in Rome before a week had passed. They found a nanny who liked to wheel Gabriel around their neighborhood in a stroller, and when they took him out on their own they sometimes heard strangers call out, "*Ciao, Gabriele.*"

From Rome, they moved back to Houston. Gabriel was a restless sleeper. "We used to marvel that he never stopped moving in the crib," Hirsch said. As a small boy, he grew easily overstimulated and was subject to fits of temper. One day, he had a tantrum over taking some medicine. "He broke a lamp," Hirsch wrote in the dossier. "I was beside myself. I couldn't take it anymore. Suddenly, I sat down and started crying. Gabriel was instantly calm. He looked so surprised. 'What's wrong, Dad?'

"I just think I'm a poor father," I said sniffing. "I've let you down. I can't control you. I can't get you to take your medicine."

"You're a good father, Dad," he said,





"I can't have anything that's a food."

patting me on the leg. I'll take the medicine now."

"A couple of months later, the same thing happened to Janet. She suddenly burst into tears during one of his tantrums. 'Don't cry, Mom,' he reassured her. 'You're a good mother.'"

Gabriel hated school from the start. "It would have been funny if it wasn't so awful," Hirsch wrote. "He cried hysterically. He threw things. He clung to the couch, he held fast to a chair. We dragged him out kicking and screaming. I was sympathetic because I had been the same way in nursery school—a bus driver had to come into the house and pull me out of the closet—but the world is a tough place, kid, and you've got to go to school. That's how it works. The law is the law."

In grade school, Gabriel took up more of the teacher's time than was practical. "He asked a lot of questions; he interrupted a lot," Hirsch said. "He just couldn't, or wouldn't, follow directions. It was just all too hard for him. The main thing about him was he had a boundless amount of energy. We used to run him like a puppy. I think part of his trouble in school was that he couldn't actually stay in one place." At

the end of the year, the principal told them that they should find another school.

By that time, Gabriel had developed a series of tics. "He had a cough that was a tic," Hirsch said. "And a way he used to run his hands over his face." His parents took him to a psychiatrist, who sent them to a colleague, "a specialist who had the Nabokovian name Dr. Doctor," Hirsch said. The specialist diagnosed Tourette's syndrome, which has no cure. He wrote prescriptions to mitigate Gabriel's behaviors, "a slew of medications for an eight-year-old who had trouble reading, paying attention, getting along with others, sleeping," Hirsch wrote. Hirsch told me that the medications made Gabriel feel "groggy, they made him fat, they made him feel tamped down." They eliminated some of his tics, though, and made others less insistent. "They enabled him to sleep through the night."

When Gabriel was nearing the end of sixth grade, Hirsch said, his school "gently suggested" that he and Landay find another place for him. One night, after Gabriel was asleep, Landay said that she thought he should go to boarding school. Someone had told her about a therapeutic

school in Virginia called Little Keswick, for boys between ten and fifteen. Gabriel was eleven. Little Keswick cost about ninety thousand dollars a year. Hirsch had won a MacArthur Fellowship, and that money, along with what he made from poetry readings and talks, could almost cover it. "I had strongly ambivalent feelings—he seemed too young—but I couldn't come up with a better plan," Hirsch said.

Gabriel, however, liked the idea of boarding school. Anywhere else would be better than where he was, he thought. "He tried to convince me: 'This is a good idea, Dad,'" Hirsch wrote.

"You're just too young, Gabriel, I kept saying. 'You'll only be twelve years old. You can't know what's good for you.'"

"Gabriel was adamant. 'I'll do well there,' he promised. 'This is a good idea, Dad, believe me.'" The psychiatrists supported him.

Once Gabriel got to boarding school, he was homesick and wanted to leave. He said he would go to his old school and behave. Hirsch and Landay had paid a year's tuition, and it was too late to get it back. Gabriel stayed. He didn't do well, but he did a little better. He often got into trouble for not following directions or for arguing or being disrespectful. Like a lot of his classmates, he shouted out answers when he knew them and shouted when he didn't know them. A therapist wrote, "A concept of self, what is me and not me, what I am good at, and how I am performing as an active agent in the world is not clear to Gabriel."

While Gabriel had lived with his parents, they sent him to two different Jewish Sunday schools, but he had trouble learning Hebrew. Hirsch hadn't liked Sunday school, either. He and Landay decided that they would give up on Gabriel's having a Jewish education; other issues seemed more pressing than whether he had a bar mitzvah.

In 2003, while Gabriel was in eighth grade, Hirsch became the president of the Guggenheim. Sitting in his office, he told me that the following year the school's doctor said that he didn't think Gabriel's diagnosis of Tourette's sufficed. If you think of the brain as a switchboard, the doctor said, Gabriel had a lot of things knocked out. A more appropriate diagnosis was PDD-NOS—pervasive developmental disorder, not otherwise specified—a mild form of

autism that presents in such a multiplicity of forms that Hirsch considered it “a technical confession of ignorance,” he said. “‘Not otherwise specified’ struck me as so vague that it was like they were saying, ‘We don’t know what’s wrong.’”

Gabriel entered tenth grade at a school in Washington, Connecticut, called Devereux Glenholme. He disliked it immediately; he said it was like a prison. Hirsch and Landay took him out for lunch and a movie and were appalled when they returned to the school and he was searched by a member of the faculty. Hirsch asked the man what he was searching for. Drugs, cigarettes, contraband CDs, and gum, the man said. Hirsch spoke several times to the principal. “She said she would look into it, but nothing ever changed,” he said. “After a while, I began to feel she was slightly exasperated with my complaints.” Gabriel began to call the place “the hellhole.”

Hirsch and Landay phoned Gabriel as often as the school allowed. One night, Gabriel sounded more unhappy than usual. “‘You sound lonely,’ I said,” Hirsch wrote. “‘It’s O.K., Dad,’” Gabriel said. “‘I’m used to it.’” The one activity Gabriel enjoyed was working in the school canteen as a cook. He learned to cook burgers and make salads. He thought he might like one day to be a chef.

Gabriel left Glenholme at the end of his sophomore year and went to Franklin Academy, in East Haddam, Connecticut, where some of his classmates from Little Keswick had gone. By then, Hirsch was seeing Watel, whom he had met at the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference. After months of marriage counseling and then confronting the anguish of telling Gabriel, who, it turned out, had already divined the trouble, Hirsch got an apartment in Brooklyn with a bedroom for Gabriel. He bought the same furniture for Gabriel as for himself. “I was so relieved when he arrived and liked his room,” Hirsch said.

In 2006, when Gabriel turned eighteen, he stopped taking all his medications. It was a present he gave himself; he said they turned him into a zombie. For a couple of years after he graduated from Franklin, he lived with Landay in New York. Then he moved to Amherst, Massachusetts, into the house of a young woman who was a social worker. He enrolled in a prevocational-training course, whose director called him “a bright spark

of a person.” He also worked sporadically at odd jobs. One day, he called Hirsch and said he was in the West Cemetery, in downtown Amherst, mowing the grass, and had come upon Emily Dickinson’s grave. Hirsch asked him to read the inscription. “Called Back,” Gabriel said. Another social worker who saw Gabriel frequently, a young woman named Christa Pylant, told me that she regarded him as “a deeply reflective person, with strong feelings about his family and girlfriends and the world. He had a deep cynicism, and he talked a little tough, but it was to cover his lack of self-confidence.”

In October, 2010, Gabriel got in trouble with the police. Two friends asked him for a ride to the house of a woman they knew. On the way, they told him that they planned to break in. Gabriel was sufficiently intimidated by them that he couldn’t refuse them. While he waited, they took a television and a computer. Someone saw Gabriel’s car, and the police later charged him with two felonies, for which he got six months’ probation. The encounter scared him, and even before the case was disposed of he moved back to

New York, where he lived between his mother’s and his father’s apartments. He took up with a young woman named Tamar, who was willowy and dark-haired and as thin as a wading bird. They liked to shop together; she liked to buy him clothes. Every Wednesday night, Tamar made hot dogs and baked cookies, and they watched “Ultimate Fighting” on television. With friends, they watched pirated movies that they bought on the street for five dollars.

Gabriel and his friends often began to party at ten or eleven at night, like figures in a Russian novel. They went to raves in Williamsburg and Chelsea and Tribeca. His social life was dramatic. “He was repeatedly fighting with friends, talking about them, reconciling with them,” Hirsch wrote. “He had a small but intense circle. Whatever else was happening in his life, he was always so much happier when his friends were around. In his own way, he had a gift for friendship.” Because Gabriel was essentially nocturnal, it was impossible for Hirsch to keep track of him. “I worried about him all the time,” he said. Three days a week, Gabriel came to his office for an allowance. Often he



“She was a rescue.”

told his father that he worried too much.

One day in 2011, Gabriel was at the apartment on West 109th Street where his friend Joe Straw, who was a little older than Gabriel, lived with his mother. Gabriel and Straw were playing a video game. Their games grew so heated that they played standing up. “Gabriel was a little bit in back of me,” Straw told me. “He was saying, ‘Oh yeah, watch, ‘cause I got you now,’ and then I just heard him hit the floor.” Straw realized that Gabriel was having a seizure, and he put his hand in Gabriel’s mouth to keep him from biting his tongue. Straw’s mother called 911 and, while they waited, Straw said he held Gabriel as tight as he could. “The medics asked him what year it was, and he didn’t say the right year,” Straw said. “He kept taking off his oxygen mask and saying hello into it, like it was a phone.”

A few weeks later, Landay and Hirsch took Gabriel to a hospital for tests. Gabriel was hopeful that the tests would identify the reason for all his problems and that there would be a treatment to cure him, but the tests didn’t really show anything. “Nobody had any idea what was wrong with him,” Hirsch said. Gabriel was disconsolate. He had another seizure, in Chicago, while he and Tamar were visiting Hirsch’s mother. At lunch at a restaurant, his eyes rolled back, and he fell on Tamar’s shoulder. They were sitting in a booth beside a window, and he began to punch the window. The seizure lasted about a minute. Then he started kissing Tamar, and she held him. His knuckles were bruised, he had a terrible headache, and he couldn’t recall anything that had happened.

Hirsch and I had been talking for a couple of hours. Evening was falling and the windows were turning darker. He walked around the office, collecting his things. “I didn’t just worry about his present well-being,” he said. “He was so unworldly that it was hard to imagine a path for him into the future. He seemed so unsuited to the practical world that I could never quite see him as a middle-aged man. It never occurred to me that he would die, of course, especially so young. It was too awful a thing to think about. He sometimes put his trust in the wrong people, and made poor choices, but he was also so touching and full of joy. He was incomparably alive, and so unexpected-

edly charismatic. My heart was lifted whenever I saw him. It’s really impossible to believe he’s left the world for good.” He paused, and for a moment he seemed overcome. Then he said, “I feel so grateful to have had him for my son.”

Writing “Gabriel” required Hirsch, for the first time, to sort through a huge body of material for which he had to find a shape and a form. He found an organizing principle in the model of three-line stanzas. He liked that each stanza had a beginning, a middle, and an end. Usually, the three-line stanza is “a dialect of the underworld,” Eavan Boland pointed out to me. “A signal that the poem is about grief.” This is mainly because it invokes *terza rima*, the three-line rhyming scheme of the “Divine Comedy.” Dante’s lines rhyme aba, bcb, cdc, and so on, but Hirsch’s lines are unrhymed. Hirsch’s stanzas are also unpunctuated, which allows them to move adroitly and to bear what the poet C. K. Williams described to me as “both trivial things and grandly non-trivial things”—Gabriel’s antics, his humor and presence, but also the weight of Hirsch’s own desolate feelings. Charles Simic told me that the stanzas’ pace and fluidity reminded him of “the way memories pour out of us.”

The final structure—sections of ten stanzas, each section occupying a page—occurred to Hirsch after four months. The sections sometimes carry the poem’s narrative, and sometimes convey associations that are a kind of commentary. They aren’t poems themselves; Hirsch calls them “near-poems.” He liked that the fast alternations of tone and subject seemed to evoke the willfulness and impulsivity that were hallmarks of Gabriel’s temperament.

One day, I sat with Hirsch in his office and looked through drafts of “Gabriel,” which filled one of those cardboard boxes called Bankers Boxes. Hirsch held the box on his lap and leafed through the pages. Now and then, he lifted several pages from the file. “Oh wow, you see a lot of mistakes when you read it this way,” he said. “This was a whole section that I didn’t include where I was calling him ‘Dada boy.’ I had a lot of anecdotes under Dada boy. Dada boy captured something,

but in the end I didn’t think it worked that well.” He put the pages back and removed some others. “The boy with a headset,” he said. “I had ‘The boy with a headset did not have the patience of a flâneur. He did not like to take his time and linger along the avenues.’ It was going on like that for a while. I decided it was a false track.”

The next section Hirsch examined, about Gabriel’s manner, is part of the final poem. “I had a surfeit of stories about Gabriel’s impulsivity, and I decided to make one particular section about Mr. Impulsive, which I hoped would have a droll feeling,” he said. The section begins:

Mr. Impulsive walked out of class
When he did not like what the teacher
said
It was boring

Mr. Impulsive scurried out in a storm
Wearing shorts and a wife beater
Soon he was shivering

The neighbors complained to the landlord
Complained to me but Mr. Impulsive
Could not be bothered to close the gate.

All the schools that Gabriel attended, Hirsch condensed into a section written using the structure of a blues lyric. “I love the blues, and it seemed like a good subject for the form, since that’s how he felt about school.” The section begins:

He’s singing the Poe Elementary School
blues
He’s singing the Shlenker School blues a
day school
For the offspring of upper-middle-class
strivers

He’s singing the Montessori School blues
He’s singing the Monarch School blues
For kids with executive function
disorders

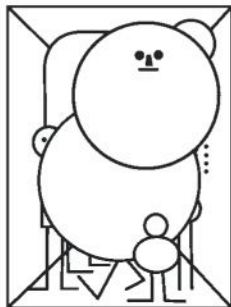
And ends:

There are no more academies to attend
He was not befriended by study
A therapist called him one of the lost boys.

Grasping another set of pages, he said, “I thought I hadn’t captured enough about worrying. Janet and I were endlessly worrying. So there’s a section about worry. I changed the ending from ‘we’ to ‘I.’” The section reads:

The evening with its lamps burning
The night with its head in its hands
The early morning

I look back at the worried parents
Wandering through the house
What are we going to do



The evening of the clinical
The night of the psychological
The morning facedown in the pillow

The experts can handle him
The experts have no idea
How to handle him

There are enigmas in darkness
There are mysteries
Sent out without searchlights

The stars are hiding tonight
The moon is cold and stony
Behind the clouds

Nights without seeing
Mornings of the long view
It's not a sprint but a marathon

*Whatever we can do
We must do
Every morning's resolve*

But sometimes we suspected
He was being punished
For something obscure we had done

I would never abandon the puzzle
Sleeping in the next room
But I could not solve it.

One night at dinner at Café Luxembourg, on the Upper West Side, a waiter laid plates in front of us, and Hirsch said, "There's one other thing I'd like to tell you about my grief: I was shocked to discover that I couldn't read. Even poetry, which had always come to my rescue, couldn't protect or console me. People are irreplaceable, and art, no matter how good, doesn't replace them. It took this tragedy for me to feel that. A lot of people have died whom I loved, but I still found tremendous comfort in poetry. To be left with myself and being unable to read meant I was unrecognizable to myself."

A busboy poured water in our glasses. Hirsch continued, "I used to believe in poetry in a way that I don't now. I used to feel that poetry would save us. When I was writing 'Gabriel,' even the painful things were consoling, but I'm aware when I'm outside the poem that the poem doesn't give me my son back. Art can't give him back to me. It comforts you some, better than almost anything else can, but you're still left with your losses."

The waiter returned when I was in the midst of a sentence, and he said, "Forgive me, but were you discussing Richard Howard?" He said that he translated poems from Hungarian and asked if we would like to hear one. He leaned

over our table and spoke just above a whisper. The Hungarian words sounded like incantations and like small bells ringing. He asked if we would like to hear his translation. I had assumed he was reciting something obscure, but, when he ended, Hirsch said, "Wow, you made it rhyme. The standard translation doesn't."

I said, "This is Edward Hirsch," and he and the waiter shook hands, then the waiter left. Hirsch and I went back to our conversation. "One of the sections of the poem that's very important to me is the one about carrying bags of cement on your shoulders," Hirsch said. The section begins:

I did not know the work of mourning
Is like carrying a bag of cement
Up a mountain at night

The mountaintop is not in sight
Because there is no mountaintop
Poor Sisyphus grief

I did not know I would struggle
Through a ragged underbrush
Without an upward path

And ends:

Look closely and you will see
Almost everyone carrying bags
Of cement on their shoulders

That's why it takes courage
To get out of bed in the morning
And climb into the day.

"It's a recognition that you're not the only one that's carrying around this grief," Hirsch said. "That seems important for the poem, a recognition that other people are grief-stricken, too."

The waiter placed our check on the table. "I put down these memorandums of my affections," he said. Hirsch smiled. "That was the first poem of yours I learned," the waiter said.

Gabriel and Tamar came to Hirsch's office early in the afternoon of August 26th, to get some money for the weekend. Hurricane Irene was due that night. Hirsch told Gabriel that the storm was going to be serious.

"Don't worry so much, Dad," Hirsch wrote in the dossier.

"I kissed him goodbye and told him I loved him, as I had done thousands of times before. I said I loved him every single time I spoke to him.

"I love you, too," he said.

"Our ritual complete, he whisked out the door."

The rain began falling that night



around nine. Gabriel and Tamar were at Landay's apartment, on the Upper West Side. Hirsch, at home in Brooklyn, was reading translations of the eleven songs of William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, because he had an idea for a poem in the style of the troubadours. He went to sleep on what he calls "the last night of my old life," and got up Saturday morning and began working on the troubadour poem.

Saturday afternoon, Landay called and said that Gabriel hadn't come home. He wasn't answering his phone. Tamar had been calling him, too. Landay had reached the young man that Gabriel had said he was meeting, and he said that Gabriel had cancelled their drink.

Two policemen came to Landay's apartment, but they said that because Gabriel wasn't under sixteen or over sixty-five they couldn't look for him. He would be eligible for a search if he had a life-threatening illness, but neither epilepsy nor PDD-NOS counted as one. Twenty-two-year-olds often behave this way, one of the officers said. He told Landay to check with Gabriel's friends; one of them would know where he was.

Gabriel wasn't in any of the hospitals that Landay called. The subways had

stopped running, because of the storm. It was still raining. Hirsch and Landay thought that maybe he had run out of money and his cell phone had lost its charge, and he was stuck somewhere and couldn't get home.

The rain stopped Sunday, but the subways stayed closed. Two more officers told Landay that there wasn't much they could do; Gabriel was old enough to go wherever he wanted.

Monday morning around six, having spent the night staring out a window, Hirsch started walking toward his office. By the end of two hours, he had crossed the Manhattan Bridge, walked through Chinatown, up the Bowery, over to Park Avenue, and arrived at his desk. Gabriel's friends thought that he was holed up somewhere with a woman. Joe Straw thought it was a Brazilian woman in Tribeca. He didn't know her name, he just called her Brazil. He had been to her apartment only once and wasn't sure where it was, but he would recognize the building when he saw it, he said. Hirsch and Straw began walking the streets looking for it. When they found it, they rang her bell, but no one answered.

They sat on a stoop across the street. It began to grow dark, and the street lights

came on. "There were three sets of windows stacked on top of each other," Straw told me. "The middle was hers. From the street light, you could see pretty much every section of her apartment. Nobody was there. Not even her. Then we're just stuck there. We're still just looking. I don't even know why. I guess because the search is so desperate at this point."

The street light in front of the building flickered. "That's a bad sign," Straw said. Hirsch said it was just a street light. Straw began to grow upset. When the light went out, he said, "I don't know where my friend Gabe is," Hirsch wrote. "I thought he was here, but now I don't know anymore. He's lost."

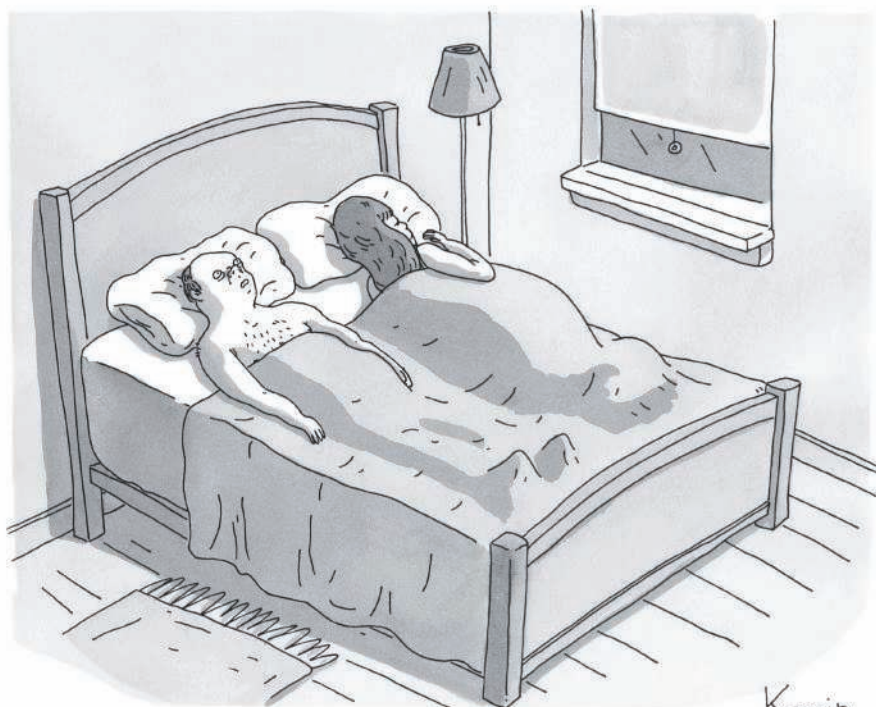
Straw said he had to leave, and Hirsch gave him money for the subway. Hirsch waited a little longer, telling himself that a street lamp was just a street lamp. He decided to go home and check the building in the morning.

Late Monday night, Landay got the idea of examining Gabriel's phone records, which she could do since the phone was in her name. There were several calls and texts to someone in Jersey City. Gabriel's last phone call, made to that number, was at twelve-thirty Saturday morning.

By Tuesday morning, Landay had discovered the address for the phone number. She and Hirsch went to the precinct that was closest to it, where an officer wrote down their driver's-license numbers. After about an hour, four cops escorted them to an office.

According to an assistant prosecutor named Mike D'Andrea, whom I spoke to on the phone, people at the party were given a drug called GHB. The initials sometimes stand for Grievous Bodily Harm and sometimes for Georgia Home Boy. It is a sedative, occasionally employed to treat narcolepsy, and it is sometimes used as a date-rape drug. It can cause nausea and, in large doses, seizures. The ambulance attendants found Gabriel on the floor, unconscious.

At Gabriel's funeral, Joe Straw said that he had written something but that he had decided not to read it. Straw is compact and muscular, with a heart-shaped face, blue eyes, and long black hair. "I just want to talk to you about what it was like to be with Gabe," he told the audience. "Gabe was my best friend, my



*"If I could take back ninety per cent of the things I say,
then I think people would know the real me."*

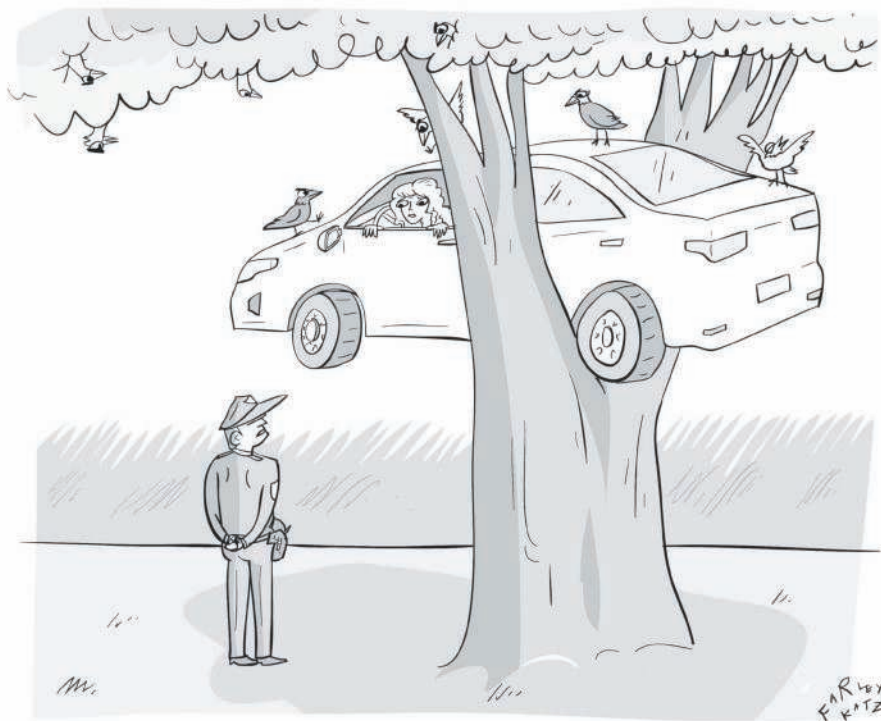
right-hand man. Gabe was my wingman. When I did my endeavors, Gabe was always with me.”

In Straw’s remarks, Hirsch said he felt “Gabriel’s persuasiveness, his generosity, his great joyousness. You felt happy, listening to Joe, that Gabriel had lived so fully.” Straw’s speech, more or less as he delivered it, occupies two sections in “Gabriel.” It is as if, in the manner of a Greek tragedy, a member of the chorus had stepped forward to speak.

Straw described what he and Gabriel had done on Gabriel’s last birthday, October 23, 2010, a story that Hirsch had never heard. They had gone that evening to a tattoo parlor on the Lower East Side to watch the Ultimate Fighting Championship fight between Brock Lesnar and Cain Velasquez. “It’s mad people gathered at this shop,” Straw told me, meaning the place was crowded. “Everybody’s drinking, watching the fights, having a good time. I had talked about wanting to bet Velasquez, the underdog, but I didn’t do it. I was telling everybody, though, ‘Look at the size of his head. He just looks mean.’ Gabe said, ‘You’re right.’” Gabriel thought Velasquez had a head like a brick.

“Just before the fight starts, this fat guy with a beard and a lot of piercings holds up his hand with a big roll of money and says he’s got five hundred dollars on Brock Lesnar,” Straw said. “Gabe says, ‘I got this,’ and they make the bet. Now, I know Gabe has only forty bucks in his pockets, so I also know if we lose I’m going to have to fork over all my money to cover him, and I only have two hundred. I wanted to kick him. Brock was an eight-to-one favorite.”

The fight was over in the first round, and Cain Velasquez won. “The big dude came over and counted out the money and put it on a table like it was nothing,” Straw said. “Now we have all this cash. We’re with our friend Juan and we leave, and we go to this club a few blocks away where there’s a really long line. It’s hopeless. They’re only letting in very few people, and everyone’s dressed very formal, and we’re not. Gabe must have heard something. He goes up to Juan and says, ‘The Ming family.’ We are two white guys, and a half-black, half-Native American. Juan tells the bouncer, ‘We’re with the Ming family,’ and Gabe is standing behind him with a smirk,



“I’m sorry, I can’t help you—you’re subject to bird law now.”

like he knows this is going to work.”

The bouncer let them pass, and they went upstairs to a ballroom where they added themselves to the Ming family wedding reception. Gabriel told people he was distantly related. The Chinese girls they tried to talk to spoke almost no English, so they finally left and went downstairs to a bar where there was another party.

“Everyone’s tuned up,” Straw said. “Gabriel starts spending his money, buying everyone drinks. Then it turns out Juan knows the bartender. His name was Spam. Gabe’s bought so many drinks that Spam starts giving us drinks. I was just, like, ‘Look at Gabe, dancing on the bar on his birthday, feeling like a champ ‘cause he bought the bar out.’ Everybody was going up to him saying, ‘Where you from? What’s your name?’ then turning to someone else and saying, ‘He got my friend’s drink.’ It was the happiest night of his life.”

Gabe and Juan and Joe stayed in the bar until last call. “Then I don’t know why, but we ended up in Union Square,” Straw said. “It’s hazy. I remember we jumped on the back of a garbage truck to aid us in where we wanted to go. The garbagemen

stopped the truck and started to chase us. They were totally Bensonhurst—fat, overweight guys. One of them had a baseball bat. They only lasted to the end of the block. I can still hear them wheezing behind me, trying to catch us.”

The three of them then walked a few blocks until they saw a delivery truck with its back doors open, and no one around it. “It’s a pastry truck,” Straw said. “We grabbed several boxes of pastries, and we’re running and eating and drunk and laughing.” When Straw had eaten all the pastries he wanted, he went to throw the rest in a trash can, but Gabriel took them from him. Of his prize money, Gabriel had about forty dollars left. Between him and Straw, he had a couple of boxes of pastries, which he distributed among the homeless men in Union Square. When Straw asked what he was doing, Gabriel said, “We just had the night of our lives, and these guys deserve a good breakfast.” Then he went to a coffee shop beside the square and bought coffee for all of them, and to one of them he gave five dollars. When he finished, he was out of money. Straw had to buy him a MetroCard to go home.

“I wasn’t even mad at him,” Straw said. ♦



My father was a suspicious man—and, as a widower, wounded, too. My mother died when I was ten, and he became overly concerned about my welfare. He showed it in the following way: he'd take me by the chin, lift my head, and smell it, as though examining a melon for ripeness. He was checking for cigarette smoke or a girl's perfume, the reek of the pool-room or a back alley, for the odor of disobedience. He never smelled anything. Even so, to test me he'd say, "Where?," meaning, "Where have you been?"

He was thrifty in all ways, with money, with time; he always tore a stick of chewing gum in half and put the other half in his pocket for later. And he made sure to use the fewest words possible. If he wanted me to move out of the way, he said, "Shift," or if I asked for a favor he said, "Never." He hated explanations.

Gruff with me, but talkative with customers at the shoe store that he owned, he seemed to me to be two people. That didn't surprise me. I was also two people: the obedient son tidying the store and sorting shoe sizes, and, out of my father's sight, someone else—I was not sure who, but certainly not the person he was used to.

All through high school I worked for him at the shoe store, hating every minute of it. He claimed that he needed me, but business was slow—"slack" was how he'd put it—and I knew that he wanted me there only to keep me out of trouble. His letterhead said "Louis Lecomte & Son," which looked important, but the reality was my father dozing in one of the customers' chairs and me in the basement stacking shoeboxes.

The way my father worried about me made me think I was dangerous. I could hear the tremor in his voice when he called out, "Albert!" If I didn't reply, he'd call again, "Al!," then "Bertie!," with growing alarm—where was I?—until at last I said, "Yuh?," and he was calmed. Cruel of me to delay like that, but I felt trapped. I missed all the school football games. I never joined a team, because I couldn't take time off to practice. I couldn't hang around Brigham's ice-cream parlor after school, looking for action. My fa-

ther had succeeded. Sometimes I felt very young, other times like an old man: no action for me.

As a menial (I worked for pocket money), I dusted the shoes on display, helped take inventory, and polished the Brannock Device, a metal clamp-like contraption for measuring feet—both width and length. I also ran errands. The errands were the only freedom I had, but it was always the same trip—picking up a pair of shoes, sometimes two, from a warehouse in Boston, near South Station, on Atlantic Avenue.

My father sent me there one summer afternoon, and, before I left, he raised his hand and said, "No Eddie," meaning, "Don't associate with Eddie Springer," a friend whom he considered a bad influence. What I liked about Eddie was the way he himself said, "I'm a wicked-bad influence."

I took the electric car to Sullivan Square, climbed the stairs, and waited on the platform in front of "Spitting Is Forbidden," then rode the train to South Station and gave the shoe size and style to the man at the warehouse counter. He didn't greet me or even comment. He made out an invoice by hand, measured a length of string, and tied the box while I leaned on the counter.

A woman at a desk behind him smiled at me and said, "You look just like your father."

I didn't know what to say. My father was more than fifty years old. She looked quite a bit younger. I could smell her perfume, like strong soap, and I imagined that her blond hair, too, had a fragrance. Seated, she seemed small, doll-like, but sure of herself.

The man said, "Ask your father why he only buys one pair at a time."

The woman winked at me. She said, "His father only sells one pair at a time."

"And when is he going to pay me what he owes me?"

"I'll ask him." The suggestion that my father might be tricky reassured me and made me admire him.

As I left, holding the box with a clip-on handle, a wooden cylinder with wire hooked through it, the woman said, "Don't listen to Grumpy. Your father's a great guy. Tell him Vie was asking for him. Violet."

Maybe that was his other side—a la-

dies' man, a man of the world now down on his luck as a widower and the father of a sulky teen-ager. If that was the case, it only made him more suspicious. He knew what a boy was capable of. He was puritanical and hated any kind of foolery—loud music or talk about girls, or sunny, frivolous places, like California or Florida, any sort of indiscipline.

But that woman, Vie, knew something about my father that I didn't, and the idea that he was concealing a part of his life made me dawdle on the errand, in my own concealment.

I cut through South Station and bought a jelly doughnut. The woman at the counter, in a white apron and cap, lifted the doughnut from the tray with tongs and dropped it into a small bag.

"Ten cents," she said, and I gave her the dime. As I stepped away, a man with a mean face leaned over and said, "Give me that." He looked like a gargoyle, and his smell and his ugliness made him seem violent.

Handing over the bag, I held on to the shoebox and hurried out of the station as though I'd done something wrong. I went up Federal Street, walking fast, until I got to Milk Street. I had a sense that the man might be following me. I went down into Goodspeed's bookstore. The old woman at the desk said, "You can't bring any parcels in here."

Near the corner of Milk and Washington, I stopped at a shop that sold knives and cameras. I knew the place. There was always someone, usually two or three men, looking at the window display of knives—hunting knives with wide blades or jagged blades and shiny bone handles, bowie knives, Buck knives, Swiss Army knives. The cameras were set out in the adjoining window.

A grinning man in a long coat and glasses said, "Hey, look at that camera, how small it is. That one down there."

Like a toy, a tiny camera was propped on a box with a tiny red roll of film.

"You could get some swell pictures with that. Fit it in the palm of your hand," the man said. "Take it anywhere."

I said, "I guess so. It's really small. Maybe German."

He put his face near mine, as the man in South Station had done, demanding my doughnut. "I took some pictures of my roommate when he was bollocky," the man said. He was smiling horribly

and making a face, and he dislodged his glasses. He pushed them back into place with a dirty thumb.

But I was backing away. I said, "That's O.K."

"I could take a picture of you bollocky," he said. "Wanna let me?"

"No, thanks."

"You're probably too shy."

"No. It's not that. I just don't want to."

I walked quickly into the sidewalk crowd and ducked past Raymond's department store. I crossed Washington Street and headed up Bromfield, lingering in front of Little Jack Horner's Jokes and Magic, then to Tremont, up Park to the black soldiers' memorial and Hooker's statue, and down Beacon. Just as I approached Scollay Square, five black boys, big and small, came toward me, filling the sidewalk.

My heart was beating fast as I hurried through traffic to the other side of the street, and I kept walking until I got to the Old Howard theatre. Ever since leaving the shoe warehouse I'd been escaping, and it seemed strange that, trying to avoid trouble, I'd found myself here. I had come here with Eddie Springer one Saturday six months before, after bumping into him on another errand.

Eddie knew the corners of Boston and all the shortcuts. It was Eddie who had shown me the knife shop and Raymond's and the joke shop; my father had shown me the memorial to the black regiment and Hooker's statue and the Union Oyster House. Between my father and Eddie, Boston held no secrets for me.

It was all exteriors, though. I never

went inside anywhere. What would be the point? I had no money, and I was afraid of being confronted. But Eddie had been to all the stores, and had even gone inside the Old Howard for a burlesque show and told me the jokes. A stripper said to a heckler, "Meet me in my dressing room. If I'm late, start without me," which made Eddie laugh so hard he didn't notice that I hadn't understood.

We had come this way in the winter, the same route, from South Station toward the Common, then via Scollay Square—a detour—and along Cambridge Street to the back slope of Beacon Hill.

When I realized that I was retracing that winter walk with Eddie, I felt safer. I knew that I could make my way onward to North Station and to the electric cars in Sullivan Square to take the shoes back to my father.

Eddie was three years older than me, a neighbor who was kind to me because he knew that my mother was dead. He smoked, he drank beer, and he knew Boston, which was like knowing the world. His confidence made him a hero to me. And he had a girlfriend—Paige. We'd gone to see her.

That day with Eddie, there had been snow on the ground. Now it was a summer afternoon of hot sidewalks and sharp smells and strangers, the air of the city thick with humidity under a heavy gray sky. It all stank pleasantly of wickedness, and if I'd known anything I would have recognized it as sensual. But I was fifteen, small for my age, soon to enter my sophomore year of high school. Away from my house I wasn't sure who I was; I had no self, nothing to put forward, no idea that I

dared express, no voice, nothing but the bravado I'd learned from Eddie, even his sayings. "Eyes like pinwheels," he'd say. Or, "She's easy," as he'd said of Paige.

I remembered Paige clearly: blond, small, with a broad, blankish face, but kindly eyes. She listened and responded with her eyes and didn't say much. Eddie claimed she was an Indian, from Veazie, Maine, on the river, and he said she was a dancer.

"You like her."

"She's action." Saying that, he believed he'd told me everything.

Her smallness had made her seem girlish, but she was older than Eddie and much older than me, twentysomething. She seemed strong—experienced and sure of herself—but she had no airs. She had treated me as an equal and hadn't mentioned that she was eight or ten years older.

I don't know why Eddie took me to meet her. Perhaps he wanted to introduce me to a life remote from mine and show me what a man of the world he was. When I was with him, I felt that I was learning how to be a man of the world myself.

I liked the idea that Paige looked so demure and patient—solid and reassuring, petite and close to the ground, the ideal of girlhood—but deep down she was wild, her other self hidden, to be awakened only by Eddie, who described her howling when he made love to her.

"She knows a few tricks," he said. "And so do I."

Paige lived alone in a basement on the other side of Beacon Hill, not an apartment but one large room, the kitchen at the back wall, a double bed to the right, some heavily upholstered chairs near the front door.

On this late-summer afternoon, crossing town, carrying my shoebox, I walked slowly downhill, looking for her door. But I didn't want to knock—nor was I sure which door was hers, because on that side of the hill the houses were so much alike. I walked on the opposite side of the street, glancing across, and saw that some of the basement doors were open. Encouraged, I crossed over, and as I passed a house I saw Paige inside, framed by the doorway, standing at an ironing board, shaking water onto a red cloth and then running an iron over it.

"Hi."

With the bright daylight behind me



"Who's coping with his fear of the vacuum? Are you coping with your fear of the vacuum? Are you? Yes, you are."

as I peered down, my face must have been hard to make out, because she looked uncertain, even a bit worried. She lifted the iron, holding it like a weapon.

Instead of saying my name, I said, "Eddie's friend."

Still holding the iron, she angled her body a bit to see me sideways, away from the light, and then said, "You! Come on in," and laughed in a gasping sort of way, as if in relief.

I walked down the short flight of stairs to the basement room and sat in one of the upholstered chairs, exactly where I had sat six months ago, when I'd come with Eddie.

"I hope it's O.K. to stop by," I said.

"It's nice to see you," she said, and returned to her ironing—and I could tell from the smoothness of her movements that she meant what she said. She pushed the iron without effort across the red cloth, then with her free hand she deftly folded the cloth in half and ironed the fold, giving it a crease.

"I just happened to be in the neighborhood," I said. This explanation gave me pleasure, because it wasn't quite true, yet sounded plausible, even suave.

But I suspected that she didn't believe me. She was literal-minded and truthful, in the way of someone with no small talk. She said, "There's not much going on in this part of the world."

"I was headed to North Station."

Paige smiled, clapping her iron down. "How about a drink?"

"I'm all set."

"There's some lemonade in the fridge—help yourself," she said, tossing her head, loosening her hair.

Eddie would have known how to find the lemonade and a glass and pour himself a drink, but it was beyond me. It occurred to me that I was out of my depth. I knew that, had Paige not been ironing in the open doorway, I would not have approached her. Without a word, she went to the refrigerator and poured me a glass of lemonade.

To fill the silence, I said, "I haven't seen Eddie lately."

She bowed her head and went on ironing.

"He changed schools. I guess he wasn't too happy in Maine."

She still said nothing.



"I'd like to go there sometime."

She nodded.

"Like Eddie says, cold in the winter, and the summer's only a few days in July."

She worked the red cloth into a tighter square and pressed it with the heel of her hand before applying the iron again.

"And I don't belong there. My mother once said, 'Just because a cat has kittens inside an oven doesn't make them biscuits.'" She didn't react. I now felt sure that I'd raised the wrong subject. I said, "But my mother's dead."

This roused her. She looked pained. She said, "I'm really sorry. Please have some more lemonade?"

I showed her that my glass was half full. I said, "How's the dancing?"

"It's O.K.," she said, and, echoing the tone I'd used, "The dancing."

"Whereabouts do you do it?"

"You know the High Bar?"

"Not sure."

"You've got to be twenty-one," she said, frowning. "It's kind of a rough place."

"I'd like to see you there."

"No, you wouldn't," she said. "You're better off somewhere else. Like getting a good education."

That was friendly. It encouraged me, because I felt that she was becoming familiar with me, and something more might happen, and it excited me, because I didn't know what.

She was a steady presence, standing with her legs apart in her loose shorts, one hand smoothing and folding the red cloth, which grew smaller with each fold, the heavy iron in her other hand. Wisps of hair framed her damp face. I was not used to seeing a woman dressed like this, almost undressed, in her own house, and that excited me, too.

"So where did you learn to dance?" I asked.

She smiled again, shook her head. "It's pretty easy," she said. "The guys don't come there for the dancing." As we talked, my eyes were drawn to her bed, which was neatly made, with plump pillows and a Teddy bear propped up against them, and on the side table a book. I could easily read the gold lettering on the spine, because it was a title I



"No, this is correct—you're both in 28-B. We no longer offer individual seats."

knew, the New Testament. That confused me. It didn't fit with the image that Eddie had given me. *She's action.* I saw us in the bed, doing—what? I'd never been in bed with a woman.

"Darn," she said.

The spell broke briefly, but the way she put down the iron and fussed, hiking up her untucked blouse, made her seem sexy again.

"I'm out of starch."

As she spoke, a shadow moved across her face, filling the doorway.

"Just thought I'd stop in." The slow way the man descended the stairs emphasized his bulk, as though he were climbing down a ladder, testing each step before taking another. But when he got to the bottom and I stood—my nervousness making me self-consciously polite—I saw that he was not much taller than I was, though twice as heavy. "Vic."

He went over and chucked Paige under the chin. She jerked her face away as if she expected to be slapped. "You be having yourself?"

"Have a coffee."

"I'll have what he's having."

"Lemonade," Paige said. "It's in the fridge. I have to get some starch. I'll be right back."

"I should go," I said.

"I won't be a minute."

"Don't go," Vic said at the refrigerator, pouring himself a glass of lemonade. Then Paige was out the door and up the stairs.

I sat down. Vic sat in the chair next to me, but only sighed, didn't say anything. A sound came from my throat, a worried noise, a whicker of anxiety—*Heh-heh.*

"Heh-heh," Vic said, the exact sound, and he stared at me. His face was hard and misshapen, with full lips. He was hunched forward in the chair, which made him look fatter, and I could hear his breathing, like gas escaping. He said, "I know who you are. You're Eddie."

"No. I'm not Eddie." My voice was high and terrified, and the way I said it seemed to convince him that I was lying.

To calm myself, or maybe to show him that I was calm, I raised my glass to my mouth. As I began to drink, he leaned over and punched me in the side of my face, cracking the rim of the glass against my teeth and jarring my head. I drunkenly set

the glass on a side table and moved unsteadily toward the stairs, just as Paige came down.

"I have to go."

"What did you do?" she said angrily to Vic, but she knew.

"You heard him. He has to go."

I hurried away, blind, stumbling downhill. I was so stunned at being hit in the face that I couldn't think. My head was ringing, my jaw hurt, and yet I felt glad to be away, and happy when I saw that I wasn't being chased. My mouth was full of foul-tasting saliva, but I didn't spit until I got to the bottom of the hill, and then I bent over and spat blood. There was a tenderness on my tongue where my teeth, or the glass, had hit it when he punched me.

Passing a pizza parlor, I caught my reflection in the window and was surprised to see that I looked normal: no one would have guessed that I'd been hit in the face. But I seemed so young, so pale, with spiky hair and a rumpled shirt.

That was how I looked. Inside, I was sick, and the wound in my mouth, the taste of blood, made me afraid. I ran, skinny and breathless, to North Station, pushed my token into the slot, and hurried onto the train.

It was at Sullivan Square, as the train drew in, that I remembered the shoes. I'd left them at Paige's apartment when I ran. On the electric car I tried to think of an excuse. The truth was awful, impossible, unrepeatable.

As soon as my father saw me entering the store, he said, "Shoes?," in his economical way, not wasting words on me. But it struck me that he was his other self, too, the one the woman had described, the good guy. It seemed, as I thought this, that he was summing me up, too.

"I lost them. I was on the train and looked down and they weren't there."

"What else?"—meaning, "And what other things happened to you?"

"Nothing."

He lifted my chin. The wound in my mouth hurt as he tugged my head. He leaned over and, sniffing my hair, he knew everything. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM

An interview with Paul Theroux.



The Metropolitan Museum of Art's annual Costume Institute exhibition and gala are among the fashion world's most spectacular events. Now *Vogue* takes you inside, with in-depth stories and stunning photographs.

By Hamish Bowles

Foreword by Thomas P. Campbell

Introduction by Anna Wintour

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THE CRITICS



BOOKS

THE PLACES IN BETWEEN

The struggle to define Indonesia.

BY PANKAJ MISHRA

After India and China, Indonesia was the biggest new nation-state to emerge in the mid-twentieth century. Consisting of thousands of islands large and small, it sprawls roughly the same distance as that from Washington, D.C., to Alaska, and contains the largest Muslim population on earth. Yet, on our mental map of the world, the country is little more than a faraway setting for earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions. The political traumas of post-colonial Egypt, from Suez to el-Sisi, are far better known than the killing, starting in 1965, of more than half a million Indonesians suspected of being Communists or the thirty-year insurgency in Aceh Province. Foreign-affairs columnists, who prematurely hailed many revolutions at the end of the Cold War (Rose, Orange, Green, Saffron), failed to color-code the dramatic overthrow, in 1998, of Suharto, Indonesia's long-standing dictator. They have scarcely noticed the country's subsequent transfers of power through elections (there was one earlier this month) and a radical experiment in decentralization. The revelation that, from 1967 to 1971, Barack Obama lived in Jakarta with his mother, a distinguished anthropologist, does not seem to have provoked broadened interest in Indonesian history and culture—as distinct from the speculation that the President of the United States might have been brought up a Muslim.

Indonesia's diversity is formidable: some thirteen and a half thousand islands, two hundred and fifty million peo-

ple, around three hundred and sixty ethnic groups, and more than seven hundred languages. In this bewildering mosaic, it is hard to find any shared moral outlooks, political dispositions, customs, or artistic traditions that do not reveal further internal complexity and division. Java alone—the most populous of the islands, with nearly sixty per cent of the country's population—offers a vast spectacle of overlapping cultural identities, and contains the sediments of many world civilizations (Chinese, Indian, Middle Eastern, European). The Chinese who settled in the port towns of the archipelago in the fifteenth century are a reminder of the great maritime network that, long before the advent of European colonialists, bound Southeast Asia to places as far away as the Mediterranean. Islam is practiced variously, tinged by the pre-Islamic faiths of Hinduism, Buddhism, and even animism. The ethnic or quasi-ethnic groups that populate the islands (Javanese, Batak, Bugis, Acehnese, Balinese, Papuan, Bimanese, Dayak, and Ambonese) can make Indonesia seem like the world's largest open-air museum of natural history.

As Elizabeth Pisani writes in her exuberant and wise travel book "Indonesia Etc." (Norton), this diversity "is not just geographic and cultural; different groups are essentially living at different points in human history, all at the same time." In recent years, foreign businessmen, disgruntled with rising costs and falling profits in India and China, have gravitated to Indonesia instead. About



ABOVE: FRANÇOIS AVRIL; OPPOSITE: MAGNUM

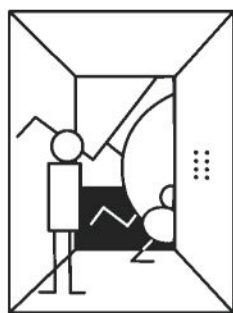
A protest in Bali, in 1965. In 1965 and 1966,



some half a million suspected Communists were massacred across Indonesia. The dictator Suharto became President the following year.

PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS HOEPKER

half the population is under the age of thirty, and this has stoked excited conjecture in the international business media about Indonesia's "demographic dividend." And it is true that in Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of Borneo, once known for its ferocious headhunters, you can now find gated communities and Louis Vuitton bags. But the emblems of consumer modernity can be deceptive. While Jakarta tweets more than any other city in the world, and sixty-nine million Indonesians—more than the entire population of the United Kingdom—use Facebook, a tribe of hunter-gatherers still dines on bears in the dwindling rain forests of Sumatra, and pre-burial rites in nominally Christian Sumba include tea with the corpse.



This coexistence of the archaic and the contemporary is only one of many peculiarities that mark Indonesia as the unlikeliest of the nation-states improvised from the ruins of Europe's empires after the Second World War. The merchants and traders of the Netherlands, who ruthlessly consolidated their power in the region beginning in the seventeenth century, had given the archipelago a semblance of unity, making Java its administrative center. The Indonesian nationalists, mainly Javanese, who threw the Dutch out—in 1949, after a four-year struggle—were keen to preserve their inheritance, and emulated the coercion, deceit, and bribery of the colonial rulers. But the country's makeshift quality has always been apparent; it was revealed by the alarmingly vague second sentence in the declaration of independence from the Netherlands, which reads, "Matters relating to the transfer of power *etc.* will be executed carefully and as soon as possible."

Indonesia, Pisani writes, "has been working on that 'etc' ever since." To be fair, Indonesians have had a lot to work on. Building political and economic institutions was never going to be easy in a geographically scattered country with a crippling colonial legacy—low literacy, high unemployment, and inflation. The Japanese invasion and occupation during the Second World War had undermined the two incidental benefits of long Euro-

pean rule: a professional army and a bureaucracy. In the mid-nineteen-fifties, the American novelist Richard Wright concluded that "Indonesia has taken power away from the Dutch, but she does not know how to use it." Wright invested his hopes for rapid national consolidation in "the *engineer* who can build a project out of eighty million human lives, a project that can nourish them, sustain them, and yet have their voluntary loyalty." Indonesia did have such a person: Sukarno, a qualified engineer and architect who had become a prominent insurgent against Dutch rule. For a brief while, he formed—with India's Jawaharlal Nehru and Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser—a kind of Holy Trinity of the post-colonial world. But Sukarno struggled to secure the loyalty of the country's dissimilar peoples. In the service of his nation-building project, he deployed anti-imperialist rhetoric, nationalized privately held industries, and unleashed the military against secession-minded islanders. He developed an ideology known as Nasakom (an attempted blend of nationalism, Islam, and Communism), before settling on a more autocratic amalgam that he called Guided Democracy.

By the early nineteen-sixties, Sukarno was worried about the military, which had been developing close links with the Pentagon, and he sought to establish a counterweight by strengthening the Partai Komunis Indonesia, at that time the largest Communist party outside the Soviet Union and China. But a series of still unclear events on the night of September 30, 1965, led to his downfall: several members of the military high command were murdered, provoking a counter-coup by a general named Suharto. The new rulers, Pisani writes, unleashed "a tsunami of anti-P.K.I. propaganda, followed by revenge killings." The military zealously participated in the extermination of left-wing pests, and, as Pisani points out, "many ordinary Indonesians joined in with gusto." Various groups—big landowners in Bali threatened by landless peasants, Dayak tribes resentful of ethnic Chinese—"used the great orgy of violence to settle different scores." In Sumatra, "gangster organizations affil-

ated with business interests developed a special line in garroting communists who had tried to organize plantation workers." The killings of 1965 and 1966 remain one of the great unpunished crimes of the twentieth century. The recent documentary "The Act of Killing" shows aging Indonesians eagerly boasting of their role in the exterminations.

This bloodletting inaugurated Suharto's New Order—an even more transparent euphemism for despotism than Sukarno's Guided Democracy had been. Suharto offered people rapid economic growth through private investment and foreign trade, without any guarantee of democratic rights. Styling himself *bapak*, or father, of all Indonesians, he proved more successful than other stern paternalists, such as the Shah of Iran and the Philippines' Ferdinand Marcos. One of his advisers was a close reader of Samuel Huntington's "Political Order in Changing Societies" (1968). The book's thesis—that simultaneous political and economic modernization could lead to chaos—was often interpreted in developing countries as a warning against unguided democracy. Suharto, accordingly, combined hard-nosed political domination with an expanding network of economic patronage. In effect, he was one of the earliest exponents of a model that China's rulers now embody: crony capitalism mixed with authoritarianism. He benefitted from the fact that the massacres had not only disposed of a strong political opposition but also intimidated potential dissenters among peasants and workers. According to Huntington, the historical role of the military in developing societies "is to open the door to the middle class and to close it on the lower class." Suharto, together with his relatives and allies in the military and in big business, pulled off this tricky double maneuver for more than three decades, helped by the country's wealth of exportable natural resources (tin, timber, oil, coal, rubber, and bauxite).

During the nineteen-seventies and eighties, Jakarta expanded from the low-rise city of Obama's childhood into a perennially gridlocked glass-and-steel megapolis. But with economic growth came a revolution of aspirations and an increasingly politicized public. In 1998, after the Asian financial crisis exposed the fragile foundations of Indonesia's economic gains, Suharto's autocracy

finally collapsed. His successors have cautiously permitted elections and press freedoms, but they have struggled to find a formula that can attract investors, who seek high quarterly returns on their infusions of capital, without alienating the poorly paid or unemployed masses. Stalwarts of the Suharto regime—both ex-generals and monopoly industrialists—have reinvented themselves as manipulators of electoral politics, and disillusionment with democracy runs high.

The country's innate centrifugal forces have been strengthened by the abrupt decision, in 1999, to devolve political power from Java to the provinces. As Pisani puts it, "In the space of just eighteen months, the world's fourth most populous nation and one of its most centralized burst apart to become one of its most decentralized. The center still takes care of defence, fiscal policy, foreign relations, religious affairs, justice and planning. But everything else—health, education, investment policy, fisheries and a whole lot more—was handed over to close to 300 district 'governments.'"

Many of the new administrators in the provinces—popularly known as "mini Suhartos"—are adept at siphoning off the funds and resources at their disposal. The country's old problems of poverty, inequality, and environmental despoliation have become more daunting amid the euphoria generated by faster economic growth and the enrichment of a tiny minority. The elections earlier this month revealed a deepening confusion over what kind of country Indonesia should be. One of the two main Presidential candidates was Suharto's former son-in-law, Prabowo Subianto, a former general accused of committing many human-rights abuses in the nineties, who was backed by most of the political and business elite. Though he is an oil magnate these days, Prabowo tried to direct mass rage and frustration against foreigners who are "pillaging" Indonesia. His ultimately victorious opponent was Joko Widodo (widely known as Jokowi), who has enjoyed a spectacularly rapid rise since 2012, when he went from being the mayor of his home town to governor of Jakarta. Jokowi was the first Presidential candidate since Suharto to have had no ties to the dictator. The son of a carpenter, he has a record of supporting small businesses and the urban poor. The election results show

the huge appeal of his call to a "mental revolution" and "bottom-up" governance among young Indonesians discontented with top-down modernizers.

Pisani is an exceptionally resourceful observer of the ongoing battle to define Indonesia. She first visited the country more than thirty years ago, as a backpacker; she returned as a journalist in 1988, just as public disaffection with Suharto was starting to bubble. In 2001, three years after Suharto was forced out, she was on hand to witness the country's fumbling attempts at political reform, or *reformasi*, and stayed to see its first direct Presidential election, in 2004. Her book, a product of more recent and extensive travels, benefits from this long view, and also from her fluency in Bahasa Indonesia, the one language that most Indonesians can communicate in.

Seeking the unconventional and the little explored, Pisani seems to have deliberately ignored Bali, whose terraced rice fields, gamelan ensembles, and mat-

rimonial opportunities were commemorated most recently in "Eat Pray Love." Exposing herself to motorbikes and dingy buses on bad roads, leaky fishing boats and unreliable ferries, she traces a long, meandering route through the islands on the periphery—Sumba, Maluku, Sulawesi, Sumatra, and Kalimantan—before arriving in the old core of Java. She creatively uses the travel book's discursive form, its built-in tendency toward the random. Her journey is structured by curiosity, and quickened by a sense of wonder and discovery. The information that a shaman was called in to catch a woman-eating crocodile on an island off the coast of Sumatra prompts a typical response from Pisani: "I resolved to go to Haloban to talk to the Crocodile Whisperer." Such wanderlust can border on the masochistic in a country that is, as one of Pisani's friends points out, "hard on the bum." Pisani, however, is always game for fresh experience, whether watching votes being bought at a local election in Aceh or looking for

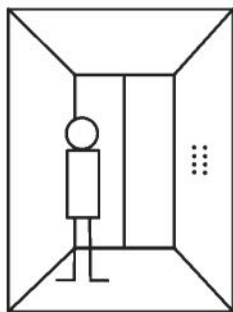


"Don't you want to have parents who can brag about their children?"

the optimum distance between a twenty-four-hour karaoke bar and a smelly toilet on the five-day ferry to Maluku.

More remarkable, she never fails to situate her often meticulously ethnographic depictions of distinct peoples and cultures within a larger picture of a fast-changing country—one in which a system of patronage connects district officials and their local supporters to one another and to Java, and the modern capitalist economy is everywhere, raising incomes on the remotest islands while also despoiling them. Indonesians, Pisani finds, all partake of a collective life at various levels—family, village, neighborhood, region, and country—no matter how diversely they worship their gods or make and dissolve marriages. Indeed, much of rural Java still resembles the island that Clifford Geertz, Indonesia's most astute American observer, saw in the nineteen-fifties. But the old bonds are fraying. Pisani writes, "This spirit of solidarity may not survive the pressures of the modern economy, much less the wholesale move to that other Java, the McDonald's, Indomaret, toll-road, gated-community Java that is gobbling up the island, bite by bite."

A much cited report by the McKinsey Global Institute claims that "around 50 per cent of all Indonesians could be members of the consuming class by 2030, compared with 20 per cent today." It's tempting to see Indonesia as a typical "traditional" society in which an increasingly individualistic middle class will bring about a secular and democratic nation-state. But Pisani's knowledge of the country's innermost recesses leads her to challenge the boosterish speculations of "pinstriped researchers at banks in Hong Kong, committees of think-tank worthies, or foreign journalists." She counters McKinsey's projections with some simple facts: "A third of young Indonesians are producing nothing at all, four out of five adults don't have a bank account, and banks are lending to help people buy things, not to set up new businesses." Meanwhile, the self-dealing activities of the country's political and business elites—"raking in money from commodities, living easy and spending large"—do little to spur real economic growth.



She is equally dismissive of the ideologies who claim that Indonesia is in the ever-expanding evil empire of Islamic extremism. In much of Indonesia, religious practices are still syncretic. In Christian Sumba, she finds the islanders adhering to the ancient Marapu religion, "guided more by what they read in the entrails of a chicken than by what they read in the Bible." Muslims show no sign of repudiating the *wayang*, the shadow-puppet theatre based on the Hindu epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Though it's true that orthodox religion seems increasingly attractive to urban Indonesians, this is largely because religion "is a visible badge of identity which suits the need to clump together, so very pronounced in clannish Indonesia." A few fanatics attacking Christians and Muslim minorities, she argues, do not represent the majority, who seem indifferent to what other people believe. Religious political parties, faced with declining vote share, have moved pragmatically toward the center. However, a more hardheaded analysis would show that intolerance of religious difference has grown since the fall of Suharto and the advent of democracy. As Pisani admits, "Bigotry does produce votes." In order to achieve electoral majorities, politicians have pulled all kinds of stunts—from rash promises of regional autonomy to legislation making women ride motorbikes sidesaddle and protests against Lady Gaga.

Indonesia's political development has had other unexpected outcomes. In a country where once only an elite few could benefit from corruption, many more people are now on the take. Pisani argues that it's possible to see widespread corruption as a kind of "social equalizer." In Indonesia's long-standing system of clan patronage, people look out for members of their extended family or village, awarding them money, contracts, or jobs. Decentralization has empowered many more people to do favors than was previously the case, which in turn gives them a greater investment in maintaining the political status quo. Thus, corruption plays a crucial role "in tying the archipelago's mosaic of islands and disparate peoples into a nation," Pisani writes. "Patronage is the price of unity."

Coming from one of the mini Suhartos, this would seem a cynical rationalization. But Pisani recognizes, as Richard Wright did, that a collective project sustained by voluntary loyalty is crucial to an artificial nation-state like Indonesia, especially when there is a widening abyss between wealth and misery and only a weak national ideology. In Indonesia these days, as in many post-colonial countries, welfare is rarely conceived as a national project, as it was during the idealistic era of Sukarno, Nehru, and Nasser; it is every man for himself. Pisani fears that this new culture of global capitalism has rapidly hollowed out beliefs and institutions that once gave meaning and direction to millions of lives, and replaced them with little more than an invitation to private gratification. High economic growth sustained over several years might eventually help Indonesians aspiring to become free, self-motivated individuals in the modern world. As for the rest, she writes, "the deeply rooted village populations of Indonesia have always lived fairly close to subsistence and millions remain contented with that life."

Pisani is adamant that not all Indonesians can be or ought to be committed to the modern adventure of realizing individual freedom through material success and possessions in the metropolis. Her experience among the premodern communities of Indonesia has made her alert to the painful and often futile sacrifices that their members make for the sake of an imagined better life: how "the all-encompassing security of a shared culture gets sold off in exchange for individual fulfillment." A pragmatic conservatism also explains the lack of a sizable Indonesian diaspora in the West. Emigration to foreign lands looks too arduous when, "by drifting to another island, you can unlace the stays of place and clan, you can learn new dances and try new foods." Pisani's views are similar to those of Ann Dunham, Obama's mother, whose anthropological field work among Javanese villagers made her argue for the economic viability of rural craft traditions among subsistence farmers, and against the bias in all modernizing ideologies toward urbanization.

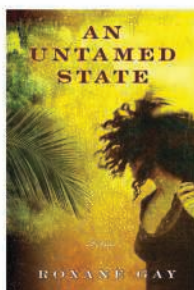
Pisani hopes, somewhat wistfully, that Indonesia's "next Etc." may be a "collectivist culture without the feudalism." This seems even vaguer than the country's original declaration of

independence, in 1945. Indonesia cannot avoid a reckoning with its present and future challenges by trying to retreat into its past. Of all the historical forces that have worked upon its diverse peoples in the past century—maritime trade, imperialism, development, and despotism—the economy and the culture of globalization may turn out to have the most profoundly ambiguous effects. Halfway through her journey, Pisani begins to worry that she is trying “to write a book about a country that has ceased to exist.”

Such uncertainty seems widely shared in many other post-colonial countries. Nationalist ideologies, forged to bring consensus to new heterogeneous societies, have long been in decay. Electoral democracy has lost its moral prestige. Old-style military despots are back in power in Thailand and Egypt. However brutal, they seem to lack the conviction and the resources to build a new national project. Authoritarianism itself has ceased to be a bulwark against disorder in many places, most dramatically in Syria and Iraq.

Indonesia is hardly immune to catastrophic breakdowns, as the anti-Communist pogrom showed. But, like India, it has been relatively fortunate in evolving a mode of politics that can include many discontinuities—of class, region, ethnicity, and religion. Indonesia can’t avoid or prevent severe conflict, but it can weather it without falling apart. The Indonesian archipelago is unlikely to descend into the violent secessionist anarchy currently on display in the Middle East and North Africa. However, what it still needs, as Geertz once argued, is a “structure of difference within which cultural tensions that are not about to go away, or even to moderate, can be placed and negotiated—contained in a country.” Such a reconfigured national consensus, or a way of doing without one, seems equally imperative in the case of Hispanic immigrants in America, Muslims in France, Palestinians in Israel, Tamils in Sri Lanka, Kurds in Turkey, and Tibetans in China. The old question—what is a country, and what is its basis?—has become menacingly relevant long after it appeared to have been settled. In that sense, it is not facile to wonder if we are all Indonesians now, facing the perplexities of a shattering old order. ♦

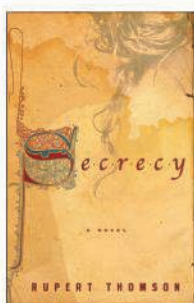
BRIEFLY NOTED



AN UNTAMED STATE, by Roxane Gay (*Black Cat*). How does one survive thirteen harrowing days in captivity? The question animates this commanding debut, whose protagonist, Mireille, is kidnapped in broad daylight while driving to the beach in Port-au-Prince with her husband and young son. Gay unsparingly renders Mireille’s ordeal at the hands of her ruthless captors, and details the tensions afflicting the “untamed state” of Haiti: corruption, roaming gangs of bandits, and an expatriate community still yearning to return home. Mireille’s struggle to maintain a sense of self while being denied her freedom produces the novel’s most powerful chapters. “I was no one,” Mireille says repeatedly, as her mental state, too, becomes increasingly “untamed.”



THE BALLAD OF A SMALL PLAYER, by Lawrence Osborne (*Hogarth*). Gambling has rarely seemed less fun than in this novel, in which a disgraced English lawyer, working under the name Lord Doyle, feverishly attempts to rid himself of stolen cash at the baccarat tables of Macau while drinking himself into oblivion. Osborne, a travel writer, renders the atmosphere of casinos, hotels, and restaurants seductively. The story shifts from Doyle’s headlong descent when he is rescued from penury by a mysterious, possibly ghostly, prostitute, who nurses him back to health before disappearing. Though portentous philosophizing about the nature of luck occasionally slows down the narrative, Osborne shows an impeccable facility for capturing the sweat-soaked suspense of the high-stakes card table.



SECRECY, by Rupert Thomson (*Other Press*). In this historical novel set in late-seventeenth-century Florence, a Sicilian sculptor who makes anatomically accurate wax portraits of physical degeneration arrives at the Medici court at the invitation of the Grand Duke. After falling in love with a woman who is an enemy of the court, he must negotiate carefully between love and patronage. Thomson paints a suspenseful picture of the moody, factional world of Florentine politics and draws parallels with the inner life of an artist whose work imitates darkness and decay. The novel is a meditation on different forms of secrecy—the creative ambiguity of the sculptures, the political hypocrisy at the court, the riddles inherent in the most intimate relationships.



THE ROAD TO EMMAUS, by Spencer Reece (*Farrar, Straus & Giroux*). Reece, an Episcopal priest, writes voluble poems that slide between memoir and prayer journal, charting a life spent in coming-out groups, correctional facilities, A.A. meetings, and nerve-jangling chaplaincy shifts in the E.R. Generosity and gratitude toward his fellow-man suffuse Reece’s collection: in “The Prodigal Son,” set in a lush Miami, he writes, “Nearby, Cuba is singing and somewhere here / Richard Blanco is writing his poems.” Reece steers clear of sanctimony, describing his grandmother as “George Washington with lipstick” and toying with a reader’s desire to know how much in his love-affair poems is true. The standout “Monaco” feels like a late-Hemingway fable of blurred sexualities on a permissive Riviera.

ON TELEVISION

GUT REACTION

Gross-outs and grief in “The Strain” and “The Leftovers.”

BY EMILY NUSSBAUM



Maybe it was that beating heart kept in a glass jar, like a pet tarantula. Maybe it was the moment that a villain hissed, “Gratitude! Vat an effective leasssssh.” Maybe it’s the damp summer weather, or one too many serious cable dramas, but somehow I succumbed to “The Strain.”

A new horror series on FX, “The Strain” is based on a trilogy of vampire books by Guillermo del Toro, the director of “Pan’s Labyrinth” and the terrific “Hellboy” series. It was adapted in collaboration with Carlton Cuse, whose earlier genre experiment, “Lost,” began with huge ambition and then took a late-season nosedive. Both creators are

proud nerds, and del Toro in particular is one of the world’s more lovable cheerleaders for the power of the grotesque, in every medium. “The way your body needs the exercise, your brain needs to be exposed to the flight-and-fight instincts. And you seek it through a roller coaster, or some people seek it through extreme sports, or you can seek it in genres like noir, crime, horror,” he said, in a recent interview.

To find out whether “The Strain”—the type of roller coaster that would likely be shut down if the safety inspectors got a tip—will fulfill your brain’s needs, consult your brain. Certainly, the series doesn’t have the best pacing, or the best dialogue

(“Well, if the mountain won’t come to Muhammad, we’re going to the morgue”), and in some areas it doesn’t even try: never has a show set in New York but filmed in Toronto felt more like a show set in New York but filmed in Toronto. (When Astoria appeared, full of burning garbage cans, all of Queens raised its eyebrows.) And yet the show overflows with greasy satisfactions, simply because it commits so fully to its own goofiness. It’s unpretentious even when its characters are being ultra-pretentious. Given time, I’m sure I could cobble together an intellectual case for liking “The Strain,” footnoted with the cross-cultural origins of vampire myths, or a deep analysis of class warfare in genre narrative. But why bother? It made me jump and it made me giggle and the lead actor is very charming—in July, maybe that’s enough.

“Try negotiating with a virus,” the amazingly named Ephraim Goodweather (everyone calls him Eph) sneers. Eph (Corey Stoll) is a Centers for Disease Control expert in infectious diseases, a cocky mastermind with a disenchanting soon-to-be ex-wife and a stock adorable son. A plane has landed mysteriously full of dead passengers, and Eph struts around, bickering with competing government agencies and assorted weak-minded individuals, as he struggles to solve the puzzle. Was it corporate sabotage? A disease that causes pus to well up inside corpses? Something to do with ammonia? Or possibly worms? Or Germans? Zombies? Vampires? Is there by any chance an immense wooden box carved with ancient runes? After the first few episodes, you come to appreciate the show’s all-of-the-above approach.

Eventually, a mythology unfolds, involving Upper East Side one-per-centers who, as Eph puts it, are intent on “rewriting human biology.” Infection spreads; mistakes are made. There’s an old enmity between Nazi-ish men in suits and a Holocaust survivor with a sword, a clash that leads to one of the bad guys announcing, “The Great Game is over, Jew.” In the immense ensemble, no cliché goes unturned: the cold career-woman litigator threatens to sue; the Latino thug says, “White boy.” A goth rock star celebrates being one of the plane’s few living passengers with a groupie foursome—although, in a nice satirical touch, he needs Viagra to partic-

“The Strain,” like “The Leftovers,” is made by a showrunner of the hit series “Lost.”

ipate. It's a technique that becomes irrelevant once vampirism causes his penis to fall off.

There are a lot of high-end, super-goopy special effects of the sort that will be familiar to viewers of "The Walking Dead." A friend of mine hates seeing animals suffer so much that those around her coined the label N.S.F.S.: Not Safe for Stacy. Stacy, don't watch "The Strain." The show is also not safe for anyone who dislikes dead-children plots, people with holes where their noses should be, or doctors who deliver graphic explanations for the word "cloaca." "I just want to go on record: I do not think that this is a good idea," a nebishy C.D.C. employee sputters as Eph prepares for the world's ickiest autopsy, which entails tugging drippy phallic tubes from the abdomen of a corpse. "A monster just tried to murder us," Eph replies, eager to get to the part with entrails. "There are no records."

Among the current glut of vampire stories, "The Strain" stands out for its devotion to old-school monstrosity, in which nobody broods or seduces; the undead are more like bugs than like bad boys. Instead, it's the heroes who get all the charisma, notably Stoll, a specialist in redeeming roles that should feel ridiculous. In "House of Cards," the actor played a working-class congressman who became a puppet in Frank Underwood's schemes. Though the role was small, his story felt real and true: he got sober, he fell off the wagon, he died. Miraculously, Stoll lent his character such weight and intelligence that he became the only person worth mourning. In "The Strain," Stoll is playing more of a contrivance, but he's as nimble as Tigger, bouncing on his heels and justifying a wig that comes with a widow's peak, sideburns, and a Bob's Big Boy swerve. Rubbery-featured and cheerful, Stoll makes "You're dead to me" sound as if he'd invented the phrase. Never before have I so sympathized with a cable drama's sighing, exasperated wife character, the one who, despite herself, is charmed by her workaholic genius of a husband.

Cuse's creative partner on "Lost" was Damon Lindelof, who also has a new series out, "The Leftovers," on HBO. From conversations I've had with viewers, I get the feeling that the

show has left many people confounded, uncertain how to feel or what to think. Like "The Strain," "The Leftovers" is obsessed with grief and terror—but, rather than make you jump, it makes you cry. As in its source—a novel by Tom Perrotta—the show's premise is that an unexplained event has taken place: a Rapture-like disappearance. Two per cent of the population—kids, grownups, the Pope, Gary Busey—are gone, poof, vanished, into the blue. When the show begins, it's three years later. The community left behind is still wrecked, in large part because no one has any answers. Some people repress the question. Others rage about it. The town celebrates the missing as "heroes," but not everybody agrees with that interpretation.

Gradually, the show reveals the outline of a few characters, including a devastated family. There's Kevin (Justin Theroux), a local cop prone to fits of violent anger, bad dreams, and—N.S.F.S.!—dog-shooting. His wife, Laurie (Amy Brenneman), has abandoned her loved ones and joined a cult called the Guilty Remnant. Their sulky daughter lives with Kevin; their son is out West, working for another cult leader, Holy Wayne, who offers up "healing hugs." Over time, we learn more about the inner workings of the Guilty Remnant, whose members live together on the edge of town, dress all in white, and chain-smoke. They communicate only in writing. While their philosophy is unclear, they come across as nihilists, nonbelievers who refuse to let anyone move on: they infuriate people in the town by stalking them, hovering and staring, a reminder of the pain of the incident. If this sounds confusing, it is. The narrative flow is murky and chaotic, and at times it chokes up; initially, I kept mixing up sad brunettes who resembled Liv Tyler—among them Liv Tyler, as a young woman who leaves her fiancé to join the Guilty Remnant.

But "The Leftovers" builds in potency. As I watched the third episode—featuring an eccentric preacher (the terrific Christopher Eccleston) who believes that the "disappeared" were sinners—all my distance, and my distrust, crumbled. It was a morbid (and slightly "Lost"-like) fable about

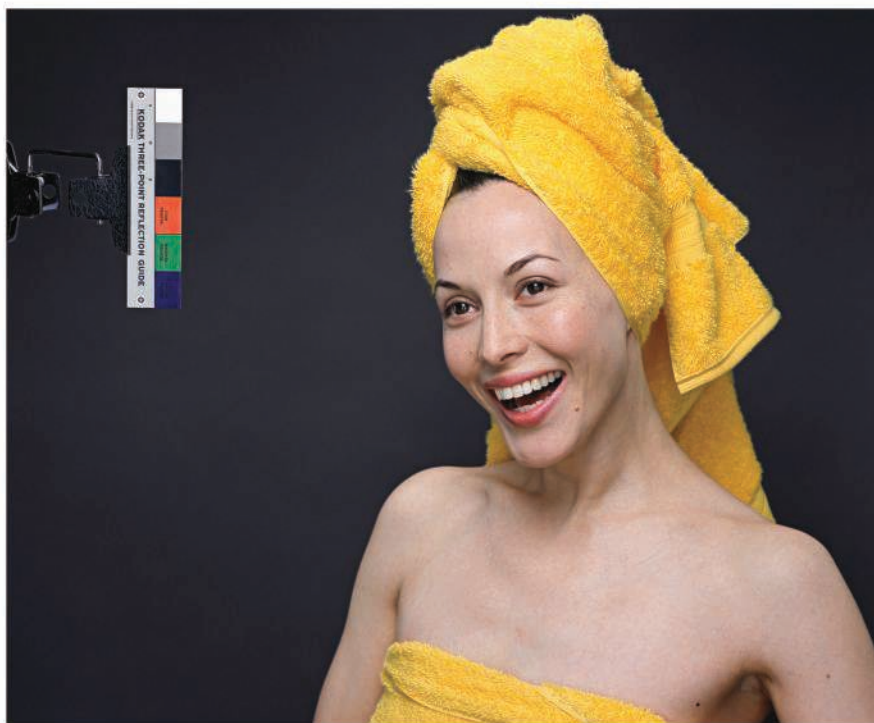
the preacher gambling to save his church, and losing. Much of the show is hard to describe, because it's not about plot, the usual center of TV drama, but about images, with poetic sequences that capture the way that people who grieve differently smack into conflict. In one powerful sequence, the preacher offers compassion to the Guilty Remnant—only to have Laurie walk toward him blowing a whistle, the sound shattering the air with her refusal. In another sequence, cunningly edited, a baby doll is assembled in a factory, piece by piece, then bought, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and placed in a public crèche—and then, without explanation, it's gone. Members of the Guilty Remnant sneak into people's homes, steal their family photos, and leave empty frames. It's not that these moments make sense, exactly; it's that they stayed with me. Like laughing at comedy, or shrieking at horror, crying is another kind of review: it's your body saying yes to the story.

There's an argument to be made for TV shows that I call "three-eppers": they take a few installments to convert you. Sometimes this is because they're doing something novel; sometimes it's because they're doing something alienating. If, after you've watched three episodes of "The Leftovers," you decide that it's not for you, go ahead and bail. The show has a grandiose quality; it's structured in a looping, musical way—to the point that it reminded me, oddly, of "Treme," another series that evaded traditional TV formulas. But it captures the disorientation of grief in a way that is provocative and rare for television. It feels less like a puzzle than like a slow-fuse meditation on the nature of death itself—with or without the Rapture. Why them and not me? How could the ones we loved, or hated, be here, then gone? One scene, in which Laurie—whose silent face flickers with contempt—suddenly breaks down, broke me down, too, but it didn't feel manipulative, as in a Lifetime sobfest, just cathartic. It also felt like being shoved underwater. "Lost" was a mystery that never got solved, leaving many viewers furious. "The Leftovers" is something new: it doesn't promise answers. It just asks to be experienced. ♦

SHARP FOCUS

Christopher Williams's sophisticated pictures.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

*A 2005 photograph from Williams's retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art.*

The Production Line of Happiness," a retrospective of work by the photographic artist Christopher Williams, at the Museum of Modern Art, brings a tonic chill to an art summer enfevered by the Jeff Koons retrospective at the Whitney. The two shows describe opposite extremes in sophisticated art since the nineteen-seventies: ascetic, academy-based, and soft-core political in Williams's case; hedonistic, market-oriented, and smiley-faced populist in that of Koons. Williams can seem to work strictly for circles of educated initiates, while Koons endeavors to please practically everybody. But, if you remove the measures of money and fame, by which Williams is a relative pauper and a cipher (this is his first American museum retrospective), commonalities emerge. The two artists share roots in a moment, in the seventies, of self-conscious reflection on the exhausted drive of modernism. That moment spawned

antic irony in art and an infatuation with hard-bitten critical theory in academe. Both artists attacked assumptions of meaning in their respective mediums—photography and sculpture—and have striven to control the reception of their work. Koons blares his intentions, while Williams veils his. But to fully appreciate the work of either you must divine the rules and play along.

Working with the MOMA curator Roxana Marcoci, Williams shows scores of photographs, mostly of odd objects (glass flowers, stacks of chocolate bars, cameras that have been cut in half to reveal their anatomy) and of subjects that suggest glossy-magazine advertisements (fashion models, fancy photographic gear) but often have something a bit off about them—such as a model seen from a strange angle. On rare occasions, Williams appropriates images, but, when he does, it's always with a conceit. For example, he sought out photographs in the

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library that had been taken on a certain day in May, 1963, and that show the President's back turned. (There are four, rephotographed and lined up on a wall; they stir feelings of remoteness and sadness.) Williams's work is too recondite to fit among that of his more succinctly ironic contemporaries, such as the image bandits Richard Prince, Louise Lawler, and Sherrie Levine. Nor is he trendy in technique; none of his pictures were shot digitally. Williams, now fifty-eight (a year younger than Koons) and, since 2008, a professor of photography at the Düsseldorf Art Academy, remains a knight of the darkroom. He also has a sideline in collecting relics of his exhibitions: in the MOMA show there are sections of walls cut out and transported from museums where Williams has previously shown. Not that you'd know this: there are no wall texts or labels to explain or identify any of the pieces in the show, although a handout checklist provides the works' titles.

Among the innocently generic-looking but riddling pictures in the show are some of a suite of glass flowers, made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, from the collection of Harvard's Museum of Natural History. We're not told that each picture represents a bloom emblematic of a nation that had been cited as repressive by Amnesty International—a forced allusion that, even after I got it, didn't do a lot for me. And only a professional photographer is apt to recognize the pale red in a picture of dishes in a dishwasher as a signature color of Agfa film—much less that Williams laboriously achieved it with a Kodak film. Williams has a hobbyist's ardor for technical arcana, which he dumps into long, dense captions in the show's catalogue.

His withholding of the often intricate backstory that informs each of his works leaves a viewer with three choices that I can see. One is to be maddened by the tease. Another is to be stimulated to consult the catalogue, which is replete with brainy curatorial essays and with extended quotes from such cynosures of the art-school seminar as Jean-Luc Godard and Pier Paolo Pasolini, and from artist friends, including Barbara Kruger, Daniel Buren, and Lawrence Weiner. (Williams is nothing if not collegial, suggest-

ing an audience that is less a public than a Masonic fellowship.) Still a third is to relax and enjoy the mute and striking elegance of an installation that amounts to an exhibition about exhibiting. I have tested all three options. They all work.

Williams was born in Los Angeles, where both his grandfather and his father were cinematic special-effects experts. His parents divorced when he was young, and his father married a British actress who subsequently also worked in film production. (His father died in an accident on a movie set in 1977.) Williams credits his early enthusiasm for art to his stepmother's mother, who took him to museums when he visited her in Philadelphia. (He recalls having been wowed by Rodin, Brancusi, and Duchamp.) He dropped out of high school in favor of surfing, then attended a junior college and, in 1976, managed to qualify for admission to CalArts, the Disney-founded art school and think tank of avant-gardism.

He studied under the conceptualist masters John Baldessari, Michael Asher, and Douglas Huebler. Williams told me, when I met him at MOMA, that he had thrilled to the "quietness and slowness" of art, after the tumult of his upbringing in the movie industry. But his background gave him a natural feel for his teachers' preoccupation with the ways, means, and manipulative ends of spectacle in consumer culture. He embraced, as well, a fashion for "institutional critique"—art exposing the conventions and the imputed purposes of the places that show it. Briefly rife in the eighties and nineties, such enactments of academic theory have long receded from the spotlight of the art world. Williams's persistence with them would seem hapless but for the surprising and, given a chance, the affecting spirit of romance that he finds in their exercise.

The show's title, "The Production Line of Happiness," is a phrase from a factory worker and amateur filmmaker whom Godard interviewed for a documentary, in 1976. It's how the worker characterized the sequential tasks involved in creating films. I suspect that for Williams, as for Godard, the words secrete a turned-around sense: the happiness of the production line. Even the great director's most tedious later movies radiate his deathless passion for cin-

ema. Similarly, Williams's photographs can seem almost like nugatory remnants of a process pursued with devotion that is its own reward. The worst that might be said of them is that they enforce a sort of supply-side aesthetic: profiting an élite and trickling down, maybe, to less privileged folks. But they enable a vicarious appeal: imagining what it's like to care so much about something, no matter what. And one immediately compelling aspect of Williams's process is his mastery of the forms and protocols of display. The exactly considered, quite beautiful arrangements of walls and works in the show sparkle with wit, however elusive the content of the jokes may be. (Williams is a balding and pleasantly fleshy man, and shortish—which may explain, as a defiant jape, the unusually low hanging of his show.) An only mildly curious ten-minute tour will refresh your eye and spatial sense, as a car wash does a car. The most viable alternative approach requires hours of study.

In certain respects, much of what I'm saying about Williams at MOMA could apply to the Koons show at the Whitney, as well. Both artists glory in cultivating shocks—or, anyway, mild bemusements—of recognition, with pointed evocations of culture either low (Koons) or far out (Williams). The major gap—a chasm—between them is worldly. It has to do with disparate visions of, yes, happiness. Koons exalts a society that is defined and dominated by financial wealth, as flaunted by those who have it and presumably admired by those who don't. Williams assumes and addresses people who would rather be rich in leisure time and energy to visit museums, read specialized books, and savor wayward discourses. Let a fifty-eight-million-dollar stainless-steel balloon dog that astounds the eye while benumbing the mind stand for the values of the first constituency. Have Williams's murky photograph of a Renault sedan tipped on its side—referring to a factory site and evoking a barricade, from the political upheavals of 1968 in France—represent the knowingness of the second. One party buys and sells. The other talks and talks. The emptied middle that they bracket buzzes with possibilities for a truly satisfactory art, contingent on whether our time proves itself worthy of it. ♦

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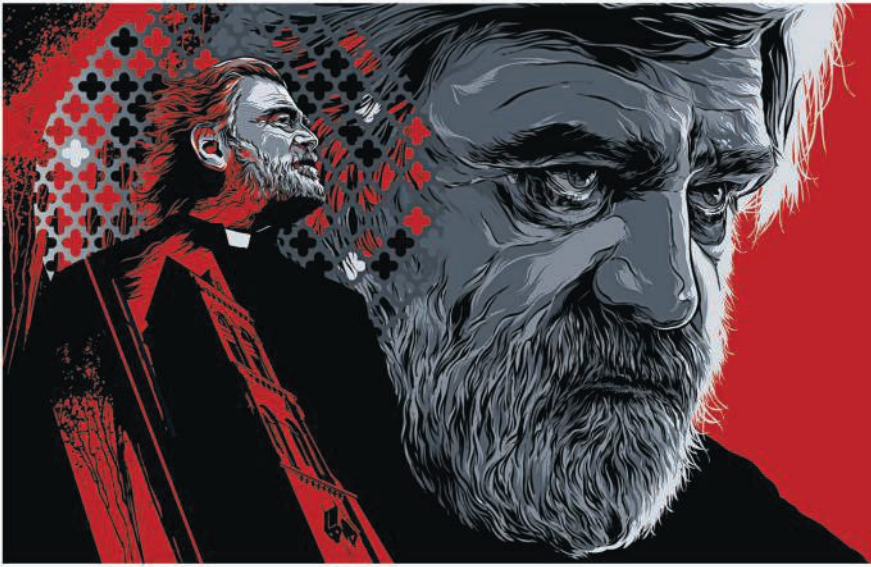
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BIG MEN

"Calvary" and "A Master Builder."

BY ANTHONY LANE

*Brendan Gleeson plays a troubled Irish priest in John Michael McDonagh's movie.*

Thank God for Brendan Gleeson. Long before the invention of CinemaScope, movies found space for big men—not the beanpoles or the beefcakes but the frame-fillers, ursine and glowering. Gleeson is not the last of the breed (Brian Dennehy is still at work), but, with James Gandolfini and Charles Durning passed away, he is the most unignorable; any scene, whatever its mood, feels solidly earthed by his presence. Seldom does he use his bulk as Broderick Crawford, say, once did, to bully those in the vicinity. Instead, there is a diffidence, or a need to retire into the burrow of his own thoughts, that goes beyond grumpiness and deepens Gleeson's appeal. You cannot imagine him being taken aback by the sins of the world, even when they move him to pity or scorn. How fitting, then, that his new film, *"Calvary,"* should see him cast as a priest.

Gleeson plays Father James, who tends the souls of a rural parish in County Sligo, on the northwest shoulder of Ireland. As aerial shots make clear, the countryside is fierce and

green, with the Atlantic breaking the teeth of the coast, and a huge stone mass, like a giant's vaulting horse, overhanging the land. That is Ben Bulbin, enshrined by Yeats in verse, and it dwarfs all those dwelling below, save Father James, who strides around in his black soutane, with a beard of russet and gray. Piece by piece, the present reveals the past: Father James used to be a drinker, and he could be yet again, given the provocation and the chance. He was married, too, before being widowed and then ordained; he has a daughter, Fiona (Kelly Reilly), who comes to visit from London, with bandages on her wrists. You start to realize what burdens our hero has to bear. How does he summon the strength to lighten the woes of others?

All this is foreshadowed in the first—and best—scene of the movie. We see nothing more than the expression on Father James's face, but it's like an open wound. He sits in a confessional and hears the complaint of an unidentified man, who explains that he was abused by Catholic clergy from an early age, that the damage is irrep-

arable, and that he has therefore decided on vengeance, of a very particular kind. By way of a public statement, he will murder a priest: not a bad priest—that would be too easy, and would solve nothing—but a good one. To be specific, he will murder Father James, in a week's time, on Sunday, at the beach. "I'm going to kill you because you've done nothing wrong," he says.

What a *great* setup. It plunges us, without ado, into the guts of a moral crisis, but it also has a satisfying smack of the whodunit or, rather, a who-will-do-it. Think of Agatha Christie's *"A Murder Is Announced"* being handed to Dostoyevsky for a rewrite. Moreover, the sequence tells us quite a bit about Father James, who seems far more distressed by the recitation of the man's sufferings than by news of his own impending doom—the true Christian response, which is even rarer in cinema than it is in ordinary life. If the film had ended there, leaving us poised on that existential brink, I would have been content. As it is, the writer and director, John Michael McDonagh, must see the rest of the story through.

It is divided into seven days, and parcelled out among a group of locals, who may or may not be involved with the crime to come. We get a writer, a butcher, a wealthy wastrel, an African car mechanic, a God-mocking doctor, a flirt who wears dark glasses to hide her bruises, and a detective with an irritating boyfriend, who insists on speaking in a bad Bronx accent. "He's a character, eh?" the detective remarks of his beau, and that's the trouble. All these folk feel like "characters," worked up and tricked out with defining traits, as opposed to plausible people. More often than not, the priest's encounters with them are played for awkward laughs—a real lurch of tone, after the opening scene, the intensity of which soon ebbs away.

Maybe that is deliberate; maybe McDonagh intended a composite portrait of a place from which the sea of faith has, within a generation (and, some would say, with good cause), begun its long retreat. The owner of the village pub, talking to Father James, refers to "your kind," as if religion were

the mark of an alien race. What stays with you from “Calvary” is not its dramatic pull but its solitude; look at Father James entering his bare bedroom, with its crucifix on the wall, and ruffling the white-golden fur of Bruno, his retriever and best friend. “Even the wisest man grows tense/With some sort of violence,” Yeats wrote, in “Under Ben Bulbin,” and that includes the man of God. At one point, Father James gets hold of a pistol, as if planning a shootout, only to hurl it unused into the waves. The tension of “Calvary” is fitful at best, and much of the movie trips into silliness, but in Brendan Gleeson—in his proud bearing and his lamenting gaze—we see the plight of the lonely believer in a world beyond belief.

Another man commands the scene in “A Master Builder.” He is more daunting than Father James, yet less obviously suited to the task. For one thing, he is half the size. His name is Halvard Solness (Wallace Shawn), and he is an architect, with a special interest in making sure that nobody else builds anything at all. What pricks and spurs him on, it seems, is a vampirism of the spirit, and those from whom the lifeblood has been sucked include his wife, Aline (Julie Hagerty), his crumbling old friend Brovik (André Gregory), and Brovik’s son, Ragnar (Jeff Biehl), who has designs on being an architect himself. Good luck with that. More important, Ragnar is betrothed to Kaya (Emily Cass McDonnell); but she, too, is in thrall to Solness, who employs her as a bookkeeper, and

reduces her to tremors with the merest touch.

For lovers of “Manhattan,” memories will stir of Jeremiah, the sexual conquistador played by Shawn, who appeared for less than ninety seconds and rendered the “little homunculus” immortal. In the case of Solness, however, such powers are no joke, and the crux of the drama relies on our believing in them—something of a problem, given the crinkled smile that plays at the corner of Shawn’s mouth and hints at deep reserves of rueful irony, as of a man betrayed. Likewise, the anxious twang in his voice chimes oddly with the personage of Solness, who should be at least half *übermensch*. Consider the worshipful eyes—blue, wide, and unblinking—of Hilde Wangel (Lisa Joyce), who met the Master Builder ten years ago, when she was only twelve. He forced himself upon her that day, and now she bursts into his home, clad in white shorts and chunky boots, craving not revenge but further enslavement, plus the “kingdom” that he promised her back then. Strange people.

If you are wondering what that kingdom entails, and whether Hilde makes any sense at all, or how Freudian your reaction should be to the towers that Solness is said to have constructed and even climbed, you are not alone. The film is based on Ibsen’s “The Master Builder,” which, since its première, in 1893, has left audiences flailing in confusion and alarm, and producers riven: should they strain for naturalism or surrender to a rich symbolic dream? This version was adapted by Shawn, and refined onstage over

fourteen years by Gregory—their third collaboration, after “My Dinner with André” (1981) and “Vanya on 42nd Street” (1994). The director is Jonathan Demme, who continues in the darting, fidgety style that he brought to “Rachel Getting Married” (2008). Such relentless probing should suit the inquisitions to which Ibsen subjects his creatures, and yet, for some regrettable reason, the movie doesn’t really work.

One clue lies with James Joyce, a fervid Ibsenite, who noted, in an essay written at the age of eighteen, that the later plays, like this one, had “a tendency to get out of closed rooms”—quite a relief, after the cagelike chambers of “A Doll’s House” and “Ghosts.” But Demme and Shawn refuse this opportunity for fresh air; indeed, they hunker down, initially confining Solness to a sickbed, with nurses in attendance, and planting a strong suggestion that the whole episode with Hilde may have bloomed in his rotting mind. The camera, close enough to sniff the actors’ breath, conspires in this hot-house effect; after Solness declares his dread that “the younger generation will just show up one day and knock on the door,” there is such a knock, Hilde appears, and we suddenly zoom in tight on his dumbstruck face. “A Master Builder” is a bold endeavor, thriftily made, and there is muscle and volume in the performances; but had Demme hung back, and kept things cooler and quieter, the mastery of what Ibsen built, and the agon of his extraordinary hero, would have cast a more looming shadow. ♦

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VOLUME XC, NO. 22, August 4, 2014. THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028792X) is published weekly (except for five combined issues: February 17 & 24, June 9 & 16, July 7 & 14, August 11 & 18, and December 22 & 29) by Condé Nast, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The Condé Nast Building, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. Elizabeth Hughes, vice-president and publisher; Beth Luskó, associate publisher advertising; James Guilfoyle, director of finance and business operations; Fabio Bertoni, general counsel. Condé Nast: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Charles H. Townsend, chief executive officer; Robert A. Sauerberg, Jr., president; John W. Bellando, chief operating officer & chief financial officer; Jill Bright, chief administrative officer. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. 123242885-RT0001. Canada Post: return undeliverable Canadian addresses to P.O. Box 874, Station Main, Markham, ON L3P 8L4.

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CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Liza Donnelly, must be received by Sunday, August 3rd. The finalists in the July 21st contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the August 25th issue. The winner receives a signed print of the cartoon. Any resident of the United States, Canada (except Quebec), Australia, the United Kingdom, or the Republic of Ireland age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"Let's flip this house."
Brian Gallay, Toronto, Ont.



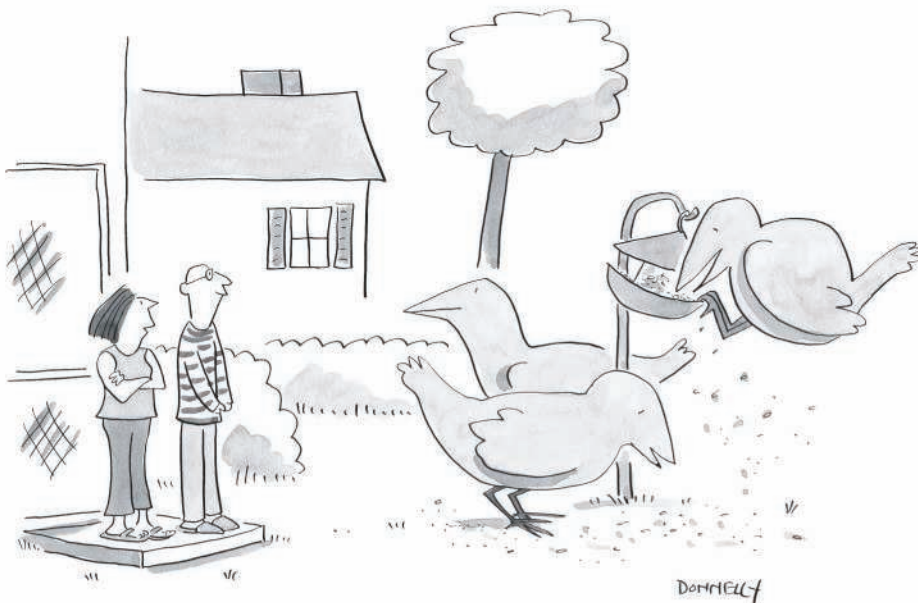
THE FINALISTS

"It's an invertible."
Dan Broom, Branford, Conn.

"Perhaps he wasn't really a valet."
Don Symons, Santa Barbara, Calif.

"I thought I told you to wait in the car."
Elizabeth Tevlin, Ottawa, Ont.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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