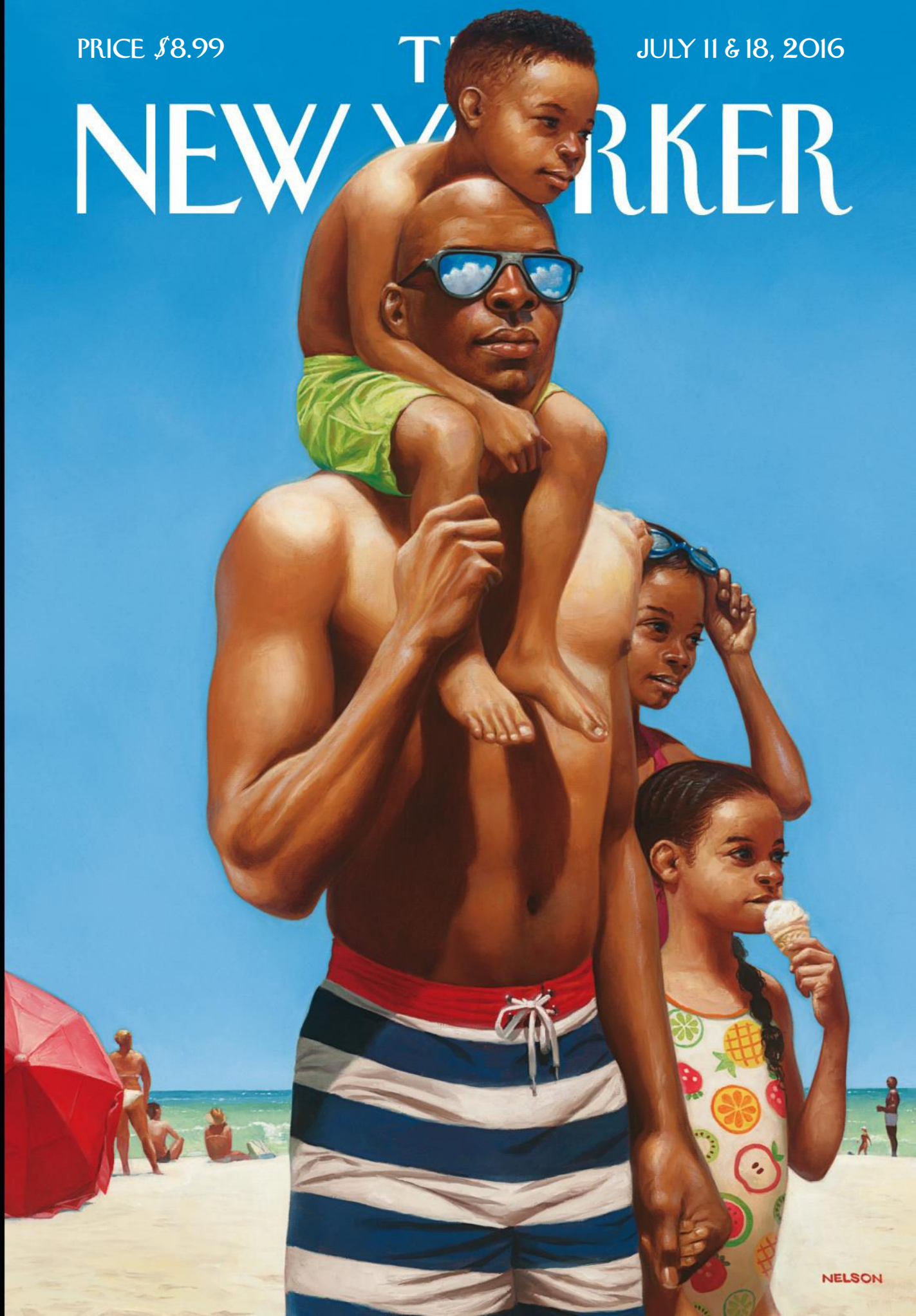


PRICE \$8.99

JULY 11 & 18, 2016

# THE NEW YORKER



NELSON



4:28PM

*The moment a historic Bermudian treasure became a fresh discovery.*

Hamilton Princess & Beach Club has been a beacon of Bermuda hospitality since 1885—and is still just hitting its stride. An epic restoration has unveiled a new world of delights: parasailing and paddleboarding at the sparkling new marina; a vibrant Bermudian menu at Chef Marcus Samuelsson's dazzling new restaurant; a world-class modern art collection featuring works by Andy Warhol and Jeff Koons. What hasn't changed? Breathtaking ocean views, relaxed seaside luxury and the exceptional service you've come to expect from Fairmont.

For a special offer on your next getaway, visit **fairmont.com**

Gateway to your moment in over 20 countries.

UNFORGETTABLE. SINCE 1907.



HAMILTON PRINCESS & BEACH CLUB  
A FAIRMONT MANAGED HOTEL

*Fairmont*

# THE NEW YORKER

JULY 11 & 18, 2016

## 9 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

## 27 THE TALK OF THE TOWN

*Mark Singer on Donald Trump's image; Hillary; Gaffigans; Michael Brown's mother; James Surowiecki on what's next with Brexit.*

## PROFILES

**John Seabrook** 34 The Mixologist  
*The ascent of a hip-hop producer.*

## SHOUTS & MURMURS

**Colin Nissan** 43 Wedding Announcement

## LETTER FROM REYKJAVÍK

**Adam Gopnik** 44 Cool Runnings  
*Presidential politics Iceland style.*

## AMERICAN CHRONICLES

**George Saunders** 50 Trump Days  
*Up close with the candidate and his crowds.*

## A REPORTER AT LARGE

**Larissa MacFarquhar** 62 The Threshold  
*The life of a hospice nurse.*

## FICTION

**Michael Andreasen** 74 "The King's Teacup at Rest"

## SKETCHBOOK

**Barry Blitt** 77 "Charles Atlas Shrugged"

## THE CRITICS

## A CRITIC AT LARGE

**Kelefa Sanneh** 80 *Of ghettos and gentrification.*

## BOOKS

82 Briefly Noted

## ON TELEVISION

**Emily Nussbaum** 86 "Orange Is the New Black."

## THE CURRENT CINEMA

**Anthony Lane** 88 "Café Society," "Life, Animated."

## POEMS

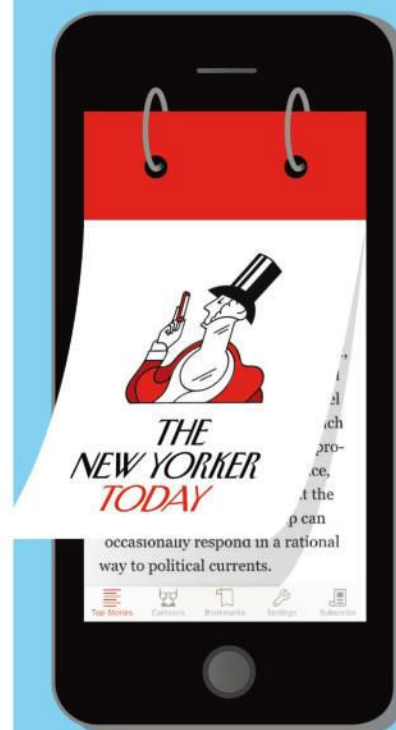
**Natalie Shapero** 36 "My Body Is an Injury the World"  
**Terrance Hayes** 78 "Ars Poetica with Bacon"

## COVER

**Kadir Nelson** "A Day at the Beach"

## Introducing The New Yorker Today app.

Download it to get the best writing in the world on the events and ideas of the moment.



Get a continuously updating feed of our editors' selections from all that we publish: blog posts written within the hour, stories from the current issue, classic articles of the past, cartoons, and podcasts. The best of what we do, in one simple app.

Download the app at  
[newyorker.com/today](http://newyorker.com/today)



**DRAWINGS** Seth Fleishman, Jason Adam Katzenstein, Tom Toro, Zachary Kanin, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Robert Leighton, David Sipress, Paul Noth, Roz Chast, Danny Shanahan, P. C. Vey, Liam Francis Walsh, Edward Steed  
**SPOTS** Miguel Porlan

Dillard • Anohni • Michelle Williams • Hilary Duff • Roz Chast • Emily Nussbaum • Cuba Gooding Jr. • Roger Angell • Jelani Cobb • Gloria Steinem • Jonathan Safran Foer • Jill Lepore • William Finnegan • Charlie Kaufman • Jesse Eisenberg • Abbi Jacobson • Harry Wilmore • Lin-Manuel Miranda • Evan O'Toole • Robert Glasper • Patti Smith • Ta-Nehisi Coates • Jack Handy • Siddhartha Mukherjee • A. J. Jacobs

## THE NEW YORKER RADIO HOUR

PODCAST

Spend an hour each week with your favorite writers and artists and their guests. The magazine's editor, **David Remnick**, hosts an original mix of profiles, storytelling, and provocative conversations, plus an occasional blast of comic genius.

Subscribe to the podcast on **iTunes** or **Google Play**, and listen anytime. (Or check your local public-radio broadcast schedule.)



## CONTRIBUTORS

**George Saunders** (*"Trump Days,"* p. 50) is the author of nine books, among them *"The Braindead Megaphone"* and *"Lincoln in the Bardo,"* his first novel, which comes out in February.

**Mark Singer** (*Comment,* p. 27) is a longtime writer for *The New Yorker*. His book *"Trump and Me"* has just been published.

**Kia Gregory** (*The Talk of the Town,* p. 31) has written for the *Times*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and *Philadelphia Weekly*.

**John Seabrook** (*"The Mixologist,"* p. 34) has published four books, including, most recently, *"The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory."*

**Natalie Shapero** (*Poem,* p. 36) teaches at Tufts University. *"No Object"* is her first poetry collection.

**Kadir Nelson** (*Cover*) is an artist whose work is included in *"The Picture Book Re-Imagined,"* a group exhibit at the Pratt Manhattan Gallery, in New York.

**Larissa MacFarquhar** (*"The Threshold,"* p. 62) is a staff writer. Her book, *"Strangers Drowning: Grappling with Impossible Idealism, Drastic Choices, and the Overpowering Urge to Help,"* came out last September.

**Adam Gopnik** (*"Cool Runnings,"* p. 44) has written several books, including *"Angels and Ages: Lincoln, Darwin, and the Birth of the Modern Age"* and *"The Table Comes First."*

**Seymour Chwast** (*Illustration,* p. 51) is designing and illustrating a new book, *"Seymour Chwast at War with War."*

**Michael Andreasen** (*Fiction,* p. 74), whose fiction has appeared in *Zoetrope: All-Story*, is working on his first collection of short stories.

**Kelefa Sanneh** (*A Critic at Large,* p. 80) is a staff writer.

**Anthony Lane** (*The Current Cinema,* p. 88), the magazine's film critic, is the author of *"Nobody's Perfect,"* a collection of his *New Yorker* essays.

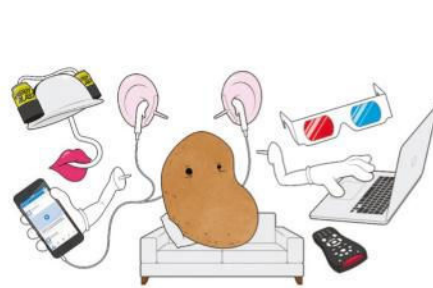
## NEWYORKER.COM

Everything in the magazine, and more.



## VIDEO

Watch puppets from the Futurist play *"Demolishing Everything with Amazing Speed"* come to life.



## ELEMENTS

Why the term *"couch potato"* is falling out of use even though we spend more time in front of screens.

**SUBSCRIBERS:** Get access to our magazine app for tablets and smartphones at the *App Store*, *Amazon.com*, or *Google Play*. (Access varies by location and device.)

# THE MAIL

## BASIC INCOME

James Surowiecki's column on proposals to institute a universal basic income—a stipend from the government for all citizens—presents a number of persuasive arguments in favor of the idea (*The Financial Page*, June 20th). I would add that there would also be significant benefits for women. Many women, particularly those who are poor and working class, perform a vast amount of labor—caring for children, the sick, the disabled, and the elderly—that goes unpaid and unrecognized. This leaves many of them vulnerable to poverty, exploitative relationships, and violence. (Indeed, many women stay with their abusive partners because they cannot survive economically without them.) Not only would a universal basic income increase workers' bargaining power, as Surowiecki notes; it would also increase women's bargaining power within their households.

*Rachel Elfenbein*  
Walla Walla, Wash.

## DECONSTRUCTING BEYONCÉ

Hilton Als's article on Beyoncé's most recent album, "Lemonade," might have been an opportunity to consider the current state of affairs among black women ("Beywatch," May 30th). Instead, Als dismisses both Beyoncé and her audience. He faults her for making money, for collaborating with her husband, for appealing to men, and for attempting to be political, but not authentically enough. He dismisses "Lemonade" as merely "an attempt at storytelling," even though the response among women shows that many feel the album tells their stories—of history, geography, Yoruba traditions, loss, strife, and more. Als contrasts Beyoncé with Erykah Badu, saying that she, unlike Badu, would "never risk being unpopular." Yet Beyoncé recently made a video in which she is lying on the roof of a New Orleans police car as it sinks into floodwater—a racially charged political statement that was certainly a

big risk, to say nothing of her performance of the video's song, "Formation," at the Super Bowl, as an homage to the Black Panthers. Als describes her fans, specifically those waiting outside the auditorium of one of her shows, as "clusters of young black and Hispanic women" dressed to emphasize their behinds, as if Beyoncé's only effect has been on her fans' wardrobes. Only briefly does Als acknowledge Beyoncé's impact on black female culture. No one reading the piece would have any sense of the depth and breadth of the significance of "Lemonade," which has made many black women feel seen, honored, and empowered. At last, the lives and bodies (and minds and feelings) of the brown ladies huddled outside the auditorium are being valued.

*Johari Townes*  
Los Angeles, Calif.

## THE COST OF EDUCATION

I appreciated R. Kikuo Johnson's cover illustration of a 2015 college graduate working on a maintenance crew during this year's commencement ceremony (*Cover*, May 30th). In 2006, when I was twenty-four, I worked as a janitor at Emerson College, my alma mater. Student debt, along with income disparity, are highlighted in nearly every news cycle, yet blue-collar professions are often viewed with contempt. I am a veteran of the Iraq War and the first in my family to graduate from college. Owing largely to the employee benefits I earned through Emerson, I paid for my entire education without incurring any debt. I owe Emerson nothing except my thanks. Blue-collar work is not an option of last resort. Taking on endless student debt should be.

*Russell J. Cornelia*  
Beijing, China

*Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. We regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.*

## Fine Estate Jewelry

(Circa 1960)



Platinum, gem emerald, marquise, baguette and round diamonds spray brooch \$16,500



Platinum, emerald cut aquamarine and emerald cut sapphire ring, signed Cartier, Paris \$18,000

Yellow gold, baguette and round diamonds rose brooch, by Oscar Heyman \$8,500

SHOWN  
ACTUAL SIZE

## FIRESTONE AND PARSON

30 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116  
(617) 266-1858 • [www.firestoneandparson.com](http://www.firestoneandparson.com)

ADVERTISEMENT

Exclusive Limited Edition Prints  
Hand Signed and Numbered  
by Bob Staake



"Purple Rain", May 2, 2016

[newyorkerstore.com](http://newyorkerstore.com)



# MY IMMUNE SYSTEM + KEYTRUDA



## APPROVED TO TREAT NON-SMALL CELL LUNG CANCER

KEYTRUDA is a prescription medicine used to treat a kind of lung cancer called non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). KEYTRUDA may be used when your lung cancer has spread **and** tests positive for “PD-L1”\* **and** you have tried chemotherapy that contains platinum, and it did not work or is no longer working **and** if your tumor has an abnormal “EGFR” or “ALK” gene,\* and you have also tried an EGFR or ALK inhibitor medicine. It is not known if KEYTRUDA is safe and effective in children less than 18 years of age.

\* PD-L1 = programmed death ligand 1; EGFR = epidermal growth factor receptor; ALK = anaplastic lymphoma kinase.

### Important Risk Information About KEYTRUDA

KEYTRUDA is a medicine that may treat your lung cancer by working with your immune system. KEYTRUDA can cause your immune system to attack normal organs and tissues in many areas of your body and can affect the way they work. These problems can sometimes become serious or life-threatening and can lead to death.

**Call or see your doctor right away if you develop any symptoms of the following problems or these symptoms get worse:**

**Lung problems (pneumonitis).** Symptoms of pneumonitis may include shortness of breath, chest pain, or new or worse cough.

**Intestinal problems (colitis) that can lead to tears or holes in your intestine.** Signs and symptoms of colitis may include diarrhea or more bowel movements than usual, stools that are black, tarry, sticky, or have blood or mucus; or severe stomach-area (abdomen) pain or tenderness.

**Liver problems (hepatitis).** Signs and symptoms of hepatitis may include yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes, nausea or vomiting, pain on the right side of your stomach area (abdomen), dark urine, feeling less hungry than usual, or bleeding or bruising more easily than normal.

**Hormone gland problems (especially the thyroid, pituitary, adrenal glands, and pancreas).** Signs and symptoms that your hormone glands are not working properly may include rapid heart beat, weight loss or weight gain, increased sweating, feeling more hungry or thirsty, urinating more often than usual, hair loss, feeling cold, constipation, your voice gets deeper, muscle aches, dizziness or fainting, or headaches that will not go away or unusual headache.

**Kidney problems, including nephritis and kidney failure.** Signs of kidney problems may include change in the amount or color of your urine.

**Problems in other organs.** Signs of these problems may include rash, changes in eyesight, severe or persistent muscle or joint pains, severe muscle weakness, or low red blood cells (anemia).

**Infusion (IV) reactions that can sometimes be severe and life-threatening.** Signs and symptoms of infusion reactions may include chills or shaking, shortness of breath or wheezing, itching or rash, flushing, dizziness, fever, or feeling like passing out.

# KEYTRUDA<sup>®</sup>

(pembrolizumab) Injection 100 mg

## = HELP TO FIGHT TUMORS

### Important Risk Information (*continued*)

**Getting medical treatment right away may help keep these problems from becoming more serious.**

Your doctor will check you for these problems during treatment with KEYTRUDA. Your doctor may treat you with corticosteroid or hormone replacement medicines. Your doctor may also need to delay or completely stop treatment with KEYTRUDA if you have severe side effects.

**Before you receive KEYTRUDA, tell your doctor if you** have immune system problems such as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, or lupus; have had an organ transplant; have lung or breathing problems; have liver problems; or have any other medical problems.

If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, tell your doctor. KEYTRUDA can harm your unborn baby. Females who are able to become pregnant should use an effective method of birth control during treatment and for at least 4 months

after the final dose of KEYTRUDA. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant during treatment with KEYTRUDA.

If you are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed, tell your doctor. It is not known if KEYTRUDA passes into your breast milk. Do not breastfeed during treatment with KEYTRUDA and for 4 months after your final dose of KEYTRUDA.

**Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take**, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

The most common side effects of KEYTRUDA in people with NSCLC include feeling tired, cough, decreased appetite, and shortness of breath.

These are not all the possible side effects of KEYTRUDA. Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

---

Ask your doctor or health care professional about KEYTRUDA, or call **85-KEYTRUDA** (855-398-7832).

---

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please read the Medication Guide on the adjacent page for more detailed information.

### Merck Helps™

Having trouble paying for your Merck medicine? Merck may be able to help. [www.merckhelps.com](http://www.merckhelps.com)

### Merck Oncology

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,**  
VISIT [keytruda.com](http://keytruda.com).

## MEDICATION GUIDE

### KEYTRUDA® (key-true-duh) (pembrolizumab) for injection

### KEYTRUDA® (key-true-duh) (pembrolizumab) injection

#### What is the most important information I should know about KEYTRUDA?

---

KEYTRUDA is a medicine that may treat your melanoma or lung cancer by working with your immune system. KEYTRUDA can cause your immune system to attack normal organs and tissues in many areas of your body and can affect the way they work. These problems can sometimes become serious or life-threatening and can lead to death.

#### Call or see your doctor right away if you develop any symptoms of the following problems or these symptoms get worse:

- **Lung problems (pneumonitis).** Symptoms of pneumonitis may include:
  - shortness of breath
  - new or worse cough
  - chest pain
- **Intestinal problems (colitis) that can lead to tears or holes in your intestine.** Signs and symptoms of colitis may include:
  - diarrhea or more bowel movements than usual
  - stools that are black, tarry, sticky, or have blood or mucus
  - severe stomach-area (abdomen) pain or tenderness
- **Liver problems (hepatitis).** Signs and symptoms of hepatitis may include:
  - yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes
  - dark urine
  - nausea or vomiting
  - feeling less hungry than usual
  - pain on the right side of your stomach area (abdomen)
  - bleeding or bruising more easily than normal
- **Hormone gland problems (especially the thyroid, pituitary, adrenal glands, and pancreas).** Signs and symptoms that your hormone glands are not working properly may include:
  - rapid heart beat
  - urinating more often than usual
  - your voice gets deeper
  - weight loss or weight gain
  - hair loss
  - muscle aches
  - increased sweating
  - feeling cold
  - dizziness or fainting
  - feeling more hungry or thirsty
  - constipation
  - headaches that will not go away or unusual headache
- **Kidney problems, including nephritis and kidney failure.** Signs of kidney problems may include:
  - change in the amount or color of your urine.
- **Problems in other organs.** Signs of these problems may include:
  - rash
  - severe or persistent muscle or joint pains
  - low red blood cells (anemia)
  - changes in eyesight
  - severe muscle weakness
- **Infusion (IV) reactions, that can sometimes be severe and life-threatening.** Signs and symptoms of infusion reactions may include:
  - chills or shaking
  - flushing
  - feeling like passing out
  - shortness of breath or wheezing
  - dizziness
  - itching or rash
  - fever

**Getting medical treatment right away may help keep these problems from becoming more serious.** Your doctor will check you for these problems during treatment with KEYTRUDA. Your doctor may treat you with corticosteroid or hormone replacement medicines. Your doctor may also need to delay or completely stop treatment with KEYTRUDA, if you have severe side effects.

#### What is KEYTRUDA?

---

KEYTRUDA is a prescription medicine used to treat:

- a kind of skin cancer called melanoma. KEYTRUDA may be used when your melanoma has spread or cannot be removed by surgery (advanced melanoma).
- a kind of lung cancer called non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). KEYTRUDA may be used when your lung cancer:
  - has spread **and**,
  - tests positive for “PD-L1” **and**,
  - you have tried chemotherapy that contains platinum, and it did not work or is no longer working **and**,
  - if your tumor has an abnormal “EGFR” or “ALK” gene, and you have also tried an EGFR or ALK inhibitor medicine.

It is not known if KEYTRUDA is safe and effective in children less than 18 years of age.

## What should I tell my doctor before receiving KEYTRUDA?

**KEYTRUDA**  
(pembrolizumab) injection 100 mg

### Before you receive KEYTRUDA, tell your doctor if you:

- have immune system problems such as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, or lupus
- have had an organ transplant
- have lung or breathing problems
- have liver problems
- have any other medical problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant
  - KEYTRUDA can harm your unborn baby.
  - Females who are able to become pregnant should use an effective method of birth control during and for at least 4 months after the final dose of KEYTRUDA. Talk to your doctor about birth control methods that you can use during this time.
  - Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant during treatment with KEYTRUDA.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed.
  - It is not known if KEYTRUDA passes into your breast milk.
  - Do not breastfeed during treatment with KEYTRUDA and for 4 months after your final dose of KEYTRUDA.

**Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take**, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your doctor and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

### How will I receive KEYTRUDA?

- Your doctor will give you KEYTRUDA into your vein through an intravenous (IV) line over 30 minutes.
- KEYTRUDA is usually given every 3 weeks.
- Your doctor will decide how many treatments you need.
- Your doctor will do blood tests to check you for side effects.
- If you miss any appointments, call your doctor as soon as possible to reschedule your appointment.

### What are the possible side effects of KEYTRUDA?

**KEYTRUDA can cause serious side effects. See "What is the most important information I should know about KEYTRUDA?"**

The most common side effects of KEYTRUDA in people with melanoma include:

- feeling tired
- rash
- diarrhea
- decreased appetite
- itching
- constipation
- nausea

The most common side effects of KEYTRUDA in people with NSCLC include:

- feeling tired
- decreased appetite
- shortness of breath
- cough

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of KEYTRUDA. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

### General information about the safe and effective use of KEYTRUDA

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. If you would like more information about KEYTRUDA, talk with your doctor. You can ask your doctor or nurse for information about KEYTRUDA that is written for healthcare professionals. For more information, go to [www.keytruda.com](http://www.keytruda.com).

### What are the ingredients in KEYTRUDA?

**Active ingredient:** pembrolizumab

**Inactive ingredients:**

KEYTRUDA for injection: L-histidine, polysorbate 80, and sucrose. May contain hydrochloric acid/sodium hydroxide.

KEYTRUDA injection: L-histidine, polysorbate 80, sucrose, and Water for Injection, USP.

This Medication Guide has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Manufactured by: Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp., a subsidiary of **MERCK & CO., INC.**, Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889, USA

For KEYTRUDA for injection, at: Schering-Plough (Brinny) Co., County Cork, Ireland

For KEYTRUDA injection, at: MSD Ireland (Carlow), County Carlow, Ireland

U.S. License No. 0002

For patent information: [www.merck.com/product/patent/home.html](http://www.merck.com/product/patent/home.html)

usmg-mk3475-iv-1512r004

Revised: December 2015

Copyright © 2016 Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp., a subsidiary of **Merck & Co., Inc.** All rights reserved.  
ONCO-1159415-0000 03/16



AN HBO LIMITED SERIES

WHAT HAPPENED

# THE NIGHT OF

JULY 10 9PM

OR STREAM IT ON HBO NOW

**HBO**

HBO NOW® is only accessible through participating providers in the US and certain US territories. Certain restrictions apply.  
©2016 Home Box Office, Inc. All rights reserved. HBO®, HBO NOW®, and related logos and service marks are the property of Home Box Office, Inc.



JULY 6 – 19, 2016

# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



After spending last summer yachting on the Hudson (and charging for tickets), the sixth annual 4 Knots Music Festival returns home to the South Street Seaport on July 9 for a free afternoon of salty riffs. There are plenty of acts to prioritize on its best bill yet—a reinvented Guided by Voices, a germinated Car Seat Headrest—but Cleo Tucker and Harmony Tividad’s school-bus shout-alongs as **Girlpool** may play the sweetest over the East River Bikeway. “This life is pretty,” the duo says; Water Street revellers would agree.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MAYAN TOLEDANO

# THE THEATRE

## OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

### Butler

Richard Strand's play, directed by Joseph Discher, tells the true story of General Benjamin Butler's moral crisis when three escaped slaves arrived at Fort Monroe in 1861 seeking sanctuary. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200. *Previews begin July 14.*)

### Cats

The return of Trevor Nunn's long-running production of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, based on T. S. Eliot's "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats" and featuring Leona Lewis as Grizabella. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 877-250-2929. *Previews begin July 14.*)

### Engagements

In Lucy Teitler's dark comedy, directed by Kimberly Senior for Second Stage Theatre Uptown, a young woman causes trouble at a series of summer engagement parties. (McGinn/Cazale, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. 212-246-4422. *Previews begin July 18.*)

### Hyperbolic! (The Last Spectacle)

Monstah Black's dance-theatre piece, the centerpiece of the twenty-fifth annual "HOT!" festival of queer-focussed work, imagines the last party ever in a distant future. (Dixon Place, 161A Chrystie St. 866-811-4111. *Opens July 8.*)

### Kanze Noh Theatre

Lincoln Center Festival kicks off with a presentation of works from the centuries-old Japanese genre Noh, directed by Kiyokazu Kanze, the twenty-sixth Grand Master of the Kanze School. In Japanese, with English supertitles. (Rose Theatre, 60th St. at Broadway. 212-721-6500. *July 13-17.*)

### Motown the Musical

The 2013 musical, which uses the Motown catalogue to trace the rise of Diana Ross, Smokey Robinson, and other musicians, returns for an eighteen-week run. Berry Gordy, Jr., the founder of Motown, wrote the book. (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 866-870-2717. *Opens July 12.*)

### New York Musical Festival

The festival returns for its thirteenth year, with selections including "The Gold," about a German Jewish boxer in the nineteen-thirties; "Camp Rolling Hills," set at a summer camp for tweens; and "Ludo's Broken Bride," about a man who travels to the beginning and end of time. (Various locations. [nymf.org](http://nymf.org). *Opens July 11.*)

### Oslo

Bartlett Sher directs J. T. Rogers's play, which recounts how a Norwegian diplomat (Jennifer Ehle) and her husband (Jefferson Mays) orchestrated the secret talks that led to the Oslo Accords, in the nineties. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200. *In previews. Opens July 11.*)

### Privacy

Daniel Radcliffe, De'Adre Aziza, and Rachel Dratch star in James Graham's interactive, interview-based work, which explores issues of privacy in the digital age. Josie Rourke directs the Donmar Warehouse co-production. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555. *In previews. Opens July 18.*)

### PTP/NYC

Potomac Theatre Project presents two 1981 plays in repertory: Howard Barker's "No End of Blame: Scenes of Overcoming," about a Hungarian political cartoonist sparring with government censors, and C. P. Taylor's "Good," in which a professor studies a German man succumbing to madness. (Atlantic Stage 2, at 330 W. 16th St. 866-811-4111. *In previews. Opens July 12.*)

### Runaways

"Encores! Off-Center" stages a concert version of the late Elizabeth Swados's experimental musical from 1978, drawn from her interactions with young runaways and featuring a cast of New York City teen-agers. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. *July 6-9.*)

### Simon Says

Brian Murray stars in a thriller by Mat Schaffer, in which a young psychic and a retired professor try to solve a two-thousand-year-old murder. Myriam Cyr directs. (Lynn Redgrave, 45 Bleecker St. 866-811-4111. *In previews. Opens July 9.*)

### Small Mouth Sounds

A return engagement of Bess Wohl's comedy, directed by Rachel Chavkin, in which six urbanites attend a silent retreat in upstate New York. (Pershing Square Signature Center, 480 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. *In previews. Opens July 13.*)

### Troilus and Cressida

Daniel Sullivan directs the second offering of the Public's Shakespeare in the Park season. The cast includes Andrew Burnap, Ismenia Mendes, Corey Stoll, and John Douglas Thompson. (Delacorte, Central Park. *Enter at 81st St. at Central Park W. 212-967-7555. Previews begin July 19.*)

## NOW PLAYING

### The Golden Bride

Though the script and score are painstaking recreations of a once-popular Yiddish musical comedy, last staged in New York City in 1948, this muscular production is no museum piece: Bryna Wasserman and Motl Didner direct a buoyant, full-voiced cast of twenty, and Zalmen Mlotek's fourteen-piece orchestra shifts effortlessly between Old World melancholia and New World swing. (Izzy Fields deserves special notice for a delectable array of period costumes.) The plot is fluff—a woman raised in a Russian shtetl inherits a fortune, moves to America, and offers marriage to any suitor who can find her mother—but even at its silliest it's an often touching time capsule of the hopes and fantasies of Jewish immigrants circa 1923 (complete with an unexpected anthem extolling "the new Russia"). The story ends with a masquerade ball, but the whole show glows with the joy and energy of a great party. In Yiddish, with English and Russian supertitles. (Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Pl. 646-437-4200.)

### A Midsummer Night's Dream

To attend these free presentations of Shakespeare in the parks, by New York Classical Theatre, there's no waiting in line, but there is some light hiking involved. At a recent early-evening performance in Central Park, near the Central

Park W. and W. 103rd St. entrance, the audience of a couple hundred would periodically pick up their blankets and folding chairs and happily follow the action to various sites around the body of water known as the Pool. Other natural venues for this troupe specializing in panoramic productions include Rockefeller Park, Prospect Park, and Carl Schurz Park. Sean Haggerty directs an energetic, strong-lunged cast of twelve in the Bard's dizzy, delirious, bighearted comedy. Later in the summer, to challenge the dog days, the company will present "The Winter's Tale." (Various locations. [newyorkclassical.org](http://newyorkclassical.org).)

### The Paper Hat Game

To call this a puppet show would be a radical understatement. The fifty-minute piece, created and directed by Torry Bend, combines puppetry, video footage, illustrations, a gritty soundtrack, and human hands constructing hats out of newspapers. The bare-bones plot onto which the mixed media are layered is at once simple and psychologically complex: a playful urban saint—based on the real Chicago (now Seattle) prankster Scotty Iseri—doles out paper hats to strangers in the subway, until one day he experiences a traumatic event that threatens to rob him of his good nature. Will he grow cold and retreat from the world, or show resilience and continue to create ripples of positive energy with his merrymaking? The dreamlike dénouement lends itself to multiple interpretations, any of which promises to reward the curious theatregoer. (3LD Art & Technology Center, 80 Greenwich St. 800-838-3006. *Through July 17.*)

### Sense & Sensibility

Those who prefer their Jane Austen demure should keep a restorative slug of Madeira wine at the ready. The rest of us can relax and disport ourselves at Bedlam's galloping adaptation of Austen's 1811 novel—back for an encore run—about the romantic trials of the Dashwood sisters, Elinor (a superb Andrus Nichols) and Marianne (Kate Hamill), spirited young women pauperized by their father's death. The director, Eric Tucker, isn't one to let his actors sit around and embroider. They are nearly always on their feet—rolling wheeled scenery, trading bits of gossip, whirling in anachronistic dances, or tussling in a rugby scrum. Tucker should have let them have an occasional rest and allowed the climactic scenes to unfurl with more gravitas. But the show has ample energy and mischief, and, if some nuance is lost, much is gained in giving inventive performers such rein. (Gym at Judson, 243 Thompson St. 866-811-4111.)

## ALSO NOTABLE

An Act of God Booth. • Cirque du Soleil—Par amour Lyric. • The Color Purple Jacobs. • The Crucible Walter Kerr. *Through July 17.* • The Effect Barrow Street Theatre. • Fiddler on the Roof Broadway Theatre. • Fully Committed Lyceum. • Fun Home Circle in the Square. • Hometown New York Theatre Workshop. • Hamilton Richard Rodgers. • The Healing Clurman. *Through July 16.* • Himself and Nora Minetta Lane Theatre. • The Humans Helen Hayes. • Ice Factory 2016 New Ohio. • Incognito City Center Stage I. *Through July 10.* • On the Verge; or, The Geography of Yearning Walkerspace. *Through July 9.* • Out of the Mouths of Babes Cherry Lane. • School of Rock Winter Garden. • She Loves Me Studio 54. *Through July 10.* • Shuffle Along Music Box. • Turn Me Loose Westside. *Through July 17.* • Waitress Brooks Atkinson.

IF THERE'S A DREAM,

# CHASE IT



NSX GT3 Race Car shown. ©2016 Acura. Acura, NSX, and the stylized "A" logo are registered trademarks of Honda Motor Co., Ltd.

 **ACURA**  
PRECISION CRAFTED PERFORMANCE

## ART

## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**MOMA PS1**  
“Forty”

In 1976, the adventurous curator Alanna Heiss invited a group of artists to do as they wished in a dilapidated former public school in Queens. Gordon Matta-Clark, notoriously, tore up the floorboards. Four decades later, PS1 (now run by MOMA) remains one of America's most important centers for new art. Rather than slavishly re-creating the museum's landmark inauguration, this wily love letter echoes it, re-introducing artists from the days of cold-water lofts and municipal bankruptcy in a combination of old and new work. (On iPods throughout the show, you can hear Heiss, now retired, speaking to the artists she championed. “The thing about PS1,” the sculptor Jackie Winsor reminisces, “is that it was like an extension of your studio.”) Some participants went on to fame (Laurie Anderson recites a roundabout monologue about her therapist). But the real delights here are the less recognized figures, including the painters Robert Yasuda, whose mottled green mural is lit from behind, and Ron Gorchov, whose new diptych of curved and stacked monochromes may be his finest to date. *Through Aug. 28.*

**Museo del Barrio**

## “Antonio Lopez: Future Funk Fashion”

The Puerto-Rico-born fashion illustrator and photographer, who signed his work simply “Antonio,” was only forty-four when he died, in 1987, but he'd been remarkably prolific for decades: *Women's Wear Daily* first published his drawings in 1963, while he was a student at F.I.T. In an era when fashion illustration was all but passé, Lopez revived it, embodying the anything-goes spirit of the day. He understood that hedonism had history; his disco revellers might have stepped out of Weimar-era Berlin. This retrospective, while dazzling, is overly anxious to hit every high point and overwhelms (yet under-describes) with videos, slide shows, and vitrines of ephemera. But the co-curators Rocio Aranda-Alvarado and Amelia Malagamba-Ansótegui do a fine job of laying out his influences. Lopez's style—fluid and assured, recognizable but never repetitive—paid homage to Léger, Tamara de Lempicka, and the Futurists, but its primary muse was the street. Lopez, who was gay and out of the closet, made stars out of young models of color (Pat Cleveland, Tina Chow, Grace Jones), and turned B-boys and break-dancers into style icons. This seductive multicultural mix, groundbreaking at the time, looks utterly contemporary now. Lopez anticipated an openness and diversity that we're still struggling to realize, but it's powerfully alive in his work. *Through Nov. 26.*

**Ferenc Berko**

If the Hungarian-born photographer's name rings a bell, it might be for his pictures of Aspen, the ski resort whose image he helped burnish in the mid-twentieth century in magazines like *Look* and *Life*. (Berko died there in 2000, at the age of eighty-four). But he was also a key avant-gardist, a protégé of Moholy-Nagy, and a pioneer of color processes. Displaced by the war in the thirties, Berko travelled to London, Barcelona, and Paris (where his work showed the influence of Henri Cartier-Bresson) and also to India, where some of the best pictures in this show were taken. His most distinctive images capture no place at all: they're studies in texture, pattern, and form. *Through Aug. 19. (Gitterman, 41 E. 57th St. 212-734-0868.)*

## GALLERIES—CHELSEA

**John Akomfrah**

In the eighties, the British filmmaker co-founded the groundbreaking Black Audio Film Collective. In his first significant show in the U.S., two multi-screen pieces consider themes of migration and economic change. In the lush, surreal “The Airport,” a woman and an astronaut wander through a crumbling terminal near Athens, men gaze out over the Aegean Sea against an ululating soundtrack, and memories of world war and dictatorship bleed into contemporary Greece's decay. Less acute is the century-spanning “Auto-da-Fé,” filmed in the Caribbean;



Julie Blackmon's “Pool” is among the photographs in the group exhibition “Back at the Water's Edge,” opening July 7 at the Robert Mann gallery.

— THE HUFFINGTON POST —

“TRIUMPHANT AND SPIRITED.”

— USA TODAY —

“VIGGO MORTENSEN IS A MARVEL.”

— The Washington Post —

“WISE AND DEEPLY MOVING.”

— Entertainment. —

“SWEET AND FUNNY.”

# CAPTAIN FANTASTIC



sundance



OFFICIAL SELECTION  
UN CERTAIN REGARD  
FESTIVAL DE CANNES  
Directing Prize

BLEECKER STREET AND SHIVHANS PICTURES PRESENT AN ELECTRIC CITY ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION A FILM BY MATT ROSS VIGGO MORTENSEN "CAPTAIN FANTASTIC" FRANK LANGELLA WITH KATHRYN HAHN  
AND STEVE ZAHN CASTING BY JEANNE MCCARTHY, C.S.A. MUSIC BY CHRIS DOURIDAS MUSIC BY ALEX SOMERS COSTUME DESIGNER COURTNEY HOFFMAN EDITOR JOSEPH KRINGS PRODUCTION DESIGNER RUSSELL BARNES DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY STÉPHANE FONTAINE, A.C.E.  
CO-PRODUCERS SAMANTHA HOUSMAN CRYSTAL POWELL LOUISE RUNGE EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS NIMMITT MANKAD DECLAN BALDWIN PRODUCED BY SHIVANI RAWAT MONICA LEVINSON PRODUCED BY LYNETTE HOWELL TAYLOR, p.g.a. & JAMIE PATRICKOF, p.g.a.  
RESTRICTED LANGUAGE AND BRIEF GRAPHIC NUITY SHIVHANS PICTURES ELECTRIC CITY CaptainFantasticMovie.com WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MATT ROSS  
© 2016 CAPTAIN FANTASTIC PRODUCTIONS, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. BLEECKER STREET

STARTS FRIDAY, JULY 8 IN SELECT THEATERS

# — BETWEEN TWO WORLDS —

Smartphones, selfies, and videogames, endless online content and binge-watchable TV. In our hyperkinetic, technologically-saturated world, there are few more pressing worries than the way we live now.

But what if you could leave it all behind? What if you could return to a simpler, calmer way of life, and raise your children as “philosopher kings” straight out of Plato’s “Republic”: artists, athletes, and independent thinkers, free from the distractions of modern living?



**“IT’S ALL LOCAL AND ORGANIC AND NON-GMO.”**

**“HOW DID YOU KILL THOSE CHICKENS? WITH AN AXE OR A KNIFE?”**

That’s how Ben Cash brought up his family: a self-sufficient, idiosyncratic brood. But he didn’t think about how they would react to a wider world that would seem utterly alien.



**“I DIDN’T HAVE TO KILL THE CHICKENS. IT’S A ROTISSERIE CHICKEN SO YOU BUY IT ON...IT’S ALREADY DEAD, OR COOKED, ON A THING.”**

What’s the best way to bring up our children? Ben raised his in a forest paradise, but didn’t prepare them for the outside world. For his children, growing up was a path from isolation to integration—a journey between worlds.

## CAPTAIN FANTASTIC

STARTS FRIDAY, JULY 8,  
IN SELECT THEATRES



we watch Jews, Huguenots, Africans, and, finally, Iraqis flee persecution. Even when he's being heavy-handed, Akomfrah's commitment to beauty—as in a sequence of a hijabi on a rain-pounded beach—humanizes and ennoble his characters. *Through Aug. 12.* (Lisson, 504 W. 24th St. 212-505-6431.)

### “Blackness in Abstraction”

The curator Adrienne Edwards has organized a deft and ambitious show, which pairs mostly black works by an older generation (Ad Reinhardt, Louise Nevelson, Fred Sandback, Robert Irwin) with similarly achromatic art by younger black artists. In Adam Pendleton's floor-based ceramic tessellations, Wangechi Mutu's scattershot tosses of dark paper pulp, and Pope.L's squiggly drawings on pages ripped from “Faust,” the color black and the racial designation “black” intersect and inform each other. (A sour note is sounded by Oscar Murillo, whose tarps hanging from the ceiling manage to be arrogant and apathetic at once.) Edwards's exhibition has the virtue of placing black artists in a lineage of American abstraction from which they have too often been excluded. Even more impressively, it argues that expressing one's identity in art is not an all-or-nothing proposition, but a much freer enterprise, in which black, the purported absence of color, is anything but. *Through Aug. 19.* (Pace, 510 W. 25th St. 212-255-4044.)

### “Fine Young Cannibals”

The art historian David Joselit contends that painting is “beside itself”—an object is never alone on a wall but, rather, is embedded in a network of preëxisting images and allusions. The gallerist Friedrich Petzel, who organized this show, seems to agree. A black rubber work by Martin Kippenberger, a lodestar for Joselit's theory, reveals underlying symbols like a tic-tac-toe board and a schematic telephone; abstractions by Christopher Wool and Wade Guyton redepict earlier works through either silk-screening or digital reproduction. In a new painting by the coruscating Laura Owens, a screen-printed background with a lamb and a gingerbread house is overlaid by globs of lime green and olive. Owens, perhaps more than any other American artist, leads the charge for painting today as a medium that's as reliant on references as it is on pigment. *Through Aug. 5.* (Petzel, 456 W. 18th St. 212-680-9467.)

## GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

### “Big Nothing”

The British photographer Richard Caldicott, best known for his work with abstraction, has rounded up works by six like-minded contemporaries, half of them newcomers. The show borrows its title from a series by Luuk de Haan, ghostly black-and-white pictures of biomorphic white forms, which, like most images here, hover somewhere between present and vanishing. Erin O'Keefe makes constructions of translucent Plexiglas panels, which dissolve into layers of color and light in her photographs. Dizzily intricate patterns appear in the work of both Ellen Carey and Gottfried Jager, balancing pleasure and rigor. Caldicott's curatorial coup is his focus on modest-sized works, a welcome antidote to the recent glut of supersized abstract photography. *Through Aug. 19.* (*Sous les Étoiles*, 560 Broadway, at Prince St. 212-966-0796.)

# CLASSICAL MUSIC



“The Blind Banister,” a piano concerto by Timo Andres, was a finalist for this year’s Pulitzer Prize.

## Bold Moves

*The young composer Timo Andres steps forward while looking back.*

TECHNOLOGY, GLOBALIZATION, the levelling of cultural genres, and the ever-expanding options for entertainment and diversion have placed the empyrean realm of classical composition—and its living, thousand-year tradition—into a maelstrom of conflicting contexts. For Timo Andres, one of several brilliant composers to come out of the Yale School of Music over the last quarter century, context is commonplace. Not only is he part of a composer group, Sleeping Giant, which creates multi-movement, collective works, but he is also the member of that group whose music is most connected to the greater classical heritage. His new piano concerto, “The Blind Banister,” is a deeply complex tribute to Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-Flat Major; you can hear both works performed by Jonathan Biss at Caramoor (July 10), part of a concert with the conductor Joshua Weilerstein and the Orchestra of St. Luke's that also features tribute-type pieces by Haydn and Martinů.

Andres (born in 1985) is nothing if not a millennial, and his “bloglet” contains semi-snarky pronouncements that can be read

variously as parody, self-pity, or misdirection (“Composing is proving no easier in the new year than it has been in past years . . . I'm not trying to be dramatic; I'm merely trying to complain.”) There's nothing unsure, however, about “Blind Banister,” an extraordinarily confident stream of twenty-three minutes. Like John Adams and the late Steven Stucky, Andres has succeeded in carrying forward the mainstream tradition of orchestral modernism (which includes Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, Ives, and, now, Adams himself) in a way that is no less distinctive for seeming so ironic and abashed: the piece is at once gently private and powerfully communal in its gestures and devices.

Andres cites the Beethoven concerto's first-movement cadenza, a turbulent and contradictory patch of music that Beethoven composed some twenty years after the rest of the piece, as a main inspiration for his working process. But it is Beethoven's much simpler cadenza for the slow movement—an echoing line of gentle, dying falls—that seems to suggest the Andres concerto's real mood. The ease with which Andres absorbs these influences simultaneously reveals two ineffable qualities necessary to the mind of a mature artist: perseverance, and regret.

—Russell Platt

## CONCERTS IN TOWN

**Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center: "Summer Evenings"**

This project, another of the Society's continuing extensions of its already capacious schedule, was a hit last summer; now it returns for a three-concert set. The first program finds the consistently impressive Escher String Quartet playing music by Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Brahms (the String Sextet No. 1 in B-Flat Major, with the violist Roberto Díaz and the cellist Andrés Díaz). The cellist Jan Vogler leads the next concert's lineup, joining the pianists Orion Weiss and Wu Qian (among others) in more Mozart (the Piano Quartet in E-Flat Major, K. 493) as well as works by Dvořák and Schumann (the Piano Quartet). Favorites by (yes) Mozart, Beethoven (the Serenade in D Major for Flute, Violin, and Viola), and Dvořák (the Piano Quintet in A Major) round out the series, performed by such musicians as the veteran pianist Jon Kimura Parker and the up-and-coming violinist Benjamin Beilman. (*Alice Tully Hall, 212-875-5788. July 6 at 7:30, July 10 at 5, and July 13 at 7:30.*)

**Metropolitan Opera Summer Recital Series**

The second leg of the Met's tour through the city's parks takes it to four of the five boroughs. Three members of the company's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program—the soprano Michelle Bradley, the tenor Kang Wang, and the baritone Yunpeng Wang—sing arias and duets from "Rigoletto," "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," "La Traviata," and "La Bohème," accompanied by the pianist Dan Saunders. (*Clove Lakes Park, Staten Island, July 7 at 7; Jackie Robinson Park, Manhattan, July 9 at 7; Socrates Sculpture Park, Queens, July 11 at 7; Crotona Park, the Bronx, July 13 at 7. No tickets required. For details, see metopera.org.*)

**Summergarden**

The Museum of Modern Art renews its summer commitment to this valuable series, which provides a showcase to the exceptional young musicians of the Juilliard School. The classical offerings are provided by the New Juilliard Ensemble, led by Joel Sachs; its first concert features recent music by admired composers from Italy (Luca Francesconi), Iceland, Great Britain, and the United States (James Crowley, whose "Circle in the Round" will have its New York premiere). (*MOMA Sculpture Garden, W. 54th St. between Fifth and Sixth Aves. July 10 at 8. No tickets required; seating is first-come, first-served.*)

**Lincoln Center Festival: "Paradise Interrupted"**

Huang Ruo's one-act chamber opera isn't so much an East-meets-West story as an East-is-West story: Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden is grafted onto an episode from the sixteenth-century Kun opera "The Peony Pavilion." This fusion extends to the work's musical language, wherein the heroine's solos, in the tensile, melismatic style of Kunqu, are layered on top of the harmonies of a Western-style vocal quartet. Qian Yi, the leading lady of Chinese opera, stars in a production by Jennifer Wen Ma, one of the designers of the 2008 Beijing Olympics' opening and closing ceremonies. (*Gerald W. Lynch Theatre, John Jay College, Tenth Ave. at 59th St. 212-721-6500. July 13 and July 15-16 at 8.*)

**National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America**

Europe frays, but the spirit of its great national and transnational youth orchestras endures as a worthy model. This ensemble, now in its fourth

year, is the ward of Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute; its outstanding musicians gather under the leadership of Christoph Eschenbach for a concert that features music by Mozart (the Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-Flat Major, with Emanuel Ax) and Bruckner (the Symphony No. 6 in A Major). (*212-247-7800. July 14 at 8.*)

**Lincoln Center Festival: "Reich/Reverberations"**

New York hardly needs a reason to celebrate the achievements of Steve Reich, one of its finest musical progeny, but the composer's eightieth-birthday year is as good as any. So Percussion, with friends, leads off the first of three concerts with "Drumming," the hour-and-fifteen-minute epic; further programs, offered by the JACK Quartet and Ensemble Signal, feature such works as "Triple Quartet," "WTC 9/11," and the seminal "Music for Eighteen Musicians." (*Alice Tully Hall, July 16 at 8; Appel Room, Jazz at Lincoln Center, July 19 and July 21 at 8. lincolncenterfestival.org.*)

## OUT OF TOWN

**Glimmerglass Festival**

This season, the preëminent summer opera festival of the Northeast hews to a reliable formula in its lineup, presenting one warhorse, one relative rarity, one musical, and, for its last show, one twentieth-century opera (Robert Ward's "The Crucible," beginning July 23). July 8 at 7:30 and July 17 at 1:30: The festival opens with E. Loren Meeker's Belle Époque production of Puccini's beloved "La Bohème," starring Michael Brandenburg and Raquel González as Rodolfo and Mimì; Joseph Colaneri conducts. • July 9 at 8 and July 18 at 1:30: The director Christopher Alden sets Stephen Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd" in a village hall in postwar England, where the townspeople gather to retell the story of Sondheim's grisly dramedy over a meal of meat pies. Greer Grimsley and his wife, Luretta Bybee, are the demon barber and his salty accomplice, Mrs. Lovett; John DeMain. • July 16 at 8: Peter Kazaras's fairy-tale staging of Rossini's "The Thieving Magpie" (best known, in the modern era, for its sparkling overture) features Rachele Gilmore as Ninetta and Michele Angelini, a bel-canto specialist on the rise, as Giannetto; Colaneri. (*Coperstown, N.Y. glimmerglass.org.*)

**Chamber Music at Caramoor**

Intimate concerts continue at the gracious Westchester festival along with the grander orchestral and operatic fare. First, the young Aizuri Quartet, Caramoor's quartet-in-residence for 2015-16, offers the world premiere of a piece by the composer-cello Paul Wiancko in addition to Beethoven's String Quartet in B-Flat Major, Op. 130 (with the "Grosse Fuge"), in the intimate Spanish Courtyard. The commanding Pacifica Quartet arrives the following weekend, performing music by Beethoven (including the "Razumovsky" Quartet No. 1 in F Major) and Shulamit Ran in the festival's main venue, the Venetian Theatre. (*Katonah, N.Y. caramoor.org. July 8 at 8 and July 17 at 4:30.*)

**Tanglewood**

The supreme music festival of the summer hits its stride: here are some highlights. July 8 at 8: On Tanglewood's official Opening Night, the podium of the Boston Symphony Orchestra is offered to Jacques Lacombe, the outgoing music director of the New Jersey Symphony, with Joshua Bell adding his own note of glamour; music by Ravel

("Alborada del Gracioso"), Saint-Saëns (the Violin Concerto No. 3 in B Minor), and Prokofiev (the Fifth Symphony) is on the program. • July 9 at 8: Lacombe returns to lead the orchestra in a concert including two works that are in the deep repertory of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus—the "Daphnis et Chloé" Suite No. 2 and Orff's "Carmina Burana." • July 12-13 at 8: The Emerson String Quartet mines the Viennese repertory in two concerts at Ozawa Hall. The first is a traversal of all six of Haydn's Op. 76 Quartets; the second is a ripe assemblage of late- and post-Romantic music by Brahms, Egon Wellesz ("Sonnets by Elizabeth Barrett Browning"), and Berg (the "Lyric Suite") that features a star turn from the soprano Renée Fleming. • July 14 at 8: In "The Times They Are A-Changin'," the Knights chamber orchestra brings its Brooklyn vibe up to the Berkshires, with the vocalist Christina Courtin and the singer-songwriter Gabriel Kahane; among the selections are pieces by Haydn (the Symphony No. 64, "Tempora Mutantur"), Schubert, and Kahane, in addition to arrangements of music by, among others, Bob Dylan. • July 16 at 8: The distinguished maestro Christoph von Dohnányi comes to the Shed, conducting the B.S.O. in music by Ives, Strauss (the "Four Last Songs," with a return visit from Fleming), and Tchaikovsky (the Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique"). (*Lenox, Mass. For tickets and complete schedule, see bso.org.*)

**Music Mountain**

String quartets are the usual fare at this longtime northwest Connecticut venue, but one of mid-July's chamber concerts will be given over to two exceptional pianists: the great Peter Serkin, and a protégée, Julia Hsu. They'll play four-hand music by Bach (arranged by György Kurtág), Brahms (the composer's own arrangement of the String Sextet No. 1), Mozart, and Bizet ("Jeux d'Enfants"). (*Falls Village, Conn. musicmountain.org. July 10 at 3.*)

**Marlboro Music**

The legendary summer festival and school, where the world's leading musicians gather with their promising students to make chamber music on the highest level, is up and running. Programs are announced one week in advance on the festival's Web site. (*Marlboro, Vt. marlboromusic.org. July 16 at 8 and July 17 at 2:30. Through Aug. 14.*)

**Caramoor**

The centerpiece of the Westchester festival's summer season is a concert of Rossini's newly rediscovered "Aureliano in Palmira." Its resonance is twofold: The opera depicts a love story set against the background of war-torn Palmyra (in modern-day Syria), and it has its American premiere in a new critical edition prepared by Caramoor's director of opera, Will Crutchfield, who also conducted the work in its first modern-day performances at Italy's Rossini Opera Festival, in 2014, two hundred and one years after its composition. Crutchfield leads the vocal soloists Andrew Owens, Georgia Jarman, and Tamara Mumford and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. (*Katonah, N.Y. caramoor.org. July 16 at 8.*)

**Maverick Concerts**

One of the finest of young American chamber ensembles, the Horszowski Trio, makes its debut at the Maverick's idyllic woodland hall in piano trios by Schumann (No. 2 in F Major), Joan Tower, and Beethoven (the "Archduke"). (*Woodstock, N.Y. July 17 at 4. For tickets and full schedule, visit maverickconcerts.org.*)



## The Rooftop Revelers

Leave some room in your bag and take the cool with you. Plan your trip by reading up on neighborhoods, hip happenings, restaurants and more at [WASHINGTON.ORG](http://WASHINGTON.ORG) or by calling 1-888-301-7001.

#MyDCcool

**DC**  
*Cool*

# DANCE



*Hurlin unearthed four unproduced plays by the artist Fortunato Depero in Rovereto, Italy.*

## Acrobatic Homicides

*Dan Hurlin rescues Futurist puppet shows, at Bard SummerScape.*

IN 2013, DAN HURLIN, a performance artist and puppet artist, was working at the American Academy in Rome when he stumbled on evidence that during the First World War Fortunato Depero (1892-1960), one of the Italian Futurists, had written four puppet plays that were never produced. Where were they? Hurlin travelled to Depero's home town, Rovereto, at the foot of the Italian Alps, to examine the man's archive. "I sat at this big table,

wearing those white cotton gloves they make you wear," Hurlin remembers. "The librarian brought out a huge box, full of sheets of paper, each covered with tissue paper. And I turned the sheets, and there they were—the plays. I practically wet my pants." What the box contained was pages and pages of stage directions, and also set designs. There was no dialogue, and there were no drawings of the puppets. This last discovery, I thought, must have been a blow to Hurlin, but he reported it to me with no apparent sorrow. I should have known. He is a puppet designer, and he was not unhappy to have to

design the puppets himself. They are a triumph of cubo-constructivo-Bauhausianism—pear-shaped heads, conical legs—all of this in Fisher-Price reds and greens and yellows, and sporting nice little accessories: an aigrette, a cigarette.

In a sense, Futurism was just the Italian division of a pan-European fascination with technology in the years surrounding the First World War. The artists wanted metal, not flesh; action, not thought; violence, not tea parties. So, Hurlin says, puppets were perfect: "Puppets are action figures. Violence is a big, gross, dumb motor action, and puppets can do it. Plus, when they do it, it can be far more dire than with actors. An actor may die, but we know he'll get up when the curtain comes down. With puppets there's no pretending. They have no other life. There's a saying among puppet people: 'An actor has to work to die. A puppet has to work to live.' And, in the end, who does that work? The spectator does. The puppets don't have those emotions. We put the emotions into them, in our minds. So when they get shot or have their heads cut off"—as they do, in Hurlin's show—"it can be actually tragic."

Among the Depero plays that Hurlin will present are "Automatic Thief" (a thief hypnotizes everyone, then magnetizes them, then steals all their belongings via magnetic attraction), "Acrobatic Suicides and Homicides" (self-explanatory), and "Electric Adventure." This last is a love triangle. All three of the principal characters die. Then their coffins get caught up in high-voltage wires, and the corpses are electrocuted back into life. The over-all title of the four-play presentation, which will run about an hour and a half, with commissioned music by Dan Moses Schreier, is "Demolishing Everything with Amazing Speed." It will be at Bard SummerScape July 17-17.

—Joan Acocella

**Dušan Týnek Dance Theatre**

Týnek, a veteran of both Lucinda Childs Dance and the Merce Cunningham Repertory Understudy Group, has imbibed lessons from both masters, about the importance of structure and the excitement of raw movement, but he's undeniably his own man. His style, though rigorous and roughly balletic, is loose and muscular. And, unlike with Cunningham, his dances are driven by the poetic logic of music. This run includes a new work, with music by Bryce Dessner—who provided the score for Justin Peck's "Most Incredible Thing"—and a recent piece set to music by the Serbian-born composer Aleksandra Vrebalov. Týnek's "Romanesco Suite," from 2013, takes its inspiration from fractals, repeating geometrical patterns that appear in nature. (*New York Live Arts*, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. July 7-9.)

**"Tap City"**

Along with its usual classes, awards presentations, and boat ride, the New York City Tap Festival is now offering a series of tours to key places in New York tap history, from the Apollo Theatre, in Harlem, down through Forty-second Street into Greenwich Village. At the site of Five Points, a spawning ground for tap in the early nineteenth century, a mass of students will thunder for free early on the evening of July 15. The main performances, on July 14, at the Duke on 42nd Street, feature a lineup of festival regulars such as Max Pollak, up-and-comers such as Caleb Teicher, and some variety in the form of the veteran hip-hop dancers Kwikstep and Rokafella. (229 W. 42nd St. 646-223-3010. July 11-16.)

**Twyla Tharp Dance**

She's back! After a much hyped fiftieth-anniversary season at Lincoln Center, during which she presented two new works, Tharp returns to the Joyce with vintage pieces from the seventies and eighties, plus a première. These early works—"Brahms Paganini" and "Country Dances"—all too rarely performed, are a great introduction to Tharp. They contain the hip rolls, the attitude, and the loose precision that have come to define the choreographer's signature. William Whitener, who, along with Richard Colton, led the original cast of "Brahms Paganini"—a tour de force—said that it encompassed "just about everything I know about dancing and endurance and theatrics." The new work, "Beethoven Opus 130," set to one of the late quartets, will be led by the excellent Matthew Dibble with Kaitlyn Gilliland. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. July 11-16 and July 18-19. Through July 23.)

**Bridgman | Packer Dance**

Having performed together for nearly forty years, the team of Art Bridgman and Myrna Packer has focussed of late on marriages between dance and projected video. In "Voyeur," one of two New York premières, they animate the implications of drama in Edward Hopper paintings, acting out noirish scenarios glimpsed through doors and windows. In "Remembering What Never Happened," they dance with multiple images of themselves, suggesting the protean nature of memory, imagination, and perception. (*Sheen Center*, 18 Bleeker St. 866-811-4111. July 13-16.)

**"Victory Dance"**

Now in its third year, this three-week series at the New Victory offers free, high-quality

dance samplers to kids in city summer camps and schools. There's also one show a week for the general public. First up is a terrific collection of quick-witted and engaging eccentricity, combining Doug Elkins's "Hapless Bizarre," Big Dance Theatre, and David Neumann. Later lineups include the Limón Dance Company, Camille A. Brown, and hoofers selected by the American Tap Dance Foundation. (209 W. 42nd St. 646-223-3010. July 14. Through July 28.)

**"From the Streets to the Stage"**

Full Circle Souljahs, a spirited dance collective run by the hip-hop old hands Kwikstep and Rokafella, presents a free, block-party-style showcase as part of the City Parks Foundation SummerStage series. In addition to the host group, the impressive list of participants includes the rhythmically supple house dancer Cebo, the Hood Lockers, and the subway buskers of It's Showtime NYC. (*St. Mary's Park, the Bronx*. 212-360-2777. July 16.)

**OUT OF TOWN****Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival**

After making its U.S. debut at the Pillow last year with a program of short pieces high on cute theatrical gimmicks and jokey fun, Gauthier Dance (July 6-10, at the Ted Shawn), a young and agile troupe from Stuttgart, returns with some of the same works, plus similar fare, including "Cantata," a Neapolitan festival (with live music) by Mauro Bigonzetti and an ensemble romp in

equestrian dress by Cayetano Soto. • In "And Still You Must Swing" (July 6-10, at the Doris Duke), three of the world's greatest tap dancers—Jason Samuels Smith, Derick Grant, and Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards—combine forces for a suite of routines and improvisations in the jazz tradition, joined by Camille A. Brown, a contemporary dancer well versed in swing, and a quartet of musicians. • Hubbard Street Dance Chicago (July 13-17, at the Ted Shawn), which has recently developed a specialty in the post-modern oeuvre of William Forsythe, brings his "N.N.N.N.," a complex quartet for dancers and their audible breath, and "Solo Echo," a mournful dance in falling snow by Forsythe's foremost artistic heir, Crystal Pite. (*Becket, Mass.* 413-243-0745. Through Aug. 28.)

**Fire Island Dance Festival**

For the twenty-second year, Dancers Responding to AIDS presents this festival by the sea, performed against the spectacular backdrop of the Great South Bay, between Fire Island and Long Island. The lineup, as usual, is stellar. Among the many participants, Wendy Whelan, formerly of New York City Ballet, will perform the duet "First Fall"—part of her "Restless Creature" project—with Brian Brooks. The Ballet Contemporáneo de Camagüey will appear, in the group's first foray in the U.S. And then there's the power couple from Alvin Ailey: Linda Celeste Sims and Glenn Allen Sims, glamour personified. Tituss Burgess hosts. (*Fire Island Pines, Fire Island, N.Y.* 212-840-0770, ext. 229. July 15-17.)

## A QUESTROYAL SPECIAL EVENT

**Over 80 paintings by highly regarded American artists offered below cost or substantially discounted**

Unlike most galleries, we own nearly all the paintings we sell.

Collectors have a momentary opportunity to benefit as we prepare for new acquisitions.

We will buy back any painting included in this event within one year of the purchase date. We believe in the paintings we sell.

**Event ends September 2, 2016**

Visit [www.questroyalfineart.com/special](http://www.questroyalfineart.com/special) for more information.

James M. Hart (1828–1901)

*Twilight with Deer at Lake's Edge*, 1872 (detail)

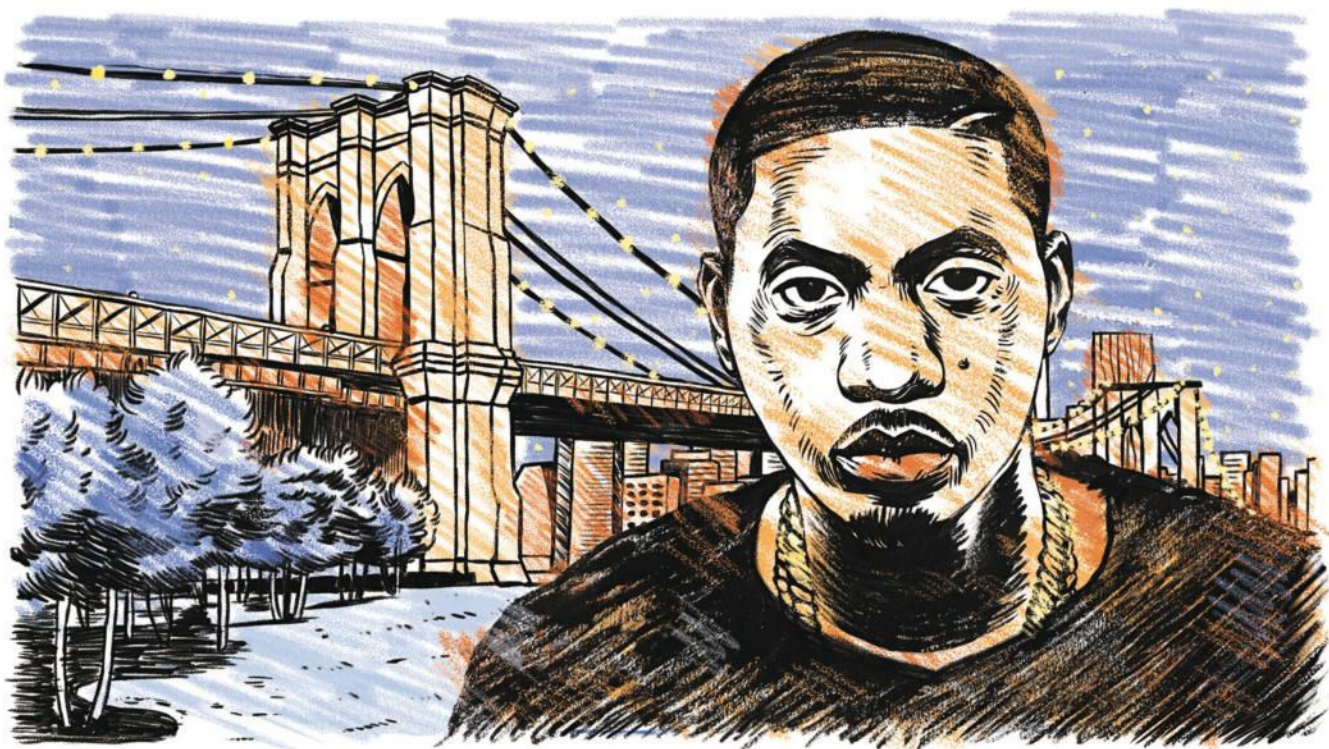
Previously offered for \$45,000

\$35,000 special event price

**QUESTROYAL FINE ART, LLC**

(212) 744-3586 New York, NY [galleries@questroyalfineart.com](mailto:galleries@questroyalfineart.com) [www.questroyalfineart.com](http://www.questroyalfineart.com)

# NIGHT LIFE



## Under the Bridge

*The rapper Nas brings Queens vignettes to Brooklyn Bridge Park.*

BY THE LATE nineteen-eighties, as the sounds and styles of hip-hop pervaded youth culture, budding stars jostled for position, and a curious internal debate swept the tristate area—where exactly had it begun? Though South Bronx block parties had long been given the credit, one song inadvertently fed fans the rumor that hip-hop started in Queens. In MC Shan's 1986 single, "The Bridge," he raps, "You love to hear the story, again and again / Of how it all got started way back when / The monument is right in your face / Sit and listen for a while to the name of the place." "The Bridge" was short for Queensbridge, America's largest operating housing project, located in Long Island City; Shan was simply extolling the place where his Juice Crew "got started." This erroneous origin story isn't the complex's only incongruity. At concerts and in clubs, Queensbridge persists as a misnomer, evoked to represent the entire borough: a rogue symbol of Queens's scrappy tenacity and opaque borders.

A ghostly image of the Queensbridge Houses appears on the cover of "Illmatic," the 1994 debut album by Nasir Jones, known to fans as Nas, transposed under a photograph of the then-twenty-year-old rapper as a toddler. On the album's centerpiece, "The World Is Yours," Jones brags of aiming guns at all his baby pictures. Scenes like these, jarringly morose and delivered in his throaty monotone, once again rerouted the genre's devotees toward Queensbridge, where Jones came of age: shortly after its release, "Illmatic" was praised as a benchmark debut, and Jones gained clout as a prodigious writer. Compact and glowingly musical, the album reworked silent film scores and nimble kalimba phrases into a humming city tableau, on which the young rapper sulks through his writhing neighborhood with the moral baggage of an Arthur Miller lead. "I need a new nigga for this black cloud to follow / 'Cause while it's over me, it's too dark to see tomorrow," he exhales.

"Illmatic" and its unanimous acclaim have also lent themselves to overzealous fetishizing—the album stalks its creator

not unlike that black cloud. Still, he's grown as a provocative and lucid narrator in the years since, always demanding more of the rap form: on "2nd Childhood" (2001), he examines the emotionally stunting effects of poverty; on "I Can" (2002), he reworks "Für Elise" for an endearing youth P.S.A.; on "Bridging the Gap" (2004), he duets with his father, the jazz cornettist Olu Dara. "I been to Saudi Arabia, Mozambique / Madagascar, Paris, Greece," Dara riffs. "The Middle Africa is where we lived / Better known as Queensbridge."

This March, Kanye West tweeted, "I promised Obama Ima do beats on NAS' next album. . . ." Whether the exchange took place or not, the patently baffling scenario West alluded to speaks to Jones's cherished stature among his fans, and hints at just how high up that base may go. He's toured extensively in recent years, including a twenty-year anniversary run in 2014, where he performed "Illmatic" in full. On July 16, he headlines the twelfth annual Brooklyn Hip-Hop Festival, in a Queens insurgency that Kings County won't mind supporting.

—Matthew Trammell

ILLUSTRATION BY CLAIRE MERCHLINSKY

  
**S. PELLEGRINO**  
SPARKLING NATURAL MINERAL WATER



**LET TASTE BE YOUR GUIDE.**

With its gentle bubbles and distinct mineral balance,  
S. Pellegrino introduces you to a world of unique taste experiences.

Find your guide to good taste.  
Visit [sanpellegrino.com](http://sanpellegrino.com)



## ROCK AND POP

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

**Barbez**

This wide-ranging outfit has tackled the works of the Romanian Jewish poet Paul Celan and two-thousand-year-old Jewish melodies from Rome. Led by the guitarist and singer Dan Kaufman (a contributor to this magazine), the chamber ensemble will perform Spanish Civil War songs; numbers from their most recent release, "Bella Ciao"; and selections from "White Phosphorus," an upcoming album that interprets the turmoil that has paralyzed the Middle East since 9/11. (*Joe's Pub*, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555. July 8.)

**Beach Slang**

Last year, while touring for their acclaimed debut album, "The Things We Do to Find People Who Feel Like Us," the winsome Philadelphia quartet Beach Slang made a few detours in Minneapolis, retracing the home-town landmarks of the scrappy eighties rock group the Replacements. The group's itinerary included local venues where the Replacements had played, railroad tracks where they'd snapped several publicity shots, and the infamous house on the cover of "Let It Be." Beach Slang will pay official homage to their beloved Replacements at a Knitting Factory benefit, where they'll cover the band's slick 1987 album, "Pleased to Meet Me," from top to bottom. Beach Slang is joined by the Brooklyn trio **The Can't Tells**, who will take on the Pixies' mammoth "Doolittle," and Matthew Daniel Siskin, who performs under the moniker **Gambles** and will spin yarns from PJ Harvey's "Stories from the City, Stories from the Sea." Part of the proceeds will go to the Sweet Relief Musicians Fund. (361 Metropolitan Ave., Brooklyn. [knittingfactory.com](http://knittingfactory.com). July 12.)

**Jessy Lanza**

Growing up in Hamilton, Ontario, this pop vocalist tinkered around with her father's synthesizers and stringently studied jazz: the tracks she's writing and producing today glimmer with the sheen of maximalist eighties mall pop shrunken down to the tinny sounds of MIDI keyboards, and the rhythms betray an innate relationship with swing. Her sophomore record, "Oh No," released this May, is most satisfying for its lack of buildup: songs like "Never Enough" and "It Means I Love You" putter along in modestly dreamy loops, giving Lanza room to jitter in high registers that she nails with ease. It's the kind of *kawaii*-and-blues thump that PC Music perfected last year—always a rush to hear live. (*Bowery Ballroom*, 6 Delancey St. 212-260-4700. July 8.)

**LUH**

Ellery James Roberts served as the central growl in WU LYF, a Manchester indie band as infamous for their dense arrangements as they were for their refusal to grant interviews. After the band petered out, Roberts sketched out solo releases, sampling avant-garde producers like Clams Casino and aping jagged, industrial sounds beloved by Death Grips. When he sought out a softer tone to balance some of his heaviest compositions, he enlisted his girlfriend, the artist and photographer Ebony Hoorn, to lay down scratch vocals. Their pairing sparked this new project, short for *Lost Under Heaven*, characterized by soaring arena-ready scores like "Beneath the Concrete" and "1&1": mammoth drums, sweepingly melodramatic strings and keys, stacks of vocals that meld it into a chain-link fence of sound, all produced by the Björk collaborators the Haxan Cloak. LUH make

their stateside debut in this small backroom, which might feel like a stadium by soundcheck. (*Mercury Lounge*, 217 E. Houston St. 212-260-4700. July 15.)

**Magrudergrind**

When a beloved underground venue abruptly gets its notice that the city, its neighbors, the landlord, or some combination of the three will no longer be a party to its continued existence, bands are called in for a parade of last hurrahs. The Acheron has played host to many bands that far outstrip the size of the small space, starting with Trash Talk on its first night, six years and a month ago, in 2010; the venue will hold two shows on its last night, after a month of surprise guests. Magrudergrind will be the last band to grace the stage, and rightfully so. They are the sort of grindcore band that epitomizes its genre namesake while understanding that it's a bit silly, a self-awareness that has boded well: they appeared in an early episode of "Veep," in a capacity not dissimilar to the role Cannibal Corpse played in "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective." (57 Waterbury St., Brooklyn. 718-576-3297. July 9.)

## JAZZ AND STANDARDS

**"Jazz in July: Summertime Swing Party"**

Swing remains the thing at this venerable uptown festival. The musical director and pianist extraordinaire **Bill Charlap** will address favorites from the nineteen-thirties through the fifties, alongside such stalwarts as the saxophonists **Harry Allen** and **Chuck Wilson** and the trumpeter **Jon-Erik Kellso**. (92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. 212-415-5500. July 19.)

**Adam O'Farrill Quartet**

The trumpeter O'Farrill's "Stranger Days" is the kind of debut recording that a burgeoning young bandleader can take special pride in. His lean two-horns-bass-and-drums quartet sounds like an actual working ensemble, his compositions announce themselves as memorable tunes worth returning to, his musical overview is expansive and inviting, and his own smart playing balances passion and restraint. Impressive is the word. (*Jazz Gallery*, 1160 Broadway, at 27th St., fifth fl. 646-494-3625. July 6.)

**John Pizzarelli**

A sterling cabaret artist who doesn't hide his deep affection for the classic rock and pop that he grew up with, the guitarist and singer Pizzarelli recently tipped his hat to a major influence on "Midnight McCartney," an imaginative project that approached offbeat Paul McCartney tunes from a stylishly personal angle. (*Jazz Standard*, 116 E. 27th St. 212-576-2232. July 5-10.)

**Chris Potter Trio & Underground**

Unplugged or plugged in—take your pick here, as the skillful tenor saxophonist Potter convenes his trio for the first half of this engagement, with the bassist **Ben Street** and the drummer **Billy Hart**, and then kicks up the voltage with his Underground quintet, featuring **Craig Taborn** on keyboards and **Adam Rogers** on guitar. (*Jazz Standard*, 116 E. 27th St. 212-576-2232. July 14-17.)

**Matthew Shipp**

Shipp, a cornerstone pianist of the jazz-keyboard renaissance that's been brewing over the past two decades, will tangle with a swath of adventurous guests during this residency, including the saxophonist **Ivo Perelman**, the bassist **William Parker**, and the violist **Mat Maneri**. (*The Stone, Avenue C* at 2nd St. [thestoneny.com](http://thestoneny.com). July 12-17.)

## MOVIES

## OPENING

**Café Society** Reviewed this week in *The Current Cinema*. Opening July 15. (In limited release.) • **Captain Fantastic** Viggo Mortensen stars in this drama, as a survivalist who brings his children up in the wild. Directed by Matt Ross. Opening July 8. (In limited release.) • **Ghostbusters** Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, Leslie Jones, and Kate McKinnon star in this reboot of the 1984 action comedy, directed by Paul Feig. Opening July 15. (In wide release.) • **Men Go to Battle** Reviewed in *Now Playing*. Opening July 8. (*Anthology Film Archives*.) • **Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates** In this comedy, Anna Kendrick and Aubrey Plaza play hard-partying women who respond to an ad placed by two brothers (Adam DeVine and Zac Efron) seeking sedate companions. Directed by Jake Szymanski. Opening July 8. (In wide release.) • **Our Little Sister** Reviewed in *Now Playing*. Opening July 8. (In limited release.) • **Under the Sun** Reviewed in *Now Playing*. Opening July 6. (*Film Forum*.)

## NOW PLAYING

**The BFG**

Steven Spielberg lavishes extraordinary care and skill on this live-action adaptation of a story by Roald Dahl, about an orphan named Sophie (Ruby Barnhill) who is plucked from a London orphanage by a giant named Runt (Mark Rylance) and brought to his home in Giant Country, somewhere to the north of north. There, Runt is bullied by nine even bigger giants, child-eating cannibals who mock him for being a vegetarian and try to hunt Sophie, whom he valiantly defends. Meanwhile, Runt plies his gentle trade as the world's dream-catcher and dream-brewer. The early scenes offer a sort of magic realism in which Runt struggles with the practical details of the modern city with a cleverly grounded whimsy that the movie's far more fanciful later conceits can't match for simple astonishment. Rylance brings an arch literary rusticity to Runt's brilliantly bungled language, and the gifted Barnhill isn't given much with the role of Sophie, who's written to be spunky, endearing, and blank. The film's technical achievements may be complex, but its emotions are facile. With Penelope Wilton as the Queen, who summons the British Army and keeps the American President, Ronald Reagan, informed.—Richard Brody (In wide release.)

**Free State of Jones**

The director and screenwriter Gary Ross illuminates immense historical spans with the true story of one man's revolt during the Civil War. Newton Knight (Matthew McConaughey), a Mississippi medic in the Confederate Army, is infuriated by draft exemptions extended to slave owners and angered by taxation of small farmers. He deserts and takes refuge in a swampland among a group of runaway slaves which includes the fiercely principled Moses (Mahershala Ali) and the medically gifted Rachel (Gugu Mbatha-Raw). Their ranks swell, and they become a fighting force, declare independence, and hold out until the end of the war. Meanwhile, Newton and Rachel marry. Ross carries the action through to Reconstruction and the bloody rise of the K.K.K.; an amazing sidebar, set in the nineteen-forties, involves Davis Knight (Brian Lee Franklin),

a great-grandson of Newton and Rachel, whose marriage to a white woman is challenged in a Mississippi court. Ross's powerful assemblage of information offers little psychology, symbolic resonance, or practical politics. He links economic and racial justice but skimps on the details, despite the cautionary reminder that the Civil War and the freeing of slaves were followed by a century of violent racism that remains unredressed.—*R.B. (In wide release.)*

### Independence Day: Resurgence

It is two decades since the last "Independence Day," and what, if anything, has changed? The same aliens are attacking once again, with the same contempt for diplomatic pieties. The same scientist (Jeff Goldblum) is trying to devise a suitable response, as, on a more homely level, is his father (Judd Hirsch). The same fruitcake (Brent Spiner) is still stuck in Area 51. True, there is a new President (Sela Ward), but the old one (Bill Pullman) is not yet out of the game. And the whole thing is orchestrated by the same director, Roland Emmerich, whose taste for the gigantic remains as excitable as ever. It seems only respectful, therefore, to view the new film in 3-D, on the largest screen you can find, and yet there's no mistaking the sense of shrunken fun. The innocent follies of the original have all but vanished, along with Will Smith, making way for something that feels both looser and more cynical. New characters, played by likable actors (including Liam Hemsworth and Maika Monroe), are dragged in but then cramped for dramatic space. As for the ending, no effort whatever is made to bring things to a natural close, and the poor movie, utterly spent, simply runs out of gas.—*Anthony Lane (Reviewed in our issue of 7/4/16.) (In wide release.)*

### The Legend of Tarzan

The plot of the classic adventure tale has been admirably reconfigured to meet modern sensibilities, but the resulting film is simplistic, condescending, and inert. The action is set in the eighteen-eighties, when Belgian colonists, led by Leon Rom (Christopher Waltz), sought to conquer the Congo and enslave its inhabitants. Great Britain's envoy, John Clayton III, Lord Greystoke, formerly known as Tarzan (Alexander Skarsgård), is informed of the Belgian plot by an American diplomat, George Washington Williams (Samuel L. Jackson), and they travel together to thwart it. John's wife, Jane (Margot Robbie), the daughter of an American teacher in the Congo, joins them and is captured by Rom. Forced to fight once more as Tarzan, the man raised by apes displays his deep roots in Congolese society as well as his ability to talk to animals (who end up engaging in the movie's most photogenic combat). Meanwhile, the urbane George reminds John, and viewers, of American imperialist and racist depredations of the era. Jane is no mere victim but an accomplished fighter, but Tarzan inescapably plays the great white savior, and his African counterparts are depicted favorably but emptily. Directed by David Yates.—*R.B. (In wide release.)*

### Men Go to Battle

Zachary Treitz's vital, granular drama spans a year in the life of the brothers Mellon, young farmers in Small's Corner, Kentucky, beginning in November, 1861, early in the Civil War. The tall Francis (David Maloney) is brash, funny, and impulsive; the short Henry (Tim Morton) is prudent, phlegmatic, and soulful. When Francis is heedless, Henry gets hurt, and a trip to the doctor puts Henry face to face with Betsy Small (Rachel Korine), an upper-crust young woman whom he courts in vain. Henry saves his emotional wounds by joining the Union Army, leaving Francis to farm alone, while the war overturns

settled hierarchies. Treitz, who co-wrote the script with Kate Lyn Sheil (who also plays Betsy's sister Josephine), sees rustic life in distant times with an astonishingly vibrant, tactile precision. The richly textured images by the cinematographer Brett Jutkiewicz offer an agile Impressionism illuminated by flickering bonfires and streaky sunlight; the actors' blend of twitchiness and terse wit, chewy accents and untamed gestures, seems to grow spontaneously from the landscape. The film dramatizes the violence of war in deftly imaginative touches and captures grand swaths of history on the wing; it's an instant-classic Western.—*R.B. (Anthology Film Archives.)*

### Mississippi Mermaid

François Truffaut's doom-laden romantic thriller, from 1969, stars Catherine Deneuve as Julie Rousel, a mail-order bride who travels from her home in Paris to the island of Réunion to wed Louis Mahé (Jean-Paul Belmondo), a wealthy businessman on whom she has predatory designs. Louis is inhibited and Julie is cagy; she ensnares him in a net of sexual obsession that pulls him, open-eyed and willing, down into the dregs of life. Long silences are built into the story of the tentative couple, and the methodical pacing bears the anguish of a slow-motion catastrophe. Under starchy bourgeois formalities, Truffaut finds a rampant daily eroticism of leers and glimpses, probings and pawings that are all the more enticing for their air of dirtiness. His tautly controlled wide-screen images lend an unnatural chill to the garish tropical light of Réunion; their complex and delicate pirouettes throb with the thrill of sex and violence. Under her cold manners and glossy looks, Julie is another of Truffaut's feral survivors of a wild childhood, a vengeful outcast from a society that tormented her from the start. Truffaut joins the redemptive power of love to a stifled guffaw of irony. In French.—*R.B. (Film Forum; July 17-18.)*

### Opening Night

Myrtle Gordon (Gena Rowlands), a glorious actress in the prime of life, stars in a new play by an older writer (Joan Blondell) but finds that the story—which is all about aging—is making her think old, seem old, and feel old, and she resists ferociously, onstage, in real time. The psychodramatic improvisations that she wreaks upon the text, and the chaos that they sow among her colleagues onstage and off, are the crux of John Cassavetes's harrowing and profound film, from 1977—one of the greatest ever made about an actor's life and work. Myrtle's co-star (Cassavetes), her director (Ben Gazzara), the producer (Paul Stewart), and the entire crew get drawn into her turmoil as she turns the theatre into her arena of existential combat. The story begins with the magic moment when Myrtle passes from the wings to the stage yet never stops being herself. The familiar fascination of backstage melodrama keeps the action flowing as the terrifying, self-excoriating antics threaten to shred the fabric of the drama, even the screen itself. Cassavetes's most cleverly constructed film is also a definitive lesson in the death-defying, all-consuming art of acting, proof of a madness beyond the Method.—*R.B. (Metrograph; July 15.)*

### Our Kind of Traitor

Adaptations of John Le Carré have travelled a long way since 1965, when Richard Burton starred in "The Spy who Came in from the Cold," with weariness and desperation worked into his face like grime. This year's TV version of "The Night Manager" boasted the kind of seductive gloss that we associate with 007, and it's followed by this new movie, based on Le Carré's novel of 2010 and directed by Susanna White, which conjures an odd mixture of

domesticity and derring-do. Ewan McGregor plays Perry Makepeace, a lecturer in English literature who, pretty much by chance, is sucked into espionage—befriended on vacation by a Russian money launderer (Stellan Skarsgård) and asked to bear a message, proposing a secret deal, back to London. From here on, Perry and his wife, Gail Perkins (Naomie Harris), find themselves morally ensnared, against their better instincts, although we get more than a hint that the thrill of the mission may be just the thing to rejuvenate their marriage. The whole thing could almost be a fantasy of Perry's; it is nicely grounded, however, by the earthy presence of Skarsgård, and by Damian Lewis as the bespectacled spy whom our hero must learn to trust.—*A.L. (7/4/16) (In limited release.)*

### Our Little Sister

The latest and most placid film from Hirokazu Kore-eda is about three siblings—or, to be exact, three and a half. The half is Suzu (Suzu Hirose), who is still a teen-ager; after the death of her father, she meets her three older half sisters for the first time. One is a nurse; another is a bank clerk; the third works in a sports shop. They attend the funeral, and are so struck by Suzu's maturity and grace that they invite her to come and live with them in their large old house, where the doors aren't even locked. The practiced calmness of Kore-eda's approach is such that you barely notice the speed at which he tugs the plot along and flips from one setting to the next, as modern mores—arguments about sleeping around, breakfasts grabbed on the go—are played out against traditional backdrops, with a flourish of blossom and at a shrine where Suzu prays before heading to school. Nobody could describe the movie as eventful (and viewers may be surprised to learn that it's adapted from a graphic novel), yet the thrust of Kore-eda's storytelling, as so often, is that even a quiet life can be a full one. In Japanese.—*A.L. (In limited release.)*

### The Shallows

On a secluded beach in Mexico, the Texan surfer Nancy Adams (Blake Lively), a recent med-school dropout, faces the curling waves with a blend of eagerness and pain. The beach was the favorite of her late mother, whom Nancy is still mourning, and whose incurable illness led Nancy to despair of the medical profession. Yet when a shark attacks Nancy and opens a deep gash on her thigh, those medical skills come in handy: she uses earrings to stitch herself up. For the next two days, Nancy—prevented from swimming to shore by the marauding beast—takes refuge on a small rock formation while keeping an eye on the tides that briefly submerge it. The director, Jaime Collet-Serra, keeps Nancy and the shark busy but offers no distinctive perspective on the action or, for that matter, on the

## THE FRONT ROW



A video discussion of John Cassavetes's "Faces," from 1968, in our digital edition.

situation. Another surfer's GoPro conveniently floats toward her rock, but the spoken testament that Nancy leaves on video veers toward the generic. The movie doesn't give Nancy much of an inner life, and it offers no sense of the mind-bending force of fear. Lively's melodramatic power remains untapped.—*R.B. (In wide release.)*

### The Shooting

Monte Hellman's low-budget Western, from 1965, offers primal violence with a modernist chill. After a hardscrabble rancher is gunned down in cold blood, a nameless young female gunslinger (Millie Perkins, whose refined chill blends Tippi Hedren and Katharine Hepburn) arrives at his outpost and hires the clever Willett Gashade (Warren Oates) and the dull Coley Boyard (Will Hutchins) to guide her through a quasi-lunar desert wilderness to a distant town for no reason that she's willing to give. Throughout the existential journey, she pits the men against each other, and signals her hired gun, Billy Spear (a sardonic, tooth-flashing young Jack Nicholson, who co-produced), to butt in when their talents no longer suit her whim. Carole Eastman's harshly literate script gives the characters a half-Biblical, half-back-country patois and demythologizes their mission, reducing the West to drudgery, sunburn, and constant danger. Hellman's tight telephoto shots press the characters entomologically against the barren landscape; he revels in the technical charms of the medium and the scruffiness of his B-movie budget as audaciously as a French New Wave director. The blank, cerebral ending is as ingenious as it is mysterious.—*R.B. (Film Society of Lincoln Center; July 6.)*

### Swiss Army Man

This excruciatingly cute fantasy, identified since its Sundance premiere as "the farting-corpse movie," lives up to that epithet. Paul Dano plays the shipwrecked Hank, alone and unrescued on an isolated beach, who's about to hang himself when he spies a body washed up on shore. Daniel Radcliffe plays that body, which is both dead and eerily flatulent; Hank drags the body onto dry land and into a forest. The body soon speaks, calling itself Manny and posing naïve questions that force Hank to explain the basics of societal organization, manners, and romance, and to re-create, by way of illustration, urban spaces out of branches and stones. Meanwhile, Manny also spews water from his mouth, and Hank harnesses both ends of Manny's energy—hydraulic from the top and pneumatic from the bottom—to aid in his survival in the wild. Along the way, Hank divulges his own sad story of solitude and thwarted love. The directors and writers, Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, offer a hint of an idea in Hank's display of a vision of responsible masculinity and the frustrations that it entails, yet they smother that idea in bland images, wheedling and sentimental performances, and banal emotions.—*R.B. (In limited release.)*

### Under the Sun

This chilling documentary about life in North Korea is constructed from footage for a dramatic feature shot there by the Russian filmmaker Vitaly Mansky. He worked with a script furnished by North Korean authorities and let his official minders direct the actors during the shoot. The authorities stopped the shoot midway; the thinness and rigidity of the drama, and the air of constraint and fear that pervades the action, suggest their reason for doing so. Mansky assembled the material straightforwardly, adding only explanatory titles and happenstance scenes of the minders overseeing the performances. The story concerns a young girl named Lee Zin-mi, who is inducted into the quasi-military

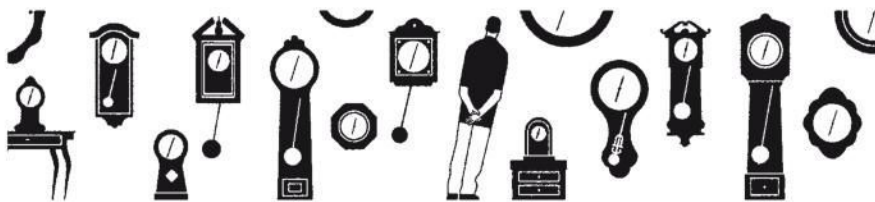
Children's Union. It follows her to school, where students learn only rote political slogans; to her home, where television broadcasts only propaganda and her parents speak in official catch phrases; and into the street, where more propaganda is blasted from truck-mounted loudspeakers and public life is ordered around deferential bowing to monuments. The vision of such severe regimentation is shocking; Zin-mi's tears of shame and her sharply limited range of knowledge and inhibited behavior embody an outrage.—*R.B. (Film Forum.)*

### Wiener-Dog

The new Todd Solondz movie takes its name, its cue, and its trotting pace from a dachshund. The same animal appears in four loosely linked stories, as a pet to a variety of owners. The first of these is a lonely young boy called Remi (Keaton Nigel Cooke), who

dotes on the new arrival, only to have it taken away after a gastric mishap. (Solondz, so mature in his visual manner, retains a childish joy in ordure and other easy shocks.) The second is Dawn Weiner—once the heroine of Solondz's "Welcome to the Dollhouse" (1995), now a hapless veterinary assistant, played by Greta Gerwig. From her care, or lack of it, the dachshund passes to the scowling Dave Schmerz (Danny DeVito), who teaches film in New York, and whose appreciation of life seems sullied beyond redemption. He, however, is a fountain of joy compared to Nana (Ellen Burstyn), the last and bitterest custodian of the pooch. If anything binds the tales together, in fact, it is not the central beast but the persistence of the director's misanthropy and the disarming elegance with which he lends it dramatic form. With Julie Delpy and Tracy Letts as Remi's unsavory parents.—*A.L. (6/27/16) (In limited release.)*

## ABOVE & BEYOND



### Bastille Day

A week after the Fourth of July, indulge in a celebration of independence with Parisian flair. French culture, cuisine, and entertainment will be on display at this annual street fair, presented by the French Institute Alliance Française in commemoration of the historic storming of the Bastille Prison in rebellion against King Louis XVI, in 1789. This year, the cast members of the Tony Award-winning musical "An American in Paris" perform selections live onstage, and attendees can enjoy champagne and chocolate tasting before watching the conclusion of the 2016 U.E.F.A. European Soccer Championship at a free screening in Florence Gould Hall. (60th St., from Fifth Ave. to Lexington Ave. [bastilledaynyc.org](http://bastilledaynyc.org). July 10 at noon.)

## READINGS AND TALKS

### Book Culture

Ashton Applewhite explores decades of ageism in "This Chair Rocks." The boomer turned activist examines America's skewed view of late life as a symptom of output-gear economic systems, and debunks stereotypes about the elderly. The Knight Fellow has spoken extensively on the subject, critiquing the medicalization of old age, which puts a strain on needed medical resources, and investigating the subtle ramifications of discrimination against the elderly in the realms of politics and gender equality. (450 Columbus Ave. 212-595-1962. July 7 at 7.)

### Cornelia Street Café

The author and public speaker Karen Kaplan lectured on health, wellness, and spirituality for years in Chicago. But her personal life harbored traumas: her father, a Holocaust survivor who had es-

caped Poland by fleeing into the forest, lived with a bitter depression that damaged his relationship with his family, resulting in physical abuse and emotional neglect. After he died, Kaplan resolved not to perpetuate the cycle of victimhood that had plagued the children of survivors. In "Descendants of Rajgród," she recounts the story of her father's youth and triumph against oppression, and forgives his treatment of her family, viewing it as a symbol of the Jewish community's potential to overcome suffering through empathy. She shares her story with the author (and Cornelia Street Café founder) Robin Hirsch, whose own experiences growing up in London in the shadow of the war set off a career of writing, acting, and teaching, including the publishing of his memoir, "Last Dance at the Hotel Kempinski." (29 Cornelia St. 212-989-9319. July 11 at 6.)

### 192 Books

It remains one of the art world's most fascinating, covetable archetypes: a curator who spots, supports, and enables a wave of talent that shakes a regime and shifts a paradigm. The image may be hackneyed now, but in the nineteen-sixties Richard Bellamy launched Green gallery on West Fifty-seventh Street and brought a groundswell of attention to the work of artists such as Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Larry Poons, and Lucas Samaras. In "Eye of the Sixties: Richard Bellamy and the Transformation of Modern Art," the author Judith Stein pulled together years of research and interviews with the late Bellamy's closest friends and associates, as well as the artists who adorned his walls. Through this biography, Stein traces the outward reach of the counterculture through one of its most important arbiters. (192 Tenth Ave. 212-255-4022. July 13 at 7.)

# FOOD & DRINK



## TABLES FOR TWO

### Nix

72 University Pl. (212-498-9393)

THE VEGETARIANS ARE WINNING. Not only are they healthier than the rest of us, they're saving the planet, one carrot at a time—or, more specifically, one fewer hamburger at a time. (Livestock is responsible for an estimated eighteen per cent of greenhouse gas; if everyone in the world became vegan, methane emissions would be reduced by twenty-four per cent by 2050.) But even as a plant-based diet becomes cool (guilt and peer pressure can be effective motivators), there will always be carnivores who want—who need—meat (or chicken, preferably fried) to feel complete. What's a forward-thinking vegetarian restaurant to do? John Fraser, the chef at Nix, a new such place in the Village, finds the joy in plants.

The Playa, a zippy watermelon cocktail, tastes like pure summer, the tequila barely detectable. A recent dish of jicama shavings pressed with cayenne, salt, blood orange, and lime was a mind-bending balance of crunchy, tangy, sweet, and refreshing. In an adaptation of *cacio e pepe*, Fraser (who is also the head chef at the trendy vegetable-focussed Narcissa) lards polenta with butter and piles on smooth shiitake mushrooms. Pity the gluten-free diner, because the best offering could be the bread. Frisbee-size disks arrive hot,

puffed, and blistered from the tandoori oven and slashed with sumac. With it, the *labneh*, a thick, creamy yogurt cheese, should not be missed. But it wouldn't be a party without the potato fry bread: deep-fried like funnel cake and loaded like potato skins, topped with broccoli to feign pure intentions.

Some of the food is a little weird. Fried cauliflower in a sweet, sticky paprika sauce served as D.I.Y. bao buns is cloying and oddly unfun. The strangely beguiling avocado *a la plancha* comes as half a fruit warmed, blackened by char, and lying face down in a pool of room-temperature tomato water livened up by basil-chili oil and sprouted mung beans; it feels futuristic and, in the end, far superior to spooning avocado out of its skin at the kitchen sink.

Leave it to Fraser's co-owner, James Truman, formerly the editorial director of Condé Nast, to spin the word "Nix," shrouding it in mysterious new meaning. In fact, it refers to a Supreme Court case from 1893 in which it was deemed that tomatoes should be considered a vegetable, because they are eaten for dinner, not dessert. The paper flowers on the stylish tables are from John Derian, and the adorable bathroom wallpaper was painted by Truman's wife, the artist Leanne Shapton. Just as lovely is the maple custard, a creamy disk topped with walnut crumble, an experiment gone joyfully right. (Dishes \$4-\$24.)

—Shauna Lyon

## BAR TAB

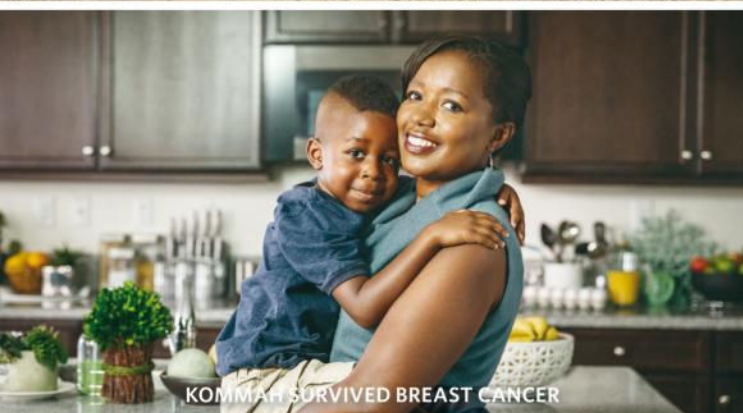


### Rose's

295 Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn (718-230-0427)

In the citronella-scented back yard of Rose's, a man in a stiff Carhartt jacket disparaged a recent meal to his friend, a five-hundred-euro affair that dared to include a classless dish of couscous and a cold egg yolk. Luckily, that evening, the egg yolk served on a particularly juicy burger was hot and runny to perfection. Until the bar was bought out by two of its managers, last April, Rose's was owned by Francine Stephens and Andrew Feinberg, dons of the tastiest mafia on Flatbush Avenue, which owns the beloved pizza restaurant Franny's and Bkln Larder, a fancy (and pricey) market down the street. Service is a relaxed, hands-off affair that encourages independence, and a refined eye is necessary to distinguish the plainclothes waitstaff from the customers: a Jesus-beard-and-German-fade combo can often be found on both sides of the bar, as can cute women in horn-rimmed glasses and cut-up tees. The food is as much of a draw as the creative cocktails. If you're forced to choose just one drink (and it's now or never, as the menu changes every few days), the Shady Lady is, indeed, as they claim, "a pretty sassy aperitivo": the cloying sweetness of sherry is balanced by a thick slice of cucumber and a dash of prosecco. There's also the Spodi Odi, a glass of red wine and a shot of bourbon. If seeking a shot of a different kind, dollar clams and oysters shucked by Charlie, the fisherman who harvested them a few hours earlier in Montauk, go down in two chews and a very briny gulp.—McKenna Stayner

# WE'RE COMING AT CANCER IN WAYS CANCER DOESN'T SEE COMING



Every day, just northeast of Los Angeles, the world-renowned research hospital, City of Hope, is pioneering some of the most unanticipated cancer breakthroughs of our time. From teaching T cells to destroy cancer to developing the technology behind four of the world's most widely used cancer drugs, City of Hope produces medical miracles that make lives whole again. But it's not enough to just heal the body. By caring for the individual, we help you re-become the person you were. At City of Hope, we combine science with soul to create miracles. To find out more about how we're saving lives by outsmarting cancer, go to: **CityofHope.org**

the **MIRACLE**  
of **SCIENCE**  
with **SOUL**™



CityofHope®



## THE TALK OF THE TOWN

### COMMENT

#### TRUMP VS. "TRUMP"

THE PRESUMPTIVE PRESIDENTIAL nominee of the Republican Party—let's call him Donald Trump, though "Donald Trump" is more like it—has a way with words, after a fashion. The mouth moves and stuff comes out. ("That could be a Mexican plane up there. They're getting ready to attack.") Except when he reads from a teleprompter, the words paradoxically seem both calculated and careless. Trusting a G.P.S. all his own, Trump is most at ease wandering syntactically all over the map until he spots an off-ramp: "Lyn' Ted," "Crooked Hillary," "Goofy Elizabeth Warren," "Build a Wall." The result ain't oratory. Still, the words entertain, wound, outrage, delight, bemuse, stupefy. More than a year into Trump's candidacy, they also signify the speaker's confusion about who he is and what he has got himself into.

Throughout the primaries, Trump rallies routinely featured his boasts about the most recent polling results. In the absence of plausible policy specifics, a coherent philosophy, a regard for nuance, or an acknowledgment of the exigencies of governance, this ritual seemed an end in itself. From there, he would ramble on about China, winning, losing, Islamic terror, Muslims, Mexicans, bigness, something about something that must be true because he read it or heard it somewhere, the disgusting lying press, and, inevitably, his fantastic super-successful incredibly intelligent self. The faithful could never get enough. One can imagine George Orwell trapped in a sea of waving "Make America Great Again!" signs when he found the poetry to define the design of political language: "to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind."

No one disputes that Trump is not a politician; he is a visionary salesman whose ingenious project, hatched while he was still in his twenties, was to brand and plaster himself everywhere. He started with the family business—real estate—and then expanded to casinos.

Despite several bankruptcies, he continued to pursue myriad schemes that epitomized A. J. Liebling's "man who mulcts another man of a dollar, or any fraction or multiple thereof." Trump had long since chosen to reduce—or, in his calculation, surely, to inflate—himself to a persona: "Donald Trump." Pivoting to Trump 2.0 likewise meant having no use for the intimacies and the self-examination inherent in personhood. The praise Trump elicits from voters for his "authenticity," for "telling it like it is," elides the fact that he is committed to hiding his human side from the world and, for that matter, from himself. "I don't like to analyze myself because I might not like what I see," he confessed to one of his biographers, Michael D'Antonio.

After running even with Hillary Clinton or slightly ahead of her in polls published in mid-May, Trump has seen his numbers deteriorate with every demographic, a decline that correlates with the exertions of fine journalists who, freed from the distraction of the primary-season horse race, are doing Trump's scrutinizing for him. Almost daily, the exposés accumulate: he doesn't pay his bills, often stiffing small contractors; for a self-proclaimed multibillionaire, he gives amazingly little to charity; he has a long history of treating women like

sex toys; he faces allegations concerning the highly dubious Trump University and the no less sleazy Trump Institute (a "wealth-creating secrets and strategies" seminar business).

Trump often speaks of how much "fun" he has running his business and running for President, but he plainly is having less of it lately. A man in touch with his emotions would recognize that in regard to this circumstance his emotions are mixed. One remarkable revelation was an account published online, in March, by Stephanie Cegielski, the former communications director of the Make America Great Again super PAC. Cegielski told of being informed by colleagues, in March, 2015, that Trump would be running for



President, with the goal of polling at, say, twelve per cent, and finishing second in the delegate count. (“A protest candidacy.”) Then, of course, his talent for demagoguery and his contempt for the establishment in both Washington and the Republican Party radically changed the narrative. The poor fellow wanted only to extend the “Donald Trump” brand, not to impose upon Donald Trump the task of learning the sorts of things that would require self-discipline commensurate with the awe-inspiring responsibilities of the Presidency.

A determined major-party candidate would have a staff employing hundreds of experienced operatives, an elaborate fund-raising network, a well-conceived ground game in every state, especially swing states. A recent headline in *Politico* read, “TRUMP’S PENNSYLVANIA CAMPAIGN IS MISSING IN ACTION.” There were also reports that the Trump campaign was soliciting donations from politicians in Australia, Iceland, Denmark, Finland, and the United Kingdom—a violation of federal law. To be fair, at the beginning of June his campaign had only \$1.3 million in the bank. So he needed the money.

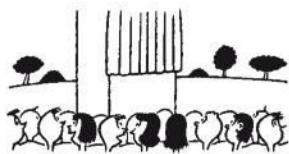
No serious candidate would gratuitously pick a racially charged fight with a federal judge presiding over a lawsuit involving his private business. A man determined to win would equip himself with a research operation that could provide in-depth information on foreign- and domestic-policy issues.

The day before the Brexit vote in the U.K., Trump was asked by Fox Business where he stood on the issue. “I don’t think anybody should listen to me, because I haven’t really focussed on it very much,” he said. “But my inclination would be to get out.” When he flew to Scotland the day after the vote, unaware that Scottish voters overwhelmingly wished to remain in the European Union, he tweeted, “Place is going wild over the vote. They took their country back, just like we will take America back. No games!”

Actually, for Trump it is all a game, one in which, though this seems an odd way to characterize it, he has outsmarted himself fatally. He famously sleeps only four hours a night—sufficient, one assumes, to squeeze in a recurring nightmare of November 9th headlines screaming “LOSER!!” Vast evidence suggests that such a scenario is what he has dreaded most throughout his life. Still, the voters who support him will not be going anywhere. The resentment that he has exploited to win their votes will remain and grow, as it will among like-minded populists in Europe who feel overwhelmed by globalization and, especially, immigration. At some point, it will hit his followers that they’ve been sold out by a huckster who coveted their votes only for the sake of his colossal self-regard. And that, all along, he had nothing real to offer.

—Mark Singer

## ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL CREATOR-IN-CHIEF



**I**N 2008, THE weekly Presidential radio address that Franklin Delano Roosevelt pioneered moved to YouTube. It skipped television entirely, legitimizing an Internet hub that has created an ecosystem of stars and revenue streams to rival Hollywood. Presidential candidates routinely court Hollywood. They may have a new crush.

Last Tuesday, ninety YouTube personalities gathered at NeueHouse, a sleek co-working space on Sunset Boulevard, for a “Creator Town Hall” with Hillary Clinton. (“Creator” is Internet-speak for someone who makes content for social media.) The event was organized by the new-media company Beautycon, after its C.E.O., Moj Mahdara, pitched the idea to Clinton’s campaign, which picked up the tab.

“I said to them, ‘Look, if you want to get this audience’”—most creators at the event were in their twenties—“‘you need to have a very transparent conversation with them,’” Mahdara said before the

town hall, standing on the pink carpet that Beautycon had rolled out. The company had liaised with the managers of Internet personalities to build the guest list. Combined, the creators in attendance had more than three hundred and twenty-one million followers on social media.

Angel Merino, a twenty-five-year-old YouTube makeup guru, batted his false eyelashes and snapped a selfie. “I’m not going to lie, I’m not a politics person,” he said. “I don’t follow Hillary on social; I only see the memes.”

Behind a barricade, protesters held anti-abortion signs and chanted, “Hillary hurts women.” “I walked by them like this,” a twenty-year-old actress named Audrey Whitby said, swinging her hips and flashing a tote bag that read, “Girls just wanna have fundamental rights.” She had scripted a question in advance: “How do we take a generation of mean girls and boys and have them embrace kindness?”

At 4 P.M., attendees filed into the building for security sweeps, chatting and Snapchatting. In a holding area, William Haynes, twenty-two, who hosts the comedy news show “People Be Like,” leaned against a bar serving only water. “I’m a young person, so by default I had to support Bernie Sanders, but I also like Hillary,” he said.

“Maybe Bernie can become her Vice-President or something!” Lucas Cruikshank, also twenty-two, also a YouTube comedian, said.

After about an hour, the creators were ushered into the auditorium, where Secret Service agents stood stiffly amid bohemian-chic floor cushions and sheepskin rugs. Mahdara introduced Clinton, who walked onstage wearing a tweedy tunic. The moderator, Dulce Candy Ruiz, a twenty-eight-year-old Iraq War veteran and life-style vlogger, who had on a sequined dress, asked Clinton if she had any opening remarks. “I’m really anxious to dive into the questions,” Clinton answered.

Topics spanned issues germane to young adults: student debt, climate change, L.G.B.T.Q. safety. Because the questions hadn’t been vetted, there were some curveballs: one woman asked if Clinton planned to pass a federal law against revenge porn; another wanted to know how she would “win back the trust of black America,” although she wasn’t clear on how Clinton had lost that trust. Clinton described her work with the Children’s Defense Fund and similar causes. “I am more than open to, and receptive to, dealing with the systemic problems,” she said. “But I also do respectfully ask that people know

# The Firebrands

They are the bold, the fearless. They are the Firebrands: the disrupters who speak the truth and hold the powerful accountable. They tell us what's going to happen in Washington before Washington even knows. Through fierce debate and intelligent conversation, they thrust us into the middle of the political and cultural zeitgeist before the sun streams through our windows. And, that's why we need them to start the day.



This is who we are.



a little bit more about what I have done." The crowd clapped politely.

At the end of the Q. & A., Ruiz asked Clinton to pose for a group selfie. "This could be better than the Oscars," the candidate said. "We have to send it to Ellen!" She worked an ad-hoc rope line, shaking hands with the YouTubers before being whisked out a side exit.

By six-thirty, the creators were back at the bar, which had started serving champagne. "A part of me feels like there was some sincerity," Missy Lynn, a twenty-six-year-old makeup blogger, said of Clinton. "Like maybe twenty per cent."

Adande Thorne, an animator who goes by the name Swoozie, appreciated the candidate's poise. "With Trump, I wonder, when he starts answering questions, What is your *modus operandi*, bro?" he said. "Listening to her, I feel much more comfortable."

Alexa Losey, who makes fashion and fitness videos, gushed about the few minutes she spent with Clinton before the town hall. "She has learned the skill of making people feel so special," Losey said. "You know when you're a little kid and you're about to meet Mickey Mouse? That's how it felt."

The thirty-year-old hair-care vlogger Whitney White, who'd confronted Clinton about racism, fanned herself with a campaign sign. She'd spoken with Clinton briefly after the talk. "She wanted to let me know what she has done, because, I guess, there's a miscommunication," White said. "It's not getting across to the millennials. Honestly, I didn't know a lot of these things."

—Sheila Marikar

## HOME OFFICE VANILLA



ON A WINTER afternoon, Jim and Jeannie Gaffigan, the married couple behind "The Jim Gaffigan Show," were working at home, in NoHo, editing a script for Season 2, which recently premiered. Fans of the semi-autobiographical sitcom might imagine them, and their five children, sharing a two-bedroom apartment, as they do in the show. They used to, but now they live in a space that comprises three apartments. Their living room/home office has a large projection screen, black walls, a black floor, and black leather furniture. Jim Gaffigan wore black, and he looked fairly trim. In February, he became the latest K.F.C. Colonel Sanders; he is famous for joking about his gluttony and sloth. At home, he sat in an easy chair, eating berries and grapes. An exercise bike stood in the middle of the room. Jeannie Gaffigan, the show's executive producer, is toned, quick, and energetic. She has a slight Wisconsin accent. Of the bicycle, she said, "It's good, because people will come in and sit on it and, like, start biking."

The script was projected above them on the screen and they read from it aloud. An assistant, Sky McGilligan, entered their changes on a laptop. In one scene, Jim takes a nap on the couch.

"I have an idea for a quick bit here," Jeannie said. "Wouldn't it be funny if he sits down and reaches for the remote, and the remote is just out of his reach, and he's like, *ehn, ehn*"—she made reaching noises. "*Ehn*. And he closes his eyes. I could just see you doing that. It's a funny Jim bit." Later, they tried to come up with an obscure, old-fashioned alcohol for a sophisticated friend (Michael Ian Black) to request when he drops by. They considered rye.

Jeannie said, "This is it. 'Can you tell me where your rye is?' 'Rye bread?'"

Jim thought.

"Rye is getting hip," Jeannie said. "Like, all the young people in Baltimore are drinking rye everything. But it's, like, *you* wouldn't know that. Jim wouldn't know that."

"But the rye-bread thing—Jim's smart enough to know that he's talking about alcohol," Jim said.

"'Can you tell me where your rye is?' Jim: 'Do you want a sandwich?' It's very Jim."

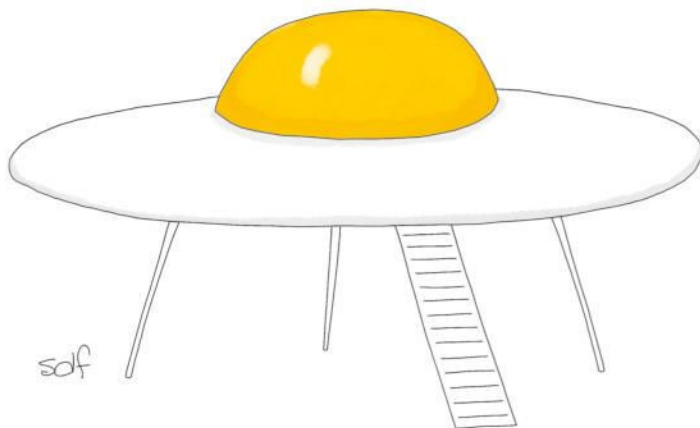
"But his I.Q. is a little bit higher than that. I think keep it bourbon."

In a more fantastical episode, Jim finds himself on trial in a court of public opinion after tweeting something controversial about manicures. (This flap happened in real life.) Jeannie read, "He is charged with being a dumb stupid idiot white guy." (His character has been in social-outrage jail, sharing a cell with Carrot Top, who says, "I've been here since the mid-nineties.") When it came time for Jim to defend himself in the script, the real Jim stood up and read his defense, waving his arms:

"'Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I believe in equality, for women, for gays, for everyone. I consider my wife my equal! I mean, when we rent a car, I don't let her drive, but that's not sexist. I just don't want to *die*. She can drive my kids around, I don't care about that.' I think put that back in there. 'But if I'm in the car, no way.'"

Occasionally, the real Gaffigan used an oaf voice to represent an unseen bloviator. "I'll tweet, 'If you're voting for someone because a celebrity told you to, then you shouldn't be voting.' And all the right-wing blogs are like, 'Jim Gaffigan goes after the libtards!'" (Oaf voice.)

The Gaffigans are Catholic. In May,



they gave the commencement address at Catholic University; last year, in Philadelphia, Jim opened for the Pope. “The Jim Gaffigan Show” is the rare sitcom with a recurring priest character. The complexity of their profile, they said, isn’t easy for everyone to grasp.

Jeannie said, “The look he has, the God-given look that he has—”

“People think I’m a Republican,” Jim said.

“—is conducive to people coming up and telling him a racist joke. Or, if a hipster like Sky wears a polo shirt, it’s ironic. But if Jim wears a polo shirt he just looks like an outgrown fat guy. A frat guy. He’s not gay, he’s not an atheist—there’s nothing that’s not vanilla about Jim,” she said.

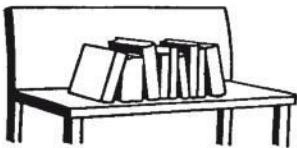
“In appearance,” Jim said.

“In appearance,” Jeannie said.

In another room, musical notes sounded faintly. “Children practicing piano,” Jeannie said. “We write till a certain time and then we go out and say hey.”

—Sarah Larson

## INK REPRESENT



“I DON’T WANT TO do this,” Lezley McSpadden said, standing in the lobby of the Roosevelt Hotel, in midtown. She was about to start a two-day press tour to promote “Tell the Truth and Shame the Devil,” which interweaves her story with that of her son Michael Brown, who was killed by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014. Her book editor, her publicist, and the memoir’s co-writer stood typing on their phones. McSpadden’s husband, Louis Head, sat waiting nearby, his eyes hidden behind sunglasses.

McSpadden had short dyed-red hair, and she wore a black hoodie, gold-rimmed sunglasses, a sparkly crucifix, and a bracelet of colorful beads, a token of the organization she founded, called Rainbow of Mothers, which supports women who have buried their children.

She hoped that she’d be able to tell her son’s side of the story, or, as she

writes to him in the book, to “represent, baby.” She wants people to know things like her son’s full name: Michael Orlandus Darrion Brown. That hers is a large, tight-knit family, with traditions, such as fishing and barbecue. That from the moment her son was born, when she was sixteen, she called him Mike Mike. That he would lean over and wrap her in a cuddly hug. That he had been learning how to drive in her old Chevy Equinox, a vehicle she will now never get rid of. That he had graduated from high school three months early. She wants to remind people that he was unarmed on the day he was killed.

Since Brown’s death, McSpadden has become a protester against police brutality and a quasi-celebrity who appeared in Beyoncé’s “Lemonade” video, looking regal on a throne, holding a picture of her son. McSpadden met Beyoncé at Prince’s “Rally 4 Peace” benefit concert, in Baltimore. She’s ambivalent about the spotlight, and has felt hesitant to even go out to the mailbox without having her hair done, fearing public scrutiny.

A black S.U.V. arrived, and the group climbed in. The first stop was Sirius XM radio, where McSpadden was interviewed before a small audience. She said, of her life growing up in St. Louis, “I never felt racial prejudice more until my son was killed.” She talked about the domestic violence she has witnessed and experienced, about being bused to school as part of a state desegregation program, about dropping out to provide for her son. “And I really wanted to have that for him,” she said, referring to a high-school diploma, her eyes welling up.

McSpadden was asked if she had forgiven Darren Wilson, the white police officer who shot Brown. “No,” she said. She talked about visiting the United Nations and meeting with members of the Committee Against Torture, which has condemned how the U.S. handles police shootings of unarmed African-Americans. In response to a comment about the minimal police gun violence in Europe, she said, with a little laugh, “I want to move over there.”

An African-American woman raised her hand and identified herself

as the mother of a twelve-year-old boy. She said, “I have fear every day, as he walks to school, or wants to go to the pizza shop.” Did McSpadden have solutions?

“I’m asking that as well,” McSpadden answered. She has an eleven-year-old son at home.

Later, people lined up to have their books signed. “I need that energy,” McSpadden said, surveying the crowd.

“You’re not alone,” a woman told her.

Outside, McSpadden smoked her next-to-last Newport and talked about her children, whom she calls her “black butterflies”: besides her son, she has two daughters, who are seven and seventeen. “I want them to feel as normal as possible,” she said. “Even though



Lezley McSpadden

that’s something that cannot even exist.”

At a lunch stop, she O.K.’ed publicity photos and approved the posts that her team would publish on social media. Her husband often exchanges heated words with online commenters. “I even get some people to take them down,” he said. McSpadden’s plate sat untouched while she conducted a phone interview.

Her last appearance for the day was uptown, at Riverside Church. During a Q & A, a man in ragged clothes motioned for the microphone. He’d come with a cart bulging with plastic bags, which was parked in the aisle. He told McSpadden that it was his first book signing. He said he felt he had to come. “God told me Mike Mike was an exceptional guy,” he said.

—Kia Gregory

A FEW DAYS AFTER the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, Nigel Farage, the head of the U.K. Independence Party, made a curious speech to the European Parliament. Farage has spent nearly two decades railing against the E.U., and his speech went viral, thanks to the unbridled scorn he showed toward his listeners. Less commented on was the end of his address, which struck a very different note. He begged the E.U. to make a tariff-free trade deal with the U.K., and promised that the British “will be your best friends in the world.” Farage was articulating the fundamental dilemma of Brexit. In 2015, forty-four per cent of the U.K.’s exports went to E.U. countries, and fifty-three per cent of its imports came from them. Although London is famous as a global financial center, it enjoys that status largely because it’s a gateway to the Continent. So, while the referendum pushes the U.K. away from the E.U., economic needs require it to stay close.

Brexiters insist that leaving will let the U.K. discard stuff that many voters dislike—free movement of labor, high budgetary dues, nitpicky regulations—without jeopardizing the country’s access to Europe’s tariff-free single market. Matthew Elliott, the Leave campaign’s chief executive, promised that the U.K. would “be able to trade with the single market on free-trade terms, without paying into the system or accepting freedom of movement.” And Boris Johnson, in a post-Brexit article, insisted that “there will continue to be free trade, and access to the single market.”

Tell that to the rest of Europe. From the start of the push for Brexit, European leaders warned that the U.K. ran a “very serious risk” of being shut out of the single market. Last week, at a meeting of the E.U.’s heads of state, that message was reiterated: the U.K. cannot leave the E.U. and have “à la carte” access to it. Even if some of this is posturing, markets are anticipating a much harder landing than what Leave promised. “If the British believe that they’ll be able to negotiate a special opt-out deal, they’re delusional,” Nicolas Véron, a fellow at the Peterson Institute and the European think tank Bruegel, told me.

There are several models for how a future outside the E.U. might look. Like Norway, a non-E.U. member, the U.K. could join the European Economic Area, retaining access to the single market while reducing its budgetary contributions. But that would mean accepting free movement of labor, the very thing a huge number of Leave voters voted against. The same would

be true if it tried to emulate Switzerland, which has more independence of the E.U. than Norway but also more limited access to the single market. The most likely outcome is that the U.K. will end up with a trade agreement like one that Canada recently negotiated: it pays virtually no tariffs and is able to sell goods throughout the single market. It doesn’t make any contribution to the E.U., and there’s no free movement of labor. The U.K. could keep selling raincoats to the E.U., while the Germans would keep selling B.M.W.s to the British.

That might sound like a great deal, but for the U.K. there’d be a big catch: the arrangement wouldn’t cover banking and other financial services. Right now, firms established in the U.K. can operate anywhere in the E.U., under a system known as “passporting.” If the U.K. loses passporting rights, banks will likely move much of their business out of London, probably to Paris, Frankfurt, or Amsterdam. As Véron puts it, “There’s a very real possibility that the City will be significantly hollowed out.” This would hit the British economy

very hard, since banking is one of its biggest industries. Although being less reliant on banking might be good for the U.K. in principle, the adjustment would be brutal.

The Brexiters are confident that none of this will happen, on the assumption that Europe is bound to see that the status quo offers the best deal for everyone. The E.U. sells the U.K. hundreds of billions of dollars’ worth of goods and services every year, so both sides have an incentive to keep things as they are. But this is naïve. For one thing, many European countries would be happy to see their own banking sectors flourish at the U.K.’s expense. The French President, François Hollande, has already said that financial clearing-

houses would have to move out of London if they wanted to continue to clear European trades, a loss that he said would “serve as a lesson” to those who “seek the end of Europe.”

As Hollande’s comments suggest, the negotiations over a new trade deal won’t be about economics alone. They’ll also be about politics. European leaders, in deciding how they should treat the U.K., will be thinking, in part, about Brexit’s effect on the stability of the E.U. itself, which they very much want to preserve. Studies show that international institutions work best, and are most effective, when members feel that leaving has a high cost. So, even if driving a hard bargain with the U.K. does some damage to the E.U.’s economy, that may be a price worth paying, in order to show Euroskeptics everywhere that leaving has consequences. “You’re willing to do things for family members simply because they’re family,” Véron told me. “But when you’re no longer in the family you’re out.” In choosing Brexit, British voters decided that ideological considerations trumped economic ones. They can hardly complain if Europe makes the same choice.

—James Surowiecki





**You've earned your money, but are you owning it?**

In life, you question everything. The same should be true when it comes to managing your wealth. Do you know what your investment recommendations are based on? Does your financial professional stand by their word? Do you know how much you're paying in fees? And how those fees affect your returns? Ask your financial professional, and if you don't like their answers, ask again at Schwab. We think you'll like what we have to say. **Talk to us or one of the thousands of independent registered investment advisors that do business with Schwab. Ask questions. Be engaged. Own your tomorrow.™**

---

Schwab ranked  
**"Highest in Investor Satisfaction  
with Full-Service Brokerage Firms."\***

---



*charles*  
**SCHWAB**

*Own your tomorrow.*

**Wealth Management at Charles Schwab**

PLANNING | PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT | INCOME STRATEGIES | BANKING

Brokerage Products: Not FDIC Insured • No Bank Guarantee • May Lose Value

To see how Schwab stands by our word, visit [www.schwab.com/accountability](http://www.schwab.com/accountability)

\*Charles Schwab received the highest numerical score in the J.D. Power 2016 Full-Service Investor Satisfaction Study, based on 6,006 responses from 20 firms measuring opinions of investors who used full-service investment institutions and were surveyed in January 2016. Your experiences may vary. Visit [jdpower.com](http://jdpower.com).

There are eligibility requirements to work with a dedicated Financial Consultant.

Wealth management refers to products and services available through the operating subsidiaries of the Charles Schwab Corporation of which there are important differences including, but not limited to, the type of advice and assistance provided, fees charged, and the rights and obligations of the parties. It is important to understand the differences when determining which products and/or services to select.

The Charles Schwab Corporation provides a full range of brokerage, banking, and financial advisory services through its operating subsidiaries. Its broker-dealer subsidiary, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("Schwab"), Member SIPC, offers investment services and products, including Schwab brokerage accounts. Its banking subsidiary, Charles Schwab Bank (member FDIC and an Equal Housing Lender), provides deposit and lending services and products. ASK QUESTIONS. BE ENGAGED. OWN YOUR TOMORROW. is a trademark of Charles Schwab & Co., Inc.

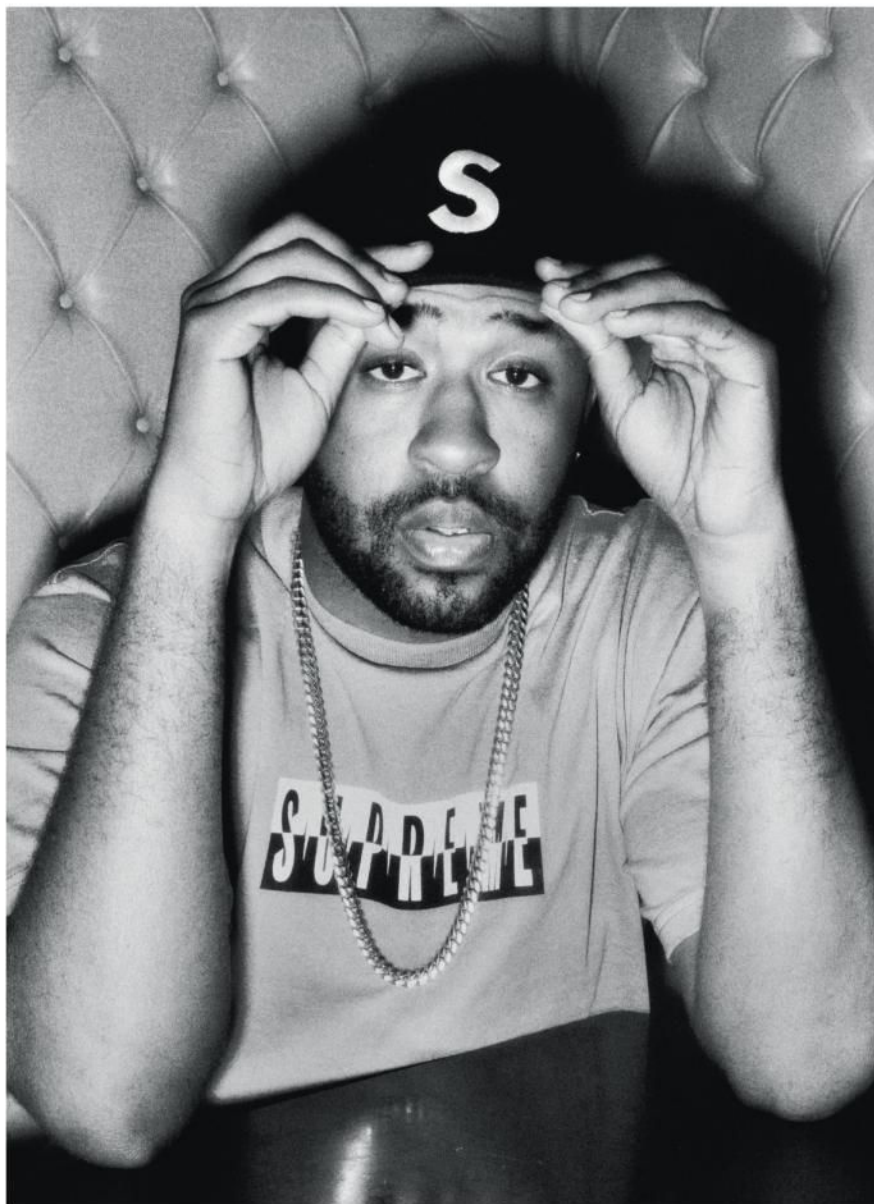
©2016 The Charles Schwab Corporation. All rights reserved. (0516-FTV3) ADP77864-02

PROFILES

# THE MIXOLOGIST

*How Mike Will made it.*

BY JOHN SEABROOK



*"I'm learning as I go," Will says. "This is everybody's first rodeo."*

AT ELEVEN-THIRTY ON a Saturday night, in a bland-looking office building on Sunset Boulevard, in Los Angeles, a security guard in the lobby directed me to a locked door. Hearing the magic words "Mike Will," the man who opened the door smiled, introduced himself as the studio manager at Electric Feel, and pointed down the hall.

In the main room, the console sat in a kind of sunken cockpit where two producers could work side by side, surrounded by an open hangout space. A long hall led to an internal courtyard, where you were supposed to go if you wanted to smoke, a rule that no one was bothering to observe. There was also a glassed-in conference room, and

that's where I found Mike Will—Mike WILL Made-It is his producer name; legally he's Michael Len Williams II—in the midst of a business meeting.

Will is the twenty-seven-year-old founder and C.E.O. of Ear Drummer Records, a label and a production company. His credits include tracks by Kelly Rowland, Miley Cyrus, Jay Z, Kanye West, Rihanna, and Beyoncé—Will co-produced "Formation," the song that Beyoncé performed at this year's Super Bowl.

Will's sessions tend to be loose, free-flowing affairs. At any given time, there are a dozen or more "creators" coming in and out—co-producers (Will has eight on his staff), artists, managers, and hangers-around—contributing to the vibe that is the essence of a Mike Will record: that moment, deep into the night, after hearing the song hundreds of times, when Will gets it and everything goes down.

"He understands the record, he understands the artist, and he understands the idea," Jimmy Iovine, who was a producer before he became an Apple executive, told me. "Every artist and every song has an idea, and the producer's job is to capture it." At a time when a lot of music production is an assembly-line process, Will uses chance, spontaneity, and group dynamics. In his sessions, jamming and messing around—ear drumming, you could call it—lead to happenstance and creativity. He seems a bit like a control freak who understands that control has no useful part to play in the process.

A couple of young white guys in hoodies from 300 Entertainment, Lyor Cohen's music and management company, were discussing putting together a record deal with Joseph Antney, a Queens-based musician who was signed to Ear Drummer Records as Yung Joey. Antney was there, but he didn't say much. He kept one palm hovering a half inch over his bare, well-inked abs, occasionally allowing himself to touch skin before pulling his hand back again.

Will sat at a laptop and played a number of Antney's songs that were in various states of completion. Some tracks included drums and other instrumentation; others were made up of loops with Antney's raunchy raps on top. Tall and broad-shouldered, Will



# # haveKINDLEwillTRAVEL

📍 TONLE BATI, CAMBODIA 📖 V. RATNER, *IN THE SHADOW OF THE BANYAN* @AMAZONKINDLE



amazon

has a domed forehead, hooded eyes that often wear a deceptively sleepy expression, a closely cropped beard, and a tendency to mumble when he talks. He was in his customary attire: white T-shirt, track pants, New Balance kicks, a gold chain, a jewelled watch, and diamond studs in both ears.

"I feel like he's a mix of Nelly, LL Cool J, and Fiddy," Will said, mentioning two artists who are considered not just rappers but entertainers, and the artist and entrepreneur known as 50 Cent. "He's got that melodic shit, but he's gonna come out as a rhythmic artist."

Will talked about the need for an artist like Antney to achieve "separation," by which he meant the ability to distinguish himself from other performers. "I want an artist to come like Superman"—that is, out of the clear blue sky—"big-ass looks, good-ass music." He wasn't impressed by an artist's twenty million Twitter followers, because "that's twenty million people who knew you before you were *this* you." (In fact, Will is in the process of rebranding the artist formerly known as Yung Joey as X.A.N.—"Xpensive Ass Nigga.")

Antney grunted in agreement. He looked ready to fly.

"I'm just trying to take the next step with him," Will went on. "So what's the next step?"

"Well, I think we really want to get a single together," one of the hoodies said. "Tonight, if possible."

That night, Antney was supposed to catch a flight back East, which might be expensive to rebook. Will glanced at the hoodies.

"Let's do it," one of them said.

"O.K., so I'm gonna go knock the drums out, that's first and foremost," Will said, getting up and heading down the hall to the main room with Antney following.

A HIP-HOP PRODUCER's personality often shows through most clearly on drums. Mike Will's drums have a swampy sound that derives from his years of apprenticeship in the basement of his family's home in Marietta, a suburb of Atlanta. As the artist Big Sean, who has collaborated with Will on several records, put it, "I think his drums are different. They're muddy,

## MY BODY IS AN INJURY THE WORLD

My body is an injury the world  
can't seem to heal from—  
you would expect it gone  
by now, and yet each next  
day it persists, still implementing  
its same staunch pain, atrocious,  
railed against, assumed  
by the world to be an ingenious  
comeuppance, a vengeance  
against it—what did it do

what did the world do

to warrant my body within it,  
smarting, to warrant each of our  
bodies within it, crowding  
the sites of abuse, assessing ticket  
prices, asking how much to see  
the slave house, how much  
to touch the indented names  
of the killed, how much to enter  
the slatted cell and size it, close  
behind us its wrought door, oh

actually that one's free

—Natalie Shapero

but they hit hard. It's rare. You can tell from the textures somebody took the time to make sure that the sonics are right, and you got to appreciate that." In the Big Sean song "Paradise," which is on Will's 2014 mixtape "Ransom," the rapper's light, skipping flow over Will's heavy *dun-dun-DAH-dun-DAH* beat is like the frosting on a molten-chocolate cake.

Drums on hip-hop songs are almost always created electronically, on computers. On a Mike Will Made-It track, different drum sounds are combined with other percussion effects, making a dense sonic impasto that stutters and shimmies through the song, until all the elements coalesce for the climax. His beats—the rhythmic and instrumental tracks that form the base for most hip-hop songs—also incorporate melodic elements derived from synthetic keyboards and woodwinds, to give a sense of spaciousness.

Beats are how many hip-hop songs begin; rappers write their rhymes to them.

And beatmaking is the way a lot of hip-hop icons begin—Dr. Dre and Kanye West started out as beatmakers. But lots of people can make beats; only a few beatmakers become super-producers.

Will's productions aren't instantly recognizable in the way that, for example, Timbaland's are. Miley Cyrus, who worked with Will on her 2013 album, "Bangerz," told me, "Mike could lock you in a studio for five days and not play the same beat twice. He has such a library of what he has created."

In the main room, two producers, Louis Bell and Roofeeo (né Jahphet Landis, the drummer for TV on the Radio), who had come in for the session, were sitting at the console. Will stood next to them, supervising the process of putting drums on Antney's song.

They began with a snare and a kick drum. The producers would play drum samples from different software files, each barely distinguishable from the next, at least to my ear, but Will knew immediately when he heard the right

drum. ("He never ever second-guesses his ear," Miley Cyrus said.) Within half an hour or so, they had the basic drum sound down and began to work on the instrumentation.

"I want this shit to go rhythmic," Will said. "Rhythmic and pop. It could be like—what's that song?" He hummed a little bit of a tune and then, in a falsetto voice, sang, "Oh, baby . . ."

"Exactly," Bell said, recognizing the late-eighties song "Just a Friend." "That Biz Markie vibe."

Roofeeo noodled around on a keyboard, playing airy, wheedling little melodies. These spooky-sounding keys, such as one might hear on the soundtrack of a psychological thriller, are another Mike Will Made-It trademark.

"That sounds dope," Will said. "Keep rocking that."

"I might have to write another verse," Antney said, and got busy with a pad and a pencil.

"This your record?" Roofeeo asked.

"Yeah." Antney looked intense, in a kind of trance as he listened to the beat.

"This shit hard, bro."

Meanwhile, back in the conference room, a young Ear Drummer co-producer named Shod had come up with a new beat on his laptop—*shup-chuga-chuga-shup*. Shod, nineteen, is one of the many cousins of Will who are scattered around the country; he lives in Inglewood. When Will heard that Shod was getting into trouble, he got him into beatmaking instead.

Will summoned Antney into the conference room, and both of them started scat-singing into their phones, using an app called VoiceNote to record themselves. They kept at it for ten minutes or so, until they had a couple of different melodic ideas, which they texted to Shod to work on. Will was elated with the results.

"Damn, Shod!" Will exclaimed, grabbing the teen-ager by the shoulders and shaking him affectionately. Shod didn't smile, but you could see that he was proud. Then he got back to work.

**M**IKE WILL WAS born in Atlanta in 1989, the same year that Antonio (L.A.) Reid and Kenneth (Babyface) Edmonds founded LaFace Records, the label that signified the birth of Atlanta as a music town, spawning

the careers of such first-generation Atlanta stars as TLC, Toni Braxton, OutKast, Usher, and Goodie Mob. Young Mike and the musical milieu around him grew up together. "The A," as locals refer to Atlanta, offers significant advantages to a precocious talent like Will—a wide range of home-grown talent to work with, plenty of recording studios, and established producers to act as mentors. Atlanta also, crucially, can provide a protective environment that shelters developing musicians from the pressures of New York and Los Angeles.

The twin poles of hip-hop history are New York and L.A., but Atlanta has its own style, one that has evolved over the years from Southern rap to crunk. In recent years, "trap" has become a catchall term for the Atlanta sound, heard on records by artists as varied as Gucci Mane, Young Jeezy, Waka Flocka Flame, 2 Chainz, T.I., and Future. The sound—grimy, ominous beats with psychedelic instrumentation on top, made with layered synthesizers—draws from an earlier style developed by the rap group Three 6 Mafia and the producer Lil Jimmy, as well as from the ongoing work of influential Southern producers such as Lex Luger and Shawty Redd. The imagery and the rappers' personas mostly come from the drug trade. Trap houses—so called because there is only one way in and one way out—are where crack and purple drank (a codeine-based concoction also known as lean and siz-zurp) are prepared, bought, and sometimes consumed. The vocals feature the A's "leaned-out" style of rapping—a hoarse urgency that commands attention, punctuated by mumbled soliloquies—pioneered by Gucci Mane and currently embodied by artists who aren't even from the A, such as Fetty Wap (Paterson, New Jersey) and Designer (Brooklyn). It is the music of rebellion, as rock and roll once was—hard beats and raps calculated to drive any parent crazy.

Will's parents, Mike L and Shirley, started their married life in Cleveland. Mike L—Michael L. Williams I—one of fifteen siblings, bettered his lot by learning about computer networks during a stint in the Marines, in the seventies. That led to a job servicing I.B.M.

products—"everything from mainframes to typewriters"—and, eventually, to a position as a project manager on a contract to computerize all the check-ins, worldwide, for Holiday Inn and Hilton. Because of his work with I.B.M., he relocated to Atlanta in 1985.

At first, Mike L was shocked to see how black people would hang their heads when they were around white people and not look them in the eye. In Cleveland, where he had been a d.j. in R. & B. clubs, he hadn't experienced that. He asked himself, "What can I do to make my kids compete on the same level with white people—with people in general?" In 1986, Williams moved the family—his wife and two daughters, at that point—to a development called Highland Trace, in the suburb of Marietta. Michael, born four years later, grew up in a split-level house, with a driveway and a yard, in a district where he and his sisters could attend an integrated school. Mike L and Shirley separated when Michael was in elementary school, but Mike L stayed nearby and remained a major part of his son's life. Mike L was strict about Michael's sticking with sports—baseball, football, and basketball, which had been his own passion, before he suffered a torn meniscus.

Michael was the only male in the house. Shirley was a mortgage-loan processor, who sang backup for the gospel singer Dottie Peoples on the weekends. The girls, Chante and Monique, were eleven and six years older than Michael. (Their parents had spaced the children so that they wouldn't be paying two college tuitions at the same time.) Chante, now a corporate manager, liked to listen to N.W.A. and Tupac; Monique, a bank branch manager, preferred Whitney Houston and Toni Braxton. Will's music is a synthesis of his sisters' tastes.

Michael would fool around on Monique's Casio MT-520 keyboard, which she had inherited from Chante. Several keys didn't work, and the battery cover was missing, but "it was just the only thing that could make sound in the crib," Will told me. "I used to listen to songs on the radio and play that junk back on that little keyboard." He called this "ear drumming."

In 2003, when he was fourteen, Will

went into the Atlanta branch of Mars Music, the now defunct chain. “I go, ‘How do you use a beat machine?’ And the sales guy goes, ‘I’ll show you.’” An hour later, the salesman asked, “Man, that’s your first beat? For real? Damn, you should make beats, brother!”

Will said, “So I went to my dad, and I was like, ‘Hey, I’m going to make beats.’ And he said, ‘What are beats?’”

“When we were coming up, you had musicians,” Mike L said. “They played drums. So when you’re talking about making beats—what the hell is that?”

Will assured him that there was money in it and persuaded his dad to buy him a Korg Electribe EM-1 music-production station for Christmas; then he taught himself music programming. The station came with a software module that sounded like the Roland TR-808 drum machine—the sound at the core of Southern rap. At Kroger, where he bagged groceries after school, Will sold his beats for a hundred dollars each to some would-be rappers who worked with him, and used the money to buy more equipment. “I just wanted to get better. I was working with anybody and everybody. I’m like, ‘Hold up, I’ll make three beats for you for five hundred dollars and I’ll record you.’” He’d come home from his job and spend most of the night working in the basement.

“He doesn’t like earphones,” his mother told me, when I met her at Negril Village, a Jamaican restaurant in downtown Atlanta. “Mike would play music so loud that it was rocking the floor! I would say, ‘Could you turn it down just a little bit?’ I wanted to see him succeed. But it was really loud.”

Mike L insisted that his son sign contracts with the rappers who bought his beats. “I’m from the corporate world, so I said, ‘You need a contract.’ But Michael would say, ‘It doesn’t work that way, Dad.’ And I would say, ‘Well, shit!’”

Will also made beats for his group, FAY—three rappers plus young Michael, the producer. In 2004, they began to have success in the clubs. (FAY stood for Fuck All Y’All, but the group changed it to For All Y’All after they

attracted fans.) But the other guys in FAY ended up getting “caught up in some bullshit,” as Will says, and the four went their separate ways.

Will was seriously tempted by the streets only “for a moment,” he told me. “At the end of the day, I was listening to the big homies and they were saying, ‘Yo, man, you got talent, man, stay off the streets.’” One of those older mentors was his uncle Roger, his father’s youngest brother, who was later shot and killed. “That brought it home for him,” Mike L said. “You hear about people getting killed all the time, but it’s different when it’s someone close to you.”



In 2006, Will met Gucci Mane (whose real name is Radric Davis) at Patchwerk, an Atlanta studio founded by Bob Whitfield, who had played with the Falcons. One night, Will recalled, Gucci was in the building, and Will passed him a CD with some of his beats on it. Not long afterward, Gucci summoned Will.

“Yo, the homeboy with the beats! I got a thousand dollars for you!” Gucci said. Will, all of seventeen at the time, replied, “I get my people to holla at your people, bro.” Gucci was amused. In the course of three days in 2007, they made twenty songs together. After one especially inspired bout on the mike, Gucci Mane bestowed on Will his producer name: “Mike Will made it, Gucci Mane slayed it!” he cried.

When Will first met him, Gucci had recently served a six-month sentence for aggravated assault after being convicted of attacking a night-club promoter. In a separate case, he was charged with the May, 2005, murder of a rapper. He acknowledged that a shooting had taken place after he was attacked, but the case was dismissed for lack of evidence. (Subsequent stints of incarceration followed, beginning in 2008. This May, he was released after serving nearly three years in a federal penitentiary for illegal possession of a firearm; he is now back at home in Atlanta, and he and Will are working together.) Did Mike L worry about his son and Gucci spending so much time together? “Constantly!” he said. “Michael would say, ‘No, he’s cool.’ I said, ‘He has gone

to prison—he can’t be so cool.’ Michael just said, ‘He got caught up in something.’ ‘Well, O.K., you just be careful out there.’”

Will’s work with Gucci, in particular, gave him credibility. Soon, he was working with practically every important hip-hop artist in Atlanta, including Future. His father insisted that he continue his studies, and his son did spend a couple of years in college, until, Will said, “I told my dad, ‘Man, Future and 2 Chainz are about to be the hottest in the game! I’m gonna drop out of school.’”

“You’re tripping,” his dad replied.

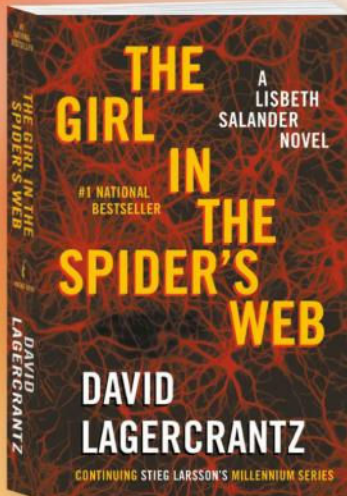
Within six months, in April, 2011, he had his first radio hit, with Meek Mill and Rick Ross’s “Tupac Back,” which had hard raps from Mill and Ross over Will’s haunted-sounding beat. Shirley told me, “I said, ‘Son, you’ll really know if you made it if Ludacris calls.’” Ludacris is an Atlanta rapper who started out as a d.j. on Hot 97.5, a local station. “And then Ludacris called! I even got to crying after that.”

**I** FIRST HEARD THE name Mike WiLL Made-It in the “drop” at the start of Miley Cyrus’s 2013 hit “We Can’t Stop.” A drop is a producer’s or a d.j.’s sonic tagline, which is introduced seamlessly into the mix. They were a feature of early hip-hop records; they went out of style for a while, but many top young producers are using them again. D.J. Mustard’s is “Mustard on the beat, hoe” and Metro Boomin’s is “Metro Boomin’ want some more, nigga.”

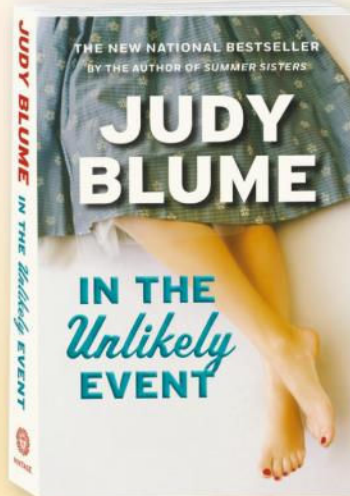
On “We Can’t Stop,” there are actually two drops: first, “Ear Drummers,” in a man’s distorted-sounding voice, and then “Mike WiLL Made-It,” in a synthetic female voice with an echo effect. Behind the drop, barroom piano chords play, and the leaned-out refrain—“It’s our party we can do what we want”—begins the song.

Before “We Can’t Stop,” Miley Cyrus was an ex-Disney kid who was trying to establish an identity as an adult artist. Her 2009 song “Party in the U.S.A.,” which was co-written and produced by the hitmaker Dr. Luke, had partly accomplished that transformation, although vestiges of Cyrus’s Hannah Montana persona remained. She had

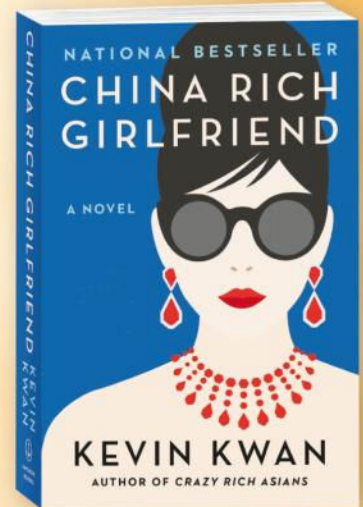
# Great Books for Summer Reading



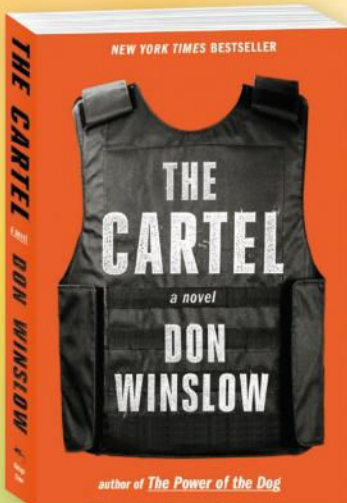
"Riveting.... Pyrotechnic.... Intelligent."  
—Chicago Tribune



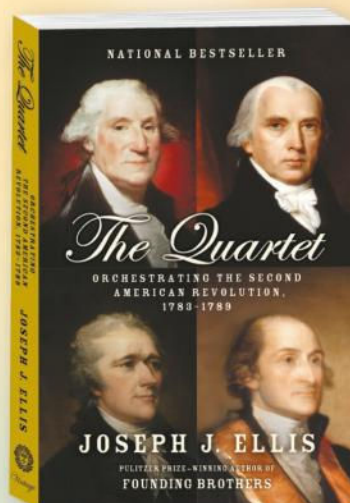
"A page-turner.... Like reconnecting with a long-lost friend."  
—The New Yorker



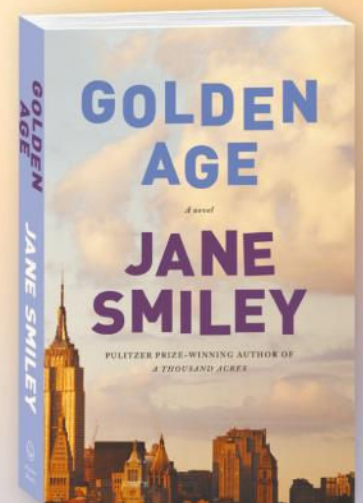
"This year's best beach reading.... Highly entertaining."  
—The Washington Post



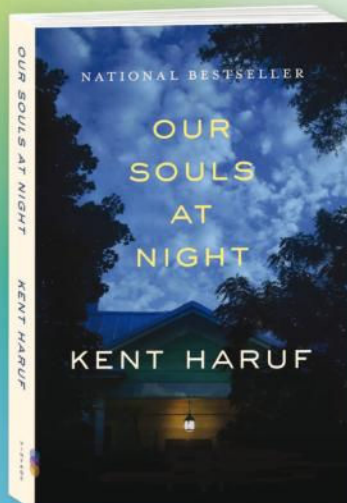
"An epic, gritty south-of-the-border Godfather for our time."  
—Esquire



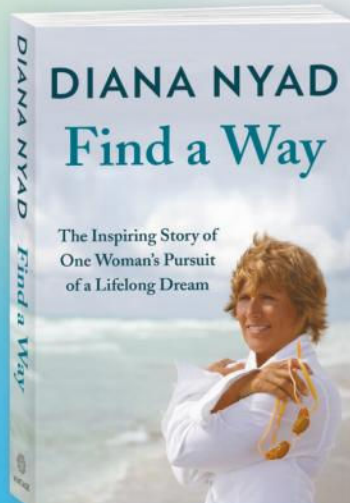
"Wonderfully immediate and gripping."  
—The New York Times



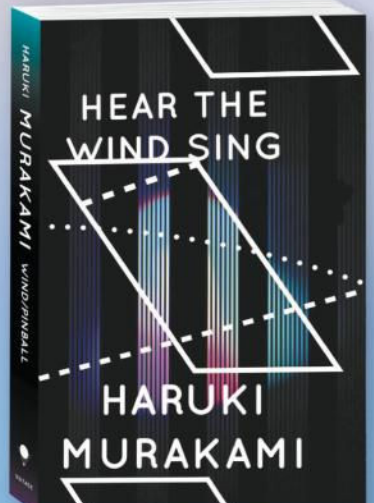
"A monumental portrait of an American family."  
—Los Angeles Times



"Utterly charming.... Tender... like a blessing."  
—The Washington Post



"An inspiration."  
—The Wall Street Journal



"Powerful."  
—Chicago Tribune

recently signed with RCA Records, and was beginning to work on her first album for the label.

Jon Platt, the C.E.O. of Warner/Chappell, Will's music publisher, arranged for Will to meet Peter Edge, who runs RCA with Tom Corson, in New York. Will brought along his laptop and played tracks for Edge, one of which was a sketch for "We Can't Stop." It consisted of a chorus and verse that had been written by Rock City, a songwriting team of two brothers, Theron and Timothy Thomas; Will had worked on the drums and the general production. Edge loved the sound. "I played it for Miley and she loved it," he said. "And once she and Mike were in the studio they clicked and became besties."

There's a looseness in Will's working methods that gives some artists a sense of greater autonomy. "I had been working with Pharrell a lot, and this was a very different style," Cyrus said, describing her collaboration with Will. She went on, "I felt like in 2013 hip-hop was the new kind of punk rock, and that's where I was in my life. I was eighteen, and my mom was not loving it that I was going out and shaking my ass at Juicy J shows." Will gave her space. "At that point, I was into recording at my house, and I like to be alone when I write, and he was just so chill

about that. I needed that freedom."

With "Bangerz," her RCA album, which Will executive-produced, Cyrus used elements of trap culture to further distance herself from her Disney past. When she went further still and twerked to "We Can't Stop" at the 2013 MTV Video Music Awards, she was heavily criticized for appropriating black identity. But, if the goal was to put a stake through Hannah Montana's heart, Cyrus and Will succeeded. And, remarkably, working with a white pop star didn't ruin Will's street cred. Jon Platt says that was because "Mike Will didn't cross over to Miley Cyrus. Miley Cyrus crossed over to Mike Will." Not long after "We Can't Stop" came out, Will joined Jimmy Iovine at Interscope Records. (A year later, Iovine departed for Apple.) "When I met Mike, I gave him a label on the spot," Iovine said. "As soon as I heard his first song, I just knew."

THE DAY AFTER my visit to Electric Feel, I arranged to meet Will in Santa Monica. In recent years, he has shuttled between L.A. and Atlanta, spending more time on the West Coast as his career advances. "In L.A., I'm a C.E.O.," he says. Aubrey Potter and Brian Wright, Will's two main Ear Drummer associates, often travel with him.

Among the artists on his label, in addition to Joseph Antney, are Earz and Jace, both solo acts, and Rae Sremmurd, a rap duo made up of two brothers from Tupelo, Mississippi, who are his most successful artists so far. (The group's unpronounceable name is Ear Drummers backward.) Their first album, "SremmLife," was recently certified platinum. Will also oversees their feel-good videos and helps design the typefaces and the graphics that contribute to the group's strong visual character.

"If you're a super-producer, you can produce whatever you want to produce," Will said, leaning against a railing on the Santa Monica Promenade. "That's where I'm at." To that end, Will had recently purchased a RED camera, to make music videos. "A RED camera is the best," he declared. "When I started shooting videos, I had to pay ten thousand dollars just to rent one. I was like, 'I do all these music videos, and I still don't own a RED camera?' So I spent about a hundred thousand dollars to buy one. My own bread. Boom! We can go shoot a movie right now. Why not? We're just using the utensils at hand."

We walked up Wilshire Boulevard to the Fairmont Hotel, where Will had been staying. Two tow-headed children, waiting by the reception desk with their parents, stared at his gold chain. On another occasion, in the Four Seasons Hotel in Atlanta, I observed two older white women shrink into a corner of the elevator as Will got in. When I remarked on this afterward, Will said, "But here's the thing, bro—I'm just as scared of them as they are of me. Y'all might get mad at me for smoking weed on the floor or what-not. Damn! It's the nigga's dream to be young, black, and successful. But the nigga's dream is the American nightmare. These bougies—they don't know how to take it. They see us coming through the lobby, gold chains, pants sagging, and they're like, 'Who the fuck is he?' Or they say, 'Damn! How'd he hole up on a floor higher than we?' Or, 'Damn! How's he driving an S63 Mercedes—is he a drug dealer?'"

The S63, Mike Will's ride when he's in Atlanta, is a top-of-the-line white Mercedes sedan with gold-colored rims and massage seats. "And I got a refrigerator built into the back



*"Son, I think it's about time we had the TED Talk."*

seat, full of goddam natural organic juices!” Will said. “And they’re going, ‘Did he steal that car?’ Man, this cop pulled me all the way out the car. ‘Tell me the truth—whose car is this?’ ‘Man, it’s mine. Take this license and run these plates and get out of my face.’”

In the Fairmont, a well-dressed woman was sitting with her laptop open on the bar, reviewing video footage. Will asked her whether she made films. She said her production company had just finished making an ad for a travel company.

“It’s going to air on ‘Grey’s Anatomy’—I don’t know if you watch that show?” she said, her eyebrows going up quizzically.

Will glanced at the video again.

“What camera do you shoot with?” he asked.

“Oh, we use an ALEXA,” the woman said.

“Have you heard of the RED camera?”

“Oh, yes,” the woman said. “That was the best camera, but the ALEXA has replaced it.” She helpfully listed the features of the ALEXA that made it superior to the RED.

Will wasn’t fazed. “How much does that camera cost?”

“Oh, we don’t buy them! We just rent them,” she replied. “They’re like phones—they get better and cheaper every year.” And with that she went back to her laptop.

**B**Y 2013, MIKE WILL could work with anyone he wanted to. And he has, pretty much. Pharrell Williams got back some of the street vibe of his early Skateboard P days through a collaboration with Mike Will: “Move That Dope,” from 2014. The seed that became Beyoncé’s “Formation” was planted by Swae Lee, one of the Rae Sremmurd duo, and A Pluss, one of Ear Drummer’s staff producers, who has been a friend of Will’s since high school. A Pluss had started the beat back in Atlanta, and Will had it with him on his phone when he was driving from L.A. to the Coachella music festival with Lee and his brother, in 2014.

“So we’re in the middle of the desert,” Will explained. “And we’re just coming up—we just freestyle, you know?”—and Swae Lee said, ‘O.K., la-

dies, now let’s get in formation.’ And we put it on the VoiceNote. Swae Lee’s got so many voice notes that he doesn’t even record, but I’m like, ‘Dog, we got to do that “get in formation” shit.’ That could be a hard song for the ladies. Some woman-empowerment shit. Like, ‘Ladies, let’s get in line, let’s not just fall for anything.’ I’m seeing that vision.” When they got back from Coachella, they booked a studio, and Swae Lee “ended up just laying it down.”

The year before, Will had hoped that he might get to work with Beyoncé. He’d been summoned to New York by Jon Platt, of Warner/Chappell, to work on the track “Beach Is Better,” for Jay Z’s album “Magna Carta . . . Holy Grail.” The collaboration with Jay Z went well, but nothing panned out with his wife. Now Will sent the song, along with five or six others, to Beyoncé and her team. Platt, their mutual publisher, made sure she listened.

A few months after this, Will was in L.A., where he attended a Clippers-Cavaliers basketball game. He knew LeBron James’s agent, Rich Paul, because he’d produced the John Legend song “My Shoes,” which was in the memorable 2013 Nike commercial that showed LeBron running through the streets of Miami. They were staying in the same hotel, and Paul invited Will to join LeBron and his friends after the game. But Will fell asleep in his room. “I woke up at two in the morning,” he said. “And I had some missed calls, and I called Rich back and I was like, ‘My bad, bro, you’re probably in the room by now,’ and he was like, ‘No, we’re still down here.’ So I went down there, and I was chopping it up with LeBron and the Cavaliers, and then Jay Z and Beyoncé just walked up. And this was really like a dream to me. I was just asleep upstairs and now I’m kicking it with Jay Z, Beyoncé, and LeBron. And Bey was like, ‘Yo, I like that “formation” idea.’ And I told her what I was thinking about the woman empowerment, and she was like, ‘Yeah I kinda like that idea.’ And she just left it like that.

“We were just thinking about it being a female anthem,” Will went on. “Because I knew I just wanted a banger with Beyoncé, like a ‘Single Ladies,’ but I wanted it to be a new kind of chant.” Back in New York, Beyoncé wrote verses

*Andante*  
TRAVELS

Expert-led archaeological tours across the world, from ancient Pompeii to the highlands of Peru.



- FROM AS LITTLE AS \$895  
EXPERT-LED | SMALL GROUPS  
SPECIAL ACCESS -

TOLL-FREE 1-888-331-3476

tours@andantetravels.com  
andantetravels.com

ADVERTISEMENT

## New Yorker Cover Prints



Ilonka Karasz, April 4, 1925



Barbara Shermund, June 13, 1925

Find your favorite at  
**NewYorkerStore.com**

for the song, but kept the central concept of “get in formation.” The song broadened to become both a Black Lives Matter power anthem and an intimate song about her family.

“Next thing I know,” Will continued, “Big Jon”—Jon Platt—“told me, ‘Yo, this shit’s crazy, you got to hear this.’”

Will went to New York and spent a week with Beyoncé in the studio recording the song. Beyoncé, he explained, “took this one little idea we came up with on the way to Coachella, put it in a pot, stirred it up, and came with this smash. She takes ideas and puts them with her own ideas, and makes this masterpiece. She’s all about collaborating.” He added, “That’s what makes her Beyoncé. Being able to know what she wants. A lot of people don’t know what they want. To the point where you can bring them some hot shit, and they’re like, ‘This shit ain’t it. I need a hit, bro.’ And I’m like, ‘Man, this is a hit. If you don’t like this line or that line, you should take this line out and put your own lines in there, and we doctor it up.’ Some people want it cooked. They just want to put a little icing on it and bite it. But it’s really a process to make one of these great songs. It’s layers. Layers and layers and layers.”

Will watched Beyoncé’s performance of his song on the Super Bowl halftime show at Iovine’s place in L.A. with Jimmy and his friends. “I ain’t gonna lie,” he said. “I was with four billionaires watching the TV. I was like, ‘Damn, I got to put more work in. This is only the start.’ For real. It was dope.”

MOST OF WILL’S recent production work with artists not on his label remains unreleased. There is a follow-up to the “Ransom” mixtape, “Ransom 2,” which includes collaborations with Chief Keef, Big Sean, Future, and Young Thug. Will also has two full albums’ worth of his tracks with superstar artists which he hopes to put out in 2016—a pop project, and a vibe record called “Backwoods n Apple Juice,” which he describes as “the best album to smoke and chill to.” The first single from “Ransom 2,” a Rihanna track called “Nothing Is Promised,” dropped in early June.

Mixtapes have long been a feature of

the hip-hop world. A mixtape can be made a lot quicker than an album, partly because it’s O.K. if it sounds rough; a mixtape is about catching a “wave,” as Will often describes his music. But perhaps the biggest difference between a mixtape and a studio album is that producers don’t have to clear the samples. Technically, mixtape samples aren’t legally authorized, but since they aren’t for sale there is little cause for action.

Will put out five of them before “Ransom,” in 2014. Fans have been waiting—impatiently, if Twitter comments are any indication—for “Ransom 2,” which was supposed to drop on January 29th. One reason for the delay is that, unlike the previous mixtapes, which were “leaked” for free over the Internet, “Ransom 2” will actually be for sale, which is part of Will’s partnership with Interscope. Will didn’t seem all that happy about this arrangement, but he had little choice but to go along. “I recognize that I am in business with them,” he said.

Will and his co-producers must track down the copyright holders of each sample and negotiate a split of the record’s profits. And, since there is no limit to the size of the split the copyright holders can ask for, many begin with wildly inflated demands—asking for seventy-five per cent of a record’s earnings, say, for the use of a two-second percussion sequence or melody—and hold up the release of the album until they are satisfied. All of which is a new thing for Will and his team, who, despite their precocious success as producers, are still learning when it comes to the finer points of licensing-royalty splits.

“He’s an entrepreneurial guy,” Jimmy Iovine said of Will. “He hustles, he works hard, and he has brilliant ideas. Now it’s all about follow-through. If he can do that, he could have an extraordinary career.”

“I’m learning as I go,” Will said. “This is everybody’s first rodeo. And if the fans can’t see and respect that then they aren’t really a fan.”

WILL REMAINED IN Los Angeles for several more weeks after I saw him. As it happened, I was passing through Atlanta on the day of his return, and he agreed to give me a lift

in the Mercedes S63, which he had left at the airport the month before. The “goddam natural organic juices” in his car refrigerator had been fermenting in the heat all that time, and the interior smelled putrid. Exclaiming, “Goddam, dog, this shit ain’t cool!,” Will drove the car at high speed with the windows down to the apartment of Brian Wright, his marketing manager, where he met a friend who has a mobile car wash.

That night, A Pluss was having a birthday party in a club. Will got a late start—about one-fifteen in the morning. As he entered the club with his retinue, he was immediately shouted out by the d.j.: “Mike WiLL Made-It in the building!” Everyone looked around. The place was a cleaned-out store, with bare concrete floors and walls, some furniture scattered around, and a lot of people dancing, some on tables and couches. Now and then, a rapper would jump up and flow to a beat. Will went up to the booth and played a couple of records, then headed back down.

A guy near the bar, who was dressed all in white, was someone Will had known since his teen-age years in Marietta. He got very agitated that the d.j. had not put on the song he was trying to promote. He was obviously drunk. He got in Wright’s face, and then Will’s friend Tay, who was already at the club, came over, and things looked bad.

“Man, they didn’t give me the microphone to perform!” the guy said.

“You got to understand the difference between pulling and pushing,” Will responded, putting his arm around the guy. “You can’t make people like your shit. You got to have dope music and get people to fuck with your music.” Will talked to him for five minutes or so, and then the place closed and we filed out.

Back in the car, Will expressed his frustration. “He thinks I can do something for him and make that shit hot, but that’s not how it works. You got to *be* hot.” He closed his eyes and shook his head. “You were hot twelve years ago, and you still going to the same party with the same promoters, trying to get your song played.” And then him trying to get me to feel his pain! And I feel his pain, but you got to change something up!” ♦

## WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

BY COLIN NISSAN

**L**AURA HULL AND Tom McCoy will be married at the Holy Lutheran Church in Roxbury, New York, on Saturday. The ceremony will be officiated by Robert O'Brien, a longtime friend of the groom, who will stammer through a meandering analogy about how love is like a boat, failing to convince anyone in attendance that love is even remotely like a boat.

The bride, thirty, graduated summa cum laude from Dartmouth, with a B.A. in education. The groom, thirty-two, graduated magna cum laude from Penn, with a B.A. in economics. This disparity in achievement will be a recurring source of tension for the couple, first rearing its head during their honeymoon, in Belize, when the groom will take a little too long to calculate a tip and the bride will step in to "summa the situation"—a phrase the groom will coin in that moment and continue to employ for years to come, with diminishing amusement.

Two years later, the couple will have a child and name him Robwood. This is not a name that either of them will want but, rather, a hard-fought compromise between two names, and an early indication that their relationship will suffer from weak problem-solving skills. The suffering of the couple will pale, of course, in comparison with that of Robwood.

Soon afterward, they will leave Manhattan for a new home in Rye, New York. The bride's father, Allan Hull, a partner at the Hull, Victors & Niles law firm, and her mother, Terry Hull, the V.P. of development for Comdex Communications, in Manhattan, will provide the sizable down payment, but it will come at a price, one that the groom will pay each time Allan refers to himself as the groom's "investor-in-law."

The couple will underestimate the difficulty of the transition to suburban life. The bride will put her teaching career on hold to care for Robwood, and the unexpected feelings of isolation will hit her like a minivan.

A neighborhood cookout at the Clarkes' will end badly when the newlyweds arrive with potato salad, unaware that Judy Clarke is famous for her potato salad. Despite Judy Clarke's attempt to bury the rival dish on a back table, her guests will find it and enjoy it thoroughly. The capers, they'll say, the capers just make it.

The groom will blame the bride for this faux pas. The bride will tell the



groom to go fuck himself, and to go fuck Judy Clarke, while he's at it. The groom will ask what the hell she means by that. "I think you know what I mean," the bride will say. The groom, in turn, will question the bride about her frequent trips to the farmer's market and the bundles of pussy-willow branches that she buys. The bride will tell him that she likes pussy willows. He will ask if she's sure it isn't the tank-topped pussy-willow farmer that she likes. The bride will deny having feelings for Diego.

Distrust will fester in the years that follow. The groom will spend longer hours in the city, where he works as a financial analyst at Rowe & Barnes. It is there that he will meet Kate, a young Yale grad whose smile will remind him of the bride's in the days before she started wearing a night guard.

The groom will kiss Kate in her cubicle during a company party. He will feel young and alive. She will taste like Tic Tacs and Yale.

The bride will return to teaching, at the local middle school. She will

develop a puzzling attraction to Ron, a chalk-dusted algebra teacher seven-teen years her senior.

All of this will take its toll on Robwood, who at the age of seven will retreat into a world of books. In an effort to reconnect with him, the family will take a trip to Disney World, where, during a Donald Duck brunch, an emotional groom will confess to the bride about Kate, saying that he's been a fool. The bride will sip the dregs of her third Mickey Mary with an eerily placid smile.

A short time later, the groom will move to a studio apartment in Brooklyn, three blocks from where Kate lives. She will introduce him to her friends. They will go to concerts that start at eleven. His hips will ache. He will dye his beard a shade darker than the Just for Men box recommends—a shade reserved for Wayne Newton and pirates.

A short time later, his relationship with Kate will end outside a photo booth, when the peculiarity of their union will become evident in not one but all four photos.

The bride, still in the house in Rye, will marry Ron, who will provide the stability that a teen-age Robwood will crave. They will have taco night.

At eighteen, Robwood will have his name legally changed to Dan. Two weeks later, he will receive his first hand job.

The groom—the son of Roy McCoy, a retired electrician in Marshfield, Massachusetts, and Eleanor McCoy, a librarian—will, after years of online dating, all but give up on finding love. Then, at a local Y.M.C.A., he will meet Astrid, a Latvian competitive swimmer with lats like a cobra. They will marry and buy a tiny house in New Jersey with a large pool.

The groom will want children—a second chance after the mistakes he made with Robwood. Astrid will claim that she is unable to conceive, faulting her years of chlorine exposure. The groom will not Google the validity of her assertion, because it won't matter. He will be happy.

A week after the groom's fifty-first birthday, Astrid will discover his body floating in their pool—a heart attack during his morning laps. Friends and family will gather at St. Augustine's Church, in Teaneck, New Jersey, where Robert O'Brien will resurface with a eulogy for his old friend, the premise of which will be that death is like a boat.

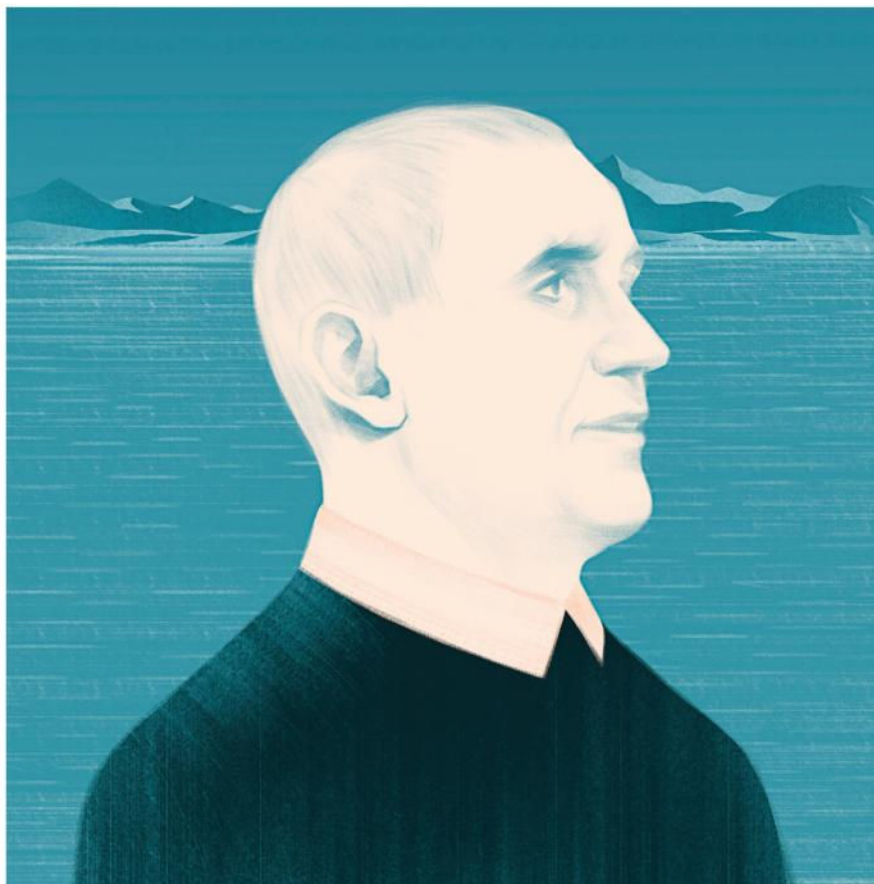
The bride will be keeping her name. ♦

LETTER FROM REYKJAVÍK

## COOL RUNNINGS

*How to become President of Iceland.*

BY ADAM GOPNIK



*A scholar of the Icelandic Presidency swiftly became a Presidential front-runner.*

WHEN I HEARD that the historian Guðni Jóhannesson was running for President of Iceland—not only running but entering the final weeks of the campaign as the clear favorite—I was intently curious to be present when and if he won. I had met Guðni a year or so earlier, when he delighted a busload of nervous novelists on a literary retreat in Iceland, during an all-day tour of local landmarks that took place on the coldest, windiest, foggiest day an Icelandic April could offer, with the bus neatly enveloped in milk. Guðni, serving as tour guide, mike in hand, kept his cool and his good humor throughout. “Here are the great parliamentary fields of the Thingvellir,” he said at one point, referring to Iceland’s famous

early-medieval parliament, and gestured straight-faced toward a wall of white cloud. More impressive, he lightly detailed all the ways in which the myths of the monuments were and were not in accord with the facts of history, providing a detached view of what might be called Icelandic Exceptionalism, while still thinking it exceptional. I liked to tell people in New York that our tour guide was now running for President, though the truth is that he never would have been on the bus had his wife, the Canadian writer Eliza Reid, not been running the literary seminar—but, then, he was on the bus, he did have the mike, and he was giving a guided tour.

I should add that, having married into a Canadian-Icelandic family (about a

fifth of Iceland’s population decamped for Manitoba around a century ago, keeping their culture and their national pride intact), I wasn’t entirely unhappy to hear Icelandic exceptionalism debunked, if gently. I had long ago come to accept Icelandic particularities—the cooing voices, the long-winded family histories, the constant coffee consumption—but I’d also had the prideful bits drummed in (world’s oldest democracy, most literate nation, most successful welfare state) for so long that I could stand them being a little upended. Iceland, to be sure, is a country for which many Americans and English and Canadians have an outsized affection, not unlike that which some of the wizards in Tolkien, himself an Icelandic fanatic, have for the Shire. While recognizably part of our own Western world, the country is so islanded, so unlike anyplace we know in landscape and language, that it is possible to feel protective of it in ways that Icelanders themselves sometimes find encumbering.

In thinking about Iceland, one is always whipsawed between two facts. On the one hand, there’s the tiny scale of the place. There are only three hundred thousand-plus people in the country, and a Presidential election, even though it gets a huge, Nordic-style turnout, will still top out at about two hundred and forty thousand voters, about one-third the number in a single congressional district in New York City. One might read that, as a proportion of the population, more Icelanders died in the Second World War than Americans did, which means two hundred and thirty, most of them in seafaring accidents. “Icelanders suffer from ecstatic numerical aphasia” is the way that Heiða Helgadóttir, a prominent alternative politician, put it one morning, over milky coffee, the country’s *vin ordinaire*. “We are convinced that we come from a country of at least two or three million, and nothing dissuades us.” On the other hand, Iceland is an honest-to-God country, not a principality, like Monaco, or a fragment fallen off a larger one, like Montenegro. It has a language and a history and a culture entirely its own, it fields competitive teams in international football tournaments, and it can claim about as many famous artists—Björk, Sigur Rós—as its far larger Nordic peers.

Politics is serious in Iceland, not least because of its self-image as the Oldest

Democracy in the World, a view questioned by only a few academic skeptics—one of them being Guðni Jóhannesson. On the plane to Reykjavík, I finished his “History of Iceland,” the best one-volume study of the country to be written in English. He makes the point that the early parliament was less a democratic conference than a meeting of the tribes and chieftains to sort out their differences—like a meeting of the Five Families to divvy up the Bronx and Brooklyn. Guðni’s history shows that the medieval Iceland of saga was largely a Romantic invention, for the purposes of nineteenth-century nationalism, laid over what had been, until the twentieth century arrived, a scarcity economy of almost unbelievable hardship and hunger. How someone so prepared to look skeptically at his people’s myths would motivate those people to vote for him intrigued me. I was drawn to the Icelandic election, too, for more or less the same reason that Icelanders are drawn to the local swimming pools, where the temperature is kept around that of Icelandic seawater. It seemed refreshing to follow a Presidential campaign where erudition was revered, where the various sides were more or less sane, and where democracy was seen as a communal enterprise, not as a carnival for television. That, at least, was my hope when, arriving in Reykjavík, I raced off to find Guðni in the Höfðatorg, one of the city’s few modern glass-and-steel frame towers, where he was giving a speech.

Reykjavík is perhaps the hippest capital in Northern Europe, a sort of double-sized Williamsburg, with fjords instead of the L train. It is built mostly on a two- and three-story scale, and, as the capital of a timber-depleted island, is made mostly out of the two most unprepossessing of architectural materials: concrete and corrugated steel. But all the concrete has produced a great building, the Hallgrímskirkja church—a masterpiece of Northern Expressionist architecture that looks exactly like Tolkien’s drawing of the tower of Orthanc—while the corrugated steel is jaunty in its waves and ripples, and comically used to create many stylistic effects. One sees corrugated-steel Gothic, and corrugated-steel Queen Anne, and the metal is painted in bright colors that

give Reykjavík some of the quality of a child’s playroom, as though it were a city of Lego.

Guðni was, unusually for him, wearing a suit and a blue-and-white flecked tie. I was making a mental note that he looked Presidential when he came up to me and said, “Don’t I look Presidential?” After a quick consultation with Eliza, and with his campaign strategist, a wise and weary-looking professional named Friðjón Friðjónsson, Guðni went upstairs only to find, by the elevator, another candidate for President, one Elísabet Jökulsdóttir. “There are two hundred surrealist moments a day,” Eliza whispered, glancing at her.

Elísabet and Guðni shook hands heartily and exchanged a few warm words. Presumably, she had just been addressing the same group—essentially, Friðjón explained, an I.T. team for a consortium of banks. Guðni slipped into the cafeteria, where the audience had gathered, and began to speak.

Though he spoke in Icelandic, the content of his speech was transparent, the choreography of candidacy in modern democracies being, with the odd exception, universal. A beginning murmur of modest promises; shrugged evasive responses to awkward questions; emphatic responses to sympathetic questions, signalled by forceful gestures; the whole decorated by self-deprecating family humor—in this case, Dad jokes and husband jokes on the Obama model, clearly indicated by bright, sheepish gestures toward the candidate’s spouse. The only English words that appeared were “Manchester United,” but this, too, was transparent in meaning, an obvious answer to a question about Guðni’s favorite team in the Premier League.

The football question was inevitable, Friðjón whispered to me. As it happened, the week of the Presidential election coincided with the most eventful week in modern Icelandic sports. Iceland had advanced in the final tournament of the UEFA Euro, and was going to play Austria the following day. Over a quick lunch in the now abandoned cafeteria, candidate and manager addressed the ins and outs of football politics. “What happens to the football games if we play on Saturday and we go into extra time?” Guðni asked. “Will they stop counting?” Friðjón pointed out that if Iceland *defeated* Austria it would probably play England

on Monday, a much better result politically than if it drew and had to play on Saturday, Election Day.

Friðjón had the serene, slightly cynical detachment of any good political strategist, and, after Guðni swept off to his next event, talked about his chances just as a strategist might who was running a Presidential campaign for a promising Midwestern governor in New Hampshire. “We’ve gone everywhere,” he said. “All the little rural places. But our strategy is to turn them all into social media—media for Facebook, for messages, for Twitter.” Anyway, it wasn’t face-to-face electioneering that counted. Guðni’s rise was due entirely to television. He had appeared as an expert commentator at the moment when the Panama Papers revealed that the Prime Minister, Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson, had once owned shares in an offshore company belonging to his wife. No one claims that this was illegal, but it was awkward. Guðni had been such a supple and sober guide through the shock—a sort of superior bus-tour guide, come to think of it—that he won over the viewers. Friðjón said that the polls, though descending just a bit, looked good and added calmly, “I’ll be in Paris tomorrow.” It was true: he was going for a day, to see the Iceland-Austria match. (Nearly a tenth of the population was in France to watch the Euros—as though, people said repeatedly, many millions of Americans had travelled with their national team, another instance of ecstatic numerical aphasia.)

AT HOME ON the Wednesday morning before the election, Guðni, wearing an Iceland jersey, like every other Icelandic male that day, looked just slightly bemused. (His sons—he and Eliza, who met while studying at Oxford, have four children—were wearing Iceland jerseys, too.) He is tall, with a steady, appealing gaze and the close-cropped hair that Icelandic men favor, and he seemed startled by his own ascent.

Iceland’s constitution makes the role of the President essentially ceremonial, Guðni explained. Yet the country’s double crises—first the banking collapse, in 2008, and then the Panama Papers, this spring—made that role seem inadequate. “After twenty years in office, the current President announced that he wouldn’t

seek reelection,” Guðni said, discussing his improbable candidacy. “At that stage, I was—and I remain—an associate professor of history at the University of Iceland but a frequent commentator on television. So—I remember this vividly—there was class, I was just going to bike home, and I see fourteen missed calls from the media. The message was simple: you need to come up here now, we’re live, and the Prime Minister may resign.”

He went on the air with another academic. “We were chatting, we were funny, we were articulate. I’m not saying this to boast”—he inserted instantly, boasting being the cardinal sin of Icelandic culture. “Then the President got involved, because the P.M. resigned, and, with my expertise in the history of the Presidency, I was able to describe to people what options the President had, and, as it happened, this was at a stage when there was nobody sweeping the electorate behind him or her, and the sort of trickle of support I felt to run turned into a flood.” The same kind of distaste for experts and expertise that has been present elsewhere in Europe had developed in Iceland, I had learned, and it worked to Guðni’s advantage. The bank crash had produced a general mistrust of the professional politicians who had let it happen. Guðni might still be an intellectual in good standing, but at least he was not a professional politician with a bad record.

The skeptical positions he had taken in his histories *had* been used against him—especially his writings on the Cod Wars, with the United Kingdom, in the nineteen-seventies. (Iceland wanted Britain to stop fishing in waters that it claimed were Icelandic, and, after it threatened to withdraw from NATO, Britain agreed.) It’s a holy moment in Icelandic history, but Guðni has pointed out that there was much internal dissension on the Icelandic side, and that the “fishing disputes were not wars in the proper sense of the word—had the Royal Navy been allowed to use the weapons at its disposal, the tiny Icelandic coast-guard fleet could have been immobilized in a matter of days.”

“Tell what you said,” Eliza urged.

“Well, early in the campaign there was a televised debate between me and Davíð

Oddsson, who was focussing on my alleged weaknesses and mistakes, including my work on the Cod Wars and Icelandic history in general.” Oddsson, who had been Prime Minister for a long time, and the governor of the Central Bank of Iceland during the collapse of 2008, was seen as the establishment’s man in the Presidential race.

“So the debate got a bit heated, and I said to him, ‘Sir, have you no decency?’ and that basically clinched it for me,” he recalled. It was the line directed by the Army’s attorney Joseph Welch at Joseph McCarthy, during the Army-McCarthy hearings.

Icelanders, being better students of American history

than many Americans, generally got the point.

“I have the duty, certainly as a historian, and even more as President, if elected, to tell our story to anyone who wants to listen—objectively, truthfully, because we will only suffer and fool ourselves if we do it any other way,” Guðni said. “We saw this in the years before the banking collapse. We sustained and supported a view of Icelanders as more daring—the descendants of Vikings and voyagers who dared to enter uncharted waters—when in fact they were more daring because they were silly, and better at borrowing money. It had nothing to do with the Vikings, who, if we want to take it further, were murderous bastards, in addition to being voyagers and explorers.”

Later that day, I crowded, together with what seemed like the entire remaining population of Reykjavík, into Ingólfstorg square to watch the Iceland-Austria match. Icelandic players and their coaches have the same flexible career definitions as the politicians: one coach doubles as a dentist, the goalkeeper as a filmmaker, while the color commentator has a share in the café where I had had breakfast with Heiða. In the posters that lined the square, the star players wore the set, growling stare that is *de rigueur* for sports-star posters now, with the difference that, since Icelanders, unlike Americans, are not socialized to smile in the first instance, they did not have to be instructed to

make those faces. This is how they looked when they were *happy*. As Iceland ran, three on one, to the winning goal, the announcer, Guðmundur Benediktsson, was driven to a desperate, orgasmic, inarticulate siren of excitement, now legendary on the Internet, and never to be forgotten by anyone who heard it live. The cheering resounded from one end of the small capital to the other—made louder, perhaps, by all that metal.

NOT EVERYONE IN Iceland is happy with or impressed by Guðni’s sudden rise—not Oddsson’s supporters, on the right, and not those on the green-tinted left. I heard from a twenty-something friend, after an evening at a Reykjavík bar, that the youth vote—the Berniessons, so to speak—was drifting toward a different candidate, the writer and intellectual Andri Snær Magnason. As it happened, I knew Andri Snær, too, and would have imagined him as a Presidential candidate even less than I might have imagined Guðni. His work, often very funny in a Nordic way, is essentially satiric—one of his sci-fi novels won the Philip K. Dick prize—and his book “Bónus Poetry” involves dry conceptual jokes about consumerism. (Bónus is a sort of Icelandic Walmart.)

Although Andri Snær has a morbid, apocalyptic air, he was a virtuous green. If there were real issues driving Icelandic politics, beyond personalities, they were mostly environmental. The country had made an amazing rebound, post-2008, that was fuelled mainly by the fisheries—the mackerel schools had miraculously come back—and by a huge boom in tourism that the country’s delicate ecology could hardly endure. “Game of Thrones” is shot, in part, in Iceland exactly because the country looks so ancient and timeless; in truth, its geology is extremely young and extremely fragile.

In his house in a Reykjavík suburb—the only place I wasn’t offered coffee; I put it down to perverse principle—Andri Snær could barely suppress a half-smile at what he knew to be the absurdity of a writer with a taste for the absurd playing a political part. Nor was his taste for irony diminished by the fact that he was currently close to second in the polls. He was often on his phone, talking or texting,





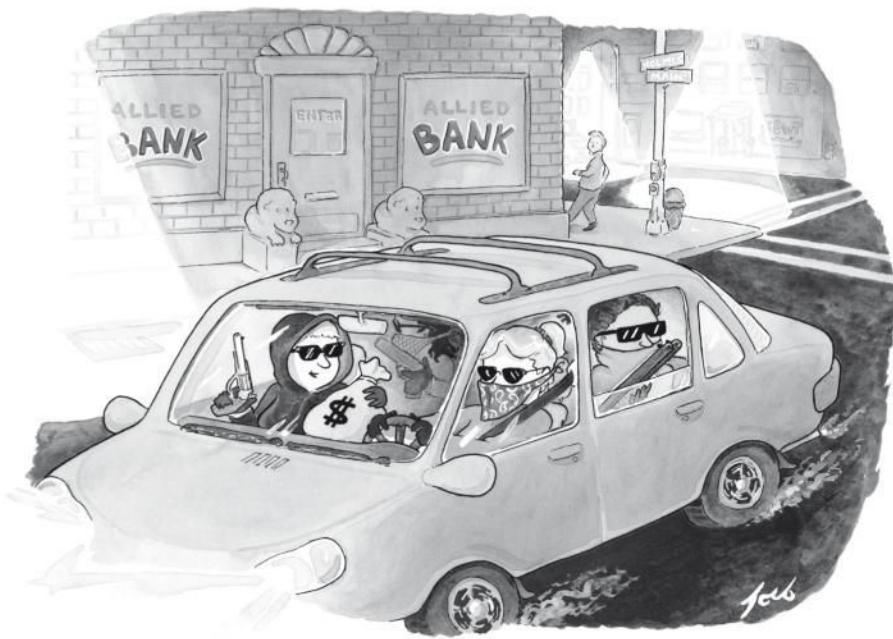
CAN YOU SPOT THE 12 YEARS OF  
**RELENTLESS  
SCIENTIFIC  
INNOVATION?**  
IT'S THERE.  
**ON THE TOP SHELF,  
NEXT TO THE  
MINTY MOUTHWASH.**

It takes an average of 1,600 scientists 12 years to bring one Pfizer medicine to life. That's a lot of collective brainpower dedicated to finding medicines that improve lives.

Scientists and patients are one part of a medicine's journey. Get the full story at [Pfizer.com/discover](http://Pfizer.com/discover).



Driven to discover the cure



*"And to think that we started as a book group."*

with his dog, a shy whippet, whisking around his feet; it looked as if his strategist, pollster, and staff consisted of himself and the whippet.

"The Presidency could be a role for a creative," he said, laughing. He usually wears a sly, excuse-me expression, like the young Woody Allen. "I've already been working on a literary-documentary project on global warming. My grandparents went for their honeymoon on Iceland's largest glacier. At that time, the glacier was moving on a geologic scale. Now the glacier is melting and is moving on a human scale. But our human reactions are on a geologic scale. We are thinking of having a convention in 2025 where we will think of having a convention in 2026 to discuss the outcome of the convention."

Andri Snær saw no problem with being both Iceland's leading ironist and its potential leader. It was normal in Iceland for a person to be several things at once, he said. "In Iceland, we try to have a klezmer band, and new jazz, and fusion jazz and techno jazz and classic Chicago jazz," he said. "We want to have death metal, speed metal, thrash metal. So that means you might be in both a klezmer band and a thrash-metal band. You have to do more things. The guy who is running against me"—he meant

Guðni—"has a better-designed campaign. I went out with concepts and agendas pushing things from the edge to the center. He's playing very polite, and saying, when it comes to environmental issues, that we should take good care when we leave camping areas." Andri Snær was ginning himself up for televised debates that evening. "I have everything to win, so tonight I might start poking him. Ask him, 'What do you really think?'" He looked fondly at the whippet, as though together they were considering the costs of going negative on Guðni.

Elsewhere, Andri Snær's campaign might have seemed like pure protest, but Heiða Helgadóttir points out that her own anti-political parody party, the Best Party, won the mayoralty of Reykjavík for a comedian, Jón Gnarr, and then "governed pretty well." The Pirate Party, with anti-politics of the same kind, is polling extremely well for the parliamentary elections this fall. In a system of proportional representation, parody politics quickly becomes real politics. Of course, parody politics in America quickly becomes real politics, too, but tends to lack the saving self-knowledge of its origins in parody.

I watched the debate that night, with Eliza translating, at Guðni's campaign headquarters, in a strip mall in Reykjavík,

along with a neat semicircle of about twenty Icelandic women. As so often happens, television changed everyone: Andri Snær's constant ironic half-smile came across as sweetly embarrassed. Davíð Oddsson, with swept-back silver-gray hair and a sombre expression, looked, I thought, too censorious, like a Norwegian playwright of the nineteenth century. (Oddsson's role was, well, odd. On the one hand, his character had been besmirched in the 2008 crash, when he was the governor of the Bank of Iceland. On the other hand, here he was, running for President, very much the confident man of the establishment.) Guðni's height was even more impressive on TV than in person, although the same steady gaze that made him seem trustworthy now looked slightly over-fixed. The fourth candidate in this debate was Halla Tómasdóttir, a businesswoman in her forties. Guðni had always thought that a woman candidate for President would be the most plausible popular choice, and that, if a woman ran, she would win. Halla had not been the obvious candidate, but here she was now, rising in the polls as one who, though working in the banking sector, had made it through 2008 intact, and had subsequently emphasized the need for a feminist approach to financial matters.

I knew Guðni's people thought that she was a dark horse surging ahead on the outside, and she was good. Halla was not just sincere-looking for a politician. She was the most sincere-looking human being I have ever seen, a living emoji of sincerity: her head gently tilted to one side, her face a perfect equation of warm smile and worried, caring expression. She explained that she was a simple "plumber's daughter" now running for President. I felt vaguely uneasy.

ELECTION DAY DAWNED like any good June day in Iceland: overcast and in the forties. Guðni had said that he was going to spend the day relaxing at a football match, and had invited me along. We met for lunch at his headquarters, where cake and coffee had been laid out, with Icelandic zeal. I counted at least twelve kinds of cake and six kinds of cookie, and scarcely a sign of a savory dish. Icelanders feel about eating cake the way New Yorkers feel about not eating cake: it is a sign of their relentless commitment to self-improvement. (The hot coffee, I

was assured, kept the cake from being unduly caloric.)

Explaining about the match on the drive to the stadium, Guðni said, “It’s a women’s team I’ve supported since I was a young boy, called Stjarnan, and it’s playing another good women’s team, Valur.” We talked about the Brexit vote, two days earlier. Iceland already has what Britain may want—an affiliation with the single market without actual membership or responsibility—but few here were cheering. Iceland, a fairly closed or anyway homogeneous society, knows that it depends on the openness of others. The most persistent theme of Guðni’s histories is that tiny Iceland, while cultivating a Viking myth of self-reliance, has, like every other country, been tightly wound into a network of dependencies. Christianity came on time, around 1000, just as it came to the rest of the Nordic countries, and then the Reformation, too, arrived on schedule; coffee appeared as the national beverage not long after it did in the rest of Europe. More recently, Iceland benefitted enormously from the Marshall Plan, and from the Cold War-era American Navy and Air Force presence. And though Iceland certainly had eccentric and distinguished possibilities for President, its play of politics was the familiar one, of television and social media and the month’s momentum. Tolkien’s point about the Shire, after all, is not that the small good place can be self-sufficient but that no place ever is. What happens in one place happens everywhere. No island is an island.

“I was probably too soft on Brexit last night,” Guðni said, revisiting the debate. “I said we have to respect the verdict of the people, but there are obviously Brexiters waking up this morning saying, ‘What have we done?’ There must be a solution, a second referendum, to keep this from happening.” He pointed out that the terms of Iceland’s associate relationship with the E.U. guarantee what many in England seemed to fear, and that is an unrestricted movement of people. “Poles, Portuguese—they can all come here freely,” he said. “If it weren’t for the Poles, the Icelandic fishing industry would break down entirely.”

We arrived at the little stadium. There were about thirty or forty people in the

stands. Seagulls wheeled and cawed mournfully overhead. We sat alone with Guðni’s Canadian father-in-law, nothing suggesting that six or seven hours later Guðni might well be elected Iceland’s head of state. I did notice a small girl tugging at her father’s shirt and pointing, and in the second half the two came over for a selfie portrait. It had taken about seventy minutes to break past the politeness barrier. The game was excellent, with the Stjarnan side having an edge, in large part owing to one Donna Key Henry, a Jamaican international who has been playing in Iceland. She was running at slant angles, right through and around the earnest, straightforward Icelandic women, with their blond ponytails and square-to-the-play alignments.

At halftime, Guðni got coffee for us all. “Now, this is relaxing,” he said. “What is better than watching football with hot coffee?” Stjarnan had taken a 3–0 lead. “If Valur scores a goal, that would make for a more interesting, highly competitive match,” he said, laughing. “But today of all days I think we don’t want an interesting, highly competitive match.” It was the day before his birthday, he reminded me, and, win or lose, he was going to celebrate it by flying to Nice with Eliza for the next Euro game, against England, of all places, on Monday. He didn’t know then, but didn’t seem as though he would be surprised to discover, that Iceland could defeat England—as, of course, it did, by a come-from-behind score of 2–1, in one of the most astounding upsets in the history of European team sports.

But I knew that Guðni would not have thought it had happened by chance. The Icelandic association had devoted absurd resources to developing young players on indoor pitches; the coaches had to have a hundred-plus-hour training course to be certified. The best Icelandic players had got even better playing abroad. Guðni had been quoted often during the campaign as saying—a thought he repeated while we watched the game—that the men’s team was good because it knew what it was good at being good at: defense and counterattack. I also under-

stood that his allegiance to the semi-professional women’s team of Stjarnan, which was real and weekly, was in support of the idea that a culture, even a sporting one, had to run all the way to the ground to rise up in the air.

THAT NIGHT, IN the ballroom of the Reykjavík Grand Hotel, equipped with a television podium and giant screens, there were some nail-biting moments. The first results, coming in from the countryside, showed Guðni and Halla neck and neck. Sveinn, Guðni’s social-media man, and a blond Icelandic actress were up onstage, cheerleading the expected celebration, but now their smiles tightened sharply. The sound was turned up as the results came in. I realized that I was tense myself, though the numbers being reported for each region were much smaller than those in the congressional district I vote in every two years, where I am hard-pressed to name my congresswoman. I was, I realized, suffering from ecstatic numeric aphasia.

Then the first Reykjavík result came in, and I saw Sveinn release a sigh and double-clutch his fists. “It’s in the bag,” he told me. “We were worried that Andri Snær might have more votes in the city—the hipster, artist, Reykjavík, microbrew vote—but we have it in the bag.” I saw Friðjón, back from France. “Closer than I would have liked,” he said professionally. “But a win is a win.”

I have always wanted to be the first to say to someone “Congratulations, Mr. President.” And so I waited for Guðni to come to the ballroom. He arrived at last, buffeted by cameras, and made a speech, with Eliza, in a blue First

Lady’s dress, by his side. He was obviously promising to be the President of all Icelanders, the last step in the choreography of candidacy. A birthday cake appeared, and then—a hallucinatory moment—another Icelandic actress sang “Happy Birthday,” in a perfect impression of Marilyn singing it to J.F.K., sexy sibilant by erotic syllable: “Happy biiirthday, Mistah Prez-uh-dent . . .” The crowd cheered in pleasure and recognition. We live on one planet, indivisible. ♦



## TRUMP DAYS

*Up close with the candidate and his crowds.*

BY GEORGE SAUNDERS

## HE APPEARS

**T**RUMP IS WEARING the red baseball cap, or not. From this distance, he is strangely handsome, well proportioned, puts you in mind of a sea captain: Alan Hale from “Gilligan’s Island,” say, had Hale been slimmer, richer, more self-confident. We are afforded a side view of a head of silver-yellow hair and a hawklike orange-red face, the cheeks of which, if stared at steadily enough, will seem, through some optical illusion, to glow orange-redder at moments when the crowd is especially pleased. If you’ve ever, watching “The Apprentice,” entertained fantasies of how you might fare in the boardroom (the Donald, recognizing your excellent qualities with his professional businessman’s acumen, does not fire you but, on the contrary, pulls you aside to assign you some important non-TV, real-world mission), you may, for a brief, embarrassing instant, as he scans the crowd, expect him to recognize you.

He is blessing us here in San Jose, California, with his celebrity, promising never to disappoint us, letting us in on the latest bit of inside-baseball campaign strategy: “Lyn’ Ted” is no longer to be Lyn’ Ted; henceforth he will be just “Ted.” Hillary, however, shall be “Lyn’ Crooked.” And, by the way, Hillary has to go to jail. The statute of limitations is five years, and if he gets elected in November, well... The crowd sends forth a coarse blood roar. “She’s guilty as hell,” he snarls.

He growls, rants, shouts, digresses, careens from shtick nugget to shtick nugget, rhapsodizes over past landslides, name-drops Ivanka, Melania, Mike Tyson, Newt Gingrich, Bobby Knight, Bill O’Reilly. His right shoulder thrusts out as he makes the pinched-finger mudra with downswinging arm. His trademark double-eye squint evokes that group of beanie-hatted street-tough Munchkin kids; you expect him to kick gruffly at an

imaginary stone. In person, his autocratic streak is presentationally complicated by a Ralph Kramdenesque vulnerability. He’s a man who has just dropped a can opener into his wife’s freshly baked pie. He’s not about to start grovelling about it, and yet he’s sorry—but, come on, it was an *accident*. He’s sorry, he’s sorry, O.K., but do you expect him to *say it*? He’s a good guy. Anyway, he didn’t do it.

Once, Jack Benny, whose character was known for frugality and selfishness, got a huge laugh by glancing down at the baseball he was supposed to be first-pitching, pocketing it, and walking off the field. Trump, similarly, knows how well we know him from TV. He is who he is. So sue me, O.K.? I probably shouldn’t say this, but oops—just did. (Hillary’s attack ads? “*So false*. Ah, some of them aren’t that false, actually.”) It’s oddly riveting, watching someone take such pleasure in going so much farther out on thin ice than anyone else as famous would dare to go. His crowds are ever hopeful for the next thrilling rude swerve. “There could be no politics which gave warmth to one’s body until the country had recovered its imagination, its pioneer lust for the unexpected and incalculable,” Norman Mailer wrote in 1960.

The speeches themselves are nearly all empty assertion. Assertion and bragging. Assertion, bragging, and defensiveness. He is always boasting about the size of this crowd or that crowd, refuting some slight from someone who has treated him “very unfairly,” underscoring his sincerity via adjectival pile-on (he’s “going to appoint beautiful, incredible, unbelievable Supreme Court Justices”). He lies, bullies, menaces, dishes it out but can’t seem to take it, exhibits such a muddy understanding of certain American principles (the press is free, torture illegal, criticism and libel two different things) that he might be a seventeenth-century Austrian prince time-transported here to mess with us. Sometimes it seems that he truly

does not give a shit, and you imagine his minders cringing backstage. Other times you imagine them bored, checking their phones, convinced that nothing will ever touch him. Increasingly, his wild veering seems to occur against his will, as if he were not the great, sly strategist we have taken him for but, rather, someone compelled by an inner music that sometimes produces good dancing and sometimes causes him to bring a bookshelf crashing down on an old Mexican lady. *Get more*, that inner music seems to be telling him. *Get, finally, enough. Refute a lifetime of criticisms. Create a pile of unprecedented testimonials, attendance receipts, polling numbers, and pundit gasps that will, once and for all, prove—what?*

Apply Occam’s razor: if someone brags this much, bending every ray of light back to himself, what’s the simplest explanation?

“We’re on the cover of every newspaper, every magazine,” he says in San Jose in early June. “*Time* magazine many times. I just learned they’re doing yet another cover on Trump—I love that. You know, *Time* magazine’s a good magazine. You grow up reading *Time* magazine—who ever thought you’d be on the cover of *Time* magazine? Especially so much?”

It’s considered an indication of authenticity that he doesn’t generally speak from a teleprompter but just wings it. (In fact, he brings to the podium a few pages of handwritten bullet points, to which he periodically refers as he, mostly, wings it.) He wings it because winging it serves his purpose. He is not trying to persuade, detail, or prove: he is trying to thrill, agitate, be liked, be loved, here and now. He is trying to make energy. (At one point in his San Jose speech, he endearingly fumbles with a sheaf of “statistics,” reads a few, fondly but slightly mentions the loyal, hapless statistician who compiled them, then seems unable to go on, afraid he might be boring us.)

And make energy he does. It flows



*Trump's energy flows out of him, as if channelled in thousands of micro wires, and enters the minds of his followers.*

out of him, as if channelled in thousands of micro wires, enters the minds of his followers: their cheers go ragged and hoarse, chanting erupts, a look of religious zeal may flash across the face of some non-chanter, who is finally getting, in response to a question long nursed in private, exactly the answer he's been craving. One such person stays in my memory from a rally in Fountain Hills, Arizona, in March: a solidly built man in his mid-forties, wearing, in the crazy heat, a long-sleeved black shirt, who, as Trump spoke, worked himself into a state of riveted, silent concentration-fury, the rally equivalent of someone at church gazing fixedly down at the pew before him, nodding. Yes, yes, yes.

### A TINY PISSED VOICE RINGS OUT

**“W**OW, WHAT A crowd this is,” he begins at Fountain Hills. “What a great honor! . . . You have some sheriff—there’s no games with your sheriff, that’s for sure. . . . We have a movement going on, folks. . . . I will never let you down! Remember. And I want to tell you, you know, it’s so much about illegal immigration and so much has been mentioned about it and talked about it, and these politicians are all talk, no action. They’re never going to do anything—they only picked it up because when I went, and when I announced, that I’m running for President, I said, ‘You know, this country has a big, big problem with illegal immigration,’ and all of a sudden we started talking about it. . . . And there was crime and you had so many killings and so much crime, drugs were pouring through the border.” (“STOP IT!” someone pleads from the crowd.) “People are now seeing it. And you know what? We’re going to build a wall and we are going to stop it!”

Mayhem. The Wall is their favorite. (Earlier in the afternoon, Jan Brewer, the former governor of Arizona and legislative mother of that state’s Draconian immigration policies, nearly undoes all the good right-wing work of her career by affirming that, yes, Trump is “going to build *the Fence*.” Like new Americans who have just been told that Hulk Hogan was the first President, the crowd rises up in happy outrage to correct her.)

“THANK YOU, TRUMP!” bellows a kid

in front of me, who, later in the speech, will briefly turn his back on Trump to take a Trump-including selfie, his smile taut, braces-revealing, grimacelike yet celebratory, evoking that circa-1950 photograph of a man in a high-velocity wind tunnel.

“I only wish these cameras—because there’s nothing as dishonest as the media, that I can tell you.” (“THEY SUCK!”) “I only wish these cameramen would spin around and show the kind of people that we have, the numbers of people that we have here. I just wish they’d for once do it, because you know what?” (“PAN THE CAMERAS!”) “We have a silent majority that’s no longer so silent. It’s now the loud, noisy majority, and we’re going to be heard. . . . They’re chipping away at the Second Amendment, they’re chipping away at Christianity. . . . We’re not going to have it anymore. It comes Christmas time, we’re going to see signs up that say ‘Merry Merry Merry Christmas!’ O.K.? Remember it, remember it. We have become so politically correct that we’re totally impotent as a country—”

Somewhere in the crowd, a woman is shouting “Fuck you, Trump!” in a voice so thin it seems to be emanating from some distant neighborhood, where a girl is calling home her brother, Fuckhugh Trump.

The shouter is Esperanza Matamoros, tiny, seventeen years old. The crowd now halts her forward progress, so she judiciously spins and, still shouting, heads toward the exit. As she passes a tall, white-haired, professorial-looking old man, he gives her a little shove. He towers over her, the top of her head falling below his armpit. She could be his daughter, his granddaughter, his favorite student. Another man steps in front of her to deliver an impromptu manners lesson; apparently, she bumped him on her way up. “*Excuse me*,” he says heatedly. “Around here, we say *excuse me*.”

An ungentleness gets into the air when Trump speaks, prompting the abandonment of certain social norms (e.g., an old man should show forbearance and physical respect for a young woman, even—especially—an angry young woman, and might even think to wonder what is making her so angry), norms that, to fired-up Trump supporters, must feel antiquated in this brave new moment of

ideological foment. They have thought and thought, in projective terms, about theoretical protesters, and now here are some real ones.

This ungentleness ripples out through the crowd and into the area beyond the fence where the protesters have set up shop. One of them, Sandra Borchers, tells me that out there all was calm (she was “actually having dialogues” with Trump supporters, “back-and-forth conversations, at about this talking level”) until Trump started speaking. Then things got “violent and aggressive.” Someone threw a rock at her head. A female Trump supporter “in a pink-peachy-color T-shirt” attacked a protester, kicking and punching him. Rebecca LaStrap, an African-American woman, twenty years old, wearing a “FUCK TRUMP” T-shirt, was grabbed by the breast, thrown to the ground, slapped in the face. (She was also told to “go back on the boat,” a perplexing instruction, given that she was born and raised in Mesa.) Later that day, in Tucson, two young Hispanic women, quietly watching the rally there, are thrown out of the venue, and one (as a member of Trump’s security staff bellows, “Out! Out! Out!”) is roughly shoved through a revolving door by a Trump supporter who looks to be in his seventies and who then performs a strange little quasi-karate move, as if he expects her to fly back in and counterattack. A pro-immigration protester named George Clifton, who is wearing a sign that says “VETERAN: U.S.M.C. AND C.I.A.,” tells me that two Trump supporters came up to him separately after the Fountain Hills rally and whispered “almost verbatim the same thing, not quite, but in a nutshell”: that they’d like to shoot him in the back of the head.

### I’M HERE FOR AN ARGUMENT

**I**N TUCSON, TRUMP supporters flow out of the Convention Center like a red-white-and-blue river, along hostile riverbanks made of protesters, who have situated themselves so as to be maximally irritating. When a confrontation occurs, people rush toward it, to film it and stoke it, in the hope that someone on the other side will fly off the handle and do something extreme, and thereby incontrovertibly discredit his side of the argument. This river-and-shore arrangement

advantages the Trump supporters: they can walk coolly past, playing the offended party, refusing to engage.

Most do, but some don't.

"Trump is racist, so are YOU!" the protesters chant, maximizing the provocation. A South Asian-looking youth of uncertain political affiliation does a crazy Borat dance in front of the line as a friend films him. An aging blond bombshell strolls by in a low-cut blouse, giving the protesters a leisurely finger, blowing them kisses, patting one of her large breasts. A matronly Hispanic protester says that the woman has a right to do what she likes with her breasts since, after all, "she paid for them." A grandmotherly white woman tucks a strand of graying hair behind her ear, walks resolutely over, and delicately lifts a Mexican flag from where it lies shawl-like across the shoulders of a young, distractedly dancing Hispanic girl, as if the flag had fallen across the girl's shoulders from some imaginary shelf and the grandmother were considerably removing it before it got too heavy. The girl, offended, pulls away. But wait: the woman shows her anti-Trump sign: they're on the same side. The girl remains unconvinced; she'll keep the flag to herself, thanks. "So *sorry*," the white woman says and rejoins a friend, to commiserate over the girl's response, which strikes her, maybe, as a form of racial profiling.

Two tall Trump supporters tower over a small liberal in a green T-shirt.

"Stupid! Uneducated!" Trumpie A shouts. "Do you know anything that goes on in the world?"

"Articulate a little more," the guy in the green shirt says.

"I don't want to live in a fascist country!" Trumpie B says.

"You don't know what fascism is," Green Shirt says.

"Oh, I'm getting there, man!" Trumpie B says. "Obama's teaching me!"

"Go back to California," Trumpie A shouts at Green Shirt. "Bitch!"

The four of us stand in a tight little circle, Trumpie A shouting insults at Green Shirt while filming Green Shirt's reaction, me filming Trumpie A filming Green Shirt. The bulk and intensity of the Trumpies, plus the fact that Green Shirt seems to be serving as designated spokesperson for a group of protesters now gathering around, appears to be making Green Shirt nervous.

"Obama's teaching you what fascism is?" he sputters. "Obama's a fascist? The left is the fascists? This is so rich! So, like, the people who are being oppressed are the oppressors?"

"Do you know what's going on in the world, man?" Trumpie A says. "You're not fucking *educated*."

This stings.

"I am very educated," Green Shirt says.

"You have no *idea* what's going on," Trumpie B says.

"I am very educated," Green Shirt says.

"You've got no idea, bro," Trumpie A says sadly.

"Ask me a question, ask me a question," Green Shirt says.

The Tall Trumpies, bored, wander away.

Green Shirt turns to one of his friends. "Am I educated?"

"You're fucking educated," the friend says.

Green Shirt shouts at the Tall Trumpies (who, fortunately for him, are now safely out of earshot), "And I'll stomp the fucking *shit* out of you!"

Spotting a round-faced, brown-skinned youth in a "Make America Great Again" T-shirt, who's been quietly listening nearby, Green Shirt snarls, "And *you* can get your fat fucking Chinese face out of here."

The kid seems more quizzical than hurt.

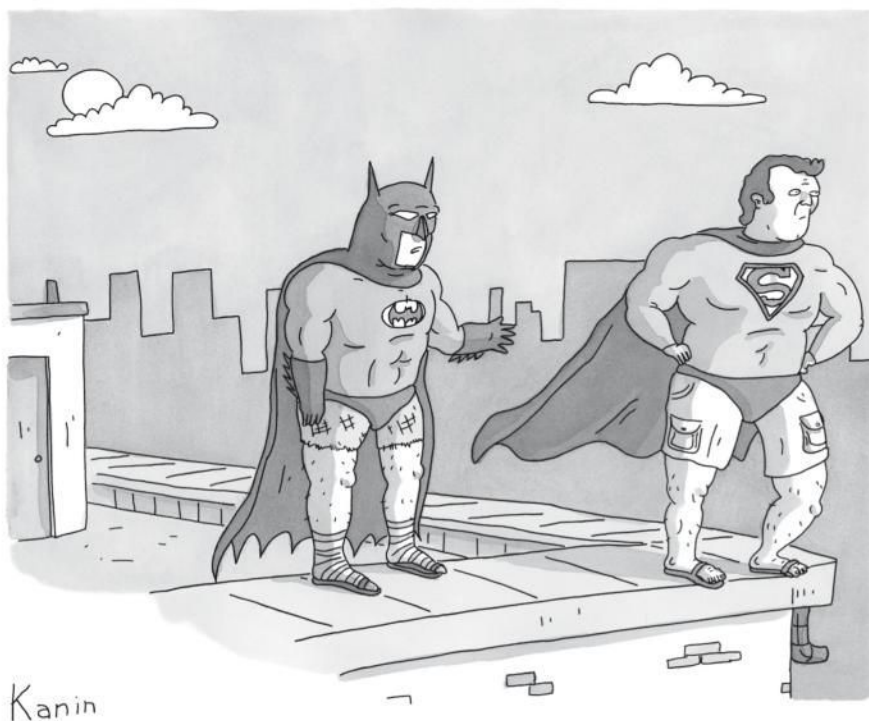
I ask Green Shirt for clarification: did he just tell that guy to get his Chinese face out of here?

"No, I was calling his *shirt* Chinese," he clarifies. "I told him to get his Chinese *shirt* out of here. The Trump campaign gets those shirts from China."

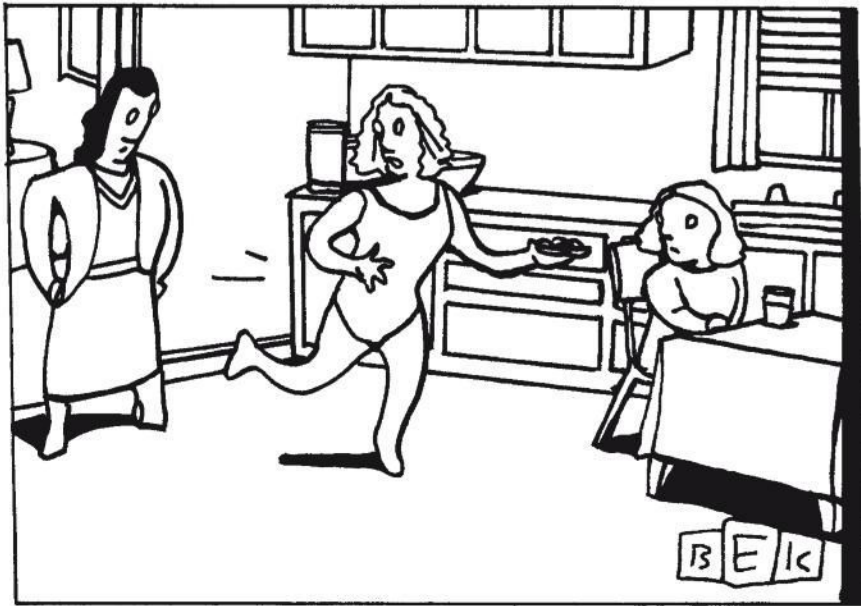
I'm relieved. My liberal comrade did not commit a racial slur.

"I did call him fat, though," he admits, then dashes back over to the kid, hisses, "Why don't you make your *waistline* great again?," and slips away into the crowd.

"This is America!" a Trump supporter rages desperately into the line of protesters, after one of them forces his phone camera down. "I'm American! I'm Mexican-American! Are you a marine?" he demands of an elderly protester in a floppy fatigue hat. "I'm a veteran. I'm a *veteran*. You're idiots. You're *idiots*. I'm a Navy corpsman! I saved marines' *asses*. Mexican, white, and black. We're red, white, and blue!" The guy in the floppy hat answers, in heavily accented English, that, yes, he was a marine. This conflict rapidly devolves into a bitter veteran-off: two old guys, who've presumably seen some things in their time, barking hatefully at each other. I know (or *feel* I know) that, on another day, these two guys might



"I feel like bad guys aren't as scared of me in the summer."



*"She'll only eat it if I cut it up in cloverleaf shapes, serve it on a blue plate, and do a little dance as I serve it."*

have grabbed a beer together, jump-started each other's cars, whatever—but they're not doing that today.

"What are you *doing* here?" a girl shouts at the Trump-supporting Mexican-American former corpsman. "You should be ashamed!"

"What am I doing?" he shouts back. "I'm supporting a man who's going to clean up Mexico, build a wall, fix the economy!"

"*Puto!*" a protester snaps, as the corpsman storms off, to go home and, I'm guessing, feel like crap the rest of the day.

If you are, as I am, a sentimental middle-aged person who cherishes certain Coplandian notions about the essential goodness of the nation, seeing this kind of thing in person—adults shouting wrathfully at one another with no intention of persuasion, invested only in escalating spite—will inject a palpable sadness into your thinning, under-exercised legs, and you may find yourself collapsing, post-rally, against a tree in a public park, feeling hopeless. Craving something positive (no more fighting, no more invective, please, please), forcing yourself to your feet, you may cross a busy avenue and find, in a mini-mall themed like Old Mexico, a wedding about to begin. Up will walk the bridesmaids, each leading, surprisingly, a dog on a leash, and each

dog is wearing a tutu, and one, a puppy too small to be trusted in a procession, is being carried, in its tutu, in the arms of its bridesmaid.

And this will somehow come as an unbelievable relief.

#### LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF

WHERE IS ALL this anger coming from? It's viral, and Trump is Typhoid Mary. Intellectually and emotionally weakened by years of steadily degraded public discourse, we are now two separate ideological countries, LeftLand and RightLand, speaking different languages, the lines between us down. Not only do our two subcountries reason differently; they draw upon non-intersecting data sets and access entirely different mythological systems. You and I approach a castle. One of us has watched only "Monty Python and the Holy Grail," the other only "Game of Thrones." What is the meaning, to the collective "we," of yon castle? We have no common basis from which to discuss it. You, the other knight, strike me as bafflingly ignorant, a little unmoored. In the old days, a liberal and a conservative (a "dove" and a "hawk," say) got their data from one of three nightly news programs, a local paper,

and a handful of national magazines, and were thus starting with the same basic facts (even if those facts were questionable, limited, or erroneous). Now each of us constructs a custom informational universe, wittingly (we choose to go to the sources that uphold our existing beliefs and thus flatter us) or unwittingly (our app algorithms do the driving for us). The data we get this way, pre-imprinted with spin and mythos, are intensely one-dimensional. (As a proud knight of LeftLand, I was interested to find that, in RightLand, Vince Foster has still been murdered, Dick Morris is a reliable source, kids are brainwashed "way to the left" by going to college, and Obama may yet be Muslim. I expect that my interviewees found some of my core beliefs equally jaw-dropping.)

A Trump supporter in Fountain Hills asks me, "If you're a liberal, do you believe in the government controlling everything? Because that's what Barry wants to do, and what he's pretty much accomplished." She then makes the (to me, irrational and irritating) claim that more people are on welfare under Obama than ever were under Bush.

"Almost fifty million people," her husband says. "Up thirty per cent."

I make a certain sound I make when I disagree with something but have no facts at my disposal.

Back at the hotel, I Google it.

Damn it, they're right. Rightish.

What I find over the next hour or so, from a collection of Web sites, left, right, and fact-based:

Yes, true: there are approximately seven million more Americans in poverty now than when Obama was elected. On the other hand, the economy under Obama has gained about seven times as many jobs as it did under Bush; even given the financial meltdown, the unemployment rate has dropped to just below the historical average. But, yes: the poverty *rate* is up by 1.6 percentage points since 2008. Then again the *number* of Americans in poverty fell by nearly 1.2 million between 2012 and 2013. However, true: the proportion of people who depend on welfare for the majority of their income *has* increased (although it was also increasing under Bush). And under Obama unemployment has dropped, G.D.P. growth has been "robust," and there have been

close to seventy straight months of job growth. But, O.K.: there has indeed been a “skyrocketing” in the number of Americans needing some form of means-tested federal aid, although Obama’s initiatives kept some six million people out of poverty in 2009, including more than two million children.

So the couple’s assertion was true but not *complexly* true. It was a nice hammer with which to pop the enemy; i.e., me. Its intent: discredit Obama and the liberal mind-set. What was my intent as I Googled? Get a hammer of my own, discredit Bush and the conservative mind-set.

Meanwhile, there sat reality: huge, ambiguous, too complicated to be usefully assessed by our prevailing mutual ambition—to fight and win, via delivery of the partisan zinger.

LeftLand and RightLand are housemates who are no longer on speaking terms. And then the house is set on fire. By Donald Trump. Good people from both subnations gape at one another through the smoke.

## WHO ARE THEY? (PART I)

IT’S CLEAR ENOUGH to those of us who don’t like Trump why we don’t like him. What isn’t clear is why it isn’t clear to those who like him. The Trump supporter is your brother who has just brought home a wildly inappropriate fiancée. Well, inappropriate to *you*. Trump support, nationwide, stands at around forty per cent. If you had ten siblings and four of them brought home wildly inappropriate fiancées, you might feel inclined to ask yourself what was going on in your family to make your judgment and that of your siblings so divergent.

It seems futile to try to generalize about a group as large and disparate as “Trump supporters”—like generalizing, say, “people who own riding lawnmowers,” who, of course, tend to be, but are not exclusively limited to, people with large or largish lawns, but can also include people with small yards, who, for whatever reason, can’t manage a push mower, and/or people (both large- and small-yarded) who may have received a riding mower from a father-in-law or an uncle and don’t want to rock the boat. But sometimes, standing at a rally among

several thousand madly cheering Trump supporters, I’d think, All these people have *something* in common. What is it?

I didn’t meet many people who were unreservedly for Trump. There is, in the quiver containing his ideas, something for nearly everyone to dislike. But there is also something for nearly everyone to *like*. What allows a person not crazy about Trump to vote for him is a certain prioritization: a person might, for example, like Trump’s ideas about trade, or his immigration policies, or the fact that Trump is, as one supporter told me, “a successful businessman,” who has “actually done something,” unlike Obama, who has “never done anything his entire life.”

The Trump supporters I spoke with were friendly, generous with their time, flattered to be asked their opinion, willing to give it, even when they knew I was a liberal writer likely to throw them under the bus. They loved their country, seemed genuinely panicked at its perceived demise, felt urgently that we were, right now, in the process of losing something precious. They were, generally, in favor of *order* and had a propensity toward the broadly normative, a certain squareness. They leaned toward skepticism (they’d believe it when they saw it, “it” being anything feelings-based, gauzy, liberal, or European; i.e., “socialist”). Some (far from all) had been touched by financial hardship—a layoff was common in many stories—and (paradoxically, given their feelings about socialism) felt that, while in that vulnerable state, they’d been let down by their government. They were anti-regulation, pro small business, pro Second Amendment, suspicious of people on welfare, sensitive (in a “Don’t tread on me” way) about any infringement whatsoever on their freedom. Alert to charges of racism, they would pre-counter these by pointing out that they had friends of all colors. They were adamantly for law enforcement and veterans’ rights, in a manner that presupposed that the rest of us were adamantly against these things. It seemed self-evident to them that a businessman could and should lead the country. “You run your family like a business, don’t you?” I was asked more than once, although, of course, I don’t, and none of us do.

The Trump supporter comes out of the conservative tradition but is not a traditional conservative. He is less patient: something is bothering him and he wants it stopped *now*, by any means necessary. He seems less influenced by Goldwater and Reagan than by Fox News and reality TV, his understanding of history recent and selective; he is less religiously grounded and more willing, in his acceptance of Trump’s racist and misogynist excesses, to (let’s say) forgo the niceties.

As for Trump’s uncivil speech—the insults, the petty meanness, the crudeness, the talk about hand size, the assurance, on national TV, that his would-be Presidential dick is up to the job, his mastery of the jaw-droppingly untrue personal smear (Obama is Kenyan, Ted Cruz’s dad was in cahoots with Lee Harvey Oswald, U.S. Muslims knew what was “going on” pre-Orlando), which he often dishonorably eases into the world by attaching some form of the phrase “many people have said this” (*The world is flat; many people have said this. People are saying that birds can play the cello: we need to look into that*)—his supporters seem constitutionally reluctant to object, as if the act of objecting would mark them as fatally delicate. Objecting to this sort of thing is for the coddled, the liberal, the élite. “Yeah, he can really improve, in the way he says things,” one woman in Fountain Hills tells me. “But who gives a shit? Because if he’s going to get the job done? I’m just saying. You can’t let your feelings get hurt. It’s kind

of like, get over it, you know what I mean? What’s the big picture here? The big picture is we’ve got to get America back on track.”

The ability to shrug off the mean crack, the sexist joke, the gratuitous jab at the weak is, in some quarters, seen as a form of strength, of “being flexible,” of “not taking shit serious.” A woman who wilts at a sexist joke won’t last long in certain workplaces. A guy who prioritizes the sensitive side of his nature will, trust me, not thrive in the slaughterhouse. This willingness to gloss over crudeness becomes, then, an encoded sign of competence, strength, and reliability.

Above all, Trump supporters are “not



politically correct,” which, as far as I can tell, means that they have a particular aversion to that psychological moment when, having thought something, you decide that it is not a good thought, and might pointlessly hurt someone’s feelings, and therefore decline to say it.

## WHO ARE THEY? (PART II)

I OBSERVED, IN TRUMP supporters’ storytelling, a tendency to conflate things that, to a non-Trump supporter, might seem unrelated. For example, in 2014, Mary Ann Mendoza’s son, Brandon, an openly gay policeman in Mesa, who volunteered at the local Boys and Girls Club, was killed in a car accident caused by an intoxicated, undocumented Mexican man who had spent at least twenty years drifting in and out of the U.S. and had been charged with a number of crimes, including assaulting a police officer, and was convicted of criminal conspiracy, but was free at the time of the crash, having been shown leniency by a Colorado court. At the rally in Fountain Hills, Ms. Mendoza gave a moving speech about her son, which she concluded this way: “This was the kind of man my son was. . . . *Was*. Not is. *Was*. Because of the lack of concern that this Administration has for American citizens. . . . Brandon’s. Life.

Matters.” The crowd roared. Something key lay in that juxtaposition and that roar. What was the connection between her son’s death and the Black Lives Matter movement? Couldn’t a person be against the killing of innocent black men *and* against illegal immigration (or drunk driving, or the lax enforcement of existing laws, etc.)?

A man comes to Arizona from Vermont and finds that “the illegals” are getting all the kitchen jobs for which he’s qualified. “So once Trump started talking about the Wall,” he says, “I was like, all right, now I think I’ve got to start paying attention to this.” How does he know those workers were undocumented? He doesn’t; there’s no way, situationally, that he could. Stephanie, an executive administrator for a finance group in Minnesota, gets laid off, and the only benefit she qualifies for is “a measly little unemployment check.” Standing next to her at the government office are “these people, that are from other countries, non-speaking—I’m not biased, I have no reason to be—but . . . I’m seeing them getting cash, getting their bills paid, and, as a taxpaying citizen, I don’t get anything. And so the border thing really resonated with me.” Does she know for a fact that these were illegal immigrants? “That’s a good question, and I don’t know

the answer,” she says. “I’m not a hundred per cent on it.”

Bill Davis, a funny, genial sales rep in the packaging industry, has nothing against legal immigration but feels that illegal immigration is “killing” the area in Southern California where he lives. How, specifically, is it doing this? He mentions a neighbor of his who speaks no English, has two hundred chickens running around his yard, goats everywhere, doesn’t “play by the rules”—and hence Bill’s property values are going down. Is his neighbor undocumented? It doesn’t matter, he says. He’s “not assimilated.” Growing up, Davis says, he had a lot of first-generation Hispanic friends. These people took pride in assimilating. “Those days are over,” he explains. “So Trump is onto something about that. We don’t want you guys throwing your fast-food wrappers out your windows when you’re driving down the freeway. Take some pride in what you do. And learn to work in this country by the rules and regulations that we’ve developed over two hundred and fifty years. I’m not opposed to immigration, by any means. Come here, but when you leave Mexico—when you leave Germany, when you leave Russia, wherever—you’ve left that culture for a reason. It’s America now. So you can have your parties and your stuff at your house, but don’t expect us to cater to your culture.”

“Thousands of Cubans coming in,” Kathryn Kobor, a Trump supporter and animal-rights activist in her seventies, tells me in Phoenix, as she sits in protest of the Hillary Clinton rally across the street, beneath an umbrella provided by a Clinton supporter. “Three hundred sixty thousand Guatemalan kids and mothers standing at the border, they have to be taken in. We’re going to be taking in thousands of Syrians, whom we cannot vet.” I tell her that the thought of deporting and dividing families breaks my heart. “Of course it does—you’re a human, you care about people. That’s not the question. The question is, Do you want to live like India? Sewage running in the streets? . . . The infrastructure is crumbling. . . . I’m not speaking for tomorrow. I’m not speaking for a year, two years from now. I’ll be gone. I’m speaking for my descendants. I have a granddaughter. I have a son. I want them to live a decent, clean life. . . . Trump just



*“And if you sign up for our Gold Star membership level we stop pestering you to sign up for our Gold Star membership level.”*

wants the laws enforced. . . . He's not a mean-spirited person."

A former marine in line for a Trump rally in Rothschild, Wisconsin, tells me that, returning to the U.S. from a deployment overseas, he found himself wondering, "Where did my country go?" To clarify, he tells me that he was in Qatar on the day that Obama was first elected. "I was actually sitting in the chow hall when they announced the results and he gave his speech," he says. "I saw such a division at that time. Every black member of the military was cheering. Everybody else was sitting there mute. Like stunned."

What unites these stories is what I came to think of as usurpation anxiety syndrome—the feeling that one is, or is about to be, scooped, overrun, or taken advantage of by some Other with questionable intentions. In some cases, this has a racial basis, and usurpation anxiety grades into racial nostalgia, which can grade into outright racism, albeit cloaked in disclaimer.

In the broadest sense, the Trump supporter might be best understood as a guy who wakes up one day in a lively, crowded house full of people, from a dream in which he was the only one living there, and then mistakes the dream for the past: a better time, manageable and orderly, during which privilege and respect came to him naturally, and he had the whole place to himself.

### HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PROBLEM LIKE NOEMI?

TALKING TO A Trump supporter about Trump's deportation policy, I'd sometimes bring up Noemi Romero, a sweet, soft-spoken young woman I met in Phoenix. Noemi was brought to the U.S. when she was three, by undocumented parents. A few years ago, she had the idea of applying for legal status through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. But the application costs four hundred and sixty-five dollars, money her family didn't have. Hearing that a local Vietnamese grocery was hiring, she borrowed her mother's Social Security card and got the job. A few months later, the store was raided. Noemi was arrested, charged with aggravated identity theft and forgery, and taken to jail and held

there, within the general prison population, for two months. She was given spoiled milk, and food that, she said, had tiny worms in it. Her lawyer arranged a plea bargain; the charges were reduced to criminal impersonation. This was a good deal, he told her, the best she could hope for. She accepted, not realizing that, as a convicted felon, she would be permanently ineligible for DACA. Puente, a local grassroots organization, intervened and saved her from deportation, but she is essentially doomed to a kind of frozen life: can't work and can't go to college, although she has lived virtually her whole life in the U.S. and has no reason to go back to Mexico and nowhere to live if she's sent there.

I'd ask the Trump supporter, "What do we do about Noemi?" I always found the next moment in our exchange hopeful.

Is she a good person? the Trump supporter might ask. I couldn't feel more sorry for her, he might say. That kid is no better or worse than I am and deserves the best God can give her. Or he might say that deportation would have to be done on a case-by-case basis. Or propose some sort of registry—Noemi, having registered, would go back to Mexico and, if all checked out, come right back in. There had to be some kind of rule of law, didn't there? Tellingly, the Trump supporter might confess that she didn't think Trump really intended to do this mass-deportation thing anyway—it was all just campaign talk. The most extreme supporter might say that, yes, Noemi had to go—he didn't like it, but ultimately the fault lay with her parents.

Sometimes I'd mention a Central American family I met in Texas, while reporting another story. In that case, the father and son were documented but the mother and daughters weren't. Would you, I'd ask, split that family up? Send those girls to a country in which they'd never spent a single day? Well, my Trump-supporting friend might answer, it was complicated, wasn't it? Were they good people? Yes, I'd say. The father, in spare moments between his three jobs, built a four-bedroom house out of cinder blocks he acquired two or three at a time from Home Depot, working sometimes late into the night. The

Trump supporter might, at this point, fall silent, and so might I.

In the face of specificity, my interviewees began trying, really trying, to think of what would be fairest and most humane for this real person we had imaginatively conjured up. It wasn't that we suddenly agreed, but the tone changed. We popped briefly out of zinger mode and began to have some faith in one another, a shared confidence that if we talked long enough, respectfully enough, a solution could be found that might satisfy our respective best notions of who we were.

Well, let's not get too dreamy about it. We'd stay in that mode for a minute or two, then be off again to some new topic, rewrapped in our respective Left and Right national flags. Once, after what felt like a transcendent and wide-ranging conversation with a Trump supporter named Danny (a former railroad worker, now on disability), I said a fond goodbye and went to interview some Hillary supporters across the street. A few minutes later, I looked over to find Danny shouting at us that Hillary was going to prison, not the White House. I waved to him, but he didn't seem to see me, hidden there in the crowd of his adversaries.

### THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

THE AVERAGE TRUMP supporter is not the rally pugilist, the white supremacist, the bitter conspiracy theorist, though these exist and are drawn to Trump (see: *the Internet*)—and, at times, the first flowerings of these tendencies were present among some of the rank-and-file supporters I met. A certain barely suppressed rage, for example, is evident in the guy in Phoenix who wears his gun to a protest against Hillary ("I'm out here with two friends, Smith and Wesson"). One of his fellow-protesters tells me that Hillary has had oral sex with many female world leaders ("She's munched with a lot of our enemies, man").

After a rally in Eau Claire, a handful of Trump protesters stand silently in the Wisconsin cold as the Trump supporters file out—a spontaneous little lab experiment investigating the Trumpies' response to silent rebuke. "I guess you guys don't read too much,"

someone shouts at the protesters. “Or watch the news. *Fox News!* Watch that once in a while!” Other Trump supporters yell over incredulously, “Fifteen bucks an hour?” And “Go to socialist Europe! Save your checks and move to a socialist country!”

But the line I won’t forget comes from a guy leaving the rally, alone, who shout-mutters, if such a thing is possible, “Hey, I’m not paying for your shit, I’m not paying for your college, so you go to Hell, go to work, go to Hell, suck a dick.”

Not far away, a group of enterprising Girl Scouts is out late, selling cookies under a winter-leafless tree. “Cookies for sale, last time this season,” they seem to sing. “Girl Scout cookies, last weekend to get them.”

So, yes, there are bigots in the Trump movement, and wackos, and dummies, and sometimes I had to remind myself that the important constituency is the persuadable middle segment of his supporters, who are not finding in Trump a suitable vessel for their hate but are misunderstanding him or overestimating him, and moving in his direction out of a misplaced form of hope.

### WHO ARE THEY? (PART III)

SOMETIMES IT SEEMED that they were, like me, just slightly spoiled Americans, imbued with unreasonable boomer expectations for autonomy, glory, and ascension, and that their grievances were more theoretical than actual, more media-induced than experience-related.

Before the rally in San Jose on June 2nd, I talk to a group of construction workers, each of whom is in some state of layoff: current, recent, chronic. One, who’s hoping to get a job working construction on the Wall, rails against millennials, the unions, a minimum-wage hike for fast-food workers, and “these people” who get fired, then turn around and sue. I ask for examples. He says he isn’t going to give me any names. I say forget the names, just tell me a particular story. A guy got fired from his workplace just last week, he says. “Is he suing?” I ask. “Well, probably,” he says.

I ask one of his friends, a thoughtful Chinese-American guy, how his life

has been made worse over the past eight years. He comes up with this: he pays more for his insurance because of Obamacare. Anything else? Not really. How has he personally been affected by illegal immigration? He hasn’t, he tells me, but he’s been fortunate enough to have the resources to keep his family away from the danger.

At one point, in line at the Fountain Hills rally, frustrated by a litany of anti-Obama grievances being delivered by the woman in front of me, I say that I think life is good, pretty good, you know?

“You think this is *good*?” she says.

“I do, yeah,” I say. “We’re out here on a nice day, having a beautiful talk—”

She groans, meaning, You know that’s not what I mean.

But I don’t, really, so I ask her what, in terms of her day-to-day life, she thinks is wrong with America.

“I don’t like people shoving Obamacare down my throat, O.K.?” she says. “And then getting penalized if I don’t have insurance.”

Is she covered through Obamacare?

No. She has insurance through her work, thank God, but “every day my rights are being taken away from me, you know?” she says. “I mean—this is America. In the U.S., we have a lot of freedoms and things like that, but we’re not going to have all that if we have



all these people coming in, that are taking our—”

“We have our own people to take care of, I’m sorry,” interjects a seventeen-year-old girl who is standing nearby, holding up a sign that says “MARRY ME DON.”

### WHO ARE THEY? (PART IV)

AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL campaigns are not about ideas; they are about the selection of a hero to embody the prevailing national ethos. “Only a hero,” Mailer wrote, “can capture the

secret imagination of a people, and so be good for the vitality of his nation; a hero embodies the fantasy and so allows each private mind the liberty to consider its fantasy and find a way to grow. Each mind can become more conscious of its desire and waste less strength in hiding from itself.” What fantasy is Trump giving his supporters the liberty to consider? What secret have they been hiding from themselves?

Trump seems to awaken something in them that they feel they have, until now, needed to suppress. What is that thing? It is not just (as I’m getting a bit tired of hearing) that they’ve been *left behind economically*. (Many haven’t, and *au contraire*.) They’ve been left behind in other ways, too, or feel that they have. To them, this is attributable to a country that has moved away from them, has been *taken away* from them—by Obama, the Clintons, the “lamestream” media, the “élites,” the business-as-usual politicians. They are stricken by a sense that things are not as they should be and that, finally, someone sees it their way. They have a case of Grievance Mind, and Trump is their head kvetcher.

In college, I was a budding Republican, an Ayn Rand acolyte. I voted for Reagan. I’d been a bad student in high school and now, in engineering school, felt (and was) academically outgunned, way behind the curve. In that state, I constructed a world view in which I was not behind the curve but ahead of it. I conjured up a set of hazy villains, who were, I can see now, externalized manifestations, imaginary versions of those who were leaving me behind; i.e., my better-prepared, more sophisticated fellow-students. They were, yes, smarter and sharper than I was (as indicated by the tests on which they were always creaming me), but I was...what was I? Uh, tougher, more resilient, more able to get down and dirty as needed. I distinctly remember the feeling of casting about for some world view in which my shortfall somehow constituted a hidden noble advantage.

While reporting this story, I drove from New York to California. During all those days on the highway, with lots of time on my hands for theorizing, generalizing, and speaking my generalized theories into my iPhone while swerving off into the spacious landscape, I thought

about this idea of grievance, of feeling left behind. All along the fertile interstate-highway corridor, our corporations, those new and powerful nation-states, had set up shop parasitically, so as to skim off the drive-past money, and what those outposts had to offer was a blur of sugar, bright color, and crassness that seemed causally related to more serious addictions. Standing in line at the pharmacy in an Amarillo Walmart superstore, I imagined some kid who had moved only, or mostly, through such bland, bright spaces, spaces constructed to suit the purposes of distant profit, and it occurred to me how easy it would be, in that life, to feel powerless, to feel that the local was lame, the abstract extraneous, to feel that the only valid words were those of materialism (“get” and “rise”)—words that are perfectly embodied by the candidate of the moment.

Something is wrong, the common person feels, correctly: she works too hard and gets too little; a dulling disconnect exists between her actual day-to-day interests and (1) the way her leaders act and speak, and (2) the way our mass media mistell or fail entirely to tell her story. What does she want? Someone to notice her over here, having her troubles.

#### BUT, THEN AGAIN, COME ON

A BULLY SHOWS UP, is hateful, says things so crude we liberals are taken aback. We respond moderately. We keep waiting for his supporters, helped along by how compassionately and measuredly we are responding, to be persuaded. For the bully, this is perfect. Every fresh outrage pulls the camera back to him, and meanwhile those of us moderately decrying his immoderation are a little boring and tepid, and he keeps getting out ahead of us. He has Trumpmunity: his notions are so low and have been so many times decried, and yet they keep arriving, in new and escalating varieties, and the liberal imagination wilts.

I have been mentally gathering all those nice, friendly Trump supporters I met and asking them, Still? Even after the Curiel fiasco and the post-Orlando self-congrat fest, and Trump’s insinuation that President Obama was in cahoots with the terrorists? Guys, still, really? The tragedy of the Trump movement is that one set of struggling peo-



*“That’s Roger’s therapy dog.”*

ple has been pitted against other groups of struggling people by someone who has known little struggle, at least in the material sense, and hence seems to have little empathy for anyone struggling, and even to consider struggling a symptom of weakness. “I will never let you down,” he has told his supporters, again and again, but he will, and in fact already has, by indulging the fearful, xenophobic, Other-averse parts of their psychology and reinforcing the notion that their sense of being left behind has no source in themselves.

#### ALL THAT BAD ENERGY COMES HOME TO ROOST

AH, HOW FONDLY I now recall those idyllic rally days in Fountain Hills, Tucson, Rothschild, and Eau Claire, back in March and early April, when the punching was being done by Trump supporters.

After the San Jose rally in early June, protesters bullied and spat on straggling Trump supporters. Sucker punchers lurched up, punched hard, darted away, hands raised in victory. A strange little protester, mask around his neck, mumbled, as he scuttled past a female reporter conducting an interview, “Fuck you in the pussy.” Some sick genie, it seemed, had been let out of the bottle. I had to pull an older white woman out

of a moblet of slapping young women of color, after she’d been driven down to one knee and had her glasses knocked off. When I told the young African-American woman who’d given the first slap that this was exactly the kind of thing the Trump movement loved to see and would be happy to use, she seemed to suddenly come back to herself and nearly burst into tears. The slapped woman was around sixty, tall, lean, sun-reddened, scrappy, a rancher, maybe, and we stood there a few minutes, recovering ourselves. Seeing something unsteady behind her eyes, I suggested that she be sure to take a few deep breaths before driving home. She said she would, but a few minutes later I saw her again, at the edge of the crowd, watching the protesters in fascination, as if what had just happened to her made it impossible for her to leave.

The order to disperse was given, first from a helicopter circling above, then barked out repeatedly on the ground, through megaphones. Police, in riot gear, stepped forward, shoulder to shoulder, chanting, “MOVE MOVE MOVE!,” and the kids played at revolution, chanting back, “HANDS UP! DON’T SHOOT!” and “FUCK TRUMP!” and “FUCK THE SYSTEM!” and “FUCK THE PO-LICE!,” occasionally dashing ahead of the advancing line to gain a few minutes to call home on their cells to reassure their worried parents. The

police line formed a human wiper blade that, over the next couple of hours, drove the protesters around and around the downtown area. It was like some large-form board game: the longer the blue wiper blade pushed forward, the more protesters fell off the game board and went home, until, finally, only a handful remained, regrouping in the dark under the freeway.

Up on grassless viaduct slopes, whippet-thin young men of color gathered stones, carried them down furtively in clenched fists. When asked not to throw them, they averted their eyes guiltily, the way a busted third grader might. Some dropped their rocks; others just slipped away into the crowd. I saw two friends hurl their rocks at once, high, weak, arcing throws that burst up through street-light-yellow, low-hanging branches. I told an African-American kid wearing an elaborate Darth Vaderish multi-mask arrangement that this made him look like he was up to no good and aggravated the ambient white-privileged notion of the protesters as thugs out to make trouble. He sweetly agreed, but then (dashing off) said that, still, the protesters “have to do what we have to do.”

They were so young, mostly peaceful, but angered by the hateful rhetoric addressed at their communities, and their disdain for Trump morphed too easily into disrespect for the police, a group of whom, when all was over, huddled in a bank doorway, bathed in sweat, a couple of them taking a knee, football style, and when their helmets came off it was clear that they’d been scared, too, and I imagined them later that night, in darkened living rooms, reviewing the night, assessing how they’d done.

Early in the evening, a protester about my age asked me, “Where’s your sheet?” Seeing my confusion, he regrouped. “If you’re a Trump supporter, I mean.” Later, I saw him again, shouting to the police that they were all “pigs.” Still smarting over his Klan crack, I asked how he could hold a sign claiming that hate doesn’t work while calling a group of people he didn’t know “pigs.” “They *are* pigs,” he said. “Every one of them.” His wife was murdered a few years ago, he added, and they did nothing about it.

So there you go. Welcome to America.

The night was sad. The center failed to hold. Did I blame the rioting kids? I did. Did I blame Trump? I did. This,

Mr. Trump, I thought, is why we practice civility. This is why, before we say exactly what is on our minds, we run it past ourselves, to see if it makes sense, is true, is fair, has a flavor of kindness, and won’t hurt someone or make someone’s difficult life more difficult. Because there are, among us, in every political camp, limited, angry, violent, and/or damaged people, waiting for any excuse to throw off the tethers of restraint and get after it. After which it falls to the rest of us, right and left, to clean up the mess.

## THE SOMEWHAT BETTER ANGELS OF OUR NATURE

WELL, IT WASN’T all doom and gloom. Who could fail to be cheered by the sight of a self-described “street preacher” named Dean, whose massive laminated sign read “MUHAMMAD IS A LIAR, FALSE PROPHET, CHILD RAPING PERVERT! (see history for details)” and, on the flip side, “HOMO SEX IS SIN—Romans 1,” being verbally taken down by an inspiring consortium consisting of a gay white agnostic for Trump, a straight Christian girl for Trump, and a lesbian Latina agnostic for Bernie? Who could resist the raw wonder in the voice of a rangy young Trump supporter who reminded me of a gentler version of Sid Phillips, the bad neighbor boy in “Toy Story,” as he said, rather dreamily, “I love that everything in Trump’s house is gold. That’s like real-life Batman. That’s some real Bruce Wayne shit.” A group of anti-Trump college students in Eau Claire concocted the perfect Zen protest: singing and dancing en masse to Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody.” If there’s anything common across the left-right divide, it’s the desire not to come off as tight-assed or anti-rock and roll, and what could the passing Trump supporters do but dance and sing along, a few holdouts scowling at the unfairness of the method?

Outside a Clinton rally in Phoenix, a Native American-looking man in an Aztec-patterned shirt joined the line of Trump supporters, with his megaphone, through which he slowly said, one word at a time, “Make. America. White. Again.” Once the Trump supporters caught on to the joke, they



*“Well, if your allies said that about you then they’re not your allies.”*

moved away, but he was a good sport and scooted down to join them.

"Make. America. White. Again," he said, in the calmest voice.

"We don't want you," one of the Trumpies said. "We don't want your racism!"

And civility is still alive and well, if you know where to look for it. Outside a Lutheran church meeting hall in Mesa that is being used as a polling place on primary day, for example, where an eighty-eight-year-old woman sits, beautifully dressed for the occasion. "Oh, my goodness," she says. "I've never seen anything like this."

Hundreds of voters are waiting in a line that runs around the parking lot and down the street. She came earlier, she says, and thought she might just forget it. "But then," she says, "I thought, I'm getting up there in years—not going to have that many more chances to vote. I don't want to skip it. Because I always vote."

The voters move slowly, under crossed palm fronds, up for Palm Sunday, past a grapefruit tree in a gravelled breezeway: its three trunks have been whitewashed, and it looks like a three-legged creature in white pants, standing on its head.

For the next five hours, America passes by, wearing work badges, fanny packs, surgical scrubs, sparkly dance-short-leotards, suspenders, wool caps, head scarves, dreadlocks; pushing walkers, baby strollers, a fat-wheeled trail bike, a shopping cart (containing a bamboo cane and a Burger King crown); carrying walkie-talkies, books, a manpurse shaped like a gigantic tennis shoe, squirming babies, portable fold-up seats that never get used.

Someone says that in twenty-nine years she's never seen this level of excitement. Someone says that it takes all kinds. Someone says that this is what makes the U.S. great: so much difference, and everyone gets a chance. Someone says that there are so many extremes at play in this election, people are coming out just to resist the extreme they're most against.

A man says, "I'm a good guy, I hope," and his wife nods.

A hipster dad picks up a bit of cookie his kid has dropped on the sidewalk and eats it.

A college-age kid in a "Captain America" shirt demonstrates that there is a certain portion of one's elbow flesh that will never hurt, no matter how hard one pinches it.

At seven, the polls are supposed to close, but the line is the longest it's been all day.

No one seems angry. There isn't much political talk, and what there is is restrained, chatty. They are here to vote, and that is a privilege and a private matter.

How fragile this mind-set is, I think. It could be lost in a single generation.

By 8:18 P.M., per the Internet, with only one per cent of precincts reporting, it's over: Trump wins, Clinton wins.

Even though their votes now seem technically meaningless, there is no mass exodus. The people just keep coming. They've raced over from work, weary kids trudging along beside them. They are fantastically old people; people in terrible health, in wheelchairs or hobbling along on walkers, or joining me on my bench to stretch out a stiff leg or adjust a bad back. What makes them do it? Keep standing in line, after dark, at the end of a long day, to vote in an election that is already over?

A young woman says, cheerfully, to her toddler, "Don't hit yourself. You only have one face, one head. That carries your brain. Which is very important."

"After all these many years, in the back of my head," a man says thoughtfully, "I still hear this voice: 'Wait until your father gets home.' And that's my mom's voice."

At 9:50 P.M., the last person in line disappears inside.

I am joined by a trans woman about my age. People get afraid, she tells me, and nobody wants to feel afraid. But if you get angry, you feel empowered. Trump is playing on people's fears, to get them angry, which in turn makes us, on the other side, feel fearful. It's a domino effect. And, she says, it will continue even if Trump is out of the equation.

Another trans woman, apparently a stranger to the first, comes out of the church, holding a journal.

"All I have to write in here," she says, "is: I voted from Hell."

The last fifty or so voters are still visible inside: patient, calm, plodding forward a few steps at a time.

Mailer described what he called democracy's "terrifying premise" this way: "Let the passions and cupidities and dreams and kinks and ideals and greed and hopes and foul corruptions of all men and women have their day and the world will still be better off, for there is more good than bad in the sum of us and our workings."

Well, we'll see.

From the beginning, America has been of two minds about the Other.

One mind says, Be suspicious of it, dominate it, deport it, exploit it, enslave it, kill it as needed. The other mind denies that there can be any such thing as the Other, in the face of the claim that all are created equal.

The first mind has always held violence nearby, to use as needed, and that violence has infused everything we do—our entertainments, our sex, our schools, our ads, our jokes, our view of the earth itself, somehow even our food. It sends our young people abroad in heavy armor, fills public spaces with gunshots, drives people quietly insane in their homes.

And here it comes again, that brittle frontier spirit, that lone lean guy in our heads, with a gun and a fear of encroachment. But he's picked up a few tricks along the way, has learned to come at us in a form we know and have forgotten to be suspicious of, from TV: famous, likably cranky, a fan of winning by any means necessary, exploiting our recent dullness and our aversion to calling stupidity stupidity, lest we seem too precious.

"DONALD J TRUMP A GUARDIAN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN," reads a poster I retrieved from the floor of the Rothschild rally. "HIS SPIRIT AND HARD WORK AS PRESIDENT WILL MAKE THE PEOPLE AND AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!!!"

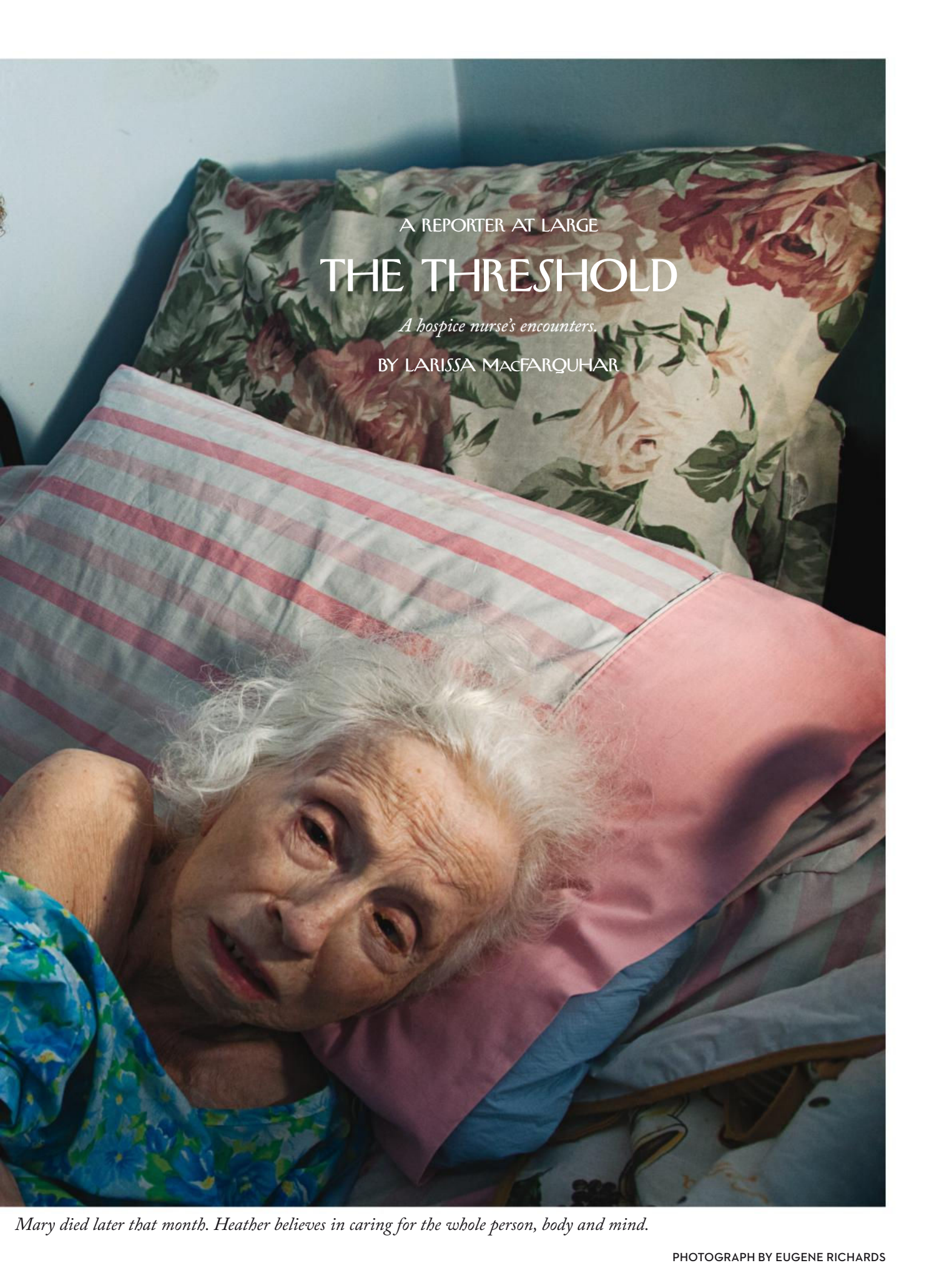
Although, to me, Trump seems the very opposite of a guardian angel, I thank him for this: I've never before imagined America as fragile, as an experiment that could, within my very lifetime, fail.

But I imagine it that way now. ♦





*Heather Meyerend examines Mary, a ninety-two-year-old woman, at her home, in Marine Park, Brooklyn, in September, 2015.*



A REPORTER AT LARGE

# THE THRESHOLD

*A hospice nurse's encounters.*

BY LARISSA MACFARQUHAR

*Mary died later that month. Heather believes in caring for the whole person, body and mind.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY EUGENE RICHARDS

**H**EAATHER MEYEREND is a hospice nurse who works in several neighborhoods in South Brooklyn—Sheepshead Bay, Mill Basin, Marine Park, Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge. She usually has between sixteen and twenty patients, and visits each at home once a week, sometimes more. Some patients die within days of her meeting them, but others she gets to know well, over many months. She sees her work as preparing a patient for the voyage he is about to take, and accompanying him partway down the road. She, like most hospice workers, feels that it is a privilege to spend time with the dying, to be allowed into a person's life and a family's life when they are at their rawest and most vulnerable, and when they most need help. Some hospice workers believe that working with the dying is the closest you can get on earth to the presence of God.

Heather is not brisk or efficient, as nurses in hospitals are. She is purposely inefficient, in fact. Most of the time when she visits patients, she doesn't have much to do: she takes vital signs, she checks that there are enough supplies and medications in the house, she asks if old symptoms have gone away or new ones developed. If she were rushing, she could do all that in about five minutes, but her visits usually last

an hour or more. Sometimes there is a complicated medical situation to take care of. Sometimes she does something non-medical that needs to be done, which is the hospice way—she might sweep a floor, she might heat up dinner. But, even when there's nothing else to do, the idea is to be around longer, to chat, to sit close by, to put her hands on the patient's skin as she goes about her checkup. Her visit may be the high point of the day for the patient, who may not be able to get out of bed, or for whoever is taking care of the patient, who may not have left the house or seen anybody else for a day or two; either or both of them may be going a little crazy and may badly need interruption or variety of any kind, ideally someone different to talk to. So Heather moves slowly; she sits down; she delays; she lingers.

Dying can be long and bewildering, lonely and painful, frequently undignified, and consumed by pressing and unpredictable and constantly changing and multiplying needs. It's a relief to have someone around who understands what's going on and what may happen next. On the other hand, when dying is long it becomes ordinary, just another kind of living, but one in which your friends may be gone and your children busy, or not busy enough. In that case,

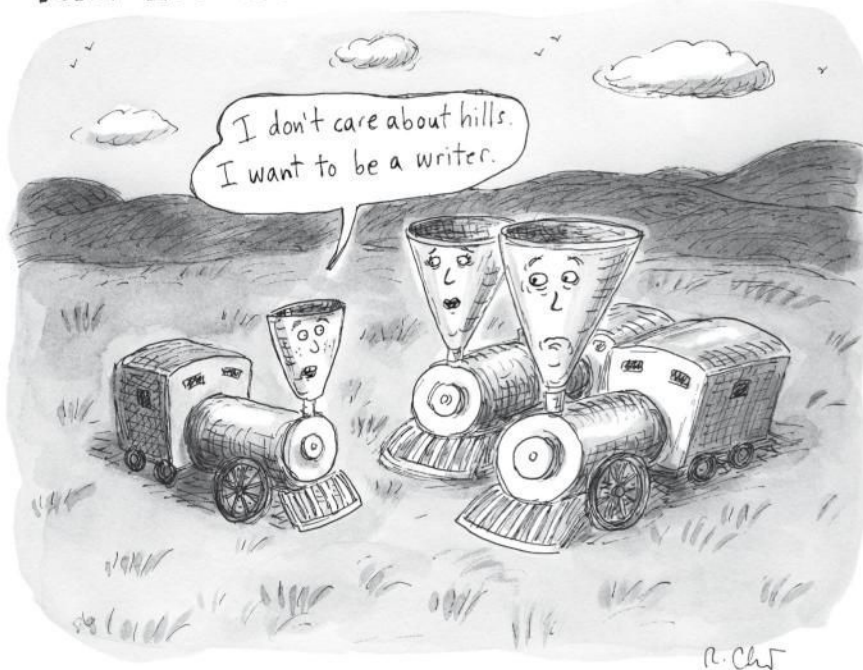
it can be a good thing to see someone who is not a member of your family; who comes from the world outside your illness; who has known you long enough to be familiar but not long enough to have heard your stories already; who wants to know where your pain is but doesn't need you to explain everything; and who is there to take your vital signs but who behaves as though she might have come over to borrow a snow shovel or a couple of eggs.

Hospice used to have a countercultural air about it: dying at home seemed, for a while, as unconventional as giving birth at home. The first modern hospice was founded in 1967, in London, by Cicely Saunders, who was both a doctor and a social worker: she wanted to offer homelike care that aimed to provide comfort and serenity rather than to prolong life. Two years later, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's book "On Death and Dying" focussed public attention on the idea of the "good death." The first American hospice opened in 1974. In those days, hospices were small nonprofits staffed mostly by volunteers; but in the mid-nineteen-eighties Medicare began to cover hospice, and now roughly twice as many people in America die in hospice as die in hospital. Oddly, Medicare still requires that volunteers provide five per cent of a hospice's staff hours, even though some hospices now are large businesses that are very profitable indeed. (MJHS, where Heather works, is a not-for-profit.)

Hospice believes in caring not only for the patient but also for the family, and tries to address psychological and spiritual needs as well as physical ones, providing social workers and bereavement counsellors, music therapists and chaplains, who work together as a team and consult one another frequently. Nonetheless, patients tend to resist hospice, because it sounds like a death sentence, and it is: entering hospice means giving up on curative treatments, and you qualify only if your doctor believes that you have less than six months to live.

**C**ARMELA'S HOUSE STOOD on a quiet street in Bergen Beach, across Mill Basin from Floyd Bennett Field. Her front door opened onto a small hallway, to the left of which was a darkened

## THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT WOULDN'T



living room, furnished with carved, gilded chairs and paintings of Jesus. Her husband built the house in 1972, but he died some time ago, and now Carmela lived there by herself. That morning, she had pulled her hair back in a white satin headband, and she was wearing a baby-blue fleece bathrobe and bedroom slippers. She led Heather past a large cage with two small birds hopping about in it, into the kitchen.

"I get dizzy," she said. "I don't know if it's because of my pressure."

"But your pressure has been O.K.," Heather said. She put her bag down on the kitchen floor and sat at the table. "What time do you get dizzy? Before or after your medication?"

"Before."

"O.K., so it isn't that."

"I'm always diagnosing myself," Carmela told her. "I missed my calling. I wanted to be a nurse, but my mother said no."

"And those were the days when you did what your mother told you."

"Oh, yes. But I drew the line at the man she wanted for me."

"Good idea!"

"Well, maybe he would've been better than the one I picked. Mine was crazy."

Heather laughed. "But he built you this beautiful house."

"Yeah, and he was a plumber, he did all the pipes."

Carmela's parents came to Brooklyn from Sicily in the nineteen-twenties and opened a candy store on Henry Street in Carroll Gardens. At some point, they moved to Bergen Beach and opened a boarding house. They rented rooms to performers who worked in the amusement park in Coney Island. Back then, there was nothing around, Carmela said—only the big house surrounded by grass with the beach behind. All the roads were still dirt. Outside the house was a field of weeds, twelve feet high.

"My mother was very shrewd," Carmela told Heather. "Every bit of money she got, she bought bits of property. Her English was bad, but she had a good head on her shoulders. A property guy would come by the house and ask, 'How much do you want for a property?'" "Two thousand." "That's too much."

"You don't want it? Don't buy it." Next day, he'd come back, "How much?" "Twenty-five hundred. Tomorrow it'll be three thousand." My mother always picked up every penny, and I still do. They were in candy, it was a penny business, so I have great respect for the penny."

Heather dug in her bag and produced a thermometer and a blood-pressure gauge.

"I've lived through a lot," Carmela said. "I don't care how many books you read, experience is the best teacher."

"That's true."

Heather stuck the thermometer in Carmela's mouth and bound the gauge around her arm.

"Pretty good, 140 over 70."

"You gotta have a sense of humor, you really do," Carmela said. "I wish I could bottle mine, I'd be rich."

Carmela was dying of cancer. She also had a hernia from lifting heavy things during Hurricane Sandy. She knew she shouldn't have lifted them, but what was she supposed to do when there was three feet of water in the house and she by herself? She had a small white dog that kept her company, but she couldn't pick him up anymore. Heather took out her stethoscope and listened to Carmela's chest, then to her back, then to her belly.

Carmela thought that what she really should have been was an inventor, but time and time again other people had thought of the same ideas. Years ago, she had dreamed of a house made of glass, and then someone else built one. She dreamed of disposable diapers, but somebody else made them. She dreamed of patterned sheets.

"I wanted to sleep on a bed of roses!" she said.

Facing Carmela's actual bed was what she called her Jesus wall, on which hung seven pictures of Jesus, three statues, one Mary, two crucifixes, a Last Supper, and a Pietà.

"I've seen Jesus twice," Carmela told Heather. "My last surgery, when I was coming out of the anesthetic, we were face to face. He had his red robe on and he was holding both my hands. I don't remember what he said to me, but then a nurse said, Wake up, and I said, No! I was talking to Jesus! I saw him another time in my bedroom door-

way. These miraculous things happen to me. My faith is very strong."

"How do you pray about your cancer?" Heather asked. Heather is a Christian, but she's careful not to talk about her beliefs unless a patient asks her or it's obvious that the patient is a Christian, too.

"Oh, I talk a lot, I never stop," Carmela said. "He probably says, Stop babbling. But He's been in my heart all my life, and I've walked away from many bad things. I lost my two babies, my girls. I said to God, I don't feel like I lost anybody—I gave you two angels. I never feel alone. One time, I saw God in the clouds, I wish I had a camera—face, beard, everything."

Heather had been there for an hour and a quarter; it was time to go.

"Love you!" Carmela said.

"Love you, too."

MRS. SEJDARAS WAS sitting up in a hospital bed that was pushed up against her regular bed on one side and, on the other, an I.V. pole and packages of medical supplies, which were crowded into a small space between the bed and a closet. The detritus of death is not beautiful: the wipes, the pill organizers and the medications, the Kleenex boxes, the disposable bed pads, the I.V. poles and the heat-therapy patches, the catheters and colostomy bags, the oxygen tanks and commodes, the bottles of Ensure liquid meal replacement, the bandages, the sterile gloves, the discarded packaging and used tissues in the wastebasket. Mrs. Sejdaras's bed was covered with a quilt printed with roses. On the wall facing the bed hung a clock, ticking loudly.

Mrs. Sejdaras's hair was gray and short, and she wore little hoops in her ears. She had emigrated some years before from Korçë, a city in southeastern Albania. Now she lived in Bensonhurst, where there were other Albanians, along with Italians and Russians. She spoke some English, but today she felt too tired to summon it, so her daughter, who was in her twenties, came in to translate.

"She feels like there are two of her," the daughter said. "She says it's the medication."

"So sometimes you feel one way,

sometimes another?" Heather asked.

"No. She feels like she is two different people."

Mrs. Sejdaras hated being confused, so she avoided taking pain medication until her pain grew unbearable. When she wasn't confused, she was depressed.

Next door, in the small living room, several members of her family were sitting on a sectional sofa, eating lunch on their laps. Mrs. Sejdaras used to spend time in the living room, but these days she rarely left her bed. It was too tiring to walk. On the TV in the living room was a Balkan news program that displayed the time and weather in Pristina, Skopje, and Ulcinj, but Mrs. Sejdaras found television boring.

Heather sat on the bed and took Mrs. Sejdaras's temperature and felt her pulse. She moved slowly about the room, back and forth between the bed and her bag. She shone a small flashlight into Mrs. Sejdaras's mouth to check for thrush.

"I'm not sure I'm going to see you again," Mrs. Sejdaras said to Heather.

"Everybody gets sick," the daughter scolded. "You will soon feel better."

"The doctor told me one more month."

"But he doesn't know that for sure," Heather said.

"The doctor told her 'months,'" the daughter said.

"There you go," Heather said. "He said months, not a month. Don't dwell on the time, dwell on your family, what you have here."

"Why did the doctor say that?" the daughter said angrily. "I swear to God, I hate doctors. In our country, a doctor would not say that."

One of the reasons Mrs. Sejdaras was so tired during the day was that she wasn't sleeping at night. She suffered from nightmares, and then she woke in the early hours of the morning and stayed awake for hours, terrified of what lay ahead of her. Each night, she feared that she might die tomorrow. She took Xanax to relieve her anxiety, but it didn't help much. Her family discouraged her from talking about any of this, because they believed it would make her feel worse. Heather had tried to persuade

them that talking might be helpful, but without success.

"Would you like a visit from the chaplain?" Heather asked.

Mrs. Sejdaras smiled. "I have no patience for that."

Heather sat down next to Mrs. Sejdaras on the bed and held her hand. They talked about the morphine she was using for pain. If the drug made her groggy and disoriented, then maybe Heather should reduce the dose that Mrs. Sejdaras got when she pressed the pain button. Maybe taking Ritalin would give her more energy during the day to spend time with her family. Heather called the hospice doctor and requested a prescription.

A cat padded in from the living room, jumped onto the bed, and paced along the top of the headboard. Heather got up to go. Mrs. Sejdaras wrapped her arms around Heather's neck, and Heather kissed her goodbye.

WHENEVER HEATHER ENTERED a patient's home for the first time, she knew that she was walking into a long, long, complicated story that she understood nothing about, a story that was just then reaching its final crisis. She was extra alert on those first visits, extra careful, trying to figure out what was going on—the conflicts and rivalries between members of the family, tension over who wasn't doing enough, who was doing too much, unresolved bitterness, and nearly always grief and anxiety and fretting about how to take care of the patient and what to do.

Sometimes relatives would tell her, Don't ever say "cancer," don't ever say "hospice," and she would respect that. Some people believed that if you told a patient he was dying then he would become depressed and die sooner. She thought it was usually better for families to be open about the dying, but if that was not their way it was not for her to force her way upon them. Once, she had a patient from Eastern Europe who was in his late fifties or early sixties, and his family had told her not to mention cancer, because the man didn't know his diagnosis. The hospice

doctor came for a visit, and she had told him of the request, but he must have forgotten, because he mentioned cancer very casually, and Heather saw the man's countenance change completely—he looked devastated and dazed, like a lost soul, she thought. No one had prepared him for his death sentence; he never recovered from the shock and died soon after.

Sometimes the adult children of a patient felt angry or guilty that they couldn't prevent their parent from dying, and so they denied that the whole thing was happening. Or else they harangued Heather to get every last bit of help that hospice entitled them to, and then more than that—extra hours, extra supplies, more I.V. fluid—maybe as a way of expiating guilt or proving love, or maybe just because they were that kind of aggressive person.

Sometimes a patient's child would attack Heather for the opposite reason—for giving too much medication, or for leaving dangerous drugs in the house. Some people—including some doctors and nurses—feared that opioids like morphine caused trouble breathing and hastened death. Hospice and palliative-care doctors had been accused of euthanasia. And it was true that opioids taken on the street killed people all the time. Many studies had found that careful use of morphine for pain only very rarely slowed breathing, in part because pain itself was a powerful respiratory stimulus; morphine was more likely to prolong life than to shorten it, because it reduced the patient's distress. But suspicions persisted.

Sometimes there was no calming a relative down. The daughter of one of Heather's patients had decided that Albanians were untrustworthy. When an Albanian aide came through the door, the daughter jumped up from her chair and shouted, No Albanians! No Albanians!, and Heather stood there wondering whether, with the strain of everything, the daughter had simply lost her mind.

Sometimes the adult child—more often a daughter—was so entangled in her parent's misery that it was as though Heather had two patients rather than one. If the mother was anxious or angry about something, the daughter would

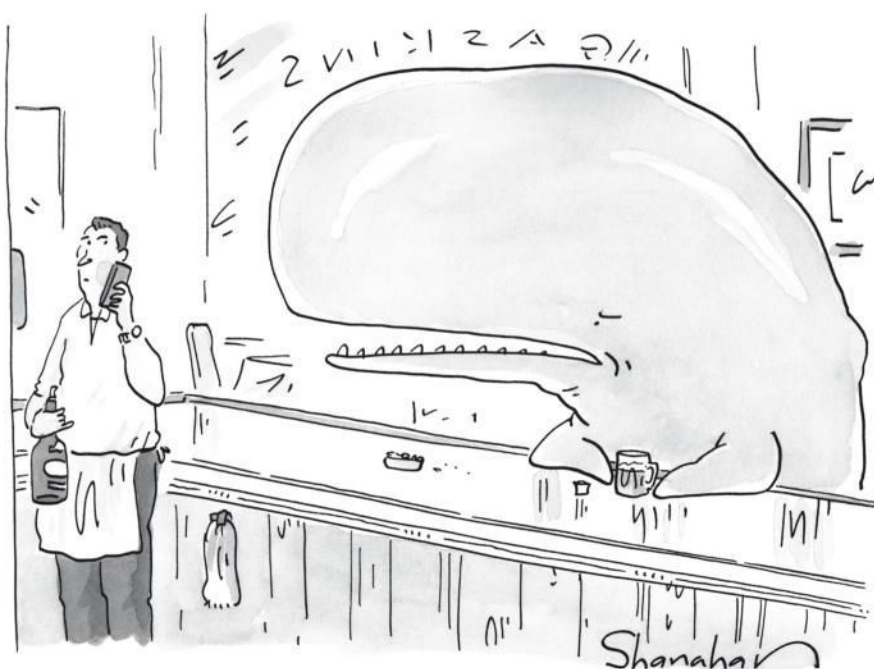


become even more so, and the situation would escalate. The daughter might have left behind the other parts of her life and become isolated in her total focus on her dying parent. It was people such as these whom Heather would mention to the social worker on her team as at risk for a particularly protracted and difficult bereavement.

Sometimes a patient wanted to talk to her about his life because it was easier to talk with a stranger, or because she wasn't a therapist, or just because she was there. Other patients didn't want to talk about the past. The Holocaust survivors she had nursed usually didn't want to talk about it.

When a patient was tormented and having a difficult time dying, or was hanging on despite no longer eating or drinking, Heather would ask, Is there someone you need to see? If a patient was preoccupied with someone he was resolved never to forgive, Heather might say that this unforgiveness was like bondage, and that if he forgave the person who had injured him that person would no longer be his jailer. Heather believed that suffering was part of life, and sometimes when a patient was very disturbed she thought that maybe he needed to understand whatever harrowing memory he was living through again. At other times, she felt that her job was to reduce pain of all sorts, so she increased the patient's medication until the visions went away. Usually, though, she wasn't there when a patient cried out, because the worst visions came at night: memories of terrible things that had been done to the patient, or terrible things that he himself had done.

Sometimes when a patient's family didn't visit, Heather would make inquiries and discover that the patient was a cruel person whose family was avoiding him for good reason. Some such patients wished that they had done things differently, but others had no desire to make things right. One woman said to Heather, I know I'm a wicked person, I'm a mean person, but she made no attempt to make restitution. She had no friends, and her children seldom visited, even though they lived across the street. Some patients died alone and angry—angry with people who had wronged them, angry with God.



*"If it's a series of patterned clicks, I'm not here."*

Heather believed that God did not create Hell for people, or people for Hell; she believed that Hell was always chosen. People chose to have their reward on earth: they chose money or power over God. "There's a parable in the Bible about a rich man who while he was alive had all good things," she says. "The finest of wines or whatever. And there was a beggar who would sit at the table of the rich man and he would get the crumbs. They both died, and the poor man, Lazarus—who had a name by the way, Lazarus; the rich man was just the rich man—Lazarus was taken to Heaven, to the bosom of Abraham, and the rich man ended up in Hell. From Hell, the rich man looks up and he sees Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham, and he says, Abraham, can you send Lazarus so he can put something wet, just to assuage the thirst that I'm feeling. And Abraham says no. There's a great chasm that cannot be passed once that death happens; there's no more travelling back and forth."

HEATHER GREW UP in Jamaica, the eighth of nine children. Her mother and father met in a soda-and-beer factory where they both worked. Her father didn't live with her mother,

but he visited most days and supported the children financially. "I think my mother had a broken heart," Heather says. "I think she loved my dad very much. They were going to be married, but it didn't happen." Later, Heather's mother worked as a seamstress, and later still she moved to Brooklyn to work as a nanny, and her employers sponsored her for a green card. After she was settled, her children moved to Brooklyn one by one.

When Heather was eleven years old, her eldest brother died in a car accident. When she was twenty, another of her brothers died, by drowning. A nephew, her eldest sister's son, drowned when he was about fourteen. Another nephew, her brother's son, died in a car accident. Some years ago, her niece drowned in a lake, at the age of eleven. Heather's family never talked about how many deaths there had been among them, however, and it did not occur to Heather until quite recently that these deaths might have something to do with her choice of work.

One memory from her youth has stayed very vivid in her mind. She was in high school in Jamaica, walking to

a stadium to practice with her netball team, when she saw a mother carrying a baby over her shoulder, and as Heather got closer she saw from its eyes that the baby was dead. The mother was crying as she walked, but, from the way she was carrying the baby, it seemed to Heather that she didn't know it had died; she couldn't see its face. Heather went up to her and said, Miss, what happened to your baby, and she steered the mother to the police station and stayed with her until a policeman came. She didn't feel afraid of or repelled by the dead baby but sensed that the mother needed someone to walk with her until she reached a place where someone else would take over and know what to do.

Heather came to Brooklyn after high school, when she was nineteen, more than thirty years ago. She had planned to go to college to study English literature and become a teacher—she loved poetry, she loved T. S. Eliot, she loved C. S. Lewis—but when she prayed about this she got a sense that God was telling her to go into nursing instead. She was reading the Bible, 1 Thessalonians, and came across the verse “But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.” She said to God, Nursing? Lord, I never really thought of nursing. But she discovered that it suited her.

Normally, a graduating nurse went into medical-surgical work—that was where the prestige, the difficulty, and the excitement were—but she went instead into home care. She wanted to care for her patients in a personal way, rather than racing from one task to another, one limb to the next—inserting an I.V. here, drawing blood there, scarcely noticing whose vein she was puncturing or whose arm she was holding.

After a few years working as a visiting nurse, she felt a call to be a missionary abroad. She moved to California and enrolled in Fuller Theological Seminary, in Pasadena. There she met and married her husband, a white man from Kansas, and together they tried to become part of a mission. But they didn't find a placement, and all the while they were trying to make it work Heather kept dreaming that she was at her wedding but something was missing, or that she was getting married but had no shoes, and she began to get the sense that God didn't want her to go on a mission abroad after all. She was disappointed, but she thought, God's no is as good as his yes; if missionary work was not for her, then surely there would be something else. She and her husband moved to Brooklyn and started working as pastors at a small church in East Flatbush. Her

husband became the principal of a school attached to the church; Heather began teaching Latin there on Friday mornings.

Heather felt that her work was a kind of therapy, but she had never wanted to be a talk therapist: she wanted to care for the whole person. She knew some people believed that bodies didn't matter, that only the soul counted, but she believed that God had created bodies for a reason and that they mattered a lot. She wanted to dress a wound and see it heal—even though much of the time in hospice there was no healing. She wanted to make a patient more comfortable for a few hours, or at least not hurt him when she put in a needle, and sometimes a patient would thank her for being so gentle and tell her that she had a good touch. She understood now that touching itself was important, whether it healed or not; she had not realized this before she became a nurse.

“I didn't grow up in a family that was all touchy-feely,” she says. “In the Caribbean, there tends to be that—I'm not stereotyping, but when you talk to other people from the Caribbean, especially after you reach a certain age, the natural thing is not to have your mom or your dad just hug you. And yet we know their love for us. The love is not expressed in touch; it's expressed in, I'm cooking your dinner, I'm washing your clothes, I'm doing all of these things for you.

“One time when my mother was dying, I got in the bed with her. It was a hospital bed. I got in the bed, just to get a sense of hugging. I was seeking for a sense of connection. Physical connection with my mother. But you know, when I went in bed with my mom, I didn't feel that returning sense of, you know—

“I'm sure when we were younger children you would run and get hugs. But I think maybe as we got older there's self-consciousness. But I can't say that I remember. I can't honestly say that I remember cozy, in-your-lap hugging. Do you know how my mom expressed her love? If she'd go to a supermarket, she would bring back little treats for us. I never doubted her love. But that sense of being enveloped in



*“First of all, if you're not sitting down, you should sit down.”*

a warm embrace, I don't—you know, I don't have a great memory. I should ask my sister."

MARY LIVED IN a small two-story white house near Kings Highway in Marine Park with her daughter, Barbara, Barbara's husband, and two dogs. Previously, Mary had slept upstairs, but then she developed arthritis and heart problems and dementia and she couldn't make it up the stairs anymore, so Barbara got her a hospital bed and installed it in the living room. The living-room walls were pale blue; against one wall, there was a sofa covered in a torn quilt, where the dogs lay. Against another wall, a radiator cover was crowded with statues of saints and vases of artificial flowers, and there was a display cabinet set out with china plates and cups, decorative glass, and china animals.

Mary rarely spoke now, but she could cry out in distress. At night, she sometimes threw herself against the railings of her bed, and the morning after she would be black and blue.

"Hello, Mary!" Heather said from the side of the bed. "How are you feeling?" She touched Mary's hand in greeting.

"How's her intake?" Heather asked Barbara. "Did she eat today?"

"Three spoons."

"That's all?"

"And then it spilled out again."

"How about yesterday?"

"Yesterday she was good in the morning and afternoon, but in the evening she was sleeping so soundly."

"Without medication?"

"Without anything. She just wouldn't wake up. I put the oxygen, I thought maybe that would help, but she wasn't even trying to pull the tube out of her nose, you know?"

"Ah," said Heather sadly. "She wasn't fighting anymore."

Barbara used to work on Wall Street, in a corporation's library. Now that her mother was sick, though, she rarely left the house. Heather had tried several times to persuade her to accept help for at least a few hours a week, which came free with hospice, but Barbara refused. She felt that her place was with her mother. She didn't want some stranger taking care of her.

"My mother was good to me," Barbara said. "I was diabetic from when I was four years old, and she took care of me. We were like Tonto and the Lone Ranger."

Mary grew up in the Village during the Depression, one of nine children of immigrants from southern Italy. Her father was an alcoholic who didn't work; her mother worked as a janitor and washed diapers for extra money, but then in her forties she had a stroke. When Mary was sixteen, she started working in a factory that made shoulder pads, and during the war she worked in an airplane-parts plant. Barbara's father worked in the shipyards in Red Hook.

"Oh, my word, she has a lot of stool," Heather said, examining Mary. "I have to take it out."

"Oh, boy, she's gonna hurt."

"Mary! I have to take out some stool, all right? I'm sorry. I'm so sorry."

Heather pulled on a pair of rubber gloves. Stool removal was a fairly regular part of her work, and she didn't mind it. It brought the patient such relief that it was actually quite gratifying to do. And it was not the most distasteful of her tasks. A fungating wound could smell far worse than stool. Sometimes the stink of a wound was so foul that she had to excuse herself and walk away so the patient or the family wouldn't see her gagging.

Mary rattled the bars on her bed, but she didn't seem upset.

"She's not yelling!" Barbara observed cheerfully.

"She's just so weak right now."

Afterward, Heather came back from washing her hands.

"Are you O.K.?" she asked Mary. "A little bit sore?"

Mary gave the A-O.K. signal with her hand, and rattled her bars again.

"Oh, good."

still wanted to fight, but they knew they couldn't take another round of chemo, or radiation, or whatever the treatment was. They were starting out into unfamiliar and hostile territory, in which things that had once been ordinary became fraught. Some patients were afraid to walk, lest they fall; others were afraid to eat, because they worried that their body was breaking down and would not be able to cope with the food. Some fought sleep because they were afraid they might never wake up again, and they were right—they might not. Family members reported to Heather that a patient would fall asleep and then five minutes later jerk violently awake, in terror.

Of course, Heather didn't know how long a patient had to live; she could only guess. Toward the end, there were signs. A person became lethargic and began to lose interest in food. Families often found it extremely distressing when a patient stopped wanting to eat. Sometimes a patient would say, Oh, I feel like eating lobster! and the family, thrilled by this expression of desire, would rush out to get lobster, but then the patient would take only one bite, or wouldn't want it at all, he would smell it and feel nauseous and push it away. If a patient became unable to swallow, he could decide to have a stomach tube put in, but most patients didn't want that. They didn't need food anymore.

When a patient could no longer keep food down, Heather might put him on an I.V. to give him fluids, but after a while even that did more harm than good. If the patient wasn't taking in any more protein, eventually the fluid stopped being absorbed and began to leach out under the skin. But even though this caused swelling, sometimes she would continue it for a short time, because to cease even the fluids might seem too dreadful a step if the patient or his family wasn't ready to finally let go.

Heather thought that religious people for the most part were more accepting of death than others. Then again, Christians sometimes felt, guiltily, that they ought to endure their suffering without complaint, or even embrace it. One Catholic woman said to Heather, After all that Christ went

PATIENTS OFTEN ASKED Heather how much time they had left. She tended not to answer this question right away. She would ask them for their own sense of this, and she would deduce how direct an answer they were ready for. By the time patients entered hospice, they knew the battle was pretty much up, but often they were conflicted about it. They weren't ready to die, they

through, the persecution and the Crucifixion, why can't I cope with this cancer? Why can't I love my suffering if it was given to me by God? Heather told the woman it was O.K. not to love her suffering, but she didn't convince her.

As the end approached, patients sometimes fell into an agitated delirium in which they saw people from their past appear in front of them as they lay in bed, often people who had died years before. This happened more often than Heather had expected—to about a third of her patients. The spectres appeared sometimes sitting in a chair by the bed, sometimes standing near the door. Often, a dying patient saw his mother or his father in the room, waiting. Sometimes these spectres were welcome: it seemed to the patient as though someone he loved who had gone on before had come back to accompany him to a life after. But other times the spectres were terrifying. Sometimes a patient believed that someone was running after him, out to get him; sometimes he was haunted by someone he had hurt long ago.

When death drew closer, a patient usually began to withdraw, not wanting to see people, and talking less if someone came. He began to sleep more. There was a kind of quieting, a kind of drawing in, as if he needed time to prepare. He might open his eyes for a minute and smile, but then he closed them and returned to wherever he had been. Hearing was the last sense to go. The patient might seem to be asleep or far away, but still he might hear what his family said around him. People tended to whisper around a dying person, so Heather might say to them, Don't whisper! Talk, play music, he can still hear you.

When death is imminent, the breathing changes, and discoloration begins. The skin under the nails starts to get cyanotic, to turn blue. The legs grow dusky and cool. When Heather sees these signs, she calls family members who aren't there and tells them, If you want to be here, this is the time. But she has seen, many times, that the patient seems to choose whom he wants there at the moment of death. Sometimes he waits for someone to arrive; but just as often he waits for someone

to leave. Heather would see a husband or a wife or a child sit by the bedside day after day, hour after hour, and then he or she would say to the patient, I'm just running out to the market for ten minutes to get lunch, or I'm just going to take a shower, and that would be the time the patient would go. This happened over and over again. She wasn't sure why. Maybe the dying person wanted to spare his spouse or his child the grief, or maybe it was harder to let go with that particular person around. Maybe dying was just easier to do alone.

If Heather was there when the end was very near, she would ask if the family wanted to gather together in the room. Then she would hang back, leaving the family to say goodbye. If the family were Christian, and if they had talked about that before, she might ask if they wanted to pray together. If the family were not Christian, she didn't want to impose her beliefs, so she prayed silently in her head: God, here is this person, have mercy on him.

The patient's breathing changes. He might stop breathing altogether for half a minute or so, and then start again. Then he stops again, but for longer. Then starts again, but shallower. This means that death is very close. For a person who hasn't seen dying before, this strange, unpredictable breathing can be bewildering, a horror: because of the irregular intervals between the breaths, there is no knowing until a while afterward which breath is the last. Just before it happens, there is a staring. The eyes don't focus anymore. The person is not there behind the eyes. Even so, Heather may need to step forward, after waiting some time, because the family may not know that the patient is dead.

People react differently to a death. Some cry, some are calm. Some are frightened to be left alone with a body. Some fear that the body may come back to life. Wives sometimes throw themselves on the body, weeping and grasping it, especially when the couple have been married forty, fifty, sixty years. "The Bible says, And two shall become one," Heather says. "It's a wrenching that happens, a tearing, like a garment that's being pulled apart." But fairly often a former spouse is taking care of

the patient, because there is no one else to do it, and that person may not feel too much.

When the time seems right, Heather begins the postmortem rituals. She shines a flashlight into the patient's eyes to see that the pupils no longer constrict, and, if they do not, she closes the eyelids. She checks the pulse at the wrist and neck. She listens to the chest, and looks at the hands to see if they have changed color. She asks the family if there are people they need to call—other relatives, a priest, the funeral home—and if they aren't ready to do it she offers to do it for them. She phones the hospice doctor to confirm the time of death, and the doctor writes up the death certificate. It is illegal to transfer medications from one patient to another, so she goes to the patient's fridge and retrieves any leftover drugs and destroys them, with bleach, or coffee, or dirt.

AS HEATHER WAS leaving Mary and Barbara's house, she received a message that George, another patient of hers, who lived nearby, had died. She drove over right away. As she parked, she saw a priest knocking at the front door. George had died ten minutes earlier, and his wife, Anna, had immediately called the church and hospice. Two clergymen from the church had also come by, to keep Anna company and pray with her.

George was lying on a hospital bed in the living room. His mouth was open; he had no teeth. In a formal photograph of George and Anna that hung over the bed—he wearing a dark suit, she a white one—George was a big, robust man, but in his illness he had become shrunken and thin; the pale skin of his face hung slackly over his cheekbones.

The priest stood over George's body and prayed aloud. "Go forth, Christian soul, from this world," he said. "In the name of God the Almighty, the Father who created you; in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for you; in the name of the Holy Spirit who was poured out upon you, go forth, faithful Christian. May you live in peace this day. May your home be with God and Zion, with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, with

Joseph, all the angels, and all the saints. I commend you, George, to Almighty God, and entrust you to your Creator. May you return to Him, who formed you from the dust of the earth. May Holy Mary, the angels, St. Columba, and all the saints come to meet you as you go forth from this life. May Christ who was crucified for you bring you freedom and peace. May He forgive all your sins, and set you among those He has chosen. May you, George, see your Redeemer face to face, and enjoy the vision of the one God forever. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

“Amen,” echoed Anna and Heather and the two clergymen and George’s home health aide.

“Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen,” the priest said. “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

For a minute, it was quiet in the room. Anna stood holding on to the bed rails and cried silently. Heather went to her and stroked her back. Anna stopped crying and turned to Heather.

“I can’t believe I wasn’t in the bathroom when it happened,” she said.

Heather laughed. This had been one of Anna’s persistent worries in the days leading up to George’s death—that she’d be doing something dumb like going to the bathroom when he died, and she’d miss the moment.

“How are you doing?” Heather said to her. “Why don’t you sit down. Do you want something to drink?”

Anna sat down next to the priest on the sofa, and he put his arm around her. The priest had been in the parish only sixteen days, so Anna didn’t really know him, but he was her priest and he comforted her.

“A lot of people are going to miss George,” the priest said. “I know that. I’ve been hearing about the both of you since I got here—how faithful you were to the church, and to God.”

Anna and George’s daughter arrived, and Heather hugged her. The daughter went over to her father’s body and stood looking at it for a moment; then she went to sit next to her mother on the sofa. The priest stood up to leave.

“Anna, God bless you,” he said. “I have to go, but anything you need, let me know.”



*“Like that?”*

• •

Heather turned to the aide, who had been crying.

“Are you O.K.?” she asked.

“Yes, I’m O.K.”

“Is this the first time you’re seeing someone like this?”

“Oh, no.”

Heather asked the aide in a low voice whether she needed to wash George’s body, because sometimes people soiled themselves when they died, but the aide told her that George was clean. Heather went over to the bed and stood looking at George’s face for a moment. She shone her flashlight into his eyes, then gently closed his eyelids.

Anna went over to the dining-room table, and the two clergymen sat down with her.

“I thought he was going to wait till Monday, because that was our anniversary,” she told them. “But then he lived past Monday. And then I thought he was waiting for my birthday. All this while I was thinking, Another two hours, another four hours, he’s not going to go through the night. The waiting, the anticipation, you know? And then the hospice music people came and played the guitar, and he went off with them playing ‘On Eagle’s Wings.’”

“His favorite tune?” one of the men asked.

“Yes! And I didn’t know that hos-

pice at the end would give me twenty-four-hour service.”

“That’s wonderful.”

“Unbelievable! I had no idea. When Heather said I was going to have around-the-clock, it was, like, God, here’s my miracle that I was asking for. People don’t always realize when they have miracles.”

“It’s always in the little things,” the man said.

“You know?” Anna said. “And Maureen! Forget about Maureen. Every time I ran short, Maureen, my niece, she’s a nurse, she’d come running.”

“Why is it that ninety per cent of the nurses are named Maureen?” the man asked.

“I don’t know,” Anna said.

“Or Heather. The other half are Heather.”

Heather went into the kitchen to destroy George’s medication. The daughter and the aide watched her as she hunted for every last package in the fridge and the cupboards.

“You’re not going to make crystal meth, are you?” the daughter asked.

Heather giggled. “No, I’m not.”

“I’m a teacher,” the daughter said. “I know about these things.”

Next to the table in the dining room there was a display cabinet filled with china and religious figurines. A

sign on the wall read “MY DOG ISN’T SPOILED, I’M JUST WELL TRAINED.” There was a framed message from Pope Benedict XVI, blessing Anna and George on the occasion of their fiftieth wedding anniversary, in 2007.

“These people next door had two pianos in their house, and they wanted to give away a piano for nothing,” Anna was saying to the clergymen. “So I went down the list, calling all the priests I know, figuring maybe they needed it in church, this piano. People came, but they said, How am I going to get the piano to where I gotta get it?”

“Yeah, right, that’s it,” one of the men said.

“Then, two weeks ago, Father Apollinaris from Ghana comes, and he sits down and he’s having a plate of spaghetti over here with us and he starts showing pictures—he opened up a school, and every year he comes and shows me these pictures of the kindergarten children.” Over the years, Anna and George had hosted more than four hundred priests from all over the world—from Ghana, Nigeria, India, Lebanon. “So I said, It’s too bad you’re over there, because there’s people next door who’ve got a piano. He said, I could use a piano. I said, How’re you going to bring a piano all the way there?”

“Yeah, what’s he going to do, crate it?”

“He said, I want the piano, I need a piano, if it’s for free. I’m going to

call two men in my parish, St. Matthew’s, over there on Eastern Parkway. I said, Wait a minute, when you pick up the piano, where you gonna put it until you go? People are gonna have a fit, you bring a piano in the house. Oh, he said, that escaped my mind. I said, Go call up the freight people in the Bronx, so that’s just what he did. The people next door were so happy because they thought they were never going to get rid of that piano. The piano belonged to his wife who passed away three years ago. Did you read the paper three years ago? The lady who was going to the post office, and on her way to the post office, or coming out of the post office, some driver lost control—”

“Oh, yeah!”

“—and threw her into McDonald’s and killed her. It was this lady next door.”

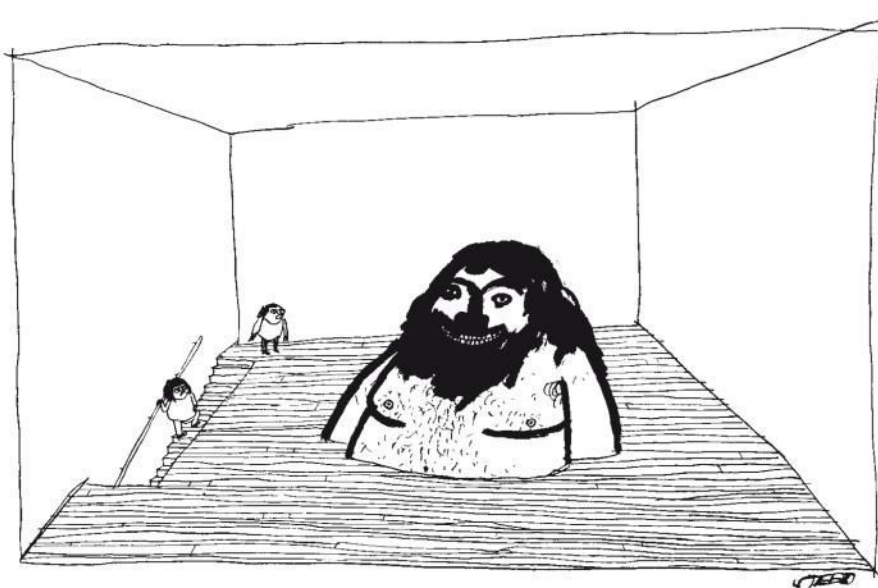
“That was her! O.K.”

“And a year later it winds up that he marries his second cousin, and that lady came with a piano, and this piano belonged to his first wife. So there were too many pianos in the house, and she didn’t want to keep the wife’s piano, she wanted her own piano. So Monday, as bad as it was, I went from crying to laughing when I looked outside and saw all of them trying to get the piano into the van, and there were so many of them I didn’t know how they were going to fit. And the piano went to Africa. And that made me happy,

that at least I did something good for somebody today. As bad as it was over here, something good was happening someplace. You know?”

MOSTLY, HEATHER DIDN’T take the deaths of her patients too hard. She couldn’t—she had to learn to control her emotions. But sometimes a death really got to her. There was one woman in her forties who lived with her teen-age daughter and was dying of melanoma. The woman had lived a rough life—she had been a junkie and a prostitute—but she had found A.A. and found religion and had been trying to lift herself up. She was an unbelievably needy person. When Heather went to see her, the woman wanted to tell her about everything she had gone through in her life, all the struggles and the abuse, and she was always calling Heather on the phone in between visits. Heather found herself wanting to protect and help the woman: she had lived such a miserable life, and she had fought so hard to rise above it, and now she was going to die young and leave her daughter behind. The woman liked to read aloud to Heather from the inspirational books she was given at A.A., and sometimes the two of them would hold hands and pray together.

Then one day Heather got a call asking her to go over to the woman’s house right away, and she arrived and found that the woman had gone. She wasn’t dead yet—she died a couple of weeks later—but mentally she was gone: she could no longer talk coherently or understand who Heather was or what she was saying. It was so sudden, so abrupt, and it was immediately clear that Heather would not be able to ease the woman into death as she had wanted and planned to do, and she felt such an acute sense of loss that she realized how much this woman had got under her skin. The teen-age daughter couldn’t take care of her, so the woman was placed in the hospice’s inpatient facility—many hospice organizations offer both inpatient and home care—and Heather wasn’t her nurse anymore. Heather asked the facility to keep her updated on what was going on. And then one Tuesday morning, during her weekly



*“This explains the penis we saw downstairs.”*

meeting at work, she suddenly noticed that the woman's name had disappeared from her computer system. Heather realized that she had died, and burst into tears.

Sometimes, particularly when she was assigned to dying children or babies, she asked herself what she was doing in this profession. She no longer had child patients—there were now nurses in her hospice who specialized in children. But she remembered the ones she'd had. She remembered a boy, about seventeen years old, who had a tumor that had started in his mouth and protruded up into his eye, so that the eye had come out of its socket, and then the tumor had spread into his brain. The boy was self-conscious about how ghastly he looked, so he had withdrawn from his friends. His mother, too, was isolated—she had expected her friends to rally around her more than they did. That family belonged to a church like Heather's, and so she and the boy would talk about God. The boy himself wasn't angry about dying so young, but Heather found that case very difficult. The boy had a younger brother, and Heather had two young boys herself, and it was just too close.

Heather did not fear her own death. She believed that there was a life after that was better than this one, and she trusted that she would wake up with God, and with those from her family who had died before her. Sometimes she even got excited thinking about what was in store in that future. Meanwhile, she tried to do her best in life, so that when she came before God he would say to her, as she had read in the Bible, Well done, good and faithful servant.

**"REMEMBER ME?"** HEATHER said as she walked up to Ruth, who was sitting in an armchair in her living room. "I'm Heather, I'm the nurse!"

"Feel good," Ruth said, in a high, weak voice, and smiled up at her.

Ruth lived in a brick apartment building on Ocean Avenue, in Sheepshead Bay. She was a tiny person, well coiffed. Her white hair was pulled back into a tight bun; she wore a striped cotton dress with a cardigan over her shoulders. Her nails were freshly painted

cherry red. On the shelves behind her there were framed family photographs of children and grandchildren, graduations and weddings, decorative plates and glass goblets.

Ruth was a hundred and five, almost a hundred and six. Her husband had died the previous year, at ninety-four, and this had been a shock to everyone because she was supposed to go first. When he died, his and Ruth's daughter, Pearl, kept protesting, in her



grief, "But he's so young." Nobody was sure whether Ruth understood that her husband was dead. Pearl had told her, and she had cried, but then she seemed to forget. She still blew kisses to the spot where he used to sit on the sofa.

For months now, Ruth had been inert, almost unwakeable. Heather had come by each week, and Ruth had just sat there. She didn't speak, she barely ate, she slept all the time. But then quite suddenly, a few days earlier, she had come back to life. It was like a miracle—Heather could hardly believe it.

"I feel good, how about you?" Heather said. "It's good to see you!"

"I'm ready," Ruth told her.

"She's been like this since Monday?" Heather asked Ruth's home health aide, Indira, in astonishment.

"Yes! She says she wants to get married." Indira had been with Ruth for ten years, ever since Pearl started feeling nervous about her parents living alone.

"You're kidding. Wow!"

Ruth grew up on the Lower East Side, the youngest of eight children. She grew up in an Orthodox family, but instead of getting married she worked as a public-school teacher in Bedford Stuyvesant and travelled by herself to South America and the Middle East. Eventually, in her late thirties, she married a younger man and had Pearl. She had always felt

blessed in life, and loved by everyone. Pearl did not believe that this had much to do with her longevity, however; she thought her mother just had good genes.

"Who's going to take the gasoline?" Ruth asked.

"The gasoline? Not me!" Heather said.

"Try," Ruth urged.

"O.K., I'll try."

"Where is it?" Ruth asked.

"I don't know, Ruth," Heather said.

"Where's what?"

"I want to hear."

"What do you want to hear?"

"Summertime."

Ruth started to sing. "Summertime, and the living is good," she sang, in a quavery voice. "So hush, little baby, don't you cry."

"Very nice," Heather exclaimed.

"One of these mornings, you're going to fly free singing," Ruth sang. "Then you'll spread your wings, spread your wings! And you'll take to the sky."

"Do you want to try this one?" Indira asked when Ruth finished the song, picking up a book of lyrics and opening it on Ruth's lap. "It's your favorite."

"Old man river," Ruth sang. "Body's aching and shaking with pain. I get weary . . ." she trailed off.

"I'm tired of living," Indira prompted.

"I'm tired of living," Ruth sang.

The next line was "And scared of dying," but Indira skipped that one.

"But he just keeps rolling along," Indira sang.

"Feel really good," Ruth said, beaming at Heather and blowing her a kiss.

"That was great!" Heather said.

"Beautiful," Ruth said.

"Yes, it was beautiful."

"I want . . ." Ruth began, then murmured something, and got teary suddenly and began to whimper.

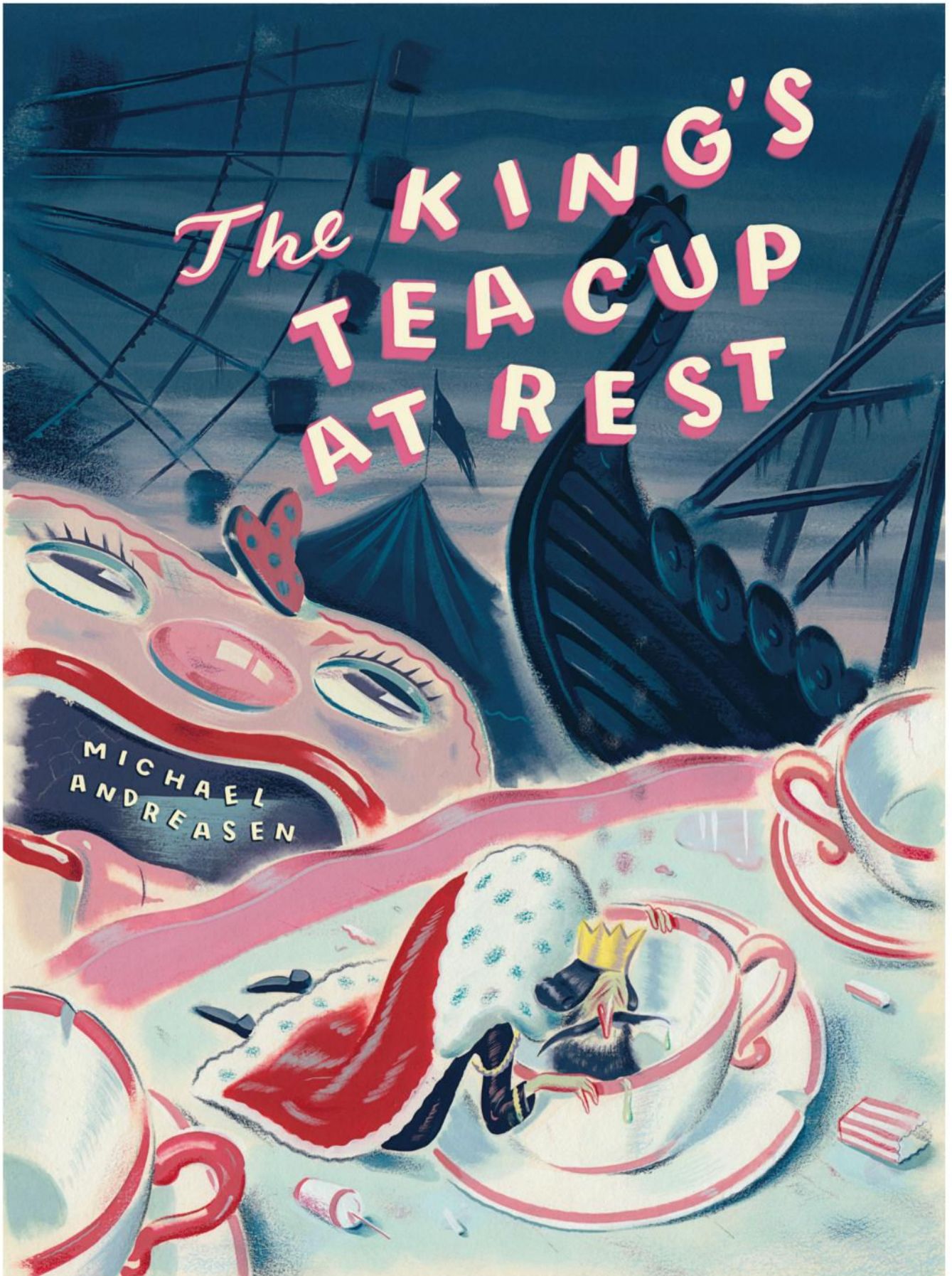
"It's O.K., we're here," Heather said. "We're right here with you."

"You're gonna be very happy," Ruth said to Heather. "Happiness is going to be very beautiful, too."

"Grandma, here." Indira gave Ruth a Kit Kat, and Ruth nibbled at it. It was her favorite food.

"Beautiful!" Ruth said to Heather. "You're happy?"

"I'm happy," Heather told her. "Yes, I am." ♦



SIGNED. NOTARIZED. EVERYTHING in order. The royal steward returns the amusement park's deed to his crocodile-leather attaché case and addresses the king.

"Your Majesty," he says, in his most officious tone, extending a withered hand in the direction of the failing iron gates, "may I present, for your consideration, Liebling's Sunday Morning Carnival and Midway."

His Royal Highness, the King of Retired Amusements, surveys the carnival grimly. Beside him, his modest cortège: the steward, tall and lengthily wrapped in a livery of black velvet, a powdered wig on his head and lace pursed at his collar and wrists, his spectacles at high perch; the scout, not yet sixteen, pale and freckled in his olive sash and khaki shorts; and the dancing bear, in a comically small fez and a Jacobean ruff, precariously balanced on a confetti-speckled ball, an Atlas in reverse, his fabulously razored claws never deigning to touch the ground.

"Not much," the king says. It is autumn, and the air is beginning to turn.

"Your Majesty wishes to forgo the inspection?"

"Are you sure you've brought us to the right place?" the king asks the scout. The boy looks at the tracks leading to the turnstiles, fingers the hand-carved eagle slider holding his neckerchief in place. The braided lanyards on his belt twiddle in the wind. He is quiet.

The dancing bear yawns.

It is the usual pageant. The king scoffs. The steward humors. The king doubts. The scout is silent. The bear yawns. The steward prods. The king consents.

"Shall we, sire?"

"If we must," the king says. "Find refreshment quickly. We are hungry."

The padlock and the chains undone. The gates wide. The whole of the park laid bare. The King of Retired Amusements shuffles across the threshold into his dominion. They are strange places, these abandoned fairgrounds and shipwrecked boardwalks and dry, cavernous water parks. Something more than people has deserted them, made the world turn its gaze elsewhere and not look back. Often they are barren craters, worn and ruined beyond remembering. But Liebling's Sunday Morning Carnival

and Midway is another Pompeii, as preserved and perfect as a fly in amber. The Ferris wheel, still fully erect, regards the party like a cold and distant sun, its carriages creaking in a shovel of wind. Flags still flag on their poles, and bunting still hangs from the ticket booths. Only the main courtyard shows signs of dereliction. The statue at its center, a bronze, top-hatted Gustav Liebling himself, has been toppled, his magnanimity run aground, his outstretched arms now bidding welcome only to a patch of broken flagstones and soft dirt, which, after a few more good rains, will surely swallow him whole.

The king turns to the bear, now lying horizontal on his ball, teetering, asleep. He plucks the fez from the animal's head and flogs him with it until, with a prolonged stretch that seems to solidify the bear's balance rather than upset it, he rises.

"Hot dogs," the king says.

The bear lifts his nose to the high wind and inhales. In the courtyard, fallen leaves rustle nearer. Slowly, he adjusts his heading and rolls the ball in the direction of the midway, and the men follow.

THE HOT-DOG STAND. A few bloated green wieners still floating in a steel pond of brine. Fungal buns spill out of the trolley's lower compartment. Pigeons have been at them. A few are still lying in dizzy, half-dead piles nearby. The smell of the cart has made the bear morose.

"Forgive me, sire," the steward says, "but these look unfit for Your Majesty's consumption."

"We will eat them," the king declares. "Relish?"

"Also unwise," the steward says.

"Just a dab, then."

"Please, sire," the steward entreats, "recall the fish tacos at the Morristown County Fair." He looks to the scout for help. The boy says nothing, pretending instead to read a smear of pigeon droppings on the cotton-candy machine.

"Serve and obey," the king says.

The steward bows. With a handkerchief over his nose, he constructs something that, in a world without proper standards, could be considered a hot dog. He serves it to the king on a small silver platter drawn from his attaché

case. The king stuffs the mass into his face, rancid mustard peeling down his chin and onto the mange of his ermine.

"Passable," the king declares. "Now take us to the rides."

The steward bows again and gestures toward a distant banner that reads "Cul-de-sac of Fun."

"We suppose you'll be disappearing again?" the king says to the scout.

The boy lifts his eyes from the pigeon poop.

"I must find my people," he says.

"Very well," the king sighs. "Be ready to lead us back in an hour." He repositions his threadbare cape against the breeze. The air is chilly. Already his stomach is expressing misgivings about the hot dog. The less time spent here, he decides, the better.

THE MIDWAY. A chute of empty booths still bright with new paint. The scout reads the trampled popcorn boxes, the displaced gravel, the wailing wind. They tell of a fleeing multitude, a people retreating in panic, his kin on the run. A balloon dartboard abandoned in haste. Sawdust-stuffed neon-orange rabbits left to molt. But no pursuer that he can find. No advancing army's boot prints. No claw marks the length of a man raked jaggedly across the ringtoss booth.

The bear rolls quietly beside the scout, sniffing the air. *They have quit this place, John Bennington*, he says.

"I have not finished looking," the boy replies, but it's a lie. Any tracker could see that no human feet have touched this ground in months.

*I said that you would not find them here*, the bear reminds him. *They are like the hungry, wild spirits of old. This land is chewed and spat out again. You cannot expect them to tarry.*

"Be silent," the scout says. "Let me think."

*Thinking will not change the direction of the wind*, the bear says, adjusting his fez with a graceful claw. *You cannot bid the wolf to stop its baying, nor the whip-poor-will to postpone its dirge. You cannot bid your people stay.*

"I do not know my people," the scout says. "I do not know what I might bid them do."

The boy has never met his people. Indeed, he did not know he had a

people until he met the dancing bear.

The boardwalk at Gavin's Point, where the orphaned scout had made a meagre living selling saltwater taffy and guessing weights, had reached its economic nadir. The drug cartel Los Compasivos controlled a majority interest in the boardwalk and its environs, and, while a shakedown of the boy's booth was rare, the smack addicts left in the cartel's wake made for a poor clientele. Malodorous and malnourished, they would make the boy guess their pathetically low weights to guilt him out of free taffy and sack lunches. It was only after the King of Retired Amusements arrived to take final ownership of the boardwalk that the boy was acquainted with the details of his lineage. As the king and the steward parlayed with Los Compasivos, the boy heard the whisper-thin voice of the dancing bear speaking only to him.

*I know who you are, John Bennington, the bear had said. And I know what you must do to fill the hole inside you that wails like a hollow tree and knows no quiet. Before there were ringmasters and zookeepers, before men baited bears and made them roll, we taught your people the ways of the wilderness. Now they have become relentless seekers of delectation and distraction. They once walked this boardwalk, eating shaved ice and posing for selfies, but fled at the first sign of commercial depreciation, abandoning it all to indigence and petty crime, and, at last, to the King of Retired Amusements. And in their great haste they left you behind.*

*Follow me, the bear said, and I will show you how to find them again.*

By the time the steward had returned his spent MAC-10 to his crocodile attaché, the boy was on bended knee, offering his service and allegiance to the king.

The bear taught him to scout. The boy learned how to dress wounds, remove ticks, and handle scat without fear. With this tutelage came recognitions of merit, badges for woodcraft, campsite cleanliness, bravery, animal friendship. But, most important, the bear taught him orienteering, not by reading maps or stars but by following the compass of his own loneliness. The boy learned how to direct his senses away from ease and contentment, to turn his needle in-

stead to where others had turned their backs. There, he was told, he would find his people: refugees fleeing the squalor of the boardwalk, who left behind gutted big tops and disrepaired carousels, vacant outdoor malls and imitation Colonial townships littered with broken, historically inaccurate tools. The scout could mark and follow the trail his people left with ease, but only ever seemed to arrive after they had gone.

Here again, at Liebling's Sunday Morning Carnival and Midway, he has arrived too late.

*You will search but not find, the bear says, assuming the lotus position atop his ball, which has suddenly turned the color of the night sky, alive with blazing comets and galactic spirals. Small birds come to perch on the bear's ears and shoulders. The air becomes thick with a foggy radiance. Around him: the Limpid Aura of Unimpeachable Knowledge. Above him: the Halo of Oneness with All Things.*

*You will walk the Unmanicured Path. The path of sorrow upon sorrow.*

"You say that every time," the scout replies.

The tracks of his people lead beyond the carnival into a dense wilderness of gray birch and red cedar.

*Come, the bear says, gesturing back toward the midway. I have something to show you.*

DEEP IN THE Cul-de-sac of Fun. The Viking ship. The King of Retired Amusements aboard, seated, displeased. The steward frowning at the controls, pulling the lever fruitlessly, fingering buttons with little confidence.

He has dreaded this moment since the night Rudy Vermiglia, the royal engineer, absconded with the queen. In between consoling the inconsolable king in the starlit parking lot of the La Quinta Inn and coaxing him onto his feet and back into the motel room before his cries of cuckolded anguish drew the attention of the other guests, the steward had envisioned with great trepidation this precise scenario. Machines had a history of disobedience in his presence, and the scout could barely be counted on to stay within shouting distance, let alone to troubleshoot technical difficulties. And so now, here in the terrible present, the steward stands engineerless,

brow creased, hands slick with perspiration, his lord and employer seated in the mock longship, perilously unamused.

"We wish to feel the rock of the waves," the king says, impatience agitating a stomach already on the verge of sedition, "to know the kiss of the wind. We wish to command the horizon, to see it bow and rise before us, as is our sovereign right." The flag atop the faux mast crispens in salute. The faux rigging is at the ready.

"What," the king inquires, "is the goddam holdup?"

"I beg your indulgence, Majesty," the steward says. "The device is uncooperative." He reaches into his attaché case and consults the diagnostic checklist that accompanied Rudy Vermiglia's letter of resignation.

*Is there power running to the mechanism?* the checklist asks.

A light is on, so yes, one would assume, power is being received.

*Are any of the lights red or green?*

The illuminated light is yellow, which suggests little by way of either readiness or lack of readiness. Caution, it seems, is the message. But caution against what? The pulling of the lever? The steward has already pulled the lever several times, so his hope is—no, not that. The depressing of buttons? One of the red buttons has already been depressed, and has remained depressed.

*Is/are the safety system(s) engaged?*

Could this depressed red button represent the safety system(s)? If he pressed it again, would it un-depress, thereby disengaging the safety system(s)?

The steward presses the red button again. It does not un-depress. The light does not change. It is still yellow, the color of abeyance, unease, hesitation.

*Is there a hard lock, and, if so, has the proper key been inserted and turned, releasing the lock?*

In an interior panel, nestled under a muscle of wire, obscured by a mis-installed switch cover, a secret hidden behind secrets, small, unassuming, bashful in the sunlight: a hard lock. A soul might look for hours and still miss it. Digging into the pocket of his velvet coat for his key ring, the steward wonders how many small answers like this he has missed over the years, discrete solutions to life's puzzles that can be found only by those who know

precisely what to look for. He wonders, Was this ride, maybe even this entire carnival, abandoned simply because someone could not find the right metaphorical lock? And if he had discovered a different metaphorical lock years ago, and fitted it with the correct metaphorical key, would he be standing here now, on this gray autumn day, in this livery, serving this king?

The steward inserts and rotates the appropriate key, releasing the lock. The machine howls to life. The yellow light turns green, indicating satisfaction, announcing readiness, recognizing authority, command, control.

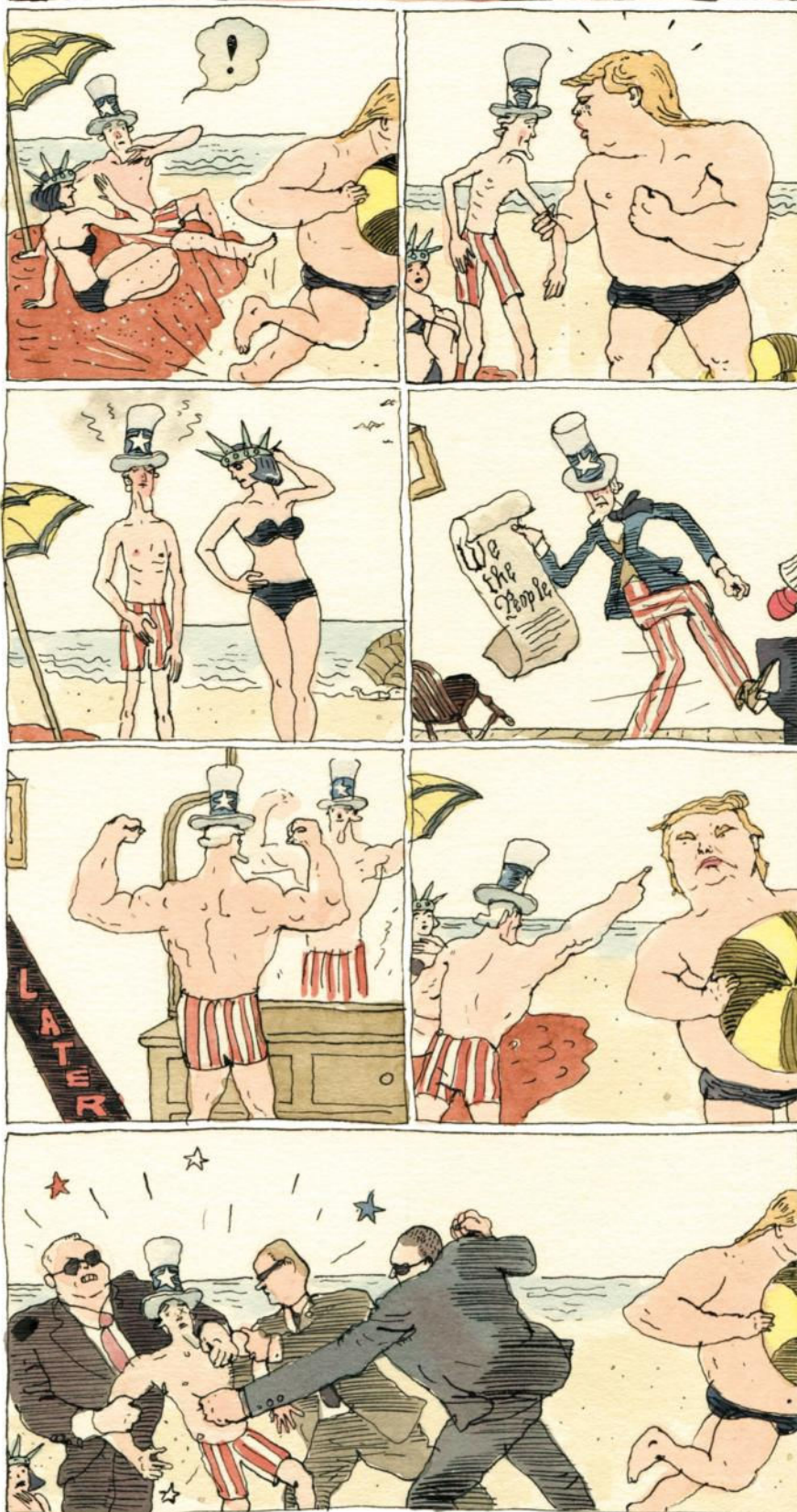
The steward pulls the lever, and at once the Viking ship is pendulous.

The king, however, has been rocking for a while. He is the victim of food poisoning. His skin is pallid. He sweats. As the ship's arc widens, the king is made to feel the physical force of today's mistake, followed quickly by the psychic force of a lifetime of human error. His gaffes, his royal miscalculations. As sky and earth swap seats, he is visited again by his catastrophic failures. The purchase of Humbolt's Puppet Theatre, in Barksdale, for example. The decision to walk the ten miles to Greavesport, Michigan, in January, without properly insulated footwear. The hot dog. The queen left alone with Rudy Vermiglia while he inspected Gizmo's Giant Go-Getter. These regrets float above him now in the faux rigging, unaffected by the Cuisinarting of the world. They mock and assail him, call him a disgrace, a punch line, a pretender-king.

It was in moments like this, when his guts were in tumult and his brain felt unmoored from his body, that the queen would take his head in her lap and say to him, "Quiet now, just quiet." Would whisper to him, "Just shut up." Would say to him, "You're shitfaced," or "You smell like total ass," or "Jesus Christ, when will you learn?" And her fingers, soft as daffodils, would set aside his crown, and twist tufts of his sideburns into knots, and pull the hairs of his ears from their tender follicles until, red and swollen, he slid into dreamless sleep. And later, when he woke and left their motel room to survey a new park or arcade, she would say, "Bring back cigarettes."

"Bring back cigarettes," her eyes lost

## CHARLES ATLAS SHRUGGED



in contemplation of the television, her fingers delicately balancing a butt above the ashtray, or the Bible, or the cigarette-burned silk of her slip. "Bring back cigarettes," with the distraction of a goddess. "Bring back cigarettes," and he would marvel that words so holy had ever been uttered.

He brought back cartons. He showered her with menthols and ultra-lights, filtered and unfiltered, and, for a time, they were happy.

**T**HE FUN HOUSE. Animatronic vampires and ghouls. The rattling of chains, or perhaps just a recording of it. The moaning is almost certainly on a loop. The jolting screams are too earnest to be real.

The scout has been led by his animal guide through the maze of mirrors to a room made to look like a graveyard. Their entrance triggers a sensor that activates the smoke machine. The bear stands upright on his ball, which now glows a night-light green, filled with what appears to be a swarm of fireflies. With a giant paw, he swipes at the rubber bats dangling from the ceiling. Though they are indoors, there are trees, grass. The tombstones are Styrofoam, the skeletons glow-in-the-dark plasti-cast. Hovering above an open grave with an exposed casket is the incorporeal spirit of one of the scout's ancestors.

"Hail, John Bennington, son of Bryce and Courtney, who walks the Unmanicured Path," the ancestral spirit says. "And to you, Sage of Boyhoods, who rolls the world beneath him." The spirit wears an opalescent-white golf shirt over tan chinos. A salmon-pink cardigan rests on its shoulders like a mantle. Its spectral hair is handsomely thinned, and its sockless, loafered feet hover just above the floor. At the lip of the open grave, the ghost of a Pekinese lies napping.

The dancing bear yawns grandly, maneuvering on the ball until he is flat on his belly. *Hail, great spirit*, he says. *Our meeting is fortunate, for John Bennington has many questions to ask regarding the ways of his people.*

"Then he shall ask them," the ancestral spirit says, "and be answered."

But the scout says nothing. Hearing the spirit speak the names of parents he has never known has caught him off guard. For a moment, there is only the

## ARS POETICA WITH BACON

Fortunately, the family, anxious about its diminishing food supply, encountered a small, possibly hostile pig along the way. The daughter happened upon it first pushing its scuffed snout against something hidden at the base of a thornbush: a blood-covered egg, maybe, or small rubber ball exactly like the sort that snapped from the paddle my mother used to beat me with when I let her down. At the time the father and mother were tangled in some immemorial dispute about cause and effect: who'd harmed whom first, how jealousy did not, in fact, begin as jealousy but as desperation. When the daughter called out to them, they turned to see her lift the pig, it was no heavier than an orphan, from the bushes and then set it down in their path. They waited to see whether the pig might idle forward with them until they made camp or wander back toward the home they'd abandoned to war. Night, enclosed in small drops of rain, began to fall upon them. "Consequence" is the word that splintered my mind. Walking a path in the dark is about something the way a family is about something. Like the pig,

sound of recorded moaning and the leaky-tire hiss of the smoke machine. The ancestral spirit clears its throat. The bear is irritated. The dreaming Pekinese rolls over on its back and bicycles the air with its paws.

*For example*, the bear interjects, *John Bennington may wish to learn the wisdom of the Homeowners Association. Tell him how a strict observance of yard-waste disposal guidelines helps to maintain harmony with nature.*

"And property values," the ancestral spirit says.

*That, too*, the bear says.

"No," the scout says, finally finding his voice. "Tell me why my people left me at the Gavin's Point boardwalk to guess the weights of drug addicts."

The ancestral spirit looks momentarily cowed. It pretends to be distracted by an e-mail on its cell phone. "Are you sure you would not rather ask another question?" the spirit asks. "About your place in this world, perhaps? Have you no wish to access the volumes of cultural insight bequeathed to you by your people?"

*Tell him the parable of the independent subcontractor and the hornets' nest*, the bear says.

"Yes," the spirit says. "That's a good one."

"No," the scout repeats. "Why was I abandoned?" The Pekinese suddenly stirs. This exchange is unexpected, and worth being awake for.

*It is not your people's way to ask such direct questions of their ancestors*, John Bennington, the bear says. *It makes them uncomfortable.*

"I do not know our ways," the scout says.

"That is why I am here," the ancestral spirit says.

"Why do they flee?" the scout asks. "Are they in danger?"

"Ours is a story of constant discomfort, of annoyance that knows no end," the spirit proclaims in a voice meant to carry over the crackle of back-yard terra-cotta fire pits and the chewing of Caprese-salad skewers. "Dilapidation makes us uneasy," the spirit explains, "and passé architecture offends us. We search for new exclusive and ergonomically designed playgrounds as one might look for a sun that has already set, a moon that is always new, for no place is ever truly ours and ours alone, to lounge in as we please in safety and in peace."

"What the hell does that mean?" the scout wants to know. But he knows.

"You must not ask in this way," the ancestral spirit says. The Pekinese has

I too, wanted to reach through the thorns for the egg or ball, believing it was a symbol of things to come. I wanted to roll it in my palm like the head of a small redbird until it sang to me. I wanted to know how my mother passed her days having never touched her husband's asshole, for example. Which parts of your body have never been touched, I wanted to ask. I'd been hired to lead the family from danger to a territory full of more seeds than bullets, but, truth was, in the darkness there was no telling what was rooting in the soil. Plots of complete silence, romantics posing in a field bludgeoned by shame. The heart, biologically speaking, is ugly as it pumps its passion and fear down the veins. Which is to say, starting out we have no wounds to speak of beyond the ways our parents expressed their love. We were never sure what the pig was after or whether it was, in fact, not a pig but some single-minded soul despair turned into a pig, some devil worthy of mercy. Without giving away the enigmatic ending, I will say, when we swallowed the flesh, our eyes were closed.

—Terrance Hayes

returned to its nap. The bear is also asleep, snoring hard into the green glow of his ball. The artificial smoke hangs low in the room. It smells sterile and chemical. It is nothing like real smoke, heavy with vaporized sap and hot with embers. When the boy departs, it will not cling to his clothes and linger in his hair.

"Screw it," the scout says. He leaves the room, its skeletons and its ghosts. He leaves the bear asleep on his ball. A mannequin dressed like a menacing clown knife-points the way to the exit. The boy does not startle as the fake guillotine blade falls inches from his heels. He escapes the imaginary perils of the fun house intact, but outside, with the sun mostly gone and the day growing colder, he is not sure which direction to take. His compass is attuned only to absence, to abandonment. Outside the fun house, the needle inside him pirouettes, unable to locate any place more lonesome than the ground upon which he stands.

**FULL TILT.** THE good earth perpendicular, then parallel, then perpendicular. A universe upside down. Vomit on the royal ermine. The Viking ship is a swing possessed, a cradle gone mad.

This, the king knows, is what comes from trusting engineers. This is the fruit of their handiwork.

"God in Heaven!" he proclaims between barfs. "Deliver us from this evil!"

The steward returns the lever to its first position. The arc of the ship acutes. The King of Retired Amusements collapses onto the boarding platform and dry heaves through the grate.

"Perhaps a respite," the steward says.

"You are sent from hell to destroy me," the king says.

The steward offers his sovereign a handkerchief and, with great deference, hoists him onto his feet.

"There is a bench," he says.

"Unsuitable," the king replies. He points to a nearby attraction. "There."

"Your Majesty, I must protest."

"Not to ride," the king says, the handkerchief over his mouth, in case. "Just to sit."

The teacups. Minus waltz and whimsy. Minus passengers, save the king, who growls and retches against the pastel floor of the ride, and the steward, who apologizes ardently, but only to a point. When the hot dog is mentioned, he says nothing. When the engineer is mentioned, he says nothing.

When the queen is mentioned, he reads another handkerchief. It is not his fault. Nor is it the king's fault. Nor the engineer's. It is a world in constant motion. Even here, in the stillness of the teacup, its shifting is too wild and too unpredictable for any to move safely within it.

The dancing bear rolls up to the ride. His ruff has the crumpled look of having been slept on. His fez hangs low on his brow. Every few minutes he sniffs the air, redirects his muzzle, sniffs again, whimpers.

"Is that the boy?" the king asks from the floor of his teacup.

"No, sire," the steward says, "the animal."

"That little twerp had better show up soon," the king says, "or he can stay lost."

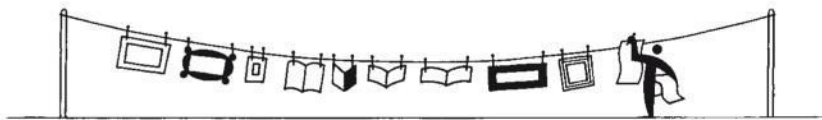
But the threat is a hollow one. The King of Retired Amusements, lord of salvage and recoup, is not in the business of leaving things behind. He will not lose another member of the cortège if he can help it, and when he can no longer help it, when it becomes clear that the scout will not return, and the bear will not stop grieving, and the steward will not survive another winter with his fealty intact, he will press on alone. Absent cape and crown and royal retinue, he will wander the earth in search of those joyless cavities still crying out for their king.

The steward gathers his velvet coat around him and scans the area for proper shelter. He knows they will not make it back to the motel by nightfall. They will go to sleep hungry on the floor of the Independence Day Gazebo in the middle of the All-Holiday Promenade. That night, the steward will wake to the sound of weeping. He will reach for his last unsoiled handkerchief before realizing that it is not the king but the bear atop his ball, sobbing in his sleep. The sound will be great and low, like the crying of a mountain, and into that sound the steward will smuggle his own small grief, his own ruins and regrets, which he knows have no place in a world of such delight. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM

Michael Andreasen on writing with solemnity and humor.

# THE CRITICS



A CRITIC AT LARGE

## THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

*Is it really a problem when poor areas get richer?*

BY KELEFA SANNEH

AT THE Golden Globe Awards, in January, Ennio Morricone won Best Original Score for his contribution to “The Hateful Eight,” the Quentin Tarantino Western. Accepting the award on Morricone’s behalf was Tarantino himself, who brandished the trophy in a gesture of vindication, suggesting that Morricone, despite all the honors he has received, is nevertheless underrated. Tarantino proclaimed Morricone his favorite composer. “And when I say favorite composer,” he added, “I don’t mean movie composer—that ghetto. I’m talking about Mozart. I’m talking about Beethoven. I’m talking about Schubert.” The backlash began a few moments later, when the next presenter, Jamie Foxx, approached the microphone. He smiled, looked around, and shook his head slightly. “Ghetto,” he said.

Tarantino’s comment, and Foxx’s one-word response to it, became a big story. In the *Washington Post*, a television reporter called Tarantino’s “ghetto” comment a “tone-deaf flub.” A BBC headline asked, “IS THE WORD ‘GHETTO’ RACIST?,” and the accompanying article summarized the thoughts of a Rutgers University professor who accused Tarantino of implying that “the ghetto was not a place for white, European, male composers.” Of course, “ghetto” is itself a European term, coined in the sixteenth century to describe the part of Venice to which Jews were, by papal decree, confined. And Tarantino, in suggesting that the category of film composition was a ghetto, was using a common dictionary definition: “something that resembles the restriction or isolation of a city ghetto.”

But “ghetto” is also an idiomatic way of dismissing something as cheap or trashy. And the adjectival “ghetto” owes its salience to the fact that a modern American ghetto is not only poor but disproportionately African-American. Recent census data showed that 2.5 million whites live in high-poverty neighborhoods, compared with five million African-Americans. Earlier this year, Senator Bernie Sanders went further, saying, “When you’re white, you don’t know what it’s like to be living in a ghetto.”

What is a ghetto, really—and who lives there? In “Dark Ghetto,” a pioneering 1965 sociological study, Kenneth Clark depicted Harlem, a paradigmatic ghetto, as a “colony of New York City,” defined by both its economic dependence and its segregation. In the decades that followed, scholars argued over the limits and the utility of the term—did it apply to any poor neighborhood, any ethnic enclave? The word may have various definitions but it arouses singular passions, which is why, in 2008, the sociologist Mario Luis Small suggested that his colleagues stop using it altogether. He argued that, in many ways, “poor black neighborhoods” were neither as distinctive nor as homogeneous as “ghetto” implied, and warned that academic theories of “ghetto” life might “perpetuate the very stereotypes their proponents often aim to fight.”

Mitchell Duneier seems to have taken Small’s pronouncement as a challenge; his response is “Ghetto” (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), a history of the concept which also serves as an argument

for its continued usefulness. Duneier is a sociologist, too, sensitive to the sting of “ghetto” as an insult. But for him that sting shows us just how much inequality we still tolerate, even as attitudes have changed. Where the ghetto once seemed a menace, threatening to swallow the city like an encroaching desert, now it often appears, in scholarly articles and the popular press, as an endangered habitat. Academics and activists who once sought to abolish ghettos may now speak, instead, of saving them. This shift, as much as anything, accounts for the vigorous response to Tarantino’s comment: people wanted to know just what was so bad about a ghetto, anyway.

IN 1945, ST. CLAIR DRAKE and Horace Cayton published “Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City.” When they wrote about a “Black Ghetto” in Chicago, they were making a provocative analogy. Duneier notes that, in explaining how blacks were prevented from buying or renting homes in white neighborhoods, Drake and Cayton referred to “the invisible barbed-wire fence of restrictive covenants,” a formulation that was calculated to evoke gruesome images of the Third Reich. Despite the long history of Jewish ghettos in Europe, Duneier is at pains to show that the Nazi ghetto was not a revival of European history but a break from it. In the old Italian ghettos, Jews, who were ostracized by authorities, created their own tightly organized communities. The restrictions were onerous but not absolute; residents were sometimes

ABOVE: MIGUEL PORLAN



REFERENCE: ROBERT CARTER/GETTY

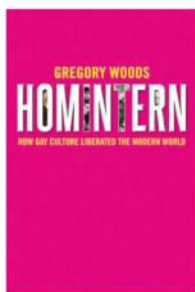
*Once, black home buyers were thought to threaten the character of a neighborhood. Now gentrifiers are seen as the menace.*

ILLUSTRATION BY JAVIER JAÉN

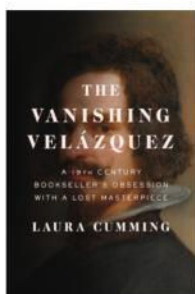
THE NEW YORKER, JULY 11 & 18, 2016

81

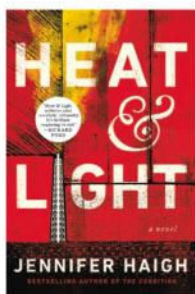
## BRIEFLY NOTED



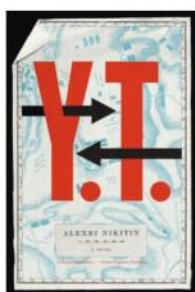
**Homintern**, by Gregory Woods (Yale). This wide-ranging history of gay culture spans the so-called “Wilde century”: the era that began in 1895, with the trial of Oscar Wilde, when homosexuality emerged as “a major cultural influence.” Wandering from Sergei Diaghilev’s coterie around the Ballets Russes to Natalie Barney’s interwar Paris salon and Jane and Paul Bowles’s compound in Tangier, in the fifties, Woods shapes his book as a challenge to a defining myth of the period: the idea that homosexuals, newly emboldened, were secretly plotting a takeover of the social order. Marshalling an impressive array of conspiracy theories (as early as 1869, Engels was telling Marx that the “paederasts” would shortly begin organizing), Woods allows his eclectic portraits of gay groups and individuals to provide the exculpatory evidence.



**The Vanishing Velázquez**, by Laura Cumming (Scribner). Diego Velázquez has been called the Shakespeare of painting—luminously present in his art, all but absent outside it. In this captivating double portrait, Cumming exhumes the little that is known of the Spanish artist and courtier through the peculiar tale of one of his most passionate devotees. In 1845, John Snare, a British bookseller, bought a picture of King Charles I for a pittance at auction and spent the rest of his life trying to prove that he had a genuine Velázquez. The puzzle of the work’s origins transformed Snare into an itinerant obsessive and embroiled him in courtroom controversy. Cumming intersperses this story with illuminating discussions of Velázquez’s radical candor and originality as a painter.



**Heat & Light**, by Jennifer Haigh (Ecco). At once expansive and intimate, this ecologically minded novel moves back and forth between 1979 and 2012, following the intertwined lives of farmers, police officers, Big Energy C.E.O.s, bartenders, scientists, pastors, activists, and rig men. It covers events such as the Three Mile Island nuclear disaster, along with subtler signals of the leisurely degeneration of American life. Haigh draws a parallel between the leasing of land for fracking and the wreckage left by the pursuit of now dwindling energy sources like coal. She is especially adept at juxtaposing scenes of suburban serenity with ones of environmental violence.



**Y.T.**, by Alexei Nikitin, translated from the Russian by Anne Marie Jackson (Melville House). The narrator of this novel is a jaded midlife, midlevel salesman in Kiev, who receives an e-mail reviving a war game that he and his friends played during the Soviet era, leading to their arrest by the K.G.B. “We were just playing a game,” he says. “There was nothing else to do. You can’t just drink vodka all the time.” His search for the person who sent the e-mail combines with memories of Soviet intimidation and absorbing descriptions of the game itself. The story—at times hauntingly evocative, at other times truly confusing—never feels quite stable, but is held together by the narrator’s nuanced character.

permitted to leave during the day and return at night. (Duneier suggests that some inhabitants of the Roman ghetto might have viewed it as “a holy precinct, its barriers recalling the walls of ancient Jerusalem.”) By contrast, the Nazi version was a brutal, short-lived experiment. Duneier describes the debate, among Nazi officials, between “productionists,” who saw the inhabitants of Jewish ghettos as a useful source of slave labor, and “attritionists,” who preferred them dead.

The modern history of American ghettos, then, begins with a misunderstanding: the term acquired its awful resonance because of the Nazi ghettos, even though the conditions in American cities more closely resembled those of the older European ghettos, which were places capable of inspiring mixed feelings, among both inhabitants and scholars. American ghettos were the combined product of legal discrimination, personal prejudice, flawed urban planning, and countless economic calculations. For more than thirty years, starting in 1934, the Federal Housing Authority steered banks away from issuing mortgages to prospective buyers in poor black neighborhoods, which were deemed too risky; black tenants or prospective homeowners were often stymied by banks that doubted their creditworthiness, or by deed requirements that sought to maintain a neighborhood’s character and forbade blacks to buy or lease, or by intimidation and violence. Disconcertingly, white homeowners who worried that integration might erode the value of their homes may have been correct, even as their decision to flee exacerbated the problem. Drake and Cayton described their subjects as less bothered by segregation itself than by its stifling effects. “They wanted their neighborhoods to be able to expand into contiguous white areas as they became too crowded,” Duneier summarizes, “but they did not actually care to live among whites.”

Scholars who studied the ghetto tended to be motivated by sympathy for its residents, which often resulted in a complicated sort of sympathy for ghettos themselves. Clark, making his study of Harlem, spent time with Malcolm X, who insisted that segregation—“complete separation”—was the

only way to solve America's problems. Clark didn't go that far, but he did express a certain skepticism about the wisdom and the prospects of school desegregation. Better, he thought, to "demand excellence in ghetto schools," as Duneier puts it. Similarly, the anthropologist Carol Stack, in an influential 1974 book called "All Our Kin," suggested that the black ghetto fostered social cooperation, knitting its residents together in extended "networks" of families and friends. At the same time, scholars sought to pin down the relationship between "ghetto" and its Spanish-language analogue, "barrio," and to compare poor black neighborhoods with other enclaves. When an activist named Carl Wittman announced, in 1970, "We have formed a ghetto, out of self protection," he was calling for a different kind of separatism: he was writing about his adopted home town of San Francisco, in a pamphlet titled "A Gay Manifesto."

Duneier's book makes it easy to see how, through all these changes, black ghettos in America have remained the central point of reference for anyone who wants to understand poverty and segregation. By some estimates, African-Americans are more isolated now than they were half a century ago. In a study published last year, scholars at Stanford reported that even middle-class African-Americans live in markedly poorer neighborhoods than working-class whites. And the linguist William Labov has suggested that, during the past two centuries, African-American speech patterns have been diverging from white speech patterns, owing mainly to "residential segregation." By many measures—marriage rates, incarceration levels, wealth metrics—poor black neighborhoods stand out.

Even so, Duneier's review of the scholarly literature cannot obscure the fact that the term "ghetto" does seem to have faded somewhat from common usage. In the past decade or so, the adjective has overshadowed the noun: a word that once conjured up intimidating neighborhoods now appears in unimpeachable coinages like "ghetto latte." (This is a coffee-shop term popularized in the aughts, in honor of the parsimonious customer who, instead of ordering an iced latte, orders espresso over

ice, which is cheaper, and then dumps in half a cup of milk.) On hip-hop records, "ghetto" has largely given way to the warmer, more flexible "hood," which sounds less like a condition and more like a community; Kendrick Lamar's ode to the bad old days is called "Hood Politics," not "Ghetto Politics." The persistence of residential segregation has tightened the relationship between concentrated poverty and African-American neighborhoods, and made the word "ghetto" harder to use. "Ghetto" has come to sound like an indictment of a people as well as of a place.

OUR DOUBTS ABOUT the word may also have something to do with our changing view of cities. Many of the studies in Duneier's book were conducted in the shadow of white flight and, starting in the nineteen-sixties, rising crime rates. The term suggested that a particular sort of dysfunction was native to urban environments and, possibly, inseparable from them. But fewer people talk about cities that way anymore: among contemporary urbanists, a dominant influence is Jane Jacobs, known for her lifelong commitment to the simple but radical notion that city life can be pleasurable. To judge from the literature, the major preoccupation among today's urbanists is not the ghetto but a different G-word: "gentrification," a process by which a ghetto might cease to be a ghetto.

It is an inelegant term, and must have seemed a strange one when it was first introduced, in a 1964 essay by Ruth Glass, a British sociologist. Glass, who wrote under the influence of Marx, was distressed to see that "the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes." As the gentry moved in, the proletariat moved out, "until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed." The story of gentrification was, curiously, the story of neighborhoods destroyed by desirability. As the term spread through academic journals and then the popular press, "gentrification," like "ghetto," became harder to define. At first, it referred to instances of new arrivals who were buying up (and bidding up) old housing stock, but then there was "new-build gentrifica-

tion." Especially in America, gentrification often suggested white arrivals who were displacing nonwhite residents and taking over a ghetto, although, in the case of San Francisco, the establishment of Wittman's so-called "gay ghetto," created as an act of self-protection, was also a species of gentrification. Even Clark's "dark ghetto" was a target. In 1994, Andrew Cuomo, who was then at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, told the *Times*, "If you expect to see Harlem as gentrified and mixed-income, it's not going to happen." He was, in due course, proved wrong.

A gentrification story often unspools as a morality play, with bohemians playing a central if ambiguous part: their arrival can signal that a neighborhood is undergoing gentrification, but so can their departure, as rising rents increasingly bring economic stratification. Stories of gentrification are by definition stories of change, and yet scholars have had a surprisingly hard time figuring out who gets displaced, and how.

In 2004, Lance Freeman, an urban-planning professor at Columbia, and the economist Frank Braconi, who ran the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, tried to answer the question. They produced a paper called "Gentrification and Displacement: New York City in the 1990s," which has been roiling the debate ever since. In the paper, which was based on city survey data, they came close to debunking the very idea of gentrification. Looking at seven "gentrifying neighborhoods" (Chelsea, Harlem, the Lower East Side, Morningside Heights, Fort Greene, Park Slope, and Williamsburg), they found that "poor households" in those places were "19% less likely to move than poor households residing elsewhere."

While traditional gentrification narratives suggest that poor residents, if not for the bane of gentrification, would have been fixed in place, the truth is that poorer households generally move more often than richer ones; in many poor neighborhoods, the threat of eviction is ever-present, which helps explain why rising rents don't necessarily increase turnover. And gentrification needn't be zero-sum, because gentrifying neighborhoods may become more

©2016 KENDAL

# Explore!

Retirement Living  
on a 500 acre  
Arboretum Campus




Learn more, visit our  
website or call to  
schedule a tour.

**KCC.Kendal.org**  
**800-216-1920**

## KENDAL~CROSSLANDS Communities

Together, transforming the experience of aging.®

Kennett Square, Pennsylvania

EQUAL HOUSING  
OPPORTUNITY

### CHILTON'S COTTAGE LINE



Crafted from maple in classic  
cottage colors. Made in Maine.

UTILITY • QUALITY • SIMPLICITY



chiltons.com 866-883-3366



## McLean Pavilion

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL AFFILIATE

**To find a solution, you must  
identify the problem.**

Diagnostically informed treatment at U.S.  
News' Top Ranked Psychiatric Hospital

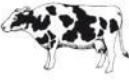
**617.855.2874** [mcleanpavilion.org](http://mcleanpavilion.org)

sullivan + associates  
ARCHITECTS



martha's vineyard

### HELP FOR ADDICTION



Dawn Farm offers affordable treatment for  
drug and alcohol addiction on a working farm.  
Accredited, internationally known, a unique  
program with compassionate care and hope.

[www.dawnfarm.org](http://www.dawnfarm.org) • 734.669.3800



### Roll-up Panama \$110

Handwoven straw. Made in Ecuador.  
Sizes: S - 2XL. Ideal traveling sun  
hat. Colors: dark natural or light  
natural. Check or credit card w/exp.  
date. Add \$12 S/H. [johnhelmer.com](http://johnhelmer.com)

**John Helmer** • Est. 1921 • (503) 223-4976  
969 S.W. Broadway, Dept. N066 • Portland, OR 97205

densely populated, with new arrivals adding to, rather than supplanting, those currently resident. Freeman and Braconi suggested that in some cases improved amenities in gentrifying neighborhoods gave longtime residents an incentive to find a way to stay. At the same time, New York's rent-control and rent-stabilization laws have protected some tenants from sharp rent increases, while others have an even more reliable refuge from rising prices: subsidized apartments in city buildings. "Public housing, often criticized for anchoring the poor to declining neighborhoods, may also have the advantage of anchoring them to gentrifying neighborhoods," they wrote. When two scholars who took a dim view of gentrification, Kathe Newman and Elvin Wyly, did their own investigation, their conclusion was mild. "Although displacement affects a very small minority of households, it cannot be dismissed as insignificant," they wrote. "Ten thousand displacees a year"—this was one estimate of New York's total—"should not be ignored, even in a city of eight million."

Newman and Wyly's paper was called "The Right to Stay Put, Revisited," in tribute to a decades-old question in urban sociology: Do tenants have a political right—a human right—to remain in their apartments? In New York, regulations like rent stabilization not only limit the amount by which some landlords can raise rents but also restrict a landlord's ability to decline to renew a lease. In Sweden, the rules are tighter: rents are set through a national negotiation between tenants and landlords, which means that prices are low in Stockholm, but apartments are scarce; a renter in search of a long-term lease there might spend decades on a government waiting list. Another solution is to allow more and taller buildings, increasing supply in the hope of lowering prices. Often, the steepest rent increases are found in places, like San Francisco, that have stringent building regulations: a recent study of the city found that fewer poor residents had been displaced in neighborhoods with more new construction. In seeking to preserve what Ruth Glass called the "social character" of a neighborhood, anti-gentrification activists

echo the language that was once used to defend racially restrictive covenants. Arguments over gentrification are really arguments over who deserves to live in a city, and the notion of a right to stay put is sometimes at odds with another, perhaps more fundamental right: the right to move.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, in the pages of *National Review*, Kevin D. Williamson devoted a typically astringent column to the kind of poor community that is rarely called a ghetto and even less often targeted for gentrification. A fellow-pundit had suggested that Donald Trump, unlike many other Republican politicians, spoke to and for white voters living lives of economic frustration and opioid dependency in towns like Garbutt, New York. Williamson, no fan of Trump, responded with a withering attack on Garbutt and its ilk. "The truth about these dysfunctional, downscale communities is that they deserve to die," Williamson wrote. Their inhabitants, in his view, "need real opportunity, which means that they need real change, which means that they need U-Haul."

This diagnosis sparked an outcry. But was Williamson wrong to insist that people are more important than places? Arguments about gentrification sometimes imply that places matter most. Jane Jacobs, for instance, could seem to cherish Greenwich Village more than she cherished the people who lived there, to say nothing of the people who might have liked to join them, if only there had been more and cheaper housing. When it comes to the neighborhoods that Duneier would call ghettos, there is some evidence that the most humane approach is not to improve them but, in effect, to dismantle them, by encouraging their inhabitants to move. A program called Moving to Opportunity, which was initially judged a failure, now provides modest evidence that removing children from high-poverty neighborhoods can have lasting positive effects on their lifetime earnings. And a recent study by Deirdre Pfeiffer, a professor of urban planning, suggests that racial minorities encounter "more equitable" conditions in newly built suburbs than in cities.

The uneasy way we discuss ghettos

and gentrification says something about our discomfort with the real-estate market, which translates every living space into a commodity whose value lies mainly outside our control. Things that happen across the street, down the block, or on the other side of town affect the worth of our homes, and this lack of control is predestined to frustrate capitalists and community organizers alike. “Bushwick is not for sale!” Letitia James, New York City’s Public Advocate, announced at a recent anti-gentrification protest in Brooklyn. She was hoping to get the city to force developers to set aside more units for low-income families, but she was also voicing a familiar and widely shared distaste for the way the character of a neighborhood is hostage to its market price. The opposite of gentrification is not a quirky and charming enclave that stays affordable forever; the opposite of gentrification is a decline in prices that reflects the transformation of a once desirable neighborhood into one that is looking more like a ghetto every day.

In a recent *Times* Op-Ed, the Harlem historian Michael Henry Adams lamented the changes in his neighborhood, complaining that “poor black neighborhoods” were “irresistible to gentrification.” But New York is an unusual place, and it’s possible that the conversation about gentrification has been distorted by our focus on neighborhoods like Harlem. A recent study found that Chicago neighborhoods that were forty per cent or more African-American were the least likely to experience gentrification. This statistic was cited by the journalist Natalie Y. Moore in her new book about her city, “The South Side.” She recounts the pride she felt when she bought a condo in a seemingly up-and-coming South Side neighborhood: she paid a hundred and seventy-two thousand dollars, and she was shocked when, five years later, an assessor told her that its value had depreciated to fifty-five thousand. She writes about herself as a “so-called gentrifier,” adding, ruefully, that “black Chicago neighborhoods don’t gentrify.”

In May, on CNN, the comedian W. Kamau Bell hosted a one-hour program about gentrification in Portland, Oregon. He has a keen eye for irony

and a high tolerance for awkward situations, so he walked around the city, chuckling at hipsters—a word at least as hard to define as “ghetto” or “gentrification”—and listening sympathetically to residents of the city’s dwindling African-American neighborhoods. An older woman named Beverly said that her neighborhood was gone; standing on the porch of her mauve-trimmed house, she gestured across the street at a new apartment building going up, which seemed likely to ruin her lovely view. To hear the other side, Bell met with Ben Kaiser, a local developer, who was unapologetic. Bell told him, “I talked to an older black woman in this neighborhood, and every so often somebody knocks at her door or calls her and is offering to buy her home, even though she’s made it clear that she wants to keep her home. And somebody’s telling them to make that phone call.”

“We always think it’s a somebody, and in my opinion it’s an economic force—there’s no one orchestrating this outcome,” Kaiser said. “What’s happened, historically, is they’re offered a tremendous amount of money, and they’re kind of nuts not to take it. At some point, her kids—or she—will say, ‘I am nuts not to take this offer.’”

Bell was unconvinced. He wasn’t sure how many new “twelve-dollar juice bars” and “high-end vegan barbecue” restaurants the neighborhood needed, and he worried that the old neighborhood wouldn’t survive. In the ghetto narrative, a poor neighborhood falls victim to isolation; in the gentrification narrative, a poor neighborhood falls victim to invasion. These stories are not necessarily contradictory—they reflect a common conviction that the sorrows and joys of neighborhood change tend to be unequally shared. One effect of gentrification is to make this inequality harder to ignore. The call to save a neighborhood is most compelling when it serves as a call to help a neighborhood’s neediest inhabitants. That might mean helping them stay. But it might also mean helping them leave. ♦

#### Neatest Trick of the Week

Headline in the *Asbury Park* (N.J.) Press.

AFTER DEATH, EX-PRIEST IN STATE OF SHOCK

SILVER HILL HOSPITAL  
RESTORING MENTAL HEALTH SINCE 1931

#### Inpatient and Residential Eating Disorders Treatment

New Canaan, CT  
(866) 548-4455 [www.silverhillhospital.org](http://www.silverhillhospital.org)

#### RETIRE TO FEARRINGTON

A charming country village near Chapel Hill, NC with bluebirds, belted cows and fascinating people of all ages.

[www.fearrington.com](http://www.fearrington.com)

**JacksonCenter**  
FOR CREATIVE WRITING AT HOLLINS  
[www.hollins.edu/jacksoncenter](http://www.hollins.edu/jacksoncenter)

Your Anniversary Immortalized in Roman Numerals  
**JOHN-CHRISTIAN.COM**  
888.646.6466 Rush Available!  
Necklace in Gold or Platinum

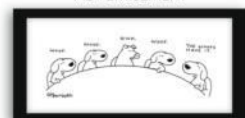
Creating memories for 35 years!  
**REPLACEMENTS, LTD.**  
China . Crystal . Silver  
800.REPLACE | [replacements.com](http://replacements.com)

**SO ST** linen  
all linen  
all season  
all made in maine  
[southstreetlinen.com](http://southstreetlinen.com) 774.234.7678

**AUSTEN RIGGS CENTER**  
Integrative Psychiatric Treatment  
Stockbridge, MA | [AUSTENRIGGS.ORG](http://AUSTENRIGGS.ORG) | 855-283-1770

**Blazer Sale**  
Blazers for ladies and gentlemen  
7 colors. All sizes.  
Were \$205. Now \$185.  
**Hunter and Coggins**  
Asheville, NC 1-800-343-9396  
[hunterandcoggins.com](http://hunterandcoggins.com)

ADVERTISEMENT



[newyorkerstore.com](http://newyorkerstore.com)

ON TELEVISION

# EMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

*Radical loss on "Orange Is the New Black."*

BY EMILY NUSSBAUM



N EARLY EVERY MOMENT of the fourth season of "Orange Is the New Black"—which this review discusses in full—feels refracted in a small sequence in the finale, a bubble of joy floating up through tragedy. In a flashback, Poussey Washington (Samira Wiley) is visiting friends in New York, and ends up taking an F train to Dumbo, blissful and exhausted. Sitting next to her, a white guy with dreads plays a steel drum. An Asian mother falls asleep; when her little boy opens her wallet to take some cash, Poussey catches the eye of a middle-aged man in a turban. They smile, sharing the secret. Poussey watches Wall Street suits offering a flask to two girls,

then gazes at an older black woman reading Michael Chabon, an interracial couple kissing, a pregnant woman, some jocks.

For anyone who lives in New York City, this is a familiar vision of cosmopolitan heaven—a weave of strangers, open and curious. The city that Poussey gets lost in isn't perfect. She's a young black woman, and when her phone is stolen, and she asks for help, white men brush her off. But, for a few hours, her life is full of jittery serendipity: she meets a drag queen named Miss Crimson Tide; she sees a dopey Roots cover band; she goes to a club where participants follow instructions that flash on the wall (Kiss, Dance, Share); she ends up hitching a

bike ride from a fake monk who's a member of Improv Everywhere. It's hell to watch, though. The subway car is the inverse of the justice system that will swallow Poussey up and, years later, kill her.

The theme of "Orange Is the New Black"—a show that launched on the cusp of a TV revolution in diversity—has always been empathy, a refusal to see anyone as inhuman. But, season by season, the show has shifted, absorbing and reflecting critiques. The first season spun its ensemble around Piper Chapman, a white, well-to-do outlier who went to Litchfield Prison for smuggling drug money. In Season 2, Piper receded, and the main arc was a sharp melodrama of six black women: a villain, a heroine, a tragic victim, an object of love, a henchman, and a clown. (Those six weren't the only black characters: there was also an elderly woman, a trans hairdresser, and a guard—such is the ensemble's radical sprawl, which emphasizes not just diversity of characters but wild diversity within groups, including the guards.) The backstories were more varied, the ethical range broader, the jokes sharper. Last season, the show's third, Litchfield was bought by a corporation, M.C.C., which union-busted guards and exploited inmates as sweatshop drones. The tone darkened, with a focus on the gruesome spillover of privatization—one character was raped, another put in solitary—and yet the season still managed to end in a rapturous vision of unity, with the inmates swimming together, as if baptized, in a lake.

The hardest trick for "Orange Is the New Black" has always been in balancing its humane values—sex, humor, spirituality—with candor about its harsh setting. (Too light, it's trivializing; too heavy, it's gloom porn.) This season, the show made a risky leap, taking structural racism as its central subject. Owing to an influx of prisoners, Litchfield is now dominated by Dominicans, whom the guards treat differently from white inmates. Piper's attempt to exploit this distinction, by forming a community-watch program—really a cover for her attempt to squash competitors in a smuggling business—aligns her with neo-Nazis. (In a solid song cue, "Tomorrow Belongs to Me" plays over the credits.) Even in a show that thrives on rude comedy, the epithets feel uglier, the plots more violent. (Some echo the HBO men's-prison show, "Oz.")

*The show's theme has always been the refusal to see anyone as inhuman.*

In the penultimate episode, there's a cruel loss: Poussey, the heroine from Season 2, a military brat with a romantic heart, dies beneath the knee of a guard named Bayley, gasping, "I can't breathe."

"Someone died on your watch, Captain," the prison warden Caputo says, self-righteously, to the dehumanizing monster whom he had left alone to oversee the callous new guards. "A *human being*. And you better believe we're going to look into it—and we're gonna be hearing many stories. Not just *the* story you're telling, but many stories." It's as if Caputo were predicting the emergence of "Orange Is the New Black" itself. Then he punts. For the news cameras, he offers just one story: he defends the guard who killed Poussey. He doesn't say Poussey's name. The prison explodes, in a gorgeously filmed sequence that ends with the camera spinning and a gun pointed at a guard's head.

**I**N RESPONSE, THERE WAS AN explosion of rage and grief among some viewers online (another community that is both hell and heaven, with strangers struggling to communicate, side by side). Some observers resented the fact that the show, which has mostly white writers, had forced fans, especially African-Americans, to soak in racist violence rather than offering them a respite from it. Some were uncomfortable with echoes of real crimes. Some of the pushback was fan response to losing a beloved character—especially a black lesbian, a rarity on television—and, with her, a happy ending.

That's not how I saw the final episodes, but then I wouldn't. To me, Poussey's death was an earned tragedy, resonant for reasons beyond simply "sending a message" about the Black Lives Matter movement. She died when the show became clearer about something that had always been buried within it: the irresolvable tension between that utopian subway car and the tilted, biased world surrounding it. Poussey was educated, world-travelled, and middle-class, but she died as any black inmate might, as a cipher crushed by a racist system. This season's smartest move was to interrogate empathy rather than treating it as a cure-all. Compassion is a resource, too. Who gets it and who gets cut off?

One of the most powerful story arcs concerns a character who had once (like many of the series's best characters) been

a minor figure, a bit of a joke: Blanca, of the feral, glowering affect and the unibrow, howling in the bathroom about "Diablo." This season we see Blanca's backstory, a satisfyingly pungent fable about a kind Dominican caregiver working for a monstrous rich white woman. When Blanca gets fed up and takes revenge—screwing Diablo, her gardener boyfriend, in front of her boss—her eyes flash black. In prison, she turns a punishment into a protest: forced by a guard to stand on a cafeteria table, she pees herself, unafraid to trigger disgust, becoming an icon of civic resistance. It's the same fury that lights up several other characters: Maria Ruiz, a Dominican mother whose sentence increases when Piper rats on her; the Puerto Rican Daya, once a dreamy artist, now abandoned by her guard-lover, her child lost in the foster system; and the African-American Taystee, Poussey's cheerful, bounce-back friend, who had worked for Caputo, getting close enough to see his betrayal firsthand. Poussey's death was a misery. It was also the story of Taystee's radicalization, and of the day that Daya got sick of seeing the other side of things.

"Orange Is the New Black" is not the only show to fold the Black Lives Matter movement into its narrative. The sitcoms "Black-ish" and "The Carmichael Show" did cross-generational takes. "Scandal" offered a healing fable; "Empire" rudely satirized the theatre of protest. In "Orange," this subject matter feels unavoidable, and it's used smartly to complicate the critique of capitalism that fuelled Season 3. But, if Poussey's death is realistic, it also casts a shadow backward. There's a sweet scene in Season 2 in which Taystee tickles Poussey affectionately, until she gasps, "I can't breathe." Does that make the story deeper or just more unbearable?

There are audience members who will always object on principle to getting inside the head of a character like the bigoted counsellor Healy, or the rapist Coates, or a neo-Nazi, as this show insists that you do. Empathy can be a bully's demand: Feel my pain. As Jesse Williams put it last week, in a galvanizing speech at the BET awards, "The burden of the brutalized is not to comfort the bystander." Yet the fourth season is most provocative when it refuses to resolve its emotional contradictions, by

showing how insufficient an apology can be, how despair can be as reasonable a response as faith. Every other finale offered viewers a communion: a Christmas pageant, a spiritual exorcism, a lake swim. This year's unifying vision, the riot, suggests that, when conditions are unbearable, "good behavior," love and kindness, are insufficient to achieve justice.

The finale's sharpest move was the way it anatomized the limited scope of white compassion: it's what allowed Caputo to describe Bayley as a "victim of circumstance" but forget to call Poussey's father until he was reminded. In one darkly hilarious sequence, another guard, Dixon, while driving Bayley home, offhandedly describes atrocities he committed in Afghanistan, including strangling a girl he'd had sex with. Bayley needs to "get over it," he advises, just as he had. "Now, I didn't see what happened exactly, but I know you," he adds warmly. "Sort of. You're a good guy! I'm a good guy. It was an accident."

It's true: Bayley did kill Poussey by accident. He also killed her because he's a poorly trained numbskull. He killed Poussey because he is part of a toxic culture of guards who grope Latinas during frisks, call black inmates "apes," and goad mentally ill women to fight. He's an innocent scapegoat who will get smeared as a "bad apple" by a corporation that off-loads its real crimes. He's a privileged white kid, whose colleagues don't blink before offering him a fake cover story, whose boss automatically identifies with him. He's a boy who committed the same crimes Poussey did (pot-smoking, trespassing on private property) and something she never did—stealing at work—without repercussions. She's a globe-trotter who speaks German; he's a sensitive small-town kid. But he didn't have to be a murderous racist to be both the tool and the beneficiary of a system slanted in his favor—just as she didn't have to be a "thug" to get choked.

And yet the season somehow manages to end with the individual. In the finale's last shot, set on the Brooklyn pier where Poussey will soon be arrested, she smiles at the camera, breaking the fourth wall. It's as if she were taking her place in the show's opening credits, a montage of the faces of real-life ex-prisoners, staring at us. The smile is a confrontation, and maybe a kind of pressure, too. ♦

## THE CURRENT CINEMA

# FAMILY TIES

*"Café Society" and "Life, Animated."*

BY ANTHONY LANE



*Jesse Eisenberg and Kristen Stewart in Woody Allen's new movie.*

THE NEW WOODY Allen film, "Café Society," is set in the nineteen-thirties—you know, that far-off land where movies were movies, cars were like boats, and a guy could wear a suit the color of peanut butter and still look good. Aside from a goggling glance at things to come, in "Sleeper" (1973), Allen's preference, as a time traveller, has been for an express ticket to the past. The trip hasn't always worked out, and Allen has been sage enough, in "Zelig" (1983) and "Midnight in Paris" (2011), to remind us how frail and treacherous history can be; and yet, more often than not, the destination has been a haven. Just look at "The Purple Rose of Cairo" (1985), "Radio Days" (1987), "Bullets Over Broadway" (1994), or the melodious "Sweet and Lowdown" (1999). Allen was born in 1935, which is why a movie like "Radio Days," though full of tall warm tales, feels less like a fantasy and more like a family scrapbook.

The hero of the new film is Bobby Dorfman (Jesse Eisenberg), who lives in the Bronx with his father, Marty (Ken Stott), and his mother, Rose (Jeannie Berlin). We first meet Bobby as he ar-

rives in Los Angeles, hoping to try his luck with his Uncle Phil. This is not such a bad idea. Phil Stern (Steve Carell) is a Hollywood agent, and we first meet him in a tuxedo, beside his pool, encircled by the beau monde of his trade. "I'm expecting a call from Ginger Rogers," he says. Phil is forever expecting, taking, or making calls, although we never see the stars to whom, or of whom, he chats—not because he's a fraud but because the movie gods of that epoch were and remain, to anyone of Allen's vintage, beyond human reckoning, and certainly beyond impersonation. Likewise, when Phil gives his assistant, Vonnie (Kristen Stewart), the task of showing his nephew the town, what she and Bobby do is stand outside the homes of stars and gaze. They might as well be staring at the night sky.

The one place we do see a celebrity is onscreen—at a movie theatre, where Bobby and Vonnie watch Barbara Stanwyck, in "Lady in Red" (1935). It's a perfect choice by Allen: not a great film but the sort of entertainment that—so we like to tell ourselves—swept smoothly into view on a regular basis. (And Stan-

wyck, in closeup, makes you catch your breath. That's not nostalgia; that's awe.) By now, needless to say, Bobby and Vonnie have grown close. Bobby is a klutz of the heart; rather than simply falling in love, he tumbles and trips—nicely caught in Eisenberg's voluble patter, dotted with hiccups of anxiety. But there is, as there always must be, a hitch. Vonnie is stepping out with someone else. Worse still, the stepping needs to be stealthy, because the someone is Uncle Phil.

Love triangles, like other forms of romantic geometry, are nothing new in Allen's films. What's different about "Café Society" is how casually the telling of the tale proceeds. It's not that Allen is going through the motions but that the motions no longer consume him. (That could imply the mellowing of the years, but consider Robert Bresson, who was Allen's age, in his early eighties, when he made "L'Argent" (1983)—a narrative as taut as piano wire.) The Phil-shaped twist, for instance, is introduced early, without a scrap of suspense, and, when we tack back East, to a subplot about Bobby's no-good brother, Ben (Corey Stoll), a hoodlum whose idea of friendly persuasion involves a pit of wet concrete, the mood of the movie barely skips a beat. People get shot in front of us, yet we are left with the shrugging sense that no harm was done. Later, with Ben's backing, Bobby returns to New York, and they open a night club. It thrives, attracting the same brand of tony folk who had once thronged around Phil's pool. A resourceful clan, the Dorfmans.

None of this, you could claim, is remotely credible, but "Café Society" does not seem like a confection or a skit. There is a gravity to it, and a tug of sadness, that cannot be accounted for by the story. In "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (1989), ostensibly a far more serious film, Allen says, of show business, that "it's worse than dog-eat-dog. It's dog-doesn't-return-other-dog's-phone-calls." In "Café Society," the hero says, of Hollywood, "It's really a kind of boring, nasty, dog-eat-dog industry." No kicker, no laugh. The performances, too, shy away from the nutty and the broad, and Carell, a master of the brave face, does a fine job of suggesting the strain behind Uncle Phil's bonhomie. Better still is Stewart, who, despite the girlish touches in her

outfits (headband, white ankle socks with strappy sandals), reveals a woman veiled in ruefulness, and her final moments, in which Vonnies muses on paths both taken and spurned, are a lovely act of suspension, done without a word.

If this film has a secret, it dwells in the cinematography—by Vittorio Storaro, no less, who shot “The Conformist,” “Last Tango in Paris,” and “Apocalypse Now.” He worked with Allen on a segment of “New York Stories” (1989), but “Café Society” marks their first full-length collaboration, and the result is ravishing to behold—more so, I think, than any Allen picture since Gordon Willis filmed “Manhattan” in black-and-white. No one has delved more fruitfully than Storaro into the depths of color, exploring its contribution to political and physical extremes, and you could argue that Allen should have summoned him sooner, to chart Cate Blanchett’s prostration in “Blue Jasmine” (2013). Is “Café Society” too slight an occasion for Storaro’s inquiring art? Maybe so, yet there are scenes here—particularly the interiors, in Phil’s office, in the bar where he takes Vonnies on the sly, and in the lowly apartment where Bobby cooks her a dinner for which she doesn’t show—that burn almost painfully with Woody Allen’s yearning for the past. It lies there glowing, as recognizable as a movie star and as homely as a hearth, forever out of reach.

**T**HE SUBJECT OF “Life, Animated,” a new documentary directed by Roger Ross Williams, is Owen Suskind, who is now twenty-five years old. In the early nineteen-nineties,

when Owen was three, he began to withdraw into himself. Neither his motor skills nor his powers of speech were functioning as they should. The change was so rapid as to leave his parents—Ron Suskind, then a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, and his wife, Cornelia—profoundly alarmed. They seemed to be losing the Owen they knew. In Ron’s words, “Someone kidnapped our son.”

They consulted a specialist, who diagnosed autism. The prospects of retrieving Owen, as it were, or of assuaging his condition in any substantial way, were arid. Then—“a year along, into his silence,” as Ron puts it—the family was watching a video of Disney’s “The Little Mermaid.” Suddenly, Owen spoke, repeating the villain’s words: “Just your voice.” Of all the lines in all the movies in all the world, he went for those. A doctor, however, dampened hopes by identifying a case of echolalia—in psychiatric terms, a parroting of sounds that carries no weight of meaning. Cut to the ninth birthday of Walter, Owen’s older brother, when Owen, having talked for four years in what Ron describes as “gibberish,” came into the kitchen and announced, “Walter doesn’t want to grow up, like Mowgli or Peter Pan.”

Only the chilliest viewer could watch the Suskinds recalling this event and not share in their astonishment and joy. Added to that was the strange realization that Disney was not an escape or a palliative for Owen but his principal tool for connecting with experience—making sense of it rather than feeling overwhelmed or mobbed.

(In itself, his addiction to Disney films, plus his knack for learning them by heart, is not unusual. Any frazzled parent in the era of “Frozen” will confirm as much.) Often, he was drawn less to heroes than to sidekicks, such as Baloo, in “The Jungle Book,” or the cranky Iago, in “Aladdin,” even devising a Land of the Lost Sidekicks, with himself as their appointed protector. He wanted to help the helpers.

Owen has made immense progress, to which “Life, Animated” is a stirring tribute, yet it leaves a trail of questions unanswered or unasked. How many children with autism find a particular template, in the way that Owen found Disney, and, without such a model, are they more likely to be locked in? Would a kid bereft of the unstinting love, the intellectual curiosity, and the worldly means of the Suskinds be able to follow Owen’s course? Then, there are larger and more uneasy conundrums: You wonder how this film affects the cultural accusations that have long been levelled against Disney—that the products charm and infantilize one generation after another, offering a vision of life that is soluble and simplified to a fault. Does the story of Owen require us to retract that charge? At one point, with the Suskind boys grown up, Walter gently explains to his brother how people in love like to kiss. “They don’t just use their lips, they use their—?” Walter asks. Pause. “They use their feelings,” Owen replies. The other Walt would be proud. ♦

**NEWYORKER.COM**

Richard Brody blogs about movies.

THE NEW YORKER IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF ADVANCE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS INC. COPYRIGHT ©2016 CONDÉ NAST. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

VOLUME XCII, NO. 21, July 11 & 18, 2016. THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028792X) is published weekly (except for five combined issues: February 8 & 15, June 6 & 13, July 11 & 18, August 8 & 15, and December 19 & 26) by Condé Nast, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: Condé Nast, 1 World Trade Center, New York, NY 10007. Elizabeth Hughes, publisher, chief revenue officer; Risa Aronson, associate publisher advertising; James Guilfoyle, director of finance and business operations; Fabio Bertoni, general counsel. Condé Nast: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman emeritus; Charles H. Townsend, chairman; Robert A. Sauerberg, Jr., president & chief executive officer; David E. Geithner, chief financial officer; Jill Bright, chief administrative officer. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. 123242885-RT0001.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE NEW YORKER, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684. FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, ADJUSTMENTS, OR BACK ISSUE INQUIRIES: Please write to The New Yorker, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684, call (800) 825-2510, or e-mail [subscriptions@newyorker.com](mailto:subscriptions@newyorker.com). Please give both new and old addresses as printed on most recent label. Subscribers: If the Post Office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. If during your subscription term or up to one year after the magazine becomes undeliverable, you are ever dissatisfied with your subscription, let us know. You will receive a full refund on all unmailed issues. First copy of new subscription will be mailed within four weeks after receipt of order. For advertising inquiries, please call Risa Aronson at (212) 286-4068. For submission guidelines, please refer to our Web site, [www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com). Address all editorial, business, and production correspondence to The New Yorker, 1 World Trade Center, New York, NY 10007. For cover reprints, please call (800) 897-8666, or e-mail [covers@cartoonbank.com](mailto:covers@cartoonbank.com). For permissions and reprint requests, please call (212) 630-5656 or fax requests to (212) 630-5883. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The New Yorker’s name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. Visit us online at [www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com). To subscribe to other Condé Nast magazines, visit [www.condenast.com](http://www.condenast.com). Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services that we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information, please advise us at P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037 0684 or call (800) 825-2510.

THE NEW YORKER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RETURN OR LOSS OF, OR FOR DAMAGE OR ANY OTHER INJURY TO, UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, UNSOLICITED ART WORK (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND TRANSPARENCIES), OR ANY OTHER UNSOLICITED MATERIALS. THOSE SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ART WORK, OR OTHER MATERIALS FOR CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT SEND ORIGINALS, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE NEW YORKER IN WRITING.



## 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 David Sipress, must be received by Sunday, July 17th. The finalists in the June 27th contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the August 1st issue. Anyone age thirteen or older can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit [contest.newyorker.com](http://contest.newyorker.com).*

### THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

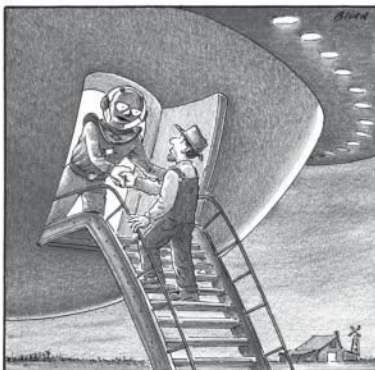


SIPRESS

“

”

### THE FINALISTS



*“We said we would return when Cleveland won a championship.”*

Thomas Fox, Houston, Texas

*“You voted Leave, didn't you?”*

Chris Mills, Washington, D.C.

*“What happens on Vega stays on Vega.”*

Alex Dering, Brooklyn, N.Y.

### THE WINNING CAPTION



*“You're in his blind spot.”*

Joey Narain, Bloomfield, N.J.

# GREECE

ALL TIME CLASSIC

MYKONOS

**WELCOME HOME**

[www.visitgreece.gr](http://www.visitgreece.gr)

GREECE

MAKE YOUR NEXT DARING MOVE.  
INTRODUCING THE FIRST-EVER XT5.



STYLE MADE VERSATILE.  
[CADILLAC.COM/XT5](http://CADILLAC.COM/XT5)



*Cadillac*

DARE GREATLY