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Energieia

Spring 2015

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Light

contents

Terence Washington	7	<i>6:15</i>
Max Anthony	9	<i>A Science of Frivolity</i>
Michael Van Wie Jr.	10	<i>The Second Man</i> <i>originally by Aloysius Bertrand</i>
Casey Morris	15	<i>Before the Rain</i>
Thomas Magnette	16	<i>Late Sunday Happy Hour</i>
Sebastian Abella	18	<i>To My Son</i> <i>originally by Miguel Hernandez</i>
Erik Neave	23	<i>To Know the Joy of Leaving</i>
Andrew Gudgel	25	<i>Others Will See</i>
	33	<i>Outside Waldo, Ohio</i>
Ely Fish	27	<i>Miracle Machine</i>
Eva Brann	34	<i>Teachers and Students;</i> <i>Intimate Distance</i>
Daniel Belshaw	48	<i>Red Annapolis</i>
James Connors	51	<i>Energeia</i>

artwork

Zaw Maw	6	<i>Central Train Station- Yangon, Burma</i>
Elizabeth Janthey	14	<i>The Binding of Isaac</i>
Jennifer Ongley	22	<i>Back</i>
James Connors	26	<i>Shroud System, Indian Creek</i>
	47	<i>Rock Salt, Geneseo</i>
	55	<i>Synthetic Arrangement, Buffalo</i>
Elizabeth Wooten	32	<i>The Crossing</i>
Jakub Piven	50	<i>Untitled</i>



Central Train Station - Yangon, Burma/ *Zaw Maw*

6:15

Terence Washington

One day you open your eyes beneath a dark window. In fact, you often wake before the streets do, but this day, instead of lying in bed watching last night's highlights, waiting for it to be an okay hour to be awake, you choose to get up and go outside. You make some of the first prints in the snow and see a new and cute dog-walker, but soon your prints get filled in and you avoid the walker, not wanting to impinge on a routine which must always have been going on in the years you spent dawns sleeping.

People of a certain age or comportment wake up early so they can get the jump on obligation and diversion. There is no hurrying before sunup. Ambling has yet to be coming or going. Most people walking around now are already where they want to be. After grabbing coffee beans you walk home shivering, thinking of how well you can see certain things when the promise of light isn't yet fulfilled. At a certain hour people seem more authentic and the world is quieter in a way that is and is not related to sound.

Starting the water, you pull down what you realize is your favorite mug and resolve to wake early, or maybe on time, more often. The sun rises, but you don't have to watch: it's the hour, not necessarily the sight, that bewitches. You reflect, with regret only at first, on all those quiet mornings you could have spent truly alone. For now, you sit and listen to yourself. It dawns on you how sad it is how long you'd wished to wake after the world had grown too loud for you to hear.

A Science of Frivolity

Max Anthony

Anthropologists suggest cooking food permitted man's brain to grow and his stomach to shrink. But will they suspect the first flesh cooked was probably human?

You say life begins at conception. But when does conception occur? At that height of man's endeavors or in the sighing that follows?

"We": the apotheosis of the insincere.

Would that the Doomsday Clock run like the Cuckoo.

The Eighth Commandment is clearly meant for women.
For the only false witness one could bear is a child.

To those who say "real life": Learn not to employ degrading adjectives.

Sankt Max

Le Deuxieme Homme

Aloysius Bertrand

Enfer! — Enfer et paradis! — cris de désespoir! cris de joie! — blasphemes des réprouvés! concerts des élus! — âmes des morts, sembables aux chênes de la montagne déracinés par les demons! âmes des morts, sembables aux fleurs de la vallée cueillies par les anges.

Soleil, firmament, terre et homme, tout avait commence, tout avait fini. Une voix secoua le néant. — «Soleil? appela cette voix, du seuil de la radieuse Jérusalem. — Soleil? répétèrent les échos de l'inconsolable Josaphat.» — Et le soleil ouvrit ses cils d'or sur le chaos des mondes.

Mais le firmament pendait comme un lambeau d'étendard. — «Firmament? appela cette voix, du seuil de la radieuse Jérusalem. — Firmament? répétèrent les échos de l'inconsolable Josaphat.» Et le firmament déroula aux vents ses plis de pourpre et d'azur.

Mais la terre voguait à la derive, comme un navire foudroyé qui ne porte dans ses flancs que des cendres et des ossements. — «Terre? appela cette voix, du seuil de la radieuse Jérusalem. — Terre? répétèrent les échos de l'inconsolable Josaphat.» — Et la terre ayant jeté l'ancre, la nature s'assit, couronnée de fleurs, sous le porche des montagnes aux cent mille colonnes.

The Second Man

translated by Michael Van Wie Jr.

Hell! — Hell and Heaven! — Cries of despair! Cries of joy! — Blasphemies from the reprobate! Concerts from the elect! — Souls of the dead, seeming like oaks of the mountain uprooted by the demons! Souls of the dead, seeming like flowers of the valley plucked by the angels.

Sun, sky, earth, man, all had begun, all had ended. A voice shook the void. "Sun?" the voice called, from the threshold of the Heavenly Jerusalem. "Sun?" repeated the echoes of the inconsolable Jehoshaphat. — And the sun opened its golden eyelashes upon the chaos of the cosmos.

But the sky was hanging like a tatter of a battle standard. "Sky?" the voice called, from the threshold of the Heavenly Jerusalem. "Sky?" repeated the echoes of the inconsolable Jehoshaphat. And the sky unfurled with the winds its folds of burgundy and azure.

But the earth was flotsam in the current, like a devastated ship which bears within its hull only char and bones. "Earth?" the voice called, from the threshold of the Heavenly Jerusalem. "Earth?" repeated the echoes of the inconsolable Jehoshaphat. And the earth having been tossed its anchor, nature sat down, crowned with flowers, beneath the porch of mountains with a hundred

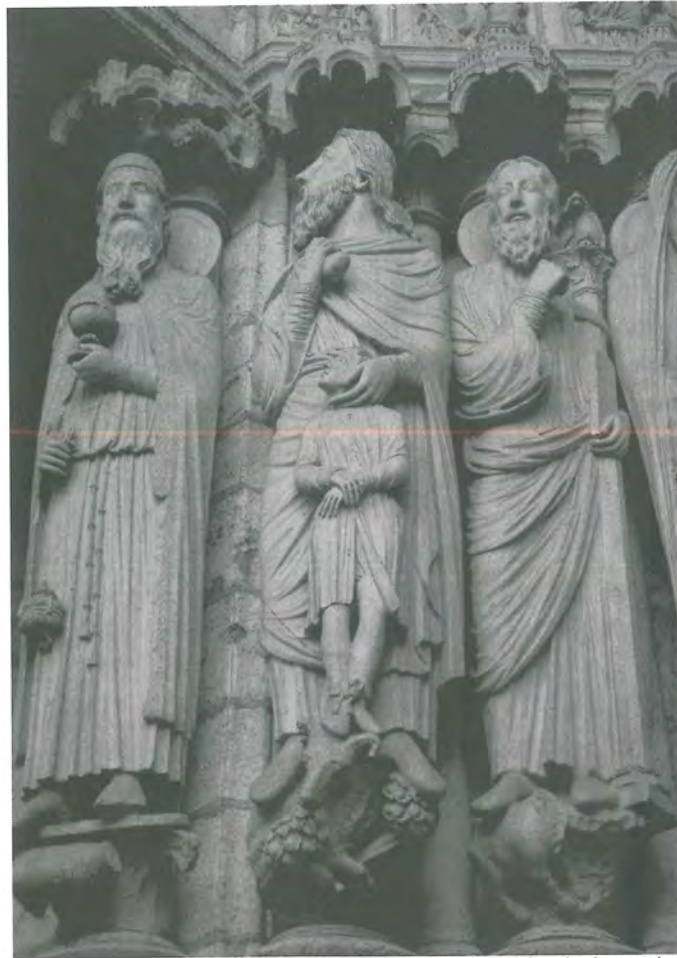
Mais l'homme manquait à la création, et tristes étaient la terre et la nature, l'une de l'absence de son roi, l'autre de l'absence de son époux. — «Homme? appela cette voix, du seuil de la radieuse Jérusalem. — Homme? répétèrent les échos de l'inconsolable Josaphat.» Et l'hymne de délivrance et de grâces ne brisa point le sceau dont la mort avait plombé les lèvres de l'homme endormi pour l'éternité dans le lit du sépulcre.

«Ainsi soit-il! dit cette voix, et le seuil de la radieuse Jérusalem se voila de deux sombres ailes. — Ainsi soit-il! Répétèrent les échos, et l'inconsolable Josaphat se remit à pleurer.» — Et la trompette de l'archange sonna d'abîme en abîme, tandis que tout croulait avec un fracas et une ruine immense: le firmament, la terre et le soleil, faute de l'homme, cette pierre angulaire de la création!

thousand columns.

But man was missing from creation, and sad were the earth and nature, the former lacking its king, the latter lacking its spouse. "Man?" the voice called, from the threshold of the Heavenly Jerusalem. "Man?" repeated the echoes of the inconsolable Jehoshaphat. And the hymn of salvation and grace did not break the seal with which death had bound the lips of man, asleep for eternity in the bed of the sepulcher.

"So be it!" said the voice, and the threshold of the Heavenly Jerusalem covered itself with two dark wings. "So be it!" repeated the echoes, and the inconsolable Jehoshaphat was given to weeping again. And the archangel's trumpet sounded from abyss to abyss, while everything collapsed with a din and immense devastation: the sky, the earth, and the sun, from the sin of man, that cornerstone of creation!



The Binding of Isaac/ *Elizabeth Janthey*

Before the Rain

Casey Morris

At College Creek

A little after seven, the water rests
and swills the blue shadows
of cattails and mudflat grass

a rough embrace, it seems
along the banks, of shadows
summer water and their faint race

through the parting lilies
rowing through flies whose rising
will only be remembered as rain.

Late Sunday Happy Hour

Thomas Magnette

Musical caffeine bounces off the brass and
tv lights drown out the streetlights.
In the early night music videos and the Patriots game
are staring back in the picture window pane.
My head scans clockwise the time telling of
empty highball glasses, fresh faces, brawls.

Sammy of Sammy, Don, Chip and Matt,
at the popular table,
holds brown bottled laughter of being the
largest and the loudest but not the baldest.
He's always telling the same story from the eighties
where he's the punchline somewhere near Borderline.
Tall Don turns away and laughs.

Meanwhile, romantic scruffy brown-haired
hipsters, I hope unnoticed, sitting on barstools
beside the window trade thick rimmed glances
beside sweaty blushed vodka cocktails.
Accidental brushings of boots catch the
opposite hems on rolled chinos.

Tonight's fifty year old shy guy from Ohio
stares at the New England versus Chicago
in Levis and a college tee, hoping to see
someone noticing him nursing a Bud heavy,
wondering whether a fumble or an interception's
even possible by ten but
someone's always ready early on a Sunday.

Left of the register, under the speakers in their spot,
two vodka sodas, one with a splash, occasionally speak
into each others' ear where it's too loud to hear.
They're holding hands on top of the bar and
Neiman Marcus intrudes, running his mouth off
but splash guy is too polite to brush him off.
Vodka smiles but looks away and rolls his eyes.

In the center, leaning on draft taps, I watch this world
across the bar top.
In the window my red hat and concealed eyes reflect
back at me.

A Mi Hijo

Miguel Hernandez

Te has negado a cerrar los ojos, muerto mío,
abiertos ante el cielo como dos golondrinas:
su color coronado de junios, ya es rocío
alejándose a ciertas regiones matutinas.

Hoy, que es un día como bajo la tierra, oscuro,
como bajo la tierra, lluvioso, despoblado,
con la humedad sin sol de mi cuerpo futuro,
como bajo la tierra quiero haberte enterrado.

Desde que tú eres muerto no alientan las mañanas,
al fuego arrebatadas de tus ojos solares:
precipitado octubre contra nuestras ventanas,
diste paso al otoño y anocheció los mares.

Te ha devorado el sol, rival único y hondo
y la remota sombra que te lanzó encendido;
te empuja luz abajo llevándote hasta el fondo,
tragándote; y es como si no hubieras nacido.

Diez meses en la luz, redondeando el cielo,
sol muerto, anochecido, sepultado, eclipsado.
Sin pasar por el día se marchitó tu pelo;
atardecó tu carne con el alba en un lado.

El pájaro pregunta por ti, cuerpo al oriente,
carne naciente al alba y al júbilo precisa;
niño que sólo supo reír, tan largamente,
que sólo ciertas flores mueren con tu sonrisa.

To My Son

translated by Sebastian Abella

You have refused to close your eyes, my dead one,
they are open before the skies like two swallows:
Their June-crowned hue is already dew,
and distances themselves to certain regions of the morning.

Today, like a day under the earth, dark,
like under the earth, drenched in rain, unpopulated,
with humidity that lacks the sunlight of my future body,
like under the earth, I want to have buried you.

Since you have died, the mornings do not animate
to the impetuous fire of your sun-like eyes:
October headlong against our windows,
you gave way to autumn and made the seas into dusk.

You became devoured by the sun, your only rival and deep
and the distant shadow that flung you, alight;
The light pushes you from below, taking you to the depths,
Swallowing you whole; it is as though you were never born.

Ten months in the light, circling the sky,
Dead sun, made to dusk, buried, eclipsed.
Without passing through the day your hair has faded;
your flesh has turned to evening with dawn by the side.

The bird asks for you, body towards East,
nascent flesh to dawn and to a particular joy;
Boy that knew only how to laugh, for so long,
that only certain flowers die with your smile.

Ausente, ausente, ausente como la golondrina,
ave estival que esquivaba vivir al pie del hielo:
golondrina que a poco de abrir la pluma fina,
naufraga en las tijeras enemigas del vuelo.

Flor que no fue capaz de endurecer los dientes,
de llegar al más leve signo de la fiereza.
Vida como una hoja de labios incipientes,
hoja que se desliza cuando a sonar empieza.

Los consejos del mar de nada te han valido...
Vengo de dar a un tierno sol una puñalada,
de enterrar un pedazo de pan en el olvido,
de echar sobre unos ojos un puñado de nada.

Verde, rojo, moreno: verde, azul y dorado;
los latentes colores de la vida, los huertos,
el centro de las flores a tus pies destinado,
de oscuros negros tristes, de graves blancos yertos.

Mujer arrinconada: mira que ya es de día.
(¡Ay, ojos sin poniente por siempre en la alborada!)
Pero en tu vientre, pero en tus ojos, mujer mía,
la noche continúa cayendo desolada.

Absent, absent, absent like the swallow
Summer bird that refrains from living at the foot of ice:
Swallow that, soon after opening its fine plumage,
is shipwrecked on the enemy scissors of its flight.

Flower that was incapable of strengthening its teeth,
of reaching the faintest indication of fierceness.
Life like a leaf with nascent lips,
Leaf which slips away when it begins to sound.

The advice from the sea has been useless to you...
I return from stabbing the tender sun
from burying a piece of bread into oblivion,
to cast upon your eyes a handful of nothing.

Green, red, brown: Green, blue and gold.
The veiled colors of life, the orchard
the center of the flowers by your destined feet
of sad dark-blacks, of solemn frozen-whites.

Abandoned woman, look, it is now day.
(Oh, eyes without setting into dawn!)
But in your womb, but in your eyes, my woman,
the night continues to fall into desolation.



Back/ Jennifer Ongley

To Know the Joy of Leaving

Erik Neave

To know the joy of leaving—flesh and blood
On flesh and blood—between the murmuring tongues,
Before the song is buried in thunder,
Takes the gentle burden of tired offspring
Filling the cradle of cause and result;
Eyelids heavy, set on sleep, mimicking
Pizzicato cries and swells of close chords
Sound, diminished, down the skeletal hall
Emptied of life, a ghost of the future.

(When clapped hands might carry grateful bodies
Into the cavernous foyer for tea
And tan coffee and pleasant, hushed talk
And force the ghost to shuffle, wind-like
And slip slow between civilised whispers
And into the cold corpse of now... and now...)

And now each quivering step on matte ice
Sends memory to its mirror image.
Like summer rain and white-washed nights converge,
Toying with memory.
Each season demands absolute regard,
A quartet of individual voice
Legato as the sliding, icy steps.
Stones to home and warm, silent midnight—a
Squirming torso bending towards the darkness,
The haze, or the vague routine of childhood
Guiding the dying present to dead past.
One hears, at last, the palm-muted ballad
Of flesh and blood on flesh and blood leaving

Overflowing auditoriums then,
For a vacant, translucent stillness now.
A stillness that fills the whole unended song with
joy.

Others Will See (For WW)

Andrew Gudge

He was right even though he was wrong.
He did not return; the body to dust
And the soul into air disappearing.
His like the nation ne'er will see again,
For he was a creature of his times:
The bloody war, the soldiers' death rattles
Breathed out as he patiently penned
Letters home on their behalf. Then there came
The swelling chorus of a revived nation
Stretching from sea to shining sea,
Which like he and his body, found power
And exaltation in its sinew and
Spit and muscle and seed and lust for life.
But as predicted, in latter days did
Come other men who rode the ferry as
He once had, gazing at Manhattan shores
While the sun came up and the gulls wheeled
Overhead, and all unaware of him
Who rode before, who chanted his strong chants
In homage to life and America.



Shroud System, Indian Creek/ *James Connors*

The Miracle Machine

Ely Fish

The miracle machine grips you by the head. It whirs and comes alive. In your eyes, lights flash. In your ears, beeps play.

You are on a beach.

The sky is a dull, rainy grey, and it seems to you it should be chilly, though you feel neither cold nor hot. The waves crash and foam. Out at sea, a storm rages, and lightning strikes the horizon. A few droplets of rain fall on you, but you feel no wetness. In fact, you feel nothing at all.

There is no one else on the beach, though it seems there might have been, once. You see the empty expanse of shoreline stretch off to infinity in both directions. Behind you are silent palm trees. The sand looks wet and clumped, but you don't feel it. The rain drips, and the miracle machine beeps and flashes.

You lie down on the sand and stare up at the sky. Its grey is too perfect, too uniform. You lift your arms above you. They are arms, and they are yours, but they don't look like yours, or anyone's. They tell you nothing about who you are. The machine beeps and flashes, and none of this surprises you.

You feel bored, so you make a fist, holding within it the sky itself. You imagine a very different scene, and fling this sky off into the distance. Obediently, it slides away, revealing the darkness of night and the growling rage of a storm that is closing in on the shore. The rain stabs the sand around you. You rise, seeing and hearing lightning strike again and again out in the depths of the unending sea. The flashes illuminate a rogue wave, building in strength and intensity. And for a moment, you are pleased. This world you have created, or that has been created for you, is well rendered. You watch the wave grow and rush towards you. A flash of light and it is miles off. Another and it is half a mile. Another and it is twenty feet away and fifty feet high, the whitecap like great teeth beckoning you into the wave's gaping mouth. It is beautiful.

But the idea of being swallowed annoys you. So you push the wave off and toss away the whole scene. Somewhere far away, the machine whirs loudly, as if pleased.

You make a bright day. The sky is a solid chunk of blue, the sun not quite intense enough to burn the retinas of your mind's eye. You throw in seagulls, a handful of clouds. You pull the ground up from beneath you a hundred feet, forming a cliff face, and leap off, snapping your fingers to freeze yourself in midair in the instant before you can touch the water's surface. Hanging above the frozen sea, you chuckle, and then you unfreeze, falling into

the liquid that should feel like something but doesn't.

Floating in the lonely sea, you suddenly feel bored again. You are struck by a certain fuzziness, and silly questions like "who are you" and "where are you" and "what's the point" make themselves known. But these questions are irrelevant, both to you and to the miracle machine – its beeps and clicks tell you that you need to end this boredom, and end it fast. So you pull a reverse-leap out of the water, sliding the cliff back down simultaneously, and land on even ground, doing a bow for no one in particular.

You decide this place needs people. So you make some.

First, a family: Mother, Father, Daughter, Son. You give them lives as best you are able. The females tan. The mother tells her daughter about shopping in Paris; the daughter is enchanted, and dreams of the Sienne. The father and son toss a football around, the father telling the son about how to get girls, and the son imagining a stadium and a thousand screaming fans.

You know you can't be a part of this, so you float above their heads, and decide one family isn't enough. So you throw down another, then a few more. They congregate and bask in the heat and talk about nothing and gossip about everyone.

Who are you?

You can't stop. You tear down the trees, build a hotel, and fill it with people – businessmen, shady characters, vapid fools, sad folk, and their families, with vast sums of money in tow. You give them things. Bulldozers tear up the palms, and suddenly there's a casino with dinging slots and the illusion of possibilities. Then there's a theme park with the highest and fastest roller coasters in this or any world, with an entrance price in the hundreds of dollars. ATVs are available to rent. Boats take people tubing or parasailing. Coral reefs beckon scuba divers, itching to explore...

Who are you?

A superhighway is built. People race to get here at a hundred miles per hour, stay an instant, and leave at the same speed. An airport makes driving obsolete. More hotels spring up, bringing more people. And then, you realize that this place has moved beyond your control, and that you feel empty and you don't know what this is or who you are but you know that you need to feel something. Anything.

You become enraged.

So you call forth a tsunami, a hundred times the size and strength of the rogue wave you stared down. You float higher and higher in the sky until you are miles above the fray. And you watch.

A thousand heads turn. No one moves. No one screams.

The miracle machine beeps and flashes. And then a loud buzz sounds. The beach melts away. Your eyes open. It is over.

You are alone in your room, on your bed, back in your body. Your walls are yours, but they seem foreign. Your heart beats, but you'd forgotten you had one. Your body aches, but it seems like someone else's pain. You feel as though you have woken from a dream, but you do not feel refreshed. You feel only longing.

The electrodes retract from your temples, and the wires slither back into the body of the miracle machine.

You sleep. Tomorrow, it will take you again.



The Crossing/ Elizabeth Wootten

Outside Waldo, Ohio

Andrew Gudgel

The trees their gnarled hands held up
Hoping to seize handfuls of autumn sky,
Whose afternoon blue shaded up beyond
The vision of bees and men and into
The realm of angels.

The sun, only four fingers now above
The horizon, its light pale and heatless,
Cast corn-stalk shadows like a picket fence
For miles down the road.

In cardinal directions, lonely crows
cawed over and over, seeking solace,
Permission or maybe absolution,
In a land made sere and biblical,
All the way to the edge of the world.

Teachers and Students: Intimate Distance

Eva Brann

There's something strange about our world, about its things, events, people. They reach us in two ways: real and unreal, genuine and fake, true and false, actual and virtual. It's surely the point of a real "higher" education to help us make out which is which, how they get entangled, switch sides, complement each other and, last but not least, how to live in this dual world and even get a – livable – living out of it.

A witty colleague of mine used to say that at St. John's we're always hunting down the primal amoeba. It's quite true – a genuine education does a lot of tracking down and tracing back: delving deep into the hidden bases of things, following them back to their first beginnings. This passion for digging down and finding out holds us together. It shapes the relation between us teachers and our students. Succinctly put, we are all in it together – teachers, students, and a great third element: our Program. We form – all of us together – a "community of learning." Such a community has to be small, face-to-face, day-by-day. There are large, virtual connectivities in our world that do useful things (such as on-line courses with ten-thousand takers), but as communities of learning, they are illusionistic irrealties.

So the three elements of our college, a real community of learning, are the Program, the teachers, the students – mentioned last, but really first, because they are the reason for our existence. Why? Because there can be students without teachers, but a studentless teacher? That would be like a mute singer – a pathetic urgency.

And yet I'll soon want to say that we really aren't teachers, and therefore call ourselves "tutors" (of which more below), and that our students don't just study. (I'm not thinking of our many distinctive extracurricular activities, from major-league croquet to small-sloop sailing in Annapolis, and in Santa Fe, "search and rescue" operations and every kind of outdoor activity.) I mean that our students aren't supposed to study in the sense of now and then, at examination time "hitting the books" (as they used to say), which sounds like a deliberately caused traffic accident. We hope rather that they will read steadily, but put down the book often to look up and think by themselves, or find their friends to talk with about what they've absorbed – or, for that matter, take a tutor to lunch for conversation (which is free; no one ever went to a college dining hall for the gourmet experience, yet tutors are delighted to be asked).

Even the first element that makes us one, the Program, is not a rigid prescription but a way to freedom: the relief from blind choices and sign-up anxieties, the security in having the grounding to do anything whatsoever in life, and the comfort of

having classmates with whom to share discoveries and work out problems. We are great believers in thinking by oneself and studying together – both in turn.

Footnotes are where writers park matter too close to their hearts to be left out, but perhaps for the moment skippable by the intended reader. I shall put in a footnote what I think of as the main characteristics (not the actual content) of the St. John's Program.* (Footnote on pg. 44)

You can see that I've said mostly what we are not; human ways that are seriously significant are often, to begin with, best described from the outside in, from what they avoid and resist, and so I'll go on like that for a little more.

We, the faculty, call ourselves "tutors" to avoid the appellation, standard for colleges, of "professors." Professors have certain properties we disown: They are trained in a profession, that of scholarship and research, and are expert in a sub-part of it, their specialty. Their duty is to train their students in the methods, and to impart to them the material, in which they are competent authorities. Oddly enough, they usually have no training in teaching, on the assumption (for which I actually have a lot of sympathy) that if you know "your subject" really well, are engaged in "original research" in it, and have some residual enthusiasm for it, you will infuse your expertise into your students.

As a result a professor's relation to undergraduate students labors under a certain built-in awkwardness and even liability. Professors are far more learned in their area than are their students and so, rightly, assume superior standing. But they are also teachers who, in order to be effective, need to be on a level, on a human equality, with their pupils. It is not easy to find the right tone between mature superiority and human togetherness. The danger of dominance is great; what's more, sometimes it is exactly what students want: to be told things, to be molded. But the more they want it, the more fraught with delicacy, even embarrassment, the relation must be.

A tutor has a different – I think a very different – relation to students. The word "tutor" is Latin and means a watcher-over, a guardian. At our college, the teachers are tutors who protect the students' learning – even from the tutors themselves. They try not to dominate the students' thinking but to elicit it by asking many pertinent questions and then really participating in the resulting dialogue – not *as if* the participants are equal but because they *are* equal – equal as thinking, feeling, bottomlessly mysterious and inexhaustibly interesting human beings.

Here are the two dominations from which we most strenuously abstain: political and personal. A teacher who perverts occasions for learning into opportunities for propaganda is either naively or cannily corrupt; a teacher who exploits a student's

devotion for personal use is just plain iniquitous. It's not that students may not ask our advice or, in a limited way, regard us as models; in fact no faculty could ask for more appreciative respect than we get from our students and alumni. (By "our" students I mean the students at our college. – I've rarely heard a colleague speak of the personal property called "my student.")

Not being professors makes all sorts of additional difference here: We are not professionals of knowledge but amateurs of learning: Amateur means "lover" – that is, a lover of learning who is on the way, not at the end. All of us have acquired a small file of information and a sufficient fund of knowledge – enough to help our students in the most empathetic way through a demanding Program (one that has in it not the ghost of a gut course). But much of what we learned in pursuit of our advanced degrees is out of commission here: We all begin at the beginning to learn the same material as the students. We, as do they, advance in the Program, but there is no such thing as mastering it; its matter is too deep and too inexhaustible. Thus we are, in some significant sense, viewed from the heights of real knowledge, always on a level with our students – and so the awkwardness of inequality ceases. It takes our freshmen a little while to be really persuaded that their tutors are waiting for them to articulate their own thoughts, the fruit of their studies (and their lives), and that when their teachers speak, they're not talking at them but with them. One way to put

this is as a paradox: We're non-teaching teachers.

So now I'll try to delineate the relation of students and tutors from the inside out. But the more I think about it, the more it seems that this relation is really pervasively paradoxical (but then, so are all humanly significant matters). By "paradoxical" I don't mean evasively messy, or elusively murky. Not at all: paradoxes can state crisply the way things really are, which always includes a bit of their opposite. So here are five rubrics that seem to me to describe our tutor's, our non-teaching teacher's relation to our students.

1. Unequal Equality
2. Formal Closeness
3. Intimate Distance
4. Reticent Accessibility
5. Respectful Love

1. Unequal Equality: I've already said a good deal about that, but it is basic: Our whole school is basically egalitarian. Tutors have no ranks, students are not ranked. Competition has its place – in the gym. Thinking well requires a lot of high spirits, and speaking well surely involves the desire to shine – but not at each others' expense. Students don't do each other in so they can stand out; tutors don't out-do each other for academic bonuses (there aren't any). Students will have no success trying to impress the tutors; we have a good nose for pretense and don't like it. Tutors don't squash students with their magnificence; if

ever they do, our upperclass students go to the dean and complain: He or she "dominates." Basically, students and tutors are serious with each other and that precludes personal pretensions. What makes us serious is our willingness to face the depths and abysses broached by the Program of study. (One proof of living seriousness is finding a lot to laugh about, such as all-too-consistent conformities and irresistibly comical incongruities.) We approach these problems unequal in maturity and with different levels of learning and experience, but equal in the desire to deal with the question at hand and on the same level in the face of its depth. At least, that's how it works when we're at our best; we aren't – here's full disclosure – all the time.

2. Formal Closeness: This college observes a lot of customs, most for articulable reasons. One is that we call each other Ms. or Mr. – no first names (except in circumstances where strict observance is ridiculous). The reason is that we often converse about matters that touch us deeply, so that formal civility is an important shield against becoming personal in the wrong way. Those formal observances make possible what you might call a higher-level closeness: We can pierce surfaces without lacerating each other. Generally, tutors and students maintain these formalities, through which they can touch each other inoffensively, until Commencement. On that day it's first names and, for some of us, friendship for life.

3. Intimate Distance: For while at the college, tutors and students are not friends in a genuine sense. The essence of true friendship – there are wonderful books about this on the Program's reading list – is real reciprocity (equal give and take) and true mutuality (simultaneous esteem). How can tutors expect real reciprocity in intellectual guidance or students true mutuality of esteem? Tutors do, in fact, tend to know a lot more than students, and what's more, tutors are obligated to evaluate students. So their equality in inquiry and their esteem for each other as human beings sometimes has to recede before a clear and candid assessment by tutors of students' efforts and performances, including some pretty strong, tutorial words of what, by a euphemism, would be called encouragement. In other words, tutors must, on scheduled occasions, tell students what's what, which is not a mode of friendship. Thus a distance opens up. And yet there remains an intimacy – that of watchful care, of having the students' interest at heart. But that is not the only or chief sort of intimacy that a discreet distance makes permissible. The word intimacy comes from a Latin adjective, *intimus*, meaning "innermost," "most deeply within." What our books speak to us about is what is most internally ourselves. Especially when we are young, when we are most self-consciously involved with other people, we tend to think that we get really to know and be known by others from the inside through a revealing exchanges of personal confidences and by daring disclosures of secrets. But the intimacies of our

souls that are suitable to common learning leap past these privacies, that should be reserved for particular friends, to a common humanity. Yet everything concerning the human soul – including the perfectly legitimate question whether we have one – is delicate and requires a certain careful distance from each other in order to be approached together.

4. Reticent Accessibility: We tutors don't keep posted office hours: "Tuesday and Thursday from 3-4 p.m. and by appointment." We are available when needed, and not only in an office (many of us don't have one), but wherever on campus we can sit and talk. Put it this way: People in offices are official, and while the relation of students and tutors sometimes has a semi-official aspect, as in scheduled oral examinations or "don rags" (our evaluations), for the most part even these are not so much bureaucratic or administrative (which is a particularly powerful and, as it happens, unavoidable way of being unreal) as genuinely human ways of guarding learning. So tutors and students get together in spontaneous ways, not hedged around with protocols of hierarchy and officialdom. On the other hand, there are restraints on these relations. We, the tutors, cannot function as personal trainers of students, riding herd on their indiscipline, and even if we would, we couldn't because of the demands on us. And in fact, students are respectful of our time, and we of theirs. Nor are we mom-and-dad substitutes; much as we may in our hearts sympathize with our students' griefs

(which are much better known to us, even without telling, than they may know). We – students and teachers – contain our personal affairs below overt expression. Our students have a wonderful capacity, which has won my particular admiration, since it shows that the learning we do together has really taken: They exercise a thoughtful literacy in framing their most intimate feelings – of certainty or confusion, pride or guilt, triumph or grief; they communicate in those expressive terms, available to the beneficiaries of a real education, which make it possible to talk about anything, poignantly and yet without unwanted psychic touching. So in brief: Tutors and students are mutually accessible – but under restraint. And here's a bonus: A little loss in laid-back self-expression leads to a great gain in psychic intensity.

5. Respectful Love: Everything I've said so far about the relation between tutors and students really comes to this: There's a sort of love between us, real enough but well hedged by the realities of the situation. The best name, I think, for that sort of love is respect. "Respect" is yet another significant Latin word. "To respect" means "to look round at;" respect is thus a kind of wide-eyed regard – not a bold and intrusive stare but a guarding and guarded glance, a careful and caring attention. Our regard for each other is reciprocal, but it cannot help but be somewhat different in kind. First, as far as mere ocular looking, seeing appearances, goes – and such physical eyeing is an unavoidable aspect of all "respect" – the young are

just nicer to behold than their elders, and so far – this is a plain truth – we are in their debt (not to mention here the attendant dangers). But the young, our students, are works in progress while we, the tutors, are closer to works accomplished, and so they look up to us (and here too are dangers, already mentioned). Second, as far as genuine respect, the true regard we have for each other's being, is concerned, one difference is that each tutor knows quite a number of students while each student knows only a few tutors. So the tutors' loving regard is – perhaps – somewhat more distributed, the students' admiring respect somewhat more intense. On the other hand, we – perhaps – know better what to look for than they do and so our regard is more realistic. But when all is said and done, what is truly mutual is affectionate regard, respectful love, lasting a lifetime.

* I think four characteristics describe our Program: Greatness, Books, Tradition, Truth-Seeking, all closely interwoven.

Experts tell us that they've all four gone out of style among the young; that is why I want to sketch them out here. The experts are the folks who suppose that you find out what human beings think by instructing them to fill out questionnaires. I think that our students are practically defined by being unresponsive to jiggled pseudo-questions, the kind that have numbered or yes/no answers, because for-real questions, which take time and human back-and-forth to produce a consummation, are the main way of our college. So if you believe that such results about contemporary late adolescents are true, you'll believe anything.

Greatness. We, the tutors, the faculty, think that human works, particularly the kind called "texts," tapestries (like in "textile") woven of words, notes, symbols, come in gradable degrees of fineness: low-grade junk, passable mediocrity, unsurpassable greatness – and lots of unplaceable stuff. All human works, like the beings that produce them, can be interesting – appealingly or repellently fascinating. Nonetheless, we think that it's our pedagogic responsibility 1. to make out, by reading and thinking together, which is which and 2. to put into our Program mostly the works we think are the finest, the greatest. We are convinced – and this is emphatically not what is practiced much in universities – that since the world is full of lowness, banality, mediocrity, badness, and even evil, our students will have ample time to study and grapple with these later on. We are persuaded that just as those children live most competently in the world who experienced goodness at home, so those students will do best later who are amply provided in college with ideas of what is genuinely, desirable, great. For how can you "change" the world (the almost universal student desire except for the tragically misguided one of making a lot of money) if you don't know in what direction?

Books. Such matter is found in books, or as academics say, in texts of all sorts: verbal, musical, mathematical, even instructional (such as laboratory manuals). Great Books are not "delivery systems" for information (which is only informative when you already know what you're doing) but are brought about by a high art in which the how and the what are conjoined. They may come in any format – from real letters printed on solid paper to virtual texting on a translucent tablet (though, for all I care, a student may come to class, like Moses down from Mount Sinai, with engraved stone tablets) – as long as they have been well studied, have opened the mind for conversation, and are present on the table for ready reference.

Tradition. Who wants to live on the thin forefront of all that went into making the present, and so, ignorant of what's pushing from behind, be helplessly driven into a future not of their own making? We study "the tradition" – meaning the works that made modernity – not because they're old but because they're at work in our present. Not to experience the illumination to be gotten from this tradition is to live in the dullest and most dominating of all time-phases: the mere now.

Truth-Seeking. In most class-rooms in our country (I'm pretty sure) there's "correct" and "incorrect" for the hard sciences but not "true" and "false" in the squishy humanities. In these, where are raised questions of moral right and wrong, of esthetic beauty and ugliness, of human power or impotence, of first and last things, people shy away from asking: "Is what this author says true or not really true, truly beautiful or just elaborate, really penetrating or ultimately evasive?" We pursue a middle course: We stay away equally from delivering dogmas and from wishy-washy disengagement. We ask our students (as ourselves) to try to answer, to form their own opinion, but also to explain themselves to each other.



Rock Salt, Geneseo/ James Connors

Red Annapolis

Daniel Belshaw

There, below flushed clouds,
That are like fowl, as they perilously sit
In the sky's suspension,
Waiting to honorably discharge their creations,
The exorbitantly pink rays
Slashing through the atmosphere like branches,

My body, foot after foot,
Attempting to leave the courtyard behind
And my besieged, bedraggled senses
Floating away, like balloons, over the tops of the buildings,
My physical self too singleminded
To change course and recapture them.

When you walk at this hour,
The world is more gravitational than before.
Stand where you are, for just an instant,
And you will stand there as if forever, the pant legs
And the leather of your shoes the bark, and the shoot,
The rubber of your soles the stump, and the roots,
Not caring to get along.

And maybe, unmoving on the courtyard,
Someone in one of the Georgian houses across the street-
Would see my state, rush over out of pity, and pull me out of
the ground.

Like pulling a pin off a board, but that is unlikely.
And even if they saw me, through one of their windows,
They must leave for the brightness of their kitchen and,
Me, I would sink back into the courtyard.

But this collapse of movement probably will not take place.

Perhaps I am asking too much of this establishment that
calls itself the night, with a slightly cold temperature
And ten mileperhour winds working the late shift.
They are eyeing me from many places, waiting for my check.
I have not yet written it, for I am the man who
Orders drink after drink.

I have paid, hour after hour,
For additional stores of strength;
The temperature has been receptive to my desires,
The wind, less so; I think it wishes to get home,
Desperately, even.

But I am not finished with myself in this light,
And even if they kick me, I will simply spill out onto the street
And live a doubleday, smashing the signposts of time for my
own ends.



Untitled/ *Jakub Piven*

Energeia

James Connors

The title of this journal got me thinking about what 'energeia' might have to do with photography. What is photography? I want to say it is a formalization of vision. All photographs delineate, order, and preserve a particular visual moment. If vision itself is a way in which we receive the world, then photography delineates, orders, and preserves our reception of the world.

But what is the point? We see well enough on our own, right? We already formalize the world in our mind, so what does the extra processing of the photograph provide? Perhaps it is this: insight into the energeia of things around us. I am not sure what 'energeia' means, but Aristotle seems to urge us to say that the activity of our world is mixed. Think of boulders, bodies of water, flora and fauna. The work of these 'natural' beings consists simply in preserving themselves. This much is straightforward.

Of course, these are not the only things we encounter. The world is also full of art objects that some natural beings 'create' by combining, relocating, or repurposing other natural beings. Think of a hermit crab shell, a bird's nest, a hammer. These objects do not work to preserve themselves, but work for the goal of their creator.

There is a 'tension' lying dormant in what I am calling art objects. Their work for the creator is at odds with their former work as natural beings, which we could say they might 'rather be doing'. For instance, an ax is called into the service of chopping, but its wooden handle once worked for the sake of 'treeness' and it is to treeness that it owes everything (and similarly with the metal part). As the dead remnant of the tree it once sought to be, the ax handle now finds its woodenness humiliating. The tools we use are like mercenary soldiers with deeper affiliations elsewhere.

This might sound ridiculous, but perhaps less so if we try to 'see' beyond our own ends. Does the art object have a specific *energeia*? I'm not sure. If not then it is meaningless bastard matter. If so, does this *energeia* consist of its service to the creator, or the remnants of its natural being that continue to 'stay themselves' out of loyalty to their original form? Is it even our place to say? In a very real way, art objects are 'working overtime' serving many masters at once, and becoming exhausted all around us. This explains a range of phenomena in the class of plane crashes and nuclear meltdowns, as well as when my pencil lead breaks.

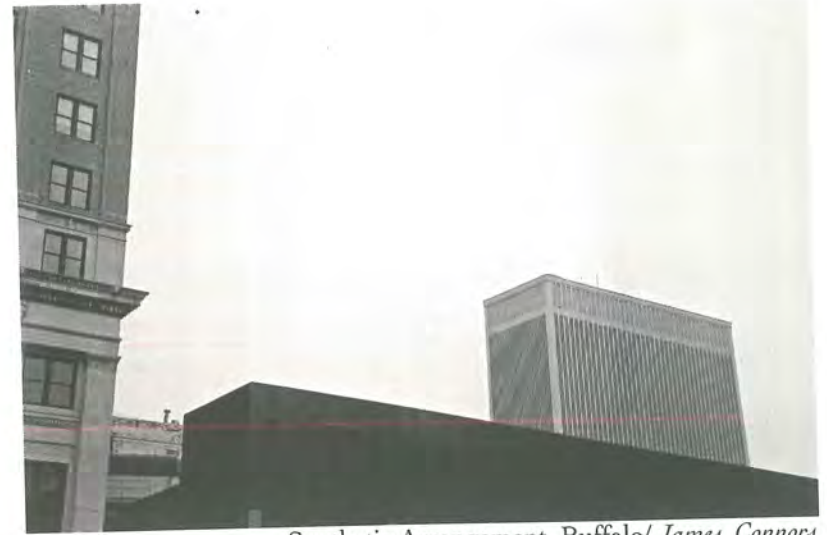
We might say that constructing a web is essential to the work of a spider. Is this the same thing as saying that constructing ocean liners and smart bombs are essential to the work of human beings?

I have to say yes, for even the most bizarre and destructive modern technologies remain instruments in service of seemingly unchanging human ends. You might say: "humans lived for thousands of years without these instruments, therefore they are not part of our nature". They are inessential choices we have made. And I would say: "but our nature has always wanted them". When we call things choices we are not thinking hard enough, for there are always reasons why choices are made.

The struggle between our *energeia* and that of the natural beings we enlist comes to presence in the art object, and, getting back on track, it is this latent tension that photography is particularly good at exposing. The photograph is a disjunction from life, a respite from the continual flux of unprocessed vision. A place where both the world and the viewer 'take a break' from their business to question each other. And to question the world means increasingly to question the art object.

In my mind, the photograph is the prison cell of the art object's interrogation. Here it is finally at rest from work, hence we are at rest too. These are the necessary conditions to consider a world beyond human use. A building in a photograph can't hold people or collapse, but it does demand an explanation for its existence. The aesthetic strength of the photograph lies in how forcefully this demand is posed.

To delineate the art object in the photographic frame precisely with respect to its non-work is always to discover unintended beauty, regardless of the banality or inhumanity of its function. But the more we are moved here, the more we are astounded at the ruthless efficiency with which we have wrested our creations from their manifold former meanings. Consider the process by which the collection of natural beings called a 'cell phone' became your cell phone. Human energiea is exquisitely lethal, like an apex predator acting out in nature. Might we be approaching an era where the prior obligations of our inventions, the totality of which we call the natural world, are lost completely?



Synthetic Arrangement, Buffalo/ *James Connors*



Energieia
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21401