If you take one glance at this Editor’s Note, you may just see that— a written sentiment from a student you may or may not have come in contact with. You may not realize the thought, the effort, and the pride behind it. Much like this note, you will find the topics of the articles and photography as simplistic; however, as you digest the works you will come to see the beauty that less is more.

This book took a level of intense creativity and passion from each and every member listed throughout. It’s a privilege to be able to witness 54 blank pages transform into a piece of art through one conceptualized idea.

“A writer only begins a book. A reader finishes it.” Samuel Johnson

Be the reader.

CAIT PRZETAK
Editor-in-Chief, Spring 2017
MEET THE STAFF

TEMPO is a student-produced feature magazine, offering publishing experience to some of Coastal Carolina’s most talented writers and designers. Opinions expressed throughout the magazine do not necessarily reflect those of Tempo staff. That said: we wholeheartedly support individualism, and in that regard, we do not publish a single word we regret.

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Acapella is vocal music performed without musical instruments (think Pentatonix) and is enormously popular on college campuses across the country. These groups come in every imaginable configuration. There are men's, women's, and coed groups. There are groups that specialize in barbershop, doo-wop, rock, country, gospel, R&B, folk, beach music, you name it. Many groups not only perform but also compete at the local, regional, and national levels. For example, the University of Michigan has sixteen officially recognized acapella groups, one of which is the Compulsive Lyres, former national champions. Even MIT, a college we normally associate with engineering rather than the arts, has their Superlogs, who are likewise nationally known.

This time last year, the AcaChants were a hatchling band of songsters who dreamed of officially bringing acapella to Coastal Carolina University. In January 2016 Joseph Comes, a Coastal student, held auditions and began the work of building Coastal Carolina’s first official acapella band. He describes himself as the group’s founder, president, music director, and costume designer. He has been working in both the foreground and the background doing organizational work for the past year in hopes that AcaChants will become not just a band of gifted musicians, but a family for its members.

The performers took the name AcaChants, “Aca” from acapella and “Chants” from Chanticleers. The past year has been spent primarily in rehearsals, acquiring the necessary music rights, and working on other related foundational tasks. However, the AcaChants made their first public appearance only three months after they began when they opened the CCU concert choir’s April concert. On September 9th, 2016, the group was invited to sing at the Eastern States Insulation Contractors Association Fall Conference at the Grand Dunes. For that performance, they received a generous donation which has helped them move forward in their organizational efforts.

On Saturday, January 28th, AcaChants held auditions for new members in Coastal’s Johnson Auditorium. Before the auditions were underway, I had the privilege of speaking with the present members and found a real cache of talent and dedication. I expect
“AcaChants” to become a name that Coastal students come to know and love. Allow me to introduce you to some of the talent invested in this venture. You may find that you share a class with one or more of these outstanding musicians.

Joseph Comes, AcaChants’ founder, hails from Portsmouth, Va. In high school he participated in advanced choir. He was also chosen for the district and all state choirs in both his junior and senior years. At the end of his junior year, Mr. Comes auditioned for and was accepted to the Musical Theater Department of the Governor’s School of the Arts in Norfolk, Va.

Jason Wint, from Las Vegas, is a sophomore majoring in psychology. Before coming to CCU, he attended Charleston County School of the Arts where he was a vocal major, as well as High Point University where he studied theater and psychology. He was a nationally recognized honor singer in Salt Lake City at the national championships.

Jason learned about the group from Meghan Hoffman. Meghan is from Charleston where she and Jason were high school classmates. Like Jason, Meghan was also chosen to participate in all state. Meghan is a music education major who came to CCU in the fall of 2015. She was doing a show with Joseph Comes while he was organizing the group and became a member early on.

Rhiannon Robertson, a freshman from Washington, N.J., joined AcaChants in the fall of 2016. Rhiannon is a Marine Science major and a member of the Coastal Carolina marching band’s color guard. In high school she participated in choir and theater.

Dean Robertson, a freshman and native of Washington, N.J., is majoring in biology and pre-engineering. In high school Dean performed for three years in the school choir and for all four years in his school’s musical productions. Here at Coastal he plays tuba in the marching band.

From Lake City, S.C., we have Blake Graham, who attended high school just down the road in Pawley’s Island. Blake, who will be graduating this spring, is studying public relations/communication and theater. In high school, Blake participated in both choir and theater for four years.

The AcaChants have come a long way in the brief span of only one year. However their founder, Joseph Comes, will be graduating this spring. The following months will be a crucial time for the group. The question now is whether they will have the impetus to keep things moving onward and upward after their founder’s matriculation. Joseph is hopeful that they will as he and his team have worked extremely hard to flesh out the dream and make it the reality that it has become.

Things are moving at a rapid clip in the world of the AcaChants. Since our interview, they have held auditions and added new members. They have also decided to rebrand themselves as “Enchant.” Let’s keep our eyes and ears open. Hopefully, it won’t be long till we can revel in the music making of this auspicious new entity at Coastal Carolina University.

“LETS KEEP OUR EYES AND EARS OPEN...”
Look around your classrooms. How many international students do you see? That’s a trick question. There’s no way to know, is there? However, chances are that you see international students every day, if not in the classroom then in the library, in the dining hall, or walking across campus.

I first became aware of the international nature of our campus through my classmate, Rio Matsuura from Toyota-shi (Toyota City), Japan. I was extremely pleased to learn that Rio is from Toyota, as I lived for six years in Shizuoka, a city quite close by. Rio emanates that wonderful Japanese charm, grace, and elegance that I was never able to.

I asked Rio the question I love to ask all visitors to the U.S, “What’s the strangest thing you have observed about America?” I had to chuckle when she said that driving here is very dangerous and that we don’t obey the traffic signals. I expect most of us would concur. During my extended stay in Japan, I learned that drivers go through much more extensive training than we do and are extremely courteous as well. Rio also noted that the presence of guns in America makes her feel unsafe since gun violence is not a problem in Japan.

I asked Rio what surprised her most about college in America. She noted several things. First, she was surprised that our campuses
“...her favorite thing is the friendliness of the American people.”

are so large and the buildings are so short. Because there’s not a lot of available land in Japan, college campuses tend to be smaller and to have taller buildings. Rio also mentioned that students in Japan just listen passively to their professors’ lectures. Here she really enjoys participating in class.

Yet life in America can be challenging because of the need for a car and Rio finds the costs of tuition, insurance, and medical care in the U.S. to be daunting.

When asked what she likes best about this country, Rio responded that her favorite thing is the friendliness of the American people. We also know how to celebrate; she noted that she particularly likes our Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations. What Rio misses most about Japan is the food and what she most wishes she could share with us from her home land are the cherry blossoms and autumn leaves.

After speaking with Rio, I began looking around for other international students. I was extremely fortunate to meet Kamilla Erazo. A native of Aruba, Kamilla is a little dynamo, a bundle of vitality, energy, and enthusiasm.

Kamilla’s mother works in the hotel industry and is following in her mother’s footsteps by majoring in Hotel, Resort, and Tourism Management. She was the first Aruban to be enrolled at CCU (now there are eleven), is the president of Coastal Carolina’s International Club.

Having such flawless English, I asked her whether it is the language of Aruba. Kamilla explained that because Aruba has been governed by other countries in the past, tourists from all over the world, and immigrants settle there. Most people in Aruba speak at least four languages: Dutch (the language in which government business is conducted), English, Spanish, and Papiamento (Aruba’s native language).

Adopted from Ecuador when she was four months old by a single, Catholic, Aruban, it was a Jewish family friend that also had a tremendous impact on her life. Kamilla said that she has adopted the Jewish viewpoint, not to look at the problem, but to look at the solution.

When I asked her what she finds strangest about America, the mood shifted to a serious manner. She said that nothing is grown in the country so things are very expensive there, and since Aruba is a very small island—there aren’t so many opportunities. Noting that it is as if Americans don’t appreciate what they have.

I also asked Kamilla what she likes about America. Surprisingly, she echoed Rio’s answer. She likes the friendliness of the people. Kamilla added that she especially likes the friendliness of the people in the South.

Rio and Kamilla are wonderful examples of the delightful array of international students with whom we are sharing our lives here at Coastal. Have you ever wished for a friend from abroad, for another window on the world? That shouldn’t be difficult at CCU. Look around. You will find one or two...or ten. There are likely international students in some of your classes or student organizations. According to Kamilla, China, Japan, Aruba, Brazil, Australia, France, Germany, the U.K., and Colombia are all represented in the International Club. She also pointed out that there are students from Italy, Peru, Siberia, and the Dominican Republic on our soccer and tennis teams.

Finding an international student is one thing. However, how does one go about making friends with someone from abroad? Don’t be shy. Remember what your mother told you when you were small: “The way to have a friend is to be one.”

For information about the International Club, you can make contact at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/ccuisc.
In May 2016, I was finally able to experience the intrigued foreigner’s medical gaze in Havana, Cuba’s Cira Garcia Central Clinic. I was referred to this for-profit facility by Oscar Suarez, owner of the casa particular I was staying in for the second time, as it was the closest option for foreigners in need of medical care. Within an hour and a half, I was diagnosed with mild acute otitis and promptly received medicine. The total cost for a technical emergency room visit, including medicine: $37. That’s right. Thirty-seven dollars.

Just over two years had passed since my first visit to Havana in April 2014. It was refreshing and nostalgic to be staying in the same refurbished colonial home, walking the same pothole-laden streets, and once again blowing black soot out of my nose from the notorious, inescapable clouds of burnt diesel that permeate the city. The purpose of my visit this time was to visit the famous Valle de Viñales and to see how things had changed, if at all, since the country’s newly improved relations with the U.S.

I soon boarded a Viazul bus on my second morning and enjoyed the roughly three and a half hour ride. The cushy, air-conditioned liner departed from the terminal and we pulled away from the city. Within fifteen minutes or so, we had reached an area noticeably different than the bustle of the three million plus population of Havana.

The Cuban countryside was unlike any other I’d previously seen. Along the visibly neglected, sparsely occupied lengths of highway a few features stood out from the country’s undeniable natural beauty. There were numerous people waiting along the roadside for rides. Small, weathered houses were scattered here and there in massive fields of palm trees and tobacco leaves, baking beneath the midday Caribbean sun. Cattle and goats were tethered to trees just off the pavement, awaiting God knows what. Naturally, there were billboards of Ché and Fidel and the occasional tower complete with armed guards.

After the relatively brief ride, we pulled into the small city of Viñales. We were immediately greeted by a few dozen eager casa owners reaching into the bus to distribute contact cards and intent on renting rooms. After pushing through the relentless crowd I found my luggage and got a quick taxi ride to my room. We found the house at the end of Calle Adele Azcuy, situated at the base of the hill. The
pavement abruptly ended and a hard, orange dirt road began. The infamous limestone mogotes jutting out of the landscape were within walking distance.

My two day stay was summed up walking the dirt trails around the mogotes, living on beans, rice, and street empanadas, as well as meeting the occasional bewildered German. The place was adorable. Every house stood in stark contrast to the typical Havana counterpart. Many had been recently built or renovated. My lodging in particular had brand new beds, window units, fresh coats of paint, shiny tile, private refrigerators and so on. These may seem matters of course, but they were (and are still for many Cubans) hard to come by given the country's history of scarcity and economic stagnation. To unjustly summarize, Viñales delivered its reputation for scenic beauty and hospitality. What you see is what you get: a slow, small, farming town sporting an impressive facelift from tourist money.

I quickly established a daily routine back in Havana. Each morning I would walk to the nearby produce market and buy a day's worth of small tomatoes and plantains. From there, it was to the panadería for the delicious, dirt cheap rolls which can be found in any of the nameless bakeries all across the country. These, along with a glass of fresh juice and the daily news periodical, cost less than fifty cents.

At night, it was to my favorite part of the city: the Avenida de los Presidentes, locally called Parque G. This long, downhill avenue features a park in the middle, separated into around a dozen sections by the city's grid of streets and finally ending at the ocean on the Malecón. It was my nightly place to have random conversations, watch people skate, and get strange looks for ordering vegan food.

Now, nearly a year later, I realize I've fallen into the inevitable clichés that come with discussing and visiting Cuba. After two trips to the island I am left even more confused than before and, I have to confess, am in a bit of a tug of war. Sure, the crumbling buildings, fuming Chevies, mojitos, cigars, and scantily-supplied ration shops turn heads when compared to the lifestyles tourists lead outside the country. Yet these things become yawn-inducing caricatures when you consider the revolutionary propaganda being overrun by an emerging capitalist frenzy. I imagine this particular specter of communism has Marx and Castro rolling in their graves.

I’m also afraid it is already too late for those who worry they will “miss” Cuba before it becomes another commercial center. Trust me. Havana has a Lacoste store and Nestle coffee creamer. Over a decade ago, Christopher Hitchens contended in his Eighteenth Brumaire of the Castro Dynasty that “we can certainly say that the Castro era is effectively finished,” and that “a uniformed and secretive and highly commercial dictatorship is the final form that it will take.” This declaration has been cemented by Castro’s recent death.

Additionally, for every loyal Cuban Communist Party member cringing at reformist socialism, there is a young person who could not care less about politics. At the end of the day, Cuba is a country whose praise or condemnation are best articulated by no one other than Cubans. Romanticizing a country with very real problems is the foreigner’s go-to error. These environments of relative and objective neglect are the reality for the majority of Cubans, at least for the time being. We should at least reconsider our fetish for the underprivileged Cuban who still remains positive in the face of adversity, especially when visitors have the privilege of affording to leave.

To be fair, the recent increase in private business is bound to positively impact many Cubans even if, for the first time, many are faced with the uncertainty of trading in steady state jobs for more lucrative, less formal ones. We should also not forget that the Cuban medical and education systems (which are entirely free for Cuban citizens) are still regarded as some of the very best in Latin America, something some fear the transition may eventually dismantle.

I am left remembering a candid conversation on the Malecón one evening, along the same, surreal strip of oceanfront highway I walked in 2014. I spent my week alone, mostly being spoken to by hustlers, and met a man named Alexander. A middle-aged pizzeria worker and father, he had just gone through a breakup with his girlfriend of several years. Improvising in Spanglish, we spent several hours talking.

He went on about the Rolling Stones’ free show (el máximo, in his words) and the filming of the new Fast and Furious, both of which had taken place recently in the city. He someday wished to visit a rural area in the US, away from any metropolitan congestion reminiscent of Havana. His opinion was that Raul Castro was better than Fidel, but only “porque él no habla tan largo.” He told me Cuban culture was rapidly changing, yet the government would stay the same. In his words, the average Cuban could work their entire lives and not be able to afford a car. He himself was left with no money after all of his necessary expenses, even with the country’s ration system. The only good things about the country, he said, were its free education and healthcare.

We sat in the sticky breeze, sitting on the ledge as the streetlamps flickered on, drops from the ocean splashing onto our legs. After a moment he lazily raised his eyebrows and shrugged in resignation. Lighting up just a little, he said “Capitalismo es claro mejor” as if stating a simple fact.
“My favorite memories at CCU have been my Study Abroad experience in Costa Rica, as well as joining Alpha Delta Pi. My advice to anyone is to go outside your comfort zone because both of these experiences have made my college career!”

Kaila Smart

“Having the opportunity to meet so many people who share the similar mindset as me, and creating awesome friendships.”

Katie King

“My favorite memories are the ones I can’t remember.”

Connor Skrypek

“My favorite memory is knowing that I have left a long lasting impact on the CCU Army ROTC program. I can leave here knowing I have inspired others, just like I was inspired when I first got here.”

Joshua Collins
There is something so tender and beautiful in a memory. It’s a lapse of time our souls have decided to latch onto for whatever the reason. College has always been said to be “the time of your life,” and that they are the premise for stories when we get old and frail. Maybe, just maybe, those people were right– we have Coastal to thank for them.

Interviews by Krysten Elliott

“My favorite memory of the English Department at CCU is when Dr. Ennis had Dr. Hamelman come and debate with him about American & British Literature. I still have notes from that class.”

_Lindsay Hickman_

“Scoring my first collegiate goal for Coastal Carolina club field hockey.”

_Rachel Warner_

“Celebrating the College World Series win with all my friends at Tongy’s.”

_Ashton Tyler_

“Having the opportunity through Coastal to travel Europe during a Maymester for a business study.”

_Whitney Powell_
At one point or another, your mother or teacher had relayed the wisdom that actions speak louder than words. Like many things we are taught, a simple action is not a black and white situation, rather, the grandest of gray areas. We often forget an important aspect of any situation, intent.

Our actions, and the objects we include in them, compile a deeper meaning. Something as frail and trivial as a red rose, holds a promise between the petals. It’s a promise that has the power to encompass and alter one’s past, present, and future. As the world has continued to develop, we have given up on chivalry and romance. Pebbles are no longer thrown at windows, boom boxes are no longer held outside of your crushes house, and 9 times out of 10– you are opening the door for yourself. Even though our beloved 80s movies have become a scarcity of recreation, one show has kept the importance of the red rose: The Bachelor.

It may seem as though a single rose is not that important when twenty other ones are being given away at the same time, but it is so much more than that. It’s a promise to keep learning, and growing with one another. It’s also a promise that you’re safe for the time being. For those that are not aware of what The Bachelor is, it’s a reality television show on ABC Network that has over 6.56 million viewers per week. The premise is one single man, dating 25 women at once and slowly breaking off relations ‘each week’ by rewarding those staying with a rose. The women travel the world with the season’s bachelor and go on exquisite and breathtaking dates. These dates can be individual, or one-on-ones, two-on-ones (where one woman is sent home in the middle of the date), or group dates. Each date itself has a rose that is a symbol of safety and mutual interest. At the end of the show, one of the two women standing is proposed to with a ring designed by Neil Lane and courtesy of the show. To many of these women, that rose is the equivalent of hearing the words: I love you. Unless your name is Ben Higgins, Jojo Fletcher, or Lauren Bushnell, then that’s a different story.

But The Bachelor is not just for one man to be the center; there are multiple off takes, Bachelor in Paradise, Bachelor Pad (which was sadly canceled), and the ever-popular Bachelorette. The most alluring part of being a Bachelor fan is that many of the favorite contestants end up back in the process. One single man or woman that did not end up getting the proposal from their season is the next Bachelor or Bachelorette. If the favorites do not end up being chosen for their own individual journeys, then they end up on Bachelor in Paradise. These shows are America’s guilty pleasure– the show they begin by hate watching and then becoming part of The Bachelor Nation. In fact, I was one of the haters so to speak, however I judged the trend without ever even giving it a chance. To be quite frank, I am upset that I had such a strong animosity against it for so long. It may seem like a strange process to become engaged, or even desperate, and although it still may be– it is also one that does work. There are documented 12 couples that are happily married, some with or without children, or still engaged.

To think it all started with a red rose.
Doing More With Less: An IPA Experience

Written by Parag Desai

When I was first introduced to the internet in the late 90s-very early 2000’s it was something of an enigma; a big block of plastic and metal that was rather shotty in convenience, but had the ability to teach me more than I ever would need to know. The keyboard and the mouse were an entirely separate entity—not that it isn’t now, but having more unreliable and aesthetically unappealing accessories to support a machine that was way over my parents’ salary didn’t justify the means. But, with time, the hunk of metal grew on me. I remember burning CD’s with my favorite artists on it and playing online games, and using instant messenger, watching funny video compilations and also being reminded by AOL of the signatures of dial-up internet. It was the quirky software dings and the pleasant feedback of the keyboard clicks that, for me, really created an aura of the computer and the growing comfort of its use, yet ever-expanding territory of the internet, that really captivated me for the long-haul. It became a staple in my everyday life.

Fast-forward 10-plus years later and I’m still surfing the web. I’m still using some iteration of instant messenger. I’m learning and growing—possibly at the same rate as the internet itself. I don’t use the same Dell P4 anymore; I’m getting a lot fancier these days. iPhones and iPads and super-refined laptops that double as a portable flat top grill are the commercial successes of today’s tech-savvy world now. The internet paved a way for nuances in expression that would never have been possible without the artists and inventors who pushed society forward further. The invention of the telegraph, the telephone, radio, and the computer set chronological markers that would define who we were as a society, and were our trajectory would send us next.

I think we’ve found that next marker, or at least crashed-landed into a world, that includes hands-free personal assisting. Google Home and Amazon Echo have breached the tech industry with an omnipresent computer assistant that is programmed to play music, make to-do lists, provide weather and local traffic updates, etc. all by voice interactions. Much of what our baseline products have been gearing towards is the ability for technology to become “smart”. This means that phones and devices that run on operating systems under a “smart” banner are meant to:

Run at multiple program capacities at the same time
Have critical functionalities that operate almost instantaneously upon user interface
Give the user the ability to personalize their product—from screensavers, to privacy settings, to the intricacies of date-storage accommodations
Make life convenient

Wow. Sounds complex, right?

It’s even more incredible that tech giants like Google and Amazon are stuffing all that criteria into a product that’s supposed to be stationed table-side in the living room like a small vase. It begs the question if this whole exterior-minimalist/interior-maximalist movement lives up to the hype at all?
Fortunately, the “smart speaker” products are priced modestly. Google Home being sold at $129 while the Amazon Echo is priced at $179.

For what it’s worth these tangible intelligent personal assistant (IPA) products seem to be going in the right direction. The Echo can make mundane activities seem incredibly sophisticated, like ordering a pizza or requesting an Uber just by saying its name followed by your instruction. Amazon has partnered up with third-party programmes that houses nearly 3,000 neat abilities within the Echo’s arsenal—a taller, ominous device that looks like alien technology. Home is strong in its cuter, sleeker, and unassuming design and its ability for quick-action questions and demands: “Play Ed Sheeren’s latest hit” or “How’s the weather?”

Echo, can you make my life simpler? Google, can you do my Spanish homework for me?

All jokes aside, all the new tech emerging out of the woodworks is great, but does it compare to web surfing manually?

Honestly, I think if you’re still on the train that’s designated from people who can’t catch up with the times, then I say it would be easier for you to get a IPA device that’s hands-free and no bigger than a liter of bottled water. IPAs are an example of how we’ve mastered our wants in needs into something much more elegant and robust. Also, it’s hard to compete with a product that can have full-blown conversations with you as if it was an actual person. Your fax machine can’t do that. Sh*t, these days actual people can’t even engage in conversation.

Google Home and Amazon Echo gets a big, fat “W” for me on this one. At this early in the game these products can only get better.

“I remember burning CD’s with my favorite artists on it and playing online games, and using instant messenger, watching funny video compilations and also being reminded by AOL of the signatures of dial-up internet.”
Mandalas have been around for hundreds of years. They are spiritual and ritual symbols that are circular in shape and contain highly detailed geometric designs. These religious patterns are meant to represent the universe. The big questions are how did they end up in every college dorm and apartment across the country; and why is everyone using them in tattoos and in coloring books?

Homemade D.I.Y. decorations of canvases, collages, and high school pictures used to cover the walls of college dorms. Now, you can’t walk into an apartment or room without seeing a huge mandala tapestry hanging. Every apartment or dorm I’ve walked into, including my own, has one. But why? One possibility is that it all started with the Tumblr craze which made being “hipster” or “bohemian” the newest trend. Being hipster in today’s society means being an independent person who appreciates art, the creative process, and education. This new hippie culture consists of people who love anything that is vintage and everything far from the mainstream. So maybe that’s how mandalas started surfacing on college campuses all across the U.S. Our generation started appreciating art more and mandalas could have possibly been an easy way to demonstrate that appreciation. After all, mandala tapestries are beautiful, colorful, and intricate designs that don’t cost a lot to purchase—making them perfect for college students.

However, most people have absolutely no idea what these decorations mean that serve as the backdrop for their Instagram and Facebook pictures actually symbolizes. In the Buddhist and Hindu cultures, seeing a mandala meant you were entering a sacred place or a place of meditation. Without even realizing it, hanging one on our bedroom or living room walls, we have deemed that area our own cherished and relaxing space. Our pretty wall decoration is a symbol that radiates positivity every time someone walks past it. Many trends in college aren’t always the best and are often meaningless fads, but it’s nice to know this one embodies the ideas of positive minds, positive vibes, and a positive life.

The same could be said for mandala tattoos. They have also become the new tattoo trend and many people have decided to permanently mark their bodies with this symbolic artwork. There are so many different styles and variations of the mandala that it makes it easy for someone to find or create their own personal design. The Sanskrit word “mandala” actually means circle and the circles are usually designed to have their own special meanings. They could mean balance in life, eternal life and much more. It’s no real surprise, then, that they have become such popular tattoo choices.

When people get tattoos it is often that each one has a specific purpose or meaning, whether it’s a reminder of something, someone or a certain event. Each piece of art is significant in itself. A mandala can be used to symbolize whatever you want it to mean. The design, the color choice, and the symbols used to make it are all unique to the person who it was created by or created for. For that reason alone, there’s no denying that they can make great symbolic tattoos.

One of the last places we’ve seen mandalas popping up lately have been in adult coloring books. These coloring books represent the latest mandala inspired trends. Coloring books used to be created for kids and only kids but adults everywhere are reliving their childhood through these vamped up variations. The biggest selling point of these books is that they promote stress and anxiety relief. Many people who use these adult coloring books say drawing in them is almost like a form of meditation. It’s safe to say that they publishers of the books favored mandala inspired drawing because of the level of detail in them. People can literally spend hours coloring on picture because there’s so much going on it, but it’s hard to ignore the symbolism in it. Mandalas were originally designed for meditation and to ease the mind and that’s exactly what people are doing when coloring in these adult books. Many might not know what they’re drawing, it may just be a beautiful picture to them, but the Mandala is fulfilling its original purpose.

It’s safe to say that they publishers of the books favored mandala inspired drawing because of the level of detail in them. People can literally spend hours coloring on picture because there’s so much going on it, but it’s hard to ignore the symbolism in it. Mandalas were originally designed for meditation and to ease the mind and that’s exactly what people are doing when coloring in these adult books. Many might not know what they’re drawing, it may just be a beautiful picture to them, but the Mandala is fulfilling its original purpose.

Whether they’re found in a Buddhist temple, a college dorm, on someone’s body or in a coloring book, mandalas have become a major part of today’s society again. Providing a deeper connection between ourselves and the world around us.
That 6am alarm goes off and hopefully you get out of bed soon after. You finished all that morning routine nonsense, hopefully with enough time to grab a quick breakfast before you’re late and the boss yells at you. What did you grab to eat? Many may find this question difficult to answer.

Which breakfast takes less time to make? A bowl of cereal or two eggs sunny side up with whole grain toast and some spinach on top? I’m sure many find that cereal is easier and maybe even a little bit tastier. The real question is, how long will that bowl of cereal hold you over until your stomach starts begging for more? Not only will you be hungry soon after, but a majority of cereal also puts a little more sugar into the body than is needed. Adding protein to your meal in the morning is not only generally healthier, but will also keep you fuller for longer. Eggs offer that! Let’s say you do have time to make that gourmet eggs and toast breakfast. You finish it, head to work, and now it’s lunch time. Whoops! “That pizza joint has awesome pizza and it’s made super fast so I can get back to work!” We all know that’s not a very healthy choice.

Meal preparation is crucial to a healthy lifestyle. Without a plan set in place, we run into this continuous cycle of bad choices since these choices are usually the easier ones to make. Giving yourself enough time in the morning or night before to plan out your meals with save you time during the day and help you stay on a healthy road. Many people live sedentary lives and don’t focus on what their body needs in order to stay healthy. Unfortunately, this kind of lifestyle can damage your health. I applaud those who stay active and maintain healthy eating habits. I have trained and worked out ever since I went on my first jog back in elementary school. That feeling I got afterwards was one I wanted to keep having the rest of my life. I felt like my body was clean and healthier than ever.

Soon after I began working out on a regular basis, I began to dial in my nutritional and eating habits. After years of trial and error I can confidently say that preparing meals ahead of time is not only important, but can impact your life for the better. Eating healthily is very difficult and is not suited for everyone and those who can’t train or work out on a regular basis need to have a meal preparation in place if they want to live a healthy lifestyle.

In today’s world, we live for responsibilities and from work and family to friends, we all have our daily dose of duties. This can make our lives that much harder in terms of health, but finding just enough time to prepare your daily meals beforehand will aid you to live a healthy and full life. Working out may not be for everyone, but meal preparation certainly is.
For most people the phrase ‘genetic illness’ conjures images of a whole range of ailments from Down Syndrome to Cystic Fibrosis– well known, symptomatic diseases that draw out the best of human empathy. Unlike the case of lifestyle diseases (for example most lung cancer and diabetes), unfortunate victims of these diseases suffer a life long affliction through no fault of their own. This only exacerbates the tragedy of the situation, causing friends, family and even the indiscriminate passer-by to ooze sympathy for such sufferers, knowing themselves to be simply incapable of imaging having to live with the terrible symptoms that these ailments present. With this then being considered, it seems impossible to imagine a situation whereby people suffering with similarly debilitating diseases, are snubbed by the same society that present themselves as so ready to show kindness to those in need...

There lies a whole secret world of suffering, shrouded in taboo, too distasteful and uncomfortable to be acknowledged but behind closed doors. 42.5 million adults in America alone suffer with a diagnosable mental illness every year, or to put this better in perspective, one in every four adults. By statistical probability this means that during your morning coffee run you likely pass by, if not interact with at least one person with a diagnosable mental illness.

The question therefore must be asked: Why does the subject of mental health elicit responses of such discomfort and awkwardness? In the vast majority of cases, mental health disorders can be similarly traced back to a genetic origin, with simple chemical imbalances in the brain causing characteristic ‘crazy’ symptoms. This means that in much the same way Huntington’s is the result of a genetic defect, mood disorders can be understood in this same light.

The stigma surrounding mental illness however is by no means a new phenomenon and thus many theories have cropped up in response to societies adverse reaction to such disorders. Evolutionary theory, media, historical events and quite simply, fear are all common explanations. Arguably most relevant and helpful in tackling this issue, is expansion upon the concept of the fear response. This fearful reaction in turn prompts the reportedly common experience of feelings of shame in those suffering with mental health. This shame in my opinion is so important to raise awareness of, as it is what leads to the secrecy and subsequent fear associated stigmatisation of issues such as bipolar and depression. Far too often, through no fault of their own, the average person has no realistic concept of just what these diseases entail and thus widely inaccurate stereotyping occurs. The media only exacerbates this situation. We are bombarded constantly with news of ‘mental people’ behaving erratically, terrifyingly and in ways we cannot relate to or begin to comprehend. These wildly extreme cases become society’s mental health scapegoats, justifying their ignorant fear based responses instead of encouraging a greater understanding of the subject. Whilst it remains important that the media does report on cases of those suffering with mental imbalances, the reports are in no way balanced and hence representative of the vast majority; sufferers who are far less severely affected and thus pose no real threat to society.

The main way then, that we can achieve real change today in people’s perception of those with mental health issues is to portray the illness in a more holistic and subsequently representative light. Here, role models are key and there are in fact many positive cases where public figures have chosen to speak out about their illnesses. For example Robin Williams, Mel Gibson, Angelina Jolie and Ellen DeGeneres have all used their fame as a platform by which to raise awareness and understanding of their own mood disorders. This, whilst a step in the right direction, is not enough to fight generations of social conditioning that surround this topic. It is vital now in tackling this problem that people follow suite, working to make mental health an open topic of discussion. No longer need this social taboo exist and poison the lives of those it touches. It has far surpassed the time for serious change to occur. A revolution of mental health is required, and this all starts with a conversation.
Once upon time, I ran every day. I ran more and more thinking that my body would change the way I wanted it to; beachbody and lady magnet. After months of running so many miles my body slowly started to become that of a marathon runner… Not the beach buff I was planning to be. I ran, literally, into a problem that I needed to solve.

I was then introduced to weightlifting once I entered high school. This was much different in the sense that, instead of just running and strict focus on cardio I would be incorporating weights. Adding weightlifting a couple times a week to your workout program will not only help shape your body, but also burn more calories than strictly cardio. Which is great for those trying to shed some weight for beach season. My first time going to a gym with the mindset of lifting weights was one I’ll never forget. I began with chest and arms. Classic right? These body parts seemed like a good place to start. I found a workout program that revolved around pyramid training, which is to start with lighter weights and on the third set, you’d be moving your heaviest weight. At the time, I was pushing not such heavy weight, considering I was an extra thin, marathon lookin’, weight liftin’ newby. After that first workout, I went
home, went to bed, woke up and couldn’t move. Did my arms become weights?
I laid in bed, staring at the ceiling as I braced my body to get up. It was then that I experienced the pain of a pulled muscle radiating from my chest down my arms, like heavy unattended weights rolling down to my wrists. As the day went on, I started to feel a little less sore and a little more excited to lift again. I went back to the gym after school ready to workout my back. I began pulling some sets of lateral pull-downs, with some pull ups. I could still feel my muscles from the day before being sore and all, but I decided to put it behind me and continue with my workout. Believe it or not, I kept up with this routine for about a month until I noticed nothing.

Really... I noticed nothing. No progress in strength or muscle size. What was happening? I knew I was pushing my body past my comfort zone every day. That's what you’re supposed to do right? After school one day, I decided to ask one of the personal trainers at the gym if I was doing anything wrong. I was explaining my workout routine to him, and he stopped me at “everyday.” He asked, “You’re lifting every day? Well there’s your problem right there.” He explained that in order for my body to progress and change, I needed to incorporate rest days into my routine. Without these days off, my muscles would never be able to recover. I took this advice wisely. I began to do a three day workout split with rest days in between. Monday was chest/triceps, Wednesday was shoulders/legs, and Friday was back/biceps. I stuck to this routine. After just 3 weeks, not only was I seeing bigger and more toned muscles, but other people did too! That’s when I realized that rest days were crucial to the progression of my workouts.

I am now a senior in college with a whole new outlook on exercise. I now strategically exercise to incorporate weights, cardio, plyometric exercises, and some isometrics. As you continue to progress in the gym, you become more aware to what your body responds best too. As you gain more knowledge of workouts and how to exercise properly, you will continue to progress and push your body to the next level. There is only one crucial part that needs to stay consistent throughout your life of exercise; rest, rest, and rest.
What is it like to be completely comfortable with someone?
What even happens?

We all know people who are happy and dating, but what does being comfortable with that relationship really intend? I found three couples to interview: Tony and Jane, Patrick and Kacey, and Felix and Amanda. They’re all Sophomores and they each answered what questions I had about comfort in relationships. I wanted to see what made a relationship comfortable and if comfort was the key to a healthy and happy relationship.

Tony and Jane have known each other and have been dating the longest. They met each other in class on the first day of Freshman year and began dating shortly after that because of how much time they spent together. They are both artists so they have similar classes and they both settled down with the same group of friends who always hung out and played Magic the Gathering together. They both had a crush on the other one but neither of them new it. One night when they were playing Magic with their friend group, Tony was singing “My Heart is a Ghost Town” by Adam Lambert and one of his friends jokingly called him out for it. He asked Tony why his heart was a ghost town, and when Jane looked away Tony pointed at her and the whole group laughed. One thing led to another and they turned the running joke into an album cover and two songs. Tony admitted to Jane that this all started because he had a crush on her and they went on their first date. They just celebrated their one year anniversary.

Patrick and Kacey have known each other and have been dating for about four months. They met each other in class on the first day of Freshman year and began dating shortly after that because of how much time they spent together. They both settled down with the same group of friends who always hung out and played Magic the Gathering together. They both had a crush on each other and neither of them knew it. One night when they were playing Magic with their friend group, Tony was singing “My Heart is a Ghost Town” by Adam Lambert and one of his friends jokingly called him out for it. He asked him why his heart was a ghost town, and when Jane looked away Tony pointed at her and the whole group laughed. One thing led to another and they turned the running joke into an album cover and two songs. Tony admitted to Jane that this all started because he had a crush on her and they went on their first date. They just celebrated their one year anniversary.

Felix and Amanda have known each other for about a year but have only been dating for about three months. “We were in the same building Freshman year and I liked his friends. The first night I got to know Felix we all went to a haunted cabin by the sea and watched horror movies. I liked him right away, we were instant friends. I lived on the first floor and he lived on the third and we would talk to each other every day, watch the same shows on TV. I loved him like I love all my best friends. I really wasn’t looking to date anyone.” Felix clarifies it as, “We were basically dating but without the title. There’s a lot of history behind us that would take a long time to tell so long story short, I just liked her company and I liked being around her and she made me happy— makes me happy. I fell in love with her, it was pretty tragic that she only saw me as a friend, but I stuck with it because I genuinely enjoyed her presence and I wanted her in my life. It all turned out perfect in the end. We’ve never been happier. I love her more every day.”

I asked them if they could describe what makes their relationship so comfortable and to my surprise they replied with about the same answers: Trust, respect, and mutual love. It also helps if you’re friends first.
I wanted to get down to the bottom of how these people were so happy and comfortable and what they did to maintain their relationships.

From these three couples—I have come to find that when you’re comfortable in a relationship you fall in love, you spend all the time you have together, you hope for a happy future together, and you’re weird with one another. If you can laugh, love, respect, and trust your significant other, it looks like you’re gonna go far.

Finding comfort in another human being doesn’t always happen overnight. Love doesn’t happen at first sight just like trust doesn’t, it has to be worked at until you get to that point where you can boop their nose and they bite your finger and you don’t think it’s weird. In fact, the weird things make you love them more because you come to realize that the things that make individuals weird is that makes them special and special to you. If something upsets you, know that you have that person by your side that will hear you out and do anything to make you feel comfortable again. Trust comes from being genuine and being comfortable, comfort comes from finding similar interests and knowing you’re S.O. is honest and cares about you. Love comes later, or it comes right off the bat, but either way if you’re going to have a long-lasting, happy, and trustworthy relationship be prepared to fall in love, and to be in their presence all the time.

“THE COMFORT CLAUSE. THE WEIRD THINGS MAKE YOU LOVE THEM MORE BECAUSE YOU COME TO REALIZE THAT THE THINGS THAT MAKE INDIVIDUALS WEIRD IS THAT MAKES THEM SPECIAL AND SPECIAL TO YOU...”
For most of us, our phone is always in hand. We all have our favorite contacts and we all know how we text our best friends versus regular friends. The tone and weirdness is always on a different point of the scale. But what is it like to text the person you’re dating? Is there any difference in talking to your significant other versus your best friend? Are there unspoken rules or things you do and don’t talk about? I asked three couples questions on what texting their partner is like and to see if texting is truly essential and if it increases intimacy in a relationship. This is what I gathered.

Finn and Abby, Phillip and Kate, and Tyler and Jessica, see one another every day and they live on campus. Their texting habits vary but they’re all in unanimous agreement: there’s nothing like face-to-face communication.

They’re all in great relationships, as they told me, and for the most part they text each other every day. It’s not always back-to-back or 100% of the time but it is throughout the day regardless. Phillip and Kate admit that if they know they’re going to see each other that day they won’t text as much. Sometimes they’ll see each other in short periods of time throughout the day and they’ll text regardless. Tyler and Jessica said that they text every few hours in the day if they weren’t already in a texting conversation.

When asked if texting helps their relationship, Finn said that it causes more problems than anything else. It’s because there’s no emotion over text, there no inflection in voice or change in body language, and sarcasm doesn’t go over well. “There’s times where I’ve gotten in trouble for saying a joke but Abby read it as a serious reaction. Things are misconstrued and that doesn’t end well.” Abby laughed, “It’s only because you don’t use emojis like I do. Emojis are the body language of text messages.” She disagrees with her boyfriend and thinks that texting helps them stay closer. “I love hearing how his day is going and what he’s up to. Without text I would feel disconnected since we both have conflicting schedules.” Regardless of his beliefs on texting, Finn said that he loves his girlfriend and texting doesn’t change that. “I can text her nice messages and heart emojis but I can’t kiss her over text. It’s simple as that.” Texting doesn’t detract from the
relationship but according to Finn it can be volatile. On the other hand, a perk of texting is that you can say anything to your s.o. at any point and you can wake up to really sweet messages.

Kate disagreed with Finn’s ideology and said that texting does help her relationship. When she and her boyfriend are separated over break it’s great to text him because he’s not with her at home. She can’t see him but can look at her phone and read his words, knowing he’s still out there and cares about her. “I live so far away,” she said, “it’s nice to still be able to talk to him when I’m not able to actually sit down and make a call.”

Kate’s boyfriend, Phillip, said that certain forms of texting causes misinterpretations, “Sarcasm doesn’t work well over text. Kate will take it seriously and it makes things complicated.” “I’m a mess,” Kate replied, “But no, I don’t think texting takes away from the relationship even if it can cause misinterpretations, because we’re both good about asking if it’s misinterpreted. We always ask if it could be misinterpreted.”

Tyler explained to me that for him, texting is not the most important thing especially since he and his girlfriend Jessica live right down the hall from each other. “If we aren’t in the same room or have early morning classes, texting is a good way to stay connected like ‘Hey, do you want to grab lunch?’” Like Kate and Abby, Tyler doesn’t think texting takes away from his relationship as misinterpretations never really come into play. “Jessica and I know each other,” he told me, “and we know how each other speaks.”

I asked if these couples felt more connected based on how much they text and Finn said yes. “Abby tells me what’s happening to her throughout the day as mini updates. I like seeing text bubbles come up on my phone with her name on them. It’s a reminder that someone loves me and that I’m on her mind. It’s a great feeling. It really adds to how much I love her.”

Phillip admitted that texting just a form of communication so it doesn’t make that much of an impact. “It’s just like short memos throughout the day.” He went on to say that the connection he maintains with Kate through text depends on if they’re close to each other or not, though. If they’re on break and she’s fifteen hours away from him, then texting has a positive impact on their connection. But if they’re on campus together, hearing from Kate over text has less of an effect on him.

I asked them if they talked to each other the same way they texted. Phillip and Kate were quick to answer. Kate said that when Phillip talks to her in real life he uses real words since voice-to-text isn’t an issue in real conversation. Phillip said that all Kate does is send him memes and all he replies with is “haha” and that that’s not entirely what it’s like when they’re talking face-to-face. Though Kate said she does talk about the same as she texts, she likes to use full sentences, grammar, and punctuation. “I like people to know exactly what I’m saying so if someone is like ‘oh you said that’ I can say no, and then show them the screenshots.” She said all of this while giving Phillip a side-glance. “I’m also a perfectionist.”

Abby, on the other hand, says that she talks to Finn the same way she texts him. “I always have a lot to say about everything. Finn is one of the people who doesn’t care if I talk his ear off. I write for a living so I’m used to writing a lot regardless. I use a lot of capitalizations because I’m almost always screaming. I’m probably a bit more coherent in person than over text.”

To end out the interviews I asked the couples how they thought their s.o. would describe their texting. Phillip stifles his laughter before responding with, “Nonexistent. I text brief words here and there because she always texts me when I’m busy. But I can tell you that she considers my texts very interesting...” Kate tells me that that she texts in short bursts, “So if I send something long I split it up and it blows up his phone and he tells me to stop. Oh, also really, really excited because of all the caps I use.”

Finn said, “I don’t know, probably sh*tty. I’m sh*t at texting. I forget about it and get preoccupied. My phone is always on silent.” Abby said that Finn would probably describe her texting as “too much and all the time” because that’s exactly how she texts, “also, unnecessary for the most part. But I like texting him throughout the day and I don’t intend to stop.”
MA & PA’S LONG DISTANCE MARRIAGE

Written by Cait Przetak

27 years.
4 children.
243 miles.

These three things alone are enough to cause pressure on a relationship, forceful enough to break—however this is a story of surmount.

It all begins at a bank in northern New Jersey, where my father first saw my mother. She was working as a teller when my father first tried to ask her out. Keyword here: tried. Suffice to say, the timing wasn’t quite right. Nonetheless, when circumstances altered, he tried again, only this time he succeeded.

Like many children, there are many things that I admire about my parent’s marriage. Some are as simple as the way they split up duties in the kitchen for our Sunday breakfasts, or the way they kiss one another when my dad returns from work. While others require more dedication to one another, such as how my dad continually learns Spanish for mom. He does this to converse better with my grandparents and help my mom feel more at home. Yet the thing that really and truly gets to me is their devotion for one another and our family. That’s something that unfortunately is becoming more and more rare, and as time goes on, worries myself that I may not have this kind of love.

The kind of love that was strong enough to have withstood 243 miles apart for 1 year and 4 months. For 1 year and 4 months, my parents lived apart; it wasn’t because they were having problems, or a secret affair, or even as a get away from us four children. It was for us. Once the pharmaceutical industry in New Jersey took a hefty hit (thanks Christie), jobs were, and still are quite scarce. Because of this, my father began applying to surrounding states,
Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts. Finally, he got a job, not only in his field, but also with his prior title. Yet the times are still hard in the industry and having reliability in a job is often unnerving. When a better opportunity came about, we were all ecstatic, the only issue was that it was near Boston in Massachusetts. But at the end of the day, a job is a job, no matter where it is located and he wanted to continue supporting the family.

Since it was four to five hours from our house in New Jersey to his new job, my parents decided to get him a condo in the nearby area. This could have been detrimental. My father could have gotten this apartment and not come home to see us, or even had a whole other life there, but he didn’t. He came home every weekend that my mom couldn’t make the drive up. They called each other two to five times each day and night. They even recorded their shows on DVR and would FaceTime each other as they watched them and even would fast forward through the commercials at the same times. I’m not saying that it was easy or perfect, rather that they made it work.

They share a love that is the hope and dream of any hopeless romantic, couple, and newlyweds. They truly share their lives together, happy. That is all that anyone can want. With divorce and affair rates so high these days, it is a blessing to have a model of true love and devotion reminding me everyday of what a marriage should be. I know what I can look forward to in the future, and what I would want and deserve in a life partner. Although this could prolong the time before fully settling down, I know that just like my parent’s long distance marriage, it will be worth it.

“The kind of love that was strong enough to have withstood 243 miles apart for 1 year and 4 months.”
“Less is more!” said the man who decided to go bald after accepting the sad fate of his receding hairline. “Less is more!” said the college girl as she was putting together her outfit for Broadway on a Saturday night. “Less is more!” said the really cool professor who never gave any homework. But there was a German architect and educator who said this aphorism and let it have a much more profound meaning in his life; this man was Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Born in 1886 Germany and originally known as Maria Ludwig Michael Mies, Ludwig later on added “van der Rohe” to his name—an adaptation of his mother’s maiden name. He began his pursuit in architecture by gaining vocational training, working with his father who was a stonemason, and by working in various apprenticeships. From there, he worked his way up to being a draftsman and then began to learn under brilliant architects nearby. He opened his own shop in Lichterfelde during 1913, and married Ada Bruhn the same year. They eventually ended up having three daughters together. But Mies’ pursuit was put on hold for some time though when he served in the German military during World War I. During the war, he put his designing hands to help build bridges and roads.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was young when he first heard the expression, “Less is more”, spoken by his godfather figure, Peter Behrens. Behrens was a master architect and designer in...
Germany during the early 1900s, and took Mies under his wing, encouraging him to become the great architect he eventually did become. The aphorism clearly grasped Mies’ attention because he continuously returned to it and used it for inspiration in his line of work.

He used the phrase throughout the rest of his life to help guide him in architectural designing because he liked the emphasis on being minimalistic. He was fond of architecture that embodied this simple appeal, which was extremely timely considering he was designing and building during the Modernist Period of the early twentieth century. Modernist architecture had become popular after World War II when the architecture and design currently being used, was failing to meet necessary social needs. During this period of the 1930s, much of the urban population was in poverty due to the slum clearance, and people became aware that something had to change. The modernists grew a strong feel of responsibility that architecture from thereon out should enhance the living conditions of the masses. This is when Modernist architectural planning stepped into the picture to serve as a solution to these troubles.

The goal of modernist architects was to abide by the phrase, “Form follows function,” which meant to shift the focal point of architecture from embellishment and interior design, to structure and form. Students who were in school learning architectural design, learned about the purity of forms and how to plan for a new, superior world. Instead of stressing interior design like previous trends in architecture, the students sought to transfer the stress to a new type of construction that was both practical and had a pleasant aesthetic. The buildings were not supposed to bear any decoration or addition in style that wasn’t necessary for its intended purpose. Key features in modernist design were progress, function, and social morality, with a focus on family life and social interaction. Examples of these are clean-cut borders, open spaces, and open planned interiors that encouraged communication and social living.

By the 1920s, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe had become one of the most renowned figures of the Modernist Period because of the Modernist aesthetic throughout his work. It was during this time that he created the German Pavilion for the 1929 Barcelona Exposition and revealed his vision of a glass skyscraper, which was considered to be a very futuristic concept at the time. He later became director of the Bauhaus, which was a popular German school of experimental art and design, but he soon closed the school when pressures from the Nazi Regime became heavy.
It was during the late 1930s that Mies left Germany and immigrated to America, claiming his second home in Illinois, Chicago. The structures he built in America such as the Lake Shore Drive Apartments in Chicago and the Seagram Building in New York City, were praised at their time for being great Modernist works and are still receiving praise today. While in Chicago, he became director of the school of architecture, which is now known as the Illinois Institute of Technology. He single-handedly designed the plan for the campus and helped rationalize the architecture curriculum because he insisted that education should have a back-to-basics approach. Mies was director at the school for 20 years, until he resigned in 1958 at the age of 72. Upon resigning, he received the AIA Gold Medal, which is the highest award given by the American Association of Architects, and President Lyndon Johnson presented him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. When Mies was asked to describe the kind of work he did, he said, “I have tried to make an architecture for a technological society. I wanted to keep everything reasonable and clear – to have an architecture that anybody can do.” In 1966, he began suffering from esophagus cancer and he passed away three years later in his claimed home of Illinois.

Regardless if you agree or not with the saying, “Less is more”, there is no denying the accomplishments of Mies’ contributions to the modern urban landscape. The buildings he created evoke an undeniable sense of confidence, sensibility, sophistication, and stylishness that only Mies could do. His creations are a true reflection of himself and a profession of the essential elements within our lives. Granted that excess is in much closer reach for us today than it was for individuals 80 years ago, Mies’ simplistic approach is as relevant as ever in our current society. His structures that are still standing are direct examples of how beautiful and complete our lives are capable of being if we strip away the distractions and excess of life and instead, focus on the fundamental elements of ourselves and our surroundings. When you’re faced with the skin and bones of what something is, you might just be surprised how marvelous, picturesque, and elaborate it really is. Believe it or not, less really can be more.
“Let us now consider the various types of human character, in relation to the emotions and moral qualities, showing how they correspond to our various ages and fortunes. By emotions I mean anger, desire, and the like; these we have discussed already. By moral qualities I mean virtues and vices; these also have been discussed already, as well as the various things that various types of men tend to will and to do. By ages I mean youth, the prime of life, and old age. By fortune I mean birth, wealth, power, and their opposites—in fact, good fortune and ill fortune.”

– Aristotle “Rhetoric: Book II” Chapter 12-13

SELF

I used to get into a lot of fights when I was younger. While most of the quarrels revolved around quirky impulse and mismanaging my emotions, that stubbornness to organize my feelings came from a dynasty of those who never bothered to control themselves—never brought hyper-aggression or addiction to the conversation and with that neglect, provided a whole onslaught of problems that uprooted the fundamentals of a healthy childhood; innocence died with time and burden became its pallbearer.

THE PERSON I WAS

I was angry. Sh*t, I still kind of am. However, it was a different kind of anger back then. It wasn’t a silent, low-key anger. It was an I-don’t-know-why-I’m-angry, anger, the I-don’t-deserve-this anger. It was the frustration of the person who never felt at home in any situation. By the time I was twelve I had transferred to four different public schools; I had to make best friends four-five different times. I was put into a different environment without my permission and as a result I never formed the ideal of cherishing and appreciating an ending because the ending was always cut short for me.

Little Parag felt as if the world was weighing on his shoulders. Little Parag was convinced he was going to be a doctor or an engineer and as long as you work hard and keep you head down, the story was going to write itself. It’s funny though, that same story has been plagiarized a million times over and with every bit of fabrication weaved into that allegory it gets less and less reliable.

In elementary school (maybe at the age of eight or nine) I had to go to the school’s therapist because I was exhibiting behavior outside of the conditioned response. In liberal New Jersey, even the sh*tty south-end, they take great pride in producing their students to become robots without the privatized discourse of religion. DSS took my mother away from me for a short time and their solution to it was to throw booklets and how-to manuals my way in order to solve my issues.

At eleven years of age I spent half a school year in the suburbs of Cheraw, South Carolina. Cheraw is exceptionally memorable because not only was it the place where racism post-9/11 was
alive and kicking, but it was where I had my first kiss. I thought I was in love. The next day I moved across the state and spent the rest of that year in contempt.

The year after that I decided to get out of my bubble and make friends. I invited my classmates to my birthday party and no one showed up, not even my cousins. I spent 8th grade sporting a thick, black hoodie and smothered my face into for the rest of my middle school experience.

I could never get out how hurt I was about everything.

When I was sixteen my grandfather suffered a heart attack and died in my arms. Another reminder of how my life was full of sporadic taunts of impermanence and apathetic conclusions that came at the velocity of a rabid mac-truck. If there’s anything more eye-opening about your life, its hearing your own grandfather moan his last breath away and paradoxically beg for his fading life back.

When you’re a kid stuck in a reality that is both self-serving and self-defeating, it’s hard to step back and realize that you’re not the center of the world. Even though it feels like the world is ending and the sky is on fire and you keep failing your algebra tests, it’s hard to stop and slow your roll. Life is going a thousand miles an hour, so the little bit of teenager I had left in me was so concerned with maintaining a normal high school experience that I kind of set myself up to be the person I always hated.

I was faking who I was and I was forgetting where I came from. On top of that, I had to pretend like everything was okay. Being superficial never worked out, of course, since I could never keep my mouth shut about things I don’t like and people who rub me the wrong way (hence, I am writer), which prompted me to get my a*s beat on multiple occasions but hey, a little bruising never hurt anybody.

THE PERSON I AM TODAY

If you’re like me, you’ve grown a lot more cold and cynical throughout the years. People don’t impress you as much, breaking news isn’t surprising, your favorite bowl of cereal sits in the milk a little bit longer than normal, but you’re too unmotivated to eat faster. “Favorites” don’t carry much clout when you’re washed up.

It’s funny, really. Self-deprecating humor is now your preferred vehicle of expression and sarcasm is riding shotgun. The reality of the situation is that you can’t just beat people up whenever you get angry, you get boxed for that.

Something my father never quite understood was that his actions caused ripple effects—the decisions you make are linked to the life of another, especially when you have kids. Even in the worst conditions, culture becomes this normalized figure that becomes impenetrable to critique. I can only imagine how different my life would have been if my relatives didn’t brush off abusive behavior.
simply as a personality trait, and concentrated their ideas of a well-rounded person based on objective truths, rather than suffocating their problems with money and fake holidays.

“Things would be different if I had money,” my father once said to me.

“Things would be different if I empowered myself,” my mother once said to me.

Those are the realities you end up facing as an adult—the decisions that cost you your life. While everyone else is gallivanting in a meadow of gluttony and self-entitlement, those that missed out on subtle opportunities pay for it with regret that echoes in the mind so noisily. Mother does offer a valid point though, it very much is about self-empowerment. It’s about putting your life on the line every single day. It’s about educating yourself.

Rene Descartes’ theories on knowledge, value, and education were based on the principle that you must want to learn to truly understand—that the first teacher and the first student is the self. It is knowledge that breeds conviction, and not vice versa. The first kindling of a fire eventually powered the first coal-fueled engine. Knowledge ignites the need to know more to reach unimaginable heights.

Think of it like this: think of all the known information that is out there, think of the ancient Sumerians that recorded the first historical event (roughly 3500 BC) to the point where little Suzie May from Whitesville, Alabama on the corner of Privilege Street and #AllLivesMatter Road can now write how cute Jason looked picking his boogers in class within her diary. Think of how much the written word had to go through to end up under a little girl’s pillow.

Now, think of how much we don’t know. Think of the depths of our ocean. Think about space. Whatever we don’t know about space is just floating, chillin’—sippin’ a Mai Tai with some extra UV protection shades, just waiting for some geek with a big a*s telescope to realize, “Holy sh*t Eugene, there’s more to the universe than we originally thought!” The only thing that’s consistent is more.

I think Descartes would agree with me in that it’s this perseverance to retain our best asset, the conscious self, that makes us [enter cliché].

I’ve learned that throughout my numerous pitfalls and trapped doors, that the quest for knowledge is limitless—that is the what I’m hoping for at least. It’d suck to be the mother or the father who can’t contribute to a debate without characterless pathos. It would suck that the only education you got from your parents was what NOT to do, as opposed to solid and sound advice.

(I feel like people reading this are going to think that Parag just uses these platforms to sh*t on people—which is true—but if
“While everyone else is gallivanting in a meadow of gluttony and self-entitlement, those that missed out on subtle opportunities pay for it with regret that echoes in the mind so noisily.”

there’s someone to blame it isn’t my parents…it’s the Sumerians!)

When you’re placed in an environment never completely sure it will last, you start questioning the authenticity of its relevance. Granted settings are static and people live their whole life in their hometown so the fact that, that is the extent of it all for some people it saddens me. It frightens me. Living in the perpetual shroud of ignorance, and not learning, seems fake and lazy to me. Like, why wouldn’t you reap all the benefits these rich white people never meant to set up for us? Malcolm X spent months in jail learning and absorbing the dictionary, then flipped the discourse and the culture on its head. If life is as impermanent as it has proved to me why wouldn’t you take the chance to better yourself?

A problem that I’m facing now is the when. When do you execute? When do you start showing off what you know to be true? When do you break the news? When can I tell people, straight up, that I’ve been there and done that?

With time I suppose.

For now, I’m using this time to plot, to observe, and to make sure that my life—my goals—are not the first thing on the chopping block. I want to look Mother Nature and Father Time straight in the eyes and press my middle finger to their face, because I don’t care about preserving the peace and stat quo anymore. I don’t care about these imaginary boundaries that people before my time were too scared to cross because they didn’t believe in themselves.

You don’t have to be at the center of the universe to feel that the universe is up for grabs. That’s something I’ll never forget.
What do all these people have in common? Samuel L. Jackson, Keanu Reeves, Kanye West, Alexander Hamilton, Michael Phelps, Leonardo DiCaprio, Boba Fett, Captain Kirk, Wonder Woman.

Besides being successful badasses, they were all raised by single parents.

Chances are, you know someone who only has one parent raising them. Of course, there’s nothing wrong with that. Don’t get me wrong, being raise by a single parent can be difficult. You may not get every luxury you would have with two parents, but that still doesn’t take away from the fact that what happens in a one parent home is super.

If you have both parents in your life, perhaps you’ve wondered what it’s like to have only one. Ever been asked the question, “Who would you choose, your mom or your dad?” Maybe you haven’t, but you’ve asked someone if they only have one parent, they said yes, and you replied, “Oh I’m sorry.” You don’t have to be. We aren’t.

I interviewed my roommate Kerry whose mom divorced her dad when she was thirteen and she feels the same way about her mom. “She is the strongest woman I know,” Kerry told me, “and she’s loving. She’s been through so much and she’s dealt with it and she’s been realistic about it. Life isn’t always easy but she helps me get through it and we survive. I want to be like her as a mother, that’s just goals.” That’s the biggest thing about single parents and the kids who were raised by them: we aren’t victims and you shouldn’t be sorry for us. We’re survivors. We know what it’s like to be down and we know how to survive without anyone else’s aid but our own. Kids of single parents are proof that humans can do anything with enough drive, intellect, and heart. It’s not always easy but a good parent makes it feel like life hasn’t beaten us at all. In reality, this story shouldn’t be about the kids it should be about the parents, but I suppose the best way to truly celebrate single parents is to show off to the world exactly what they’ve accomplished. They’ve created amazing, capable people who can excel at anything they put their minds to no matter how impossible the odds seem and it’s from watching them that we do the same thing.

I asked people who were raised by both parents what they thought it would be like to be raised by one. Two people had the same answer. Parker, whose parents raised him but divorced his Sophomore year of high school, said that “It would probably be sh*tty.” Forbes, whose parents are still married, said “It would have to be sh*tty.” I asked them to elaborate on how they perceived a single-parent household and this is what they said.
P: You can either have a mom or a dad. The sh*tty part is not being able to have two sides of a story or an idea, you’d only ever have one parent’s point of view. And depending on the break up, though this isn’t always true I guess, only when the divorce happens when the kids are really young and impressionable, and the break up is really bad, it could have a negative impact on the child. They would think that because their dad is mean and bad that all men are like that and they grow up hating all men. They’re young, they wouldn’t know the difference.

F: Not having two parents means less money. That’s sh*tty on its own. It would also be hard depending on which parent you have. If you have a dad you wouldn’t have the mother’s caring side, and if you didn’t have a mom you wouldn’t have that strict enforcer. If you were a boy and had a mom you couldn’t talk about girls and stuff because that’s weird with your mom. If you were a girl and you had a dad you couldn’t talk to your dad about boys because he would just not want you thinking about boys.

I was raised by my mom starting in the sixth grade when she divorced my dad. It wasn’t a nasty divorce but it was still straining and she had had enough with my father. He was an alcoholic who didn’t love her. She had always been a stay-at-home mom. She loved being with me and my younger brother whenever we weren’t in school. After the divorce my mom bought her first house, got her first job in thirteen years, and had to do everything else that goes along with living without a spouse helping you and two young children. She is the strongest, most capable person I know, and she can do anything. She’s incredible.

In the beginning, I saw my dad once a week and every other weekend. His alcoholism worsened over the years and for the past few years I haven’t seen him at all. My mom still tries to take care of him since nobody else will, not even him. The fact of the matter is that the hardest part about the life of a single parent isn’t being raised by one. It’s being the single parent who has to raise their children on their own. I have no idea how that must feel or what that’s like, I only have the perspective of being raised by a strong mother who did everything in her power to make sure my brother and I were happy, didn’t have to worry about money, and still had a childhood while getting our homework done. In the beginning she was sad that she couldn’t be there when we came home from school but she still tried to make it in time so that she could cook delicious Italian meals instead of the Irish dishes my father always wanted. In the beginning we still always ate together as a family. As the years went on we each got busy in our own ways and now we have more fast food dinners on the couch than home cooked meals at the dinner table. But that comes with being busy and going out of your way to make sure life is normal and perfect.

My best friend Kerry was also raised by a single mom. The divorce happened in November 2010 when Kerry was thirteen and her sister was nine. The divorce “took forever” according to her and it wasn’t pleasant. “My dad didn’t think he had done anything wrong and that was a problem. That and the court systems didn’t want to do anything.” After the divorce, Kerry and her sister only saw their father once and it was because Kerry’s sister was young and didn’t understand the situation. She was scared, so they never went back.

Her mom was a nurse and after the divorce she kept working, even more than before. “Money wasn’t a problem but it could’ve been if we didn’t prepare for it,” Kerry told me. They took measures to avoid having financial troubles. “We layered up more in the winter to use less heat, we took short showers, and we ended up moving into a smaller space because paying for a place that was that big for three people was a lot and we didn’t need it.” It wasn’t that there was more alone time solely because it was just her mom, but that was a factor. Her mom had to work late shifts at the hospital so Kerry and her sister would be home at night. Kerry was old enough to watch her sister at that point so it didn’t seem too much of an inconvenience. “If we had two parents my sister and I never would’ve been allowed to spend the night by ourselves. Having just one parent really gave us more independence, made us become more independent, and that’s not a bad thing. I know how to take care of myself without a lot or any help and that’s a skill that’s come in handy a lot of time so far living away from home at college.”

It’s been said that people who are raised by one parent are “missing out on something,” whether it’s having a handyman around the house, having a mother’s touch, having two people to ask advice from, or having more financial stability. But from being raised by my mother I know that I can achieve anything life throws at me. I was lucky. My mom is handy, she’s caring, and she is so motivated and skilled at everything she puts her mind to. She thinks ahead for any disaster and knows how to handle issues that arise. She holds two full time jobs successfully: her work and her motherhood.

If anything, being raised by one parent makes you appreciate everything they’ve accomplished that much more. Single parents are strong and Kerry and I have been trained in their likeness (possibly without our moms even meaning to, though they’re proud regardless). When a person is strained or given almost impossible odds they will rise above everything they can to come out okay. Having a single parent home is the perfect situation for a hero to be made.

Single parents also raise amazing children who can totally grapple with whatever life throws at us. We’re shown the imperfections in life, that not everything always turns out our way, and that sometimes we have to fight the current that pushes us back. But if our parents can raise children on their own, keep us fed every night with a roof over our heads, and still have time to spend with us, we can accomplish anything. Our moms and dads are modern day superheroes and from watching them raise us we know that when life throws you a curve ball you have the ability to hit it out of the park.
NATURE IS EVERYWHERE. IT’S IN EVERYTHING THAT WE COME IN CONTACT WITH, AND WHAT WE SEE. IT IS THE STATE OF LIFE AND THAT OF DEATH. IT IS THE PREMISE THAT THAT WE ARE, IN ONE SIMPLE WORD AND CONCEPT.
It's in the awe...
The serenity of seclusion...
The growth of life...
The journey higher...
And the one back down to reality...
This marks our seventh creative writing contest. The competition arose from necessity, as it quickly became impossible for us not to acknowledge the vast body of creativity around campus. We asked for short story and poetry submissions and were answered with full inboxes, brimming with talent. This is a collective thank you to all those who submitted work. Your stories were defamiliarizing, full of unharnessed potential and talent.
The Three Stages of Loving a Thunderstorm
Veronica Good

I.
You are caught in static
and the way your heart lifts
when, for a pulse,
the sky
is lit with thunder blue
and you can feel fear
sitting warm in your cheeks.

II.
The downpour rings
in your ears,
a soft drum overpowering the pentameter
of your heartbeat.
Lulled back and
forth between the soft current of sleep
and the nervous pitter pitter
of wide-awake,
you cling to the cool window.

III.
Later,
your heart sits heavy, adrift
In your rib cage, and your chest
feels like it is being pressed with stones
for information you never had
but that you can smell
Wafting up
from the wet earth
on the other side of the window.
Dear
Rachel VanRensselaer

Dear:
What are you even considered to be now
A friend, a lover
An acquaintance, an ally,
An enemy
And what were you considered
Back then
When you would sneak in
And leave before sleep took over me
I ask because I have wanted to know
For years,
Four years,
What were you?
And still.
I tried
Still trying to
Burn you in the ashes of my mind
A failed attempt to an aborted memory
A never ending tide, crashing into me
You took me under without a breath of air to hold me over
What are you now?
A friend, a lover
An acquaintance, an ally, an enemy
Question after question
There is still no answer
But here is my conclusion:
You were never any of the above

Even an enemy shows emotion
A friend shows care
You were neither
A stranger it is.
ANGER (n)
A strong feeling of being upset or annoyed because of something wrong or bad.

Anger.
Seething, clawing,
Begging for a way out
Slammed doors
Sore throats
All for feeling nothing.

NUMB (adj)
Unable to think, feel, or react normally because of something that shocks or upsets you;

Devoid of emotion.
They say eyes are the windows to the soul,
But if they are,
Why can’t people see that I’m
So so—so consumed,
So absorbed,
So devoured—so
Tired.
1% living 99% dead
But I’M the victim of the zombies—
Being torn open and ripped apart.
Broken.
Only heard by the screams I no longer hear.
Broken.

ALONE (adj)
Without anyone or anything else
You said you’d be here
But all you are is a pat on the back

A pair of criticizing eyes
A mouth whose words are treason.

Betrayal.

Your labels do not define me.
Your clichés do not help me.
Your doubts don’t take me away from my problem—
My hell.

Your references are nothing
When my religion is a bed,
And my devil is the light
Disrupting my escape.

There’s a word.

ESCAPE (v)
To get away.
Captivity out of my control,
A prison in oblivion,
Chains controlled by guards—
Unknown faces,
Unknown motives.

BLACK LIVES MATTER, they say.
And though my skin is white,
My soul is a contrast
In perpetual darkness.
No sense of a way out.
No sense of a light to follow.

Anger.
The Plastic Comb
Hallie Bonds

Sitting in between my Mom’s white legs, green varicose veins stain them. I twirl my tan thumbs in a large circle. My legs are crisscross applesauce and I am in a ring of hair supplies. Five different types of hair lotions, three different types of hair gels, six or seven brushes, a blow-dryer and rainbow colored hair bows. “How do you want your hair for school today?” my Mom said. “I don’t know Mommy, I just don’t want it sticking up.” I said. The children at my school were constantly picking on me about my hair. Asking me why I don’t know how to brush it and why it is always so frizzy. I was seven years old. I did not know how to fully do my hair by myself yet. I could brush it here and there, but that is about it. “I was talking to my friend Miranda at work today. She recommended we get this gel called “Jamz” it comes in a black container,” my mother said, as she reaches for a black comb. My Mom was always telling my about all these new hair products we should try. The bathroom cabinets were full of unused products. Half-empty bottles of Pantene shampoo and Garnier Fructis conditioner. Little did we know at the time, is that those were nowhere near what we should have been using for my hair texture. It was a curly and tangly jungle that multiple bobby pins would get lost in. Yet, at the same time it had the softness and flowyness of my mother’s hair. My hair was just confused about what it wanted to be. Kind of like a child who changes what they want to be when they grow up 15 times before college. I always find myself getting jealous of the other black girls at my school. How they have perfect zig-zag parts in their hair, tied off with multi-colored plastic barrettes. Sometimes I didn’t even care about how extravagant the hair-styles were, I just wanted my hair so lay down. For my hair to not stick up like blades of grass. I am sure the teachers at my school were thinking, I was just rolling out of my twin-sized bed every day. Throwing my shirt over my head, slipping my pants on and neglecting my hair. She grabs another type of hair tool to try on my hair, since the black comb kept getting stuck. It made me feel like my hair was made out of mud or something. Why couldn’t the comb just go through effortlessly? Why did the white women on the hair commercials make it look so easy? Her next choice was a round-red brush with coarse bristles. The bristles on it were already suffocating with previous hair attempts. My Mom takes her hand and cleans the hair out of it, pulling it from the bristles slowly. Her white fingers contrasting my soft black hair. They are now greasy, as she finds a towel to whip them on. I suddenly feel a jolt as my mother nearly whip-lashes my hair back. I look in the oval white mirror and notice she is settling for a ponytail. This is taking a really long time. The bristles press up against my scalp and it feels kind of good. I was in no way what black people call “tender headed.” I feel her loop a black hair bow around my hair. I tell her that the hair bow is not tight enough and to please do it again. Reluctantly she takes it out and reties it to my liking. I look back up in the mirror again and my hair is still sticking up. Even though I knew that the children were going to laugh at me at school. I gave my mother a kiss on the cheek and started walking over to my closet. Picking out my black chuck tailors, accented with white laces to wear to school today. There was never any trouble with my laces laying down.
If you know who Tina Fey is, you probably know that she is absolutely hilarious. Fey was a writer for Saturday Night Live, created the TV show 30 Rock, and wrote the screenplay for the movie, Mean Girls. The woman has had her fair share of experience in the world of writing comedy for both television and film. So if she's good in those concentrations, why wouldn't a book written by her be just as much of a success? Spoiler: it's totally a success.

In the book’s 275 pages, Fey writes about her life in chronological order, beginning from her childhood up until what it's like being forty. She writes about her road to success in the world of theater and acting, reveals what caused her facial scar, and how to balance motherhood with work. Aside from a basic autobiographical timeline, Fey also weaves in her mature view of certain topics: the “ideal” American beauty standard, how to be an effective boss in the workplace, and how to resist pressure from people attempting to change you. This book will make you fall in love with Tina Fey for her character because she's confident enough to achieve her goals and is aware of her accomplishments, yet she's also very humble about her ultimate existence as a human being.

So when your required readings for classes get too boring or academic and you just want to relax and read something funny, get your hands on a copy of Bossypants. Translating humor to paper is a difficult thing to do, but Fey does it with grace, honesty, wit, and intimacy. This is a book that fans and non-fans, girls and even guys, will enjoy.
Milk and Honey
Rupi Kaur

Review by Zach Thomas

Milk and Honey, Rupi Kaur’s 2016 bestseller, is a collection of four “chapters” of poetry. The poems confront pressing topics such as rape, incest, the 1984 Sikh genocide, pedophilia, and female identity, just to name a few.

One could say a characteristic minimalism applies to the poems, yet this includes the craft and content as well. Any heaviness is neutralized with abundant platitudes and the poems, replete with faux quirks, should have been reserved for the Tumblr blog where they began. The speaker says “I can’t tell if my mother is / terrified or in love with / my father it all / looks the same.” The next poem simply reads “I flinch when you touch me / I fear it is him.” Now if these were texts from a friend, I would be concerned. They are, however, just two instances of Milk and Honey’s knack for anticlimax.

Determined to not leave the reader indeed wanting more, the book regularly pontificates as well. One poem states that “you have sadness / living in places / sadness shouldn’t live.” The following reads “a daughter should / not have to / beg her father / for a relationship.” One of the collection’s many glorifications of sophomoric epiphanies is the underwhelming “you cannot leave / and have me too / I cannot exist in / two places at once.”

Perhaps one could at least admire Milk and Honey for its curious style. Each poem is nameless. Only lower case letters are used and all punctuation except periods is omitted. This, according to the author’s foreword, is a nod to Punjabi’s written form. Even then, Kaur’s only feat with Milk and Honey is a drab cultural mishmash content with 200 some pages which elicit a shrug while simply stating that trauma and pleasure happened. Perhaps next time she’ll spend more time showing how.
MOVIE REVIEW.

“Hour of the Wolf”

Review by Zach Thomas

Ingmar Bergman’s classic 1968 psychological horror film is an account of the gradual mental deterioration of artist Johan Borg (Max von Sydow) and the subsequent effects on his wife, Alma (Liv Ullman). Some two decades into Bergman’s career, this film captures many of the elements for which he is best known: barren, sparsely inhabited landscapes, ominous images in sharp black and white, and an exploration of characters’ suppressed thoughts and desires.

A slide in the opening scene establishes a puzzling air with a seemingly real bit of backstory: “The artist Johan Borg disappeared some years ago, without a trace, from his home on the island of Baltrum in the Frisian Islands. His wife Alma later left me Johan’s diary, which she had found among his papers. This diary and Alma’s account are the basis of this film.” The impression of reality is made by this and Alma’s direct yet subtle addresses to a narrator and confidante whose identity remains a mystery throughout the film.

Johan, a struggling painter, has recently been beset with insomnia, anxiety, and a fear of the dark. Increasingly distant toward his wife, he begins sketching a series of characters which regularly appear to him on the island. Among these are a woman in all white whose face, according to him, comes off if she removes her hat. Others are the ominously named spider men, the bird men, the cannibals, and the insects.

As the film progresses, the viewer discovers that the very characters in Johan’s sketchbook and nightmares are a group inhabiting a castle on the island. Creepier yet, they approach him as his biggest admirers. The woman in white instructs Alma to read Johan’s diary after appearing to her and telling her she is over 200 years old. Through secret readings, Alma discovers a number of shocking details about her husband: his affair with the troublesome Veronica Vogler, his mounting psychological isolation, and his increasingly violent tendencies. These three factors contribute to Johan’s eventual demise and disappearance.

With a little patience, viewers can expect to be defamiliarized by Hour of the Wolf. There are no explosions, car chases, or cheap, interspersed pop hits. What is left is worth reconsidering and revisiting, certain to provide new information and fresh insights, even half a century after its debut. It is fundamentally a slow-burning drama that takes a cue from the host of bleak northern European oceanfront landscapes in which it was filmed. Its dialogue borrows even more from this. Alma, in reference to her husband’s rapid decline, says “I see that something is going to happen, something evil, but I don’t know what to call it.” Johan, on one of the many nights he forces himself to stay awake, calmly states that “there was a time when nights were for sleep...deep, dreamless sleep. I cannot sleep. I wake out of fear.” Of the middle of the night, he says that “it is now that the nightmares come to us.”

Johan is eventually unable to accept or further suppress his childhood trauma, reckless violence, guilt, and harmful sexual urges. He returns to the castle to see all of the characters from the sketchbook and to pursue another rendezvous in his long-standing affair with Veronica Vogler. In some of the film’s last lines, indeed some of the most unsettling ones in Bergman’s catalog, he addresses the voyeuristic guests in resignation: “I thank you that the limit has finally been transgressed. The mirror has been shattered. But what do the splinters reflect? Can you tell me that?”
In the dimly lit, and muggy terminal of 42nd Street in Flushing, came the understanding of a concept I thought that I had known well. It wasn’t until I followed the sound of music to an elderly Chinese man in Grand Central Station that my concept of language became distorted.

He sat on a black crate, behind him a Chinese newspaper and water. In front of him, a cardboard box lined with orange duct tape and singular white stripe that held the donations of passersby. The man straddled a string instrument I was not familiar with, a Huqin, a traditional Chinese instrument. His fluidity and focus entranced me. The music was soothing and yet intensifying at the same time.

Upon the last note of his song, Theresa, who joined in the musical scavenger approached the man. We hoped to talk about his life, his passion for music, and how he ended up in New York City. However, this quickly shifted to no longer be an option. He did not understand English, so much so that he could not even relay his name to us. After a couple seconds of silence, he shifted his focus back to his instrument and began to play again.

We stood there, partially confused and let down. It wasn’t until we began our way back through the terminals and halls of Grand Central that it clicked. We always tend to think that communication is through words, and that in America, you should be able to converse in English. Yet this man defied that, he doesn’t need to learn our nation’s language, he already is able to do so universally without a single word.

All it took was one man, and one instrument.