The background of the cover is a scenic landscape photograph. It shows a vast mountain range with several peaks visible under a sky filled with soft, white and grey clouds. In the foreground, a dense green forest covers the lower slopes of the mountains. A calm lake is visible in the bottom right corner, reflecting the sky and the surrounding greenery. The overall tone is peaceful and majestic.

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Echoes From on High

The Literary Magazine of the AΔΦ Society

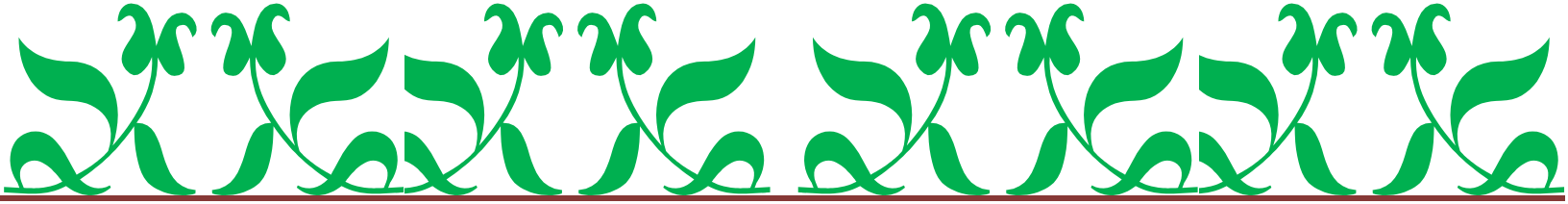
Contents

Untitled, Carling Bateman.....	3
Kiyomizu-dera in Spring, Thom Clark.....	5
Imperial Palace Kyoto 2010, Thom Clark.....	6
Hamlet Unplugged, Erin Butler.....	7
The 12 Steps of Kevin Wrapping Presents, Kevin Thomas.....	13
Sophomore, Jessica Tran.....	15
Angeles National Forest Sunset, Jim Sabo.....	17
Tujunga Canyon Sunset, Jim Sabo.....	18
Shadow Hill Sunset, Jim Sabo.....	19
Genesis, Shakespeare, and Medea: Classic Allusion in African-American Southern Literature, Jessica Lawson.....	20
Crystal and Water, Jim Sabo.....	24
The Art of Punting, Sean Moreau.....	25
Editor's Note.....	30
Contributors.....	31

ΑΔΦ



SOCIETY



Untitled

Carling Bateman, Columbia '10

The first time I decided I was in love, I was fifteen. He played hockey and had pink cheeks and smelled fantastic. I would have sleepovers with my friends at Ashley's house and they would moon over their crushes and every few minutes, I would think to myself, "Greg. Okay. Now I've thought of him. It's because I can't stop thinking about him." And then I would look at Ashley and wonder if she knew how perfect her skin was, satiny over her long, slender limbs.

The first time we kissed, we were walking through the park at dusk, and then the sun set and we walked to a bridge and there were literally fireworks, but it didn't feel like anything when his lips touched mine. It felt like a mouth touching my mouth. But all of my friends sighed when I told the story, so it must have been love.

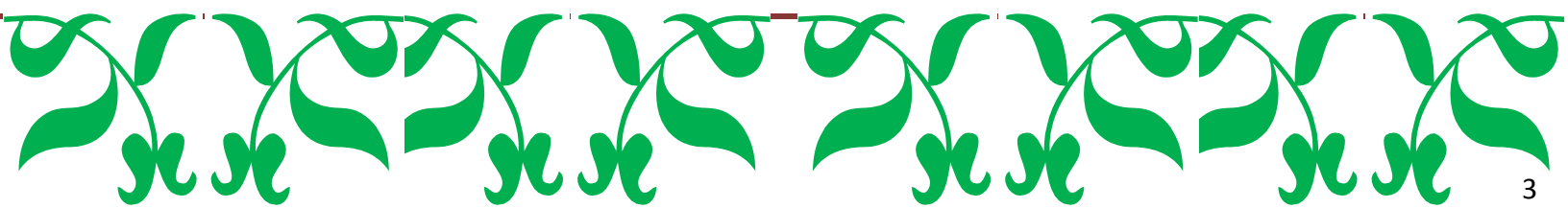
The second time I thought I was in love, I was seventeen. He had silky hair and sharp features and he was incredibly beautiful. He loved me so much, we were barely ever apart. I cut his hair once and made a joke about being Delilah and he didn't know what I was talking about. He told me my breasts were too small and that he knew I wanted to have sex because I would squirm to get away from him and he said that was a good sign.

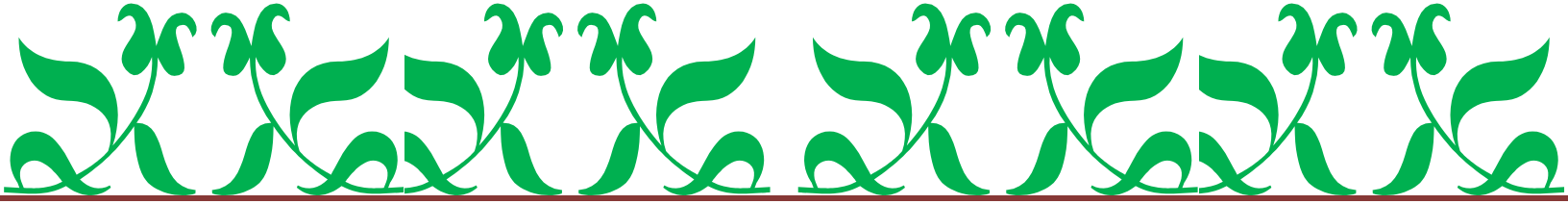
The first time he kissed me we were on my friend's bed, and she was there too, asleep, and I told him I didn't want to, but he did anyway. But I wanted desperately to please him, so it must have been love.

The third time I knew I was in love, I was twenty-one. He was tall - incredibly tall, and so handsome, and strong, and funny. All of our jokes matched up and I fit well in his arms. My family loved him and I loved his friends, and my best friend's boyfriend thought he was too loud.

The first time we slept together it felt like a victory, and I wanted to show him off to everyone I knew. When we fought it felt like we would never stop shouting, and after a few months it felt like it had been pretty good and we got along so well and it had been a while I guess so I must have been in love. We shook hands when we broke up and hugged for too long.

The first time I fell in love, I was twenty-four. She was stocky and muscular and had a scar on her lip where she had fallen down stairs. When I thought about holding her hand, I lost track of my breath

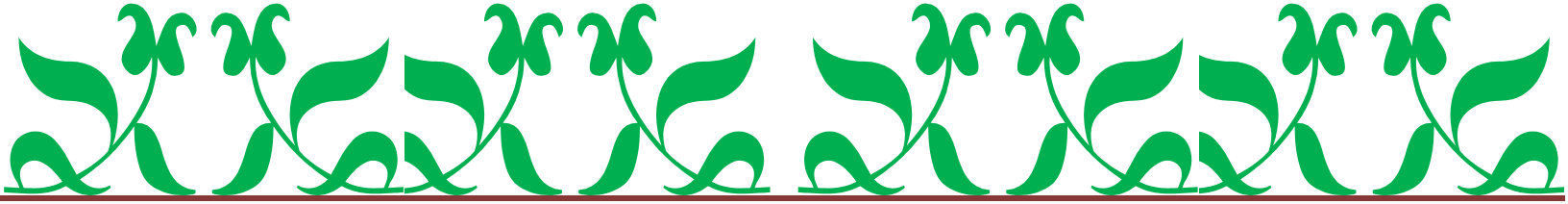




and an ecstatic electricity spread all over my body and out through my skin. Whenever she started talking to me I felt giddy and a shiver went up my spine and turned into heat around my ears. She never left my mind long enough for me to be able to remind myself to think of her, and when I closed my eyes, my mind, unbidden, replayed some moment of being with her and I would soften with a sigh of relief.

The first time she touched me, my knees went weak and my skin burst into flames, and I couldn't stop smiling for days.





Kiyomizu-dera in Spring

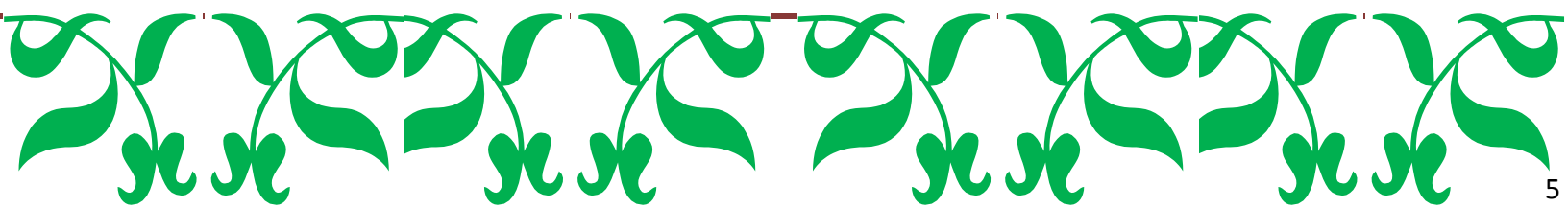
Thom Clark, Bowdoin '99



Medium: Color Digital (not enhanced)

Subject: Kiyomizu Buddhist Temple, Kyoto, Japan during the cherry blossom bloom.

Date Taken: April 2010

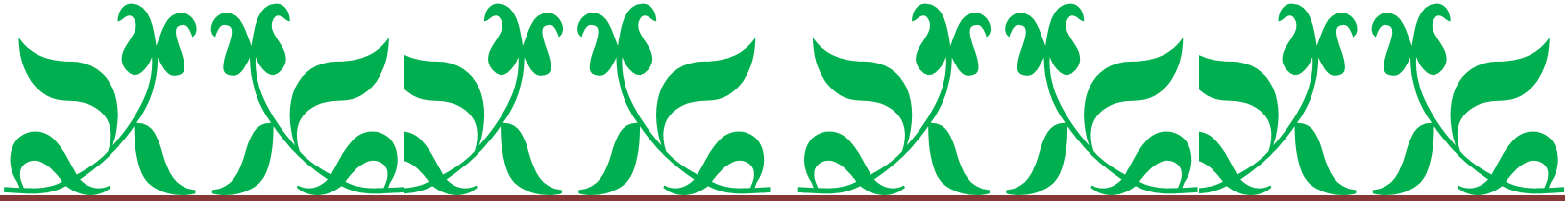


Imperial Palace Kyoto 2010

Thom Clark, Bowdoin '99



Medium: Color Digital (not enhanced)
Subject: Throne pavilion in the former Japanese imperial palace,
Kyoto, Japan
during the cherry blossom bloom.
Date Taken: April 2010



Hamlet Unplugged

Erin Butler, Brunonian '14

There is a certain peace and quiet to being absolutely mad.

Verna only mildly objected to the term. Madness – it was so messy. No, she was not angry. Rather, she was delicately, romantically mad, and nothing else would do, for she was too in love with the idea of it. She was not crazy. She was not psycho, she was not insane. How dreadful the words sounded to her. They were colloquial and childish, and they simply did not fit the bill. She was, in all practical and logical senses of the word, *mad*.

Never had a woman so enjoyed her madness as did Verna Lorne.

Her clothing was all askew when she took up her spot outside the theatre that night. She looked as though she had gotten dressed in the dark, and indeed she had. Her stockings were on backwards and pulled up a few inches higher on the right leg than on the left, leaving an uncomfortable puddle of sheer fabric beneath her left knee. A heavy black skirt like drapery was layered over the stockings. She hadn't been able to find the center seam line, so it sliced down the skirt somewhere awkwardly near her hip. Her torso was adorned with a thin rosy sweater that looked as though a window's pattern of ice crystals had been spun into its fragile wool. Covering the sweater was a thin, spiderwebbed shawl into which she had woven flower petals, and which she now clutched at the hollow of her throat.

"ARE YOU--"

She seized the man who passed her then by the arm.

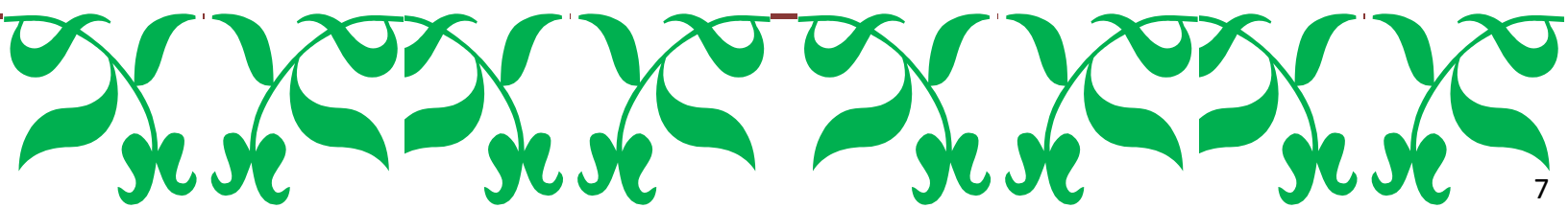
"I say, young lady," he gruffed in the sort of way that convinced you he had been wanting to say that for years. He brushed at his shoulder pads; she hadn't grabbed him there. Verna's voice dropped to a hushed whisper.

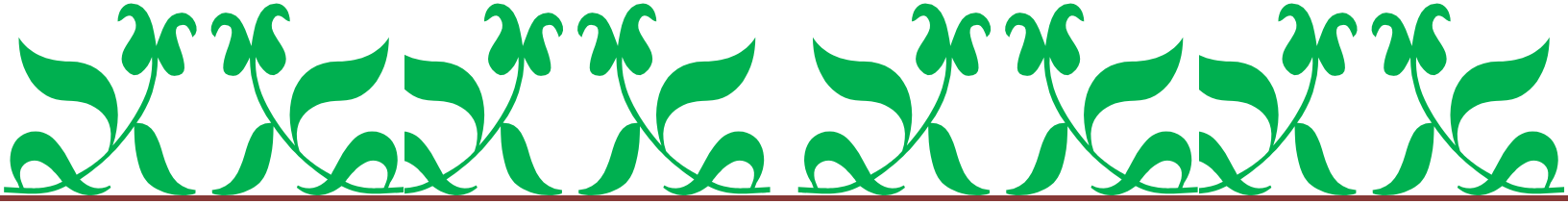
"Are you quite *mad*?" she asked him. The eyes that met his were wide with terror – whether hers or his own, he was not sure. Then she spat at the ground beside him. It sizzled in the foggy, humid night and sent up the sort of steam neither of them had seen outside of London.

"The filth they let on the streets..." he muttered, and continued into the theatre. Everything he said he had heard once in a movie.

The theatre was expansive, sprawling over an entire block. Verna sat at the southern corner, far enough from the door to be nearly invisible and close enough to see the entire audience. If she were a drinking woman, she would have played a drinking game with herself: a shot for every coat or handbag that passed that cost more than her annual income. As it was, she was clean, and so she bit herself every time instead.

There was glitter on the marquee. "*Hamlet Unplugged*," it read, in Gothic-Victorian script that looked like it wanted to kiss each passerby. It was opening that evening, a modern musical version of *Hamlet*.





"*Madness*," Verna barked, still in a whisper, and she wept just a little to herself. A poster for the show, a scaled version of the marquee on paper, was taped to the wall where she sat. It was a good length down from the box office, which was at the northern corner; far enough away for the advertisement to be enticing. She ran a finger along the poster's edges, inflicting paper cut wounds, her mouth rounded into a tiny *o*. The corner beside the tape was ripped and frayed. She teased it down, each tear a thrill of pleasure.

Hamlet Unplugged. A travesty. Is this creation? Is this anything that is real? Or new? Or art? Madness! This man in tights who speaks to a ghost and murders for murder's sake, is not he the one who is mad? No, perhaps there is only madness with reason. Perhaps he was never mad at all. He never had the logic.

The audience was beginning to arrive in bulk, adding to the few who had trickled in early for assigned seats they had already purchased. Verna huddled up her body and plastered herself closer to the wall. Her eyes were wide and wild. They darted back and forth as the audience passed in droves. She shook her head periodically; the people all looked the same, and she couldn't distinguish any differences.

A woman sat down beside her. Her hair smelled musty and she wore no gloves.

"Velma," Verna said. It was her verbal embrace. She did not bother with greetings or formalities. She did not dare touch her.

Velma's face, first frozen, cracked with smile after a moment or two.

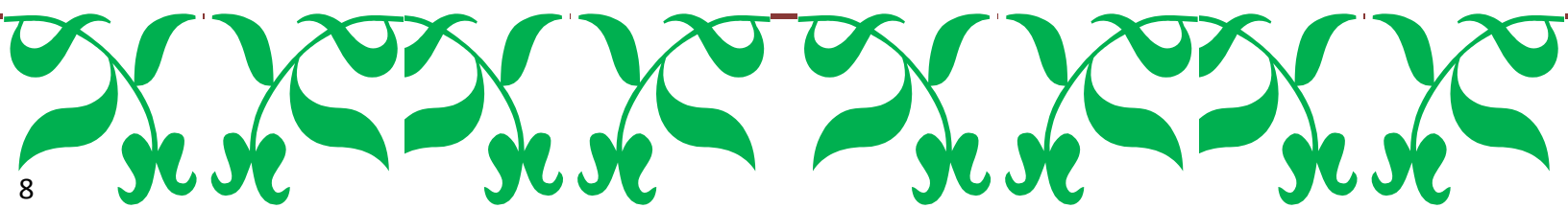
"Did you remember it?" Verna asked.

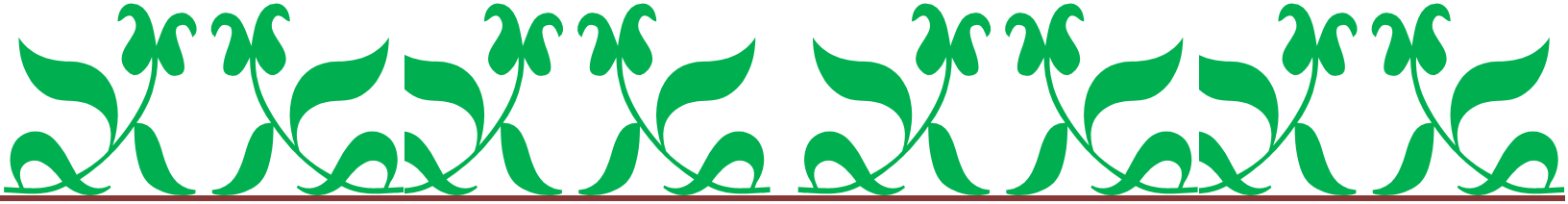
"Of course," Velma told her. She pulled a thin, heavy object, wrapped carefully around corners, out of her purse, which was made of fishnet stockings. "Shit," she added, because her fingernail caught on a stitch and tore the netting. Verna took the instrument, unwrapped it, and secured it to the inside of her shawl, using excess fabric to tie it in place. She jiggled a little to be certain it was secure, and then she sat back, satisfied. If Velma had been anyone else, she would have snaked her arm over her shoulder.

The audience was curious. A few of them thought Verna was a side show, or else some kind of opening act to prepare them for the musical. Perhaps *Hamlet Unplugged* involved some post-apocalyptic reality, and everyone in the show would be mad. Maybe this woman was even an actress, and they would see her onstage in just minutes! A handful of die-hards asked her to sign the little books they always carried for when they didn't have a playbill. The ladies bit their hands.

They did not mind the cold air. They liked to shiver and watch glittery puffs of breath emit from their mouths in the way only the cold allowed. Verna in particular had always found it a kind of liberty to see her breath as she breathed it. It was an affirmation that she was still there. No matter how much she patted at her limbs with frantic unease, any such assurance was still within her own system, and she could not be sure of it; but the breath was outside of her. Puffs of air were visible and real.

Out of the cold, the house of the theatre was dark and veiled with the speculative cloak of whispers as the audience filed in. Verna expected this, and at least for this recollection, considered it a small mercy to be outside. It frightened her that words in the theatre came only in whispers, and that if her voice rose to its normal level, she would be rude and loud, and worse, *exposed*.





Vincent Anders was inside the theatre, perched on a seat in the front row. He could not see his breath and his voice did not rise above a whisper. He had written *Hamlet Unplugged*, and his miniature portrait was in Verna's locket. Beside him sat the man whom Verna had grabbed. He held Vincent's hand and toyed alternately with the scarves around their necks.

"Darling," he whispered in Vincent's ear, leaning over, "are you ready?"
Vincent smiled at him and squeezed his hand.

"I don't think I've ever been so ready for anything." He kissed his lips.

The process had been difficult for him. For months before finishing the script, he had suffered from a horrendous writer's block. At points, it was so horrid that he could scarcely sign his name, his hand was so disinclined to write. His doctors were all puzzled. His psychiatrist, having exhausted freudian analysis, was stumped. The psychiatrist sat him down at his last appointment before he started writing the play.

"Vincent, my boy," he said, "I can't think of any reason why you shouldn't be able to write. You've been such a star."

"But I just haven't felt anything lately," Vincent told him.

"Nothing at all?"

"Very little."

The doctor paused and tapped his chin with his pen.

"Vincent," he said. "Have you ever been with a woman?" Vincent sighed. His head fell tiredly into his hand.

"Doc, we've been over this," he said. "I'm gay. I've never been with a woman, and I don't intend to be. Haven't I mentioned my husband?"

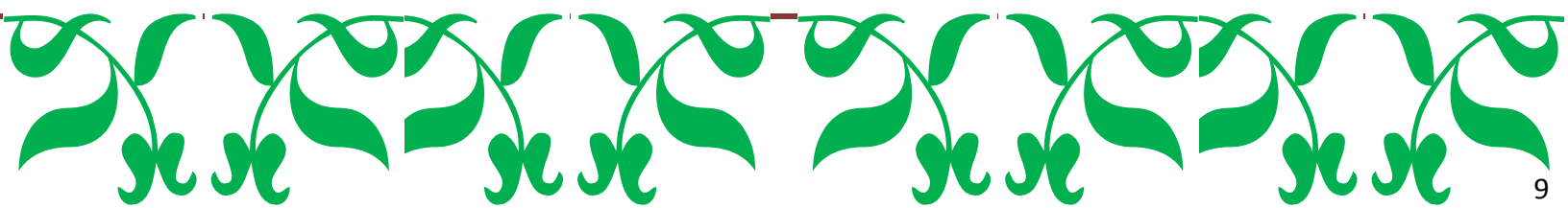
"You're missing the point," the psychiatrist said. "I'm not telling you to *be* with a woman, just suggesting you be with one. Temporarily. An experiment, if you will." Vincent leaned forward in his chair.

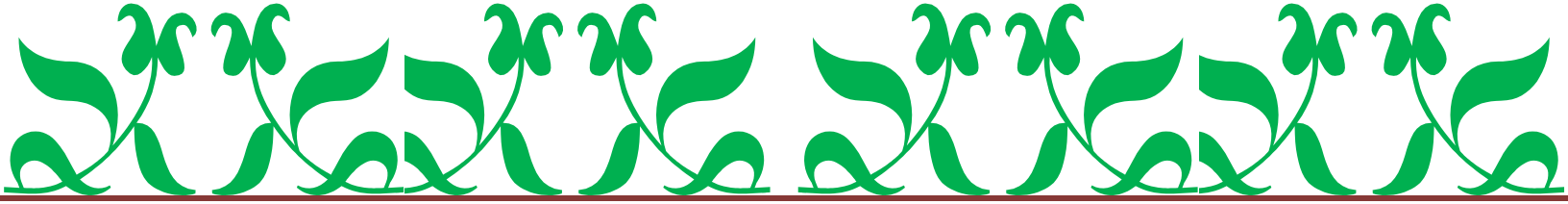
"And just what would I be testing, Doc?"

"Well, not exactly testing," the psychiatrist said. He laid a hand on the writer's knee. "Just try it out. See if it makes you feel something. Not love—just something. I think it could help you write."

Vincent was intrigued. A woman. He had never considered it before. It certainly would be something different, and if he didn't really love anyone else, he wouldn't be cheating. And so there had been Verna Lorne, a writer herself, and one who felt passionately. The sensation of emotion rubbed off on him, and *Hamlet Unplugged* reared its head.

"Oh, Vincent, how exciting for you!" came a voice from behind him, shattering the recollection before he could consider it: Marlena Evans, in fur and pearls, having just taken her seat in the row behind him. Marlena Evans was very wealthy, for her Chihuahua was the new star in commercials for a Mexican chain restaurant. She had a philanthropic love of the arts. Vincent flashed a smile at her and patted the ringed hand she placed on his shoulder.





The lights flashed, warning the audience that there were five minutes until the curtain went up, which really meant twelve minutes. Vincent followed traditions and always began seven minutes after the hour. Flutes trilled in the orchestra as violins and tubas tuned. One clarinetist was panicking because his stand light had gone out. In the wings, the stage manager was triple checking her headset while the chorus did shots of vinegar in the green room to mellow their throats. Ophelia – in this production, a violinist at Berklee and a senator's daughter – saw her boyfriend in the third row, unaware that he would break up with her that night due to a misunderstanding of her act of madness.

The house lights went down, and the curtain went up. “Shitshitshitshitshit,” said the house manager, who hadn't closed the outside doors in time and saw light leaking onto the darkened scrim before it rose. The lighting designer snapped a pencil from his booth.

But then the trapdoor opened, and up came the ghost of King Hamlet, who was represented by a street-dancer-turned-President-of-the-United-States-of-Denmark. Instead of armor, he wore a doo-rag to posthumously visit Secret Service agents Barnardo, Marcellus, and Horatio. His opening aria, *I'll Start By Saying Absolutely Nothing*, was an instant hit, demanding nearly as much raucous applause as its hip-hop-style reprise in Scene v. Vincent gripped his armrests, turning his knuckles white, and mouthed the words along with the actor.

And the play was an enormous success. The audience went wild. How it resonated with them! The revelation of Claudius as a religious extremist terrorist was brilliant; Hamlet's anarchy was scandalous; and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's tap number ending in their hate-crime murder was a show stopper. It was so inspired! The review in the *Times* tomorrow would rave. Musical theatre theory textbooks would cite it as a masterpiece for years to come, and students would whine about having it assigned to them in class, only to fall in love with it.

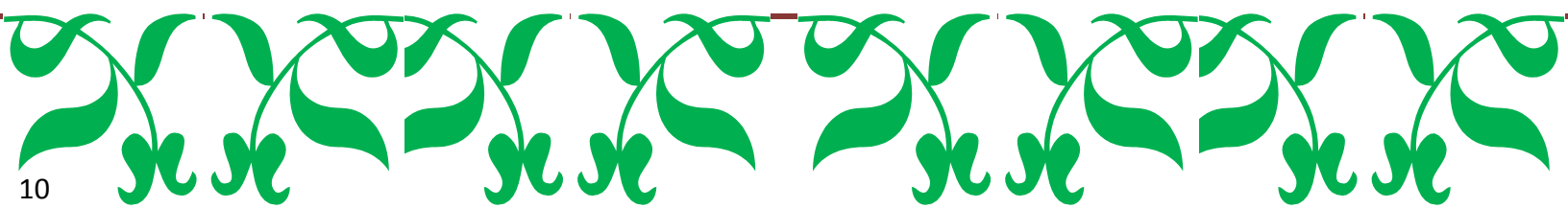
Outside the theatre, Verna heard their applause. Her fingers curled up into themselves. Her fingernails scraped at the pavement, leaving parts of themselves behind and pulling up bits of gravel. The applause rang and split in her ears, becoming louder the more she tried to block it out. She squeezed her eyes shut, but her mind's eye would not be veiled. It kept picturing the madness onstage. She imagined a streetwise Hamlet prancing about in legwarmers, feigning madness without nearly the conviction she herself felt. Cruelly, viciously, hints of story, the way she would have written it, sprang up in her mind like wild mushrooms. Yet she knew she could not write. She was a writer, and she could not write. What did she have if not that?

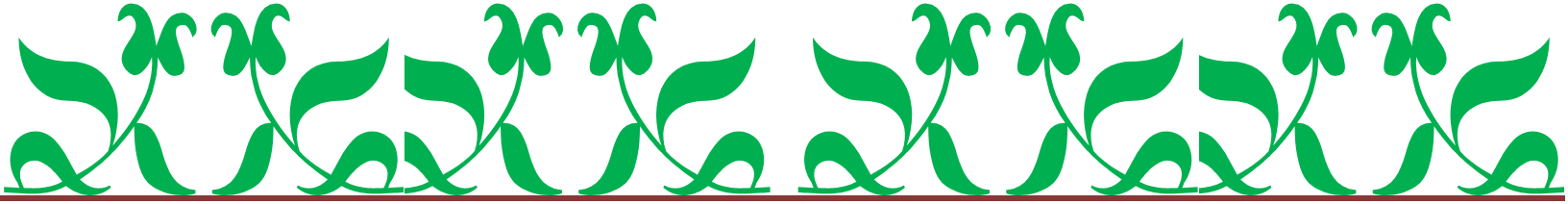
Nothing.

Nothing except for madness. Maybe she would win a Tony.

The theatre fell into hushed silence during the graveyard scene such that Verna could hear Hamlet's monologue from her corner outside the theatre walls. She ignored the taste of copper in her mouth and listened:

“*Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio.*” The line was sung, catapulting the tenor up into alto range. Verna could not see it, but Hamlet held, rather than a skull, an antique vase holding the dead man's ashes. Then the music stopped and the actor playing Hamlet let out an enormous wail, echoing through the halls and





seeping through the bricks like poison. It hit Verna's ear and she screeched.

Yet it got worse: "*Alas, Yorick! 'Tis he I loved, Horatio! Yorick Ophelia could never be, and thus I sob, I sob.*"

And sob he did. Verna raged. She tore at her clothes and ripped out her matted hair in clumps. Then she dug her fingernails into Velma's hands, but she could not feel anything there.

"Damn it, Velma!" she cried. "You're never here! Why are you never here?"

Vincent Anders wept during curtain call at his masterpiece.

"It's really *something* to bring it to life," he sobbed into his husband's shoulder.

Flowers were thrown onstage as the tech crew finally closed the curtain after a second standing ovation. The cast scurried to and fro as they prepared for their opening night cast party, pushing strike out of their minds and replacing it with visions of a multi-year run. They left the theatre in a flurry, only minutes after the audience had.

Vincent lingered. He loved the smell of the stage after a show. With the empty theatre and only a thin strip of lights past the proscenium shining on the stage, he breathed deeply and ran his hands over the edge of the stage with deliberate slowness. It was his dearest love.

"Vincent?" his husband called from the doors. "Everyone will be waiting."

"Coming," Vincent answered. He gathered his things and met him outside. It was darker now, and much colder than when they had arrived. He wrapped the scarf tighter around his neck. And suddenly there was a woman before him.

"VINCENT," she cried. Yet she had barely spoken at all. Her face was wild. She may have been mad. "Vincent," she continued, "*my old boy.*"

"Excuse me, madame," he squeaked. The words were inaudible even to him. She edged closer, her face coming by degrees into the light – wrinkled and worn like yesterday's lunch bag.

"Vincent, you've written," she said. Her smile was toothy and horrid, and now her hands were on his biceps.

Written what? How do you know?

"Vincent, my darling," cooed she, "oh, you've been so successful. Vincent, do you remember me? You loved me once." She eyed the tall man beside him. He said nothing. His hands were in his pockets.

"Vincent, do you know I cannot write a thing? Not a single thing, not I, ho ho!" And her laugh was treacherous. In his ears, it seemed to drip with tuberculosis.

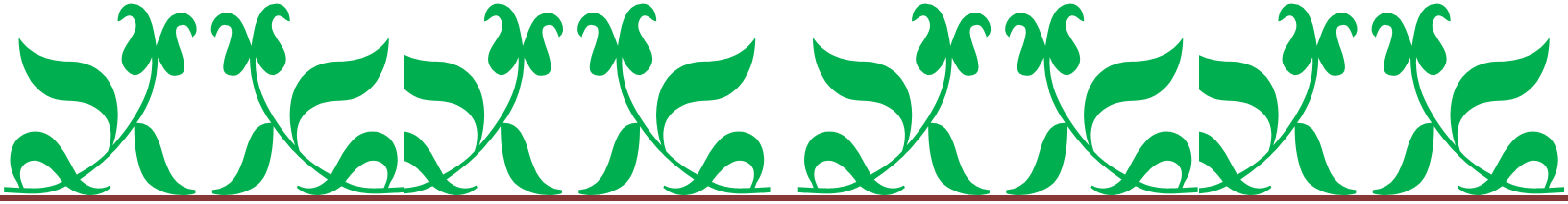
Then she became very still.

He didn't say a word.

He did not try to stop her when she pulled the gun out of the folds of her shawl.

Verna did not try to stop herself as she fingered the trigger, teased it, and pulled. The bullet soared with





professional swiftness, followed by another, and another. They punctured his lungs, his brain, his kidneys; she had aimed for his heart. But his body fell and was still.

Later, the police were tired. The theatre-going crowd wasn't usually so rowdy. They thought the job would be easy, that they could handcuff the woman and go. But the husband would not stop screaming, first at the woman, then at the officers themselves, and then at the crowd who had congregated behind the caution tape.

The body lay on the ground, against protocol. The man would have drowned in his own blood if the bullets hadn't killed him first. Usually, the officers were not frightened when these kinds of victims died with their eyes open, but it was so late, and they were so very fatigued, and they usually did not come to this part of town; it spooked them just a little.

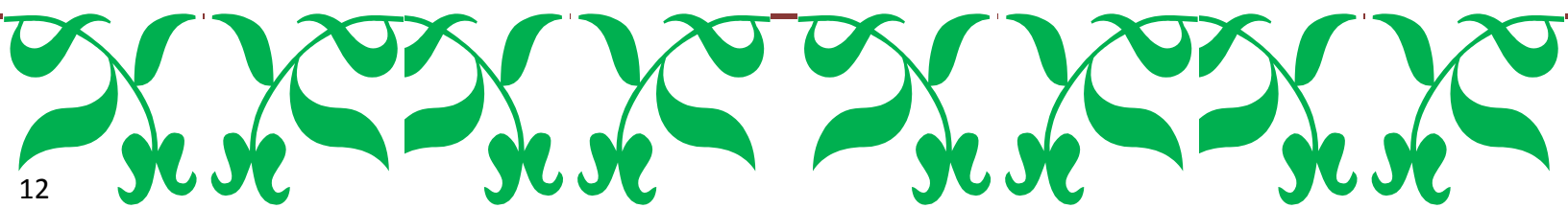
The fat officer tried to calm the red-faced husband while the thin one struggled to restrain Verna. She was belligerent and snapped her teeth at his forearms when he had handcuffed her own behind her back.

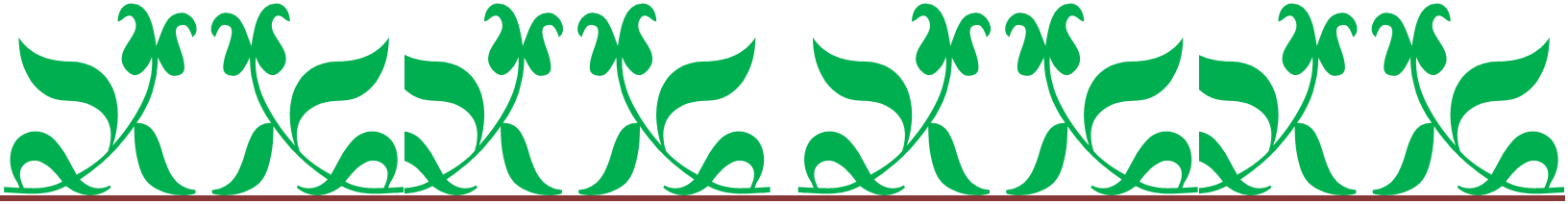
"But officers," she protested, "I didn't do a thing. She did it, it was her! She gave me the gun!" And beside her, holding nothing, was Velma. Verna saw her own breath, but from Velma, she saw nothing. She kned the girl in the back.

Velma, breathe. Breathe, damn it!

Again, nothing.

Verna was dumb and dazed. And she told the officers, "My God, she's dead."





The 12 Steps of Kevin Wrapping Presents

Kevin Thomas, Brunonian '11.5

Step 1: Buy presents.

Step 2: Buy wrapping paper.

Step 3:
Hey!--the label reveals your wrapping paper was manufactured in America! From recycled materials! This feels awesome. Never mind that when you bought it you had no way of knowing it wasn't made by tiny Vietnamese children, whose very tears gave the paper its illustrious sheen; it still puts you in the Christmas spirit.

Step 4:
You bought the wrong wrapping paper.
You got distracted by the little dogs with their little reindeer hats for a second too long to realize the dimensions of your wrapping paper fit none of the five gifts you have purchased this season.
You consumerist whore. You thought about the plain red roll--it was big enough for everything. It was timeless. Tasteful. But like so many, you chose style over substance--and paid the price.

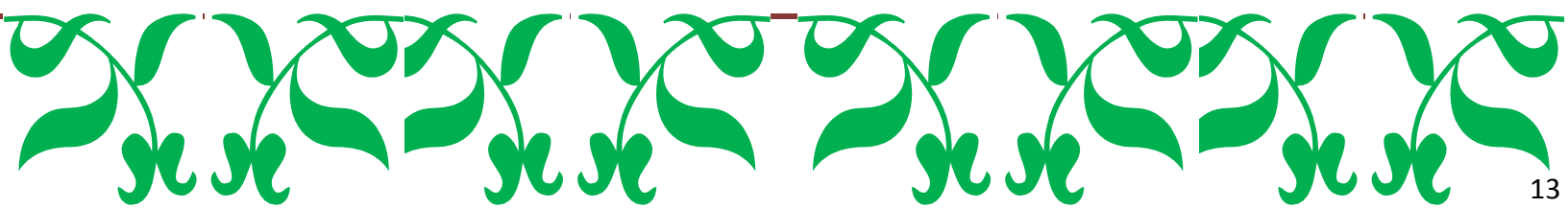
Step 5:
Continue wrapping. Cut out sections to cover up other holes and tears until your presents resemble a tramp's trousers from the 30's. Fix all problems with Scotch (tape).

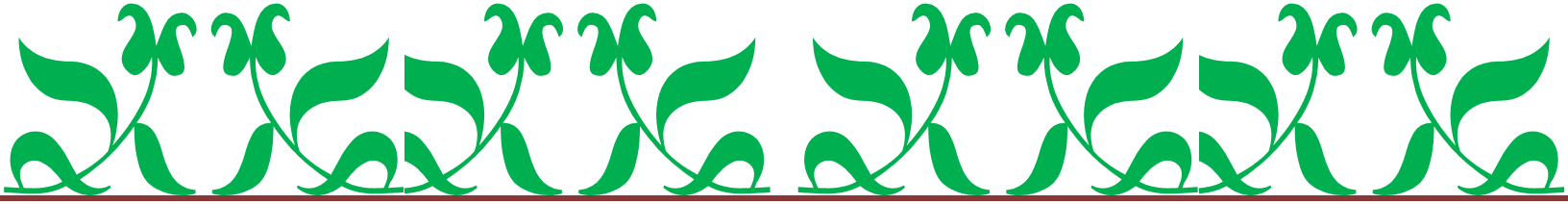
Step 6:
Crying, Scotch (bottle).

Step 7:
How are women so good at this? You're supposed to have the superior spatial reasoning. You're not a real man. A real man wouldn't have used a pre-tied bow.

Step 8:
Finally, having assembled a shambling horror of a gift, attempt to bring the presents downstairs. But you have stretched the paper too thin--your poor creation would rather die than be seen under the judgmental light of the Christmas tree, and tears itself apart.

Step 9:
Maybe try a gift bag.





Step 10:

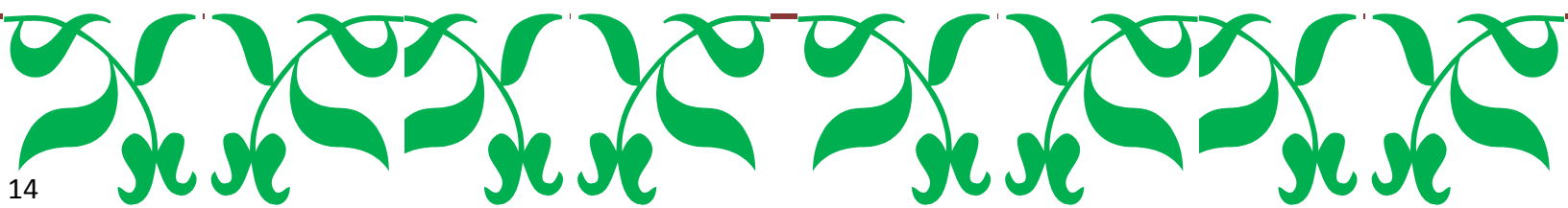
WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH THIS TISSUE PAPER. FUCK IT ALL TO HELL.

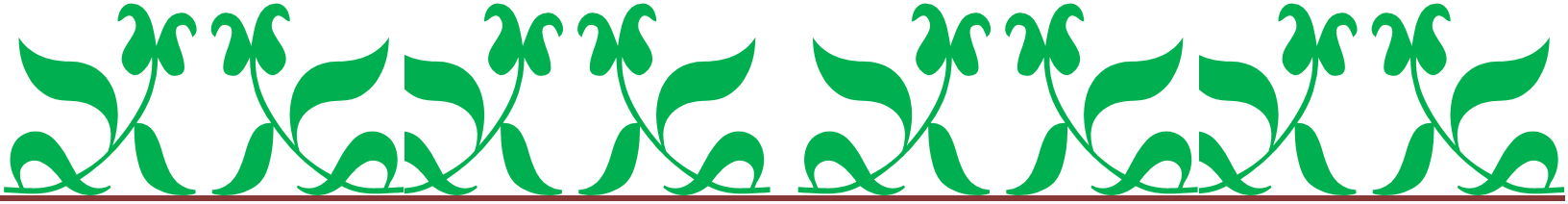
Step 11:

Look in the mirror. Admit that you failed every part of kindergarten--folding, tying, cutting with scissors. You were never meant to grow up; a grown up could do this. You're just a sad 20-something that can't even arrange his bow properly. Like so many of your generation, let every semblance of self-worth visible in your eyes die.

Step 12:

Get mom to do it. Eat cookies. Feel better.





Sophomore

Jessica Tran, Brunonian '15

I sit and wonder where all my time has gone.
I pass each day by telling myself I'll do better, I'll work harder.
I came here thinking I had a plan
And found my world turned upside down.
What am I doing here?

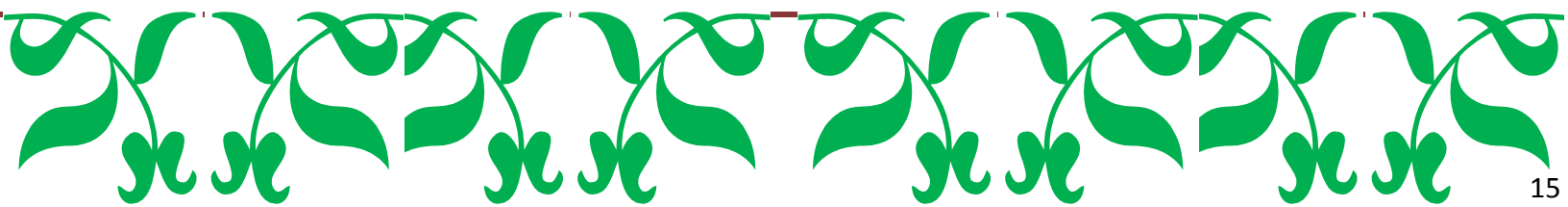
I've found friends, freedom, and a place where I belong,
But I've also found that life is more complicated than I thought it would be.
I struggle and struggle to find balance,
But the more I struggle, the more I drown.
Have my priorities changed?

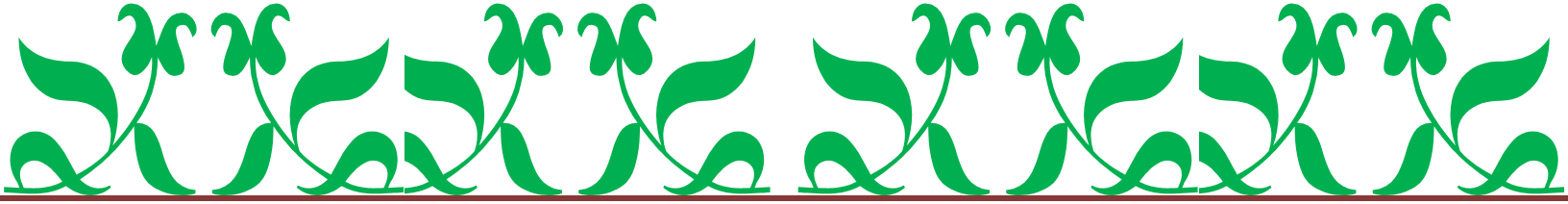
There are so many things I know I should be doing,
But I can never bring myself to do any of them.
My drive has disappeared.
I'm tired and frustrated all of the time.
Where has all my energy gone?

I'm buckling under the weight of the world;
I'm lost and scared.
I'm surrounded by people I trust and love,
But somehow, the words disappear as they leave my lips.
Where has my voice gone?

I wish I had something to be passionate about.
I wish I had something that made me feel alive.
My days pass in a blur.
I don't have any substance.
Am I a ghost?

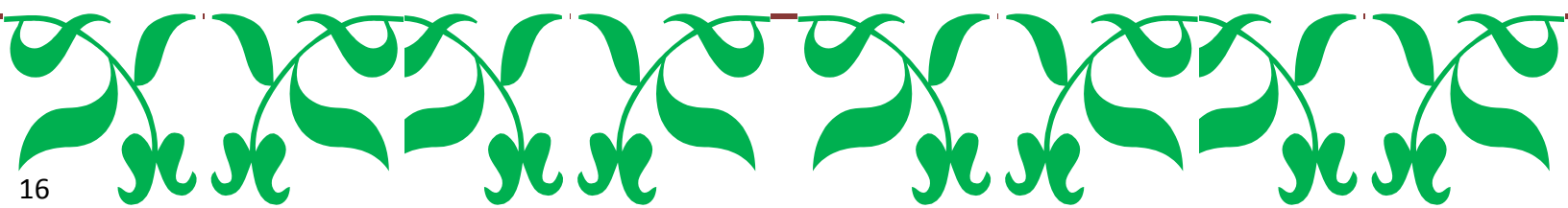
I have no one to blame but myself.
This phrase continues to cut me.
All the old feelings are coming back.
My feelings of inadequacy continue to rise.
What happened to my self-esteem?

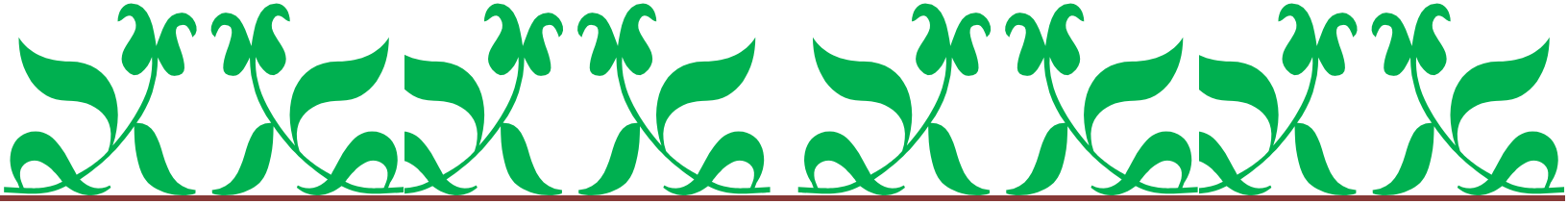




These feelings are gathering in my heart;
It hurts more and more each day.
I try to stop them by throwing myself into the things I love,
But the expectations of my family – my expectations of myself –
Continue to push me under the water.

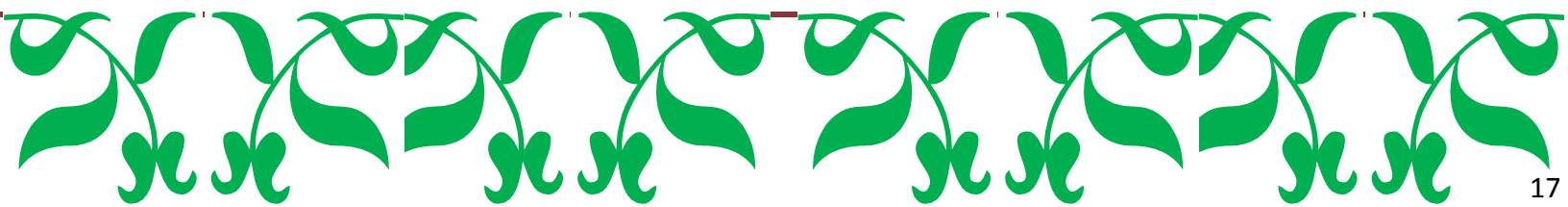
What am I doing with my life?
I don't know.
What is happening to me?
I don't know.
Am I a wise fool?
Or am I just a fool?

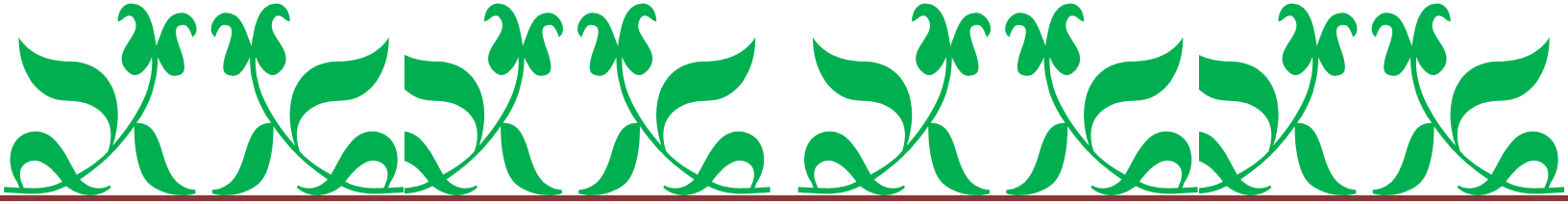




Angeles National Forest Sunset

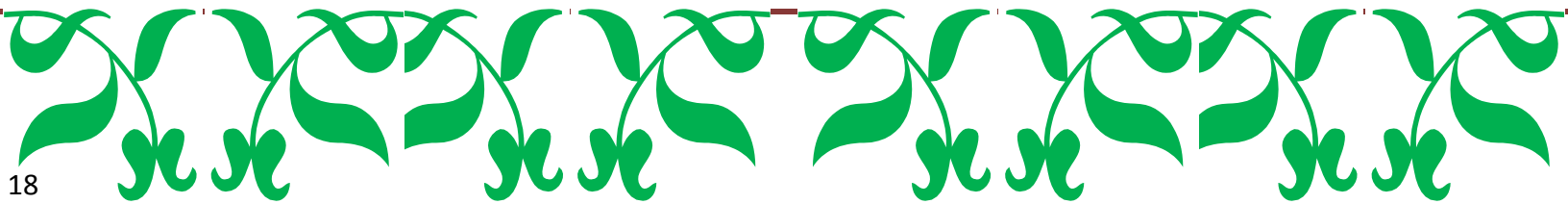
Jim Sabo, Bowdoin '92

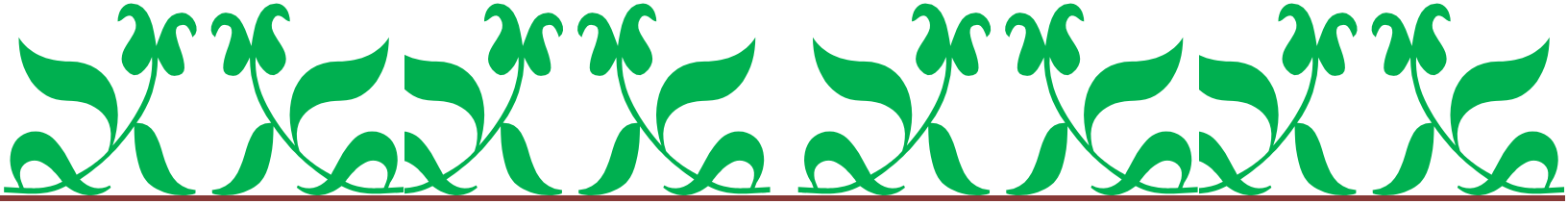




Tujunga Canyon Sunset

Jim Sabo, Bowdoin '92

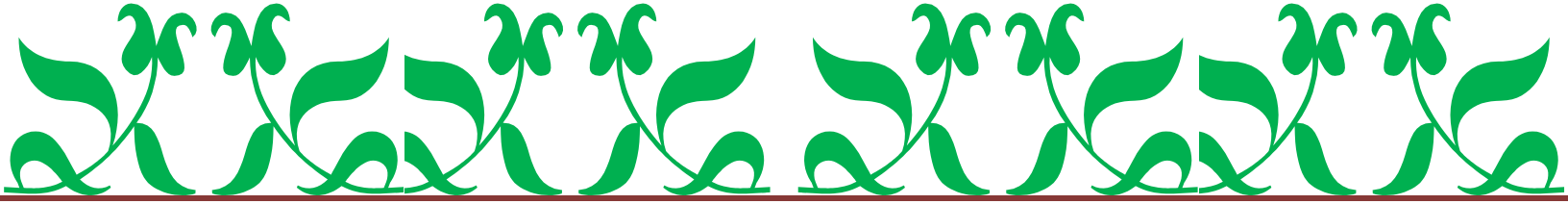




Shadow Hills Sunset

Jim Sabo, Bowdoin '92





Genesis, Shakespeare, and Medea: Classic Allusion in African-American Southern Literature

Jessica Lawson, Penn '14

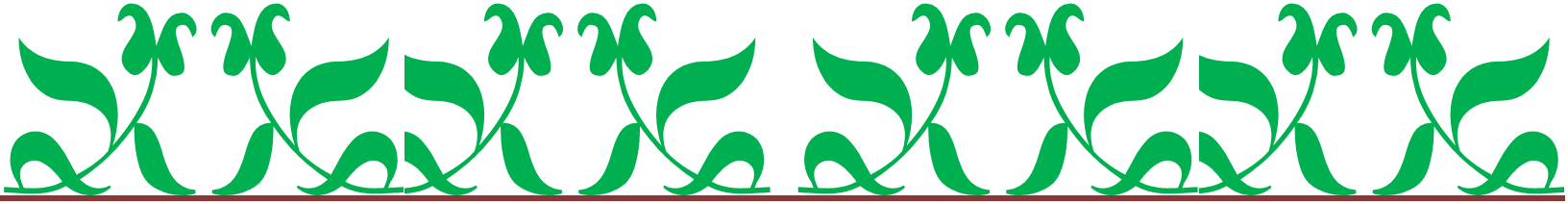
"There can be no doubt that in art no small portion of our task lies in imitation, since, although invention came first and is all important, it is expedient to imitate whatever has been invented with success. And it is a universal rule of life that we should wish to copy what we approve in others. It is for this reason that children copy the shapes of letters that they may learn to write, and that musicians take the voices of their teachers, painters the works of their predecessors, and farmers the principles of agriculture which have been proved in practice, as models for their imitation. In fact, we may note that the elementary study of every branch of learning is directed by reference to some definite standard that is placed before the learner. We must, in fact, either be like or unlike those who have proved their excellence."

Quintilian

Throughout literary history, southern African-American writers have been challenged by the stigma of anti-intellectual sentiment. As these authors seek to legitimize and stake their value within the greater cultural sphere, they hearken back and salute to previous works that are not their own. Writers Olympia Vernon, Natasha Tretheway, and Jesmyn Ward follow this movement through the allusion to and reference of classic texts. In her acclaimed novel *Eden*, Vernon draws from the book of *Genesis* in order to signify an evolution of rebirth and renewal. In *Bellocq's Ophelia*, Tretheway calls upon the work of both William Shakespeare and John Everett Millais in her characterization of the beautiful Ophelia. And lastly, classic references are evident in Ward's *Salvage the Bones*, through the juxtaposition of young Esch's storyline to the mythological tale of Medea. This referencing of classic texts serves as a means by which to bolster southern writing within the pantheon of literature, legitimizing and reaffirming a region that encounters significant scrutiny on behalf of its academic counterparts. Additionally, the use of such classic and historical allusions works not only to lift the realm of southern literature, but also to form a public memory that is transcendent in both time and place.

Southern African-American writers and intellectuals have sustained several decades of intensive skepticism from the greater academic community. Often deemed unworthy and unsubstantial, many American scholars perceived southern writing, both African-American and Caucasian alike, to be illegitimate. American scholar and authority on mid-twentieth century conservatism, Richard M. Weaver stated, "Perhaps the sin for which the South has most fully though unknowingly atoned is its failure to encourage the mind... it has had to compete against the great world with second-rate talent" (Powell, 11). Because of such attitudes, southern writers face a certain anxiety as they assert themselves into the world of academia. Although the work produced by those of the South is equal, and in many instances superior, to texts written outside the region, southern authors still possess an understanding that their work is examined with a different level of scrutiny, precisely because they are categorized as "Southern." As Tara Powell writes in *The Intellectual in Twentieth-Century Southern Literature*, "Typical southern writers today are professional intellectuals who are considered at best unintellectual by their nation because of their region's past, their region because of its self-image, their colleagues because of their definition of what constitutes academic work, and often themselves for a combination of all three reasons. There is no doubt that writing one's best life is complicated anywhere, but certainly its complication have



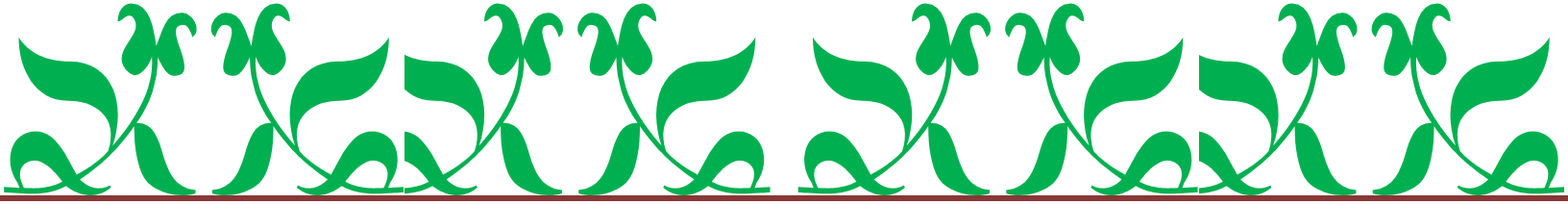


and remain distinct in the South” (Powell, 212). However, several southern authors have harnessed this intellectual tension that runs throughout the region as a means by which to inform and elevate the southern “genre” as a whole. Through the incorporation of classic and historical texts that are universally recognized as masterful works, these authors challenge those who question the intellectuality of their work. This methodology began with great writers such as author and civil rights activist, W.E.B Du Bois, who studied the classics at Fisk University. Du Bois’ frequent use of classical learning in his works, such as *The Souls of Black Folk*, runs throughout his career and assists in distinguishing him as a great writer of his time. Other notable southern authors who have made use of such referential techniques include Ralph Ellison and Toni Morrison.

In Olympia Vernon’s *Eden*, allusions to the book of *Genesis* are made frequently, coinciding with major themes within the novel such as rebirth, renewal, and womanhood. Vernon forms different levels of these allusions, ranging from more transparent references such as with the title of the book itself, to more subtle inferences. Written in the Christian Old Testament, *Genesis* is a semi-poetic text, although intended to be historical in nature. Serving as the religion’s creation story, the book holds momentous spiritual significance for followers of Christianity. However, the text also has its place in the secular world as a literary work. Throughout history, differing aspects have been taken from *Genesis* and incorporated into various forms of art. Some of the book’s most recognizable passages and lines include “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (*Genesis* 1.1),” “Let there be light (*Genesis* 1.1),” and “For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return (*Genesis* 3.19).” Vernon captures and finds inspiration in the power of this historical text in the opening lines of *Eden*. She writes, “One Sunday morning, during Bible study, I took a tube of Aunt Pip’s fire-engine-red lipstick and drew a naked lady over the first page of *Genesis*. Her chest was as flat as a man’s, her face blank and clear” (Vernon, 3). These words, over which Vernon later remarks in an interview “I could not get this one line out of my head,” immediately break into a deep sense of spirituality that is evident throughout the novel. Through the use of *Genesis*, and more specifically, the young narrator’s defilement of it, the reader becomes aware that *Eden* is a storyline possessing strongly provocative and metaphysical elements. This momentum is carried through the entirety of the text, coming to a climax in which young Maddy has a surreal experience of rebirth within the forest. Vernon writes, “The mud of the forest saturated the earth as I ran my fingers along the edge of the coffin, a death basket soon to be filled by a disease, a woman soon to die in a woman’s way” (238). Here, a more subtle allusion to *Genesis* is employed. The themes of womanhood, nature, and rebirth are prominent in this passage and thus hearken to the masterful work of the classic text. Vernon’s use of allusion elevates her novel to a higher sense of spirituality, enabling the author to call upon an exceptionally powerful text –that of *Genesis*—in order to communicate the overwhelming divine aspects of her novel. Through her use of *Genesis*, Vernon sets a foundation that ultimately lends itself to a very spiritual reading of the novel.

Natasha Tretheway incorporates classic works into *Belloq’s Ophelia* specifically through her characterization of Ophelia. The figure of Ophelia most notably originates in William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. She is featured as a young beauty, a symbol of womanhood and innocence. However, hers is a tragic character, as she is ultimately driven to insanity and then, suicide. Nineteenth-century artist John Everett Millais adopted Shakespeare’s Ophelia in his renowned painting, *Ophelia*. Millais depicts the young woman’s death scene, in which she elegantly floats among foliage and elements of nature, after casting her body into the river. The painting required approximately five months to create, during which Millais’ model fell seriously ill due to passing

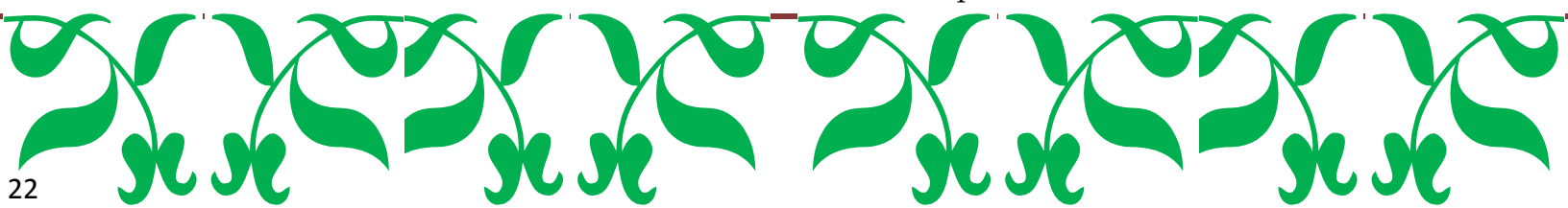


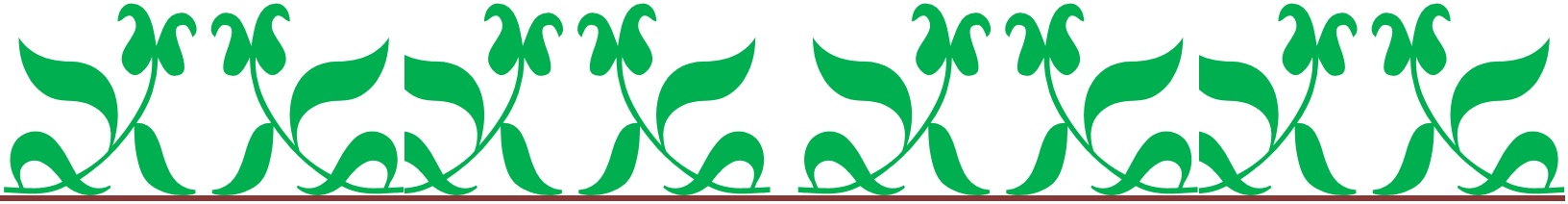


long periods of time in freezing water. In *Bellocq's Ophelia*, Tretheway describes Millais' work, "Ophelia's final gaze/ aims skyward, her palms curling open/ as if she's just said, *Take me*" (3). Tretheway does take Ophelia as her own, bringing and morphing her into the realm of southern literature. She designs an Ophelia that is similar and yet distinct from the virginal woman of Shakespeare and Millais. Like both artists, Tretheway's Ophelia is a masterful work of art, a beautiful muse. However, she is also an *African Violet*, told to possess a "wild continent hidden beneath [her] white skin" (Tretheway, 13). The nature of her unconventional portrayal stems farther as Tretheway's Ophelia is not only black, but also a prostitute residing in one of New Orleans' most prominent brothels. In this sense, the artistic lineage that Tretheway adopts from Shakespeare and Millais provides a source of legitimacy within the greater literary community while still enabling Tretheway to delineate and assert her own cultural vision of Ophelia. Her character is timeless and transcendent. Although she is originally of Shakespeare, she is also of Millais, she is also of Bellocq and she is also of Tretheway. Through her own creation of Ophelia, Tretheway actively asserts herself into this literary tradition and history. This example of incorporating classic references into the cultural context of the South draws an interesting contrast. As southern writers seek to obtain recognition within the greater literary pantheon they adapt the very cultures that presumably resist them. This means of drawing from, and then altering, universal classic works provides authors with the power of both recognition and creative freedom.

In *Salvage the Bones*, Jesmyn Ward incorporates classic Greek mythology into the narrative. Euripides' tragic play *Medea* is one of passion and murder. Betrayed by her lover Jason and blinded by her angered passion, Medea seeks vengeance. The fierce woman murders Jason's lover, the lover's father, and her own children by Jason. Throughout the novel, Ward draws a connection among Medea, Esch, and the determined pit-bull, China. Through juxtaposition, Ward tells the story of young Esch as she too encounters the obstacles of motherhood, love, and betrayal. Ward describes, "China is bloody-mouthed and bright-eyed as Medea. If she could speak, this is what I would ask her: *Is this what motherhood is?*" (Ward, 130) Here, the integral and complex relationship shared by Medea, Esch, and China is quite evident. The three figures, although differing in time and place, are inherently connected by the trials of motherhood. This connection is drawn once again during a pivotal dog fight within the novel, "I know that whatever Manny is saying is howling the meanness in him, the he is Jason betraying Medea and asking for the hand of the daughter of the king of Corinth in marriage after Medea has killed her brother for him, betrayed her father. Manny's mouth moves and I read, *She ain't shit, ain't got no heart*. He looks at China when he murmurs, but it feels like he looks at me" (Ward, 172-73). All three figures draw strength from their shared history and burdens. Euripides' *Medea* transcends time and place to enable Esch's narrative to be told. The two storylines are forever linked by the universal trials of motherhood, fierceness, and spurned love. In this sense, Ward's text is empowered by the globally recognized tale of *Medea*. Classical texts tell a story and share a certain history that African-American southern literature, and in reality all modern forms of writing, cannot. Authors such as Ward acknowledge this power and harness it in order to bolster and enlighten their own work within the literary sphere.

Why do African-American southern authors turn to classic culture and text as a form of elevating their work? A significant reason stands within the capacity of such texts to transmit culture. Due to the unwavering presence of *Genesis*, Ophelia, and mythological tales throughout cultural history, they have been deemed (primarily within the Western world) as the acceptable standard for which all other cultural products should be judged. In other words, because these works have withstood time and culture, they have been taken as the criteria for *what is* culture. As authors Barbara Goff and Michael Simpson describe in *Crossroads in the Black*





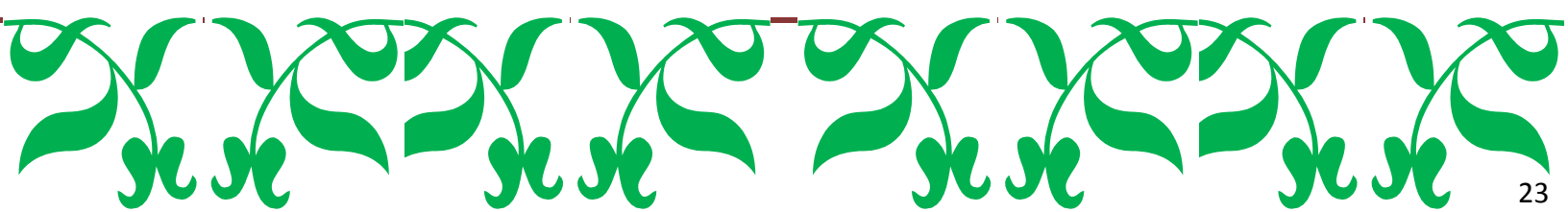
Aegean: Oedipus, Antigone, and Dramas of African Diaspora, “This response centres not simply on the historical achievement of culture, as did the last one, but on notions of how culture is transmitted, through time especially but also across space...and has claimed to be the one culture that is equipped above all other to determine what is a culture” (Goff and Simpson, 26). Thus, as southern writers seek to challenge anti-intellectual stigmas that reside within the literary community, they turn to works that have been universally accepted in the Western realm as standards of higher culture and academia.

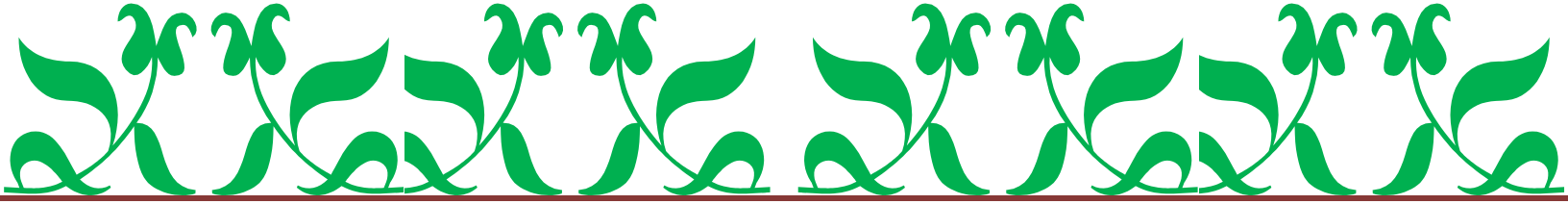
The movement of southern literature towards classic texts also signals a new development in regard to the South as a region. As noted by award winning poet Nikky Finney in *Ringling Ear*, “Who, what, and when is southern?” The study of southern literature is a process that continues to evolve and expand. As the boundaries of the South and what is defined as “Southern” grow, so does the nature of the literature it produces. Through the incorporation of historical and classic texts that are globally recognized, authors, perhaps unknowingly, form the South as a relatable place for both insiders and outsiders. The cultural transmission of works that transcend both time and place creates a shared public memory within the South. One can identify with Vernon’s *Eden* as a result of a deep spiritual connection shared with the book of *Genesis*, one can envision Shakespeare’s Ophelia while simultaneously absorbing Tretheway’s adaptation, one can feel the mighty wrath of young Esch simply by recalling the great passions of Medea. These sentiments can pass without ever having set foot across the Mason Dixie line. This connection through cultural transmission “centres on the matter not merely of culture or civilization...but on notions of how culture is transmitted from one generation to the next and from one location to another” (Goff and Simpson, 3).

Culturally preserved memories in classic works such as the Bible, Shakespeare’s plays, and mythology change the landscape of the South as a place. The expansion of “Southernness” brings new definition to the region, illustrating its flexible and yielding nature. In *Place: a short introduction*, author Tim Cresswell comments on the every-changing entity that is place noting, “places are never finished but produced through the reiteration of practices” (Cresswell, 82). By threading these classics through their texts, southern authors create a new sense of place. The linkage of modern southern literature to masterful classics elevates the region’s work into a higher position of excellence by demonstrating the presence of a true lineage of historical and public memory, on both a regional and global scale.

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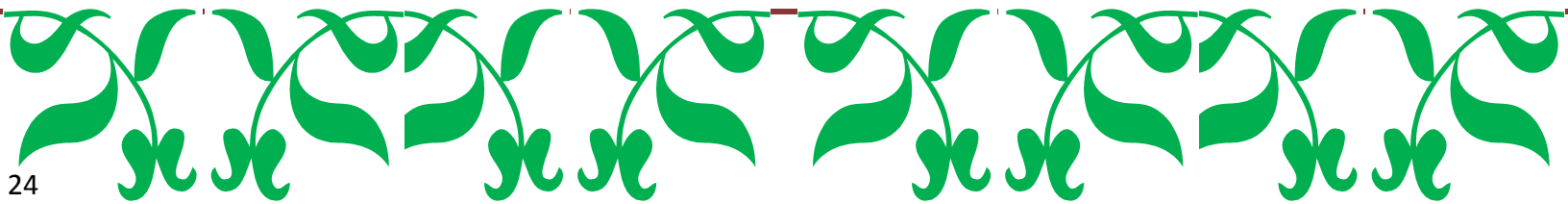
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Crystal and Water

Jim Sabo, Bowdoin '92



The Art of Punting

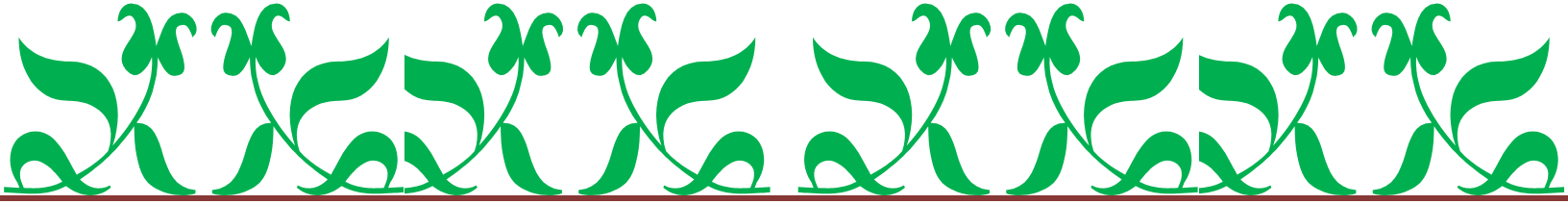
Sean Moreau, Granite '14



Oh, man. This is a big mistake.

I am finally pressured into trying punting. I refuse at first, but I am forced to relent. After all, when would I get another chance at punting once I leave England at the end of the summer? I stand up slowly and try to stabilize the rocking boat. I head back to the stern and step up onto the till — a flat, platform-like area at the rear of the boat where the punter stands. It is terrifying at first, but I hold a wide-legged stance to keep my balance.

Rachel and Jessica, acquaintances who are also studying at Gonville and Caius College, hand over the pole to me. I lift it over my shoulders, and I realize that it is a lot heavier than I thought it would be. I put the pole into the river like I am an ancient heroic figure, slaying a sea monster. The pole is almost two-thirds in, and I still cannot feel the bottom. I begin to panic. My hands are already clammy from the hot sun above, making it difficult to firmly grip the pole. I have no idea what the hell I am doing, and I am stuck among what appears to be a vast sea of other boats trafficking past me. I finally feel the bottom of the river. I push. Harder and harder. I keep pushing against the pole. Our punt barely moves forward. At this point, I am really frustrated. Another tourist piloting a punt almost collides with us, and I nearly lose my footing, about to fall in the river.



* * * * *

Punting, like rowing or traveling by gondola, is an art that requires patience, skill, and a high attention to detail. It also helps to be confident and to have a good sense of balance. As you stand on a platform, called the till, located at the stern of the punt, it is imperative to, with your forward hand, throw the pole vertically down into the water. The pole must be close to the side of the punt itself and should be guided with your lower hand. As the pole falls all the way to the bottom and touches the riverbank, reach forward with both hands and pull the pole gently past your chest. Then, at the end of each stroke, relax and allow the pole to float up behind you. In this way, you can let the pole act as a rudder; if you steer the pole to the left or to the right, then the punt will turn either left or right respectively. Finally, when the punt is going straight, recover the pole hand over hand until you can throw it down again to begin the next stroke. One should make habit, however, to relax at the end of each stroke. Doing so can avoid falling in the river, should the pole unexpectedly get stuck in the mud, which happens more than one might think.

* * * * *

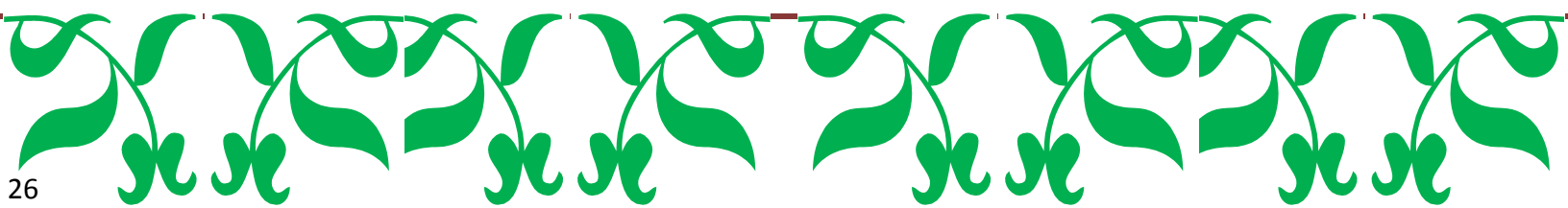
For the first time in two weeks, there was sunshine. Bright, glorious warmth made the dew-filled grass sparkle like emeralds. Birds flew parallel to the white, fluffy clouds above. What more was there to do on such a marvelous day in Cambridge than to go punting on the River Cam? Adorning sunglasses, sneakers, a tee shirt, and cargo shorts, my friends and I decided to venture out of Gonville and Caius to do just that.

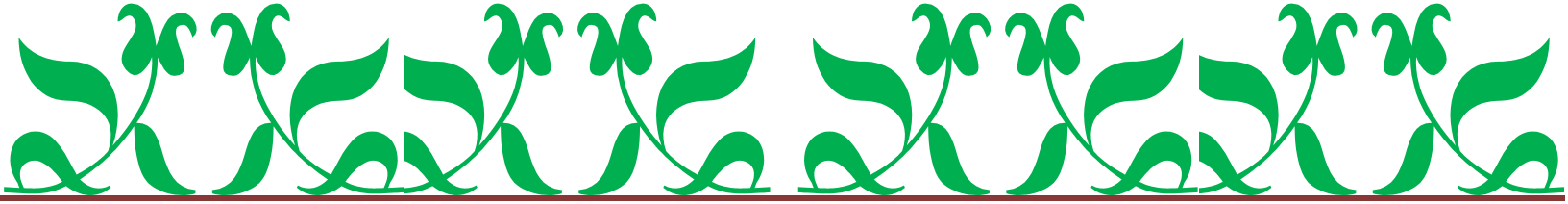
As we stepped through the arched entrance of our summer college onto the uneven cobblestones street, the temperate sun enveloped our bodies. It was pleasant to have a day devoted to summer weather. The narrow streets were crowded with slow-walking tourists and cyclists that sped by. We made our way in between the petite colleges that composed Cambridge University, following tributaries of the River Cam to an isolated spot behind Trinity College.

We noticed a sign that read, “*Punt Yourself, £15/hr, £40 Deposit.*” The area was a bit shady, as we were located off the beaten path, standing next to a slightly dilapidated building. Attached to the building was a wooden door, dark brown with age and golden highlights. One of its wooden planks read the Latin phrase, “*NE VILE VELIS,*” in green uppercase letters. Apparently, this expression was the personal motto of Thomas Neville – a Master of Trinity College and a crucial leader in the War of the Roses back in the sixteenth century.

Suddenly, an older British gentleman glided over to us. He was thin with glasses and had long, silvery wisps of hair. He held what appeared to be a self-wrapped “cigarette” in his hand, and quirkily chirped, “You guys looking to punt?” His thick British accent reminded me of a Hogwarts professor who could have taught punting as an elective.

“Yeah. All four of us would like to punt ourselves for an hour,” replied Stacy. As a graduate student, she was the eldest of our group and eager to go on a new adventure.





“Alright,” he uttered, “that will be a £40 deposit.” He pointed over to a wooden boat that was bobbing up and down from the slight waves generated by other punts drifting by. “Take that boat right there. If you guys go over the hour limit, it’s an additional £3 per fifteen minutes. But, don’t worry. I’m lenient if it’s only five to ten minutes over. When you get back, you can pay me what you owe, and I’ll give you the deposit back. Have fun!”

The four of us stepped down the sandy embankment and onto the wooden platform where all the punts were moored. I noticed that each punt had its own unique name; our punt’s name was *Cheer*. We carefully half climbed and half crawled our way onto the narrow, wooden boat, which easily swerved and tipped. Stacy, beautiful, athletic, and determined, made her way to the stern, or the back of the punt, with the ten pound heavy, twelve foot long pole that would be used to propel us up and downstream. The older gentleman undocked our boat, and we gradually drifted onto the Cam.

Stacy was poised and ready for the ensuing ride, sporting a red tank top, navy blue athletic trunks, a bright orange visor, and orange-tinted sunglasses. She delved the pole into the Cam, hit ground, and pushed off. Amidst the plethora of other punting boats, we veered off in a diagonal direction. I made use of a paddle that was located in our vessel and made quick strokes, attempting to veer us in the right direction. Stacy realized that we were punting against the current.

“Don’t worry,” Stacy confidently exclaimed, “I got this!”

She lifted the pole out of the water, and the boat swung around, while the current carried us downstream. The river was a murky, brown color, with white foam that lapped up against our boat and the stoned walls that contained the canal. I began to ponder what it would be like to fall in such a grimy river. The very thought petrified me. *Gross*.

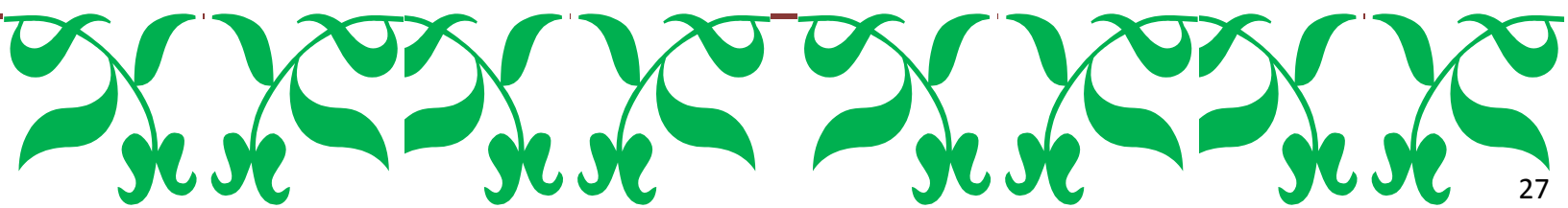
As we continued to meander under low bridges and through the lush, green curtains of willow trees (which were all quite nice to escape the very warm sun for a few minutes), I noticed the large numbers of punts that were in our vicinity — about two dozen! Most punts that passed by had about fifteen or so people onboard, and the punters themselves were very good looking and muscular European men. They were barefoot and wore tight-fitted collar shirts and knee-length khaki shorts. They were obviously punting professionals, as they navigated around other boats with ease. The average, inexperienced tourist could also be seen punting with their families, as they managed to collide with walls and other punts. Some punts that passed by, however, were more romantic, with couples cuddling next to each other while sharing a bottle of wine.

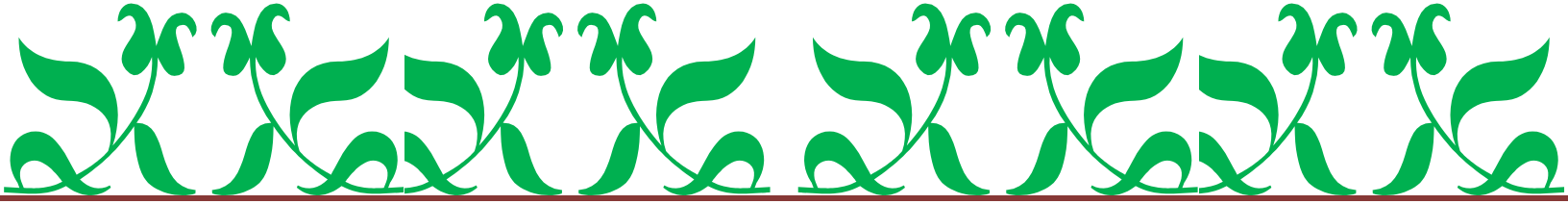
As Stacy grew tired from punting, my two other friends switched places with her to try to punt themselves; we quickly became that tourist boat as we spun around in circles like hands on the face of a clock, dodging walls and bridge pillars, and scraping against the sides of other boats.

* * * * *

I am able to maintain my balance on the till, with a wide stance and arms stretched out like a surfer. I flash the tourist a snarling look.

“Sorry,” the tourist says, in a sarcastic, British accent. I want to chuck the pole like a spear into him. I do





not even know if my friends in the boat realize how much I am struggling with everything that is going on.

“Wait, so what do I do? I can’t do this, guys,” I say.

“Just thrust the pole to the bottom and push off. Leave the pole in the water. As it raises to the surface, use it to steer the boat like a rudder,” Stacy replies in a calm manner. She is very reassuring, and she is also a lot more athletically inclined than I am. It is highly intimidating.

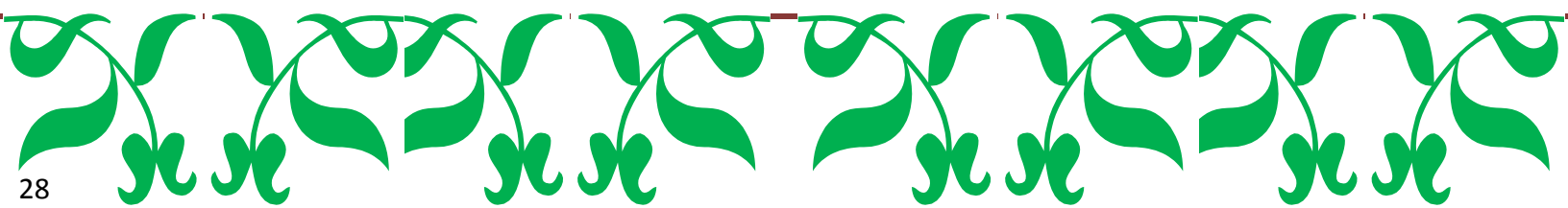
“Got it,” I retort. But, I really do not understand. I try her method, but it is a lot harder than it looks. I am unable to get good leverage, and the proper technique of punting is too advanced. My chest and upper arms already ache from lifting the pole out of the river and submersing it back so many times.

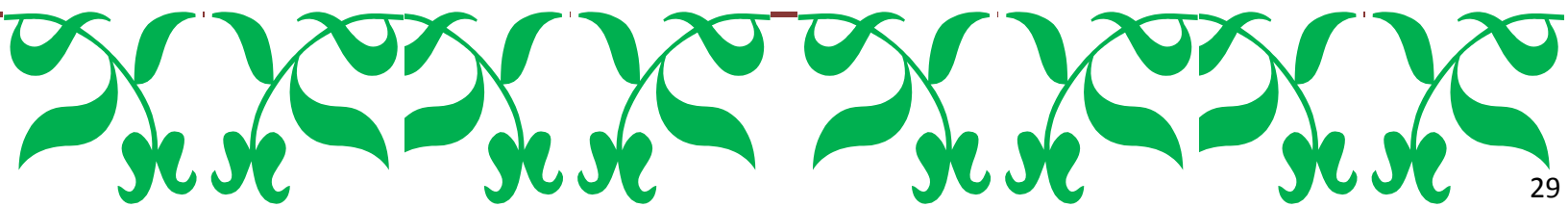
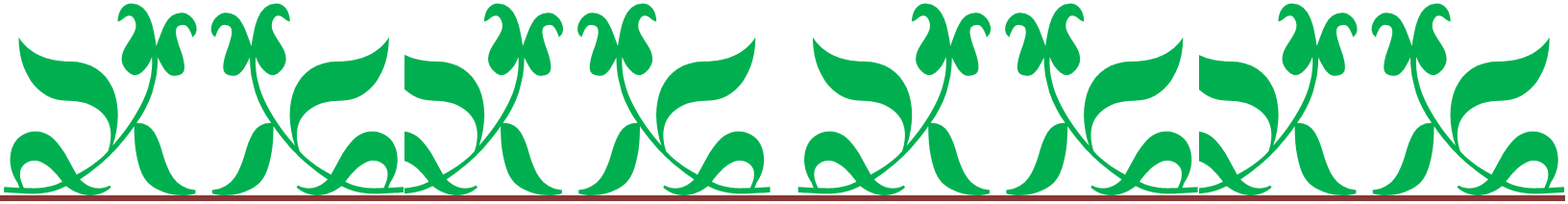
I attempt again: I lift out the pole, and then I cast it out like a fishing rod while maintaining my wide-spread stance. I feel ground and give a big push, trying to get a good support and not fall into the river, which are both quite difficult, mind you. Again, our boat barely moves forward. The current takes further downstream, and we only have fifteen more minutes to return the punt about a quarter mile back upstream. Apparently, punting is not for the faint-hearted, and it definitely requires more painstaking effort than I am able to give.

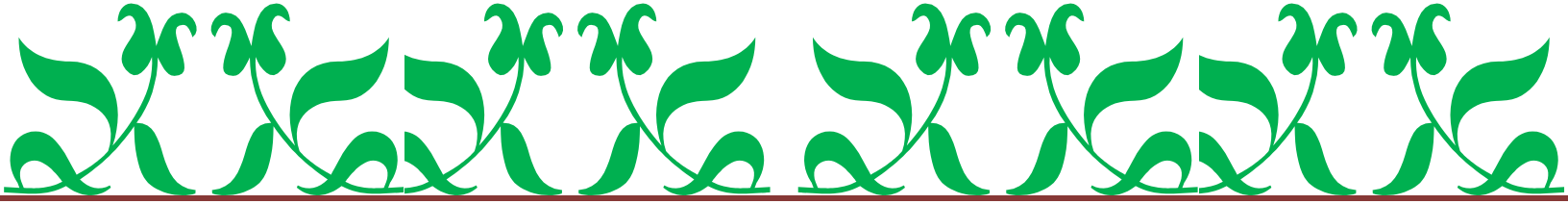
Stacy has rested long enough to rescue me and take over the reigns. We carefully exchange places, to not rock the boat. She obviously regards punting as an art, as her technique is quite aesthetic. She elegantly throws the pole in the river and steers the boat with almost no effort. This is her first time ever punting, and I am amazed, as well as impressed, with her sanguine and successful skill. I ask Stacy how she is able to punt so well. She informs me that it is just technique, and that one has to be confident in themselves.

Slowly, but surely, we make our way back to the punting docks in the rear of Trinity College. Stacy is out of breath, while the older gentleman moors our punt to the dock. *Finally. Terra Firma*, I think to myself.

We get out of the boat, hand the man thirteen pounds, and he gives us back our forty-pound deposit. We all cheer for Stacy and head out to the Cambridge market to buy her an ice cream as a reward. It has been a good day, and at least I know that I have something to work on before I leave Cambridge — to try to master the art of punting. As a perfectionist, this challenging feat has made me want to try punting again, although the fear of falling into the river and making a mockery of myself definitely overshadows my willingness to do so. The next time that I go punting with my friends, however, I will definitely make sure to take the turn to punt downstream instead of upstream and let the current work its magic.







Editor's Note

Χαίρε! Thank you for reading the first issue of the Alpha Delta Phi Society's literary magazine, *Echoes from on High*. As we begin this project of a literary magazine for the Society, your support is greatly appreciated. We are striving to maintain a society-wide respect for and appreciation of literature.

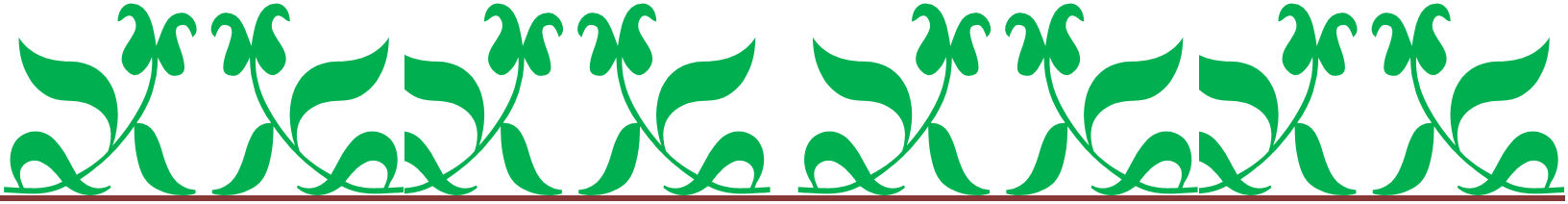
As you have seen throughout this issue, *Echoes from on High* represents the varied creative interests of our members. We feature poetry, fiction, photography, artwork, and academic essays, and we continue to seek varied work that shows the best we have to offer. Ideas and suggestions are always welcome, especially in these early stages of development. With future issues, we hope to make *Echoes from on High* a place where artists and audiences alike will feel welcome and enriched.

If you would like to submit a piece for our next issue, offer suggestions, or get involved in the production of the magazine, please send us an email at adpslitmag@gmail.com. Submissions are accepted from both undergraduate and alumni members of the Society. We look forward to hearing from you!

Χαίρε,

Sis. Erin Butler, BRN '14





Contributors

Writers & Artists

Carling Bateman
Thom Clark
Erin Butler
Kevin Thomas
Jessica Tran
Jim Sabo
Jessica Lawson
Sean Moreau

Editors

Hannah Gribetz
Ivy Alphonse-Leja
Erin Butler

Cover Art & Design

Hannah Gribetz
Michael Rose

Web Design

Christine Chapman

Submission Readers

Alethea Roe
Jeremy Perlman
Ashley Taylor
Kevin Hudson

