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[The North Avenue Review](#) is a student publication of the [Georgia Institute of Technology](#). It is published four times a year by [our staff](#) composed of people who write for us, submit art, help with layout, show up to meetings, etc. for the students of Georgia Tech. It has become a (relatively) long-standing tradition as

an alternative form of expression.

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[North Avenue Review](#)

A Georgia Tech Publication.

after He came

by [Kiefer](#)

Tell what you know. Well, that's much easier to do if you know something. But I don't.

I have no stories of the war for you. I can't tell you of the hardships of my childhood. No tales of my harrowing experiences with drugs and crime. And let's not even joke about a love story.

A lifetime is a whole lot of nothing to do.

Not that I want you to feel sorry for me. And I don't need your pity. Just don't be sitting there expecting me to give you a story.

Do you really need a story, anyway? Shouldn't you be somewhere else, instead of here with me looking for an escape that is not forthcoming? Why don't you go out and bring back a story for me. I'll wait.

Still here, aren't you? I shouldn't be surprised. We'll wait together.

My hat itches and my boots are too tight. I could get new ones, but then I would just end up with itchy feet and lose the circulation to my scalp. I'd find it all funny if it wasn't me.

No, I take that back. I wouldn't laugh. I don't laugh anymore. I occasionally smirk. And even that is more out of a need to do something more than out of mirth. What's so funny anyway? You're just laughing because you have nothing to say.

Something once why. It again.

Let's just sit a while.

Why must you feel you must keep moving or you must keep talking or you must die? It's not as if your activity increases your intrinsic interest. If anything, it makes you duller. Most of us still find more interest in a still-life than in a hyper-kinetic mess. Well, it's true

enough if you're careful about who you define as us. It's the same us as in us versus them. But you're probably one of them, so why waste my breath?

Sir.

No, I mean no disrespect. I mean nothing at all. I have no more reason to disrespect you than I have to respect you. But none less either. Not that there is much less to begin with.

I'll just sit here and you'll just sit there.

To-ma-to.

What? You still want more from me? Couldn't you see I had nothing to give before? And haven't you been with me since then? And have you seen me gain anything in that time? Then what should I give you? I have nothing to spare. In fact, I should take some from you. That would teach you to come looking here for handouts from me.

That's right. Leave. Don't look back. It drains me so.

And back you come. Don't look ahead. It taxes. Come. You would anyway.

Why should I be surprised? For me to be surprised, I would need expectations, and I know better than that. No expectations and you will never be disappointed. Too much.

What do I know? I could fill a book. But so could Robert Fulgham.

A Letter to Dean Galloway from a Former Student

by [David Miertschin](#)

College of Architecture Class of 1994

Dean Galloway,

I learned this morning that there has been a grievous mishandling of Georgia Tech's student work. I am speaking of the shipping container project that represents more than a years' worth of student hands-on interdisciplinary research. This is the kind of research that was the very basis of what made Georgia Tech's college of architecture one of the best programs in the country. It is research that you supported when I was a student there. It is the pinnacle of a great design studio.

Perhaps you have forgotten that day I spent in your office upset and pleading with you to make a change at the college, to open it up to wider ranging topics. The shipping containers were such a topic. Tech Expo was such a topic. Both of these opportunities have been squandered by the colleges' refusal to admit studies that are not limited to the classroom. It seems that instead of allowing Tech's amazing student body to flourish, the policy of the institute is to keep the intellects and potential neatly trimmed and in line.

My best experiences at Georgia Tech were direct results of interdisciplinary study. When people speak of Tech's unbounded potential this is what they are referring to. The special topics courses and the encouragement of Professors such as Richard Martin and to a lesser extent Thomas Michael and Charles Rudolph were invaluable to my development as a sensitive designer. Sensitive not to strictly aesthetic issues and intellectual ideas, but also how those ideas relate to the real world and society at large. I can say in all honesty there are people who are not sleeping on the streets tonight as a direct result of my contact with this class.

It is appalling to hear that the college has blatantly disregarded what I believe to be its most visible contribution to the rest of the community. By turning its back on this one tenuous connection to other fields of study in the Institute, the College of Architecture has proven again how disrespectful it is of the merit of the other majors. This was another attempt to isolate and insulate the college from messy outside experiences. Moreover, it does a disservice to students by not allowing them this opportunity to share their educational experiences with the engineers and policy makers that will play such an important role later in their lives as professionals. This is a sham!

That afternoon I spent in your office taught me a valuable lesson: When someone asks what can I do for you? Have an answer. Assuming you listen to alumni as well as you claimed to listen to students this may as well be cast to the wind, but I'll say it anyway. This situation deserves rectification for the sake of the students and the reputation of the Institute at large. Find a way to bring such a project to the forefront of the curriculum. Use it as a way to boast about the value of your program. By doing this you can only receive the future blessings of your current students. You are a planner, use your foresight to navigate Georgia Tech University's College of Architecture out of the ridiculous safety of studio and into the uncharted regions of real world involvement. This is the place for academic work. You have the tools of the college at your disposal. Use them, alumni, reputation, and all, to do the right thing. Connect and make a difference!

Loneliness

by [*Travis "Animal" Armstrong*](#)

I think that, as long as i live, i shall never understand the female gender of our species. so here i sit. smoking and waiting. no matter what excuse or reason i may give, that's all i'm doing. waiting. waiting for a call. a rope in the dark tossed to a lonely drowning man. drowning in despair? no. just drowning in an overwhelming sea of emptiness. a sea of apathy, with each passing day, moment, second, thought, another rolling black wave breaks its icy crest over my head and i plunge deep into darkness. i fight it. why? optimism is a thing of the past - a lifeboat with holes. it sank long ago-too weak and flimsy to support the ever-increasing weight of hopelessness. hope? hope for what? another dead-end relationship? just a rope with an anchor, that. a meaningless sexual excursion? a pipe dream - nothing is without meaning.

but at the same time, what has meaning? family - just because i am the offspring of two lonely people who found each other doesn't mean they are a wellspring of hope and love. friends? a loose coalition of drowners - clasp hands in a circle to keep afloat, so if one drowns we all drown, but it doesn't work that way. fill the empty slot with another equally hopeless being or tighten the circle without. others fall - keep tightening until your arms are wrapped around yourself and you sink after the last.

so what has meaning? you, and only you. what can others do? why must i help another stay afloat? do i take upon myself another being, man or woman, carry their emotional luggage, and keep him or her afloat just so i can say "ive got a friend" or "look at me, i'm in a relationship"? i'm still drowning, only now i'm bringing another down with me!

no.

so i swim alone. i drown alone. i will die alone. soon enough the sea will pull me under, alone. and then? once i have succumbed to apathy and unfeeling existence, what next? am i still alone, or do i join those beneath me who have long ago given in and stopped their kicking and screaming attempts to stay afloat? is that when i finally give in to another and drop into a worthless relationship simply for the sake of itself? do i become another insect scabbling madly, clawing furiously, begging for something, someone, anything, anyone above me to latch on to and drag myself closer to the surface? is that what we become? leeches in a sea of lost humanity. too often have i already felt the icy fingers of those poor souls under me pulling at my feet, legs, anything within arms reach. and i have already been dunked under by those flailing hands, only to soon find out that one cannot breathe under water.

so i fight, kick, hurt, and break the surface again with a great gasp of putrid air. once again i begin treading water, waiting.

do i wait for a messiah, happily skipping across the water in his sandals? who dreamed that one up? a collective imagination of drowning souls, who think there's one strolling about this pathetic collection of worthlessness. no, i wait not for that one, or if i do, it is only to pull at his silly robes and drag him under as well. why do we sink and let him wander above us? who does he think he is to condescend to our level in such an arrogant fashion? not my savior, if anyone's. so i wait more.

what will i do if the rope comes, if the phone rings? should i grab on and hope there's a boat out there looking for me? are they relatives? are they friends? are they lovers? or are they users? religious fanatics? slave traders? how do i know what's at the end of this rope? is there an anchor? another dead-end relationship? who would look for me here? do the people on that passing cruise ship even know i'm here?

laughing and dancing, each with his arms around another. do they know i'm here? do they care? more importantly, do I really want to join them? thats the true question. am i willing to give up my fight, my own personal struggle for life, simply to join them in their revelrie? would they want me? what use have they of a poor sopping wet friendless man who couldn't keep himself afloat on his own?

am i offering myself to them? mold me, shape me, make me one of you, laughing and dancing with my arms around a nameless faceless creation for the sake of the other laughing dancing lunatics?

i think i would prefer to drown on my own rather than cry out, or beg them for a way out of my drowning habitat, even if it is a cesspool of filth. at least i know who i am. i may eventually give in to the passing luxuries or the coldness beneath me but for now i'd prefer to tread water, to fight on my own.

i'll do it myself, damnit, i don't need them.

lovely words, but complete bullshit. yes i would love to do it on my own, but i am cursed. we are all cursed. my desire to be alone means nothing. when that phone rings, when that life line drops a few feet from my eyes, this paper will get tossed aside and i shall be out the door - pulling on the line with all my might - whether or not it seems to be pulling me up or down. hope may appear dead, but when faced with an opportunity, i cannot resist - i am helpless, I am cursed. even when i know the rope is pulling me down i still wonder who's at the end of it. it could be someone like me. maybe it is!

whose voice is that? that voice comes unbidden and unwanted to my mind. it controls me

at times. it makes me do things i don't want to do. it's what makes me throw a line. it makes me swim around in search of others. it makes me give in to those clawing hands under me. because of that voice i look to the party boats cruising noisily past me, looking for a rope, a lifeboat, someone thrown overboard, anything!

so i call. i look. i search for others. and i lie. i lie to myself, to my family, to others. to my friends, potential lvers, old lovers, and even enemies. everything's okay, isn't it? i'm fine. it's all right. no it's not. i am not fine i am not happy and i am not by any means having fun anymore. life is a faded and tattered flag waving high above. it's old and it's been used hard and milked for all its worth. it doesn't shine. it doesn't sparkle. it doesn't entertain and it's not enjoyable. it's full of false hopes and bullshit. it's been kicked down and had mud thrown at it and passed around like a joint at a party.

now don't get me wrong.

in no way am i advocating or even considering the end of my struggle to keep afloat and strive for that filthy flag called life. That's weak - to end it. I'm just tired. tired of reaching for a dream that i know to be false.

The Idiot's Guide for Dummies

by [Kiefer](#)

It started off innocently enough, with a few manuals about computer programs aimed at the novice. Then the books took up half of the shelf space in the computer section. Then new versions came out for the people who didn't understand the first wave of Idiot's Guides. Now, throughout the entire bookstore, there are "Guides for Dummies" in every category, from finances to relationships. Well, I've always suspected - and now have marketing numbers to prove - that the world is stupid. Real stupid. Even the smart people know next to nothing. And the world is quickly changing to accommodate, nay even promote, this influx of brainlessness.

An example will illustrate this accommodation. I'm writing this essay on my word processor, one of the more popular ones. Built in is a spell-checker in order to save writers from their illiteracy (a feature upon which, I admit, I rely upon heavily. In fact, even the best spell-checker can't save me, as previously published essays will attest to.) However, more telling is the grammar-checker, which, in a similar fashion, is supposed to find any usage of incorrect syntax and such in one's papers. I say supposed to, for I find that this is never the case (for me at least). I can partially attribute this to my frequent diversions from standard English, which is understandable (after all, if the machine wants to berate me for beginning sentences with "and" or "but", so be it). What bothers me is that every other sentence I write is too long for the program to process. Actually, what bothers me is that apparently this isn't a problem for most people, for if it was, the checker would be modified. From this I gather that most documents don't have too many sentences longer than six words, or more complex than noun-verb construction, and yet their authors *still* need grammar-checkers. This society is functioning at the level of a grammar school primer. And this is acceptable.



It's been reported that a good percentage of college graduates aren't even able to read a bus schedule, and I believe this. For reading a bus schedule isn't on any test (at least none I know of), and as anyone who has sat in more than a few classes can attest to, students will not learn anything that won't be on a test. Because to do so would be to actually learn. And knowledge is a dangerous thing, best left to the professionals.

But there are fewer and fewer professionals all the time. Or rather, the professionals are all machines. Machines and computers are supplanting thinking employees more and more every day, from fields obvious (stock trend analysis), to influential (bank loan risk evaluation), to downright scary (air traffic control). The reason for this is most likely many-fold, but it must be partially due to a perception of a lack of thinking employees available out there. For what are employers to do when faced with today's flock of fresh scrubbed faces with fresh scrubbed minds, both untainted by the dirt and grime of thought or other unfathomable acts? What can they do, but move the critical decision making processes to computers? If I were them, I don't think I would be any more likely to entrust my corporate assets to today's graduates either.

I know, none of this should shock me, yet it still does. It has to. As I am writing this, yet another report has been released telling us that school kids are ignorant, this time in history. It seems as if these reports come out every week, and yet nothing ever changes. Well, that's not quite true. The public's attention to these reports declines. So the reports continue.

And there is where the books of this article's title come in. Rather than try to raise the intellect of this country, we sink to its stupidity. I guess this is understandable; it is much easier to work on lower levels than it is to raise the masses to higher ones, and there is more immediate profit in dropping to the lowest common denominator.

But this will not solve the problem, but rather magnify it. For it has now become clear that society expects nothing from people today, and therefore nothing is what is received. For why should one go out of their way to meet a level of competency not expected of themselves or others? Judging by how hard they are trying, there isn't much of a reason. So we must create one.

For this lack of intelligence to cease, it can no longer be celebrated or even tolerated. Every instance of pandering to stupidity encourages it, and breeds more. We must shame and berate the dumb to improve, and we must stop encouraging others to join their ranks. We must return education to the forefront of the lives of our youths. And we must start now.

The rest is left to the reader as an exercise.

Mulling Under a Purple Sky

by [Sara Louise Willson](#)

Greetings NAR readers. It is I, your philosophical freshman, back with a few more bits of wisdom for the daring. Among my ponderings this quarter has been the question of why I decided to come to college instead just spending the rest of my life in menial labor. Aside from the obvious financial advantages of a college degree, my original expectations of higher education consisted mainly of escape. I was sick of the confining town I lived in and, like most recent high school graduates, I wanted out. College fit the description of my way out primarily because it would be free thanks to good old Zell. However, after being "out" for about 6 months, I have realized that college offers more than just freedom from the Moms and Dads I had endured in high school. College has allowed me the mental freedom I never enjoyed in the restrictive atmosphere of state-mandated preaching. From the newly free mind of this curious soul-searcher I have uprooted a few uses for college I found upon arrival. The following revelations might sound a little cheesy to some of you hard-core literary masterminds out there, but please bear with me, for I am merely a beginner in the world of mental unveiling.

I see college as a place to mature beyond the bounds of high school, where we all thought we were the most adult by our senior year. Our thoughts begin to ride a new wavelength above the petty fluff of high school. College is for diving into your mind to drag out your true ideas that were buried deep within your brain growing and waiting to be harvested. College is for widening your window of perspective from a view showing what hits you to one that displays the things that hit everyone else. It's for digging up the connections among everything that you never had a notion of before. It allows you to see how ugly the world can be and nudges you to do something about it before those connections you dug up bring that ugliness to your front door.

College should be more than a journey away from your physical home. It should be a journey from your mental home where all your thoughts are right without question because everyone around you taught you to think that way. It should be getting away from the people who have conducted your train of thought your whole life into a land of questions with no answers and no specific directions. There is no cage for your mind to keep it from flying away to explore on its own the mysteries of life, love, and itself.

I will quite readily admit that the previous paragraphs are idealistic and at best wishful thinking for many of us. I should see college for what it is, a place of learning we pay to attend in the hopes of making a few extra bucks in the long run with our degrees. Well, I don't want to and you can't make me, so nyah nyah nyah. I still have a little immaturity in

me yet. Idealism makes the world fixable, so until it's all too far gone to pray for, I will hold college to my idealistic standards and keep on ponderin'. May college bring revelation to us all!

Hell

Chapter 3

by [Julia Eaton](#)

(to see the previous chapter, check our [fall 1995](#) issue)

Carolyn stood up slowly and stared at the open doorway into the black hallway. She still wasn't quite sure whether or not to believe that the last hour or so had really happened. At the doorway she stopped and put her hand on the door to balance herself and shuddered. She couldn't even begin to imagine what the other rooms were like.

The darkness of the hallway felt comforting as she stepped out into it. Her steps were slow and cautious, almost like a little girl's.

Across the hallway was another door similar to the first one she'd gone through at least an hour ago. Carolyn looked up and down the hallway and sighed heavily before opening the door.

Inside was a spacious hotel lobby. A long mahogany desk spread out directly in front of her, with numerous silver keys hanging on hooks behind it. The walls were covered in a yellow, print wallpaper offset by a rich, red carpet laid across the dark wood floor. Carolyn stood hesitantly in the doorway, looking around for a bellhop or host.

"So what evil person from my past works here?" she asked out loud. No one appeared, so Carolyn walked into the room a few steps. As soon as she let go of the door, it slammed shut behind her, causing her to jump. Still no one appeared in the room.

Carolyn walked slowly towards the front desk. She heard a cat meow and it sounded familiar to her. Over on the far right corner was a small, delicate black cat. She arched her back and then stretched her front paws in front of herself, yawning. Her tiny pink tongue curled under long white fangs.

"Lilly," Carolyn walked towards the cat, cooing, "You look just like Jonah's little girl, Lilly."

Jonah had made it clear that his cat's name was to be spelled with two l's. "My cat's not a flower," he'd said firmly. Carolyn smiled to herself remembering the first time she'd been over to Jonah's big old house in the south part of the Mission District.

The cat meowed again and stretched her neck to meet Carolyn's hand with her head. Carolyn scratched the cat behind the ears and started to feel relieved again - finally.

"Come on," she picked the cat up and shut her eyes, burying her face in the soft black fur. The cat purred loudly.

Then the purring stopped. Carolyn realized the soft, plush fur had turned to a short, coarse fur. The cat's shape seemed to have changed to a rather large, bulbous hard ball.

Carolyn lifted her head and opened her eyes. The small delicate black cat who looked so much like Lilly was gone from her arms. Instead a large, monstrous face was staring at her. The mouth was opening and closing as if in horror and the seemed to be sunken into a huge, black body. She felt something brushing against her hair and realized there were eight, tentacle-like legs flailing around her head.

With a loud, uncontrolled scream Carolyn threw the creature from her arms, shuddering and shaking her arms as though to get rid of the memory of the feeling. The spider flew a foot from her legs reaching back towards her as though in desperation, then he seemed to implode. As quickly as he was there, he was gone again. Carolyn began jumping up and down, shaking herself and moaning from the cringy inner feeling of wanting to jump out of her skin.

"Oh gross!" she yelled at the top of her lungs, "That was so fuckin gross!"

She stopped suddenly and looked around suspiciously, not believing the huge spider was actually gone. Maybe he had friends. Maybe he had friends that would want to avenge the implosion of their comrade. What else would just suddenly turn into a spider in this room? If she sat on the chair would that suddenly become a spider?

Off to the far right, Carolyn heard the voices of three men approaching. She quickly ducked behind the large front desk. Talking spider? It could happen. As she stooped down, she felt something jab her in the leg. Reaching into the pocket of her pants, she pulled out a key with a plastic tag attached to it. The tag had the number 254 stamped on it. Carolyn held tightly onto the key in one hand and peaked around the corner of the desk to see who was coming down the hallway.

Three men appeared around the corner. Two of the men were young and tall and slender. One of them looked like he wasn't over eighteen. The third was wearing an expensive shark skin suit but was much shorter and pudgier and balding. The younger of the two slender men was in the costume of a hotel bellhop straight from the forties. The other man was wearing a large button-up shirt and baggy pants. He had a fedora pulled down low over his forehead so Carolyn could not see his eyes.

"We got the best in the business here," the short man gestured to the man in the fedora, his voice nasal and high-pitched, diluted with a Bronx accent, "Dick Snap. He'll find this bitch, I know it!"

"I prefer to call her a lady," Dick said with a slow Southern drawl, "Even if she is wanted for murder."

"Yea, well she killed our best customer," the short man sneered, "I'll call her whatever I want."

"What room is she registered in?" Dick asked the tall, gangly bellboy.

"Two-fifty-four, Sir," the boy said shyly, "But I'm sure she's not there any more. She's not stupid."

"How'd ya know this, son?" Dick asked, "Do you know her?"

"Uh, no, Sir," the boy looked down at his feet, "But I did meet her. She was really beautiful."

"Always a shame to have to kill a beautiful woman," the fat man said, shaking his head.

"If you don't mind," Dick sighed, "Could you keep your opinions to yourself?"

"You're not planning on killing her, are you?" the bellboy looked frightened, "I mean, that would be murder itself!"

"I know, kid," Dick put his hand on the boy's shoulder, "Unfortunately, some people don't know that."

"Some of us just see the world a little differently than you, Detective Snap. You didn't know Kursingham. He was a good man. Not a lot of men like him. That bitch never cared about nothing but money from the very start. Bad to the core, that one. Bad to the core!" the owner of the hotel ran a pudgy hand through what was left of his receding hairline and sighed deeply.

"You know before we go jumping to any more conclusions that Miss Dunleavy did this, I think we need to go look around her room," Dick said, "Do you have another key for that room, Jimmy?"

"Sure do, Mr. Snap. Why don't I meet you up there," Jimmy paused before going to the

front desk, "Don't you have a board meeting, Mr. Holland?"

"Yes, I do, Jimmy. Go get that key for Detective Snap, now. I'll be back in about two hours," Mr. Holland shuffled back around the same corner that the three men had come from.

Jimmy walked towards the front desk and Carolyn cowered further under the desk. She heard his steps approaching and held her breath, staring down at the floor. She stared at the red velvet carpet until it was crushed by two black patent leather shoes directly below her face. Carolyn shuddered and tried to stay completely still in her crouched position.

"Hey," she heard Jimmy whisper hoarsely above her. She stared at the floor and willed him to go away.

"Hey," he repeated, "What're ya doing down there?"

Carolyn slowly lifted her head, "Miss Dunleavy. You're in a lot of trouble, you know. You should get out of here." Carolyn nodded and looked up at Jimmy with woeful eyes. Her expression matched what she was feeling - desperate and lost.

"Stay down there till Detective Snap is gone though." Carolyn nodded again and stayed in the same position.

"You got that key, Jimmy?" Carolyn heard Dick's voice right above her.

"Sure do, Mr. Snap," she saw Jimmy lean over the counter then heard footsteps retreating from where she was, "You don't need me to go up there with you after all, do ya?"

"No, Jimmy, I think I can handle this on my own," Carolyn heard his voice from across the room and it sounded gentle and strong. She pictured him in her mind as a young Cary Grant.

After a moment, Carolyn slowly stood up and peered over the old, marred mahogany desk. She saw Dick's back disappear around the counter and let herself breathe again.

"Hey, Miss Dunleavy," she slowly turned around and looked up at Jimmy. For a young man he was already very handsome, though his eyes were still full of naivete, innocence and wonder, "Can I ask you something? Um - did you do it? I mean, did you kill Mr. Kursingham?"

"What do you think?" Carolyn asked. She wasn't quite sure how to answer that question.

Did she kill him? What were the circumstances leading up to this scene? It didn't seem like she would have killed him, but who was to say? No one was briefing her on the script for each of these rooms. She could be anyone in this room.

"I don't know," Jimmy shrugged, "You don't seem like you could. I mean, you seem way too nice to hurt anyone. And even if you did, I bet you had a really good reason. Mr. Kursingham wasn't a very nice man."

"He wasn't?" Carolyn asked.

"No. I didn't think so. At least I didn't like the way he treated you. He acted like he owned you. He once told Mr. Holland that he won you at the tables in Vegas in some deal with the hotel owner there and that he could do anything he wanted to with you cause technically he owned you. I don't believe any person owns another. Especially not anyone as nice and smart and as much of a lady as you are, Miss Dunleavy."

Jimmy looked down at his feet suddenly and blushed. He crossed his arms and cleared his throat and tried to regain his composure.

"I was afraid a couple times, the way he was treating you, that he might kill you," he said, sadly.

"I used to think that too," Carolyn said, vaguely, considering how to pump Jimmy for information without looking obvious.

She smiled up at him and saw that he still looked very uncomfortable. He shuffled his feet nervously, clearly afraid of her gaze upon him.

"Will you help me, Jimmy?" she asked, quietly.

"I don't know how I can, Miss Dunleavy. What do you want me to do?" Jimmy asked.

"Help me find a place to hide until it gets dark and I can get out of town," Carolyn said, going with the first thought she had. It seemed the best idea to just escape the whole place until she figured out what the script of the room was about. And what was up with that giant cat/spider, anyway?

"Yea," Jimmy thought for a moment while looking around the lobby for anyone listening who he may not have noticed before, "Yea, I can do that."

"Thank you, Jimmy," Carolyn bit her lip and wondered for a moment how she could ask the next question, "Can I ask you something?"

"Sure."

"Jimmy, uh - what city are we in?"

Jimmy looked confused, "We're in Chicago, Miss Dunleavy. Didn't you know that?"

"Yes, I did," Carolyn laughed lightly, then paused, thinking she heard someone in the distance, "I guess I'm just a little bit confused right now. I haven't had much sleep in the last day or so."

"I know the perfect place for you to hide," Jimmy said, taking hold of her hand, "You can sleep there until it gets dark. I can bring some food up for you too."

"That would be wonderful," Carolyn sighed.

Jimmy led her across the lobby to a small door leading up a back staircase. He looked around himself nervously. Once again, Carolyn was certain she heard the footsteps of someone approaching from a distance.

The stairs were covered with a thick layer of dust. Cobwebs fell from the door as Jimmy pushed it open. The boards of the stairs bent under the weight of their steps and creaked loudly. As they ascended the stairs, Carolyn brushed an old cobweb out of her face.

"At the top of these stairs is a door which leads to the attic. You'll be safe there. No one ever goes up there," Jimmy took a large brass ring of keys out of his jacket pocket and removed a large silver key. He handed it to Carolyn, closing her hand over it with his long, skinny fingers.

"There's only eight flights. You'll be safe as soon as you get there," he said.

Carolyn could see the look of genuine concern in his brown eyes and for a moment was moved by his youthful faith and adoration of her. Without thinking she reached her hand up and pulled his head down towards her, placing her lips on his. He hesitantly put his hand on her back, pulling her closer to him and opening his mouth to receive her kiss.

Minutes later they both heard the door, one flight down creaking open again. Carolyn recoiled quickly and looked up the seven flights of stairs which lay before her. She looked back at Jimmy with a mixture of gratitude and panic.

"Thank you," she whispered and turned to run up the stairs. The boards creaked and

groaned loudly with each of her footsteps.

"Who's that? Who's up there!" a familiar voice bellowed up the stairs.

"It's just me, Mr. Holland," Jimmy yelled down, "I heard a strange noise in the stairwell and I came to check it out. It's just a draft in here. It's just the wind."

"Who the hell is with you," Mr. Holland was sweating and panting after the first flight of stairs. Beads of sweat were forming on his brow and dripping down to his pudgy cheeks, "Is that bitch in here? Is that you, Carolyn Dunleavy? I'll be damned if I don't catch up to you, woman!"

Carolyn was desperately out of breath when she reached the top of the stairs. She could hear Mr. Holland yelling at her from a few flights below. His voice was weak and strained but she still felt the instinctual panic of one who is being pursued. Her hands shook as she stuck the key in the dusty lock, all the while listening to the ominous sound of the stairs rocking under the weight of his fat body lumbering up towards her.

Pushing the door open, all Carolyn could see was blackness, cut by a myriad of light slivers coming through cracks in the ceiling. A cloud of dust and ancient cobwebs blew in her face as she ran blindly into the room. Coughing and trying to brush the cobwebs from her face, she kicked the door shut behind her.

As she ran into the darkness the sticky cobwebs seemed to multiply. She stumbled over a wooden box and fell to the ground, her hands landing hard on a floor that had at least an inch of dirt collected on it. She coughed and pushed herself back up, continuing to run in the same direction - hoping she might hit a wall which she could follow to a doorway or window or light switch. Something she could hide in or behind. Anything. She just wanted to find something.

As she heard the door behind her creaking open, she also realized with horror that the cobwebs that were wrapping around her arms and legs were not allowing themselves to be brushed off. They had begun to wrap around her arms, legs and head like sticky yarn, clinging unceasingly to her. She stumbled over the tangled knots around her legs and pushed herself up again, her running turning more into a convoluted hopping.

"Carolyn Dunleavy! Where have you run off to?" she heard Mr. Holland yelling in the distance, "You know I'm going to catch you! You may as well stop running!"

Huge drapings of sticky white strings fell in her face, wrapping themselves around her eyes and mouth. The giant cobwebs gathered in her mouth, forming a gag and choking her. She kept trying to run until she was completely wrapped in the cobwebs like some

sort of abstract, erect mummy. She wiggled and struggled but was completely bound by the sticky string. Her muscles twitched uncontrollably, wanting to escape her confinement.

"Carolyn? Where are you Carolyn?" Mr. Holland's voice had begun to change slightly, "You know I'll find you!"

"Carrie? Carrie?" his voice had become softer and scratchier, the words slurred just a little, "Where are you, girl? Daddy's looking for you!"

"Where are you hiding, little one?"

Carolyn realized with a sudden burst of sickening realization that it had changed to her father's voice. She tried to scream but the sound was cut off by the cobwebs stuffed into her mouth.

"Oh, there you are," Carolyn began to cry and shake inside her sticky larvae state as her father's voice was right behind her.

"Oh, you walked through a spider web," he said softly, "You know what I hate most about doing that?" Carolyn whimpered and tried with one last effort to free herself, as her father finished speaking.

"You always gotta wonder - where's the spider?"

Love for a Dark Lady

by [Mark Moore](#)

It would seem that is this place, this factory masquerading as academia, that unrequited love is not quite dead. Granted its glory days, the days of courtly love and sonnets to dark ladies, are long since past, but the underlying emotions can still be found. Maybe it's the nature of this place, success at the price of disillusionment, that keeps the time honored tradition alive. This school and this city hold to the truest tradition of Faust: you will find your place and gain your fortune, but it will cost you your soul. Hope you enjoyed the ride. This particular trip ends not with a blaze of glory or some form of sublime enlightenment, but merely fades to grey.

Oh, were that is otherwise. For I have my dark lady. I long for her lacy kerchief, thrown down from above to place against my breast. The only comfort under a layer of steel. The gears turn endlessly, spitting out their ill-fated products. Fortunes made but lives lost. Potential both realized and crushed. What could something as ethereal, as unquantifiable as one man's love mean in this world of fact and statistic? The masses just stroll on by, sparing naught about a casual glance at the freak, the poor lost soul that has the gall to ask why. To admit that he cares.

It lies in the best of a man's heart to love. For love is nothing but an acceptance, a longing if you will, for the best within himself. I believe that some women still long to be put to on that pedestal. Not an exalted position that comes from the charity of the heart, NO, rather the earned place that comes from exemplifying all that is true and right within the man himself. Both sexes long not for an emotional handout or the situation that brings, but for the chance to live up to the best that is within themselves, and their loved one. In the end, to see that embodiment come to fruition is the ultimate goal of a relationship between two people. I long to hold someone in my arms and know not that I earned it or deserved it, but that this pleasure is mine by a right of existence. I long for the love that I have no power to sanctify, because our very beings do far more than my precious little mind or ego ever could.

Alas, these are just wishful dreams. But isn't that what unrequited love really is? Wishful dreams, or is it just some sort of mind game for the incurable romantic. Maybe therein lies its value. In a world gone mad, and a place designed to put you at the forefront of the world's thinking, are not dreams necessary? Those of us who would keep our souls and sanities must anchor them to something. That is what my dark lady represents to me, an anchor in a sea of disillusionment and broken dreams. She is my refuge and safe harbor. Through her I keep from following Judas Ascariot up the leafless tree, because, for me,

the thought of unrequited love is immeasurably better than the thought that I sold what, in me, was worth loving.

ORGT Climbers Feel the Hammer

by [Ken Turner](#)

Dave Jackson once told me "caving is like hitting yourself with a hammer; it feels so good once you stop." The same analogy can be used in mountaineering. To the climber the hammer is the cold, the altitude, the dehydration, the hunger, the sleeplessness, the wind relentlessly chiseling away at ones drive.

I'm somewhere on the southwest ridge of President Peak in the Canadian Rockies-the hammer is beginning to pound. It would be nice to see this mountain I'm climbing but all I see is white-out -- the blur when snow and clouds fuse the ground with the sky into zero visibility -- total blankness. In front of me the green rope I'm attached to slithers through the snow for about twenty feet and then disappears into the whiteness; up in front Bryan Palmintier and Aaron Brent are also attached to the same rope. Bryan is only 70 feet in front of me, but I feel quite alone in the wind -- outta sight, outta mind. Interestingly enough this is the same rope our sharpened crampons have trudged all over for five days on the Columbian Icefields. This rope probably isn't adequate to use as dental floss anymore, but we're risking our lives on it.



A black granite headwall looms in front of me and I make out footprints that traverse to the left and up. The snow is much steeper here and I dig my ice axe in deep to keep my balance. Unfortunately the rope wraps around a knob below and halts my progress -- I'm trying to climb up while Bryan and the rope are tugging me down to the knob over a cliff. "SLACK! SLACK!" I scream at Bryan, but the wind deadens my pleas. To make things worse Aaron is tugging on the other end of the rope tied to Bryan; I'm trapped. Five minutes go by of kicking, swearing, pulling, and yanking until the rope simply slips off the knob and drags me up over the rock.

The tugging at my waist pauses and I realize my right hand has gone numb from the cold; I thrust my axe into the powder and start massaging my hand. Numbness is transformed into burning pain as individual blood cells retake frozen capillaries in my fingers -- circulation is renewed. I close my eyes and flashback to times that were sunny and warm and question why I climb mountains. The hammer is coming in loud and clear.

My pink-sports-bra-daydream is shattered by the jolt at my harness and I topple into the snow almost impaling myself on my axe. The rope's moving, but where are my friends going? They can't see squat. Did Aaron's Swahili upbringing give him a sixth sense so he could navigate without sight? Or is he just about to walk off a cliff? I smile at the idea of being the last one dragged off the mountain if Aaron falls; it might be a fun ride to the President Glacier 1,000 feet below us.

Suddenly, as if to answer my whining, the clouds break; Bryan and Aaron are highlighted in blue with the summit just above them. Aaron is right below the corniced top and breaks through a wall of snow to where he can climb no higher; Bryan and I quickly sludge through knee deep snow and join our partner on the summit. The hammer is still toiling away at me and I think FOOD; I nearly tear apart my pack until I find it, the almighty POWER BAR. I rip of the wrapper with my chattering teeth and bite onto a frozen solid mass; no good -- I can't even bend the damn thing. I think about offering it to my compatriots as a joke but shove it into my pack instead. They would have rewarded my humor by throwing me off the mountain. We take the standard victory snapshots and prepare to get the hell out of Dodge. We still have to descend -- that is the hard part. The wind is picking up; our short view of Little Yoho Valley 3000 feet below is drowned in clouds.

My downclimbing can best be described as a semi-controlled fall; every two steps of walking is met with five feet of slipping and sliding. Ahead of me Aaron places a snow anchor called a dead man; its purpose is to stop us if we plunge out of control down the ridge. Aaron's first attempt at placing a dead man is akin to the average males first attempt at changing a diaper: pretty messy. A slight pull and the anchor rips out of the snow into my icy mitts; my mind tries to calculate: if I started cartwheeling down the ridge, would this piece of aluminum stop me? Let's see $F=ma$ -- screw it -- I'm cold and I got a D in Particle Dynamics anyway!

Two hours later finds us at the bottom of the glacier toe, exhilarated to be off the mountain. David, looking rather warm, walks up the moraine and asks us how it went; a part of my trembling body wishes I had stayed in my warm bag this morning also. I fumble with my crampon straps and try to untie the frozen laces of my boots; my left foot has been numb for about three hours now. It takes a while of rubbing but soon my toes are moving quite nicely and I no longer can feel the hammer. I rumble down the last mile of rocky scree and steep trail until I crash through our oversized tent and find myself wrapped in feathers back to daydreaming. God knows why, but I only can think of other mountains to climb and look forward to seeing my friend, the hammer, again. For without the hammer, I am not a climber.

Asylum

by [Kevin Stanley](#)

"This does not look good. Your chart, I mean. Nothing but delusional thought. We have to keep increasing your dosage because you're not getting better - you're getting worse."

"I can do better. Really I can. Just no more medicine. It makes my eyes hurt, and the dream - it keeps getting stranger and more violent."

"Tell me about that."

"They just keep killing each other."

"Who? "

"All the lifeforms in my dream. So much sadness. It hurts to think about it. I don't want to talk."

"Very well. Orderly, come here. Take him back to his room. (I want you to increase his dosage by 10%) "

"Yes, sir. "

"President Bush said today that Saddam Hussein will have to comply by the deadline or airstrikes will begin inside Iraq against Iraqi artillery divisions."

He tried to shrug off the effects of the drug, but it continued to take hold. Digging its talons into his mind once more. The dream continued.

"In a press conference today, President Clinton ordered the Bosnian Serbs to take their gun batteries out of the hills of Sarajevo or face NATO air strikes."

"The Zorlani government today acknowledged the discovery of a foreign probe, possibly of alien design, which would mark our first discovery of technology from an alien life form. The probe was inscribed with pictures and drawings and right now the only symbol

that stands out to identify it is 'P-I-O-N-E-E-R--I.' Scientists are continuing there investigation of the probe."

"One of these days, Alice, bang-zoom-TO THE MOON!"

"Ricky, I want to be in the show!"

He tried to fight a yawn, but couldn't.

"The flame has been lit, officially opening the games of the XXXth Summer Olympics here in Nairobi, Kenya."

"Fly Delta, with 17 nonstop flights from Los Angeles to Ho Chi Mihn City."

"Uttrahdi forces invaded the Nxthar homeworld today after a daring assault on the phlentax mines on Snsuur IV. The Uttrahdi have pledged that the plongshed will cease once the Nxthar capitulate."

"Academy Award winning star of stage and screen Macaulay Culkin died today at the age of 104. He is best remembered for starring in the motion pictures of the late 20th and early 21st such as 'The Good Son III' and 'Home Alone VI: The Sword of Brooklyn' and his Academy Award in 2034 for playing migrant farmer Tom Joad in the holopicture 'The Grapes of Wrath.'"

"Come on, time for your medicine again."

"Aw, come on. I'll give you a carton of smokes and 50 credits if you'll just tell them you gave me the shot."

"I'm sorry, but I can't do that. Roll up your sleeve."

A psychedelic burst of pain shot through his arm -
and straight
into
his
eyes.
NOOOOOOOOOOooooo...

"Vatican tanks rolled into the Ukraine today as the Papal advance continued. Hungary and Poland fell last week. The U.S. prime minister declared that Pope Leo XV's disgraceful pillage of Europe was a direct assault upon U.S., Mexican, and Canadian interests in the region. Pope Leo XV was unavailable for comment."

"It's Ramadan in Mecca and all of the fashionable Muslims are wearing the latest silks from Riyadh. No faster should be without his stunning ensemble in ecru and white. It's all the rage."

"A bomb went off inside the Louvre Museum, Paris, damaging the 950 year old Mona Lisa. French officials were baffled because sensors detected no weapons of any sort within the building."

"The Australian ozone hole is the biggest it's ever been. 98% of all remaining homes in the region have been fitted with new UV domes. The PM says 'it's the only safe way to go' and urges Aussies to stay indoors and travel using the tunnels."

"Farik Sarad opens the Council of Phlentax Producing Planets (CPPP) meeting today on Sehlah XII-A. The five glarr-long meeting will be to discuss the embargo against the Beldassian Republics for their collaboration in the Nxthar Wars."

"Water water everywhere but not a drop to drink. The Outh are out of fresh water after a six month winter drought. Whipping winds have battered the coastline, flooding villages and contaminating wells in the North."

"Have your children mastered 'Photon Cannons' yet? Are they ready for the latest in SimReality Games? Try Carnage Spree from Zyco. More blood! More kills! More of what you buy them SimGames for... because they're you're kids and you love them. Zyco! Only the best in bloodsports!"

"China confirmed that it has the muon bomb with an outerspace test today. The weapon can wipe out a whole country with virtually no property damage and destroys with high-level gamma-A radiation. The SEATO alliance has vowed to stock up."

"I see stars. Billions of stars..."

He sprang from his cot. Drenched with sweat. This is worse than it's ever been. It just keeps getting worse.

The next day...

"Doctor, take me off the medication. I'm begging you. I've been on it for years now. I just want the pain to go away."

"We'll make the pain go away."

"You will. Oh, thank you. Thank you."

"Go back to your room. The orderly will be in with something to make you sleep."

"But not the medication I've been on, right?"

"Of course not. Something much better. Totally different."

"O.K."

He went back to his room and looked out the window into the burgundy night. An hour passed before the orderly came...

"Drink this."

"It's not the old stuff, is it?"

"No . . ."

"...because the old stuff makes me crazy! It just gets more violent and more uneven. Sometimes, it's like it's on a loop or something and the nightmares start over - sometimes the same, sometimes different. But the result is always the same. They're like rabbits... they multiply. Destroy one, a dozen more pop up. Destroy a dozen and a thousand pop up after them. I try and give them things, you know, to get through the maze."

"Uh, huh."

"I give them things. I gave them a woodworker, a wanderer and a fat man. I gave them ships and rockets and stars. I gave them fuels and fusions and little ones... and currency and power and books. Bread and circuses and parades, but it always ends the same way. Sometimes my eyes start to hurt and it all shifts red or green, you know."

"I know."

"I just want to get some sleep. Some quiet sleep."

"Take this."

"I don't like the dreams. I'm tired of the dreams. I just want sleep. I've been here for twenty years and haven't had a good night's sleep. This medicine will help me sleep?"

"Absolutely. "

"It smells funny. Bitter, really strong. It tastes salty.

"It's new. "

"I don't like the taste, but if it will help me sleep... Whoa... my head."

"Put these specs on. "

This is really... s-t-r-a-n-g-e

"This is an emergency distress message to anyone, any station within range. This is Arecibo Radio Signaling Post with an Interplanetary Distress Call. The Planet Earth is under solar alert. Our sun has increased in size by 10.5% in the last half year and continues to grow. Temperatures on our planet have increased 15 degrees C in that time. Mercury - closest to the sun - has seen a 200 degree temperature rise. The oceans are beginning to warm and swell. The ice caps are melting. Coastal cities are flooding. Global cloud cover is approaching 50%. If the sun continues to grow, our seas will boil, the cloud cover will reach 100%, and our atmosphere will vaporize. If you are out there, if you are listening: Save yourselves. Stay away from the Terran system at all costs. Ending transmis..."

The left arm of the Milky Way collides with the Andromeda Galaxy Eye inside of eye.

"What did you do to me!?"

"Just a little hemlock cocktail to help you sleep - doctor's orders. "

"You're killing me. No!"

"In News of the Bizarre today, Karech-Ba and Tomesh-Ek-Noral spun into each other last week. The bizarre twist - there was no explosion. No cataclysm. Instead, two interlocking blackholes developed in their place. Scientists are baffled by this heretofore theoretically impossible event."

The glasses flew across the floor.

Swirling and contracting. Enveloping and spinning into itself over and over and over...

He lunged at the orderly.

"IT WAS YOU - YOU DID THIS TO ME! I'LL KILL YOU!"

"NOT SO FAST!"

"Unnghh!"

The orderly regained control of his syringe and injected the patient.

"I see angels in the architecture, spinning in infinity. These are the days miracle and wonder stars. Billions of stars. It's like an immense vacuum going out to forever." Noooo...

This is the way the worlds end,
This is the way the worlds end,
Not with a shudder -
But a crash...

And the patient fell to floor dead.
