

# North Avenue Review

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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.

Mail suggestions, questions, or submissions to NAR at

[dsadmpn@prism.gatech.edu](mailto:dsadmpn@prism.gatech.edu).

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# My Old Man

by R.T. Bledsoe

I could kick him. Just a quick one to the shin would do it. Then a fast jab in his ribs, and when he doubled over an elbow to the kidneys, and he'd be down.

It'd be absurdly simple. There's no doubt I'm more imposing physically. My old man portrays tall very well, and until my growth spurt last year I thought him the tallest man in the world. But at twelve I'm taller and broader. In a few years I'll play an undistinguished defensive position for the Taconic Hills Titans and years after that I'll run distance races just for the love of motion.

There's an oak in the front yard next to the road, and it looks like the three of us are lined up tallest to smallest for the bus: the oak, me and the old man. I could leave him behind the oak and nobody'd be any the wiser.

It's hard to be cool when your father loves you. It isn't even some sick, incestuous thing. Nothing that good. My old man loves me. He took me shopping for school at the Government Exchange this year. I figure, here I'm twelve now, practically a teen, I think I can choose my own clothes, just pay for them, thanks. But while I'm eyeing Levis and fantasizing Laurie Gallop will take the hint and start calling me "stud," here he comes with an extra large pair of Dickies, saying "These should fit, honey."

The bat at the counter looks to think that's the darlinest thing she's ever heard. I could belt them both.

Other kids are lucky. My pal Pfeiffer doesn't even know where his old man is. He took off after Pfeiffer was born. Bone is even luckier. Every couple weeks he gets on the bus sporting a new shiner the size and color of an eggplant heel. Once he showed me a cigarette burn on his shoulder.

"Wow," I breathed. "Did your old man really do that?"

"Yeah," he says. He's wearing the shirt with the burn hole still in it. He centers the burn with the hole so it looks fresh. "We were watching SWAT and he tipped over to put out his smoke. He was tanked and I was asleep leaning on the couch and he missed the ashtray and got my shoulder."

Bone's old man works at the tire shop. His fingers are the shape of Oscar Meyer weiners. I imagine they operate as individual hydraulic lifts. "How'd it feel?"

"It didn't hurt too much. It was kind of like when you get that booster shot with all the pins. Only it burned after and it smelled funny. My old man put this stuff on it and kept saying he was sorry." He rubbed the shoulder to put a red burnish around the wound

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and then ripped the hole a little wider. "Don't tell anybody that last part, okay."

My old man is a banker. He might as well be an accountant. He wears ties and suits and a too-large black coat when it rains or snows and a plaid fedora with a yellow feather. He and Mother are teetotalers and most of their meals come out of boxes or cans. They go to church sometimes but don't make a religion of it. About the only thing my old man has in common with the fathers of my friends is that his old man used to get tanked and beat the snot out of him too.

Lucky bastard.

The bus comes down the road. It stops at Russel's a half mile off. The old man says "Have a good day, honey," and leans up to kiss my cheek.

On mornings like this I praise this oak to the skies. For two years it sheltered me while I watched Kim Russel tanning. Last summer my old man caught me with his binoculars. He didn't even bawl me out, just chuckled and said "well now."

I haven't been able to look at Kim since without blushing. Bone says she thinks I like her but what could I do with a fourteen year old girlfriend? She's just watching material.

The old man runs into the house to lock up before he heads to work. In another two years, when I have my ulcer and Dr. Bardwell, bless him, explains to my parents it's caused by riding the bus, these goodbyes will be tendered in the privacy of his car after he drives me to school. The old man will make himself ten minutes late every morning in order that my ulcer doesn't worsen. Later, when my stomach gets better, it'll turn out it really is from riding the bus. But for now Mother swears it's the horror comics the old man buys for me.

I get on the bus. The coolest place to sit is on the back bench and Pfeiffer saved me a spot. We trade comics weekly and today he's got a Swamp Thing to exchange for a Tomb of Dracula. I hold out. Swamp Thing's lame. He throws in The Demon and I say okay.

The bus rumbles on and maybe it's because I called his first offer lame that Pfeiffer says, loud enough so everyone in the bus hears, "Hey, is that your dad following us?"

I turn around and sure enough there he is, less than five feet from the bumper. His Monte Carlo looks like a Chihuahua sniffing a Doberman. It's winter and my old man is a black crumple at the wheel. He's a plaid-topped nightmare.

I turn around. "No, man" I mumble. "That's not my dad, I don't even know where my dad is, we think he's in Indiana somewhere, I don't know who that guy is--"

"Hey, he's blowing kisses, man!"

There's a blur and sixty kids pile into the back seat. My head sinks and it would hit the floor if my hands weren't there to catch it.

I have to look.

Bone asks "Is your dad a fag, man?"

Because there's my old man in his feathered fedora puckering up and popping off a couple good ones. I wonder if there's a shelter for kids who are too-loved. He smiles and it makes him look like one of those insipid felt-covered dogs that sit in the rear window of old people's cars and nod at anything. I hate him. I hate him the way magnets hate each other, jutting away when you put the wrong end near them. I hate him and he loves me as absolutely as metal filings love static.

Just before the bus turns left and he turns right, my old man waggles his fingers at me. One hundred twenty two eyes look at me.

I wave back. What else can I do.

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# "Freeze," Goes Daddy

by Jimmy Lo

It didn't happen until Daddy thought he had heard something downstairs. But he wasn't quite sure, so he asked Momma, who was sleeping on my other side. It was raining like hell outside, so I had slipped into bed with Momma, Daddy, and our cat Dog. Dog was sound asleep, and I was beginning to wonder how Daddy could've heard any sounds over the heavy thumping of the midnight rain. Just then, there was another sound that resembled a gigantic copper wind chime, but it sounded a bit too piercing. Daddy's big green eyes got bigger and he looked at Mommy and me.

"I heard it too!" Momma said. "I heard it too, that time!"

"What should we do?" I said.

"I'm goin' down," Daddy said. He climbed out of bed and trudged into the closet. When he came back out, he was covered with linen, pillowcases, and underwear (it was on his head, and I couldn't help but laugh). He shook the stuff off, and my eyes caught on to something that shimmered in his hand. It was a Smith and Wesson .38 revolver, brand new, never been shot before. "Ain't no burglar robbing my house!" he exclaimed as he walked off into battle.

Momma said, "Wait! You ain't goin' alone. I either comin' with you or you ain't goin' at all!"

"I'm comin' too!" I said. So, despite my good Daddy's complaints, we inched down the steps slowly like we were lining up for some food in Russia. Daddy told us to be absolutely quiet, so that we wouldn't wake up Grampa. So, with Daddy leading the way, clutching onto his S&W, we followed in a chaotic line, nervously holding on to the shoulder of the person in front.

When Daddy had reached the bottom of the stairs, he crouched down low, hiding behind the La-Z-Boy loveseat. He whispered for us to turn on the damn lights. Since I was at the end of the line, and closest to the switch, I reached up and turned it on. But there was no light and I was beginning to panic. Daddy whispered again -- Turn on the lights, not the fan. Feeling a breeze from above, I reached up again and flipped on the other one. The living room lit up like heaven, and I saw Daddy spring up to his legs, scanning the room with his outstretched hands, pivoting like a compass and yelling "Freeze!" like a madman.

A few minutes later, we had explored every corner of our house. We examined the place behind the coffee tables, where I had left some of my Dr. Seuss books. We explored the kitchen, and discovered nothing but pots and pans filled with grease and

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leftover apple pie, and a slice of cheap bread that I had left on the counter because it kept sticking to the ceiling of my mouth like a leech. We examined the closets and its assortment of aprons, pure honey, cans of Spam, tomato juice, and Campbell's Cream of Mushroom soup. We even checked under the beds in the guest bedroom, where no one had been for ages and where dust had settled onto as its permanent habitat. But there was no burglar in sight.

Daddy was still searching, when I crossed back over into the living room. Momma had found the cause for the noise -- a vase, one of Momma's most treasured, had fallen from its place and ricocheted onto the floor where its fractured form lay behind the television. I looked at the mess -- broken porcelain and a rose on the ground -- and knew it was nothing to be scared of. But, for some reason, Momma sat propped up on the loveseat with shaky eyes like a frozen chicken with short red hair.

"Momma, whatcha 'fraid of?" I asked.

"M-m-m" she said. And suddenly, from within the cracked vase, a little grey mouse emerged, with red rose petals stuck on its butt and whiskers the size of our cat Dog's. Momma gave out a loud high shriek, but the mouse seemed undisturbed. It simply looked around, moved its whiskers as if feeling the mood in the air, and sped along the ground like a bullet straight into the darkness beneath the La-Z-Boy loveseat. Momma was shaking with fear when Daddy walked in pointing the gun in every which way possible.

Momma said "Get Dog! Get Dog! He'll catch 'em.. Quick!" So I rushed upstairs, unable to keep pace, as I heard Daddy's confused voice.

"Dog? He's a cat! He ain't gonna catch no burglar! Now where is the burglar,"

"M-m-m" Momma attempted.

Meanwhile, I burst into the bedroom. Jumping over the trail of lingerie Daddy had left on the ground. I grabbed Dog, who was still sleeping peacefully on the silk bed. He gave out a "meow" of disapproval and squirmed, but I struggled to keep the cat in my arm as I raced downward.

So there we were, as I put the cat down, all staring at him as Dog proceeded to lick his paws, walk in circles for a while, and plop down to sleep. And he slept, too, without so much as to open one eye. He slept like it was the Fourth of July, as if we were standing there protecting him from the Devil's rod.

"For God sakes, do something!" Momma cried out to Dog. I saw the confusion in Daddy's eyes as he looked at the cat. His jaw had dropped in disbelief at our stupidity.

"Why'd you bring the cat down!" he yelled at me, as if feeling stupid himself for having witnessed such crassitude.

"M-m-m" Momma tried again. Just then, the mouse scampered back out and stopped before it hit the cat. Suddenly the cat jumped backwards with an arched back and made the most amazing sound a cat could make that could freeze the air. Every fur on his back was raised in horror. The mouse jumped a bit too, when suddenly he realized he had confronted himself with a cat, and raced away in another direction. Daddy raised his gun and shot. One, two, three, four. It seemed like it'd never end, when finally it did. Blood had dispersed all over the room, dripping from the curtains and on the walls. Even Dog had blood on him and I had spots of blood the size of pebbles when I looked at my arm, as if I were covered with tiny red freckles. The mouse was no more.

Daddy hadn't even yelled "Hallelujah!" yet when suddenly a loud thud of the door came from above, and we knew what that meant. Grampa came down the stairs, wrestling with a sweater, trying to put it on, or quite possibly, pull it off. Still in his blue and white striped pajamas and slippers hastily worn backwards, he breathed so heavily we could hear him and it sounded like he had problems keeping balance on the steps. When he came to the place where there was a gap in the wall halfway between the second floor and the first, right in the center of the staircase, he stood, frozen. His hair was still tousled from sleep and his eyes, although grimy and sticky, opened as wide as I've seen them open, wide enough to see the yellow in the white part of his eyeball. He stood there, all tangled up in his sweater, staring at Momma, who was still shrivelled up in the chair, and Daddy, and then me.

"Oh my God!" he whispered. Then he yelled "No, John! What're you doing! Don't shoot your wife, John! No, don't shoot your wife!"

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# whatever the fuck you want -- I never could name stuff

by Mark Moore

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The clarity of vision during the first hour of dawn is remarkable. Especially after a night that held no sleep. Everyone should spend a night avoiding their problems, and then take a long drive once the sky has begun to lighten. The things you will see will astound you. The stains on the pavement begin to make an artistic statement. The weeds creeping up on the side of the roadscream like the colors from a Pollock canvas. The world makes itself wonderfully lucid on such a morning. For better or worse.

This time is the kingdom of the fringe of society. This is when the morning paper miraculously materializes on your step, as if some wizard willed it into existence. The immediate post-dawn is the realm of the night's true denizens taking stock of the themselves before sliding into the void that consumes the sun. By this time the club kids, prostitutes, pushers, drunks, and partiers have long since gone back to whatever passes for daytime solace for them. This sliver of time belongs to the paper carrier, garbage collector, long distance commuter, druggie, and desperate. A patchwork of society going everywhere and nowhere at once.

Soon the rest of the world will realize it is behind. Amazing how people can wake up already behind time. Its not even the ones who have overslept, clinging desperately to that last bit of reverie that their dreams hold. Its the ones who wake up before the alarm, knowing that the extra five minutes earned will give them that all important edge. The edge never seem to hold though. How do people keep their sanity when drowning in minutia? As the yuppies begin to drive their BMWs to work, the world slides from it brief moment of forced introspection into the normal speed most would recognize as reality. The pulse of the city begins to reach a rate that would rival an aroused adolescent. Maybe society will give itself a heart attack.

I can feel that moment slipping from my grasp like the smoke curling away into nothing from the end of my cigarette, the only thing binding me to the material world. I wish the suns timid rays could dissolve me into nothing. Spend a blissfull eternity floating in the warmth. Maybe that is the appeal of hot baths. To be surrounded, encased in warm fluid must bring back some Freudian memory of the womb. Sticky and biological like some amorphorous creature clawing its way from the primordial ooze. Maybe it is less grandiose and neurotic than that. Just a longing to be held, to be encased by love from another. To be held in someone's arms and told that it will all be alright sounds like a tidy definition of paradise. Quite possibly I am just a sleep deprived psychotic who needs to light another cigarette.

"My memory serves me far to well...." George Michaels had it right, and music is always the key to both existential angst and torturous introspection. Give me more lounge croons, George. Give me Michelle Pfeiffer rolling around in a red dress on a piano. Give me the feel of well oiled wood, the bitterness of a fourth martini, the smell of stale smoke, the voice of Billie Holiday, and some desperate people to watch. Hell, give me Jessica Rabbit singing a Billie Holiday tune. Disneyland is good enough for the rest of the world. I still have a problem with trading life for a simulation, but God knows I'm not in the driver's seat. I hope Hell has a nice warm spot for hypocrites. They probably chain you opposite a mirror and provide early morning light. Then you could never get away from your perversions.

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# MONEY MAKING SECRETS UNCOVERED!! EARN MORE MONEY THAN YOU'VE EVER DREAMED OF!!

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Dear Nar,

Hi. My name is Jimmy Lo, and I'm writing this letter to reveal to you a rarely known MONEY MAKING SECRET! Yes, this formulaic money making trick that I am about to tell you is SO SIMPLE, yet SO EFFECTIVE. How would you like to bring home \$5,000, \$10,000, or even \$25,000 dollars in ONE DAY?!? Sound impossible! Well, it did to me also!

It's hard to believe, but I was in dire financial need once also. I was living in a trailer park, had a small job down the street at Uncle Bob's Barbers. It was a crummy job and I was treated like shit! Yes, if you know what I mean, then you're ready to take the next step!

One day as I was cutting this man's hair. He was in his 40's or so, brown hair, brittle, he asked me "Son, do you wish to work here the rest of your life?" I thought about it. The pay was bad and the treatment was worse. But there was no alternative. Oh was I SO WRONG! This man then went on to tell his story, revealing to me how he made all his money. He told me to guard those secrets tightly, and never tell anybody those money making secrets.

Well now I've made myself a fortune, bought the barber shop (!!!) that I once worked for, and have a beautiful family in a beautiful peaceful home! And let me tell you that feeling you get when you bring home a \$10,000 check each week is tremendous!!! Plus, I've got so much money that I won't ever have to work again!

With all this money, I have the time to do all the stuff I've always wanted to do. I can go skiing, spend time with the kids, and even go fishing. I can do the things I really enjoy!!! Financial freedom is right around the corner!

Therefore, I've decided not to listen to the guy who told me to never tell anybody about this MONEY MAKING SECRET! Why? Because I see so many people suffering out there, so many people that I can relate to. I saw a boy working minimum wage at a cashier register the other day and I said "I could be him! I could be this boy!" But I'm not! I got lucky, and I want to SHARE THE WEALTH!! I lose NOTHING when I share the wealth because I am already wealthy. What do I gain? Very little monetary gains, but a huge sense of satisfaction. You see, I LIKE helping people out. I feel like this is the least I can do to give back to this world!

I'd love to tell you all my money making secret! Yes you. I am only telling a few

important people that I have carefully chosen among many candidates, and you are one of them. I wish to share the wealth and the knowledge, but I also want to share it with the right people. People like you, who are dying to discover a better way. You've suffered enough; now let me tell you the way.

This secret money making tool has been proven by many of the wealthiest men time and again to be the MOST effective, lucrative, and downright simple. A five year old can do this. If you can follow simple instructions, you're on your way to making big bucks.

So are you ready? Are you committed to this? Are you serious about being rich beyond your dreams? There is only one way I can know who is seriously ready and who is not. That is why I am charging a minimal 100% money-back guaranteed fee of not \$200, not \$150, not even \$50, but \$29.99. And in a few weeks, you will know that it was the best investment you have made in your entire life.

Remember Nar, anything is possible. It is your decision.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Lo

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Uh oh, my scheduled drug test is today. I don't have enough gas money to go and do it again. They want me to go to College Park to piss again. I kinda feel like a monkey, pissing for a job. Jokes on me though cause they found the THC and Hennessy. Hahaahaha. Very funny! Suit and ties can kiss my ass. Why do I have to be a clown as well as a thinker? The world makes me feel sick inside. I'm gonna vomit, I just swallowed my pride.

Time keeps on ticking, reminding me that my death is nearer than before and what have I accomplished? Made a mistake so I'm no longer human. To err is Alien. The world is pressing me down, trying to kill me! Like a mad insane beast with three arms. Hard to rise up! It's always something. The good comes and go but the bad ever remains present and gets worst. I'm tired of war, tired of watching the light tower's signal in the box. I wanna go out but no clout. It's funny, you have to take what you can get, but no matter how depressing life gets there's always weed, acid, and sex. And don't forget Rock n Roll cause it's there to comfort the soul. And if in a situation where these things you can't get.

There's always a cigarette!

And Alcohol, your 21 kid, real life sucks so drink up!

I got the message while kneeling over the toilet, even the fun sucks. I gotta keep my guard, I'm playing basketball with life, it's not that hard.

So we can't have the best, at least we can smoke cess, trip our balls off till we see permanent trails with cigarettes boosting the little high that isn't nothing but somehow something. Living in a dream one way or the other, I could be a average joe or a robber. What's my point?

Nothing, just saying a bunch of shit that comes to mind. You have to seperate the raisins from the bran. Another man's bran is another man's raisin. Praise him. So you would think I would go but no no no. But I am getting sleepy, so goodbye and stay high.

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# The Restless Night

by Sara Willson

I just ate six donuts...ugh.

Life is full of the unexpected.

"The present alone was significant, was hers, to torture her as it was doing then with the biting which her impassioned, newly awakened being demanded." - Kate Chopin, The Awakening

And so, with a few well-ordered notes, the day's sadness falls upon me in its entirety. Its weight is crushing, yet light enough that I survive to be mauled another day. Whether or not that fact is a blessing remains to be seen. It is difficult to place blame for my strange fragility. Is it a curse? A favor? No matter at all?

"Dread remorse when you are tempted to err...: remorse is the poison of life." - Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre

A million thoughts run near-infinite stampedes through my mind, and I cannot calm the beating of my heart. Sometimes I wonder if it still beats at all.

I am only 20, not old and yet not so young that I am ignorant of the world beyond my eyes. Despite what I know of the world I live in, its atrocities still appall me to silent tears. This is not a weak reaction, but necessary, vital, important. Who else will mourn for the victims?

Life always seems a little more severe in the dark.

"Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody." - JD Salinger, Catcher in the Rye

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# Balsamic Vinegar

## "A Tribute to William Burroughs"

by Geri Atrics (aka jimo@cc)

I dream of balsamic vinegar. An ultimate meta-sensation. I liquefact therefore I am.

I dream of a culture of the future, and sleep through today's pawnshop.

I dream myself, and I dream of Genie.

I cut-up the Preamble:

"Liberty to form our Posterity and insure the States United we Welfare the general Tranquility and perfect the defence to secure the People and establish Order and ourselves ordain Justice this common America, we do provide domestic Blessings"

I dream of thoughts once begun that follow themselves out towards logical conclusions and putrefy into gooey jewels of poignancy.

I dream the ideological state apparatus, as she dreams me.

I dream of the theater that screams inanely and stops the world.

I dream of formless informity, multiformity, communiformity and, of course,

I dream of balsamic vinegar.

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