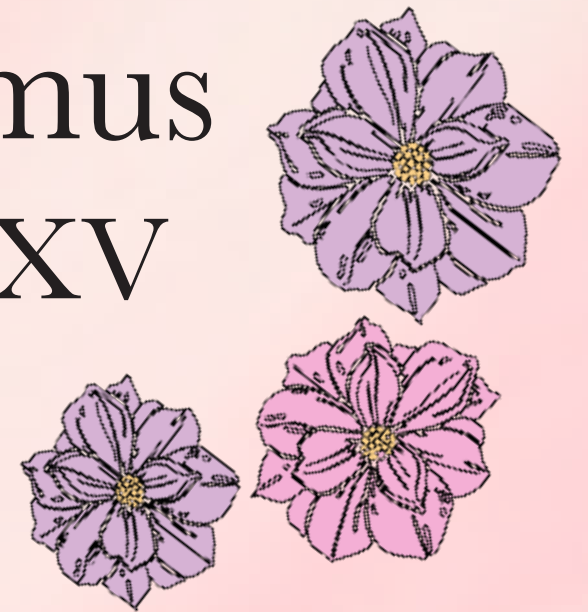


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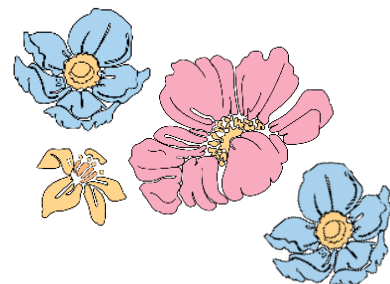
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F RWARD

Dear Reader,

It is my pleasure to present to you the fifhteenth edition of *Audeamus*. This year, our editorial team carefully reviewed over 100 submissions from undergraduate students across the nation. The accepted 14 pieces, which represent the most original and creative of voices, each offer a diverse perspective on this year's theme of **bloom**. They showcase what it means to flourish in the face of adversity and blossom into something new through the illustration of complex themes and emotions.

In the process of producing this publication, our editorial board hit many roadbocks and delays. In the midst of such a transitional time period due to the lasting effects of COVID-19, I am proud to say that we have successfully completed this jounral on an expidited timeline of only four months compared to the typical nine. This would not have been possible without the tireless effort, dedication, and dilligency of the entire Audeamus Staff to whom I am extremly grateful for.

Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Cardullo, Kristine Parada, and the rest of the Honors Staff who made this jounral possible. Their aid and guidance over the past year has been invaluable.

As the Editor-in-Chief of *Audeamus XV*, I am honored to share this outstanding collection of work that represent the resillinecy, vigor, and beauty of our oridnary existence. I hope that these pieces inspire you in their honesty and challenge your notions of what it means to be alive.

Sincerely,
Samantha Park
Editor-in-Chief
2021-2022

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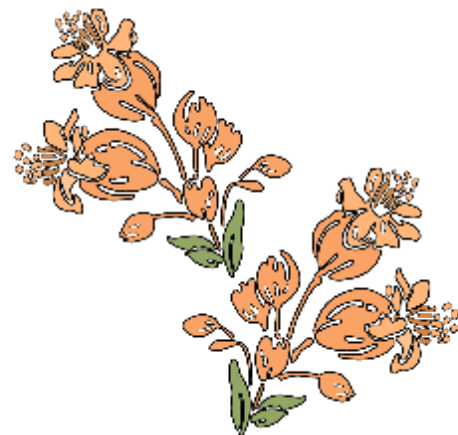
BEREA COLLEGE

my oldest sister cooked dinner on days off.
pizza or pot pie or potato casserole,
for once, dinner food for dinner,
saving breakfast food for breakfast.
nine siblings, and the leftovers were always finished
before I could eat them for lunch the next day.

my grandma sent boxes of junk food,
and all of us, so starved for something to own,
drew names to divide autonomy.
the heavy flat-rate box emptied into hungry hands,
gone after the first cycle.
I saved my chocolate as long as I could;
briefly in control. of course I held on too tightly.

finally feeding myself with more than cereal
and starving peanut butter sandwiches,
the voice still screams that what I don't eat now
will be gone by tomorrow. the boy in my bed consumes me
right back, and I spend every second dizzy and obsessed.
when I come home to an empty bed tomorrow,
maybe, the hunger pains in my stomach
will be gentle on me.

but only if, tonight, I overeat.



A Letter to the Wanderer

M.V GOSSEN



UC RIVERSIDE

“The Wanderer” is an Anglo-Saxon poem collected in the Exeter Book. Though the book was found around 975, some scholars speculate that “The Wanderer” may date as far back as the fifth or sixth century in origin. It likely began an oral elegy and was later transcribed, but neither the composer nor compiler can be identified.

Millenia ago—

I imagine you. Maybe you sit cross-legged
on the shore. Maybe you watch the waves break or
maybe you cradle yourself in the roots of a tree or maybe
you drag yourself along the road, one foot after
another, just surviving.
Anywhere you are, I imagine you
alone.

My apologies, friend, but I dont know your name.
It was lost somewhere between
the first telling and the last. But I know
the taste of your sorrow—
salt-trails down bloodied cheeks, the empty space
in your hand where you used to grip your mead, and always
the echoes of the laughter you fear
will be forgotten.

Somewhere on that shore, that grass, that road,
you opened your heart. Let loose the grief
so tightly gripped.
And now, lifetimes between us, I can hear it
beating
every time it is given shape on our lips.

Do you know that, wanderer,
lone-dweller, exile, you
who claws against the grave-dirt?
I hear you. I remember.



Flightless Bird

MORGAN FISCHER

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

If there was one thing I knew about the world as it was then, I knew that it was easy to get forgotten in the eyes of history. It seemed there were two sides to the matter, and I was somewhere in the middle. A bartender pulling himself up by the bootstraps to drag only *himself* out of poverty, almost like I was halfway in, halfway out. The beggars lining the streets of the city cursed my name for doing this to them, lumping me in with the rest of the shiny coated businessmen who wiped their hands clean of all the sins they'd done, escaping the clutches of the Depression more unscathed than those left to ruin. But those same businessmen didn't want me either, viewing me simply as the *help*. It didn't bother me as much as it could've, as my days were more focused on surviving rather than what my survival meant. But every so often, I wondered where I belonged, if there *was* anywhere I belonged. Because it certainly wasn't here.

I'd taught myself how to pour drinks, knowing from a young age it could make me money. After growing up watching my father's green eyes shatter as he gave in to the call of the bottle, drinking in the dark like the rest of the country at the time, I'd known that perhaps men had a fault. But that fault could be used. And *The L'Hotel de Soleil* had been full of people who succumbed to that fault, making the position quite an easy one to obtain.

I'd studied French in primary school, my mother had insisted upon it, sure it would improve my appearance as a gentleman more than my raggedy boots could erase. I was never any good at it, but the knowledge I'd clung to let me know that the name was wrong. It was redundant first of all, the *the* and the *L'* simply saying the same thing, and then the *de* should've been *du*, for reasons I didn't really understand. So technically, the name of the esteemed hotel was *The The Sun Hotel*, instead of *The Hotel of the Sun*.

The owners of the hotel were both American, born and raised, and it was painfully clear. Both names meant essentially the same thing, and got the point across well enough, advertising not only the elegance of the place, but also the novel rooftop bar they used as a selling point to market to newer, younger customers. Most newer, younger customers couldn't afford to feed their family, let alone stay at such an expensive hotel, but again, the managers were oblivious.

Or maybe that was just the glamour of it. Since the crash, it was almost easier for these patrons to get themselves to pay the absurdly high rate, if only for the fact that it was a way to show they had money when practically no one else did. The world was changing, yet their pre-

ternatural instinct to cling to their ways and survive was greater than their instinct to change with it. The place had its regulars, and by default, so did I. Middle-aged married couples searching for excitement, an old widow still hanging on to the last memories of her husband, even the crazy old beggar from down the block consistently stationed outside on the street. They'd all been the same people since the Depression started, the only change being that the beggar may have finally earned the right to be crazy. Everyone had. Even those shiny coated businessmen. But I'd always hoped they were crazy with *guilt*.

Looking back at the time I spent there wasn't always fond, though it wasn't all notable. It was the same routine day after day, cleaning the lacquered mahogany wood of the bartop while I waited for a guest to order me around, or relishing in those few minutes before the early evening rush started, before the people came out to enjoy the weather before going back downstairs to the lavish restaurant in the lobby. Before, before, before. It was like my life was one giant before, constantly waiting for something to happen just to push me to the *after*: I hadn't known what that would be until it stared me in the face with a pair of brown eyes.

My first taste at a *now* happened one evening, when the Rutherbys sidled up to my bar. Mara Rutherby, a woman well on her way into middle age, still clinging on to the rapidly disappearing skirts of youth, was attached to the arm of her husband, Frank Rutherby, who had spent so much time poring over stock reports he'd started to take on the pallor of the paper, drained and pale. "Can I get a gin, son?" Frank asked loudly, waving me down even though I was right there.

"You don't even need to ask, Mr. Rutherby," I said with a smile, dropping it the moment I turned around. "It's comin' right up." I grabbed the bottle of gin, smoothly pouring the right amount, topping it with lime juice and club soda. I prepared the martini Mrs. Rutherby liked as well, and when I turned around to hand them to the respective couple, I found them deep in a comparison of their last visit to now. It'd only been three weeks since then, yet *too much had changed*.

"The maids have all been in such a tizzy this time!" Mrs. Rutherby admonished, both intrigued and scandalized by the news. "Apparently there's a new couple coming to stay this weekend," she added, like she was telling a secret, and I couldn't deny I was a bit surprised. There hadn't been anyone new since before I'd gotten the job, the same people just cycling through for the past few years. Some stayed for a weekend at a time, others for a week, but everyone was running from something.

"We haven't had any fresh blood since the '20s," Mr. Rutherby grunted, throwing back the rest of his drink, liquid dripping off of his graying bushy mustache. "Except for all the new scum out on the street down there. Why can't they just go find a new Hooverville to shack up in instead?" He uncaringly gestured to the edge of the rooftop, looking pleased with himself as his wife laughed. I had to restrain myself from scoffing.

Instead, I joked, "Don't let Mrs. Carter hear you sayin' that," earning two laughs of my own.

“That old quack could learn a few things about life, right Mara?” Mr. Rutherby mused, “I don’t see why she’s still let in this place; I’m honestly surprised she hasn’t wasted all her money away being *charitable*.” I didn’t know what to say, so I didn’t say anything at all, letting the Mrs reply as I grabbed a rag, moving down the bar to wipe down the wooden top. It was already-clean. But the suffocating presence of the painted upper class marionettes was driving me away.

If only I had somewhere else to go besides a hovel under a bridge, or a Hooverville like *Frank* had suggested, though I was surprised he’d adopted the colloquial term for it. Maybe Mrs. Carter was rubbing off on them all.

The sun was setting on that very same evening when the new couple walked up to my bar, and I was immediately aware of what made everyone else in the hotel so intrigued by them. They were a handsome couple, wealth and class dripping off every layer of their appearance, like the air itself was emanating it. I’d served them their alcohol, the man asking for a scotch and ordering his wife a glass of red wine. That was the first thing I noticed. The second thing I noticed was the way the woman’s eyes shone when she spoke, introducing her and her husband to the couple next to them, the Hattersons. Though I didn’t know if woman was the right word; she looked closer to a girl than a woman, though she wasn’t too much younger than the man she’d married. They were both young, contrasting the older tinge of the hotel itself.

Eliane. That was her name. *It means the sun*, she’d said cheerfully, her bright smile matching the description to a tee. She looked like the sun, with her golden hair, which was curled into an updo to match the fashion; and her eyes were like caramel, melted by that very same sun, or maybe just the warmth of that sun after a cloudy day.

It was a contrast to the man who sat next to her, whose blue eyes were the only bright thing about him, his hair dark and his brows dark and his clothes dark, but I supposed they were still a *dark* sort of blue, like the color of the sky right before it rained, with an air of danger and a hint of thunder. When the man had sat down, I’d almost expected him to smell like smoke. He looked like the type that would. But not like smoke from the cheap kind of cigarettes, not like he was out smoking down the block and came in with a scowl on his face and tar on his fingers. No, he looked like he’d smell like an expensive cigar from halfway across the world and knew it. Like he knew he smelled like one and wanted to, just so that everyone who passed him knew how rich he was.

I didn’t miss the way the man — *Laurence* I overheard — or Laurie to his wife, didn’t smile once the whole time. That was the third thing I noticed. Maybe Eliane was compensating for that with her extra smiles, giving them out to everyone who stopped to talk to her, or who stopped to just look at her briefly before continuing on with their evenings. Such was always the air in that hotel bar; everyone was always there but everyone was too wrapped up in their own issues to really stop and notice anyone else’s. I was the receiver of all of their gripes, all of their pasts that were coming back to haunt them, all of their careless drama, only source of excitement in some of their washed-up lives.

I didn’t mind it, I was a good listener, when people chose to talk to me. That was the fourth

thing I noticed, *Laurence* didn’t say a single thing to me unless he was ordering a drink, and Eliane didn’t say anything at all. I wasn’t sure that was by her own volition, if the way the man ordered for her was any indication. But that wasn’t my business, I just served the alcohol.

“Get me another one,” Laurence said, disrupting me from my thoughts. Not even a question, a demand, one that I had to fulfill or be in danger of a complaint to my boss. So, I just nodded, grabbing his empty glass to fill it up with another round of scotch, staying silent as I slid it back, turning to look at the woman next to him, whose glass was also conspicuously empty.

“And another for the lady?” I asked. But instead of answering, Eliane just turned to her husband, whose hand hadn’t moved from her waist the whole time they’d sat there. His jaw clenched, but he nodded, and the blonde girl looked back at me, smiling lightly as she answered.

“Yes, thank you.” Her words were much politer, and I smiled back, grabbing her glass and the opened bottle of cabernet to fill it up with, pouring a bit more than normal before giving it back to her, setting it against the dark wood gently. She was facing her husband, laughing at something he’d said, the first smile of the evening on the man’s face, though it was a bit restrained, like his face wasn’t used to the movement. But she smiled at me again in thanks as she took the glass, taking a small sip of the wine before setting it back down, turning back to her husband, as if eager to return to the conversation.

There was something I was missing, some piece in their dynamic I hadn’t quite puzzled out yet, especially when Laurence seemingly lost interest in his wife, turning to talk to Mr. Rutherby instead. They hadn’t left the bar. I caught a few snippets of their conversation, about the stock market and financials and other nonsense, just like every conversation was nowadays. Empty words led to nothing but empty promises, and empty solutions. Nothing was going to change over a half hour talk with a stranger. But I wasn’t really listening because my attention was absorbed with Eliane. She looked a bit lost, her eyes falling into infinite and heavy sorrow, and I was entranced by the expression until she looked up and caught me staring. She blinked.

“Do you happen to have a ballpoint pen?” she asked quietly, instead of chewing me out, and it was my turn to blink.

“Yes, I do,” I replied, producing one from under the counter. She took it from me gently, and I was called down the line to fill up a new glass of whiskey for an old widower who came here to drown his sorrows.

By the time I was back over on her side of the bar, another quarter of my energy sapped, the napkin she’d commandeered was now covered in an artistic rendition of a bird, a seagull if I could guess correctly. A type of bird I saw around here often, being close to the coastline. Ocean views *and* city views, the perfect combination for rich guests. It was picturesque, as long as you just looked out, not down off the edge of the hotel, where the lines of beggars formed, the bleakness of the streets in stark contrast to the postcard worthy views.

That’s where I’d end up without this job. The drawing was surprisingly detailed, showing she had some talent at it, though I doubted she was ever taken seriously. Such was the way of things.

“That’s beautiful,” I decided to compliment, earning one of her smiles.

“Thank you,” she said, a little bashful, and I smiled to myself as I grabbed an empty glass, cleaning out the inside with a rag. I fell back into the mindless hum of the crowd, when I felt a burning gaze on me. I glanced up, a secret part of me hoping it was those brown eyes, but it was the storm staring at me instead.

During dinner, I got momentary peace, but the second the restaurant was closed, the guests were flocking back upstairs, ready to drink themselves to sleep. I’d dealt out a round to everyone, making a note to subtly add it to their room charges later on. It was easier to charge someone too much for a drink when they didn’t even realize they were paying it until too late.

The napkin turned canvas had been left on the bar when the artist herself had left, something I knew had to do with the dismissive words thrown her way when she tried to show it to her husband. But I didn’t toss it. Instead, I took a tack and pinned it up to the wall behind the bar where the specials menu was carefully written out. It earned me a half smile when Eliane, Eliane *Edwards* I’d gleaned, came back up. But to avoid another icy look, I turned to Mrs. Carter, who’d finally made her grand appearance. Mrs. Carter was an old woman with a bushel of white hair who shocked the whole hotel by not only having opinions, but by having the wrong ones too. She’d been a suffragette less than two decades ago, and had maintained that independent spirit even when the bill was passed. Maybe that had something to do with her husband never returning home from the Great War; she was so brutally independent because she was forced to be. She was one of the few people I actually enjoyed talking to, simply because I never knew what she was going to say. To prove my point, she plopped herself down into the stool in front of me, her glasses making her eyes bug out as she glanced down the bar furtively.

“I don’t like Mr. Edwards,” she said frankly, and I raised my brows idly, polishing another glass.

“What makes you say that?” I asked, and she shook her head.

“I talked to *Mrs.* Edwards earlier, oh what a sweetheart she is, and I just don’t think a dove like her should be with someone as stiff as him.” She clicked her tongue before taking a sip of her Old Fashioned, yet another thing that made her stand out.

“You should’ve heard her talkin’ ‘bout the poor souls who lost their jobs. She’s very sympathetic, more sympathetic than I’ve ever seen here. She’d do much better with a nice boy like you.”

I didn’t know what to say, so I just didn’t reply. Turns out I didn’t need to, because she kept talking, leaning in close and keeping her voice low.

“There’s something about him; I’d say he’s a scoundrel or a spiv, but when I talked to them, it was clear he has the money in the relationship, so no need to take hers.” She furrowed her silvery brows.

“Hmm, I’ll think more on it.” She took another sip, finishing the glass.

“You do that, Mrs. Carter,” I said, smiling at her. “Do you want another one?” She clapped her hands and I chuckled as I took the glass from her, getting ready to fill it back up when there was a commotion from down the bar, the shattering sound attracting everyone’s attention.

I made my way over to the scene, where Eliane’s white dress was now covered in a deep red

stain, her glass of wine in pieces on the floor. It looked eerily like bloodstains, and nausea rose in my stomach.

“I’m sorry,” she said quietly, looking close to tears, “I didn’t mean to, it just slipped, I-” she slid off the stool, kneeling down by the mess as if she was going to try and clean it up herself. But her husband grabbed her upper arm, lifting her back to a stand. He leaned in, whispering something harshly in her ear, and she nodded, tears springing into her brown eyes. She wiped her face, turning to look at the spellbound crowd, who wasn’t even trying to pretend like they weren’t watching. “I’m sorry everyone, I’m just a bit clumsy.” She forced a chuckle. “I’m going to retire for the evening. I wish you all a pleasant time.” And then she was leaving, her Oxford heels clicking on the floor. I watched her walk away, before snapping back to attention. It wasn’t her job to clean up the mess, but it *was* mine. So I huffed, grabbing some cleaning stuff from under the bar and heading over to the spill. The wine would be hell to scrub out of the wood if it soaked in any longer.

“Accidents happen everywhere it seems,” Laurence Edwards joked, coaxing the crowd from their shell-shocked state. He *smiled* too, shocking the hell out of me. Only another moment passed before the bar was back to normal, teetering with life again. But his attention turned to me.

“You overfilled her glass,” he said in a tense voice, in a volume only I could hear as I crouched down by his barstool to begin cleaning. I didn’t respond, staring at the floor instead.

After that, it was like everyone seemed to realize it was late, or the life had been sucked out of the bar when Eliane left, or maybe because I was preoccupied, with no replacement at the bar to pour drinks, but people started tapering off until it was just me and Mrs. Carter. The lady scuttled over to me where I was scrubbing at the floor, sliding into the barstool Eliane had vacated.

“What did that man say to you?” she asked, tapping her short nails on the bartop. I sighed.

“He didn’t say anything,” I blatantly lied, cursing under my breath when I cut my finger on a piece of glass I missed.

“Hmm.” She hopped off the barstool, as quick as she’d come, leaving me with words I didn’t quite understand. “Write your own biography dear, don’t just read someone else’s.”

It took me another half hour to finish cleaning the floor and cleaning off the bartop. I was wiping down the used glasses when I heard voices floating up from the side of the building. It was a clear night tonight, so sound traveled. There were the faint sounds of the ocean, a few rare car horns, and... arguing.

I couldn’t quite make out what was going on, so to satiate my curiosity I tossed my rag, edging toward the side of the roof, past where the veranda stopped. “*That was a fucking embarrassment!*” a distinctly male voice shouted, and I flinched even from my safe distance away.

“*It was an accident, Laurie!*” a female voice, Eliane, responded. They must have the penthouse suite, with a window open if the sound was any indication. “You can’t blame me for an accident.” I had a feeling I wasn’t supposed to be hearing this, yet, I couldn’t move away.

“*Oh yes I can,*” Laurence’s voice was gritted and angry. “*We have a reputation to maintain, I have a reputation to maintain. You know this. You know what’s at stake here. Do you think I want everyone here knowing I’m only one generation away from shit? That this money is all new?*”

You can't go around getting drunk and ruining our image."

"*And why do you think I want to be drunk?*" she seethed, in a voice so unlike what I expected from her. "*You said you'd be better, that's what this trip was for. Yet everything's just the same.*" There was a pause, and I imagined her walking toward the door of their room, or storming to the bathroom or something, until I heard a slapping noise, so distinct it couldn't be anything else.

"Shit." Distinct footsteps, and then the sound of the window rattling in its frame, my sound cut off. The sounds of the city took over again, a heavier ambience than the words I'd just heard, and I took the chance to look out at the view all the guests paid for. It was stunning, and it would be serene in the night air if not for the far out sight of a cluster of homeless encampments, or of the part of the city not lit up, the electrical bills no longer being paid. There were signs wherever you looked, but some people just didn't care enough to see them.

The restaurant hosted a luncheon on the rooftop the next day, citing the nice weather, but I knew it was just a reason concocted by the servers to pass on some of the work to me. I wasn't supposed to be at the hotel that day until five, but it was my bar, I'd be damned if someone else was running it without me.

About half of the hotel's guests flocked to join in the social endeavor: the Rutherbys of course, the Hattersons, a few other couples I knew, and the Edwards. Mrs. Carter was absent, but it was probably for the best, as she wouldn't be able to shut her mouth when she saw Eliane. She was smiling like always, but with what little I knew about makeup, I could tell hers looked heavier today, like she was covering something up.

There was a moment where she'd moved to the edge of the roof, looking up at the sky as if basking in the sun, hoping for a bit of rejuvenation, but it passed under a cloud and she was back to her state of acting like nothing was wrong. She conversed like she had the day before, Laurence at her side, though there was a bit more tension between the pair. But I was sure no one else noticed; they were both quite accomplished actors.

I'd puzzled over her words last night while trying to fall asleep, hearing, "*You said you'd be better,*" over and over in my head. He said he'd be better, yet it didn't appear he was. My heart hurt for this girl I barely knew, for what she was undoubtedly going through. Yet what could I do? I was nothing but a bartender. Yet Mrs. Carter's words rang in my head too.

Write your own biography dear, don't just read someone else's. If only it was that easy.

I knew I had a long night ahead of me from the moment I stepped into my bar that night and saw Laurence Edwards staring me down. I didn't know what I'd done particularly to invoke that rage, but it seemed it was there regardless of cause. Either way, I continued my duties without inciting anything, even if the sound of that slap still rang in my ears. I'd caught Eliane's eyes at one point too, hoping to see a bit of sparkle, and I did, her face warming infinitesimally as she smiled at me. A smile she extended to everyone else too, though I didn't think it held quite the same spark.

Things were going smoothly, a small jazz band playing music in the corner while chatter

filled the cool night air, until I'd gone around the corner to get another crate of beer and was suddenly being cornered by the man of the hour.

"Listen here, kid," he spit ironically. We couldn't be more than five years apart. "You need to take a step back, okay?" I blinked, indignation flaring as the other man shoved me into the wall by my shoulder. "I know my wife is a looker, I know she can be flirtatious, but you need to learn your place." I nearly scoffed at the dripping condescension. But I couldn't say the words I wanted to say, not when this job was the only thing standing between me and joining the bands of stragglers on the streets.

"I'm just trying to do my job," I said instead, raising my hands and trying to assuage the man's apparent fears. But I still shoved past him to head back out to the bar, where Frank Rutherby was waiting for his next gin. Mrs. Carter had migrated over to Eliane, which I was sure Laurence would break up. He didn't seem to be the type to put up with her musings. And it seemed he wasn't satisfied by their brief discussion, his hand swiping across Eliane's back to snag her waist. I couldn't hear, but I could tell his words were fairly curt as he dismissed Mrs. Carter, coaxing the blonde to the edge of the roof, away from the general crowd and out of sight. There was a current of tension, but he was still aware of how his attitude was perceived.

Mrs. Carter immediately walked over to me, indignant. "Did you see h-"

"Yeah," I said faintly, "I did." She loosened a breath.

"That poor girl." I made a hum of acknowledgement, eyes tracing where the couple disappeared. "She doesn't deserve that."

"Would anyone care, though?" I mused, drumming my fingers on the bartop idly. The thought brought me back to a comment I'd overheard Mr. Rutherby making one time, a comment several of the men he was entertaining had laughed at, "*Sometimes you've gotta rough 'em up a little, you know?*" I had stayed quiet like always, but I'd clenched my jaw. I was sure some of it was performative, and that most of them weren't in the habit of abusing their wives, but the more they joked about it the more it would slide by without any real recognition. I never thought to realize that I was letting it slide by too.

"You have to *make* them care," Mrs. Carter insisted, her bug-eyes blazing. "They won't ever listen to me, they think I'm crazy, but they might listen to you." I huffed a laugh.

"I'm the help, Mrs. Carter," I explained, "they think my word is a load of bullshit."

"Then make that bullshit stink," she insisted, and I would've laughed at the way she said it if I didn't understand the meaning behind the words. *Be loud, make it impossible to ignore you, make a stink.*

"I'll try my best," I said to assuage, knowing I had no intentions to do anything. What was I supposed to do? But it seemed to satisfy the old woman, who hopped off her barstool like a little cricket, wandering around to bother other people with her Old Fashioned loose in her hand. I shook my head just in time to see Eliane emerge from around the corner, scrubbing at her face discreetly while tugging at her sleeve. I heard a snuffle as she passed me, and I caught a glimpse of red on her wrist, red in the damning shape of fingerprints. I didn't know what to do when she took a seat except ask her what she wanted to drink.

“Cabernet please,” she asked, her voice consistently polite with only a hint of desperation this time. “And fill it up as *much* as you can.” She shook her head, her blonde curls bouncing, and I didn’t hesitate in taking a glass, popping open a new bottle of the red wine and filling the glass up as much as I could without fear of it spilling again.

She drained half of it in one go, not caring what the others at the bar thought for the first time that weekend. Laurence emerged a moment later, looking like he was ready to punch a wall, especially when he saw her with me. Eliane didn’t seem to notice. “You kept the bird,” she asked instead, “why did you keep the bird?”

It took me a moment to understand, before I realized she meant the drawing I’d pinned to the wall. I shrugged. “It seemed a shame to let something so beautiful go to waste.”

She smiled hesitantly as she took another sip of the wine, before her eyes darkened as if she reached some glaring conclusion I didn’t know. Laurence finally made his way over, and I conspicuously disappeared back down to the other side, pouring whiskey like a coward. I never seemed to do much else.

The night ended like they all did, with the crowd tapering off until it was just me left to clean up the messes made. I’d needed another bartender for ages, but the hotel management hadn’t been able to fill the role apparently. I knew that was bullshit. I knew there were thousands of people who would take this job at the drop of a hat, because no matter how shitty the guests were, it still came with a paycheck. So that meant the management was just content to pay one salary and let me do all the work instead.

The Edwards had left early in the evening, not coming back up after dinner, so I was a bit surprised to

see a flash of blonde hair. I’d been taking inventory, tracking which rare bottles of alcohol were emptying out, enjoying the peace and stillness of the night, when that peace and stillness was disturbed. Eliane looked like a ghost, her light blue evening dress trailing loosely around her bare feet as she wandered for a moment, eventually going to stand by the edge, looking out at the city. A pit formed in my stomach and I carefully made my way over there, setting down my notepad and ballpoint pen before taking measured steps to join her at the railing. I didn’t look at her, I just stared out at the same view she was staring at as I exchanged my first real words with her.

“What are you doin’ out here?” I asked carefully, trying not to disturb her. She looked peaceful, her expression calm, but I knew that calm hid a tornado of emotions. There was no sun out here anymore; she didn’t belong in this world of darkness.

“Thinking,” was all she said, her blonde hair blowing back in the light wind.

“Thinking about what?” I asked, nonchalantly turning my head to watch her. She’d changed since I last saw her, and her wrist was on full display, the bruising purple-red splotches standing out against her pale skin.

“Flying.” It was a single word, but that pit in my stomach just grew. “Birds fly,” she continued, her tone eerily empty, almost as if it was getting taken by the wind too. “Birds fly high in the sky, flying right next to the sun without any worry of if they’ll fall.” She leaned dangerously

close over the edge, eyes searching the pavement below for something I couldn’t see. “Maybe *I’m* a bird,” Eliane added. “I’d never know because I’ve never been allowed to try.” I scooted infinitesimally closer, my hand reaching up to guard against any sudden movements.

“Do you think I’m a bird?” She looked over to me, her brown eyes wide, stark against the fading blue sky. Sometimes they were like melted caramel, sometimes they were like the warmest hug I’d ever had the pleasure of feeling, but today they were like a deer’s after the headlights had already passed it by. Dead.

I didn’t know what to say. “Laurie thinks I’m silly,” she said, turning back to the edge of the rooftop, continuing to peer over the wall like it’d whisper the answers she sought. “He thinks I *think* too much. But what is there to life besides thinking?” She sighed quietly, something in the sound making me brace myself.

“Though birds don’t think, do they?” Eliane asked, lifting herself up on her toes, tilting forward even more. “They don’t need to think, they just fly.” She started leaning forward, her arms loosening, and I was about to make a move, about to pull her back to safety, when -

“Ellie!” A voice called - well, shouted. Reprimanded. A voice we both knew all too well. “What the hell are you doing up here!” Edwards continued, and I tensed. Eliane let out a single breath, closing her dead eyes and breathing that breath back in before turning around mutely.

“I better go,” she said to me. “Keep the bird. Though maybe unpin it to see if it’ll fly away.” And it was with those words of nonsense that she left me standing there, trailing back over to her husband. She didn’t stop by him though, she kept going, heading to the door to the stairs, letting him stomp behind her. The door slammed shut and I never spoke to her again.

I fell asleep at the bar, something I’d only done a few times in my career. But there was something stopping me from walking down those stairs, from climbing down those steps she’d last walked down, some sense of foreboding when I looked at that door.

I’d fallen asleep slumped over at a barstool, my inventory tab only half complete. That didn’t matter, I’d finish it tonight. What did matter was the blaring red lights I saw reflected in the morning air from down below. I scrambled to a stand, the barstool falling over as I rushed to the edge of the roof to peer at the ground. Police cars circled the entrance to the building, and I ignored my instincts at the door, running downstairs, taking them two at a time. Until I couldn’t anymore, police tape blocking off the entrance to the penthouse suite hallway.

The elevator, in all its shiny brass glory, sat there unused as more police officers rushed up the stairs, walking into the room and whispering furtively to the ones already in there. Ice filled my veins as I managed to get a peek into the room, seeing a blue dress, splayed out blonde hair, and blood, so much blood coating the front of her. An echo of spilled wine.

A faint ringing grew in my ears, like a haze taking over my senses as I was shuffled down the stairs by a police officer. He was talking to me, waving a hand in front of my face, before he gave up, huffing indignantly and passing me off to someone else. I didn’t even realize we’d gotten down to the lobby. I barely ever left the bar to venture anywhere else in the hotel; the bar was my little kingdom, why would I need to?

“You,” a police officer said gruffly, but I only half heard his words, the ringing growing louder. “Why... up there? ...did...last see....?”

I answered the questions the best I could, my mouth formulating responses to words I didn’t even understand. All the guests had been shuffled out of their rooms, standing in the lobby with furrowed brows and loud conversation, and in my state of half awareness, my eyes landed on Laurence Edwards, talking to his own policeman.

“Who the hell do you think you are?” he was shouting. “I already told you! I went to bed, my wife next to me, there was a commotion and I woke up to see her bleeding out on the floor with the intruder getting away!” I blinked at the obviously contrived story.

“I would *never* do anything to hurt her,” he said, and I could hear genuine emotion in his words, even as he stomped back and forth.

“I loved her,” he looked close to tears and I blinked again, completely ignoring the officer trying to get my attention.

“And anyone who suggests I didn’t can go to hell.”

He buried his face in his hands, pacing back and forth, before stringing his hands in his hair. He was the most wrecked I’d ever seen him, and the more I listened in to their conversation, hearing excuses and potential theories he was spouting to draw attention away, I realized that he was wrecked not from anger and grief over who did this. He already knew. It was guilt driving him mad. Maybe he was sad, I didn’t doubt he was, and it was clear he was filled with regret, but he could regret all he liked, it didn’t erase what he’d done.

I met Mrs. Carter’s gaze from her spot in the crowd, and at the insistent look in her eyes. I opened my mouth, to say something, *anything* about what I’d witnessed, what I’d seen and heard this weekend. But I missed my chance. Because once Mr. Laurence Edwards’ stormy eyes landed on mine, he lifted a finger and pointed. Right at me, muttering the word, “Him.”

A silence overtook the room at the single word, everyone hushing in shock until everything happened at once. I didn’t even have the chance to say anything before the policeman talking to me clipped a set of handcuffs around my wrists, not even giving me a chance to explain as the seemingly *holy Laurence Edwards* spoke instead. I didn’t even listen to his bullshit, the ringing in my ears returning.

How the hell was this happening? I thought. *How the hell was this real?*

But it was real, and I was dragged away, shoved out of the very hotel that had kept me alive for the past half a decade. I met nothing but cool, blank stares as I passed the crowd, no reaction to watching the person they’d spouted all their dark secrets to get carted away.

No one cared.

Outside wasn’t any better. The crowds of people already lining up for just the hope of food doing nothing but staring either, just using me as passing entertainment. Perhaps they were looking at my uniform and wondering if this was a small form of justice, wondering if I was one of them. No, they didn’t care either. The only person who maybe would’ve was gone.

The rest of the morning was a blur, the rest of the week, month, year was a blur, and here

I am now. Jail is as bad as I always expected it to be, especially when I’m here for a crime I didn’t commit. I was never given a proper chance to state my defense, my explanations passing through deaf ears as I was shuffled away and arrested. It was easier to blame me, a person with no place in society. I was never given a fair shot. No one in the hotel defended me either, except poor old Mrs. Carter, who was shuffled away to an institution not long after I was gone. Another problem to clean up. I suppose everyone at the hotel simply adapted to the new bartender, though I’m sure he’s not as competent as me. That was the only change permitted, change that kept the stability of their daily routines.

I stopped being bitter about it a long time ago. Sure, I’m wrongfully imprisoned and I have a right to be upset about that. And I am, don’t get me wrong. I’m bitter about Laurence Edwards, who gets to move on with his life like he didn’t take away his wife’s. I’m bitter that she never got a chance to live life not under the thumb

of an ungrateful dictator. And I’m bitter that I’ll never get the chance to see that smile again.

My biography was written for me, I wasn’t allowed any input. There’s no author’s note or tale from the guy who lived it all. It would almost be better if I was erased from history entirely, instead of my history being stained with inaccuracy and with misdirected anger and with the main star being a cop out for someone else instead of letting them tell their own story.

Maybe someday, someone will find this and the record will be set straight. Maybe I’ll be free one day and I can go back to the bar and unpin that drawing of a bird, letting it be free like a pair of brown eyes had wanted it to be. And maybe I’ll figure out why she so desperately wanted to fly, though I’m starting to realize that now. History is written by the winners, and the rest of us poor folks get tossed off the page, forever doomed to the margins.

Well, I suppose the only thing for me to do is try to make it a nice place to stay. I’m a bartender after all, what else can I do?



The Funeral

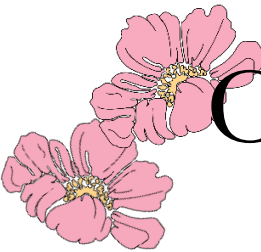
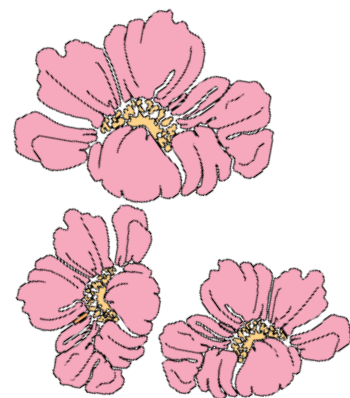
THE THEME AWARD

KENDALL VORHIS

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

If you must bury me, I implore you, abandon all ceremony. Let my little cousins, nieces and nephews forego the formalities, for goblin children need not consider a dead woman's decorum. Let them tug on the minister's coat amid his prayer — some demanding incantation — let them ask him what my eyes look like under silver dollars, if the steely irises are the same color beneath thin membranes. Let them wonder if my tongue holds a golden coin, too. Faux-rose lips hinged upon a bribe, should the silver be too frugal.

Out with propriety! Let the little terrors stick their fingers into my nose and run sticky fingers through the pockets of my eclipsed entourage, I won't say a word. Let them brush their hands through my hair and make braids of fine fescue, let them plant wildflowers in my roots. Should they be unsure about my solitude, let them lure beetles into my gossamer gown, and pull dog-eared poems from bookshelves to tuck under my granite palms. If you must, when the time comes to bury me in valley sod, pinch their cheeks for me. Tell them made-up stories of my bravery, legends longer than the shadows between the hills. When night falls, lay us to rest with the memories of all I've given them, my chest wide open within the earth.



On How I Love in April

KAITLYN DRAKE

FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY

When I think about my sister, she is in a hospital, gravitating towards the
peat flowers crowning her head, leftover from the river. wet
mud between her toes, in her blonde, blonde hair. White sheets, maybe
— I never saw her there. When she chose to die she *chose* to die
I had been thirteen. Never found the weapon, never killed her
boyfriend, he belonged to the black dirt, he fucked scarecrows in the shape of women
in his free time. He was in my house, and we still have that
carpet. I think of her pale skin now, tanned slightly from the heat
of the sun. I know the ambulance took care of her.

We come from the sticks mossy lawns and fields of wheat,
those amber waves that are supposed to be our dream. We watch our older
brother reach for the stars while tethered to the ground. If we can be whatever
we want to be, I want to be a demolisher I want to be all teeth and no
words I want to be a tiger. I do not want to show mercy
to the men who killed us. People cannot find bodies easily
where I come from. It isn't pretty, but it calls me back every so often, a
whisper in the back of my throat. I do not remember the last time it
screamed.

Dying before 18 didn't work, so we live until 19, 20, we see women from
our hometown leave the whiskey corn behind, flock to big skyscrapers and
they don't want to jump off of, where they can see their clothes hanging in
the open, they are filled with love there, I love them by the
beach now, sunlight makes my skin red but it feels good to know nature
has touched me, I find myself missing the groves, the wide open
roads, the stone walls that border them, but I remember his mom
replacing the sink and my mom plastering the wall and the night my best friend
finally held me after six years and I didn't know if love was a steeple or a
hand still I write always isn't hard with her,

and she leaves me for another man she hates.

We are told *he didn't love you*, but we respond *he didn't kill me*.
We said if I die, it's by my own hand and they laughed. I wasn't lying.
We are told we do not have a choice but to find a man who
will rot our teeth melt our lungs tear our intestines We are lambs for
slaughter; we must find our lions before we are sheep. We know we will not
have this hair forever. Find a man who will pretend to love you before he
kills you so that you don't get blamed for it as much.

She says it is because of her head
He says he is how he is because of how he grew up
and I run out of arguments against it.

My knuckles were white from loving him, but my lover now loosens my fingers
from the palm of my hands and kisses the marks that my nails left. He takes me to
old bookstores and talks about what it means to be immortal, and I would do it
with him if I could.

My friends tell me he feels like getting drunk off sunlight I tell them he's
like a poem I wrote years ago: Italian countryside, fresh-
ly squeezed lemonade summer, 1966, summer, 2022,
compounded together "you need to add salt – wait sugar"
"no you're right, it does need salt" "did your parents show you
how to do this?" "no" "same here."
He does not care what my parents do - we talk about leaving it all
anyway, living in emerald shade, away from kings and
gold, we could get up and paint every day, he tells me we could share tea
cups get a cat instead of continuing our names smash
our phones and go back to handwriting letters spend Sunday
mornings on our porch in the sunshine, the only semblance of road a dirt
path that leads to each other, alive, and I think that
sounds perfect.

My lover is the heaven I was told I wouldn't get into, and I prefer him
anyway.

The Haunting History of Oppression and Truama: A Comparative Analysis of *Beloved* and *Sing, Unburied, Sing*



DALTON SIKES

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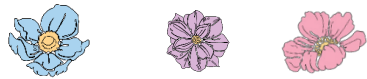
Abstract

What if death was not the true end of a human's life? What if it was the beginning of something new; an end of materiality, but not of one's ontology? In literature, the concept of the spectral (i.e. the hauntological), the state of being in-between the world of the material and unquantifiable, has been evident for centuries. Supernatural apparitions have played pivotal roles in classic works as they have allowed many writers to break barriers by transcending societally-imposed limitations regarding the Human Condition and providing profound commentaries on seemingly inarticulable issues of the time. This paper seeks to define hauntology (i.e. spectrology) and cultural haunting; the characterization of the ghosts in *Beloved* and *Sing, Unburied, Sing*; and how ghosts shape these books' respective narratives. By illustrating these concepts and the ways they function within *Beloved* and *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, this paper will prove to readers the profound symbolism capable through hauntings (i.e. via hauntology/spectrology) and how they embolden the pertinent messages that Morrison and Ward seek to communicate about the power dynamics of race and the nature of trauma within their respective literature.

Defining the "Haunt"

For centuries, the concept of the supernatural has been ever-present in religion, prose, and poetry. However, a method in which to analyze the supernatural within these works was not concretely defined. Then along came literary scholars who sought to categorize the patterns they saw occurring within all forms of literature. Their collective efforts gave rise to a new literary lens: hauntology (i.e. spectrology). However, defining hauntology in simple terms is not easily accomplished. A duo of Polish literary scholars, Edyta Lorek-Jezińska and Katarzyna Więckowska, define it as: "A study of spectrality and spectres—that is, entities and processes that exceed any definite categorization; accordingly, it inevitably questions the established notions of being, thereby transforming the status of the objects and subjects of knowledge, and contesting the possibility of objectivity" (p. 1). However, to most readers, this definition seems to blend the lines between tangible ideology and uncertainty, similar to what a hauntological study would

assess. Instead, this paper prefers to provide a more concise definition. Hauntology implores the reader to look beyond traditional ontology (i.e. the nature of being) and what is conceptually definable, unveiling truths about the literature and oneself in the undefined (Loevlie, para. 40). By using this definition, it becomes apparent that by focusing on the symbolism of spectral elements within a piece, this literary lens seeks to shed light on intrinsic messages embedded in well-crafted works, such as *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and *Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward. However, to access the full extent of symbolism woven into these novels, and thematically similar ones that deal with the portrayal of race, it is necessary to consider another form of haunt: cultural haunting. Cultural haunting “explains how ghost stories are used in American literature of different ethnic backgrounds as a memory tool to show how the past interacts with the present and to expose multiple ethnic and cultural identities” (Khedhir, para. 5).” By focusing on both the symbolic nature of the spectral and the tradition of writers of color of using cultural haunting within their works, this paper seeks to illuminate the importance of analyzing the hauntological and the profound messages covertly embedded into the masterful works *Beloved* and *Sing, Unburied, Sing*.



The Characterization of Ghosts within Literature
Beloved

In *Beloved*, the lines between tangible and intangible blur through the use of a specter-like girl. Beloved is an African American girl who gradually consumes the narrative following a happy day at the fair for Sethe and her trauma-ridden family. Initially, Beloved appears to suffer from amnesia and is very inquisitive about the world around her; however, the central characters of the novel are curious themselves about this mysterious girl. The book provides various possibilities as to what Beloved truly is: an escaped slave (Morrison 140, 270), the embodiment of Sethe’s mother as depicted through her extensive knowledge of the middle passage (Morrison 248), Sethe’s dead daughter (Morrison 281), or as a harbinger of cultural haunting. Beloved is not any one of these, she is all of them at once. Beloved is an escaped slave because she was carried from her mother’s horrific life in the South to one of freedom in the North while still in her mother’s womb (Morrison 39). Beloved embodies Sethe’s mother clearly in the end when it states: “[Beloved] imitated Sethe, talked the way she did, laughed her laugh, and used her body the same way down to the walk, the way Sethe moved her hands, sighed through her nose, held her head” (Morrison 283). Beloved is Sethe’s dead daughter as evidenced by the scar on her chin in the same place Sethe slit her baby’s throat (Morrison 281). Beloved is a symbol of cultural haunting as the epitaphs speaking to the sixty million and more who died during the middle passage and the quote from the New Testament shed light on her allegorical meaning within the work (Schwartz, para. 1-9). Given the many ways in which Beloved is characterized (i.e. as an ex-slave, Sethe’s mother, the ghost of Sethe’s murdered baby, and a reflection of cultural haunting), it may leave readers questioning why Toni Morrison was so ambiguous with the symbolic

significance of her work’s title character. It is that in-between that Morrison sought to portray not only with the ghostly presence of Beloved but also with the plot. As readers work through the complex world of Beloved, they are forced to look at gray areas of the United States’ collective consciousness that do not get the attention they should. For instance, why does slavery still manage to impact Sethe’s life as a free person? Why does Beloved begin to consume Sethe’s life force, metaphorically and literally? Why does Sethe confuse Mr. Bodwin for Schoolteacher and lash out at him? It is by questioning these characters and their actions that truths about the United States at large can be revealed. As Morrison writes, “[Beloved] is mine” (Morrison 236). Beloved, the manifestation of a legacy of oppression and generational trauma for Sethe and her family, is Morrison’s. Beloved is part of every Black person’s story in the United States. The trauma spoken and unspoken is passed down from generation to generation and, just like Beloved, that trauma can consume an individual’s ability to live in the present.

Sing, Unburied, Sing

In *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, the work of Morrison in *Beloved* is utilized to create a cultural haunting set in a contemporary time. The ghost of this work, Richie, gets chapters throughout the book where others discuss him and where he is allowed to share his unique perspective. It is from this peculiar formatting that the character of Richie becomes realized. According to River (i.e. Pop), Riche was young, frail, and not built for work (Ward 21, 24, 75). Throughout the book, River’s description of his friend is focused on his capabilities. This characterization by River could implicitly speak to how the commodification of Black bodies for free labor in the prison system has psychologically impacted how River perceives members of his community. Alternatively, this refusal to speak to the deeper aspects of Richie’s character could reflect how River is actively repressing any feelings of sentimentality toward Richie in order to avoid his guilt for murdering him. However, Ward doesn’t solely rely on River or other characters to speak for Richie, as many people speak for those who’ve died similar sudden violent deaths. Instead, Richie becomes an integral figure who gets the rare opportunity to be both dead and to have a direct role in keeping his story alive. According to English professor Yesmina Khedir, “his ghost is resurrected into the narrative, to communicate not only his own individual trauma, but also ‘the crises of a larger social group’ and to tell the readers untold stories about the past, stories about slavery, lynching, racism, as well as stories about communal love and bonding” (para. 5). In *Sing*, Richie, like Beloved, constantly reminds the central characters of the horrors of their past in a way that takes an incredible emotional toll. This burdening of the past on the present lives of Sing’s characters reflects the reality of generational trauma and the implications of living in a society with systemic prejudice (as observed through the disproportionate rates of incarceration, the White privilege, and the police brutality within the novel). While serving as a reminder of the past, Richie’s character is perceived by the reader to be needy and temperamental; traits that can be used to describe trauma as it demands time to process and is prone to flare up in negative ways. When Ward’s ghost is compared alongside Beloved’s, it becomes clear that the cultural haunting within these works resonates similar broad themes concerning the Af-

rican American community; however, it is upon close examination of how the ghosts impact the narratives that leads to startling discoveries about when the books were written and the versatility of the haunt within the literature.



The Impact of the Supernatural on Storytelling

Beloved

In *Beloved*, Morrison tactfully utilizes the ghost of Beloved not only as a way to advance the plot, but as a pivotal symbol of cultural haunting that comments on the social, political, and economic factors that led up to the novel’s publication in 1987. It is important to note that: “Cultural Haunting in African-American literature often translates an inability to reckon with a past that refuses to be buried and a desire to be heard and seen” (Khedhir, para. 15). This fact is evidenced by the role Beloved plays in Morrison’s award-winning novel. To fully understand the context behind Beloved, one must go back in time to 1965 when the Moynihan report was published. The Moynihan report said the deterioration of Black familial structures within the US (i.e. Black men being incarcerated and women leading households) would hinder their progress and keep them trapped in poverty. The report called for major healthcare and social program expansions; however, its seeming attack on the African American community and culture created controversy. Thus, dividing African American activists and liberal thinking; while also halting the programs advocated for in the Moynihan report (Geary). This report was primarily supported by White liberals who sought to help the African American community by addressing these identified core structural issues; yet, how the report minimized the capacity of African Americans’ agency came across as patronizing and the attack on women-led households as sexist. Yet, this report was not entirely wrong in its aim to help the African American community via government-sponsored programs and to reestablish male figures within the community after a legacy of oppression had led to many broken homes. In fact, when the Moynihan report was glossed over, the stressors weighing on the African American community compounded; especially, under the Regan administration, who was in office when Morrison wrote and published *Beloved*. “The discourse in the 1980s, then, was constrained by a double denial: Reganist conservatives denied American racism, and descendants of the New Left denied any dysfunction in African American communities” (Berger, 414). Thus, Black America was receiving minimal help as the war on drugs, beginning in 1971, decimated their community who was oftentimes forced to sell drugs to provide for their families. In *Beloved*, Morrison seeks to demonstrate the effects of generational trauma, the way grief can consume individuals, as a reminder that the legacy of slavery still haunts the African American community. Without their trauma being acknowledged (i.e. broken family structures, disproportionate rates of incarceration, systemic prejudice, etc), each successive generation is traumatized by When the role of Beloved in shaping the narrative is assessed given the cultural context in which Morrison wrote the book, startling revelations about the

ability of hauntology become apparent. Cultural haunting within this work functions as rhetoric both highlighting the implications of a legacy of oppression and core issues that need to be addressed for society to move forward. For example, Morrison writes: “Without [Mr. Garner’s] life each of theirs fell to pieces. Now ain’t that slavery or what is it?” (Morrison 259). This quote exemplifies how the reliance solely on white people, regardless of whether they are leftists or conservatives, is a form of slavery as the double denial of the African American experience has already led to profound suffering over the years, particularly in inner-city communities who’ve disproportionately been affected by the war on drugs and Regan’s advancement of it. Moreover, this broken system that minimizes the agency of African Americans as they rely primarily on sympathetic White people within the government to support their causes is exemplified at the end of the novel. Sethe mistakes Mr. Bodwin, a White abolitionist, as Schoolteacher, the man whom she escaped from, when Mr. Bodwin comes to 124 to take Denver to work (Morrison 308). This moment could be written off upon first reading as an emotionally unstable Black woman flying into a rage; however, this offensive minimization of the lived experience of Sethe fails to recognize the parasitic nature of her trauma as observed through Beloved’s growth and the political message behind this act. It is not a mere coincidence that Sethe mistakes one White man for another, as many people mistake one Black person for another during police line-ups. Instead, this moment critiques the political institution as a whole for systematically excluding African Americans and making their very well-being contingent on White people for support. It doesn’t matter that Mr. Bodwin is an abolitionist. What is significant is the lack of agency many people of color feel they have in the United States as they struggle to elect politicians who align with their experience and who represent their values. When the character of Mr. Bodwin, the prolific abolitionist is assessed, it becomes clear that his support for the African American community isn’t purely altruistic. He is described as having a racist statue of a Black person that says “At Yo service” that implicitly reflects his perception of African Americans as subservient, and he describes the years before African Americans were emancipated as the good years (Morrison 300, 307). The fact that Mr. Bodwin, a proud abolitionist, seems to romanticize the time before the emancipation of African Americans highlights how his protest for their rights provided him with something in return: a sense of purpose without a full acknowledgment of African Americans as equal to Whites. Thus, while the work of Mr. Bodwin in freeing Sethe following the murder of her first child and the work he did to oppose slavery is positive, his intentions are not pure. This performative activism can be recognized within the realm of politics as many politicians structure their campaigns around appealing to their constituents (i.e. all people, particularly people of color in inner-city communities) without necessarily understanding or recognizing their true needs. Beloved does a masterful job of covertly reflecting the experience of many people of color while challenging prevailing notions about the African American community and the nature of trauma. However, Morrison could not have anticipated the exacerbation of stressors acting upon the African American community (e.g. their skyrocketing incarceration rates, police brutality, neglect in the wake of a global health crisis, etc). Thus, the work of Jesmyn Ward in *Sing, Unburied, Sing* has stepped up to expand upon the brilliant socio-political ground-

work of Morrison through the use of her own hauntological narrative.

Sing, Unburied Sing

In *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, there are multiple ghosts; however, it is Richie who plays a pivotal role in shaping the narrative of Ward’s Beloved-inspired work. Richie, like Beloved, serves to advance the plot by reminding the central characters of past trauma and taking a great toll on a family; yet, the contemporary time and Ward’s clever writing give life to a new take on Beloved’s core messages. Going back to the Moynihan report, it is easy to see some striking similarities between *Sing* and its 1965 assessment. Firstly, Jojo’s family is depicted as broken: his mom is an abusive addict, his father is in prison, and his grandparents who care for him are passive with their love. Sadly, both of Jojo’s parents sell drugs for money like many other people do to provide for their families. However, it is worth noting that Jojo is lacking strong male figures within his life just like the Moynihan report claimed would hinder the African American community’s ability to pull itself out of poverty. For Jojo, his father figure is River. River was incarcerated merely for harboring a fugitive because he cared for his brother after a fight. This lackluster reason leads to River losing years of his life to the prison system (i.e. an extension of slavery’s legacy of oppression as it exploits Black bodies oftentimes under the supervision of White people). In fact, a recent report found that, “Black Americans are incarcerated at nearly 5 times the rate of white Americans” (Rezal, para. 2). This glaring inequality reflects the fallout of the war on drugs, entrenched prejudice limiting the opportunities of people of color, and governmental neglect toward the needs of the African American community culminating for decades. Richie’s dead because of the prison system and his ghost emerges from Parchman Prison following Jojo’s visit to retrieve his father. Richie plays a pivotal allegorical role symbolizing trauma and speaking to larger societal issues. Notably, the former is observed when he states: “There is so much Jojo doesn’t know. There are so many stories I could tell him” (Ward 137). This storytelling to Jojo about River’s experience with Richie becomes crucial to the plot and Jojo’s growth. After River’s full story with Richie is told and the family confronts Richie, it states: “all the little boy [was] gone from [Jojo’s] eyes: the tide gone out, the sun scorching the residue of water away, leaving hot sand baking to concrete” (Ward 272). By meeting Richie and expelling him from his house, JoJo is freed from the trauma of uncertainty about River’s past and he is matured by the experience. However, leading up to this growth, Richie as a symbol of trauma communicates many harder truths. For example, he states: “Watching this family grabs me inside, twists, and pulls tight” (Ward 240). In this excerpt, the tendency of residual trauma to materialize in the present is depicted. Thus, reflecting how generational trauma can hinder one’s ability to move forward and can almost be viewed as a malicious spiritual force hellbent on consuming one’s present-day. Similarly, the African American community assumes a specter-like role in society as they are real figures that contribute to the maintenance of American society; however, they are systematically made into ghosts without the same opportunities to access voting, loans, housing, public office, and higher education. Unlike Beloved, Ward makes her discourse on the nature of time intensifying these problems more explicit. She writes: “Time eats away at things: it rusts

machinery, it matures animals to become hairless and featherless, and it withers plants” (Ward 46). In other words, just like any other thing within nature, if left unaddressed throughout time, the plights and hardships of the African American community will eat away until there is no life left to take (i.e. happiness left to be enjoyed). Therefore, by acknowledging and grieving one’s ghosts (like the family in *Sing* does to Richie), steps can be taken to make the most out of one’s present.



Conclusion

In a world plagued by ghosts, both of past traumas and untold stories, hauntology shows society the beauty of the in-between of the concrete and the unknown. In *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and *Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward, ghosts provide a portal into a dimension of new understanding and recognition. The ghosts within these works, Beloved and Richie, demonstrate the destructive nature of trauma, how it is passed down, and how it can deprive people of living their lives. Meanwhile, they serve as allegorical instruments which resound powerful ballads about broken family structures, governmental neglect, societal inequalities, privilege, and systemic prejudice which elude the collective consciousness of people in power; further disenfranchising the African American community. Without specters within literature, the past would stay buried and the extent of cultural haunting’s influence on the African American community would likely go unknown. It’s put best by Toni Morrison herself, “when there is pain, there are no words.” Therefore, by analyzing the hauntological symbolism within texts, readers can delve deeper into the psyche of people of color and can start to grasp the inarticulable horrors that their communities have and continue to face.

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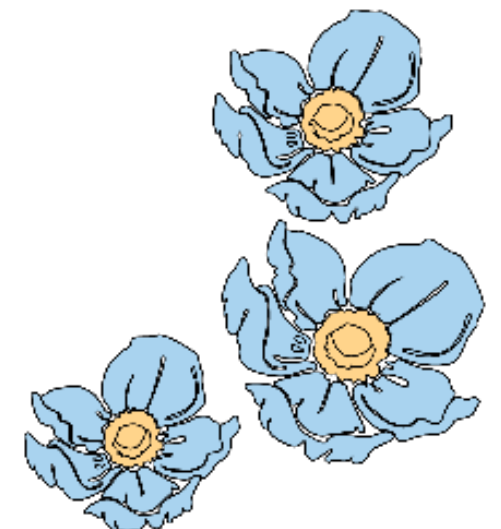
Blue Guardian Haibun

KITTY CHU

UC RIVERSIDE

Our bodies are embodied by movement, the fluidity of limbs and tongues in unison until asleep. They make our person peaceful. We encase ourselves in a cloak of skin, a familiar comfort that comforts our bodies as we approach the unfamiliar. For Gu Ma, this was death, if death is ovarian cancer. It took her body underground where her organs are now attached to the earth, resurfacing as dandelions in spring, though she passed in winter. Cancer withered her skin so it could no longer protect her. I learned that comfort comes in new ways, as did she. Her bones bloom in spring, reminding us of passing and rebirth—the silhouettes of life. Her body dances in the wind as Dad blows her bone-white hair so her being can spread, can grow, can transcend beyond more than it already has. When Gu Ma passed, Dad said she was asleep. Her body is at peace, comforted in the beyond that is neither wholly above nor underground. She is part of the earth, and her spirit lives on in bodies who knew her before her name became life itself.

Silhouettes beyond
Mother the (in)tangible
Re-Earthed in spring's wake





Unconditional Love

EDITORIAL BOARD CHOICE AWARD



SAHITHI VENNAMPALLY

UC RIVERSIDE

My artwork is heavily inspired by India, emanating joy, and peace while expressing the vibrant spirit present in the atmosphere of Indian culture. This composition depicts the bloom of love between Yashoda and Krishna — two of the most pivotal figures from Indian mythology. Alongside the two figures, there are also tropical birds like parrots and peacocks, and flowers like lotuses. I produced this composition using rich Indian ink, which significantly contributed to how well I was able to control and maintain precision. It also added to the artwork's richness and variation of color density. I decided to embellish my work with minute detailing in contrast to sweeping brush strokes and bold marks. As a result, the intricate linework introduces sophistication that leads to creating a maximalist theme. Furthermore, the creative and thoughtful display of overlapping subjects produces movement, rhythm, and a loud environment in the background of the composition. The juxtaposition between the intensities of the patterns and textures creates a perception of depth, which emphasizes specific subjects.





hood girls

BEST VOICE AWARD

DESIREE CARCAMO

UC RIVERSIDE

your *mamá* didn't want babies in your stomach
wanted knowledge in your brain, shut you inside
abuela's blue house & catholic school because
south central has a way of picking girls off like meat
at the butchers there's none left by sunday.

hood girls get made grown fast by huge L.A. billboards
& by each other, like greenhouse plants, tricked
into sprouting too early by constant, dry heat

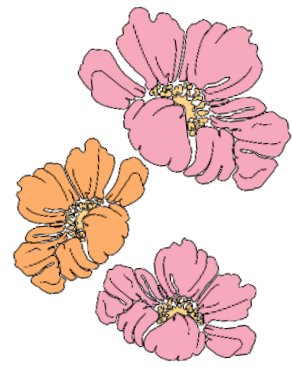
in summer, little girls try to become women, wear skinny strap
tank tops & dangly necklaces at the supermarket
the cosmopolitan whispered it would make boys look at your breasts
your *abuela* confessed she used to slouch so no one would see hers,
boys learn to whistle at girls after they see pablo call
you're so fine, to the lady walking by—

news ladies don't get it. *were they asking for it,*
no one is really trying to make these girls grow up
so fast, aren't they doing it to themselves?

but it's not like that really. even hood girls need love
try to find it in all places, in the sweaty hands
of boys who think that being a man means having women
lots of women, *i'm a playboy, won't you play?*
hood girls gamble to find love, make babies so
at least someone will love them, they can teach it to love them,
a baby's love is free, right?
but babies are too small to fix their *mamás'* hearts

not that they need fixing. hood girl hearts are already calloused over—
you think hood girls are born for pain, but it's their *mamás'* careful preparation:
mijita, nobody owes you anything in this world
& the only one you can trust to lean on is you.

when the hood girl won't cry, shrugs it off, just walks away
they say *she's tough*, but really,
she's just ready for the blow

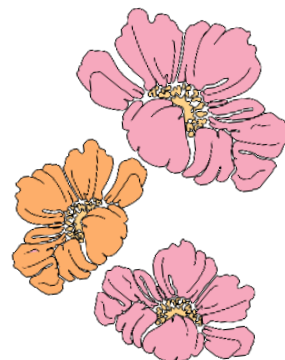


What's Buried Underneath Nazarene Church Road

SAMANTHA McLEOD

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Sweat:
seeped into the grass, a product of the sun on my mother's bare body.
mud dauber nests. pool noodles once used as deadly weapons.
the bones of all the stray dogs we took in.
a wrecked four-wheeler.
an old boat,
once filled with laughter, stands rusted and forgotten
for so long that nature took it back with claiming vines and
slithering snakes.
a well-used monopoly board. a faded deck of playing cards, the kings and queens absent from
some game gone awry years ago.
the games we used to play before we got too busy.
books my mother bought that my father never read.
a book they read together.
the books I read alone.
the bible, rows and rows of words highlighted from the time my mother found Jesus,
like Jesus was the stained hoodie at the bottom of a high school's lost and found bin.
a table we were forced to sit at.
flat slabs of stone my nana painted frogs on.
tiny rocking chairs made from clothespins, cherished in the process of making, lay
broken and
forgotten.
beanie babies, a trove of them once jealously guarded,
their seams splitting and their stomachs sagging.
a treadmill I skinned my knees on.
my mother's body, curling into itself on our bedroom floor,
trash bags teeming with toys she'd been wanting to throw out.
a door I can't remember walking out of.



Down From the Mountain

THE CONTEMPORARY AWARD

CONNOR GREEN

UC RIVERSIDE



University of California, Zoom Campus. Second floor, backroom. No A/C, small window, cat piss. *HISA 128: American Nature Writing*, consisting primarily of pre-recorded lectures, downloaded, not watched, Barbra Kingsolver audiobook listened to under hairnet and hat while scraping last week's lasagna off of wall, ceiling, and floor of God's least favorite pasta chain. Tears shed for missing fingertips and the American chestnut tree.

Weekly writing assignments, prefaced with the now trite "take all precautions, stay safe, stay home," etcetera, additions more required than meaningful, required readings sourced heavily from drug dealers and serial arsonists. The subtext, "Avoid the police." The assignment proper, attempt to have a "Nature Experience," as described by Unit #3's collection of freaks, fruits, and flunks, again with the caveat that the University of California cannot endorse drug use, but that your professor is not a snitch. This meaning that I must provide two whole pages of text, with the phrases living Earth, ultra-vast, and italicized experience, whatever that means, appearing inside quotation marks by any means necessary.

As a young child, I was not allowed to play outside or have any toys that looked dangerous or had the potential to break bones. As is normal, this safety reduced when fat-faced indifference gave way to grease, spindly limbs, and prescription medication and the pleasures of tending to malleable soft-headed children disappeared. Predictably, I spent my teens utterly unsupervised, filling Gatorade bottles with gasoline and throwing rocks at cars, but was thoroughly ignorant about dirt, snakes, and topographic maps. My friend Chris, however, whose delinquency puts mine to shame, a desert fiend who boasts an encyclopedic knowledge of where to hide a body in every national and state park from Callexico to Salt Lake City and has the Junior Ranger Status to prove it.

I arrive at coffee chain store #23319, the primary benefactor of Chris' forays to and from every desolate patch in this hemisphere a few hours before his scheduled release. Primarily to convince him that if he were to bash his manager over the head with a stainless steel carafe that it would certainly ruin both of our plans for the evening, and that his Zappa stache would be shamefully immortalized in mugshot by R.P.D. photographers, an unforgivable offense.

I sit and wait, considering without the aid of substance, what is a "Nature Experience," something left, perhaps purposely, all too vague by the assigned prompt. The readings presume that presence is what is required of experience, that with openness comes experience and then all at once, your writing assignment is complete, and you can go back to wasting away in a dimly

quial name, Judas Trees, for their seed pods' resemblance to a hanged man, a bad omen and a wholly unnatural experience.

The sun begins to set, and Chris is allowed to remove mask, gloves, apron, and pleasant customer service joviality. He informs me that his park supervisor had called him to say that the gates to Joshua Tree were closed and locked and that there had been police patrolling the thoroughfares questioning passersby on intent and destination, a gross abuse, a Stop and Frisk of the soul. In a brief discussion on the state of law in the United States, the power of a federal government to make legitimate dicta against mind and body, we decided to reject the authority of man and attempt to eat a pizza inside of the eye sockets of Skull Rock.

As we begin towards the Mojave Desert, the warning lights of wind farms and spotlights of casino towers leave the sharp lines of Mt. San Jacinto reduced to a slick oil soaked cotton ball by the excess and exuberance of one of California's least productive eyesores. Here I begin to pick up on the meaning of a natural experience, and the word salad of my course content. Human presence is not the operative function in the natural world. The melting mound of mountain did not cease to exist because my eyes could not see it, nor did the Rhode Island sized chunk of desert now Federally restricted.

Here we pulled off the freeway and planned to cut an indirect path, that frankly would have produced more suspicion. Though serendipitously, we were now under the gaze of the, apparently, world-famous Cabazon Dinosaurs and committed to sharing with them in this criminal communion. The adjoined restaurant closed, the parking lot abandoned, the eyes of the fiberglass T-Rex glowing bright red 25 feet above my head. I proceed to imitate, with perhaps not the appropriate amount of sincerity, the figures of my course materials, pacing the parking lot bare-foot, consuming 1800 calories of triple pepperoni pizza, and waiting for the T-Rex to provide me with the 500 words expected from me in the next two hours and fourteen minutes. This does not come, and I begin frantically tapping at the God-forsaken Docs app as Chris meanders through Moreno Valley, Beaumont, Cherry Valley, Oak Glen, Yucaipa, pointing out childhood homes, landmarks of adolescence, grandpa's grave, perhaps gaining more from the sojourn than me, and good for him.

A few short weeks and a few arbitrary reshufflings of federal and state orders later, I am again driving towards a now wide-open Joshua Tree National Park hoping to catch a view of the lovingly named C/2020 F3, an apparently larger than normal comet. No longer couching my expeditions as necessary for my academic success, but still under the influence of the criminals, deviants, Ph.D. holders, and acclaimed journalists whose writings made up the course curriculum. This time, in a considerably more crowded car, and with the Little Richard memorial playlist blaring at only slightly sub-sonic, the somewhat solemn tone of the previous trip was absent. Of course, the coinciding announcements that it might be okay to leave your house, and that if you went somewhere dark enough you might be able to see a comet meant that nowhere was really dark enough to see anything. The flood of wrenched suburbanites, unaware that headlight, flashlight, and gasoline-powered floodlight are all components in the light pollution that will keep your pupil shriveled and useless, did their best to render desert into a brightly paint-

ed adventure ride. Chris's homicidal rage, kept in check only by my assurance that Sonic's 99c Mozzarella sticks are not provided to convicted criminals, continued deeper into the park.

Fighting hurricane-force winds, Jamie, my wife assembled and positioned her hobby telescope, herself in more danger of being swept up by the desert winds, at approximately the correct quadrant of sky, the comet still invisible to the naked eye. I recall our first trip here some years earlier. A Christmas gift, supplies and expenses spread thin over an irresponsible number of credit cards.

Both of us novices with an undescribed urge to be somewhere away from construction equipment wander a park without aid, guide, or ranger, semi-annual act of Federal malfeasance leaving the park unfunded and unguarded. We watch with a bystander bewilderment as rock climbers become stuck, toddlers are dangled over hundred-foot precipices for reckless photo-ops, and men in pickup trucks take chainsaws to federally protected flora. I recall St. Augustine's adolescent theft of fruit, not to eat or to keep, but perverse pleasure in destruction and others' deprivation.

Our great hope, that the pitch black of uninhabited desert might give us a night sky without the strangled purple pallor of stretching semi-urban blight, and for once see a star, any star. But as the sun sets the sand quickly cools and pulls down winter winds from mountain tops. Bring with it walls of sand to pit the surface of my budget sedan, and clouds to cover the Moon and stars. Left alone in total black with the distorted crackling Christian contemporary, the only radio station streaming into this dark heart of the desert, and the frightfully swaying limbs of Joshua Tree with the souls legend says dwell within them anxious to break out...

We eventually find the faint two-prong tail of what we have every reason to believe is, at the very least, a comet if not the comet. I am again stuck with a feeling of a sort of vague uncertainty, undeniable but unfounded. In the pitch black, staring at something that might be something that I've never seen before, who's to say anything about anything.

I am met with this feeling again on an impromptu road trip, to be done before the cost of gasoline required to make the round trip exceeds the balance of our sick and shrinking savings accounts. The rest of my compatriots, undiagnosed narcoleptics, are incapable of driving in the dark without constant stimulation. Leaving for me many hours and multiple hundred-mile drives through some particularly desolate stretches of nowhere or somewhere, without the benefit of light or familiarity to aid in my concept of anywhere or anything.

The violent summer thunderstorm, illuminating the back stretches of desert in flashes and cracks, revealing the mountains stretching up and out, the stark flat horizon of desert plains fading back into the pitch black borderlands of the Nevada/California Stateline, disposable Fuji film camera gripped tight against steering wheel, for cryptid-watching, in case another wild donkey decided to stand up on hind legs and scream, provides a unique sense of dread to every switchback brought to a boiling point by the large and looming sign, hand-lettered white paint on black plywood "Jesus Saves," floats out of the darkness 40 miles from the nearest habitable space, interpreted more as a threat than an assurance of grace.

The breakneck descent from Yosemite's Roosevelt Point, near 200 miles of curving

switchbacks down, up, and down again the foreign topography lit up by the rainbow LEDs lining the hull of America's most ostentatious long haul convoy, stopped only when I realize that any further progress will hurl me and my bags of dutifully purchased souvenirs into the Pacific (not to mention my passengers), only strengthening my conviction that UC Merced does not exist. Or in that case, the whole of the Central Valley, whose whole being flickered past in one dimly lit blink of the eye. Troublingly, despite the breakneck pace, the trip took many hours more than navigation estimates despite the constant pace. Somewhere something was lost, more than just 8 gallons of gasoline and 3 bags of peanut M&Ms, something intangible.

These moments of tension are broken up by total stillness. An empty dinner in a town of 96, an hour rest in Tuolumne meadows, an early mornings swim in Monterey Bay, the California Condor careening between cliff and cloud as it strafes the crumbling bridges of State Route 1, a pile of pilfered Danishes from Solvang's third cheapest motel - cheese and raspberry, individually wrapped in crinkling plastic. A final moment of good will in Mission Santa Inés before the looming blood brown clouds of Los Angeles County must be confronted with much squealing of brakes and gnashing of teeth. Whether the peace or the tension is the moment of experience, an unnecessary complication.

An endeavor quickly forgotten, drowned out by 50-hour work weeks, graduate school applications, check engine lights, and grocery lists. An ordeal summoned suddenly, by silver halide and ritual. Disposable cameras, dropped in dust covered pharmacy collection boxes, returned two months later, 7 weeks late. Several photos taken are missing or returned rendered in bright multichromatic starburst and static. Physical documentation of the vast left impossible, either by greater force or uncaring pharmacy employees. A final assurance that you don't need to understand everything you see, just keep looking.

Peanut Butter Spoons



HANNAH CRABTREE-EADS

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

just tall enough to see over the moon's shadow
today i felt too skimpy to stand in the sun
like a grapefruit that only looked edible unpeeled
sweatpants are a temporary fix for bruised skin
our sleeved arms dangling, left-hand sides caught together by the cuff
tattle tale-ing us together, fraternal tales

shaved heads deal ugly up front
maybe the similarities aren't wide enough
to bridge the crevasse — barely skating
by — might be well aligned but just enough
to never catch our breath
this calm in our bonier of storms

you say my problems feel as real to you as yours do to me but
my most unlikely questions refuse to accept any answers
i shut so many teardrops out for you
viscerally dismantling me in eruptive spasms
because i knew you'd moved on from the nightgowns that never fit us right

but we wore them to shreds in turn
find me in candy crack pipes, eighteen
slamming doors, my blacked out losses

find you in tired footsteps u-hauling scared squeaks to safety while
throat parched, I scream back invisible threats and risk indicting u in my self judgements
your never complaining, loving silence i had sworn to leave behind

if i could help it, and i could-
damage control for a lost target
just let me know he didn't take those
streamlined, hose soaked sunny days

away from us forever

set up, toss it twice; triple snake eyes
the “wanted” space stares like our
double or nothin blackjack luck
babybell blondie slamming ceramic keys
“no more root beer for you, honey”
was that your first high?

sweetpea and fruity pie, i baked the crust
and didn’t let you eat
til that chest-nut-rise was crestfallen
maybe our blood boils at the same heat
i hope we don’t find out
it ain’t too humid out tonight



America’s Colonial Subjects: The Origins & Legacy of U.S. Imperialism in American Samoa

ETHAN ROESLER

UC RIVERSIDE

“If you do not occupy and use your country, others will. It will not continue to be yours or your children’s.... You and your children will... be cast out into outer darkness.... [I] have seen these things... I love Samoa and her people... [but] the day is come... the last opportunity by which it shall be decided whether you are to pass away... or to stand fast and have your children living on and honoring your memory in the land you received of your fathers.”

Robert L. Stevenson,
Address to the Chiefs on the Opening of The Road of Gratitude in Samoa,
October, 1894.

Robert L. Stevenson, renowned for his writings of such novels as *Treasure Island* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, described the Samoan Crisis and all that revolved around it, rather prophetically, as being unfairly relegated to an obscure “Footnote to History.”^[2] Having lived and died amid the turmoil of foreign imperialist governments encroaching on the Samoan archipelago in which he resided, Stevenson’s documentation of the period has served as a vital time capsule for historians. The Samoan Crisis of 1887-1889 let alone American Imperialism in the Pacific—unfortunately does not receive the recognition it deserves. It is overshadowed by American pop culture’s self-gratification at the cyclical re-gurgitation of the same iconic stories in mainstream media. The most self-evident examples are Gettysburg, Normandy, and Pearl Harbor which manifest a modern sense of patriotism within the broader United States; there is neither substantial room nor desire to recognize the blunders of the past and their adverse effects on the present. This complacent national amnesia continues to be directed towards the U.S. Pacific colony of American Samoa, a series of islands located 6,993 miles away from Washington D.C.^[3] Much of this is attributable to historically rooted, unrivaled levels of racial and legal discrimination, U.S. mainland nationalism, and fabricated ignorance surrounding the territory.

My own research expounds on the following themes: economic motives for U.S. imperialist involvement; political and military actions taken by the American government; the

effects of U.S. nationalism and discrimination towards its colonial subjects; and finally, the modern-day consequences of U.S. imperialism. To accomplish this goal, I analyze government documents, financial records, diplomatic letters, and past historiography on the subject. My primary sources comprise documents compiled by U.S. officials, written by diplomats and journalists, and other first-hand accounts about U.S. involvement in Samoa. I also draw upon newspaper clippings as well as political cartoons that contain derogatory depictions of U.S. colonial subjects. The purpose is to demonstrate the abrasive roles of nationalist xenophobia and discrimination toward Samoa. Furthermore, I utilize testimonies from the U.S. Navy and famous author Robert Stevenson, who lived in Samoa during the early 1890s.

The motivation driving this study is to draw attention to the origins of American Samoa's 150-year-long socio-political relationship with the United States. My preliminary research suggests that the U.S. Government's strategy was to position itself politically and militarily to take advantage of desperate Samoan leadership. This was rooted in the reality that Samoa confronted the increasing inevitability of conquest and subjugation by the German and subsequent British royal governments from 1872 to 1900. Past U.S. historiography on the subject presents the Samoan chieftains as being well-informed and enthusiastic when presented with the possibility of partial administrative and eventual full executive control under the U.S. Government. Consequently, the United States is frequently portrayed as an altruistic mediator solely interested in the independence of the Samoan people from European influences. The historical evidence I have mustered suggests the opposite. The U.S. Government's paramount concern included the right of ownership over one of the best harbors in all of the South Pacific and the economic opportunities such a location as Samoa could provide to corrupt steamer tycoon lobbyists based out of San Francisco. Additionally, strategic opportunities for jingoistic U.S. Navy officials wishing to expand the U.S. military's influence abroad were a major factor in spurring U.S. involvement in Samoa.

Historiographical narratives surrounding American Samoa have naturally contorted and flexed to reflect broader contemporary social and political sentiments, often via the vessel of historians' interpretations of the past's fruition and general effects on the present. These historians' perspectives reflect each period in which their works were published, the result being incongruencies regarding American Samoa's historiographic track record. Some prevalent examples of this dilemma are represented by several early and mid-twentieth-century American historians. Julius Pratt dismissed those who categorized American imperialism negatively as communists, connotating a lack of intellectual merit or validity among them, while simultaneously perpetuating bigoted notions of indigenous peoples as primitive and in need of guidance. ^[4] Jeannette Keim's and George Ryden's research are similarly *parti pris* in favor of the United States, often disregarding unfavorable Samoan interpretations and perspectives of foreign imperialist interventions in their archipelago. ^[5] Therefore, most early sources frequently disassociate with, downplay, or omit the realities of America's imperialist history when and wherever possible. According to their interpretations, the United States is either portrayed as something of a diplomatic saint in Samoa and the greater Pacific, or a paternalistic mediator that was a bene-

factor of mere circumstance.

These early interpretations were more recently challenged by Max Boot, Daniel Immerwahr, and Matthew Frye Jacobsen. Individually, they openly acknowledged the more adverse effects of America's imperialist past. Boot's summation of America's involvement in Samoa during the late nineteenth century culminated in the following statement, "now U.S. forces were staying in foreign countries and trying to manipulate their politics, if not annex them outright....[That's] imperialism, even though Americans... are sensitive about applying this term to their own conduct." ^[6] Thus, Boot emphasizes the significant role Samoa played as a catalyst for U.S. imperialist ventures the United States embarked upon not just in the Pacific, but globally—simultaneously conveying present-day America's hypocritical failure to both acknowledge and recompense for its past. Immerwahr goes even further, writing, "American Samoa... [is] as Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson unabashedly called... colonies.... [Samoans are] subjects, not citizens... ruled by... the army, navy, and Department of the Interior." ^[7] Any doubt that American Samoa is not a colony is repudiated, as "territory" is merely a euphemism that was adopted to obscure the reality that the U.S. possessed, and still possesses, island colonies. Jacobsen refutes modern misperceptions of American imperialism, stating, "at the dawn of [its] Pacific empire in 1899.... the United States consciously chose imperial power along with the antidemocratic... bloodshed that [it] entailed...many Americans... *liked it*." ^[8] Hence, these historians' work presents a less biased retelling of a largely underrepresented and dismissed period of American imperialism.

In tandem with Boot, Immerwahr, Jacobsen, and other recent and past historians, there is an opportunistic, *quid pro quo* nature of U.S.-Samoan relations as the driving force behind U.S. intervention. Samoans were victims of circumstances the U.S. seized upon, rather than amicable recipients of US protection. Indeed, a segment of Samoan leadership believed that U.S. protection would safeguard their longevity as a distinct nation and people from European encroachments politically and socioeconomically. Hence, they opted to "befriend" the United States with an understanding that their limited remaining independence would be assured; by the end of the nineteenth century, however, this mutual expectation became null in the view of the U.S. government. Following several proxy civil wars, a weakened Samoa was divided between the imperialist powers, with Germany acquiring the western islands, the U.S. receiving the eastern islands, and Britain receiving territorial compensation from Germany elsewhere. ^[9]

The origin of the U.S. government's interest and subsequent involvement in Samoa was tied to a bevy of business prospectors coveting the archipelago's promising geographic location and natural resources. They viewed Samoa's assets as having the potential to expand their private fiscal empires, spurring their self-serving motivations to pressure the U.S. Government and Navy for a stronger American presence there. Some of the earliest instances of American industrialists infiltrating Samoan affairs occurred amid the American Civil War. According to historian Barry Rigby, this can be attributed to the fact that the "Union blockade of Confederate sugar and cotton exports spurred... land speculation in Samoa... the lure of plantation development provided the impetus of US expansion..." ^[10] Many of these land speculators were from Cali-

fornia and elsewhere in the United States; they successfully and illegally acquired Samoan lands from the indigenous communities in exchange for addictive, intoxicating liquors and firearms that deteriorated civility among rival villages, sometimes leading to infighting.^[11]

In conjunction with the agriculturalist interests in the archipelago was an inherent desire for Tutuila's—the largest island in American Samoa—first-rate harbor of Pago-Pago. According to historian Keim, Pago Pago harbor is, "...one of the most perfectly land-locked harbors in the Pacific Ocean... in the steamer lanes between Australia and San Francisco or Vancouver via Hawaii."^[12] This naturally stimulated interest from steamer tycoons based out of San Francisco. With the incentive of untold fiscal opportunity at play, these businessmen levied their robust financial influences throughout The Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco and other major institutions to influence U.S. President Grant in involving the U.S. government in Samoan affairs. According to historian Julius W. Pratt, this was made possible due to, "Grant's susceptibility to the pressures of businessmen and speculators... In this case it was the head of a steamship company...who drew the President's attention to the fine qualities of Pago-Pago harbor..."^[13] Evidently, corporations consistently occupied a key position in directing U.S. policy and diplomacy in the South Pacific.

William H. Webb was the preeminent steamer tycoon who drew and manipulated the U.S. Government's attention to Samoa. As the aforementioned historian Pratt subtly hinted at, Webb was a famous ship-builder from New York City who headed both the Central American Transit Company and the North American Steamship Company in the years after he built and sold ironclads to the Union government that fought amid the Civil War.^[14] All American imperialist strings in Samoa lead back to this tycoon puppeteer, as Webb was the primary reason American Samoa was and is now acquired by the United States. His connections and desire to expand the accessibility of lucrative trade for his steamer fleet that he began tampering with and commandeering foreign policy and procedures in Samoa. Webb's conspirators included the surveyor Wakeman who first made arrangements for U.S. Navy Commander Meade to anchor in Pago Pago harbor, *ignoring* his orders from the U.S. Government to proceed to Panama, as Webb's wishes carried a higher precedent than duty.^[15] Captain Stewart, at the behest of Webb, would also draft a request for annexation from "impressionable" Samoan chiefs; Webb read it over and then presented it to President Grant himself for immediate consideration.^[16] Finally, the second significant diplomat to arrive on the scene, Steinberger, who would later establish a Samoan government he too illegitimately presided over, was also recommended to President Grant by Webb who he had close ties to.^[17] Therefore, it becomes increasingly plausible that American involvement in Samoa would likely never have transpired had it not been for these robust, private financial interests with direct lines to policymakers that deeply desired to attain the archipelago and expand their fiscal assets.

Much of U.S. diplomacy and political action in Samoa in the late nineteenth century was orchestrated via semiofficial, piecemeal decisions by the U.S. Navy. This allowed the American government to shirk responsibility for controversial developments in Samoa via plausible deniability. Major decisions that put the United States at loggerheads with German,

British, and Samoan interests were presented as unauthorized actions solely conducted by a select few U.S. Navy officials, many of whom had direct ties to Webb. For example, when Navy Commander R.W. Meade anchored in Pago-Pago harbor in 1872 and convinced the native island Chief of Tutuila, Oau O Maga, to sign a treaty that granted special privileges for the United States to acquire the harbor and establish a coaling station, he did not have the legal authority or jurisdiction to enter such a treaty but mostly enacted it on Webb's behalf.^[18] Chief Oau O Maga and others were frequently either under-informed or completely misinformed as to what they truly signed; the treaty stipulated that in exchange for American rights to Pago-Pago, Maga and his people would be granted, "the friendship and protection of the great Government of the United States of America."^[19] Soon after, the agreement became undermined by the U.S. Government.

Back in Washington D.C., the treaty's proposal of an American protectorate over Tutuila was immediately quashed by President Grant and Congress in favor of solely obtaining the harbor without any obligation to protect Samoans against foreign European powers as hoped for by increasingly desperate Samoan chiefs.^[20] This became evident when President Grant wrote to Congress, "[Meade] was without... authority to enter into such an agreement, [but] the advantages... are so great... for steamers between San Francisco and Australia, that I... recommend its approval...[after] modification of the obligation of protection which the agreement imports..."^[21] Hence, Maga and chieftain Malietoa were deceitfully enticed into believing the assurances from U.S. Navy officials like Meade and Colonel H.B. Steinberger. Steinberger was subsequently sent after Meade to Samoa at the request of, "highly respectable commercial persons,"^[22] in Congress to survey and report back on the desirability of the Samoan islands. As for those respectable commercial persons, Webb was undoubtedly among them, as he knew Steinberger personally and had already recommended him to President Grant.

On the surface, these political actions regarding Steinberger and other U.S. officials' visits to Samoa appear to be little more than benign diplomatic procedure, but the darker realities of their veiled intentions are unearthed via Robert Stevenson's writings. Stevenson directly commented on the reality of America's machinations when he wrote, "The States... hands... are not immaculate. It was an ambiguous business when a private American adventurer [Steinberger] was landed with his pieces of artillery from an American warship, and became prime minister to the [Samoan] king. It is true (even if he were ever really supported) that he... sold himself for money to the German firm.... [a] wretched story."^[23] Thus, Stevenson's testimony affords insight into the more amoral elements of American involvement in Samoa, devoid of patriotic bias in favor of the United States. The result is the withdrawal of the often-procured pristine curtain that obfuscates the truly corrupt nature of American foreign policy in Samoa. The U.S. Navy and American diplomats consistently relayed to Samoan leadership that the U.S. Government had no interest in acquiring Samoa's islands, while similarly attesting to the fact that their security and sovereignty were forever safeguarded. However, it would become growingly evident as time passed that this was largely mendacious political theater meant to manipulate indigenous leadership into gradually kowtowing to foreign American demands and inter-

ventionist policies. ^[24]

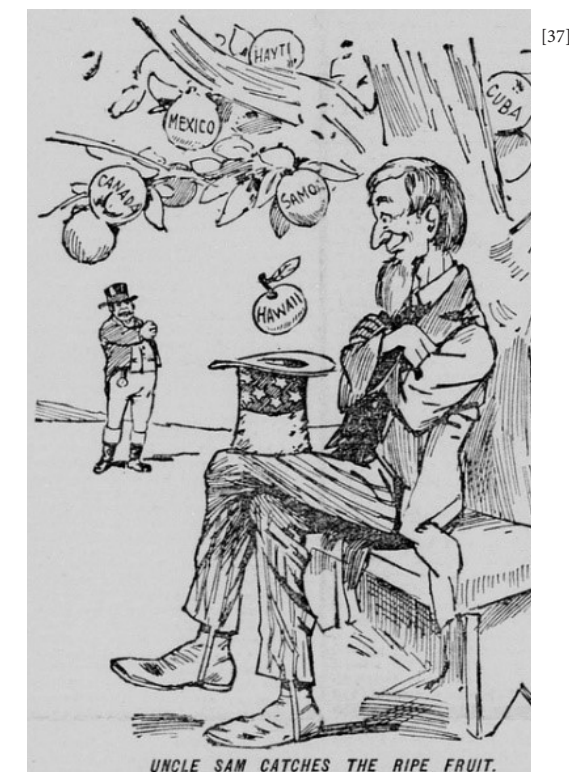
Tutuila, the main island, and the rest of what would become American Samoa were soon jointly administered (1889) and later annexed (1900) by the United States; its inhabitants were now subject to the autocratic whims of U.S. Navy rule. ^[25] Historian David Chappell described one of the earliest interactions between American Samoans and their new Navy Governors, writing, “[Pres.] McKinley had authorized Navy rule... before the Deed of Cession... [but] Tui Manu‘a, king... did not... sign it, because ‘he regarded himself... as sovereign...’ but the U.S. Navy informed him, ‘whether you come or not, the authority of the United States is already proclaimed over this island.’” ^[26] This illustrates the authoritarian nature and rampant lack of respect for Samoans the U.S. Navy demonstrated while governing them for decades. The wishes of Samoan leaders were quite evidently not at the forefront of American diplomatic and political procedure in Samoa as was so often claimed to be the case.

Rivalries ensued between the imperialist American, British and German governments as they encroached on Samoa, mainly spurred by their fiscal and strategic stakes in the archipelago. This generated an abrasive nationalism that erupted into indirect military confrontations between the three powers, effectively dividing Samoan borders, politics, and culture in the process. Before and since the Samoan annexation in 1900, following a tripartite agreement between the three imperialist powers, Samoa was split politically and culturally into East (U.S.) and West Samoa (Germany; later New Zealand). This division remains firmly in place. Historian Jeanette Keim elegantly surmised the predicament Samoa found itself in during the late nineteenth century, writing, “war between one Samoan chieftain and another became much more serious when one... was considered to be the champion of German interests and his opponent the champion of American or British interests... foreign residents [manipulated] the native factions for national ends.” ^[27] This toxic competition culminated in proxy civil wars in Samoa, including The Samoan Crisis of 1887-1889.

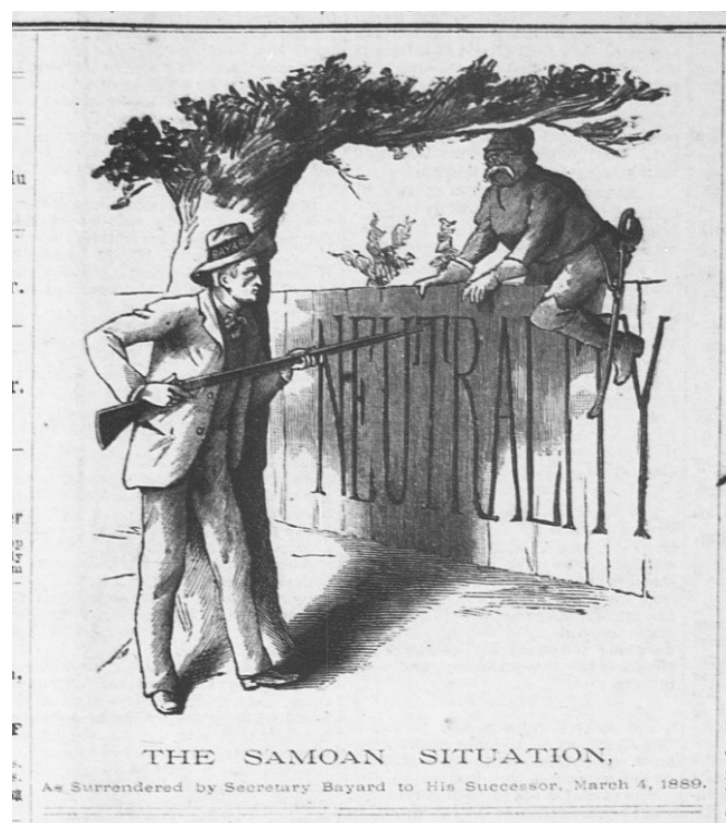
During the Samoan crisis, the navies of the United States, Germany, and Britain directly confronted one another in Samoa, anticipating imminent battle they individually sponsored Samoan Chiefs—Chief Tamasese (German) and Chiefs Mataafa and Malietoa Laupepa (Anglo-American) — who were locked into a bloody conflict for sole control over the entirety of the archipelago. ^[28] Ultimately, Malietoa Laupepa would be placed on the Samoan throne after the naval fleets belonging to Germany and the United States shipwrecked during a fluke tropical typhoon that killed over a hundred German and American sailors combined, temporarily cooling the war fever. ^[29] The confrontation led to the establishment of tripartite administrative control over the islands divvied between the Great Powers, effectively erasing much of the “fiction” that was Samoan sovereignty under the Steinberger and subsequent indigenous governments by increasingly allotting the reigns of executive, advisory, and veto power to the U.S., British, and German governments whom decidedly picked or sponsored Samoan chiefs they aligned with and best felt represented their own fiscal and strategic interests, inevitably leading to direct, violent confrontations among the natives that disagreed with whomever the corrupted chief was that was chosen to oversee them. ^[30]

Full annexation and direct U.S. military action in Samoa occurred during the Samoan Civil War of 1898-99 a decade later. ^[31] Max Boot details the 1899 American occupation’s goal in Samoa, which was the overthrow of German-backed chieftain Mataafa; he states that the, “[U.S. Navy] bombarded the area... targeting Mataafa’s followers but also hitting... the German consulate and a German gunboat... four Americans were killed... [Mataafa] agreed on cease-fire lines... [This] ended tripartite rule in Samoa, dividing the islands between Germany and America, with Britain receiving compensation elsewhere.” ^[32] From this point forward, American Samoa would remain part of the United States, while the western islands belonging to Germany were seized by New Zealand during World War I and eventually received their independence decades later in 1962. ^[33] In 1900, Samoans on Tutuila became American subjects (nationals), not citizens, and are still beholden to this status over a century later; having originally lived for decades as a virtual “fiefdom” ^[34] under Navy rule that was described by Senator Bingham of Connecticut as being one of if not, “the most unlimited autocrac[ies] the world has ever seen.” ^[35] Even after the Navy rule ended in Samoa in 1951, Immerwahr reiterates the poignant fact that in addition to not having full American citizenship and the rights such status provides, “They’re subject to the whims of Congress and the president, but... can’t vote for [them] either. More than fifty years after the Voting Rights Act, they remain disenfranchised.” ^[36] Therefore, American imperialism in American Samoa had become an ongoing affair.

The American nationalism that had begun brewing amid the U.S. conflict with Germany and Britain can also be examined on the basis of two American political cartoons from the period, the first of which was published in San Francisco newspaper The Sunday Call:



In it, one can observe Uncle Sam—representing the United States—patiently waiting for Samoa to follow suit behind Hawaii in falling into its imperial grasp; it would partially meet this fate in 1889 and then fully in 1900 upon annexation by the U.S. Government.^[38] The cartoon falsely depicts the U.S. as being a lackadaisical participant during the entire process, rather than the actively enmeshed, opportunistic manipulator it was in actuality. Perhaps a more accurate metaphorical representation of U.S. imperialism would have been Uncle Sam taking a hatchet to the apple tree illustrated above, rather than resting below it. The second political cartoon was illustrated in *The Hawaiian Gazette* amid the Samoan Crisis of 1887-1889:



[39]

Here one can observe U.S. Secretary of State Bayard warding off a German from crossing what America perceived as a fence—or line—of neutrality. This accurately represents the nationalist tension between the imperial powers as they attempted to safeguard their colonial possessions in Samoa from unwanted competitors. Julius W. Pratt goes into further detail about the U.S. Government’s response writing, “reckless war talk [arose] in the United States. American naval vessels were ordered to Samoa, and William C. Whitney, Secretary of the Navy, opined that the United States would be ‘disgraced’ by... [foreign] aggression.”^[40] There was a definite patriotic ethos arising within the U.S. government in response to the actions of foreign powers that impeded American interests.

American nationalism amid The Samoan Crisis (1887-1889) took on many forms, the most obvious being reflected by statements from U.S. officials and violent action taken by the

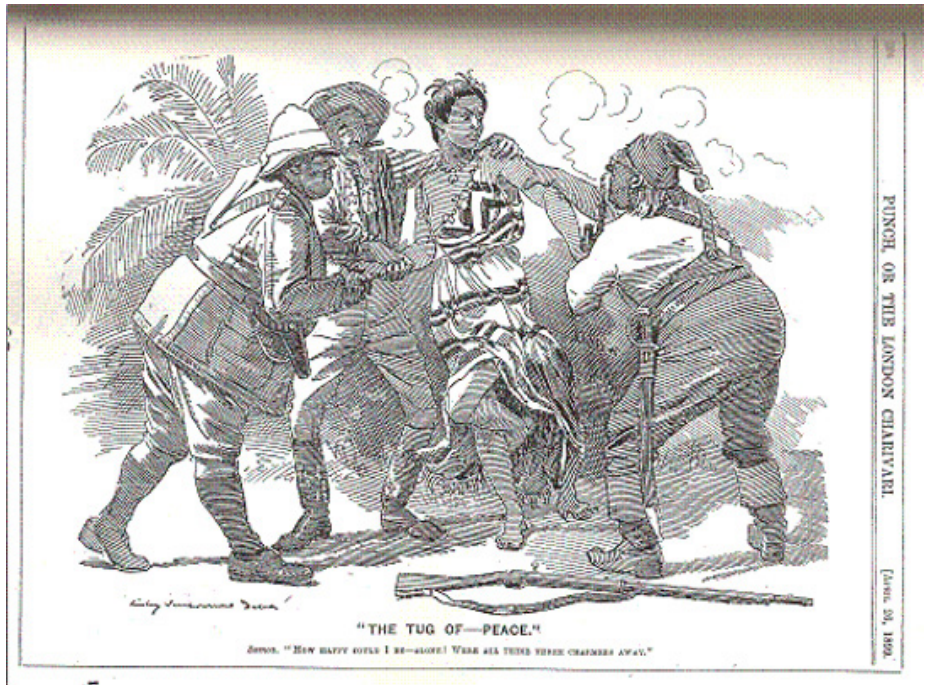
American public toward Germans within the United States.^[41] America’s robust financial interests that had first swooned the U.S. Government into increasing its involvement in Samoa naturally embodied their ongoing roles of corrupt private influence via opining on the circumstances and appropriate response to the crisis. President Mercury of the Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco relayed to congress that “the aggressive action of the German Government at the Samoan islands...[are] destructive to American interests... and hostile to the United States... the Commercial interests of the Pacific Coast, respectfully urges upon Congress... [to] maintain its just rights or sacrifice its self-respect and its proper influence among the Islands of the Pacific.”^[42] This further implicates the substantial role American economic interests played in directing the courses of military and diplomatic action taken by the U.S. government in Samoa. The effective manipulation of public consciousness via nationalist theater allowed private American financial interests to achieve their fiscal goals in Samoa.

This nationalist fervor is recollected by Robert L. Stevenson who writes that “violently passion ran upon the spot... blunders and mishaps had heated the resentment... against all other nationalities [in Samoa] ... to stir the people of the States to an unwonted fervor... Germans in America publicly disowned the country... In Honolulu... German and American young men fell to blows in the street.”^[43] Therefore, what occurred thousands of miles away in Samoa had profound effects on the American psyche back in the United States; however, Americans were not truly infuriated by the poor treatment of Samoans by foreigners. Their predominant concern was with their nation’s international reputation as a budding, global empire and the assets abroad they were at risk of losing to imperialist rivals like Germany and Britain.

There are many examples of discrimination towards American Samoans, commonly to assert a hierarchy of Polynesian subserviency, political disenfranchisement, and othering. The *Insular Cases* of 1901 aimed to tackle the subject of race and the rights possessed by Americans residing in unincorporated U.S. colonies. It ultimately became the legal linchpin beholding American Samoans to third-class status, with U.S. Supreme Justice White concluding the cases with a statement, “A false step at this time might be fatal to... American Empire If those possessions are inhabited by alien races, differing from us... according to Anglo-Saxon principles... large concessions ought not be made... [such as] a free government under the Constitution.... [Nothing] in the Constitution... forbid[s] such action.”^[44] Thus, after a series of racialized decisions, the U.S. Supreme Court effectively condemned American Samoans to a colonizer-colonial relationship. This was reflective of American sentiments surrounding the *Insular Cases* of 1901 that viewed U.S. Pacific Islanders like American Samoans as “savages” that may “wreck our institutions” of government should they be protected by the Constitution’s laws.^[45] Dissenting Chief Justice Fuller described the final outcome writing that, “if an organized and settled province of another sovereignty is acquired by the United States, Congress has the power to keep it, like a disembodied shade, in an intermediate state of ambiguous existence for an indefinite period... irrespective of constitutional provisions.”^[46] Therefore, as American Samoa continues to remain as an “unincorporated,” “disorganized” U.S. territory with no voting power in Congress, the likelihood that it would ever receive statehood or apt legal rep-

resentation under the current U.S. legal system is unfortunately unlikely, given how politicized congress’s grip over their future is. ^[47] According to Immerwahr, the Insular Cases, “are still cited as good law... the Constitution applies to some parts of the country but not others... the Fourteenth Amendment’s citizenship guarantee to anyone born in the United States doesn’t apply to the unincorporated territories... it is ‘statutory citizenship,’ meaning that it... [can] be rescinded.” ^[48] Thus, it is evident that the Insular Cases, prompted over commerce disputes in U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico, are the primary legal reason American Samoa has been left in constitutional purgatory, unsure of its ultimate future via American design.

Discrimination against Samoans is further demonstrated in a political cartoon illustrated by a satirical English cartoonist for Punch titled “The Tug of—Peace.” It depicts a Samoan woman being pulled by three infatuated men representing Germany, the United States, and Britain:



[49]

Below the cartoon we find a sardonic statement by the Samoan woman: “How happy could I be—alone! Were all these three charmers away.” While this is a metaphorical depiction as much as it is a critique of nationalist rivalries between foreign powers in Samoa, it is nonetheless an apt reflection of racial discrimination during the era of imperialism. The cartoon’s stark, misogynistic implication of an exoticized Samoan woman—representing the larger archipelago—as a sexual conquest for foreign white men, which gives insight into a racial hierarchy in which Samoans increasingly found themselves toward the bottom. Here, Samoans are maligned as annoying, uncivilized obstacles that unfortunately also happened to inhabit islands that were either a waste of British resources and attention in the view of the cartoonist or valuable and lucrative territorial acquisitions for Germany and the United States. Any humanity the Samoans possessed was therefore significantly undermined by foreign interests whose main

concern was the fiscal and territorial acquisition of the archipelago and its resources, overriding the indigenous Samoan population.

This perception of American Samoans as “lesser” or “non-Americans” permeated the national consciousness as well. For example, the famous ethnographer Margaret Mead’s *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), “avoided mention of colonies, territories, and empires altogether... It is entirely possible to read... [the study] without realizing that the ‘brown Polynesian people’ she describes encountering on ‘a South Sea Island’ are [Americans].” ^[50] Evidently, there was no desire on the part of the U.S. government, citizens, or academics alike to recognize the legitimacy of the now Samoan-Americans that resided within the U.S. empire, allowing them to be subjugated, without representation or many legal protections, via executive administration by the U.S. Navy.

During the late nineteenth century, under U.S. Navy Commander Meade and subsequent Officials, the United States promised to protect Samoan sovereignty and indigenous rights, starkly contrasting the discriminatory policies and derogatory language inflicted upon them by U.S. Navy officials now tasked with governing them at the turn of the twentieth century and thereafter. Captain Uriel Sebree, the second U.S. Navy governor of American Samoa, ridiculed and stereotyped Samoans as, “children...[all] naturally lazy.” ^[51] This harmful stereotype U.S. Navy officials first propagated while governing American Samoa remains in place today, as American Samoans are frequently disproportionately discriminated against when applying for rental housing, being passed over in favor of white tenants that are deemed more fiscally capable and reliable. ^[52] Governor Evans would also write, that, “when I first became Governor, I was flooded with [Samoan legal] petitions, nearly all of which were of no importance whatever and found their way to the waste-paper basket.” ^[53] Finally, Alex Willis, a local translator, would write that, “the heads of the [Navy] Government disliked the [Samoan] people because of their color... they were using... [them] to gain their own individual aim.” ^[54] This cements the discriminatory feelings harbored by U.S. citizens towards the indigenous populations inhabiting their government’s colonial possessions, as they were primed under eugenic ideals to see faraway Polynesians residing in the U.S. empire not as Americans, but as subhuman inhabitants on faraway Pacific islands whom just happened to be managed by the U.S. Navy.

Perhaps the most detrimental long-term effects of U.S. imperialism in American Samoa would be that of the legal racial discrimination American Samoans have been forced to face for nearly 150 years. While it saw its origins during early U.S. involvement in the islands during the late nineteenth century, it holds over to the modern-day in numerous, tangibly profound ways. According to the ACLU, “all persons born in the United States or its territories are U.S. citizens. The exception are persons born in American Samoa... who hold an obscure and discriminatory status as ‘non-citizen nationals’... [denying them] the right to vote... in the 50 states...[and] public employment... a reality for over 100,000 people.” ^[55] This makes American Samoans the most legally discriminated against population of Americans to reside within the borders and sovereign lands of the United States today, bar none. Continuously, over a half-century after

American Samoa was formally annexed by the United States, those who made the journey to their new “mainland” on the North American continent were consistently “an ignored and neglected population, classified under ‘others’ by the government and treated as ‘others’ in the American scene. ^[56] It soon became clear that American Samoa’s indigenous island lands which they had inhabited and were culturally molded by over thousands of years were now merely a U.S. naval asset.

This study has thus far concluded that U.S. imperialism in American Samoa was implemented on a historical foundation of powerful fiscal greed, territorial expansion, manipulative diplomacy, nationalist rivalries, proxy civil wars, and a hefty amount of still pertinent legal and racial discrimination toward Samoan-Americans. My research of this often overlooked and understudied American community may prompt wider recognition of their existence and the substandard, discriminatory legal status imposed on them by the U.S. Government. ^[57] This research paper challenges the belief that every American is born into a democracy protected by civil liberties while helping the public understand why American Samoans still live as colonial subjects in what can only be described as a 21 st century American imperial autocracy. In the future, I wish to conduct oral history interviews with American Samoan community leaders and members to further bridge gaps in American historiography and give them a platform to have their own interpretations and perspectives better represented and studied.

¹ Andrew Lang, *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson - Swanston Edition Vol. 25*, Read Central, <https://www.readcentral.com/mobile/chapters/Andrew-Lang/The-Works-of-Robert-Louis-Stevenson-Vol-25/011>.

² Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Footnote to History; eight years of trouble in Samoa*, (London: Cassell & Company, 1892).

³ Ibid, 112.

⁴ Ibid, 2.

⁵ Keim, “Forty Years of German-American Political Relations,” 215.

⁶ Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, New York: Basic Books, 2002, 94.

⁷ Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019, 58; 108.

⁸ Matthew Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2000, 265.

⁹ Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, 90-94.

¹⁰ Barry Rigby, “The Origins of American Expansion in Hawaii and Samoa, 1865-1900,” *The International History Review* 10, no. 2 (1988): 222-223.

¹¹ Ryden, *The Foreign Policy of the United States in Relation to Samoa*, 44.

¹² Keim, “Forty Years of German-American Political Relations,” 112.

¹³ Pratt, *America’s Colonial Experiment; How the United States Gained, Governed, and in Part Gave Away a Colonial Empire*, 7-8.

¹⁴ Ryden, *The Foreign Policy of the United States in Relation to Samoa*, 46.

¹⁵ Ibid, 59-60, 91.

¹⁶ Ibid, 101.

¹⁷ Ibid, 107-108.

¹⁸ Ibid, 91.

¹⁹ Keim, “Forty Years of German-American Political Relations,” 114-115.

²⁰ Pratt, *America’s Colonial Experiment; How the United States Gained, Governed, and in Part Gave Away a Colonial Empire*, 15.

²¹ Keim, “Forty Years of German-American Political Relations,” 114-116.

²² Ibid, 120-121.

²³ Stevenson, *A Footnote to History; eight years of trouble in Samoa*, 32.

²⁴ Ibid, 115-116.

²⁵ Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*, 108.

²⁶ David A Chappell, “The Forgotten Mau: Anti-Navy Protest in American Samoa, 1920- 1935,” *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 2 (2000): 217-60, Accessed May 4, 2021,doi:10.2307/3641439, 223.

²⁷ Ibid, 144.

²⁸ Ibid, 144.

²⁹ Kimberly, “Typhoons and Hurricanes: The Storm at Apia, Samoa, 15-16 March 1889.”

³⁰ Pratt, *America’s Colonial Experiment; How the United States Gained, Governed, and in Part Gave Away a Colonial Empire*, 7.

³¹ Ibid, 77-78.

³² Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*, 93-94.

³³ Ibid, 94-96.

³⁴ Ibid, 109.

³⁵ Pratt, *America’s Colonial Experiment; How the United States Gained, Governed, and in Part Gave Away a Colonial Empire*, 228.

³⁶ Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*, 272.

³⁷ Chronicling America, “Uncle Sam Catches the Ripe Fruit,” *The Sunday Call*, January 29, 1893, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn94052989/1893-01-29/ed-1/seq-1/>.

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⁴⁰ Pratt, *America’s Colonial Experiment; How the United States Gained, Governed, and in Part Gave Away a Colonial Empire*, 15.

⁴¹ Stevenson, *A Footnote to History; eight years of trouble in Samoa*, 264.

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⁴⁵ Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*, 61.

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Christopher McCandless



DEBORAH BROWN

BEREA COLLEGE

You ate spare change for dinner, a gumball machine,
never hungry, perfect teeth crunching the quarters.
You smiled at the waitress, and she brought her best conversations
to lie out beneath the stars, and of course,
you were enraptured, pocket full of nouns and nickels,
your world, big enough to fall in love time and time again.

Everyone you met, a story, but just a detail to yours,
and what a life, of the tourist. Every place you saw, a work of art,
when wheat farms were open arms,
and you found homes in the land of the midnight sun, and suburbia.
You painted everything in shades of chaos and heartbreak,
awe and amazement, and like glass meeting pavement,
you collected the futile colors of each day breaking.
But this is the home of those who can't dream of your options.
What will be left of them when your interest has faded?

What a privilege to live at one with nature;
with only muscles, flesh, and earth, you build a home:
the garden where Adam named the animals,
the world yours to consume and define.
You burned your car and left it by the highway,
what a privilege to choose your own demise,
to vacation in the world of the empty and waiting.

When the world refused to feed you, you cursed the fig tree,
then got drunk at the creek, water to wine between your teeth.
I know you left heaven like Christ, but you *decided*, trying poverty on for size,
self-created, on vacation. Tourist or savior?
Oh, to walk the earth in skin without a bounty,
to be held by those around me,
voluntary inquisition into time alone,

to run into the wilderness,
leaving only loved ones as my suicide note.
to try Alaska on like a coat, breath like smoke,
voluntary inquisition into time alone,
to run into the wilderness,
leaving only loved ones as my suicide note.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

DEBORAH BROWN is an undergraduate student at Berea College, where she is majoring in Psychology and minoring in Sociology and Creative Writing. She has been passionate about writing for as long as she can remember and is always excited to experiment with new forms and ideas. In addition to her love for creating prose, poetry, and lyrics, she also enjoys her job as a writing consultant for her college. Her work has also appeared in *The Blue Route*, and is forthcoming in *Green Blotter*.

Desiree Carcamo is an astrology-obsessed and very superstitious scientist once raised in a haunted house that used to be owned by devil worshippers; they tell real stories for quirky, occasionally existential, and paradoxical people. Carcamo was raised by a savvy single-mother and her grandmother, a carwasher who hustled to feed five kids in LA during the 80s. Strong, smart, jaded, and loving women inspire them. Once a closeted queer in a toxic, conservative So-Cal Christian high school, they are now an openly queer Mexican-Salvadoran-American creative, performer, and researcher from South Central LA and the Inland Empire. Being unexpectedly cast in their uni's dance showcase activated the storyteller inside Carcamo. Since then, they are a Disney-NHMC Series Writer program alumni (2021), won NBCU-Nosotros Monolog Slam (2020), and are currently a director in the CBS Leadership Pipeline Program (2022). They have been part of the development teams at MACRO and studied bioengineering at University of California, Riverside.

Kitty Chu is an Asian American writer living in the valley of Southern California. She currently attends the University of California, Riverside, where she studies Creative Writing and English. Her works have been featured in *Entropy Magazine* and *Matchbox Magazine*, and she has received the William Willis Poetry Prize and UC Riverside Chancellor's Award. Outside of writing, Kitty enjoys going on sunset walks, baking, and making caffeine-kicking coffee!

Hannah Crabtree-Eads is a lifelong writer of short stories, songs and poems, as well as a Junior in the Portland State University Honor's College. They are an aspiring publicist, a stinky cheese enthusiast, and the proud mother of a siamese cat named Cupid, a blue bottle green tarantula named Boris and a french bulldog named Sugar.

Kaitlyn Drake (she/her) is a double major in English with a concentration in Professional Writing and Philosophy at Fairfield University. After she fulfills her undergraduate degree, she is planning to pursue a Juris Doctorate. In her spare time, she dreams of being a poet and living in a cottage in the middle of the woods with cats. For now, though, she is quite alright with reading and writing poetry in her college dorm with her friends.

Morgan Fischer is currently a freshman at the University of Florida. She is majoring in English, and minoring in Communication Studies, Classical Studies, and History. She lived in Orlando, Florida for eighteen years before moving to Gainesville for college. When she is not reading or writing in her favorite coffee shop, you can find her dancing with her friends, baking some yummy treats, or even overconfidently attempting to paint something she saw on Pinterest. She hopes to be a full fledged author one day, and finally get to see one of her own books on her overcrowded shelves.

Connor Green has a B.A. in History, and A.A in Social Science, and a valid Food Handlers card. These took him a very long time. His submissions are not works of reliable historiography. He is not to be trusted.

M.V Gossen was born and raised in citrus-coated Riverside, California. The first book they remember reading on their own was about a girl with a paper bag on her head, and the reading list has only gotten stranger from there. A love for stories has guided them in almost every aspect of their life, from becoming a writer, to getting a degree in English. If they can't be found analyzing a story, then they're probably trying to write one. Either way, they are more than willing to ramble about it. They have been published previously in *MUSE Literary Magazine* 2020.

Samantha McLeod is a student at the University of South Carolina. She is a writer, a mother of two children, and a wife. She enjoys reading and hopes to one day find her own book on a shelf in the bookstore.

Ethan Roesler is a fourth-year at UC Riverside and an Archivist for the Inland Mexican Heritage Project. He is also a UCR Arts Museum Volunteer and Digital Marketing Assistant for the Communications Department at UCR. Academically, he has made the Chancellor's and Dean's list at UCR and was a participant in the Honors program. Recently, he was accepted into the UCDC program, received UCR's Mini-Grant under Dr. Michel's supervision, and was a finalist for the Chancellor's Research Fellowship. He plans on pursuing a Ph.D. in American History.

Dalton Sikes is a writer who was born in Southern California, but raised in the Pacific Northwest. He currently is a Managing Editor for the internationally distributed *Silk Road Review: A Literary Crosswords*. Dalton has presented literary scholarship at the Northwest Undergraduate Conference on Literature and creative writing at the Northwest Undergraduate Conference in the Humanities. He is pursuing degrees in Creative Writing and English Literature at Pacific University. His work ranges from dark to delightful through poetry and prose.

Sahithi Vennampally is an Indian-born American contemporary ink artist who lives in the San Francisco Bay Area, California. Her work is heavily inspired by her birthplace, India, as her distinctive personal style emanates joy and peace, while expressing the vibrant spirit present in the atmosphere of Indian culture. Sahithi incorporates the use of rich Indian ink in her line compositions to add to their authenticity and depth. Her art portrays Indian mythology, picturesque landscapes, tropical birds, and flowers, which are all brought to life with intricate detailing. From winning a state-level award in Chicago at the age of 6 to winning the Nationals in India at the age of 11, she had extensive experience from a young age combined with an innate talent for visual art. And ever since, it has been her vision to tell stories through her art; this is her way of connecting with India.

Kendall Vorhis is a third year English and Psychology student at the University of South Carolina. Vorhis’ poetry has been published in journals such as *The Battering Ram*, Scholastic’s *The Best Teen Writing* 2018, and *Good Juju Review*. She has also had poetry published through the New York Life Award, with her work displayed in grief and healing centers across the United States. As a native of Goose Creek, South Carolina, she has participated in multiple low-country poetry competitions and performed at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston. Vorhis is currently an editor for UofSC’s Garnet & Black Magazine, and has had numerous poetic and journalistic works published in their online and print editions since 2021. She plans to pursue an M.F.A. in Creative Writing.

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