The Jack

Randolph College:
A Journal of Academic Writing
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Welcome to the second issue of *The Jack*, Randolph College’s home for excellent academic writing. This edition hosts three award-winning papers—two from the English department and one from the music department. As ever, these papers are evidence of the college’s commitment to good writing.

*The Jack* also acts as a place to record the names of those writers deemed excellent by their professors. During 2010/2011, 184 students were identified by faculty as being above average writers, and it gives me great pleasure to record their names here in *The Jack*.

Professor Bunny A. Goodjohn  
Director of the Writing Program
Contents

Award for Best Short Paper 2010/2011 ..................6
Writing the Female Experience
   Elizabeth Zehl ’11: English

Award for Best Long Paper 2010/2011 ...................9
The Origins of Don Giovanni
   Karl Speer ’12: Music

Award for Best Senior Paper 2010/2011 .............. 16
Snapshot in Rhapsody (extract)
   Maggy Roza ’11: English

Randolph’s “Excellent Writers” 2010/2011 ........20
Works that fall within the genre of bildungsroman chart the “advancement and development of the individual,” generally from childhood to, and sometimes through, adulthood (Kunz). Encouraged by “Romanticism’s interest in the phenomena of consciousness and memory,” the genre took root in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Miles 990). Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre, published in 1847, is a female bildungsroman firmly established in the canon of Western literature. Hettie Jones’ How I Became Hettie Jones, published in 1990, serves as a non-fictional, modern, female bildungsroman. The nearly 150-year distance between the works’ publications indicates the extreme divergence of the experiences of their authors; while Brontë’s life was spent in nineteenth-century England, Jones grew up in New York City during the blossoming of the beat generation. How I Became Hettie Jones works to complete Jane Eyre and add to the body of literature about the female experience by providing a modern, fully autobiographical account of the intellectual and emotional development of a woman from childhood through adulthood.

Despite undertaking a similar effort, Brontë’s novel and Jones’ autobiography differ greatly in presentation and execution. Jane Eyre was originally published as Jane Eyre: An Autobiography, was written under a pseudonym, and is narrated in the first person. Brontë detached herself from the text at multiple formal levels, while also working to craft a piece of literature that approximated a reality deeply related to her own. How can a woman write intimately about the psychological maturation of a woman without drawing heavily upon her own framework of experience and memory? Indeed, several of the major characters and events within Jane Eyre had clear parallels to her life (Kunz). The very character of Jane Eyre can be read as a radical female figure, expressing not only Brontë’s own relatively uncommon position as a female writer, but also potentially her belief that women should be permitted to engage more actively in the then male-dominated social structure. The ongoing popularity of the novel and its canonization also speak to Brontë’s intricate rendering of a young woman’s growth process, a complex subject she would know little about without her own experience as a female.

Brontë sought to write a fictional novel, while Jones chose to write a non-fictional account of her own life. This is a major difference of form between the works that demands acknowledgement; yet beyond this clear distinction, Jones’ expression of ownership of, and clear connection to, her bildungsroman increases its legitimacy as an accurate account of the development of an individual woman. How I Became Hettie Jones directly announces its purpose and origin: to explain the process by which Jones became Jones herself. This difference in presentation, aside from form, can also be understood in the context of the authors’ placement in radically different socio-cultural realms and historical periods. Jones’ life, while notably marked by sexism and racism, was unhindered by the rigid gender conventions of Brontë’s world. This increased mobility gave Jones access to a wide range of experiences. She was not only able to form platonic and romantic relationships with intellectually and artistically gifted contemporaries, but to have shared experiences with male and female writers, artists, and musicians during a particularly charged period of American cultural and political history. Furthermore, Jones knew that readers in

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1990 would not be alarmed by a bluntly personal account of the female experience, whereas Brontë’s 1847 readership required at least a semi-didactic narrative framework.

Structural continuity between the works can be found in the emphasis placed on moments of self-conscious liminality, expansion, and change; events of departure and arrival serve as major structural units for each. Jones’ autobiography is chaptered and placed within five sections, four of which are titled according to the location of her physical home within New York City: “Morton Street,” “Twentieth Street,” “Fourteenth Street,” and “Cooper Square.” Similarly, moments of geographical transition are highlighted in *Jane Eyre* when Jane leaves her childhood home at Gateshead to travel to the Lowood Institute, then to Thornfield Manor, Moor House, and Ferndean Manor. When change is manifested in physical movement, moments of introspection are sparked for both Jane and Hettie.

After making the decision to leave Lowood for a job as governess at Thornfield, Jane explains to the reader that she “longed to go where there was life and movement” (Brontë 75). While she manages to lead a full and semi-radical life despite tremendous gender and socio-economic restrictions, one which included education, paid work, travel, and marriage to a partner who respected and admired the complexity of her identity, Jane’s experiences of “life and movement” simply cannot match those of Hettie. Jane’s decision to accept the job at Thornfield was partially influenced by the opportunity to be “seventy miles nearer London,” while Jones led her life directly within a major urban center, steeped for decades in a stimulating environment Jane could only dream of (75).

Although *Jane Eyre* and *How I Became Hettie Jones* are primarily organized chronologically, there is also a sense of retrospective patterning at work. The voice of older Jane breaks through the narrative to highlight important moments of internal development, as does the voice of older Hettie. Upon her arrival at Thornfield, Jane muses: “Externals have a great effect on the young: I thought that a fairer era of life was beginning for me, one that was to have its flowers and pleasures, as well as its thorns and toils” (Brontë 83). Hettie’s older voice freely enters the text from its authorial present to weave careful prose that unites her past and present identity, illuminating the effects of the passage of time and space on identity: “From Fourteenth Street we’d have to salvage...even the kitchen sink. Which like me remains on Cooper Square but linked to an earlier time and place. So that tonight, at the dishes, though twice her age I can also see that person I was at twenty-seven, bathing in her kitchen sink, with all of downtown at her back, and the morning sun ablaze in the poverty trees” (Jones 164). In these instances, a heightened sense of perspective shapes the text, adding depth and nuance to the process of growth that it tracks.

Despite the shared emphasis on growth and retrospection, the sharp contrast between the endings of *Jane Eyre* and *How I Became Hettie Jones* reveals a certain “correction” of Brontë’s work. Jane concludes the novel by directly addressing the reader and revealing that she has written the work ten years after her successful marriage to Mr. Rochester: “Reader, I married him” (Brontë 382). She goes on to tell of the birth of their first son, who Mr. Rochester was able to see after the impeccably timed and miraculous return of his vision. The conclusion to Jones’ work is more protracted and far less of a traditional fairytale. Hettie writes of the dissolution of her marriage to Amiri Baraka (formally LeRoi Jones) brought about gradually by mutual infidelity, personal changes, and the stress of celebrity attention. Ultimately, Baraka’s alignment with the Black Power movement leads him to renounce Hettie and their mixed-race children and results in their permanent separation. Indeed, many of his most
powerful plays and poetry are sourced from this hatred of that which is not black. The culmination of Jones’ work is not marriage, but rather separation and single motherhood; she stands on her own at the end of her bildungsroman just as she did in its beginning, yet with a deep self-awareness and a wealth of memories and experiences.

While Jane is not ultimately punished for her expansion beyond that which her status as a poor orphan prescribed her, Jones, writing over a century later, experiences a visceral loss while in the public eye. She has led a radical life and has been assigned both joy and pain because of her bold decisions. *How I Became Hettie Jones* is a profound continuation of the work begun by *Jane Eyre* as it explicitly chronicles the self-directed journey of a real woman with a rich and fully developed internal and external life who is in no way rescued by the simplifying power of a Romantic framework.

**Works Cited**
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Later writers, when revisiting the Moliere creation, would excise these portions, making the play more palatable. From here stems a conflict in the telling of the Don Juan story. Many authors and playwrights became drawn to the idea of the rationalist approach to the story as a way to analyze the moral implications of Don Juan’s actions. However, the comedy was so ingrained into the public mind that one could not simply abandon that aspect—as the unsuccessful run of Moliere’s play revealed. So, many writers attempted to blend the two aspects, trying to strike a balance between comedy and gravity. Despite innumerable attempts, none were completely successful, at least as viewed from the retrospective standpoint we hold today.

Moliere’s play became a framework, plot-wise, for numerous reincarnations across Europe. The story entered the repertoire of German theatre under the guise of Don Juan oder Don Pedro Totengastmahl (Don Juan or Don Pedro’s Banquet for the Dead) in 1690. The idea of setting the play to music was also done before, first in Le Tellier’s 1713 Le festin de pierre, a vaudeville comedy, and then by others, including Gluck in his ballet Don Juan in 1761. Thus, by the time the story reached Mozart’s ear, it was rehashed, redone, rewritten, recast, and reformed innumerable times.

To correct what may seem an egregious error, it was not Mozart’s ear, in fact, that first heard the
Don Juan story. Pasquale Bandini commissioned Mozart to write an opera for Prague in 1787, paying him 100 ducats for an opera of any topic. So, Mozart approached da Ponte and asked him to choose a libretto for this new opera. Da Ponte, at the time, was also serving requests from Salieri and Martini. Salieri wished for da Ponte to translate one of his French operas into German, and Martini (like Mozart) requested a libretto of any topic. Da Ponte picked *l’arbore di Diana* for Martini (because it fit his—as da Ponte described it—“simple, delicate music” well) and agreed to translate Salieri’s opera. At the time, da Ponte was well-acquainted with Casanova (a real-life incarnation of Don Juan if there ever was one) and was reading Dante’s *Inferno*. Furthermore, Don Juan had attained a special degree of fame thanks to a spat of Italian enthusiasm for the production. Goethe recalled in 1815 that in 1787, one could go out in Rome any night and find at least one production of *The Stone Guest* (as was the common alternative title to the play) performing that very night. So it is no surprise that the topic of Don Juan appealed to da Ponte, or that he chose that topic for Mozart’s opera. Emperor Joseph told da Ponte “You wont [sic] succeed,” believing that undertaking all three tasks simultaneously would be too much for the librettist. Perhaps because of da Ponte’s defiant nature (he was known to be just as cruel a critic as Mozart and felt no shame in bashing former colleagues if he felt they had done him wrong), he promised to disprove the Emperor—and so he did. Salieri’s opera was translated with little trouble, Martini received the libretto he requested, and all the while da Ponte slaved over preparing the Don Juan story for Mozart.

As was common practice for da Ponte, he looked for a stage play that he liked, intending to use it as the groundwork for his own libretto. (Da Ponte followed this same tactic in the last libretto he prepared for Mozart: *The Marriage of Figaro*, based directly on the play by Pierre Beaumarchais.) This time, da Ponte used Bertati’s libretto for Gazzaniga’s opera *Don Giovanni*. In truth, a majority of Bertati’s libretto survived into the final work of Mozart’s operatic translation of the story. Da Ponte’s contribution to this story was not inasmuch rewriting or reshaping the story itself, but something of a more preparatory nature; da Ponte, having worked with Mozart before, was well aware of the composer’s sense of dramatic flow. His goal was to channel a piece that would conform to and accentuate Mozart’s dramatic senses.

To this end, da Ponte made several important changes to Bertati’s libretto. First and foremost, there were considerations to be made regarding the performers available in Prague. As Mozart noted upon working with the singers, “the singers are too lazy to rehearse on opera days and the manager is too timid and fearful to push them.” There were relatively few singers able to perform Mozart’s operas in Prague, and as such, the stage manager was very conscious of their health. If they over-performed, they would become ill and be unable to perform in the premier. Da Ponte was aware of the casting problems in Prague and consolidated several of the roles in Bertati’s libretto. First, Don Giovanni would only have one servant; the cook Lanterna (for the most part a weaker duplicate of Leporello) was simply absorbed into his stronger counterpart. Also, the character Donna Ximena was divided and placed in Donna Elvira and, more importantly, the peasant girl Zerlina. Not only did this help adapt the play to the casting limitations in Prague at the time, but it also made the three females—Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, and Zerlina—more clearly defined and unique. This was vital as Mozart’s dramatic sense needed characters that could clearly stand apart from each other, instead of blending into each other as they did (to a certain extent) in the Bertati libretto.

Another important difference is the role of Donna Anna. In Bertati’s libretto, Donna Anna sends Don Ottavio to avenge her father’s death while she spends her life in a convent waiting for his
successful return. This was far too weak a character by Mozart’s dramatic standards—and da Ponte knew it. Da Ponte made the role stronger, shaped it into more of an opponent to Don Giovanni himself. Given Mozart’s proclivities for strong women in his operas, and particularly women who have darker, more serious characters to offset comedic elements of his operas, it is suspected that Mozart had a hand in the development of Donna Anna.12 This is no surprise for, as da Ponte learned through working on The Marriage of Figaro, Mozart collaborated with his librettists, changing the story as needed to fit his dramatic ideas, instead of simply accepting a libretto as it was.

Leporello was also changed from the Bertati libretto. Originally, and in most comedic incarnations of the Don Juan story, Don Juan’s servant is a slapstick, comedic sidekick—and not much more. His jokes and antics become the truly opera buffa aspect of the performance. In several versions of the story, the servant becomes the main character, his antics making him more a central part of the story than Don Juan himself.13 However, Mozart and da Ponte elevate Leporello above simply a servo ridicolo, but a strong and independent character,14 very similar to the servant in Moliere’s Dom Juan.15 Instead of merely joking around, Leporello feels inner conflict, denouncing his master’s lascivious ways and at the same time wishing to emulate his master’s behavior and appearance. He knows consequences, and he flees in terror when the statue threatens punishment on Don Giovanni. Leporello does not joke that the statue can’t harm his master, or that his master is (to borrow a modern colloquialism) “gonna get what’s coming to him,” but instead realizes the danger to his own mortality and cowers in fear. Leporello, in da Ponte’s and Mozart’s eyes, is not simply the buffa, but just as much a serious character in the opera as the rest.

Why this shift? Why not keep him a simple comedic part and let Don Giovanni and Donna Elvira and so many of the other characters carry the serious weight of the drama? First of all, such a character has no place in Mozart’s dramatic flow—each character in his operas was vital; none existed simply for ornamentation or to please the audiences. Second, he now serves as a comedic counterbalance to Don Giovanni.16 Leporello works as an intentional comedian; his aria listing Don Giovanni’s conquests is proof enough of that. However, he finds moments where his comedy cannot exist, and thus he becomes human, such as in the final scene. Don Giovanni, on the other hand, finds no purpose in comedy—unless it is to woo a woman, of course—and thus everything he does is intentional. Because everything is intentional, he feels he is superior—after all, he has planned so much, is so good at what he does. Thus, he laughs when the Commendatore first challenges him; why fight an old man? He later scoffs at the statue’s warnings and threats; he is simply beyond such things. Thus he becomes, in a wry sense, unintentionally comedic, his own pride blinding him to the reality that the audience can easily see. Were it not for the change in Leporello’s character to counterbalance this, the audience might think, Are we supposed to not feel threatened by the statue? Maybe it’s just a joke. But the cowering Leporello, the human servant, assures us that no, Don Giovanni has truly, as the colloquialism would go, “stepped in it.”

This very contrast allows for a wholly different dramatic dynamic in the play. For instance, in Moliere’s play, the Leporello-equivalent makes a toast to Don Juan exclaiming, “esprit fort!” This term applied to libertine philosophers of Moliere’s time. Mozart’s Don Giovanni also has that same toast, but with completely different meaning. First of all, it is Don Giovanni who delivers the toast to himself and Leporello, making the same exclamation. However, there is little philosophy on Don Giovanni’s tongue, only sexual pleasures. Thus the toast to “freedom” becomes not intellectual, but physical and sensual.17 All of Don Giovanni’s comedic elements have been transferred to Leporello;18 when Giovanni makes the toast instead of his servant, suddenly there is no humor in a mock-philosophical pursuit of women, but merely a frank indulgence in the pleasures they can provide. Donna Elvira, perhaps one of the women who has provided such pleasures,19 has also undergone a transformation of character via da Ponte. Already a strong character from Bertati, da Ponte built on the idea. In most opera buffa, the fooled love is portrayed as a dunce, and the man who has “conquered”
her is hailed as a victor. However, in *Don Giovanni*, Mozart and da Ponte chose to cast her as fiery and independent. The fact that she pursues Don Giovanni throughout the opera, seeking both to regain his love and eventually prevent him from his own self-destruction, shows a stronger, more determined character than the opera style would typically grant. This fits in with Mozart’s view of strong female characters in his operas. Then why does Donna Elvira not grant any protest to the insult given by Leporello as he regales her with Don Giovanni’s long list of sexual conquests? This list is a common element in the typical Don Juan story. In *opera buffa*, to have this comedic element immediately after a serious altercation is fairly standard practice (as non-standard an *opera buffa* as *Don Giovanni* might be). The list also fits into dramatic flow as Don Giovanni has no desire to stay and mollify Donna Elvira, and Leporello would certainly begin to enumerate all his master’s former loves—perhaps without even realizing how cruel such a list might be to Donna Elvira. Dramatically, to have Donna Elvira show anger or hurt from this aria would ruin the comedic aspect, which is needed after the more serious argument between herself and Don Giovanni.

Mozart had very specific musical ideas in store for *Don Giovanni*. Notably, Mozart did what would otherwise be considered heinous: the main character, Don Giovanni, has absolutely no arias of his own. Every time he sings, he merely joins another character. He does not introduce himself, he does not announce his reasons. Instead, Mozart lets the dramatic exposition during the introduction (the first four scenes) show Don Giovanni’s character. But why must Don Giovanni have no arias to himself? Mozart’s concept of the story involved a man who was utterly sensuous, to the point where, unless he was wooing a woman, he had no purpose and was restless. Thus, when a man lives only for the pursuit of woman and other pleasures of the flesh, why should he have something unique and individual? His whole life revolves around a focus on himself through other people. So, it makes sense that he sings with others. More importantly, Don Giovanni does not receive any motifs or melodies that are explicitly his. Instead, he is a master of taking other’s melodies and using them as he sees fit. When Mozart says that the music must serve the voice, there is a corollary: the music must serve the character. Here, Don Giovanni uses the music just as much as his words and charm. In Bertati’s libretto, Don Giovanni enters first followed by Donna Anna—emphasizing the “duped love” aspect of a typical *opera buffa*. However, Mozart and da Ponte have Donna Anna enter first, followed by Don Giovanni—who immediately takes Donna Anna’s melody for his own. The character division between Don Giovanni and Leporello also appears here; while Donna Anna and Don Giovanni bicker, Leporello offers interjections, but only when they do not sing, never entering with them, as if he is a third side in a two-way argument. Were it not for the clear character distinctions that da Ponte emphasized textually and Mozart developed musically, such a scene would never have worked.

So what of the distinction for Donna Anna? The stronger aspects of Donna Anna, as conceived by Bertati, have been given to Donna Elvira. Why? For one, this draws a clearer distinction between the two characters. Furthermore, Donna Anna and Don Ottavio together now act as foils to the rest of the characters in the opera. Their innocent, naïve love
serves as a counterbalance to the desperate views of Donna Elvira, to the cynical views of Leporello and Zerlina, to the lurid and sensuous views of Don Giovanni. Each character, as developed by da Ponte and Mozart, act as a way to measure all the other characters. Their differences are so distinct that each acts as a measuring stick for the others—and thus Mozart’s clear-cut dramatic flow and design works, playing off of the contrasts between each character, each interaction.26

Musically, Mozart drew from his past, not only for his sense of drama as seen in *The Marriage of Figaro*, but also direct musical concepts. The song *O statua gentilissima* has very similar structure to the *Idomeneo* scene with the voice of Poseidon. At first, the *Idomeneo* scene was forty measures long, and Mozart quickly realized that Poseidon’s voice had no sense of drama. He made a similar rant against the ghost’s speech from *Hamlet*, claiming it would have been much better if it were much shorter. So, the forty measures were reduced to seven, and Mozart was happy. When it came time for the statue’s dramatic speaking, Mozart used the similar tactic of “less is more” and reduced the statue’s part as much as possible: one measure with one note.27 On that note, the statue sings, “Si,” on the tonic. The power of this moment is concentrated and palpable, and it is due to Mozart’s prior work with condensing speech and music that lead to this particular moment.

On the first of October, 1787, Mozart and Constance left for Prague. When they arrived, they found that “few preparations and arrangements have been made” for his opera, and the performance would have to be delayed. The original premier date of October 14th was scrapped, and to appease the crowds, *The Marriage of Figaro* was performed on the 15th while *Don Giovanni* finished rehearsing. As it so happened, Giacamo Casanova visited Prague and stayed. He most likely attended the premier of *Don Giovanni*, which occurred on October 29th, 1787. It should be noted that the premier Casanova saw had not been fully rehearsed; Mozart put the final touches on the score on the evening of the 28th.28 The play was an immense success. A local paper reported that “Connoisseurs and musicians say that Prague had never heard the like. Herr Mozard [sic] conducted in person; when he entered the orchestra he was received with threefold cheers, which again happened when he left.”29

It is important to note the reasons behind da Ponte’s and Mozart’s decision to work with this story. Contemporary analysts look at *Don Giovanni* and seek out the moral underpinnings and connotations that hide under the surface. They seek to find out Mozart’s true opinion of men such as Don Juan and Casanova. Are they hailed as heroes or despised as villains? Such searches are truly vain. Whether Mozart had such thoughts at all, let alone whether or how he espoused them, is irrelevant to the subject and story of *Don Giovanni*. Da Ponte and Mozart wished to make money.30 They wanted a successful opera, one that would make Prague’s money fall into their pockets. Don Juan was an immensely popular story at the time, so its selection is no surprise. Whatever moral conflicts may be analyzed in the story have either been there since its inception in the middle ages or were the results of Mozart’s sense of dramatic flow. Mozart did not moralize in his operas. On the contrary, he nixed the entire last scene where the characters come out and essentially state the moral, get married, and live happily ever after. Instead, he ends it with Don Giovanni’s descent into hell. Why? Simply that descent is the climax. That was the culmination of all the dramatic buildup in the entire opera. To then have another scene, where it is simply a reflection on the scene prior, is redundant and weak; Mozart knew this all too well and, even though he scored, rehearsed, and even performed this recap scene several times, he ultimately removed the scene from the opera entirely.31

The knowledge that money, ultimately, drove the inception of this great opera explains the oft-cited, seemingly ill-fitting title, *Il dissoluto punito, o sia il Don Giovanni.*

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Giovanni—“The Rake Punished, or Don Giovanni”—always heralded as an opera buffa. A comedic opera? Really? Well, since most adaptations of the Don Juan story prior were comedic, that the comedy title stayed was not surprising. Furthermore, despite how successful the opera was, every form of the Don Juan story prior that focused more on the serious aspect of the story and less on the comedic fell flat on its face. Why even risk advertising as a losing show? No, Mozart and da Ponte were more savvy than that. They knew that labeling it as an opera buffa did no harm—after all, there was humor. And once people came in and saw the great opera, well, who cared that it was not quite as comedic as they may have expected? They enjoyed it and would give their money to see it again—da Ponte’s and Mozart’s entire goal, as superficial as it may seem.

Notes
2. Ibid, 1034.
3. Ibid, 1035.
4. Ibid, 1036.
5. Ibid, 1037.
6. Ibid, 1038.
13. Ibid, 1034.
15. Ibid, 1035.
19. Probably not, as opera buffa traditionally spelled out all happenings and left little implicit, especially the more risqué material. If the opera did not explicitly state that Don Giovanni slept with Donna Elvira, then he most likely did not. See Ibid, 1061.
20. Ibid, 1064.
22. Ibid, 1045
23. Ibid, 1060.
31. This final scene was most often performed in Dresden, and was done as late as the early 19th century. See Piero Melograni, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 209.

Bibliography
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Nominated by Randall Speer,
D.M.A. MUSC 286S.
Maggy Roza for
Snapshot in Rhapsody—an excerpt

The first time a professor described my poetry as confessional, I was less than pleased. Confessional poetry, like much poetry and literature written extensively or exclusively from personal experience, has a bad rap. To be blunt: confessional is often used as a synonym for “whiny” in literary criticism, and it is a popular notion that all inexperienced poets are confessional poets, because they simply don’t have the life experience or imagination to write about anything other than themselves. Needless to say, the stereotype of the self-absorbed confessional poet troubled me. I wanted to write something more than a collection of poems about myself; to describe something about the human condition, or at least about an aspect of young womanhood in America today. Searching for a more secure, or at least broader foundation for my work than myself, I drew inspiration from existentialist philosophy and literary existentialism: a movement that has always fascinated me. Existentialism is the philosophical study of human existence. Existentialists believe that every human needs to confront several central issues in their lives, including the significance of death, the meaning of life, and the challenge of creating one’s own meaning in an ambiguous and essentially meaningless universe. Existentialism formed, for me, the connective tissue, if you will, between the personal and the universal.

I categorize my manuscript, Snapshot in Rhapsody, as an existential work because the arc of the manuscript follows the arc of an existential crisis. Part I consists of seven poems that address the themes of addiction, intoxication, infatuation, and danger. I felt that it was appropriate to place these poems at the beginning of my collection because they convey the most dissatisfaction, nostalgia, and angst. The poems in Part II express anger, regret, and the desire to reject and refuse. This section explores facing the truth, confronting one’s regrets, and meeting guilt head-on. Part II is the peak of the existential crisis, the climax of a lifetime of anger, resentment, and regret. Part III is the denouement, the comedown from the high. The poems in Part III are about reaching a state of acceptance, resignation, understanding, or forgiveness. The resolutions are not always positive, but they embody the struggle and achievement of a certain level of self-acceptance that we, as humans, strive for. Snapshot in Rhapsody is, in short, a quest for inner peace.

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Filth

I forgot to mention what the sun looked like the day my dad and I smoked weed perched on the roof of that apartment complex that he moved into because Mom kicked him out when she discovered that he’d been sleeping with another woman since before my little brother was born. It all seemed like a bad dream: all those trips to the office had been excuses to see his other family.

I remember wondering how many families someone can have before they just dry up, like a dead fish on the rocks. I thought, you’d have to wrap so many Christmas gifts, but my dad never helped wrap our gifts.

It was always my mom alone, carefully covering each gift in tissue paper, taping, and stuffing all five stockings until 6 a.m., then waking up two hours later to film us tearing them open.

But the sun, the sun that day was red. My dad said it was from all the filth in the air.

Bundy

The anger is washing away now like blood from the hands of the serial killers you’re obsessed with, sitting in secluded corners of the library reading Helter Skelter and interviews with Ted Bundy. They say Bundy strangled girls because he liked to overpower them, liked to see them thrashing around helplessly as he pulled the rope tighter. That gave you nightmares. I asked why you kept reading. You said you didn’t know, you said morbid fascination.

It’s been a while since we last spoke. My resentment is trickling away. I don’t know where my hate went, if I passed it on like a hand-me-down or if it just dissolved into the air, rising from my skin like steam. But it’s gone, and what’s left in its place—I can’t quite decide. Maybe I miss you, or I just miss your voice, or having someone who cared enough to scream at me. Maybe I’m just as fucked up as you,

but I could never stomach the idea of squeezing a throat or bludgeoning a skull until the life just leaves, like a moth abandoning a burnt-out light bulb.

You said most of them get off on killing people; they like to watch the eyes go dead. There was a serial killer in California who drank his victims’ blood, because blood is life and he wanted to take their lives completely, consume their blood. The press called him the Vampire of Sacramento, but I don’t think he drank their blood because he liked the taste, that taste that floods the mouth when teeth tear at lips, that tang like raw meat and pennies.

You said memories are just the corpses of emotions we’ve felt in the past, relics of feeling too much that congeal in our brains and vanish like magicians’ smoke when we die. But I wonder if those Bundy girls would agree, if those memories expired along with their pounding hearts and struggling lungs, or if those snapshots in time are still alive, flitting from corpse to corpse, buried deep in the dried-up riverbeds of Washington.
Requiem

I dreamt your name was written in blue ink on the paper skin of my cigarette. I felt you percolating into the fiber of my lungs, but when I exhaled, you floated away.

I dreamt the waves cracked open on the shore like raw eggs in a cast-iron frying pan. The sand was all that remained of a million broken seashells. You said waves made you sad, the way they stretch and reach and always fall short, sliding back into the ocean.

I dreamt you still loved me, and it hurt more than when you told me you didn’t. I stood naked on the balcony with the brushstrokes of a slow, sick breeze licking my chest, and the shame of how I’ve always felt like a child resonating somewhere in my veins.

I dreamt we stood on opposite ends of a meadow of soft, tall grass. The sunlight shone through opalescent clouds, and the hum of bumblebees rent the air. When I tried to ask you why, the cracks in the clouds closed and stifled the sun. When I tried to run to you, the grass had turned to thistle.

Tonight, I dream I am awake, falling from the balcony like an ice cube dropped in a glass, but the swoop and the kick never come, and I feel as though I’ll never wake up.

Preface to the Death of Us

The clouds are like a baby’s sleeping lungs, expanding and contracting to the beat of the thunder. And we look without seeing, broken like kaleidoscope eyes

or a mirror that shatters so violently it becomes a trickle of dust between the floorboards. There is a metamorphosis that carries us from life to death.

Death was always there inside, lurking somewhere between our bodies, waiting to swarm like an army of ants and carry us away because we can’t exist in hotel rooms, and death always knew that. She said she was sorry, that it was time for her to bloom, time to make us two again.

But what death doesn’t understand is that we’re used to apologies, you and I: they are all we’ve ever known, and we’ve already forgiven her.
Maggy Roza was born in Sacramento, California, the second youngest of five siblings. Home-schooled from an early age, she was able to dedicate many hours to the pursuit of writing fiction and poetry, dancing at the local ballet conservatory, and acting in both community and professional theatre. Maggy came to Randolph College at the age of 16 and declared her English major shortly thereafter. She is forever grateful to her parents for raising her in an environment where the fine arts were held in such high esteem and to Jim Peterson, Laura-Gray Street, and the entire Randolph College English department for their never-ending love and support.

Nominated by Laura-Gray Street, ENG 494
Randolph’s “Excellent Writers”

The following students have received writing skills evaluations of “1 Excellent” from two or more faculty members during the 2010/2011 academic year:

**Seniors**
- James Battle
- Foluke Beveridge
- Lucas Brady
- Marja Copeland
- Richard Coulta
- Raquel Cruz
- Elizabeth Dewing
- Alisha Dingus
- Victoria Ellington
- Khandarmaa Enkhbold
- Olivia Felo
- Anneka Freeman
- Wazhma Furmuli
- Sara Goldstein
- Meica Green
- Sandra Griffith
- Ashley Hertig
- Shi Hua
- Sarah Johnson
- Michael Kenyon
- Rhiannon Knol
- Ludovic Lemaitre
- Wenjiao Liu
- Zachary MacDougall
- Timothy Marshall
- Brooke Miaka
- Joanna Morales
- Brandon Morgan
- Caleb Moxley
- Arielle Orem
- Alexandra Ostrowski
- Annamarie Pagel
- Roshan Poudyal
- Poojan Pyakurel
- Rachel Reid
- Octavia Rodney
- Samantha Romero
- Parrisa Samani
- Cameron Shepherd
- Marilea Showalter
- Ankeeta Shrestha
- Aisha Smith
- Kristin Spinner
- Aster Thomas
- Eric van Staalden
- Meeta Viadya

**Sophomores**
- Guan Wang
- Victoria Winfree
- Lindsay Wood
- Elizabeth Zehl
- Yayi Zhang
- Connor Adams
- Stephen Allman
- Steven Blackwell
- Jenna Brown
- Treasa Bryant
- Madeline Carmain
- Cameron Colquitt
- Rachel Cox
- John Coney
- Kim Do
- Lauren Dowdle
- Ashley Fertig
- Ahsan Ford
- Christine Gniesski
- Sara Graul
- Megan Hageman
- Colton Hunt
- Julianna Joyce
- Samuel McGarrity
- Tamara McKenzie
- Marisa Mendez
- Lily Noguchi
- Lee Nutter
- Alexandra Orrell
- Lisa Patterson
- Wyatt Phipps
- Karen Rose
- Andrew Schaeffer
- Benjamin See
- Millie Symns
- Samantha Thacker
- Katherine Turner
- Katharine West-Hazelwood
- Megan Wheatley
- Thomas Whitehead
- Alexandra Williams
- Samantha Wittie
- Laura Word

**Juniors**
- Reese Barclay
- Joanna Bourque
- Jennifer Bundy
- Leah Campbell
- Jaskirat Chhatwal
- Jessica Cline
- Michaela D’Angelo
- Stephanie Defillo
- Catherine DeSilvey
- Megan Dillard
- Isabelle Dom
- Adam Eller
- Sarah Fogle
- Lauren French
- Nicole Gammons
- Patrick Glynn
- Alyssa Groves
- Duquan Little
- Safiyah Lopez
- Meghan Luksic
- Nashiva McDavid
- Lorna McFarlane
- Kendra Moore
- Corbin Nall
- Mridul Oli
- Teah Perkins
- Jeffrey Reid
- Danielle Robinson
- Louise Searle
- Nicole Skellie
- Jessica Smith
- Karl Speer
- Xavier Suarez-Castanedas
- Sylvia Tropp
- Marian van Noppen
- Emma Vescovo
- Jerry Wells
- Aisha West
- Kathleen Wilson
- Reid Winkler

**First Years**
- William Dede
- Elizabeth Delery
- Tierney Dickinson
- Huong Doan
- Timothy Fowler
- Chelsea Fox
- Toni Ann Gambale
- Cameron Garrison
- Glenna Gray
- Olivia Groff
- John Grundy
- Edwina Gyamfi
- Tung Ha
- Ismail Haimoura
- Kristen Hutchinson
- Amy Jacobs
- Andrew Jobe
- Mimansha Joshi
- Yong Jun Kwon
- Sarah Kass
- Nushaa Kaz
- Amber Keese
- Jonghui Kim
- Nia King
- Samantha Maggard
- Kristina Marinak
- Alicia Mcmahan
- Tra My Dinh Doan
- Hannah Neifert
- Teague Nelson
- May Nwe Soe
- Andrew Nye
- Kavya Pradhan
- Marielle Rando
- Jalen Randolph
- Emily Rist
- Sergio Rodriguez
- Gabrielle Roessler
- Eli Shadrach
- Shannon Stepp
- Julia Stika
- Rachel Storey
- Morgan Thompson
- Tamara Trombetta
- Claudia Troyer
- Monica Varner
- Brittney Via
- Tsubasa Watanabe