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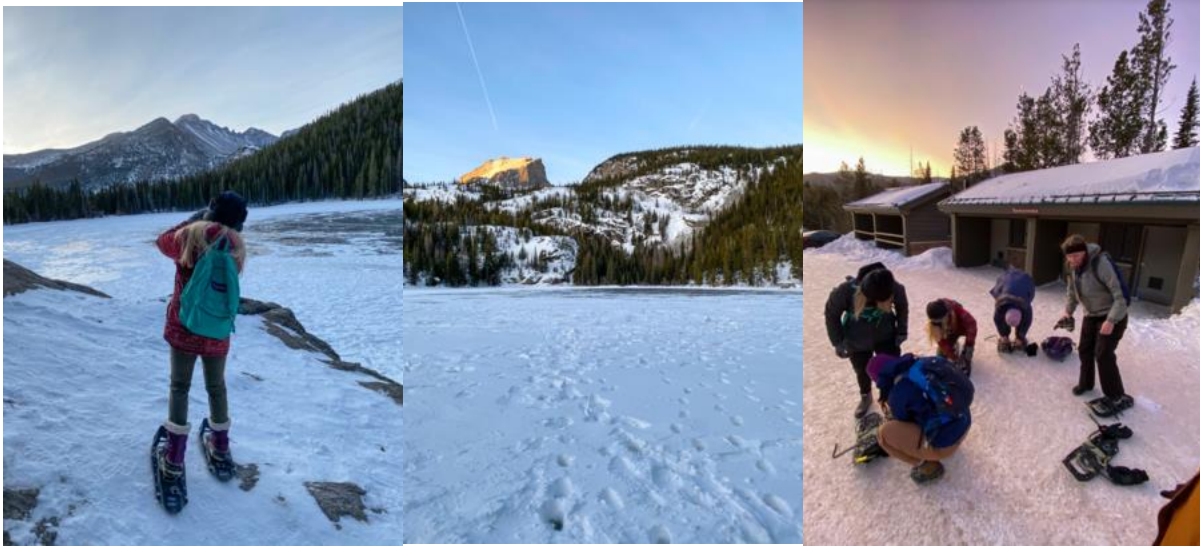
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Snowshoeing Photo Essay

January 24, 2020

By; Amy Reglin, Lead Photographer

Who says hiking fun has to stop when there is snow on the ground? Thanks to the Outdoor Adventure Program (OAP), it doesn't have to. OAP offers gear rental year-round including snowshoes, which means when you and your friends want to hike on the weekend but there's two feet of fresh powder you still can.

Snowshoes work by giving your feet a larger surface area which enables you to float on top of the snow instead of sinking into the fresh snow. Another great resource when planning your snowy hike is the All Trails app. This app allows you to search for trails, download offline maps, and read comments about other hikers recent trips.

Head into the OAP office Monday—Thursday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. or 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. or Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. or 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. to check out snowshoes or any other gear you may need. Remember to practice safe hiking techniques whenever you hike!

The Best French Toast That You Already Have (Almost) Everything For

February 5, 2020

By Garrett Kelly, **Staff Writer**

French toast stands among the holy trinity of American breakfast pastries along with the illustrious waffles and pancakes. But of the three, I find French toast the most accessible.

Whether you're new to cooking, looking for a quick snack or trying to feed a group, my recommendation of the three would have to be the toast. If you have a few of kitchen staples you'll probably have much of what you need for this already.

Ingredients

1 large egg

2 tablespoons of butter (you'll need extra if you intend to go the optional fried route)

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of milk

1 teaspoon of vanilla

2 tablespoons of sugar

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup of flour

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt

About 6 pieces of thick cut bread (think Texas Toast)

(Optionally, ground cinnamon or powdered sugar to garnish)



Toss your egg in a bowl along with your melted butter and vanilla. Beat the egg and combine with butter and vanilla. Once your egg is nicely beaten and your mixture is homogeneous, add sugar flour and salt, once again whisking to combine. Try not to beat the mixture too quickly or it will fluff up too much. What you're looking for is to beat all of the clumps out of your mixture until the liquid is even and smooth.

Next up, you're going to throw your pan on medium heat. Be careful not to go above medium or your mixture will likely burn too quickly which reduces the rich yolky flavor that we're hunting for. With your mixture at the ready, you're going to dunk a slice of your thick cut bread in. Make sure that you thoroughly coat both sides of the slice, such that the surface is covered thickly and evenly.



Place your toast on heat and let it cook but don't go far! This process is extremely quick and each side will likely not take much more than 30 seconds or so each. The layer of egg is relatively thin and you want to be careful not to overcook, as it would be the same detriment as overheating it. The real trick to this simple recipe is trying to hit that perfect sweet spot between sweet and savory that makes the perfect French toast.

You can also optionally add more butter to the pan before placing each slice down for an even richer variant. If you go this direction, I recommend adding small amounts of butter before each and every slice is cooked so that no one slice gets overly saturated.

I recommend a touch of ground cinnamon or powdered sugar plus thin slice of butter for that extra touch of diner presentation, but that's really it. French toast is a super easy and ingredient-efficient recipe that I'd recommend to cook's of any competence or confidence level. I promise the reward for your effort will be worth it.



EDITORIAL: Low Tech Solutions to High Tech Problems

February 7, 2020

By *Garrett Kelly*, **Staff Writer**

For the students of Regis University, the Fall 2019 cyber attack remains a present reality. I'm sure many of us remember the delayed and disorganized classes due to complications caused by the breach. We went many weeks with our homework systems disabled entirely or in disarray. Personally, I hoped to be sympathetic and forgiving given this was an attack and Regis was the victim, but, this previous semester left a bad taste in my mouth. [Regis Updates](#) is still an active page since the cyber attack, with the most recent post at the time of this article's publication Feb. 3, 2020. Despite this site, updates since the attack have not been timely, instructive or even relevant to student life. Nowhere on this page is it mentioned how Regis University has chosen to respond to the crisis. As one avidly interested in such a thing, I

followed the page closely. You might imagine my surprise when I was directed by one of my Highlander colleagues to an [article](#) from the Denver Post detailing that the university did in fact pay out the ransom requested by those that took the school hostage. Key details, relevant to our ability to function as members of this community remain undisclosed. What we've seen is a consistent pattern of non-communication to this university's most important stakeholders--faculty and students. The Denver Post's Jan. 28 article claims correctly that it was the first to report that Regis did in fact pay out the "malicious actors", a revelation that took place six months after the event. Other "revelations" remain waiting in the wings.

The comments on the Denver Post article are even more interesting given the context. One user under the moniker Cloud claimed to be among the contractors hired to restore antivirus systems at the university. He wrote, "It was a mess. Everything was down." Various others left probing questions as to how it could be possible that such an attack could disable our systems for such a length of time. In truth, even colloquially, I'm aware that the lack of backup built into the school's servers represents another case in a series of internal security flaws that allowed us to be put in such a position. I wish I could write this in anger, but I can't. To describe it as such would be a dishonest expression. More than anything, this experience has left me frustrated. It shocks me that the first report of Regis' official decisions regarding this monumental event come only in the form of the Post article that I *happened* to be pointed towards.

After all this, Regis postures itself to host a cyber security summit, in the name of sharing what they've learned with others who are potentially vulnerable. For this, I want to applaud them. This summit has the promise to shed more light onto the events that paved the way for the events experienced in the fall semester. It should also address how to respond when such attacks are successful and disabling. Frankly, the first to know should have been us; the faculty and students of Regis who have a vested interest. That we'd only be informed indirectly a week after the fact bothered me deeply. Six months later, Regis's updates remain ambiguous. Websites remain filled with dead links to disabled systems. But Regis Updates remains unchanged and I am doubtful that my peers know the latest news of what decisions the institution has made, and the impact those decisions will have on our path to education.

The silence present here is deafening in a way that breeds the worst kind of anxiety for college students. With the obvious financial and administrative turmoil at Regis, silence only

inspires more doubt and fear of instability. I fear the further limitation of already slim programs. I fear for the professors, already overworked amongst a hiring freeze that could face an even greater workload in the near future. My priority is that of the quality of my education, something that the passionate teaching staff of Regis University has provided time and time again. But I'm not blind to what they're facing here, all that challenges us with the recent technical challenges affect them twofold. I certainly don't want my professors to be forced to take on greater responsibility while they're already amongst the busiest in the country.

Much of the strength of Regis, in my observation, is that of the small class sizes and passionate teaching. As this crisis continues with little information and minimal communication, it is clear to see the strain it places on those who work so hard to provide a quality educational experience. This lack of communication undercuts the spirit of community, collaboration and our fundamental Jesuit values. The standard of communication during this crisis has fallen short of any reasonable expectation. It's easy to assume that the communication received by the professors here is the same as that we have received--vague and unhelpful. As Regis continues to return to old refrains, discussing the building of community the lesson becomes solidified, all of us, the student population, will remain the last to know anything. We remain in the dark, unsure and unclear as to the path ahead, and our place on the road.

The answer to high tech problems is a low tech one. Trust. Communication. Community in more than name. This could have been a learning experience for all of us, but instead it's been a fracture of trust.



Rangers Win Over Adams State

February 10, 2020

By: Amy Reglin, *Lead Photographer*

Friday night the men's basketball team hosted Adams State. It was an exciting, high scoring game for the Rangers. The men lead by 20 going into the half and won the game 99-75. The next home game is Feb. 21 against Dixie State, be sure to be there to support your Rangers!



An average snow day on campus

An average snow day on campus

February 10, 2020

By: Armando Covarrubias, **Cartoonist, Writer**



When They See Us Film Screening

February 17, 2020

By: Morgan Jacobus, **Staff Writer**

On Feb. 11, the Black Student Alliance (BSA) helped host the fourth screening of the docuseries, *When They See Us*. BSA President Eryn Rideout coordinated with the mayor's office along with other organizations around Denver about this series around three months ago. *When They See Us* is a Netflix docuseries that was released May 31, 2019 about the Central Park Five who were accused and wrongfully convicted of the assault and rape of a jogger. The story of the five spans over a quarter of a century, from when the teens are first questioned about the incident in spring 1989 to their exoneration in 2002 to the settlement reached with the city of New York in 2014.

"I think the mayor's office wanted to show this series now even though it came out like a year ago because these things are still happening today... it is not something that we can just act like it is not happening anymore," said BSA president Eryn Rideout.

Eryn mentioned how Regis was able to host two of the screenings, which was a unique opportunity to inform and encourage Regis students and community to make a change.

“I think it is important to have it here, because Regis is a very much, I sometimes call it an ally-ship school. I don’t consider it a social justice institution necessarily just because these issues don’t get talked about at all in the depth they need to be talked about, and they don’t get talked about in the right ways, so I feel like this was pertinent to us doing it especially during black history month. It is still happening every day and we need to have these discussions so we as students can know what to do so that this doesn’t happen again,” said Rideout.

The series consists of four episodes: The Crime, The Trial, The Aftermath, and The End. At each screening, there were different focuses in the conversations depending on what each episode was about.

The first screening, held at Metro State University, had attendance of about 15 people, “Because that episode talked about the interrogations that the boys had to go through we mainly focused on that and we also went into things we can do, students especially, in our own communities and out in Denver to help with police brutality and these kinds of situations,” said Rideout.

The second screening was at Regis, and featured some students and an alumni as panelists, with a crowd of around 20 people. Since that episode was about the boys being tried and convicted, “We were focusing on media because in that episode that was a big proponent to why the boys were vilified before they even went to trial,” said Rideout. Each episode prompts new topics for discussion and consideration for those that chose to attend.

Though the third screening was unfortunately cancelled due to weather, Rideout explained how that episode entailed life after being convicted, in which three of the boys got out of juvie or finished their sentences. This episode brought up questions of how people are supposed to reenter society when so many factors are against them.

The last episode and final screening was the most attended and likely most anticipated event. It was about Korey: the oldest of the five that had to serve his sentence in adult prison which came along with its own set of challenges. This episode also showed the person who

actually committed the crimes stepping forward to confess, and how they were finally exonerated. For this screening they had a panel comprised of six individuals from various organizations around Denver that all see importance in this issue. There were attorneys, the mayor, and community members from the National Association of Real Estate Brokers.

“I loved the panel, I’m glad that they brought such great people who have seen these things unfortunately, but I think it was a great perspective to understand that these things are still happening every day and I think it just made it more than a docuseries or more than a movie to people and they are wonderful, they are doing great work out in the Denver community,” said Rideout.

The panel discussed several issues, from the justice system, parenting, the media, and the impact we have an opportunity to make as a community and as students. Each of the panelists had experiences with wrongful conviction or had someone (sometimes more than one person) they knew that was a victim of wrongful conviction. With each of them coming from different perspectives, along with bringing their own personal experiences with these issues, they each had their reasons for being a part of the panel as well as why they thought this docuseries was important.

For some of the panelists, they see the recurrence of unfortunate events like those in *When They See Us*, and how it is not an isolated incident, but one that continues to happen and will happen if we do not change something.

“What I got from the movie is how little things have changed, and how much we are still doing the same things ... we are still trying children as adults. We are doing the exact same thing over and over again now,” said Attorney Joyce Akhahenda.

All the panelists had their own take on why the docuseries showings were so vital.

“This particular event is put on by the mayor’s office of community outreach. We were talking about how it is so important for you all not only to be involved but to lead the charge. It’s easy to say well that happened in New York that is certainly not happening here or its not happened in my life,” said Gloria Neal, who is a part of constituency affairs in the mayor’s office.

Other panelists were struck by the sheer injustice in the docuseries, as well as in our society.

“The reason I wanted to be a part of this was this case is famous, but also there are so many other cases that aren’t famous. I have been blessed throughout my life and I feel that it is important for me to give back and that is why I do the work I do but, also, this showing is about the things that are most important to me: social justice, racial justice, and juvenile justice, and all three of those are all linked together in the Central Park Five case,” said Attorney Courtney Denson.

Angela Hutton-Hall, vice president of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, who was involved as one of the sponsors of the event, explained how she didn’t really know the real story behind the exonerated five, and emphasized the importance of becoming aware and informed that these things happen. “Like Dr. Martin Luther King said, ‘injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,’” she said.

Many panelists were advocating for the rights of juveniles, and how cases like these treat them unfairly.

“What it says to me is these are children, their brains are not fully developed. It really does say to me that it is a crime to be a person of color... You cannot forget that these are still children, and I think that is what is often lost,” said Attorney Nicole Duncan, who is a juvenile public defender.

Overall though, each of the panelists expressed the importance of change, as well as emphasizing the impact that us as students can make.

“I thought it was important to at least start a discussion and talk about it. We aren’t going to fix anything by having a discussion in this room, but it is the start of the solution... I hope the lesson you can take from this is the opportunity to be just and fair... use that in your everyday lives and in your future careers,” said panelist Steven Tilghman.

That sentiment was obviously shared.

“This movie is a call to action. I think we continue to need new leaders to step up to accommodate and find out the injustice in our community. If we can make a difference that is really what we want to do. I am really passionate about equal rights and fair for all,” said panelist Milford Adams.

Ultimately, the basic goal of these screenings, panelists, and discussions was to prompt thought and reflection within the Denver community. Just being able to get people to see what they previously hadn't allows them to expand their perspective on what is happening in the world around them.

"A lot of people here hadn't seen the docuseries, so I honestly mainly wanted people to come and see it and be in a space where they would be able to discuss it since it is such a powerful docuseries. That was my main hope, is that people would come see it here," said Rideout.

Rideout's goal was achieved in the end with great attendance at the final event.

"It was such a powerful movie, if you haven't seen it you got to see it," said Denver mayor, Michael Hancock.



Sunshine and Roses

February 17, 2020

By Matthew O'Neill

Black Tides

Turbulent blue mounds of water
Mirroring the cloudless sky
The sun skins the surface,
Giving much needed life
To the micro-animals beneath
A sailing vessel cuts a path
In the deep empty void
A fish files through its home
The bird scoops up water and the fish
But the thing keeps on squirming
Until he cracks its bones in his beak
Somber giants drift under the mirror
Gentle beasts, blowing water to the sky
No one can go deep, the demons dwell
Light touches nothing, in the dark
And ancient volcanic vents propel.
All things go to sink and die,
As the hunting lights go out
A toothy frown from the angler
The eyeless creatures of the dark
The deep blackness is left behind
To shore by morning, tide is up,
And dead things are left to the sand
As people fill the sea with fish
Leaving not a single strand
Of life among the deep blue sea.

Black Tides

February 17, 2020

By Patrick O' Neill

Radio Silence

February 17, 2020

By Patrick O' Neill

Part I: Mania

Paul Bookes was better than everyone else in every possible way except one, his distinct and almost immediately perceptible inability to let go. He was smart, yes, and strong, handsome to a fault, straight teeth like marble columns, sleek brown hair and glistening crystalline blue eyes. However, despite his physical attractiveness and numerous academic achievements, including a master's degree in God-Knows-What, his home was stacked to the ceiling with books, papers, CDs, maps, trinkets, and photographs of pearl of a woman he called Savannah (the one who disappeared).

These photographs existed in piles stacked neatly, face-up in order to see her smile, and the eccentric coil of her lips, the twinkle of her eyes, as Paul sorted through and studied each picture day by day (whenever he had the chance). In this way the pictures never gathered dust because he handled each with exquisite care on the daily as though they were a valuable collection of rare trading cards (collect them all and get the full set). And oh yes, he had the full set. Obsessed.

This particular morning Paul was thinking quite suddenly of the blue whale, as it is known, the largest animal on the planet. And he thought about how he was here, and the blue whale was there (the far-off ocean), so as that Paul could not currently see it. So, how could it be that such a creature was real? And Paul thought about how he was here and how he drives to work each day in a silver Honda and returns home eight to ten hours later all in fifteen-minute, three miles back and forth stretches. And life always seemed to move straight and pass him by daily. He whispered, "Savannah." And wondered between the gentle blue whale and himself, who would die first? Savannah. He went with the flow but needed to be pushing against it. Why should he choose to block the sword when he could hack through the wrist?

Know thyself. Never walk like a cat around hot porridge.

There must be something more, he thought.

Paul Brookes' car weaved ever-closer to the highway guardrail, at 65 mph yellow and gray passed under the car rapidly while the field of wheat beside the road passed in slow cautious lulls like a slideshow backgrounded by the sound of *Pink Floyd* on the radio. Everything fit nicely. Tap the steering wheel on cue. Rhythm. Tap. Tap. Tap. Click to shift to 1st gear. Paul pulled up his driveway and pulled the park lever. He thought about the divorce (life passed by). He thought about her figure, and saw the dust rising through the car window as the 4 pm sun blared and planted the idea of cancer in the skin of a woman walking her dog down the sidewalk.

Paul collected his coat and water bottle and unlocked the door of his home, placing his hand flat against the red brick wall outside the door, which was hot, but he didn't remove his hand even though it burned. Not uncomfortably. Savannah. He would get her back was the thought that flashed through his mind before logic took over. He would get her back. The floor in the home was uneven, just like the atmosphere and the overflowing bookshelves.

Determined. The carpet smelled of mildew and held flecks of lint and cobwebbing. A distant spider studied Paul (the son of a ghost) and related to him because he heralded the sound a spider makes as it scurries across a skeleton.

Paul taught physics at a community college nowadays because physics was the only sad thing he could rely on. Why is the tattoo of her name on your shoulder crossed out? She didn't really love him. Marriage doesn't take time, just money. Nothing exists on purpose. Calamity.

Paul sat upon a red sofa in his living room, big enough for two. The unoccupied space was filled with newspaper clippings of crossword puzzles, all blank. Paul needed them or thought he might soon be bored enough to need them. A ten year collection. The divorce was only 3 months ago. Judges, lawyers, paperwork. No struggle.

He was staring at himself in the wood-framed mirror above the mantelpiece. Was that really him? Who is he? His eyes are red, teeth yellow. Monster. His eyes were crystalline blue and his teeth white. Monster. All peace was broken when his cellphone began to ring. Sunlight filtered through the blinds, laying a ribbed pattern upon the floor. The phone rang three times. Four, and he picked up.

"Hey Paulie! Bro!" said a man, his younger brother.

"Oh, hey John!" Paul replied in earnest. He is not sad. Only thinking. "What's up?"

"You home from work yet buddy?"

"Yeah, but I think I'm in for the night John."

"Come on over for dinner Paul, 91 Cedar Road, you know? It's Friday!"

Paul peered at his watch, 4:32 pm. It was probably Friday, by the smell of the air, "Okay John I will." No reply. He hung up.

Paul went to the kitchen, rubbing his side, and took an aspirin or two. The medicine cabinet door creaked and whined. He pulled a menthol stick out of his pocket and began chewing on the end. Supposed to help him quit.

And there he was pulling out of the driveway again. 4:45 pm, still blistering hot, except now the sun had had the time to reach inside the car and burn the seatbelt, but Paul didn't mind the tearing heat. *Hey Jude*, played on the classic rock channel now, as the car edged down the side street, with Paul inside. 20mph. He thought about Savannah again. That face, that red hair, green luminous eyes, chewy lips, sharp nose, tall... beautiful. Paul wasn't going to take the highway to John's house, it was rush hour. But if nothing matters in the end why should he care about something as insignificant as traffic? Ten minutes down Alder Street, 45mph, bumpy, crooked. In other news, the world, bumpy, crooked. Up Cedar Road to house 91, the last one was 89. How do they decide which house gets which number? Who decides it? Savannah.

John lived in a nice house, two stories, grey brick, white pane, dark glass. See the lines converge, people are tricked into believing there's a purpose. Paul pulled up the driveway which was harshly sloped because John lived on a hill at the end of a col-de-sac.

John's wife, Madison, opened the door. Her voice was grating. She was religious. She wiped her hands on her apron and welcomed Paul inside. Paul knew his way, he had the extra key.

"I didn't expect you to be here so soon, Paul," she said.

"John didn't give me a good time, and I wasn't busy."

"Johnny stepped out to the store to get some drinks," Madison and John had been married since college times, several years before Paul and Savannah and 3 months after, "How have you been Paul? How's work?"

"Everything is okay," he said.

"Hello hello! Paulie, you here? You'll never believe who I saw!" One could hear John kicking off his shoes, after pushing through the door, two six-packs in one hand and a paper bag of groceries in the other, he plopped these items on the table where Paul and Madison were now sitting, "I saw her Paul, when I was driving just now. She was walking some dog on a blue leash, next to some guy."

Paul's heart sank, "Who?" John was oblivious.

"Savannah!" he was already popping open a *Budweiser*.

Paul didn't speak or move while John sipped the froth and continued to say the name Savannah between many other unimportant words. Savannah meant freedom and bliss. Paul meant torment and traps. Madison studied Paul, making a mental note of the beard.

"John will you shut up, can't you see he doesn't want to hear about her!" she scolded.

"Sorry, sorry, sorry...buddy, sorry," John took another sip.

They were all friends in the end of course. Between the three of them and the great blue whale, Paul wondered, who might die first? Although, why should he care about some distant creature the likes of which he could not see or know? What had been lost? Savannah. Hope. Lions. Gazelles.

Half an Eagle is a Hawk as they know (life passes by).

Paul began drinking a beer, in five minutes he took another. Madison put the lasagna in the oven. John helped make a salad. He was a good husband. The TV was on in the background and was visible in the living room from the dining table where Paul sat. *The Raiders of the Lost Ark* was on, the money supply was waning.

Paul would never want to be like Indiana Jones, never staying in one place, always running from traps. Eating monkey brains. Having faith. Becoming a rumor, sinking into conjecture, never advancing according to some plan. He would instead exist in echoes and live in the wind. Long for the wheat grasses of Iowa to consume him just as the sands of Southern California might've done.

They ate hot lasagna and Caesar salad that evening, while looking at weather reports. Feeling off. Several or more beers in each of their stomachs, caused John to convince Paul to stay the night, and drive home in the morning. He took the couch. Feeling off.

Part II: Rain and Shine

That sacred buried point where the beige wall of the room met with the white paint of the ceiling, created an esoteric boundary between the heavens and the earth. Monet, Renoir, Matisse, they probably would have hated it. Vague and otherworldly, it was raining outside when Paul opened his eyes on the couch. Hot the day before, cool and rainy the next. The

pestiferous liquid dampened the window on the outside and made the inside pane as chilled as ice.

The rain rushed past the window, carried microscopic pieces of dirt back to the Earth. Rain falling, rain pouring, coming down. Rain coming down in sheets. Sleep. Repeat. Paul slowly stood, jaggedly, bumping into a side table, where a decorative glass globe sat. The globe faltered and tumbled, but Paul caught the planet, secured it, waiting for news crews to arrive.

Who gets to save the world? How do they pick the next Pope? John-Paul

There are these mysteries.

John and Madison were already in the kitchen, speaking softly. John hadn't yet gained his usual boisterousness. They drank coffee.

They haven't located themselves yet.

"Mornin' Paul," said John.

"Hey John."

"Sleep well?"

"Well enough. It's raining."

John was oblivious, "You want bacon and eggs buddy? Bacon and eggs sounds good to me, how about you? Waffles too, eh?"

Rain came down in sheets.

Part III: Years Later

Nobody needs a purpose, people should just exist for the sake of existing. Living in pleasure is supposedly a sin. Why? The bogeyman cannot get you until someone gives him a bigger knife.

When Savannah left Paul (nearly three years ago now), one of the things she said to him was, "Having the same general body parts doesn't count as having something in common." Now as she occasionally walks along, the sun has already planted the idea of cancer in her skin.

Paul had said that when he was four years old he saw a birthday clown drowning in the backyard pool. There are these mysteries.

Savannah traced the grooves of the banister as she stepped lightly down the stair. She was remarried (only last year) and lived with her rich (wealthy) hairy (rich) husband, Bill, in a miniature mansion in the hills., big enough to host a reception. Savannah had grown fatter since a divorce that seemed so long ago. Paul hadn't spoken to her in nearly two years, and indeed was on his way to forgetting her existence entirely, even starting to date again. The pictures now lay in a plastic bin in the broom closet.

Savannah went to the kitchen, after kissing her husband on the cheek. She had to make his breakfast. Paul. Her husband was watching TV, some conservative news channel no doubt. She recalled Pau...the money her new husband had and made him an omelet slowly. The cheese crackled and popped in the Teflon pan. The eggs sizzled. He ate half of the omelet shortly after and looked disgusted and went to work.

Savannah cleaned the dishes and got ready for her own job, teaching algebra at Alder High School. She ate no breakfast but had a few sips of coffee, obscuring the dark circles under her eyes with *L'Oréal*. She tied back her red hair and pulled a pair of jeans (far too small now) around her hips, walking out the door with ankle boots on her feet. One needn't be a religious person to lose one's mind.

A tractor in a wheat field in Iowa twists the land in ever-opening circles. Life passes by. Savannah had better options, but first she had to pick up Bill's dry cleaning.

If she forgot to grab some milk, Bill could get upset. Obsessed. Bill sometimes thought about locking her in the closet, frantically. He was often angry. He remembered not to let her scream, not to let her call the neighbors.

John and Madison started getting into horror films after their first child was born last year. The world turned.

Why is it 'around the globe' and 'across the world'? 'Across' implies flatness, and yet all are aware that the world is perfectly round. And so, life passes by behind rot-stricken oak doors.

Bill came home at 4 o'clock, his beard was black and grizzly around his neck and chin, stretching around his face like a mask. His dark skin was made darker by the dim lights of his empty house. He found satisfaction in that... *his* house. His large manly hands, veiny, slammed the door behind him. The lights were on, she must've left them on all day. 'Where was that damn woman?' Bill thought. He reached for his phone to text her. Desperation. Where are you? Where are you? He felt agitated but okay with the fact that she must have went to the grocery store without telling him, she had to pick up some milk.

Savannah deliberated on milk choices far longer than necessary, anything to get out of going home too early. She shopped and shopped at that grocery store for the sake of not going home. She imagined what her home might possibly need. The mop was getting old, better grab a new one, but which one should she grab. They were running low on eggs, right? Grade A. Toilet paper, should she get the regular cheaper brand or the ultra-soft? Deliberations for nearly an hour. Bill needs bananas, apples, cherries, right? 'I should grab some frozen meals for lunch at work,' Savannah mused for herself, while the fluorescent lights of each aisle and the glossy floor planted the idea of consumerism in her skin and the skin of every patron at the store. Each of the glossed tiles on the floor was peppered with black specks, she wondered who might've designed such a pattern.

Her wire grocery cart rattled like an old woman down the frozen food aisle, where she took time to grab the precise cuisines she wanted. 700 calories. 500 calories. They want to bring cholesterol to the American heart. Associations and byproducts, nutrition facts and warnings. Saturated fats with oil seeping through the corner of the thin cardboard on this week's latest frozen Indian dinner with curry. She picked that one, wiping away the collection of frost that obscured the name, satisfied, tossing it in her cart. Bags of frozen French fries, pints of raspberry sorbet, thick gooey vanilla ice cream, chocolate sauce, peas, carrots, corn. The cart was becoming heavier and it became easier for the rough wheels to lean into the divets or cracks in the tile. Slices of life trapped in cardboard. Savannah reasoned that all this was necessary, she hadn't gone shopping in a long time. \$123.45. But she forgot the reusable bags in the car and drove home dismally to see Bill.

Her phone was lighting up with texts from Bill, but she took the drive slowly. 35mph. The Amber Alert was far too easy for everyone to ignore on their phones. By the time she got home it would be almost 7 o'clock. Rows of red and yellow-leafed aspen trees along the

medians and sidewalks whisked by as she drove. The sky darkened, does nature include space or just the Earth?

It was 7 o'clock, and as she pulled up the driveway, Savannah felt everything at once, a great sinking feeling. The garage door opened like a curling spine, crackling along the way with that garage door motor kind of sound. This meant that Bill would be aware that she was home at last because he could always hear the door from the living room. Bill parked his nicer car in the backyard in a detached garage, where he thought he might be safe from the accidents of Savannah. Savannah collected all the groceries, hanging the bags along her forearms, as her flesh oozed around the edge of those plastic handles and her skin reddened under the pressure. She thought about those days long past when she was less afraid, less subservient. Paul. It was 7 o'clock and the moon was almost out.

Bill noticed her right away as Savannah came into the house through the garage door that lead directly into the kitchen. She temporarily relieved herself by plopping all the bags down on the counter and silently removing and organizing items. Bill had the news on again. He was always watching the news, as though he hoped to hear something about his own political or economic goals being met. Those goals would never be met. The cold food was now in the fridge. And Savannah had paused by the kitchen window to watch the last rays of sunshine dip beneath the horizon and disappear. How could she disappear and never be found?

Humanity is guilty.

"What are you daydreaming about over there?!" Bill said, striking Savannah out of a brief and nearly imperceptible trance or hesitation, as she stood near the crumb-littered counter weary after a long day.

Regular.

"Nothing dear!"

"Still thinking about that slick idiot Paul?"

"No dear, of course not," she said, beginning to wipe the counter with a soiled and chaotically dampened washcloth, wiping crumbs off the counter and into her hand. The moistened

pieces of bread, crackers, and lettuce stuck to her palm when she tried to shake them into the pull-out trash bin.

Bill changed the channel of the TV from Fox to CBS and back again, his thumb crushing the rubber buttons into the plastic casing of the clicker. High Definition, Static Hums, hmm.

“Maybe I should pay him a little visit,” he said, flipping the channel to AMC, where *The Godfather* played the scene where Carlo beats Connie as she smashes plates one by one.

Savannah dropped a serving dish on its way from the dishwasher to the cupboard. Bill flinched and turned towards her, severity upon his brow, his beard hair curling like the tentacles of a dead octopus after a fine exposure to soy sauce.

In the night Bill kills people, but during the day he drives trucks.

Somewhere nearby an ambulance stopped at *Dairy Queen* and a paramedic bought ice cream for himself and his partner, while a weary man pushed a bin of garbage towards the street. There are these mysteries.

“What the hell did you do?”

“Just dropped something dear, don’t worry about it.”

“What’s the matter with you,” Bill turned the volume up on Connie, and Savannah’s grip tightened on the steak knife she pulled from the dishwasher. General Electric.

John and Madison fast forwarded through the Carlo and Connie scene that evening.

“What are you making for dinner?” Bill said.

“Curry and rice,” Savannah said through clenched teeth.

“Geez, you don’t need to be so wound up.”

The sun had failed her. The sun had failed them.



The average College student during midterms

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