

SWEET 3.2

JANUARY 2011

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Someplace Else—Letter from the Editor

Laura Hershey, whose beautiful poem "Relationship" appears in this issue, passed away between submitting her work to me and my acceptance email. I cried when I discovered this, and when I read a little bit more about what an exceptional person she was, and when I re-read the poem, so resonant on this topic: "The body holds the soul like a lost love..."

Laura, I came to learn, was not only a beautiful poet. She was also an advocate for people living with disabilities, for LGBTQ people, for people whose voices too often get lost or drowned out in this cacophonous world. She was an artist, and an activist; she did what all of us in the literary community struggle to do, every day—to put words down that come together in a way that matters—and she did more. I am humbled to be in the position of publishing one of her poems.

So I said, at the beginning, that I cried. As a writer myself, I was sorry that she didn't get to know how much I liked the poem. And I was sorry to learn what we—all of us in this world—had lost. Most of all, though, I cried because that is what beautiful writing often does for me: it seeps into the cracks of my everyday tax-paying-kitchen-cleaning-go-to-work self and finds the tender core inside; it reminds me what is really important; it connects me to other people and the universe in ways nothing else does.

At Sweet, we're not all about the tears. We love to laugh, to play with words, to be buoyed by joy, to learn and to understand. But if something you read in this issue makes you feel like crying, I urge you to let the tears come. That words can do this, can open us up, is a blessing. "The body inspires the soul/to live, to live, itchy feathers and all."

—Katherine Riegel

Nin Andrews

On the island where I come from,

the men know that physical beauty is their most important asset. They dress in brightly colored clothes designed to display the body's graceful motions, the rise and fall of each breath, thigh, bicep. Popular are the revealing silk blouses, left unbuttoned to display chest and abdominal muscles and the traditional tattoo of our native flowering vine that begins at the navel and twines below the belt where the flower rises when in bloom. (Sometimes the tattoo of a bird is chosen instead, with one wing reaching above the belly, it's head diving below—or rising, depending on the occasion.) Some men, however, object to being seen as the second sex or as mere sex objects, and they refuse to dress in the revealing and colorful outfits most island-men wear. They choose instead the long dark skirts and gowns professional women wear. Walking down the sidewalks, trying to balance in women's heels or pumps, these men look like large penguins waddling from side to side. Locals laugh when they walk past and whistle and call out names, but the men in dresses do not despair. They say it is only in dresses that they can enter the society of women and be treated as equals. Only in dresses can they speak with soft voices, think with gentle thoughts, and be respected in the work places. Only in dresses can they visit women's salons and have their hair and nails done, share in the gossip and small-talk of the town, and enter their private world of female power and politics. They say someday they will break the gender barrier. Then they will earn as much as women earn, enjoy multiple orgasms, and no longer need to apologize at the end of a long day: *I'm sorry, Honey. I have a headache*, before rising from their beds to gaze at the stars overhead and ask the silent heavens, *Why, God? Why?*

Mother's Love

On the island where I grew up, the cooks were the most revered members of society, admired alongside the priests, the painters, the architects of the governor's mansion. Cooking, it was said, was a rare form of magic, transmitted from angels to women on earth. That is why my mother, a chef in her own right, was so renowned. My mother baked a special pastry in those days that she sold from a kiosk on the plaza in the middle of the town each day at noon. In the early mornings she woke before dawn and rolled out the dough made from rice flour mixed with wine. Her long black hair pulled back in a bun, her bare arms waving like wings, she swooped around the kitchen like a crazed bird, mixing and rolling the thin dough, brushing it with almond oil and a paste of nuts, fig syrup, and lychees—a white translucent fruit that tastes of music and summer rain. Sometimes, if the mood struck her, my mother would add a touch of cinnamon and a little something else. It was that something else everyone loved. No one knew what it was or why. (Only I, her son, was allowed to spy on her and see what it was, but to this day, I won't tell a soul.) My mother would only say that everything has an essence without a name, that that is our special additive, our gift to life. But there were rumors that her pastries were enchanted. For certain men, it was said, her pastries would inspire such desire, that with each bite, they would feel greater and greater greed. Before these men could stop themselves, they would be down on their knees, weeping and begging for more. *More! Please, please, more!* they cried. You could hear their voices above the noisy crowds in the town like the moans of lonesome hounds. Some men had to be stopped from competing with the pigeons that pecked at the crumbs on the city streets. Others had to be taken away by police. Still others accused my mother of crimes, insisting she was a witch and part of the female conspiracy whose sole purpose was to keep the men hungry, desperate, deprived. But my mother said some men are just born with too much greed. They can never be satisfied. It is the curse of the male species. She was too busy to notice me then, crawling beneath her counter, licking the crumbs from the

floor and my sticky fingers and knees. If I didn't lick quickly enough, tiny yellow bees would swarm around me, nestling into the crevices of my skin, dancing their tiny feet up and down as if to an invisible beat before stinging me again and again.

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Vagina Envy

1. Listening to the women laugh and chat at the end of the day, a man feels he is left out, alone, stranded. He is but an afterthought in her life, a period at the end of her day, or a mere after-dinner mint.

2. Whatever bliss a sufferer feels, he loses it too quickly, sometimes by tiny increments, often in a flash. His life, he fears, is meaningless.

3. You must learn to swim, a therapist suggests. But many who suffer from vagina envy are afraid of drowning. They dream of being pressed underwater, unable to surface, as sharks pursue them amid schools of shimmering fish.

4. Highly contagious, the disease spreads like bad news, starting in street corners and traveling quickly up and down neighborhoods before entering into bars and restaurants, schools and sanctuaries, and finally consuming entire towns.

5. A common cause: a man is left by a woman he loves. Every woman after reminds him of the first. She has the same hair color, eye color, the same giddy laugh. Every woman after reminds him of his failed attempts to win back the first, though he loved her only when she was leaving him forever, only when he knew he would never see her again.

6. The sickness gives off a distinct odor. It's as if the air has been singed, and everyone should be wearing masks over the nose and mouth.

7. While most folks write of love and desire as blissful events, the men who experience vagina envy feel only resentment, sorrow and bitterness, as if there is an ongoing party of earthly delight to which they have never received an invitation.

8. There is no cure known by the traditional medical community, but the healers assure these men that they need not worry. Suffering is normal on Planet Earth. If they perform kind deeds, say their prayers, and accumulate good karma, they will be reborn as women in their next lives.

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NIN ANDREWS is the author of several books of poetry and short fiction including *The Book of Orgasms*, *Why They Grow Wings*, *Midlife Crisis with Dick and Jane*, *Sleeping with Houdini*, and *Dear Professor, Do You Live in a Vacuum*. Her newest collection, *Southern Comfort*, was released by CavanKerry in the fall of 2009. Her favorite sweets all include ginger: ginger candies, ginger cookies, ginger cakes, ginger bread. You can find her blog at ninandrewswriter.blogspot.com and her website at www.ninandrews.com.

Susan Lilley

Hula Girl Honor

When I opened the door and saw her
black scarf of hair, her eyes glittered up
for the early dinner show, I quaked
in front of this tall palm,
swaying in stillness
as strong trees do. In my *haole* world,
visiting the girl who had brazenly
stolen your boyfriend was unthinkable,
yet here she stood, moving but not
moving, her eyes black honey.
“He is a one-woman man,” she said.
Surrender made her even more
beautiful as she handed me
gifts with her story-making hands,
his favorite pineapple bread, some
macadamia candy, bowing farewell so deeply
tears splashed on her elegant toes.
At summer’s end he quite correctly snapped
my thin plastic heart in two and found
his love again. I heard they raised a slew
of kids and run a Polynesian show
in South Florida near the beach, with fire
dancing and slit-drums made of rosewood,
her black hair shimmering down, her hips
a blossoming life of their own.

SUSAN LILLEY'S work has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *Poet Lore*, *The Southern Review*, *Drunken Boat*, *Passager*, *New Madrid*, *The Florida Review*, and other journals. She is the 2009 winner of the Rita Dove Poetry Award and a recipient of a Florida Individual Artist fellowship. In 2006 her chapbook, *Night Windows*, won the Yellow Jacket Press contest for Florida poets. She teaches at Trinity Preparatory School and Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida.

David Sklar

Real Estate

When younger, I purchased a house in the Kingdom of Death:
a tiny cottage—
not even a summer home really, but I
like to go there on weekends
and sometimes late at night.

I bought it when I was six. It cost me
a butterfly and three snails. It has
fluorescent lights in all the rooms
which turn on and off unexpected,
and of course it has hot and cold water
running in place.

There's a freeway across the river.
The sound of the cars at night
entices me when making love,
unnerves me when trying to sleep.

The access ramp to the freeway
is seven days' journey away
on a path of round stones
which rattle insultingly
if you speak.

If you wish to visit
you must know to walk in silence:
if you need to find me
I cannot tell you; you must know the way.

DAVID SKLAR writes in the places between the impossible magic of legend, the inscrutable magic of dreams, and the breathtaking everyday magic of the world in which we live. His works include fiction in *Strange Horizons* and *Triangulation: End of the Rainbow*, and poetry in *Paterson Literary Review* and *Bull Spec*. His first novel, *Shadow of the Antlered Bird*, is available as an e-book from [Drollerie Press](#), for whom he is currently coediting the two-headed anthology *Trafficking in Magic/Magicking in Traffic*. A more complete publication history can be found on his Web site at [davidwriting.com](#).

David lives in New Jersey with his wife Rachel and their two kids. He works as a freelance writer and editor. The finest dessert he has tasted is the wedding cake that [Sweet Sisters](#) of Totowa, New Jersey, baked for him and Rachel in 2002. The finest he has imagined will appear in the upcoming *Magic Beans* anthology from [Dark Wine and Stars](#).

Susanna Lang

Already

Quick, quick, quick, calls a mockingbird outside the window,
throat pulsing with song.

Quick, while the flowering cherries
still bask in their own light, while the maple

leaves are small folded hands, and the oaks are hinting
at green. Inside,

an old man laughs over his newspaper. It's not
a funny story, but he has heard it so often before.

And here's another, the corner house is empty.
That's not funny either,

but the mockingbirds laugh from their branches,
It's over, quick, it's over.

SUSANNA LANG'S collection of poems, *Even Now*, was published in 2008 by The Backwaters Press, and she completed a second manuscript as a fellow at Hambidge last summer. In 2009, her poem "Condemned" won the Inkwell competition, judged by Major Jackson, and was featured on [Verse Daily](#). Her poems have appeared in journals including *New Letters*, *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, *The Baltimore Review*, *Kalliope*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Jubilat*, and *Rhino*. Translations include *Words in Stone* by Yves Bonnefoy. A poem published in *The Spoon River Poetry Review* won a 1999 Illinois Arts Council award. She lives with her family in Chicago, where she develops curriculum for the Chicago Public Schools and enjoys her husband's fruit pies.

You can read her poems and those of the writing group which has kept her work honest at www.eggmoneypoets.org. Other poems are available online [here](#) and [here](#).

Nick McRae

An E-mail from God Concerning the Recent Plague of Locusts

"And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power." – Revelation 9:7-8

Yesterday I twisted open the cap of the world
and in flowed locusts—tiny centurions,
breasts bronzed with armor, their forelegs clanging
together like swords upon shields.
They twisted through the clouds like lightning.
You saw them crashing toward you
and I noticed you clenched your laptop

to your chest as if you thought they were rain.
You reminded me of Pharaoh cradling his son's limp body
in his arms, cursing me as though I were a motorist
who had run the boy over and driven away.
But you ducked into a Starbucks before the locusts hit
and all hell quite literally broke loose. As you sat
sipping your latte and typing on your screenplay,

I watched the locusts strip bark from trees,
paint from houses, stacks of letters from the hands
of postmen, and then the postmen themselves,
their uniforms collapsing into small blue heaps,
which the locusts then devoured. You may not have seen
the swarm invade the pet shop. They swirled
like the great clouds of a tornado and ate and ate

until the animals were merely white cages
locked in larger cages, the shopkeeper's bones

slumped over the counter. You seemed not to appreciate their sweep through the bus station, leaving in their wake only watches, wallets, and here and there a prosthetic limb, the buses idling emptily in their lanes. Once they had eaten their fill, I watched as they spiraled

back up into the atmosphere, the black mass of them blotting out the sun so that you thought it was night already and decided to head home for a bite.

I know you were pissed that you had to walk all that way in the dark, but I did notice that locusts figure prominently into the end of Act II Scene VII and I wanted to say, *you're welcome*.

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Lumber

Charcoaled stumps scrape low clouds,
almost as if they scribble
their names, the earth spinning
a crude cursive beneath the sky.
This is earth before the Reclamation,
as they call it, the rocks and sludge bruised,
giddy as a child fresh up
from a bicycle tumble.
Then the gloved hands will come
to pick up the pieces, thrusting bulbs
and saplings into the crust.

Maybe there will be sunlight—
the smoke and cloud

blown fresh by a morning guster.
Maybe springs will arc
through here again—some branching-off
of a distant river.
Maybe roots will settle: and nests
will settle: as we are settling into lawnchairs
somewhere highways away.

In Bohemia, a man once burned
by the light of his own words,
his eyes rolling earthward
under the tall paper hat of a heretic.
Lashed already to the post,
he swore an oath
to the snap and spark
of straw and charred cherrywood
as beggars held out their hands
to the rising fire of his memory.

This is how the flames lick us,
trees and streams and birds
so hot inside we groan
to feel them growing—
the earth on our hands black, and red,
and greener every second.

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NICK McRAE'S poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Copper Nickel*, *DIAGRAM*, *Linebreak*, *Passages North*, *Poet Lore*, *American Literary Review*, and elsewhere. A former Fulbrighter, he is currently a University Fellow in Creative Writing at The Ohio State University. After meals, Nick tends to skip dessert in favor of another helping of whichever dish was the meatiest. You can find him on the web at www.nickmrae.com.

*Hillary C. Katz***Only So**

No one is able to say how the moon
still astonishes in December when we've seen it
glow full and silver eleven times before, and that's
just this year. Years become
sleeping cats and blur like impressionist paintings.
There's only so much difference
between blue and green. There's only
so much sky to see before it fades
into itself and the naked eye
widens to make it new again. In the future
people on the streets will look
perpetually up, and notice
how the clouds gather and release
like clenched fists or nerves. Let's
let go like clouds, they'll say,
let's be translucent wisps instead of these
opaque orbs we're so proud of.
They will uncoil like sleeping snakes
and drift about like loose threads, weightless.
There will be no difference between hot and cold,
ocean and land, field and mountain. Everything
will be just right. Look how happy we are,
they'll say. Look how we've made everything
beautiful and the same. But always at night
they will stare with pin eyes at the moon
and wonder how to be like that,
ever-transforming and unchanging, and if
one was to brush against another in passing

neither would know the other's name.

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HILLARY C. KATZ is a poet and writer from Vermont. She recently graduated from the University of New Hampshire where she studied literature and creative writing. Currently, she lives and works on the seacoast of New Hampshire as a barista and a freelance writer. Born with an insatiable sweet tooth, she has a wide range of favorite desserts, including dark chocolate, lemon sorbet, and pecan pie. You can check out her [blog](#) or contact her at hillaryckatz@gmail.com.

You're Not Supposed to Pet the Donkeys

Rachel Furey

You're not supposed to pet the donkeys in Ireland. It has to do with foot-and-mouth disease. There are big signs when you first get into the airport. It's the first thing I saw when I stepped off the plane in Shannon, my eyes fluttering from lack of sleep – confused by the six hour time change. I'd come as part of the exchange program my university had set up, but in all the talk about health insurance and currency exchanges, I couldn't remember anyone pulling me aside to warn me about foot-and-mouth disease. I stood in line, staring at that big sign in front of the gray customs desk. I still can't remember exactly what the sign said, something about not touching livestock, with foot-and-mouth disease in large and dark letters. They were supposed to be ominous, but in my sleep-deprived state they became rather humorous. I imagined green, leprechaun-like people with purple beaks and hooves.

*

I rented a small room in a town called Athenry. There were castles, old stone walls. And down the road, there were donkeys. When you walked along the sidewalk, they came right up to you, lifting their heads over the rock wall that kept them in. They'd jockey their heads up and down, begging to be petted. I studied their mouths and feet and found nothing wrong with them, save the excess of saliva dripping from their jaws. Surely, saliva wasn't a bad sign. Animals simply drooled.

I knew nothing about foot and mouth disease. I'd had a particularly pesky strain of athlete's foot for most of my middle school years. Doctors stared at my feet in awe, unable to cure them. They gave me ointments that made my feet shed skin as if they were snakes. I molted so much that my socks filled with the skin. I changed my shoes and socks several times a day, and still, the disease stuck. My feet were sometimes so sore that after my mother applied ointment and gauze I took to crawling toward my room rather than walking.

The donkey on the other side of the rock wall had the softest eyes, the kindest lashes, a look that asked: *how could you assume I had foot-and-mouth disease?* I reached out my hand and performed the sin of petting a donkey, giving it a good scratch between the ears. Its hairs tickled against the palm of my hand and gathered in soft tufts in between my fingers. Goose bumps rose along my forearm. The donkey stared only at me, forgetting about its donkey friend grazing in the grass behind us. It made happy donkey noises I can't explain in any other way. I smiled back at it. And so we began our daily greeting to each other.

*

There were days I checked the castles for customs agents that might be lurking in the high towers, binoculars pulled to their faces, walkie talkies sending back a description of me: *five foot, brown-haired, always petting the donkey, but no sign of the disease yet*. Athenry was a small town. The agents probably had better places to be: Galway, Dublin. But when the donkeys disappeared only a couple months into my stay, when I imagined them being corralled to a different field with thicker greener grass because I couldn't imagine the worst, I again wondered if the agents had been watching me. If they had decided I wasn't strong enough to resist the pleasure of petting a donkey, that I could never be taught, and therefore the temptation must be taken away.

I mourned the loss of the donkeys, the friendly faces that populated my walk. My mother must not have understood my sadness over the matter when I called home. During those high-priced international calling minutes, she insisted I lie about the donkey petting when it was time to come home. Border control didn't want me spreading foot-and-mouth disease. Her voice was stern, as if she was reminding me not to prod a knife into the toaster in order to retrieve a piece of burnt toast. She followed with an email: *say no to all the questions the customs agents ask, or they might not let you back into the country*.

*

They might not let you back into the country. I could stay in the land with castles and rock walls. Perhaps the donkeys would return and I could live among them. Together, we could frolic in the grass fields, roaming around the stone towers that now stood in ruins. The custom agents wouldn't care anymore because I wasn't going anywhere. But the ice cream was better back home.

Before I left, I practiced saying *no* in front of the bathroom mirror. It was something my health teacher had talked about in high school. But, after all these years, I had never been offered cigarettes or crack or weed, something my health teachers had led me to believe was a regular occurrence. Here I was practicing my very first big *no*, the *no* I would have to answer when I was asked if I had petted any livestock. I practiced making eye contact with myself in the mirror. I practiced not smiling. It was hard. I had to slap myself a couple times.

The customs agent was tall, thin, slightly attractive. It didn't seem like it would be too much of a disappointment if he had to cuff me. He asked a lot of questions before getting to the livestock one, and I answered them all with *no*, practicing my strong and steady voice for the lie to come. When he finally asked if I had touched any livestock, I stared at his hands, looking for signs that he too might have once felt donkey hair tickle against his palm. Then I looked at him. He didn't look up, only stared at the sheet where he checked off my *no*'s. A line had formed behind me and I gave him this last *no*. It came not from my stomach but somewhere high in my throat, and I was prepared for him to ask the question again. He didn't. He checked off my last *no*. I marched on through, caught my plane, and made it home.

Still, I wonder what would have happened if I would have confessed it all to that customs agent. *Yes, sir, I petted a donkey. Several, actually. On numerous occasions. And I loved it. One of them licked*

me, but just on the hand, which I thoroughly washed with soap afterward. The donkeys disappeared after a time. Is that your doing? I wonder what he would have done, if I would have been put in a quarantined cell and tested for foot-and-mouth disease. Or if he might have leaned forward, looked me hard in the eye, and repeated the question for me again, giving me ample time to change my answer.

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RACHEL FUREY is currently a PhD student at Texas Tech. She wouldn't have had the chance to write the above essay had Southern Illinois University at Carbondale not provided her with the wonderful opportunity to study in Ireland. She is a winner of *The Sycamore Review's* Wabash Prize for Fiction and *Crab Orchard Review's* Charles Johnson Student Fiction Award. Her work has also appeared in *Women's Basketball Magazine*, *Freight Stories*, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, *Squid Quarterly*, *Terrain*, *The Adirondack Review*, *Waccamaw Journal*, and *Hunger Mountain*. She loves writing under the influence of ice cream sundaes.

Dogged

Barrie Jean Borich

The dog on the Calumet Expressway was no discernible breed, a good runner the size of a Doberman or Grayhound, sleek and short-haired, dark with russet markings. No collar. The dog ran toward my car as I wound around the exit ramp toward the old East Side, where I was headed to pick up Little Grandma. The dog sped toward the rumble of rusted sedans and semi trucks, into the far southside industrial speedway. Naked was the word that kept coming to mind. Where was that dog headed, so naked, so exposed, her flanks heaving?

This was near to twenty-five years ago, and I had already moved away from Chicago to Minneapolis. I was probably home for a short visit—an anniversary or wedding. Little Grandma lived alone in the old neighborhood and didn't drive, her children spread out into the Chicago suburbs. We were the closest, her oldest daughter's family, just below the city limits where the knock-off bungalows faded into mid-twentieth century ranch houses. Just fifteen minutes south, we were usually the ones in charge of transporting Little Grandma and when I was home I usually volunteered.

It was a yellowish, smoke-stained drive to Little Grandma's, especially back then, well before the era when urban housing project towers were torn down, old mill tracks remade as bike trails, and in Chicago before the Superfund dumps were reclaimed as Harborside International Golf Center and the Calumet was renamed the Bishop Ford Expressway, after the clergyman who spoke at Emmett Till's funeral. This was the mid-1980s, when the Daley machine power grid had begun to either repopulate or replicate, but before today's green city cleanup had begun. The air itself on either side of the freeway seemed bruised and smoldering then, the horizon punctuated by the amber glow from the remaining steel mill and paint factory stacks, a panorama that taught me, when I was a girl, to understand the world as a bleary, glowing finger painting. And too, it was raining the day I saw the dog, the expressway encased in a dingy squall.

I am, without doubt, a dog person. The dogs I live with today receive wrapped presents on Christmas, sleep in my bed, have been known, on special occasions, to wear hats. Years back, before my spouse Linnea and I adopted our first dog, we rescued strays we found on the street in Minneapolis, keeping them in our ramshackle rental yard and putting up signs until their people came to claim them. Once two golden retriever puppies showed up at our back porch door on Easter morning, and it was easy for me, a former Catholic, to believe they were a resurrection gift. We brought them into our apartment and imagined them ours, until some rough-looking young men,

either neighborhood gangsters or pretending to be, showed up at our door. This was the year we saw neighbor boys with guns stuffed into their pants, the spring city papers starting calling the street one block over from us Crack Avenue. The boys leaned up into our faces, calling us the worst words they could think of to let us know they could see we were lesbians, then accused us of stealing their dogs. We handed the puppies over. A few weeks later we adopted a dog of our own.

I wanted to save the expressway dog too, but what could I do? The dog was running so fast, headlong into traffic. I could never have caught up. But even if there had been a way, who's to know how long a stray with such wired eyes has lived wild, and if she did once hang out with humans who knows how they treated her? People have all sorts of ways of making dogs mean, and chances are a dog without a collar streaking up a freeway ramp was not running from a house where she got to wear hats. And did I imagine I could put Little Grandma and a feral dog in the same car, and then what? Let them wrestle for the front seat? I watched the dog veer toward me and the best I could do was swerve out of her way.

Dogs run. Running seems to be one of the ways dogs know they are alive. My own dogs smile when they run. Dogs running, when they run for joy, are bodies leaping into time, elongating a moment, a connection, a physical grace. Sometimes they even bark, as if singing into the moment. But the stray running towards the expressway was not smiling. Her eyes careened every which way as if to ask *where is god, where is god, where is god?*

What I remember of this running dog is not just the blur of her passage but also the backdrop she runs against, the prairie burned away by heavy industry, the earthbound poisons that likely made the cancer forming in Little Grandma's gut, the same landscape that may have led all the girls of my place and generation to develop a bruised, smoked-in sense of ourselves, unable to see heaven in any but the smallest circles of light. I assign my memory of this dog a female gender not because I could actually make out the details, but only because I identify with her pumping and straining leg muscles and those inconsolable eyes, a body in trouble, hurtling toward no good end. Wherever this dog came from, and whatever actually happened on the freeway, each pull of the dog's legs, each scrape of toenails against the grainy asphalt, read to me then, and still reads to me now, as the breathless, beleaguered female strain to keep on living.

This exit ramp circled over and around South Deering, feeding into the avenues that lead to Little Grandma's brownstone, a two-flat just a block from the Irondale housing projects where my mother's father started his drinking and my mother lived unhappily until she married my father. A few miles north human technology and ambition extrapolates into the wonder of the Chicago skyline, but down here, in the place that made the steel that make the skyscrapers possible, human passage is marked through the evidence of detritus, a valley of rust, sulfur stink and accidental scriptures of scrap. Here, before the coming resurrection that will turn at least some of this wasteland back to green, ran the body of a dog who now, many years beyond her natural life, runs in my memory as evidence, yes, of doggedness, a stuttering light, still alive, still running.

BARRIE JEAN BORICH is the author of *My Lesbian Husband* (Graywolf), winner of an American Library Association Stonewall Book Award. Her new book, *Body Geographic*, is forthcoming from the University of Nebraska Press. She's the recipient of the 2010 *Florida Review* Editor's Prize in the Essay and the 2010 *Crab Orchard Review* John Guyon Literary Nonfiction Prize, and her essays appear in recent or forthcoming issues of *Ecotone*, *Seneca Review*, *Indiana Review*, *Hotel Amerika*, *New Ohio Review*, *South Loop Review*, and *Seattle Review*. Her work has been named Notable in *Best American Essays* and *Best American Non-Required Reading*, and she is an assistant professor in the MFA/BFA programs of the Graduate School of Liberal Studies at Hamline University where she's the nonfiction editor of *Water~Stone Review*.

Satisfaction at Cape Disappointment

Tim Elhadj

We had camping reservations at Cape Disappointment, a ridiculous name for a vacation destination. My wife and I amused ourselves by making dreary predictions of a terrible weekend during the three hour ride to the Washington coast. Our five-year-old twins watched cartoons in the backseat. Holly had many fond camping memories from when she was a child and wanted to offer our children the same experience. We pulled onto the loamy state park road and wound through scrub pine to our site, one of a dozen. Although midday, the sky was milky white. Getting out of the car, I felt a stiff wind blow cold sand against my legs.

I wanted the best for my kids, too, but I didn't have the same experiences my wife had to draw upon. My family was an old-fashioned Catholic brood of seven. We went on vacations to the Jersey shore, but we hung out on the boardwalk and slept in motels—beds overflowing, the smallest of us wrapped in blankets on the floor. After my youngest brother was born, my father didn't so much abandon us, as he just seemed to lose interest. He started dating. He would disappear for unexplained weeks at a time. He would bring his girlfriend to the high school football games to watch my older brothers play. One Saturday in the fall, I spotted my father among my classmates, strolling along the cinder track that circled the football field with his girlfriend. He had a full beard and had grown out his hair, which had started to grey in a large patch down the middle of his head. It took me a few minutes to recognize him, and when I finally did, he saw me too. I kept my expression even, as did he. After a heartbeat, he turned, pointed out something in the distance to his date, and then ambled on. My father had been the linchpin of our tribe, but then he just inexplicably took off in another direction. Why? Perhaps it was some sort of midlife crisis, a desire to recapture his youth. Or maybe he had finally fallen in love. A few years later, after he died, my mother revealed to me he really had loved this girlfriend of his. But whatever caused this essential shift in him—love or crisis—just knowing that a person could one day reevaluate their entire life's course and find it so lacking that they would abandon everything and start over had left me uncertain and cautious, especially when it came to my own abilities as a parent. So now, some twenty years later, when I needed to act like an adult, I invariably looked to Holly for an example. If nothing else, she had her fond memories to guide her.

After I unloaded our gear, Holly took the car to get firewood and food for dinner. I shoed the kids down to the beach and began assembling our campsite. When the propane stove was connected and the tent standing, I went to fetch the children and found the beach deserted.

The tide was out, the surf a quiet murmur in the distance.

Scanning the long stretch of wet sand, I saw gleaming ledges of rock, like some giant reptile frozen in the surf. Tall firs stood on all sides. Below the firs, fat white timbers of driftwood, some the girth of a telephone pole, littered the shoreline.

This was no Jersey beach.

The sand ended about a hundred yards south, where the land rose steeply, with a picturesque lighthouse on its seaward tip: Cape Disappointment. As I watched, I saw two tiny figures scaling the rocks. I had found the children. Aaron, a stocky little fireplug of a boy, was blazing a trail for Kennedy, who was closer to the beach, but high enough to cause me concern.

I raced across the beach, but the sand made running feel like an anxiety dream. I kept stopping to catch my breath and holler. Aaron was on his haunches poking a stick into the rock when I finally got his attention. He looked at me with mild wonder. I told him not to move.

"Daddy's coming," I yelled.

He continued poking his stick into the rocks.

I climbed to the children, avoiding the dizzying view down. When I reached Aaron, he took my hand. I escorted him down, and then his sister, who had discerned my terror, and was playing up the drama. "We could have been killed, Daddy!"

During dinner, I confessed how I had found the children. Holly raised one eyebrow, but continued eating. I felt ashamed. I take the kids for an hour or two and they end up in mortal danger. Holly announced that the beach now required adult supervision.

"Adult supervision," Kennedy aped.

*

In the middle of the night, I woke to the clamor of a nearby party. Firecrackers. Hoots and laughter. The darkness disoriented me. Someone started a vehicle and raced its motor. My eyes adjusted, but my head remained heavy.

"Darn kids," Holly hissed.

I could see our children resting peacefully. I lay there wondering how I ought to respond and then inadvertently slipped back into sleep. I woke in the wan light of dawn, a crow cawing noisily outside the tent. I sat up and heard Holly sigh heavily. Creeping out of the tent, I threw a rock at the noisy bird.

Breakfast was glum.

Holly was sleep deprived, I wasn't much better. Holly said I ought to report the teens in the nearby campsite. Everything over there looked peaceful and calm: I saw an old pickup, its fender and hood covered in dull grey primer. It didn't seem neighborly, and I expressed reluctance. Holly glared over her tin of coffee. The entire weekend lay before us.

After breakfast, I set off for the ranger station.

I found a young man in uniform, told him about the previous night, and then walked back to camp. A few minutes later, a ranger jeep roared up the road. Holly and I ducked into our tent and peeked out the window flap.

The ranger got out of his vehicle and stood by the old pickup. One by one, the teenagers drifted over to the ranger, some barefoot. The ranger wore his official hat and kept his hands on his hips. The boys stood looking at their feet, their heads shining halos of hair sticking out in odd directions. One cherub-faced boy used the heel of his hand to rub his eyes.

"Remember partying all night," Holly said.

"We're just like grownups now," I sighed.

Holly suggested we make a pact. "From this point forward," she said, "it's live and let live."

I agreed.

Holly took the children to the beach. The boys catty-corner to us dismantled their tents and loaded their truck. I watched our breakfast fire die. I felt sleepy and sad, as if I, too, were extinguishing. Was this how my father had felt when he grew weary of being a parent? If I dared to look long and hard enough, might I find my own life lacking: this thought left me feeling unsettled and frightened.

Live and let live, I reminded myself.

A girl wandered past our site.

I ignored her, but for the next hour, she came past again and again, each time slowing a bit, peering into our camp. At mid-morning, the sun had not appeared, our camp fire was gone, and the entire park seemed deserted—except for this one lone girl, who kept wandering past our camp.

She approached tentatively. "You need firewood?" she asked.

I smiled. "You have extra?"

"You can get it on the beach," she said. Extending her arms, she presented a large chunk of white driftwood, as if it were a newborn.

Large signs everywhere restricted campers from burning the park's driftwood. "I don't think we're allowed to use the driftwood," I said, trying not to sound condescending. She looked about 12 or 13-years-old and I wondered if she could read.

"If the rangers ask, you say you're using it for whittling." She dropped the driftwood, which made a dull thump.

"Take this," she said. "I got tons."

"O," I said.

"What's your name," she asked, chewing her lip and fingering her hair.

Something about the way she asked this made me uncomfortable. With growing unease, I wondered if she were flirting with me. The whole thing was wrong—the driftwood, the girl, the cloudy

morning and the terrible night. I longed for Holly to show up, a competent adult who would absolutely know what to do. I struggled to stand from my camping chair and decline the driftwood. Just then, Holly and the kids did appear and the girl slipped off.

When I explained what happened, Holly insisted we report her.

"What about live and let live," I laughed.

"This is different," she said, toeing the block of driftwood. "It's environmental."

I couldn't bring myself to report the girl. I had already reported once today. I wanted to wait one day—if not for the sake of decorum, then at least so I could speak with a different ranger.

That night, we slept peacefully.

In the morning, we broke camp and the sun shone. I used my foot to nudge the driftwood by our fire pit into the weeds. The sunshine combined with the sea air made me feel invigorated, as if there were no situation I couldn't handle.

On the way out of the park, Holly stopped at the ranger station. I was determined not to report the girl and was ready when Holly asked. I declined. Politely but firmly. Holly threatened to do it herself and I said that was fine.

Holly's jaw was set, but before she got out of the car, she quickly switched tactics and groaned. "Come with me....," she said.

"Fine," I sighed.

I could do this much.

Inside, Holly stood in line at the information window behind an elderly couple. I browsed a brochure rack. Turning to catch Holly's eye, I saw the ranger was the same young man to whom I had reported the boys. Horrified, I grabbed a brochure, unfolded it, and buried my face. Holly started talking to the ranger. I knew that she was going to explain the girl's scheme for burning the park's driftwood. I knew that to corroborate her story my wife would eventually turn to me, but in that very moment I also knew that I was no longer hounded by the ghost of my father: I could trust my own judgment, which wasn't perfect, but was at least as good as my wife or anyone else's. I would do the best I could with what I had. Any excitement that would light my future days would come from shepherding my children from harms, both real and imagined.

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edits *Junk*, a nonfiction literary magazine that focuses on addiction. His book-length memoir is forthcoming (Central Recovery Press, September 2011). Tim enjoys dessert fruit pies packed with sudafed, artificial caffeine, and real cane sugar.

Festival

Iza Wojciechowska

Spain again, but I rarely tell this story, about how the town built giant statues, puppets mounted on papier-mâché altars filled with something flammable, about how the people paraded them through cobbled streets and parks and past the whitewashed church and lit them all on fire, *Las Falles*, the annual festival of burning, and about how some Sergio or Xavi or Carlos pushed me up against the tarry wall of a bus station while those statues burned against the starry sky outside and people yelled and cava ran through the streets and the warm air smelled like oranges.

Millennium

Warsaw on the brink of the century was cold. I stepped into the wind to take a train an hour west of the city to my grandfather's palace, the pear orchard bare, the pond frozen over, the lion statues sleek in scarves of snow. I shared the Presidential Tower with my mother's sister, the poet, the divorcée, the girl at heart who was still afraid of spiders. She lined my eyes with a blue pencil and I, fourteen years old, read her poetry transfixed by rhymes of love and death, mothers and mythologies and I wanted to be her or be like her because her poems spoke secrets and because she talked to me like an adult even though I wasn't going to be for a very long time. New Year's Eve and dinner in the Venetian Hall, silver silverware, soufflé for desert; illicit wine in the Tower with my aunt's friends and a dachshund; and midnight in the library, books locked along the walls, globes of the universe guarding the balcony, red leather couches and a fireplace. We wrote wants and wishes on rolling papers and at midnight, the corner of the year, the century, we touched the papers to lighters or candles and dropped the flames that dangled from our fingers into glasses of champagne. I wished for something like a hundred on a math test and a boyfriend, a date to the eighth-grade dance, and now I wonder how I was so naïve in a palace with poets on New Year's Eve. We burned and drank our hopes, hugged the men standing in the corners and went for a walk through the linden lane toward the wheat fields, toward the forest, and it never crossed our minds to check whether technology had stopped as everyone had feared, whether the world had ended, because here we were somewhere else, really, where the air was dark and the ground was cold and the sky was simply diamonds.

Etymology

Love, the tennis score, is from the French for egg. A score of zero. *L'œuf*. An egg is ovoid like a zero, fragile like defeat. An egg has potential, has a beating center sometimes, a heart. I think I love a tennis player. Not a professional one of course, but a man who plays tennis in his spare time, who is deft with a racket, who understands the rules and terminologies, the elegance of the game. *Tennis*, from *tenir*, Spanish for to take, to hold, to receive. As a ball, a serve, as a gift, as a beating heart.

At my house no one plays sports. Some of us play games of course, but no one plays or watches sports, our television blank and meek on game days. At my house we like mathematics, or we pretend to as my father passes out equations like Communion wafers and gets lost in the world of things that I will never understand. I operate on a plane of words and languages, I like Greek and Latin roots, Slavic declinations, Turkic agglutinations, but the language of mathematics is difficult to learn. There are no morphemes, phonemes there. There are variables and exponents. There are roots though. Square roots and cube roots. Elements of language must always have roots.

Love is a language of its own. They say that love is a language of its own. That it transcends barriers and boundaries as it transcends so many things, and that lovers need nothing else to understand each other. I don't agree, necessarily, but appreciate the sentiment.

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IZA WOJCIECHOWSKA is finishing her MFA in creative writing at Columbia University, concentrating in creative nonfiction and literary translation. She was born in Poland, grew up in Texas, and graduated from Duke University in 2008. She writes about cultural identity, palaces, and deserts, and she translates prose and poetry from Polish. Her translations have been published in The Brooklyn Rail's *InTranslation* and are forthcoming in *Hayden's Ferry Review*.

Frida's Circle

text and photos by Dinty W. Moore



The women sit on stools for eight to ten hours a day scraping the spines away with small knives. Many of them seem elderly. One is sound asleep, hunched on her stool, knife still clutched in her hand. *Mestizo* women tend to be darker, more round-faced than other Mexicans here in San Miguel de Allende, and selling the cactus fruit is perhaps there only source of income. During my month-long stay, I have seen the cacti everywhere along the road from Guanajuato to San Miguel. This is painstaking work, or painful: the spines will stick in the soft flesh of your hand, break off, and take weeks to work themselves free.



One afternoon I stumble upon an exhibit in a local gallery, “The Heart of Frida.” Kahlo’s mother, Matilde Calderón y Gonzalez, was of primarily indigenous descent and Frida knew more than her share about painful spines. The exhibit is filled with small notes tucked away into boxes, poems and doodles on odd slips of paper, with titles like “Frida, the Crippled Eagle,” and “Diego, the Fat Amphibian.” The notes and pictures are overwhelmingly hopeless. In a poem titled “Wasting Away,” she compares her crippled body to the ash of a cigarette, waiting for Diego to flick her off, into eternity.



During my time in Mexico, I am surrounded by images of Diego Rivera, a circular man I am coming to resemble in my middle age. Rivera consumed human flesh; at least three times, he claimed, out of curiosity, feasting on cadavers purchased from the city morgue. So the least I could do, I thought, was to consume the flesh of the cactus. This wasn't so hard in the end, when I learned that the little green slices in my morning eggs were in fact *nopales*, or prickly pear. I had been eating them all along, without knowing. Still, I wanted more, and earned odd looks from the women in the market when I asked for a bag of round *nopales* with the spines not yet removed.



Frida's crooked spine grew worse over the years, as did her love for Diego, as did Diego's legendary infidelities. Frida progressed from unsent letters ending with "Diego, my great love, I am here, I await you," to poems declaring that Diego the useless toad was only good for eating, "in tomato sauce." She had gone full circle. Looking in a mirror for years, painting her own picture, she found beauty in her stern face and dark eyes, until Diego's endless appetites made her hate what she saw.



In one of her late-life paintings, “The Circle,” Frida Kahlo depicts her own body, with missing limbs, and no head -- a woman disintegrating. Not unbroken. A few days before she died, she wrote in her diary: “I hope the exit is joyful -- and I hope never to return.”



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DINTY W. MOORE is author of *Crafting the Personal Essay: A Guide for Writing and Publishing Creative Nonfiction*, as well as the memoir *Between Panic & Desire*, which won the Grub Street Nonfiction Book Prize in 2009. He worked briefly as a police reporter, a documentary filmmaker, a modern dancer, a zookeeper, and a Greenwich Village waiter before deciding he was lousy at all of those jobs and really wanted to write memoir and short stories. Moore has published essays and stories in *The Southern Review*, *The Georgia Review*, *Harpers*, *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Utne Reader*, and *Crazyhorse*, among numerous other venues. He is a professor of nonfiction writing at Ohio University, maintains a [blog](#), and his favorite sweet is chocolate cake with thick chocolate icing, but he'll settle for tiramisu in a pinch.

Sean Michael Wilson

Adam Smith, Economist

Adam Smith was born in 1723 in Kirkcaldy, Fife.
His widowed mother raised him until he entered the
University of Glasgow, aged only fourteen, on a scholarship.



In 1740, at the age of seventeen, Smith went to Oxford university, leaving eventually in 1746 with an extensive knowledge of European literature. But he was critical of many aspects of the English education system:





Around this time Smith read the work of fellow Scot David Hume. His *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1734-5) was a major book of the time. Smith's interest in Hume's work brought him into conflict with the authorities at Oxford.



Some historians think that Scottish students were often disliked at Oxford then, perhaps not surprisingly, as it was around this time that Bonnie Prince Charlie's army invaded England! Anyway, Smith decided to move back to Scotland and joined in the loose academic group in Edinburgh, which included such notable people as David Hume, John Home, Hugh Blair, Lord Hailes and Principal Robertson.





Though he was silent and awkward in relaxed social situations, Smith could speak well in public – once he got started! It was noted that in his lectures he often seemed unsure of himself at the beginning...



He must have impressed somebody, because after making a series of lectures, he was made first chair of logic (1751), then chair of moral philosophy (1752), at Glasgow University. He soon became a very active figure in Scottish society at the time, being a member of such groups as the Literary Society of Glasgow and the 'Edinburgh Society for encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture in Scotland.'

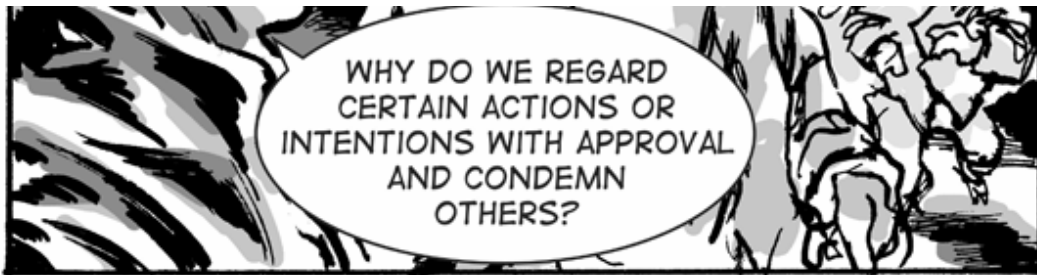


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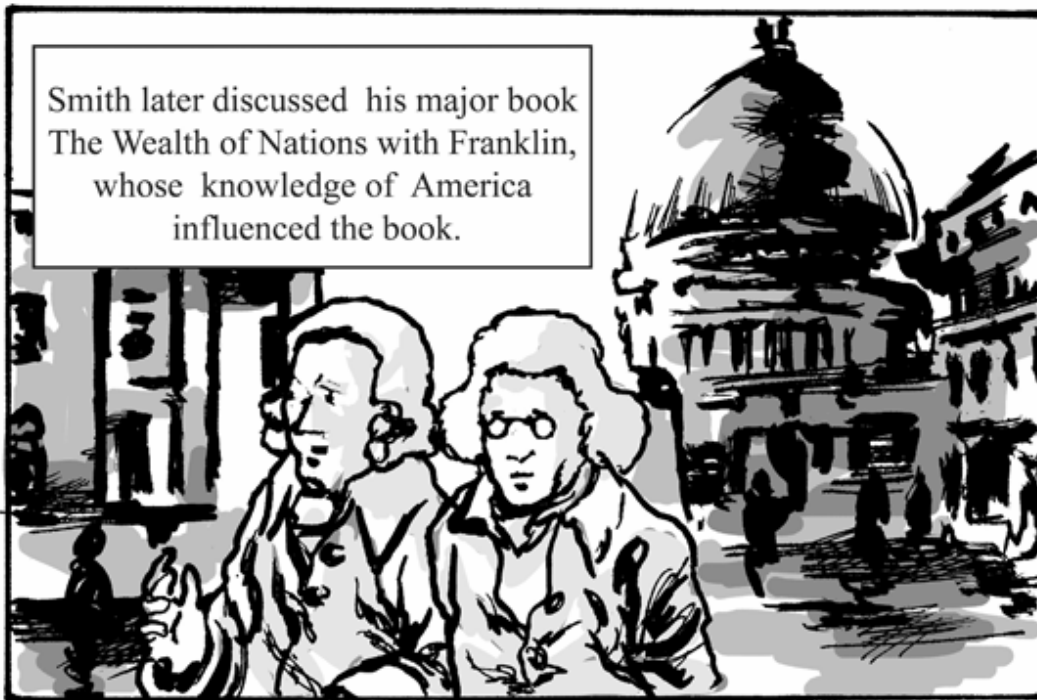
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In 1759, he published his first major work on philosophy. Theory of Moral Sentiments. It was Smith's view that the essence of moral sensibility was an impartial sympathy. In this he asked the central question:





He visited London for the first time in 1761 and over the years he met with many important figures there, including David Hume (who was to become his close friend), Samuel Johnson, Lord Shelburne, Horace Walpole, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Johnson (with whom Smith had a quarrel), and the American Benjamin Franklin.

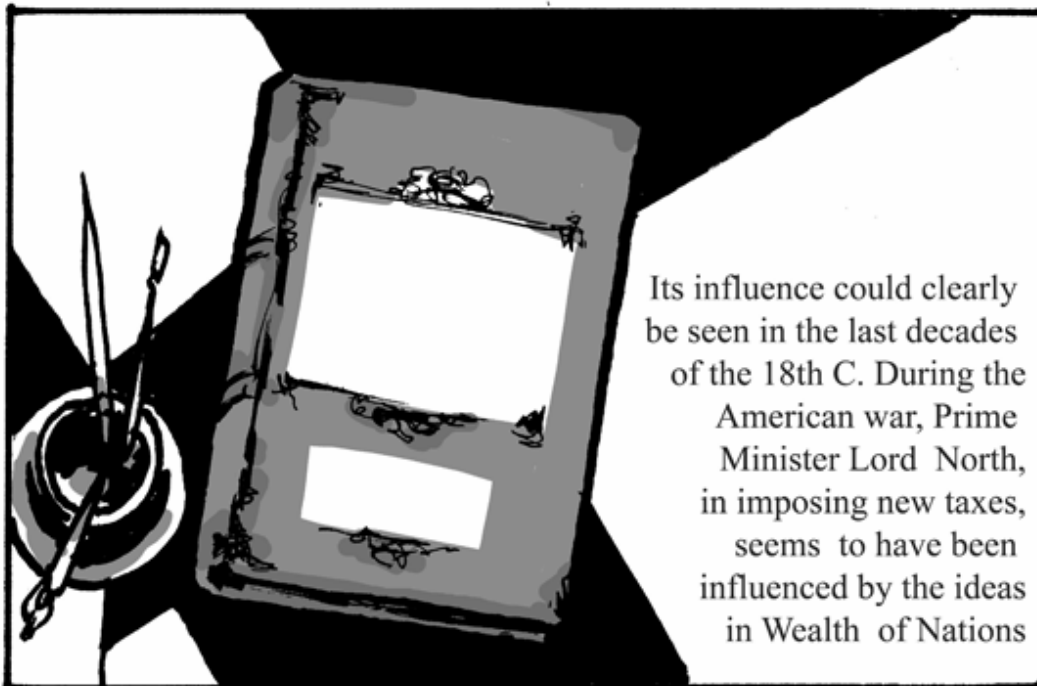


He left academia in 1764, accepting a post as travelling tutor for the young Duke of Buccleuch, at a wage of £300 a year. For over two years they lived and travelled throughout France and into Switzerland and met with people like the so called 'physocrats' Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, François Quesnay, and Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot. Their ideas also influenced Smith.





Adam Smith's masterpiece, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* was published in 1776, and he received £500 payment for the first edition, which quickly sold out. Within only 10 years it was recognised as a major work on society. Indeed 19thC historian Henry Buckle said, that the *Wealth of Nations* was, 'in its ultimate results, probably the most important that had ever been written'.



Its influence could clearly be seen in the last decades of the 18th C. During the American war, Prime Minister Lord North, in imposing new taxes, seems to have been influenced by the ideas in *Wealth of Nations*

Prime Minister William Pitt was influenced by the book in creating the French treaty of 1786, and his Govt. budget of 1792. It is a mark of the respect that Smith had gained among such high society that at a dinner at the MP Henry Dundas's house at Wimbledon, Pitt told him to be seated first, with the words:





In 1778, Smith was appointed as commissioner of customs for Edinburgh, and so moved back to Scotland, living with his mother in the Canongate. On July 17th, 1790, he died at Edinburgh and was buried in the Canongate churchyard. On his last night he was giving a dinner when he had to retire early feeling unwell.

He left his guests with the now famous words:

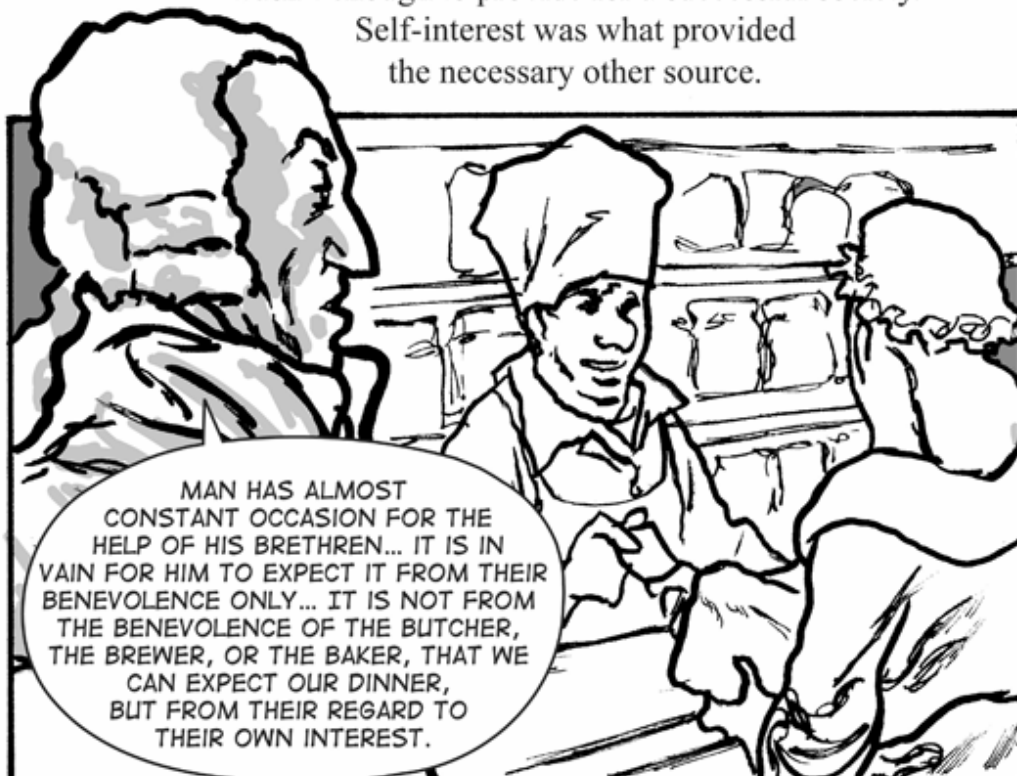


Today Smith is known for his explanation of how rational self-interest in a free-market economy leads to economic well-being. But Smith was NOT a supporter of ruthless individualism. In 'The Theory of Moral Sentiments', Smith wrote:

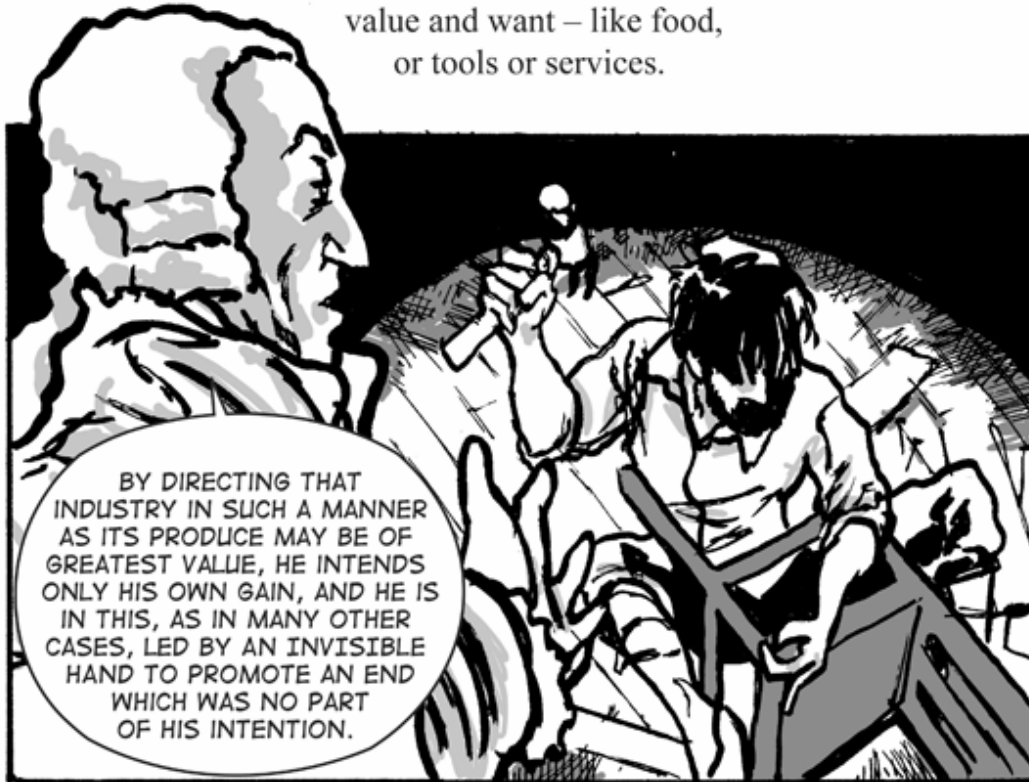


For Smith sympathy and self-interest could be complementary. Charity and a desire to help others was there in people, but wasn't enough to provide for a successful society.

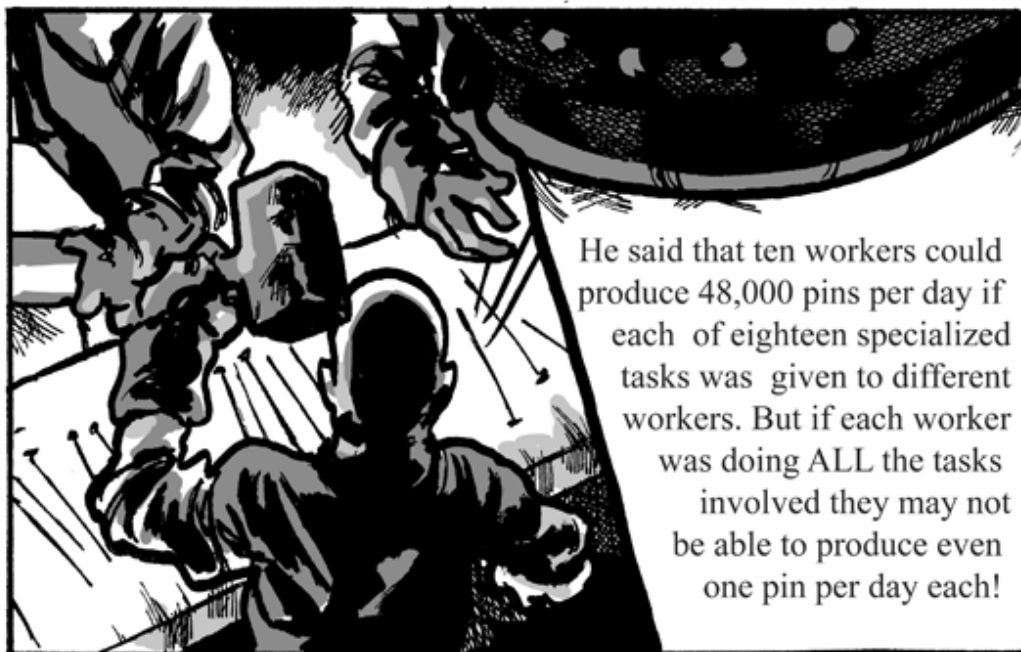
Self-interest was what provided the necessary other source.



So far Smith people work to benefits themselves. But by doing so they also benefit society, because to earn money in a competitive market, they must produce something other people value and want – like food, or tools or services.



The Wealth of Nations book was trying to reveal the nature and cause of a nation's prosperity. Smith thought the main cause was increasing division of labour. He gave the famous example of making pins.



Smith did not think that government had no role in economic life. He believed that government had an important role to play – for instance it should enforce contracts and grant patents and copyrights to encourage inventions and new ideas. He also thought that the government should provide public works, such as roads and bridges that would not be profitable for individuals to provide.



Adam Smith's provided the comprehensive study of economics up until that time, and his ideas became the basis for classical economics. His ideas have lasted longer than those of any other economist, and so Scotsman Adam Smith is rightly seen as the most important economist of the modern world.





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SEAN MICHAEL WILSON is a comic book writer from Scotland who now lives and works in Japan. He has been published by a variety of US, UK and Japanese publishers. Main influences include British and American creators such as Alan Moore, Grant Morrison, Eddie Campbell and Harvey Pekar. In addition to writing such 'western' style graphic novels, he often works with Japanese and Chinese artists. He is currently writing manga books for Kodansha International, apparently the only British writer to get a contract with them since the mid 90's. He has tried to do comic books that are different from the normal superhero/fantasy brands, working with a variety of 'non-comic book' organisations, such as charities and museums. He is the editor of the critically acclaimed anthology 'AX: alternative manga'. You find his [blog](#) online, as well as the [website](#) of the artist, Neil Cameron.