



Breath and Shadow

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The Girl

By Rachael Z. Ikins

Where is the laughing naked girl
draped on a log spontaneous spring
woods and trillium all around her for her lover's camera?

Who is this woman hungry just to see?
Cataracts, no vernal waterfall. What a choice, blindness or terror. Naked spring girl

knew nothing of these. This mirrored woman waist and breasts sagging slow, a melting
candle, each new layered ripple

shocks. Eye-light flickers. Pain, stiffness.

Who is this solitary woman who thinks about marking time until death, wonders how to
outsmart death even as she buries her mother?

I want the young girl back, her thoughtlessness, unselfconscious joy, unmarked by any
urgency but orgasm. Her life trod a path, tragedy ahead of her, loss, betrayals, chances
forfeit.

Yet she laughs. Look at the picture.

One arm flung back, palm open to collect whatever joy falls with the rain.

After the Long Dry Spell, New Dress

By Rachael Z. Ikins

Last summer I rediscovered wild flowers.

Alfalfa, butter 'n eggs, milkweed, clovers of all sizes and sweetness, many spontaneous bouquets dropped petals on my table.

All those years of drought and concrete.

Forgotten.

This year I am the bud. I remember my love of swirly skirts, the kind when you twirl flows out from your waist. Old-fashioned, Fairy clothing. I always used to garden in embroidered cotton dresses, comfortable through heat waves and washable.

Long ago my lover would gift

me flowers, more fragrances, the better.

He would slide her hands up my calf's silk, tease dresses' hem, my thighs when I was lying in our hammock beneath blue spruce, sipping champagne, or reading.

There was always celebration;

a slender stem, a woman's

leg, the sculpting fingers of a lover defining it, firefly-lit dusk. White skirts glow in the dark. Opening petals of some nocturnal luminous blossom.

Rachael Ikins is a 2016 Pushcart nominee and award winning poet and artist. Her artwork has appeared in one-woman and group exhibits in Lipe Art Park, Tech Garden and Syracuse galleries as well as from Hamilton to Albany and the NYS Fair. She has published 6 chapbooks and a novel, all with cover art by Rachael. Her new novel, Totems, is her first illustrated book. She has a B.S. from Syracuse University. Rachael is 2nd Vice President of the CNY Chapter of the National League of American Penwomen and credentialed in letters and arts and on the NLAPW publications committee. As well she belongs to Associated Artists of CNY and exhibits with the group in Manlius Library and Cooperstown, the Schweinfurth and Rome Art Associations. She lives in

Baldwinsville NY with her dogs and cat, her salt water fish tank filled with magical creatures that glow in the dark and many plants and books.

Three Word Memoir

By Izabela Jeremus

Addiction takes lives. First, it empowers. Answers, you think. All depression, gone. Mental illness, handled. *I can stop*. You tell yourself. You believe it. Addiction lies, though. It'll take control. Eat you alive. *Just one more*. The addiction lie.

I was twenty. Heroin, my lover. Struggling through college. I worked constantly. Mental illness abounded. Snorting golden relief. We were working. The dealer, gone. Straightening, I smiled. Another hellish day. Over soon enough. Synapses firing pleasure. I was ready.

"Want to sweep?" I asked her. Passed the straw. Now, her turn.

She smiled back. Nodded at me. She hated mopping. We worked together. We closed together. Every night, together. That's the job. It was boring. It was rough. Pin-point pupils shone. Best workers there. 'Twas the drugs. Energetic from drugs. Friendly, always smiling. Rarely missed shifts. Cocaine and heroin. Our secret fuels.

Stocked the shelves. Cleaned smelly bathrooms. Counted the registers. Shift finally ended. Finished, more drugs. Dealer waited outside. Treats for sweets. We lazed around. We got higher. Tumbled into bed.

Classes were tomorrow.

Classes, work, drugs. Heroin, cocaine, ecstasy. Days melted together.

Had a girlfriend. She didn't mind. She did it. We partied together.

Divided my time. My best friend. Then my girlfriend. But always, heroin. Drugs were everywhere.

Days of darkness. No heroin, sadness. With heroin, happiness. My mind, enemy.

Wanted pain away. Hallucinations taunted me. Only heroin fixed.

I needed it. Heroin breathed life. Without it, death.

I got caught. Forced into sobriety. I lost her. Kept the girlfriend. I was miserable. It didn't last. Drawn to heroin. Heroin, my life.

Couldn't live alone. Sought it out. Sought her out. We used again.

Slowly, at first. We had control. Just to party. Just to bond.

Addiction was lacking. For the weak. We spun out. We smoked crack.

Every day, up. Up, higher, up. Crack spiraled up. Heroin brought down.

Up, then down. Spinning around, lost.

It took years. Finally, an ultimatum. Get sober, leave. Chose to stay.

Chose to stop. Refused to lose. Brought her in. We stopped together.

We helped ourselves. Helped each other. Always together again. Thought about it.

Ditched the girlfriend. Kept best friend. Didn't love drugs.

I loved her. Always loved her. Not the girlfriend. Not the drugs.

Therapy and pharmaceuticals. They saved me. I saved myself. I graduated college.

Degree in psychology. I started working. I helped people. That helped me. I was useful. I was needed. It was beautiful.

I reinvented myself.

I pushed forward. Work was life. Sobriety was exquisite. Though not perfect. Far from perfection. Mentally, I struggled. Illnesses to beat. I tried, hard. Therapy and medication. Work, work, work. Trouble at home. Still raising brother. Avoiding crazy mother. Losing cheating father. Always shielding brother. Combating my mind.

Finally, something new. I met *her*. She was incredible. I fell, hard.
We fell together.

One day, *bam!* An ankle broke. Then a herniation. It required surgery. I never recovered. My back crumbled. No more work. My depression spiraled. Darkness surrounded me. Suicide whispered daily.

She rescued me. Tended to me. We got engaged. Rescued a dog. My health deteriorated. Double pulmonary embolism. I almost died. I pulled through. I wasn't ready.

We got married. Happiest day ever. Sunshine and music. Only closest friends. Some family too. Best friend hugs. Daddy walked me. My brother assisted. Down the aisle. I was exhilarated. She was gorgeous.

She fairly shone. Everything fell away. Heart-filled vows blossomed.
Everyone cried then. It was blissful. Perfect beyond reproach. *Yes, I do.*

We are partners. We are family. Equal in everything. Only the best.
She's my lover. She's my friend. She's my light. She unchained me. Set me free.

Now I write. Saving my soul. Always wanted to. Universe pushed me. I'm pushing back.
I'm not alone. All is possible. I will survive. I will prevail. I believe now. Thanks to her.

Izabela Jeremus is a poet and writer. One of her articles appeared in *Voices Magazine* published by the University of Hartford. Izabela lives in Massachusetts with her wife, Kim, and their rescue beagle, Face. She enjoys reading everything from literary fiction to true crime and all forms of arts and crafts. Izabela has a degree in psychology, but due to her disabilities is unable to work. You can follow her on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/IJeremus3>.

before the diagnosis

By Heather Ace Ratcliff

i used to think that the
iron scaffolding of my ribcage
was strong enough to guard
the bruised filigree of my ruby heart -
until i heard the buzzing prescience
and learned how it felt when the tubercle slipped from the vertebrae and i was exposed.

i used to think that the
curved arch of my iliac crest
would reach high enough to enclose my lungs so no one could catch me breathing your
name in my sleep - until i learned to anticipate the crackling *pop* of bone grinding
against the acetabulum just before i stumbled.

i used to think that the
white picket fence of my clenched teeth
would keep thoughts of the end
trapped below my calvarium
until i felt the

grinding stop of a condyle
caught and locked open, forcing me to speak.

i used to think,
before.

t6

By Heather Ace Ratcliff

i have grown used to the clicking
and clacking of my bones as i
walk down the stairs or
sit down at my desk or
even as i take a deep breath, just to compose myself.

i have grown used to the black and green bruises blossoming across my shins and
thighs, spreading like blood in a pool of milk, marring any bare patch of lunar-
translucent skin.

i have not grown used to the pain
(i will never grow used to the pain)
white-hot and flaring across my eyelids, moving so fast that the salt of my tears hits my
lips before i even know that i'm crying.

love letter series, poem V

By Heather Ace Ratcliff

i used to offer my words to men in supplication, shuffling on my knees outspread palms
full of delicate punctuation hope so translucent you could shine moonlight through it

now i thrust them up to the sun

syntax blazing like a california wildfire burning hard and fast enough to leave behind
only a dusty cloud of bone-ash and me.

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She has Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, III. She's a disability rights advocate and a status quo exile. She lives in Northern California with her pack of three wild beasts (or small chihuahuas, whichever you prefer.) Say hi on Twitter: [@mortuaryreport](#)

Budding

By Michelle Zhuang

The garden of my body is growing. My sister tells me, while we are perusing the Walmart greenhouse, that I need a little color on me. She chooses violets when I really want sunflowers, batting my hand away when I reach for the small labeled packet. "But then how would you walk?" she asks, laughing as she presses each small seed into the freshly packed dirt of my hand.

Later that night, I take a spoon in my left hand and dig out the violet seeds from the flower pot of my right until dirt strews across the floor of my small single-window apartment. The kitchen floor goes dark until I can no longer see the cracked beige tiles.

The cat winds his way between my legs, and I shoo him before his little paws can smear dirt into the carpeted areas of my apartment. I tap my pot on the table once, twice, feeling the reverberations through my wrist up to my shoulder until I sense the warning pressure of the red clay about to split, watching the last small seeds trickle out from the empty chalice onto the floor.

The first time I cracked it was the last time I was allowed to play at a friend's house. My body hadn't grown to match the weight, and I walked tipped, hobbling about while my flower pot dragged behind me, scraping and chipping against the concrete of their cul-de-sac. Amy, my friend, was small but fast, quick as a whip – she hadn't learned to slow down for anyone yet – but she was more akin to a pinball, ricocheting off of any surface she could find. When she crashed into me, I toppled over and felt the clay crack and crunch under my body, small shards digging into my wiry legs.

The adhesive didn't set in the cracks for a night, so my mother had me sit upright at the kitchen table the whole night. My wrist had trembled as I struggled to hold the flower pot upright, watching the clear adhesive glitter in the dim yellow light. My sister had taken that opportunity to bring out her washable paints and sat there with me, splashing garish yellow and clown blue onto my pot until you could not see the dusky red underneath.

And now she wants to plant violets in me. I vacuum until late in the night, ignoring the angry knocks from my neighbors, leaving no trace of my betrayal. I scrub myself raw in the shower until I can't see a single particle of dirt in the pot's cracks. I watch dusty red water swirl down the drain, gurgling as it slips into darkness.

The next day, Mr. Carson doesn't call me in to attend to his house, so I head out for Walmart once again. The bus ride is long; a little boy stares at my hand with such awe that his mother has to pull him away, averting her eyes as if ashamed to have even been caught looking at it. She mutters an apology, and I wonder what it is really for.

Few people are at the store so early in the morning, so I make my way to the greenhouse with ease. Tinny Carly Rae Jepson bounces off the walls as I shuffle through the seed packets, resting the pot on a nearby shelf. I see the clerk watching me, making sure I don't knock my hand into anything and spill half-dead succulents and cacti onto the concrete floor, or even start stuffing seed packets by the dozen into the pot. I'm tempted to run it across the shelf just to watch him flinch at the sound.

My mother once told me that there were more people like me who were born with different parts than others. I remember I asked her one day in the fifth grade, after breaking the pot for now the seventh time. The crack was not so bad that time; it didn't reach my wrist, where blood would start to seep out, and no parts were lodged into my flesh. I remember my heart, beating heavy and slow, and how it began to speed up once my mother told me that there was a woman who was born with the tail of a fish who had lived in her neighborhood when she was around my age. Her wheelchair, my mother narrated with glimmers of childhood awe, had a small tank where the foot support would go. The water would ripple gently whenever the woman moved, her tail slowly undulating as she rolled off to her destination.

"It's something that is unique to you," she had said while my mind still swam with fish tails and I Am Not Alone. "It will get better when you're older."

"Is that all?" the clerk asks me as I slide the sunflower packets across the counter. His eyes flit behind me, and I know that the minute I leave he is going to check the shelves to make sure I didn't break or take anything.

"Yes."

He sighs, a mixture of resignation and relief. "Five-twenty please."

On the bus, I pack two seeds into my hand and its freshly packed dirt, watching them sink into the soft brown soil. The bus is quiet, gently rocking back and forth, the

squeaking and rumbling somehow muffled by the lack of chatter. The seeds in the open packet tremble with the vehicle's vibrations; some jump out and clatter onto the floor like broken teeth.

I spend the day staring at my hand, holding it upright on my kitchen table. A few times, I tilt the pot slightly to see if the dirt will tumble out, but I always pull it back upright, too afraid to let it tip completely. The sunlight hits my arm, warming my freckled skin. The cat curls his body around the sunbaked pot as usual, intent on his afternoon nap.

My sister texts me two times that night while a pot of spaghetti bubbles on the stove.

6:40 PM: *hey how r u? r the violets growing ok*

6:41 PM: *do u need to water them or do they just grow on their own? ive been wondering about that*

"Maybe you should spend less time wondering," I mutter, and the cat meows with agreement as I stir the spaghetti, my right arm upright like a totem. Just to be safe, I run my hand under the faucet until the smell of wet soil mixes with the smell of boiling pasta.

Buds do not appear until a week later on a Saturday morning, when I wake up to see small sprouts gently curling up from the dark soil. When I lift my hand towards the window, the thin, miniscule veins of the leaves silhouetted by the early sun cast shadows on my face. The cat is curled up by my hip. Gently, I reach over to tickle his chin with the sprouts, and he meows irritably.

My mother texts to ask for pictures of the flowers, and I oblige, sending her a small picture of the sprouts resting underneath the cat's chin. Two minutes later, I receive a bright yellow 'thumbs up' emoji and a link to "A Beginner's Guide on Raising Plants:

How Not to Kill Your New Children in Ten Minutes Or Less.” I add the book to my Amazon wishlist and close the page.

When I arrive at Mr. Carson’s house, he takes one look at my hand and asks, “Can you still clean the bathroom?”

“Yeah.”

He moves aside and I slowly wander in. Newspapers are stacked willy-nilly on the small kitchen table, the bottom ones covered in dry coffee. Dishes are scattered across the kitchen; a few particularly old, caked ones lie in the sink. I catch a glimpse of the clutter that has accumulated in the cramped living room.

Mr. Carson used to be more embarrassed when I came over to clean, but now he simply grunts and waves his hand before hobbling out to his backyard to watch the squirrels fight over birdseed. I wait for him to close the creaky porch door, watching him as he shuffles and falls into his splintering rocking chair. The matching one next to it sways in sympathy, and he reaches a gnarled hand to stop its motion.

The sun is beginning to lower in the sky when I finish cleaning, but I wander to the back porch anyways to check on Mr. Carson, grabbing a blanket from the couch on my way out. His face, grizzled with age and worry lines, has smoothed out in sleep, giving him the appearance of a worn paper towel. I place the blanket over him along with a note (pot roast in the fridge, don’t worry, there’s no dirt in it) and gently close the porch door on my way out.

When I was in high school, the only job advertisements I could find for people like me were for lab experiments. Ninety-day trial to see if we can make your parts normal, they said. We will pay you one hundred dollars at the end of the sessions (warning: this experiment has no guarantee to succeed and we will have you sign a waiver so you can’t blame us for any misfortune). I searched on forums to see if anyone had tried

them, and I saw post after post condemning the experiments, calling them ableist with no guarantee to work. One man who had scissors for a mouth wrote that he had tried the experiments, and nothing had happened other than exceeding damage to his liver and kidneys. They ended up racking up his hospital bills through the roof that not even his measly one hundred dollars could fix.

I would listen to my sister, at the local state college and always back for weekends, gabbing about work to my mother, and I would try to quell the anxiety and jealousy in my heart. I couldn't understand how she could complain so much about work when I was worried I wouldn't find any at all.

On one of those weekends, she brought home her first boyfriend, a tall lanky boy in Philosophy with a fuzzy undergrown mustache. He took one look at my hand and wrinkled his nose, but didn't say anything. He smiled thinly when I waved hello. After dinner, I heard him talking to my sister, attempting to discuss the ethics of keeping such an ugly mutation and the possibility of prosthetics. 'You want he - them to live a fuller life, don't you?' he said, his voice creaking and nasally. I remember her silence as she struggled to find the words to correct him, but in the dark of the hallway, toothbrush rolling around in my freshly cracked pot, her silence felt like an admission of shame.

When she broke up with him, several weeks later and a few days before Christmas, she cried into my mother's shoulder for hours while we watched bad rom-coms. When Mom asked her why they split up, my sister simply shook her head and said, almost petulantly, "Because he's an asshole." But even as she sniffled her way through When Harry met Sally, I couldn't find it in myself to comfort her.

She texts me twice that night, just as I am about to go to bed. Flower emojis litter my screen, accompanied by a singular cat meme.

I send back a winking face before I turn off the light, gently propping my right hand up on my stomach.

A few weeks later, the sunflowers finally bloom. They are getting heavier now, their stalks reaching higher and higher. Some mornings I've woken up with my hand outstretched towards the window, the faces of the sunflowers turned towards the light. Their leaves are beginning to unfurl bright green. Sometimes, I catch the cat staring at the leaves and sniffing them, debating whether or not to begin a feast.

I've taken to sitting at the back of the bus on my way to work so that the flowers don't droop onto anyone. A few times, my hand tips over accidentally with the sheer weight of the flowers, but they never fall out, and neither does the dirt. I stick bus tickets and pencils in the dirt for safekeeping.

When I send my mother pictures of the flowers, she asks me if they drag on the ground when I walk.

"No," I tell her, my ear pressed to my phone as I lace my sneakers up. "They're not that long yet."

"Well, be careful. You don't want to tear them in case it might hurt you."

"I'll be fine. I'll see you next week. Love you."

"Love you." *Click.*

I planted orchids in my pot once before, when I was in middle school, on a dare from my friend. The plants bloomed wrong, the buds withered and dry, the stem knotted and twisted. The soil became as crumbled as the plant itself, constantly trailing dirt behind me as I walked no matter how upright I kept my hand. After two weeks, I scooped out the dirt and threw it on the ground. The roots splayed on the ground like broken limbs.

My sister stops by suddenly, while I'm resting my hand on the coffee table as I eat leftover mac and cheese, watching reruns of Saturday Night Live. I forget that she does

this when I'm least expecting it, or when she has amazing news that she can't bear to keep from me for another second.

She doesn't say anything when she sees my hand, gold instead of violet, but sits down across from me on the couch, ignoring my hand poised halfway to my mouth with a spoonful of dripping cheese.

"Are they going to keep growing?" she says, her lips pursed.

She stares at the flowers as if she can bore holes in them with her eyes, cut them at the roots simply with the power of her gaze. The flowers are long enough that when I rest my hand on her across the couch, the sunflower petals tickle her face. She withdraws, staring at them as though they are insect legs.

"I don't know. If they get too long, I can cut them so that they can grow back later."

"You wouldn't feel it if you cut them?"

"I don't feel it when they touch anything."

A flicker of doubt runs through my mind, and I pause to contemplate if I would feel the sharpness of a finger being severed if I cut them. I wonder if blood will trickle out of the stalk instead of water.

"You could have just told me you wanted something else, you know. You didn't have to do this."

"I did, but you didn't listen."

"When?"

“In the fucking store.”

“Oh.” She stops, her eyes flickering away guiltily. “Sorry, I guess.”

“You have to listen to me sometimes when I say I want something.”

“I do!”

“Not always.”

She shuts her mouth, gently rolling the skin of her arm between her fingers. She has always done this, even when we were kids and she didn't know how to say she was upset, so she would pick at her skin until it bled. I tilt my arm up to tickle her with the petals, and she squeals, twisting away and gently kicking at me with her leg.

“I still think violets would have been pretty.”

“Then you should plant them. Just, not in me.”

She wrinkles her nose. “It sounds so gross when you put it like that.”

“Well, that's what it is.”

“Ugh.” She looks at me, her eyes soft. “I'm sorry.”

I don't say anything, instead raising the sunflowers to place them gently on her head. She does not flinch this time.

Eventually, when the flowers grow so that their faces drag into the hard concrete, I take a pair of shears and slice them at the base of the stalk. They fall to the floor with a small thump; some leaves fall off of the stalk to flutter gently to the ground. I stare at

them for a while, swaying slightly as my body readjusts to the loss of weight on my right arm. They leak small droplets of light pink water from their stems.

Now, the sunflowers shine bright in their glass vase, the water covered in dried petals and dead leaves. Mr. Carson doesn't say anything about them or the sudden shortness of my right arm, but I catch him staring at them sometimes when he doesn't think I'm looking, a small smile gracing his face.

The garden of my body continues to grow strong. Where the stalks were severed now grow small sprouts armed with flower buds, ready to bloom once more.

Michelle Zhuang is a senior in Illustration at Rhode Island School of Design. This will be their first journal publication. Michelle lives in Rhode Island with their cat, Dexter. E-mail them at mzhuang@risd.edu

At The Expense of Joy: Human Rights Violations Against Human Beings With Autism via Applied Behavioral Analysis

By Dr. Kelly Levinstein

Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), a multi-billion dollar cottage industry in the United States, is based on the work of Dr. O. Ivar Lovaas, who borrowed the principles from his experiments attempting to cure feminized boys at risk of homosexuality (Rekers & Lovaas, 1974) and the accompanying aversive of electric shock and corporal punishment. Lovaas used the rationale that homosexual behavior was (in California at the time) illegal. Moreover, he also shared the same fundamentalist Christian values as

the parents who brought their children in for alleviation of feminine symptomology and possible homosexuality.

He objected to homosexuality being removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and proposed that it be returned there, expressing indignation that those with the pathology of homosexuality had any say in its classification and treatment. Dr. Lovaas's NIMH funding terminated in 1976 due to complaints of excessive corporal punishment against children. He then began to use ABA on Autistics. While he wisely distanced himself from his former treatment of gay children, the later treatment of Autistics has made him a legend.

Dr. Lovaas's initial work at UCLA in the 1970s "curing" gay children was generously funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. This comprehensive and intensive behavior intervention used the principles of operant conditioning to displace feminine, homosexual maladaptive behaviors, which were punished and replaced with more masculine, heterosexual behaviors, which were then rewarded. Dr. Lovaas and his colleagues advised that these children eventually became "indistinguishable from their peers." This same phrase was used to describe Autistics who are now forced to undergo ABA. They are also said to become indistinguishable from their peers (Lovaas 1987). This, in fact, is the stated goal of ABA.

The most effective punishments with both populations per Lovaas were spanking or hitting the children. Lovaas lamented that he was unable by law to hit the children harder, particularly one female Autistic child whom he referred to as "fat" (Lovaas 1974). The authorities finally intervened and forbade Dr. Lovaas from further use of corporal punishment. He also presided over gay conversion camps, which are still in existence today in the United States, attempting to make gay and lesbian youth heterosexual.

Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) has always been grounded in human and civil rights violations. This historical context is crucial to understanding present ABA, as is the present ABA corporate industry's attempts to distance themselves from their origins.

In 1991, researchers from Rutgers, including the well-known behaviorists Sandra Harris and Jan Handelman published a study about the consequences of aversives in Autism programs, comparing the morale and job satisfaction of more than 100 staff, divided into those who could use only mild aversives, and those who could use severe aversives on their Autistic clients. Severe aversives included (but were not limited to) slapping, pinching, electric shocks, noxious odors, noxious liquids and hair pulls (Harris, Handelman, Gill, & Fong, 1991). Restraints were removed from the scope of the study when no one involved could decide whether their use on Autistics constituted a mild or severe aversive.

It was discovered that those applying severe aversives were happiest and reported less job-related stress and greater personal accomplishment. In fact, the longer they had been at it, the more personally accomplished they reported being. The authors concluded that allowing staff to use a wide range of interventions, including strong aversives, may diminish job stress and enhance one's sense of personal efficacy, suggesting a certain personality type that is attracted to the control and domination inherent in ABA.

CUNY researcher Brown (2008) observed that ABA providers are more likely to be comfortable with the use of aversives, including restraint, seclusion, and food, water and sensory deprivation as well as electroshock, particularly against the disabled, who are often seen as "less than human" (Lovaas 1974).

More specifically, social workers at insurance companies are authorizing hundreds of millions of dollars for ABA without ever having seen the practice in action. They are often surprised when they are informed that it requires physical restraint—often of two-year-olds for 40 hours per week and upwards. Any child development expert will advise that 40 hours per week of restraint for a typical two-year-old is not advisable, much less a two-year-old with Autism, who has significant sensory issues and a high need for vestibular input. These social workers believe that they are helping families, sadly unaware that they may in fact be funding torture.

Parents are not advised to see a geneticist after their child with Autism has been diagnosed, to determine syndrome and accompanying IQ. If this were the case, it would be clear that the vast majority of people with Autism are not ABA candidates; i.e., they do not have the intellectual capacity to learn from the restraint and constant commands. Parents—desperate and devastated by having been given no strength-based perspective of Autism—are told that their child's Autism is a "death sentence" (Autism Now 2013) but that a reprieve is possible. Their afflicted children may be cured, they are told, but time is of the essence, and ABA is their last chance. Thus, they are told to obtain a minimum of 40 hours per week of ABA before the opportunity of the developing brain passes. Tragically, by the time they may find out that their child has a 20 IQ or lower, sometimes many years have passed and many millions of dollars have been spent.

It is very difficult for some parents to accept that their child will never be typical. Rather than being encouraged, parents are given false hope or told to mourn the typical child that they will never have, the college graduation and the wedding that they will not attend, and the grandchildren that they will never have. As social workers, we are uniquely trained and experienced in the mourning process. Rather than advocating for the boundless amounts of money to fund ABA, we would be better served in assisting families to mourn these expectations and/or celebrate their child with Autism. We need to ask ourselves as social workers if the parents' need to have an indistinguishable child should outweigh the child's need for integrity and self-determination.

A few words must be said about the large "not-for-profit" Autism organizations, all headed by neurotypical people who almost uniformly support ABA. Although these organizations raise hundreds of millions of dollars each year, a miniscule amount is delivered for PEOPLE with Autism to assist the quality of our lives. According to the HHS Office of Autism Research Coordination, only 2.4% of NIMH's research funding goes toward research on services and only 1.5 % is directed toward adults with Autism. (Autistic Self Advocacy Network personal communication April 15, 2014). The money is

spent on either “curing” Autism or, even more depressingly, on the prospect of detecting Autism via amniocentesis to ensure that people with Autism will no longer be born. The vast majority of funding through large Autism organizations is funneled to microbiologists working on prenatal testing, which could result in eugenic extermination of people with neurological differences, which Dr. James Watson refers to as “curing stupidity” (The Sun Herald, March 2003). Watson is famous for his white supremacist comments as well, in particular that Black people do not have the same intelligence as white people (The Sunday Times, Oct 2007.) In 1997 he advised the same newspaper that a woman should have the right to abort her unborn child if the tests could determine that the child would be homosexual.

At present, 92% of families who discover that they are having a child with Downs Syndrome make a decision to terminate the pregnancy (Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress, 2013). If Autism is able to be detected via amniocentesis, the expectation is that 92% of pregnancies involving a fetus with Autism will also be terminated.

This is a urgent moral crisis that necessitates social workers to examine our value systems. Is this something social workers may want to reconsider? Eugenics is not the topic of this work- but as the time is drawing so near for it to any longer be a choice- I am posing the question at this time for your consideration. URGENTLY.

In discussing the basis for his treatment, Lovaas wrote of Human Beings with Autism in 1974, "You see- you pretty much start from scratch when you work with the Autistic child. You have a person in the physical sense—they have hair, a nose and a mouth—but they are not people in the psychological sense. One way to look at the job of helping Autistic kids is to see it as a matter of constructing a person. You have the raw materials and you have to build a person” (Rekers & Lovaas, 1974). Lovaas, in borrowing the principles from his earlier torture of gay children, began to impose similar strictures on children with Autism, a population which many would argue have an even greater vulnerability.

Applied Behavioral Analysis is aversive-heavy experimentation, claiming that half of all children subjected to its methods could be made to look “indistinguishable from their peers” (Rekers & Lovaas, 1974). This is at the crux of the ABA movement-i.e., rendering people with Autism invisible as a distinct group void of all remnants and gifts of Autism. Nine out of 19 children in the experimental group underwent ABA for 40 hours a week for two or more years. The ABA industry has always downplayed and even denied the importance of aversives in achieving this famous 47%.

Further difficulties with the findings are that Dr. Lovaas and his colleagues have never acknowledged progress through a course of natural developmental for Autism and also never discussed the importance of IQ and syndrome to future prognosis.

Autism is an organic, lifelong neurological disorder that no amount of aversive conditioning, torture or torment will ever be able to “cure.” What does sometimes however occur is that, if Autistics are frightened and deprived enough eventually—like dogs or other caged lab animals—they succumb out of frustration and utter helplessness, and, as common with any victims of torture, to give the ABA trainer what the trainer has demanded of them. This stress response, however, is possible only in the event that the Autistic has the capacity to give the ABA trainer what they demand. If the IQ is too low, and the Autistics have no receptive language capacity, they will not make the connection that they are supposed to provide: eye contact, touch red etc. Thus, they may become increasingly frustrated, and may even engage in self injury, often for the first time in their lives. This scenario is most likely to result not just in injury and PTSD, but also in depression and OCD due to the constant replications over and over day in and day out (Carly Fleischman personal communication, 2013).

Seclusion, restraint and aversives have been proven to be ineffective in modifying behavior. In fact, they actually increase behavior in many children and have the potential to cause physical and long-lasting trauma to the child (Jones & Timbers, 2002; Magee & Ellis, 2001; Natta, Holmbeck, Kupst, Pines, & Schulam, 1990). Gernsbacher

(2006) has advised that the effectiveness of ABA for Autistics is a myth and misconception since the gains made during the treatment are actually due to the child's development, rather than ABA.

This then raises the question of whether ABA, apart from its great expense and its grounding in torture, is also completely ineffective. As the ABA trainers never obtain the IQ and syndrome prior to training, they have no way of understanding if the person they are seeking to train has a 20 or a 200 IQ, has an innate capacity for speech or has no such capacity. Human beings with Autism are trapped, often by straps, inhibiting their movements until they comply. When there is no ability to comply, the person with Autism will often become self-injurious for the first time in their lives. Subsequently, the ABA trainer then advises family members that more ABA is needed to quell these new "behaviors."

Ironically, if the person with Autism has no capacity to understand the demands, he or she is at even greater risk, and is described as "non-compliant." Most often, ABA trainers are unaware that there are multiple syndromes that underlie Autism and do not understand the importance of obtaining this information prior to beginning the training. For the person with average or borderline IQs who can obey the commands of the ABA trainers, it is "at the expense of joy," as expressed by Child Development expert and advocate Dr. Toni Spiotta from Montclair University Child Development Center (personal communication). From this perspective—a Human and Civil Rights perspective—there are no successes in ABA; there are only broken and traumatized human beings, who do what they are told.

Of course, by social work standards, this is a very high price to pay. "Touch Red!" This is often a beginning command utilized in ABA, which assumes that the person who is commanded has receptive language and is able to distinguish colors and understands the concept of "touch." These are complex intellectual processes. This command is repeated over and over and over again, thousands of times while the Autistic is restrained.

Another beginning command is “Look at me.” It is viscerally painful for Autistics to look at people. They comply because it is expected of them. This, however, does not make it any the less painful. In the Autistic community, such self-protection is referred to as gaze aversion, not the lack of eye contact, as it is discussed it from the perspective of the Autistic child rather than from the neurotypical perspective. Once again, the ABA trainer assumes that the person has the capacity for receptive language and is being willful and non-compliant if he or she does not look at the ABA trainer.

An even greater assumption is that this is good for the Autistic person. This assumption, an imposition of neurotypical values, has caused great harm to Autistics. The philosophy behind all of the restraint and the commands is that the person with Autism will be able to generalize the learning and will then seek to look at each and every person who passes. Autistic people will, at some point, no longer look as if they have Autism. ABA will help them to struggle to maintain eye contact with the ABA trainer.

This is the ultimate goal, desired not only by the ABA trainer, but, tragically, also by the parents of the person with Autism who are often ashamed of their child and who desire that she/he look typical, regardless of the cost in terms of emotional comfort to their child.

There is some beginning evidence that Autistic parents of Autistic children experience less narcissistic injury and less reported exhaustion due to the absence of the need that their child appear typical (Hala O’Keeffe personal communication).

The term “behavior as communication” refers to the child’s effort to communicate dislikes, needs, desires etc. but who cannot do so because of a communication deficit (i.e., no speech or limited speech). When an Autistic’s behavior is seen merely as bad behavior and not as an effort to communicate, the Autistic can become even more frustrated, thus causing escalation. People who are not properly trained to distinguish these “behaviors” or to decipher the communication attempts can sometimes escalate

the Autistic to a critical point where the use of physical and/or mechanical restraint comes into play.

The behaviors that Autistics are supposed to lose include any behaviors which make them visible as being Autistic, including rocking (tremendously self-soothing) and hand flapping. These behaviors are often referred to as “stimming” in ABA language, considered undesirable because they result in pleasure for Autistics and withdrawal from neurotypical people. Withdrawal is often a severe narcissistic injury for neurotypical people to bear.

When Autistics are stripped of all of their self-soothing mechanisms, particularly harsh because negotiating the world of sounds, lights and textures is so often debilitating, that are so vital to surviving in the world which has been created with no thought or concern as to their needs or preferences, they suffer.

ABA is largely performed by unlicensed paraprofessionals with no advanced degrees. They are, in turn, supposed to be supervised by Masters-level BCBAs; these supervisors are also not psychotherapists and not providers of any mental health training. In truth, “supervision” often includes one initial observation of the child. Often, however, this is not the case and there is no observation of the child by the supervisor. The initial observation, when it does occur, most often happens by Skype, or by telephone. Increasingly, there are paid reviewers, who have neither met the child, the ABA trainer nor the supervisor. They conduct 50 reviews a day on Autistics from across the United States, often providing the exact same treatment plan for all of them. ABA has clearly become a large-scale, mass-produced assembly line.

The BCBAs also do not have Autism, but they have decided that they know best in terms of what people with Autism need to learn or adjust. This always includes the person with Autism being socialized into the dominant culture and giving up whatever soothing self-protections deemed necessary to survive. The fact that ABA trainers are not therapists or social workers is key in understanding the fundamental value

differences and philosophies between education and social work vis a vis respect for human beings and self-determination. Even if one were to argue that ABA paraprofessionals and trainers are helping people with Autism, they are helping them through a form of training or education, not through a therapeutic venue.

The supervisors—BCBAs—have chosen education rather than social work as a profession and adhere to the values of education the way that I am hoping that we as social workers adhere to the values of our profession. I am proposing that the values of these two professions are in conflict regarding Applied Behavioral Analysis, and I am asking my social work comrades to stand up and be counted—to pick up the gauntlet that I am laying down and work to oppose ABA on the grounds that the practice is a Human and Civil Rights violation against people with Autism and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

I am also calling upon social workers to reconsider responses to a family where a child has recently been diagnosed with Autism. Rather than assisting them in suing their school districts to obtain more ABA (as the large Autism organizations recommend them to do) and putting them in touch with attorneys to lead this charge, please recommend that they see a geneticist in order to obtain syndrome and IQ. This will ensure that over 95% of the people currently receiving ABA will be spared, and parents will be spared the prospect of collaborating in the torture of their own children. Utilizing a strength-based model for Autism when working with families can educate them as to the many gifts that Autism brings. However, most importantly, I am asking that you oppose the practice of ABA on Human and Civil Rights grounds.

Make no mistake—this is a call to action. I am asking you to be brave and to chart a new course—to go against the standing social order that tells us that Autism must be cured and the people with Autism should be stripped of every possible defense they have been able to muster and of all of their joy. Even if we believed that ABA had the capacity to transform a 20 IQ into a 200 IQ, even if we believed that it had all the magical properties that the corporate ABA industry and the large multimillion dollar

Autism organizations try to convince us it does, I would still ask you to oppose this practice as a social work body on the grounds that it is a Human and Civil Rights violation, that it is, in fact, torture as defined by the Geneva Convention Part 4C(c) outrages against personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment (1949).

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Dr. Kelly Levinstein is per the IFSW (International Federation of Social Workers) the only out Autistic PhD level Social Worker, not just nationally but also globally. Prior to coming to Flint Michigan and being actively poisoned due to capitalist greed, she was a Social Worker for 40 years and worked as a civil servant, in private not for profit, in special education settings, in private practice, as a consultant for the Archdiocese of NY and NJ, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and at the nation's largest insurer authorizing care for Autistics and investigating fraud before beginning life as a full time academic and researcher in 2014.

This, after receiving her BSW, MSW, Advanced Certificate in Clinical Practice and PhD in Clinical Social Work at NYU where she was the Heilbein Scholar and the recipient of the Founders Day award. Levinstein taught in the Masters and Doctoral program there for a decade as well as in the Undergraduate program at the Ramapo College of NJ.

She is the Human Behavior in the Social Environment lead at the University of Michigan/Flint and is researching specifically Human and Civil rights violations against the Autistic community through Applied Behavioral Analysis. Levinstein was just appointed for a 3 year period to the CSWE (Council on Social Work Education) committee on Disabilities and Persons with Disabilities. She is an ABA and special education survivor who has dedicated the remainder of her life to ceasing the torture and mistreatment of the Autistic population.

Grandma's Closet

By Jennifer Gifford

I remember how it felt to disappear
Into the past of grandma's closet.
My dressing room.
The smell of White Linen
Hanging thick in the air.
Slipping on arm length gloves, faded with age.
Satin bags from the thirties hid the chunky costume
Jewelry I laced over fingers, wrists, and neck.
So beautifully gaudy and ornate.
Getting lost in the waves of heavy taffeta and linens
Because she came from the Great Depression, and never
Threw anything away.
I remember thinking how beautifully tragic that sounded,
And being seven years old, I didn't know any better.
Strands of pink and white pearls, rows of silk scarves.
Big rimmed hats with lazy gauze covers, true hallmarks of what my wild mind
associated with lady.
Dozens of old hat boxes that kept my dress up clothes, dressing up
In her past.
I played in her memories, grabbing an old tarnished silver plated hairbrush,
Singing to an unknown audience, and for a brief moment, I was her.
I was Florence Grey.
And the world was my stage.

Jennifer Gifford has always had a fascination with the dark and humorous side of fiction. She hates creepy old dolls, spiders, and garden gnomes. She has been previously published in *Danse Macabre*, *Mysteryauthors.com*, and *M-Brane's Science Fiction Magazine*. Her latest work can also be found at *Dunsteef audio fiction*, and recently by *Atoh Press*. She is currently Senior Editor at *Bete Noire Magazine*. Jennifer, who suffers from PCOS, has grown to love her role as advocate to bring awareness to the shame and pain involved with PCOS.

The Boy

By Edward M. Turner

William poured sugar in his coffee and stirred it thoughtfully.

Tom glanced at him. "How was your weekend?"

William gave a bleak smile. "Don't ask." He sipped his coffee. "We had a lousy time. Didn't pull into our driveway until two this morning."

"Tired, huh?"

"Tom, that's the least of it." William stared out the coffee shop's picture window at the afternoon traffic. "It started Friday night when we got to the campground. At the sign-in shack, they said they didn't have a record of my reservation. Or my advance payment. The man who took it over the phone? On vacation."

"Man, what'd ya do?"

"Paid again by credit card. They had an open campsite, near the entrance, but a half-mile from the pond. By then it was too dark to set up our tent."

"You had to sleep in your station-wagon?"

"Yeah. The kids drove me crazy. They couldn't sleep."

Tom sipped his coffee.

"We got plenty of exercise hiking to the darn water. Listened to people arriving and leaving all through the night, every night. Dust covered everything."

They both fell silent when a shapely girl in a short skirt and high heels walked past. The traffic noticeably slowed as the male drivers ogled her.

"Nice working in a college town...."

"Yup," Tom agreed, "sure is. And I'm inspecting the Lyceum Grill after break. Plenty of students employed there."

William sighed. "My last job is over on Harbor Street."

"Upper or lower?"

"Lower."

"Ouch. Garbage?"

"Fire escape."

"Be careful." Tom finished his bagel, rubbed his hands. "Take your big flashlight and a can of mace."

"Don't worry, I won't hang around. Wish I wasn't so tired, though. Almost didn't wake up in time." William smiled. "The landscapers in the neighborhood must've had the day off. Pretty quiet this morning."

"I cut my own lawn."

William crumpled his coffee cup, pulled out his wallet. "My turn, right?"

"Hey, sure you can afford it? Camping in Oregon and all?"

"That's why I skipped my jelly donut. I'll have it next time."

"It figures." Tom left a dollar-fifty tip. Winked at the pretty waitress.

~

William found a parking spot in front of the apartment building, a four story Federal of faded red brick. The double-doors were propped open with milk crates. Discarded newspapers, McDonald's wrappers, beer and wine bottles spilled out of the foyer and down the steps. A yellow mongrel dog sat outside wagging its tail.

"Hello, fella." He tentatively reached a hand out. The dog licked it, much to his relief.

"Good dog." He patted it. The dog whined. May have been hungry, or just needed the least sign of affection. It wouldn't go inside.

William entered and climbed the stairs. The stairway and every floor reeked of piss, fried cooking odors, vomit, and as he lingered a moment on each landing--the smell of marijuana and the burny whiff of cooked spoons. The top level lay in darkness. He pulled out his flashlight and flicked it on.

The faint howl of a child cut the quiet like a knife. He listened to a rising *yip, yip, yip* as if punishment had descended on, or caught, a young guilty soul. The cries abruptly ceased as his footsteps echoed down the hallway's dingy linoleum. He passed that door and knocked on another. He wished for a scented handkerchief for his nose.

The apartment door opened the length of its chain. A woman's bloated face peered at him. "What you want?"

William showed his badge. "Ma'am, I'm a building inspector with the city of Dover. I need access to your apartment in order to check the landlord's fire escape for safety reasons. It's a routine evaluation."

He said in a softer tone, "I must see your fire escape, Ma'am. To make sure it's up to code. If not, we'll see that it's fixed. It'll only take a few minutes. Okay?"

Her eyes registered nothing. The badge, however, got the chain off the latch and her to open.

"Yah, I don't care." She stepped aside and let him enter, then glanced both ways in the hallway before slamming the door.

William saw a dimly lit hovel. A naked bulb hung from a wire in the ceiling and illuminated the first room that was the kitchen. A fresh stench revealed a darkened bathroom with no door. Someone used it noisily. Silence waited to see his reactions. He sensed this, gripped his flashlight tighter.

The lady wore a polka dot dress that clung to a surprisingly trim figure. Her hair was gray and ratty and her face had the lined and pitted look of one battered by life. She led him to the living room where he could see the fire escape outside a curtained window.

Then his eyes discovered and became transfixed by a picture over the mantelpiece--of Jesus Christ.

William had first seen the print in Methodist Sunday school years ago. It had Jesus with long auburn hair parted in the middle, a tanned face, soft liquid brown eyes, an aquiline nose, thin lips, firm chin. He wore a pleated off-white shepherd's robe.

Jesus gazed upwards, apparently to His Father in Heaven. The unknown artist had given Him an expression of pensive pain in a face of ethereal beauty. William smiled, and did a double take when he noticed a little boy standing beneath the picture.

"Well, hello, young fella."

The boy remained silent. By his size he must have been six. He wore only ragged grimy underpants like a loincloth. His penis hung out. On his shaved skull was a wound, the edges like swollen purple lips, stitched with coarse thread by a clumsy hand. Yet his face held the unbelievable expression of a spiritual innocent.

"What happened to you?"

The boy merely stared.

The woman said, "Ma boyfriend hit him with a vodka bottle. Thought the little rug-rat wanted some of his booze."

William cleared his throat, suppressed the urge to choke.

"The fire escape, Ma'am?"

"Yah, right." The woman gave him a derisive look. "Just open the window, ya nerd." She broke wind.

He hurried to the window, lifted the sash and climbed out. A cold breeze blew in his face. He gratefully sucked oxygen into his lungs.

Altostratus clouds scudded past a setting sun in a lavender sky. The afternoon temperature was dropping.

He knew. The fire escape was more than sufficient. A quick glance told him that. He knew why. It happened to most city workers, and not a few times in his line of responsibility. He knew. Someone had called, worried about the child.

"This damned job." He held the flashlight in a death grip, turned to go in, his face etched with fury.

Edward M. Turner lives and writes in Biddeford, Maine with his wife Amy, and her black cat, Tina. His stories and essays have appeared in *Dred*, *Down In The Cellar*, *Maine Sunday Telegram*, *Fortean Bureau*, *Spring Hill Review*, and a number of times in *The North Shore Sunday*, *Flying Horse*, and *Sun Journal*, to name a few. His novel, Rogues Together, won the Eppie Award for best in Action/Adventure. He is currently working on his third novel.

Black Kripple

By Erika Jahneke

There is a lot written today in Movement circles, any movement really, about intersectionality and the way different forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and ableism overlap. You can ponder these concepts or watch them in action by reading Leroy Franklin Moore Jr.'s "*Black Kripple Delivers Music and Lyrics*"

It's not so much that Moore reinvents the wheel in any of these poems/beats(perhaps a future edition might include a soundtrack so we might know what these would sound like as part of a BK performance), although they do stand alone quite well when treated as poems. But he does do a good job of adding "new chapters" to stories we already thought we knew, such as the tough and independent blind blues musician living by his wits and demanding no special treatment from anyone; or the sweet, respectable and able-bodied civil-rights activists melodiously singing "We Shall Overcome".

Moore puts them all in a modern historical context by adding in the facts of disability into areas from which it has been erased, whether willfully or as an accident of history. In either case, Leroy Moore Jr., does us a favor by correcting the record, drawing neat connections between disability oppression and the segregation experienced by all black artists within the recent past.

Moore also covers other eye-opening aspects of disability oppression, such as the hair-raising statistic that, in America, the country where so many of us were told we were lucky to grow up disabled, those of us with disabilities face a risk of violent crime four to ten times that of a similar population without disabilities. (Women of color with disabilities fare worst, being the ones who carry ten times the risk of victimization compared to non-disabled peers).

At times, *the Black Kripple* can sound like a member of Black Lives Matter with his laser-like, as well as timely focus on police brutality and abuse on members of the disability community. However, he wastes no charity on cops, movement icons, or just ordinary Black citizens who "disability profile" their own people based on awkward gaits or garbled speech, as in the poem "Disabled Profiled" where he writes:

Can't look at me in my face

His mind is made up

Looking for my tin cup.

and describes the pain of being mistaken for a drunken beggar in the course of living daily life to be "triggering" and the kind of pain that "makes a grown man weep".

While I have not quite shared the same experience, it is not as hard for me as it might be for an able-bodied reader to feel this pain.

You might think this would render the book too painful to be enjoyed, but there is a lot of joy in life in this small volume, from tributes to famous people such as Curtis Mayfield and Ray Charles, to poems about family, to the unabashed eroticism of "Sexy Blues" "Big Bad Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood", as well as my favorite poem in the whole book, an antidote to the cliché misogyny of a lot of hip-hop called "I'm Beautiful!" where even the author's note calls black women who have been overlooked "Fucking Gorgeous,." I wish reading these words were all that would be necessary to feel them inside, but, all the same, the words being said at all are long overdue, especially by a disabled man of color who proudly calls himself a feminist.

An Interview With Leroy Moore

By Erika Jahneke

Leroy Moore, junior, is a busy man. I'm moving my phone interview around to accommodate a conference call about increasing disability presence in the media and he is fresh off a tour of his award-winning film about police brutality *Where Is Hope: The Art of Murder*, in venues throughout the Bay Area.

Still, he is always careful to make sure I understand, and not just because his speech is not always easy to follow, at least at first. We settle into a rhythm, though, and I sense that he is a quick thinker with a strong laugh that breaks out often despite the heavy topics of much of the interview.

Being careful when he speaks doesn't mean mincing words, however. In the YouTube trailer for the award-winning film, made with collaborator and former police officer Emmitt H Thrower, he says, "Brutality is an end result of socialization that people with disabilities, especially black people with disabilities, have no value." For that reason, he is careful to tell me that his work on brutality is not just a standard police-education project. "There is too much focus on the police. We want to raise awareness of the resources outside of the police."

"Born into activism" at the same time he was born with cerebral palsy in the '80s, both from a family history of social engagement and his mother's advocacy for him in the school system, young Leroy quickly noticed a gulf between his white and black disabled peers. "White disabled people were fighting about curb cuts...black disabled people about police brutality. It was all very different."

One thing the two groups share, however, is a history that gets buried and shared very seldom in schools or in the mainstream media. "It all goes a lot deeper than [disability icon] Helen Keller." says Moore, whose own poetry features disabled artists, civil rights figures, and the like.

Born too late to snog a Kennedy, but a smidge too early(and too disabled) to sweat it out in the park with Occupy, sometime journalist, activist, and fiction writer Erika Jahneke often feels caught in multiple worlds. Current ambitions include a future for her novel, a nice vacation and a legal way to keep MSNBC's Chris Hayes in her pocket in a Jiminy-Cricket style conscience arrangement.

Willowbrook

By Jessica Goody

For Gary Schwartz

You were my great-uncle, or would have been,
if such familial labels applied to one long-dead
and never met. After you were born, you were
placed in an asylum for crippled rag dolls.

In this snake-pit penal colony, the inmates lie
ignored on unwashed sheets, naked and shivering.
They line the halls, their diapers damp and sagging,
hugging their knees, staring at nothing, smudged
with their own waste What could you have become
had you been born in another generation? You could
have had a family, freedom, a life, gained knowledge,
developed your mind. Instead, you lay unused
amidst the chaos of Bedlam, carelessly tended
by overworked nurses in state institutions,
with no stimulation or thoughts of your own,
a wordless vegetable, knowing nothing but
your own name. I have walked where you walked.
It could so easily have been me: mute and drooling,

incontinent, an eternally helpless child, my body
twisted, and my mind untouched.

Jessica Goody was born and raised on Long Island. She currently lives in South Carolina, where she writes for *SunSations Magazine* and *The Bluffton Sun*. Her work has appeared in numerous publications and anthologies, including *Reader's Digest*, *The Seventh Wave*, *Event Horizon*, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, *The Maine Review*, *Broad!*, *Spectrum*, *Barking Sycamores*, *HeART*, *Gravel*, *PrimalZine*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Open Minds Quarterly*, and *Wordgathering*. Her poem "Stockings" was awarded second place in the 2015 Reader's Digest Poetry Competition. She has cerebral palsy.

My Cup Runneth Over-Not

By Anakalia

Occasionally, I check out the selection of vessels at a drugstore for one large enough to collect and transport radioactive waste. Recycled Styrofoam cups or hot tea containers from McDonalds can be used, though a child proof drinking cup with a smooth lip works better to prevent spillage when peeing in a cup.

I began the procedure as one solution for the obstacle course of my life. At a house I once lived in, my wheelchair didn't fit through the door of the bathroom, so I peed in a cup and poured the liquid into a larger jug for transport. Periodically, I'd transfer onto my scooter which could go through the door, drive into the bathroom, and flush. Wearing a flannel night gown in the cold of winter allows me to sit at the edge of my wheelchair

and relieve myself in a container. I inform concerned visitors who are thankful the cup doesn't store in the cupboard.

In Hawaii, I refrained from wearing underwear with my simple smocks, so I didn't have to raise and lower myself so much. With limited energy and mobility, how many times I lift up and down is crucial. When I do stand up in transferring to the toilet in the bathroom, it can be an opportunity to elongate my body as a balance and leg strengthening exercise.

Though dogs lift their legs in unscrupulous places, I practice this out of the public eye and then water vegetation that flourish on the elixir. Many a thirsty plant has been uplifted with the high powered metabolic urea fertilizer, while a band of this liquid excretion is known to keep deer out of a garden. With the amount of time spent irrigating thus, I could protect a good-sized plot from intruders.

Whether parked in a handicapped spot, or stopped on the side of the interstate, my car door serves as a visual block if nature calls while out in the world. Quick as lightening, I grab my beaker from the cup holder, stand up while leaning against the seat of the car, lift a small section of dress, and whiz. Angling the container, there is never any dribble and the task is achieved cleanly and effortlessly. A small sprayer bottle filled with a mixture of water, soap and essential oil disinfects the vessel. In a restroom not handicap-equipped with bars to hold onto or a seat that is steady, a plastic coconut oil container services my need. What a balancing act I do when I need to take a leak when lying in the back of my car which has no rear seats. I'll leave that one for your imagination.

I always pee in a cup before walking with my walker or previously two sticks, since vertical movement stimulates bladder activity. One day, I opened the back door of my Honda CRV for privacy while parked in front of the busy Kilauea Post Office on Kauai. Leaning on the front seat with feet on the ground and right hand concealed under my

dress, a man who had just retrieved his mail walked over and asked, “Do you need any help?” For a second my heart skipped a beat.

“Yes, please,” I replied, while reaching across to the box key on the dashboard. The gentleman took it from my left hand while my right hand remained holding the cup under my dress. He didn’t even notice.

Back when a walker supported me, I spent long hours in the segregated window box of a chiropractor’s office waiting for appointments. With no one around, quick as a flash I did the dirty deed and poured the potion down the center of a sink drain. Much to my surprise, one day the office manager approached me with a grin and a urinal. “I brought you a gift.” Though unsuitable for my purposes, from then on, I emptied my pee cup into a larger container until an employee had time to deposit it in the toilet down the hall.

The idea of a catheter and a bag on my leg always sent shivers down my spine until I discovered I could pee in a cup. With the limited scope people see, it works for me to be out in the world and pee in a cup, and if they do watch, so what?

After many years in the fast lane, accumulated health issues changed the focus of Anakalia’s life agenda from physical activity to purposeful sedentary. She fought the progression of Primary Lateral Sclerosis for over thirty years, living an active lifestyle in Hawaii. Creative with adaptability, Anakalia embraces the challenge of finding solutions in “survival techniques.”

Her work has been published on *Helium*, *Christian Devotions*, *Mobile Women*, *Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation*, *Road of Independence*, and other miscellaneous sites. More of her writing can be seen at anakalia123@wordpress.com

Time and Music

By Dorothy Baker

Nearly engulfed in six foot tall goldenrod, the shed, empty but for a ping pong table and a nation of spiders, bides its remaining time.

Arthritic joists, porous sills like aging bones, eroding under the weight of eighty winters, feebly, precariously, support the tarp-covered roof.

Oak floorboards, worn smooth by gliding feet stamping out a beat, are still intact, as is the stone fireplace, each stone still in place, undeterred by wisteria vines twining through gaps left by crumbling mortar.

Broad chestnut boards darkened by sun and time frame the dance hall like monoliths left by some ancient civilization.

The clerestory defined many a starlit night before trees sprang up to obscure the glowing points of light above unheeding dancers.

Acoustic music still echoes faintly from worn oak and grooved chestnut as spiders spin in time

Dorothy Baker lives in Western Massachusetts where she's enjoyed writing in groups with other women for a number of years. She grew up in North Carolina where she

began writing poems at age nine and progressed to soap operas as a teen, casting her reluctant childhood friends in the lead roles. Since then, she has helped write for a nonprofit environmental organization. Her stories and other work have appeared in *Breath and Shadow* over the years.