Zephyr
No Place Like Home

2014
A Hutchins School Production
Libs 341
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Swirl Time
YOGURT BAR

A Special Thank You to Redwood Cafe
with a face red and swollen with her father’s handprint on it, scar-
ing her for life. And I don’t need a window in this door to see that
girl terrified, bruised, and beaten without a reason, without a cause.
Now, here I am standing in front of this door for the last time, for
this will be the last time I enter.

Waiting in front of this door, the piece of wood that had
been my separation from a world of hope and a world of horror, I
ring the doorbell. For the first time I notice my arms as muscular
and sinewy, which must be from wildly swinging on the uneven
bars pretending I can fly, or from holding my skinny body up when
tumbling on the mats at the gym, transcending my thoughts from
misery into bliss; gymnastics had been a way for me to escape the
pain, the confusion, the grief. Or maybe my arms are just strong
from climbing the neighbor’s apple and cherry trees when starv-
and searching for food. But these arms will help me to carry out
the few belongings I am planning to take with me today, when I am
moving out.

Fortunately my legs are also powerful and strong, for I will
need them today. They must have become this way from sprinting
and sliding across the local tennis court chasing down every ball,
doing whatever it would take to be its master. The tennis ball has
been one of the only things I could decide over, such as which cor-
ger to hit it into, if to slice it, or if to slam it long-line, dictating it’s
direction and speed. I played tennis for at least one thousand hours
in the last nine years. My legs will help me to kick for the first time
if my father’s hatred-filled hands try to force themselves onto my
juvenile body once more.

I excelled at sports. Teachers and friends call me athletic;
however, I call it survival, for when having to fend for basic needs,
one becomes physically strong, agile and resilient. Nervously, I
glance down at the doormat only seeing the second-hand, ugly, brown leather shoes my heartless stepmother picked out for me last year; yet another reminder of why I hate her so much. I hope she is the one that opens the door. I want to tell that b....first.

Waiting there in front of the door that has led to a house filled with terror, I glance to the right; there it is, my forest, my friend, the place I ran to most every day to find rescue after having to be the pissing post, the punching bag for the adults inside the house on Isolde Street 3. I remember running out of that house and bolting to the left after having endured the relentless beatings of my father's hatred filled hands on my young and helpless body. I love walking on the soft, pine needle covered amber forest floor, for it feels gentle and forgiving. I remember the fresh scent that filled the space between the trees and how the smell of sap had a calming effect on me. The air felt pure and nourishing, and with every breath of it I felt as if I was filling my lungs with joy and with life. The thirty-foot tall evergreens of this forest were magical to me, and it is there that I talked to the Angel.

When I was a child communicating with my mind seemed natural. I remember having exchanges of thoughts with a presence I felt around me all the time; I only now call it talking with an Angel. She was always there at the right time, at the right moment, and when her energy enveloped mine, the feeling of wholeness allowed me to realize that my anger-raging, hatred-filled, abusive parents are lost in this world, lost to see who they are, lost to understand that time here on Earth is precious, a gift, to use it wisely. Here I am, finally, I am living the day I have dreamed of for more than a decade. I will tell them, "You are in charge of me no longer. I am."
I have enjoyed an education in Germany, spent my partying years in Los Angeles, became lazy on Maui, and witnessed diversity in San Francisco while living in all of those territories. And after having travelled extensively including to Australia, Costa Rica, France, England, Switzerland and Italy, it became clear that searching out there for happiness is not where it is; it has been with me all along waiting patiently to be recognized.

The only real territory I need is my home and the land it sits on, for this is where I love to spend most of my time to explore all the nameless territories that are hidden deep inside myself; furthermore, my heart. It is amazing after having existed pretty much all over this world that it boiled down to this: a home in nature, away from society, surrounded by large pine trees, shrubs and wildlife, and I can finally hear my heart talk.

The heart, or some people will call it the soul, is often the territory that gets explored last. We are not told in school about this place, and there are never any instructions on how to travel there. There is a map that can lead a searching apprentice to it, and it consists of roads of hardships, mountains of despair, highways of broken hearts all coming together to an intersection of either going down a dark alley or up a light path. Exploring either one of these two paths, or territories, can definitely be scary, but the latter one has definitely been worth my while...

I walked out to the kitchen the morning of April 24, 2006 to find my older brother, Matt, sitting at the left side of the kitchen table with his coffee in one hand and the comic section of the newspaper in the other. It was his usual morning routine at his spot of the table.

“Morning, Meg,” he said without looking up from the newspaper. He must have heard my blue Eeyore slippers drag across the carpet on my way to the kitchen.

“Morning. Ready for today?” I extended my arm to get a glass from the cupboard in front of me.

“Yeah, it should be a great day.” His eyes left the newspaper and glanced towards me with a smile coming from the corner of his mouth.

“Nervous?” I asked with a smile on my face, even though I knew he would deny it.

“Not really. I’m more excited than nervous, but we’ll see how it goes during the day. I might get a little nervous the closer it gets.” I turned towards the refrigerator that was plastered in family photos, along with appointment reminders and a whiteboard. This whiteboard that came from my locker in junior high school was meant for grocery lists but, it had turned into a conversation board between my brother and me. We used to write notes to each other on the whiteboard along with inside jokes that only we could understand. In the center of the jungle of photographs was the delicate piece of white paper with navy blue ribbon that stated this long awaited day. Save the date: Matthew and Tiffany are getting
married! Saturday, April 24, 2006. Formal invitation to follow.

My house was surprisingly calm that morning. Everyone was on schedule with what they needed to do and I was off to my hair appointment with plenty of time to spare. While my brother remained at our house in order to get ready with his groomsmen, I went to my future sister-in-law's parents' house with the rest of the bridesmaids to get beautified. I couldn’t wait to get in my bridesmaid dress and feel glamorous. Tiffany looked like a queen when she slowly walked down the stairs in her Cinderella ball gown. The rhinestones on her laced sleeves glistened from the sun that peeked through the windows. At that moment, it occurred to me that the next time I saw my big brother would be when I walked down the aisle as a bridesmaid and saw him standing at the altar waiting for his future wife. The conversation we’d had over breakfast that morning would be the last conversation I had with Matt as a single man.

My nerves kicked in when we arrived at Redeemer Catholic Church. I looked for my brother, but the church doors were already closed and would only open when it was time for all of us to walk down the aisle. The music began to play and my stomach turned into knots. My worst fear was tripping in my beautiful yet uncomfortable heels while walking down the aisle. My nerves calmed when the church doors opened and I saw my brother standing at the altar in his tuxedo. I could tell he was nervous; his forehead was shining with sweat. My eyes were glued to him as I walked down the aisle and he winked at me as I took my place to the left of the altar. At that moment, my mind filled with memories we’d had shared over the years.

We had very different interests growing up because of the gap in our age. We were always at different stages in our lives. He started college, I was in elementary school. He was getting married, I was finishing junior high school. However, one similar interest he and I shared was the Underground car racing game on our Play Station Two. Our father gave it to us Christmas of 2004. We spent the rest of our holiday sitting on the coffee table in front of the television with game controllers in our hands. During a race, we didn’t dare blink or let our eyes drift from the television screen. The only sounds that could be heard from the family room were the clicks of our fingers pounding the buttons on the controllers and our voices yelling at each other during the races.

“I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss your bride.” My mind flashed back to the present day as I heard the priest announce these words.

A smile beamed across my face and my eyes filled with tears, but I wiped them away quickly because I didn’t want my brother to see. The church erupted in applause as the newlyweds walked up the aisle. My brother hugged guests on their way to the door. Typical Matt—always being social and interacting with the people he loves.

“Congrats, Matteratta!” I said to my brother as I gave him a hug.

“Thanks, Meggysmeg.”

The history of the nicknames we have for each other is unknown, even for us. But we’ve used them for as long as I can remember.

“I have a big sister now!” I said to Tiffany as I hugged her and tried to maneuver around her ball gown. Her face was glowing and she had a spark in her eyes at her loved ones congratulated her.

“Love you, Meg,” she said in reply. Her face was beaming.

The reception followed the ceremony and was the highlight of the night, including a delicious dinner followed by touching toasts and dancing. As I watched my brother sweep his wife across the dance floor, my mind flash backed to the days when he was still in college and they had just started dating. I remember being in the fifth grade and eavesdropping on their phone conversations instead of doing homework. My brother had a loud and powerful voice that could be heard between walls. There were times when I wondered if he forgot that the wall our rooms shared was not very thick. I remember crashing their movie date nights, which now I realize probably annoyed them more than anything.

Matt had brought Tiffany home after a date to watch a marathon of the “X-files.” I was sitting in my bedroom when I overheard the television in his room and decided to slowly walk towards his room. I stood in front of the doorway waiting to get permission to
enter.

"It's ok, Meg. Come on in." Matt invited me in. I jumped on his bed next to Tiffany and we were all piled on his bed in front of an old, small television watching episode after episode of the "X-files." I could tell my brother was annoyed, but he never kicked me out. Even though I was the baby of the family, he always included me in everything.

And then there was the night they got engaged.

"Hey, Meg?" He came up to me while I was working on some homework on the family computer in the living room. "So, I'm proposing to Tiffany tonight." Typical of any thirteen year old girl, I screamed with excitement.

"Oh my gosh! Congratulations! Let me see the ring!" He showed me the beautiful diamond ring he had picked out for her.

"I need your opinion on something. So, I'm taking her out to dinner and need some advice on when I should propose. Should I propose before or after dinner?"

"Before. That way you can enjoy dinner knowing you're engaged instead of being nervous and anticipating the moment. Plus, if you're nervous at dinner, she may sense that you're up to something and you don't want that."

"Ok, good point. Thanks, Meg. I'll see you later."

"Good luck! Call me and tell me what she says!"

A few hours later, the house phone rang and I heard my stepmom say "Congratulations you two." I jumped up from the computer chair and ran to the kitchen. I quickly snatched the phone away from my stepmom.

"So what'd she say?" I could hear them both laugh. "Am I on speaker phone?"

They laughed again. "Of course I said yes!" Tiffany replied.

"I love my ring. It's beautiful!"

At the end of their first dance, all the guests picked up the crystal hand bells in front of their place settings and rang them. That meant the new bride and groom had to kiss. After they kissed, the D.J. turned up the music and the party officially began. The only time I left the dance floor was when I gave up dancing in my uncomfortable yet beautiful heels and decided to go barefoot. My brother and new sister never left the dance floor.

At the end of the reception, we watched Matt and Tiffany drive off in Matt's red BMW that we had decorated during the reception. The white ribbons blew in the breeze and the banner on the trunk of his car read "Congrats Newlyweds." They were off on their next adventure: their honeymoon.

"They're married," my dad said patting my back. "Let's go home."

I walked into the house that night and, even though there were other people there, it felt empty. I walked into my brother's room and saw his bed made and his room all straightened up. Just how he always kept it. I walked out of his room towards the kitchen in my blue Eeyore slippers to get a glass of milk before going to bed. I reached into the cabinet for a mug and then turned towards the refrigerator. As I reached for the door handle, I saw the delicate white piece of paper with the navy blue ribbon. Save the date: Matthew and Tiffany are getting married! Saturday, April 24, 2006. Formal invitation to follow. My eyes filled with tears as I looked up to the white board that he and I shared. I picked up the black dry eraser marker and took off the cap. Underneath our latest inside joke, I wrote Congratulations to the newlyweds! Mr. and Mrs. Matthew O'Connor! Love you both! Always and 4-eva!
FOOD FOR THOUGHT
STEPHANIE NESS

This box we are given, it is the mind
with all the secrets of the world to find
This balancing act that we call life,
brings chaos and peace to be here alike.
With all of this, there must be some undefined power.
Patience, seeking enlightenment takes more than an hour.
The only real proof is the stars above.
So thrive with each other, show the world love.
Can we say that we have progressed if a brother still kills his brother?
Because hate can still be found amongst one another.
Perfection and imperfection can go hand in hand,
being one with everything is a good plan.
Look, don't you see?
The secret is to let everyone be.
So when it comes down to it, yes, I do have faith
because God has gotten me through things that I alone could not take.
The light has gone out,
The Holy water is stained
by hands left uncleaned.
Hands clasped in prayer,
clasped around the trigger.
When reasons abandoned
the faithful stand
tall as trees
alone in their dreams.
not me.
If fate turns against me
an unlucky hand
I’ll find a new key,
try a new door instead.
Because I was afraid of
the monsters in my head
did you put them there?
Another door closed,
another key added.
I too can create, destroy
my fate may be sealed
but the present is mine
collecting keys
and the light
inside me.
AND SO I GROW
TRACY PERKINS

When I was young I thought the stars were made for wishing on. Magic wasn't just a game or contained in a book. Magic was breathing in the air around us.

I grew a little and was told Magic's name was God. And that He made the stars, And that wishes were named prayers.

I grew a little more and found the difference between fact and fiction, Could be the names of things. Facts were things like "Fish can drown!" and "Magic is only in books with little boys on broomsticks." Fiction is far off castles and people flying on water.

I grew a little more and learned that there were people before me. There was a time before buttons and computers, And that music didn't always have lyrics.
I grew a little more and overhead
My Sunday school teacher tell my mom that,
"Wonderous things can be Dangerous."

I grew a little more and found
That death is already outlined
In my mother’s favorite book.

I grew a little more and realized I was made of different pieces,
Like a puzzle, but not all the pieces come in a box.
I had to find them myself,
And I normally found them between the pages of a book.

I grew a little more and discovered that what I was supposed to feel on
Sundays,
I actually found between the trees in the summer,
And on a beach searching for colored glass,
And between the pages of a book.
And in all these places,
I found more pieces of my puzzle.

I grew a little more and found that
Other people have
Other Gods.
And while that angered some,
I wondered why anyone cared.

I grew a little more and found that
My puzzle doesn’t look like
What my mom thinks it should look like,
And that girls are pretty.

I grew a little more and found
Puzzle pieces in music,
And hope in the white feathers of a dove.

I grew a little more and found
That computers and buttons
Can lead you many places.
I grew a little more and found

The difference between fact and fiction,
Was a line grayer than adults thought,
And music isn’t always heard.

I grew a little more and found
That girls aren’t supposed to be pretty and that
Sometimes, it’s best to hide parts of your puzzle,
Even if it’s the only parts that fit.
And my mother told me that,
Sometimes, you just need to force pieces to unite,
So it looks like you’ve got it more put together than you do.

I grew a little more and found out that
Death is Permanent.

I grew a little more and found that
Fiction is that magic is only found in wands.
And people walking on water is
Bullshit.

I grew a little more and found that
Colored glass in my memories from the beach
Is more fulfilling than singing on a Sunday.

I grew a little more and found
When I was young,
My mother just exchanged my Magic for mystics.

I grew a little more and found
That the fiction about Magic
Taught me better morals than my mother’s favorite book.

I’m still growing a little more,
And I’m still finding pieces of my puzzle
In between pages of new books.
KIMMALY THACH

No place like home
Downstairs two bedroom apartment
Ten bodies including me
Uncle in one room
Three bros in the other
Two sisters, me and ma on a king
Aunt and cousin on the pull-out couch
Best friend upstairs
My other cousins beside us
School, only a ten second walk
Picking plums and having fun
Some may say this is not normal
But hey it was home.

ISAAC TALAUGON
SAMANTHA HOUCK

HOUSE

There is a heart in my chest, a brain in my head and all the countless words that
never go said.
We all have one body.
We all have one Spirit.
We all have one mind.
One planet
One clock to follow our time.
There are countless things out there to fear
But here my dear I'll speak it clear
These things you fear can all be accomplished
Take pride in your one life, my tears.
Have some faith in the paths to come all my little dears.
We all have one body, one mind, one soul.
So take care of that body, that mind, that soul.
If you don't take care of your one true self, where will you live?
In a skin of endless doubt, I'm sure.
If you don't make the choices, dearest, to take care of what you can.
If you don't make the choices my love,
No one else can.
We all have one mind
We all have one Spirit
We all have one body
Please do not deter it.

ISAAC TALAUGON

Past, present, future, we all walk a line, it's time you make your choices love and
learn that all things do come in time. You have one you to call your own, and that
my dearest, is your one true home.
WHAT IF I'M NOT READY?
I need to tell them the truth.
I don't know how they will react.
I am so afraid to speak.

I need to tell them the truth.
How I truly feel.
I am so afraid to speak.
I am gay are never easy words to say.

How do I feel trly?
Family is everything to me.
They are never easy words to say. I am gay.
I don't know how they will react
Everything is about family.
Just rip the bandage off. Just say it.
How will they react? I don't know.
When is the right time?

Say it. Rip that bandage off.
The secret struggle needs to stop.
When the time is right.
They will accept me with open arms.

You will need to stop the secret struggle
How will they react? I don't know.
Will they accept me with open arms?
What if? I'm not ready.

TENGU (EXCERPT)
BARBARA FROHLECH

The Tengu are among the strangest of Japanese mythological creatures and also among the oldest. They are minor deities, respected and feared. The old belief in them still persists. They inhabit trees in mountainous areas. The Tengu are generally associated with pine trees and Japanese cedars. They live in colonies with a principal Tengu in charge. The Tengu are part bird and part man in appearance, winged with long beaks or noses. The Tengu are red in color. They often are depicted wearing cloaks and small black hats. They are good swordsmen and are mischievous rather than evil. In certain myths they are the harbingers of war. To run across one is not usually good sign. The Tengu are a part of the Shinto pantheon. The Tengu were descendants of Sansano who is the brother of Amaterasu the Sun goddess. She is looked upon as the deity that the imperial family is descendant from. She is the Sun and her brother is the moon. They do not get along well together and sit with their backs to one another. The image is to make the shape of the islands. Sansano is the more troublesome of the two. In Shinto the Tengu are portrayed in a more positive light than they are in the Buddhist tradition. In Buddhism they are considered oni (evil spirits). It has been said that the Tengu would throw stones, sticks, and acorns at the Buddhist monks when they would travel throughout Japan demonstrating their faith. Sometimes thought of as the ghosts of arrogant monks, the Tengu are strongly associated with vanity and pride.
Memories came to her about the many stories she had heard of the Tengu.

Like the story about the boy who teased a Tengu by pretending he could see the wonders of the heavens by looking through a hollow piece of bamboo.

The Tengu, distraught with curiosity, eventually succeeded in getting the boy to part with the stick, by exchanging it for his cloak of invisibility.

The boy played many tricks on his family and friends when wearing this cloak, but the Tengu who had been deceived by the boy exacted its revenge and the boy fell into an icy river, lost the magic cloak and lived to appreciate the danger of taunting the Tengu. (Piggott, 1969, 1982)

For the full story, please contact Barbara Forhlech at frohlech@seawolf.sonoma.edu
When you don't have a door, God gives you a fence
Jennifer Bowen

There are moments when you glance across that tight rope you stand on and realize in an instant how close to the other side you really are. As I hurriedly opened the stiff goldenrod envelope I looked down at my watch hoping I would make the four o'clock deadline to submit my letters of recommendation. I wanted to glance at my professor's letter before I turned it in. She was one of my favorite teachers of all time. She is the kind that lights a fire in you, awakens you. I reached up to wipe unexpected tears from my eyes as I read the words she wrote: “This student is the top 2% of all students I have taught.” She filled the page with accolades about a woman with passion, insight, and a deep desire to teach and advocate for children and families in need. I was humbled, and in a sort of disbelief that the woman she wrote about so beautifully was me. There are moments when you see through someone else's eyes the gifts you have been given. That moment when you look around from that rope; you look down and you're not afraid anymore. I sat open mouthed, marveling at the miracle that found me sitting on this cold, damp wooden bench at Sonoma State University, reading about myself. The last five years had presented obstacles meant for strength that I never had, yet I made it.

The abuse had been worsening since we moved into the four bedroom home for perfect families. It had come to a head that night. So many mornings I drifted away at my desk just thankful that work was a safe place, well relatively speaking; there was no physical violence or blatant emotional abuse. I needn't fear having a ceramic houseplant hurled at my head any moment. I stashed clothes every morning in the locker at work. There were many mornings I awoke to half a pants suit, literally. Any self-respecting woman would have left by now, right? It just wasn't that easy. How I was going to leave without being killed—where was I going to go? My mom couldn't take us in; my step dad didn't like "kid noise". I prayed for the first time in forever, for a way to leave safely. It needed to be quiet and unexpected. It needed to be soon.

Don't ask unless you mean it.

As I lay there on the floor drifting back into consciousness I heard him call out for my daughter. I am fully aware now. The mother bear in me kicked in and I flew down the stairs, hitting two of the twelve. I chose left down the street. My only option was to jump the fence belonging to the only neighbors I had met. This was going to leave a lasting impression. Funny, the normal thoughts you have when you are running for your life. It was the fence or keep running barefoot and half naked toward the main road and flag down a car. I chose the former. He didn't yet know I was gone. My only saving grace was that my seven year old, Sofie—who he was yelling for when I came to—was asleep in the den. I hit the fence, my body numb and tingly; I had the strength of the stereotypical meth addict from “Cops” running with a stolen television. I felt no pain. My kids were in there with him.

I don't know who it was that slid open her back sliding glass door. Someone else's legs moved mine as my adrenaline propelled me in flight up her staircase—Thank God someone outside of Canada still leaves their doors unlocked I remember thinking of the Michael Myers documentary. I recalled my startled but gracious neighbor's name, “Jan”, I whispered desperately, “please call the police, my husband has my children and I am hurt badly, they are in danger”. The next flashes of memory involve red lights silently swooping hawk-like into the cul-de-sac, a police-tech woman with a cold voice and camera, my naked and bruised body. My recollection of the incidents that left me in that condition have thankfully been erased by a wise, by-pass type of physiological savior we like to call the block-out.

The choice that night was life—mine, my children's. The only option was running. The strength of a power greater than me held me up over that fence that day, and in the ensuing days, comforted me while I held my new baby who breastfed on the
bottom bunk in a room made just for our family. We were lucky enough to get the “deluxe suite”. Most families had to share rooms with others but we got to be alone on the third floor of a gorgeous 8 bedroom Victorian called the Y.W.C.A Safehouse. My fourteen and seven-year-old daughters and my four-month-old baby boy and I were technically homeless, and definitely broke, traumatized and directionless, but it was there that I had the first nights of real sleep in months.

As the days passed I felt more than at home with this community of women. It was almost tribal. It felt like the old circles of Native American women who took care of their own and each other’s, without request, a symbiotic and nurturing place. The house was filled with loud babies, Mexican Corridos playing, women cooking, sharing, crying and laughing. It was peace for me. I look back on those days with warmth and deep gratitude. This place, the Safehouse is an anomaly. Barriers of language or socioeconomic differences that affected us in the outside world were irrelevant here. The strength of the women that found a way to leave was the common denominator and group identity. It was that inclusive lens through which we saw each other. It became all that mattered. For years the Y.W.C.A. has had to keep themselves a secret, much like the women that have inhabited have had to. But their name should be yelled from the rooftops, for there are many more like us, and this organization truly saved my life. I would have left far earlier had I known about them. It was a random phone book search in the E.R. that found them, or not so random.

No one at work knew anything. I told everyone I was in a car accident. The pain going on inside was far beyond what anyone could see outwardly, but if there is anything I excel at, it is smiling while I’m about to lose it. My blond, rosy cheeked, thirty year-old, Ivy League supervisor said in his best, condescending voice, “you know, if you were more organized I bet your whole life would change”. Interesting point he had, as I had just been beaten to a pulp for not unpacking my husband’s things in our new walk-in closet fast enough, and was now living out of my car. I’m sure he noticed the disorder as he peered through my Subaru’s fishbowl windows on his way to lunch.

It was no Norma Rae moment, but one afternoon I let me mouth mirror what my brain was screaming and was certain I would be fired. I cried in my Safehouse advocate Theresa’s office, I mean really cried. My rib and shoulder throbbed with pain upon every heave but it felt so good. “What the fuck am I going to do i