

# THE SCHOLAR

**The Senior Edition 2007**

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## ***If Poetry Were Popular...***

***Kathryn Bray***

*I am from walking the dog,  
from afternoon soccer and weekend  
hiking.  
I am from toys lying around the house.  
(random, assorted, they make me young  
again)  
I am from the rhododendron,  
the hemlock  
that I mulch with Mom every summer  
in hopes of flourishing.  
I'm from do-it-yourself and common  
sense,  
from Yarbrough and Waynick.  
I'm from practicality  
and frugality,  
From eat your vegetables and help me*

*change the oil.  
I'm from Sunday School and  
Confirmation.  
I'm from Pittsburgh and Lacayo,  
hand-grown tobacco and counting cows  
for Grandma.  
From the kamikaze that flew  
into my grandfather's ship,  
the 120 miles dad and I cycle for fun.  
Beside household clay pots and pencil  
holders,  
aged albums stand proud on the  
homemade shelves;  
the photos contain long-ago made  
memories, entertaining and nostalgic,  
they are a part of me*

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## **Some Friendly, Unsolicited Advice**

Layla Scott

*I know that by the time this is published, you will already have heard all the project advice from Fall Forum about choosing a mentor and staying on top of your deadlines. Please bear with me through this, my last submission to The Scholar, because I want to impart some additional advice for life as a member of USO.*

- 1. Go on the trips. I don't think many of us fully appreciate the travel opportunities afforded to us through Scholars. So many of my favorite collegiate memories come from these adventures, from "buying postcards" on Bourbon Street to climbing a 4-story jungle gym in St. Louis to being abandoned with some of my dearest friends in the subway in NYC. I would encourage everyone to go on at least one of the big trips, regardless of the cost (which, really, for what you get isn't that much at all). You can sock away money during the summer, hit up the grandparents, sell a kidney (ok, maybe that's taking it a bit far. Maybe). It will be worth it; I promise.*
- 2. Go to the Christmas tree decorating party. This is one of my favorite Scholars traditions. Listening to Dr. Dan's stories about all the previous generations of Scholars whose ornaments we're hanging really is a lot of fun. Note to First Years: You must choose your ornament carefully, for they will be how you are known by all the Scholars to come.*
- 3. One note of advice for those who take over Turkey Duty for Scholars Thanksgiving: Be not afraid. Really, it isn't difficult, and it can be a great deal of fun. Do try to buy the turkey a couple of days in advance, though. This will make your life a lot easier when you go to prep the bird. Ask Rachel Albritton about her eye or Rebecca McClure about her kitchen sink if you need further confirmation on this point.*
- 4. Never let PC hold your cell phone. Just trust me on this one.*
- 5. I'd encourage you to revive the Test Bank. That small file cabinet under the table in the kitchen? Yeah, that's meant to be a place where people put their old tests to help those coming later to review. Check it out, and contribute if you can.*
- 6. Another Scholars tradition that has fallen out of the general consciousness is the Little Scholar. Take note of him when you walk through the courtyard, so it will really mean something when you say goodbye to him the morning of your Commencement (which will be here before you know it).*

*I hope each of you can get out of Scholars all the good that I have. Thank you all for being such a wonderful part of my collegiate experience, and I look forward to making still more memories with all of you in my last few months in Martin.*

## **Excerpt from *The Tennessee Highway***

Trey White

*This is a little excerpt from the novel I'm writing for my Scholars senior project. The characters, walking from Martin to White House in the aftermath of a catastrophic gasoline shortage, are past the point of no return - and are starving.*

*As the day wore on, my almost cheerful outlook on hunger was beginning to fade. Little conversation passed between us, and when it did I did nothing to encourage it, because I was beginning to find anything spoken to me extremely aggravating, especially if speech was unnecessary. I had to restrain the urge to snap at the others to shut up.*

*I became acutely aware of just how heavy the backpack was, how the boxes of shotgun shells had migrated to the bottom and somehow all turned sideways so that the cardboard corners were poking me in the spine. I stooped under the burden, aware that I would be sweating if my body allowed it, but this was only a clinical realization - if I overheated and collapsed to the pavement, at least I wouldn't be hungry anymore.*

*Probably wouldn't even be so lucky as to die, I mused. The other two would just drag me into the shade and pour water on me until I revived, then I'd have to keep on marching.*

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*My feet felt like hot, aching leaden weights, and my muscles were starting to bunch up and ache - even those I wasn't using, like in the meaty part of my left hand or the fibrous tissue of my neck. I wondered if my body was turning on its more vital systems for nourishment. That was a biological act of desperation, I knew - for a wild animal, it was the beginning of the end. When you're eating away your own source of strength and speed, it becomes more and more unlikely that you'll be able to snare any external food before you shut down.*

*We went past horse and cattle farms that I dared not even cross into; the ever lingering functional part of my brain told me that the best way to ensure that I got a lead implant into my brain was to mess with someone else's livestock when hunger loomed. The sun was burning into the back of my head. Hours passed. The homes and crappy farms turned into fragrant forest, beautiful and infuriating at the same time. The trees, the birds, the squirrels (the latter of the two having enough sense to stay out of sight of me and my shotgun) didn't worry about food; they got it if they got it and that was probably all they thought on the matter.*

*This sucks. I thought. It turned over in my head again and again, finding time with my footsteps. This sucks. This sucks. This sucks. Left foot, right foot. Finally, not even really realizing what I was doing, I uttered my first prayer in what might have been ten years. It was nothing more, really, than help, mentally aimed in the vague direction of the sky. Not that it would do anything.*

*I was halfway through telling myself that it at least couldn't hurt when I heard a sound in the forest, a gently crunching of leaves under small, padded feet. A beagle stepped out of the forest and into the road, twisting his head to look at us. We stopped, and so did he. My second prayer in ten years was simply, that's not funny.*

*For a moment the only thing any of us could do was stare at one another. The dog sat down on the yellow line and bobbed his tail up and down a couple of times, slapping the pavement and opening his mouth to pant.*

*I looked at my comrades, and I saw in their eyes the same thing that had first come into my head when the dog stepped out of the woodline. They eyed me momentarily and then they both looked at the ground, unwilling to meet my gaze or each other's, and especially unwilling to look at the tri-colored dog.*

*You're the one with the gun, they seemed to say. Make it quick.*

*I wasn't thrilled at the prospect, but we had to eat. At least since he was sitting right here he wouldn't have to suffer - with a loud chack-CHACK I ejected the number six shell from the shotgun, catching it and stuffing it into my right pocket. I was slightly dismayed that the dog didn't take the hint and run off. The buckshot would make for a cleaner kill, as it would more easily penetrate the little dog's skull -*

*The beagle stood, drooped ears twitching and directing themselves with the rest of his head to the left side of the road. I instinctively followed his gaze, and felt rather than heard the concussion of black hooves on hard pavement. There was a blur of tan, one startled black eye, the gun exploded against my shoulder and the deer crashed into the underbrush on the side of the road, propelled there by a combination of his own momentum and all eight pellets from a double-ought shell.*

*Then everything was so still that I think even the forest was stunned.*

*"Good shot," Rich said, and all of us, including the dog, walked the short distance to the roadside to survey the fruits of amazing fortune.*

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## **My Final Scholars Submission EVER**

**Sarah Roberts**

*Last year, some seniors reminisced, some offered advice... Well, it's my turn now, and quite frankly, I don't really know what to say.*

*I guess I could try to do both, or one, or something completely different.*

*So, here goes, and please bear with me.*

*Let me just say: Love what you do. What is it worth if you don't love it?*

*Next, I would like to advise everyone to never take yourself too seriously. Sometimes you just have to learn to laugh at yourself. Otherwise, you'll end up miserable. Sometimes you goof, and you just need to learn to laugh at it.*

*Do something spontaneous every now and then. Yet, for some reason, I really don't think this group needs to hear that...*

*Try to have the BEST Halloween costume EVER at every USO Halloween party. Why? It's fun. And people laugh at you, and little kids try to pull your ornaments off. And let add that trees seem to be big hits...*

*I feel a bit like I'm writing a graduation song that will be overplayed throughout the month of May, although I realize that won't happen. And that just makes me want to tell everyone to ... wear ... sunscreen...*

*Sometimes when your friends of majors not related at all to yours start discussions that you don't understand at all, try to start a discussion that is over their heads. It's kinda fun to beat them at their own game. For example, an engineering major and a math major start talking about upper level math functions, and you are a music major. Just start talking about music theory and how you once saw a seven fully diminished seven chord have a dominant function in a Haydn string quartet at the end of a particular consequent phrase.*

*My last bit of whatever you call this would have to be to just make sure you enjoy it all. Make some memories. This is the last thing some of us will do before we enter the ever-feared "real world!" Sure, you'll get stressed out sometimes and have emotional breakdowns, but it's a part of it... But just remember: it takes light to make shadows.*

*Thanks for a great four years! I wish the best to all of you!*

## **Excerpt from "Two Paths"**

**Will Binkley**

*"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." Matthew 7:13-14*

*In reading these verses we as Christians, love to formulate an image in our minds. Though many are not completely sure what ideas they are toying with, they are clearly formulating an image of the state of nature of man. Allow me to construct the typical scene...*

*Here stands a man, representative of every other man. There is nothing particularly special or even individual about him. In fact, if you were to look into his face you would only see a reflection of your own. He is a mirror image of any man, woman, or child who may take the time to watch him. This man is an interesting predicament because he is standing at a crossroads. Directly in front of him and across the street there stands a signpost and on this post are two signs. The first sign reads "Heaven, Distance: A Lifetime" and points in one direction, on the second "Hell, Distance: A Lifetime" and it points in the opposite. Now this man has a decision to make, he must choose a path and so he takes the time to thoughtfully examine each of the paths.*

*The path to Hell is attractive. The road is broad and smooth. It is obvious that this path has been travelled by many before him and will likely be travelled by many after.*

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*Surely, if he walks quickly enough he will come across a travelling companion sooner or later, or if not he could walk slowly and a companion could easily catch up. He is then distracted by a familiar noise; something steady, constant, and that evokes a kind of serenity he knows well. Then he sees it, not far from this point a beautiful brook runs right up to the side of the road and then continues on parallel to the road for as far as he can see. The water is clean, clear, and he knows that it must be cool. This could serve as the perfect means to cool off and especially find a refreshing drink at points during his long and arduous journey. And then he notices something else; he can see the road and the creek for miles. In fact, the only thing that causes either to disappear from view is the natural curvature of the earth. There are no mountains, no sharp curves, and not even the slightest of hills. It is flat, smooth, and easy for as far as he can see. In looking at all of this he notices a small dot out in the distance. At first he isn't sure what it is, but if he squints a shape takes form. It's a building on the left hand side of the road. If there is one building there must be others. He would be able to find food, shelter, clothing, other humans, and maybe even forms of entertainment. With all of this tucked away in his mind he turns to the path to Heaven.*

*To call this a road would be a great injustice to any true road. It is, very simply put, a footpath. Try as he may he cannot find anything particularly attractive about it. It is narrow; wide enough for one man to walk comfortably, but to attempt to add a second abreast would be impossible. Patches of grass blotch the path here and there and where there are not patches of grass there are rocks, divots, and holes. To walk on this would be far more similar to walking on cobblestones than anything else. Not only is the road inconsistent in its surface but the path is, simply put, confusing. Though it seems to head in one general direction there are diversions every other step as though those who had trod this path before him were never able to stick to the course originally laid. They wandered, returned, turned around, stopped, and did everything they could but stick to the path. Now he turns his attentions to the surroundings of the path. There is no brook here and no clear view of the sky. Bushes, trees, weeds, and other such impediments have grown out and over the path. To walk down this path would be a constant action of ducking branches, forcing his way through thorn bushes, and wading through knee-high weeds that would be home to no telling what types and varieties of insects. With all of these impediments it is clear that no one could have even attempted to build anything along this path. There was no hope of finding food, shelter, water, or reprieve from this path. Then he notices the incline. This path almost immediately begins to climb and it only seems to get steeper as it goes. This would be a hard path to follow. Perhaps the most disheartening fact about it, though, is that there seems to be no hope of ever coming across another human being. This would be long, lonely, and personal.*

*Which road should he choose? Some would say he should choose the easier of the two paths; at least with it there are some things that are certain. The journey will be easier, food and shelter will readily available, and the opportunity for companionship is certain. The second path only offers discomfort, pain, the opportunity to get lost, and maybe even death. Never-the-less the logical choice should always be the path to Heaven. The destination is all that really matters and who in their right mind would choose an eternity of misery and torment over the eternal joys provided by Heaven. Isn't a lifetime of sacrifice worth an eternity of joy? Is a lifetime of comfort worth an eternity of suffering? This is where we as Christian hit our wall. Regardless of how easy as the path to Hell may seem, when given the choice, who would ever possibly choose Hell over Heaven? The answer is simple, the image we have created is fundamentally wrong.*

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## **My Fifth Year**

**Jon Sipes**

*During this last year of my collegiate career I spent all of my time in Clarksville, TN doing a cooperative work program with the Corps of Engineers at Fort Campbell. This was a great learning experience for me and I would like to share some of the benefits of doing such work experiences during college. Before working with the Corps I had already work experience but none of this experience was directly related to my major. So I didn't know what to expect when I made the move to Fort Campbell.*

*At Fort Campbell the learning experience began the first day I walked through the door. I wasn't familiar with working in an office environment and working with so many other people. Shortly after I arrived I was placed with an engineer that was to oversee my work and help along in developing jobs on the base. The experience of having to do work that wasn't directly connected to any class I had taken was definitely a new experience. All of these new experiences were all positive experiences. Probably the most beneficial part of my experiences was being able to interact and talk with engineers that had been working for several years. In my conversations with my coworkers at Fort Campbell I gained a lot of insight about working as an engineer. I was able to take the knowledge that I gained and use as I decide upon a graduate school, my career, and the specific field of engineering that I want to pursue. Before starting my co-op experience I was unsure about what I was going to do after I graduate but the knowledge that I gained from people who have been in my shoes is priceless.*

*Now I challenge each and everyone of you to do the same. I feel that you should go through the same experiences that I did. So look to find summer internships in your related fields and at the very least find someone in your field other than a professor to talk to about your respective career. You will not regret it. The type of knowledge you will gain cannot be found anywhere else and may be the most important information you will receive during college.*

## **The Grammar Police**

**Rebecca McClure**

*Being an English major, somehow everyone else expects you to know absolutely everything about the English language. If you show even a moment's hesitation about a grammatical question put to you by an overly smug biology major, then you can expect to be mocked for at least the next five minutes. It doesn't matter to him that your concentration is in literature rather than writing and that you haven't formally studied any grammar since your tenth grade English class.*

*Heaven help you if you do know and try to correct someone unasked. Being labeled the "smart girl" early in my educational career, I learned that if I wanted to have any friends at all it was best not to divulge even the smallest shred of knowledge unless absolutely necessary. Most people do not wish to be enlightened. You'll certainly be seen as pretentious, no matter what your intent may be. Of course it pains you to see "Friday," your favorite day of the week, spelled with a letter "e," but it's best just to let these things go.*

*Perhaps many people have good reason to resent grammatical suggestions. Almost all of us have been at one time or another victimized by the fierce guerilla tactics of the shapeless organization known as the Grammar Police. Perhaps for you it was that retired-teacher great-aunt or some other older relative who wouldn't let you put two sentences together without correcting some mistake. Perhaps you were left standing there, maddened by the fact that you so deeply desired to yell out "Can't you give it a rest? It's not like I'm orally composing my dissertation over here!" But of course that was completely out of the question because her position as an elderly relative made any attempt at your own defense impossible. And then there are those annoying people who make you feel stupid every time*

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*you even open your mouth, by publicly calling you out on your incorrect usage of “who” and “whom” or some other word in a conversation. “Honestly,” you think, “this rule is so misused that almost ninety-nine percent of normal people don’t even know the difference. What’s the big deal anyway? Can’t I just finish my sentence?”*

*Many of these grammarians are harmless, and some are even tongue-in-cheek about an approach to correct grammar. For example, take the case of the Florentine graffiti-corrector. In thick block letters about an inch high, someone had scrawled “ROCK ON AMERICA” with a black permanent marker amid other comments written over the years in various languages. I considered its location blasphemous seeing as it was on the outside wall of the Accademia, the museum in Florence that houses Michelangelo’s famous “David” statue, and I shook my head at this evidence promoting the European stereotype of the arrogant American. However, interestingly enough someone before me had apparently taken offense at another aspect of this piece of vandalism: its construction. In thin ink someone had added a comma between the phrases “ROCK ON” and “AMERICA,” so that it now read “ROCK ON, AMERICA.” To emphasize his or her point, the writer had drawn an arrow pointing to the site of the correction, connected by a line to a brief explanation: “Use a comma for direct address.” I just had to laugh. It was the typical response of a textbook grammar cop.*

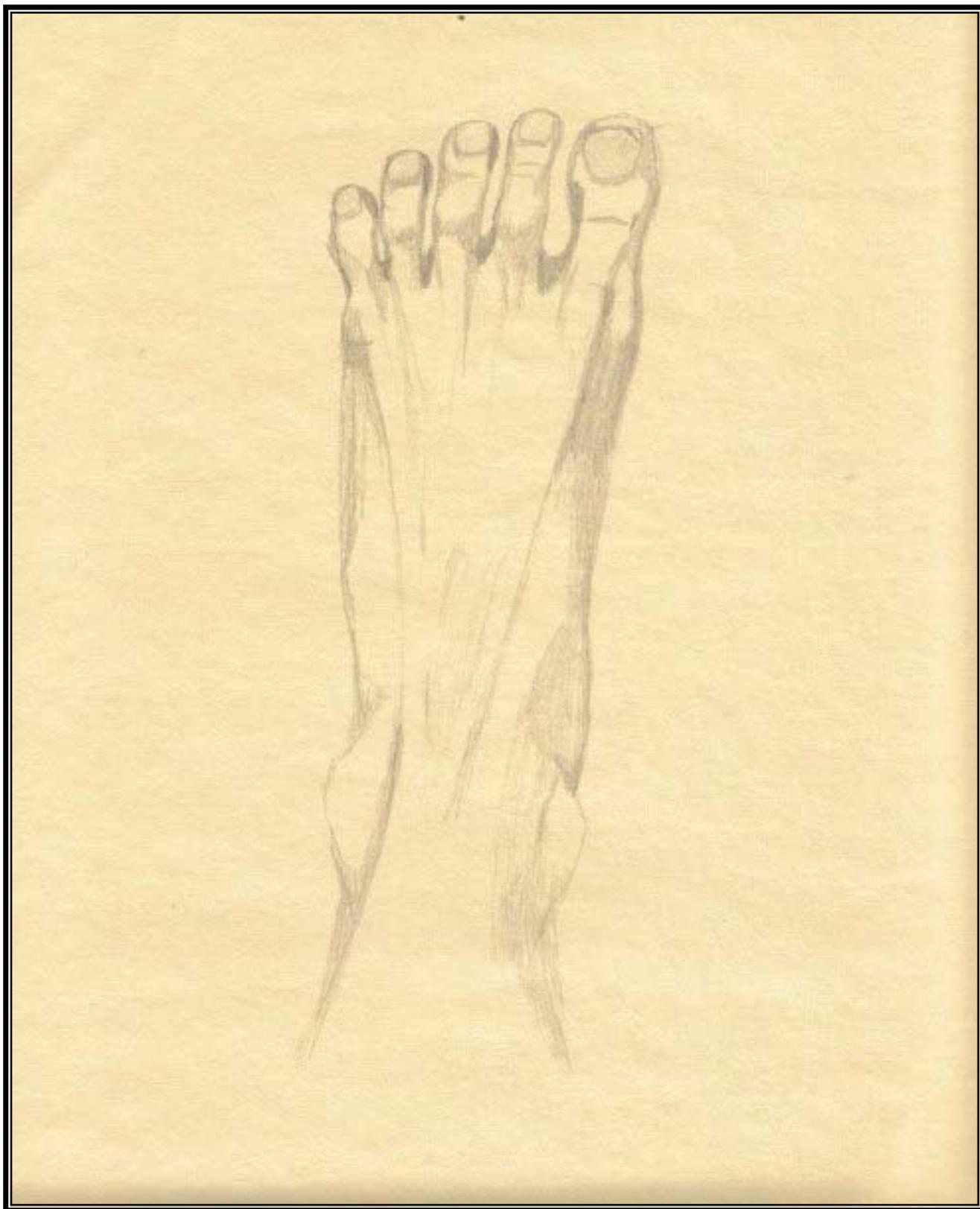
*People who love grammar need to stop and think about what kind of Grammar Police they are. Some people were born to be teachers, love the language, and think everyone should know how to use it correctly, which is a noble ambition. But to what lengths are they willing to go merely for the sake of correctness? These grammarians need to learn the same lesson I did in grade school - you have more friends if you try not to be a know-it-all. Most people are trying to communicate an idea, and as long as this is done clearly, we should normally give them credit for having the ability to speak English. Anyone who knows anything at all about the history of the English language knows that it is a big messy soup made from other languages, and that the words we use change every day. Regional slang words earn a place in the dictionary just as terms that were commonly used by our ancestors slip out of usage and into the past.*

*Writing is another matter. If I am working on a research paper for class, or if I am making an official presentation as a professional in the workforce, then naturally I should try to go by the book as far as grammar is concerned. But literature is also art, and almost by definition art breaks the rules of tradition and convention. In centuries past, new forms of writing such as the novel and the essay were developed. Others, particularly in the last century, have bent the laws of grammar nearly to their breaking point, creating wonderful masterpieces of prose and poetry. Correct Faulkner’s run-on sentences, and the work is destroyed. Or take a red pen and write, underlined, “coherence” across Joyce’s paper, and tell Williams that he must rhyme in order to make a poem. As Bronson Alcott said, “Devotees of grammatical studies have not been distinguished for any very remarkable felicities of expression.”*

*Granted, your average writer is no literary genius. But before Officer Redpen gets out his or her cuffs and prepares to drag away the grammatical offender, the perpetrator’s purpose must be known. Relax, Grammar Police. It’s not like mine gramer so bad that can’t undertand what saying to.*

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**My Left Foot**  
*Mattie Davenport*



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## **“Cry of the Banana”**

Jennifer Ryan

*I lie alone on the counter. He approaches. He reaches for me.*

*He grasps my neck—cra-a-ack!!*

*My spine is broken! Oh, the pain! The agony, excruciating agony, shoots down my whole body!*

*Now he flays me alive. I feel my skin ripped from my back, then torn from each side.*

*One bite... two bites...I can feel annihilation approaching---encroaching---imminent.*

*Nonexistence: the state of having no being. A non-state. Why, oh ye heavens, why?*

*The sun! All grows dark...*

*[Gulp.]*

## **Literary Critical Analyses of “Cry of the Banana”**

Jennifer Ryan

### **The formalist critic:**

*This brief interior monologue is obviously intended to cast doubt on the traditional doctrine of martyrdom, the idea that one can suffer like Christ. The author seems to say, “The suffering of today is unlike Christ’s suffering: it is purposeless and obsolete.”*

*The peeling of the banana alludes to the flaying of St. Bartholomew, a famous early martyr. Through this allusion the reader sees that the banana is serving as the paradigm of the modern martyr. He succeeds in taking on some characteristics of Christ and Christ’s sufferings: he is tripartite (as can be seen from the fact that it takes three bites to consume him), de-robed like Christ, and subjected to “excruciating” pain. However, the banana is a mock Christ figure in that he does not succeed in taking on other characteristics of Christ’s suffering: unlike Jesus, he suffers broken bones (“My spine is broken!”), his death is not substitutionary, and—since in the world of the story there is no afterlife—he can hope for no resurrection.*

### **The postcolonial critic:**

*This brief interior monologue is obviously a metaphor for the woes produced by 19th century imperialism. This parallel is strongly suggested by the fact that India, the world’s largest producer of bananas, is also a nation with a strong colonial heritage. The reader may logically assume that the banana is symbolic of India and, in the larger conceit, a representative of all colonized peoples.*

*Like colonized societies, he has been separated from his native environment and his family (his bunch on a banana tree), and his cultural environment has been strikingly altered (to a sterile countertop), all by divisive imperialist policy. Furthermore, these atrocities have been committed in order to satisfy the rapacious greed of the possessing power (the consumer of produce).*

*Like most native, colonized peoples, the banana suffers from double consciousness. The penultimate line of the piece demonstrates his confusion of identity: he sees the shining sun of India, then immediately the obscuring fogs of Great Britain.*

### **The feminist critic:**

*“The Cry of the Banana” is obviously a cry against andocentric thinking and a call for gynecological perspective. The color symbolism and first-person narration are significant: they call to mind Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story “The Yellow Wall-paper” in which the main character suffers under the oppression of her husband, eventually undergoing mental collapse. Like Gilman’s protagonist, this banana also suffers under the torment of its oppressor, experiencing a consummate psychological crisis.*

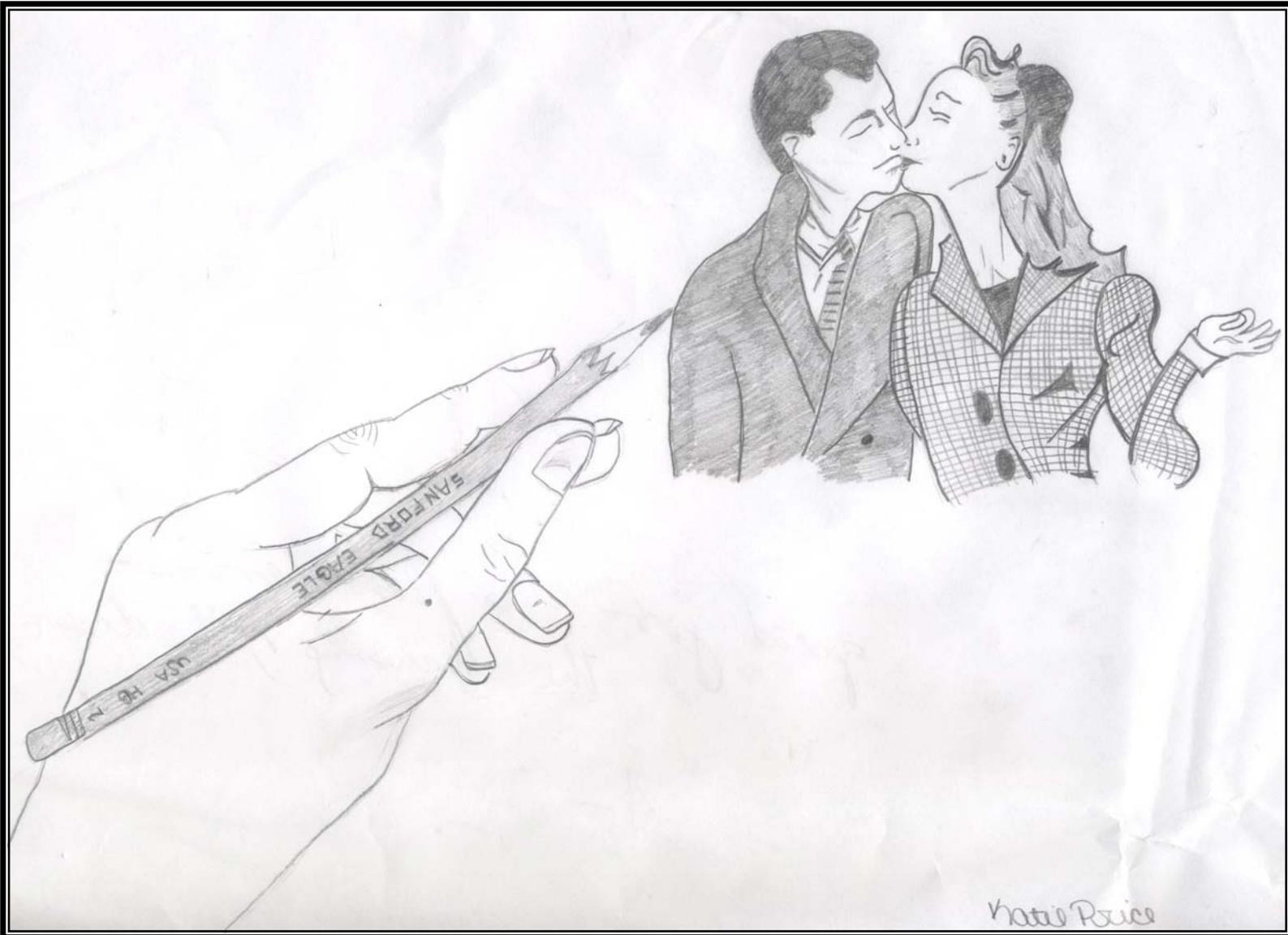
*The encapsulation of the woman’s voice in the body of a banana is significant in two ways. Firstly, it speaks to the objectification of women. Secondly, it shows how women have*

*been shaped into the image of man (the banana is a phallic symbol) rather than allowed to take shape according to nature. What results from such a warping of nature is victimization and suffering.*

*Yet the author comments on the value and predicts the fate of this oppressive, gender-biased system in her depiction of the fate of the banana. The fact that the locus of thought for the banana resides in its nether regions (indicated by the fact that the speaking voice does not cease until the last bite has been taken) suggests such views are only as valuable as excrement. Finally, the fact that the physical embodiment of chauvinism, the banana, gives way to a yonic symbol, the mouth of the consumer, suggests that feminism will successfully resist women's oppression.*

## **Untitled**

**Katie Price**



**Wishing everyone luck on his or her finals! Have an AMAZING Winter Break!**  
**--Katelyn and Emily**