

# The Flying Fortnightly

Volume 2, Issue 1, Spring 2005

A Literary Review of the Washington Literary and Debating Society

## Dry-Clean Only: Oh, The Inanity

Welcome to the newest edition of the Washington Society's biweekly literary magazine. With the new semester comes a whole host of new changes to our format, outlook, and a bunch of other cool stuff.

The most apparent of the changes is clearly our name. We are no longer WashPub but "*The ——— Fortnightly*". The middle word shall change each week to reflect a significant issue in the magazine, or whatever we feel. It should be fun.

With the new title comes a new outlook. Whereas the first iteration of this publication was the work of one man, *The Fortnightly* represents a group effort by a collection of talented and yes, beautiful people.

Expect a core group of articles by skilled writers each week providing a stable amount of high quality material. Alas! We cannot do it alone, nor can slave labor fill in the gaps of our literary magazine. The *Fortnightly* needs outside submissions from writers, artists, and creative types. Keep it original and

*"If you're a tutu-wearing psycho-killer and want the world to know your hobbies but not necessarily you, pick a pseudonym and run with it.."*

roughly within the bonds of good taste. Whatever it is, we will publish it with only minor grammatical edits. The *Fortnightly* reserves the right to turndown articles, though the goal is to print what you write.

Follow the above rules and your work will appear in an issue. Even non-Washies may submit. We love all of God's creatures, but only if they submit.

Do not fear if you hate the spotlight. The noted authorship of each article depends on the author who wrote it. We allow regular author listings, pseudonyms and complete anonymity. If you're a tutu wearing psycho-killer and want the world to know your hobbies but not necessarily you, pick a pseudonym and run with it. If you love that poem

you wrote in third grade but feel shy about it, we'll make sure everyone knows Blanky McBlankerson wrote it. Our goal is to collect the best works possible, not print names.

It is our hope that the *Fortnightly* becomes a regular and anticipated feature of Wash meetings. Give us a chance, and you'll find a rewarding enjoyable magazine to read on the toilet or during floor speeches.

We hope you enjoy this very special Chapel edition of "*The ——— Fortnightly*".

**- Editorial Staff of the Fortnight**

### Our Staff:

**Editor-in-Chief:**  
Evan Arthur Stewart

**Editorial Board:**  
Katie Richarts Bray  
Meg Linnea Olson  
Caitlin Erin Stapleton  
Keith Edmund White

### Guest Writers This Issue:

Preston Joseph Gisch  
Robert Ellsworth Kieffer  
Meg Claire Weckstein  
Bennett Lloyd West-Haven, III

Guest submissions are *tremendously* encouraged and should be sent via e-mail in Word format to our right honourable Editor-in-Chief at eas5n@virginia.edu. We are seeking prose, poetry, reviews, and other literary material, of any size and persuasion. Writers wishing to submit works under a pseudonym or 'pen name' should indicate as much in their submission. Membership in the Washington Literary and Debating Society is not necessary to submit to the *Fortnightly*. Interested in joining our staff? New staff and editors are always welcome, and should send a letter of interest to our Editor-in-Chief at eas5n@virginia.edu.



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***What Gary Cooper Did-*** Meg Olson

In the issues' most appropriately titled piece, Meg tries to hunt down the quality that 'made' Gary Cooper the icon of the American Dream. Apparently the secret lies in his ability to get laid- with virtually every woman he met. Well, except Shirley Temple.

***The Ties that Bind-*** Bennett Lloyd West-Haven, III  
Bennet brings us a fairytale without the fairy. After months of diligent work at his Cape Cod Summer Compound, he's produced a riveting family drama during troubled times. He also has three dogs.



***Coke vs. Pepsi-*** Preston Gisch

As Super Bowl festivities near, Preston examines the eternal debate between the soda world's two giants: Coke and Pepsi. Which beverage reigns supreme?

***Irem's Garden, After Nightfall*** - Caitlin Stapleton

This work of fiction, part one of what will be an extended series, tells the tale of the adventures and trials of a young girl named Aruna in seventeenth-century India.

***Satanic Tree-*** Robert Keiffer

A short, but profound, piece that documents the battle between the Frank family and its satanic Christmas. Sure to be a knew-must read for next year's Christmas season. And *The Fortnightly* brings it to you first.

***FLAMING RHINOCEROUS!!-*** Evan Stewart

And not the kind of flaming where you see them and can't for the life of you imagine a world in which that rhinoceros is straight, and prefers the company of female rhinos, like maybe the rhino is wearing tight designer jeans and a mesh tee-shirt and tasteful eyeliner. and making out with a cute boy rhino similarly attired.

***Submerging into 'Life Aquatic'***- Keith White

In yet another overflowing review, Keith analyzes Wes Andersons' newest film, *Life Aquatic*. The piece causes one only fleeting impressions of a life wasted by watching films repeatedly, alone, on the couch. And aside from a center-fetish, the piece seems to stay coherent.

***Cleaning Out the Real-*** Meg Weckstein

A poem about the "little real relevance" of our lives that describes brushing teeth. Crisp and pregnant with meaning- the piece takes into a rich aesthetic world.



# What Gary Cooper Did

**Margaret Linnea Olson**

*Staff Editor*

Gary Cooper did a lot of pretty ladies, and a lot of defining American films. Roles in Capra's folk epics *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *Meet John Doe* cemented Cooper's film persona as the humble American who could maintain personal values against wealthy tyrants and corrupt city folk. Playing other American heroes like Lou Gehrig and Sergeant York only added to his aura. Cooper's own life was vastly different from these characters'. He was a dedicated actor who never lost his ties to the outdoors and his family. By maintaining those connections while also making influential films, sporting a Saville Row wardrobe, and donking the most beautiful women in the world, Gary Cooper was the kind of man every woman wanted, and every man wanted to be.

One of the most striking things about him was his almost feminine good looks. With a slender 175 pound 6'3" frame, big blue eyes, and eyelashes that were often compared to Greta Garbo's, he was

both men and women. Add in his "hucks" nature, and he quickly became the Hollywood's secretarial pools and

Clara Bow, the original 'It' girl and flapper, slept with him for several years and called him as "hung like a horse." She married Victor Fleming, gained weight, and spiraled into depression. Cooper moved onto another costar, Evelyn Brent, who was more elegant than Bow, but reportedly not as intelligent. She helped him break into roles playing society gentlemen, as he had been too bashful and soft-spoken to play more than reticent cowboys.

His next conquest was Lupe Vélez, a five foot tall, 110 pound bombshell with a 37"-26"-35" figure, which in the current day translates into an awful lot of badonka-donk. She had also had an affair with Victor Fleming, but Cooper didn't mind, and made several movies with the man during the time. She was epileptic and liked to refer to herself in the third person, and eventually married Johnny "Tarzan" Weissmuller, but then divorced him for

breaking furniture. Gary moved onto Marlene Dietrich, who also slept with her director, John Wayne, and some women. After her was Carol Lombard, who eventually married Clark Gable. Cooper then decided he needed a break, and spent the next year in Europe under the care of the Countess de Frasso, who threw splendid parties, lived in a restored Villa decorated by Raphael, and took Gary big game hunting in Africa. When Cooper left her, she met the gangster Bugsy Siegel at a race track and sailed off with him to hunt for buried treasure near Costa Rica. Cooper started sleeping with Tallulah Bankhead.

He then married a debutante and virgin, Veronica "Rocky" Balfe, who had a bit part in *King Kong* as a screaming girl in a window. They had a daughter together, and lead an elegant lifestyle in which Cooper was forced to

give up Toluca, the ape he'd brought back from Africa. It's possible he continued with his affairs with Dietrich and Lombard after this point, but by the time he made *The Plainsman* on location in some woods he'd taken up with a "tall, warm-blooded blonde." He also had made friends, platonically, with Ernest Hemingway, and while working on *For Whom the Bell Tolls* he had an affair with Ingrid Bergman. He then made "The Fountainhead" with Patricia Neal, and for several years had an affair with her that precipitated his two-year separation from Rocky. Patricia Neal later married Roald Dahl, who was jealous of Cooper, and wrote wonderful children's books. I read them all when I was a kid. Cooper was getting old at this point, but he still did Grace Kelly during the filming of *High Noon*. During the later years of his life, he took up with Lorraine Chanel, a half Mexican, half Swedish model; Gisele Pascal, a French actress who had been Prince Ranier of Monaco's lover before Grace Kelly; and Mari Aldon, a Canadian Ballerina. Then, to top it all off, he had top-heavy Anita Ekberg, whom he stole from Frank Sinatra because "it seemed like a good idea at the time," as he later explained to his wife. This laundry list of easy living is not what made Gary Cooper the symbol of America at its best that he was for four decades. His heroism was not limited to films about cowboys or exploration of the female form: it was contained in his apparently insatiable drive to do exactly who and what he wanted. America needs more people strong, confident, and hung enough to be that way.



# The Ties That Bind

**Bennett Lloyd West-Haven, III**

*Guest Contributor*

Once upon a time, long ago, back in the days when the winters were not so very cold, and the summers not so very hot, in the days when men were less vicious, and animals could speak, and the Gods still deigned to descend to this mortal realm from time to time, even passing as human, and when everything in the world was a little cleaner, a little crisper, and a little newer, there lived two friends. Such friends as these, the world had never seen before, and, I fear, will never see again. Raised as brothers from babyhood, for one was but a few hours older than the other, they would wail if separated and smiled most peaceably when brought back into the same room. As they grew older, the boys would spend hours playing together, learning, in the manner of all children in those days, the skills that would make them worthy adults not from schooling (although they did sit for lessons in ciphers, writing, reading, and history for a few hours each day) but from their games. Running and hunting through the verdant forests, and swimming and fishing in the crystalline

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*“Although as babies none but their mothers could discern which boy was which, by the age of sixteen, the differences were clear.”*

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As they matured, differences began to appear between these two friends. Although as babies none but their mothers could discern which boy was which, by the age of sixteen, the differences were clear. Ethan, the older, was stronger and fairer. A thatch of blond hair often shaded his green eyes, and he could run faster and throw farther than his friend. Eric, on the other

hand, was quieter. He had dark hair and often seemed to be brooding, although their tutor knew that Eric was far the better of the two at

their schoolwork. Ethan certainly went through the motions, but Eric, though sometimes more irreverent than Ethan, seemed to grasp the deeper meanings more intuitively. Even in a crowd, the two were easy to pick out. Ethan would be the exuberant one in the center of the mass of people, always vying for more attention, and almost imperceptibly avoiding the boys less wealthy or noble than himself. Eric, on the other hand, was more often near the periphery of the group, trying to welcome all comers and treat each according to his own merits. But despite these differences the two remained the closest of companions, each treasuring the other's successes and succoring the other's wants.

The boys continued in this close way until the age of sixteen. Both sons of nobles, the boys expected to come into their inheritance at the age of twenty-one, when their generous and good-hearted fathers had promised to turn over the family estates, including control of the land, the wealth, and the common folk. The fathers, although they might seem foolish in this jaded and cynical age, had the best of intentions: watching their sons grow, they felt sure the boys would be wise enough to handle their power well, for after all these boys had been given every advantage that money and good company and good breeding could provide. To further their sons' educations, however, they decided that rather than giving the boys all this bounty at once, they would start slowly, and for their sixteenth birthdays, each boy received a small estate, to manage as he saw fit, and on which he could practice his skills of husbandry so that they would not be untried when he received the balance of the estate in five years' time.

The first few years were prosperous beyond the wildest dreams of Ethan and Eric. Their estates adjoined one another, and almost every day would find them walking or riding together, giving and accepting advice on the cultivation of crops, the domestication of animals, or the jurisdiction of peasants. Every thing they touched seemed to turn to gold, and their boards always groaned with delicacies they produced. They regaled their guests, providing each with that which would make him most happy, whether it be fine wine, a hand of cards, a hunting expedition, gentle dancing or serious discourse.

Despite the joys of their existence, Eric and Ethan eventually felt a dark cloud pass over their realms. They saw its shadow and shivered. They lived in the Southern half of a mighty nation, whose Northern, industrial powers felt threatened by their peaceful and agrarian way of life. Increasingly harsh tariffs and laws were enacted against the Southerners, and finding no respite from the government, a bold leader decided to protect the interests of these Southerners and named himself King of the lower half of the nation. The Northerners did not take the secession of the fruitful half of their country very well, and put their mighty army to the task of invading and subduing their recalcitrant brothers. Although for some months Ethan and Eric continued their idyllic existence, they knew they could not put off the inevitable. Food turned to dust in their mouths, wine produced bellicose words rather than its previous merriment, the most amusing of entertainments seemed dull and boring, the lutes were constantly out of tune, and their feet began to ache. One morning they turned to each other, and exactly at the same time voiced their determination to leave their estates behind and to join the King's army. This departure would be expensive for both: they donated their crops to feed the army, they promised their men should fight with them, and their wealth they put in trust for the displaced souls the invading army created as it swept over the land. But these material concerns mattered little, as they do to anyone who puts honor and justice in the first places in his heart, and they rode proudly to join the battle for their very existence, feeling lighter of heart and sprightlier of foot than they had in almost a year.

The trials of this war were indeed heavy, and before too many months had passed, the mothers would have recognized neither of these men, for men they had certainly become. No longer clean-shaven, each wore a beard and a moustache, and each face was hewn and riven by deep lines of care and shadow. Hunger made their frames slack and their faces gaunt. The physical changes belied their dispositions, however. Each man was still optimistic, and their friendship, rooted in a love of country, honor, and freedom as it was, grew stronger during this

period. Eric braved enemy fire when, during a surprise attack, he ran back across the battlefield to recover Ethan's fallen form, and after Ethan recovered, he returned the favor, carrying his friend out of a flaming forest because Eric had succumbed to the smoke. Back and forth, each owed his life to the other so many times during the war, that they lost count entirely. Somehow, though, they did survive, and though their King lost the war, and they were once again subject the Northern industrial interests, they were permitted to return to what was left of their estates and rebuild their lives.

When Eric and Ethan returned home after the war, not much at all was left to greet them. Though property was lost, they still had their character, and the strength of their convictions, and they gradually managed to rebuild their estates, piece by piece. Of course, with new laws in place to keep the South from rebelling again, they could not hope to reclaim the splendor which in the older days had been their birthright, but being good men and true, they still had enough to survive, indeed to thrive after a fashion.

This success was short-lived however. After a few score of years had passed, the bountiful land of their childhood seemed to

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*"The trials of this war were indeed heavy, and before too many months had passed, the mothers would have recognized neither of these men, for men they had certainly become."*

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wither. The crops would not grow, the cows gave no milk, the peasants grew restless, and a thief made off

with the silver in the night. Ethan, despite these disappointments managed to hold onto his land. By hook or crook, even he could not say exactly how during the darkest days, of another war, and then the surrounding estates being parceled into smaller and smaller pieces for more people to work, not as overlords like Ethan and Eric had been but as yeomen, Ethan kept his head, his land, and finally began to make something of it again. Eric simply disappeared. One morning he failed to join Ethan to survey their lands, which they still did in the manner of the old days, although now it only took a morning, when before it would have taken a week. Ethan rode over to Eric's home and found it deserted. No note, no message, no sign of human habitation at all remained in the house. After a meet amount of time had passed, the king seized it and appropriated it like the other lands. Very occasionally rumors passed that

Eric was in town, but search as he might, Ethan could find no sign of his friend.

Years passed. In solitude, Ethan changed his ways slowly, and just as slowly rebuilt his holdings. Perhaps these holdings were not as glorious as they had been before the first war, but that time had faded so far from memory that Ethan was never entirely sure that he hadn't imagined the scope of the grandeur. With Eric gone, none were left to help Ethan remember.

Rather suddenly one day, Eric returned from he would not say where. He just walked up to his home, which although still standing, had been divided into four or five efficiency apartments. His old silver key, which he appeared to have kept all this while on a bit of chain fastened about his neck, turned in the lock, but a newer, more modern lock above the old one prevented the door from opening. Saddened, he wandered through his old haunts restlessly. Gradually he gathered purpose, and finally decided to pay a call on his old friend Ethan, to see if Ethan had managed to hold what he could not.

Ethan, if he was not absolutely overjoyed to see his old friend, must be excused. He had, after all, at great cost and struggle to himself managed to secure a place, and now it smarted to be asked to care for his needy friend. But

pushing these demons aside, Ethan smiled warmly, and welcomed Eric back home. Ethan gave Eric the unconditional use of a small guest house and a few acres of land, enough to grow enough food to support himself, and the two reengaged in their old, friendly competitions.

Now and again they would have debates, to which they would invite the community and where they would vie for the honor of being named the top speaker. Footraces often followed these debates and if the two men were both grown so slow that children running alongside the course beat them, the community smiled and forgave the old men their foibles. Although the two were fairly evenly matched in these contests, and one rarely held the upper hand for more than a few years at a time, eventually Eric, by cracking jokes at Ethan's expense, won the debates five years in a row. Ethan, who felt that he had behaved most admirably toward his dear

friend, felt in these losses the sting of ingratitude, and called off the debate the following year. Eric, though upset, could not sway his friend, and though still most grateful for the living which Ethan provided, felt that perhaps Ethan had not the still the same sense of honor which had formed the basis of their earlier friendship.

Then one day Ethan's protégé, a young man whom he had adopted as a boy, came to Ethan with the news that he had taken a wife. Ethan was overjoyed for the young couple, and resolved that he would give them a small house and some land as a wedding present. But when Ethan surveyed his holdings they were much diminished. In the old days, Ethan could have given the young man a property the size of all which he now held, and still not have felt the loss. The only bit of land with a house constructed which would do for the young family to move right into was situated in a congenial setting indeed. A few fields, large enough to provide plentifully for even a growing family that might expect children in the coming years, but small enough for an old man to work easily by himself, surrounded a cozy cabin with a small stream nearby and a pasture for a few cows and a horse. Woods behind the house provided opportunities for hunting, and the view from the front porch

was unparalleled.

Although Ethan owned other properties, he determined that only this place was good enough for the man whom he had taken as a son. Although winter was coming on, and he regretted asking Eric to

leave, after he had, as per his half of the bargain kept the land up most beautifully, Ethan resolved that Eric must go.

If this story were indeed the fairy tale which it so nearly resembled in the beginning, then a fairy might magically restore Eric's estate, or provide a new place for him to resettle. Perhaps if the story didn't end here, Ethan would be punished for his disloyalty or for breaking his word. But this story did happen, once long ago in this world, and we leave Eric to fend for himself again, with but his honor to preserve him, though Ethan and his son did in fact live happily ever after.



# Coke versus Pepsi

**Preston Joseph Gisch**

*Guest Contributor*

Jack cruises his local grocery store, perusing aisle after aisle of marketed madness. As a teenager, Jack is in the demographic most desirable to advertisers; sugar-coated cereals, salty chips, and microwave pizzas clamor for attention as he waltzes by. Surrounded by choices, Jack is inordinately focused, determined to complete his objective. The Big Party is tomorrow and Jack needs the liquid staple of every teenager's diet: soda. Jack

*"The question:  
Coke? Or  
Pepsi?"*

approaches the canned drinks row and walks the white tiled floor, weighing his options.

There are quite a few people at this shindig Jack is throwing, so he'll have to consider all

possible beverage preferences. The non-brand sodas would make Jack look chintzy,



while Pepsi gains 80% of its revenue domestically. Coke currently holds 42% of the United States soda market while 31% goes to Pepsi. But the soda numbers don't

tell the whole tale— New York City-based PepsiCo sees just 41% of its profits from drinks, all other profits coming from lucrative snack chip and fastfood sales. Atlanta-centered Coke, however, makes all its money with soft drinks.

Pepsi sees its future in multiple markets, a system of integrated and diverse facets for promoting Pepsi products. Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, and Kentucky Fried Chicken are the flagship chains for the dissemination of Pepsi and related merchandising. Coke has countered by purchasing exclusivity agreements with nationwide chains including McDonald's and Wendy's. In school districts nationwide, both companies court board members in efforts to secure exclusive school system-wide consumption contracts. These contracts sell syrup and vending machines to school systems at a reduced rate and may include big-time donations to school programs.

Both companies realize the potential of the international market and have worked for years to develop relationships to ease product placement therein. Across the world, Coke has dominated as the original soda of choice and representation of American culture. Coke has also gained market share as of late, taking over bottling and distribution plants in former Pepsi

strongholds such as Venezuela and Russia. In response to Coke's aggressive global expansion, Pepsi has initiated rigorous advertising campaigns targeting new markets in developing nations such as India and China, where large populations offer fantastic potential for high volumes of soda consumption.

While marketing may be separate for each company, their distribution systems are nearly identical. A main manufacturing plant produces the concentrated syrup, which is shipped to local bottlers, where the syrup is mixed with carbonated water, then bottled and distributed to regional grocery stores and vending machines. For fountain drinks in restaurants, syrup and carbonated water is shipped directly and both ingredients are

mixed as the drink is jetted from the nozzle. This syrup-based system allows both companies to outsource the creation and distribution of their sodas, so efforts go into aspects of marketing their products to increase consumption.

Despite heavy advertising from both companies, there is little consensus

when it comes to choosing between Coke and Pepsi. Coke is currently the leader in spite of the New Coke fiasco in the late 80s. The CEO of Coke credits his company's success to the commitment to soft drinks only. The same CEO is quick to criticize Pepsi bigwigs for spreading their energy too thin by branching into snack food and the fast food industries. Pepsi management, however, believes their market placement and brand saturation on social and cultural levels will eventually win over the populace.

So far, Wall Street seems to agree with Pepsi, which is ranked higher by

investment advisers. Pepsi has attained a higher stock status by focusing on the younger demographic of the consuming public, namely 18 to 30 year-olds. Stock analysts love to see high numbers in that demographic because of the potential for continued purchase.

But fancy algorithmic investing numbers don't mean anything to the average consumer. In reality, though each company may brag about its own "nationwide taste tests," average consumers don't show preference either way. Pepsi stocks as many shelves as Coke and carts contain cases of each drink in equal quantities. Verbal inquisition of brand choice indicates no particular allegiance. Ask a store manager what sells better and he will tell you "whatever is on sale this week." The supermarket sales racket is a fairly simple one. Both Coke and Pepsi make competing deals to grocery chains, offering their syrup and already-bottled drinks at lowered prices so that the chains may sell them for less. This give-and-take balances every other week as one company tops the other's offer, oscillating customer purchases and showing no clear winner other than The Almighty Dollar. When target weekends approach, however, all bets are off. The 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Memorial Day Weekend, the Super Bowl; these holy days of the year defy all marketing conventions as the Goliaths of the beverage world go head-to-head in no-holds-barred competition for top sales.

Still undecided after several minutes of staring and contemplation, Jack grabs a case of each, a fistful of blue in one hand and cube of red in the other. He staggers down the gauntlet of advertising intensity, battered on all sides by the collective visual scream of flagrantly targeted refreshments. Reaching the end of the row, Jack stumbles to the register line and plunks each beverage block on the miniature conveyor belt before limping to the register.

Magazines with alluring women neighbor unabashedly preposterous periodicals and enticing candy bars beg Jack to spare a little loose change. This or that. Choose one or the other. As one of each 24-pack slides past the cashier, Jack is glad to be finally free of the demanding culture of choice forced upon him by modern society. So many choices barrage the boy as he reaches for his wallet while the cashier rings up the drinks.

"Paper or plastic?"

Place Artwork  
Here



# Irem's Garden, After Nightfall

Caitlin Erin Stapleton

Staff Editor

[Part One in a Series]

*“We embarked at nine o’clock, in a boat pulled by eight men. The crossing of the Mourdab is at times impossible, owing to the heavy sea; but this time luck was with us, and midday saw us at Peri-Bazar, where there is no difficulty in procuring riding-horses to take one into Résbt. The country between the two places was formerly morass and jungle, but on the occasion of the Shah’s visit to Europe about twenty years ago, a carriage-road was made—not a good one, for such a thing does not exist in Persia—but a very fair riding-track (in dry weather). We reached Résbt wet to the skin, the snow having ceased and given way to a steady downpour of rain.”*

— Harry de Windt, *‘A Ride To India Across Persia and Baluchistan’*

Surat, India. Early Summer, 1613.

Aruna sat by the pool, dipping the fingers of her right hand just-so in the water and humming softly; with her other hand, she gathered about her bare legs the over-blossoming waterfall of



*stinking with liquor, would fall asleep in the balm-shade of the casurina trees.”*

years after Akbar had taken the city by siege, when Aruna’s mother had fled the city in hopes of a peaceful life in the outlands. The city had

long been a Mughal trading center – now, with the arrival *en masse* of the outlanders, it was the industrial gem in the crown of the East India Company. At night, even now, Aruna could hear the staccato yelps of the outlanders ricochet among the trees as they brought wagon after wagon of leathers and woods, to build more and more.

Hajira had been paradise; Aruna remembered running among the fragrant, feathery casurina trees in the heat of the summer, sand burning between her toes, and the air stinging with

the scent of the iron-wells beyond the hills. As a younger girl, she would always dream of escaping the busy coast and her family’s desperate poverty for the glorious villas of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan from which her mother’s once-proud family had hailed.

She dreamed of stealing a horse and riding to the sandstone paradise of Jaisalmer, or Jaipur, where the buildings were so high, they said, as to allow a spirited girl with a good heart to reach up and take claim of the very clouds and the star-peppered sky.

Some days at Hajira, Aruna had been sent by her family into town to sell cakes and sweets at a little gray wagon, alongside other children. She would always try to remain in town as long as she could, so fiercely did she hate to return home.

Aruna’s father Tarak was not of Surat like Vasumati; he had been one of the lesser sons of Maharana Udai Singh of Udaipur when that city was founded, and had been cast out after putting his father’s name to shame with his liquor and carrying-on. When Aruna was young, Tarak would drink until his caramel-colored eyes were struck raw and blind – he would yell and curse and spit – he would beat Vasumati until her face bled, a slow red rain. It was then that Vasumati-of-a-million-sacrifices would hide her cuts and lacerations with the long curtain of her ink-black hair, and Tarak, fingers and hands stinking with liquor, would fall asleep in the balm-shade of the casurina trees. Aruna would prod him with her bare foot to wake him, beads ringing around her ankles, for she found him too filthy to touch with her hands. She hated him, and every night when the moon would, full-white, roll over the gray-green moss of the horizon, followed by the soft patter of the night’s rain, she would dream of the million drops of rain becoming a million daggers, their points-down, to kill him.

Now, Aruna rose from her seat by the pool, gathering the fabric about her and stepping lightly across the damp moss of the stones. It was her favorite hiding-place, tucked in the wet, heavy forests behind the now-empty castle of the Sultan of Gujarat, built long before her birth. Usually, on such a spring day, she’d spend the afternoon picking the fort for trinkets to bring to her mother; but not

today. She had to return home to her mother to help with the weaving.

The road back to their home, all red clay flecked with brilliant blue-gray rocks, was now churned into a froth by the paths of the East India wagons and horses. Aruna took to the far side of the road, as it was busy with horsemen and traders, and laborers in their sackcloth, traveling as she was, alongside the glittering sapphire-artery of the Tepi. She stepped lightly among the divots and gaps, dodging gracefully between bits of white-hot sunlight, finally arriving at the series of low buildings in which her family lived.

She found her mother in the main room, long limbs tucked into herself like a great knot, and the folds of her blue sari, and the great pools of her dark, sad eyes cast down to the floor. She seemed lost among the utensils and threads around her – *zari* threads and brocades in red and gold, and wooden weft-tools, brought to her at Hajira by craftsmen from the sophisticated markets in Uttar Pradesh. In front of Vasumati was a rough-hewn wooden bowl, filled with the simple grain-paste and spices that had long been her favorite food, as well as the ground bits of a strange and unusual plant that Aruna had not seen.

What Aruna could not bear to see was what lay at the edge of the bowl – Vasumati's hands, her elegant browned fingers, broken and horribly maimed by a night of Tarak's drunken rage. Clotted blood gathered beneath her mother's fingernails, and one fingernail had been completely torn away, revealing the angry rent flesh and veins beneath. There were long, purpled bruises like the bloody petals of wine-silk flowers on her mother's arm that would not fade, and that not even those men of the village, like Nityand the baker or Bhavesh the labourer, could make fade with their admirations of her.

Aruna brought herself to face her mother, and knelt on the floor. She plucked the bundle she had been carrying from under her arm and put it on the floor, deftly unknitting it to reveal its contents. "Ma, I brought back what you asked. There's been no *kokam* to be had since the rains, but some rolls of cinnamon and tamarind. And Bhavesh told me to give you this little pot." She held up the tiny clay vessel between her finger and thumb, and carried on in a sing-song voice, hoping to get her mother's attention. "Look, mint oil."

There was no response.

"Ma."

Aruna reached out to touch her mother's fragile arm, and spoke softly. "Mama, *kripyaa*. Please look at me. I came back to help with today's work. You see, the sun's not full up yet – please don't be angry with me."

Her mother remained still. Aruna put the clay vessel at her mother's feet, and

as the porcelain rang against the floor, she put her hands to those of her mother. Her mother's flesh, soft and wet with tears, was cold. Her lips were like the petals of some exotic flower dropped in a cold lake – the places where veins should press, full-beating, against the skin, had fallen silent and still.

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*"She seemed lost among the utensils and threads around her – zari threads and brocades in red and gold, and wooden weft-tools, brought to her at Hajira by craftsmen from the sophisticated markets in Uttar Pradesh."*

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Aruna began to tremble, and seized her mother's hands all the more fiercely. "*Nahi, nahi*. Wake up, there's work to do." She pressed her fingers all the tighter, into the ice of her mother's flesh. "You cannot

leave me alone! Please!". Her sobs became full-bloom now, her body rocked to and fro with convulsions of an artless grief. Aruna's sadness consumed her, and from her lips came animal cries of pain, and for what seemed like days she made her mother's hands whole with her tears.

"*Mein use kabhi maaf nahii karuungaa*", she whispered bitterly, and buried her face in the folds of embroidery draped between her mother's broken hands. "This cannot be." Her eyes turned down to the bowl – and the misery in her sprang up afresh. The fleshy, cylindrical bits of twig interspersed among the spice-paste were recognizable as bits of milk-bush – usually used as a fish poison by oil merchants at the Hajira market, but never so much as to make a man more than sick. Aruna dug her thumbnail into the plant, and as the clear-white toxin oozed from it and coated her fingertips, she knew with such sorrow what it was that her mother had done.

# The Satanic Tree

**Robert Ellsworth Kieffer**

*Guest Contributor*

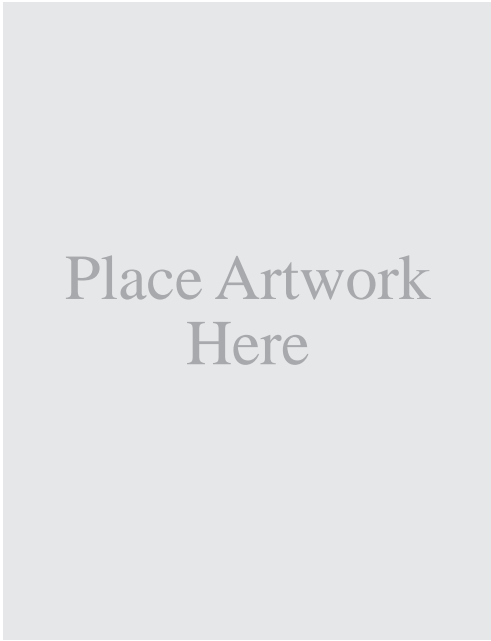
It began as an innocuous trip to the Christmas tree farm by the Franks family. They piled into their 1982 Ford station wagon with the peeling vinyl trim and rattled down route 421 to the Christmas tree farm.

They made this journey every year, despite the insistence of their neighbors that synthetic trees were better. And speak not of their neighbors on the other side.

The Franks pulled into the gravel lot at the farm, and were immediately struck by the beauty of a tree positioned close to the edge of the field. Its boughs were huge ponderous things that would hold 10 pounds worth of opulent celebratory glitter, the trunk was a good 7 inches thick at the bottom, with the bottom neatly lopped off. Even before they had gotten out of the car, they knew this was the tree. Shortly later, they had it strapped the top of the car like a dead deer. The tree bled dark sap, but the Franks noticed not as they sang Deck the Halls to the snow covered woods.



Papa Franks got out of the car and fell into a chair. Mama Franks, in her usual dress, began to dress the tree. Minutes hadn't passed when there was a knock at the door. Beneath the tree, a small pot of molasses was found. In a fury of words and spots, but they were gone. She began to take out lights and ornaments from the Christmas tree attire. Making on some of the spirit. Papa Franks remarked, "It's just shocking how they don't celebrate Christmas," said Mama Franks, "at least they could put on a show." With that, the gentle giant father Bauer got into his modest sedan with his wife and drove away, careful to dodge the happy children lofting snowballs at each other.



"Time for bed!" commanded Papa Franks, as he booted all the children from the room and lovingly chucked some presents under the tree. "Time for bed for us too," said Mama Franks, "What a lovely tree." The tree glowered back at her, its boughs writhing in pain from being bound by the strings of lights and other manifestations of human arrogance.

And with that, Papa Franks turned off the lights and they all went to bed.

But the tree was a restive soul. It resisted its confinement. It waged war on its bonds, striving to break free. The tree mourned the loss of its solid mounting in the good earth, the happiness he had shared with his compatriots of the forests; lo, he mourned the loss of everything. With a last ditch hope, or last ditch desperation, we'll never know which, he snapped the plug from the wall and cast off his velamentous adornments. If ever a tree saturated a microcosm with evil, this was it. Deep dark sap the color of the ceilings of hell dripped from sharp spires. His needles, sharp as any medical tool, oozed his lifeblood onto the floor below. And he began to grow.

He grew far more than his genetic code allowed. He grew with a vigor and desperation only fueled by viscous hate flowing through his vascular tissues. He rooted himself into the walls, into the floorboards, everywhere, sending tendrils to seek out life. They found it in the form of a rat.

But a sudden jingle on the roof signaled the arrival of a stampeding hoarde of 4-legged beasts, eyes full of fire, with the

leader blazing fires the likes of which even hell itself has ever seen from his nose. The creature, or possibly man, on the sled was of a most jolly disposition.

“Ho, ho, ho

Look out down below,”

he chortled gleefully as he slid down the chimney.

The tree, which had by now possessed the house, sent out a branch, wriggling like a snake, into the chimney, just as Santa plopped down on the gas logs.

“BAM!” One of the tendrils struck Santa and in less than two seconds, enveloped his body like a boa constrictor. But the tree’s purpose was not to kill Santa. A spire shot from the tree and stabbed Santa in the roof of the mouth, entering his brain. Santa’s struggle lasted no longer than four seconds, and he was possessed.

The tree, now having an army of one possessed rat and one possessed Kringle, shredded the walls in its path, leaving the Franks family vulnerable to deadly assault.

“**BANG!**” A sudden noise startled the Franks family awake as they stared up into the black night sky with the boughs of the pine dripping on them. The tree loomed ever closer over his prey, as they struggled against their sheets to no avail. Just as the tree was about to possess the family, the source of the loud noise was made apparent.

Standing in the door was the grimacing countenance of Armond Bauer, with a bandolier of grenades over his hairy, barrel chest and a machete in one hand. With a war cry, he leaped at the tree’s branches, but could not part them. The possessed rat bit him on the foot. Milliseconds later, the rat found itself smeared on the linoleum as Bauer’s size 16 combat boots flattened him. “That the best you got?”

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Bauer spoke through his clenched teeth. And his answer was a ghastly apparition in a red suit, with no soul left. “Let’s dance, Zombie Claus,” Bauer grinned. He slashed through the coat, but only dark sticky sap bled. The evil Claus pulled from his burlap sack a scythe, and attempted to slash Bauer.

All the while the family had been in terror of their lives. Any prejudices they had against the Bauers were dissolving as they saw their valiant warrior battle the forces of evil.

But Bauer had suffered a minor scratch on his tight muscular forearms. He licked the blood off, and pulled a menorah from its place on his back.

“This menorah is propane fired and puts out 20,000 BTU’s for each of the seven flames; one question, do you feel lucky?” Bauer sparked the massive torches and set them aflame. The flames erupted into the sky. He swung the flames into the advancing Santa, immediately the flames licked into every part of the zombie, and as the smell of burning hair pervaded the area, Bauer turned his jets to the tree.

The tree was not to be outdone. It had protected its trunk from attack by a huge number of branches that encircled in a spiny phalanx of thorns. “Get out of here,” Bauer yelled at the family, who then raced from the house. Then, he threw his grenades into the tree’s midst, where they exploded, sending splinters and sap flying. And like this, throwing grenades and advancing, he made it to the center of the tree. As he fought off encroaching branches with his menorah, he taped a plastic explosive to the trunk of the tree. He then leaped back and began to run. He had just made it to the street when the flames erupted and the tree gave a dying groan as it smoldered into a pile of cinders and ash.

Later that evening, as the Franks family sat and ate a Christmas feast of fried chicken, they couldn’t help but admire the wondrous joys that religious diversity brought to their street. The sounds of song swept down the street:

“O Christmas tree

O Christmas tree

How lovely are thy branches.”

“Not that one,” said Armond, “It’s going straight to the depths of hell.”

And they laughed. And then there were none.

# Flaming Rhinoceros!

**Evan Arthur Stewart**

*Editor-in-Chief*

“FLAMING RHINOCEROS!!!”

I hoped he was talking about something else. Perhaps a rhino in a pink sequined suit strolling down the boulevard singing in a lisp. That would be nice. Upon opening my eyes, my hopes for a gender-bending quadruped vanished. A two ton mass came thundering past doused in gasoline and clearly on fire. Getting up today was a big mistake.

Police training failed to mention a few things. Setting animals aflame is just one of the many actions taken by people that no one talks about. Another flew over in a large helicopter with “PETA” scrawled on the side and an outline of a well armed panda bear guarding the door. They had attached a water cannon on the bottom and aimed it at the ailing beast. Your average third grader knows that water only spreads a gasoline fire, not extinguishes it. It’s in the unit titled “What to do in case of a fire”. Further science classes confirm the theory.

Every person with half a brain cell should know it. Than again, these people dropped squirrels into wild jungles in hopes of freeing them.

The cannon fired. It was water. The fire hit three local buildings. The mercenary panda cheered. Stupid squirrel-bombing idiots.

I called the mayor.

“Hello?”

“Mayor, this is Officer Dick Fontaine. I need three helicopters with flame retardant chemicals at 45<sup>th</sup> and Pooky.”

“Is this the rhino thing?”

“No, I just felt like giving lower downtown a massive skin rash.”

“Oh, that’s good. I thought—”

“Yes mayor, it’s to deal with the rhino.”

“Sorry, but I can’t help you. No testing chemicals on animals, you know.”

“I’d say the rhino wants to be tested.”

“And I would agree with you, but these PETA chaps think we should get express written consent. Normally I’d just send them out with the rest of the riffraff

but they’ve got this rather tough looking panda.”

“Do they have any other demands?”

“Yes, they want twelve stalks of bamboo and to catch and release every squirrel into a desert of their choosing.

“Fine, tell them they’ll get 20 bamboo shoots but no squirrels.”

“What about me?”

“Don’t worry, you’re clearly in your natural habitat.” And that was the end of that. Getting a person who is engulfed in flame to calmly sit down and sign a waiver is no mean feat. Getting a rhino to do it is damn near impossible. After all, he can’t hold the pen.

Sergeant Hill came up with the brilliant idea of using the footprint. We wouldn’t be constraining the rhino to communication methods of the Western culture. PETA would love it.

I called the office and asked for police medical waivers. Technically they applied only to officers but some white out and a Sharpie fixed that. I had the men lay them in the oncoming path of the rhino. It was at that point that some brilliant human being decided to practice a matador act right in the middle of the road. A rhino and a bull have very little to do with each other.

To be fair, they are both four-legged mammals but that hardly covers the other major anatomical differences that divide these two species. The faux Spanish bullfighter did not know this, nor did the rhino. However, when any animal charges forward with hopes of outrunning its’ own skin, the effect is the same. I was not inclined to stop either one.

The rhino dutifully stamped his foot on several forms and the matador. After removing the “Protect” from my badge with the remaining whiteout, I called the mayor again.

“HE’S EATING ME ALIVE!”

“Pandas don’t eat meat.”

“THIS ONE DOES.”

“Could you send those—”

“Hey, that kinda tickles.”

“helicopters.”

“Sure. No problem. Hehe. Did you get the form signed?”

“Yes. That and the witness are attached to his foot.”

“Jolly good!”

Definitely shouldn’t have got up this morning.

*“The faux Spanish bullfighter did not know this, nor did the rhino.”*

# Submerging into *The Life Aquatic*

**Keith Edmund White**

*Staff Editor*

'Life Aquatic' stands as Anderson's most bold and expensive film, but *is* still clearly cast within the tradition of *Rushmore* and *The Royal Tenenbaums*. Then why the strong change in critic opinion? In combining the qualities of those two previous films, within such an expansive story what is old appears new again. It is one of Anderson's greatest achievements that this film has been seen as a deviation by some critics. What is called 'deviation' by some will be shown to be evolution.

## **Life Aquatic: Seaward Evolution "We're all a pack of strays- don't you get it?" – Steve Zissou**

The similarities between and 'Life Aquatic' and Anderson's past films are many and significant. At their core 'Rushmore', 'The Royal Tenenbaums' and 'Life Aquatic' all document the quest of reconnection and family *searching for* their central character. Max Fischer of 'Rushmore' creates an artificial family consisting of a widowed elementary school teacher and a chronically depressed business man. 'Tenenbaums' documents a real family of geniuses all trying to re-connect with one another after the return of their neglectful father, Royal. 'Life Aquatic' takes this quest for family and takes it to the extreme.

Bill Murray (Steve Zissou) is a man in the throes of a mid-life crisis.



Once a respected and revered under-water adventurer, he's now a laughing-stock and considered a hack. His last four film documentaries been panned by the art-film circuit. And tragically his partner, Esteban, has been killed—eaten alive by the Jaguar Shark. His marriage is in shambles; with drug dependency on the side. So Steve Zissou plans his last mission: to take the Belafonte's crew and kill the shark that has taken his last sense of stability in the world. His reason is clear: revenge.

Steve's survival rests on the loyalty of his crew. This crew consists of Pele, the Portuguese 'safety expert' whose only qualifications seems to be his ability to play David *Bowie* songs. Vikam, the silent camera man, spends most of his time trying to bring electricity back to the aging Belafonte.

Wolodarsky works as an original score composer. Ogata does nothing, but is capable of holding his breathe for 7 minutes and 34 seconds. Renzo, the crew's sound-man and film editor, and a consistently topless Anne-Marie round-out the support staff of Team Zissou. Leading this support team is Klaus (Willem Dafoe), a German desperately wanting to hold the place that Esteban held in Steve's heart.

Thrown into this rather spiritless crew is Ned Plimpton (Owen Wilson) and the overly British Jane Winslett-Richardson (Cate Blanchett). Both these additions bring their own burdens onto the already besieged family. Jane is pregnant with a fatherless child. And Ned is searching for his father, who may, or may not, be Steve Zissou. Quite the family Steve has created.

*Life Aquatic* continues the centrality of death found in 'Rushmore' and 'Tenebaums'. Max Fischer's sense of identity in *Rushmore* results from the fact that his mother's dying wish that he attend *Rushmore Academy*. Royal's fabrication of a terminal condition is the crux of the plot of the 'Tenebaums'. Within 'Life Aquatic' the central plot device resides in the death of Esteban.

Anderson once again embraces the meta-film, refining his technique from his previous

works. Rushmore is set as a play, separated into three acts. The frame-work allowed the film to exploit its fantastical elements, while keeping the comedy real enough to probe themes in a honest, and realistic fashion. Royal Tenenbaums is set as a visual novel. This framework allowed Anderson to expand the number of characters and subplots within the film. Yet, the movie is never centered. In utilizing a novelistic style, the focal point of Royal was lost.

Life Aquatic's frame is that of a video-documentary about Steve Zissou. This template allows Anderson the same freedom of movement he enjoyed within 'Tenenbaums'. The two best of these tangential but critical cinematic novellas are that of the hapless second-in-command, Klaus, and Steve's arch nemesis Alistair Hennessey (Jeff Goldblum). In basing this on board a ship, as opposed to the house of 'Tenebaums', Anderson's can expand the dimensions of the film's world. It moves through Antarctica, France, Italy, and the South Pacific. But while expanding the world, the central setting of the Belafonte brings to the film the same dramatic flair that was evinced in the fluid stairways of the Tenenbaum household.

This might all seem too much to bear. The film does teeter close to implosion, but unlike the 'Royal Tenenbaums' it has utilized two features of 'Rushmore' to avoid this tragic outcome: centralized structure around one protagonist and audience stress-relaxants. Steve Zissou is the definite crux of the film, with Bill Murray delivering a stunning performance. In stepping up to this hefty task, Murray anchors the film as tightly as Max in 'Rushmore', even with the film's large scope.

Anderson also allows within his screen-plays what could be called pressure-equalizers. Anderson is constantly aware that we are watching this film that is mainly about making a film. In 'Rushmore' Max's absurd plays allowed the audience to enjoy the film's post-modern

pretentiousness, instead of feeling isolated by it. Without these releases, 'Royal Tenebaums' loses both depth and even pacing. Life Aquatic's documentary-approach lets Anderson naturally permeate the film with pressure equalizers. And in a movie that is a documentary of a documentary, these instances are critical.

The scene in which Anne-Marie and Klaus discuss Steve's quest for the Jaguar Shark illustrates this technique:

Anne-Marie: *"We're all being lead on a suicide mission by a selfish maniac."*  
Wilhelm: *"You have a point. But I think you misjudge the man."*

These words are more pertinent to Anderson himself. Anderson's screenplay (co-written by Noah Baumbach) utilizes this **introspective** technique often. While 'Rushmore' achieved this through the dramatic breaks in plot with Max's three plays, Life Aquatic builds upon the dialogue-focused approach of 'The Royal Tenenbaums'- without sharing its unwieldy base. In so doing, Anderson has created the first Andersonian meta-epic.

### **The Truth at the Bottom of the Sea: "I need to find a father for this baby."<sup>1</sup>**

The film documents Steve's self discovery, and through this epicenter tells the story of the revitalization of the Steve Zissou team by his alleged son, Ned Plimpton. Anderson has broken new ground: fully embracing signs of overt pain while creating a fulfilling conclusion. In pinpointing this central thematic, and its utilization of violence, a minor attribute swells with significance.

In the film's official soundtrack, one finds a single repetition: David Bowie's 'Life on Mars' is played twice<sup>2</sup>. This is hidden from the viewer through its covert refrain in Portuguese by Pele, the guitar-playing safety expert.

The song has an interesting history, highlighting the referential nature of Anderson's works<sup>3</sup>. Bowie composed the song as a parody on the Frank Sinatra hit "My Way". While Bowie crafted the melody that was later used for 'My Way' in 1968, he

sold the rights to Paul Anka. Anka then used the melody to construct the song 'My Way', which became a Sinatra classic—and one for which Bowie received no credit. From this infuriating experience,



Bowie constructed a satirical piece bringing its listeners such lyrics such as "Mickey Mouse has grown up a cow" and "Lennon's on sale again".

The fist iteration of the Bowie

piece occurs after Steve meets his reputed son, Ned. After a few mumbled words, Steve asks to be excused for one moment, and runs to the stern. Here, alone, the camera in slow motion details his stare into the water as he smokes. And it is now that Bowie's surreal melody creeps in<sup>4</sup>:

*Oh man! Look at those cavemen go  
It's the freakiest show  
Take a look at the Lawman  
Beating up the wrong guy  
Oh man! Wonder if he'll ever know  
He's in the best selling show  
Is there life on Mars?*

Bowie's lyrics now come to represent the conflicted relationship between Steve Zissou and Ned Plimpton. Steve and Ned stand as opposites: Ned a moral southerner from landlocked Kentucky; Steve an amoral, accent-less, and overly submerged sea explorer. The real source of conflict, though, is Steve's refusal to verify Ned's biological standing as his son.

As the plot sails on, it takes on an Oedipus-Hamlet hybrid attribute. Steve unilaterally changes Ned's name to Kingsley 'Ned' Zissou (in the guise of purchasing Ned new letterhead stock). Ned tries to push the label 'Dad' onto Steve. Steve refuses, finding that 'Steve-sie' sounds better for the documentary. It is clear both these characters are trying to fight each other into their proper, romanticized roles. Both are asking if there can be life for this neglected father-son duo. Such a relationship seems so far-fetched, that one can't help but think of Bowie's query: 'Is there life on Mars?' Soon they become those 'sailors fighting in the dance hall', over Jane. The two

## Cleaning Out the Real

### Meg Weckstein

*Guest Contributor*

How long the taste of toothpaste stays fresh in your mouth; hours later, ruining the taste of a new, juicy apple. Dare I say succulent? No, not many who have just, perhaps discovered that word for themselves, in themselves, use succulent so lightly.

Hours later after brushing hard teeth in a cold, hard bathroom I suck on them.

I suck hard at the pieces of slippery ivory. My ivory, smooth, cold, hard, calculating. Gleaming from within

soft, sinewy cavern. Cavern of warmth, moisture decay. The bacteria thrive, incubated with love by a warm breath of new apple. The toothpaste wrenches them from their decadent slumber, slamming them screeching, screaming, expiring on the warm forbidding mountain of tongue. Toothpaste, basic with its unforgiving pH meter, abrading, massacring. All that's left is the cold, hard, glimmering, beautiful surface.

Immovable edifices of teeth.

11:56pm, four minutes before today is lost irrevocably. Never reclaimable I

let it go silently. Today sighs out a screech into 11:57. I sigh out toothpaste, I will always smell of artificial clean. I cannot get enough. It haunts me. Not so much a haunt as a soft linger, clinging to the back of my mind, my mouth, my words. Now, my breath types, tapping the words onto a visible plain, creating new being. The toothpaste writes, I follow. I am prey. Pray to the unimpeachable goddess of fabricated hygiene. I love her. She cradles me with a mode of security.

12:04, Wednesday begins. This is all of little real relevance. The toothpaste sings out. My life is more but not whole. The tube squeezes me lopsided.



blood-laced cavemen construct and perform their own 'freakiest show', both refusing to address the fundamental issues between them. Steve and Ned both represent Bowie's Lawman figure, beating up each other for the wrong reasons.

Jane, who has fallen in love with Ned, takes on the role of the "girl with the mousey hair" that opens Bowie's *Life on Mars* as she watches Ned and Steve fight. The eternal conflict between father and son is brought to the surface. This comes to be reflected within Bowie's lyrics: "saddening bore, for she has seen it ten times before". Jane stands as the only character aboard the *Belafonte* with a concrete problem- her unexpected pregnancy. Thus she comes to represent the girl within 'Life on Mars': one surrounded by fools. Jane's pregnancy makes her a

another the helicopter suddenly stops its whisking motion through the tropical air.

The lyrical nature of Anderson's movie becomes hyper-realistic. The viewer gasps for air as Steve is found Steve arising from the crash-site. Soon we fall back into comfort upon discovering that he is fine. Steve swims to Ned. And while Ned appears fine, he soon drifts out of consciousness and the viewer finds the red water beneath him.

It is at the funeral of Ned one hears again the quiet serenade of Bowie's "Life on Mars". Pele strums it gently in Portuguese

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the film's s. Ned, a pilot for Air Kentucky before joining the *Belafonte*, flies with Steve over the suspected coordinates of the illusive Jaguar Shark. The helicopter reflects the decrepit state of Steve: it is severely outdated, it has no safety belts and every time Steve and Ned fly it there are maintenance problems. Ned flying with Steve also represents Ned's ability to lead Steve through his dark days of self-doubt and depression.

On their third flight we find them in dire straits. Right after both display their poorly articulated, but profound, love for one

as the on-sea wake is displayed. Now the 'best-selling show' that Steve finally allowed himself into is over- almost as fast as it started. "Life on Mars" now expresses the frustrated hope to find fulfillment in object that are out of our reach. Yet, it is in Ned's death that Steve finally becomes a father. Steve formally adopts Ned, making himself and his wife (recently reunited) the new parents of a dead child. And Jane, who was close to finding the father for her baby, now is alone once again. It seems Anderson is closing a film examining the bonds of rebirth at a moment of crisis.

Or is he? For within this tormented narrative one finds Anderson's conception of family fluid. An Andersonian family is not one with all the proper parts. A true family is what is cut and pasted together through the pain of existence. It is this pain that resurrects the family's emotional nexuses. In this sense, this truly fantastic movie is simultaneously the truest movie this year will ever see.