

SUBMISSIONS

Are you an artist, writer, budding journalist or community resident in the Milwaukie, OR area? Is there something you'd like to contribute to 99E Magazine in the future? Please contact us below to be considered for upcoming issues:

Illya deTorres:

illyadetorres@gmail.com

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Design: Diane Stankard



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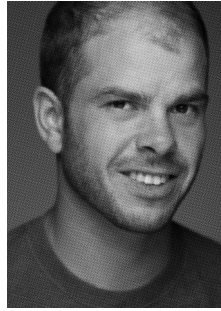
COVER ART

By Sean Croghan

CONTACT:



@sdcroghan



The camps have all dried up.
The kids are going back to school.
Families are taking a collective breath of air as they prepare for the coming months.
The leaves are changing color and the air is getting crisper.
All of our end of season vegetables are arriving all at once. And we can't possibly keep up.
All of the plans we made. Some happened exactly as we planned. Others were regretfully left behind.
Hoping with all hope we can fit them in next year.

Maybe you're reading this while sitting in the cozy house thinking about the year to come. Maybe you're reading it at a bus stop and thinking maybe you should've planned your outfit better. The rains are coming.

Maybe you're thinking about a story you read while doing your bike commute early in the morning as the sun is coming up and the chilled air is making you tear. Maybe you're about to start something new and that scares you.

Maybe you can lose yourself for a minute in these pages. Welcome to 99E.

THOUGHTS ON...THOUGHTS OFF

BY JARK

An attempt to understand the process of a simple existence through a flowing river of rant and observation...

Another month in the books, fellow humans of planet Earth. As we all know it's not the easiest to feats nowadays. I had a conversation with my seven-year-old daughter — well, almost seven. 30 days and counting.

She is really excited about her first Disneyland trip coming up in about 3 months. When I asked her what she was most excited about, she told me it was visiting the genie from Aladdin so she can make three wishes. I won't get into what those three wishes were, but rest assured she thinks they will 100% come true and they were dangerously cute.

But it got me thinking about how to break the news and shatter the illusion of the Magical World she lives in versus the day-to-day grind of status quo life and the tireless

quest for answers, an identity, and a purpose. Which in and of itself (correct cliché?) makes life an interesting, and somewhat magical, journey by proxy.

Point is, she is 30 days away from being 3000 days away from her big brain coming back online (that's scientific... truth) and throwing a metaphysical wrench in the universal gears. As a pro human parent (mostly), I feel it's my duty to keep the magic alive for as long as possible, whilst taking in as much as possible, but not let the spawn be as unprepared as I was rolling into the same situation 23 years ago... without social media. My how things have changed. Let's be good humans... please.

Not just for the children.

THE *Arborist*



BY ELIZABETH SEWARD

Elizabeth Seward is a writer/musician/artist living in Milwaukee. Her writing work has been published in places like *National Geographic*, *Discovery*, *Marie Claire*, *Cosmopolitan*, *AOL*, *Yahoo!*, *Apartment Therapy*, *Narratively*, *She Knows*, and many other digital and print publications.

When I was young and fresh I bent
Green broke through my outward seams
Whether due to creature or to breeze
I thinned my innards just to be
Accommodating enough to reach
Them before they'd reach to me

I am no longer young
and I detest the spring
I am sanding down my kneecaps
And the concessions they bring
I am not a soft bud
I am weathered and steady
My soft buds are within
Where I nurse them until ready

Now I grow tall
Firm in my ground
Would rather break and fall
And make a thundering sound
Than be bending and small
Desperate to thrive
Pretending the green
Is what makes me alive



telltale

CELEBRATE

INTRODUCTION BY JASMINE PETTET
— CURATOR/CREATOR OF TELLTALE —

What I want you to do is celebrate. I don't know what, I don't know how, I just... think you should celebrate.

You could have a drink, or a fancy chocolate. You could go yell a curse word out the window, or lay naked on the living room floor, or eat ice cream for breakfast, or call someone you love, or light a sparkler, or run really fast for one block only.

We all celebrate in our own ways. It fills up all the blank space. We all need celebration. Even in the most rotten of days — maybe especially on those days.

One way you could celebrate is to go sit on a bench somewhere, on a perfect evening, and read this next featured piece, which is delightful and somber, which are two of my favorite things to be, really.

In a perfect world, there would be flowers on the air and cute dogs walking by and you'd have really nice plans for afterward. But you can do it however you want. It's your life.

Please enjoy this short story inspired by the theme "*Close Your Eyes.*" And hopefully we will see you at the next show in September, for more stories, and more celebrations.

UPCOMING TELLTALE SHOWS:

Hail to Whatever
September 12 @ 8pm

The Devil You Know
October 10 @ 8pm

Join us at Chapel Theatre!



The Woods

BY CHITRA SUBRAHMANYAM

“Close your eyes. What do you see?”

My doctor’s dulcet voice is gentle yet steady, like a welcome hand on the small of a back when entering an unfamiliar room. We sit in a familiar room, I on a familiar couch staring at her familiar painted feet. She guides me now into the unknown.

I close my eyes.

What do I see?

I try to picture a place where I am at ease. Somewhere I am calm, where the warring elements inside of me sweetly and mercifully give up their fight, for even just a second. A place where I can just be.

But I’m not sure that such a place has ever existed. In fact, I routinely marvel with disdain that this type of peace could exist for anyone. Any time someone expresses perfect contentedness, and complete happiness with their life in that moment, I wonder: how? How is it that you are so okay? So awake and alert, cartoonlike, jumping off the page to charm even the sullenest maker. Everyone remembers you after they meet you at a party, don’t they? You’re that kind of person. They notice, they miss you when you’re not in the room. And here you are, a beam of light! Calm, a dream; so at ease. So you must be ignorant, right? The beautiful, placated idiot.

Contempt is the privilege of the Knowing, and sadness is the earned state of those that made it out of the cave. So says my brain. Or at least, my perverted brain. The culture I grew up consuming chiseled me into a lover of the sad man-child, he whose diet of self-deprecation bleeds into narcissism seamlessly as the ouroboros eating its tail. I think of that moment in *High Fidelity*. Did I listen to the sad music because I was sad, or was I sad because of the music I listened to? Am I unhappy because of the miserable bastards I idolize, or do I hero-worship those that understand me? Either way, unease becomes me. My moments are made of shapeless thoughts scurrying in different

directions, deranged siblings trying to escape their parents’ tethers at an amusement park.

I am never really here. I am always elsewhere, fragmented. And it doesn’t matter who is to blame, but the fragments haven’t settled for a while, and they don’t understand how they ever will.

I try to remember the last time I was awake. Fully in the moment and present and tracking every. Thing. That. Was. Happening. At. That. Time. Maybe there was music, maybe there was love. Maybe a dog somewhere in the mix.

It comes to me: the woods. The forest I wandered into when I visited the city where my new school was waiting for me. I was on my juvenile pilgrimage, chasing the streets named in songs by my most beloved sad bastard, when I found this view, you know. Everything was still and each breath was forgiveness. I could see across the river, I could smell the earth and cherry blossom breeze and I was tall and small all at once. I was alone, but not lonely. There was sound, but no noise. Like a new favorite song, these trees greeted me as though they had been waiting a long time. And how lovely it was, to finally meet each other.

“The forest,” I managed finally, to the pair of familiar feet. “There was this place in the hills, in Portland, when I visited. Everything felt okay.”

That was then. That was my cliché, my happy place—the image I could focus on and travel to, to calm myself down when the anxiety and post-traumatic stress became too much. The longing for such idyllic images seems just as much of a facet of existence as it is a coping strategy. It is easy, it is ritual to get lost in dreams to survive the numbing mundanities of this life. I was okay as long as I had somewhere else I could imagine myself, somewhere else I could be. Some other feeling, some promise of peace, worth chasing and getting out of bed for.

But I live here now. The trauma catches up to you, and the perennially dissatisfied are experts at desecrating the people and images they enshrine. The place I used to picture when I closed my eyes is now mere minutes away from my daily stressors, and a myriad of difficult experiences enveloped me upon my arrival to this forested dreamland.

In other words, life happened. I sit here presently, en route to a quarantine of sorts on what was a vacation cut short, for in the midst of it I caught a case of conjunctivitis. It's an uncomfortably trite metaphor for what happens to the happy places, I realize. I am the problem, the Sad Bastard proclaims. I am the traveling plague. I am the troubles that follow me. Where I am, nothing can remain unblemished or sacred for so long.

So where else can I go? What to long for now, what's left to see when I close my eyes?

The easiest thing to do when something goes wrong, in the privileged world when it is possible to do so, is to remake your surroundings. Broke up with your partner and can't stand your city? Move. Made a memory that no amount of booze could blur away? The rest of the world is your oyster. The rest of the world is yours to fuck and marry and hopefully not want to kill. You are Midas in reverse and everything you haven't touched is still gold. Flee! Then chase what it is you see, when you next close your eyes.

In other words, start over.

But if you do, you may always be chasing. It's not really a home if you're always looking for the exit.

Disillusionment: the poetic demise of the notion that if I moved to a place, I could finally be happy.

***It's not
really
a home
if you're
always
looking
for the
exit.***

The only thing left for me, the only worthy vestige of the dream, is the feeling. At the end of the day, really, the only thing any of us has to hold onto is a feeling. No permanence in a set of walls, nor in a living, breathing being. Just the feeling; the hand that reached into the center and pulled the spirit forward; the deepest kind of understanding and belonging. Everything else is temporary.

When I close my eyes, and really, really try, I can remember the way I felt in the woods for the first time. I know it's not going to be quite the same when I open them and go out there and face reality. The reality of forever-ish depression. The rat race for rent, the spider webs in the bathroom. The legs that won't stop aching, the friend that doesn't call back. The stupid thing I said to someone one time that I will replay in my head all night. No matter where I go, the heavy things will remain, and the fatigue and sadness may well be sutures in the fabric of my bones. But I can close my eyes, to remind me of that feeling. And maybe just to remind me why I should open them again.

THE
Unintentional
VOYEUR

BY BEVERLY BASHAM

I didn't mean to see you, when I made my bed for the night.
But I glanced from my second story window
and could see you so clearly down there.
My neighbor,
standing in your yellow-lit kitchen.
You put some concoction in a glass.
Placing it into the microwave, you stand at the counter, waiting.
And it's in those moments of pending action that I watch you.
Vulnerable.
Your head bald-naked from the chemo
Your hands clutching from breast to abdomen.

I am ashamed that I watch you.
My heart aches for this raw moment.
I wish to comfort you.
But in what context would this be acceptable?
At this hour,
your suffering thought private.
With you, alone, dying.
And me, your neighbor, upstairs watching.

SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY 1 MONDAY 2 TUESDAY 3 WEDNESDAY 4

THEATRE

HAMLET

Presented by

Clever Enough Productions

Directed by **Valerie Asbell**



SHOW RUNS SUNDAY 1ST — 8TH

7:30pm (All Thurs., Fri., Sat. shows)
Doors 7:00pm

1:30pm (All Sun. Matinées)
Doors 1:00pm

Visit chapeltheatremilwaukie.com for tickets and more information.
Hope to see you there!



Visit us online or on Facebook to see most current class schedules, upcoming events, and more!

CHAPELTHEATREMILWAUKIE.COM

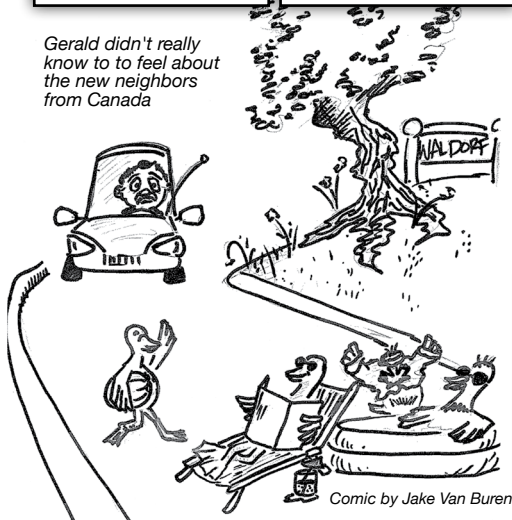
CHapel Theatre, 4107 SE Harrison St.
Milwaukie, OR 97222

MONDAY 9	TUESDAY 10	WEDNESDAY 11 LLEWELLING NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETING 6:30pm - 8pm	THURSDAY 12 STORYTELLING TELLTALE: HAIL TO WHATEVER 8pm/Doors 7:30pm	FRIDAY 13 FUNDRAISER! DUNGEONS & DRAG A fundraiser for Living Room Youth 7pm/Doors 6:30pm	SATURDAY 14
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SUNDAY 15	MONDAY 16	TUESDAY 17	WEDNESDAY 18	THURSDAY 19 LIVE MUSICAL! TECH BOOTH THEATRE PRESENTS: PLATE O' SHRIMP: A REPO MAN PUNK ROCK MUSICAL PARODY Directed by Dug Martell RUNS: SEPT 19 — OCT 6 7:30pm (All Thurs., Fri., Sat. shows) Doors 7:00pm 2:00pm (All Sun. Matinées) Doors 1:30pm Visit chapeltheatremilwaukie.com for tickets and more information. Hope to see you there!
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FRIDAY 20 MUSICAL PLATE O' SHRIMP: A REPO MAN PUNK ROCK MUSICAL PARODY 7:30pm/Doors 7pm	SATURDAY 21 MUSICAL PLATE O' SHRIMP: A REPO MAN PUNK ROCK MUSICAL PARODY 7:30pm/Doors 7pm	SUNDAY 22 MUSICAL PLATE O' SHRIMP: A REPO MAN PUNK ROCK MUSICAL PARODY 2pm/Doors 1:30pm	MONDAY 23
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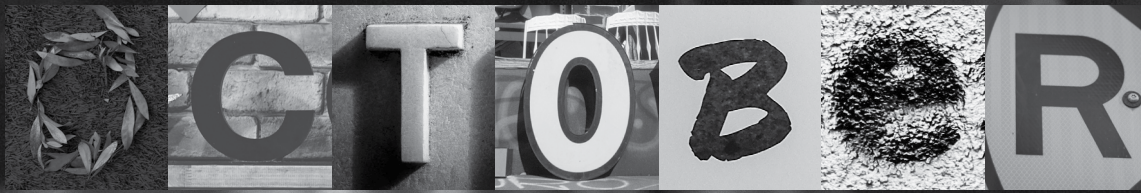
Gerald didn't really know to feel about the new neighbors from Canada



Comic by Jake Van Buren

TUESDAY 24	WEDNESDAY 25	THURSDAY 26 MUSICAL PLATE O' SHRIMP: A REPO MAN PUNK ROCK MUSICAL PARODY 7:30pm/Doors 7pm	FRIDAY 27 MUSICAL PLATE O' SHRIMP: A REPO MAN PUNK ROCK MUSICAL PARODY 7:30pm/Doors 7pm
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SATURDAY 28 MUSICAL PLATE O' SHRIMP: A REPO MAN PUNK ROCK MUSICAL PARODY 7:30pm/Doors 7pm	SUNDAY 29 FUNDRAISER! DANCE WIRE FUNDRAISER 6pm/Doors 5:30pm Dance trivia with performances by Dance Wire members	MONDAY 30
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RUNS: SEPT 19 – OCT 6

LIVE MUSICAL!

**TECH BOOTH THEATRE PRESENTS:
PLATE O' SHRIMP: A REPO MAN
PUNK ROCK MUSICAL PARODY**

Directed by **Dug Martell**

RUNS: SEPT 19 – OCT 6

7:30pm

(All Thurs., Fri., Sat. shows)
Doors 7:00pm

2:00pm

(All Sun. Matinéés)
Doors 1:30pm

Visit chapeltheatremilwaukie.com for tickets
and more information. Hope to see you there!

TUESDAY

1

WEDNESDAY

2

THURSDAY

3

MUSICAL

**PLATE O' SHRIMP:
A REPO MAN PUNK ROCK
MUSICAL PARODY**
7:30pm/Doors 7pm

FRIDAY

4

MUSICAL

**PLATE O' SHRIMP:
A REPO MAN PUNK ROCK
MUSICAL PARODY**
7:30pm/Doors 7pm

SATURDAY

5

MUSICAL

**PLATE O' SHRIMP:
A REPO MAN PUNK ROCK
MUSICAL PARODY**
7:30pm/Doors 7pm

SUNDAY

6

MUSICAL

**PLATE O' SHRIMP:
A REPO MAN PUNK ROCK
MUSICAL PARODY**
2pm/Doors 1:30pm

MONDAY

7

TUESDAY

8

WEDNESDAY

9

**LLEWELLING
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION MEETING**
6:30pm – 8pm

THURSDAY

10

STORYTELLING

**TELLTALE:
THE DEVIL
YOU KNOW**
8pm/Doors 7:30pm

FRIDAY

11

SATURDAY

12

SUNDAY

13

MONDAY

14

TUESDAY

15

WEDNESDAY

16

THURSDAY

PREVIEW NIGHT: 10.17 / OPENING NIGHT: 10.18 / RUNS 'TIL: 10.27

CHAPEL THEATRE COLLECTIVE PRESENTS:

BAKERSFIELD MIST

Directed by **Illya deTorres**

Written by **Stephen Sachs**

7:30pm

(All Thurs., Fri., Sat. shows)
Doors 7:00pm

2:00pm

(All Sun. Matinéés)
Doors 1:30pm

Visit chapeltheatrecollective.com for tickets/more info!

**THEATRE:
SEASON 2 OPENS!**

17

FRIDAY

18

OPENING NIGHT!!

**BAKERSFIELD
MIST**

7:30pm/Doors 7pm

SATURDAY

19

THEATRE

**BAKERSFIELD
MIST**

7:30pm/Doors 7pm

SUNDAY

20

THEATRE

**BAKERSFIELD
MIST**

2pm/Doors 1:30pm

MONDAY

21

TUESDAY

22

WEDNESDAY

23

THURSDAY

24

THEATRE

**BAKERSFIELD
MIST**

7:30pm/Doors 7pm

FRIDAY

7:30am

Open to the public.
North Clackamas Chamber
of Commerce business
connections meeting.
Meet your neighboring
business leaders.

THEATRE

25

**BAKERSFIELD
MIST**

7:30pm/Doors 7pm

SATURDAY

26

THEATRE

**BAKERSFIELD
MIST**

7:30pm/Doors 7pm

SUNDAY

27

FINAL PERFORMANCE

**BAKERSFIELD
MIST**

2pm/Doors 1:30pm

MONDAY

28

TUESDAY

29

WEDNESDAY

30

THURSDAY

31



HAPPY HALLOWE'EN!

CHAPELTHEATREMILWAUKIE.COM

CHAPEL THEATRE, 4107 SE HARRISON ST., MILWAUKIE, OR 97222

JUST A SPARK

BY
BARRY
BRUSSEAU



**In the morning, after a few moments of awkward silence,
my wife says:
“I feel like I’m about 7th on your priority list.”**

She says this to me on the morning of an art and music show I’m putting on at The Chapel Theatre; she says this to me with tears in her eyes. I look out the window; I’m not sure what to say.

I’ve been with my wife for close to 30 years. She knows me well; she knows I can be manic and obsessive, she has a limit she’ll put up with — and we’re over that limit. I tell her (and myself) as soon as this project is over I’m going to take a break. I’m going to relax, take it easy. I promise to try, and I mean it. And sometimes I can do it. Sometimes.

Months ago I had this idea of doing a show with musicians who also do visual art. It was just a spark of an idea, but my spark always turns into a blowtorch and next thing you know our house is a pile of ashes. I don’t know when I’ve done all I can, — when it’s a good time to let go of something.

It’s balance I have a hard time with. I like to use words like “driven” and “go getter.” I’ll convince myself it’s what separates me from the “lazies” of the world. Then my wife says something like that, and I know I’ve fallen off the cliff.

It starts like this, just a flicker of light:

We’ll have a combo art show and music show, and each artist will hang a collection of their art in the room they’ll be playing in. Oh, and of course I’ll hand cut special records for them using my 1940’s lathe, and we’ll have those records for sale at the show, and if any of the artists need to record I’ll do that too, and all the local press will cover it, and Facebook will blow up, and the theatre will sell out, and the artists will sell a bunch of paintings, and I’ll be showered with praise... and... and,... and... well you get it: blowtorch.

My magnifying mind goes into turbo mode. I hold tight to all the details and do my best to control the outcome. I assume the pressure of

everyone involved. I want Corinn and Illya to be proud of the event... and I want them to make some money at the bar, and I want the performers to feel excited and happy they are doing the show, and I hope they sell some art, and I want the audience to be overjoyed and happy they came... and... and... and... Well, you get it.

So every night leading up to the show I’m cutting records, making flyers, and working social media. On the weekends I’m walking all over Milwaukee hanging flyers, plus working 11-hour days at my job, not sleeping much, and I’m grumpy, irritable and no fun. There is no tenderness to me, no soft edges. I’m one big self-centered dried out dirt clod.

No-one gets back to me from any of the local papers, and Facebook says only 14 people are going so I convince myself I’m doing it all wrong, that this is going to be one big failure and I’ll be left looking like a nobody; an average run of the mill nobody.

***It was just a spark of an
idea, but my spark always
turns into a blowtorch
and next thing you know,
our house is a pile of ashes.***

The day of the show arrives. The players; Jim Han (Cotton), Sean Croghan, and Larry Yes all show up with positive attitudes. We start setting up all the art. Brian shows up to do sound (he’s my neighbor and volunteering his time). Corinn and Illya are as helpful as ever. I am surrounded by my peers, art, and music. I’m starting to remember

*When it's all said and done,
things never turn out
as bad as I think they will,
and usually never close to
as grand as I can imagine it.*

how many people love me, how grateful I am, and how far away from them I've let myself slip. I calm down a little, but still worry about how this is all going to turn out. There is a small trickle of folks showing up. It's 8pm before you know it.

The show starts with Cotton, showing his photography. Jim spends his days roaming the city taking pictures of street folks. Tonight, he's brought four framed photos of street people living in black and white. I met Jim many years ago at the White Eagle open mic. He probably doesn't know it but I consider him one of my best friends. His set is short, sweet, and wonderful. He plays without expression, though not without emotion. At the end of his set he gets a little more animated (just a little) as he thanks me for putting this all together.

Sean Croghan is up. He's showing a mixture of big canvas paintings with smaller watercolor pieces. He sings his heart out. The crowd is a little bigger and a little louder; his voice fills this former church to the rafters.

Larry is next, showing his positive love vibes sculptures. His set leaves the room in tears, and slows all of our hearts down a little bit. I catch myself taking note of the people who didn't come, then in my mind I ask for forgiveness. That is not the feeling I want.

I turn my thoughts to all the good people who decided to spend their night here. When it's all said and done, things never turn out as bad as I think they will, and usually never close to as grand as I can imagine it. At the end of the night people thank me for putting this show together, and I feel

good about that. I look across the room and see my wife. She has her hair up just like I like it. She looks very pretty tonight.

The show is over and everyone involved is satisfied. We've sold some records and though I lost money at the door, I'm able to give each of the artist/performers a little cash. Two are full time artists so I'm well aware the cash is a welcome reward. It's the benefit of working my truck driving job: I can afford losing a little money.

As the crowd filters out into the summer night some thank me for bringing a show like this to the theatre. Sincere and heartfelt are these things they tell me, and I know I should be enjoying this more — I should feel like I won. This is the moment when I bathe in the glory of a job well done. I'm just starting to feel it, to relax, to smell the flowers.

Then, out of the corner of my eye, I see a flash of light. It startles me and makes my heart skip a beat. Then I realize there's no need for alarm. It's not a flame, just a spark.

Barry Brusseau moved to Portland in 1985. He was in search of a death metal band and work. He found both. His music and a book of poems and short stories can be found here:

barrybrusseau.com.

MUSICIAN/ARTISTS MENTIONED:

Larry Yes
larryyes.com

Jim Han (Cotton)
Instagram
@cottonottocotton

Sean Groghan
Instagram
@sdcroghan



Milwaukie is Just Drawn to Art

BY SARAH BAGLEY

Creative expression is abundant here—even if Milwaukie hasn't always been known for it—and the art scene just keeps growing.

Here is just a sample of the City's artistry and ways for everyone to be a part of it.



Sarah Bagley is a Milwaukie Enthusiast, illustrator, web designer, and Milwaukie Arts Committee (artMOB) member. She can be found at www.sarahbagley.land

LOCAL SCHOOLS: North Clackamas School District does such a great job incorporating art, music, and performance into all schools, making for well-rounded students. Milwaukie Academy of the Arts is a public Charter high school that has a strong art component. There are also fantastic adult education programs through North Clackamas Parks and Recreation, so folks of all skill levels can take part in something fun like oil painting, ceramics, and more.

MILWAUKIE ARTS COMMITTEE (ARTMOB) In 2008, Mayor Gamba created artMOB—short for Art: Milwaukie On Board. The projects we volunteers have the honor of working on include curating art shows at Milwaukie City Hall and local businesses, the sculpture garden with a rotating selection, a creative Scarecrow contest, the famous Umbrella Parade, and First Friday art receptions and events.

AROUND TOWN: The highly-walkable downtown boasts murals and sculpture. Poetry and literary readings happen monthly through the Library. Even Rose Villa, a retirement community just south of Milwaukie, has a dedicated art program; bringing visual, performative, musical, and literary arts to their community. Even surrounding neighborhoods work together to create painted street murals.

DARK HORSE COMICS was founded in Milwaukie in 1986 and is housed in several buildings downtown. This publishing powerhouse is responsible for turning the greater Portland area into one of the country's largest community of cartoonists and graphic artists outside of New York.

What a true joy to have **CHAPEL THEATRE**—"the place for performance art in Milwaukie"—here in our community. Art events, dance performances and classes, local theater and storytelling events, and so much more. I also love that this beautiful, updated space can be rented for performances and events.

MADE IN MILWAUKIE: founded by three Milwaukie artists, this retail shop has become the centerpoint of Milwaukie's 'Cool Factor' renaissance with local art, apparel, and more for sale. During First Friday they provide yet another platform for local vendors and music.

There is so much future art to look forward to among all the new construction going on downtown:

The new **LIBRARY** building is working with two local artists who have been commissioned to create special pieces highlighting the Library's history. **MILWAUKIE BAY PARK** will be revamped in the coming years and the art incorporated into the natural landscape is being shaped now. The brand-new (very large!) **CONDO** will have a mural facing the Max station, as well as custom sculpture on the exterior for all to enjoy. Even in front of our sweet little **POST OFFICE**, some nature-themed street art (literally in the street) will be created using pigmented concrete.

Stay tuned!

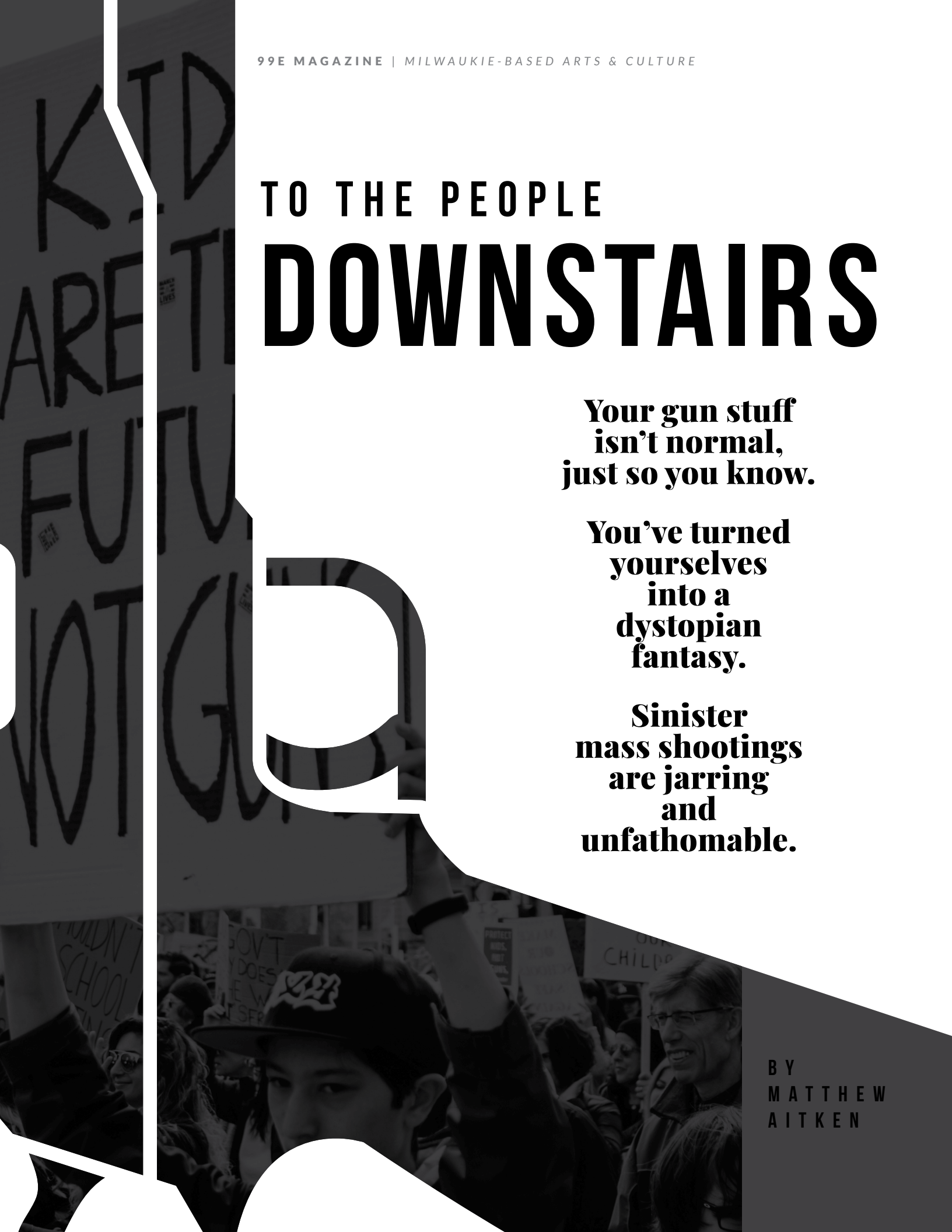
TO THE PEOPLE DOWNSTAIRS

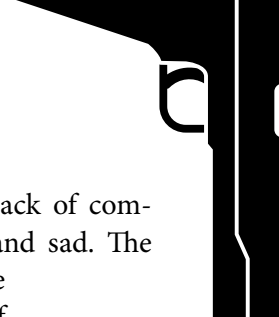
**Your gun stuff
isn't normal,
just so you know.**

**You've turned
yourselves
into a
dystopian
fantasy.**

**Sinister
mass shootings
are jarring
and
unfathomable.**

BY
MATTHEW
AITKEN





Seems like half of you have a lack of compassion that is both surprising and sad. The other half of you have a palpable frustration understood by most of us up here.

We talk here. We try to figure it out. It's not like we don't have guns. We just don't seem to want to use them in the same way. We argue about gun rights and registration. We have criminals. We do not have the same instability. We do not experience your pain.

The dialogue after an incident is a cacophony of banality that makes it seem like Sisyphus might one day stand at the top of the hill, hands on hips, smiling at his success.

Nobody can hear anything after an incident. There are predictable and unoriginal offers of support from the thoughts-and-prayers crowd. Every reference to guns and violence is liable and likely to be blamed. There's a focus on the individual and the motive because a discussion about all the sociological factors that gives the perpetrators examples to follow and justifications to believe in seems to be too difficult to have. How some still have the audacity to repeat the same boring, vapid, and petulant talking points over and over again is testament to the stubbornness and cruelty of a human mind. How some still have to listen to reports of another incident after losing a loved one speaks to the strength of the heart.

Maybe it's a test. Maybe you want to see how far you can bend before you break. Because you've broken before. Twice, but both times are now long ago. And you're not who you used to be.

There is something inherently romantic about taking up arms against a corrupt rulers, which

is what keeps those guns in it's-my-goddamn-right hands. But there is nothing about what's

going on down there that screams anything but support of the status quo. Doing things so different is not part of your dialogue or reality anymore. In fact, most of the revolutionary leaders of the last 120 years have been enemies of yours. Change isn't your thing. Steadfast dedication to the same broken system and devotion to outdated and perverted ideas about how it should be seems to be paramount.

The revolution isn't coming. Democracy made it irrelevant. When the right was written, a foreign power wrote the law. Most of the time since then, you've been an aggressor when it comes to others, promoting that great equalizer, democracy. When you get attacked again, the infrastructure you've built to defend yourselves is there. It is not a parade of citizens all too happy to pay their taxes with blood. You don't need the right. You've let it atrophy, and now it's absurd.

When someone opens fire on a crowd of innocent people, it's now normal. Each instance was somewhat justified by the most recent one. Heinousness and body counts of infamous events soften the impressions of the next. It's a loosening grip on what is moral and good. You do not know what you are losing when you let it continue unabated like this. You're going to end up killing yourselves. All of you.

The rest of us will undoubtedly watch. We will have no choice. You got the world to pay attention to your every move with your ingenuity and art. You attracted some of the best from around the world and created modern culture. Now you have to recreate your own.

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HEALY'S HIJINKS

PROCRASTINATION STATION IS THE NAME OF MY GAME. I LIVE LIFE ON THE EDGE. ALWAYS. I'M LIVIN' THE HARDCORE PARCOUR OF LYFE.

MASH

I moonlight as a house-sitter. This article is an attempt at collecting a new gig. All proceeds will go to paying off my *Aura* app I downloaded as a joke. Jokes on me, I didn't cancel that zen AF shit in time and now I'm paying up the dingus for it. Whatever is left over I'll use for my ACLU contribution and my student loan.

I know you didn't pick this magazine up to seek a sitter, but this sitter seeks you, so if you find your Mansion, Apartment, Shack, or House, (depending on what home you were awarded in your childhood 'MASH' payout) in need of some serious sitting, then give me a ring-a-ding-ding-dong-ding. Send in a letter to 99E requesting my number, and I'll respond via letter with my number, and then you can call at your earliest convenience, but make sure you leave a message because I hardly ever answer calls I know, let alone calls I don't know.

I've been in the sittin' game longer than you can imagine. I sat my first house at 18 (I actually can't remember the age so I picked a random one, but it seems legit and like a responsible sitting age) for my dearest godfather who moonlights as my uncle, and his wife, my aunt according to genealogy. Coincidentally I also sit for my godfather's twin who twins as my uncle by association and blood. Don't get it twisted though, my godfather's twin is not my godfather by association. My real life godfather is the best in the whole world and is a truly wonderful human and I know that he'll read this and feel so touched that he'll want to kick me an extra fiver on my next holiday cash payout because that is the kind of man he is.
God bless him.

BY HOUSE SITTING
AMANDA HEALY

I'm overusing the word payout in this article. Go ahead English teachers of the world: sue me! See what kinda payout you can get from a lady in debt to the *Aura* app!

House sitting. You've got your plants, your animals, and your ragers you scramble to clean up before the Mansion/Apartment/Shack/House owners return. I'm basically a pro at it all, despite one time at my not god father's house. Long story short, bottoms were found at the bottom of the hot tub and they weren't bottoms for my bottom. But that's not even rock bottom of my bottom moments housesitting... see section coming up regarding my bottom.

To be honest, which I am and is why you should hire me, I'm a pro, but my last gig at my god father's house had me shaking in my boots and on my toes...at the same time. It all started when I arrived to the house expecting to see two big dogs. The house was empty, not a bark or crotch sniff in sight. A bit confused and worried, I stood there wondering if I had already lost the dogs before I had even arrived. House sitting fail. But reason took over and I remembered the neighbor kids were asked to help, too, so I assumed they were with them, but when I saw the leashes I became rather suspish. Detective mode on, I checked the garage... Nope. I went upstairs and checked a bedroom... Nothing. I went back downstairs and checked outside and it was nothing but chickens.

At this point I was eating a bag of chips I had found and decided to go back upstairs to check the other two bedrooms I previously ignored like a dingus. Went into

one, and saw a frog, a fish, and two snails. No dogs. Last dangus room. NO DOGS! Just kiddin', the dogs were obvs in there.

That first night I tried to sleep to my expensive AF *Aura* app, paid for by readers like you. The calming sound of a crackling fire soon led to childhood flashbacks of laying by the fire with my family, always reserved as my spot in the house. Fond memories. But then I began thinking about how my mom was always worried about house fires, and the time my dad set fire to a field as a child, and how one of my ancestors fell into a fire after being shot in the arm by an arrow. How all this must be signs that I will die in a house fire. I was so relaxed that first night.

The next morning I woke up to the comforting sounds of my boyfriend snoring loudly, only to quickly remember where I was and that the snoring comfort was actually a big furry dog. Sleeping with your pets comes with my housesitting package. That morning and the next I had some real freaky deaky, *Final Destination* type stuff chillin' me to my bones in the middle of summer. Both days I saw a white semi turning left in front of me at the same intersection. Then on the ol' Highway 26, near the zoo, both days I see a *Go Cougs* bus. So yeah, coincidence? Or some bigger meaning? All I know is I never turn my back on a house sitting gig. No matter how near death it gets me.

This gig had me near death several times. I was nearly attacked by a snake, their dog pulled me through the grass like a rag doll, and probably some serial killer guy saw me walking, but we were

kinda far away at first so I kept to myself, but then he said in a serial killer tone, "Good Evening." So serious. So matter of fact. Never looking at me as he spoke. I was also nearly embarrassed to death... chasing chickens in my underwear is offish on my resume now under special skills. But my most embarrassing to death embarrassing ROCK BOTTOM moment was a bottom moment. Just an average day of sunbathing in my underwear in the backyard of my godfather's house when what to my wondering eyes did appear... Nothing. I didn't see it coming. I heard the door, his footsteps, and the pounding of my heart. The neighbor boy, maybe 12, maybe traumatized, standing right by the back door.

I know he can see me. I scrambled to my feet, pulling up my shorts and open the sliding glass door. We stood there awkwardly discussing where the animals were, when my uncle was returning, the weather... somehow we were able to end that conversation and move on with our lives. Courageously, I continued the gig, because I'm not a quitter: that violates the code of the MASH sitter.

There you have it. My credentials all presented in a short, concise, easy to read format-much like a resume.

Hire me to feed your animal family you want to abandon for something better, to water your plants and eat your veggies, to lose bottoms and show off bottoms, and to bribe your neighbors with a payout to keep their bees to their wax. To watch your MASH 'til death do me part. Now Hireable.

Musings From A Part-Time Mystic

BUT SERIOUSLY, FOLKS

BY JENNIFER HOLLAND

Walking on Bandon's beach a few weeks ago, I noticed an octogenarian collecting rocks. They concentrated on the task with a vengeance, never looking up or to either side, and only pausing to drop their tiny treasures into one of several pockets located on their super-nifty, no-doubt-expensive, canvas vest.

Not only did it sport eight pockets of different sizes and various toggles, clasps, and zippers, but it boasted a tool belt specially made for those must-have rockhound aids.

I couldn't suss the beachcomber's organizing system. One stone went here; a shell went there. Nimble fingers quickly unzipped or unbuttoned or unhooked, and as quickly re-closed, all without the vest-wearer even looking.

As I compared my woeful ensemble—faded jeans with rolled-up cuffs; twenty-year-old sandals; threadbare, oversized hoodie—to theirs, I felt envious. Wow. This person is a SERIOUS rockhound. Look at that gear! Then I stopped mid-squish. Is that not an oxymoron, 'serious rockhound'? Isn't rock collecting a hobby? Just how serious has our fun become?

We're bombarded with ads: designer gear for the SERIOUS runner... for the SERIOUS hiker... SERIOUS cook... or even invalid (the SERIOUSLY ill). NaNoWriMo, the

home of National Novel Writing Month and now marketing all year long, encourages would-be writers to buy mugs, T-shirts, and other paraphernalia to show how SERIOUS they are about writing. If you need a T-shirt as motivation, I would seriously question your desire to write at all.

Buying accoutrements for our interests and thus prove to ourselves we're committed is one thing; but are we also hoping others will believe we're serious? We might not even have to do anything if the neighbors can see our impressive collection of, say, cycles for every terrain, complete with matching helmets. These items require SERIOUS storage spaces. And a way to bring them with us on the vacays we might take—if we ever get time off, of course. Unfortunately, we must work seriously long hours to purchase, house, display, and insure these toys. No one can see how serious we are about boating, for example, if that boat lives in a storage shed fifty miles away.

It's not just sports equipment, either. I've noticed cooking's gotten way too SERIOUS. There was a time when you could buy a decent can opener or a set of measuring cups for a couple of bucks, but those days are gone. Weekend gourmets, who think they'll create such masterpieces as pomegranate-rhubarb-cilantro chicken on a bed of lightly sautéed ants, have caused prices to skyrocket for the items we ordinary, actual-food-making folks use daily. Color-coordination, I assure you, has absolutely ZERO to do with yumminess. My granny baked for a living; how on earth did she manage with only those basic, non-ergonomic aluminum utensils? Horrors!

It's scariest for parents, though. If you have children, you've experienced the crushing economics of "must-have" lessons, from music to clown school. Parents feel obligated to provide any number of pricy pursuits, with no idea whether their child will even like them. Lessons must be paid for, but so too the shoes; the costumes; the music books; the gas to get there—never mind the untold cost to the environment and dangerous health effects the stress of juggling work schedules, organizing carpools, and breathing exhaust fumes cause.

Who, then, promotes the questionable notion that those who plunge into debt to provide their offspring with a plethora of pursuits are better parents? The promoters are not on the front line of parenting, but marketing. It is not your child's, but their own financial wellbeing that is uppermost, exploiting every parent's fear of not providing the best possible childhood experience.

Your child might rather stay home with you. Take that opportunity. If you watch without judgment, you'll witness firsthand what delights your child. Focus on that. (Be warned: they rarely choose activities you like, or lessons you wish you'd had. Children are individuals, not mini-versions of us.)

You might not have to shell out for private lessons, either. Community centers are great places to get excellent classes for reasonable cost. Bartering is another viable option: what can you do that the ballet teacher can't? (Maybe those color-coordinated kitchen doodads will come in handy after all!)

Marketers have succeeded in convincing us we'll run like Usain Bolt or play tennis like Serena Williams if we buy a certain brand of shoes, or a NASA-designed racket. A racket's involved, all right, but a different game altogether. Companies spend millions on brain research to learn how to target their ads to neuron-level, and 1-click systems have us ordering before our higher brain's reasoning kicks in.

Spending hard-earned cash (or worse, using a credit card so you're still paying when your child turns 40) is not an indication of how serious you are. Question "put your money where your mouth is." Actions speak louder than words or money.

Fun needn't be so damn serious. If you want to run, don old sneakers and jog a few blocks. Do you like it? If you yearn to write, grab a pencil and paper. I assure you, no mug or t-shirt in the world writes novels; people write novels. (Good ones, anyway.) Want to play guitar? Borrow one and see how it feels. We've been trained to believe spending serious cash will force us into worthwhile activities; actually, it shows an underlying resistance to them. We always find a way to accomplish our highest priorities: no force required.

Take my beloved beach combing. In Bandon, I wore no fancy vest. My bare hands scooped up treasures, rinsed them in the sea, and placed them in the pockets of my rolled-up jeans. My ancient Birks didn't survive the watery adventure, but so what? I'll go barefoot next time. The point is, I had fun.

Seriously.

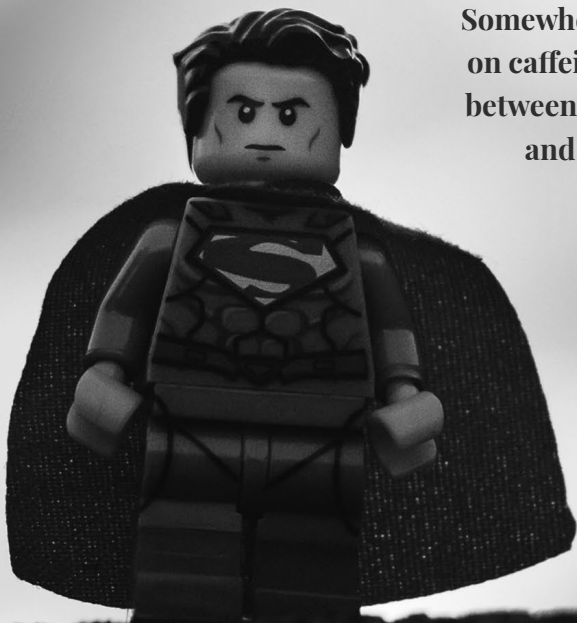
SUPERMAN DOWN

BY JOSHUA BAKER

A mystery of mischief or bad luck
the Superman action figure rests perpendicular
to weathered curb minus its lower left leg,
Wonder if its owner is sad, bad, indifferent.
The fists are clenched, but such answers take time.

Weakness seeks soft ground
Where failure dispatches taproots
even in the strongest minds.
Everyone owns a kryptonite:
alcohol, impatience, delusion.
Time and tragedy march toward flaw exposure
Somewhere, a doctoral student, while existing
on caffeine and debt, researches correlations
between children who mutilate action figures
and future crimes against humanity.

Joshua Baker lives in Oregon, where he works for the U.S. Postal Service. His writing has appeared in *Cirque*, *The Opiate*, *Madswirl*, and *Bending Genres*. In his spare time he enjoys hiking and taking photographs at the seams between civilization and nature.





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