

# Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

**Volume 23, Issue 9, Cats**  
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## Epiphanesque, Part 6 - The Feast of All Saints

By Gary Hoffmann

Children in costumes. Streetlights burn dimly, casting hollow orange illumination on tiny, shadowed faces. All the clichés roam – scantily clad witches, ghosts, plastic, rubber, and store-bought masks. Children. Their parents watch darkly from afar in their sport utility vehicles, making sure no stranger abducts their precious, vicarious lives. Children, most of them already dead, wander suburban streets; safe, well-lit streets; quiet, unassuming streets; predictable streets. One boy, large, dark eyes, thumps fearlessly past in a suit of brown paper bag armor and cardboard crown, carrying a stick-picked-up-from-the-ground sword. He looks at me, gaze stopping briefly in mine, dark eyes wearing the reflection of my own. He roars and swishes at the air, snicker-snack.

Today was the last day of harvest. Beyond today the food in the fields belongs to malicious spirits, and to harvest it would be to bring ill fortune upon your house, your live-stock, and your family. Tonight the dead return to the Earth, requiring offerings of food from the living. Hell's cafeteria sucks. Wraiths and specters blend in with children. Can you tell the difference? Demons watch darkly from afar in their sport utility vehicles. Can you tell the difference? Dark Eyes turns back to me briefly, flashing an intelligent grin.

The Devil himself haunts me tonight, walking slowly behind as I walk slowly ahead, laughing softly all the while, dimly audible at the edge of consciousness. He is dressed as I am dressed. He's dressed as someone who often walks alone at night down dimly lighted avenues and dark country roads. He whispers to me, "I have been one acquainted with the night." The Devil used to quote Bible verses. "Yeah, but nobody reads the Bible anymore." People read poetry? "Touché." I mean, if you're going to quote something, Old Man, how about *The Devil Went Down to Georgia*. At least then most people will get the allusion. "Pfah! I'm a classically trained violinist, not a stinkin' fiddler!"

I remember once sitting in church and listening to the Reverend tell us about Satan and all the torturous and evil devices he has – the hot seat, the rack, packs of ravenous wolves, the pear, pits of fire. He told us how Satan wanted to set hoards of rats upon us to devour our flesh, vultures to tear out our eyes, and crows to pick clean our bones, how he wanted to chain us down and flay our skin with barbed whips and burn our fingers and toes with torches and searing irons. The Devil's one kinky bastard, I guess. It turns out the Old Man only travels with an old, lame hound dog and a mirror. What more does he need?

He walked next to me for a long time (footprints in the sand, right?), past more children, past more ghosts. One of them I recognized. Two years ago

I saw a car drive seventy miles per hour into a tree.

The driver wasn't wearing her seatbelt. It wasn't an accident. The Devil leaned over and spoke harshly into my ear. "You really should have listened to her when she told you she'd do that." Sure, I'll be more trusting next time.

"Hello, Gary. It's been a while." Yeah, it has. Whose blood did you drink for your voice tonight, Faith? "Same as always, Gary."

Even after two years in Hell she was beautiful. As she slid silently by, I wondered if she was angry that I never cried after her death. "She's cute. I like the red hair. The one that got away?" Shut up, Old Man.

Teenagers drinking cheap beer around a bonfire in the woods, dancing, yelling, singing, fucking, puking. Someone with long hair lies passed out on the ground, a stray ember singeing auburn strands. In the

flickering light I can't tell if it's a girl or a boy or of what age. He could be fifteen or she could be thirty, or some other permutation. Can you tell the difference? I'm too far away and uninvited, anyway. "In the morning he'll swear he's never going to do this again." Good for him. "Eh, he'll be back next year." A few ghosts watch me as I leave. Can you tell the difference?

An old diner filled with smoke and people who dress for tonight all year round. "You used to come here with her, didn't you? Before she unwittingly evicted some hapless dryad, that is." The tree she drove into was cut down a few weeks later, ostensibly to prevent others from doing the same as she did. "No one would have. She was one of a kind." You don't give up, do you? "I take my work seriously." Well, I don't need your help, Old Man. "Oh, yes, always the capable one, aren't you. Never in need of assistance, always strong and... shit, what's the word I'm looking for?" Proud. "Yes, that's it. That's why you thought you could save her, right? You could make her better, even though you knew it had to be up to her." He took a sip of coffee, cream, and no sugar. "Hmm. This ain't bad. I bet that's why you come back here so often on darks nights like this... for the coffee." Check please. The waitress smiled at me. Can you tell the difference?

Graveyards are always beautiful at night – angels carved from granite stand vigilant in the moonlight, angels carved from moonlight stand vigilant over the stones. Can you tell the difference? Tonight, though, the angels are hidden, and their wards are drowned beneath the howls of the damned. I stop at a small bronze plaque embedded in the earth. I don't have to search to find it; I've come here so often over the past two years. I know next to this bronze plaque lies another

er that reads "Grace L. Barker. I did it my way. May 1, 1898 – Oct. 31, 1989." Good for you, Grace. This one just reads "Faith Freeman. 1982 – 2000." Faith. "Appropriate, I suppose." Aren't cemeteries holy ground, Old Man? Doesn't that mean you're not allowed here? "Pish. I'm allowed anywhere you are." Except Heaven? "Hah! Like they'd let *you* in! He told me Himself they made a special rule. For you, it's as hard to get in as it is to put a needle through the eye of a camel." That doesn't sound so hard. "Wait 'till you see the camel they've got." Well, you're paraphrasing Bible verses now, at least.

I take my shoes off before stepping onto the sand. It's cold out, but I keep walking anyway. I roll up my pant legs and step into the frigid lake water. The sky is already beginning to lighten. The Devil doesn't follow me, standing back and speaking more loudly to make himself heard. "I don't like getting sand between my toes." Wuss. A figure stands at the end of the pier, enjoying the cold wind, the spray as waves crash into the rocks and leap up, reaching for the figure. "Go talk to her." Why? "Trust me, just go talk to her." Trust the Devil. "I was an angel once."

Faith - not a ghost, not some shade of a distant memory - standing at the end of the pier, looking out over the lake. I walk up to stand behind her as a particularly large wave crashes, grasping for my already half-frozen feet. Faith. "Hi, love." But, how... She glances her eyes towards the east. "Don't worry about it." This isn't possible. "It doesn't have to be." I miss you. "I know." You're dead. "Why do you find it so unbelievable that God raises the dead?"

As the sun rises, she kisses me once, and disappears.

## Yet Another One About Islam

By Nefret Banu

Enough. I have had absolutely enough of this ignorance, this blindness. I am writing this article after a basic political science lesson 15 minutes ago. Today, I saw my professor<sup>1</sup> discussing conquests in the world. I saw him write “Hitler”. Then I saw him write “Islam”. Someone stated Christianity too has conducted conquests, e.g. Crusades. He looked perturbed and shook his head and then stated, “That was the Roman Empire”. So up goes “Roman Empire” on the board. X has been a professor for a couple of decades here at RIT and has completed several doctorates and also is nearing retirement. This is not some kid who knows nothing about history or theology. So how is it that he can only differentiate between the Roman Empire and Christianity and not between Islam and the Ottomans or any other Muslim Empire? Mind you, I am not calling him a racist. After all, we all have the right to free speech. Never mind that the students who come away from his class will put his notes together with what the media displays of Islam and come to their “own”<sup>2</sup> conclusion.

I am really curious to know why every time something somewhere explodes and it is attributed to a Muslim terrorist? Not just “terrorist” but always, always preceded with the word “Muslim.” When we read of Hitler in textbooks, do you ever see stated, “Hitler was a Christian terrorist who murdered thousands of innocent Jews.”? I have read books where it is stated that Hitler was raised as a Catholic. Perhaps that is a controversial and confusing point that was never proven. Well then take Timothy McVeigh – show me one place where his religion was associated with his terror. I don’t understand. Why are we so determined to state the religion of terrorists only when that religion is Islam?

Jerry Falwell called Muhammed<sup>3</sup> a terrorist – on TV. According to an article on CNN.com, many other conservative Protestant clergy have made “sharply critical remarks about Islam and Muhammad in the

past year.”<sup>4</sup> I read the papers online quite frequently and I have hardly heard of this. So, if a Muslim leader said something similar about Jesus, how long would it be before the American media rose up in arms against him? “Oh, he is just a bloody bigot. He is a Muslim radical” is probably what we would hear of him. But Falwell is just exercising his right of free speech, correct?

Nothing can ever justify the killing of innocent people. Sept 11 2001 can NEVER be justified by anybody for any reason. When Americans started asking “Why us?” the excuse given was “they [the ‘Muslim terrorists’] are jealous of us, our freedom, our rights!” Imagine this scenario. One day you wake up. Some superpower has decided to give half of America’s land over to war refugees from Country Y. And eventually country Y takes over the whole of the US, except a couple of states – which are patrolled by Y’s policemen and you live in terror of them (the hypothetical Y people). What will you do? How will you feel? Will that justify using 2 planes as bombs and flying them into buildings full of innocent country Y people? To me, nothing will justify that. But to oversimplify the way these terrorists think fringes on carelessness.

I am not writing this article to declare Islam as the religion of peace, blah blah blah. You can read that anywhere. I am writing this article because I am simply sick and tired of hearing “experienced analysts” and many others less “experienced” refer to and equate Islam to a terrorist and his actions. Osama bin Laden is an asshole (understatement of this century and the next). You won’t find any rational Muslims who deny that. You simply won’t. The men who carry out his orders lack a mind of their own. As far as I am concerned, Osama is an immensely corrupt and devious politician (among many other things). He is NOT doing this for the sake of Islam.

I am frustrated beyond words about the ignorance that prevails when it comes to Islam. Damn it,

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<sup>1</sup> Who we will address as X, to protect his identity.

<sup>2</sup> Not to mention completely wrong.

<sup>3</sup> The last and *very* highly respected prophet in Islam.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2002/SHOWBIZ/TV/10/03/falwell.muhammad.ap/>

pick up a book on Islam and read it. While you are there, pick up a whole bunch of other books about other cultures. Read, damn it. Don't make up your mind till you know the entire truth. The looks I get when I tell people here at RIT that Islam *does* recognize Jesus *and* Abraham and other prophets from both Judaism and Christianity tells me that unless we awaken and read, we will never be able to fully protect ourselves from another event such as Sept 11. No religion asks us to murder or destroy baselessly and yes, Sir, that includes Islam. Not to flog a dead horse, but if you only picked up a book and read, you would see it too.

News flash: Focusing primarily on getting laid and drunk is NOT going to save the world. Yes, that might come as a shock to the general population.

To those who are fuming right now and are about to start calling me a racist, stop right there, you moron. I am NOT a racist. I do NOT hate any religion or culture. I do NOT judge anyone by his or her religion or culture. I simply have a mind that can analyze the facts that are out there for all to see and draw logical (and perhaps controversial) conclusions. If there are people out there offended by this article... I am just exercising my right to free speech. Have a nice day.

## Icarus

**By Peter Gravelle**

Somehow I knew, from very early on, that it was all going to end in tears.

I met her twice (one of the dubious advantages of having poor memory skills). Once at a club we both went to, and once when she came to my hall to see someone she knew from high school.

We hit it off right away. Part of that might have been from my initial attraction to her, and it probably helped that she was attracted to me as well. When we first met, these were things we both knew subconsciously. Then I met her alumnus boyfriend/lifemate.

"Okay," I told myself, "Pick up your pieces and move on," but she detected the thinly veiled disappointment in my voice as I greeted him. That's about when I figured out it would all end in tears.

We talked about it that night. That was when I told her how I felt. It would be a few days before she told me that she had similar longings.

From that point on there were cuddlings and nuzzlings, because, well, that isn't really "cheating," right? And goodness did it feel good. So, of course, I was tempted, and I fell. Hard. It didn't help that we had a class together. It also didn't help that it was an evening class so we didn't have any pressing obligations for afterward. It certainly didn't help that we

were passing notes back and forth during class (and I still have each and every one).

One night, I asked if we could go talk after class. I don't even remember what, if any pretense I used.

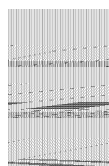
This is where the tears go. I kissed her then, told her I love her, and waited for her to run screaming from my life.

"I love you, too," she said instead, and kissed me.

And so that began. In public we were the same close friends we had been for awhile, but in private we were... something very tricky to define. The furthest it went was on the last day of spring quarter. We spent the night in my too-small dorm room bed. We slept. It was the greatest night's rest I've ever had. When I woke up to meet my father to return home, I realized that I would get a phone call that summer telling me it was over.

I just didn't know it would be the next day.

I realize that she will read this, and that's okay. We're good friends and she cares about what I do. She says I taught her much about the nature of love, and that alone makes the tears worthwhile.



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**::// The Way...****By Ian C. Smith**

It was the cool air, the golden leaves and the white, pearly snow that kept me here. I yearn each year for the change in seasons; the way life slowly changes all over campus. Bike rides to class get colder and colder; a perfect way to wake up after a long night. The sites and sounds of people down the quarter mile call out to me like the Sirens. I know my destination will be a desolate classroom with parched minds dying to quench their educational thirst. The slow ride home after a long day, accompanied by the yellow glow of street lights intermittently broken up by the fluorescent blue lights, soothes the mind. They dot my path and guide me home like a runway on a dark night. Greek Row lurks in the dark while shadowy figures gather on the stoops. A whoosh of air as another rider passes me by, heading off to lands known only by him. Back around Ellingson my mind drifts to days gone by...

The way we all laughed and played while rolling in the snow dodging those cold snow balls launched by the Sol army. A night to be remembered, forever recorded to be reviewed on a later date. While in a routine huddle during an always-annoying fire alarm, Ellingson was paid a visit. The army of Sol appeared through the falling snow, a dark mass with Cheshire grins. A bright, full moon appeared overhead accompanied by a rain of projectiles. Flung with joyless intent the balls of snow created a frightful night. Their joker grins grew to reveal their razor fangs and their snake-like eyes shone in the light. Hoots and Hollers grew in pitch as the armies rushed forward. Gangs of men came out of nowhere to ambush those unsuspecting freshmen. Mounds of snow were the ideal location to raise one up and drive one down. Icy snow down the back makes one quick to lay down the smack. Long after the red trucks had rolled through the fight outside continued on. When all was said and done a clear line could be drawn, Ellingson and Sol were tied. No victor could be discerned for bodies lay everywhere covered in snow. Home we went cold and happy, none would forget a night such as this.

Bright lights and harsh sound...I throw on the breaks and skid to a stop. Lost in thought

I've flown down the hill almost to meet a car head on. With no air bag and lacking a seat belt I'm sure to have lost. I laugh to myself and shake my head. On past the swampy creek I see a shopping cart trying to escape its murky doom. The way things appear lie in the eye of the beholder. Perkins appears around the corner and my thoughts long for summer days. Volleyball and bocci await the warmth soon to come. If I had sat in my room I'd have missed all I've seen. Despite the bricks that tower above us, our little city is full of beauty. They say, "It's only as fun as you make it" and they are right. The way you spend your time is the key. Learn to *live* through college, for RIT has more to offer than the 'puter. Unhappy and grumpy fools may expand upon the downsides of this institution, but I'm saying it's more than meets the eye. It's everything you could dream of, but it depends on the way...the way you view it.

**Gas the rebels! I am president of Russia!**

## Our Parents Hate Us

By Rocko Bonaparte

*Don't bother worrying about kids too much; they obviously don't worry about you.*

The older generation always seems to have this gripe about kids: they have no respect for elders. Of course, by “elders,” the older generation means themselves. It's obvious to them we don't give them the respect they deserve. All generations have been complaining about this for decades. Their parents said this about them, and then they turn around and say the same thing about us. Then we'll turn around and say the same thing about our kids. So what's the distinction? Seems like we're going through the motions again.

This was one of the big gripes parents seemed to have with our generation when *Reporter* questioned them. I should admit that their staff probably selected these responses to make us ponder, and I'm biting the bait. I'll admit that these parents issued pull-trigger responses. They didn't have time to revise their responses. If given a chance, I think some of them would have. Other responses dealt with sex, technology, and fashion. They will get honorable mention.

“When we were younger, sex was not talked about. Now, it's commonplace.”

“Speaking of those parents in the ‘Word on the Street: I heard some of them had sex. Dirty.’”

— Matt Nicole, off the *GDT* mailing list.

True, us kids wave sex around like it's a flag nowadays. But ever wonder where that came from? I recall the older generations did quite some elaborate experiments in sex. Doesn't this contribute? I suppose the older generation is ashamed Britney Spears came from prior generations of sexual exploits.

“Freedom in my day, as compared to today, was much more restricted. Children today are allowed to do anything and there are more people being away from home and going to college.”

I am assuming this woman considers that a good thing. I sure hope so. But the rest of these make me wonder:

“Technology makes life easier for kids of this generation. Things like remote controls add to a lack of motivation.”

Watch those words – you are saying them at a *Technical Institute*. Do you feel that technology has left me unmotivated? I have been sitting in front of computers since I was in diapers. I study computer engineering at RIT to gain mastery in this technology. I have slaved away a good portion of my life in front of keyboards and circuits. This I plan to make my career. It is already my hobby. I would believe that technology has been a serious motivator for me.

Also, perhaps technology wouldn't be so bad if the people developing this stuff actually thought about this “lack of motivation” it would cause. Who develops this stuff? Why, *your* generation!

“The way that this generation deals with anger. My generation was more able to control our anger through demonstrations and we had a focus.”

Are these the same demonstrations that tore apart the University at Buffalo campus in the 60's?<sup>1</sup> I understand what you mean by control. Your generation was capable of focusing it into a pure rage that feared nobody. We are somewhat more misdirected. The best we can do write angst poetry, or punch a hole in a wall.

“Our generation was geared more towards discipline. When someone graduated from high school and didn't have high enough scores to get into college, they were drafted. This enabled them to learn a trade. Today's generation isn't subject to that. It was a downfall when they did away with the draft.”

HAAAAHAHA! I laugh at your draft! This reminds me of an Internet forum thread I followed

<sup>1</sup><http://www.buffalonian.com/history/articles/1951-now/1960santiwar/powellbuff1965to1976.html>

This has a bit of the history I am talking about. I've skimmed over it, and it provides some insight into the demonstrations. I hear a few buildings got knocked out during this time, but I didn't find the number.

once. A late teenager was sharing the history of his parents, complete with some pictures. Here is a short summary:

Here is a picture of Dad before going to college.

Here is Dad next to Mom. He met her in Canada after fleeing the draft.

Here is Mom and Dad now, pillars in the local Republican Party. You should hear him talk about kids these days, and how every man should have to serve time in the military.

Does age make you wise and brave, or does it just take you out of the draft age? I imagine the latter. It is so easy to tell somebody else to go off and die for his country when you are exempt. So I am/must be a coward. I love guns, but I'm disturbed at the thought of seriously shooting at somebody. I have had terrible dreams about getting killed, but this is probably the tip of the iceberg for infantry. Those fears must be a thousand times worse. I am proud they go into it, and you don't hear me saying crap about them.

Regarding discipline, why do you think it takes a drill sergeant to make a well-mannered human being? Could it be, perhaps, because these people were improperly raised to begin with? Hmmm. I guess it's the liberals' fault for making it illegal to beat the shit out of your kids.

Being able to learn a trade through the government is novel idea. I always get the impression from my father that he wanted me to go into the Army and get a free ride into adulthood. But I feel that anybody that goes into the armed forces with that attitude doesn't belong there. So here I am, in college, pursuing the private sector. Now, if we're talking "Starship Troopers" here, where government service (possibly non-military) was mandatory, perhaps we can make a deal. But do you want the government to have the power to whisk away all your bright and cheery kids somewhere right after high school? Come on, libertarians, I know at least you guys don't.

Also, I prefer a volunteer military. The people that are there *want* to be there. It improves the overall quality of the forces. Remember, quality, not quantity. Remember the ratio we fought against in the Korean War.

"Today's generation has an entitlement philosophy. They feel we owe them something and they don't appreciate parents."

Just like how all the Baby Boomers are standing in line to make sure Social Security will be around for just a few more years.

Oh yeah, you parents do owe us something. And yes, we often don't appreciate you. I have had the luck of my parents sticking together, but most of my friends are part of broken households. It's more than a pain in the ass for a child to alternate between his "father's place" and his "mother's place." It's terrible to see your biological parents out to ruin each other. So yeah, we ask for cash, cars, toys, and whatever; we would settle for a family instead, but it's often unavailable. Also, your kids expect you to take care of them. We're entitled to that.

"Today's generation doesn't have the benefit of focus. There are too many diversifications out there today. My generation had the Vietnam war which kept people focused."

This father was more eloquent, and I appreciate his comment. At least it wasn't pejorative like some of the other stuff I read on that page. But I feel hollow about this. The Vietnam War was all the rage for these people. However, this "War on Terrorism," for how potent it may end up being, doesn't seem to pull much emotion out of us. Something about that seems wrong. I will give credit to the older generation for being more politically involved, or at least portraying that image. I have heard plenty of times that college students went to protest rallies because "it was a great place to hook up." Nonetheless, they managed to be more active (see comments about Buffalo).

"Too much freedom of choice. People today are allowed to do anything they please. There are rules in society and people have to be responsible. They need more guidance like we had."

Somebody needs a hug. Too much freedom of choice? Oh shit, that's horrible! It's 5AM, but I'm going to call my parents and request they make all my important decisions for me! It is a benefit to you that you had the guidance you had. Your parents had been



through the Second World War, and seen a lot of stuff. Don't act like that happens everyday. But we don't have that advantage, so we'll have to pave our own way. Not many of your parents' lessons seem to be trickling down to us. I wonder if the tap went dry.

"Technology. This generation is more in tune with things going on. We didn't grow up with computers and televisions but now everything is based on technology, and I'm not sure if that's a good thing."

Didn't grow up on television? I should assume you walked to school in the snow, uphill both ways! What about the radio? I insist gadgets and gizmos have been oozing out of American culture since before the Second World War. A lot of it is crap, but the lull in

tech stocks shows what happens to crap. But don't fear technology - respect it. It's like fire: you won't go anywhere if you try to avoid it, so learn to embrace it . . . properly.

So really, I think these are just the same gripes you hear everywhere all the time. I guess for that case, it wasn't even worth talking about. So why did I? Am I starved for material this week? Well, I haven't heard anybody complaining about this for a while, I guess. This gave me a good soapbox to stand on about things like disrespect for elders, and the draft. But I fear I'm also preaching to the choir. Oh well, maybe one or two parents will catch wind of this someday. Maybe when I'm a father, this article will spill out of my little shoebox of *GDT*'s. I hope it causes me to ponder the change in attitude.

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## The Book Shelf

By sue kuhn

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Being an avid reader when I entered college, I was somewhat upset about not having time to read anything that didn't cost me \$120. Since I work at a public library now, I figure I'll try to break the monotony of textbooks and give you some information about books written by people that actually sell to the general public. Hopefully one of these reviews will give you an idea what to read, or maybe what not to read after Fall Quarter finals.

October 11, 2002

Book: *Ash Wednesday*

Author: Ethan Hawke

While checking in books at the library, a rather mundane task, a few happen to catch my eye. Today the cover of this book interested me enough to actually take it home. The front has a picture of two people kissing in sepia tones on the top portion, sort of superimposed over a picture of some vintage 60's sports car in black and white on the bottom (all this over a yellow striped background). On the back is a picture of Ethan Hawke on a rooftop. Not realizing Mr. Hawke fancied himself a writer, I immediately opened the cover to see if it was true, and yes, in my hands, I held the second book of the actor/writer Ethan Hawke. Unfortunately for me, the book I had my hands on was being held for a patron, meaning I had to wait

**The main character Jimmy is a Staff Sergeant in the Army. I'm not sure what that is, but I'm sure it has something to do with the Army's policy of labeling everything and everyone so nobody gets confused about how little they mean to everyone else.**

to get a hold of a copy. Wait I did, for three days.

The first chapter of the book enthralled me. The main character Jimmy is a Staff Sergeant in the Army. I'm not sure what that is, but I'm sure it has something to do with the Army's policy of labeling everything and everyone so nobody gets confused about how little they mean to everyone else. Jimmy joined the Army because his dad, a former member of the armed forces, committed suicide, and he admired Tom Cruise's character in *Top Gun* (you know... because of the motorcycle and the sex). We join the Staff Sergeant one morning, as he's fucked up on a crystal meth, telling a mother her son is dead. Not killed in the line of duty, but killed in a barroom brawl

turned gunfight.

It turns out that Jimmy hates the Army, and that he's just broken up with Christy, his girlfriend, something he realizes (while fucked up) that he regrets. After the mother throws him out of her house because he's on drugs, he decides to find Christy (she's depressed, pregnant and on a bus to her grandma's in Texas) and propose. Obviously, Christy hates her life as much as Jimmy hates his but she sees this child (which she hasn't told him about) as a way to start

some new life. Whatever that means. Being a single mother living with my grandma in Texas is not my idea of a new beginning. I think the real perspective here is she's going to start some new crappy life, and leave the old crappy life behind. Had she been moving alone to the French Riviera to start over, I think I could have bought the new life story.

Anyway, the plot quickly becomes inane and I'm only finishing the book because Hawke is a decent writer. Even though I'm not too keen on the plot, I like the style he used. In fact, I've never really read a book like this before. It's first person, but both Christy and Jimmy tell the story, not scene for scene, his version then her version, but as time goes by. You get Jimmy for a few hours of their lives, and then it changes to Christy. I like this because while Jimmy's speaking you get to know how he thinks, then when it switches to Christy you get to understand how she thinks and how Jimmy's attitude has affected her mood.

I've talked to a few people that have read his

other book, and they say it's much different. Instead of being about people fed up with their lives (at 28 or less) like *Ash Wednesday*, the first is about people in their early twenties just beginning to live, and how they deal with serious relationships. Unfortunately, as a 23 year old that is fighting to find where she really belongs, reading about 28 year olds that hate their life is a bit depressing. I wish I'd come across his other book, I think I would have related more to what I was reading, rather than be forced to fear for my own future.

So, if you are hell bent on reading a book by Ethan Hawke, I totally recommend his FIRST book *The Hottest State*, even though I've not read it yet myself. My best friend gave it two thumbs up and some guy on Amazon.com gave it a pretty good review, and I'm sure it's better than the one I read.

Final Rating<sup>1</sup>: This book will remain on the shelf for 2 weeks before another person checks it out.

<sup>1</sup>Rating: the time the book sits on the shelf is inversely proportional to how much I enjoyed it.

Date: Fri, 25 Oct 2002 15:43:49 -0400  
From: Hanna Dickhut <hanna\_dickhut@hotmail.com>  
Subject: A Letter to the Editors

In response to Sean Stanley's poem and the response [...] made to Denise Philips-Dickinson:

Intentions can only mean so much. Even the best intentions can end up with the worst results imaginable. For example, Harry S. Truman signed the agreement to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the intention of ending the war quickly and saving lives; however, killing and affecting thousands of Japanese civilians wasn't the only option and is yet to be seen as the best solution to the Japanese confrontation in WWII.

The poem might have had good intentions, but the writer needs to own up to the results and accept the consequences and hurt feelings caused by those words. If indeed the intention was to address the stress of

evidence collection on a rape victim, there was a better way to do it especially considering how sensitive a topic this is for one out of ten women in this nation.

Consider how many women you know. Now consider this statistic. In all likelihood, you know someone who has been raped. How do you think this poem would have affected that individual?

Did you also know that most rape victims suffer from post traumatic stress disorder that is characterized by reliving the experience through intense mental reenactments and dreams? Usually these episodes are triggered by reminders of the attack, and this poem was graphic enough to be considered a trigger.

If this topic is to be addressed, research into evidence collection should be made, and the actual address should have been more considerate to those of us who have been raped and less about shock value.

-Johanna Dickhut

**\*bzzt\* IT bashing and semen guzzling? Sounds like the CS department! \*bzzt\***

I'm speechless. Show us how to convey all of that research in the dozen or so lines and we'll put you on full-time. Had anyone actually complained to our staff in a professional manner, Mr. Stanley would have had the opportunity to "own up" to the results of his poem. Instead, staffers were attacked on a personal level – which is something that we don't take too lightly. – Ed.

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Date: Thu, 24 Oct 2002 10:49:04 -0700 (PDT)  
From: Phil Robinson <phillazilla@yahoo.com>  
Subject: gawy hofmannnnnnnn with losta fuck-  
ing n's

Mr. NNNNNNNNNhead

I'm very not happy with all you crapheads calling us ITers stoopid, we are smart peopels. I came to RIT as a electronomicalistic jet propulsion enginister and found that i couldn't finish tests becuase i couldn't fill out my major in time. So i switched to IT and became faster at taking crap tests because IT is only too letters to

write. i also deescovered that i'm good wiv colours and making stuff that goess beep beep. Stuff that goes beep beep beep is really hard, but i'm taking a class on that next 1/4. There are losta people in IT and some of them are wieners and some of them are hot but those people like data bases and I can't penetrate their base defenses. There are lots of fat people who drink mountain dew and complain about how many plusses a letter should have after it. I have a dog named frodo, he kicks ass. Then there are some nice faculties and faciluties that make IT nice. We get some pizza sometimes and it is usually gone because of all the fat people. So in closing, we are not all stoopid and lazy.

thanks for your tiame

fil

Thanks Phil, as always. Glad to see someone's reading. – Ed.

## **Spoiled**

**Tom Nichols**

Purple marmallow cats  
New spooky “Peeps” sticks to my lips  
Too much dust on my desk  
.. The things I notice when I’m bored  
It comes with a short attention span

Ahem, my point, oh yes:  
Sweetness so malignant  
What tastes so good isn’t so grand  
Our longing for something craving  
Inside the stomach,  
A lust for something always more  
It’s the desire of a consumeristic culture:  
To have means there’s more to be had

Never be satisfied, never enough  
In love or in belonging  
Listen to your widescreen TV:  
“You can always have more!  
Refinance now, no credit needed!  
There’s always something better,  
we call it progress!” What a great  
Land do we live in...

So down goes another purple cat  
Sweetness lust satisfied for another moment  
Don’t blink or you might miss it  
Did you feel the sugar rush?  
Do you feel better now?  
Satisfied yet? Or still wanting more  
The orgasm fades quickly  
Leaving but a bitter feeling in the stomach  
Mom was right:  
Too much candy will spoil dinner.

# poetry!

## **Ten Minute Release**

**By Tom Nichols**

She said to sell your house  
You should bury Saint Joseph upside down  
There’s not much dirt in a dorm room  
At least not mine, I’m much too clean  
Except in my mind  
I just want to get out- escape  
But I don’t like hallucinogens

Ride down sweep blacktop through brick  
Two wheels don’t take me too far  
But maybe the other side of campus  
It’s quiet there at night  
I can see the bats flying over my head

Whatever... I should be studying anyways  
Differential Equations is essential  
To my well-being  
Where’s my Safe European Home?

I seem to have a social acrimony  
With everyone, except me  
Me likes me and I’m too lazy  
for conversation anymore  
Typing away monotony jibberish  
That I like to think is creativity  
Or something to avoid studying for another  
Ten minutes.

## Him & Her

By Tom Nichols

Bringing home another woe  
 Along with his paycheck  
 He comes home from work again  
 To greet his wife and children

He'd always make a good father  
 but he can't be his kids' dad  
 He can't be his wife's lover  
 Although he's always been a good husband  
 Tired all the time...

The bread he wins is slowly growing moldy  
 The life he lives is becoming stale  
 He has love, he has everything he could need  
 But his golden dream is slowly starting to fade

The sun isn't as bright on this new morning  
 The grass isn't as green on this side  
 The happy moments he once held dear  
 Seem farther and farther away

Tired from working all the corporate jerking  
 Is wearing away on his soul  
 He tried to find fulfillment in success  
 But really it's wearing down his home

Now she finds a longing for the youth they were strong in  
 Their dreams that would never fade  
 The promises he gave her, mere echoes seem false  
 She fills her longing somewhere else

Although she still loves him he's much too busy  
 Providing for his family  
 Now tension still rising there's more compromising  
 He finds her crying in her sleep

## Untitled

By Gary Hoffmann and Gillian

maybe,	aren't we?
fleshy	all
robots?	working
we're	together
just a	in the
bunch of	same
organic	bunch of
fleshy	fleshy
tiny	organic
robots	robots?
all	maybe
working	we're
together	just a
in the	unit,
same	tiny
unit,	fleshy
aren't we?	robots

# What is this magazine?

This is Gracies Dinnertime Theatre, a magazine of satire, literature, poetry and art. We publish out of Rochester, NY but we have readers around the globe. We exist as a medium for your expression and invite you to contribute.

**Anyone is welcome to submit.**

**[gdt@hellskitchen.org](mailto:gdt@hellskitchen.org)**

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