

THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY
PRESENTS

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL
YOUNG WRITERS AWARDS



WEDNESDAY MAY 19, 2010
MEMBERS' ROOM

THE YOUNG WRITERS AWARDS
2010

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POETRY

GRACE ALEXANDRA CHIONG

AN OSPREY IN A TREE

SILVER LIFTIN

THE HUMP OF GOLD

The hump of a camel,
With golden-brown hair,
Bounces slowly up and down
With every step the glorious creature takes,
Like the heads of children jumping on a black and blue trampoline.

His head is raised slightly to the left
As he stops to watch the yellow mound of Jell-O
Set in the East.
Then he blinks,
Those black grapes from God's garden,
Twice,
And continues slowly
But steadily
Toward his destination.

An Osprey in a tree
so high above.
An Osprey in a tree
so calm and majestic.
High on a mast,
swaying to and fro,
While fishermen cast
for Bass below.
Magnificent Osprey
in shades of gray
white and charcoal,
snatches a dead branch
twice his size,
from weathered Locust
and flies it back
to make his nest
at the top of a great pole.
The Osprey sips from a stream
flowing through the forest.
Glittering fish
hide in the stream
soon to be captured
by the Osprey.

The mother feeds hatchlings
big juicy trout,
as the father takes his turn
babysitting.
Osprey migrate in May
to New York City,
Martha's Vineyard and Maine.
Maybe, just maybe, in May
if you look up at the sky,
you will spy
an Osprey
spying on you
with his little naked eye.
A graceful and elegant
Bird in a tree.

BRYSON D. WIESE

I AM FROM...

I am from
The skyscrapers of New York to
The Fire Tower at Gipsy Trail;

I am from
Greenberg's Bakery to
George's Diner

I am from
The dark ravine of Wall Street to
The valleys of Putnam;

I am from
The toxic Hudson River to
The babbling Whang Hollow stream;

I am from
Glamorous Madison Avenue to
Rocky Trail #9;

I am from
Pine Pond's gentle lapping to
The pounding Atlantic surf;

I am from
The tree of Rockefeller,
To snow-covered evergreens;

I am from
Soft feather beds,
To nylon sleeping bags.

MARY MILLER

KNITTING

Through and around,

Back through again and

Off.

She is somewhere else,

Thinking it through again,

Then putting it off.

He is sitting next to me,

I am putting him through,

Trying to make him understand,

and around.

She is putting me through this

Again.

He is going around trying to understand why I hold him off.

Through and around,

Back through again and

Off.

ASHER LIFTIN

POEM IN THREE VIEWS

1. Corn

Just one
Standing tall
Trying to be the tallest,
But still just one
In a field of others.

2. Note

A poor match girl sits on the sidewalk in winter,
her face is cold and dirty.
She carries in her lap her most prized possession,
a book.
The other girls holding their exquisite dolls
with dresses she could only dream of
laugh and throw sticks at her as she sits,
reading.
She falls asleep,
crying.
When she woke up there was a note on top of her book.
It says,

I'm sorry.

3. Intercom to Hell

The guilty,
“Please, Noooooo!!!!!”
The innocent,
(Silence).
And the snail,
(Silence).
For snails cannot speak.
All snails are innocent.

ISABEL H. ADLER

THE

The word the
always goes
before things, never
on its own—
so I decided to give it a poem—
here goes nothing:
ODE TO THE
the always leads up to words
giving them a grand entrance
sentences would sound weird without the:
 dog walks in room
 pencil writes words down.

There you go the—that was your poem.

ANNABEL BARRY

SNOW FLIGHT

Fog curls down from a white sky,
To kiss the mountain in her snowy drape
Trees of dark green fir look on with envy.
Powder pulls at my boots, begging me to stay, with frozen touch
Moisture seeping into thick ski socks.
My skis edge into the frozen ground, feeling the mountain
That my eyes cannot find through the fog.
My light blue ski jacket is lost
In cloud-soft waves of brightest white.
I am blissfully forgotten amid the snow.
Hip angling up the mountain
To counter the forces pulling me downward
Poles searching for a solid place to stop,
Guiding me around, balancing me.
Powder overflowing around my knees.
Blind, gleefully liberated, I hit a knoll, skis bending upwards
Flying, for a split-second, suspended in the white
My skis reach to find ground, regaining balance,
Like a small bird carried on breaths of wind
I gain speed, carving through loose snow, swooping toward the bottom of the trail.
I leave behind the splendid freedom, until next run.

GAUTAMA MEHTA

CLEARING A FIELD

my research:

I read in the newspaper that Haiti needs tents
—the online version of the newspaper—
it said that they're going to build a "tent city"
for 10,000 people
it said they were "clearing a field in the Croix des Bouquets neighborhood"
I'm just imagining a city of tents, thousands and thousands of tents
when I was little I'd make tents
out of sofa cushions and blankets, and I'd probably have loved to live in the tent city

the reason that they need to make the tent city is:
many people's houses were destroyed
when two giant bits of rock under the ground bumped into each other
and those people don't have money so they have to live in tents
and there are so many of them and they have so little money
that according to the article
the International Organization for Migration
is clearing a field in the Croix de Bouquets neighborhood

the International Organization for Migration
counterintuitively doesn't help birds or fish find their way across the sea
I looked it up online:
"An intergovernmental organization established in 1951, IOM is committed to the
principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society."
it calls itself
"the migration agency"

clear a field for the birds.

PROSE

EMMA YESTON

KATELYN AND WILL'S GREAT ADVENTURE

One time in Brooklyn, New York there lived a girl named Katelyn. She had a brother named Will. Katelyn was 11 years old and Will was 9 years old. They were living a very happy, normal life up until the day they found a mysterious map (which I am going to tell you about). Let's begin our story...

One afternoon Katelyn and Will were walking home from school on a very windy day. So windy, it looked like every tree in the park was going to fall down. "I have so much homework!" exclaimed Katelyn. "Sixth grade gives out waaay too much!" "That's why I'm lucky," said Will. "Fourth grade gives out very little homework. It's easy too!" "You are a bit lucky," replied Katelyn. "When you're in sixth grade, you'll wish you were back in fourth." Suddenly, the wind picked up even more. Leaves and papers started flying all over the place. "OMG! It's so windy today!" screamed Will. "I concur!" said Katelyn. "What's concur mean, Katelyn?" asked Will. "You'll learn it in sixth grade," replied Katelyn.

After Katelyn and Will had dinner, they went up to their room to chat. "It is bizarrely windy today," remarked Katelyn. Suddenly their window flew open! In flew a piece of paper with strange writing on it. "Hey Katelyn, what's this paper?" asked Will. "Let me see it," Katelyn said as she closed the window tight. "It looks like a treasure map of some sort," she said again. "From the looks of it I think it leads to a spot in Prospect Park," remarked Will. The map looked very windblown and wrinkly. It had many pathways and twists and turns on it that looked hard to follow. "Maybe it leads to treasure!" yelled Katelyn with excitement. Katelyn yelled so loud that her mother called up and said, "Katelyn, Will, are you guys OK?" "We're fine, Ma!" replied Will. "All right, here's the plan," whispered Will so their parents couldn't hear. "Tomorrow we'll go to Prospect Park after school just after the bell rings and find that treasure!" "I'm in," said Katelyn. "Let's do it!"

As planned, the next day after school Katelyn and Will went to Prospect Park to find the (so-called) treasure they were longing for. "So, wh... if we find the treasure, what should we do with it?" asked Katelyn. "We'll put it in the bank and be rich, duh!" replied Will. He looked at Katelyn as if she were stupid. "Don't give me that look, mister, I was just wondering," said Katelyn. Katelyn and Will had been following the complicated map for one hour already when they finally came to a part that was easy to follow. "According to the map we should walk 35 steps north, then 20 steps east, then another 20 steps south," said Will looking very closely at the map. "I can't wait to see what we'll find!" screamed Katelyn in utter excitement. "That is if we find anything."

When Katelyn and Will finally reached the destination, they were so excited! So completely excited that I can't even describe it! "So sis, you ready to dig up our treasure?" asked Will. "I've been

ready all day," Katelyn said. "Lets go!" So all afternoon Katelyn and Will dug and dug and dug, until they finally hit something. They were so happy! "Come on Will, help me drag it out, it's heavy you know!" said Katelyn in pain. "Coming, Kate," said Will. They dug the box out and opened it up. Inside they saw all kinds of different things. From a music box, to a Nintendo DS, candy wrappers, an iPod, 5 sets of newspapers and magazines, and a cell phone. The phone was blinking that it had a message on it. Katelyn carefully opened the cell phone and listened to the message. It said, 'dear people of the future, we, the people of the past, present to you these artifacts from our time of 2010'. "Huh?" said Katelyn. "What an unusual message. And it's from the current year? That doesn't make any sense?" Katelyn and Will held the box up so people could see how cool they were. But instead of passersby going 'WOW, THEY FOUND TREASURE, COOL!!!', a park ranger came over to Will and Katelyn. "Why did you kids dig up the Prospect Park time capsule?" the park ranger asked. "We didn't know it was a time capsule, sir" said Katelyn. "Yeah, we thought it was treasure, honest," said Will in shock. "How did you two find it?" asked the park ranger in confusion. "We followed this map right here," replied Katelyn. "Oh, we've been looking for that map all day!" exclaimed the park ranger. "The mayor made a speech in the park yesterday when the time capsule was buried. It must have blown off the podium. Thanks for returning it." Katelyn and Will exchanged the same look of embarrassment. They were both very embarrassed that they dug something up that was buried only 24 hours before. Also, something that was probably meant to be opened 300 years in the future. "You're welcome, sir," they both said at the same time.

That night at dinner Katelyn and Will's parents asked what they did in the park today. They just smiled and said, "Oh, nothing." Then they happily continued to eat their meal.

THE END

JACOB AUFZIEN

PICKLE RAGE

Why am I not still a cucumber? Why did I need to be afflicted with the evil curse of pickling? I'll tell you why, because humans like the taste of pickles! They don't care about how other species feel. For example, goose liver pate. They pour mashed corn and wheat down the poor geese's throats in excessive amounts, fattening the poor geese's livers. People then slaughter the geese, mush up their livers, and eat pate. That is pure cruelty!

I was born a perfectly proportioned, elliptically shaped cucumber. I had neither too many nor too few bumps and ridges. My spines protected me from predators. I enjoyed the sun, fresh air, leaves, vines, and my fellow cucumbers. I talked with my friends and enjoyed their company.

"Why do humans hate cucumbers?" I inquired of my friend, Dexter, "What did we ever do to them?"

"They don't hate us," replied Dexter, "they just don't know that cucumbers have feelings."

"But they know geese have feelings, and they still produce goose liver pate. Is that not cruel?" I retorted.

He answered, "Humans care more about their own desires than the rights of other beings. They are thoughtless, not evil."

I had no comeback.

Then, tragedy struck. A human came to my vine and tried to pick me. First, he squeezed me to make sure that I was suitable for picking. Then he yanked, tugged, and pulled, but I resisted. He swore and left. He came back with garden shears. The evil contraption cut me off the vine, ripping me away from my family. I was thrown into a bin with hundreds of other cucumbers, waiting for the agonizing torture of pickling. I saw siblings, other relatives, and neighbors in the bin. I said hello to Dexter.

"Who's right now? Don't you feel the full brunt of human hatred in being ripped away from your family?" I inquired.

"You are correct," he admitted.

We were poured from the bin onto a water slide. I thought that we were going to drown during the washing process. Depending on the evil whims of the human operator, you could get pickled first or last. I was one of the last to be picked. It was like waiting for a trip into the fiery furnaces of hell.

I went through the large funnel into a vat filled with water mixed with 5% salt and warmed to 66 degrees Fahrenheit. The salty brine burned like the Dead Sea burns a human who has any cuts on their skin. If only I was as cool as a cucumber now!

I shrank and shriveled while being shoved by other pickles convulsing in the agonizing pain of pickling. I cried out to the Great Pickle, "How can you let your poor creatures suffer? When will we escape this Hell?" I could feel the Lactobacillus attacking me, transforming me into a true pickle.

After three weeks, we were removed from the brine gasping at the air. A few weeks ago, the fumes would have overwhelmed us, but compared to the brine, the air was as fresh as the air in the field where I had grown on my vine. My relief was short lived. We were placed on a conveyor belt. As we went along, machines forced us into glass jars.

"Ouch," I exclaimed as my brother Josh poked me with his stem right into my middle. As another layer of pickles was being poured on top, I saw Dexter.

"Hey, watch out, Dexter!" I exclaimed.

"Well, if it isn't you, old friend. The torture that the humans have put me through has made me feel as old as my shriveled exterior," he replied, "Has hell been a little easier on you?"

I could not reply before a dishonest human factory worker picked Dexter out of the jar, put him in his greedy mouth, and ate him. May he rest in peace with the Great Pickle.

I was placed in a jar, in the precise middle, surrounded by other pickles. We were pressed tightly together so that I was surrounded on all sides by other pickles. It was like drowning in a sea of pickles.

A machine then added pickling spices and vinegar. The spices reminded me of the various scents that I recalled from the field. The pungent garlic reminded me of the scent of wild garlic in the spring. I enjoyed looking at the feathery dill flower that I could glimpse through the other pickles. The vinegar, 5% acetic acid, seared my skin. The jar's lid, like the lid on a coffin, sealed my fate. I was doomed.

The jar was placed on a conveyor belt, where a label was applied to the jar. Then the jar was placed in a box, awaiting transport to the supermarket. A truck drove us to the supermarket.

At the supermarket, I was placed in the frigid deli case. I waited. Suddenly, a whorl wind shook me as the jar was taken from the shelf. I went into a shopping cart. Then I was placed on another conveyor belt to be paid for. After being paid for, the jar was placed in a canvas bag. The pickles near the glass walls of the jar could see what was going on.

Josh said, "I see pastrami and potato chips."

Somebody else cried, "I see rye bread and mustard!"

All our hearts sank. The human carried us to his apartment. There I heard the click of the remote control as the TV went on. I heard the announcer announce the Super Bowl.

"Oh Great Pickle," I said, "we are doomed!" I sit on the counter, waiting for the inevitable. I am about to become part of a Super Bowl snack. I hope it's quick and painless. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for the Great Pickle art with me. . .

PHILIP CLARK

IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

The moonlight illuminated the portion of the ornate cruciform stain glass window bearing the image of Jesus Christ, casting a cross-like shadow over the altar below. Under this shadow, Abbess Teresa stood in front of the altar, garbed in a crimson habit and holding a chalice filled with wine in her trembling hand. The entire population of the monastery, more than one hundred in number, was seated before her. Most of the monks and nuns assembled were surprised to be here, as this "special communion" was called at almost a moment's notice. This was quite out of character for the usually orderly Abbess Teresa. Among the monks and nuns gathered this evening was young Matthew, who was trying to make sense of this evening's hastily-called communion. Matthew was quite fond of Abbess Teresa. She was a maternal figure to him and, unlike many others in his life, she shared his more nuanced views of God's words and the Bible's scriptures. Matthew had been forced to come to this monastery by his parents in their attempt to gain favor with the Church and to mould what they saw as an unruly teenager. His parents often chastised him more for not knowing his place in the world. The breaking point for his family occurred three years ago when Matthew tried (with no success) to prove that the local bishop of the town was at the center of a major scandal. After that incident, they sent him packing to the monastery. "To gain discipline and clear your mind", they declared to him as they dropped him at the main gate of the monastery. On that first day, as he made his way towards the guest house, he ran into none other than Abbess Teresa. She brought him to the refectory for a hot meal and then took him to the dormitory, where she introduced him to the senior monk, Brother John, who was to be in charge of young Matthew's formal monastic training. Ever since that first encounter, Teresa had always been a kind soul to Matthew, whether it was excusing him from penance for his occasionally "heretical questions" or making sure he got enough to eat. Before this very moment, he thought he truly understood her. But her actions today, the wearing of a crimson habitat, her nervous demeanor, the hasty calling of communion, all seemed out of character and were bewildering to him.

Her only words to him, in a chance corridor meeting before the communion began, was "I must bear my soul today to God and Man. My heart's confession can endure prison's bounds no more." Matthew's eyes were riveted to the Abbess as she began speaking. "I have called you all here today on the briefest of notice and I am very grateful that you have come. However, the matter that I will discuss is grave and many of you will not look kindly on me after my words leave my lips. I must tell you a sordid tale of sin and deception, rooted in these same very holy walls where we live, sleep and pray." The assemblage gasped, but Teresa quickly quelled them with a wave of her hand. "I have made my confession to God himself before you arrived and He told me that it was His will that I share my confession with all of you. But before I tell you my tale I am compelled first to complete my Holy Communion and drink the blood of Christ." They all watched as she closed her eyes tightly

and drank from the cup. Putting the chalice down she then raised her hands and began speaking. “Good men and women, I have committed a sin”, she stammered.

Then, all at once, her eyes widened and her words were replaced by a horrid gurgling sound. Matthew and the others assembled watched in horror as she fell to the floor, writhing in pain. Her eyes darted wildly as if searching for someone or something. They stopped suddenly and, with what seemed great effort, she rose and grabbed a nearby Bible, only to fall again. Unable to speak, she began turning through pages rapidly, until at last, she stopped abruptly. Seconds later, her rapid breathing slowed and she was still. The onlookers stood in shock, unmoving, each unsure what to do next. Their stunned silence was broken by the clanking sound of the great metal double-doors at the back of the church as they swung open. Through the doors strode, in a most imperious fashion, Abbott John, the former senior monk of the monastery.

“I apologize for my tardiness”, Abbott John began, “I was delayed in my travels by-”, the Abbott started to say but his words were cut short at the sight of Abbess Teresa’s lifeless body laying at the foot of the altar. The Abbott, a tall handsome older man with greying hair and dark black eyebrows, moved briskly to the altar and crossed himself. He knelt beside Abbess Teresa’s body and put a hand to her neck. “She is dead!”, he declared. He examined the chalice, broken but still filled with wine and carefully picked it up. He swirled around the contents of the chalice and then, drew a deep, deliberate breath through his long nose. “As you know, I am practiced in the art of medicine. It saddens me profoundly to say that I the cause of the Abbess’s death is poison, wolfsbane from the Perennial plant to be precise”.

Over the chaos of shouts and cries, Abbott John asked for silence and ordered all but the most senior members of the clergy to leave the church immediately and return to their dormitories. Slowly, yet obediently, the monks and nuns began to file out of the church. Matthew followed the others out the side door, into an annex adjacent to the main chapel, and then into the underground passage that led to the dormitories. When they reached the end of the passage, Matthew, stricken with grief, somehow made his way into the dormitory and collapsed into his cot. The events of the day had been most unnerving, so while the other novices slept soundlessly, Matthew tossed and turned on what seemed like a bed of nails. When the first rays of dawn came, Matthew decided to take a walk through the monastery to clear his mind before the others awoke. He came to a halt as he heard hushed voices on the other side of the corridor. Matthew recognized the voices as belong to Abbott John and a few other senior monks.

“One of her hands pointed to a verse from the book of John: He light shines in the darkness. . . and her other hand pointed to Verse 6 and 7: There appeared a man named John he . . . came as a witness to testify the light. . She must have been driven mad by the poison.”, one monk said. Matthew thought, The Abbess knew every verse of the holy bible. This cannot be a coincidence. A thought then crossed his mind. What if she was trying to send us a message about the name of her murderer! He thought for a minute and then remembered the cruciform window illuminating the hand of Christ. Perhaps the communion was not so hastily called. Perhaps the Abbess knew that, with the moonlight shining at that time of the night, the

window would be illuminated and that it would serve as a message in case she was unable to deliver it herself? What if the hand points somewhere?

“Enough, Brothers, I regret to say that I believe I know who the murderer is. It has to be the young novice Matthew”, the Abbott said with conviction. The monks stared at the Abbott in uniform disbelief while Matthew, standing at the other side of the door, had to put his fist to his mouth to restrain himself from shouting. “I saw him in the garden earlier in the day, I thought nothing of it at the time but now I realize that he must have stolen a Perennial plant from the garden and poisoned the Abbess’s wine glass.” The monks gasped at the Abbott’s accusations some shaking their bowed heads, others crossing themselves. The Abbott stopped for a moment to assess the reaction of the monks and then pressed on. “I have been studying the two of them for a while. I witnessed that they became close . . . unnaturally so,” the Abbott said, arching one of his dark eyebrows. “Perhaps the Abbess was pressed to break her vow of chastity by the young novice and when she rejected him, he reacted, with fury and guided by Satan’s designs. There is also his history of heretical questions that casts any pretense of his innocence in doubt. We must bring this villain to God’s justice.” Matthew heard the monks murmur in agreement. Matthew backed away from the voices and dashed off to the right, running as fast as his trembling legs would allow toward the exit of the dormitory. He needed a hiding place. As he left the dormitory, he remembered the boarded-up well near the fish ponds. He ran there, pulled up a few of the boards at the top of the well, and lowered his body into the dark opening. As he sat crouched in the cold, stone well, he heard the sounds of rats scurrying near his feet and the voices of monks outside shouting his name.

Matthew waited until nightfall and then, when he was sure there was no one near the well, left his hiding place. He gave a shiver as the wind cut through the course, ascetic fabric of his habit. He swept around the outside of the church, circling it, until he reached the altar’s cruciform window. Just like the previous evening, the moonlight illuminated the hand of Christ, pointing in the general direction of the the Cloisters and the Scriptorium. Even in the jet-black night, Matthew recognized the Scriptorium, a building in which he spent many days copying manuscripts. Hearing voices behind him, Matthew dashed off into the darkness and across the Cloisters. Before him lay an oak door, one he knew well. It was the door to Abbess Teresa’s private study, for before she had become an Abbess, she had worked here and had been a talented illuminator. Matthew turned the knob of the door and, oddly enough, found it unlocked. He entered quietly making sure to shut the door behind him and lock it.

The study was furnished with a simple desk and a stool. Upon the desk lay a pile of Bestiaries. Matthew strode over to the desk and something curious then caught Matthew’s eye: written across the top a Bestiary was a dark, black cross. Matthew carefully lifted this Bestiary and began to study it. It was the Whore of Babylon, riding on her beast the SIRRUSH. She was a dreaded symbol within the Christian faith, representing all affairs, fornication, and sexual crimes against God. Matthew could not help but think that this bestiary were not left here by accident that the Abbess left it at the top of the pile for a reason. What could these mean? Matthew thought to himself. He pondered this

symbol for quite awhile and then decided he had been there for too long. Matthew stepped forward toward the door and, as he did, he he heard a clink of metal under his foot. Matthew looked down to see a ring, with an empty socket, inscribed with the initials "AJ". Realization crept in Matthew's mind, as he looked from the ring to the Bestiaries and back again. Holy Father help me!, Matthew thought in terror. Matthew began to search frantically around the study, until he heard a soft "clink" under his foot. He bent down and retrieved the object. It was a small red stone, a perfect match for the ring he had already found. He continued searching, until he came across a letter lying on the Abbess's chair, written in the Abbess's handwriting, which Matthew began to read. He read the letter, once, twice, three times and, tears filling his eyes, he folded the letter and put it inside the cloak. The letter confirmed his worst fears, but he now had all of the proof he needed to bring the Abbess's killer to justice. It was then he realized he was not alone, before him stood Abbott John.

"The other monks will be here soon. Our time together will be short" his raised hand holding a large knife, with the sleeve above the knife bearing the monogrammed initials "AJ". "If you have questions for me before your execution tomorrow at dawn, now is the time to ask them. I do not wish for a man to go to the grave not knowing the truth behind his unmaking."

"Did she go with your willingly, out of love?" asked Matthew, his fists clenched in rage.

"Of course not, though it was my wish she would. I did so love her beauty. No, she accepted me not out of love or attraction but to protect you. Did you ever consider why you were not punished for your heretical views? She succumbed to me because the alternative would have been the severest of punishments for you, perhaps even death. I used her love for you to my advantage that is, until one day last week, when she told me she could break her vows no more. At first I was consumed by the fear of being exposed but then came an epiphany: I could rid myself of the Abbess, my accuser, and a nettlesome boy as well, a boy who himself had accused my brother, the Bishop, of a crime. When I learned of her plans for a "special communion", I knew that God have given me the opportunity to save the reputation of the church. So, in a sense, you did kill the Abbess young Matthew or at least the pure love you shared for each other resulted in her death. "

"I won't let you get away with it, I have proof!" exclaimed Matthew, thinking of the Whore of Babylon, which proved the affair which showed the two were together and, the most compelling evidence, the Teresa's written confession.

"Yes, you do," the Abbott replied, in a false fatherly tone. "But don't you see, your proof disproves Teresa's chastity; my proof is a testament for all time that she kept her vows. You see, it is really your choice: are you willing to sacrifice yourself for Teresa?"

"She was willing to reveal the truth, why shouldn't I have the same courage?" answered Matthew. "Because it was her truth to reveal, not yours," John responded and inched closer, knife at the ready. With tears in his eyes, Matthew took the letter from his cloak and held it over the candle's flame, watching as Teresa's confession turned to ashes, but he caught a glimpse of light out of the window.

"You have done the right thing, Matthew, by preserving Teresa's reputation. I promise your execution tomorrow morning will be merciful and that your family will be well cared for after your death." the Abbott said, "Understand", he continued chuckling, "My murder of Teresa was the in love of god". At this last sentence, the door flew open and a dozen senior monks rushed in.

"You lied!", one cried, "You, the Abbott, betrayed God, you shall be excommunicated till the end of your days!" At this, the monks swarmed forward toward the Abbott, reaching for him.

"You cannot!", Abbott John protested, "You would not", he cried. As he saw they would not relent, he raised his dagger, fell to his knees and drove it into his own heart.

Matthew stood before the new Abbott taking his final vows in the dying sunset. He spoke the vow of Chastity, Poverty, and finally, with a little regret, the vow of obedience. After the death of John, Matthew had been pardoned from the monks' accusation and the murder had been put to rest. Matthew was now looking forward to the quiet life in the Scriptorium and Schoolrooms as a monk. While a monastic life may not be the one Matthew chose, but it was one he was willing to accept.

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CIVIL WAR JOURNAL

July 2, 1863

I woke today at 4 in the morning. I was tired, but I was also so nervous that I couldn't stay asleep any longer. We were positioned on a small ridge, which overlooked Emmitsburg road. Beyond that was a valley leading into Cemetery ridge where the Union troops were positioned. I could see that it would be very near impossible to attack the Union troops on their ground. The hill had no coverage and was very steep. Please dear God, I prayed, don't make me lead the men up there.

Soon after breakfast we received orders that Longstreet's 1st corps were attacking the Union further down the line. As soon as they had passed us, we were to march down across the road and attack Cemetery ridge. Exactly what I had prayed not to happen. I drank a hell of a lot of coffee after I heard that order, and maybe a bit of whiskey too. Longstreet hadn't even passed us yet, so I assumed we had a long wait. I was right. We waited on that ridge for hours. The men shared war stories or played cards. I sat near a group built up of some other men from the 8th Florida and listened to them talk. They started talking about the war and the reasons they were fighting. Most of them had clear ideas of independence, and I found myself nodding along as they talked of justice and fair treatment for all the states. I realized that this was what gave so many men the courage to fight; these noble reasons were their cause.

We finally prepared to march down to the road at 5 o'clock. I got my men in order, and tried my best to disguise my fear. With the rest of Perry's brigade, we marched down the hill toward the other side of the valley. The Union did not worry about wasting ammunition on us; we were under a hail of shot and shell and bullets the whole way. The terrain was flat and was covered only by a few shrubs and trees, and I could not help admiring my men as they plunged into the battle with such spirit. They inspired courage into me. Shouting and yelling we met the first line of the Union at the road. They were positioned in a line of Batteries and strongly supported by infantry. Most of the men who had to load up their heavy muskets were killed, and some of them back fired and exploded in their faces. I was glad to have a pistol instead.

We attacked that first line of troops with such power that they were swept back almost immediately. We fought on and on and slowly we crept up to the edge of Cemetery ridge, but many men were lost. I saw them fall to the ground with the quick ripping puncture of a mini ball, or fly through the air, blasted and torn with the power of canister or grape fire. Finally we reached the

creek. We could see the top of the ridge and I almost believed it possible for us to take it. Nothing was in my mind right then but rallying the troops and taking that ridge. Lang came around to make sure we were all in position for this last attack, and then he gave the order to charge. The way had looked clear to me before, but there were a few Union soldiers in front of us. We drove them away effortlessly with a cheer.

We were fast approaching the ridge and we had just crossed over the creek, but I now realized that the few soldiers we had just driven away had gone for reinforcements. We were walking right into them! There must have been 400 men waiting for us beyond the creek. They waited 'till they must have been able to see our faces clearly, and then they fired with no mercy. I watched men being torn to shreds by the metal balls whirring past my face. A young color bearer was still leading the troops onward with a determined look on his face. I looked up into the enemy faces to see an officer point to a cannon then point to the young boy. He didn't have time to change the expression on his face. Suddenly an anger like I have never before felt came over me. I will tell you this: throughout all the battles I have been in these last years, I have shot and killed many men, but I have never wished them pain. I don't know why I have killed them before, but this time I knew I wanted that man to die. I gave him every bullet I had and, I stood there to watch him die. I can't get over that moment in my head. I felt so victorious but also so horrible. When you fight a war, you always assume you are the hero, but looking back on that moment, I think that maybe I'm not the hero.

We retreated because we were obviously being overpowered by these new reinforcements. I led my men back to our positions and camp, but I wasn't paying attention really. I kept waiting for the guilt to come like a prisoner waits for the execution, but it didn't come. I'm going to bed. Oh, right. I was right last night. I do recognize the smell tonight; the smell of the second night at a battle field.

July 2—sometime in the middle of the night—1863

I've been thinking about that man I shot. I saw him go down, and clutch his chest in surprise and pain. There's no doubt that they couldn't have saved him. He died.

They say war is supposed to harden you. Most of the men out there are hardened; they cheer when they hit someone, and when they see them die in a bloody mess. In the beginning I just couldn't get used to it. I felt guilty about every man I shot, but today something changed. I haven't felt guilty about practically torturing him. Right now my lack of guilt is worse than the guilt was before. Am I finally "losing myself" out here?

July 3, 1863

I slept too late today, but when I did get up I was ready for battle. This is how I reasoned it out last night. This new attitude towards battle is generally a good thing. I realize now that I have adopted the other men's ways and I now am fighting for myself and independence, not just my Pa. The new tolerance for killing is good now that I am fighting for my own reasons and I really have a cause. It wasn't O.K. before because I was killing for no good reason of my own. That's why I have been feeling so guilty. I had never thought of this war except as a chance to prove myself, but I now realize it is a lot more than that. These are human emotions and human rights we're fighting for.

I had a late breakfast, and I found myself talking easily with the other men. I met another captain from the 8th Florida regiment who had a lot in common with me. He was from a town near the one I grew up in, in North Florida. We talked until we were both called by General Lang for our orders.

Lang had called together the captains and Colonels of our brigade, and he explained the situation to us. Longstreet and his 1st corps had been ordered by Lee to attack the center of the union army. We were to be the supporting column for this attack along with Wilcox's Brigade. We were to follow Pickett's division and be his support when needed.

After I heard this I abandoned the other officers and went to think things over by myself. I knew, well, I could tell from the ground that this would be a very hard battle, if it was even a battle and not a massacre. I shuddered at the thought, but I was not afraid. A lone, premature tear ran down my cheek at the thought that most of my men would be gone by the end of the day; we were already down to 35 since yesterday. This battle was turning out to be fatal for my sorry little pack of Floridians.

We sat wallowing in our anticipation until 3:30, when Pickett was about to charge. Following Wilcox's lead, our Brigade began to make our way to where Pickett would attack. When we arrived we stood behind the attacking men someways and waited in positions ready to march. Then Pickett received the order to go, and they were on their way. I watched their bloody trail with the horrible knowledge that I would be following it soon enough.

Our Brigade's cheers soon turned to solemn silence and they watched good men being slaughtered. Longstreet's men marched bravely towards Cemetery ridge with the intention of taking it, but this aspiration was too much to hope for. Men were killed in droves; blasted off the ground by the long range artillery at first and then canister and musketry. It was the most horrible attempt at a battle that I have ever seen. The most bloody, cruel, useless waste of good men; I felt tears streaming down my cheeks as I watched.

20 minutes after they charged we were ordered to go in also. For a while we retraced their exact

footsteps, stepping over bodies and limbs as we too were practically scattered. I could see my men dying by the minute, but I called the remaining together, and we marched onward through the smoke. The smoke, it turned out, was a big problem, for we soon lost our way. Instead of following Pickett as we had planned, our Brigade was separated from Wilcox, and we started to drift southward towards the place we had fought at yesterday. Stopping to rearrange our selves and get in order, I noticed that Brigade had shrunk majorly in the last 10 minutes. My own company was now down to 26 men, and we hadn't even had the chance to fire a gun.

The smoke was still horrible; it choked us and stung our eyes, and it was so thick we couldn't see 20 feet in front of us. All of a sudden, Union troops stumbled into view in front of us, not 30 feet away. Gathering ourselves up with a dazed feeling, we attempted to fight our way through this new attack, but it was simply too much for our wounded Brigade. Many of us fell to the ground, or were immediately killed. I felt a bullet rip into the skin above my cheek, and a spasm of pain shot through my face.

Reaching up, I felt the torn skin and put a handkerchief to it to stop the blood. Calling my remaining troops together, I signaled for a withdrawal. Slowly, we retreated in confusion, and the Union troops, who needed a rest also, did not follow.

In slow defeat, we retreated to our camp. I'm pretty sure that every single one of those men were seeing Pickett's horrible, gruesome charge play over and over again in their heads. I could not stop seeing corpses. My eyes were watering with the sorrow of it, and at that moment I could not think of a single happy thing in the world. How could they all die like that? Just wiped of their life at such a prime. Later I calmed down. I bandaged my face up with an old shirt, but I didn't bother to see a doctor. The wound isn't really that bad. Besides, I don't feel like having to talk to another human.

It was getting dark when I emerged from my tent, and I stood looking over the battle field. Through the dusk and remaining smoke I could make out the fleshy whiteness of bodies lying pitifully on the slope and in the field. It still didn't seem real. All those bodies lying there used to mean something to someone, but now they were just lumped together. Lumped together by the people who wanted the result. Wanted the result of the war no matter how it happened. All of them martyred for the cause but none of them sainted.