WORDS & PICTURES
Class of 2016:
Alex Beguez
Alyssa Dorval
Andrea Schmitz
Anelisa Garfunkel
Barbara Geoghegan
Ethan Gould
Jon Bero
Luisa Ulhoa
Rachel Mersky
Rosa Chang
Sami Kiyona
Traci Zaretska
Walter Tyler

WORDS & PICTURES
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Chair: Nathan Fox
Design & Art Direction: Kristy Caldwell and Nathan Fox
Editor: Edward Hemingway

Cover by: Jon Bero
Narrative Writing; Dingbat Narrative

End Pages by: Luisa Ulhoa
Black & White One Color; Person, Place & Thing
Alex Beguez
Casey Jones should be here any minute now, Michelangelo thought, as he slowly twirled one of his brother's sai by its blunt tip on the wooden arm of the sofa. He anxiously looked up at the wall clock, the second hand ticking so slowly it appeared to be moving backwards. A steady stream of water droplets leaking from a nearby pipe exacerbated the silence in the room. Michelangelo began anxiously tapping his feet on the ground.

Chillax, dude, he reasoned in an effort to calm his nerves, it doesn't matter if he's late. You've got all the time in the world to do this. Leonardo and Donatello are off gathering reconnaissance at the Foot Clan's headquarters. They won't be back until tomorrow at the earliest. Splinter, at my suggestion, is busy watching Star Trek The Next Generation on Netflix. No one will be able to pry him away from the computer terminal until he's all caught up. With his attention compromised, he has tasked me with watching over our lair. And Raphael, the fool, is off on an errand and due back any minute. He will arrive just in time to set my plan into motion. No one will suspect me as its mastermind. I'm the comic relief, a child, a simpleton, he mused, smiling at his deviousness.

Casey had been a great asset and ally to the Turtles, but his love for April O'Neal proved problematic for Michelangelo. At first, he thought it was merely a crush, which was understandable. April was the most beautiful woman that ever was and ever will be. Her smile can ignite the hottest of fires in a man's cold heart. Her warm hazel eyes pierce the very depths of your soul. Her long mahogany tresses dance effortlessly in the wind, exempt from the burdens of gravity. April was not only gorgeous beyond words, but kind to a fault. She was gentle, intelligent, and most importantly, understood that Michelangelo was more than just a goofball. She made him feel special and wanted. April and Michelangelo truly belonged together.

A few years ago, Casey Jones had joined the Turtles in their fight against the Foot Clan and their malevolent leader, Shredder. Michelangelo had felt a camaraderie with Casey (they shared a love of pizza), but he soon felt betrayed when Casey ask April out on a date. April turned him down of course, but eventually she succumbed to his endless advances. Casey was quite persistent.

Michelangelo had underestimated Casey, and by casually dating April he kept her from the lair and away from her true soulmate. This is the only way.

There was movement coming from the hallway. Michelangelo cursed under his breath for not paying attention to the door. It can't be Raphael, he's too early!
thought, grabbing the sai by the handle and sitting up. The figure threw a pizza box onto the coffee table, along with a hockey mask. Michelangelo smiled.

“Finally dude! I’m starvin’!” he exclaimed as Casey entered the living room, removing his biking gloves and shoving them in his back pockets. “Sorry Mikey, there was a longer line than usual at Pizza Joe’s. Not to mention the train delays.”

“It’s cool, bro!” Michelangelo said, opening the box and grabbing the largest slice of pepperoni pizza with his right hand while carefully placing the sai between his thigh and the sofa arm with his left. Casey threw himself onto the other side of the worn-out sofa, taking a slice from the open box.

While they ate their pizza in silence, Michelangelo’s mind was reeling. Any minute now, he thought, staring straight ahead into the hallway. Suddenly, he heard the sound of a key entering the lock. He turned to look at Casey, who was about to grab another slice from the pizza carton. Without notice, Michelangelo thrust the sai into his own abdomen, bellowing in pain. Casey looked at him in disbelief, unable to utter a sound from the shock of the sight.

Michelangelo, with his acute aural faculties, could make out a frantic struggle at the front door. “What the FUCK dude?!” he cried out, kicking the table over with his foot. Casey remained still in his seat. Michelangelo leaned back, slowly letting go the weapon. He grabbed Casey’s free hand and placed it around the sai’s handle. Blood gushed freely from his wound.

The door finally gave way, falling from its frame. Raphael, Michelangelo’s older brother, stood horrified at the threshold. Casey, in shock, was still holding the sai buried in Michelangelo’s gut. “TRAITOR!” he roared, his stare projecting his homicidal intent.

Michelangelo closed his eyes and let unconsciousness claim him as he heard a blood-curdling scream and the sound of a blade cutting through flesh.

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*Dial M for Murder*

Narrative Writing

Short Story, Fan Fiction/Beauty and Violence

Source Material- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
Alyssa Dorval
“Oh thank God, thank God! Yes! You’re home! You’re really home! I thought you had left me forever!” I said panting, jumping up and down as I ran in circles (a very hard thing to do, I might add!). Gosh, this was definitely the happiest I had ever felt in my whole life.

I jumped down off of your legs and ran to my toy bin— you definitely needed a toy, and as a display of my gratitude for your return I grabbed my favorite— a free-range freeze-dried organic bison bone. I eagerly trotted back to you, bone between my teeth. I dropped the bone at your feet and you bent down to pick it up, your headphones hitting me in the face.

OMG! Were you— yes you were! You threw the bone across the room. Yay! A game of fetch! This day couldn’t get any better! I raced after the bone, grabbed it, and swiftly brought it back to you. I was soooogood at this game. I wagged my tail in utter pleasure. I nudged you to try to grab the bone from my mouth— maybe I could even get a game of tug-of-war out of this!

“Not now buddy,” you said as collapsed onto the floor and kicked off your sneakers. Were you alright? I sniffed you intently. Salty water on your skin! Eggs in your armpits! Stinky blue cheese on your feet! You smelled delicious. Where had you been? I started to lick your toes. You giggled and got up, pushing me away. I moped over to the corner of the room, giving you big old sad eyes. You looked at me annoyed.

“Do you want a treat?” you asked. A treat! Yes! Yes! Oh boy! Treats! Yay! I jumped onto your lap and licked my snout, waiting.

“Gimme a treat!” I whined.

You dropped a pupperoni on the floor. I took my treat to my bed (well actually it was your bed), and devoured it, trying to get all of the crumbs that fell onto your pillow. For sure, this was the happiest moment of my life.
Andrea Schmitz
The Innocent Eye Test

“Read this line, please.”
I stared at the chart.
“D E F P O T E C,” I recited. The doctor made a note. “Good, now this one.”
“F D P L T C E O.”
“Very good.” Another ink blot on my chart.
“Now I’ll just give you some of these drops and come back in a few minutes when you’re dilated.”
I felt the numbing sting spread around my eyes and quickly wiped the yellow tears away with a tissue I’d had balled in my fist since my arrival. The door closed and I blinked a few times.
“Mr. Andrews,” said a voice, and I started so suddenly I knocked a nearby machine with the back of my hand.
“Jeeesus…” I breathed. “What was that for, Doc?”
“Mr. Andrews, why are you here?” asked the doctor from the corner.
“To get my eyes checked out,” I answered, rubbing my sore knuckles. Skin broken, no blood.
“Mr. Andrews, you are blind,” said the doctor. “And you have been cheating on the test for quite some time, I see.”
“That’s not true—”
“I switched the charts,” said the doctor.
“Well I think that makes you the cheater, then, Doc,” I said.
“Your job requires that you pass an eye exam with 20/20 vision on your own health or with the assistance of glasses or contact lenses, but I can tell you right now that you are very much beyond our help. Though I assume you’re aware of that already.”
I was pretty sure the expression on my face had helped him make that assumption.
“Can you tell me how long this has been going on?” asked the doctor.
“When does it say I started work?” I asked. The doctor consulted his notes.
“Says five years ago,” he said.
“Then seven years,” I replied.
“And can you tell me how you’ve managed to work as a factory mechanic for five years without anyone realizing that you were blind?” He paused. “And without incident, as well.”
I didn’t answer right away. I had had this conversation before, five years previously, and I knew how it ended. The ‘seeing’ never understood when I told them I could see—though I couldn’t see what they saw. Doctors never understood when I told them that I could see their blood pumping through their veins as easily as they could see my face. I read the machines through their spokes and electrical current. I could see how they spoke to one another in a wordless tongue, the same way a synapse sparked an idea in the tissues surrounding it in the muscles of the doctor tensing before me. I read the forces in the air as easily as he could read the bottom line of his eye test, but I did it with something behind my eyes.

My previous job had left me with a metal patch on my skull, sure, but I could still work. I wasn’t blind. But they didn’t make tests for the kind of eyes I had.

I could see the doctor’s mind going full speed, so I shrugged, and answered him. “I cheated, sir,” I said shortly.
Anelisa Garfunkel
Batu and Manush

It was the most beautiful tree I had ever seen. Freshly fallen, drowning in the brackish waters that had given birth to it. My cheek seemed a small price to pay for this magnificent find.

Manush found me sitting on top of it mesmerized. With one look he knew everything that had never been said.

If Manush and I had been one person, we might be complete. I had struggled to communicate for as long as I could remember. It was all there in my head but my mouth could not find the words. Manush was the funny one. The charmer. He was often rewarded for this. I dreamed of being a great carver like my father. Manush would be. He was chosen to be an apprentice to my father. I was chosen to feed the pigs.

On our trek around the island, Manush and my father talked easily. Recounting the stories of our land. In my head these stories were vivid but I could not participate. The stories were told to teach. Manush was expected to know the trees that would feed his creations. He gave jokes in place of answers to my father’s questions. My father was frustrated with his eldest son, but charmed.

Hours before, Manush and I had gotten a hold of a handful of his unfinished shark hooks. My father carved hundreds of them for the fishermen. We were playing fishermen on the beach as we often do. Wading in the water, diving futilely for darting reef fish. But today, we had a hook. It was only a minute or two before Manush had successfully sunk a hook into flesh, a shallow puncture, blood spurting out. But the flesh was not from an unsuspecting parrotfish. It was my cheek. He laughed at first but quickly realized that I was hurt and that there would be consequences.

I didn’t cry or make a sound. My mother cleaned me up and sent Manush off to tell my father. He did not recount the story accurately, but still my father was furious. We should have known better, especially now with so much pressure on him. He scolded us both and demanded we accompany him on his trek around the island.

My father was angry with me and my brother but also preoccupied because The Feast of the Fisherman would be here with the rains and he still had not found the tree that would become the great feast bowl. He was in search of a fallen Pulok, the hardest of mangrove trees that would become the great feast bowl, necessary to honor the gods and serve his people. A series of squalls had passed over the western side of the island last night. He was hopeful that an old giant might have fallen.
The trek around our small island would take all day. For Manush, this was punishment. For me, reward. I wondered if my father knew this. As we walked, my father paid little mind to me. He demanded much of Manush. He had not noticed when I fell too far behind. Manush, my brother, had.

At this point the day had grown long. The afternoon showers were moving in off the sea. My lagging behind could be dangerous for us all. Manush intercepted my father’s inevitable anger by volunteering to retrieve me from my daydreaming. He turned from my father and darted back into the forest to find me.

He found me atop the tree. The bandage on my cheek caked with dried blood. He stood staring at me, his eyes wide with amazement. He knew that this was the tree my father had been looking for, the tree that would make my father proud. He knew he could never have found it himself. He knew our father would credit him with this find and that I would be punished for falling behind. He knew all of my dreams in that instant. And I knew then that my brother could and would speak my words for me. He stood tall, took a deep breath, and yelled for our father.
It was a beautiful sunny day, as Nancy Drew blasted down the freeway in her navy blue convertible. Her father had bought the car for Nancy for her 18th birthday, and replaced it multiple times since, as it had been totaled during various investigations. Carson Drew was a high-powered lawyer who often discussed his cases with his daughter, thereby empowering her in a way that society never had. He had empowered her too much. Carson Drew was a good man. It was a pity he had to die.

Nancy recalled the bright orange flames against the deep purple of the dusky River Heights sky. The smoke was beautiful as it billowed out of the old barn. Moments before, she had dumped her father’s unconscious body next to Ned Knickerson, who was tied to a chair next to a box stall. There was dry old hay everywhere. Nancy wondered to herself if she would even need to use the gasoline that she had had George pick up for her. Nancy was more than an amateur sleuth. The strawberry blonde, blue eyed teen had taken every precaution so that no one would figure out that she was the culprit. After all, who would suspect Nancy Drew? Who would suspect that River Heights’ perfect teenage girl detective had an icy cold heart that felt nothing; held nothing. Nothing was precious to Nancy, not even her facade of perfection. Everything, along with that very facade, would be burnt to the ground tonight.

“Why, Nan?” Ned was sobbing. He had long since given up trying to wriggle free from his restraints and was staining his plaid pants with the salty tears of a man betrayed. “I loved you, Nancy…you were the swellest gal I ever knew. How could you do this? What kind of man-hating feminist have you turned into?”

Nancy rolled her eyes.

“Shut up, you stupid baby,” Nancy had said, and hit Ned in the head with the fire extinguisher she had brought just in case she changed her mind. She knew she wouldn’t be needing it now. The fire extinguisher could burn along with everything else. The townspeople would mourn this tragic accident at the end of town, as well as spreading rumors of a tryst between Carson and Ned, no doubt. Nancy’s mouth curled up at one corner. Good, she thought to herself. This was her finest work yet.
Five hours later, Nancy had changed out of her sensible cardigan and pencil skirt into a different cardigan and pencil skirt. She felt like a million bucks as she drove faster and faster, with no destination in mind. Nancy’s friend George sat in the passenger seat next to Nancy, sipping Pappy Van Winkle out of an old mustard jar. No would would sell George a flask because she was a teenager. George was a girl with a boy’s name, which meant she was a lesbian. This thrilled Nancy on an artistic level; Nancy had never had any sexual thoughts or feelings about any human in her life, least of all Ned, but having a lesbian in on her crime spree seemed to add a bit of sparkle to the proceedings, like a glittery broach on a cardigan. Nancy made a mental note to steal a glittery broach for her cardigan once she got to the city.

Nancy and George’s best friend Bess was bound and gagged in the backseat. Bess was a cute and vivacious girl whom everyone loved. She was a hell of a lot smarter than she looked too. George had been all for the crime spree from the beginning. Nancy had neglected to tell George about her now-consummated plans to murder her father and boyfriend. Stupid Bess had figured it out, though, and that’s why she was writhing around in the backseat with duct tape over her mouth. When Nancy picked George up, George had just laughed at Bess. Nancy had always liked George, and she rose higher and higher in her esteem every moment. I should have done this years ago, Nancy thought to herself.

“Whoa!” said George. “Watch out, Nan, there’s a raccoon crossing the road up ahead.” A roly-poly raccoon was slowly making it’s way across the dusty interstate. Nancy stepped down hard on the accelerator and swerved to hit the small animal. It made a sickening thump. George laughed.

“Pretty cool, Drew,” she said, and gulped some more whiskey. Bess whimpered in the backseat.

“Oh, shut up, you fat bitch,” said Nancy. She grabbed George’s whiskey jar and threw it in Bess’s face. Bess screamed through her duct tape.

“What the hell?” said George, sitting up. “Now I have to refill it.” Nancy threw the mustard jar over her head. It shattered on the highway behind them. George’s face went ashen and she sank back into her seat. Nancy turned the blinker on.

“Don’t worry, ladies,” said Nancy. “I won’t be putting any moves on you today. In fact, I’m about to solve all your boy problems.” Nancy stepped on the accelerator and barreled down the road towards the cliff that all the local teens called “Makeout Point.”

“Nancy!” cried Bess from the backseat. She had managed to pull off the duct tape covering her mouth with one loose hand. The whiskey had no doubt loosened the glue. Science class really does have real world applications, Nancy thought to herself. “Nancy, you don’t have to do this!” continued Bess. “Please don’t drive off Makeout Point! Killing us won’t make you happy! Dying won’t fix what’s inside you!”

“Wait, what?” George sat up straight, all color draining from her face. “Nancy, what?”

Nancy methodically pressed down on the accelerator until she couldn’t anymore. With George and Bess’s screams filling the air, Nancy felt a strange calmness settle over her. She wondered if this feeling was happiness, or perhaps sadness. The teenage sleuth reassured herself that she would have no way of knowing, as these emotions had eluded her for her whole life.

Nancy Drew’s navy blue convertible careened off Makeout Point, like an arrow shot from a bow. The car seemed to linger in the air for a moment before plummeting to the ground and landing on the rec center of the River Height’s nursing home. Nancy watched the building burst into flames from the edge of the cliff. Of course she hadn’t been wearing her seatbelt. She recalled the looks on George and Bess’ faces as she had dived out of the car with something akin to delight.

Who would solve these senseless crimes? Nancy mused to herself. How could she explain to the police that each dead body she left in her wake was a beautiful brushstroke on a canvas that had been white for so, so long? The young detective felt something leaking from her eyes. Was she crying? Nancy looked out on the complete and total chaos she had inflicted upon River Heights and allowed one real, true, honest emotion to bubble up to the surface: pride.

Drew Grit
Narrative Writing
Short Story, Fan Fiction/ Beauty and Violence
Source Material- Carolyn Keene
Ethan Gould
Alexander Alexander Alexander

What
Is
How

It's different.

I'm a piece of something great. Something Great.

My brow is furrowed. Noble. I can feel myself radiating majesty.

I am powerful, I am sure of it. The oxide ridden holes at the back of my hair are the receptors for my hollow eyes, and my hollow eyes are receptors for the holes behind me. I can see everything. There are hallways full of fragments like myself, fragments of the great and noble, marble grotesquely stripped of colored paint and with metal poles for legs, headless and armless, a charnel house of art. I have no body.

I am dark, and green, and metallic, and positioned high above the rabble. The rabble is frenzied, there are hundreds of them in colorful, cheap fabrics. Pants. People are wearing pants, like Gauls. I even see plaid wrapped around their waists. Have I been captured by Tartans?

No, that’s long passed. I am beyond or maybe below things like that. One person out of a thousand speaks a clipped, bizarre Greek. I don’t think I’m a person anymore. Is this the Mediterranean? I smell the ocean far away through my mighty, sturdy bronze nose. It is too cold for daylight.

I know myself. I am Alexander. I am better than Alexander, despite my wracked body. I’m everything they hoped I would be. In the end it was something of a disappointment, wasn’t it. Arabia and the Islands to the West left untrammeled, vicious infighting, betrayals, possibly poisoned. Mine was a violent and unmatched life. It is quiet here. There are no cities to raze and burn, and the cultures seem to have merged together from every corner of the world. The Persians and Macedon could never make that work, I could never make that work. The minds of small men. The heart is not a defense to be breached save by time.
Oh, I seem to have become poetic.

I check myself. I am so much bigger now! There are stories, there are legends, there are... what is a cartoon? I am everywhere. I am in the minds of every person in the world. Perhaps I succeeded in taking it over after all, eh?

No.

I feel full and fragmented, as if the contours of my body could easily be reproduced from the patterns manifest in this floating head. Full and fragmented. I imagine this is how the elderly feel looking at a lifetime of mistakes and experiences. I never had a chance to become old, there seems to be a lot of death in my lineage. My kin are dead. My progeny are everywhere. I feel conflicted about this.

I know so much and so little. My history is vast, but I am incomplete. I am ambitious as always. I'm seething with ambition.

There should be enough armor and figures in here to make a passable body.

If I'm this regarded even now, I should have no trouble reconquering everyone and everything.

I wonder if Thebes ever rebuilt.
Jon Bero
The city rests primarily in darkness as the sun slowly inches above the horizon. The cars and people begin to amass as each individual begins to make their daily trek to work. Bernard, your average businessman, effortlessly blends in with the growing crowd. He hails a cab, a perfect copy of the many surrounding him, all united by their need to travel somewhere this morning. Bernard waits for his ride, but even so, he is not deterred by anything this morning. With spirits high, he sports a bright and happy smile. “Today is the day!” he says to himself. “I will make something of myself today! I’ll get a promotion, get a corner office. OH! And maybe even the chance to get an ice cream machine installed in that office!” He licks his lips, imagining the cool creamy mouthfeel of that particular dessert. Delicious ice cream, in flavors other than chocolate. Because if he was even to just have one taste of chocolate ice cream, well he- Just then, the cab pulled up, screeching to a violent jolt of a stop.

The person in the cab was a thick, greasy, gruff lady who bore at least three different “Mom” tattoos inside various hearts.

“Where to, Mr.?” She bellowed out, bits of half eaten food spattering against the windshield as she did.

“136 Cherry Blossom Street!” He happily replied. With the single utterance of his desired address, he was quickly carted away. The cab barreled down streets, driving between lanes and other vehicles. Bernard felt himself getting a little anxious, his spring of happiness beginning to enter a dry spell. The speedometer began to rise more and more, with turns becoming more violent, more sudden, more precarious. Bernard’s eyes became glued to the gauges, his wellbeing sinking with each increase in the miles-per-hour gauge. Looking back out the window, the true nature of their high speed became apparent to Bernard. Colors blurred as figures and cars all melded into one another. Bernard opened his mouth to comment on the speed, but was cut off by a quick swerve to the left. Instantly, Bernard was thrust against the right interior of the cab before a sickening bump under each set of tires set off a chain of screams in all directions.

The cab screeched to a halt, those brakes piercing the ears of everyone nearby. Startled by the outburst from people outside the cab, Bernard quickly jumped out of the vehicle. He looked around frantically for the source of the discontent and then saw it: a golden lab lay crumpled and unmoving, the sheen of its coat now dirty and soiled. Bernard couldn’t believe this. Today was supposed to be the beginning of great things, and here he was, looking at this poor dead dog. He felt horrible about the entire situation. People who had previously cried out during the accident all turned towards...
him now to see what he would do next. All those eyes on him…did they want a miracle? Was he supposed to revive the dog? Questions began pouring into his mind, followed by judgement and a sudden need to act.

Without hesitation, he did what he felt was appropriate. He’d watched a documentary on Native Americans last night and had remembered the part about how the natives would use every piece of the Tatanka (buffalo) in order to use the animal to its full potential.

“Yes”, he thought, “I should make sure none of this creature goes to waste!” Bernard thought that cooking the meat of the dog was probably a smart option, but with everyone just standing around, watching his every move, how could he find time to gather supplies for a fire? No, he was going to do this like the Native Americans. He knelt down next to the creature, placing his head down by its fur.

“Everyone is going to be so impressed,” he thought to himself. “How cultured and retro they’ll think I am!” And with that, Bernard began devouring the dead dog. Stunned onlookers went white-eyed, unable to digest what they were witnessing. Many simply looked on in horror, until finally they could stand no more. Bernard looked up after he felt he’d thoroughly eaten most of the creature. He looked around for confirmation of his actions, but the onlookers had dispersed. It was only him now, as even the cab driver had disappeared. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, smearing fluids across it.

That’s when he heard it. A breathing so feral and untamed it sent shivers through him. Cautiously, he turned around and was met by a large, black panther. Tears began streaming down his face.

“How could this be happening??” he thought. “A giant predator like this? In the middle of the city??” He stared at the creature in astonishment before instinct took over. Suddenly he was up, sprinting down the previously busy street. Taking this corner and rounding another, he hoped he would lose the panther somehow, perhaps by outwitting the creature. Just as he was about to round yet another corner, a gazelle leaped out from behind the wall. Startled, Bernard shot in the opposite direction. He raced by an alleyway only to stop dead in his tracks as a bunny also leaped out of nowhere. He ran to his left but a turkey sat there, glaring at him. He looked behind himself, flanked by the panther and gazelle. Truly, this day was not going his way. Left with no other options, Bernard went right, down the alleyway and hopefully on to safety. Running and running, the alleyway began to narrow, but he kept on going.

It wasn’t long until every ounce of wellbeing that Bernard still possessed drained from him completely and he came upon a large brick wall. Panic filled him as suddenly the “dead” in dead-end truly hit home. Bernard turned around, expecting to see the various animals in pursuit of him, but none of them were there. Instead, a creepily painted plasticine bunny sat in the crowded alley, peering at him through dead, unblinking eyes. Without any prior indication of movement, the artificial form stepped towards him.

Bernard’s pupils became pinpricks as fear flooded him. He began crying and pleaded with the plasticine bunny to spare him. He begged to know what he, a reputable businessman with high aspirations, could have possibly done wrong. Without any verbal communication, the artificial bunny’s eyes seemed to call back to the dog for Bernard.

“No good deed goes unpunished,” he thought to himself. With that final thought, the bunny overtook him, and Bernard the businessman became no more...no more except for a pile of excrement.

Dingbat Narrative
Narrative Writing
Short Story; Dingbat Narrative (Cover Illustration)
Luísa Ulhoa
At the age of 42 Joey had never travelled alone before. As a child and teen he had always vacationed with his parents or friends, and in his adulthood all his trips were planned for two: himself and his wife. Now they had split up and he had decided it was time to go somewhere by himself. Having never been alone before he was naturally scared. He knew how to manage, but everything was easier when you knew someone had your back. For the first time, he didn’t.

As he watched the pinecones from Grenoble from his window on the airplane, everything got real. He knew he was too old to be scared, but he was a little. He was also happy. Happy to finally be Joey and not someone’s son or husband. The plane landed, and he jumped into a cab to his hotel. It was a cloudy day and even though he was jetlagged, he decided to do some sightseeing. The freedom to choose where to go was great, but also overwhelming. He felt weird walking alone on the streets with no clear direction. So he decided that taking pictures would give the wandering a little more purpose. Joey took photographs like a Japanese tourist, but as he was now feeling comfortable, he didn’t care. He visited Bastille and fought his fear of heights to take the cable cars.

By photographing, Joey began to see the world through new lenses.

In this new adventures spirit, he ordered his dinner without translating the ingredients.

“Un poulet rôti avec gratin dauphinois, s’il vous plaît. A boire? Coca-cola c’est bon”. After his French-American dinner, he took his high-school French knowledge and went to see a play. He rewarded himself with a glass of wine at a café. Back at the hotel, Joey slept like he hadn’t in weeks.

When he woke up the sun was shining, a metaphor for how he was feeling. He sipped his coffee and took the advice of the concierge and went biking around town. After a moderate photo session, it was time to hit his new destination: Nice.

When he arrived there it was already dark, even though it was summer. He had only a small sandwich during the 6-hour trip to the French Riviera. His hotel got him a table at L’Aromate, the best restaurant in town – at least accordingly to Michelin. He had fabulous dinner with plates he would never have been able to pronounce even if his life had depended on it.

He then remembered a dinner he had had with his ex-wife in a bistro in Paris where she had laughed hard at his pronunciation of everything. The waiters probably laughed here too. Depressed, his paid the check and left.
Life does not always go as planned. As he was returning to the hotel to pine, he heard the song that had always cheered him up. As if hypnotized, he followed the music to a bar and ordered a drink. Because of this, he arrived at the hotel hours after he had originally planned.

A bit hung over the next morning, Joey had his breakfast while cursing at the idea of having scheduled a scuba diving excursion. But while swimming through the clear waters of Nice he forgot about the nausea, the headache and the shattered life that waited for him at home. Here it was just him, the ocean, and the sun.

The day was beautiful and he decided not to waste it. He hopped on the first train available and ended up in Monte Carlo. For lunch, he ate at McDonald’s, because that was all he could afford. Nevertheless, the city was beautiful and he walked all over the F1 track, taking pictures of the famous buildings and curves along the way. Back in Nice, he had lavender and verveine ice cream before calling it a day.

The last day of the trip was cloudy. But still Joey was determined to make the best of it. He wandered and wandered, enjoying by chance Nice’s best features.

Suddenly, fat, heavy drops of rain started falling from the sky. It was the type of rain that no umbrella could shield. He ran back to the hotel, where he lingered reading a book, drinking tea and peeking at the window until a cab came to drive him to the airport.

At the age of 42 Joey had never travelled alone before. But he was not scared or sad anymore. For the first time he was Joey and not someone else’s Joey. And he felt pretty comfortable with that.

Joey's Joey
Narrative Writing
Short Story, Dingbat Narrative
Rachel Mersky
“You must do it yourself, my Lord, as Mithras did. Then we shall dine, and you will be blessed with a full belly and a fertile wife.”

Homa hoped she would be invited to dinner; a full belly would be most welcome, and she didn’t want this dream to end.

Certainly she was dreaming. Not even in the greatest myths had she ever heard of a cow such as herself being invited into the palace of the royal family, let alone the temple, where she found herself presently. It was exquisite, with intricate gilded relief friezes of loving couples, larger than life marble statues of ancient Gods painted in colors Homa had never seen before in the fields. By the door was a babbling fountain, its waters glowing red from the light of the setting sun.

The sun that blazed on Homa’s back as she strained to pull the chariot through the central square. Beads of sweat dripped down her face, neck, and hind haunches, but she was determined to complete the trip without fault – not many cattle from her fields are selected to pull chariots for the patrician. No, not many at all. In fact, no one she had ever known had so much as seen the city center, let alone the gates to the royal palace.

As she swayed up to the monstrous estate exquisitely embellished with minutely detailed reliefs, flanked with ornate columns and surrounded by a garden of statues and fountains, she almost missed her cue to halt. Being around such luxury made her feel regal, important. A group of slaves helped the young couple within the chariot to the ground. To Homa’s complete surprise, the King and Queen emerged from the palace’s main entrance to greet the couple outside. The ladies back in the field would never believe that she stood this close to the royal couple. How strong and noble the King looked. He turned to Homa, and she quickly darted her head forward, swishing her tail in embarrassment.

“My my…” he said, striding up to Homa in his elegant silk robe. He placed his hand on her shoulder. She shivered. “This is a lovely one.”

She suddenly wished she hadn’t drunk so much water the day before. She felt embarrassed that her sweat might disgust him. The King seemed to take no notice, however, and unharnessed Homa from the chariot, leading her back to the young couple and his wife.

“Yes, we thought so as well. We asked the farmhand for his most fertile cow.”
Homa beamed. Things were going to change after this. How proud her calves would be of their lovely, fertile, and royally praised mother when she returned to the field.

Back in the temple, the youthful couple spoke familiarly with the King and Queen of fertility and the ancient Gods. Homa missed much of the conversation as she gawked at the walls of the echoing temple. They all stood in a circle, and Homa soon realized that she stood in the center. She straightened her shoulders in an attempt to fit her new role as prize bovine. Royal bovine. A group of slaves walked in, carrying a woven basket, four buckets, and one large, sharp sword encrusted with the royal insignia.

“You must do it yourself, my Lord, as Mithras did. Then we shall dine, and you will be blessed with a full belly and a fertile wife.”

The King rolled up the sleeves of his silk robe. As he pulled her head upwards, Homa's eyes met with those of the God Mithras, standing strong and proud in marble with his mighty sword held high, his other hand gripping the head of a fat cow, streams of blood glowing red like the fountain in the temple at dusk.

Homa hoped she would be invited to dinner; a full belly would be most welcome, and she didn’t want this dream to end.
Rosa Chang
Medusa and Brooklyn Follies

“I’d like to see this creature for myself,” I said. “You make her sound like an apparition from another world.”

“Anytime, Nathan. Just come to my apartment at a quarter to eight, and we can walk down her block together. You won’t be disappointed, I guarantee it.”

And so we met early the next morning and walked down Tom’s favorite street in Brooklyn. I assumed he had been exaggerating when he talked about the “hypnotic power” of the Beautiful Perfect Mother, but I was wrong.

At a glance the woman had a perfect body. She was sitting on the front steps of her house with her arms wrapped around two small kids. Standing on the other side of the street, Tom and I tactfully positioned ourselves behind the trunk of a tall locust tree.

What moved me most about my nephew’s beloved was the absolute freedom of her gestures, an unselfconscious abandon that allowed her to live fully in the moment, the everpresent, everexpanding now. I guessed her age to be around thirty, but her bearing was as light and unpretentious as a young girl’s. Her hair was moving slightly underneath the floral pattern scarf that she was wearing. Obviously the hair seemed very odd, and I couldn’t believe my eyes, so I tilted my body toward her to get a closer look. It wasn’t windblown or a small squirrel. Her hair was moving by itself! Although it was horrifying, I couldn’t bring myself to say anything to Tom.

“I’ll bet she’s an artist.” I said to Tom.

“What makes you say that?” he replied.

“The overalls. Painters always like to wear overalls. Too bad Harry’s gallery went out of business. We could have organized a show for her.”

“Are you talking about the floral scarf in her hair?”

“Not only the floral scarf but just in general. And have you looked at her hair closely? It seems like something is going on underneath her floral scarf.”

“What do you mean, Nathan?” Tom replied.

“Look at that. The hair is moving.” My face flushed, and my voice was getting louder. We were looking at her beautiful body silhouette during the whole conversation.

“I saw her face in the morning but I was so drunk that I didn’t pay attention to her hair,” Tom said.

“What? You got drunk in the morning?”

“You know...I had couple glasses of wine with my brunch but that was with my ex-girlfriend, and I was out of control.”
Given the circumstances, there was only one possible choice. I had to cross the street and talk to her. Not just a few words, but a full fledged conversation that would go on long enough for me to wave Tom over and force him to join in. I approached her.

“Excuse me, but I wonder if I could ask you a question.”

“Question?” she answered, and said

“I’ve just moved into the neighborhood.”

I couldn’t see her eyes because of her oversized sunglasses. The big sunglasses covered almost one third of her small face, and it made me more suspicious of her.

“Hi, I’m Nathan. Can I see your eyes?” I spoke to her.

“Hi, I’m Medusa and... I think you’re rude.” Her voice slowly rose.

I was embarrassed by her answer, but I still wanted to figure her out. She was Tom’s muse after all.

“I was looking at you from the across the street. The handsome guy standing over there is my nephew Tom. He said to me that you were the beauty of our neighborhood. I just wanted to introduce myself as your neighbor.” I realized that I was talking too much.

“Do you want to my eyes?”, she responded.

“Sure, it is going to be hard to recognize your face without seeing your eyes.”

She slowly took off the sunglasses. I looked into her eyes.

A scene of a cemetery filled with stone carvings of human figures reflected in her eyes. Many serpents were passing through those stone figures. It was the most horrifying scene I’ve ever seen in my life.

I couldn’t believe my eyes. It was completely crazy. Magical things were happening this morning.

She said, “If you ask me to take off my sunglasses again, I will turn you to stone. Do you understand? I’m not going to explain. Also, don’t even try to look at my hair. None of your business.” I was speechless. This was as bad as it gets!

I walked back over to Tom.

“Hey Nathan, why did you talk so long?”

My head was a mess because of the horrifying scene in the lady’s eyes. I couldn’t imagine that how that beautiful lady could curse me like that. I didn’t have the energy to explain everything to Tom so I simply said, “Hey Tom, get the BIBLE!”

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Medusa and Brooklyn Follies
Chapter “The Queen of Brooklyn”
Narrative Writing
Short Story, Fan Fiction/Horror Hybrid
Source Material- Paul Auster
Sami Kiyono
The Evening Report

Lindy:
“This is Lindy Lawless for Chanel 9’s evening report. Municipal City is once more in Captain Magnitude’s debt today, after he manages to single handedly prevent a bank robbery down in the Lower East Side. At precisely 3:39 pm, employees at Ingot Bank had a nasty surprise when they were suddenly held at gunpoint by an unknown assailant.”

Janitor:
“So, I was just doing my job, wiping stuff, polishing stuff. You know, what I gotta do everyday, right? Next thing I know though, there’s this big ol’ gun floating in my face! A gun!
“I’m not that easy to scare, right? I mean, I’m a pretty tough dude. Did boxing in high school, the ol’ One-Two, One-Two.
“But this gun, right? You know, a gun to the face is bad enough as it is, but I looked around, and this gun…this gun ain’t got nobody behind it. Nobody’s! Holding! The gun! What are you supposed to do when there’s a gun in your face, but nobody’s holding the god damned gun!!?”

Teller:
“Oh, it was terrible! I had just come back from lunch, from the Thai place across the street. You know the one, called Pagoda Thai? They just opened last month.
“Anyway, all of a sudden there was this big hullabaloo coming up from the front, and I see the Janitor waving his arms about, like it’s a gosh darned music concert, saying things like, ‘There’s nobody holding the gun! There’s nobody holding the gun.’ I donno, it was all very confusing.
“But then we heard this big, mean voice booming through the hall! It said, ‘PUT YOUR HANDS UP.’ That’s when I saw the gun.”

Security Guard:
“Yup, it was a talking gun. Don’t see that everyday.”
Janitor:
“Next thing we know, we’re all outside with our hands up, right, with this gun giving us orders.”

Teller:
“We had to open the safe, pile up all the money, uh, I was so scared, you couldn’t imagine. You would think that the Security Guard could have done something about all that, but, well, that didn’t happen.”

Security Guard:
“I never got training for how to deal with a talking gun.”

Janitor:
“But that’s when Captain Magnitude comes in! He flies down, looking all sly, you know, cape flowing in the breeze and all that. Then he says, ‘STOP RIGHT THERE, VILLIANS!’ It was tight! Then Magnitude turns to us, and says, ‘WORRY NOT, GOOD CITIZENS,’ And then he points to the gun, and is all, like, ‘FOR THIS IS JUST ANOTHER TRICK BY THE NEFARIOUS DR. MORPHO!’”

Teller:
“Dr. Morpho’s that evil butterfly that’s been all over the news lately. Just last week he tried to do a heist at that jewelry store across town. You know the one.”

Janitor:
“But that’s when Dr. Morpho turns around and says ‘You’ll never take me alive!’ and starts firing at Captain Magnitude!”

Teller:
“I was just so scared; just so scared.”

Janitor:
“Man, they were going at it! Dr. Morpho was all like, BANG! BANG! But Magnitude was all like, POW! POW! You should have seen it!! You know, at first I didn’t know if he could do it, but Magnitude pulled through, man!!”

Teller:
“If I hadn’t had seen it with my own eyes, I would have never believed it.”

Security Guard:
(Slow affirmative nod)

Janitor:
“I gotta say though, Morpho floated like a butterfly, but Magnitude stuck like a bee! Just one last One-Two, and Morpho was down for the count!”

Teller:
“It was amazing! I tell you, that Captain Magnitude can rescue me any day.”

Security Guard:
(Still nodding)
“…Yup.”

Linda Lawless:
“And there you have it, folks. Another happy ending for the people of Municipal City, and it’s all thanks to Captain Magnitude. Be sure to tune in again tomorrow night for more. And remember, if it’s not Chanel 9, it’s not news. Good night, everyone.”
The topic was Impressionism. That's what our group was assigned to research for our presentation. I had never heard of Impressionism. Art was not something I was exposed to as a child. There were no museums in the sleepy suburb where I grew up, and we didn't go into The City. In my child's mind, San Francisco was a foreign place, way on the other side of the bay.

Our research at the Centerville branch of the public library resulted in several faded posters of Impressionist masterpieces which we used as props in our presentation, illustrations to go with the list of names and dates we reported.

I was only mildly interested when I found out that we would be going on a field trip to see the Impressionist exhibit later that same year. The thought of traveling all of the way across the bay to San Francisco was way more exciting to most of us than the idea of seeing some Impressionist paintings. But then I saw the paintings up close. Too close actually. My friends were embarrassed that I kept leaning over the guard rails and setting off the alarms. But I didn't care. The paintings looked nothing like the faded posters. I had never seen anything so beautiful, and I couldn't understand how we had prepared a presentation about Impressionism without really learning anything about it.

The many art history classes I took in college exposed me to all types of art, but Impressionism remains my favorite. My decision to pursue art in college dismayed my parents. In their minds, there was nothing practical about art. To keep the peace, I agreed to pursue a double major, psychology being the "practical" degree. I graduated to find that neither of my degrees provided me with marketable skills. The realities of adulthood pushed my art further and further to the back burner. It didn't help that I had a knack for finding partners that discouraged, even ridiculed, my art-making.

That all changed in 2005. I found my partner who fully supported and encouraged my art. I moved to San Francisco and immersed myself into its art. And I found a job that allowed me to share my passion for art with my students and introduce them to the real beauty of Impressionism.

My mother never understood why I was so determined to live in San Francisco, with the ludicrous price of real estate there. It was worth it to me, though, because I was able to expose my daughter, beginning at a young age, to the art, music, and culture I did not begin to learn about until I was a teenager. Though my daughter's childhood passion for art did not turn into a life-long passion, she is a more well-rounded person for having grown up in a city rich with arts and culture.
Being "older" parents, my partner and I weren’t sure we would ever be grandparents. Today we welcomed our great-granddaughter into the world, born in the same hospital in San Francisco as my daughter and granddaughter were. My granddaughter already talks about taking her child to museums and the ballet. I am looking forward to holding my great-granddaughter in my rocking chair and sharing with her the picture books I have written and illustrated.
Walter Tyler
Dust and Boots

Inspired by "Beginnings," a painting by Max Beckmann.

Dust. When will that woman come in and dust this room? Open a window? Something? Am I, Puss-in-Boots, to be treated this way?

"Boots?"

"Shut up, Gnome. I am thinking."

"Aways thinking. Thinking Boots!"

"Yes, very well. Boots. I’m wearing your boots. As I have since Max put them on me ages ago.

"My Boots," said Gnome.

"Take it up with management," I said and turned my back on him. It was dark, but perhaps he’d get the idea. He lived in the wardrobe after all. He could probably see in the dark. Not me. My fur longs for the sun. And that damned woman hasn’t opened that door since Max left for school.

He didn’t take me with him. He always takes me with him. What wrong have I committed to be treated thus? What is the motive for my imprisonment? If I were taller, perhaps I could reach the door. And then what? Stroll through the living room? Catch mice in the kitchen? I am a house cat true, but someone might notice my stitching.

"Gnome!"

"Boots?"

"You can reach this door can’t you? Why don’t you do me a favor and go for a walk."

"Boots!" Gnome said.

"Ah, this exhausts me. There’s nothing to do in here! Nothing to see! I’m meant for adventure. And you,” I pointed into the dark, “are meant for—”

"Boots!"

Then he pulled my legs out from under me. I swung around, claws bared, and took a swipe at air. All I got was dust, and Gnome got my boots.

Dust and Boots
Narrative Writing
Short Story; Artwork as Character
**WORDS & PICTURES**

*Black, White and One Color*
Lighting, temperature, character, mood, setting, continuity and rhythm: These are but a few of the basic, yet fundamental, building blocks of visual storytelling. Favoring content and narrative over finished product, this course aims to help students examine their assumptions of these visual fundamentals in their own work through a limited and focused palette. Using only black and white, mixed with spot colors, students will be given a series of exercises that are intended to disrupt and challenge current working methods. The goal is to gain a better understanding of storytelling as both artists and as authors.

*Narrative Writing*
An author is broadly defined as "one who originates or gives existence to anything; a creator." More narrowly defined, it's someone who practices writing as a profession. Skilled writers use language to successfully portray individual ideas and unique images, and skilled visual artists can take those ideas and images and push them far beyond the written word. Combine the two and great things can happen. Exploring the "artist as author" is the goal of this workshop. Personal artistic voice will be explored through on-location and in-class writing exercises, often done in tandem with images created in Black, White and One Color. Universal themes present in literary genres and popular culture will be analyzed and debated. Students will be required to keep a written journal to help them promote, practice and refine a relationship between visual and narrative storytelling. An extensive reading list will be scrutinized and discussed, and lectures by guest authors will be scheduled.

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*SVA NYC*