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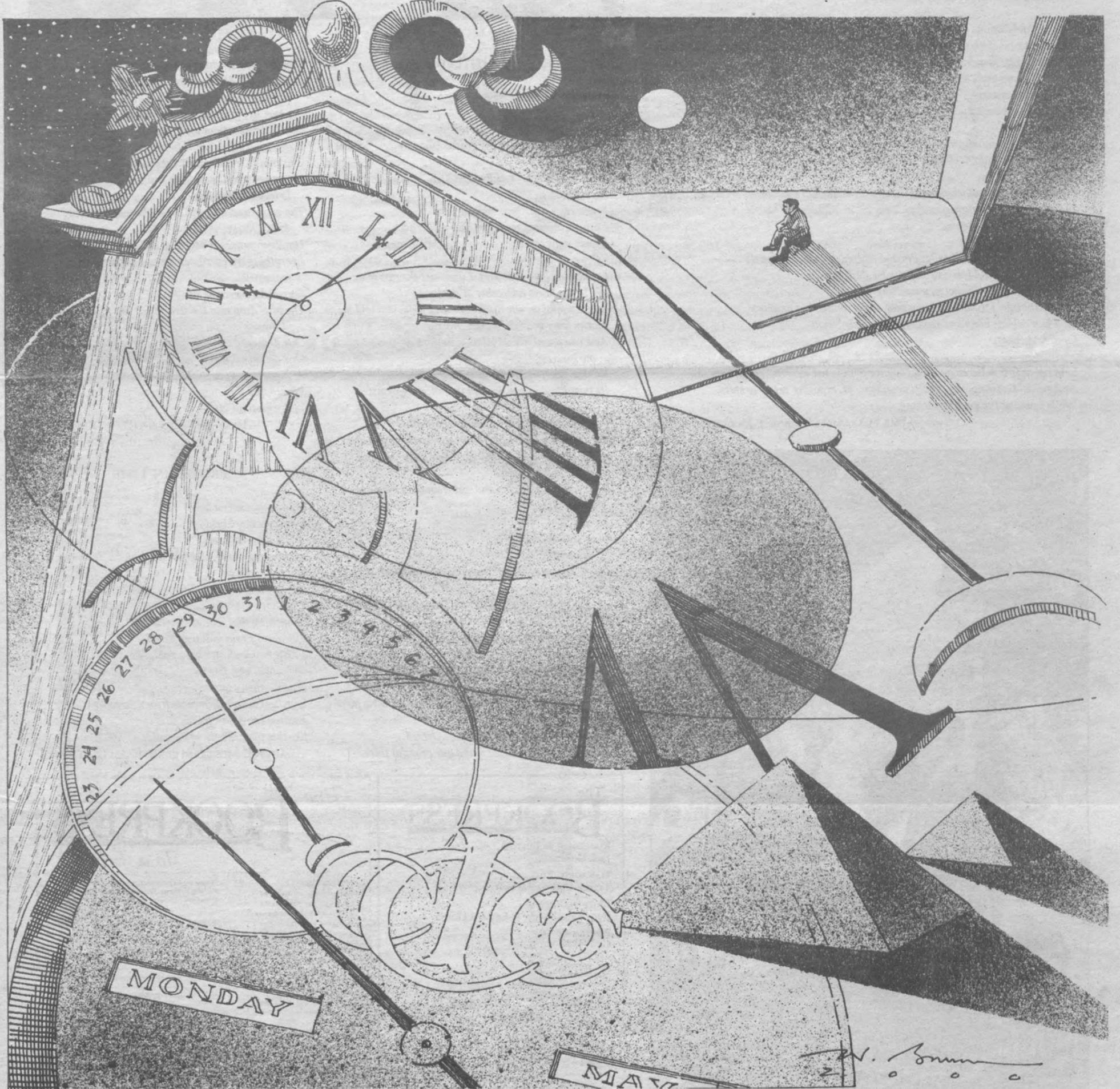
# The BOOKPRESS

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE LITERARY ARTS

Volume 10, Number 5      June 2000      Ithaca, New York      FREE

ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD

## ITHACA FESTIVAL 2000



Bill Benson

# Five Poems by Local High School Students

## SESTINA

Night growth  
Reaching green and nodding stamens  
Towards the black—an exhalation  
Of peppers. I awaken taller, but the cool moisture of stars  
Cannot penetrate my window,  
And I ache.

I long for a different garden, aching  
Plants pained by growth  
Choking on heavy air, behind a window  
Hung with drapes: orange day lilies hide stamens  
From night, rooted in their past. But stars  
Pulse, force me to exhale,

Remind me that breathing out  
Is something roses do, releasing ache  
In a rush of crimson, wafting to stars.  
My garden is not afraid of growing  
Into itself, leaves, buds, stems, stamens  
Filling the ground. I open my window,

Scents and blossoms permeate air, freed from behind cold glass.  
My head brims with flowerings, I forget to exhale,  
Face tickled by powdery stamens.  
They hide my steady ache,  
My jealousy of carrots' joyous growth—  
Not entirely. Inwardly, I curse stars

Who pour light in my garden. Stars,  
Vines, tendrils unfold—behind the window,  
Barrenness. I grow,  
Unwillingly, wary of what I may become, at odds with expectations. Garden sighs  
In resignation. My stuntedness an ache,  
Alone, from root to stamen.

They are disappointed. Sunflowers and creeping phlox drop petals  
In despair. If I could learn to blossom by starlight  
That seeps through keyholes, my aching  
Would subside. I would leave my post at the unyielding window  
And join delphiniums and radishes in the exhalation  
Of night growth.

I am not as grounded as an orchid; my growth is not a matter of stamens  
And stems. Exhaling, my garden accepts roots, exposing petals to stars,  
While I wait at the window, aching.

—EMILY GOLDMAN, 9th grade, Montessori School



Bill Mutch

## UNTITLED

there is never language enough  
to describe these glances  
quivering seconds pass like turtles

—SHEELA RAO, 12th grade, Ithaca High School

## I REMEMBER

I remember when you took me here  
I can see the rock we sat on just a year ago  
Except now, there are velvety patches of moss.

I remember how awkward it was, just the two of us  
We barely knew each other at the time  
As we sipped on our Sunkist orange soda, you told me  
Stories from your childhood...from your home  
And when we weren't talking, we just lay there on  
my grandmother's  
blanket, listening to the water  
Its mist beading our faces in the hot, muggy air.

I remember skipping rocks into the creek,  
The way they bounced off the water's mirrored surface.  
As we stood on the creek's edge, you took my hand  
and held it in yours.  
Your fingers were cold and wet from the condensation  
on the soda can.

I can still feel it  
...I can remember  
—CAITLIN KELLY, 12th grade, Ithaca High School

## 15 YEARS FALLING INTO AN OCEAN

As we lay upon a log,  
Cherishing everything we know,  
Thinking of our lives to come,  
Wondering what the future holds,  
Creating a memory that will be held in our hearts for-  
ever,  
Scared to leave this fantasy we've created,  
The sounds of nature surround our peaceful trace,

The leaves rustle high above our solitude,  
Our thought-filled minds awaken to notice a single  
leaf falling from the sky,  
We look to the flowing stream below,  
Our lives have been so standard,  
Everything has fallen into place,  
Our minds rebel against the rules we know so well,  
We looked upon each other and realized that we had  
to let ourselves free,  
The water was cold and the night was becoming  
dark,  
However our souls edged us to leap,  
Everything we ever lived for came down to that  
moment,  
Ourselves overcame us,  
The brief drop into the stream felt like fifteen years  
plunging into an ocean,  
Our drenched clothing adhered to our flesh,  
Our childhood memories filled the water,  
And covered us in happiness,  
We stopped for a moment in time to realize...  
We're growing up.

—HEATHER LACEY AND DANA KINGSBURY,  
11th grade, Ithaca High School

## FROZEN IN TIME

He's grown into a boy  
from the baby I held in my arms  
A hand on his head  
as if the man who stands beside him  
wants to hold on,  
keep grounded in this life  
They have the same name  
Something that will forever connect them  
But never again will they stand,  
a little boy with shocking red hair  
and a man who has  
seen too many years,  
together to have their faces frozen in time  
Because life didn't freeze  
like this picture held in my palm  
—CAITLIN L. MOSS, 11th grade, Ithaca High School



Bill Mutch

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR  
Jack Goldman

MANAGING EDITORS  
Tracey Calhoun & Barbara Woltag

FICTION EDITORS  
James McConkey & Edward Hower

POETRY EDITOR  
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### CONTRIBUTORS

David Colt, Franklin Crawford, Tom Eisner,  
Paul Fairbanks, Laurel Guy, Brian Hall,  
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Poleskie

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# A History of the Ithaca Festival

Laurel Guy

*What we need is a common story that connects us to Creation, that discovers the sacred, the magic in every moment. We need to evoke the deep sense of connection and relationships, the pattern that illuminates our place, our identity, direction and purpose...*

—Medicine Story

The story of the Ithaca Festival is a collection of Ithaca's most amazing moments—moments that capture Ithacans when they're at their most brilliant, open, artistic, and musical—when they're most alive. But there is also a richer pattern that emerges from the shaping of all these performances and events into one collective piece. It allows us to see the "glimmering" fabric of our community.

There is indeed more to this event than just the performances, the food, the crafts, the parade, the fireworks that happen for three days in June. Those of us who help guide the making of this celebration have often glimpsed something magical that is happening just below the surface.

Let me tell you a story about such a moment. It was 1995. The Ithaca Festival theme was "There's No Place Like Home." There were echoes of "The Wizard of Oz" throughout the Festival—red shoes, an Emerald City, and a hot air balloon ride.

It was a perfect day. Floating in a hot air balloon feels as if you're suspended in the wind. The horizon rises as you dip to brush the treetops. The view is spectacular and the sounds of the world below are crystal



Randi Anglin

clear—dogs barking, people talking. Although there is a pilot, there is no way to steer the balloon, no way to know where you will land. For that reason, a "chase car" follows the flight path.

As the sun set, we landed in a field in the middle of nowhere. I watched the crew pack up the balloon. I asked one of them if he knew where we were. He said, "Shaffer Road." Hmm. Shaffer Road. I walked around for a few minutes wondering why that sounded so familiar.

I looked down at the 1995 Ithaca Festival T-shirt I was wearing. You may recall that it was a brilliant watercolor by Ellie Jones featuring the barn of Littletree Orchards out in Newfield. Suddenly it dawned on me. Shaf-

fer Road was where Littletree Orchards was. I ran back to the same crew member and excitedly asked, "Do you know where Littletree is?" He looked at me like I was crazy and pointed. "It's right there." We had landed in the painting!

It seemed too impossible to be a coincidence. We knew that something magical had happened. We decided to take it as a sign that we were doing something right, that we were heading in the right direction. That day we learned that there was something greater at work here than we had imagined.

Some complain that our culture is lacking in tradition and ritual, that our holidays have become too commercialized. Yet, here in Ithaca, we each have the opportunity to participate in the making of this community celebration. We are all creators, we are all myth-makers. Be part of this neverending story that renews our collective spirit and reconnects us to this time and place. It is part of you.

1977

**Theme: Celebration Ithaca**

The first Ithaca Festival, "Celebration Ithaca" was planned to "pull together that feeling of community so often lacking in this day and age." It combined the talents of professional artists from around the country with the skills and talents of the local community. Funded by an NEA grant of \$15,500, this first festival occurred over 14 days in September and included dance, sculpture, music, art, mime, parades, and food. It culminated with a finale that sent athletes and dancers scaling walls and roofs on the Commons accompanied by a multimedia mix of music, slides and sculpture. Trumansburg artist, Loretta Pompilio, the Festival's "godmother" created enormous inflatable jack-in-the-boxes. Janet Braun-Reinitz wrapped the Whiton House on Terrace Hill in 300 yards of muslin, topped off with a big red bow—gift-wrapped for Celebration Ithaca. A balloon-like "Sky Launch" in the form of a waterfall (60' x 20') was created by environmental sculptor Dennis Valinski with the help of members of the community. He said he had hoped to incorporate the "essence of Ithaca" into the sculpture.

As the evening drew on, despite a prolonged drizzle, festival-goers got down and dirty beating festival-supplied pairs of sticks together in endless, driving rhythms.

1978

This year's festival was held on the first weekend in June, which has now become tradition. Harry Chapin wrote a song called "Flowers Are Red" especially for the Ithaca Festival:

*Flowers are red, young man,  
Green leaves are green.  
There's no need to see flowers any other way  
Than the way they always have been seen.  
There are so many colors in the rainbow*

*So many colors the morning sun  
So many colors in flowers  
And I see every one.*

Participants included Ithaca Dancemakers, Saga Ambegoakar, Mischief Mime, Carolyn Fellman's Off Central Children's Theatre, Ithaca Ballet, Cornell Folkdancers, Peter Fortunato, the Sweaty Tools, and many other local performers. Events included many musical performances, a giant braid dance, folk dancing, a car painting spectacular, art and craft demonstrations and studio open houses. The Zobo Funn Band and Peabody Band played to an audience of several hundred in the Strand Theatre. The sentiment was often heard that this year's celebration was better than the last because it was all local.

1979

**Theme: Water Over Rocks**

The 1979 festival was held over three days on the first weekend in June. Glorious sunny weather welcomed music, dance, crafts, poetry, kite-flying, and gymnastics. A highlight was the celebration commemorating the International Year of the Child.

1980

This was the first year Ithaca Festival buttons were made. The local community was urged to purchase these buttons for \$2.00 to help pay for the following year's festival. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development cited the Ithaca Festival as an outstanding downtown festival. One of the federal consultants stated that Ithaca "is an incredibly culturally aware city, with so much homegrown music, art and dance, and a festival is a good way to celebrate that. Festivals are good for everybody. They're a chance to get together and celebrate who you are, where you live, where you come from."

Highlights from this year included performances of *Desiderata*, written by Ira Rabois, and *Odyssey*, a musical journey through American history. Poems by local writers were exhibited in Ithaca City buses.

1981

Two obstacles almost prevented the 1981 Ithaca Festival from running smoothly, but in the end it was another successful festival year. A \$10,000 grant from the NEA to fund the festival was frozen because of a budget request from President Reagan; however, it was later reinstated. The loss of the once-vacant Center Ithaca site, where the festival cavorted for the past four years was mourned, but many new performance sites were constructed all over town. Highlights included face-painting, folksinger Susan Graetz, Finnish fiddler Richard Koski, synthesizer performers David Borden and S.S. Jones, vocalist Peggy Haine and the Low-down Alligator Jazz Band, the Appalachian Cloggers, Desperado, and the Open Air Storytelling Festival, featuring the Odyssey storytellers. More people than ever attended this year, with estimates at 20,000 people for the weekend.

1982

This was the first year that the festival was entirely supported by the local community without outside grant support. Festival button and T-shirt sales to the community thus became even more crucial. A bomb threat interrupted the festivities, which led to the evacuation of Center Ithaca; however, no bombs were found. Musical highlights were a smorgasbord of styles and cultures. The Ithaca High School Orchestra shared the stage with the Wild Balkan Band, Wicky Sears, and the Cornell Gamelan Society.

For the first time ever, an entire day of the festival had to be rescheduled—a never-ending rainstorm caused the final day of the festival to be rescheduled for the following Sunday.

*continued on page 6*

**To see the world in a grain of sand, and a beaver in a wildflower, hold**

**band and eternity in an hour. - William Blake**

**of sand, and a beaver in a wildflower, hold**

**infinity in the palm of your hand**

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# Off Campus at THE BOOKERY

## Don't Tell Me What To Do, Just Send Money

Helen E. Johnson  
and Christine Schelhas-Miller  
Tuesday, June 6, 7:00 p.m.



Finally--a much-needed "Dr. Spock" guide for the college years! Presented in an easy-to-read, cover-all-the-bases format. *Don't Tell Me What To Do, Just Send Money* will transform parents' relationships with their college students. Through humorous dialogues and realistic case examples, this comprehensive guide covers the key issues that concern parents and students including: initial adjustment--socially and academically; choice of major; dealing with the confident, confused or coasting student; career expectations; money issues; drinking, drugs and sexuality; fraternities and sororities; failing or dropping out; managing changes in the family; and how to handle normal developmental struggles, serious problems and crises. When children leave for college, many parents feel peripheral and uncertain about their changing role. Parents may lose control when their child goes off to college, but they haven't lost influence. This essential guide emphasizes the importance of parents becoming mentors and guides to their college-aged children--and it shows parents how to do it.

This event will take place at the Women's Community Building.

## Distemper Beth Saulnier Sunday, June 25, 2:00 p.m.

Following the smash success of her first novel, *Reliable Sources* (#1 Bestseller at the Bookery 1999), Off-Campus at The Bookery is pleased to welcome back local reporter-turned-mystery writer Beth Saulnier to read from her new thriller, *Distemper*. After a career-making murder case that proved personal bad news, sharp-witted journalist Alex Bernier swears she's going to report stories, not make them. Then a serial killer declares hunting season in her eccentric upstate New York university town--and is only too happy to keep Alex personally in his twisted loop. To stop him, Alex must face off against an attractive police detective, a ruthless New York Times reporter, and a tech-happy student voyeur. But as she races through a maze of bewildering leads, she doesn't know her rabidly clever subject is out to kill her story--permanently... Please come hungry to this event--Beth's mom will be providing edible goodies!

This event will take place in the upstairs atrium in the DeWitt Mall.



## Some Thoughts on the Country of Time

*Thoughts about time. I was thinking that perhaps time itself stands still.  
We think time is passing  
but it is really just us passing through.  
We are MOVING through time--like a car  
driving through the country of time.*

*We move through different states,  
past, present, future.  
The past continues to exist once we pass through it.  
What state was that, and how do we get back to it?*

*I was also thinking about future selves and past selves--  
that my child self is truly a separate person  
from who I am now.  
Does the future exist before we get there?  
The person that I am now...  
as a child, was I able to sense that person?  
Can I sense who I will become in the next 30 years?  
What kind of communication is there between selves--  
future, past, probable or improbable?*

*Perhaps though, time itself is not completely static.  
Perhaps it changes and moves--though at a different rate than we do.  
Like geologic time versus human time versus insect time.*

*Being able to feel time itself moving  
depends on your size.  
Our small size does not allow us to feel the earth moving.  
The earth itself is also moving through time on its own journey.*

*So think of time like a place, and how it is  
when you go back to a town that you haven't been to in a few years.  
It never is quite the way you remember it.  
The place of time also changes its shape.*

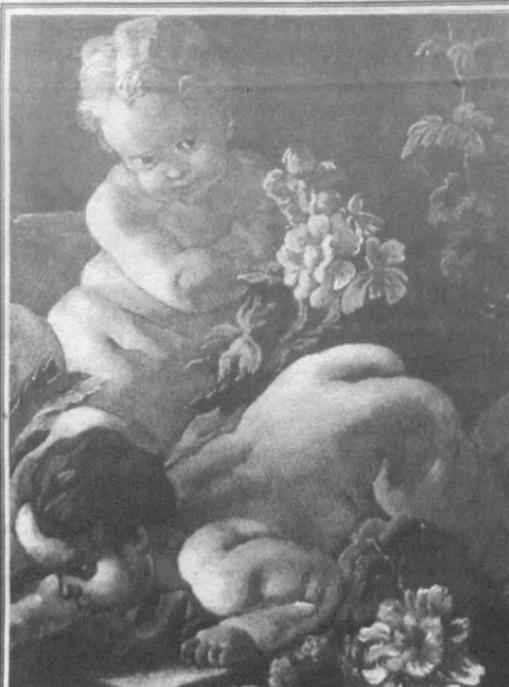
*Someone once said that the past is before us, ahead of us, not behind us.  
It is as though we are walking backwards to the future.  
We can only see the past.  
We rarely turn around for glimpses of the future.  
We are surrounded by the past.  
TV, newspapers, everything we see and read is already past.*

*Turn around.*

—LAUREL GUY



Courtesy of the Ithaca Festival



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# Open in 2048

Franklin Crawford

Mom knotted the sheer blue scarf under her chin with those thin, elegant fingers of hers. The dog there all excited thinking he was going, too. Mom reached down and buttoned the top button of my jacket. When she turned, I undid the button.

"Suit yourself," she said, not looking at me, but in a little cosmetic mirror, working the cherry-red lipstick just right. "But there's a chill in the air."

She closed the mirror, dropped it in her white handbag, then patted the pockets of her dun overcoat feeling for her sunglasses. She fit them to her face ceremoniously, two-handed, her fingertips resting a moment on the sunglasses frames as she acquainted herself to the dark. Mom took my hand and said, "off we go" and I felt the dog's disappointment as we edged and shooed him away from the door.

Out we went into the spinning blue day, out the long, lumpy driveway. Beefer barked a half-dozen hurt and whiney calls, muffled and lost in a stiff offshore breeze that fussed under hedges, flushed out dervishes of dust and carousels of leaves and debris. They spiraled across our path and vanished. Above, more wind demons skinned flocks of cloud from the blue belly flesh of the sky. Sunlight lapped and pulsed over the neighborhood in surging tides of irregular brilliance.

Mom suddenly let go of my hand.

"Can't you walk alone for five minutes without holding on to me?" she said. "You're getting to be such a momma's boy."

"I just want to make sure you're still there," I said.

"Still where? Frankie, where on God's earth do you think I would be? Do you think your mother is going to go up in a puff of smoke?"

The question reminded her to have a cigarette. At the stop light, she removed a red calfskin pouch from her bag and nimbly pecked a Parliament from its pack. She struggled to light it with A&P paper matches, but the mischievous wind blew them out one after another.

"Hells bells," Mom said, cigarette flopping in her mouth. The light turned red, then green, then red again before she got it lit. We stepped off the curb. Mom laughed, smoke whirling away from her face.

"What's so funny, Mom?"

"My son the voyeur," she said, and took my hand.

I savored the exotic word without begging its meaning. It was a rare treat to go downtown with Mom, and I had already forgotten about the morning's minor calamity.

At breakfast she had promised to take me on errands. Usually, she left me home with Beefer or waited for my brother or sister to get home from school before leaving. I dreaded the sheer scarf, the lipsticks and sunglasses, the deliberate pace of her preparations. Her exit line was always the same: "Don't you fret, I'll be home in two shakes of a lamb's tail."

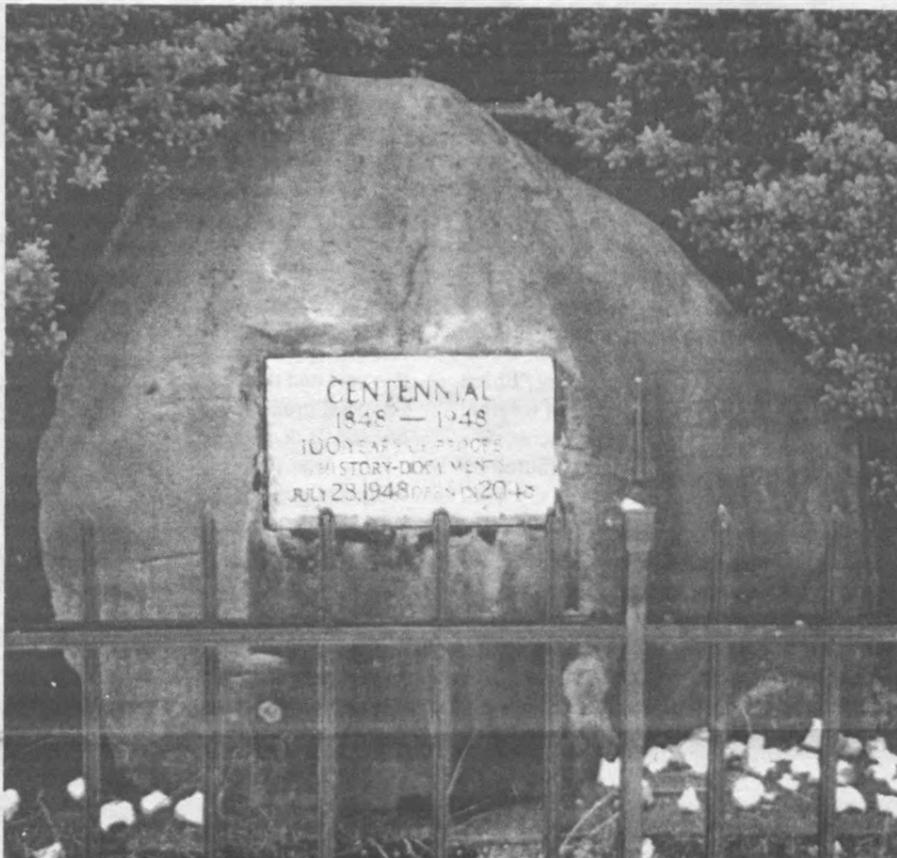
That was a stumper. I couldn't imagine any kind of animal didn't shake its tail real fast. Like Beefer. You couldn't even count how many times he shook his tail when it got going. But maybe lamb tails were different. Still, it seemed that any animal, even a dinosaur, could shake its tail twice by the time Mom got to the end of the driveway. She strolled at the dreamy tempo of wedding processions or funeral marches. A trip to the corner grocer seemed to me to take half a day. Mostly I waited and waited for her in the empty house thinking, "She's gone. They got her. Bad People got her."

But on this particular day the whole morning had been a festivity of anticipation. To kill time before we left, I played in a vacant lot by the train tracks where maple saplings reclaimed an old foundation. With a stick I found some critters under the bricks: a ball bug, a centipede, an ugly white worm with an orange head curled like a macaroni in the wet, wormy dirt and rotten leaves. Then the wind picked up. The saplings shivered overhead

and Beefer started digging crazy after things I couldn't see. A mid-morning express hurtled by, mostly empty; a cloud passed over the sun, and suddenly I wasn't sure if I had made up the story about Mom saying we were going shopping or if she already had gone shopping and I was out there alone. I thought she had told me not to come until she called. I tried to remember just how she said it, and the harder I tried the more trouble I had remembering exactly what she said or if any of it had happened at all. Did she really kiss my cheek and say, "Don't get yourself all dirty because we're going shopping?" Maybe I invented it.

I had to go check the house.

The windows were too high, so I dragged a wooden milk crate under a kitchen sill but she wasn't in there. The crate sank in the damp, moldy ground on the dark side of the



Franklin Crawford

house where we buried the dead cats. Coo-coo the black cat was buried there and so was Sweetie, the tabby and white that was named, I thought, because she looked Swedish.

Coo-coo's and Sweetie's cat bodies were there. But their cat souls were in heaven with Jesus and Grandpa Crawford. In heaven, Coo-coo and Sweetie and Gramps looked just like they did on earth only they wore white robes and Gramps couldn't spit tobacco juice because it would make stains. It was better in heaven than on earth and even though I had some serious questions about the cats and Gramps and where they were exactly, I didn't like the way Mom and Dad shushed me and changed the subject when I asked.

I hauled the crate to a row of windows outside Mom and Dad's bedroom. The curtains were pulled, but through a slit I could see shadowy movement: Mom. That was a relief. I stood tiptoe and watched her take a brown bottle from the dresser, which she emptied into a juice glass. Her head tilted back and down. Then she stood and slipped off her housecoat and was completely naked, a startling whiteness. The crate broke and I went "ass over tea kettle" as Mom was fond of saying.

\*\*\*\*

Main Street was only two blocks from our house and you could see how the trees yielded and opened like a gateway to the bright skyline of downtown.

In Grant's department store Mom picked out two shirts and a pair of dungarees that I had to try on. Bashful with the sales clerk, I held my ground, clutching the clothes. Mom got mad and whisked me into the dressing room and I tried on the pants and the shirts and they all fit just fine.

"You need to start doing some things on your own, Frankie," Mom said, tugging on the belt loop of the pants, pulling the shirt so

it hung right on me. "Your mother isn't always gonna be around to look after you."

"Why not?"

"Because I said so."

"Why won't you always be around?"

"Because," she said. "Now button your lips and zip up your fly."

I didn't want to leave the dressing room filled with Mom smells—perfume and something sharper, familiar and rich. I hugged her.

"Mom, if we stayed in here till the store closed, would we have to spend the whole night?"

"I guess so."

"We could watch TV together and sit on all the furniture," I said.

"And sleep in the bedding department, I suppose?"

"And play in the toy department."

get cigarettes, then the liquor store, a deep narrow place of shelves crammed floor-to-ceiling with colorful, gleaming bottles. My Hush Puppies squeaked on the red and black linoleum squares and I told Mom my new shoes were no good because they made noise. Mom said "shush" and got a large brown bottle with a white label and a green bottle with a yellow label and the man, Mr. Nelson, put them in a crackly brown bag then said, "wait a minute," and, like he was doing something real important, went in the back and returned with a strip of cardboard, which he slid down between the bottles. Done, he patted the bag with his crooked red fingers and tossed a packet of salted peanuts at me.

"Thank you," I said, picking them up off the floor.

"You're looking very lovely today, Sally," he said, as he took Mom's money. "Like a queen of the silver screen."

"Oh, you go on, Curtis," Mom said.

He was shorter than my dad, skinny. His hair was slicked back with a straight part like a white scar on the side.

"And this fella here," he said. "They grow fast don't they?"

"They sure do. He's gonna be a big, big boy," Mom said.

"Handsome kid. Gets his looks from his mother," Mr. Nelson said, and winked at Mom. I didn't like that wink.

On the way home the wind shifted, herding cloud animals along Main Street, over shops, cars, people, us. We reached the American Legion Hall. There was a big rock on the front lawn with a plaque that had words engraved.

"Mommie, read the rock to me!"

"Frankie, I'm tired, my feet hurt. I just want to get home and rest. Don't you want to take a nap?"

"Please, Mom, tell me what the rock says."

I stopped and leaned my head between the rails of the iron fence bordering the lawn. Mom stood behind me and set the shopping bags down. I turned to see her lifting the sunglasses.

"It says: Centennial. Eighteen Forty-Eight to Nineteen Forty-Eight," Mom paused, fished for a cigarette. She tried to continue while she struck a match: "One Hundred ... Years ... of—oh, hells bells!"

She stopped, cupped her hands round the cigarette and got it lit on the second try.

"One Hundred Years of Progress: History, Documents, July Twenty-Eighth, Nineteen Forty-Eight, Open in Twenty Forty-Eight." I turned and she exhaled a plume of smoke. The breeze yanked it away.

"What does it mean?"

"It means that in a long time from now they are going to break open the rock, or move it, or something, and look at all the old things people put in there."

"What old things?"

"Oh, not very exciting stuff. Papers, maybe some old tools. Just ordinary ... things."

"Why would they put papers and stuff in there?"

"Because," she said, tapping an ash. "Things get important after a long time, I guess."

"Like Dad's Army stuff?"

"Like that."

"Can we go see the rock get opened?"

"Oh geez, honey, that won't be for a long, long time."

I watched her. She looked down the street, away from me, and bit her lip.

"Please, won't you go with me?"

"Do we have to make a plan right now?"

The breeze riffled her blue scarf. Across the street, the Methodist church steeple seemed to be sailing, its high white cross lonely and alone.

"Please? Just say you'll come with me to see the rock get opened?"

"Frankie, for heaven's sake, you'll be older than me by then."

Her tone frightened me. The Legion flag snapped impatiently. I tugged on Mom's overcoat.

"Please, Mommie, please."

continued on page 10

# A HISTORY OF THE

continued from page 3

## 1983

Highlights from the 1983 festival included events in Cass Park, with performances by the Limberjacks, as well as contra-dancing, and a standing-room-only crowd at the Hangar Theatre for a Cole Porter revue. "Everything Goes Cole" featured local actors and singers.

The sun shone throughout the weekend until the closing minutes of the festival at Stewart Park when, almost on cue, rain started falling.

## 1984

By 1984, increased button sales meant that the Ithaca Festival was now almost entirely self-supporting.

Highlights from this year included a multimedia presentation of twelve Ithaca artists, "Creative Reflections," by Gordon Webb. Todd Peterson Dancers' Ithaca City Crew stole the show with its break dancing routine to music by Freeze; silhouetted dancers were reflected in nine windows of the downtown Ramada Inn. Musical performances included Laurie Conrad, Bill Steele, Eric Feinstein and Non-Bondage.

## 1985

### Theme: All That Jazz/Celebration of the Arts/International Day

Face painters were removed from the Commons on Friday because the paint was too much of a mess. They returned Saturday and Sunday with drop cloths for the concrete. No events were held in Stewart Park this year, due to park renovations. "The Museum on the Commons" featured paintings by local artists displayed in shop windows.

## 1986

### Theme: 10th-Anniversary Celebration

Reaching a crossroads, and forming a new non-profit organization, Ithaca Festival supporters and organizers briefly debated taking the year off to put the organization on a firmer footing.

A 10th-anniversary cake measuring 8 feet by 4 feet, and 14 inches deep with an apricot filling and chocolate icing was baked by Clever Hans Bakery. Highlights included an outdoor exhibition by fifteen Ithaca sculptors, including Deb Jones, Cly Boehs, and Robert Jessup. The artists used cardboard, clothespins, styrofoam, duct tape, paint, and other discardables to create pieces designed to last only a few days—an exercise in evanescence. Perennial favorite performers included local belly dancers, singer Mark Rust, the live mannequin, Dickens the Clown, and the Scottish Country Dancers. A sampling of the gastronomic delights found at the festival included falafel, potato pancakes, freshly picked strawberries, Navajo fry bread, tempura, mango juice, Cornell chicken, and ice cream.

## 1987

### Theme: Ithaca On Cayuga: A Diverse Community

Music was the main attraction this year: The Joe Salzano Big Band, Caprice Fox, The Fe Nunn Jazz Trio, The Flumerflutes, Calvary Baptist Choir, The Burns Sisters, Bernie Milton, and Peter Dodge were but a few of the high notes. Herb Nelson designed a parade to remember—floats covered with lights depicting images of Ithaca, all mystically imagined. A dance troupe from Binghamton, Second Hand Dance Company, made their first public performance—a memorable moment in festival history. Once again rain interfered with Sunday at Stewart Park, and all events were moved to the high school.

## 1988

### Theme: Celebration of the Century

This year's festival helped to celebrate this



Randi Anglin

unusual (and sometimes peculiar!) city's 100th birthday, with special events including a Centennial parade, a re-enactment of the signing of the city charter, and—for the first time—fireworks to end the festival at Stewart Park. Expanded to five days, this year's celebration saw Barbie and the Rockers, Moxie, and Mark Rust singing "Ithaca Sunset" (the festival anthem), an original play written by Carol Kammen, the world's largest ice cream sundae (contributed by Ben & Jerry's), and the return of the Mutt Dog parade.

## 1989

### Theme: Ithaca Blooms

This year the first short story and poetry writing contest was held, store windows on The Commons became galleries to showcase an exhibit of art works from Ithaca artists titled "Self-Portrait of a Community," and the Ithaca Festival Kazoo Band, numbering 700 played in Stewart Park.

## 1990

### Theme: Ithaca Festival: On Location

This year's theme, "On Location," celebrated the history of local silent film production, which was centered at Wharton Studios, located in Stewart Park, in the early 1900s. Ithaca films could be seen for just a nickel at the State Theatre all weekend.

## 1991

### Theme: Celebrate You and Me

An aerial photo featuring 500 Ithacans spelling out the word "Ithaca" was taken by Jon Reis from a hot air balloon. An original play by Laurel Guy, "Off Off Buffalo," featured a huge cast of Ithaca notables appearing as the buildings and landmarks of Ithaca, including the Clinton House (Dorothy Conon), the State Diner (Regi Carpenter), the Ithaca College Towers (Perri LoPinto and Shauna Guidicci), the Gorges (the Burns Sisters), the Strand (Laurie Conrad), and Buffalo Street (George Ferrari) to name a few.

## 1992

### Theme: When Pigs Fly

Memorable experiences from this year included this reminiscence from 11 year old Katie Hassinger: "I had a taco salad. It was really good. Actually, being with your friends is the best part."

## 1993

### Theme: Celebrate Community

This year featured an edible art contest themed: "Historic Places that Make my Community Special." Shops on The Commons offered "Festival Bonus" discounts and coupons if festival souvenirs were shown.

## 1994

### Theme: That's Imagination

Due to low button sales in previous years the Ithaca Festival was nearly canceled. But at the last minute it rose like a phoenix from the ashes, renewed again. The spirit at this festival was the best in years. The energy was high and the community responded—over 10,000 buttons were sold this year and the Festival was back on solid financial ground. The weather was sunny, dry and 73 degrees every day!

This was the year of the Phoenix—a sculpture built by Durand van Doren that was 35 feet long and 25 feet high. It was going to be burned on Cayuga Lake at the end of the festival as a grand finale, but alas, it took until 1997 to perfect the "fire on the water."

## 1995

### Theme: There's No Place Like Home

There were echoes of the "Wizard of Oz" throughout the festival this year. Festival-goers were asked to wear red shoes and local artist Tim Merrick created giant 7-foot ruby

slippers. Local historian Gretchen Sachse created a "Secret History Tour" that included remnants of the original Yellow Brick Road. (Long ago and far away State Street used to be paved with yellow bricks!) Our magnificent parade didn't happen because a whirling tornado with Dorothy-force winds blew through town just as the parade was getting ready to step off. There was a floating Emerald City on Cayuga Lake on Sunday and overhead a small plane towed a banner that read, "Surrender, Dorothy!"

This year the festival established the Artists' Program Fund and all performers were paid a stipend for the first time in Festival history!

## 1996

### Theme: Life is but a Dream

Row, row, row your boat—there were boats and floats. The Cascadilla Boat Club rowed into the sunset.

Gently down the stream—kinder, gentler crowds basked in three days of perfect sunny blue-sky weather.

Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily—jug band orchestra, street games, piñatas, swing dancing, fireworks.

Life is but a dream—before you knew it the 1996 Ithaca Festival was over, a memory. Enjoy the moment.

Throughout the spring, Ithacans remembered and wrote down their dreams as part of the Community Dream Project. Dreams were hung on the Festival Dream Line on The Commons.

Festival-goers made paper cranes, each person writing a wish inside the paper before folding it and hanging it on the Festival Dream Line. There is a saying: If you make one thousand cranes, you will live forever. Hopefully the community will live forever and our wishes will all come true.

After the festival, the cranes were sent to the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, Japan where every year millions of paper cranes are sent from all over the world to commemorate



It's  
**T. About Time**  
an  
Ithaca Festival  
reading

**FRIDAY, JUNE 2 • 8:00 P.M.**  
Women's Community Building  
100 West Seneca Street, Ithaca, New York

featuring stories and poems by:

NAN BELL • YVONNE FISHER  
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JANE SPRAGUE • NAOMI STRICHARTZ  
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# ITHACA FESTIVAL

the anniversary of the bombing.

1997

**Theme: Hello Old Friend**

The "Hello Old Friend" Tile Project attracted 500 people of all ages who each painted a ceramic tile. After the festival, a mural was created out of these tiles inside the DeWitt Mall. The Water and Rock Friendship Tree was created by local artist, Jane Dennis. And in DeWitt Park a special Blessing of the Animals was held. Festival-goers brought their pets to a simple service of prayer, music and wonder.

On Sunday, a grand finale to remember! At dusk, a great fog settled on the lake. Slowly through the mist, a barge lit by small glowing luminarias appeared. The fire was lit and the giant paper, wood, and cloth figures burst into

flames. Overhead, fireworks exploded. The Lost Sailors played at the Ballpark Stage while, at the water's edge, a circle of drummers was joined by festival-goers in a ritual of drumming as the fire died out.

1998

**Theme: Happy To Be Here!**

This year's theme celebrated the leap of faith that we all take to simply be happy—to experience joy in the moment.

Special highlights this year included "Aha-hahee, the Bird of Happiness" a giant bird created by Jane Dennis that required thoughts of happiness in order to be light enough to fly. This was also the year of the World's Largest Tofu Dog (144 feet long), the World's Largest Game of Telephone (513 people played), the World's Largest Number of People'Hula

Hooping at one time (500 people), and the year of 10,000 jokes. Pass the laughter!

1999

**Theme: Odyssey**

*The Odyssey* is the 2,700-year-old-story of Odysseus, one of the Greek heroes at Troy, and the misadventures that occurred during his ten-year-long journey home to Ithaca. The 1999 Ithaca Festival was about the journeys that have brought each one of us through thick and thin to this destination, this mystical place called Ithaca. We had sunny weather all three days, though it was a bit hot on Sunday—but no one complained much.

There was a marathon reading of Homer's *Odyssey* with the help of many volunteer readers. (It took 15 1/2 hours!) Other highlights included a Trojan Horse race, Ancient Olympic Games for kids, Penelope's Loom—a 30-minute whirlwind play of the entire *Odyssey* complete with local monsters and audience participation, the first annual Knitter's NASCAR Race, the He-Man Chainsaw Marching Band. And of course, there was fabulous food and great performances.

One other memorable aspect to this year's festival happened *before* the event. In the spring three intrepid travelers and a plush dolphin named "Odysseus" embarked on a special odyssey to Greece, ending in ancient Ithaki. Each week from March 16 through June 1, the Ithaca Journal retold the tale of Odysseus, the King of Ithaca and printed weekly postcards from our travelers. It was a great way to make sure everyone was familiar with this incredible story.

2000

We hope that this year's theme, "All The Time in the World," will inspire us to think about time in new ways, perhaps lessening our feelings of anxiety and pressure that we have no time.

We rush along, the days get shorter and shorter. If only time would hold still, just a little bit, to let us savor life's simplest moments.

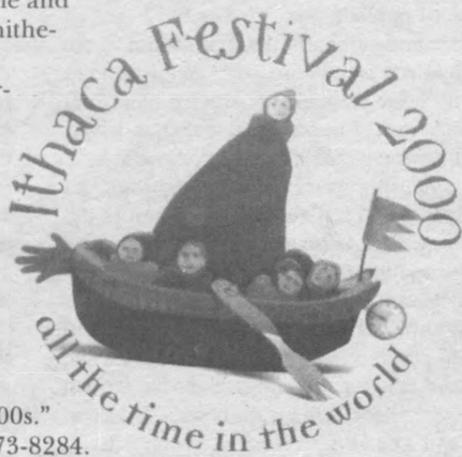
We are not here forever. The moment is passing...yet if you slow down, hold up the shard of the passing moment to the light, you will find that all eternity exists in that one moment.



Mike Rambo

## Ithaca Festival 2000 Highlights

- ◆ **Jane Dennis, Ithaca Festival Artist:** Come see the unique, whimsical painted wood sculptures of this brilliant local artist. Her solo show (including the sculpture pictured on the Festival T-shirt) will be displayed in the Clinton House through June.
- ◆ **Finding Time:** Think about time in a new way. Look for a giant pendulum, artist clocks, and other installations that these artists have created. On display at the locations listed, May 29-June 12. George Rhoads (Contemporary Trends); Tim Merrick (15 Steps); The Oiseaux Sisters (Moosewood Restaurant); Rob Licht (DeWitt Park); Kent Loeffler & Kate Gould (Borealis); Loretta Louviere (Innovations, Clinton Hall); Harry Lyttell (The Bookery); Emme Edmunds (Madeline's); Victoria Romanoff (Chair and a half)
- ◆ **Make a Tibetan Mandala Painting:** Venerable Tenzin Yignyen, a Tibetan Buddhist monk, will guide you in making this cosmic diagram. (Fri. & Sat. Center Trees, 12:00-5:00)
- ◆ **Zen Boards:** The art of living in the moment. Enjoy painting on this special surface without worrying about the outcome. (Fri. & Sat. Center Trees, all day)
- ◆ **Human Sundial:** Step into this giant sundial...you cast the shadow, be the measure of all time! (Fri & Sat. Inner Plaza, all day)
- ◆ **Sand Sculpture:** See the world in a ton of sand! Come make pyramids and other fun sand sculptures in Dewitt Park! (Fri & Sat., Dewitt Park, 12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.)
- ◆ **Twilight Zone Film Fest:** E.J. Novak presents original episodes of the Twilight Zone plus rare footage of Rod Serling. Stay outdoors after the Festival—the films will be projected on the wall of the Firehouse Theatre! (Fri. Firehouse Theatre, 10:00 p.m.)
- ◆ **Community Time Capsule:** Write a letter to the future resident of the house you're living in now! Write a prediction about Ithaca in 2025. Vote on other items to be included. Capsule will be opened at Ithaca Festival 2025. Be there! (Fri. & Sat. Playground, 12:00-5:00)
- ◆ **"All the Time in the World" Race:** The winner will be the LAST person to cross the finish line. All are welcome to enter this slow motion race! (Sat. W. State St., near State Theatre, 12:30 p.m.)
- ◆ **It's About Time:** An Ithaca Festival Reading by Irene Zahava and Friends. (Fri. Women's Community Bldg., 8:00 p.m.)
- ◆ **It's About Time:** A musical comedy in which Einstein dreams and contemplates the nature of time and gravity by the Black Umbrella Troupe. 277-4549. (Fri. Cayuga Pavilion 1:00 p.m., Sat. Center Pavilion, 3:30 p.m., Sat. Cayuga Pavilion, 5:00 p.m.)
- ◆ **Ithaca Community Poets:** Four local poets will offer "Eternity in Half an Hour"—original poems about time and timelessness. 273-3744. (Sat. Amphitheatre, 1:00 p.m.)
- ◆ **3rd Floor Productions:** Several brief time plays by this women's playwriting group. Their studio is just above Morris II. (Sat., 136 the Commons, 2:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.)
- ◆ **Tompkins County Museum:** Two time-related programs: "The Ithaca Calendar Clock" by Geoff Morse (Sat, 401 E. State St., 1:00 p.m.) and "Ithaca Pastimes: Outdoor Recreation in the early 1900s." (Sat., 401 E. State St., 2:00 p.m.) 273-8284.



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# Time as a River

J. Robert Lennon

If time is a river—and a lot of people will try to tell you that it is—it certainly isn't the one you're thinking of. It is not a slow, inexorable river, sweeping everything it touches into the sea; nor is it a fierce, destructive river crashing through an unpeopled wilderness.

This river has no headwaters and it never empties. Its waters are not potable. You would not want to swim in the river of time, nor would you want to fish in it. Not that you wouldn't catch anything: you probably would, but you are likely to want to throw it back. Unfortunately, things fished from the river of time cannot be thrown back.

The banks of the river of time are cluttered with houses, graveyards, parking lots, farms, highways, hospitals, churches, and bars. Sometimes it seems like everyone in the world lives there, and in fact they do: not just everybody alive now, but everyone who ever lived and everyone who will ever live. People from the past live upstream: you can barely make them out, waving to you from the banks. Don't bother waving back, though; they won't notice you. People in the future live downstream. You may think you can see them, see their cities, their achievements, their failures. You may even think they look a little like you. When you reach the future, however, you will find that your eyes deceived you. Sorry.

Everyone falls in at some point. They float downstream, into the future, where they sink or break into pieces. If you reach in from the present and haul out one of these people, these people from the past, you might be able to learn a thing or two about them, but it will probably be distorted or wrong. Their features will have been washed away by the flow of time. There are people who think that the dead should be left in the river of time, that we shouldn't bother hauling them out, and these people may be right.

The river of time is full of garbage. That said, the river is also full of treasure. Sometimes it is hard to distinguish the two. Something may be thrown into the river as garbage and found on the bank downstream as treasure. Occasionally something—an idea, a piece of art, a dead person—might get caught on a branch somewhere and refuse to be carried off. For as long as this thing is snagged, it will seem timeless. You might look at it and think it looks pretty good, and come back a week later and still think it looks good. But eventually the thing detaches and is gone, and you can't imagine what you thought was so interesting about it.

There are people who spend their lives trying to make their way upstream, into the past. You may do this if you wish. If you do, know that your boat is unsteady, it may leak, and you may never find your way back to the present. You may be capsized by some object floating downstream: perhaps a person you loved. If you survive such an encounter, you may try to bring this person onto your boat. This is not recommended. If you do manage to reach the past, you may not be pleased by what you find. People will ignore you, for one thing. A house you once lived in may prove dingy and old. The streets of your hometown will be neither as tidy or friendly as your recollections have indicated. The women will not be as beautiful, the men as handsome, as memory has promised. For this reason, travel upstream is discouraged.

Travel downstream is also discouraged. This does not stop people from trying, however. You can see them on the bank, busying themselves for their trip to the future. They cannot be bothered by the present; their eyes are on the river of time. When they enter the water, they are pleasantly surprised to discover how quickly it carries them into the future. They feel effective, privileged. They suddenly get the idea that existence is a sort of boat race, which they are winning. Eventually these people turn

around to see if the present is paying attention, but the present is gone.

If you look long enough at your section of river, you begin to get the idea that it is the most important section of the entire river. You will believe this regardless of how much of the river you have actually seen. You get the idea that your section of river is moving faster than all the others, that its waters are more beautiful, its contents more profound or valuable. You may begin to think that the waters of your section of river are somehow blessed, that they offer great wisdom, or eternal youth, or inexhaustible pleasures that are not available to other people on other banks. It is recommended that you quit kidding yourself.

The river of time does not always look the same. If you are sharing a bench at the river's edge with a beloved companion, the river may strike you as moving unusually quickly, and you may notice very little floating debris. If your companion then tells you that it isn't working out and that he or she would like to start sharing benches with other people, the river may suddenly seem thick and sluggish and clogged with junk. Do not be alarmed; this is normal.

It is a good idea not to live too close to the river of time, or to situate your business there. The flowing water tends to erode the river's banks, and things that once seemed inviolable may quickly be undercut. These things may tumble into the river and be carried away by time. Entire religions, systems of thought, races of people, and species of creature have set up shop in what seemed like a safe area, and have later been carried away. Not that there was anything they could do about it. Though controlling the speed and direction of the river of time is a perennial obsession, it is futile.

You may want to ignore the river of time. Most people do. You may go days, even weeks, without even noticing it; you may completely forget it is there. But then one

morning you will look in the mirror and catch a glimpse of the glittering river, reflected over your shoulder. Or you will be enjoying the scent of a delicious meal or bouquet of flowers, and suddenly you will detect a faint odor of decay, and you will realize it is coming from the river. At times like this, you may feel inexorably drawn toward the river. You may reflect on its permanence, its overwhelming presence, its hugeness and incomprehensibility, and you will feel powerless in the face of it. It is not recommended that you share these thoughts with others. They don't want to be reminded of the river either. Don't expect to say to someone, "Boy, the river is really flowing today," and get any kind of positive reaction from that person. If you absolutely insist on talking about the river, people will stop listening to you. If this happens, you may become obsessed with the river. You may even wish to end it all and jump in. That's your prerogative. Understand, however, that if you are fished out, you will never get the smell of the river of time out of your clothes and hair, and people will turn away when you pass and may refuse to sit near you in restaurants.

In fact, let's forget about the river of time entirely. Time is only time, the river is simply a river. They aren't related at all. This is probably the best way of looking at it. This way, you could go down to the river on a sunny afternoon and gaze at it for awhile, perhaps with a lover or friend, and the two of you might find it pleasant, even romantic. You might even get the idea that time is standing still. Terrific! Hold that thought. Time is standing still. As you turn away and climb back up the bank, tell yourself that life is beautiful and will last forever, and that, as you watched the flowing river, nothing passed by but water.

J. Robert Lennon is the author of two novels, *The Light of Falling Star* and *The Funnies*. He lives in Ithaca.

# Who's Counting?

Brian Hall

you're just getting older . . . and now you're even older . . . and now you're even older than before . . .

This paraphrase of a song I heard a year or so ago has become the mosquitoey mantra of my middle age.

Middle age! How did that happen?

As a writer, I prefer to think of it as my Middle Period.

In the last few years I've gotten into the habit of calculating, whenever I read a book, the age of the author when it was written. If it is, say, his third book (since I am sweatily imagining rivals, I will assume them for syntactical simplicity to be male, although I am every bit as envious of precocious women writers), I note when he wrote his previous two books. I wince whenever I see books published one or two years apart. Three is acceptable. By four, I'm feeling fine.

I especially note the man's age at publishing his first book: if he was older than I was when I published my first book, I feel all warm and sympathetic toward him. I see weight and care in his work, careworn lines on his brow. Dammit, the man has lived first!

Whereas if he was younger than I was, then whatever brilliance his book may have is obviously superficial—workshop spit and polish. In fact, the more brilliant it is the more suspect, because flashes in the pan and pea-sized meteors fizzling out are by definition brilliant: "all sizzle and no steak," as my neighbor, friend, and fellow-writer Paul Cody puts it. I feel great respect and warmth toward Paul because although he has written one more book than me, he is six years older.

Don DeLillo published his first book when he was 35: serious novelist.

John Updike published his first book

when he was 24; by his thirtieth birthday he had produced six books and had won the National Book Award: flash in the pan.

Jim Crace's first book came out when he was 40: serious.

Frank Kermode, reviewing Crace's fourth book, said (I am paraphrasing again) it pleased him to remember that Crace was only 52, and thus at the beginning of what for many writers was the period of their best work. I feel great respect and warmth toward Frank Kermode as a critic.

Edith Wharton published all the books by which she is known today after she was 40.

Penelope Fitzgerald published her first book when she was 60! I will revere her work when I find time to read her.

I am 40 years old. My Early Period is at an end. In that period I published five books. (James Joyce may have finished *Ulysses* at the age of 40, but—he had only written three books.) At the moment of writing this (12:40 pm, May 7, 2000) I have completed a little under half of the first novel of my Middle Period: 250 pages of a projected 550.

This is the way I think about it:

Although I began writing my first book in February, 1984, I didn't get serious until July of that year. I was almost 25 years old. (Precisely the right time to begin a first book, by the way: old enough to be weighty, young enough to be brilliant.) If I adopt July 1984 as the starting point of my writing career, then by this July I will have been a writer for 16 years. Five and a half books in 16 years works out to 2.9 years a book.

I don't like this figure. To take almost three years to write a book strikes me as going a tad beyond deliberate and serious, into the neighborhood of lazy and constipated. However, since I am determined to finish my current book before this time next year, I could instead calculate my production at six

books in 17 years, or 2.83 years to a book.

And now for the creative accounting: since I have two children, aged seven and four, surely I can lop two years off the total to compensate for all those bleary days following nights up with one or the other colicky brat, general anxiety and energy-sapping self-questioning of early parenthood, overlong and over-frequent visits by relatives, and so on. That leaves me with a figure of six books in fifteen years, or four books a decade.

Which strikes me as just right. A book every two years seems mechanically productive—i.e., you are a "writing machine," a term writers use for other writers when we are pretending to be complimentary (and need I even comment on those logorrheic freaks, those DSM-IV classifiable hypergraphs who produce a book a year?)—whereas four books a decade means you are taking three to four years to forge your masterworks and one to two years to fashion your small gems.

Assuming that I enjoy average health and remain productive until I am seventy, four books a decade means I have twelve more books in me: a pleasing number: twice as many as I have written, which inclines me to believe they'll be twice as good. It also means that in my Late Period, when my writing will have become "magisterial," I can take seven years, if I want, to write my *Underworld* (as DeLillo did in writing what will then prove to have been the precursor to my own "astonishing, total performance," as the front-page review in the *New York Times Book Review* may call it), and still have a career total of 16 books. (DeLillo's a great writer, but hey, if he wants to hit 16 he'd better get the lead out.)

It is now 2:40 pm, May 7, 2000. (481 words in two hours! Not bad!) I have stopped for lunch and expended an additional half hour in random-access parenting.

(My younger daughter wanted—well, explaining it would take more time.)

When I say I am determined to finish my current book before this time next year, I mean absolutely, hell-or-high-water determined. It may be true that so far I have not once finished a book by any in the series of progressively later deadlines I have selected for their numerological significance, but that was my Early Period, when, though weighty and brilliant, I exhibited the indiscipline of youth ("this rawboned Promethean prodigy," as the *New York Times Book Review* might well have termed me).

I don't measure my progress by months, but by lunations. I'm not sure why. I suppose because the moon is poetic, and therefore a better muse than the calendar on the wall (this would be the tenth muse, *Temperania*; the one with the leather collar and whip). Whenever I see the full moon, I calculate the number of pages (x) that I have written since the last full moon and make a vow as to the number (>2x) I will write by the next one. One advantage of this system is that I can always tell interested parties the date of the next spring tide. A disadvantage is that I've lost every particle of pleasure in gazing on the full moon.

The last full moon was on May 18. I (absolutely, etc.) intend to finish my novel on the day of the tenth full moon after that: March 11, 2001. The reason is straightforward: I finished writing my last book on March 11, 1997, and taking more than four years to produce a book strikes me as going beyond lazy and constipated, into the realm of blocked and played-out. But I look on the bright side: if this one's taking me four years, I must be forging one of my masterworks.

Brian Hall is the author of two novels and three works of nonfiction. He lives in Ithaca.

# The Color of Time

Jeanne Mackin

*The years like great black oxen tread the world*

—William Butler Yeats

Mine was a childhood of seasons, and each season had its own special color. Spring was green with grass and blue for robin's eggs found broken in the dirt next to the rosebush; summer was gold with heat and shimmering dust and brown faded lake-weeds left drying on the shore; fall of course was red and orange with dying leaves that matched the ochres of new pencils and book covers; winter was red and white, the colors of impatience, of waiting for the gifts to be placed under the tree and waiting for the moment when those gifts could be opened.

I learned the colors of time early and thoroughly, learned to mark the year and the seasons and the days by their colorful tags, the pink and blue icing of birthdays cakes, the purples and yellows of Easter eggs, the neon brights of the '60s and the business grays and mauves of the '70s. Color and time became inseparable, perhaps because my father is colorblind and I spent much time trying to "see" the world as he must, as a place of contrast and movement and even a primary color or two but without the subtlety of hue and tint. I learned to use color as efficiently as any watch or calendar and can still tell the time within a half hour or so simply by looking for clues in the way sun hits lilac leaves or tints the clouds. (Don't test me on this. I don't perform well under pressure.)

We tend to think of time as the great invisible. It is friend and foe, lover and for a brief months when we are so new we can't recognize even a clock's ticking, it is a stranger. Time is omnipresent and, ultimately, omnipotent. Yet we cannot see or smell or touch this shadow of eternity, winged chariot, great leveler, robber, unmasker of falsehood, this kindly god...or so goes the litany of names given time by poets and philosophers.

Yet we have learned to measure this great invisible, to mark it, to celebrate, to mourn it. We have named it for its duration as moment, minute, hour, day, week, month, season, year, decade, century, era, millennia...eternity. (Time, in old Irish, begins with a word that translates only as "in the blinking of an eye.") We have tried to make time visible by tagging it the way scientists tag butterflies and sperm whales. We have discovered time, measured time, tried to control it by assigning shores and paths as if it were a river we could chart and even dam. We have tried to make the ethereal tangible, even tried to be on a first-name basis with it.

But as well as naming time with an avidity matched only by Adam's urge to name the beasts who shared his Eden, we have colored time. Like children with crayons, we have filled in the outlines of the great invisible and assigned to it portions of the rainbow, that fraction of time between storm and stillness when moisture prisms sun into the never-reached goal of fortune seekers. We talk of green youth and gray age, of rosy dawn and violet dusk, of blue days and silver anniversaries, of black hours and golden eras. We mark the holidays of the year with color, and the different ages of history and its events with color.

For instance, the new millennium is going to be a blue one, according to astrological lore. Blue, the color of both air and water, the color of melancholy and of many spring wildflowers, the color of this planet when seen from outer space, is the astrologically assigned color for the next Great Month, the Age of Aquarius, which began New Year's Eve, 1999. Perhaps the blue of the Aquarian Great Month now beginning reflects the inevitable journey of earth dwellers from closed dark cave to infinite unknown space.

Or perhaps the Age of Aquarius will be marked by manic depression on a universal scale.

All Great Months have their own color: the age of Pisces, begun when Christ was born, was sea-green, an appropriate color for an era marked largely by a religion whose foremost symbol was that of the fish. The Great Month of the Pharaohs, also known as the Age of Gemini, was yellow, the color of gold and sun and hot sun. The earliest known Great Month, the Age of Leo, when humans first stood upright and recognized the usefulness of opposing thumbs and forefingers, was an orange time, symbolizing fire and creation.



Courtesy of the Ithaca Festival

The colors of the Zodiac are just one of many ways we have assigned a visible characteristic, color, to the greatest of all invisible entities, time; color leaches down to smaller increments as well, to the ages by which we pigeonhole history. The classical eras of Greece and Rome, for instance, favored purple-reds and ochres and black. Empedocles viewed color as the root of all existence, with yellow representing earth, black representing air, red representing fire and white representing water; Homer's seas were wine-red, not blue or green. (Nietzsche and other philosophers have even speculated that the Greeks could not see blue and green, seeing in their place deep browns and lighter yellow, hence their tendency to use the same word to describe dark hair and a stormy sea.) In classical Rome, blue was the color of foreigners and barbarians and it was blue-painted Picts who gave the Roman empire that fatal struggle in Britain that helped weaken the empire. The Blues, a political party favored by the emperor Justinian, eventually brought the Roman empire to its knees.

The great monotheisms eventually replaced paganism and violet, the color of penance, eventually replaced purple-red, the color of blood sacrifice and of human beings made into gods (another reversal there, with the Christian dogma of a god made into man!). Attic ochres and terra cottas gave way to the blues and greens in shadowed catacombs and airy cathedrals, and green became the color of the Prophet. The blues of Christianity and greens of Islam clashed in the banners of the Crusades, giving way to the heraldic colors and emblems of the Middle Ages, the gules (bright red), azure (deep blue), purpure (purple), argent (silver) and other colors still found in national and familial coats-of-arms. The many colors of heraldry merged into black during the Inquisition of the seventeenth century, when monotheism became a pawn of power hungry leaders: "black clothing suits our age," commented one observer. "Nowadays everyone loves black: earthly, material, infernal, the color of mourning and sign of ignorance."

In the Enlightenment and later, color became the subject of scientists and philosophers who, perhaps wearied of the often dan-

gerous splitting of fine hairs and arguments over angels, sought to find rational explanations for how and why we see color at all, and the physical properties of color. Hegel, Jean-Paul Marat and Goethe all proposed color theories as part of a new humanism; color, in the modern era was no longer about decoration and representation, but light and space, red stars and blue stars and the infinity we now measure in terms of light years. In this modern era, the Age of Aquarius, color may well become the primal color of the big bang, the explosion of white and light that began time. (Interestingly, archaeologists speculate that our first calendar was white—a Neolithic piece of carved bone that marks a two month

cycle of lunar change.)

To color time, though, we don't have to look for anything as grand as an era or age. The seasons that eventually make up the ages, as well as the Great Months and Great Years (a great year is about 28,000 solar years, or the length of time it takes the Earth to move through all the signs of the zodiac) also have colors associated with them, and perhaps the most colorful season of all is spring. In the West, spring is traditionally the color of yellow daffodils and purple crocus, but in India the spring festival of Holi is marked with crimson and saffron, the specially tinted waters that children throw at each other to celebrate the new season.

In the traditional Chinese calendar an Azure Dragon presides over spring, the Divine Tortoise (brown) presides over winter, The Vermilion Bird guards summer, and the White Tiger symbolizes autumn.

While most cultures think of yellow as a good luck and happy color, in the Arabic calendar, the month of Safar, yellow, is considered unlucky not because it is the autumn time when leaves turn yellow but because it is believed to be the month when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden.

Perhaps one of the most poetic forms of telling time also comes from the Arabic, from Islam, when the break of day is marked with the first prayer: day begins, according to this theology, at that precise moment of dawn when gray is vanquished and our eyes can pick out colors.

Color marks vanity as well as glory, and mid-afternoon, during France's Ancien Regime, was known to a certain class of people as the White Hour. It was the time between informal morning audiences and the more formal activities of the evening, the time when hairdressers scurried from palaces to palaces, trailing the white talcum powder of their trade behind them, when miladies and milords, swathed in sheets of linen, let attendants douse their heads with clouds of talc so they could emerge fashionably pale and white-haired. (I've always found it strange that a color most people identify with age should have reached such extreme popularity, especially in a group of people not particularly known for their sobriety.) While the hair was being powdered, ladies and gentle-

men of style dressed in colored silks with ridiculous names such as "infant puke" "flea dirt" and "mouse's belly." Later, that same white hair would earn you a trip to the guillotine, so hair dressed au naturel quickly became the custom—it was no longer advantageous to see so quickly and easily who was master and who was servant, and the White Hour faded to nothingness.

A hundred years later, another folly, almost as dangerous as being aristocratic in an age of revolution, was marked by the Green Hour. Absinthe, distilled from the leaves and flowers of wormwood, is green in color and toxic when unmixed. When combined with alcohol it can produce hallucinations and intense, prolonged intoxication. Around 1840 the French military began adding it to the wine stock provided soldiers in Algeria, thinking it might help prevent fever, and by the end of that century absinthe had become a stylish cocktail favored by Manet, Daumier, Picasso and others who gathered at their favorite Parisian cafes for the Green Hour. Van Gogh, in homage, painted a still life of a glass and decanter of absinthe, the recreational drug of choice for nineteenth-century artists such as Rimbaud and Verlaine, Degas and Baudelaire. And for many of them, the Green Hour ended with early death related to the same addiction that fueled both art and social life.

While France enjoyed its Green Hour, Rome, less fantastic in its domestic pleasures, began the old world tradition of the Blue Hour, that time of day when men traditionally visit their mistresses after work but before going home for the evening meal.

In the nineteenth century the complex pastels of monarchist Europe gave way to a Victorian fascination with white: Moby Dick was a white whale, the white Arctic and Antarctic glacial fields became the explorer's destination of choice and women of any reputation preferred to be painted in white, as well as married in white. White, the final statement of absence, became the ultimate contradiction in an age of ever-increasing contrast: white tombstones against skies black with industrial smoke, chaste wives in white gowns in harlot-red boudoirs, pseudo-classical sculptures in white marble, whereas the originals would have been glorious in polychrome. White, in the nineteenth century, became more than an absence of color, it became a statement of bourgeois values.

How will we eventually tint the late, great twentieth century, a century known not for great religions or inventive pastimes, but for immense politic frameworks? Will it be green, for the color of capitalism, or red, as a kind of memorial to that other economic option? That's the thing about color—it must be viewed from a certain distance, like history itself, before it is really knowable, identifiable. We can pick our favorites, but only time itself will make the ultimate decision on the appropriate hue for time passed.

And, of course, while we play in time, test time, and suffer in time, we dress ourselves in the colors of time, putting infants and toddlers in playful pastels, youths and maidens in pure whites, lusty adults in red (Adam, according to Hebrew tradition, means "red" and red has, since Adam, been a color of life, of passion, of celebration). We clothe old age and the weight of the years in black and violet, the color of ashes, the color of mourning. Perhaps, eventually, in the black holes of outer space, we may even find a world where time reverses itself, where continuity of change, like light, is pulled into a denseness so rich and inevitable that time itself no longer holds us, as Dylan Thomas voiced it, "green and dying, and singing in my chains like the sea."

Jeanne Mackin is a journalist, instructor, and the author of three novels. Her next novel, *The Sweet Bye and Bye*, will be published by St. Martin's Press in 2001.

# Next

## Paul Fairbanks

The phone rang and I knew. 13-year-old Fred always called 10 minutes before I was scheduled to meet him, just to make sure I was still coming.

"Yes, Fred," I answered, "I'm on my way."

"Just checking," Fred apologized.

"How could I forget your Mohawk haircut?"

"Can we get the blue dye, too?" Fred pleaded.

"We'll talk about that with the barber. See you in 10 minutes..."

When I pulled up in the Subaru, Fred was running in place on the sidewalk, tossing his football high above his head and starring in a fantasy Superbowl game.

"Thanks for taking me to get my Mohawk."

"No problema, you earned it."

Fred had earned it. Much to everyone's relief, he had made a major effort to improve his behavior in the classroom. But why in the world he had chosen a Mohawk haircut as his reward was beyond me. His choice, his life. Besides, I rationalized, the difference between a Mohawk and a buzz cut was 20 seconds with the clippers set on low.

Joe, the barber at the Cornell Barber-shop, had assured me it wouldn't be a long wait. I remembered Joe from the time, two years before, when he had come to the local hospital to give a last haircut to a dying friend. I'll never forget the calm look in Goldie's eyes as Joe skillfully trimmed his white hair, combing it in place and adding just the right mix of hair tonic and conversation.

When Fred and I walked into the shop it was busier than I had expected. Joe was buzzing the sides of a fidgety kid who never stopped talking. Joe's partner, Rich, seemed absorbed in his work as he deftly squared off the sideburns of a well-muscled teenager. Along the wall, a small child and his father sat waiting their turns. Great, I groaned to myself, this could take a while.

Joe looked up and greeted us with a broad smile. He was more handsome than I had remembered. Black slacks, black turtleneck, heavy gold chains around his powerful neck, and smartly styled black hair, more pepper than salt.

"Hi, Joe. This is Fred."

"Do you do Mohawks?" Fred asked quickly.

"If it's okay with your parents, it's okay with me," Joe answered, adding, "We cut hair any way you want it."

I noticed the rows of magazines neatly laid out in the bay window and gestured to Fred to take one. He declined the offer and quickly took a seat behind Joe's barber chair. I grabbed the latest issue of *Field & Stream* and flipped through it, but my attention was quickly diverted. The kid in the chair was a regular chatterbox and Joe was keeping right up with him. Fred joined in, talking about his Mohawk, prior haircuts, and whether he could get his hair dyed blue.

"No. We don't dye hair," Joe said, giving me a wink.

Rich finished up with his client and the 6-year-old climbed aboard his chair. The boy giggled as Rich pumped the chair as high as it would go. When it reached the top, the air escaped, making a sound that can only be

described as a whopper of a fart. PPPPPLL-LLLLPPPPPP!!

Hysterical laughter ensued. Joe grabbed his water bottle and zapped the chatterbox on his newly shorn head. "I told you to sit still!!"

Rich pumped the chair up, up, up. "Higher," the boy demanded. "I can't see myself in the mirror." PPPPLLLLLLLLPPPPPP!!!! The world's largest whoopee cushion!

"Hey Rich," Fred shouted, "what happened to your pants?"

"Yeah," Joe added, "did you pee in your pants or something?" Dignified Rich ignored them and pumped the chair up yet a third time.

PPPPPPPLL-LLLLPPPPPP! More hysteria.

As Rich finished the third pump-up, he moved around to my side of the chair. I could see that his khaki slacks were decidedly wet. Rich reached for his bottle and threatened retaliation.

"Do it!" the boys implored. Joe grabbed his bottle to defend his station. A Mexican standoff ensued, and the calm was broken by the dad saying to his son, "Zach, settle down!"

Poor Zach, now he was somehow the cause of all this mayhem!

Rich buzzed Zach's melon with style and finesse. Actually, it was more like watching a sporting event, as Zach kept turning and twitching, and looking and talking and laughing. I watched in awe. Forty plus years of experience had given Rich a talent to clip a moving target and not draw blood. But suddenly, "Owww! You got me!"

Rich flicked Zach's ear, reported no major damage and finished the trim. Zach was now giving Rich fuller attention and Rich played it for all it was worth. He reached for a black corrugated hose and flipped on the vacuum. Before the boy could move, Rich had the hose pressed to Zach's forehead and said, "One more word out of you, and I'll suck your brains right out of your head."

Zach's body shook as he squelched his laughter. But not completely sure if Rich was serious, Zach surrendered.

"Ready for your Mohawk?" Joe greeted Fred as he settled into the red barber chair.

"Oh yeah!!" Fred said. And with that, Joe went about his trade. He showed Fred where he would cut and asked how much he wanted in the back. After the negotiations concluded, Joe made fast work of Fred's shaggy curls.

The boys had gone by now, their pockets

stuffed with lollipops grabbed from a big fishbowl that Rich offered on their way out.

Saturday morning was a busy time and three more customers entered the shop. Soon they too became part of the Mohawk experience.

A red-headed kid with two missing teeth was amazed that someone was actually getting a real Mohawk. An older man wearing a very over-stuffed Buffalo Bills sweatshirt complimented me on my decision to let Fred get a Mohawk. "They all want to try something different and the more you tell them no, the more they want to do it."

"Yeah," I said. "I just keep telling myself what my dad always said: 'The only difference between a bad haircut and a good one is 6 weeks!'"

Buffalo Bill laughed. "I have two boys, and I tell 'em, cut it my way, or you pay for it."

By now, everyone was caught up in Fred's emerging new look.

I walked over to see the progress and said, "Hey, it actually looks pretty good."

"Yeah, I like it," Fred added, revealing his first smile since taking the chair.

"Just tell everyone that you got it at the Cornell Barbershop!" Rich suggested.

"Yeah! Be sure to tell 'em that Joe did it!" added a crew-cut chap.

"Now watch," Joe said, "They'll probably be lined up to the Commons waiting to get Mohawks! Just my luck!"

"What about the blue dye?" Fred asked.

"All you need to do," Joe advised, "is take some blue Kool-aid, water soluble Elmer's glue, and a little water and make a paste. It washes out with shampoo the next day if you don't like it."

Joe talked Fred out of shaving the sides of his head and gave him some tips on the care and feeding of his Mohawk. Rich asked Buffalo Bill if he too wanted a Mohawk. "Not today," he said, "not today."

Fred seemed quietly content on the way home, and I was reminded of Goldie's peaceful expression while Joe cut his hair in the hospital. Today's scene was very different, but somehow it fit—the hum of clippers, chattering kids, squirt bottles, lollipops, and laughter. Almost makes me want to get a Mohawk.

*Every few months, Paul Fairbanks finds time to squeeze in a short story between his job as an Intensive Case Manager and his fantasy life as a wannabe pro-golfer and bowler.*



Bill Mutch

## Open in 2048

*continued from page 5*

"Stop it now, Frankie, I mean it," she flicked her cigarette down and squashed it under her pointy black shoe.

"Please say you'll come with!"

She grabbed my hand.

"Frankie, sweetheart, that's more than eighty years from now. Your mother isn't Methuselah."

Methuselah—the name sounded like a mouthful of spiders. I gaped at her.

"People just don't live that long, honey?"

"What people?"

"Grown-ups."

"You, too?"

She didn't respond and the silence sucked the stuffing out of me. I collapsed, a slow, dramatic slide down the iron railings to the sidewalk. My agony was so fresh, so complete, that when I opened my mouth, it streamed out of me in a high, thin music. But the tantrum never gathered steam; I was too crushed to get properly hysterical. The cry arced and flattened into a low, excruciating drawl, remarkable for a sustained tone held without benefit of an in-breath. I beseeched Mom's feet, groping like a drowning boy. Her pointy black shoes resisted me.

"It's just a rock. Franklin, if it means so much—" she said, pausing, I thought, to tell me "Yes, we'll go." But people passed by and she got flustered. "Pull yourself together, do you hear me? Pull yourself together this instant!"

She stepped away from me and I let myself roll face down onto the sidewalk, tasting concrete and dirt, snot and drool pooling under my chin.

"All right, stay here and make a spectacle of yourself," she said. Her heels clacked like bones as she moved, gone already it seemed. Coo-coo. Sweetie. Gramps. Mommie, too. Already gone.

Of course, she softened, returned, got me on my feet, took me home. But she made no effort to console me about the rock, even though when it got opened in 2048 none of us would live to see it happen. Later that year, President Kennedy joined Coo-coo, Sweetie and Gramps, and my older sister tells me I stopped smiling for family photos.

Franklin Crawford is a writer who lives in Ithaca.

Franklin Crawford is a writer who lives in Ithaca.



It's tough to get into GreenStar.

(If you're a zucchini.)

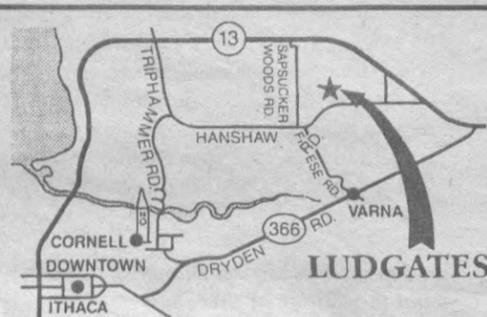
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# Double Time

## Stephen Poleskie

Two brown clocks on your brown desk, almost identical clocks, are keeping almost identical time. The one on the left is new and therefore a slightly darker shade of brown. You have acquired the new clock only yesterday as a replacement for the clock on the right, which you have owned for the previous three years. The older clock is worn to a lighter shade of brown and has a yellowed face. The new clock has a white face.

Several gray days pass, during which time the sun does not appear and it snows a little, but still the two clocks keep identical time, a time which corresponds to the time shown on the glowing green dial of the digital clock in your bedroom, the time you always set to the time shown on your television, the time you accept as the correct time—the time you believe to be the real time.

You take the new clock, the darker one, with you when you go to work. As it is an exact replica of your other clock, your co-workers have not noticed that you have a new timepiece. They no longer consider it strange when you pull a small brown travel alarm clock from your pocket when you need to know the time. Occasionally you forget, or the button gets pushed up accidentally, and the clock sets off an alarmed beeping in your pocket. This caused you embarrassment until you realized that most people,

hearing the sound, took you to be a most important person being paged to take a most important call. So you have taken to setting your clock to sound at times during the day when you will be in a meeting, or engaged in some other odious task, giving you an excuse to run off to attend to a more pressing matter.

Several more gray days pass, without snow, and your two brown alarm clocks continue to keep identical time. This makes you wonder why you had bought the second clock as a replacement for the first.

The original clock had stopped working, and when you took it back to the store where you had purchased it you were told that the batteries were probably dead. You replaced the batteries, but still the clock refused to work. As the clock was rather inexpensive, you bought a new one, intending to mail the old clock back to the factory for repair. But you had misplaced the warranty. Now the first clock sits on your desk keeping perfect time, as it has done ever since you introduced it to its successor.

When you bought the new clock you were certain the older clock was not working, and you had not intended to begin a competition. You only meant to compare the two clocks to be sure they looked exactly alike. Examining their mechanisms, you absentmindedly set the old clock to the time which was displayed on the new clock and turned your attention to the pile of papers on your desk.

While working you probably glanced at both clocks, but it was only after several hours, when you decided to stop working, that you became aware that both clocks were showing the exact same time.

Since then you have developed the habit from time to time of taking both clocks in your hands, putting one to each ear. First the new clock, then the older one: "tch, tch, tch ..." each emits an identical quartz sound. The new clock speaks and the old one responds simultaneously. Perhaps to see which timepiece will stop first, you listen for several minutes, the clock sounds echoing in your head.

You eat your dinner alone, without appetite. Your meal finished, you rise, leaving the dirty plate on the table, and go to your desk. The two clocks are there, still keeping identical time. You go to the window and stand looking out. Across the square you can see the illuminated clock on the public library, its hands folded in exactly the same position as the two clocks on your desk.

A frisson of fear pierces the fog of your mind. Pressing your face against the cool window, you gaze out at the darkening street where a hurrying man looks down at his wrist, and then up at the brightly lit library clock. You feel your soul flattening and dissolving, plunging ever deeper into dull apprehension at the gathering of night, while the body that is you stands listless, staring at the clock across

the way through dimming eyes.

The old brown clock was not supposed to work. It had not worked for several weeks. Even after you replaced the batteries it did not work. Now you hold it in your hands and it will not stop.

With your left hand you carefully place the new clock back on the desk, while your right hand violently shakes the old clock. Comparing the two faces, the time is identical. In anger, you slam the old clock to the floor, and kick it across the room. It ricochets off the baseboard and slides under your bed like a wounded animal trying to escape.

Retrieving the battered timepiece, you place it against your ear and listen. The old clock is silent. Carefully, fearful that your movement might cause it to start up again, you place the old clock back on the desk next to the new one.

The next morning, filled with anticipation, you rise from your bed and go to your desk. The slanting rays of the weak winter sun reveal the two brown clocks side by side, their hands in identical positions.

You pick them up, the battered old clock and the new clock, carefully putting one to each ear. You hear nothing.

Both clocks have stopped.

Stephen Poleskie is the author of two novels, a nonfiction book on flight, and three collections of stories.

# Pray for Us Now (but mostly) At Our "KODAK MOMENT"

## David Colt

(On seeing the third replay of a friend's replay of the video of her son's wedding)

Your Video is not memorializing—but stealing from you—the occasion...

By making a movie of the occasion, and by approaching the occasion movie camera in hand, you've locked yourself out of the Spirit of the occasion—turning the happening into the raw material of a movie...

Your "video," because it is permanent, and will not fade—because it is replayable—thereby giving it the ontological prestige of "science"

*(Einmal ist Keinmal!—  
Proclaims Science.*

*the Only-Once Occurring hasn't Really Happened*

*What cannot be repeated under laboratory-controlled conditions  
—is not worth our notice.*

*Only ONCE Doesn't Really Count*

*And in this remark is embodied the entire Contempt for,  
and eventual Destructiveness of,  
All of Life at the hands of Science—  
since it is precisely the Einmal—the Only-This-Once—  
that is the essential of Life*

*Da war ein mal ein König...*

*ONCE upon a time begins the Story.)*

and this Science enjoys the prestige of repeatability (or, as with myself, the stigma of repeatability, the canned-ness)—offering you the advantage of controlability—as the original event did not.

Having the darling-ness about it of being your own creature—as the original event was not, or was so only very partly—and coming at you with a more concentrated glow, through the chemistry and physics of the cathode ray tube—while the original event came at you only with the gentler energy and chiaroscuro of the varying daylight.

Your video soon has substituted itself in

your Heart—through the phenomenon of exact repetition and through the immediacy of its relation to you as your own artifact—for the otherwise destined-to-fade Memory of the Real Event.

But!!—The preciousness of the Moment was precisely because of its Evanescence.

The Musick is Precious—as Life is precious—as being destined to STOP.

The glimpse of Beauty is Precious because it will Fade.

*(This thou behold'st which makes thy love more strong*

*To love that well which thou must leave ere long...)*

Your attempt to Veto the Evanescence—the *Verganglichkeit*—works you only a Pyrrhic victory.

It works you a Loss that is hard to put into words—more subtle to appreciate than you are prepared for.

It makes an immediate substitution: of a glowing and very reduced/diluted, but unfading, simulacrum of The Wedding...for the fading set of sense-memories pictures as they were "taken" from many different angles, and at many different saturations of color and other qualities. Pictures of varying vividness that went with a fading in & out Musick.

The real—only fleshly—memory will fade with Time—but as it does so, you may from moment to moment hark back to a lilt or a glint that had drifted into the mist—and now comes back to you for a reason peculiar to the moment of recall—and lodged in your innermost being at this new moment of recall.

The images in Memory of the event are inevitably...fading with the days and the months and the years—but certain shimmering bits of it standing out in—perhaps at the moment they happened unanticipatable—relief and significance—as time does its own editing—washing away the sensational bits that have no roots in your soul, none in the deeper meaning systems of yourSelf—and leaving in glittering hi-lite other details that you never had suspected at the moment would shine so in Memory (and may never know just why!)

Instead of this natural (and mysterious)

process—as event becomes sea-changed into Memory—instead of that...The Video Footage.

Superceding the organic memory in you of the event; inevitably superceding it by the superior physical brilliance of the CRT—

The video simulacrum you have made.

Substituting for the fading Memory—the flat and instantaneous substitution of the camera lens for our Selves.

The precious event has now become one of the many phenomenon that are candidates for validity because they are "As Seen On TV!"—and exists there through.

It is easy to see what we have gained.

The image glitters—is recallable at will—and is always identical.

Seeing what we have Lost in substituting the Camera Image for our own fading Memory is much harder. But we may know that we have Lost something very Important—though that loss be only a Suspicion. And a haunt.

*(Alone as if enduring to the end*

*A valiant armor of scarred hopes outworn,*

*He stood there in the middle of the road*

*Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn.)*

And realizing what that Loss is cannot be done in an instant—nor amid the Cacophony of the Pantechonicon.

The momentousness is Gone—when the Moments become "Kodak Moments."

And, even as I say this, trying to be true to the Truth I know—I know that there is a sense in which seeing the Video of this ceremony will "bring back" the scene and the moment to bride and groom, or to someone else who was there—in a way that they will find delicious and precious, say 10 years hence. And I guess that I am saying that there is something un-Natural, Wrong, and even Cruel in denying the moment its ability to Fade. And also (and this is Notes for a further rumination at another time)—I feel very different about sound recordings of moments.

I feel—replaying an old audio tape—re-experiencing thus the sounds of an occasion...

the proper and us-fulfilling, and organic Memory; the valid memory—that it is the

right one to meld with all our other memories. Offered me by sound recording, but denied by videography.

The recall of Sound re-opens the Door to the Spirit of the Occasion in a gentler and more potent way—with a respect for the complexity of the Event, and with an invitation to that Complexity to manifest itself in such way as may now be the Right One for this particular moment of Recall in a way that is denied by the Video replay.

I myself am always recording the sound of an event—by taking the little machine out that rides always in my shirt pocket. I thereby—it feels—allow myself the possibility of re-evoking the Event—but in its richness—and with respect for the emergence in my Memory of different aspects of it—as my own understanding evolves with Time inside me.

And I feel that Video recall is over-defining—shutting the door that Audio recall leaves Open.

While also requiring—through its greater complication—an emotional shutting oneself out from participation in the event in the first place as one 'shoots' the video.

The removedness and "objectivity" required for video-making is Felt by those "shot" as hostile (this ambivalence is beautifully caught in *Bullworth* by Warren Beatty) as we are never quite certain whether the omnipresent unshake-able man in black leather shot with a gun or with a camera)

—though that feeling can rarely be expressed in this Age when the Idiots run the show—and all prestige belongs to Video in all forms

But something in those being "shot" always knows...that.

*...any eye is an evil eye*

*That looks in on a mood apart...*

At the Half a Century Mark, David Colt is still trying to figure out how one can be a Bard under modern conditions. While puzzling that one--he's invented himself a Racket whereby he Fines the Fortune5 for their Criminal Behaviour. Which buys the next Bottle to fuel research on that Bard Problem. His Window is Wide Open (flowers in it) on the Commons above MoonShadow. His Mind (also with Flowers in it) is Less So.

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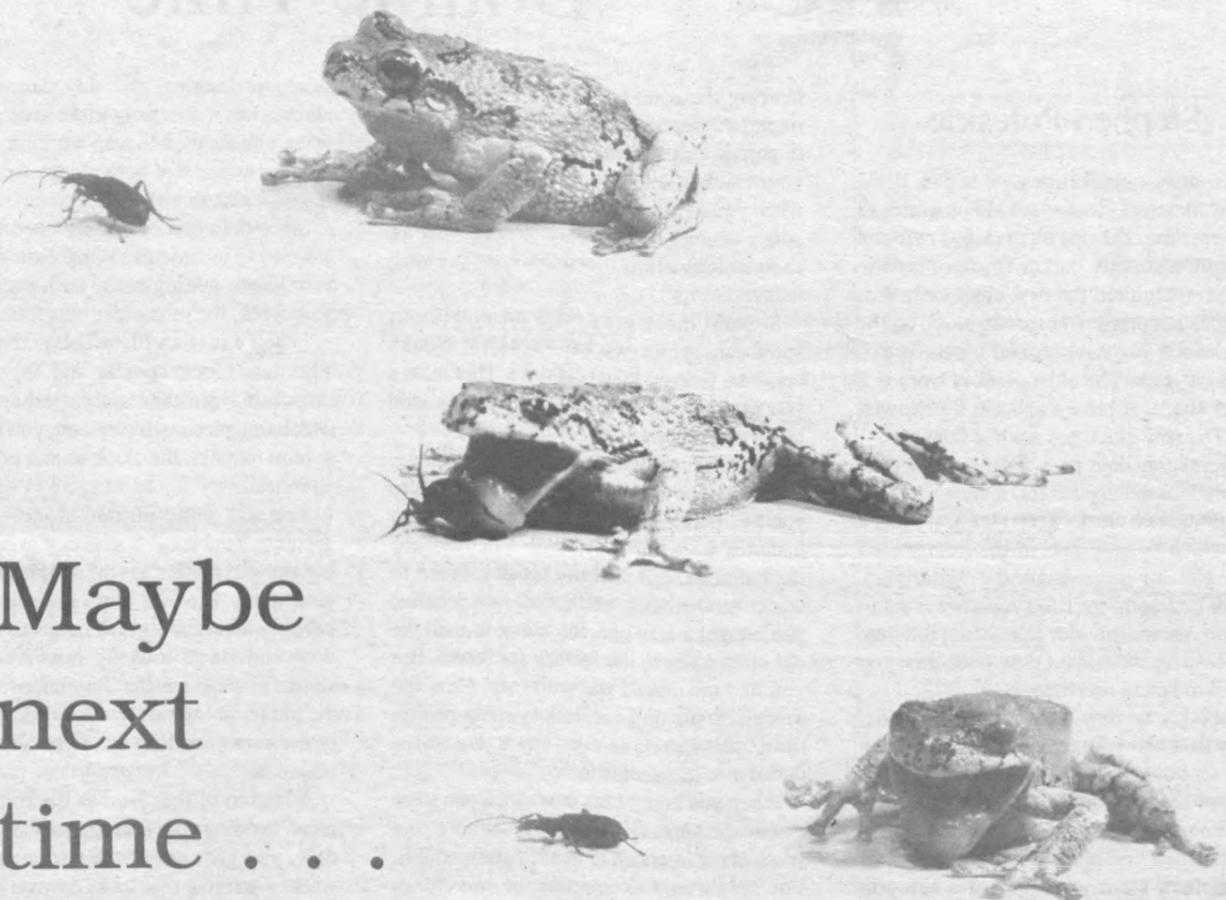
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