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# children churches & daddies

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the unreligious, nontfamily-oriented literary and art rag

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## the boss lady's editorial

### We're in a War: Is This World War III? Or Are We In a Holy War?

We're in a war.

Well, technically, we're not.

We haven't been in a war since World War II.

I know, I know, we had the Korean War and the Viet Nam War. I even saved *The Daily Illini* newspaper when the headline said fourteen years ago that we were at war in the middle east. But the thing is, only Congress can declare a war. We have not been in a war, although our leaders have allowed our troops to come into harm's way repeatedly over this past half century.

But if newspapers need to call sending our troops to kill and be killed a war so that people can be okay with what our government is doing, then so be it (there's nothing I can do about that). But in all honesty, the two World Wars are our last wars. And I've heard people referring to this war in Iraq, coupled with the War on Terror, as World War III.

Well, besides the fact that we're technically not in a legal war, I'd have to figure out what even *makes* a war a "World War."

I mean, think about it — what is the definition of a World War? It would have to be that it's a war with all (or most) of the principal nations of the world. Meaning that yes, the United States would have to be in it, but considering that world War II had Japan and the United States and half of Europe, I don't think that the U.S. against Iraq (with help from England and maybe ancillary forces from Poland and Australia) constitutes a World War.

So although I think we can safely rule out us being in World War III, I wonder if I can rule out people calling this a Holy War.

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Over the past few years, I have noticed a resurgence of religious beliefs seep into the United States' government, thanks (I suppose) to President George W. Bush. It has only been since 2000 that there have been people



talking about whether or not “In God We Trust” should remain on our money, or if the line “Under God” should be removed from the Pledge of Allegiance. Although civil marriages are now considered legal, marriages have historically been used for religious purposes, and there have been a number of states passing laws to only define a marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

I’m not going to tell you that removing “In God We Trust” from our money is our way of neglecting the beliefs of the founders of this country (yes, because they were all quite religious). I’m not going to tell you that “Under God” was not originally in the Pledge of Allegiance, and that Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Congress amended the Pledge by *adding* the line “Under God” to the Pledge in 1954 to show Americans was better than those Godless Communists we were opposed to. I’m not going to tell you that gay couples in permanent relationships deserve the same benefits married couples receive, whether or not people consider it a marriage.

I wouldn’t tell you that. You’re intelligent enough to come to your own conclusions.

But I mention these things because of a war President Bush started that a lot of youth had no interest in fighting. It seems that to keep people fearing life and needing him as President, Bush started a war on a homeless enemy — meaning, there are no borders to fight, and there is no land conquest. The War on Terror is an ideological war, and as long as people have different opinions, there will always be an enemy for President Bush, and we will always be fighting.

Also, consider that if the economy is doing poorly because of the fall of the dot com industry in the end of the ‘90s, one way a president can help pick the economy back up is to actually go into war.

...How would a war help?

Yeah, I wonder that myself.

People say that going into war does a few positive things for the U.S.

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economy. One, it forces the country to increase its production of weaponry and things needed for the military in war. As silly as it sounds, we'll need tanks made, and we'll need bullets mass produced, and I guess we'll need all of the other crap that goes into making a well-equipped army. This increased need created jobs. Two, it rallies a country together for a common cause, and there is always strength in unity. Third, when the military goes off to war, the jobs of the people going to war will also have to be filled — creating an additional temporary surplus of jobs.

Now, I can get that part. I can't quite figure out where those extra jobs go for the soldiers when they come back from war. I don't know who the missile-creators and the bullet manufacturers will work for when the war is over (as they'll lose work too). I also can't understand how we get ourselves out of debt, after the president has created a debt to get us out of economic trouble.

I guess I'm not an economist, so I can't justify all of those issues away.

And, as silly as this sounds, I'm only one person, and I probably couldn't stop our country from going to war, just because I see some points that I can't resolve about the meaning of it.

Oh crap, I guess I'm getting side-tracked. What I was saying was that President Bush got us into this notion of the unending War on Terror (I feel like I should change the font or something when I write that, so you can feel that a low echoey voice is saying that ominously - let's try **War On Terror...** Hey, was that any better?), but that probably wasn't enough for President Bush, because people were catching on and saw no end in sight. So he turned to a country his Dad fought in the early 1990s and we didn't have UN. sanctioning to kill the bad leader, a country he thought he could get easily, and he could make it sound like a moral thing we're doing by attacking Iraq to get to Saddam Hussein.

So we've slipped into a war to *liberate* a country, not to protect ourselves (which is supposed to be the only reason this country goes to war).



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Suddenly our reasoning for stepping into wars has changed.

And our **War On Terror** is no longer a battle to get the enemy that killed thousands of innocent people in a civilian setting in the United States. President Bush even said (and this was mentioned in the debates) that he is not interested in looking for Bin Laden. That's because the **War On Terror** has become a battle to fight an ideology.

If you ask Bin Laden... Well, I'm sure you won't get the chance, but if you want to guess at his opinion, Bin Laden is screaming over there that we Americans *just don't get it*, that they hate what we represent and what we believe and how we live, and that this is a **holy war**.

I don't ever remembering stepping into a holy war.

But wait a minute. Define **holy war**. I'm near the Websters' 1975 (sorry, all I have is an older dictionary with me today) *New Collegiate Dictionary*, and it defines **holy war** as

**holy war** n: a war waged by religious partisans to propagate or defend their faith.

Hmm. Fascinating. You think the **War On Terror** is not a holy war? Maybe *we* don't think so. But think of how President Bush thinks of this war, that this is something that is a fight for our values (not necessarily as stated in our Constitution). Think of what Bin Laden thinks of it as. These people hate our values and ideas, because they do not adhere to their religion. They will fight to the death for their cause. They will mass kill the innocent to make a statement, because they think that killing those who don't believe as they do is moral and just.

Yeah, to them this **War On Terror** and the war in Iraq is a holy war.

Yes, this is a different kind of war. And we haven't learned how to fight it differently yet. The beginning of mass media in our country coincided with the advent of political correctness. In recent years we have become

concerned with how not to piss anyone off in any situation, and since that time and the advent of television, and the soon-after advent of video reporting on wars, people have been able to witness the destruction of



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wars, and they have started to violently protest *against* wars. People never saw how bloody the World Wars were (you know, because we weren't there, they didn't have images flashing on wide-screen TVs of the gore and death no one can tolerate to look at now), and that may be why we can no longer condone fighting a bloody, unjust war.

Sorry, war is unjust. It is menacing. We get angry when we see our prisoners treating hostages poorly? Well, they're **hostages** in a **war**. I think the point is to treat them unjustly. We get angry when we see the U.S. military being too angry or violent at enemies. Yeah, you're right, liberals: they *should* keep a perfectly cool head at all times when people who look innocent could pull out a gun from between their legs to kill you at any time, or people could set off a bomb on their body to kill the both of you. You don't need to *really* worry about getting an enemy, because we're now supposed to be a politically correct military machine (think of a kinder, friendlier army, so to speak). Don't like it? Then don't be in the God-damned war.

Because that's what war is, holy or not.

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Does it matter if we are the ones considering this a Holy War? Does it change the end result — does it matter to the families of the one who dies in battle? Does it matter to the people in the Middle East whom we apparently are “saving” from an evil dictatorship? Does it matter to the al-Qaida who want to get rid of Capitalism and individual rights, if we manage to hold them back for a while? Does it matter to those of us who don't think it is America's place to be in this war? Does it matter?



Janet Kuypers  
Editor in Chief



**editor's photo** taken by  
J. Yotko on her 10 year anniversary of  
being a vegetarian, January 2, 2005

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# An Open Letter from Sam Hamill

New Years Day, 2005

Dear Friends:

The war drags on. Fallujah has been destroyed in order to save it, shades of Vietnam. A man who presented the argument in favor of ignoring the Geneva accords, a man who would authorize torture, is now our Attorney General. More than 100,000 Iraqi civilians dead, many times more wounded, homeless... And American soldiers who have served their tours of duty are being post facto drafted to remain in combat.

We can look forward to Bush's new secretary of state continuing to... who knows what? And there will be supreme and other high court appointments, and of course a Patriot Act II, with attendant incursions into our constitutional rights. Tax cuts for the rich? Permanent. The environment? The worst policies in our history. What a ghastly litany.

Four more years, indeed.

Like kindred organizations in countries around the world, we have reminded millions of people of the noble traditions of poetry, of its role in every culture. I have seen time and again tears of gratitude in the eyes of the Italians, French, Lithuanians, etc, and have received innumerable messages of hope, support and kinship from all over the world. These people are grateful to be reminded that (at least) half of the U.S. objects to the direction this country's taken, and that we are eager to listen to and work cooperatively with them so that all of our voices (and various positions) may be heard while we stand together.

In the ecology of the soul, thrift is ruinous. We look forward to a productive new year filled with mindful actions, generosity of spirit, heartfelt compassion, and of course a lot of good poetry.

**Sam Hamill**  
**poetsagainsthewar.org**



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news you can use

# NEW YEAR FOR CHOOSING A HEALTH PLAN

by Scott Holleran

For many workers, the new year initiates a process called open enrollment — when many employees designate a health plan through their employer — that's as comprehensible as the tax code. During the annual cattle call, employees are pummeled with bureaucratic jargon about co-pays, deductibles, and out-of-pocket maximums.

Though some employers have discovered a relatively simple alternative that's far superior, open enrollment in a health plan gets more confusing — and, for everyone, more expensive — each year. Understanding why requires a basic grasp of health policy history.

The widespread bureaucratization of medicine was developed during the 20th century, when the government began to intervene in the medical profession with a range of regulations. From changing the tax code to punish individuals buying their own health insurance to socialized medicine for those persons over age 65 and an employer mandate to offer something called an HMO, the concept of force is at the core of today's health financing system.

The individual was first discouraged from buying insurance in 1942 when employee health premiums were made tax deductible to employers — not to individuals. Congress created Medicare in 1965, making individual insurance for those over 65 obsolete. Subsidized, unrestricted health care for seniors lead to a frenzy of spending by patients and doctors.

Predictably, as costs went up, those on the left, including then freshman Sen. Ted Kennedy, insisted that government pay for everyone's health care; they promoted the idea of a health maintenance organization, a term coined by a left-wing college professor.

President Nixon appeased the left and proposed the HMO Act, which Congress passed in 1973. The law created new, supposedly cheaper health coverage with millions of dollars to HMOs, which, until then, constituted a small portion of the market. Combined with Medicare, the

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HMO Act eventually eliminated affordable individual health insurance.

Employers, forced to offer HMOs, stopped offering a choice of plans, making real insurance more expensive for the individual. The government had instituted HMOs — and their cousin, PPOs, which were also instituted by the state — at the insistence of the left and the capitulation of conservatives.

The result was quasi-socialized medicine and, as with every compromise of capitalism and socialism, capitalism was blamed for the resulting disaster. Advocates of socialism, such as Sen. Kennedy, merely became opponents of the monstrous hybrid they had concocted.

Since Nixon's and Kennedy's HMO Act was passed, the individual has become a prisoner. Covered by an employer and herded into managed care, the individual is powerless. Under managed care, the patient wanders the maze of managed care, awaiting treatment approval, hoping not to be refused or delayed treatment.

It's money for practically nothing. Premiums deducted from a paycheck for a managed care plan do not pay for medical treatment decided essentially between patient and doctor, adjudicated by insurance companies using objective standards; premiums pay for the management of care, i.e., health maintenance, by a third party.

Unrestricted free choice in medicine — insurance chosen, provided and paid for by the individual — has practically vanished. But a new concept in paying for medicine, the Health Savings Account (HSA), offers the first real opportunity in generations.

Combined with catastrophic insurance, the Health Savings Account offers a choice to purchase health care as an individual — neither through an employer nor through government. Using money from the HSA, which, unlike a 401(k), the employee owns, the patient can pay out of pocket for health costs or leave the money alone to earn interest.

Once the HSA-compatible health plan's deductible is reached, the insurance policy kicks in, typically with free choice of doctors and hospitals, though HSA plans vary. Imagine medicine without networks, percentages, thresholds, co-pays, generics and pre-authorization from a nurse practitioner at a phone bank in Idaho — that's the best of the Health Savings Account plans: free choice of treatment, 100 percent of costs above the deductible, real, name-brand drugs and less restrictions on medicine, that plus tax-deductible contributions which earn as much as four percent interest.

The notion of a tax-advantaged savings account to which the employer and the employee may contribute is a knockout punch to high-

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er health costs for lower quality care. It beats the bureaucratic open HMO/PPO enrollment in which embattled employers bear the burden of higher premiums while their employees suffer under arbitrary restrictions.

The lack of a market in individual health insurance, not a lack of regulations, led to today's open enrollment mess. A better health plan, such as a Health Savings Account policy, preserves the right to choose — and pay for — one's own health care. It is becoming an option at last and, for many workers and the businesses that employ them, the faster, the better.



**Fighting the Demons Within**  
art by Edward Michael O'Durr Supranowicz

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# America's Compassion in Iraq Is Self-Destructive

Fighting a compassionate war is immoral; it is costing the lives of American soldiers in Iraq and emboldening our enemies throughout the Islamic world.

By Elan Journo

The horrific suicide bombing in December of a U.S. mess tent near Mosul and the assassination on Jan. 10 of the deputy chief of Baghdad police--the second Iraqi official murdered in five days--are further indications that the war in Iraq is worsening. Things are going badly not because, as some claim, the United States is arrogant and lacking in humility--but because it is self-effacing and compassionate.

The Bush Administration's war in Iraq embraces compassion instead of the rational goal of victory. Such an immoral approach to war wantonly sacrifices the lives of soldiers and emboldens our enemies throughout the Middle East to mount further attacks against us.

Regardless of whether the Iraqi dictatorship should have been our initial target in the war against totalitarian Islam, when in the nation's defense a President sends troops to war, morally he must resolve to soundly defeat the enemy while safeguarding our forces and citizens. But America's attention has been diverted to rebuilding Iraqi hospitals, schools, roads and sewers, and on currying favor with the locals (some U.S. soldiers were even ordered to grow moustaches in token of their respect for Iraqi culture, others are now given cultural sensitivity courses before arriving in Iraq). Since the war began, Islamic militants and Saddam loyalists have carried out random abductions, devastating ambushes, and catastrophic bombings throughout the country. That attacks on U.S. forces (including those engaged in reconstruction efforts) have gone unpunished has emboldened the enemy.

Early and stark evidence of the enemy's growing audacity came in March 2004 with the grisly murder and mutilation of four American contractors. Following the attack, U.S. forces entered the city of Fallujah vowing to capture the murderers and punish the town that supports them. But such resolve was supplanted by compassion.

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In the midst of the fighting the United States called a unilateral cease-fire to allow humanitarian aid in and to enable the other side to collect and bury its dead. The so-called truce benefited only the enemy. The Iraqis, as one soldier told the Associated Press, were "absolutely taking advantage" of the situation, regrouping and mounting sporadic attacks: as another soldier aptly noted, "It is hard to have a cease-fire when they maneuver against us, they fire at us." As the siege wore on, the goal of capturing the murderers quietly faded--and the enemy's confidence swelled.

Neither the later offensive on Fallujah in November nor any of the subsequent incursions have quelled the insurgents: witness the unending string of car bombings and (road-side) ambushes. Why?

Because in Fallujah and throughout this war the military (under orders from Washington) has been purposely treading lightly. Soldiers have strict orders to avoid the risk of killing civilians--many of whom aid or are themselves militants--even at the cost of imperiling their own lives. Mosques, which have served as hideouts for terrorists, are kept off the list of allowed targets. Military operations have been timed to avoid alienating Muslim pilgrims on holy days.

There is no shortage of aggressors lusting for American blood, and they grow bolder with each display of American compassion.

Consider the shameful tenderness shown toward the Islamic cleric Moktadr al-Sadr, who aspires to be the dictator of an Iranian-style theocracy in Iraq. An admirer of the 9/11 hijackers, Sadr has amassed an armed militia of 10,000 men (right under the noses of our military), and demanded that Coalition forces leave Iraq. On the run for the murder of another cleric, he took refuge with his militia in the holy city of Najaf, which has been surrounded by U.S. troops. Rather than attacking, however, the United States agreed to negotiate. It is as absurd to negotiate with and trust the word of a villain such as Sadr as it would have been to negotiate with Nazis bent on wiping out Allied forces in World War II. It is shockingly dangerous that the United States allowed a mediator from Iran--part of the "Axis of Evil" and Sadr's ideological ally--to assist in the negotiations.

In the end Sadr was allowed to walk away along with his armed militia; his agreement to disarm them has--predictably--gone unfulfilled.

For the enemies of America, Iraq is like a laboratory where they are testing our mettle, with mounting ferocity. The negotiations with Sadr; the half-hearted raids on Fallujah; our timid response to daily insurrections throughout Iraq; America's outrageously deferential treatment of its enemies--all of these instances of moral weakness reinforce the view of bin Laden and his ilk that America will appease those who seek its destruction.

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If we continue to confess doubts about our moral right to defend ourselves, it will only be a matter of time before Islamic militants bring suicide-bombings and mass murder (again) to the streets of the United States.

Though Washington may be blinded by the longing to buy the love of Iraqis, our servicemen know all too well that (as one put it): "When you go to fight, it's time to shoot--not to make friends with people." In its might and courage our military is unequaled; it is the moral responsibility of Washington to issue battle plans that will properly "shock and awe" the enemy. Eschewing self-interest in the name of compassion is immoral. The result is self-destruction.

*Elan Journo is a junior fellow at the Ayn Rand Institute ([www.ayn-rand.org](http://www.ayn-rand.org)), in Irvine, Calif. The Institute promotes the philosophy of Ayn Rand, author of *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead*. Send reactions to [reaction@aynrand.org](mailto:reaction@aynrand.org).*

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# Choice.

## Charlie Newman

Wal-Mart will not sell Maxim, Stuff, The Advocate, Out, or CDs with parental warning labels. They see all this, and all similar media, as immoral.

They did sell The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion (a vicious anti-Semitic screed) on their web site until it kicked up a very public PR nightmare. They continue to sell videotapes of Birth of a Nation (white supremacy trash), as well as books like The Clansman (the book upon which Birth of a Nation is based), The South was Right (which claims that the South was an independent country invaded, captured, and to this day occupied by a vicious aggressor), Myths of American Slavery (which attempts to "defeat the misinterpretations" related to American slavery), Was Jefferson Davis Right? (which is a spirited defense of the man who lead the South), and the like.

It is their right to sell what they want to sell and not sell what they don't want to sell.

It is your right to support corporations with which you agree by buying their goods or to withhold your monetary support from corporations with which you disagree.

Shop at Wal-Mart? My ass.



8, art by Christine Sorich



art by David Matson

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# poetry

## All That Damns You

Michelle Greenblatt

The sun has been falling all afternoon, then, a current of clouds lashes it back up, yanking it into the sky.

This reminds me of us,  
the ascension, dissention, & dropping down the horizon.

What else, then? Your uncovered feet;  
you thought I wouldn't

peek  
while you were dreaming

to see if my nightmare had come true. Stippled with scabs,  
thunder tangling around

my eyes as I put my hand to your thigh, trying not  
to wake you, trying not to kill you.

My face swollen with unshed tears, I ache now to name  
you, first name, middle, last. When you read this,

remember all I have written that damns you. When you  
read this, remember all I have written that doesn't.



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# LANGAUAGE VANDALISM POEM (PULL THE RIP CHORD)

Kenneth DiMaggio

Pull the rip chord  
from your religion

metaphysical free fall

while the face of God that you saw  
in a dream drifts like a failed parachute

until it gets snagged on the TV antenna  
and the barbed wire

leaving it exposed  
to the radioactive and the chemical  
weather that will bleach this dead spirit

until it becomes a rag  
good enough only  
to tourniquet an artery  
passionate for the syringe kiss  
of the artificial

Then  
will you be able to resuscitate your soul  
so that it can be strapped down  
and electrically re-charged

and flop around  
like an eel

pulled  
from a corpse

---

and thrown onto an elegantly set  
dining room table

Maybe that  
will put more focus

back into a haunting  
memory

that is frantically coagulating

like a scrambled TV-screen image

Can you ever get back  
what was once your true form

after something simple as one word

could no longer take root within you?

C d g l and  
the way those letters might be arranged  
along with a few more might able to *tell*

But when  
did something so easy  
as using paper and pen

require

so much violence and destruction

when  
did the suppressed cry  
from one so young

become the monster's  
berserk

but now dying roar

---

# LANGUAGE VANDALISM POEM (GET LOST)

Kenneth DiMaggio

Now be a good  
little puppet  
remember  
to look charming  
but stupid  
when you go for that interview  
and give the correct answers like

Democracy is the center of the universe  
and all the other countries  
that revolve around it are barbarians

Instead  
of going to graduate school

exile  
yourself to the asbestos filled warehouse  
and a job fok lifting  
the liposucted remains

sanctioned from the rotting metaphysics  
of a dead religion

that if you could pretend to believe in

would let you become your own  
painted and plastic and seemingly  
indepedent mannequinn

Just leave it to your superiors

---

to dress you in the appropriate ideology

So this is what prisons  
and if necessary wars are for

to make that pissed off  
tattooed flesh

wish that it was made out of pine  
and had nice pretty red circles  
on its cheeks

Is that why  
the writers for sale  
at my Barnes & Noble bookstore

all look like the dolls  
you try to knock down with a ball  
at the carnival

but not if you become the author  
of your own foul disturbed  
psychotic and sacrilegious language

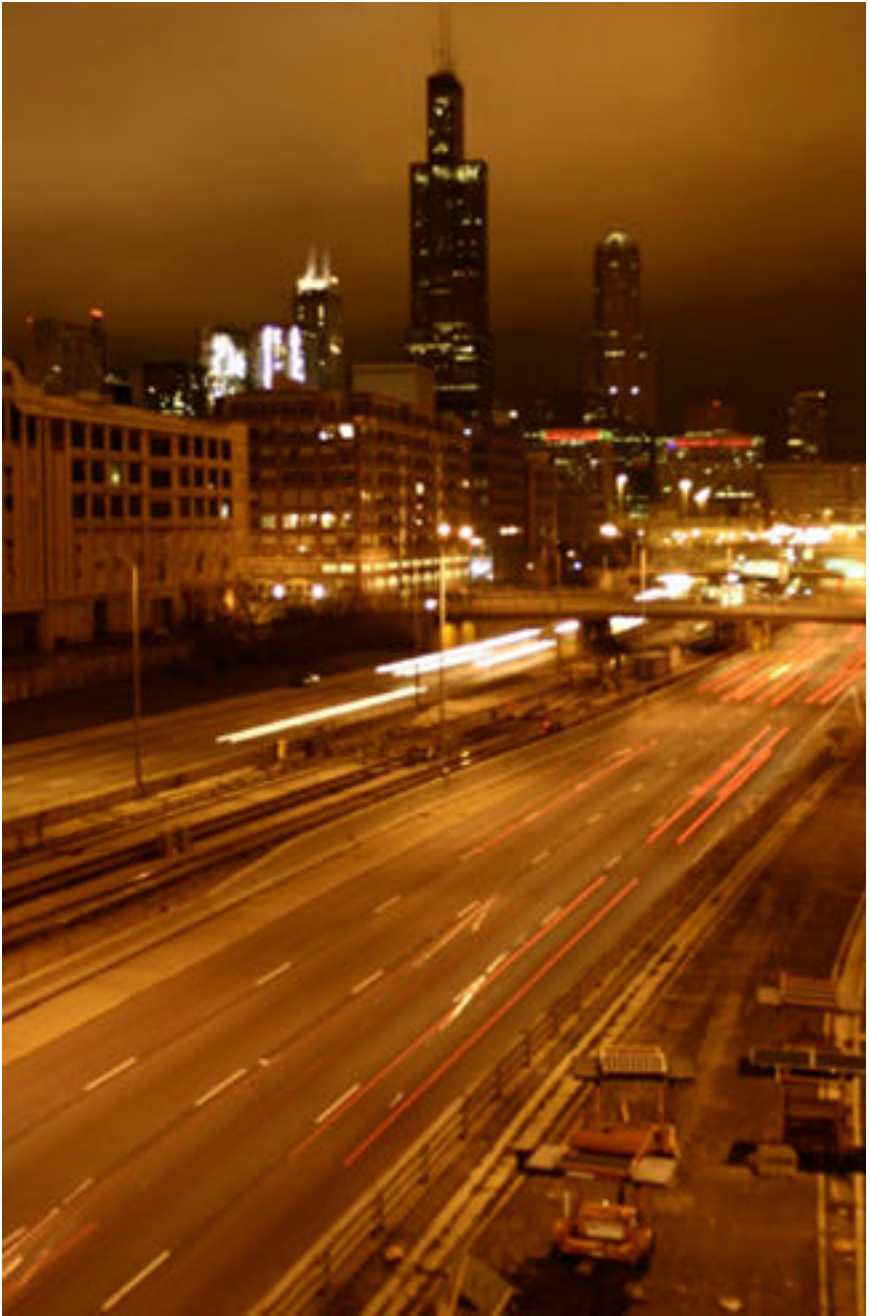
starting with the words: "Get Lost."

But if you know how to curse  
or deface great works of art

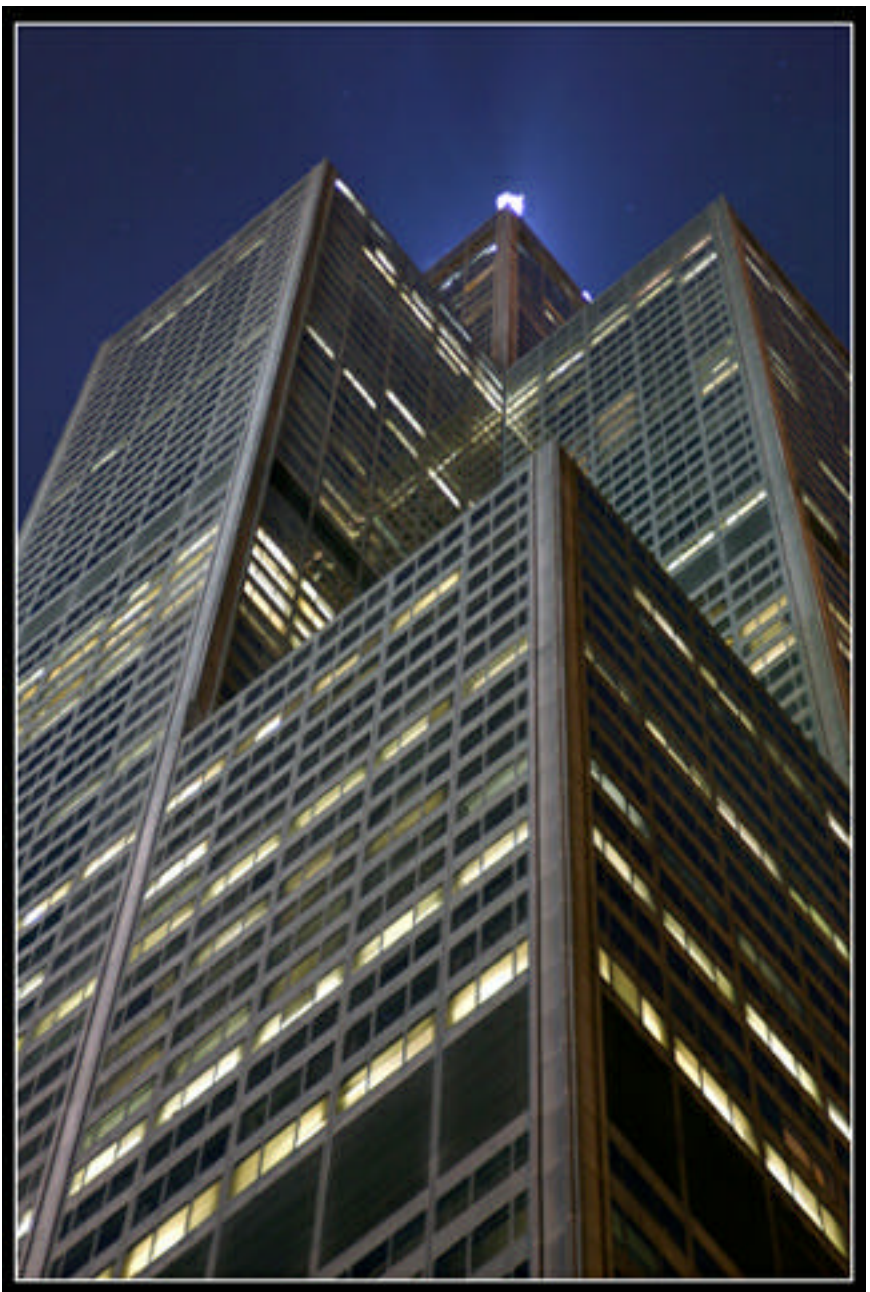
you can stay

and some of the other  
creatures of this planet like monkeys poets  
porn stars and criminals

but no professors police  
officers politicians or God



*chicago, IL, art by Joel McGregor*



**Blue Tower, art by Nick Brazinski**

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# Korean War Memorial 1995

## (for my grandfather)

### Joseph Veronneau

Souls are reborn  
thought to have once been abandoned completely.  
Bottled water was handed out  
in humid, inhumane temperatures,  
but the politicians still wore suits,  
climbed to their respective podium  
and delivered speeches  
they felt the people wanted to hear.  
The grassy terrace held too many  
in one place at one time,  
looking to put peace on a day  
in honor of a war  
these politicians had no clue about.

Tragedy brings people forth  
to respect sacrifices that many  
unwillingly took.  
The men in suits  
wanted it to be a revival,  
a ballgame, with the crowd roaring  
and applauding to stand proud  
before television cameras,  
awaiting to catch tears down the faces  
for ratings.

This was not a barbecue,  
a picnic, or even a town hall meeting,  
this was for lives:  
husbands and fathers  
moving in military rhythm,  
receiving bronze badges of courage  
and purple hearts,  
when the real courage could have come  
from the ones who run the nation.

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# The Modern Condition

Joseph Veronneau

Let's approach tragedy  
like a screaming infant,  
with no sense of  
who we are  
and covet it like a bible.

Let's take the back roads  
and turn them into  
drug dens  
so all dumbfounded poets  
can rent the space  
and shoot more dope  
into their sunglass-tainted eyes;  
content to watch MTV  
all day long,  
Satisfied to pick the  
perpetual wedgies  
in desert heat.

Gather your words,  
I'll gather mine  
and we'll recite them  
in our heads  
when days have grown  
too short,

and round-up a grocery  
or two  
at the basement of  
our lives.





*art by Louis Faber*



art by Nicole Aimiee Macaluso

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# Low Tide

Ryan McElroy

On the news today they're talking about bodies  
the body politic, the politics  
of governing bodies- governing  
our bodies, ungovernable  
by turns torpid  
and turgid as bodies  
of water

## (UNTITLED)

Ryan McElroy

a girl is a delicate thing

despite her sunburn and sore back  
her stained hands, her bruises  
despite what she says

a girl is a delicate thing  
she can only break from the inside out



**The Hands of Saint Peter**  
art by Mark Graham

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# PALL MALLS

Ryan McElroy

You're killing me slow like cigarettes.  
when eleven meets twelve and you're not near-  
your catholic past and your blue period;  
these things between us  
big lies and small promises-  
I want to accept it all,  
to accept all of you  
bad.  
I'm killing me slow like cigarettes.



art by Xanadu



Dream maid in the sea of Mer,  
Where colours run  
Your senses flow  
In the REM beats,  
The breathing, a sigh melody...  
Hear the spirit travel  
Nap after nap,  
And night by night.

from *Heroines*  
*Unlikely*  
art by  
Stephen Mead

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# Ik verlangde naar pijn

Je schreeuwde naar mij aan de kant te gaan.  
Je wou dat ik stopte.  
Ik reed te hard, zei je,  
daarom stampte ik op de remmen  
en zette de motor af.  
Ik wou uit de auto springen  
en weglopen,  
lopen tot ik mezelf verloor.  
Ja ik wou vallen.  
Ik wou op de grond vallen  
Ik wou de kille scherpe grint voelen  
die in mijn gezicht sneden  
en mijn kin openhaalde.  
Ik wou pijn om me weer goed te voelen.  
Maar jij zat nog in je auto,  
klaar om te racen  
mijn geest aan te porren,  
tot waanzinnigheid , boven alle grenzen heen.  
Ik stond geleund tegen mijn auto,  
voelde mijn verzwakte adem  
mijn krullen vlogen door de wind tegen mijn gelaat  
Ik moest me concentreren op mijn adem  
de uitdaging in jou macht te geraken negeren  
zolang ik ademen en denken kon.

(i wanted pain)  
translated by Jean Hellemans

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# Burn It In

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Janet Kuypers



Once I was at a beach  
off the west coast of Florida  
it was New Year's eve  
and the yellow moon hung over the gulf  
like a swaying lantern.  
And I was watching the waves crash in front of me  
with a friend  
and the wind picked up  
and my friend just stared at that moon for a while  
and then closed his eyes.  
I asked him what he was thinking.  
He said, "I wanted to look at this scene,  
and memorize it, burn it into my brain,  
record it in my mind, so I can call it up when I want to.  
So I can have it with me always."

I too have my recorders.  
I burn these things into my brain,  
I burn these things onto pages.  
I pick and choose what needs to be said,  
what needs to be remembered.

Every year, at the end of the year  
I used to write in a journal  
recall the things that happened to me  
log in all of the memories I needed to keep  
because that was what kept me sane  
that was what kept me alive.

When I first went to college  
I was studying to be a computer science  
engineer, I wanted to make a lot of money  
I wanted to beat everyone else  
because burned in my brain were the taunts



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of kids who were in cliques  
so others could do the thinking for them  
because burned in my brain were the evenings  
of the high school dances I never went to  
because burned in my brain were the people  
I knew I was better than  
who thought they were better than me.  
Well, yes, I wanted to make a lot of money  
I wanted to beat everyone else  
but I hated what I was doing  
I hated what I saw around me  
hated all the pain people put each other through  
and all of these memories just kept flooding me  
so in my spare time  
to keep me sane, to keep me alive  
I wrote down the things I could not say  
that was how I recorded things.



When I looked around me, and saw friends  
raping my friends  
I wrote, I burned into these nightmares with a pen  
and yes, I have this recorded  
I have all of this recorded.



What did you think I was doing  
when I was stuffing hand-written notes into my pockets  
or typing long hours into the night?  
In college, I had two roommates  
who in their spare time would watch movies in our living room  
and cross-stitch. I never understood this.  
In my spare time, I was not watching other's stories  
or weaving thread to keep my hands busy  
I was sitting in the corner of a cafe  
scribbling into my notebook.  
I was sitting in the university computer lab  
slamming my hands, my fingers against the keyboard  
because there were too many atrocities in the world  
too many injustices that I had witnessed  
too many people who had wronged me



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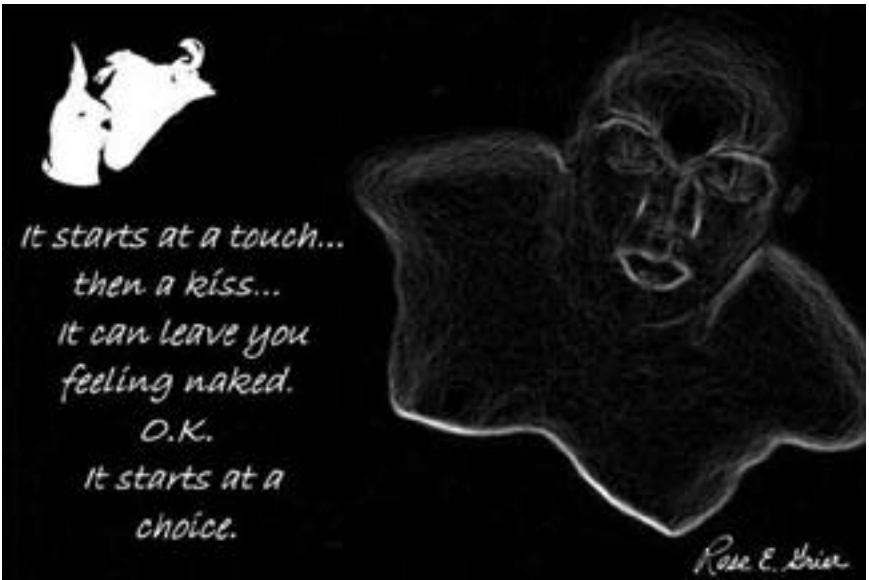
and I had a lot of work to do.  
There had to be a record of what you've done.

Did you think your crimes would go unpunished?  
And did you think that you could come back, years later,  
slap me on the back with a friendly hello  
and think I wouldn't remember?  
You see, that's what I have my poems for  
so there will always be a record  
of what you have done  
I have defiled many pages  
in your honor, you who swung  
your battle ax high above your head  
and thought no one would remember in the end.  
Well, I made a point to remember.  
Yes, I have defiled many pages  
and have you defiled many women?  
You, the man who rapes my friends?  
You, the man who rapes my sisters?  
You, the man who rapes me?  
Is this what makes you a strong man?

you want to know why I do the things I do

I had to record these things  
that is what kept me together  
when people were dying  
that is what kept me together  
when my friends went off to war  
that is what kept me together  
when my friends were raped  
and left for dead  
that is what kept me together  
when no one bothered to  
notice this  
or change this  
or care about this  
these recordings kept me together

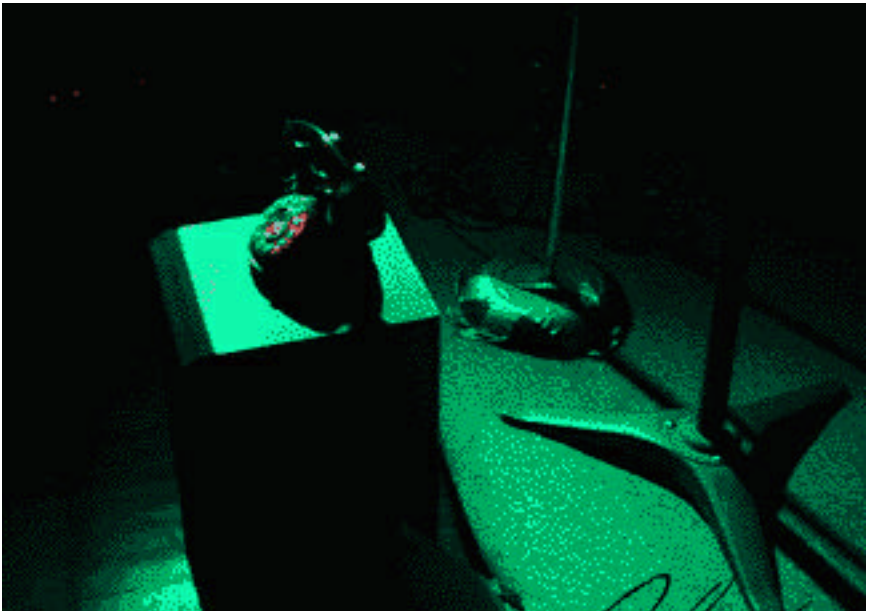
I need to record these things  
to remind myself  
of where I came from  
I need to record these things  
to remind myself  
that there are things to value  
and things to hate  
I need to record these things  
to remind myself  
that there are things worth fighting for  
worth dying for  
I need to record these things  
to remind myself  
that I am alive



*It starts at a touch...  
then a kiss...  
It can leave you  
feeling naked.  
O.K.  
It starts at a  
choice.*

*Rose E. Grier*

**Naked Kiss, art by Rose E. Grier**



**Not Mute Phone, art by John Yotko**

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Like Lemmings All Walk  
And Drown Together  
Dreaming of evacuation  
has to do with process  
is this history of one  
who is wholly careless  
Discharge its contents  
with emptying a weapon  
until a people relents  
uses everyone as a pawn  
See him walking softly  
carrying the big stick  
containing our energy  
Sit war out is a trick  
sick political synergy



**Bubble Girl, art by Cheryl Townsend**

## **The Irrelevance of the Avant-Garde**

In the normal course of events, the world is content to ignore the capers that take place in our ivory-tower institutions. But in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, the public has suddenly cast a sharp eye on obscure academic figures whose reactions demonstrate either an appalling callousness, an extreme removal from reality, or both. One figure in the latter category is Karlheinz Stockhausen, a German composer considered a modern master among contemporary academic composers--and ignored by the rest of the world.

The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung's English edition carries the following account of Stockhausen's comments, by reporter Julia Spinola:

Asked at a press conference on Monday for his view of the events, Stockhausen answered that the attacks were "the greatest work of art imaginable for the whole cosmos. . . . Minds achieving something in an act that we couldn't even dream of in music, people rehearsing like mad for ten years, preparing fanatically for a concert, and then dying, just imagine what happened there. You have people who are that focused on a performance and then five thousand people are dispatched into the afterlife, in a single moment. I couldn't do that. By comparison, we composers are nothing."

His later explanation was: "At the press conference in Hamburg, I was asked if Michael, Eve, and Lucifer were historical figures of the past and I answered that they exist now, for example Lucifer in New York. . . . I said that [the events] appeared to be Lucifer's greatest work of art. . . . I cannot find a fitting name for such a 'satanic composition.'"

For those who are wondering how classical music came to this, we can look first to Arnold Schoenberg, the early twentieth-century composer who argued that our traditional harmonic system, cultivated over centuries and producing many of our civilization's greatest treasures, had run its course and an entirely new organizing principle was needed. (He offered his own as the answer.) Schoenberg's creed was augmented by the French composer Pierre Boulez, who argued that, having done away with traditional harmony, it made no sense to retain traditional melodic or formal structures either.

Many of our finest composers dissented quietly, went their own ways, and produced beautiful bodies of work. But the Schoenberg-Boulez line

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was held up as historically inevitable progress, and suddenly composers who wanted to be hip and part of history were left scrambling for their own 'new' way of writing music. From the screeching bleeps of Penderecki's "Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima" to Cage's "4'33" (where the pianist shuts the piano and lets the audience's incidental noise make the "music"), piece after piece emerged that showed little craft and achieved validation only through attaching itself to some artistically "progressive" or politically correct concept.

Here is where Stockhausen earned his fame and even became hip enough to end up on the cover of the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper" album. He contributed heavily to the avant-garde scene with pieces (among countless others) in which the performer simply lets his eye rove among various isolated chunks of score and plays what he sees for a fixed amount of time--plus loads of 'experimental electronic' music that at the time was hailed for being spooky and futuristic but now could be outdone by any teenager with a computer and a sampler. In the end, we had the spectacle in the 1970s of an "avant-garde" music circle that simply dragged to a halt and remains there today, frozen in time, a purgatory in which Stockhausen himself is stuck, while classical composition on the whole has taken a dramatic turn toward conservatism, accessibility, and meaning. Flailing for attention, the avant-gardists produce works that are designed to "send vibrations of welcome to extraterrestrial beings from different galaxies and universes," according to critic Paul Moor, and a string quartet for four helicopters.

So, it's hard to see how any of these ivory-tower composers are capable of contributing meaningfully to our experience of the post-September 11 world. The Hungarian composer Gyorgy Ligeti said, in response to Stockhausen's comments, that he should be confined to a mental institution. But can anyone who knows Ligeti's music think a work in his style could produce something that speaks to this tragedy? Consequently, like economists' models that ignore how living people act, their music does none of the things that we look to music to do.

-- Eric Barnhill

*A graduate of New York's Julliard School, Eric Barnhill is a pianist who has performed in concert halls throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe, as well as at TOC's 2000 summer seminar*

# children churches & daddies



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