



# JOURNAL

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Wisdom | Leadership | Service

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*The Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal accepts submissions from non-members as well as members of Delta Epsilon Sigma. While student contributions are welcome at any time, each spring issue will reserve space for the Delta Epsilon Sigma Undergraduate Writing Contest winners. We will consider for publication a wide variety of articles, fiction, and poetry. Our primary mission is to serve the Catholic cultural and intellectual tradition, and we favor work commensurate with that aim. Submissions to Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal are peer reviewed by doctorally-prepared academics or other specialists. Submissions published in the Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal may not be afterwards published elsewhere without the express consent in writing of both the Executive Director and the Journal's editor.*

*Submit manuscripts (as Microsoft Word files) via email to either of the two editors: Dr. Robert Magliola (magliola.robert@gmail.com) or Dr. Claudia Marie Kovach (ckovach@neumann.edu).*

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## MESSAGES FROM THE EDITORS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*DO YOU KNOW? Thanks to the Amazon Smile program, you can donate to DES by simply shopping online at Amazon? When you designate Delta Epsilon Sigma as your chosen charitable organization, DES receives 0.5% of the value of your Amazon purchase. Use this link and it will automatically select DES for you: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/41-6038602>.*

Submissions for the forthcoming 2021 Undergraduate Writing Competition in Scholarly and Creative Writing are due on or before Dec. 1st, 2021. Chapter advisors are encouraged to organize their own local contests. *Before sending the winning entries on to the national competition, advisors must require the student-authors to correct all grammatical and mechanical (spelling, punctuation) errors in their submission.* Please note that the Executive Board must receive all submissions in Word format (no PDFs) and that submissions are limited to 5000 words maximum. *Submissions that exceed 5000 words shall not be considered.* Use the format of in-text citation and Works Cited. **All Notes should be relegated to the submission's back matter as Endnotes (NO Footnotes).** Submissions may not contain copyrighted images unless these have been cleared by the copyright holder. For further specifications, see the pertaining section of the Announcements at the rear of this issue.

The Delta Epsilon Sigma website—[www.deltaepsilonsigma.org](http://www.deltaepsilonsigma.org)—invites your *active participation*. The site features information about the Society and *its constituent chapters*. It supplies the latest news, **current and past issues of the *DES Journal***, instructions, and application forms for the various contests, awards, etc.

All published work in the *DES Journal* is peer-reviewed by doctorally-prepared academics or specialists in the work's subject-matter.

We continue to seek updated postal and email addresses of our membership. Please notify Ronald L. Smorada, Ph.D., Assistant to the Executive Director, DES National Office, Neumann University, Arts and Sciences, BACH 305, Aston, PA 19014-1298.



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## J. PATRICK LEE PRIZE FOR SERVICE

### INTERVIEW WITH MEAGAN DUBOIS, ST. ANSELM COLLEGE

**You've done many different kinds of service. What type do you enjoy the most? Why?**

I really enjoy working with the refugee and immigrant population. I have experiences from a classroom setting, soup kitchen, and afterschool programs. The essence of being a refugee carries many hardships, and I appreciate working with the family unit, both youth and adults alike. It is the strong relationships and seeing their individual growth that I enjoy, as I get to know them and their experiences on an individual level, through long-term community engagement.



**How and when did you begin serving others?**

Throughout high school I did various types of service, using my talent as a competitive jump roper to teach the sport to inner-city youth near my home in Providence, Rhode Island. I would do this at afterschool programs such as the YMCA, the Boys and Girls clubs, and several schools, one being in Newtown, Connecticut after their tragedy in 2012. I was even able to travel to Klagetoh, Arizona on a service trip with my high school, living in the Navajo Nation for a week. On this trip we built corrals for sheep, cleaned out a barn, dug a watering hole, and played with the Navajo children after school.

**As you have given to others, what do you believe you have gained in return?**

The most powerful thing I gained is learning more about myself, including passions, strengths, and weaknesses. I entered college as a shy student, only knowing that I want to work with children in a job. I leave college as a well-rounded leader, ready to enter the workforce, likely as an advocate and support for refugees and immigrants. Through service I have made good friends at school, as we are like-minded individuals who care about others. In addition, I have created a home for myself in Manchester, having been here four years.

**You write that social work remains essential to your future.**

**Explain how you think this discipline relates to Catholic social teaching.**

Our social work values include service, social justice, dignity/worth of every person, integrity, the importance of human relationships, and competence. These are much like the Catholic social teachings, which include life and dignity of a human person, preferential option for the poor, solidarity, and care for God's creation.

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**Tell us please about your work with those suffering from addiction and the impact this experience had on you and your social views. What have you learned that might give *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal* readers insight concerning the current needs in this country?**

During my sophomore year, I attended “Hope for New Hampshire Recovery,” where I used active listening skills and attended meetings to help those seeking recovery from addiction. This taught me to be patient and understanding as addiction is not a choice; therefore, addicts are not to be judged as “bad people.” I witnessed the power of support that is within this community. It is extremely difficult to seek recovery, and nearly impossible to do so alone. In agencies like this, people have friends who are going through a similar experience, empowering each other to change for the better. In my short time volunteering there, I witnessed the consequences of negative stereotypes on this population. I also observed first-hand how many of these individuals defied the odds and the stereotyping directed towards them.

**What would you like to share about your experiences during St. Anselm’s “Spring Break Alternative trip?”**

Freshman year, I participated in one of the Spring Break Alternative (SBA) trips. The trip I attended was to Saint Benedict’s Preparatory School in N.J. for one week. I took a van with ten other students to Newark, despite warnings from my friends of how dangerous the city was. I did not let stereotypes of the city prevent me from going. While there, I assisted teachers at the school, served food in a soup kitchen, and attended daily Mass with the local community. I built strong relationships with the students there, some of whom I keep in contact with today, four years later.

**You mention the Kids Café soup kitchen and its impact on your growth. Describe this involvement and how it connects to other aspects of your personal service. Explain the connections you find in the sharing of your personal gifts.**

The most influential service I have done during my undergraduate education is my work as a Community Coordinator with Kids Café, a Salvation Army program for youth ages 7 through 12. This position I have had since my freshman year. My role is to attend Kids Café twice a week, building strong relationships with the staff and children through eating a family-style meal and playing fun activities with the youth. Many of the children are undocumented or first-generation Americans who have English as a second language, and experience food insecurity and housing and educational disparities. Kids Café has helped me find my voice, advocating for these programs. In this role, I have extended my advocacy, problem-solving, time management, and teamwork skills. This community engagement sparked my passion for the undocumented, as I recognize they are one of the most resilient yet vulnerable populations.

**What service experiences have especially inspired your choice of career path?**

My plans have changed since my arrival at Saint A's. I came to Saint A's as an Elementary Education major, wanting to work with children as I was passionate about educational disparities. However, since then I have realized that there are so many other populations needing help. I have grown passionate about issues such as food and housing insecurity, healthcare disparities, wage gaps, and racial justice. Therefore, I am graduating from Saint Anselm with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work. I will be pursuing my Master of Social Work next year at Rhode Island College. Hopefully, I will eventually work for a non-profit, supporting refugees of all ages through therapy and advocacy.

**What do you find most difficult about service?****Can you think of a time when things didn't go as you expected or you questioned your purpose?**

One of the hardest things is knowing that I am in an agency for a semester-long project. It is extremely difficult for me to leave relationships that I have built over months, knowing I may not see them again; however, I have learned so much from the short time I have had at each agency. Moreover, leaving one site means that I will have a new opportunity to meet new people and learn more. This semester, I have been placed at a school in Manchester working with a homeless liaison. I have been yearning to work with a school social worker as I thought I may want to be a school social worker after graduation. Though I have learned so much from my supervisor, this service experience caused me to change my career path as I learned school social work is not a good fit for me. I enjoy working in a team of other social workers, but as a school social worker, it is extremely unlikely for there to be two or more partners working together. This service experience has helped me realize that a non-profit setting for refugees and immigrants may be a better fit for me.

**Do you think all university students should engage in service? Why or why not?**

I think every student should engage in service because it allows you to feel like part of the community. In addition to studying people or topics in a classroom, you can apply what you are learning to your engagement. Service will help to defy biases you have, encouraging you to treat each person as an individual. It will allow you to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes.



## JULIET

## MOLLY MACDUFF\*

I envy that Capulet.  
She captures cocky gentlemen  
with her white veil and virgin smile,  
fills their minds with fire—  
a facetious nurse her only companion,

innocent to a fault.  
Never has her heart been picked  
like petals and tossed off a balcony.

If she had any common sense,  
she'd live under golden chandeliers,  
bearing children to dry her hasty tears.

But I envy her.  
I'm young enough  
to take the potion and sleep,  
elope with any willing Romeo.

But smart enough  
to know I'd awake alone  
with the dagger next to me.  
She knows the world will end tomorrow.  
It is small and flat and without her lover  
death is sweet as a blueberry macaron.

---

\* Molly MacDuff, a student at Loras College, won second place in the poetry category of the 2020 Fr. Edward Fitzgerald Undergraduate Competition in Creative and Scholarly Writing.

## SNOW

DOUGLAS BERMAN\*

Snow helps anchor the mind. Enhancements may be useful, though: snow shoes, sleds, and crampons. And a mint julep for the way home.

Thales grasped its constituent elements: water, crystal, organic material. He was a scientist of the open road.

I am getting old now. I once dreamt I spent the entire winter inside a docked submarine berthed on land dragged from the sea by maverick sailors in Nova Scotia.

The submarine rested on topsoil, and I did not stir from inside the entire winter. I slept and woke, without a word or speech to anything living. For the snow and silence had plugged my ears. The muffled sound lay inside my hearing and my thoughts.

There was fresh snow every morning; for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It was delicious.

Inside the vessel, there was a water boiler that did not cease and a storeroom with provender. Snow flurries rustled like leaves but no one who could prise me away or discern my presence from outside. I felt safely unbuffered.

The snow fell slow. But it was effective: it plugged the tiny edges of the ship, then the tiny window that was added for show, as submarines do not have portholes; the top; and then the hatch.

By January – the snow had sealed shut the ship hull and aft and obliterated me from external sight. My home, small and tinny in shape, had become a simple line, an adumbration to the world outside. I was the inside and the outside at once.

I finally dethatched myself right before Spring. I climbed out of the top portal and leapt out onto newly-washed ground. Clumps remained, but the bulk had evaporated.

---

\* Douglas Scott Berman currently lives in New York City where he enjoys taking meandering walks, trying new foods, and eavesdropping on other peoples' conversations, from which most of his stories are derived. Formerly, he lived in Asia where he taught, practiced law, and studied Mandarin Chinese. His greatest hope is for world peace.

As feet descended, the submarine gave a little pirouette to its left and vanished. And as I turned to leave, I recalled a small ditty I learned as a child:

Do not dwell in yonder village; do not dwell in yonder yard  
The road home is paved with worry -- the price to pay -- so stay on guard.  
Carve the fruit and shed the husk; sweep the residue away  
Set the carvings on the table; we will linger here today.  
Remain home where you can rest your weary. We will linger here today.



## AMOR MEUS

ROSEMARY BERTOCCI AND FRANCIS ROHLF\*

My Beloved

*Laudato Si'*, my gentle father.

*Laudato Si'*, my tender mother.

*Mea culpa*, my beautiful lover.

*Mea maxima culpa*, best Friend (Think BFF).

*Ago tibi gratias*, favored, favorite brother,

*Fratelli tutti*, in fraternity and social friendship,

*Sororibus in sempiternum, in aeternum!*

You've given me them all -- to comfort me, teach me, praise me,

To play with this little one.

---

\* Dr. Rosemary Bertocci, Chair of Franciscan Studies, Theology, and Applied Ethics and Professor of Environmental Studies at Saint Francis University, Loretto, PA, earned a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology at Duquesne University.

Dr. Fran Rohlf recently retired as Coordinator of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Mount Aloysius College, Cresson, PA. He has degrees in Philosophy, Pastoral Ministry, and a Doctorate in Systematic Theology from Duquesne University.

Drs. Bertocci and Rohlf co-authored "Condemned to Be Religious: The Human Quest for Ultimate Meaning," published in *Theology and Science*.

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## COUNTY SLIGO

### LAURA LUNGHUHN\*\*

#### Saturday, Mile 16:

I stick close to the edge of the country road, back bowed beneath the rain and the weight of a full backpack. A slight hill rises on my left, cutting off sharply before the shoulder, so the brown water flows from the ground across the pavement. Hours ago, I would have watched where I walked to avoid the worst puddles, but now I'm so soaked and muddy that it no longer matters. On the right, the Irish countryside slopes into bright green pastureland. I can smell the livestock, but can't see them; they've taken shelter from the rain as I should have. At least if it rains for the next six kilometers, there's a chance most of the mud will have washed off by the time I re-enter Sligo. An engine hums behind me. I don't look back. The car slows as it approaches, passes on my right, but doesn't speed up again. It crawls to a stop ahead of me, its red paint bright on the overcast day. The window rolls down. I recall my mom telling me years ago that you don't hesitate, don't look in the window, just keep walking. But I can't help it. I look.

"Would you like a ride?" The woman, getting on in middle age, short straight hair fading to grey, leans across the passenger seat to speak to me out the window.

I stop, and before I have even thought the words, I'm asking, "Where are you headed?"

"Sligo."

I'm relieved. "Me too."

"Would you like a ride?"

"Yes, please." I don't hesitate in my answer, only slightly disappointed I won't be adding another four miles to the day's total.

She opens the door.

"I'm covered in mud," I say. It's spread over my shoes, my calves, my rear end, my backpack. My backpack! "But I've got a towel I can spread over the seat," I say, remembering Mom's solution after muddy soccer games. The woman doesn't say anything, so I unslung my bag and dig out the towel. She helps me spread it over the beige leather seat, and I climb in, nestling my bag between my feet. Once the door is shut and I'm buckled, I grimace, realizing just how wet and muddy I am.

"Were you on the mountain?" she asks, putting the car into drive.

"Yes."

"Have you been up before?"

"No. I'm not from here. Just visiting for the weekend."

"Did you climb alone?" I'm not sure if her voice betrays concern or disbelief.

"Yes," I answer, feeling rather proud of myself. I had made the climb!

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\*\* Laura Lunghuhn, a student at Loras College, won first place in the creative nonfiction category of the 2020 Fr. Edward Fitzgerald Undergraduate Competition in Creative and Scholarly Writing.

“Next time, you should take someone with you. Or make sure to ask a local before going. People have been air-lifted off that mountain.”

“Really!?” Warmth creeps up my cheeks. “I didn’t know.” Some of the pride drops from my voice.

“And there are mine shafts people have fallen in by stepping off the path.”

“Oh?” My cheeks burn. How far off the path? I wonder, but don’t dare speak.

Silence.

“You know,” she begins, a slight smile beginning to cross her face, “you’re quite adventurous.”

Adventurous? Me? But I’m introverted. How can I be adventurous?

“I guess.” I shrug.

### **Saturday, Mile 14:**

My toes squish in my wet shoes as I rock forward on my feet to give my heels a short rest. I follow the staircase up the mountain with my eyes – earthen steps supported by wood fronting and overlaid with gravel – until they disappear around a bend. Knocknarea. And at the top, Queen Maeve’s Cairn. A two hundred-meter climb.

I hesitate. I had turned back this morning; should I really be attempting the climb again? Some of the rain had to have dried up, blown off, or soaked into the ground, I try to reason with myself. That’s a joke. It’s been raining off and on all day; the only time I was (mostly) dry was at the café during lunch. Finally, I shrug, telling myself, you came to Sligo for this. And besides, you have to go back anyway. This’ll cut the distance.

Muscles tug in my thighs, my calves, a post-workout strain before I’ve done the workout. I pause, breath rattling out of me. Is it altitude or exhaustion? I want to blame it on the altitude, but looking up and then back – green pastureland dotted yellow with blooming gorse rolls downward, pooling into the grid of white homes at the mountain’s base with the ocean beyond, wooden fence posts marching alongside – I estimate I’m only a third of the way up. I keep going, counting miles. At least thirteen by now, more probably. Two thirds. Backpack inventory: laptop and charger (hopefully dry), journal and novel (those better be dry), yesterday’s clothes, toiletries, towel, milk chocolate digestives. The trail levels out. The houses have shrunk and Coney Island is visible beyond the peninsula of Strandhill. I pick out the beach I had walked and the airport I had skirted.

I take a right turn, wet gravel sliding beneath my feet, following the path’s curve around the mountainside. Around the bend, stairs sprout from the earth. Wooden, overlaid with chicken wire and rows of curved metal for traction, they form a narrow way up the mountain between a rise of pines. I step carefully; the treads aren’t enough to prevent slipping on the saturated wood. Light is dim between the trees, the boughs nearly obscuring the grey sky above. Sound is muffled, absorbed by the wet wood and brown needles that blanket the forest floor. It would be ominous in the dark. The ground falls away as I climb, a blue rope strung between trees the only means of support.

The stairs end when the trees do. My glasses speckle with water droplets, then fill, obscuring the town below. I stop for photos, doubting they’ll turn out what with the fog, rain, and my impaired vision. Can’t feel my fingers either. I fish my gloves out of my pocket, pull them on.

I approach the cairn – a 27,000-ton mound of rock piled like stone dumped from the back of a truck – climbing over and around the puddles flooding the gravel path. No stone should be removed from the cairn. If I want a mountain stone as evidence of my success and my time here, now would be the time, before I get too close. I bend, pick one up, rub my thumb over its rough edges, put it back. This is Queen Maeve, the woman who marched on Ulster in an attempt to steal a prize bull in revenge. Not worth the risk. I circle the mound, treading the far edge of the path. All this way, and I'm wary of getting too close. I don't need anything else to go wrong.

The descent is treacherous. I expect stairs like the ones I had just climbed or like those I had encountered this morning at the base. Instead, there are fading tracts of gravel, white stone protruding from the hillside, nothing to hold onto. The path, or what I guess to be the path, hairpins down the mountainside, too steep to be comfortable. I hold my breath with each step, the wet stone shifting beneath me, waiting to lose my footing. Maybe I should have gone around.

In a single step, I slide too much. Throw my arms out for balance. Dig in my feet. Stop. Breathe. I step from the path – it wouldn't do to go down on gravel – and slide again. I wobble, look for traction, try to right myself before collapsing, but there's no use. The ground squishes beneath me and wet seeps through my thin jeans, numbing my legs. I place my hands in the mud, lift myself from the ground, slip, land hard. I scramble for the gravel path, steady my rise. Mud clings to me. I scrape off what I can until my gloves hang heavy with it. I rinse those in a puddle and walk on, fingers frozen.

I slog through the flood at the mountain's base. Nothing matters now.

### **Saturday, Mile 10:**

I stand at the edge of the pier, thighs pressed against the cement wall. The north Atlantic washes over the beach, unsettling only the smallest of the grey stones that look almost blue against the water and the sky. If it has stopped raining, I can't tell; the ocean blows in, and I can taste the salt on the wind.

My phone vibrates in my pocket; I withdraw it, the charging cord tangling around my wrist. A good-morning text from my boyfriend. I grin. He's just getting up, and I've already walked ten miles. I respond, bragging just a little.

I head up the strand to Shells, a seaside café and bakery recommended to me by a coworker. The place is packed. I fill the narrow space between the full tables, peering around heads and side-stepping waiters to read the menu. When a waitress finally has a spare moment, she takes my name, adding me to the queue of waiting customers. Space clears and she places me at a table for two. She takes my order. I splurge a little and get an affogato in addition to my sandwich – a small way to celebrate my arrival despite everything.

For a while, I sort through the most recent pictures on my phone, deleting those blurred with rain or a washed-out sky, but then I let my phone rest on the blue patterned tablecloth. No longer anxious, no longer wishing to be home, I'm content to wait.

### **Saturday, Mile 7:**

I stand at Knocknarea's base, studying the trailhead map. Two and a half kilometers? That's nothing. An hour and a half? Can probably shrink that time. I set off excited, determined.

The trail's climb is gradual, deep steps cut into the hillside. Empty pastureland flanks the path. Mud squishes beneath my feet. I grimace. The puddles widen. I step over and around. Then, I come to a puddle that fills the area of the step. I manage to get a purchase in the grass on the edge of the path, using a wooden fence post as support. And then I get stuck. The next step is filled, ankle deep. No stones for purchase. A stone wall prevents me from leaving the path. I weigh the cost. Keep going, make it to the top, spend the next nine hours in sodden shoes. Or turn back. I hesitate. Determined to find a way to make this work.

A couple comes down the mountainside, tramps through the water. I stare after them, envious of their waterproof hiking boots. With a sigh, I give it up. Will nothing go my way?

I follow the road that traces the massive hill's base, keeping to the shoulder. The trek is easy, downhill, and the view of the ocean in the distance is some consolation for the failed climb. The rain lets up, only a spitting drizzle now.

When the trees clear, the mountain side morphs into rolling hills. White sheep dot the green land. Strandhill appears in the distance, butting up against the sea.

Almost there.

### **Saturday, Mile 1:**

The sky is grey when I leave the hostel at 8 AM, but it's not raining yet. Maybe today will go right. I make tracks out of town, headed for the closest McDonald's, Wi-Fi on my mind. I have Carrowmore on my list of things to see but can't remember what it is and want to make sure I get to the right place.

The road is quiet with only the occasional car. I imagine its passengers gawk at me. Aged brick row houses are replaced by cottages, their siding white and yellow. Bed and breakfasts pop up on my right. Should have stayed in one of these. They'd probably have Wi-Fi.

The houses disappear, and I pass the last service station. I double check maps.me, the GPS app on my phone. There's no way McDonald's is this far out of town. The town road turns into a county road. I pass a motorway exit. Take a curve. The restaurant finally appears in front of me, off a new roundabout in a developing shopping center. The irregularity of it puzzles me. This isn't like Dublin, isn't like the States.

The place is deserted, and yet an employee still makes her rounds with a broom and a pan, sweeping. I nod at her, slide into a booth. I make quick work, finding the Wi-Fi listed on my phone, hitting connect, but I'm not redirected to the McDonald's page, can't agree to the terms and conditions. Disconnect. Reconnect. Same result. Restart my phone. Nothing. I pull out my laptop; maybe the network has an aversion to mobile devices. No luck there either. I give it some time, try again. Nope. The woman with the broom eyes me. Not too late to turn back... I pack up.

Outside, in the spitting rain, I put Carrowmore into my GPS, circle the roundabout, abandoning civilization for the Irish countryside. What have I got to lose? The roads undulate, shallow black waves over a green ocean. The rain increases, darkening my berry coat, sliding off its smooth surface, soaking the thighs of my pants. Ten minutes and it lets up again, a slight drizzle, stops. I slow when the rain disappears, and my nostrils fill with petrichor, damp wool, and silage, the smells of my aunt and uncle's farm. I wonder if this is what Sligo looked like to my great-grandmother, too. If this is consolation for spending the day wet, I'll take it. I dry out just before the next downpour.

I climb the last rise to Carrowmore. And there's nothing there. A fenced green valley with a pond shimmering on the far side. No sign, no indication that I'm somewhere. I check the GPS again, open the details on my location. I've arrived at the locality of Carrowmore. I search the place again. No other results are listed. What then, had I discovered on Google? Unable to remember, I put in Knocknarea, wondering how much time I could have saved if I had abandoned this detour when I first set out. I slip my phone back into my pocket, it's screen dotted with fresh raindrops. Remember to thank my brother again for the waterproof case.

### Friday, Mile 6:

The bell on the café door jangles to silence. My head swivels – left or right? I choose to increase my mileage and go left, even though there's nothing left to see. I make tracks back up the main street, again eying the array of green cakes and pastries in the bakery window, glad I'm headed back to Dublin for St. Patrick's Day. I pick a side street at random, hoping to end up somewhere new, but find myself in the Penny's parking lot. I had been at the department store earlier, hoping for Wi-Fi. They had it, but the connection was weak, and I left with emails in my inbox that refused to load.

I don't see the roads I walk; I've already looked. Sligo's an empty town. I turn off the main street for the n-th time today and enter the shopping complex – the only place I haven't been. Trudge the main level. Take the escalator down. Out of options, I enter T.K. Maxx. I browse the coats, thinking I may want something lighter as the weather becomes balmy. I linger in the baking aisle, imagining all I could throw together in my Dublin flat if I had the tools. I stop to smell the candles, something I'd do with Mom, something to which I introduced my boyfriend. I come across one labeled cedar wood and reach for it, greedy. But I'm not prepared for its accuracy, how closely it resembles the scent of Dad's woodshop and the blanket chest he crafted me. Placing the lid back on the candle, sealing its fragrance, is like hanging up the phone, ending the only connection I have to home. Wanting that connection back, I reach inside my pocket for my phone to text someone.

I pull out my gloves.

My keys.

My wallet.

My rosary.

I stop breathing.

Check my pants pockets – all four of them.

Check them again.

My teeth clench, holding back tears of panic.

Where's my phone?

Nearing a run, I leave the store, backtrack, hoping I dropped it nearby, but afraid to hope too hard. Pat my pockets. Check the ground. Nothing. I leave, sucking in the cold damp air. Take off down the street. How long has it been? Thirty minutes? An hour?

I dart across the street, bump shoulders, elbows. Pass the green sweets. The café!

The bell clangs, and the woman behind the counter looks up.

"I think I left my phone here," I say, trying not to sound too desperate.

“Yes.” She smiles, reaches under the counter, draws out my phone.

I breathe again.

“Thank you so much!” I reach for it.

“Not a problem!”

The knuckles of both hands whiten around my phone. I’m already tacking this onto my list of mistakes.

### **Friday, Mile 5:**

I agonize over the menu – the only meat-free option is a tuna melt, and I don’t like tuna. Though, I could just get a pastry and coffee. The woman at the counter watches me in my inability to make a decision. Have I lingered too long to leave?

I step to the counter. Swallow. “Can I get the tuna melt, please?” This is what I get for traveling on a Friday during Lent.

I take a seat in the back room of the café, shoving my damp backpack beneath the table and shrugging out of my coat. Then, I pull out my phone, desperate for Wi-Fi. Usually, I don’t mind being disconnected, but this is my first solo overnight, and as the day wears on, I’m feeling more and more alone. Nothing. I miss the texts from my sister and the Snapchats from my friends.

The woman places my meal on the table in front of me. I tell myself to eat slowly; I can waste time here. Soon, the crisps are gone. Then half the sandwich. Then all of it. It wasn’t terrible. My heart speeds as I stare at my empty plate. My stomach twists. How long is it socially acceptable to remain here? Five minutes? Ten? I turn on my phone, swipe through my screens, cycle through my photos, open and close my texts. Anything to not walk back out into the rain alone.

The song on the radio breaks into my circling thoughts.

“There’s something in the way you roll your eyes.”

Those words are enough to make me lower my phone and listen. How many times has my boyfriend commented on my eye-roll? How many times have I made a point to roll my eyes, just for him?

“Trying to stand up on my own two feet.”

I roll my eyes. That’s why I’m here, isn’t it?

“So say you’ll stay with me tonight, ‘cause there’s so much wrong going on outside.”

Everything is going wrong. I replay my misfortunes in my head. Everything. And I have no one to walk me home. My breath catches and my eyes fill. I settle my bill before I begin to cry.

### **Friday, Mile 3:**

The train drops me on the edge of the old part of town. I descend the station steps, cross the road, stop. I stare up into the large face of William Butler Yeats, his portrait, in black and white, surrounded by colored rectangles in blue, maroon, yellow, and green overlaid with poem excerpts in calligraphic script. I pass through downtown, eyeing the

pastries in the bakery window, hurrying to the White House Hostel before it closes at one. Otherwise, I'd have to wait until five for it to reopen. I pass the Yeats' House. Cross the river Garavogue flowing swift and fast with the recent rain. Pass a statue of the poet. Definitely Yeats Country. Climb the small hill to the hostel. It's an old two-story white cottage with a three-season room pasted on the front. I ring the bell.

A middle aged, balding man answers the door.

"Hi," I say. "I made a reservation."

He nods once, pushes the door open further to let me in.

I follow him through the living room to the desk.

"Your name?"

I give it to him, and he checks it against the list of bookings on his calendar.

"You're not on here."

I swallow my panic. "I booked through Hostelworld."

"For this weekend?"

"Yes."

He flips the pages in the calendar. "I have you down for next weekend."

Next weekend? There's no way I booked for next weekend! I'm going to Scotland next weekend!

"Oh." My voice is small.

"We have open beds. I can just change the booking for this weekend," he tells me.

"Yes, please." I nod, relieved.

I watch as he makes a notation in his calendar. Then he grabs a stack of clean sheets and shows me to my room upstairs. The stairs creak and he has to jimmy the key in the lock. The room is empty, for now, but I expect the majority of the remaining five beds will fill up by nightfall. After he explains the shower – it's electric – and the checkout procedure, he departs. I relax a bit, knowing I have a place to come to tonight. But the booking has me on edge, and I pull out my phone to double check it. I couldn't have selected the wrong night. I open settings to connect to the Wi-Fi. Nothing comes up. My stomach drops. How do I connect with home?

### **Friday, Mile 1:**

The bus hisses to a stop, and I rock forward, gripping the yellow pole for the support. I mumble a thank you to the driver, and step into a crowd of Dubliners. I force my way through the jam, head for the Liffey. Though the street is heavy with commuters, it feels empty. The smell of fried chicken from the KFC is gone, and Irish music hasn't yet begun to filter out into the streets from Carrolls Irish Gifts. The crowds disperse as I head west, out of city center to Heuston Station.

There's relief when I arrive at the train station; it hasn't begun to rain yet, but the chill of it is in the air, and at least now I'm out of the wind. I sink onto a metal bench, cold seeping through my jeans, and study the departure board. Sligo. Sligo. Sligo. It's not there. My brow wrinkles. I check my ticket: Dublin Heuston to Sligo MacDiarmada. Where is it?

Maybe I'm too early. Study my ticket. Seats reserved: IFS, A21. A21, that's my seat on the train, but what's IFS? Read the boards, look for the answer. Nothing. Pull out my phone, reluctantly turn on my data. It's a transfer via the Luas, the tram. Why was Heuston even an option, why didn't it tell me to buy my ticket for Connolly Station? Check the Luas schedule. Arriving now. I hurry from the building to the platform just outside, board with the crowd.

The Luas lurches, begins to move. I eye the commuters, watching for the Irish Rail officials. Will they check tickets this morning? My ticket says I can ride, but what if it's wrong, what if I get in trouble for riding without paying?

We stop. Two officials get on.

I hold my breath. Maybe they'll pass over me.

They stop in front of a man a few feet away, demand his ticket. He pulls out a handful of them, but they're all old. They issue him a notice. He gets off at the next stop.

The man approaches me.

I pass him my ticket.

"This isn't a Luas ticket," he says.

"It says I can transfer," I trip over my words, pointing to the notation at its base.

He frowns, passes it back. Moves to converse with his partner in a low voice.

I watch them move through the car, wait for them to come back, tell me off.

They get off at Abbey Street. I breathe again.

This was supposed to be the easy part.

### **Saturday, Mile 17:**

I watch as the woman runs hot water, filling the sink. "Warm your hands." She smiles. She retreats to the kitchen, and I take her place in the bathroom, submerging my hands in the hot water. They go numb, then begin to tingle, before their temperature equalizes with the water. I let my fingers float up one at a time, suspend in the water, counting. First, everything that went wrong, a list I've been dwelling on for over twenty-four hours. Then, everything that's gone right, and this one, somehow, is longer than the first. I'm lucky, really. A genuine smile crosses my face for the first time since leaving my Dublin apartment. I drain the sink, return to the kitchen, watching over my shoulder to ensure I didn't leave a trail of mud.

"Milk or sugar?" she asks.

"No, thank you."

She passes me a mug, and I wrap my hands around it. The heat leeches the cold out of my hands, the warmth spreading up my arms to my chest. I watch as she rummages in the cupboard for a package of chocolate bourbon biscuits and places a few on a saucer for me. "Eat those."

I obey. The crumbs drop into my tea.

"Another five minutes and then I've got to go."

"All right." I gulp my tea. It burns my throat.

“Do you have a place to go?”

Yes; it is only right; I’ve been given so much. “My train is at six. I’ve already checked out of the hostel, but I’ll see if they’ll let me change my clothes.”

She nods, finishes her own tea.

I give mine another go. Still too hot.

Time to leave.

Leaving the woman’s home, exiting the street of copy-paste row houses, I get turned around. After a series of guessed turns, I happen upon the mural of Yeats. I take a left here, head for the bridge, the hostel. The sidewalks along the main thoroughfare fill; I keep my head down avoiding the stares.

A guest answers the hostel door after I ring the bell.

“I checked out this morning, but would it be all right if I came in and changed?”

My heart pounds.

“Better to be in here than out there,” he says, looking past me to watch the steady rain shift the puddles in the street.

It takes me half an hour to change and erase the mud from the bathroom. My clean pants are almost as wet as the pair I had on previously. And I’ve wrapped my book and journal in my water-resistant jacket, determined to keep them dry.

I pass quickly through town, head lowered against the rain, literary bundle tucked close to my chest. I hesitate when I get to Shake Dog, the American-style diner where I pulled myself together after recovering my phone. It’s warm, has free Wi-Fi, and another milkshake wouldn’t be bad... But my feet carry me onward. My mind, my heart, my entire being, desiring to be elsewhere.

I take a left, hurry up a slight incline, the bell tower of Sligo Cathedral rising in front of me. When I pull open the door to the Adoration chapel, I feel my shoulders relax, my heart slow. I can breathe again. I leave my saturated backpack in the tiled entryway and go through the second door into the chapel.

The room is silent, my steps muffled by the plush carpet. Only a few others occupy the space, heads bowed; they don’t look up when I enter.

I kneel before the exposed Eucharist, bow, almost touching my head to the floor. God, thank You for keeping me safe.

I take a seat against the wall in front of the heater, draw my rosary out of my pocket. I slide my thumbs over the smooth black beads, intending to begin the scripted prayer. Instead, I find myself again counting all the moments that went right. Everything could have gone wrong, but didn’t. I’m okay.

Maybe I am adventurous, I tell Him. I did all that, didn’t I? Thank You for walking me home.

## THE LIGHTHOUSE

SCOTT RINER\*

*January 19, 18—*

Dearest sister,

By now Mother has undoubtedly filled you in on the reason for my absence, yet I cannot in good conscience pen this letter to you without attempting to explain myself.

It was an unfortunate turn of circumstances in which I found myself in such a position to accept a job manning a lighthouse on this island off the mainland; having little money in my pocket and debts—the likes of which I hope you never encounter—I found myself in desperate need of a job. By chance, I happened to be in the company of a man whose uncle was in need of a keeper for his lighthouse. (The previous keeper was unable to withstand the pressure of the job, instead succumbing to his own fate. But worry not, sweet sister, for your simple correspondence shall be enough to save me from a similar outcome.) With little hesitation and the eagerness of a small child, I accepted the job by the same means of communication I address you now. Though I have been on this island for little more than a week, I have yet to formally meet my employer. His letter which formally offered the position to me was brief, only containing my duties as lighthouse keeper, which—to quote him—is to “serve the seas and heed its call.”

Oh how I wish you could be here, sister. The island is quaint and quiet. I am alone and miss you very dearly. The ocean is very beautiful and seems to call to me even as I lie dreaming, which leaves me to wonder whether my employer’s words were metaphoric or literal.

Write soon! I eagerly await your letter.

Signed,  
Your loving brother

*January 28, 18—*

Dear sister,

The ferryman who brings me the post has assured me that he has not received any sort of communication from you. I grow worried as each day passes without any word from you, wondering if anything unfortunate may have befallen you so close to your wedding day. I am placated only by the thought that Mother would have written to me if anything had happened to you, so I shall chalk the delay in your response to the postal service.

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\* Scott Riner, a student at St. Francis University (PA), won second place in the short fiction category of the 2020 Fr. Edward Fitzgerald Undergraduate Competition in Creative and Scholarly Writing.

Speaking of your wedding, how is Hubert? I know the last time I had talked with you—in person, of course—he was recovering from some illness contracted overseas. I do hope this letter finds both him and you well.

My loneliness deepens here at the thought of the two of you together. How I wish to be reunited with you and Mother, but I suppose hearing from you via post will suffice. Oh, how I dream of the day the ferryman brings me a letter addressed to me from you! Until that day, he is my only company (though he is not much at all, coming here every other day and only staying long enough to exchange letters). I speak of dreams, though even in my waking hours they are shattered by strange sounds, the likes of which invade my nocturnal thoughts as well. In my last letter—which I presume you *have* read—I wrote of how the seas which surround the light house have a voice that calls to my very soul. Though it may sound absurd, I believe that this is what speaks to me here, calling to me, be it while awake or fast asleep. Its call disturbs my spirit, and while I have never feared the waters before, I cannot fight the dread which lingers within me as I gaze out the lighthouse window, nor can I ignore how the waters seem to gaze back.

The darkness has fallen around me. I wonder how long I have been at this letter... I fear I must cut this letter short, so I may turn my attention toward guiding any approaching ships safely to shore. The seas call to me and I must answer, after all.

Please write soon. I am alone and quite frightened.

Signed,  
Your loving brother

*February 1, 18—*

Dear sister,

Yesterday when the ferryman brought me the post (and told me much to my frustration that you have yet to respond to my two previous letters), I informed him of the fear that settles upon my nerves as I look out at the ocean. Much to my horror, he *laughed* at me. When I questioned him of his reaction, he told me the story of the last keeper, whom I mentioned in passing in my first letter to you. I was under the impression he had simply taken the ferry back to the shore after feeling the loneliness of the job. What the ferryman told me, however, was much more disturbing:

For more than a month before vacating the position which is now mine, the previous keeper reported unease, as though he was being watched by some unseen force. Apparently, he spoke on more than one occasion to the ferryman about his uneasiness. The ferryman wrote it off as nothing more than paranoia, the result of spending so much time alone. Unbeknownst to the ferryman, the previous keeper wrote to his employer (whom I still have yet to meet) about his experience. My employer told him much the same as the ferryman, and threatened to remove him from his position if he continued to indulge in such fantasies.

“Well,” as the ferryman put it, to quote him almost to the word. “The last keeper could not shake the uneasiness, and began to take up alcohol.” Sister, alcohol and work hardly ever suitably complement one another; the lighthouse business is no different. The keeper began drinking while he was supposed to be watching for boats, and on one fateful night

he spotted from the tower a sight which made his blood run cold, or so the ferryman led me to believe.

Without going into too much detail, the ferryman said the next day he came to the island to check on the previous keeper. There had been a storm the night before, and the ferryman wanted to check that the keeper was all right. What he found instead was the keeper, hanging from the tower, eyes bulging and face a deathly purple. On the desk—the very same in which I write this letter to you now—directly beneath where he hung was a note, simple in wording, which explained the keeper’s actions and apologized for the horrific sight. It seemed that as the storm raged on, the keeper had shown his light in an effort to safely guide the ships to the mainland, when the light fell upon a creature—and this the ferryman quoted directly from the dead man’s letter— “as beautiful as it was terrifying.” Driven to madness by the sight of the creature—or perhaps by the knowledge that such a creature existed just below the surface of the water—the keeper slipped a rope around his neck and stepped off the tower.

The ferryman’s account was enough to give me goosebumps, but it did nothing to explain his laughter, so I questioned him on why he had reacted so. His response chilled my blood, a coldness that I feel now even a day later. “I laughed,” said he, “because you are not the first to report feeling called by the ocean, nor was the man who came before you.” You see, dear sister, that in the span of just one year, the lighthouse has gone through *seven* different keepers, each who reported feeling called by the waters before either taking his own life or fleeing in the middle of the night. He *laughed*, sister, because the occurrence is now so commonplace that what chilled him before is nothing short of amusing now.

I do not know how much of the ferryman’s story I believe, but it does give me a glimpse into the only source of human contact I have alone on this island. Please write to me. Please. I do not know how longer I can continue without hearing from you.

Signed,  
Your brother

*February 7, 18—*

Dear sister,

Still no word from you.

I have very little to say, other than the call is growing stronger. It pervades my very thoughts. Most times I cannot concentrate long enough to have a coherent thought. Even writing this (short) letter is taking longer than it should.

I suspect there was some truth to what the ferryman told me about the last keeper, though I wish there wasn’t. Either that, or his story has increased the productivity of my imagination.

Write back.

Signed,  
Your brother

P.S. I presume your wedding has taken place by now. I extend my heartfelt—if not a little forgetful—congratulations to you both.

February 16, 18—

Dear sister,

Against my better judgement, I wrote to my employer yesterday. It took a great effort (as did writing this), but it was necessary in order to express my desire to leave my position at once. Unlike the other (now deceased) keeper, I have no desire to abandon my post without alerting my employer first, though I will if he does not respond soon, for what I saw last night is a sight I wish to never behold. I hesitate to write you an account of what occurred last night, sister, for fear of unsettling you, but I must share my experience with someone who will not write me off as a lunatic, as I am sure my employer will attempt. If you are alone, please have Hubert come and sit next to you; otherwise, you may not be able to handle what I am about to tell you.

There was a storm last night, the likes of which I have never seen in my twenty-three years. The wind battered against the lighthouse so fiercely that I began to fancy the entire thing would just fall over with me inside. The rain pounded down, the seas lashed against the rocky beach outside. I was scared, truth be told, but I feared for any unfortunate ship that may be out in the weather, so I turned the light on, but it did little good: the light was simply not strong enough to cut through the thick wall of the storm.

A sudden gust of wind came through the lighthouse—though I must admit I had no idea I opened any of the windows—and blew the flame out, which is odd, for my employer assured me such an occurrence was unlikely. I made an attempt to relight the light, but each attempt was met with failure. I knew the longer it took me to relight it the greater the risk of a ship becoming lost in the storm, so suffice it to say my nerves began to get the best of me: my hands shook as I lit a match and tried without success to light up the ocean. Around me, the wind was beginning to die down, and by the time I relit the damn thing—pardon my language, but I grow frustrated by my clumsiness—the storm was but a memory. Still, I had a job to do, so I shone that light as bright and far as I could—which is when I saw it.

Take a breath, dear sister. Grab Hubert's hand. Do whatever you must to calm yourself before you read on, or else you may suffocate from the sheer terror of it all.

What I saw, just outside the lighthouse window, not but a few paces from where I stood, was an eye. Yes, *an eye*, which stared at me unblinkingly through the window. It was white and veiny, the iris the color of dried blood, and strangely hypnotic. I found myself unable to move, so entranced by the eye. Only after it blinked an emerald eyelid did I find the trance broken.

How big of a creature it must have been that only its eye was visible, and the thought

that such a creature could exist sent me into a cold panic. Was it the very same the previous keeper had seen? If so, I perfectly understood his decision to take his life—at least, in that moment I did.

My hands shook as though I had tremors as I snuffed the light out. I know, I know; I extinguished the light which I had worked so hard to relight, extinguished the very light which may guide a boat so safely to shore. It makes me sound unfeeling, but if you would have seen the eye, I know you would have done the same.

I prayed to the Lord that the creature would leave me be, though I must admit, dear sister, that I find the notion of God impossible after what I witnessed: surely no loving God would create such a creature. For whatever reason—divine or mundane—I found myself no longer being watched by the eye as the storm cleared and the moon shone bright.

There ends my story. I hope it did not frighten you, but instead give you an insight into why I must step down as lighthouse keeper.

No need to write—I will be home soon.

Signed,  
Your brother

*February 21, 18—*

Sister,

You may have realized I am not home. That is largely due to realizing the rashness of my last letter.

I fear I let the ferryman's story creep into my imagination. Such a creature could not possibly exist. It was nothing more than an illusion, mere fantasy. Not much different than the games of make-believe we played as children.

Tell Mother not to expect me back, as I informed her I would be in my last letter to her; I am already home and cannot imagine leaving.

The sea calls to me and I must answer.

Signed,  
Your brother the lighthouse keeper

*February 27, 18—*

The sea calls to me and I must answer. The sea calls to me and I must answer. The sea calls to me and I must answer. The sea calls to me and I must answer. The sea calls to me and I must answer. The sea calls to me and I must answer. The sea calls to me and I must answer. The sea calls to me—

Signed,  
The lighthouse keeper

*March 3, 18—*

My brother,

I am so sorry it took so long to respond. The letters only just now arrived. I miss you more than you could imagine.

Hubert and I's reception was wonderful; the only thing missing was you. I wish you could have made it! Mother cried when she saw Hubert and I profess our everlasting love for another, but not as much as Hubert did.

What was with the last letter you wrote me? The one dated February 27. It was just the same sentence written over and over again. If you are trying to scare me, you did a decent job.

Please write soon. Mother and I are very worried.

Signed,  
Your dearest sister Bernice

*March 7, 18—*

No need to be worried; I have answered the call of the seas. I know what I must do to appease the waters and the creature which dwells below.

Be well.

Signed,  
The lighthouse keeper

*July 24, 18—*

My dear brother,

I have tried without success to come see you one last time before they... I cannot bear to even write the words, out of fear that setting them upon the page will make it real. What they say you did is dreadful, but I dare not believe it. Tell me it isn't true, that you intentionally turned off the lights as ships passed through, so that they ran aground or sunk? It was all through the newspapers, but I cannot imagine my big brother—the very same man who Hubert sought a marriage blessing from after Father passed—doing such a thing.

One reporter wrote that you said you did it to appease the creature who lived below the water. Another wrote that you sat and sang quietly to yourself as the cries of the drowning sailors filled the darkness. I hope it isn't true.

Whatever the truth may be, I hope you know that you have put me in an awkward situation: how shall I explain to my unborn child how their uncle died? I cannot tell them the truth, that you were hanged for purposely drowning sailors, for no purpose other than to placate a creature that existed only in your mind?

Mother cannot stop crying. I hope you are happy with yourself.

Though I know not why, I cannot but help love you, dear brother, and hope the last few months do not ruin our chances of reuniting in Heaven.

Signed,  
Your loving sister Bernice

*August 1, 18—*

Dear sir;

I am writing in response to your job advertisement in the morning post. I am interested in the “Lighthouse Keeper” position you have available, and would be able to fill it at once.

I heard about what happened to the last lighthouse keeper you employed, but you need not worry: I am a man of strong body and mind, and will not allow my imagination to get the best of me. As unfortunate as his end was, I must say I am quite glad a monstrous man like that no longer walks this Earth, but instead is facing his punishment in eternal damnation.

Please let me know about the job, one way or another.

Respectfully,  
Wm. Fredericks



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## LOVE IN O. HENRY'S "THE GIFT OF THE MAGI"

JONATHAN KIRK\*

In "Semiology and Rhetoric," Paul de Man writes that "[b]y reading we get, as we say, inside a text that was first something alien to us and which *we now make our own by an act of understanding*" (400; emphasis added). In explanation of de Man's quotation, consider the following analogy: reading a text is just as complicated as getting into a relationship. First, we must get to know the *stranger* (someone who is an *alien* to us) in order to make him/her an acquaintance. Then, as we gradually become more familiar with this person, we begin to understand him/her at a deeper, more intimate level. Reaching this personal level of understanding is similar to the depth that readers struggle with when reading an unfamiliar text. Yet many readers pick up a book, read it, and put it down, never to be seen or touched again. What is the benefit of this type of surface-level reading? After all, de Man urges readers to examine a text until they have come to realize the extensive, hidden, internal meanings found between the words, for perhaps the true meaning of the language cannot be explicitly understood. This idea gives birth to the intricacies of the Post-Structural, or Deconstructionist, critical mode. A surface-level reading of a text, especially when it comes to interpreting O. Henry's short story "The Gift of the Magi," may lead to a recognition of the basic literary themes present in the work. However, such a rudimentary perusal deprives readers of an appreciation providing insight into the concealed meanings and signs found within the language: these involve the choice of gifts and the conflict of gift-giving in the story.

A one-time reading of "The Gift of the Magi" offers a limited understanding of the meaning behind the gifts that Jim and Della exchange. However, as de Man argues, "[l]iterary texts are self-deconstructing because every text calls attention to the literal meaning, which is contradicted by the implied or surface meaning" (Mambrol). Therefore, to go back to our analogy, readers must form a relationship with the text that provides insight into the *signified* of the gifts. This relationship can be formed only through close-reading and analysis. In doing so, what we find is that Della sells her hair—*her* most prized possession—in order to purchase a gift for Jim, a gold watch chain that is "almost worth the honor of belonging to him" (Porter 2). Later in the story, Jim makes a similar sacrifice by selling his pocket watch—*his* most prized possession—to be able to purchase the beautiful, jeweled combs that Della has admired. Unbeknownst to either of them, the gifts, or the tangible *signs*, will soon be rendered useless.

After realizing the gifts that were exchanged were purchased to complement each other's most valuable asset, Jim, in a cheerful yet sentimental way, utters, "Della . . . let's put our Christmas gifts away and keep them a while. They're too nice to use now" (Porter 6). From a Formalist perspective, this particular scene comes off as Jim saying to Della *let us keep each other* (each other being symbolized by the gifts) *around for a while . . . I love*

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\* Jonathan Kirk, a student at St. Francis University (PA), won second place in the critical analysis category of the 2020 Fr. Edward Fitzgerald Undergraduate Competition in Creative and Scholarly Writing.

*you*. Yet, a Deconstructionist approach brings about a deeper, more accurate interpretation of this particular scene. For instance, although there is an *absence* of Della's hair and Jim's pocket watch after they are exchanged for the gifts, there is a *presence* of the gifts. The gifts are the signifier of their *love* whereas the signs, which are "to be interpreted if we are to understand that idea [that they are] to convey" are Della's hair combs and Jim's watch chain (de Man 398). Although the gifts are simple, dime-store purchases--and are no longer useful to the recipient--do they depreciate in value in the process of the gift-giving? The answer to this question is no. In fact, the gifts appreciate in value because of the signified, which is revealed by the language used to describe the acceptance of the physical items.

In his "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences," Jacques Derrida mentions, "The center is at the center of totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality . . . the center *has its center elsewhere*" (384). Generally speaking, readers place the gifts of the story at its center, meaning that without the *gifts* there would be no *love*, or *différance*. Even though gift-giving is at the center and is the signifier of the signs, hair combs and watch chain, the gifts essentially move aside—find their center elsewhere—in order for an even greater meaning to be exposed. When the gifts are no longer in the spotlight, they illuminate the *signified*: love. Yes, while the gifts may be a tangible representation of Jim and Della's love, they are not the couple's love; their love is depicted in the sacrifice made for the other, in the absence of her hair and his pocket watch. Jim and Della's love is intrinsic, steadfast even after their gifts are proven to have no practical value, revealing that the signs are secondary when compared to the overwhelming presence of their required bond and substantiating the theory that the *gifts* are at the center, but are not the center, of the totality. Despite the fact that the center of the story—the gifts—has found its center elsewhere (elsewhere pertaining to the signified meaning of the signs), the gift-giving remains an integral part of O. Henry's story.

The *différance* emerges in the story when the *s* is removed from *gifts* to reveal the *gift*. The *gifts* are what bring to light Jim and Della's *love*, which is the "The *Gift of the Magi*." Moreover, if we are to "eras[e] the difference between the signifier and the signified," according to Derrida (385), readers would finally understand the linkage between the gifts and the meaning they represent. The absence of the gifts' (signifiers') practicality does not take away the presence of the love (signified) Jim and Della share for one another. The absence of the signifier is what immerses readers in a deeper appreciation of the text. For "by reading the text as we did, we were only trying to come closer to being as rigorous a reader as the author had been," de Man affirms (404), meaning O. Henry specified the sign(s), signifier, and signified for readers of his story. So, by the end of the reading, after closing the gap between the signifier and the signified, the text is restored and readers come to realize the *gift* in the story is *love*, just as Jim and Della *are* the Magi, the Wise Men who brought *love* to the Christ-child.

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## BIG BIRDS AND BEES: EXPLORING SEXUALITY WITH THE MUPPETS

EMILIE DEMAIO\*

Jim Henson said, “If our ‘message’ is anything, it’s a positive approach to life. That life is basically good. People are basically good” (as cited in Tim Saunders’ article “Jim Henson: How One Man and a Frog Made a Difference”). He used his talents and passions to share this message through puppetry on children’s television, most famously, *Sesame Street*, which first went on the air in 1969. *Sesame Street* is known to be progressive in that it always has a racially diverse cast, with the goal of fostering children’s affinity for goodness to accept people of different backgrounds. In Jim Henson’s *Sesame Street* and other works, Muppets also use their roles to examine human sexuality and gender.

The term “Muppets” is used to describe the puppets Jim Henson and his team created over the decades. Muppets’ movements are orchestrated by strings, like marionettes, by inserting a hand into the puppet itself, and/or by being worn as a costume. When pressed for an explanation whence the term derived, Jim Henson responded, “In actuality, ‘Muppets’ was a word we just coined... I used to say to people that it was a combination of ‘marionettes’ and ‘puppets.’ ... But then I stopped telling this lie, and I’m back to the truth: It just came out of midair” (Cronin, 2020). Muppets animate all sorts of living creatures, from people to monsters to plants. Their special effects may be realistic in appearance, or their colorful features and attributes may be more fantastical.

Because of Muppets’ flexibility as characters, Jim Henson and his teams had the unique opportunity to create programming that addressed contentious topics, like race and sexuality. These characters are not always humans, so their ambiguity and symbolism allow the metaphors used in the television shows to be less blunt and more acceptable to viewers and their parents. Nonetheless, topics addressing what some people consider deviant behaviors are inevitably contentious.

Delving into an issue like this, one must consider if analysis of children’s media like *Sesame Street* matters. People argue that children’s media should not be digested and criticized beyond its intents and purposes, which are entertainment and education. In a newspaper article from *The Los Angeles Times* written the week a *Sesame Street* writer announced the two characters Bert and Ernie were in fact in a gay relationship, Ellen Lewis, Sesame Workshop’s own vice president of Corporate Communications, said, “They are puppets, not humans” (Maerz, 2010). Like-minded critics suggest that because of this lack of humanity, they cannot actually teach us humans anything about our own modern society. However, media is not discounted from critical analysis simply because its target audience is children instead of adults. In his journal article “The Performance of Nonconformity on *The Muppet Show* -- or, How Kermit Made Me Queer,” Jordan Schildcrout (2008) states, “All cultural products have meaning, because they are created and consumed by people

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\* Emilie DeMaio, a student at Cardinal Stritch University, won second place in the scholarly research category of the 2020 Fr. Edward Fitzgerald Undergraduate Competition in Creative and Scholarly Writing.

who cannot be separated from their social realities and ideologies” (p. 823), iterating the point that any content humans create will inherently mimic our own humanity. Children’s content is still valid and open to interpretation as commentary on social problems like anything else. In fact, these media should be more closely examined because of their more vulnerable audience. Media creators and censoring parents should be conscious and wary of what messages and behaviors are being modeled for viewers.

Another criticism is that people should just let entertainment be entertaining and avoid manipulating media into conveying meaningful messages. Media that touch on social issues spoil their entertainment value. For example, Christine Flowers (2018) argues in her piece about Bert and Ernie’s sexuality in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, “Making Bert and Ernie’s sexual orientation an issue deprives *Sesame Street*’s prime audience of living an unencumbered childhood.” This claim is extreme and illogical. Adult interpretations of characters in no way “encumbers” childhood. *Sesame Street* has always valued teaching about diversity and tolerance. If characters of different cultures and colors did not encumber childhoods, why would characters with different sexual orientations or gender identities? Claims like these expose ubiquitous prejudices that *Sesame Street* aims to repair.

With the consideration of this analysis’ validity, evaluation of the ambiguous nature of the characters can help provide perspective on how Muppets explore sexuality and gender. Not all puppets physically represent humans. As described by Ute Sartorius Kraidy (2002) in the journal article, “Sunny Days on *Sesame Street*? Multiculturalism and Resistance Postmodernism,” some characters imitate animals, creatures of literary fantasy, or flowers (p. 17). When their bodies are “fashionable” colors and do not have any gendered characteristics, such as voice and clothing, do viewers assume they are representing heterosexual white males, or do viewers favor and apply their own ethnicities and genders? While nobody has formally studied viewers’ perceptions and projections in this regard, Ute Sartorius Kraidy and Heidi Louise Cooper have analyzed both sides of this theory.

In the journal article, “A Usefully Messy Approach: Racializing the Sesame Street Muppets,” Cooper (2008) uses examples from *Sesame Street* to illustrate how viewers automatically assume characters follow the heterosexual white male model despite other appearances. Elmo is a character who shows no indications of ethnicity. His fur is bright red, he wears no clothing or accessories, and his voice has a neutral accent. He is not tied to any particular cultural group on *Sesame Street*. However, his puppeteer, Kevin Clash, is African-American. This was never a secret, but once it was “discovered,” Robin R. Means Coleman (2003) of *Popular Communication* published an article aptly titled “Elmo is Black!” Moreover, Cooper describes her interactions with a colleague who “knew Elmo was Black” (p. 42). These reactions illustrate a shift from the broad assumption that Elmo’s puppeteer was probably white, to the surprising revelation that Kevin Clash is African-American, leading to a sort of mental reframing of Elmo’s character and representation. Instead of perceiving Elmo as white, viewers would now perceive him as African-American.

Similarly, this could be applied to Bert and Ernie, two male characters cohabiting, sharing a bedroom but not beds. Until the 21st century, they were presumptively heterosexual. In the past decade, the conversation about their sexual orientation has stirred controversy. Conflicting officials and creators of the characters from the *Sesame Street* team began affirming and denying that they were written to be gay. As seen with the reaction to Elmo’s race, the assumption that Bert and Ernie were roommates was challenged, and the public vehemently responded to the notion that perhaps this is not the case. Still, with prompting

from the creative team and the press, viewers re-shifted their perception of the characters, just as they had done in the case of Elmo.

From this viewpoint, the presumption that characters are white, straight, and/or male is disadvantageous in that it does not allow for speculation until there is some sort of catalyst. Though the intention of the producers may be to create diversity, by going beyond typical human traits their intention is sometimes lost in translation. Until the creators tell the audience the characters' ambiguous traits must be interpreted this way or that way, viewers assume a basic set of characteristics for everyone unless proven otherwise. Any attempt at ambiguity is moot.

Ute Sartorius Kraidy (2002) offers opposing viewpoints in the journal article, "Sunny Days on *Sesame Street*? Multiculturalism and Resistance Postmodernism." The opposing viewpoints suggest that because the cast is so diverse in its colors and species, and the human cast is limited, there is no proven majority or priority group, so viewers are left to "compare the show with their own environment," instead of the majority's set of characteristics (Kraidy, 2002, p. 17). They explain, "African Americans may identify with African American cast members interacting with monsters, animations, and other people; Latinos may focus on the presence of the Rodríguez family and their relationship with everyone else on *Sesame Street*, and so forth" (Kraidy, 2002, p. 17). Therefore, the show is highly interpretive for each viewer and can be adaptable according to their experiences, without reinforcing a racial or gender majority they may experience in the "real" world.

To reiterate, neither Cooper (2008) nor Kraidy (2002) looks at the psychological science behind viewers' interpretations; however, Kraidy's suggestion helps the Muppets' mission to explore human differences, including sexuality. Without consideration of the creators' intentions, diverse audiences may relate to the content. In the newspaper article, "A gay-friendly 'Sesame Street'? Though the company says it's not trying to appeal to an LGBT audience, some are feeling the love lately," the author Melissa Maertz (2010) describes experiences of gay parents. These viewers describe their excitement over being represented on screen, including in *Sesame Street*, and express their appreciation of having been acknowledged as part of *Sesame Street*'s growing audience (Maertz, 2010). Even before any rumors of Bert and Ernie's sexuality started, LGBT people were able to feel a sense of representation, although hushed.

Although Bert and Ernie's physical appearances may help humanize their stories, Jim Henson's productions use their creative liberties to create Muppets that deviate from human-like appearances. In fact, some Muppets are monsters. These Muppets are not classically scary monsters by any means. Most do not have teeth or horns (Cooper, 2008, p. 41). They are usually very clean and even sometimes cuddly. Nonetheless, they are monsters. Using monsters to represent humans is obviously not ideal, especially when those monsters symbolize minorities against whom some sort of "monster" rhetoric has already been constructed. Monstrosity symbolism helps paint the picture of the "other," drawing lines between socially constructed groups of people. Cooper (2008) uses African Americans as an example in her analysis of monstrosity symbolism, but the idea of how egregious it is to use monsters to symbolize minorities applies to homosexuality and transgenderism too.

Despite *Sesame Street*'s broader messages of accepting diversity, there are clear examples where the show draws this line between the viewer and the monster, or the "other." Kraidy (2002) describes an example where the show illustrates the difference between a daycare for human children versus a daycare for monsters. The monsters have

their “other” practices that are lesser than the children’s, for example, they do not hang up their coats on the coat rack. In the end, the children help the monsters “adopt” the custom of hanging up their coats, helping civilize them in a way (Kraidy, 2002, p. 21). Cooper (2008) asserts that monster Muppets teach children to accept and tolerate diversity, but they also model behaviors that are then taught to be avoided. In this way, even if those monsters can be integrated into society, to be a monster is to be undesirable (Cooper, 2008, p. 41). Incorporating monsters with undesirable behaviors while trying to diversify the cast is precarious. As discussed, the nature of ambiguity allows room for interpretation: perhaps it is not a direct link between racial minorities or the LGBT that conjugates with these undesirable behaviors. But the young, vulnerable viewers that *Sesame Street* targets do acknowledge links between the “other” and undesirable behaviors. This does not reinforce Jim Henson’s vision for good, nor does it examine human sexuality, race, and gender positively. Monstrosity symbolism reinforces stereotypes.

Still, Muppets’ sexuality and gender expression can eliminate ambiguity and sometimes defy stereotypes. Jim Henson’s Muppets adhere to and deviate from traditional gender roles in different ways. There are examples of Muppets following classic female or male tropes, defying heteronormativity, or not expressing gender at all. Of the thirty recurring Muppets on *The Muppet Show*’s cast lists, two are female, Miss Piggy and Janice, both of whom display different ideals of femininity. Miss Piggy flirts with stereotypical conventions of jealousy, seduction, and desire to be the center of attention, just to catch the eye of her romantic interest, Kermit. The fashionista’s skin is, of course, bright pink, highlighting the girlish stereotype (Schildcrout, 2008, p. 829). In contrast, Janice is more secure in her femininity. As demonstrated by her relaxed demeanor with the male counterparts of her band, she is not seen in desperate pursuit of a heterosexual partnership unlike Miss Piggy (Schildcrout, 2008, p. 830). The viewer does not question Janice’s gender because she conveys it differently, though. The dichotomy of these two characters’ expressions of their genders reinforces that personal identity is independent of romantic partnership.

In contrast, Elmo and Big Bird appear gender-neutral in *Sesame Street*. They both have neutral voices, wear no clothing, and have no secondary sexual characteristics. One appeal of having characters like these two is that prepubescent children, whom the show is targeting, are also inherently gender-neutral. They also have no secondary sexual characteristics, and so there is no difference in their voices. The only reason people can tell if a baby, toddler, or school-age child is a boy or a girl is by how their parents dress them and their early adoption of traditional gender roles. So the neutrality of these two characters may be a reflection of their target audience; since children have not reached certain stages of development, they are not concerned with characters who exhibit gendered characteristics. Otherwise, the gender-neutrality is one way to reinforce the ambiguity and diversity of *Sesame Street*.

In addition to depicting a wide array of gender expressions, Muppets certainly are not bound to expectations of heteronormativity or conformity. Jim Henson’s productions embrace human guests that represent the LGBT community. Celebrities including Wanda Sykes and Neil Patrick Harris, two gay icons, have made appearances on *Sesame Street*, as well as well-known celebrity allies like Katy Perry (singer of “I Kissed a Girl”) and will.i.am, who during his *Sesame Street* episode sang “What I Am,” a song celebrating being true to oneself, the message of which became one of analytical consideration for viewers (Maertz, 2010). Elton John guest-starred on *The Muppets Show* two years after he came out as bisexual, something that was not as acceptable in the 1970s as it might

be in the 21st century when Sykes or Harris starred with Muppets. In 1976, when he was welcomed as a guest, John was considered “one of the most famous queer people on the planet” (Schildcrout, 2008, p. 883). In his episode, his flamboyant costumes and sexual nonconformity are challenged by characters, but in the end, John leads the Muppets to accept themselves as they are, even if they are not “normal” (Schildcrout, 2008, pp. 883). Accepting that one may not fit into society’s definition of normality and accepting who a person truly is have been messages intertwined in the Muppets’ productions for decades. By including LGBT guests on these programs and teaching closely held messages, the population of the cast and viewers is better represented. Muppets and viewers learn the value of defying conformity and being true to oneself.

In *The Muppets Show*, the messages are steered away from *Sesame Street*’s goals of education, and focus on entertainment instead, and here Muppets play more directly with the audience’s heteronormative expectations of their sexual orientations. Because of that shift in audience goals, Muppets can become less ambiguous and examine sexuality and gender in different ways. Gonzo of *The Muppets Show* is known for being naive to heteronormativity. Schildcrout (2008) describes this character’s interactions with the gender spectrum: “[Gonzo] often finds himself on the wrong side of the gender fence. Sometimes Gonzo is romantically paired with a female chicken named Camilla, but more often Gonzo is a lone ‘weirdo’ with ambiguous gender/sexual/species status” (Schildcrout, 2008, p. 831). In his paper, Schildcrout shares two noteworthy examples where Gonzo deviated from gender norms and expectations rather than sticking with Camilla and passing as straight. The first case is a scenario in which Gonzo orchestrates a “dance marathon” and has the characters pair up. Kermit is left without a partner, so Gonzo valiantly takes the lead, illustrating a “provisionally destabilized” setting (Schildcrout, 2008, p. 831). A second violation of gender norms occurs in the episode starring Gene Kelly. Gonzo interrupts Kelly and Miss Piggy’s duet, reminding Miss Piggy she needs to change for the next segment. From there, Gonzo “helps” Kelly finish his song by singing Miss Piggy’s part, which is meant to be comedic, but ends up as quite an affectionate scene. Schildcrout describes it as “undeniably queer in its playful transgression of compulsory heterosexuality” (Schildcrout, 2008, p. 832). These two situations illustrate where a Muppet defies expectations and conformity in order to explore his own gender and sexuality.

Through the television programs *The Muppets Show* and *Sesame Street*, the Muppets themselves depict gender and sexuality in varying ways, as explained above. Jim Henson’s film *Labyrinth* uses Muppets in a different way. In *Labyrinth*, starring David Bowie, a famous bisexual singer and artist, the Muppet characters are not aesthetically pleasing and they are not meant to be directly engaging in metaphorical discourse on human sexuality like Gonzo does (though there may be something to be said about the brief shot of two Muppet goblins fighting over rather phallic sausages). David Bowie’s character, Jareth the Goblin King, is designed to be the object of desire in the film. Instead of exploring their own roles in gender and sexuality, the role of the Muppets here is to juxtapose Jareth in order to accentuate his sexuality.

Rosalind Galt (2018) criticizes the sexual and power dynamics of the film in her paper, “David Bowie’s Perverse Cinematic Body.” Throughout *Labyrinth*, Jareth adorns well-fitted pants to accentuate his masculinity but defies gender roles by wearing flattering, not satirical, make-up and styling his hair eccentrically; make-up and long hair are typically associated with femininity. However, his pseudo-romantic target in the film is Sarah,

implying a degree of heteronormativity. His polyamory is illustrated when he is shown dancing with multiple partners before partnering with Sarah during the climax of the film, which reinforces his deviant role (Galt, 2018, p. 136).

Jareth's style and conduct is the opposite of how the Muppets in the movie convey themselves. No other romantic relationships are portrayed except for one of the Muppet's interest in Sarah. Hoggle is short, wears dirty, ragged clothing, and has unappealingly textured skin. He's inhuman. As opposed to Jareth's pursuit of Sarah, the viewer has no suspicion that Hoggle and Sarah will be united by the end of the film. Including Hoggle, the Muppets in the movie do not convey sexual appeal because they are in fact puppets. Also, the Muppets' relationship to Sarah revolves around helping or hindering her navigation throughout the Labyrinth, whereas Jareth is specifically keen on seducing her into joining his reign. The relationships Sarah has with the other characters in *Labyrinth* help show how the characters' approach to sexuality and gender is totally different from Jareth's. Because of this dichotomy, Jareth's role is better appreciated. Even though the Muppets themselves are not wholly involved in illustrating human sexuality, their juxtaposition with Jareth lends itself to wide feminist and erotic criticism of the film, as Galt (2018) describes in her paper.

From Jim Henson's movie and television shows, viewers can interpret the Muppets' message regarding the acceptance of the LGBT population in society. A positive value in this regard is that producers do not ignore this part of the population just because it may be too contentious for a children's show. They acknowledge the importance of representation and convey that regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, everyone has a place in society. More disturbingly, however, these concepts are not always handled so graciously; using monstrosity symbolism or casting bisexual actors in predatory roles shines a dim light upon the status of LGBT. Jim Henson's Muppets approach sexuality and gender with varying levels of ambiguity, and even though these productions include human guests with different sexual orientations, this does not always lead to fair representation of the LGBT community. In line with Jim Henson's mission for good, these programs come from a place that values diversity, both racial and sexual, but should better avoid drawing a divisive line between the viewer and the "other."

## NOTES

\*In the news article, "3 Sex Abuse Lawsuits Against Elmo Actor Dismissed," Joan Yeam and Jason Hanna (2014) recount Clash's problematic history that led to his departure from *Sesame Street*. Clash was brought to court, charged with sexually abusing teenagers. After 28 years of working with Elmo, he stopped working for *Sesame Street* as a result of the allegations.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### WINNERS OF THE 2021 SISTER BRIGID BRADY, O.P., DELTA EPSILON SIGMA GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD

*Amarfi Collado* (St. Joseph's College, Brooklyn campus)

*Taten Shirley* (Salve Regina University)

### THE HARRY R. KNIGHT UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE PRIZE FOR INTERNATIONAL SERVICE



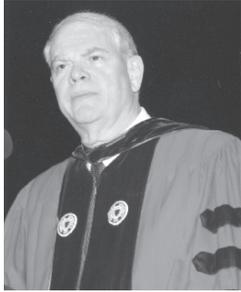
*Harry R. Knight*

Through the generosity of the Knight family and named for a professor and long-time member of Delta Epsilon Sigma, this award supports a student who wishes to offer service to others outside of the United States by assisting with travel costs up to \$2500.00. The transformative nature of such efforts provides benefits to the student as well as to those served. New skills related to work, language, and culture can enhance resumes and refocus existing career plans. A required reflective report, submitted after the student returns, will be published with photos in the *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal*.

**Requirements:** Applicants will submit the following items:

- a three-page proposal, which includes a statement of specific details of potential destination, travel costs, length of stay, assistance goals, and how the applicant's goals correspond with the mission of DES.
- a brief CV with biography including career goals, other completed service, and academic accomplishments.
- an official transcript of coursework.
- a letter of recommendation which addresses the candidate's character, academic work, and potential to contribute to society.
- **All documents must be sent electronically to the National Office.**
- **(DESNational@Neumann.edu) by March 15th.**

## THE J. PATRICK LEE UNDERGRADUATE AWARD FOR SERVICE



*J. Patrick Lee*

Delta Epsilon Sigma offers the J. Patrick Lee Award for Service. This annual undergraduate competition was established to honor Patrick Lee, who served as National Secretary-Treasurer of Delta Epsilon Sigma with dedication and commitment for over 20 years, and whose leadership transformed the Society. As a tribute to Dr. Lee's praiseworthy ethical character and judgment, awards of \$1000 will be given to student members of Delta Epsilon Sigma who best embody the ideals of Catholic social teaching through their engagement in service. Student winners of the award will also be profiled in the *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal*.

### **Guidelines for The J. Patrick Lee Undergraduate Prize for Service:**

- In order to participate in the contest, the student should submit a 300-dpi photo (preferably highlighting the candidate's service) and a personal statement of 500-1000 words to his/her chapter advisor. Personal statements should reflect on the service experiences by responding to the following questions: How does your current and past engagement in service reflect the tenets of Catholic social teaching and enrich the local, national, or global community? How will you continue or expand your service in the future? **Students are encouraged to be as specific and thorough as possible within the word limit. Please do not simply repeat information listed on the entry form. Make every effort to explain service involvement instead of just listing service activities.**
- The student should also submit one letter of recommendation written by someone in a professional position who can attest to the type and extent of the service in which the student has been engaged.
- Chapter advisors should select one student from their chapters to nominate for the prize.
- Nominated students must be undergraduates at the time of nomination.
- Nominated students must be members of Delta Epsilon Sigma.
- **Applications must contain a complete official entry form to be considered.** Please visit the DES website, [www.deltaepsilonsigma.org](http://www.deltaepsilonsigma.org), for this form.
- Advisors should submit all entries electronically as MS Word Documents (no PDFs, please) to the National Office at Neumann University, Executive Director: Dr. Claudia Kovach, Neumann University, Division of Arts and Sciences, Aston, PA 19014-1298, (610) 558-5573, FAX (610) 361-5314, Email: [DESNational@neumann.edu](mailto:DESNational@neumann.edu).
- **The deadline for nominations from advisors is December 1.**

## THE DELTA EPSILON SIGMA NATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARD

Delta Epsilon Sigma has a national award to be presented to outstanding student members of the society who are completing their undergraduate program. It provides a means by which a chapter may bring national attention to its most distinguished graduates.

The National Office has a distinctive gold and bronze medallion that it will provide without cost to the recipient's chapter for appropriate presentation. A photo and brief profile of recipients will be published in the *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal*. Qualifications for the award include the following:

- Membership in Delta Epsilon Sigma.  
An overall Grade Point Average of 3.9-4.00 on all work completed as an undergraduate.  
Further evidence of high scholarship:
  - a grade of "A" or with the highest level of distinction on an approved undergraduate thesis or its equivalent in the major field, or
  - scores at the 90th percentile or better on a nationally recognized test (e.g., GRE, LSAT, GMAT, MCAT).
- Endorsements by the chapter advisor, the department chair or mentor, and the chief academic officer.
- Nominations must be made no later than six (6) months after the granting of the undergraduate degree. Include with the nomination a 300-dpi photo and a three-sentence abstract of the student's accomplishments, including the ways the qualifications for the award have been met.
- **The calendar deadline for the submission of names of proposed recipients of this award is February 15th. Please send nominations to the Office of the Executive Director: DESNational@neumann.edu.**

## THE FATHER EDWARD FITZGERALD UNDERGRADUATE COMPETITION IN CREATIVE AND SCHOLARLY WRITING



*Fr. Fitzgerald*

The DES Board is proud to honor Fr. Edward A. Fitzgerald, the founder of Delta Epsilon Sigma. Fr. Fitzgerald conceived the notion of a national association of Catholic scholastic honor societies in 1938 and chaired the Committee of Founders that wrote up DES's Constitution in 1939, thus initiating the national association.

This contest is open to undergraduates (members or non-members) in an institution that has a chapter of the society. Manuscripts may be submitted in any of five categories:

- Poetry
- Short fiction
- Creative nonfiction/personal essay
- Critical/analytical essay
- Scholarly research.

A first prize of five hundred dollars and a second prize of two hundred and fifty dollars in each of the five categories will be awarded. No award may be made in a given category if the committee does not judge any submission to be of sufficient merit. **Winners must submit a 300-dpi photo of themselves to accompany the publication of their essays in the *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal*.**

**General Guidelines:** Either MLA or APA documentary styles are acceptable (except where they may deviate from the instructions contained here in the *Journal's* "Guidelines"). Publishing restrictions do not permit the Chicago Manual of Style. All prose should show double-spacing, appear in Word format (no PDFs), use 12-point font, and include just one space between words and sentences. Number all pages. *Citations should use the "in-text plus Works Cited" format. Relegate all explanatory notes to the submission's back matter as Endnotes (no Footnotes!).* Do not include headers or footers. The author's name should not appear after the cover page to assure anonymity during judging. Proofread carefully to assure that all guidelines are followed and that conventions of grammar and punctuation, in addition to the use of language and style (such as avoiding excessive wordiness and redundancies), reflect the standards of your college or university. The *DES Journal* reflects Catholic values. *Gratuitous use of profanity or vulgarity will not impress the judges and will not merit publication.*

**Poetry:** Writing in this category should be original poetry, either in verse or prose form. A long poem should be submitted singly; shorter lyrics may be submitted in groups of two or three.

**Short Fiction:** Writing in this category should be original fiction, such as short stories or stand-alone sections of longer pieces. Fiction should total 1500-5000 words, either in a single work or, in cases of very short pieces, in groups of two or three.

**Creative Nonfiction/Personal Essay:** Writing in this category should communicate some dimension of the worldview or feelings of the writer. Writing should be true—as affirmed by the writer—but may be creative in structure or form and may make use of character development, dialogue, or other techniques of creative writing. Creative nonfiction pieces or personal essays should total 1500-5000 words, either in a single work or, in cases of very brief pieces, in groups of two or three.

**Critical/Analytical Essay:** Writing in this category should investigate a text, or a social or scholarly issue, through a critical lens. Examples of this type of writing may include textual interpretation or expository or argumentative essays in which original research is not the primary aim. Essays in this category should total 1500-5000 words. Provide appropriate in-text citations for all direct or indirect (paraphrased) quotations. Integrate brief quotations properly with correct punctuation.

**Scholarly Research:** Writing in this category should present primary or secondary research that provides and elucidates some original insight on a social, ethical, cultural, humanistic, or scientific question. Emphasis will be paid to the quality, depth, and presentation of the piece, and proper adherence to conventional documentation format (MLA or APA). Scholarly research should include an abstract (situate it at the beginning of your paper). Papers in this category should total 1500-5000 words. Provide appropriate in-text citations for all direct or *indirect (paraphrased) quotations*. Integrate brief quotations properly with correct punctuation.

The first phase of the competition is to be conducted by local chapters, each of which is encouraged to sponsor its own contest. A chapter may forward to the national competition only one entry in each category. Preparatory to student revision, editorial comment and advice by a faculty mentor is expected and appropriate, as is correction of grammatical and mechanical (spelling, punctuation) errors, as long as it is the student who--in the final analysis--implements them.

### **Preparation of Submissions**

- Prose manuscripts of 1500-5000 words should be typed and sent electronically in 12 point Times New Roman font.
- One space is permitted between words and sentences.
- Include a cover page with title, name, university, and home address.
- The page following the cover (the beginning of the actual text) should contain only the title and no other heading.
- The pages must be numbered, the lines double-spaced, and in Word format (no PDFs, please).
- Scholarly papers should attach an abstract, include primary and/or secondary research, and present some original insight.
- Documentation should follow one of the established scholarly methods, MLA or APA but not the Chicago Manual of Style.
- Advisors as well as faculty mentors are expected to take an active role in providing additional comments to students.
- **Advisors and faculty mentors should approve and send all entries to the Executive Director of Delta Epsilon Sigma (DESNational@neumann.edu) by December 1.**

Final judging and the announcement of the result will take place no later than May 1st of the following year. Winners will be notified through the office of the local chapter advisor.

## THE SISTER BRIGID BRADY, OP, DELTA EPSILON SIGMA GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD



*Sister Brigid  
Brady, OP, Ph.D.*

Named in honor of Sister Brigid Brady, OP, Ph.D., The DES Graduate Student Award will grant \$1000 to each of up to three (3) graduate student members of DES per year who have shown a strong commitment to graduate study and maintain the Society's ideal of service to others. The award is renewable for an additional year for one awardee during a given year. Sister Brigid served as a National Executive Board Member, Vice President, and past President of the Society, and was a remarkable Religious, educator, and woman. She spent sixty years as a Dominican Sister, forty-three of which she dedicated to teaching at Caldwell University. Sister Brigid challenged and aided her students to excel. A scholar of Medieval Literature, Shakespeare Studies, and the History of the English Language, Sister Brigid was among the first professors at Caldwell to introduce classroom technology as a way to broaden student learning. A Renaissance woman, Sister Brigid also handmade her own harp and was deeply committed to the Arts. In addition to her service to DES and other societies, Sister Brigid frequently presented and published papers at the Conference on Christianity and Literature, an international society of scholars dedicated to the study of Christian themes in literature.

**Requirements:** Applicants will submit the following materials:

- a three-page essay, which includes a statement of (a) career goals, (b) academic accomplishments, (c) scholarly activity, and (d) how the applicant's goals correspond with the mission of DES.
- a brief CV with biography (no more than three pages).
- an official transcript of graduate coursework.
- a 1,500-word sample course paper.
- a letter of recommendation which addresses the candidate's academic work and potential.
- **All documents must be sent electronically to the National Office (DESNational@Neumann.edu) by March 15th.**

### AN INVITATION TO POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS

- The editors of the *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal* invite contributions to the journal from the readership. Submit manuscripts via email attachment to the editor, Robert Magliola (magliola.robert@gmail.com), with copy to the interim co-editor, Claudia Kovach (ckovach@neumann.edu).

- All attachments should be sent as Microsoft Word documents; no PDFs please. Submissions should be limited to 5000 words at maximum. Submissions to *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal* are peer reviewed by doctorally-prepared academics or specialists in the pertaining subject matter.
- The journal is open to a wide variety of topics and genres. Particularly welcome are submissions addressing issues of concern to Catholic colleges and universities. The *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal* editors encourage contributions from all readers, both DES members and non-members.

## THE DELTA EPSILON SIGMA FATHER EDWARD FITZGERALD SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Delta Epsilon Sigma sponsors an annual scholarship and fellowship competition for its members. Junior- year members may apply for one of ten Fitzgerald Scholarships at \$1,200 each, to be applied toward tuition costs for their senior year. Senior-year members may apply for one of ten Fitzgerald Fellowships at \$1,200 each, to be applied toward tuition costs for first-year graduate work. These scholarships and fellowships are named after the founder and first Secretary-Treasurer of DES, Most Rev. Edward A. Fitzgerald of Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa. The awards will be made available on a competitive basis to students who have been initiated into the Society and who have also been nominated by their chapters for these competitions. Applications may be obtained from the website ([deltaepsilonsigma.org](http://deltaepsilonsigma.org)) or from the Office of the Executive Director ([DESNational@neumann.edu](mailto:DESNational@neumann.edu)). **The deadline for submitting applications for the DES scholarships and fellowships is March 15.**

## THE DELTA EPSILON SIGMA DISTINGUISHED LECTURERS PROGRAM

Each year, Delta Epsilon Sigma offers an award of one thousand dollars for a speaker at a major meeting sponsored or co-sponsored by a chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma or by a Catholic professional society.

The society also offers awards to help subsidize lectures sponsored by local DES chapters. An application for one of these must be filed with the Office of the Executive Director thirty days in advance; the maximum award will be two hundred dollars. The award requires a follow-up report with photos and promotion on the DES Website and in the *DES Journal*.

All applications should be directed to the Executive Director: Dr. Claudia M. Kovach, Neumann University, School of Arts and Sciences, Aston, PA 19014-1298, (608) 558-5573, FAX (610) 361-5314, email: [DESNational@neumann.edu](mailto:DESNational@neumann.edu).

# THE DELTA EPSILON SIGMA STORE



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<b>NEW</b> Grey DES Chapter Polo Shirt* – unisex	\$39.00
<b>NEW</b> Men's Fitted DES Red Chapter T-shirt*	\$17.00
<b>NEW</b> Ladies Fitted DES Red Chapter T-shirt*	\$17.00
<b>NEW</b> Horizontal Certificate Frame with Medallion	\$65.00
DES Gold and Maroon Double Honor Cords	\$11.00
#502 Key - gold kase	\$30.00
#502 Key - 10K yellow gold	\$284.75
#503 Keypin - gold kase	\$31.00
#503 Keypin - 10K yellow gold	\$274.75
#502D Key with 2pt. diamond - 10K yellow gold	\$324.75
#503D Keypin with 2pt. diamond - 10K yellow gold	\$314.75
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## THE DES NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOLASTIC HONOR SOCIETY EMBLEM



The emblem of DES contains the motto, the name, the symbols, and the founding date of the society. Delta Epsilon Sigma is an abbreviation constructed from the initial Greek letters of the words in the motto, *Dei Epitattein Sophon*. Drawn from Aristotle and much used by medieval Catholic philosophers, the phrase is taken to mean: “It is the mission of a wise person to put order” into knowledge.

The Society’s Ritual for Induction explains that a wise person is one “who discriminates between the true and the false, who appraises things at their proper worth, and who then can use this knowledge, along with the humility born of it, to go forward to accept the responsibilities and obligations which this ability imposes.”

Thus the three words on the *Journal’s* cover, Wisdom · Leadership · Service, point to the challenges as well as the responsibilities associated with the DES motto. The emblem prominently figures the *Chi Rho* symbol (the first two Greek letters of the word Christ), and the flaming lamp of wisdom shining forth the light of Truth.

*DELTA EPSILON SIGMA JOURNAL*  
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