The Hour of the Pearl

Literature & Art from the Steinbeck Youth Institute

Cover to Cover / Katie Osaki

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THE HOUR OF THE PEARL
Literature & Art from The Steinbeck Youth Institute

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-P.B., Director & Founder of the SYI

Shorecliff / Kyla Walker

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Tidal Pull / Tom Malmgren

I was immersed in a culture of creativity, a culture separate from the academics of "the color yellow symbolizes class struggle" and "this allusion to the allegory of the cave represents..." and "Dustin stop interrupting my class"–ok maybe not this last one–but it was a culture that I connected with, a culture that sources its power from the rich greens of the forest and deep blues of the ocean.

-Dustin Morris

Into the Wild / Dustin Morris

An Ongoing Moment

By Pete Barraza

Steinbeck remains at the core of English departments across the country in part because students continue to see the relevancy of his intentions, or as one of my students pointed out, "in the way his works listen to our lives." As a young student growing up in a working-class Latino community just east of downtown Los Angeles, I became fascinated with California's most revered writer, likely because of the way marginalized characters somehow remained heroic or courageous during dire times and also because the life of my own working-class family seemed to exist somewhere between Steinbeck's pages.

Disaffected at times during my own high school reading experience—like most students when they do not see themselves in the curriculum—I struggled to find the connective value in many of the core texts assigned. I can remember being interested in Pip in *Great Expectations* and Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion*; however, far from the English marshes or the London streets, I was in search of a writer, a story, or a reason to find literature meaningful on a more personal level. Like most English teachers who can pinpoint that moment at which a book changed the course of their literary life, I too remember my starting point—my first encounter with Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Steinbeck's Edenic California as well as George and Lennie's dream seemed to me to be what literature should be about, a reminder that people really do affirm each other, even in the face of suffering and loss.

Teaching Steinbeck's works connects students to their own lives, regardless of where that life is taking place. Prior to returning to Southern California three years ago, I taught at the Punahou Academy, an independent school in Honolulu, Hawaii. As a hard core Californian, I wondered whether Steinbeck's works in Hawaii would seem to students like literary flotsam—as far removed from their experiences as Pip's once seemed to my own. But I learned quickly that the "outsider" perspective of my Hawaiian students could be as incisive as my own, and possibly more critical because they often see California as an anomaly—ironically as a kind of island, like themselves separated from the rest of the country. I remember assigning Cannery Row to a group of sophomores at Punahou, hoping that the metaphor of the tide pool as community would be relevant, even if a bit contrived. They connected.

Like many teachers who include *Cannery Row* in their curriculum, I asked my students to write their own poetic narratives modeled on the opening section of the novel. Their responses convinced me that Steinbeck—regardless of whether I was teaching along the California coastline or in the middle of the Pacific Ocean—mattered beyond my own experience and observations. Steinbeck's works thus provide students with an opportunity to reach beyond an "academic" exercise, entering the conversation via their own stories. Students respond to the essential questions raised by texts with good insight on current times and universal human motivations.

It is clear that in a time when Steinbeck's works are so relevant, often on stage or in the music of various bands such as Mumford and Sons, or even on a Google

Doodle, somewhere in the pages of California's most revered writer, we can discover some element of our own times—of ourselves.

And so, the Steinbeck Youth Institute was founded in the fall of 2016 to provide students with an opportunity to engage in an in-depth study of the world of Steinbeck outside of the classroom with the goal of authentic research and fieldwork, and the hopeful aftermath of academic and creative writing, photography, and visual arts. This initiative rooted in academic inquiry and application is modeled after, but separate from, the National Endowment for the Humanities Steinbeck Institute. With the privilege of learning and sharing through my faculty position in the NEH Steinbeck Institute for educators, I was wishful in finding a handful of students that might be interested in an outside reading list, texts by or about John Steinbeck, and luckily a group of 30 students over the course of two years have proven that it is their voices that are probably the most important in terms of future scholarship and inquiry.

The Birthplace of the Monterey Jazz Festival / Pete Barraza

In the fall of 2016 and in the spring of 2018, SYI members embarked on a 5-day trip to the Central Coast of California that included: archival work at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas; dinners with keynote speakers, such as with Dr. Susan Shillinglaw and Dr. Dan Kreiger; poetry writing at the Robinson Jeffers Tor House in Carmel led by Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts; dinner and music with next generation musicians of the Monterey Jazz Festival; several seminar-based discussions driven by essential readings rooted in ecology, marine biology, history, and the spiritual force of the natural world; impromptu jam sessions at the Henry Miller Library in Big Sur; sunset volleyball games on the beach; hikes at Montaña de Oro in San Luis Obispo; the discovery of Salvador Dali in Monterey; spending an afternoon with Gail Steinbeck and Benjamin Brode in Santa Barbara to celebrate the works of both father and son, to remember Thomas Steinbeck as a writer and artist with his own focus and fascination; tide pooling with William Gilly and Elan Portner at the Stanford Hopkins Marine Station; encountering the Dark Watchers of Big Sur or the Dark Watcher of Asilomar while reading poetry to each other in the wind and fire of the night; First Awakenings in the Pacific Biological Lab on Cannery Row with the ghost of Ed Ricketts; and finally, with each other on the open road.

The following pages are the result of these experiences, at least for the time being, as much of it has been left for the next time. The ultimate goal of the Steinbeck Youth Institute, to be exposed to the literary landscapes captured in the works of Steinbeck, has been met with this creative academic journal, *The Hour of the Pearl*. Not only are senior high school and first-year college students represented in this collection, but it is a rare and unique collaboration with important literary scholars, historians, stage directors, prosaic writers, and poets. In this journal you will find a fitting poem by George Wallace, author of *Poppin Johnny* and former Poet in Residence at the Walt Whitman Birthplace in Long Island, New York; a poem by Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts from his new volume of poetry, *White Fire*, published by the Henry Miller Library's Ping-Pong Free Press in 2017; an essay on Steinbeck's ecological vision by Dr. Susan Shillinglaw, Director of the National Steinbeck Center and author to several Steinbeck-related books such as *On Reading The Grapes of Wrath* published by Penguin in 2014; an essay on Steinbeck and the illusory aspects of the natural world by Dr. Dan Kreiger, Professor of History, Emeritus at Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo; paintings by California landscape artist, Benjamin Brode; a literary reflection by M. Thomas Gammarino, author of *King of the Worlds*, *Jellyfish Dreams*, and *Big in Japan*; a comparison of Ed Ricketts and John Muir by Donald Kohrs, Branch Library Specialist at the Harold A. Miller Library of Stanford Universitys' Hopkins Marine Station; and an incredibly poignant reflection on directing *The Grapes of Wrath* on stage by Jen Bloom, Resident Director and Co-Founder of Santa Monica Rep.

Most importantly, however, are the contributions by the "best minds of [this] generation," the SYI scholars that have committed to each other and to the readers of this journal by producing a collection of honest manifestations good to eat for at least a thousand years.

Spine / Dustin Morris

The Roots of Steinbeck

"After the bare requisites to living and reproducing, man wants most to leave some record of himself, a proof, perhaps, that he has really existed. He leaves his proof on wood, on stone or on the lives of other people."

- The Pastures of Heaven

eleven ways of flipping through the pages

by kelly dunn

I. las pasturas del cielo
and the sunlight dripped
upon pastures-
thick with siennas ochres and umbers
trailing into the lips of the valley
breeze humming gentle.
(is vasquez here?)

II. azaleas
the great valley
clustered with azaleas
which ran and fled in the wind
told stories.
one such was
him, hard truth, softened by
her, shy loveliness
and how they sat and picnicked.
but he could not bring himself to say
    that he loved her
not in so many words.
so they lay together
until sky merged with night
speaking in hushed voices
of what the day would bring.

III. the grocery store
old tennis shoes and canned peaches
between tobacco and cordage
the asian man behind the counter
checked out cream wafers.

IV. cannery row
this is the street
of the remembered things
away from the cities
(which too oft swallow up millions of
    men)
where silvery sardines
pile on fishing ships
a whitewater fury
tangled up in lines,
and the people walk
going nowhere but everywhere.

V. up in weed
the man
lost in the sepia maze
of worn and tired things
walked to the farmhouse
every step a sigh
wishing for something greater,
like a piece of earth
to call his own.
but these dreams are fleeting-
easily crumbled
by the pull of a trigger.

VI. treasure island
he lived off of fairy tales,
basking in laziness
on the sycamore tree
never wearing shoes.

VII. doxology
beneath the sky
which staggered under the weight of its
    own stars,
the old horse walked
his milky eyes
heavy with understanding.
the parched earth,
its soil cracked and rusted
like split skin and bloody knuckles,
haunted his rider

who longed for the taste of rain on his
lips.

VIII. tularecito
the boy was unusual.
he could tell stories from sandstone
carving coyotes and mountain lions
sharp claws and yellow eyes
with clay stuck under his fingernails
and white shavings on the floor.
but at night he crept
living between two worlds
searching for spirits
of those who understood.

IX. velvet dreams
she lived right in salinas
could've made something of herself
dreamt of big picture screens
parties and dresses
but sweet-lipped and starry-eyed,
she found herself alone on porch swings
doing nothing
but dreaming of spring.

X. fifteen lousy cents
stems drooping from the weight of their
own fruit
and strawberries freckled with seeds.
a field hand gazed at the clouds (drifting
linen)
and another stamped out a cigarette,
both waiting for change.

XI. tortilla flat
"it is good to have friends," he said.
grappa in hand
like sweet milk
with men
drinking in brotherhood

Personal Eclipse / Dustin Morris

Steinbeck's Ecological Vision

By Dr. Susan Shillinglaw

Both the fecund Salinas Valley and the ecologically diverse Monterey coast profoundly shaped John Steinbeck's sense of place. His prose of place is chiseled, precise. Monterey Bay is a "blue platter." The Great Tide Pool on the tip of the Monterey Peninsula is "fantastic with hurrying, fighting, feeding, breeding animals." The Gabilan Mountains are tawny hills dotted with "round, comfortable oaks." Fog "sat like a lid on the mountains and made of the great valley a closed pot." Meadowlarks sing "like water."

Fully participate, Steinbeck asks his readers. Take note of the physical world. Participate in the unfolding expanse of California, from the swish of a blackbird's wing to the purple outline of "great mountains" of the Big Sur coast, the Santa Lucias.

And Steinbeck's fields have workers in them. His characters buy ranches and plant sweet peas and cultivate gardens and buck barley. The natural world and humans' place in it is, for Steinbeck, the essential story, "one inseparable unit man and

Gibson Beach
By Emma Ware

his environment," as he wrote when composing his second novel, *To a God Unknown*. Steinbeck's are ecological narratives.

In many ways, Steinbeck's is a farmer's sensibility, a writer sharing the lineage of Wendel Berry—an observation biographer Jack Benson made some years ago in an article entitled "Hemingway the Hunter and Steinbeck the Farmer." That title identifies the ways each writer connects to place. Throughout his fiction, Steinbeck the farmer is sensitive to weather patterns and rain, to flora and fauna, to drought and crop yield. In *To a God Unknown* (1933), rancher Joseph Wayne is warned about "dry years" when he takes up land in the San Antonio Valley, near the mission: "Half the people who lived here then had to move away. Those who could, drove the cattle inland to the San Joaquin, where there was grass along the river." In a short story written in 1934 he describes a character's "planters' hands," and thus acknowledges his own family's deep ties to the soil—"our bones came from limestone of our own mountains," he writes in 1933, "and our blood is distilled from the juices of this earth," the earth of the Salinas Valley. His characters are defined by the places they inhabit, live out their often lonely lives, find solace in natural rhythms of fog and sun, drought and rain.

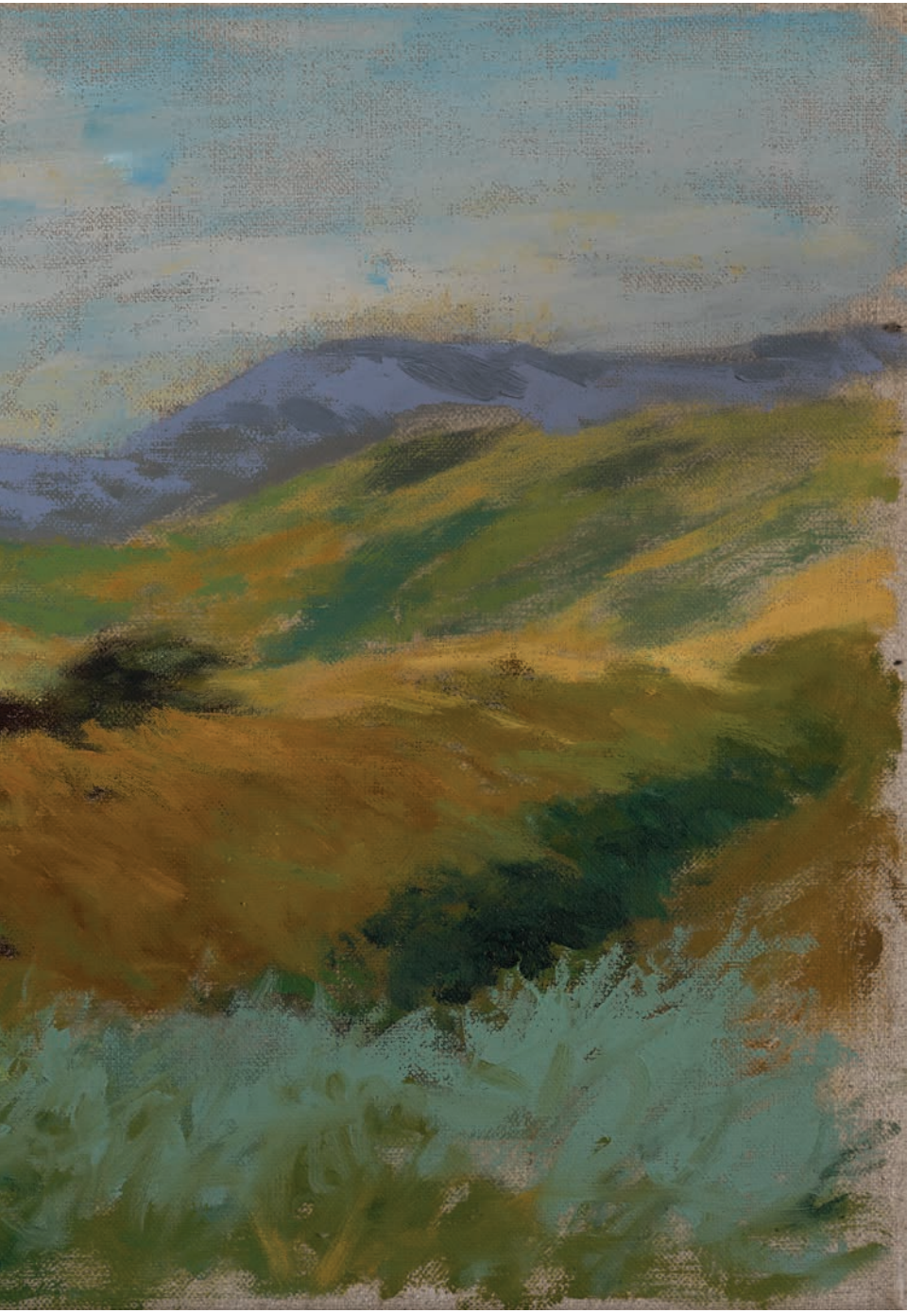
John Steinbeck's father yearned to be a farmer, the calling of his own father. Steinbeck's maternal grandparents, the Hamiltons, moved to California about the same time as the Steinbeck clan, finding land a few miles east of King City in 1873. Steinbeck would call his Hamilton relatives' 1680 acres "old starvation ranch." Sam Hamilton features prominently in Steinbeck's novel about his home country, *East of Eden* (1952), where Sam is a rancher, a blacksmith, a water surveyor and an inventor—in short, an intrepid, adaptable and vigorous pioneer. The real Sam migrated to California from Ireland, and his yearning for land must have been great.

Steinbeck admired this "westering" impulse of his Steinbeck and Hamilton grandparents, the restlessness and energy that drove pioneers to California, that made each invest in place. Although his sympathies were drawn to those who worked the land with their hands—Lennie and George, the Joads—he also wrote about visionary farmers like Joseph Wayne and Sam Hamilton, owners with a connection to place so visceral that each hungered for the words to express what the land meant to them.

Steinbeck never shook loose his own connection to the soil. Gardening was a lifelong passion, as were boats and the sea. Steinbeck was an outdoor man, with the landscapes of Monterey county, land and sea, imprinted in his soul. Winds blow through his life and his books. His characters find solace in secret places, dig into natural shelters.

Steinbeck connects: humans, the land, the sea, animals, invertebrates, and lupines. We live in an interconnected, holistic world, and he tells us that in book after book. Humans don't dominate place but live in place—and he suggests what that looks like.

Wind Swept



By Benjamin Brode

Steinbeck's Round Table and Early Literary Influence

By Kyla Walker

While analyzing and dissecting *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* (1976), the parallels between John Steinbeck's story and his hero's become apparent to readers tuned in to the minor details of the novel. The fascination began when he was a child and it was revived near the end of his life, as he rewrote the tale in modern language. The circle of his curiosity in the Arthurian legend was as complete as the Round Table. Around the age of nine, John and his sister Mary would climb the hills of the Salinas Valley, such as Corral de Tierra to find Castle Rock, the mythical and poetic haven and escape ideal for any child. Steinbeck would pretend it was Camelot and within the spiraling stairs of his steady and stable dream, his imagination would cultivate this fascination. As a child growing up with modest means, it was inevitable that one of our nation's greatest writers would find his dream amidst monolithic rock. It was here he learned how to create characters from the sunset, how to transform a gopher into the secret of life, and how to become as immortal as the legends that follow us through our days and endless nights. Without Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the Steinbeck we know and love would never have even begun his literary career and could never have changed the lives and status of the common workers of America.

In the fall of 2016, at the midst of a growing political chaos in America, a time Steinbeck could have related to, as the economy and accompanying government was up in flames at the start of his own career, I was granted the safe haven of a literary journey through Steinbeck country. With a number of my peers from the Steinbeck Youth Institute, we dove back into the author's childhood and sanctuary, finding the hills of fairy dust and clashing swords, the battles fought in freezing moats and bursting suns. By the end of the trip, we had driven and walked through the Pastures of Heaven, Castle Rock, and Salinas, but truly we had traveled back in time to his world, and back into his land of Camelot.

Steinbeck's narratives reflect the romantic notions of King Arthur, a Round Table representation of heroes and codes, a moral compass guiding poignant characters to lead the common man and woman, fighting with bravery against authority (or leaders of other kingdoms) to bring back the glory, justice, or love deserved. The reader glimpses into a parallel world, but ultimately finds Steinbeck grasping the Excalibur and the hearts of the people: "Then Arthur mounted the stone with all the lords and common people watching him, and he drew the sword easily out and held it up to them. The common people were convinced and they cried with one great shout, 'We want Arthur for our king…'" (18). Like Arthur, Steinbeck became the beacon of hope for the working class of America through the Great Depression, but instead of the sword in the stone saving the kingdom, the author's expose found in *The Grapes*

of Wrath symbolizes the struggles of the migrant workers in the Thirties. Eventually, the novel became so popular that it caught the attention of the First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, who fought Congress for more rights for the rural laborers and improved the conditions of migrant camps across the country.

Within Steinbeck's adaptation, readers can not only find a reflection of the writer as King Arthur, but also in his best friend, Ed Ricketts, as Merlin. In the pages of *The Acts of King Arthur*, we can find the roots of Steinbeck's most impactful life theory of non-teleological thinking displayed in his many novels. Ed Ricketts is revived in the magic of Merlin. In the later part of the novel, as Merlin prepares for his fate, he goes to his closest friend and illustrates the idea of non-teleological thinking, just as Ricketts would have with Steinbeck: "And Merlin said, 'You will miss me and wish for my advice. The time will come when you would give up your kingdom to have me with you again.' 'This is beyond understanding,' said the king…" (109). Steinbeck could relate to Arthur and poured his empathy into this scene, as he lost his best friend in 1948 after Ricketts' car was hit by a train. In the last conversation before Merlin disappears, he gives Arthur his final words of wisdom that sound very similar to the theory of non-teleological thinking, which had a huge impact on both Ricketts and Steinbeck: "And Merlin said quietly, 'Because I am wise. In the combat between wisdom and feeling, wisdom never wins…' And Merlin bade farewell to the king he

Castle Rock / Pete Barraza

had created" (106-107). As Merlin says goodbye, he realizes that explanations and words are not the answer to every mystery, and that maybe emotion is stronger than wisdom, reflecting the discussion Steinbeck most likely hoped he and Ricketts would have had one last time.

The focus of Steinbeck's books changes throughout his life. The evolution of his themes is seen across an arc of his early works and his late works. The early proletariat novels, such as *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), were written about the depths and struggles of migrant workers, farmers on strike, and the common class of America in the Great Depression. There were glimpses of motifs that would be used in his later works, but were more discreet as he wished to portray the hardships of the manual laborer. After the Great Depression faded, Steinbeck worked as a war correspondent in World War II. Once he returned and wrote his later novels, such as *Cannery Row* (1945), *East of Eden* (1952), and *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961), he revolved around the morality of the individual and society, and how the loss of innocence breaks and disintegrates our purity and integrity. Although Steinbeck began his adaptation in 1956, his retelling of the Arthurian legend was published twenty years later, producing themes of growing up, maintaining honor, and the importance of friendship.

The Acts of King Arthur, being one of Steinbeck's last novels, examines a fantasy world that looks all too familiar in the deeper perspective. Steinbeck began his literary career with this legend and became as immortal as the Noble Knights of the Round Table. Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* first introduced Steinbeck to the wonder of the written word, but ultimately changed his life and impacted millions of others. The young boy that once played in the hills of Castle Rock grew up and became the true King Arthur to the people of America.

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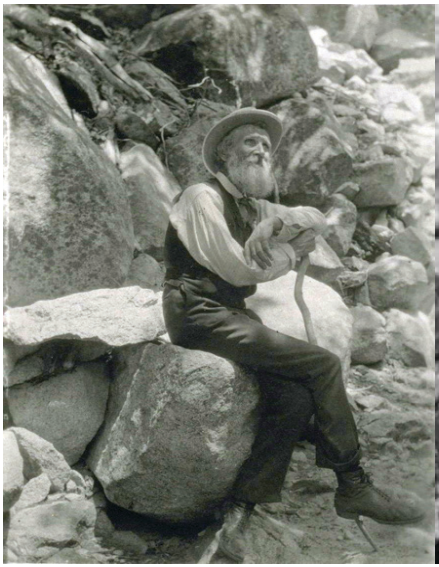
Steinbeck, John. *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights*. New York. Penguin, 1976.

Muir's Glaciers and Ricketts' Tidepools

By Donald Khors



© Cover photograph: John Muir. Photograph Taken by Professor Francis M. Fritz in 1907. Courtesy of UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library.

© Cover photograph: Edward F. Ricketts Photograph Taken by Ed Ricketts Jr. Courtesy of Ed Ricketts Jr.

The following paragraphs consider the similarities between the lives of John Muir and Ed Ricketts, two of California's most celebrated naturalists. These similarities begin with the fact that both men spent their youth growing up in the heartland of America: Muir in Wisconsin and Ricketts in Illinois. In addition, both attended a major academic university, but neither received a college degree: Muir attended University of Wisconsin - Madison and Ricketts attended the University of Chicago. Both men were mentored by prominent academic scientists: John Muir's principal mentors included University of Wisconsin's Professor Ezra Slocum Carr, his wife Jeanne Smith Carr, Harvard Professors Louis Agassiz and Asa Grey, while Ed Ricketts' principal mentors included University of Chicago's Professor Warder Clyde Allee, Uppsala University of Sweden's Professor Torsten Gislén and Stanford University's Professor Walter K.

Fisher.

Another similarity is the extended hike taken from Indianapolis, Indiana through the Southeastern part of the United States to Savannah, Georgia, which both men independently chose to experience. Muir started his hike in September 1867 when he was twenty-eight years old, whereas Ricketts started his hike in November 1921 when he was twenty-four years old. Both men wrote a remembrance of their walk; Muir in his book *A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf*, and Ricketts in his published article Vagabonding Through Dixie.

Yet another parallel in the life of Muir and Ricketts is their permanently moving west to California. Muir arrived in San Francisco, seven months after initiating his trek from Indiana; Ricketts arrived in Pacific Grove, two years after initiating his trek from Indiana through the Southern states.

After relocating to California both men quickly established themselves as respected naturalists in their field of study. As a scientist, John Muir became absorbed with validating the scientific hypothesis of glaciation as an explanation for the formation of Yosemite Valley. Captivated with understanding glaciation, Muir traveled through the Inside Passage of the Pacific Northwest to Alaska where he observed - in real time - the process of landscape formation by glacial activity.

Ed Ricketts, as a scientist, became immersed in understanding the marine ecology associated with the littoral zone of the Pacific coast. Ricketts was so absorbed with determining the processes that shape the ecology of coastal marine habitats that he traveled through the Inside Passage of the Pacific Northwest to Alaska to broaden his perspective. Collecting trips to the outer shores of the Pacific Northwest of Canada and Alaska, the coasts of Washington, Oregon, California, Mexico's Baja Peninsula and the Gulf of California provided Ricketts with the most comprehensive understanding of the habits and habitats of the seashore invertebrates of the Pacific Coast.

Both men, while engaging in their passion for scientific study, witnessed the negative environmental impact of human activities. Muir witnessed not only the destructive impact of illegal lumbering[1], but the disastrous effects of overgrazing by sheep[1] and hydraulic mining[2] to his beloved High Sierra region. Ricketts personally observed the detrimental impact of harbor dredging and breakwater construction in Southern California's Newport Bay,[3, 4] and the unnecessary loss of marine life resulting from destructive fishing practices in the Sea of Cortez.[5]

John Muir and Ed Ricketts were both inexhaustible readers, which allowed them to become extremely well read. Their exhaustive practice of reading the written word led each to gather a sizeable personal library. A significant portion of each of their library collections pertained to the natural sciences; Muir's emphasis was placed on the subjects of geology and botany while Ricketts' emphasis was placed on the seashore biology and ecology of the Pacific coasts. In addition to these subjects, both Muir's and Ricketts' library collections contained the European and American Classics, World History, Religious Studies, and the literature of the Transcendentalists.

The published works of Muir and Ricketts were written for the scientist and layman alike, which enabled the popularization of their ideas among a wide audience. Muir popularized the theoretical ideas associated with glaciation, while Ricketts introduced the theoretical ideas related to intertidal ecology.

FOOTNOTES

1. Muir, John (1898). From *The Wild Parks And Forest Reservations Of The West*. The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 81, Issue 483, January 1898 Atlantic Monthly Company.

"The forty million acres of these reserves are in the main unspoiled as yet, though sadly wasted and threatened on their more open margins by the axe and fire of the lumberman and prospector, and by hoofed locusts, which, like the winged ones, devour every leaf within reach, while the shepherds and owners set fires with the intention of making a blade of grass grow in the place of every tree, but with the result of killing both the grass and the trees."

2. Muir, John (1876). From Prospectus of the Cataract and Wide West Hydraulic Gravel Mining Co. San Francisco: Fluto & Co., 1876, pg. 4-6.

"the hills have been cut and scalped and every gorge and gulch and broad valley have been fairly torn to pieces and disemboweled, expressing a fierce and desperate energy hard to understand."

3. Ricketts, Edward F. (1932). From a letter written by E. F. Ricketts to Torsten Gislén May 27, 1932. [Torsten Gisléns archive, Lund University Library]

On our last trip down there we collected at Newport Bay, Ensenada, Ensenada estuary and Boca de la Playa, in the head of the Santa Tomas Valley. The Newport Bay region has changed around considerably due to the influx of sand and the change of currents incident to harbor dredging and breakwater work. The Gorgonian Muricea that I found on the rocky shores near the station seems completely to have disappeared, and this is a pity because it was the most northerly representative of a species very common in Panama. If something isn't done to protect that region from depredations of hungry Italians and Chinese people I am afraid there will be nothing macroscopic left to turn up.

Lund University Library, E. F. Ricketts to Torsten Gislén May 27, 1932. [Torsten Gisléns archive, Lund University Library]

4. Ricketts, Edward F. (1942). From a letter written by E. F. Ricketts to Waldo L. Schmitt March 11, 1942

Lord only knows we do enough to upset biological and topographical equilibria in small ways. Every breakwater or harbor dredging project is proof of that. Maybe now we're doing it in a big way there.

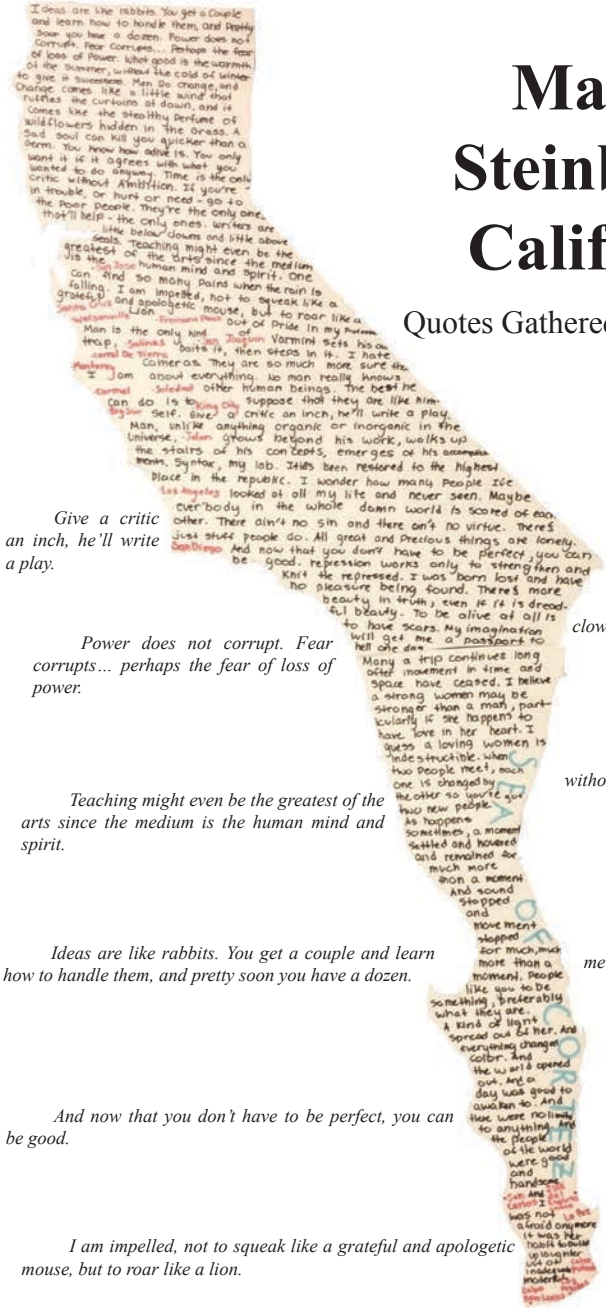
Record Unit 307: National Museum of Natural History, Division of Crustacea Records, circa 1908-1979, Box 37, Folder 9. [E. F. Ricketts to Waldo L. Schmitt March 11, 1942]

5. Steinbeck, John and Ricketts, Edward F. (1941). From *Sea of Cortez*; *a leisurely journal of travel and research, with a scientific appendix comprising materials for a source book on the marine animals of the Panamic faunal province.*

"We take a tiny colony of soft corals from a rock in a little water world. And that isn't terribly important to the tide pool. Fifty miles away the Japanese shrimp boats are dredging with overlapping scoops, bringing up tons of shrimps, rapidly destroying the species so that it may never come back, and with the species destroying the ecological balance of the whole region. That isn't very important in the world. And thousands of miles away the great bombs are falling and the stars are not moved thereby. None of it is important or all of it is."

Map of Steinbeck's California

Quotes Gathered by Natalie Gold



Give a critic an inch, he'll write a play.

Power does not corrupt. Fear corrupts... perhaps the fear of loss of power.

Teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit.

Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen.

And now that you don't have to be perfect, you can be good.

I am impelled, not to squeak like a grateful and apologetic mouse, but to roar like a lion.

Writers are little below clowns and little above seals.

Time is the only critic without ambition.

My imagination will get me a passport to hell one day.

I wonder how many people I've looked at all my life and never seen.

Carmel Beach
By Emma Ware

At first I thought I was going to be out of place because I'm not really a strong writer or an artist. I didn't know too much about Steinbeck and hadn't read as many of his works as the others. I felt like I was going to just tag along for the food, which, I must say, I was completely fine with and would do again because oh, it was amazing. I could go on and on about the food. Every place we went to I thought was better than the last, and I don't think there was any time on the trip that I wasn't full. Those warm, sugary cinnamon rolls to start off the day, the beautifully caramelized onions on homemade pizza… sorry. Back to Steinbeck.

-Ryu Akiba

At Pavel's Backerei / Dustin Morris

A Taste of John Steinbeck

By Weston Gray

Throughout my life, food has had an impact in every way imaginable. I spend hours on end thinking of food, dreaming of food, and simply indulging in the beautiful experience that taking a bite entails. While reading Steinbeck's pieces, I envisioned how his stories could be paired with the rich variety of flavors one can taste. Here, I have composed a series of dishes I believe captures the essence of John Steinbeck and his works, food for the mind and soul.

Appetizer
The SYI Experience

Fried polenta cake/ spiced honey glazed pork belly/ mama lil's sweet hot peppas

The appetizer is an exception to the rest of the courses in that it reflects the 2016 Steinbeck Youth Institute literary trip rather than Steinbeck's works directly. The abundance of spice in the dish, manifested through the use of spiced honey and Mama Lil's Sweet Hot Peppas, is meant to portray the feeling of excitement felt by SYI participants as they ventured up the coast of California and gazed out towards the Pastures of Heaven. Throughout the dish, the accents of spice are balanced with hints of sweetness in the honey and peppers to show the emotional connection that flowed between the group and the life-long friendships that were created. The pork belly was added to symbolize the rich landscapes seen along the journey. Finally, the fried polenta cake produces coherency and gives the dish purpose, just as John Steinbeck gave purpose to the trip.

Salad
East of Eden

Roasted radicchio/ fresh arugula/ sungold tomatoes/ pickled strawberries/ walnut thyme streusel/ chevre/ red wine vinaigrette

For this dish, I wanted to focus on both the picturesque setting of Salinas, California and the recurring juxtapositions in *East of Eden*, particularly that of good and evil. The salad incorporates an assortment of crops that are grown along the coast of California, such as tomatoes, strawberries, and wine grapes that are integrated into the dish, including the red wine vinaigrette. The juxtaposition of good and evil is prominent throughout the course of the story in the setting and the apparent display of the characters' divergent personalities, especially those of Samuel Hamilton and Cathy Ames. Presentation makes this juxtaposition come to life by using dark colored greens like radicchio and arugula to contrast the luminosity of the sungold tomatoes and pickled strawberries. Furthermore, crisp, nutty walnut thyme streusel creates a texture contrast and adds richness to the rather light and refreshing dish.

Flatbread
Junius and Robbie Maltby

Sauteed chanterelles/ goat milk mascarpone/ lemon zest/ chives/ fleur de sel

Representative of *The Pastures of Heaven* characters, Junius and Robbie Maltby, the flatbread is an earthy and light dish that serves as a good transition to the main courses. The earthiness comes from the nutty and redolent chanterelle mushrooms which symbolize Junius and his attachment to nature. Additionally, it is believed in China that mushrooms only grow in peaceful times and Junius thrives in a peaceful, relaxing, and simplistic environment. The bright flavors created by the lemon zest, chives, and fleur de sel illustrate Robbie Maltby and his imagination, charisma, and energy. Lastly, the goat milk mascarpone's creaminess balances the robust flavors and represents the goat Junius purchases to feed little Robbie.

Entree
Mack and the Boys

Broiled Chilean sea bass/ white wine sauce/ red wine braised chard

The few components of this dish place emphasis on the simplicity of the life that Mack and the Boys live on Cannery Row. Residing in an abandoned fish-meal shack on the row, the boys have little ambition for the most part and are able to appreciate the sheer beauty of life. Through the use of Chilean sea bass and both white and red wine, tasters can immerse themselves in the oceanic community of *Cannery Row* while perceiving the subtle hints of the alcohol frequently consumed by Mack and the boys, as infused in the sauce and the braised chard. The bitterness of the chard is representative of the bitterness and abhorrence Mack and the boys have towards living a mundane life.

Entree
Edward Wicks and his Perspective of Alice

Garlic-crusted rack of lamb/ blistered shishito peppers/ black garlic chickpea fritter/ white miso gremolata

Throughout the vignette in Steinbeck's *The Pastures of Heaven*, Edward Wicks has an immense obsession over his daughter's purity and innocence that becomes even more pervasive as the story progresses. This perception of Alice manifests itself in the rack of lamb, as lamb is often used as a symbol of innocence. The lamb is then surrounded in the intense flavors of black garlic, blistered shishito peppers, and white miso that illustrate malevolent forces, such as Jimmy Monroe.

Dessert
Ma Joad

Yuzu panna cotta/ crispy rice/ poached pear/ fresh whipped cream

The dessert portion of the meal highlights the flavor profiles of bitter and sweet to symbolize the sorrow Ma Joad faces while maintaining strength throughout the course of *The Grapes of Wrath*. The strength she emits is exhibited throughout the Joad's strenuous trek across the California desert and gives the family coherency, even through Pa's hesitation caused by a lack of job opportunities in California. Ma faces a myriad of struggles along the journey, but not once does she succumb to the afflictions. For this reason, the sweet aspects of the dish have more precedence than the bitter aspect of the dish, as demonstrated in the undertones of yuzu interlaced in the creamy and rich panna cotta.

The Mural

By Dylan Ollivier

Nature's Masterpiece / Dustin Morris

I rest,
Possessed by the crashing sound of the waves
And protected by the rocks and plants that make it seem like
Lying behind is all there is and all that ever was.
In front, all there will be; the continent's end with
Just a sailboat signaling the end of life.
The narrow cliffs outline the cove and all
That matters for hours is the gravel reaching
Out of the foamy water and the rocks whose sandy skin tone
Evoke the fur of huddled otters or the kelp that collects them.
Behind the imposing, protecting rocks, the world is hidden.
In front, a painting surfaces.
The clever layering of the most vibrant yellow,
Amidst a palette of red, orange, blue, grey,
With dents, lines,
Shapes and holes forming the most perfect
Mural with planned edges.
Adjacent, a delicate waterfall departing a gentle plateau,
Slipping on years of careful sheets of sediment,
Falls under mountains of circular and
Sharpened rocks to create a mossy
Lake whose sole inhabitant, a crab, enjoys peaceful rest.
On the other side, the mural turns to shield the lake.
The canvas is the last before miles of emptiness.
It is simply me, sheltered by a carnival of life and earth's finery.

Reflecting on *The Grapes of Wrath*

By Jen Bloom
Resident Director and Co-Founder, Santa Monica Rep
May 2017

What happens to wrath when it simmers? This is a meditation on how art moved me to personal, political action.

I direct stories that speak to me on many levels: through the plot, through the ideas, through my senses, through the people (both the characters and actors), and through my emotions. *The Grapes of Wrath* is a story that's been simmering in me since I read it in high school 25 years ago. I have read the novel a few times, designed a production 15 years ago, and directed the workshop reading for Santa Monica Rep last summer that performed for four very different audiences and events. We performed at a library for free to a full house of a very mixed demographic, at the Broad Stage for an upscale arts crowd for a $25 ticket, for high schools also at the Broad for free, and on the night of our last presidential inauguration, as an act of patriotic solace, for a suggested donation.

Like wine, the flavor of the story has changed every year. In high school, I felt the call of revolution like Tom Joad, and saw the lessons I could learn from Rosasharn's petulance. A decade later, as a designer, I connected to the sensuality of Steinbeck's landscape, of Casy's passion for the people. Now, as a director, teacher, and mom-to-be, I connect to the practicality and deep wisdom of Ma Joad, and the generations that have come before, and will come after.

When I chose this piece to direct last summer, I was responding to the images of refugees we were seeing from all over the world. The bodies of drowned children floating in the ocean were the same as Rosasharn's stillborn baby on the river. When the dust storms hit in the 1930's, and thousands of people left their land for California, they became refugees. I was finally grasping that those refugees from exotic lands are no different from our domestic refugees- our homeless citizens, addicts, migrant workers, families or isolated individuals living in poverty, our foster children- that have no home or family. But, I didn't know all that going in; it was something I learned along the way.

Directing is complicated. It's a bizarre, uncharted path that you figure out only by following a regimented process. The paradox of this is what keeps me in it. Every actor needs a different spark to give action to their character. The audience's collective and individual minds and senses need to be addressed. The poetry and ambition of the writing must be honored. The designers, production and administrative staff need both specific and inspirational ways in. And overall, my instincts and creative questions must be given voice through the story and people and colors, or the whole thing falls apart.

We have several mantras in the United States meant to bring us together and serve as guiding principles. Here are two I used when I got lost on the way while directing *Grapes* this last time around:

"We the people..."
and
"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Lately, I feel myself bristle when I hear someone say a phrase like, "in this day and age," "especially now," or "in light of current events" to highlight an atrocity that has been going on in every age. The phrase is usually meant to call attention to an injustice, and comes from a well-meaning place- as in people are somehow "worse" now, or "more" or "less aware" now, or "more" or "less cruel" now. I bristle because the phrase severs the connection to our millennia of ancestral history and memory; it keeps us separate from who we are growing up to be. Humans in a hundred years, or a thousand years, will look and think nothing, and at the same time exactly, like us. Maybe.

Or...maybe we will evolve to a place where cruelty as a result of chosen blindness no longer exists. Poverty, hunger, and planned ignorance through lack of education will be obsolete. Our collective stories will coalesce in action by our audience, and the big problems of the world will be solved by a combination of arts, technology, policy, and social sciences.

I bristle not from wrath, but from shame. I am not angry or frustrated at the speaker. I am ashamed that we keep beating the same drumbeat of stories, and getting the same results. We are in shock at our inaction to cruelty, and blind to the potential beauty everywhere. In Steinbeck's world, there is beauty in the common courtesies of community, family tradition and loyalty, the flavor bursts in a simple meal, the warmth of the Southern California sun.

What I have learned from directing stories written from several time periods is that we have always been unimaginably cruel, unbearably blind, and exceedingly arrogant. However, we have also been stunningly gracious, compassionate, giving and glorious. Rosasharn nurses a dying man after losing her child; this is what she has to give. She starts to heal her grief, her wrath by giving. She has moved from a self-interested, complaining teenager into a nurturing mother of the world, as inspired by her mother's practice of feeding children and giving whenever possible, inspired by her brother's desire to finally turn his shame from wrath into action.

This last time with *Grapes*, what I learned from Steinbeck, and our mantras, and from theatre making itself, is that I need to give back in a huge way to keep healing. My wrath has resulted in an unexpected wine. My husband and I will be welcoming foster children into our home starting this fall, and at least one child will be saved from a potential sea.

Cannery Row

By Dustin Morris

Cannery Row in Monterey in California is a postcard, a trap, an eight-dollar ice cream, a blink, an artificial light. Cannery Row is the paved and painted, brick and cement and sanded wood, clear pavements and parking lots and recycling bins, sweet shops of fresh taffy, bars and cafes, drug stores and museums and fast food. Its inhabitants are, as the man once said, "tourists, capitalists, scammers, and sons of bitches," by which he meant Everybody. Had the man looked through another peephole he might have said, "travelers and students and educators and businessmen," and he would have meant the same thing.

In the morning when the cafe owners open their doors, the espresso machines whir to life. The early morning employees waddle from the closest Starbucks to their respective stores. The row functions in one breath; the inhale brings in fresh air and the exhale leaves traces of the day. Then coffee machines scream and all over residents come down to the Row for walks along the beach. Then large busses and shining cars bring visitors and students, who disappear into aquariums and gift shops. Then from nearby towns, laborers, men and women in aprons and overalls and trousers, pour in. They come running to clean and repair the careless damage perpetrated by those who are unconscious. The whole street rambles and groans and screams and rattles while people grow larger and larger on taffy and ice cream until they are full. The stores ding and click until the last stuffed otter is sold and the coffee machines scream again and the workers collect evening caffeine before heading out into the night. Some leave on busses and shiny cars back to their hotels and villas. Cannery Row counts its money and continues its plunder. Restaurants open for dinner and bright signs attract tourists tired of hunting for cheap merchandise. Doc's ghost strolls from the Monterey Bay Aquarium to the nearest general store for a six pack of beer. He doesn't know the owner even though he's been going there for many years. The streets are constantly illuminated by shops and restaurants and darkness almost never fully arrives.

How can the postcard and the scam and the artificial light be set down alive? For the book of the poem and the stink and the grating noise has been set down. The stories of Doc and Lee Chong and Mack have already crawled onto their pages. Cannery Row is no longer a tide pool of interconnected symbiotic organisms. Now, what once was a close-knit community, has become a blur of traffic, a collection of otter-pun-ridden collectibles; while arguably cleaner than Steinbeck's original description, it was always the grit that made Cannery Row feel alive. Alive. But Cannery Row is alive, with its hustle and bustle; hundreds of thousands of people cycle in and out every day, yet it feels dead. The interpersonal connection kept the old row alive, fueled by Doc's offers of riches to Mack and the Boys and by their shenanigans, by the flophouse and the stories that surround it, and by Lee Chong and his store of endless beer.

Monterey Canning Co.
By Emma Ware

Steinbeck Meets Python

By Hanna Gratch

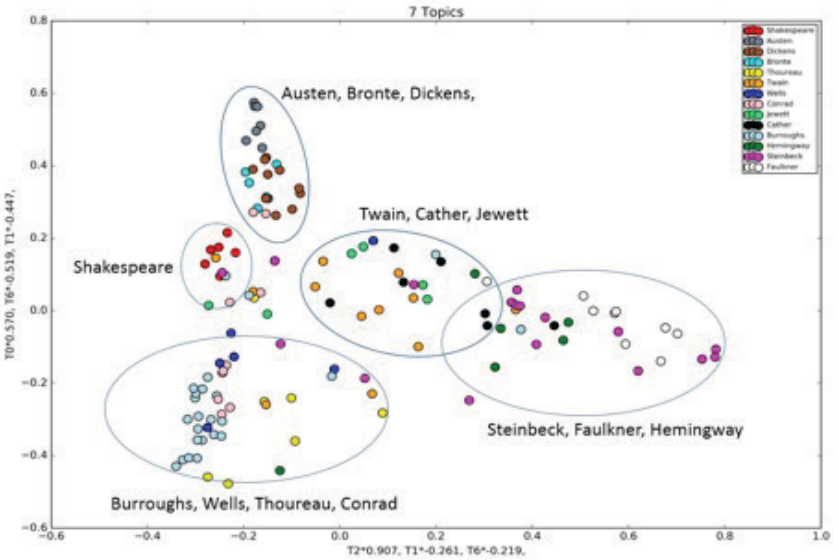
How long does it take to analyze a single book, let alone hundreds? How many re-reads does it take to decipher the countless layers of meaning within each novel? Literary scholars have analyzed the works of canonical writers for years, including California's most revered writer, John Steinbeck, but as the age of technology progresses, the efficiency of computers makes it appropriate to incorporate newer approaches to literary analysis. This project started out with the possibility of generating a block of text that mimicked Steinbeck's writing style. In order to achieve this, I needed to understand what Steinbeck's style actually was, such as subject matter, syntactical structure, word choice, and dialogue use between significant characters. The first obstacle was amassing enough data of Steinbeck's work. For a program to effectively identify patterns in style, it needs to process a large amount of data. Even with the majority of his novels, there was not nearly enough data to successfully generate new text. Thus began the search for authors similar to Steinbeck in both style and content to generate enough data of synonymous content. Once similar authors were discovered, their novels could also be incorporated into the data for the program. Three main areas of analysis arose from this process: style, topics, and character relationships. These revealed a variety of elements of Steinbeck's writing that will be discussed in this essay.

Several elements of writing are essential when determining a writer's distinct style. Using a corpus of authors including but not limited to John Steinbeck, Jane Austen, Willa Cather, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway and William Shakespeare, these elements were compared against each author (there are a total of 14 authors in the corpus). Syntactic, lexical, and semantic features were examined to determine style. These features are analyzed by using the average style--that is, the syntactic, lexical, and semantic features that each author tends to gravitate towards. Syntax is determined by elements such as sentence length, quotations, and commas. Though the subject matter of each book may differ, the way authors structure their sentences is often similar across all books. Lexical features indicate the vocabulary, more specifically part of speech, authors use. The semantic features are more complex as it has to go one step further in its analysis. The program seeks to interpret subject matter and even tone from the words in the novel. All of these features appear to remain relatively constant across each author's novels, though there are always outliers. For example, Steinbeck strayed away from his usual subject matter when he wrote about King Arthur.

Topic modeling involves grouping together words that frequently occur together to create different topics. For example, the words ship, sea, captain and deck would be grouped together. This topic is thus related to the ocean and sea travel. Books con-

sist of different topics in different proportions. In a book that is 80% ocean topic and 20% family topic, there would be four times as many ocean-related words than family-related. Additionally, the number of topics can be changed as needed. However, the accuracy of topics is noticeably affected by the number of topics. When there are too few topics, such as two or three, each topic becomes too general and it is hard to distinguish between books. When there are too many topics, such as twenty, the topics contain extremely specific words and is again difficult to distinguish between books. After experimenting with different numbers, using six to eight topics was found to be the most accurate way to distinguish books. This could have a practical use in the educational setting. Students who struggle to find books they enjoy reading could pick and choose what they would like to read about and discover books they may like with this program. As follows is a generated list of topics for the entire corpus (note: The program cuts off certain words. For example, "families" is cut off to be "famili"):

Topic 0: sister, ladi, aunt, mother, letter, father, friend, famili, brother, colonel, hous, feel, manner, daughter, pleasur
Topic 1: ape, jungl, warrior, lion, beast, girl, villag, savag, tree, tribe, trail, creatur, bull, hut, bodi
Topic 2: car, hous, hors, road, guy, hell, truck, town, father, girl, uncl, wagon, folk, dollar, money
Topic 3: king, knight, lord, duke, princ, sword, castl, queen, hath, majesti, princess, throne, hors, kingdom, royal
Topic 4: room, doctor, madam, hous, voic, life, woman, gentleman, arm, girl, mind, child, street, chair, window
Topic 5: captain, cuttl, ship, major, ranger, friend, lieuten, sea, lad, deck, doctor, sailor, grinder, offic, midshipman
Topic 6: river, boat, water, sea, shore, ship, deck, island, mile, lake, land, wood, tree, life, stream



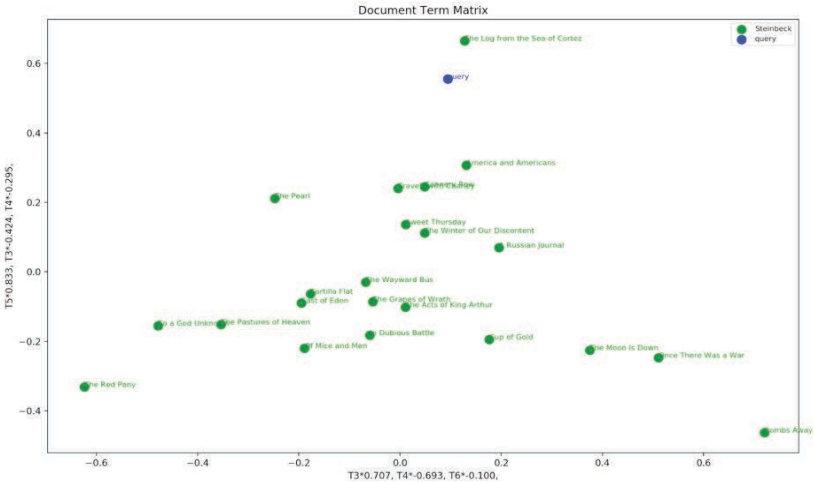
As seen from the graph, Steinbeck, Faulkner, and Hemingway appear to be the most closely related. Thus in terms of topic and style, these three authors (out of the corpus) are the most similar. As follows is a generated list of topics for the Steinbeck-only corpus:

Topic 0: door, money, hous, room, girl, father, street, friend, glass, mother, boy, bus, busi, mind, paper
Topic 1: truck, car, folk, tent, uncl, preacher, road, camp, water, highway, cotton, work, stuff, mattress, girl
Topic 2: knight, king, ladi, sword, lord, shield, queen, hors, castl, armor, court, spear, brother, adventur, world
Topic 3: ship, crew, captain, plane, bomber, pilot, war, gun, bomb, soldier, target, forc, air, mission, train
Topic 4: hors, father, hous, tree, valley, barn, water, land, rain, hill, mother, ranch, night, grass, rocklaboratori, world, book
Topic 5: anim, speci, boat, fish, water, tide, gulf, number, sea, crab, beach, rock,
Topic 6: guy, tent, hell, damn, strike, appl, truck, camp, voic, kid, cop, barn, tree, bunk, crowd

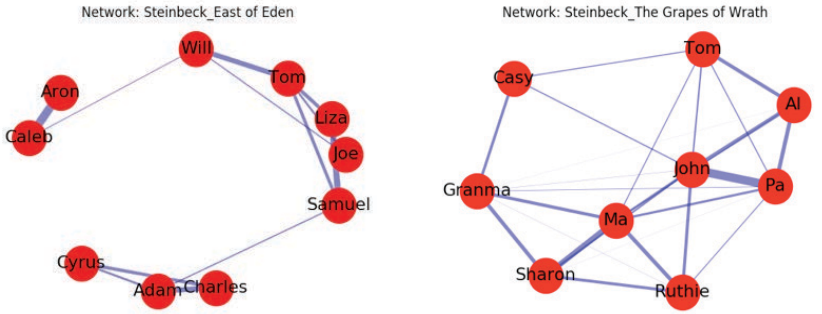
The script also listed the top three topics (decreasing order) for each of the books in the corpus (numbers correspond to topic number):

A Russian Journal (Steinbeck): 5 3 0
America and Americans (Steinbeck): 5 0 3
Bombs Away (Steinbeck): 3 4 5
Cannery Row (Steinbeck): 0 5 6
Cup of Gold (Steinbeck): 3 4 0
East of Eden (Steinbeck): 0 4 6
In Dubious Battle (Steinbeck): 6 1 0
Of Mice and Men (Steinbeck): 6 4 0
Once There Was a War (Steinbeck): 3 5 0
Sweet Thursday (Steinbeck): 0 6 5
The Acts of King Arthur (Steinbeck): 2 4 0
The Grapes of Wrath (Steinbeck): 1 6 4
The Log from the Sea of Cortez (Steinbeck): 5 0 3
The Moon Is Down (Steinbeck): 3 0 6
The Pastures of Heaven (Steinbeck): 4 0 5
The Pearl (Steinbeck): 5 4 0
The Red Pony (Steinbeck): 4 6 1
The Wayward Bus (Steinbeck): 0 1 4
The Winter of Our Discontent (Steinbeck): 0 5 6
To a God Unknown (Steinbeck): 4 5 2
Tortilla Flat (Steinbeck): 0 4 5
Travels with Charley (Steinbeck): 5 0 4

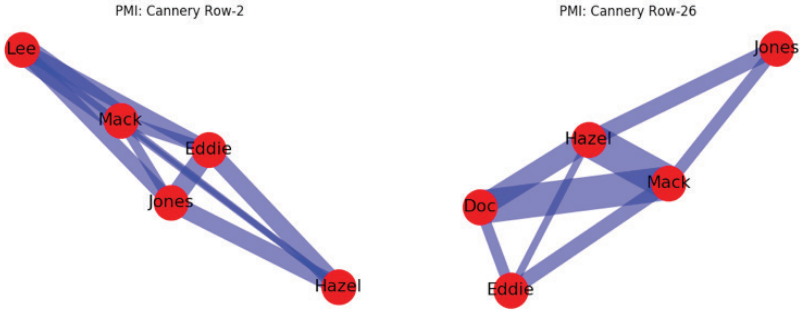
An array called "query" is used to mimic a book composed of varying topics. Each value in the array corresponds to the topic numbers. If one wants to find a book with certain topics (of varying proportions), they can change this array. For example, using the above topics, if a person was looking for a book mostly about the ocean (topic 5) and a little about family (topic 0), the new array could look like this: [.2,0,0,0,0,.7,0]. The book that is generated with this array is *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (see graph below). When looking at the topics for *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* in the list above, topics 5 and 0 are the top two. Therefore, it makes sense that searching for a book with the example query would return *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*.



A new corpus can be generated with a single book separated by sections or chapters. The script can identify characters in the book and generate a map showing the connections between characters. When the corpus is separated by each chapter, one can see how the relationship between characters changes throughout the book. A corpus can also be separated by novels and will produce character maps for the novel as a whole. The thicker the line in the map, the more interactions the characters have in the novel.

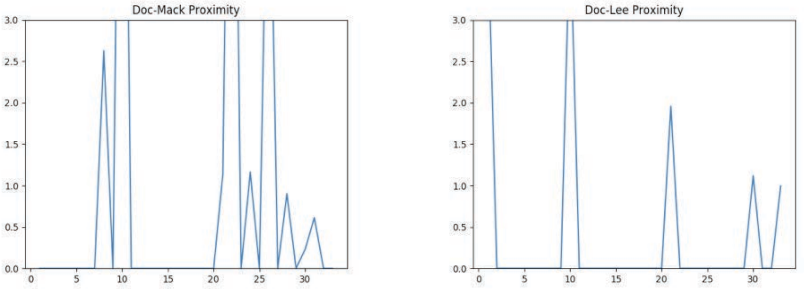


Character maps for entire novels



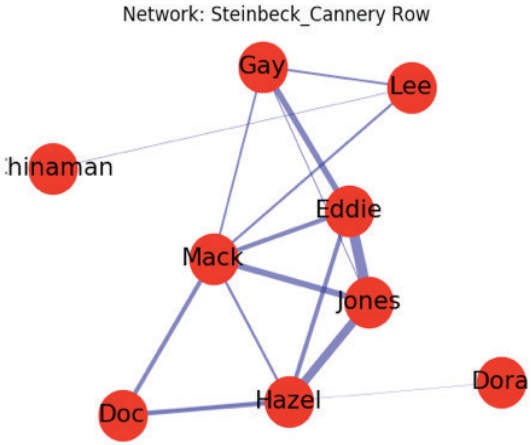
Character maps by chapter for *Cannery Row*

The script also generates graphs to show the relationship between two characters throughout the novel. The x-axis increases by chapter, and the y-axis indicates the proximity of the characters.



Examples of character proximity graphs in *Cannery Row*

These character maps provide quick access to seeing which characters are most associated with each other and the overall connections between major characters. The character graphs look specifically into a single relationship and indicate where in the book these interactions occur. This can be useful when trying to quickly locate a particular part in a book where two characters interact. It is important to note, however, that the computer cannot track true interactions; it simply tracks characters that are mentioned close together in proximity in a chapter/book. It can be inferred that most of the time, when characters are mentioned close together, they are most likely interacting with each other. This isn't always the case, however. For example, Lee and the Chinaman were shown to be connected in the *Cannery Row* character map, although they never interact:



Although the original goal of generating a new block of text has not been fully achieved, insightful features of Steinbeck's writing style and novels surfaced through the use of various Python commands. Recording the lexical, syntactical, and semantic features of his writing are the base for generating new text. These features revealed technical elements of his writing such as terse sentence construction with a greater emphasis on dialogue. The semantic analysis revealed Steinbeck's tendency to focus on movement and negative emotions, such as anxiety and anger. Additionally, recording this data led to a few interesting developments that were not anticipated. The idea of a query that stemmed from topic modeling could potentially be useful for those trying to find new books that match topics they are interested in. The character visuals were also a bonus feature that developed from the original work. For students, these visuals are useful when reviewing the book and perhaps writing an analytical essay. For example, the graphs could support efficacy and poignancy when searching for evidence in a book.

The general consensus appears to be that computers are simply efficient in solving calculations and spitting out numbers. The analysis on features such as emotion and character relationships seemed at first to only be achieved by humans. However, computers have the potential to generate more complex and meaningful analysis. Considering the speed at which computers can read text and analyze specific elements, it becomes easier to analyze large volumes of text that would normally take humans years to simply read, thus allowing analysis to be extended across several works, time periods, and cultures at an efficient rate.

John Steinbeck and the Illusory Aspects of the Natural World

By Dr. Dan Krieger, Ph.D. 2018

". . . he saw—a long valley floored with green pasturage on which a herd of deer browsed. Perfect live oaks in the meadow of the lovely place, and the hills hugged it jealously against the fog and wind."

John Steinbeck understood the illusion of first appearances. In *The Pastures of Heaven*, a Spanish "leather jacketed" corporal was on a mission of cruelty against the indigenous Californians, pursuing escaped neophytes from Carmel Mission, when he came upon the valley in the 1780's. The corporal, whispering to himself, "Holy Mother! Here are the green pastures of Heaven to which our Lord leadeth us," names it *Las Pasturas del Cielo* or "The Pastures of Heaven."

The Pastures of Heaven is still a beautiful site to those of us who drive by, even in the often bumper-to-bumper traffic of Highway 68 between the cities of Monterey and Salinas today.

John Steinbeck and his sister, Mary, played near Castle Rock and the *"corral de tierra"* or "fence of earth" as children. The author had only good memories of the place.

Why, then, did Steinbeck set *The Pastures of Heaven*, his 1932 collection of a dozen interlinked, often ill-fated stories, in this otherwise happy place?

The corporal's hope of returning to this land that was "rich and easy to work," is shattered as he dies of the horrors of syphilis.

Following the American Civil War, George Battle buys the land, only to age and die prematurely. Demonic visions absorb his son, John. John does not care for the land and lets much of it revert to nature, dying from a rattlesnake's bite as nature seemingly came back to bite him.

When his distorted, blackened body is discovered, locals begin to attach a curse to the farm. The Mustrovics, a Croatian family, appear out of nowhere, restore the farm to its former glory and then mysteriously disappear, leaving only an uneaten meal at their dinner table.

Bert Munroe, a man plagued by bad luck in business, buys the Battle Ranch, hoping to make a fresh start in an otherwise jinxed life. T. B. Allen, proprietor of Pastures of Heaven General Store and school board member, tells Bert, "Maybe your curse and the farm's curse has mated and gone into a gopher hole like a pair of rattlesnakes. Maybe there'll be a lot of baby curses crawling around the Pastures first thing we know."

Bert makes a go of it, but the Shakespearean cycle of bittersweet, star-crossed lives continues through a series of protagonists until a whirlwind carries a spark into the coal oil at the house and burns it down.

The tragedies in the near idyllic setting reflect a reality about rural, small town life that John Steinbeck knew very well.

I have spent the last forty years researching the lives of the ranching and small-town families of California's Central Coast. My findings confirm that, both anecdotally and statistically, rates of murder, suicide and commitment to state mental health facilities often exceed those for more urban environments.

Signs of severe mental illness or extreme retardation were more likely to be ignored in rural environments, partly because of the "live and let live" attitude and partly because there were not nearby neighbors to register complaints. Hilda Van Deventer's obvious instability goes untreated. Dr. Phillips recommends psychiatric care, but her mother, Helen, decides to care for Hilda at home until it is too late.

The foundling, Tularecito ("little frog"), displays obvious signs of violent instability. It is only when he strikes Bert Munroe on the head with a shovel that he is sent to the asylum for the criminally insane in Napa.

Firearms were always present. A father who suspected a violation of his daughter's virtue could easily carry out a deadly threat. When Edward "Shark" Wicks returns from a business trip to hear that his beautiful, stupid daughter, Alice, was seen kissing the Munroes' randy son, Jimmie, T. B. Allen is obliged to summon the deputy sheriff. When Wicks cannot afford bail, he is forced to sell the family farm.

Today's well-maintained roads and farmlands conceal the difficulties of travel and communication that existed as late as John Steinbeck's own youth. Today, a motorist can travel along the old river road on the west bank of the Salinas River from Spreckels to Soledad. The traveler can easily see the many shifts in the banks of the river and the levees that in recent times have mitigated the raging waters and mud flows.

In February 1938, the Salinas River again flooded. The headline in the *Salinas Index-Journal* of February 12 proclaimed, "No, not the Mississippi-just the Salinas River . . . 208 feet (2 spans) of the Soledad bridge on U.S. Highway 101 was swept downstream at 9:15 p.m....At a dozen points along 70-mile river front from King City to the coast, the churning water, brought to an unprecedented high by the heavy rains in the mountains and valley, brought damage to bridges, crops and roads, halted traffic and marooned an estimated 60 families along the River Road on the west side of the river."

The winter of 1940-1941 produced flood conditions within several areas of Monterey County, as recorded in the March 4, 1941 issue of the Salinas Index-Journal: "The River Road a half-mile south of Spreckels was flooded and motorists were advised not to attempt to negotiate it, as it also was under water at other points southward. The Arroyo Seco Road is closed to traffic, as is the Pinnacles route out of Soledad. A washout also has blocked the Jamesburg Road in the upper Carmel Valley. Both the piers and the foundations of the approaches to the Toro Creek Bridge have been washed out by flood waters, making the span unsafe for traffic."

The lessons of what the forces of nature can do in beautiful places were recently proven in the Monteceito fires, flooding, and mudslide. These events were a reality for residents of the Central Coast from missionary times until the 1940's. Famed photographer Dorothea Lange's iconic "Migrant Mother" image was photographed while she was on an assignment to show the necessity for the work that the Depression era Farm Security Administration was doing, along with the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps, for flood control and conservation of agricultural lands.

Steinbeck brilliantly ends *The Pastures of Heaven* as a new set of illusions occurs in the minds of tourists aboard a tour bus that takes the 17-Mile Drive to Carmel Mission and then to the edge of *"corral de tierra"* where John and Mary Steinbeck once played. A businessperson dreams of developing the land. A young man dreams, speaking to his new wife, of settling there. She quickly brings him back to reality. A priest wishes he could be in the "Pastures." Well, maybe when he is dead. An old man wishes he could stay there and just have time to think.

John Steinbeck wanted us all to see beyond the illusion of natural beauty into the realities of human nature and the natural order of things.

I am indebted to the writings and talks of Robert Seaway, Karen Roggenkamp, and Mimi Reisel Gladstein for shaping my thinking about *The Pastures of Heaven* and other "Edenic" writings by John Steinbeck.

The Pastures of Heaven
By Anya Pertel

At School / Xander Lee

Scholars like us, that work on essays, are the loneliest people in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place. They come to a school an' work up a paper and then they go inta college and blow their work, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other paper. They ain't got nothing to look ahead to. With us it ain't like that. We got a future. We got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about Steinbeck. We don't have to sit in no class room blowin' in our jack jus' because we got no place else to go. If them other guys gets in jail they can rot for all anybody gives a damn. But not us.

-Parody of Lennie from Of Mice and Men by Kelly Dunn

Montaña de Oro

By Tom Malmgren

I stand atop Montaña de Oro
and the wind sands away my features.
I am a fleck in its invisible current
which rushes from the sea.
Its breath blankets the land
who is a hunched figure.
Silent rivers run down its back
down divisions which are scars
marking a lifetime of offering its skin to the universe.
The wind races beyond
up the bluffs, up the fields
through the trees and forward
in trembling ambition.
I drown in blissful insignificance.
If I come here every year
every year I will still be nothing to the sea
and nothing to its grimacing swell and
nothing to the sun and the breaking clouds.
And if on the final year somebody asks,
"Why?"
I will say,
"I am finishing the last one" —
that I have written a thousand letters
and given them to the wind.

Sea Knife / Tom Malmgren

The Western Flyer / Xander Lee

Pooling Communities

"...Let us go," we said, "into the Sea of Cortez, realizing that we become forever a part of it; that our rubber boots slogging through a flat of eel-grass, that the rocks we turn over in a tide pool, make us truly and permanently a factor in the ecology of the region. We shall take something away from it, but we shall leave something too."

- The Log of the Sea of Cortez

Aphrodite's Green Monster / Tom Malmgren

Earth

By Alberto Rivas

In the beginning there was Earth
Pure, undisturbed and peaceful.
Over time, the water beat the Earth
Persistently and methodically

crashing,
cutting,
shaping

Each wave choosing its trajectory so perfectly
Like a sculptor behind a pottery wheel.
When it was finished, the gods believed it to be so perfect
Even Aphrodite's green monster awoke within her.

A Mosaic Up North

By Prashanth Balaraman

Toronto in Ontario in Canada is truly one of a kind, a mosaic of different cultures, filled with the exotic fragrances of worlds from far away, littered with those escaping death and those seeking life, flooded with extravagance at one end and penny-begging souls at another. Toronto is everything there is and everything there ever was, theatres, stadiums, hotels, shanties, mom and pop groceries, clubs, eateries with names that are hardly pronounceable, centers for refugees to seek new relief, malls, churches of all kind, and alleyways that not even the bravest soul dares venture. As quoted by a life-long Torontonian who does nothing better than say "Eh" and live the life all dream of, the dwellers of this great town are, "refugees trying to make it, businessmen trying to fake it, gays trying to hide it, and thugs trying to grind through it," by which she meant Everybody. On the other hand, a look into a different neighbourhood would reveal, "a nun raising money for church, a hippy smoking outside his shop, and an emphatic old man opening his third store," and she would've meant the same thing.

The city goes to sleep in the morning. However, it also wakes up at this time. Prior to this, there is a lull in activity for about an hour before the sun rises over the land of bricks and mortar and wood and stone and concrete and glass and marble. Before the hundreds of thousands of people pour out onto Toronto's streets, the giant big rigs coming from the States or as far west as Winnipeg and Regina and as far east as Montreal and Halifax unload their goods in the numerous warehouses and establishments in the city. The ringing bells at the Toronto Stock Exchange signal the start of yet another day. Thousands of commuters wearing thousand-dollar suits sleepily crawl out of the Go-Train at Union Station. Just downstairs, the city folk - homeless, city servants, and the newly arrived stream off the subway, ready for another day at a job that doesn't even pay minimum wage. The city crawls about in a zombie-like trance, which is literally, horrifying. As the horns honk with cars large and small streaming down Yonge Street, women scramble to jobs dressed head to toe in what can only be described as being bundled up like a pig in a blanket. Now, these aren't just any run of the mill hatchbacks on the street, Oh no, these are SUVs and cars with European names that are almost as prestigious as the history of Toronto itself. The streetcars run and hold the poor migrants coming from the ethnically diverse St. Jamestown while the taxis and private cars enclose the rich and affluent white-collar workers coming from Lawrence Park, and the tourists come down to the pier and take the ferry over to the Island of Hiawatha or just the Toronto Islands. As the people of Toronto grind through their day, so does the city. The streets wheeze for air as cars trample it and the buildings burn under the fierce Canadian sun as workers toil away long hours inside, and a near constant rumble and rattle is felt as the subway rushes to get those to their destinations and the air is tense, like the boiling before a summer storm. Before long, there is no more work to be done. Half-asleep employees of giant multinational corporations stumble out of their high-rise buildings and back onto the Go-Train heading to the suburbs. The sweaty, smelly, and enervated city servants crawl back onto the sub-

way so that they can go home, sleep, and repeat the process over again the following morning. By the time the sun sets over Lake Ontario, the streets are quiet and Toronto finally wakes up as it goes to bed. As the other side of Toronto arouses from its slumber, Toronto comes back to its normal self. The clubs on Richmond Street provide a thum-thum-thum beat that lasts throughout the night, a beat that anyone can march to. The homeless that spent their daytime occupying Nathan Phillips Square in downtown and Rexdale on the outskirts of the city start to move around. Down in Regent Park, the sounds of drunken argument and screams and gunshots have become a nightly occurrence. The majority of the city remains asleep while underground Toronto comes to the top. Homeless look through garbage cans like mice to find anything of value while drug deals happen in the alleys that no one dares look into. As the night rolls on, the few 24-hour stores that remain open are stocked to the brim with alcohol but are somehow filled with empty shelves by morning.

How can all of this be regarded as a mosaic? The screams, terror, and gunshots define the night, and yet the night is not what defines this city nor its day. The stories of Torontonians define this city. It must be remembered that this isn't one story, however, but rather 5.5 million ones. By bringing these stories together, a piece of art is constructed, a mosaic, which is Toronto.

Fisherman's Wharf
By Emma Ware

Cracking Pismos With a Rock

By George Wallace

Pelican Rock / Xander Lee

"...it is no light matter to make one's mind up about anything, even sea otters,
and once made up, even harder to abandon the position"
-John Steinbeck

In Monterey Bay an opal eyed otter makes for relentless debut, endlessly reborn in the barking swell, surfacing out of the wide and pickled sea of extinction, swimming boldly forth in the unadulterated stew, easy as a Mississippi gambler

Surfaced out of nowhere with spats on and no tie –

And you have got your wetsuit on and are scrambling into the surf like Steinbeck into the holy curving waters of Positano on the Amalfi Coast

A paucity of words comes to mind, how to explain the dilemma of your existence to the splintering sun

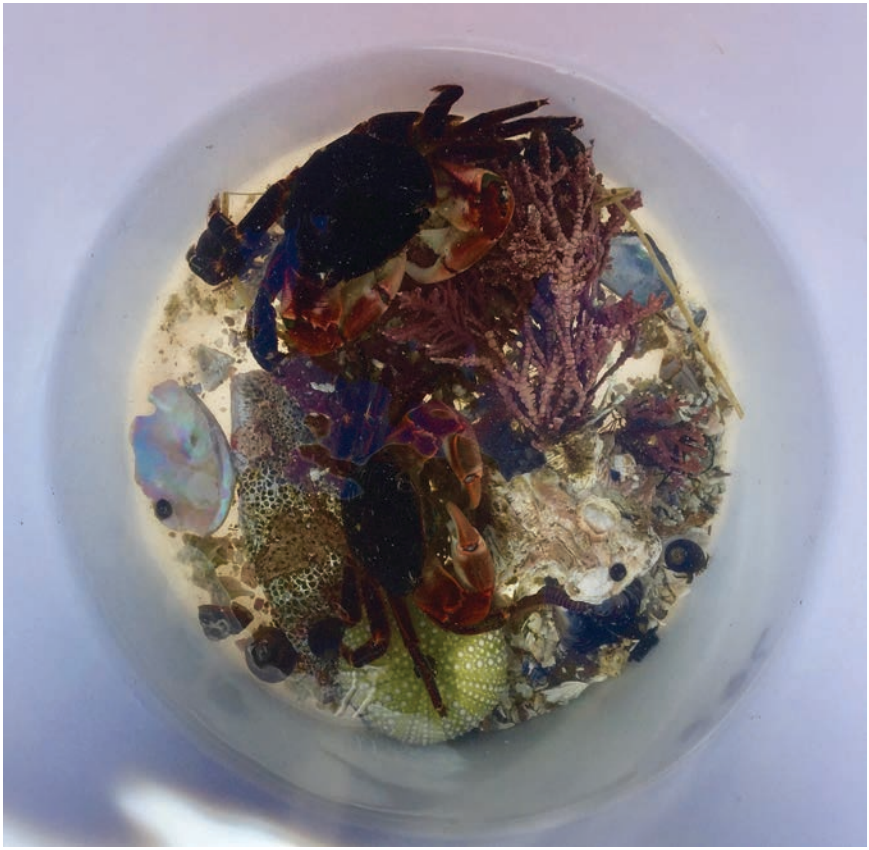
But who needs explanations when you're a west coast hitchhiker, hipper than hip, born of kelp, floating in it, when you're an offhand old renegade, olfactory in the sad cannery of the sea and at peace with yourself, as you are with yourself

And entering like a cathedral the swaggering soup of crablight and brine

Or like the sea otters busting spiny urchins with your paw & the entire aquatic world to buoy you up

Beyond the piping mood of tide there is no mightier tongue than this, no finer tonnage, tinny and plain in the smearing masculation, caught in the jaws of time, joyous as a tinker under the blue rhubarb sky

What a fortuitous vagary! To merely exist, floating on one's back & cracking pismos with a rock



Natural Selection / Katie Osaki

Tide pools are ecosystems that survive off the repetitious monotony of the ocean. The back and forth pull of the waves that brings life to a seemingly dry and dead area is a direct comparison to John Steinbeck's fictitious community of the characters of Cannery Row. Emerging are characters like Mack and the boys as the parasites, Dora and her brothel as the green anemone and algae, Doc as the dominant sea star, and Lee Chong as the sly octopus. And, with the mysticism of a tide pool, Steinbeck brings the characters within Cannery Row to life.

-Thomas Xu

The Literary Nomenclature of *East of Eden*

By Katie Osaki

Eden is a place just west of Connecticut. Maybe not just, but close enough, a place east of the Salinas Valley where people become one with the mountains, and where streams divide brothers like family feuds and pubescent fields of lupins and poppies. *East of Eden* is a novel by John Steinbeck just east of the *Log of the Sea of Cortez,* west of *Cannery Row*, and somewhere north of *The Pastures of Heaven*. *East of Eden* is literary nomenclature, a rare commodity of the common man tattooed to the very soil of the Salinas Valley, where landscape and character become intertwined.

Nomenclature is the devising or choosing of names, and in his iconic novel, Steinbeck attributes the geographic features of the Salinas Valley to the most essential characters appearing throughout three generations. The cutting Salinas River resonates with the wavering and manipulative Cathy Ames. The brooding Santa Lucia Mountains signal the dark and dangerous Charles Trask, while the Gabilan Mountains illuminate the warm but blinding light of Adam Trask. Tended to by Lee and Samuel, respective symbols of water and sun, Aron and Caleb Trask are cultivated like the lupins and poppies. Thus, Steinbeck foreshadows the events of the novel through this simple device of topographic character mapping across the Salinas Valley.

The centerpiece of the valley, the Salinas River, is a powerful presence provoking all other geographic landmarks to revolve and exist in relation to her presence. It "winds and twists up the center until it falls at last into Monterey Bay" (3). In similar fashion, Steinbeck introduces Kate, the embodiment of a monster who navigates the banks and flow of her surroundings. We first meet this "[variation] from the accepted normal to a greater or less degree" as Cathy Ames, the girl with a face of innocence but a heart of pure sin (71). In her small town, residents stare at her countenance, not for her beauty but for the lurking sense of hollowness. This hollowness is associated with psychopathy, a physical condition in which the subject cannot feel emotions, almost like a natural disaster lacking volition. However, early in her life Cathy learns the skills of manipulation and leaves her small town fully blossomed, ready for her rising victimization of those in her path.

As she walks away from the diabolic flames she ignited that engulfed her childhood home and parents, she journeys until she finds the doorstep of the Trask brothers. Plagued with an adolescent tension and the burdens stemming from the sins of their father, Charles and Adam are nonetheless on the verge of some Edenic reconciliation. However, after Cathy's journey from near death, she arrives beaten to hell and back as Catherine Amesbury. Without hesitation and likely due to an atavistic maternal need, Adam takes her in and immediately falls in love with her while Charles paces in suspicion. As Cathy stays with them and recovers, Adam takes her to be something of a romance and establishes the relationship; however, while Adam tries to make house with

Cathy, she slips into bed with Charles, "the only person she had ever met who played it her way" (116). This action drives the wedge further into the seeping gash of the Trask family fissure, but that doesn't stop Cathy from deepening the wound. Cathy, symbolically a force of nature, acts as the river that forcefully splits the brothers apart, similar to the way the Salinas divides the mountains of the Valley. Soon after, however, she gets pregnant and moves with Adam to California, although the twins are questionably not his. Quickly abandoning the newborns, Cathy resembles the river that "tore the edges of the farm lands and washed whole acres down" (3). She destroys the fertility of the surrounding land, particularly her own children representative of the uprooted lupins and poppies of the valley, and emerges as the snake in the Edenic landscape.

As the novel continues, we learn that Cathy, now turned Kate after her disappearance, develops arthritis in her hands. This slow and painful illness is the final release of her character, synonymous to the opening of the Salinas River falling into the ocean. Throughout her entire life, she has killed, hurt, and manipulated people with the same hands that now rise with the concluding and crippling pain of paying for her sins.

Charles Trask is the "dark and brooding—unfriendly and dangerous" Santa Lucia Mountains, the western border of the valley that the Salinas River must go through in order to find its way to the ocean (3). This darkening description of Charles is evident throughout the book, epitomized in the dark scars on his forehead. When Adam and Charles were young, Alice Trask's neglect of Adam was enacted by Charles, even leading him to physically abuse Adam. Over the years, however, Charles' hatred for Adam dissolved, feeling "the warmth for his brother you can feel only for one who isn't perfect and therefore no target for your hatred" (109). After realizing that Adam wasn't someone to despise, Charles begins to long for a relationship with him, but the hatred he collects over the years, and his learned inability to love, constructs a moat of protection, likely rooted in the continued need to be connected to his father's land as a result of an empty validation. This pooling sense of loneliness that Charles manifests within himself is the direct consequence of his father who favored Adam. Steinbeck expresses the consequence of Cyrus' absence of love when he says: "His dark face took on a serious expressionlessness of a man who [was] nearly always alone" (45). This desolate life set up for Charles is the darkening aspect that makes up the Santa Lucia Mountains. This brooding image of a man alone on the family farm is what we are left with after Adam and Cathy move west, the letters between the brothers slowly fading until they completely cease. Thus, Charles is the last stop before the scent of ocean air and freedom.

In contrast to the the dark and foreboding, "the Gabilan Mountains to the east of the valley were light gay mountains full of sun and loveliness" (3). Although an image in the peripheral view of the Salinas River, Adam Trask nonetheless is a focal point. We first meet him as a young boy who lost his mother and became the son that reminded his father of his past. As we see him grow over the course of the novel, we see his constant struggle of trying to live up to his father's ideals. Thus, Adam reluctantly follows in his footsteps---joining the military, positioning himself as strong and stern---but all his father saw in him was weakness. However, sheer disapproval isn't Adam's

only problem; as aforementioned, Charles is yet another source of his frustration with the world because of his stagnation. However, when Adam meets Cathy, "there was a change in everything" (118-119). Adam falls deeply and helplessly in love with Cathy in spite of his brother's hesitation toward her. Similar to a wounded reflection of himself, "She smiled weakly at him, and he thought, What a child! What a helpless child! and a surge of love filled him" (119). Through this overwhelming sensation, he "suddenly knew joy and sorrow felted into one fabric" (119). The birds sing louder, the air gets clearer, and the sun gets brighter, shining a light of joy into Adam's life that he had longed for since the passing of his mother. However, this fabricated light becomes blinding, as Adam cannot see the truth that Cathy is a monster, a creature of sin. Rather, Adam's severe deniability forces him to see someone who will never leave because she becomes a child that needs him to survive. This sad truth of this falsified image of Cathy is that Adam's inviting nature ironically pushes Cathy away, as revealed in her distaste for her own pregnancy and eventual shooting of Adam.

Soon after Cathy has the twins, Aron and Caleb, Adam urges that they move to California, where Adam will build a house for his family in hopes of creating a new Edenic life amidst the haze he's been paralyzed in. However, those dreams are quickly crushed when Cathy leaves, never to be seen again. This abrupt and painful point of reality, this heartbreak, places the umbrella back over his life, creating a depressed gray space that consumes his life. However, with a touch of water and sunlight, or rather the company of his servant Lee and hearty friend Sam Hamilton, the lush greenery of the Gabilan Mountains and the light that once flooded the mountainside are replenished. As captured in the novel's most poignant philosophical statement, "timshel," Adam learns that desolation and depression are not definite like "thou shalt" or "do thou" but rather something that you choose to be (301). Through this sentiment, Adam's life is illuminated and enlightened because all his life he self-confined himself into "do thou." Adam didn't have to be dragged down by the disapproval of his father, the lingering sense of responsibility over fixing Cathy and failing, and the distasteful notion that the twins he was raising weren't his own to the point that he couldn't even name them. It is this illumination or realization that makes Adam the "light gay mountains full of sun and loveliness," the life one mayest have if autonomously chosen.

The twins born from the evil Cathy represent the lupins and poppies described in the opening chapter of the novel. Caleb, referred to in the novel primarily as Cal, is the lupin where every petal "is edged with white, so that a field of lupins is more blue than you can imagine" (4). Cal is the Cain figure in this Edenic novel that signifies the brute, harsh nature he endures in his life much like his "uncle" Charles. The jealousy and disdain exhibited in Charles is directly repeated through Cal: "Out of revenge Cal extracted a fluid of power, and out of power, joy" (345). The hatred that corrupted and darkened Charles is the same darkness shown through the blue in Caleb as lupin; however, because he does not co-exist with Cathy around, Adam's light, shown through white, is able to penetrate this dwelling sadness. But much like Cain, Cal is still riddled with the afflictions that came when Eve ate the fig, leaving him to struggle with envy and self-loathing until freed by his father.

Aron represents the poppies in the field, the "burning color—not orange, not

gold, but if pure gold were liquid and could raise a cream, that golden cream might be like the color of the poppies" (4). Aron's purity makes him the Abel figure of this narrative, as he embodies the good-heartedness seen in Adam, his "father." Aron is more in touch with nature and sees things with a light that his cursed brother never could: "If Aron should come upon an anthill in a little clearing in the brush, he would lie on his stomach and watch the complications of ant life…" (345). In contrast, "If, on the other hand, Cal came upon the same anthill, he would kick it to pieces and watch while the frantic ants took care of their disaster" (345). Aron's deep passion for everything he observes in his life is represented through the "burning color" that ignites the valley with color. This coloration could also be interpreted as a connection to World War I where trench warfare was symbolized through the poppy, and where Aron was consequently killed.

Combined, the fields of these flowers create a diverse and vibrant image of what the valley, untouched, would look like. The lupins and poppies grow parallel to the Salinas River; not coincidentally, Cal and Aron also live parallel to Cathy. However, they can only feel the wrath of her existence rather than the fertilizing and rejuvenating powers that a river would provide: "In the winter of wet years the streams ran full-freshet, and they swelled the river until sometimes it raged and boiled, bank full, and then it was a destroyer" (3). When Aron goes in search of Cathy and finally faces her, he is so destroyed by it that he tries to flee, to escape, and as a consequence he loses his life. And when Cal faces her, he is unaffected because his evil properties are finally connected to the source of them. Therefore, the twins born by Cathy, but arguably not Adam, represent the vibrant and melancholic lupins and poppies in the Salinas Valley.

Early in their lives, both Cal and Aron lack the nurturing from a mother and father, thus they are eventually tended to by Lee, a character symbolizing water. As one of the most important and critical characters in all of Steinbeck's works, Lee is an entity necessary to sustain life. Without water we are helpless and in the context of the ecological connection to the characters, all living things in the valley, the lush green grass on the Gabilan Mountains and the lupins and poppies of the valley floor, are unable to grow without rain: "There would be five or six wet and wonderful years when there might be nineteen to twenty-five inches of rain, and the land would shout with grass" (5). The life-sustaining power of Lee's wisdom and companionship keeps the Trask family alive. Also tending to the re-rooting of Adam, "Lee had been [the boys'] contact with the adult world, and Lee had managed not only to raise, feed, clothe, and discipline the boys, but he had also given them a respect for their father" (349).

The weight of the responsibility Lee took on for the Trask family is felt. For the twins, he was a mentor figure that literally raised them. For Adam, Lee was his support beam, something that, for a very long time, he thought he would not be able to live without. In these "five or six wet and wonderful years" Lee helped the Trask family prosper. And in many ways he helps himself too, because it allows him to undergo his life's purpose: to spread and cultivate wisdom to those that need it most. He realizes this when, after discussing with Adam his desire to open his own shop, he leaves and cannot find happiness in making his dream come true. This self-sacrifice makes Lee

such a momentous character because it exhumes the questions of what it means to be an immigrant, what the role of the common man is, and how servants, like Lee, are preserved within the role of the family.

So much of Lee's character comes into focus as a result of his relationship with Sam Hamilton, a guiding force of natural light symbolic of the sun's strength in the valley. Not only a pillar of strength for his family, Sam is the wise caretaker of the valley's residents, providing the necessities of a blacksmith, a storyteller, or even those of an agrarian locating water underneath the ground. Whether he succeeds at it or not, he takes care of the people around him and the things he commits himself to. To his wife, he commits an iron-clad love characterized by a home of piety and laughter. To his children, he tries his best to give them, or push them, to pursue lives that would be fulfilling and worthy. To Lee, he was a mirror, an immigrant scrounging to survive, someone that shared the same language of vulnerability and transparency. To Adam, he was a mentor, a friend, a survivor, and a father. To John Steinbeck, we was the creator, the grandfather that gave him life and possibly his greatest novel. To the Salinas Valley, he was the sun because he brought warmth and joy to everything he touched no matter the circumstance.

East of Eden is a novel cluttered with Steinbeck's nomenclature of the geographic features of the Salinas Valley. It's somewhere north of *The Pastures of Heaven* and west from *Cannery Row*, but most importantly, it's a home for all the characters within it and all the readers who come to love it. Welcome to the East of Eden.

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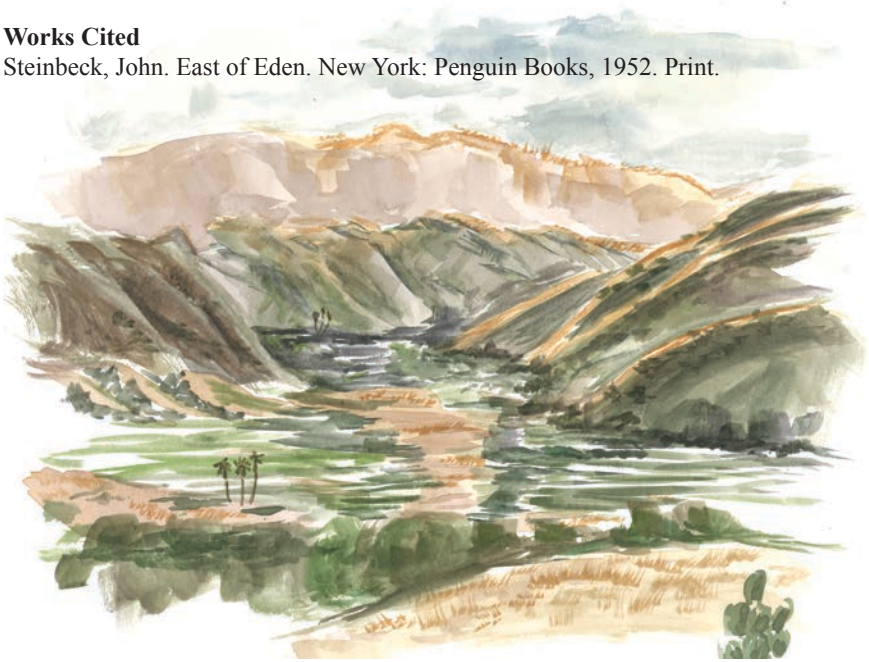
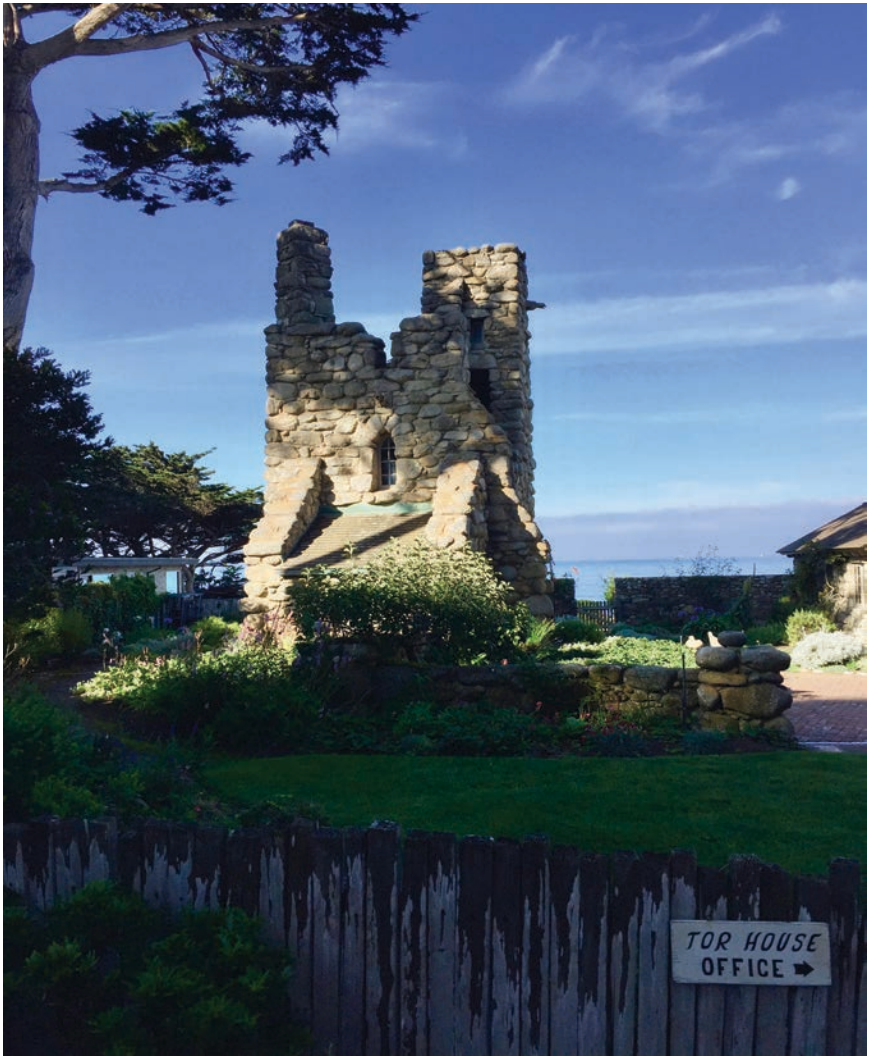


West of Eden

By Emma Ware



Hawk Tower / Pete Barraza

I remember visiting the Robinson Jeffers Tor House, every piece of stone teeming with life, and climbing to the top of the castle feeling both elevated, but also grounded by the roaring sea below. It was wonderful to be given the permission to simply take in the beauty of the world around us.

-Adya Mohanty

Irish Bulldogs

By Yasmin Patel

If you should look for this place on a spring morning
You may see Irish Bulldogs,
With short muscly legs and flattened faces,
Running through the bright garden

Lilies, tulips, and small white buds,
Intersected by a passage of vibrant green.

Metallic conches may line your path,
Guiding you to stone dwellings where families made their home.

A unicorn's horn may tap your arm,
Or accidentally pinch your back, if you are too careless to not believe
A real tusk hangs from the wall of the dining room

Pygmy pianos may intrigue you with their state of being
A current lifelessness longing to be massaged into an Irish ballad.

Little faces,
The original people of this earth,
May stare at you,
Their terracotta complexions unnoticed until you peruse between the cracks of the granite boulders

Up in the seclusion of the Hawk's fort,
A ray of light may shine through Una's miniature window,
A small painting of waves crashing against bearded rocks -- all framed.

You may even be compelled to write,
Possibly a reflection on the earth's demise, or the rocks that encompass you,
Or to dance your fingers over the adulterous keys that Gershwin -- yes Gershwin -- so kindly blessed.

It may feel as though the walls are closing in,
Strong, rich foundations that will suffocate.
But then you can step outside, onto the metallic conch-lined path
And look out onto the ocean,
Its vastness and its insanity swallowing you and the property whole.

Moonrise at the Hermitage

By Benjamin Brode

Furlough by Chloe Gottlieb

Down through the valley of ashes and past the dusted over road that leads there, sits a house. In front of it lies the dog, now a light brown color from staying too long in the sun and dirt. The front porch, with a dip whittled into it over the many years of life pressing down, sways, waiting. The once-white paint curls and chips, turning yellow with age, and eventually falls to the ground. With each rattling breath, the house barely pushes through the screen door, and there is never a resounding shut. The wooden porch swing is slowly dissolving, eaten away by termites or beetles or whichever animal it is that feeds off decay.

The Caldwell family home was by no means sought after or admired from afar (nor was it admired very close up either) but it had a certain way about it. The children said it was haunted; the adults shushed, informing them it was old age frightening them instead. During humid afternoons, such as this one, the sun hung lower than usual. Listening for the wind or the sea or both, the hot air held its lungs tight over the Californian valley. It was almost beautiful, the air and the sun and the rotting home. But it was also too dirty to ever be thought of as something pretty again.

Maribel took an odd pride in her house. It was here she had been a newlywed, here her son was born, here she was used to the fresh-stale air mix. And if it was good enough for her, why shouldn't she be prideful. She had a four-top stove in the kitchen, and not one but two hens in the back. Mrs. Wilkes only had one hen. There are some things she must be proud of, even if she has no right to be. Some things must be said in order to keep going.

It was in her worthy kitchen she stood, peeling. Her hands moved expertly over the dips and rough spots of the potato, revealing a white oval with each passing swipe of the knife. There was a small pile of peeled potatoes in a bowl stained with watermarks. Little lines remained, showcasing the highest points of drowned vegetables. Maribel worked methodically, the lines in her palms creased with a thin layer of dirt that never seemed to fully wash away. She had tried. Those hands, those worker-"make do"-hands had aged 20 years in a few short months.

Over and past the now naked potatoes and four-top stove and two hens she could see the rusted blue truck coming home. James looked to the house, blinded by sun rays burning and his display of windshield screen flies, those who clung to the glass with torn wings. He couldn't see the opposing viewthrough the same window but estimated Maribel would be this far into preparing dinner. He was a man of clocks and timed watches. He spent his available time taking care of the chickens, in the coop, looking into the

house windows more often than he looked out them.

Upon arriving home to the sinking house, something felt different. The dog and porch swing were in their usual, respective spots but there was something weighing the picture down. Something new. Something like a package. James approached it warily, unsure if it could hear, or worse, see him. Scanning the return address his eyes shifted, as if adjusting to a bright light. He looked away, and stepped over the brown box that seemed to be taking up more and more space. Instead of bringing it inside, he left it patiently resting, and walked through the sideways hallway to Maribel.

The pattern, tradition almost, for the two of them was to sit together while Maribel worked, then eat, then sit in the living room to chew tobacco or crochet or check the papers. She smiled down at him as he seated himself at the table. He mustered as well as he could a small dimple that mimicked a smile, but didn't have the full effect. He was thinking of John.

"Hey, you see this little hole in your overalls? Right here, near the waist where the denim bunches?" Maribel leaned over to touch the spot but James had not seen it and pulled back to see it better before she came into contact with him. "I can sew it up. Just remind me." James nodded his thanks, considering how to say something he couldn't pronounce. It wasn't that the words prescribed were very advanced or confusing. They were simple and yet it was impossible for him to form them. He'd rather hear hard news, never have to be the one to tell it. He wanted to scream or shake but he was not permitted either. He tried to shift in a normal manner but it's hard to shift normally when thinking so hard about what a normal fidget looks like. His heartbeat sounded like crushing water in his eardrums.

"Jim?" Maribel's face wore concern like it was makeup. She set the knife on the table. It pointed to the window. He looked at her. "What'd you say?" he asked, trying to be delicate.

"I asked, Jim, for the third time, if you're going to pick up more milk? We're low," she emphasized with raised eyebrows. If one didn't know, one might think Maribel was much older than her age. She'd been married 21 years, but at 46 a woman of her stature rarely seems older than herself. Maribel was the exception, but grieving can have that effect.

"Sure, sure, Maribel. I can get what you need."

"We *both* need it," she corrected him.

James looked down at the weathered wooden table. It was chipped in several places, and he thought about that story he'd read once of a man who planted so many seeds he couldn't leave home without getting lost in the forest.

"Maribel. There's a package out front." She wiped her moist hands on her apron and started peeling again.

"You bring it in?" He could see the whites of her eyes. He wanted to

run. She turned to the sink, no longer facing him.

"Well, it's John. It's for John. It's his things." The words hung in the now thick atmosphere, lingering between being heard and being acknowledged.

Finally Maribel said, "So you pick up the milk and I'll have the biscuits finished."

"Maribel, did *you hear me*?"

She continued, "And we'll eat soon after the sun sets. That'll be nice, won't it."

"Maribel, please." She finally set down the knife, turning to face him. Her eyes, wavering, soaked him in guilt. Like he should apologize for having stepped in the room, for soiling the memory of potatoes and biscuits. "I think I'll go freshen up while you get that milk," she half-whispered, and he could smell her in the air once she walked by.

The sun had sunk into the West by the time Maribel came downstairs. Floorboards leaked out complaints of the weight. She moved slower as she grew older; with age, it hurts to be. Her hair was combed in a way that made her face look detached, and her eyes were brand new. A thin milk carton was sweating on the wooden kitchen table, next to the half peeled potatoes and the unleavened biscuits. The air was tight, with no space to move or breathe. Nothing had been touched, changed, adjusted. Only a foreign milk carton added, waiting to spoil. James was starting a fire in the living room. On the chair next to him was the package, a soldier boy's belongings no one claimed. He rose when he saw Maribel, his eyes wavering and unsure where to focus. She refused to smile that most feminine smile, the one she'd mastered over the years. When she looked at him, all she saw was "vulnerable."

"Why didn't you bring it in first?"

James said nothing. Maribel's fist tightened, the blood leaving her hand and rushing to her heart. Her fingernails started to cut into her palm but she couldn't feel it much anymore. She was furious, but more importantly she was ashamed. Ashamed to have married a boy who was too afraid to do the right thing, the hide-it-from-me thing, the keep-it-pressed-down thing.

"Sometimes… I hate this room. I hate this goddamn house. Sometimes I think this house is killing me. I feel sick."

James was supposed to comfort and nurture. Yet, he found incredible difficulty in trying. "You loved this home," he ventured, in a failed attempt to be a partner. "You said it was ours."

"This isn't a goddamn home," she corrected him. "Nothing lives here, nothing breathes." Maribel reached the tip of her life where she stopped worrying about James and instead said only what she knew. James reached

the tip of his life where he stopped listening.

"Can't you see? Look at me! Can't you see? Don't you know? Whatever was here is… It's not here anymore! I'm tired of pretending it is. I wish I didn't have these memories." Maribel was grasping her necklace, a dainty silver chain with a small cross. "I want them out of my head! Please, Jimmy! Can't you see? I need you to see."

"Come here, please, come. Sit with me." James eyed the intruding package while taking a seat. Maribel shook her head, picking up what was left of her son. She felt herself watching her own body, could see from up above, like near the ceiling, her rugged hands shaking as she undid the carefully wrapped box. It was harder to see than to not see. First his military tags, then an old photo of Maribel and James holding a baby in front of a nicely painted home. It looked like the one they lived in now, but it was far too lively.

Unmailed letters formed a padding on the bottom, and little trinkets of his seemed to cut into her palms. She looked at the possible words he might've said and decided it was better not to know. She collected the bits and pieces of his past, put them as they were in the box, and let it fall into the fireplace. The flames cackled their thanks. Her heart, beating, blocked out the noises coming from James. He was an afterthought. She was going to bed.

James sat on the rocking chair, swaying with the dull ache in his chest. He missed his son, and had been adjusting to that hurt. It was something to tuck into, to hold through the colder evenings and keep warm. It was something surprisingly simple.

He knew the sun would rise soon, and he'd come to dread the morning light. His pipe was almost empty, and he threw the remaining tobacco in the fire. The ash was starting to aggravate his lungs. The flames reached out to him, like an offering hand. He could see the fire rise, travel first through the rug, then the curtain. After that the walls would dissolve, the staircase crumbling under the heat. Red, orange, and burnt yellow spun by him, searching for any oxygen, any life to consume. He saw the chickens wake up, could feel their worry over the too-thin eggs they sat on. Maribel was the afterthought. The roof caving in, the porch swing detaching with a hollow thud. The dog barking at light it could not understand. All of these came before Maribel, and always would. She signed her name to the house, a captain who sinks with the ship. James knew better than to try and save her.

Opening his eyes, he saw the fireplace was slowly smothering the last remaining flames. In the dark, he felt cold– almost. Making his way, slowly, upstairs, he found that returning was a much worse hurt than leaving. He never knew how long that return would last, before it too was gone again.

What The Tide Brings In

By Katie Hoover

I was the first to be at the edge of the West.
They were not born here; they all came west.
Before that, it was Virginia, Ohio, New Jersey.
Even before that it was England, Ireland, Germany.
Now it is Sacramento, Monterey, Los Angeles.
I was the first to be born at a hospital near the completion of Route 66.
To grow up in a home with a centimeter of ocean view.
To consider the 300 miles between rows of crops second nature.
To have family spread up and down the coast.
To neglect the end of the continent just 15 blocks away.
To go to school with the Pacific breeze.
To consider diversity of all things normal.
I was the first to be at the edge, confident of the many more to follow.

On the Road
By Emma Ware

Waikiki

By Tina Desamito

Waikiki in Honolulu in Hawaii is a fairytale, a tropical oasis, a loud noise, a place of love, a vibrant hue, a memory. Waikiki is a strip, paved with stone tile walkways, lined with luxurious stores and local restaurants and crowded convenience stores, aquariums, and beaches. Its inhabitants are, as the Japanese man once said, "sluts, bums, drunks, and gamblers," by which he meant Everybody. Had the man looked through another glass window he might have said, "Loved ones, glorified souls, guardians, and holy beings," and he would have meant the same thing.

In the morning when the stores open, the workers rush quickly into town to prepare. The tourists pour into the streets when the shops open their doors to the public. The clock hits opening time and all over the town men and women hurry into their clothes and come speeding down the streets to Waikiki to go shopping. Then the gleaming cars bring the higher classes down: businessmen, superstars on vacation, people who disappear into expensive hotels. Then from the town pour the surfers and skateboarders and teenagers in shorts and ripped shirts and cheap flip-flops. They come running to swim and eat and shop. The whole street laughs and cheers and screams while the streams of people flood out of the stores and the shops empty more and more until no one is left. The shops howl and roar and whisper until the last customer is satisfied and then closing time hits and the worn out, tired, beat surfers and skateboarders walk out and quickly make their ways down the streets into their cars and Waikiki becomes itself again –still and beautiful. Its normal life returns. The bums who retired in distaste under the bus stops come out to sit under the palm trees among the grass along the beaches. The drunks from the clubs emerge for a bit of silence if there is any. Adam wanders from the surf shop on the corner and walks to Mary's little convenience store for something to take the "edge" off. Friends arrive at the surf shop to see Adam, and he walks to Mary's for a bottle of whiskey.

How can the fairytale and the tropical oasis and the loud noise – the place of love, the vibrant hue, and the memory – be placed down full of life? When you open the stores, there are certain people so elated that they are almost impossible to displease, for they beam and twinkle under the light. You must let them wander and roam of their own free will outside of the door and then wave goodbye as they saunter into the roads to their cars.

Squid / Xander Lee

What Good Books Can Do

By Anya Pertel

Two years ago I had a real-life light bulb epiphany. The stars aligned, the heavens opened… and I realized why I'd hated reading.

Notice the past perfect on "I'd hated." I devour books now; my bookshelves are rapidly overflowing, courtesy of Amazon Prime's two-day shipping. That 180-degree turn happened faster than you could say "Ernest Hemingway." Where did this insatiable hunger come from? Well, my disdain for canonical literature.

It may seem counterintuitive that my love of one thing can come directly from

my hate of that same thing, but I promise it has ground. I read Toni Morrison's *Jazz* in my AP English class two years ago and I was hooked. I needed to know about Violet and Dorcas and Joe and their tangled interactions, about 1920's Harlem and funerals and sitting down in the street. I was glued to the book and its perfectly imperfect, multi-faceted characters. And my question was, out of all the books I'd read, *Why*?

And that's when it hit me, The Epiphany, that is. *Jazz* was refreshingly colorful and definitively female. The characters were nonlinear and complicated, in a new, exciting context. And I loved it.

I've read a lot of "classics," for school or my own cultural education, and I went into all of them openly and optimistically. With all the hype, I really wanted to enjoy them, so it was disheartening when I found myself loathing jaded expatriates drinking their lives away in Spain or shuddering every time I read the word "phony" (I'm looking at you, Holden Caulfield). Dead white guys writing about drug escapades and self-inflicted hardships is nearly impossible to relate to when you're not white, male, inebriated, an expatriate, or dead. Sure, the books claim to explore universal feelings, but they never felt universal to me.

I could probably count the number of well-developed female characters or characters of color in most "classics" on one hand. How can I be expected to relate to a book where female characters only serve as allegories? Even Daisy in *The Great Gatsby* was just a symbol of unrequited desire, with little regard given to her actual character. The lack of well-developed female characters on the developing female can really take a toll on one's sense of purpose.

I will admit that the canon isn't all bad. Steinbeck, for example, is an exception. Despite his penchant for ruining friendships, he thought outside his own personal sphere of struggles and wrote social commentaries about *actual* oppressed peoples from all walks of life. Peering through the holes that Steinbeck had poked in my canon-hating blanket, I realized that I don't hate the canon—I just hate canonization.

Complex characters, relatable struggles, and diversity are no doubt in the canon, but so are misogyny, bias, and two-dimensionality, and it's just sad to suspend one's own critical faculties to overlook these things. Canonical books have become so wrung dry by an idea of what we're *supposed* to gain from them that it has become difficult to separate one's own reading from the societal buzz. Given my own conditions and interpretations, I might've enjoyed the "classics," but they felt lifeless and alien under an ossified high school curriculum devoid of honest evaluation and discussion. We can appreciate the classics for how revolutionary they were in their times without trying to uphold them as eternally sacrosanct. Times change. Literary stagnancy isn't a necessity.

Not everything in life has to be enjoyable. Taking a physics test on a Monday morning is an example of an acceptable unpleasantness. Reading, however, should not be that painful. It should be engaging and connect you with a part of yourself you didn't yet know was there. The time will come when I'll revisit the "classics"—hopefully on my own terms and with more than a few grains of salt—but until then, I'll stick to the plots I don't know yet.

More Than Words

By Madeline Kresin

Lee, the intelligent, thoughtful, well-read and kind Chinese-American servant from John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, is introduced as a very one-dimensional character, seemingly burdened by stereotypes of Chinese servants. He is introduced for the first time as "[Adam's] pigtailed Chinese cook" (155), a description that doesn't appear to create much room for character development. To an outsider, he is a living embodiment of negative Chinese stereotypes: a servant, dressed in traditional Chinese attire, and speaking Pidgin English. However, when questioned by Samuel Hamilton, Lee admits that he can, in fact, speak perfect English and uses the stereotypical behavior as a disguise. He explains that people expect him to fit into their stereotypes and speak in Pidgin, and that he has to use it, not the proper English that he is capable of, in order to be understood at all. This is, he says, a result of people unable to separate "observation from perception" (161). While the stereotypes placed on Lee have generally negative impacts and prevent him from reaching his full public intellectual potential, they do not prevent him from being the most important philosopher, spiritual guide, and mentor in the book, especially in the lives of Cal and Aron Trask.

Despite the fact that Lee was born and raised in California, even attending the University of California at Berkeley, "to the so-called whites [he] was still a Chinese, but an untrustworthy one; and at the same time [his] Chinese friends steered clear of [him]" (162), making him an outsider no matter where he goes. If he drops the Pidgin and the queue, he drifts even farther from the Chinese community and becomes "whiter" to them, and no matter how westernized he is, he remains defined by his un-American Chinese origins. This is in direct contrast to Samuel Hamilton, an immigrant from Ireland accepted as an American. Not coincidentally, Hamilton is the first person to see through Lee's disguise, understanding that Lee uses his Pidgin and appearance as a method of self-preservation, but also recognizing that it hides a large part of Lee's personality and individuality. Hamilton is also the first person to whom Lee speaks in his educated English. As a result, Lee begins to realize that he can create a balance between the two seemingly conflicting parts of his identity and begins to speak Standard English and dress in a more western fashion. He realizes that he does not need to define himself as strictly Chinese or American and that his true identity is actually Chinese-American.

Works Cited

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On the Rocks / Xander Lee

Chloe / Tom Malmgren

Sea of Dreams

By Adya Mohanty

In a sea of dreams
There are dancing waves
And shores lined with shells that leak forgotten memories
Opal waters that carry the sun
And unrelenting winds that howl
There are whispers that are louder than I remember whispers to be
and men without eyes that see tides to be controlled
But I sit at your feet
and watch you twist and roll, ebb and flow
And wonder if you'll teach me how to yield to the tide

Ebb and Flow / Katie Hoover

Moss Cove Trail
By Emma Ware

The Common Man

"You can only understand people if you feel them in yourself."

- East of Eden

The Tor House

By Owen Koetters

Robinson Jeffers must have been a brave man. At the dawn of the 20th century he stood on those jarring granite cliffs and decided to build. However, rather than clear the land and build a cabin, he began with the rocks from the beach below and constructed something that was one with the land around him. That "something" he built was not just a house, a tower, or a cottage. It was life. A life integrally tied to the coastline he loved. Given a natural landscape of sun, of sea, and of rocks, he created a home within the natural world that could only have emerged in that place, at that time, propelled by creative forces.

I wish I were telling you a tale about how, there on the windswept cliffs, the dormant poet within me burst forth. I'd gaze at the Pacific. It would call my name. I would call back. We would communicate like never before! Song, verse, word, sound, fury, and space would converge at one point: me. My life's path would simply be revealed. But that would be a lie. There was no epiphany. Instead, there was a tour guide and a kid standing on a cliff wishing he was something special.

Tor House West / Katie Osaki

Tor House East / Katie Osaki

I know that I love to write, that I love to study life in its most intricate form--microbiology-- and that I love the splendor of the world around me. Exactly how these passions will come together as I pave my future I do not know. I'm pretty damn sure I'm not the next Robinson Jeffers, and I'm also pretty damn sure I don't know exactly what I'm going to do with my life, what I'm going to be when I grow up, or any of the other big clichéd topics seniors in high school get so sick of expounding upon for relatives and random friends' parents. What I do know is that I desire a life of authentic expression and thought, and that being in the Steinbeck Youth Institute has introduced me to this type of expression in a plethora of different forms.

I realize maybe I'll never find my castle as Jeffers did. However, though I might be trapped in a platonic struggle, chasing ever-elusive shadows of the truth, I hope I have the energy, discipline, and curiosity to keep searching just as Jeffers, Steinbeck, and countless other artists have on our own California coast.

The Whaler

By Caoimhe McGurrin

The whale thrashed in black ink
drowning in the thickness;
it cried out for significance

The old man echoing its calls
closed the pages of his memories to look at me with a sad but interested smile

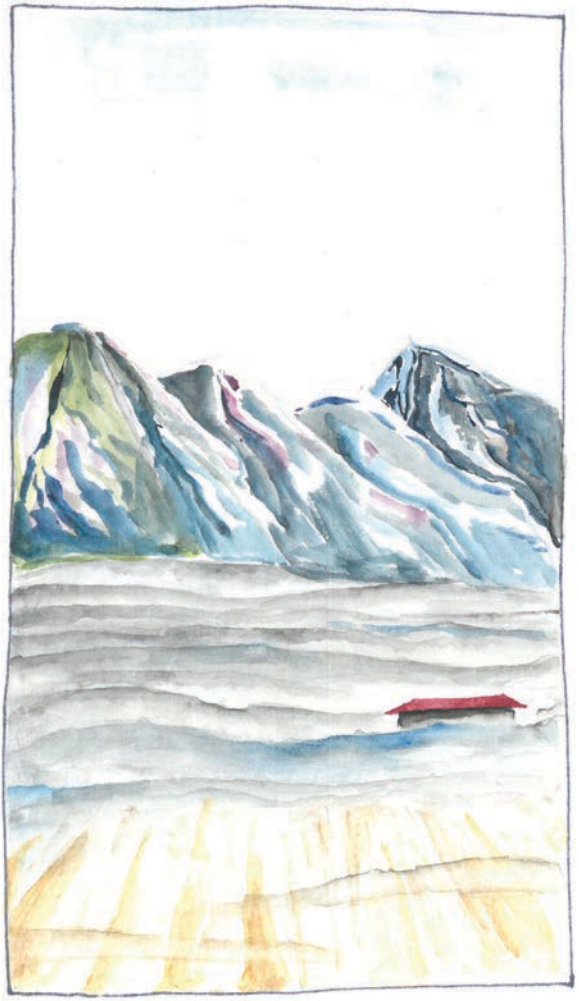
We sat down at midnight
to speak of faces that we had seen in the clouds
of butterflies we had captured with nets weaved of silk
of songs we had heard and loved
of evils we had loved to oppose
and of the whale that had drowned too soon
in the shell-encrusted cave of the old man's heart.

Fins / Katie Osaki

The Chrysanthemums

By Emma Ware

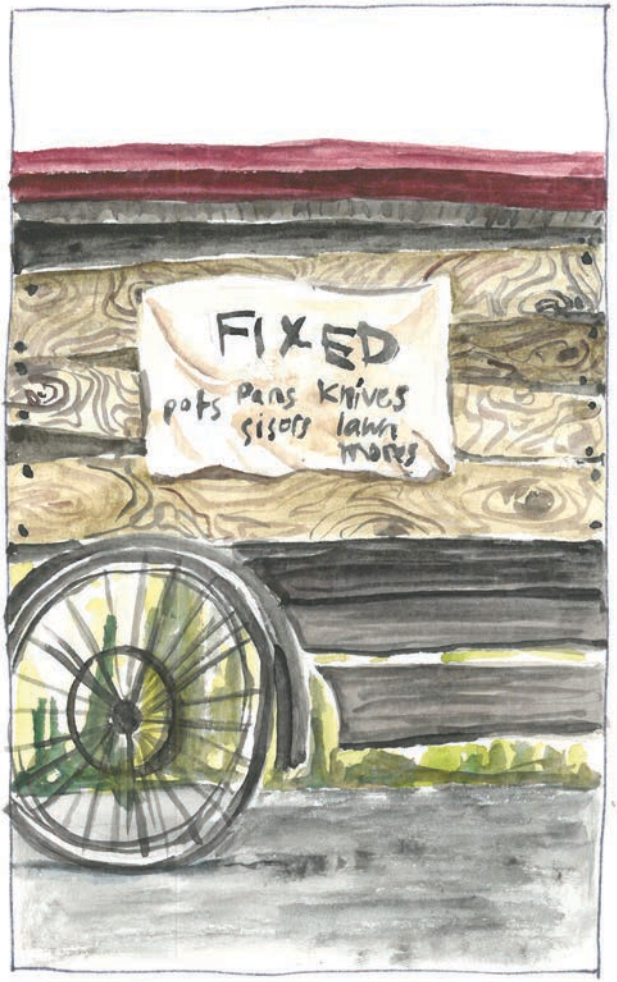
"The high grey-flannel fog of winter closed off Salinas Valley from the sky and from all the rest of the world"...



"The three of them stood by the tractor shed, each man with one foot on the side of the little Ford-son."

"She was cutting down the old years chrysanthemum stalks with a pair of short and powerful scissors. The chrysanthemum stems seemed too small and easy for her energy."

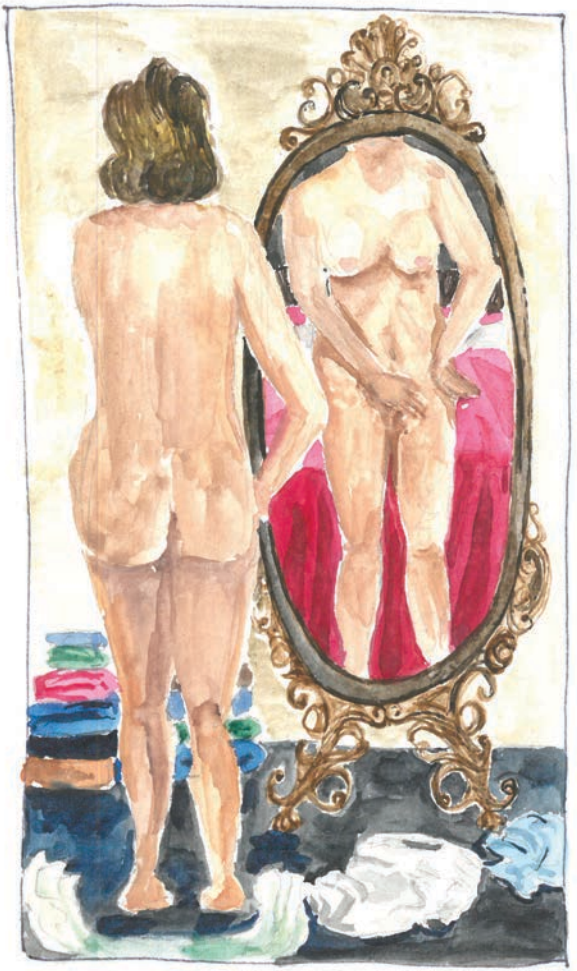
"Words were painted on the canvas in clumsy, crooked letters. 'Pots, pans, knives, sisors, lawn mores, Fixed.'"



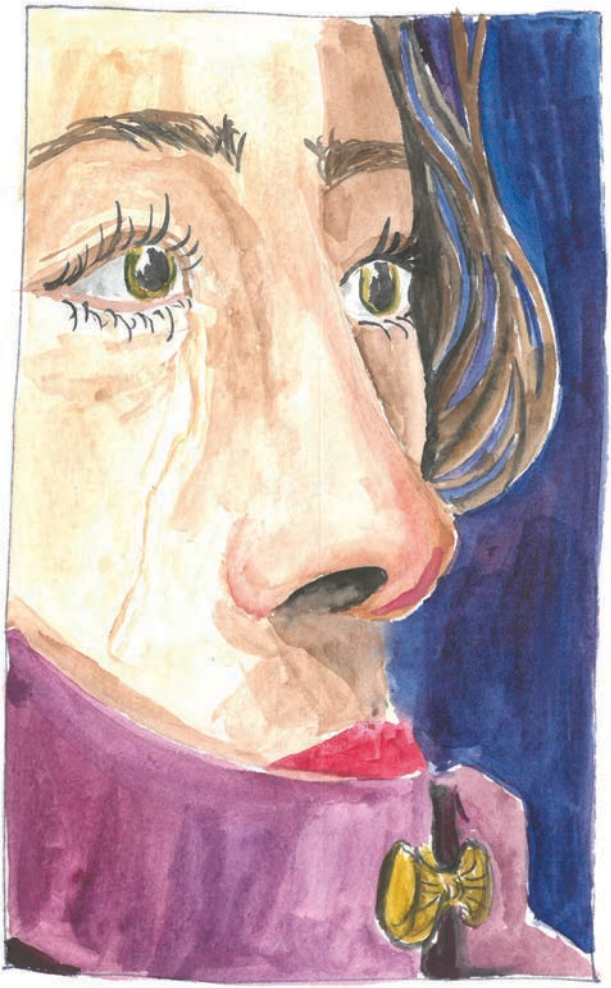
"Looks like a quick puff of colored smoke?"

"Elisa brought him a fifty-cent piece from the house and dropped it in his hand."

"When she had dried herself, she stood in front of a mirror in her bedroom and looked at her body."



"She turned up her coat collar so he would not see that she was crying weakly - like an old woman."



Elliot / Dustin Morris

Unpacking

By Edie Graber

As I sit here with the tattered brown Moleskine notebook open on my lap, taking the hesitating steps back into the cold water of my own vulnerable poetry, the smell of our bonfire wafts up towards my nose. I was unable to unpack my duffle bag for two weeks after we returned. I knew the second I opened it, that same fire smell would hit my senses, and all the memories would come flooding back. Naturally, the smell is representative of more than just that last night. The smell is the sight of the ocean I catch as I drive away from school each day. The smell is the pair of water shoes sitting in my closet that protected my feet from the mussels covering the tide pool rocks. The smell is the Hopkins Marine Station sticker on my Hydro Flask. Because of this trip, I discovered previously hidden abilities within myself. Beginning from day one, before we even left Santa Monica, the stream of consciousness practice at The Broad made me understand the true motivation behind this type of writing. I found details I had reserved in the back of my mind about a former teacher I didn't even realize had an impact on me. At Montaña de Oro, I became distracted by the effects that water has on other people. The other students climbed all the way down the cliff and I kept myself back, letting my hair fight with the wind. For a moment I thought I was alone. I felt

as if the separation between the group and the individual had become infinite. This, I have come to see, is the power that nature has on me. I wrote a short poem inspired by my experiences there:

A windy effort it was,
Trying to separate
The inseparable.
Your feet point the way
It is supposed to hurt
And I think we forget
Human nature has its
Grounds in the basis of the tides.

Many poems similar to this one fill the notebook on my lap. This is but one instance in which I uncovered my ability to write poetry. A couple months ago, just the thought of poetry might have induced a hostile reaction. Truthfully, I was almost willing to forgo the trip altogether when I learned we would have to write poetry. Obviously, I am glad I did not make that decision. This trip also allowed me to reflect on the loss of my friend a little over one year ago. Being granted the time to sit on the cliffs at Point Lobos and simply write, alone, was instrumental in this reflection. I was told by a classmate who was watching from a distance that I seemed to be wholly consumed in thought, as if the waves had transported me to some other world. Having grown accustomed to a filled-to-the-brim schedule my whole life, it was a highly invaluable opportunity to pause and just sit, to be alone with the water and my words. Our poetry workshop led by Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts at the Robinson Jeffers Tor House was one of the highlights for me, personally. My poem, "By God, It is the Sea," was published in the *Tor House Foundation Newsletter* shortly after the completion of our trip. This was the most touching news to receive. To have my poem chosen, when I was barely a friend to poetry a few days prior, reinforced my decision to never look back. My love for poetry can only grow from here.

In looking back at some of the minor difficulties we ran into while trying to get to a few of our planned destinations, the places we thought we were meant to visit, it's clear we ended up where we truly were meant to be. And, perhaps, that is the greatest realization of all. Although the smell of fire slowly fades from the pages of this notebook, it will never fade from my memory of this unique and irreplaceable experience.

“By God, It is the Sea”

By Edie Graber

If you should look for this place
On a spring morning,
Seek hawks who spread
Feathers across the bay

Listen not only to the cries
Of the sea
But to the creaks of the
Wooden steps that lead to
Nowhere in particular

If you should look for this place
On a summer morning,
Allow not your judgement
To be lost in the blinding sun

Gather shards
Put back together by millions
Of rains
Piercing the ears of the waves
That cry.

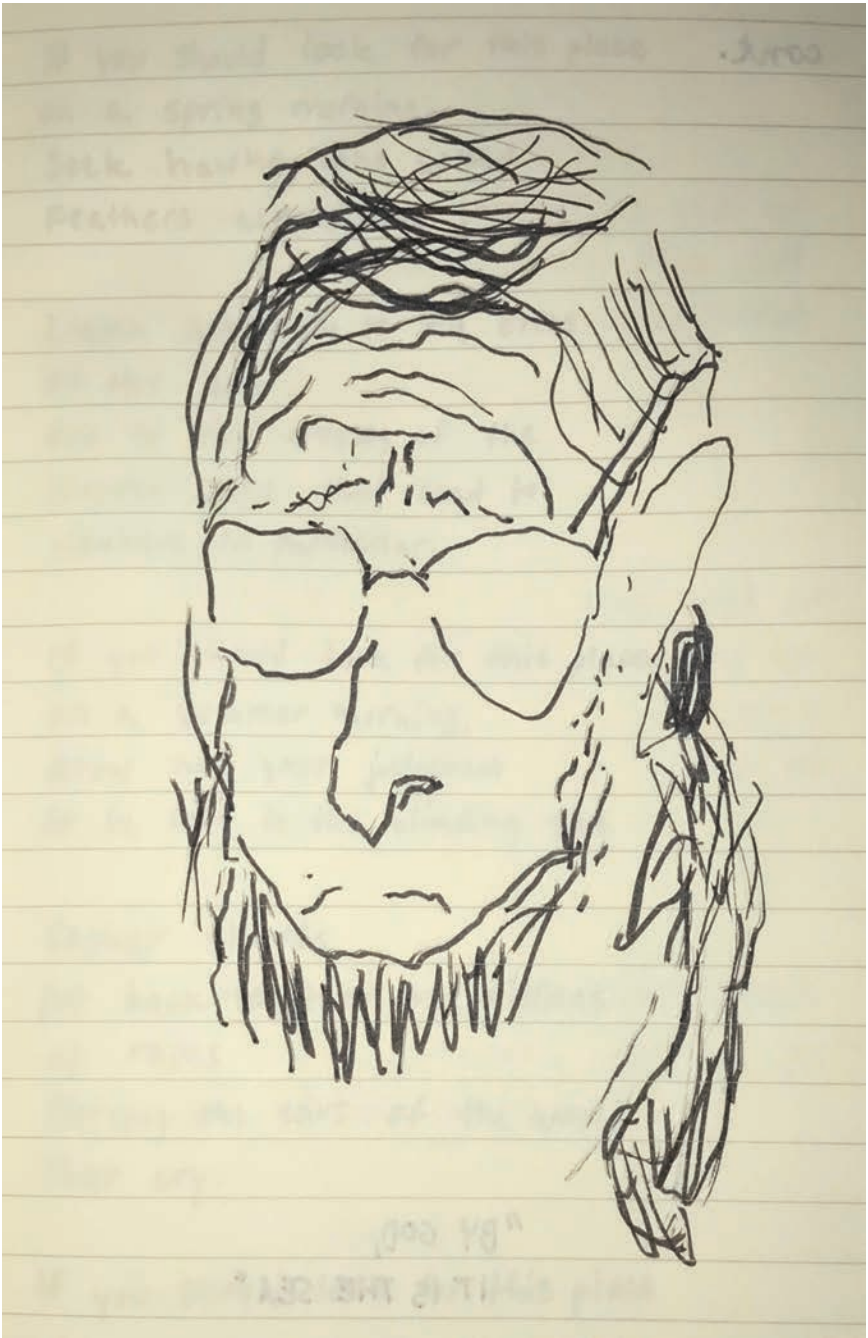
If you should look for this place
On an autumn morning,
Find yourself wishing for
The gentle light of the trees

The trees that harbor the sun,
Whose mother turned to him
And said,
“By God, it is the sea.”

If you should look for this place
On a winter morning,
Time should pass slowly,
As slow as you like

And the tower
And the desk
And the melodian
And the fire
May be yours to look for

No longer.



Drawing Elliot / Edie Graber

Drinkin' Jack

By Dustin Morris

Drinkin' Jack
Lived in the forests of Big Sur
Surrounded by ferns
A dark green brush stroke
Sweeping Drinkin' Jack off his feet

Down the highway he rode uncovered
Drinkin' Jack swayed between yellow lines
Wind whipping wildly
Snapping Jack back
From yesterday into tomorrow

Jack don't sleep
Jack don't eat
Jack just drink and drink and drink
Drink drink Drinkin' Jack

Sleeps alone
Weeps alone
His home
In the forests of Big Sur
Surrounded by ferns

Untouched, uncontrolled
Drinkin' Jack escapes into underbrush
Where light tells stories
Of fairies and mystics

A drink in his hand
A look in his eye
Drinkin' Jack
Big Sur
Surrounded by ferns

Big Sur / Dustin Morris

There is a connectivity that runs along the coast of California, not only from the highways that string it together, but from all the people that read each other's poetry and listen to each other's music. There's a network that I thought I could fit into, a synapse firing somewhere that I could recharge.The Central Valley became less about where Steinbeck found his inspiration, and more about the music and beauty that has been derived from it.

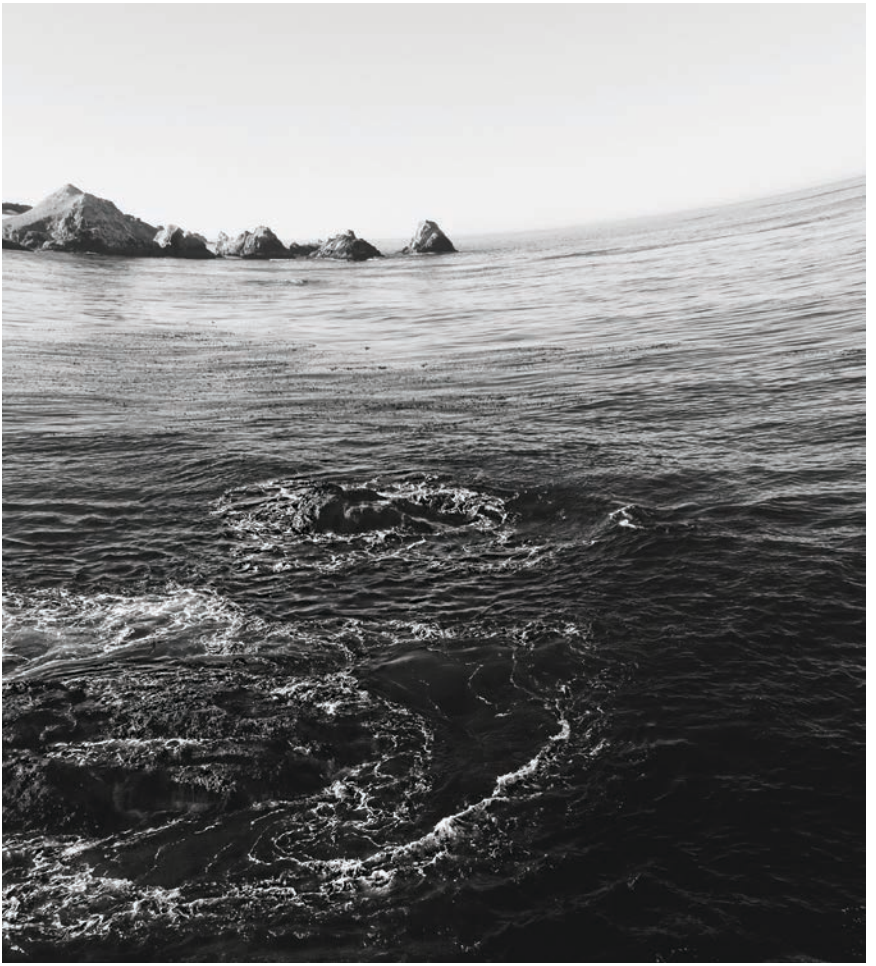
-Dustin Morris

The Grand Adjudicator

By Kelly Dunn

In the mid-twentieth century, agricultural sectors of America that relied heavily upon migrant labor still lingered amidst an explosion of service jobs and digital advancements. These laborers were manipulated into working in harsh conditions out of fear of deportment. The government often left these issues unresolved. In order to raise awareness, John Steinbeck joined the rising fight for equality. Through his observations of human behavior within economic and social tensions, Steinbeck illuminated the plight and fight of the disenfranchised workers, provoking a national response for improved conditions. While the methods of his predecessors were often rooted in battling politicians, Steinbeck's instrument for change was his writing. When writing *East of Eden*, Steinbeck described himself as "planting [his books] full of the restlessness which precedes change" (*Journal* 134). In other words, he saw his novels as the catalysts for this humanitarian fight. In these novels, Steinbeck envisions the typical agrarian worker rising from the rest of his peers and becoming a hero. Figures such as Reverend Casy from *The Grapes of Wrath*, Slim from *Of Mice and Men*, Doc from *Cannery Row,* and Lee from *East of Eden* are the people Steinbeck imposes onto the moral landscape. However, these characters are more than just heroes—they inspire change and the continual advancement of their community. They are grand adjudicators.

These grand adjudicators embody similar characteristics that ultimately enable them to facilitate that change. For one, they possess a sort of perspicacity that helps them better understand both the people in need and their causes. This uncanny understanding of the community causes people to respect the grand adjudicator. This respect is the community's acknowledgement of the grand adjudicator's authority, subsequently giving him the right to make judgments and crucial decisions that often determine the fate of others, as they know that these judgments are rooted in the best interests of the majority. These are all characteristics of the prototypical heroes, from their insight to their subsequent decisions. It is his suffering, however, that ultimately humanizes the adjudicator, causing him to be more relatable, perhaps also serving as a subtle hortative message for readers to assume those very same positions.



Swarming Tides / Angela Matic

Reverend Casy in *The Grapes of Wrath* is one of these grand adjudicators. Ostensibly the most degenerate of characters with his incessant drinking and departure from faith, he actually is still guided by a moral compass and is, arguably, one of the strongest characters in the novel.

The reverend's perspicacity is initially seen with Muley, one of the bankrupt farmers. When he and Tom Joad run into Muley on the Joads' abandoned property, Muley is frantic. He rambles about his problematic past, and even goes so far as to ask if he is touched. Casy replies, "No...You're lonely—but you ain't touched" (51). Casy's response, though simple, immediately soothes him. Despite having never met Muley, Casy's understanding of the people is so deep that they automatically trust him, even in situations as important as questioning one's own sanity.

This trust of the common farmer in Reverend Casy is demonstrated in other settings as well, especially when considering his title and past as a preacher. For instance, at the Joads' first reunion and meal with Tom, Granma insists that Reverend Casy should give grace at the breakfast table. Additionally, as Granpa dies, Granma cries for Casy to pray, despite the fact that Casy hardly knew the man. Nevertheless, he gives a quick sermon about forgiveness that releases "a long gasping sigh..and then a crying release of air" that quieted Granma and kept her "still" and satiated (138). Not only did it satisfy Granma and help aid her grieving, but his sermon was so inspirational that Granma "wanted [him] to say one for [her]" (218). Moreover, aside from his title, the people's inherent trust in Casy is also due to his moral insight; in particular, he can look past the religious screen and its titles. He notes how, "Ever'body takes a crack at me 'cause I been a preacher. A preacher ain't nothing but a man" (224). Here, he deconstructs the barriers between religious "higher-ups" and the common folk, noting how ultimately everyone is worthy and equal. Furthermore, by shedding the title of preacher, he is no longer put on a pedestal. He can thus be more with the people, rather than above them. He also no longer needs to use religion as a crutch and as an incentive for being moral.

That morality and great insight translates into Casy's drive to fight for concrete issues instead of religious abstractions. Addressing these concrete issues, such as fighting against the manipulation of the orchard owners, is Casy's ultimate goal; if fixed, the Hooverville community will grow and thrive, thus satisfying his role as the grand adjudicator. However, the majority of the field hands are myopic and unable to see how picketing can satisfy their families' immediate needs. Casy, on the other hand, understands the roots of the people's suffering and bands with vigilantes to incite farmer strikes across the California valley. But this is not enough. Casy must inspire individuals as well to ensure a lasting legacy. He eventually succeeds in recruiting Tom, who leaves his family despite working so hard to reach California. Though this may seem rather selfish, as Casy is sacrificing Tom's life and virtually guaranteeing one of pain, struggle, and constant hiding, Casy knows that the sacrifice of one man can ultimately benefit a generation.

However, this selfless fight does not come readily, for Casy suffers. His suffering

is evident from the continual struggle and dedication to his cause, his internal struggle with religion, and his ultimate death for that cause. He notes how "his little piece of a soul wasn't no good 'less it was with the rest, an' was whole," meaning that he could not be happy until the community was satisfied (418). In fighting for the Hooverville community, he becomes so invested that he, too, becomes part of it; thus, he cannot rest until justice is restored. Consequently, this explains Casy's self-sacrifice, where he lets the police detain him for Tom's actions and lock him up. Though this sacrifice ultimately leads to his own demise, as Casy is shot after picketing one night, he still manages to utilize his perspicacity and benefit the entire migrant farmer community.

The Peach Farm / Xander Lee

Slim is a field hand at the ranch in *Of Mice and Men*, and has worked there longer than any other worker, save for Crooks, the stable buck. Throughout the novella, Steinbeck imbues him with a heightened social awareness and conviction that draws his peers to him. Slim is "capable of driving ten, sixteen, even twenty mules with a single line"—something that few others can do (33). This aptitude for management and control translates into his ability to decide for the group of laborers as a whole. For instance, after Lennie crushes Curly's hand, Slim intervenes and tells Curly to not say anything. This automatically binds the rest of the field hands who are spectators into a silent agreement to not say anything else as well; they comply without any argument. This incident is also important, as Curly, ostensibly a leader and man of power around the farm, is challenged by a mere field hand, and cowers at the sight of it. This strips Curly of his superficial title, while at the same time legitimizing that of Slim's.

Moreover, Slim has an uncanny depth of understanding. This unique foreseeability facilitates a discussion George has with Slim—one that proves vital to George and Lennie's jobs. After working on the farm for a few days, George tells Slim what happened at Weed with ease. It was previously unthinkable, for George had already told Lennie, "'An you ain't gonna do no bad things like you done in Weed neither" (24); even in that discussion, George didn't dare to mention the incident, only deeming the

Horizons / Katie Hoover

actions "bad things." Nevertheless, George chooses to confide in Slim and says, "'You wouldn' tell….No, 'course you wouldn'" (41). George does not even wait for confirmation of Slim's confidentiality before spilling the incident with an unusual candor, especially when considering the gravity of the issue. Furthermore, the ease of sharing his secrets shows that George trusts and respects Slim enough and trusts his judgment, for Slim could've just as easily reported the pair to the authorities.

Judgments like these become imperative later on in the novel as they are, to some extent, tested. For instance, Candy's dog is useless in every respect, lacking both teeth and sight. Nevertheless, Candy cares for his dog, calling him "the best damn sheep dog [he's] ever seen" (44). Despite Candy's obvious attachment to the dog, Slim authorizes its death; albeit somewhat cruel, his ruling is ultimately beneficial in the broader context: the death of the dog destroyed Candy's romanticized ideals, grounding him in reality. Furthermore, harmony between the field hands was reestablished, for Candy's peers would no longer become irritated by the presence of his dog.

The death of Candy's dog is just one of many pivotal decisions that ultimately foreshadows future events. For instance, after Curly's wife is found in the barn, it is Slim who breaks the silence and declares her dead. In doing so, Slim is knowingly inciting the mob and sanctioning the death of Lennie. Though Lennie was a companion and a part of the community, Slim sees this action justified in the name of fairness and truth. Not only is he a danger with his reckless and deadly anger, but Lennie is also a huge burden for George— without him, George can have his chance to live a normal life. Slim understands this, for after George kills Lennie, he says, "You hadda, George. I swear you hadda" (107). Slim understands that George feels guilty but comforts him by agreeing with his actions; this agreement not only justifies George's actions but also sets him on the path of recovery and social betterment. Then, as Slim and George walk away, Curley and Carlson ask, "'Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin' them two guys?" (107). The question demonstrates the blindness of the rest of the field hands to understand the crux of the issue, where sacrifices must be made in order to grow and advance the community; no one else understands the significance of what occurred minutes before—that is, except Slim.

Although Slim is powerful, Arthurian in many ways, one of his most intriguing characteristics is his suffering. He is incredibly capable, as seen in his confident mannerisms. He is also wise and sympathetic. He could easily work anywhere else, yet he chooses to remain on the farm, amongst societal outcasts who are the "loneliest guys in the world…[who] don't belong no place" (14). Most others follow the American Dream—like Crooks and George and Lennie, they all wish to have their own place and make a decent living. Slim, on the other hand, never mentions having a dream or improving his current situation. He is absorbed in a much larger task: mediating the community and pushing it towards continual advancement.

Perhaps more subtle than Slim in authoritative demeanor is Doc, who serves as the grand adjudicator for inhabitants of *Cannery Row*. Doc is a marine biologist who collects tide pool specimens for every occasion. However, he is more than just another inhabitant of the row; throughout the novel, he is constantly guiding the community and individuals towards a collective improvement, where they are not only morally strengthened, but also find companionship in the strength amongst peers.

Despite the city itself, which is "a poem, a stink, a grating noise, chipped pavement and weedy lots," and the people, who are "whores, pimps, gamblers and sons of bitches," Doc nurtures all of them (1). For instance, when there is a virulent epidemic that strikes the community, Doc works tirelessly, tending to every infected individual. However, not only does he care for the group, but he supports individuals too. For instance, Doc often spends time with Hazel who was "touched….[doing] four years in grammar school, four years in reform school" and failing to "learn anything in either place," patiently answering his questions about the ocean and taking him out tide pooling (29). He also adopts Frankie, a boy living in an unstable and abusive home. Even among a community of the marginalized, Frankie is an outsider; he is described to be "like a small cloud…always at the edges of groups" (51). Nonetheless, Doc gives him a place to stay and treats him like a peer. He lets Frankie watch him while he works, as well as help serve drinks during parties. Lastly, and perhaps most obviously, is Mack and the boys, who the town sees as no-good bums. In spite of that, Doc still treats them with respect and gives them odd jobs to help make ends meet.

Additionally, in order to better the community, Doc observes while refraining from passing judgment on people, allowing his peers to find their own moral center. For instance, when Doc comes back from his trip and finds his house a mess after Mack's party, he is not angry, but rather disappointed in Mack. Regardless of Mack's rambling apologies, Doc merely begins cleaning up the mess and even goes so far as to tell him to "forget it," waving all expenses due to his concrete understanding of Mack (105). However, this purposeful disappointment proves to be rather effective, for afterwards Mack and the boys "[give] the Palace Flophouse a cleaning such as it had never had…[and] financially they [became] dull and solvent" (128). In addition to their changed habits, Mack and the boys also throw another party for Doc, uniting the whole community, bringing about everyone on Cannery Row-- even the police. Doc's response to Mack's first destructive party ultimately brought about a change in Mack's character and inspired a renewed fidelity to the residents of Cannery Row.

Yet, Doc's suffering lies in his loneliness and inability to love. He is initially described as "a lonely and a set-apart man" (92). Though well liked, he is unmarried and only has "three four dames" who visit the lab (92). Additionally, this separation is seen in even more intimate relationships. For instance, after stealing a watch as a

In the Lab / Dustin Morris

gift for Doc, Frankie tells Doc he loves him. Doc fails to respond, and later severs ties with Frankie. Interestingly, this loneliness stems from his position, unlike Reverend Casy, who shed his title to be with the rest of the community. By assuming the role of the adjudicator and educator of the community, Doc is ultimately put on a pedestal and viewed as an ideal; he is consequently, however, unable to have any truly fulfilling connections.

Ultimately, grand adjudicators all possess a sort of perspicacity and wisdom that enables them to facilitate positive change within their communities. Additionally, not only did these figures stimulate change, but, in some ways, they transcended their novel and storyline and inspired real live people to take action in fighting for the disenfranchised and migrant workers of the modern day. Interestingly, though the public lauded works like these, Steinbeck also wrote other novels that were far different. However, these books proved not nearly as popular as those with the grand adjudicator.

Like Doc, Lee takes care of a community and serves as grand adjudicator in East of Eden. Though this community is much smaller, it is no less impressive; throughout the novel, he selflessly takes care of the Trask family, addressing both their mental and physical needs. For instance, after Cathy shoots her husband, Adam, Lee physically nurses him back to health, as well as "cooked and washed, bathed the twins and fed them" (232). Lee's fastidious care of the twins is evident, as "Chinese words were the first they recognized and tried to repeat" (232). Out of pure compassion, Lee serves in place of both the mother and father figures absent in the twins' lives. Then, as Adam was suffering from Cathy's departure, Lee even goes so far as to name them Cal and Aron. Mentally, Lee wills the Trask members to believe in themselves. He encourages Adam and his refrigerated ice train business, comforts Cal despite the lack of acceptance from his peers, and supports Aron and his wishes to go to college.

While taking care of the Trasks, Lee also manages to subtly teach them. For instance, Lee introduces the concept of "Timshel" which ends up serving as a moral compass for all the characters; the phrase itself asserts that there is a glory of choice and that life is not predestined. Cal, for example, chooses to evade his family history and begin life anew with Abra. Adam chooses to forget his lonely past and begin focusing on the present; this is illustrated in the final scene where Adam is on his deathbed and forgives Cal. "Timshel" ultimately enables the Trasks to believe in themselves; this belief inspires each member to continue living and consequently satisfy Lee's role as grand adjudicator.

Lee's persistence towards the family and his inspiration for them to follow the idea of Timshel stems from his overall wisdom. He manages to fool everyone about his Chinese origins, with his ability to "talkee Chinese talk," as well as his general "lack" of intelligence (163). This cleverness gives Lee the authority to manage the characters. For instance, as Adam Trask improves from his heartbreak, Lee decides to tell him that "Cathy is in Salinas" and that she "owns a whorehouse, the most vicious and depraved in this whole end of the country" (306). This knowledge drives Adam to go and visit his wife, pushing him further along his path to recovery. Previously, Adam would not have even been able to hear of Cathy before breaking down. Now, thanks to Lee, Adam can go as far as to visit her. However, necessity for Lee's wisdom is at its zenith when Adam lies in his bed dying. In the final scene, both father and son are weak. Adam "breathed slowly between pale lips" and his "eyes moved slowly from one face to another".... Cal's mouth "moved dryly and made no sound" (602). However, knowing that the two must make amends, Lee cries out, "'I have to...If it kills him I have to. I have the choice,'" thus forcing them to meet. This is a monumental decision that can either drive the family forward or "crush [Cal] with rejection," consequently ending the Trask family (602). Nevertheless, he is given that prerogative and his decision ultimately leads to the continuation of the Trask family.

But it is this very selflessness—this compassion, empathy, and responsibility—that causes Lee to suffer. He is not content, as no man can be satisfied when there are lingering endeavors that are of importance. Lee wishes to have a wife and sons of his own, as well as his own bookstore. But he must first make sure that the Trask family is stable; he had the money for a long time to leave, and chose not to. It is only

with Adam's approval that Lee can go. However, as soon as he leaves, the family is in disarray. Everything cooked was burned. There was "a saucepan of beets out in the yard [that] smelled so bad [Adam] couldn't have it in the house" and a stove that wouldn't burn, for Adam did not know that the ashes had to be removed (418). Lee comes back, finding that the emotional ties to the family are too great to abandon. Aside from his now-worthless dream, diluted by the Trasks, Lee is now tied to them. His life, in some ways, is dedicated to them, suffering their burdens. Though nothing bad happens to him specifically, he still endures the Trasks' pains. For instance, as Lee is debating whether or not to tell Cal the truth about his mother, "black weariness [fell upon him]," as well as "a hopelessness that pressed his shoulders down" (593). This demonstrates how invested Lee is in the Trask community's troubles, despite not actually being of blood relation to the family.

Ultimately, grand adjudicators all possess a sort of perspicacity and wisdom that enables them to facilitate positive change within their communities. Additionally, not only did these figures stimulate change, but, in some ways, they transcended their novel and storyline and inspired real live people to take action in fighting for the disenfranchised and migrant workers of the modern day. Interestingly, though the public lauded works like these, Steinbeck also wrote other novels that were far different. However, these books proved not nearly as popular as those with the grand adjudicator.

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Emma / Xander Lee

Touching Steinbeck / Katie Osaki

Accidental Enlightenment

By Rara Gumbel

We were walking down Central Avenue when suddenly a motorcyclist was on the ground.

I remember the cars stopped around him and my English teacher rushing us all along, muttering, "someone needs to call 911." I could feel a pit at the base of my stomach, right next to the creamy turkey wrap I had just been served for lunch at John Steinbeck's childhood home.

For the rest of our trip, I had a tab open on my phone to a Google search for "motorcyle accident Salinas," constantly refreshing to see the fate of the man in the black leather jacket. We had seen a woman in scrubs jumping out to help the man but a part of me needed to know what destiny he had suffered. I took no news as a good sign.

It feels strange to say that the most meaningful part of my school trip up the coast was that first day when I saw a man get into a motorcycle accident. After all, during those five days, we went to Ed Ricketts' lab, immortalized in *Cannery Row*. We drove up through the Pastures of Heaven and saw a few of those golf courses Steinbeck had predicted years ago. I used not one, but two bathrooms that John Steinbeck himself had probably used at some point and, for a girl who enjoys kitsch as much as me, that meant something.

Yet, despite multiple attempts at writing this, along with some words of caution from people who think "motorcycle accident" is not the most inviting way to tell possible future Steinbeck Youth Institute members about a school-sanctioned trip, I have found myself coming back to those few seconds on Central Avenue.

My first experiences with Steinbeck were somewhat rushed. I read *Cannery Row* and *The Pastures of Heaven* in September of 2016 in order to quickly fulfill the core text requirements for our trip. While a whole month for two short books may seem like a lot, you're listening to a girl who was applying to college, attending six classes a day, and had somehow roped herself into a Mexican dance class twice a week.

However, I enjoyed the little moments I got to share with Steinbeck. I would read about the tide pools between class periods, and would alternate between asking my English teacher about Doc's relationship with Frankie and when he'd have my letter of recommendation submitted.

When I finished *Cannery Row*, I felt heavy. Not depressed heavy or heartbroken heavy. A kind of heavy that comes when a really good writer teaches you something you already knew in a way that makes it feel completely revolutionary.

Steinbeck taught me about community.

I was brought into a community where a madam, a marine biologist, a grocer, and a pack of charming 40-year-old drifters were connected; a community where frogs are traded as currency and extreme damage of property can be rectified with a good punch to the face; a community that thrives on its own tacit rules and ethical code; a community where everyone cares about each other, no matter whether they live on top of a pole or in an unfinished boat, in a whorehouse or the basement of a laboratory…

...which brings me back to the motorcyclist. In that moment, despite having never lived in Salinas nor ever knowing anyone who drove a motorcycle, he was part of my community.

Now, a better ending to this story would've been if I'd actually called 911 or held the man's hand and talked him through the pain. It feels somewhat lame to say that, in all the commotion, all I caught was a blur, and just kept walking, hoping that he was getting the medical attention he needed.

However, I think it is no coincidence that the trip that had me explore Steinbeck was also the trip on which I became emotionally attached to a stranger.

And, while I probably won't write my senior thesis on *Of Mice and Men* and I may never finish all of *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck made me a little more aware and a little more caring for those around me even if all I have to show is an Internet history filled with Google searches for a man whose name I'll never know.

Field Notes

By Katie Hoover

The three weeks I spent in Monterey, California this summer, I ate strawberries every day. And every day on my way to work in Pacific Grove, I would drive past the fields they were picked from: the fields of Watsonville, Castroville, and the areas in between lining Highway 1. p early, I took in the world bleary-eyed as we sped towards Stanford University's Hopkins Marine Station, and glancing out the window of the car, I saw the workers' bodies constantly contorted into upside-down "U" shapes as they grasped for each red gem.

The windows of the car were enough of a metaphor, as I observed the semblance of their pain. It was just glass, yet a barrier nonetheless. And every morning at 6:45, as fog coated the landscape, they would be up as I was, the window separating our intentions for the day. We both had methodical work ahead of us; they would bare the rows of strawberries, while I measured fish ear bones - "otoliths" - using a microscope with a micrometer less than a centimeter long.But this separation of intentions was really created by the disparity between our circumstances. I travelled comfortably to work at the marine station of a prominent university. They were to work all day, meticulously moving up and down each row, their bodies still bent into upside-down U's when I returned at 5:00 each evening. They were only feet away, but this small distance disguised a greater discord between our individual lives. Us and them. I felt like I was immersed in a constant drone about our different societal roles. *They have such an insignificant job. They don't belong here. They don't understand.*

I have broken my own back. More specifically, it was a lower-lumbar stress fracture. But I broke my back playing tennis, not doing back-breaking work. There was perhaps a superficial similarity between the workers and me, masked in the commonalities between the qualities of our work, meticulous and time-consuming, contributing to a larger project where individual efforts to help go unnoticed. Working in a lab requires hours of repetitive, detailed, and specific work, the results of which may be published years later. Picking strawberries is meticulous work that must be done by humans, not machines, picked right when ripe, and done by a massive number of workers in order to harvest all the berries to fill society's appetite. Both forms of work are grunt work, undesirable but necessary in order to reach a bigger goal. The disappearance of it would disable the success of the larger project. Glancing out the window I could feel a vicarious strain on my back, a reminder of pain that had been there, and was still out there for others in the back-breaking work I was witnessing. The workers and I may be together in the planet's larger ecosystem, but on Highway 1 we ran parallel, never truly converging.

The philosophers of the liberal environment I have grown up in have preached to me of the equality with which we should think of others. But their words are more effective in theory than in action. I cannot pretend to understand the life of someone completely different than me, but I can recognize that theirs has the same validity as mine, even as voices continue to threaten their right to exist in our country. I am aware that those who have similar waking times as me, those who have experienced the same physical pain as me, have not had the same life as I have. And I will always taste this bittersweet recognition in each red strawberry.

In the Fields / Xander Lee

In 1929, America broke down in the middle of an economic mess. One that consumed much of America in a dust bowl of fear, anger, stress, and economic insecurity. However, in a time when money sat in the change pockets of the wealthy and lay barren in the jars of poor farmers, John Steinbeck ventured to analyze this time in his 1939 book, The Grapes of Wrath, in which he uses the colors of the Salinas Valley to express the emotional tidal wave overtaking the country.

-Will Wisen

En La Vida Del Sol

By Catherine Taghizadeh

En la vida del sol,
Descubro mi alma.
Yo he vivido en la luz del sol
Por todo mi vida.
Soy una niña del sol;
Nunca puedo recibir bastante calor.
Tal vez la razón que necesito esta calefacción
Es porque mi corazón tiene un fuego
Que necesita ser alimentado.
Estuve creado en las flamas,
Y por eso si mira en mi cuerpo,
Encontrará naranja, amarillo,
Y un ardimiento rojo.
Espero que nunca estoy en las sombras,
Porque yo siempre quiero
La luz de la verdad.
Me encanta allí.
Ojalá que este fuego arda en mí eternamente.
Y que nunca pierda esa luz brillante.

In the life of the sun,
I find my soul.
I have lived in the light of the sun
For my entire life.
I am a child of the sun;
I can never get enough heat.
Perhaps the reason I need this warming
Is because my heart has a fire
That needs to be fed.
I was created in the flames,
And for this if you look inside my body,
You will find orange, yellow,
And a burning red.
I hope that I am never in the shadows,
Because I always want
The light of the truth.
I love it there.
If only this fire burns in me eternally.
And that you never lose that brilliant light.

The Pastures of Heaven: Steinbeck's Biblical Opus

By Charlie Sands

In 1776 a disciplinarian corporal stumbled upon the beautiful valley known as *Las Pasturas Del Cielo*. The corporal was nearly brought to his knees by the quaint serenity of the valley and declared that one day he would move to the peaceful land and lead a quiet agrarian life. This discovery, ironically through the exploitation of the indigenous, is described in John Steinbeck's 1932 California fictional work, *The Pastures of Heaven*. Painting a surreal utopia, a portrait of modern Eden, Steinbeck parallels several aspects of biblical legend.

These Eden-esque tropes are present not only in the larger short-story cycle, but evident in every tale, anecdote, and tangent that are contained within it. Any time outsiders look upon the valley, such as the corporal in the beginning, the peaceful view of the valley is absent of its grim truths. Steinbeck's short-story cycle is a compilation of biblical allusions, a repeated rewriting of the deconstruction of Eden. He writes of a normal town shrouded in a cloud of darkness, one that crumbles due to a curse carried by a seemingly nice family. Steinbeck shows the volatility of life and the unpredictable forces that can destroy human virtue, often due to the illusion of an Edenic utopia that is misinterpreted by people neglecting to accept the defects in even the most paradisiacal of places.

Even in the final chapter, many years after the first families settled in the valley, the book ends on a complete note of irony when a group of present-day tourists in a bus convey their idyllic notions provoked by the same pleasant assumptions displayed in the previous chapters. And just like the corporal in the opening chapter who intended to move into an adobe house beside a stream after retiring from inflicting violence on the local Indians, the tourists are blinded by the same view "toward the long Carmel Valley and toward the sun where it was setting in the ocean at the valley's mouth" (201). Unfortunately for the tourists, what they can't possibly know is that the corporal never reached his Edenic vision of a home by the stream. Instead, he died of the pox that an Indian woman presented him.

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Golden Pastures / Xander Lee

Take Me Back

By Kyla Walker

Take me back to Big Sur, where the waves roll into the coves and the sun sets into the hour of the slow talk, the spilling conversation, the Cartier rays. The Steinbeck Youth Institute trip started in a rainstorm that became a beautiful drive up the Pacific Coast Highway through the twists and turns of the western border.

Looking back at the trip, it feels almost as if the entire road was based off a stream of consciousness prompt. We each had schedules and itineraries but seemed to slip away into the trees and the wind, lost in our own minds converging into what Steinbeck only could have hoped to inspire.

In Santa Barbara with Ben Brode and Gail Steinbeck, Gail told stories of how she met her husband Tom, his complicated relationship with his father, and the little moments that suddenly become significant years later. She spoke of the intrigue, the certain level of madness in artists, and the way desperation changes the cores of individuals. The conversation spurred the spirit for the rest of the trip that took us into the deeper parts of California and essentially the beauty of the creativity sprouting in Big Sur.

While driving through the Pastures of Heaven at sunset, the dreamy colors transformed the area into a painting. A collection of intertwining short stories seemed to fill in the wide open fields outside the car window. Shark Wicks' vault fabricated by the oak tree across the way, the Whitesides' garden bloomed with red roses in late March, and Miss Molly Morgan could even be seen carving her name in crimson red in the stone near the schoolhouse. The golden air of California made anything possible and everything alive. Later that night, we ate dinner in the middle of it all, surrounded by trees and strings of light.

Looking around during dessert, I noticed it was just a bunch of kids playing music, telling funny stories, eating amazing food, and growing up one bite at a time. The adults had disappeared and we were too entranced to notice. The concert at the front of the room was warm enough to light the California spring night and keep us all on the edge of our seats, dreaming of the day we'd no longer be considered obsolete.

The same feeling returned while sitting around a bonfire on the shores of Asilomar Beach. The flames' glow shined in the faces across the circle reading lines straight from the heart. We closed our eyes and could feel the zeitgeist, the pulse of the trip coming to a rest. The poetry saved us from the sirens, while the freezing seabreeze led us home.

The trip was full of little moments that charged connections to the books we had only read, but now could feel inside of us. The Henry Miller Library was a cabin in the woods, and in the back we found the waterfalls and the rushing creeks from Ben's paintings. The live music inside told stories as raw as the hundreds of books sitting on the shelves all around. Throughout the trip, we were given the freedom to explore our golden state and the natural world that has been such a rich source for amazing writers, musicians, and artists before our time. Each day was spent absorbing, learning, and producing our own works. From the Salvador Dali Art Museum to Ed Ricketts' Lab to the Tor House of Robinson Jeffers, we discovered the muses and what it takes to build a world out of words, rhythms, and colors. All the hikes and the voices and the bookstores in the middle of forests came together in the end to give us the ultimate road trip, one that will be instilled in us all for the rest of our lives.

Dark Watcher / Katie Hoover

Two Men and a Driveway

By Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts

~for Magnus

"...the heart-breaking beauty
Will remain when there is no heart to break for it."
~Robinson Jeffers, "Credo"

In the driveway, something said took the men
into and outside of themselves. Each thought
of all that beauty—the younger, of whale-
roads sailed by Vikings, those wave-wandering
wind-gleaners in their high-hulled ships who filled
the sails of his youthful imaginings,
so, when grown, he wandered the wide ship-roads
from Pongo Pongo to Hawai'i, from
the Galapagos to the Marquesas,
Fiji to San Francisco; off the coasts
of South Africa and Brazil; in North
Atlantic and Caribbean; endless
ocean, the night sky a brilliant blanket
over dark sea, the sun and moon rising
gloriously; and he remembered nights
he and his wife sat together for warmth
under the cover of the starlit night,
their son sleeping below, all the stars seen
again for the first time, the rigging and
sails singing as the wave-rider shifted
in wind and frothing wave-vat, flying fish
and dolphins their companions. The older
thought of mountains he and his wife had walked—
of trekking to Hemkund, Sikh holy lake,
where he climbed the 1,000 steps singing
the holiest of Jewish prayers, singing
to the Oneness of the universe; he
remembered following the cairns on fog-
encrusted Mount Washington; the vastness
of Milky Way above Mauna Kea;
of Mount Kenya above the multitudes
of wildlife; he remembered his daughters

running down a mountainside in the Swiss
Alps, train whistle announcing imminent
departure, and his daughters, one dark-haired
and dark-eyed, the other blonde and blue-eyed,
running down the hill, hair streaming behind
them, their laughter and joy filling his heart.
At that moment, standing in a driveway,
each man also knew that the delicate
balance that sustains life will disappear,
set in motion by the human presence
on earth, and with it human consciousness
that sings hymns to this beauty. The oceans
and mountains will become nameless once
more; new, non-human life-forms will swarm in
the oceans and roam the mountains. The heart-
breaking beauty will remain when there is
no heart to break for it. In that driveway
cypress, pines and redwoods towered, like hands
raised in benediction over two men,
blessing all that was, is, and will be.

**From *White Fire* (Ping-Pong Free Press:
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State Route 154 / Katie Osaki

Ahead / Katie Osaki

From Here

By Chloe Gottlieb

the arms are the first to go
slowly you will have no limbs
and will have never had them
nor will you ever again
this is what it means to go back
to uncenter
this is the genesis into
sea anemone
at least, this is what i imagine
high up, bear hugging a rock
i want to pre-remember *this* rock
maybe come back and find it
a few years from now
and am already embarrassed by my
sentimentality and naivety
from far away
from here,
otters look like people
their rubbery heads wetsuits
their paws reaching like ours do

Pismo / Angela Matic

SLO Night Market
By Emma Ware

The Valley of SYI

"...many a trip continues long after movement in time and space have ceased."

- Travels with Charley

The Bixby Creek Bridge / Darwin Luna

Dear California

By Kelly Dunn

Preface: There were many things I loved during my time in the SYI— some of which were quite bizarre and rather inexplicable. Thus, instead of trying to explicitly state whatever abstract feelings I had, I found the following "letter" much more apt in expressing my thoughts and gratitude.

April 29, 2018

Dear California,

I'm writing this letter to you while driving down a beaten path. The pebbles are ricocheting off this van's metal shell, and we are all watching the windshield anxiously, wondering if it will hold.

But in minutes, I find that I am no longer holding my breath. I am not studying the webs of cracked glass or frantically jotting down insurance information. I am not caught up in the garbled telephone calls or streams of texts, with snippets of "The pole came out of nowhere!" and "ABBD!" Instead, I find myself looking out through the van's windows, beautifully lost in you.

Set adrift by your loosened clouds, I can think of few other things than the past couple of days traveling up your ragged spined coast— each vertebral town housing men with silvery beards and long ponytails and great sprawling pastures. I'm remembering the freezing beaches—turned gold by sunset— and my fingers tracing the worn skin of a volleyball on Carmel Beach. I'm thinking of the early morning quiet (save for the cries of a few seagulls) and the whitewater foam that is so pure and so white that it can only be called Californian snow. I'm remembering the fat drops of rain pelting our van and gusting palm trees accompanied by a single restaurant with blinking neon lights and that timeless retro-diner feel, complete with a steaming bowl of bean soup—minus the sour cream.

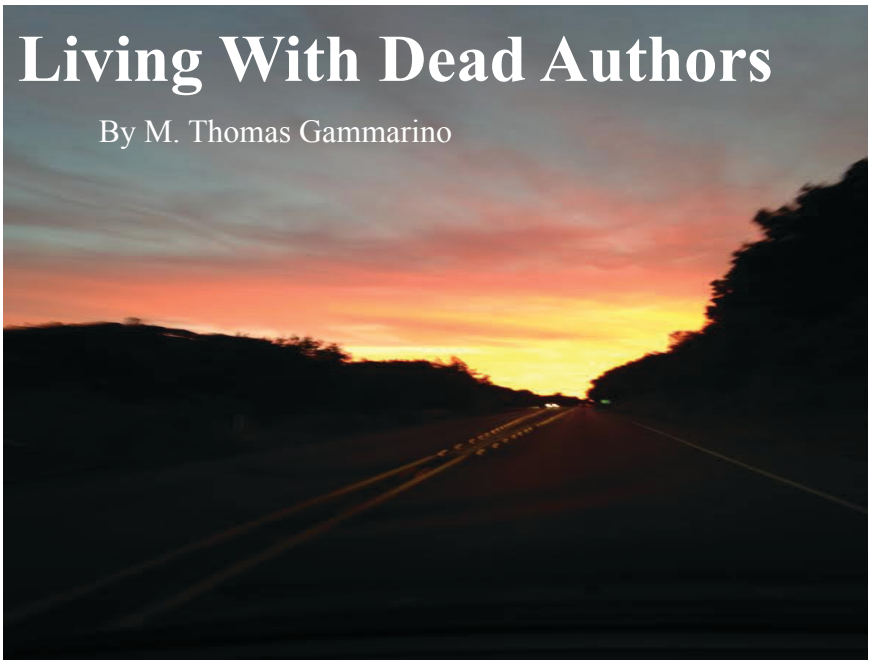
Do you remember the words we gave you? It was late, when the sky had turned black and the shy stars had just begun to emerge. We had built a fire—admittedly, with some difficulty. We wrote and read poetry, our words melting in the flames and carried by the smoke, hopefully up to your ears. I'd like to think that you heard them, and sent (in gratitude) the man, or the dark watcher, or whatever name you choose to call him. He came in a flurry of liquid amber and broken glass, but we didn't mind. I think the policemen scared him away, but I promise they meant well.

And oh glorious, evasive, odyssey-ian Nepenthe! We will reach your shores one day. But for now, we shall settle in your crevices, California, of crisscrossed routes and broken mirrors, of mossy fallen tree trunks and thick canopies. We will soften under your ebony keys that sing out those improvisational lazy, linking, jazzy blues and we will dance along the sunny side of the street. We will gaze up at your books that are twine-bound to the ceiling and smile at your Swedish men who strum old banjos and guitars and we will remember you always.

Thank you.

Living With Dead Authors

By M. Thomas Gammarino



Sunset / Pete Barraza

My brother-from-another-mother—let's call him Pedro—loves John Steinbeck.

You with me so far?

I think you are, but let's slow down. In fact, let's unpack that sentence for the rest of this essay. And let's bypass "brother-from-another-mother," which is just me putting some English on "dear friend."

What I want to subject to the microscope is that last bit: the perfectly ordinarily and stupefyingly extraordinary statement that my friend Pedro "loves" John Steinbeck, a man he never met, indeed who *died* several years before Pedro was born. Let's be clear: John Steinbeck was a human being with birth coordinates of Salinas, California, 1902 and death coordinates of New York City, 1968. In between those coordinates, he wrote what is widely regarded as some of the greatest literature the United States has ever produced. My friend Pedro's birth coordinates are Los Angeles, 1971—a few hours drive in space, but an eternity away in time—which is to say, Pedro never met John Steinbeck, and never will.

Except that he did, via the latter's work. And of course that's probably what you've been thinking all along: *Quit being dense. When you say, "Pedro loves John Steinbeck," we all know you mean that he loves the works of John Steinbeck. Duh.*

There's that, yes. I think there's more than just that actually, but first things first.

I wasn't there when Pedro discovered John Steinbeck. I'm sure he's told me about it—it's his superhero origin story, after all—but I forget. Let's say it was in high school. Let's say Pedro hated reading as a kid, as I did, and then in his sophomore or junior year, his teacher, who may or may not have been a little bit cooler than all of the other teachers Pedro had been subjected to up to that point, assigned *Cannery Row* or *Of Mice and Men* or *The Grapes of Wrath*, and a week later, on a sunny Tuesday afternoon, Pedro finally put down his volleyball, poured himself some lemonade, and took his copy of whichever why-do-I-have-to-read-this novel it was out to the table in the yard and fed the first sentence to his adolescent brain. And do you know what happened then? The yard disappeared. Pedro wasn't there anymore. Instead he was riding Steinbeck's voice—demotic enough to speak to him, poetic enough to speak to who he could become—and in an instant Pedro was transported to other coordinates in space-time, and into other bodies too, other *realities*, some a little bit like his, most not.

It might have gone like that. That's how it was with me and Kurt Vonnegut, give or take the volleyball.

Or maybe Pedro didn't "get" Steinbeck at first. Maybe it took some practice and a teacher's handholding. That was my experience with the Irish writer James Joyce—I spent a whole quarter reading his formidable *Ulysses* in college—but once Joyce got his hold on me, he never let go. To be sure, I *love* James Joyce, and he's been dead for even longer than John Steinbeck.

In any event, Steinbeck made Pedro grow. Pedro learned a bunch of stuff—about marine biology, the dispossessed, dogs, sentence structure. His curiosity flowered. His powers of empathy expanded. And not least of all, Steinbeck helped Pedro find his calling. Pedro was on his way home from law school one day when a bolt of lightning shot him from his horse and announced with a thunderous voice, "You must go forth and teach literature to high school kids! You must help them to expand as I once helped you!"

So now Pedro teaches high school, and he spreads the word about Steinbeck, and if I've made all of this sound quasi-religious, it's because I believe that it is. And this is the other "that" I've been meaning to get to. Yes, Pedro loves the work of John Steinbeck, but there's more to it than that, just as my love of Vonnegut or Joyce is about more than just the individual works themselves. What the both of us want to enshrine, I think, is not just the works but also something about the angles of vision that produced them—moral, poetic-but-insistently-real sensibilities that recognized in the world the exquisite beauty, pathos, fragility and interconnectedness of it all. Whatever the depravities of these writers' biographical lives might occasionally have been, it takes a kind of ascetic saintliness, and a seismographic sensitivity, to squeeze the hugeness and complexity of the world into mere squiggles on a page with such elegance and discipline; or as Joyce's alter-ego, Stephen Daedalus, puts it in Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man*: to be "a priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life."

If author-fandom amounts to a kind of secular church, then one of the perks is that it connects a whole global community of readers who might otherwise never

have met. Pedro's converted me into something of a Steinbeck fan over the six or so years of our friendship, and through him I've had the pleasures of talking Steinbeck with any number of hardcore enthusiasts. I've now had dinner twice with Susan Shillinglaw, professor at San Jose State and Director of The National Steinbeck Center. And a couple of summers back, Pedro and I hung out with Tom Steinbeck, John's son and an accomplished author in his own right, at his house in Santa Barbara. Alas, Tom's death coordinates turned out to be Santa Barbara, 2016.

Devout religious people don't just endlessly re-read their holy texts, of course. They go on pilgrimages. Which is why Pedro spent years taking busloads of students to see Steinbeck's house in Salinas, Doc's marine biology lab and Lee Chong's Market on Cannery Row, and the Pastures of Heaven, among other Steinbeck holy sites.

A few summers ago, Pedro took me on that pilgrimage. I flew into LAX from Honolulu, where I live. We rented the cheapest car we could and made the journey from Santa Monica to Monterey over the course of a few days. Our first stop was Santa Barbara. It was Fiesta time, so we went to a couple of parties and ate some of the best Mexican food I've ever had. We knew some people who'd rented a house and offered to let us stay the night. And we very nearly did—that would have been the safe thing to do. But then we got quiet and listened to our souls quote Steinbeck: "we do not take a trip; a trip takes us…In this a journey is like marriage. The certain way to be wrong is to think you control it" (*Travels with Charley*); and Kerouac: "I was surprised, as always, by how easy the act of leaving was, and how good it felt. The world was suddenly rich with possibility" (*On the Road*); and a thousand other authors we loved.

So we took to the road, and as we made our way over the San Marcos Pass, the sun dipped beneath the horizon, and the sky filled with celestial sherbet. When it got dark, we put on some of our favorite jazz music. A bit later we took a piss off a cliff. Then we dropped by a restaurant for some apple pie à la mode. We didn't necessarily see God, but it was a lovely, windswept Friday night on the Pacific Coast Highway, and Pedro and I were alive.

Later, after several hundred contagious yawns, we learned that there wasn't a vacant room to be had south of the Bay Area, so, for want of any alternative, we pulled over at a truck stop, reclined our seats, and did our best to stretch out in that tiny car and get some shut-eye. We slept miserably, but I don't think either of us regretted leaving that Santa Barbara party house. It hadn't been our decision at all really: our minds were made up of dead authors, and dead authors had made up our minds.

Private Property / Katie Osaki

Las Pasturas del Cielo
By Emma Ware

Going West

By Katie Hoover

California. What comes to mind are all things golden: sunsets, beaches, rolling hills, the famous, and actual gold. This particular word has the capacity to conjure such strong feelings for Californians and non-Californians alike. It captures a dream-like place for those foreign, endless days of sun where dreams become realities: "The image is one where prosperity and happiness can be had effortlessly, without labor - an image of easy pleasure under endlessly sunny skies" (Maasik). But this golden haze can obscure the unpleasant for those unfamiliar with the state, as even the epitome of the West and its progression is not perfect. California itself is a dichotomy, a place where immigrants and migrants go to find the ultimate good life, to live next to where the sun sets. California is the end of the American continent, and as the dreamers who move here know, a place where the American Dream can die, or for the lucky few, be realized to its full potential. The fascination with and aspiration to reach this golden land is analyzed throughout all forms of art, but it is perhaps most prominently found in literature, especially in the works of John Steinbeck, arguably California's most revered writer. The rolling picturesque hills of the Salinas Valley, the rugged shores around Monterey Bay, no matter what the beautiful landscape is, Steinbeck's settings carry the stories of common folk, backdrops for their struggles, hardships, and every-day lives. Through his works, Steinbeck is able to capture the experiences of those migrating in search of a better life, hoping to find some kind of haven.

When I was a child, my first California book was not *The Pearl* or *The Red Pony.* Instead, it was a book called *Our California*, a collection of vibrant illustrations depicting some of the most important California cities, with short rhymes about their environment, culture, history and weather. Though a simple format intended for children, for me it reinforced just how special California is, how vast and diverse, how rich all of the land and culture is within this American anomaly. Since reading of California's abundance in that children's book, I have been fortunate to experience more than just the "Hollywood" that is too often synonymous with the glittery outside view of California. I have driven up the 5, through the Grapevine, stopped at Harris Ranch and Casa de Fruta on the way to Sacramento and Monterey. I have picked strawberries in Watsonville, hiked the John Muir Trail and the Trinity Alps in the north, skied in the Sierra Nevadas, done nothing in Ojai and Palm Springs, and explored San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Redding, and Sacramento, among other cities. I have even visited The National Steinbeck Center in Salinas. These memories from each place are as distinct as those from different states and different countries, and have only heightened the respect and intrigue that I have for the Golden State. As a native, I have become familiar with the complaints of smog, overcrowding, crazy liberals, drought and earthquakes. But as I have grown up and travelled to the many Californias of the state, the more I have been astounded by the fortune I have to live here. Not only is the terrain breathtaking and diverse, consisting of mountains and volcanoes, beaches and deserts, and lakes and forests, but the values

and politics preached are progressive unlike other parts of the United States. Through the works of John Steinbeck, the history, fascination, and struggles to make visions of California a reality have become more apparent to me. His works depict the land I know so well, but also the people who struggled to settle and establish it. While I was not completely naive of California's history before encountering Steinbeck's works, I was struck by the unpolished history of people that Steinbeck was conveying with works such as *Of Mice and Men*, *In Dubious Battle*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*.

California has always been a mashup of cultures, starting with the origins of its name. Its namesake is a paradisal island found in a 16th century romance novel, *Las Sergas de Esplandián* by Garci Rodríquez de Montalvo. The island was peopled by all black women and ruled by Queen Calafia, "very large in person, the most beautiful of all of them… and in her thoughts desirous of achieving great things" (Maasik). This name from literature is most likely what inspired multiple Spanish explorers, like Cortes, to give California its name. As the Spanish explorers were the first people besides Native Americans to explore and inhabit the future state, they were also the first to name it, making most of California singularly Spanish in name. However, the name California itself is not Spanish in origin, but instead Islamic. "Calafia" comes from the word "caliph," which is the Arabic word for leader. In the novel, Queen Calafia rules the island in the Indies, so it is likely the Spanish author used the Islamic term for leader to show that she was the caliph of "California." The origins of California's name parallel the diverse area it is today, which many times is more so than the U.S. as a whole. A variation of an Arabic word used in a Spanish text can only set up for more melting of cultures in this "land of the female caliph." The legend of Queen Calafia continues as it tells of the women owning pet griffins that they were able to control, and "being themselves quite a match for the griffins, they fed them with the men whom they took prisoners" (Maasik). Queen Calafia's tropical island of all women may have seemed like a paradise from afar to those who wanted to journey to it, but like the men who visited it found, California is not a paradise for all.

This same allure and disillusion is found throughout many of Steinbeck's works, particularly evident in *The Grapes of Wrat*h. As the Joad family prepared for their journey, and travelled Route 66, they constantly had the dream of having steady work, and white houses and orange trees once they arrived. They imagined that because they were told there was work everywhere, there would be so. But like the men imprisoned on the island of California, the Joad family found that California was not perfect, instead finding labor strikes due to low wages, criminals, and little freedom.

Stemming from this legend, the California Dream is often thought of as a shinier version of the American Dream, propelled by those already in the land of the free, but unsatisfied, searching for an even more rose-colored version of life. That is where California comes in. Acquired by the United States through the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, California received an influx of fortune seekers soon after James Marshall spotted gold at Sutter's Mill near Sacramento. Though it was quickly realized that gold mining would not be a reliable way to make money for most fortune-seekers, migrants to California struck rich in other industries like agriculture, particularly with fruits like oranges. Steinbeck displays this thirst for the California Dream most sim-

ply in *Of Mice and Men*. Lennie and George weather the struggles of low-paying and high-energy work together, and sometimes a lack of it due to Lennie's uncontrollable temperament. But through it all, what keeps them going is the dream that someday they will own a little house in the country together, that someday they will raise animals and Lennie will take care of the rabbits, that someday they will make it. This perseverance keeps many dreamers moving more and more West, towards what will be the fulfillment of the golden promise. However, as Lennie and George eventually find, or do not find, there can be systematic discrimination that requires mountains of work and effort to get to the dream if you come to California starting with nothing. Striking gold may sound nice, but part of the wonder of it is that it is accidental, not planned or prepared for or earned. And, even the most planned for and protected success can all go away as accidentally as striking rich.

In Steinbeck's first California novel, *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932), Richard Whiteside came to California because he knew, felt, that this state, particularly the valley known as Las Pasturas del Cielo, was where he was going to build his house and craft his family dynasty. But despite his careful deliberations in choosing a wife and raising a son and presenting his house as the focal point of the valley's social and political life, his wife was not meant to bear children, his son had no interest in staying in the valley, and his house, it burned down, along with his dream. No matter the magnitude of this disillusion, the continuity of the dream is exponentially great, luring more and more people into California, and shaping its uniquely western society. There is clear reason why people move here, as they long to have their dreams fulfilled to match the Edenic land - and Steinbeck is the one who illustrates this longing, everyone's dream and desire to unlock the wishes of California.

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The Lone Cypress Tree

By Anum Damani

I reside by the ocean,
Intertwined with whistling winds,
And wedged inside the crevices of bulky, granite rocks.
The loud crashes of the treacherous waves
Resonate through my liberated mind
While the lone cypress tree remains a mystery.
Perched on the edge of the elevated cliff in the distance,
Tilted towards the endless blue sea,
A little cypress tree is all it'll ever be.
Lonesome and tranquil,
Occasionally gifted by a droplet of salty mist.
I envy its fierce stance and unwithering leaves
And unceasing loyalty to the fertile land,
As I drown in the constant noise of ruthless tourists—
The stomping of bulky boots against the golden dirt,
Frequent camera clicks and blinding flashes,
And abandoned wrappers accepted by the seafoam.

Solitude / Dustin Morris

I remember sitting on a cliff in Point Lobos, admiring the jagged waves down below while silently writing a poem called "The Lone Cypress Tree." The sole sounds of my pencil against the smooth paper and the constant crashing of the waves created the most soothing environment in which I could write my literary piece.

-Anum Damani

Splash / Katie Osaki

Around the Campfire / Dylan Ollivier

Crossing

By Tom Malmgren

When I finally arrived back home, after the SYI trip was over, I didn't want to clean my jacket. It had taken on a very strong scent of wood smoke after the last night of the trip, but I didn't want to wash it off. I knew that I couldn't go around smelling like a bonfire forever, but I had this strong urge to preserve my memories of the trip for as long as possible. I didn't want to eat dinner, because I knew it would displace the flavors of barbecue and lime custard I imagined still lingered on my tongue. I was most afraid that, back in Santa Monica, all the ideas that I had been exposed to over the trip — about nature, man, writing — would trickle out of my mind until none were left. Of course I was wrong. The things I learned on this trip are far too meaningful to forget after a few days.

In several moments throughout the trip, I felt truly in awe, sometimes at the wisdom of the people we met, other times at the ancient power of the sea, always at the strange air of importance permeating that whole region of coastline, from San Luis Obispo to Monterey. After a year of college applications and a constant focus on myself and my future, being dwarfed by the magnitude and power of the natural world was a refreshing, almost revelatory experience. Learning about Robinson Jeffers' philosophy of uncentering oneself only contributed to what became, for me, the central abstraction of the trip — stepping back and looking outward, away from myself, towards a focus larger than any one individual.

I was particularly captivated by the ocean. I've never been a water person, I don't go to the beach very often, and I've always preferred forests and deserts over the shoreline. This California Coast was different, however. With Steinbeck and Jeffers already in the back of my mind, the sea seemed to represent the natural world as a whole: powerful, relentless, cyclical, vulnerable. To see how the water had patiently and ceaselessly sculpted the stony land over thousands upon thousands of years was interesting from a scientific perspective, but also remarkable, almost unsettling, from a philosophical point of view. Suddenly my human lifespan was a very insignificant thing; the entirety of human history, to which I have devoted most of my intellectual energy, only a brief interlude in the history of the sea. I'm still not sure whether to feel calm or upset in the face of this truth, but in either case, it has changed my perspective of the world.

Lobos Point

By Cy Gilman

The sea doesn't give a fuck about your
poetry, Mr. Jeffers;
nor your music, Mr. Debussy.

The land isn't asking for your adulation,
Mr. Steinbeck;
nor your wonder, Mr. Adams.

All you misty-eyed romantics
shouting to the hilltops and praying to
the water;
questioning our relationship with nature
and offering plenty of relationship
advice.

How we scorn the world
by giving it a face!

How we pretend
that the moon-round pools
dyed red and yellow
are anything
but chemical reactions
acid-base transmission of ions
differently hued oxidations;

How we pretend
that the poetic beauty of furious extru
sions
of hanging, dripping seaweed
are anything
but math
grand geometries
curved trajectories and parallel lines;

How we pretend
that the jagged edges
the sweeping cliffs
are anything
but tectonics
twisted layers
at the intersection of continents
drifting along trails blazed by the trans
fer of heat
deep inside the earth's heart
not beating but not still;
that these twisted layers
are beaten back and worn
by anything
but the incessant in-out of the tides,
mindlessly following the cyclical pull of
the sun and moon
and the whirling of our own planet
hurtling around its orbit through the
cosmos.

How can we imagine a ghost in the
machine
when the machine is there in front of us
whirring, clicking, grinding,
carving the world all by itself?

Cy / Dustin Morris

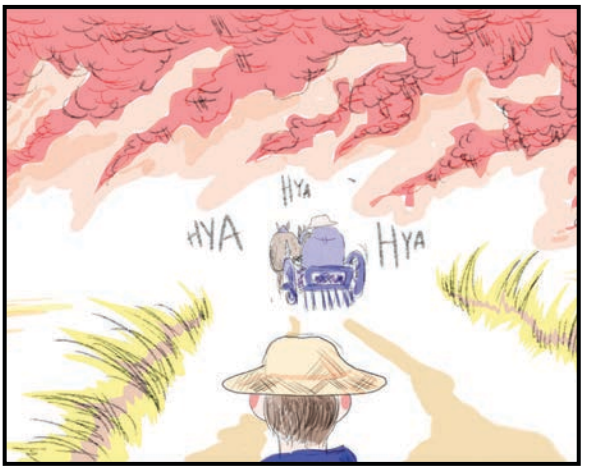
This year's trip was a scatter plot of an adventure. From driving in the pouring rain up to Santa Barbara to dropping off the map on the way to the Dubost Ranch, it felt like the digressional roadmap synonymous to the short story cycle of The Pastures of Heaven. Some plots, like visiting the Tor House and returning to Point Lobos for a "hike," were the same and better than remembered. Others were surprising and highly enjoyable like visiting the Henry Miller Library and stopping in at the Salvador Dalí museum. Every plot was one to remember and was easily defined as single moments on our trip.

-Katie Osaki

Mail Mill / Xander Lee

Endless Tracks

A Graphic Novel By Kimi Holsapple




HYA!!
HYA
HYA
HYA
HYA

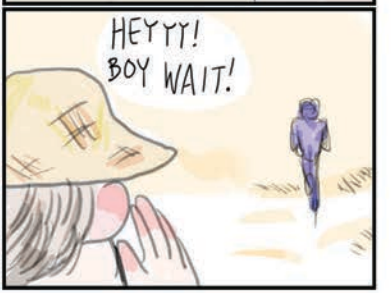

BILLY!!
There's a letter for you. Just came today. I thought maybe ya ought want to read it


Seemed urgent...
thanks


*Pause


Mr. Wallace, Something very serious has come up that I must attend to. I don't think you will see me again. I'm sorry to leave with all this unfinished work


Please tell the boss I will not be returning. I'm going to go get my stuff now as I must catch a train immediately


HEYYY! BOY WAIT!


STATION
TRAIN
MONTEREY
WHOOOSH


SPLASH!!
STATION
. . .

Forest Light / Tom Malmgren

571 Days Ago

By Chloe Gottlieb

I procrastinated writing this reflection. Maybe that sounds lazy, or detached even, but in fact it's quite the opposite. Because if there's one thing I've learned on these trips, it's that writing something down makes it permanent. Tangible. And if I started to write a reflection and started looking back, it would mean the big, towering end had arrived. I think I am still hesitant about goodbyes.

571 days ago Steinbeck was a dead white guy who, during his lively career, wrote a few books I liked. 570 days ago and "Steinbeck" had become etched into the fabric of who I was. Yes, I did the math seeing how long ago the first SYI trip was, and yes I consider Steinbeck a part of myself. But I don't mean this in the canonical sense—rather, Steinbeck is synonymous with friendship, adventure, and even Truth or Dare. This is what I think of when I hear Steinbeck. Perhaps tragically, his literary gifts fall second to the experience the youth institute has been. Should I grow up to be a wildly fantastic and well-

off writer, please don't tell anyone about my valuing the escapade over the books. To be fair, I doubt I'm alone in feeling so. (However, should I grow up to be a wildly fantastic explorer and traveler à la Indiana Jones, please don't tell anyone about my valuing of books whatsoever).

Looking through my journal from the trip, I can still smell the smoky aroma from the bonfire. This isn't a Proustian metaphor, but rather the literal drawback of having paper that absorbs everything, from ink to ash. I'm so thankful for the smell that first burned my eyes because it reminds me of Katie Hoover's badass Girl Scout skills, tearing up at the poetry read aloud that night, and running *towards* the police so that Kimi could recite verses that would move even Officer Krupke. Looking through the journal, I also see notes scrawled out, ones I only recognize as my own due to the illegible handwriting that accompanies van travel. What I wrote about varied in tune with the diverse experiences; from Borat to Cathy Ames, to re-reading quotes I credited to "Tom," confused as to the context in which Tom Malmgrem or Tom Xu would have said such a thing only to realize I originally meant Thomas Steinbeck (the third person on our trip to share that first name).

These notes in the Moleskine, some to myself, others to Caoimhe or Emma or whoever I felt the insatiable need to communicate with at the time, make me feel like I've discovered the immortal elixir too many fantasy novels revolve around. I read a line and suddenly I'm back, ankle deep in tide pools, trying to impress Elan with my Great White Shark knowledge (which is next to nothing, but that never stopped me before). Or a few pages before, and I'm talking to Owen about how the mountains and hills look like dinosaur footprints. A couple paragraphs later I'm drinking coffee in Ed Ricketts' lab, taking photos of the player piano with Dustin.

I flip through again and I'm standing on Montaña de Oro learning about how the continents are moving as quickly as a fingernail grows and how one day the very Californian land we stand on will wind up near Alaska. I didn't say it at the time, but all I could think about was the fact that these places (and even the memories) are impermanent, and that no matter how hard I tried to write it all down and photographically remember it, there was a futility in trying to hold on too tight. John would encourage non teleological thought here, tell me the now is all we have. Call it naivety or wishful thinking or disrespect, but I think Mr. Steinbeck missed out not having had his own SYI. If he did, the past would be too lovely, too eccentric, too full of togetherness, that he never would've obsessed with "is-thinking." As for myself, my eyes are not focused entirely on the past nor present, but rather the future. The vineyard is calling our names.

At Hopkins

By Ryu Akiba

Angry waves enter
A ravine exposed by tides
Accelerating.
Into the narrow fissures
Pounding the mussels
Pounding the old, strong granite
Threatening to tear
The anemone away.

But slightly deeper
The sudden flow is welcome.
Patches of sponges
Colonies of tunicates
Delighted by food
Gladly filtering away.

Hiding up above
Where waves only sometimes lick
Barnacles hold watch.
The periodical tides
Swell from storms afar
Lonely rogue waves crashing in

Energy gathered
Energy dissipated
Distributed among all.

Hopkins
By Emma Ware

If You Should Look for this Place on a Spring Morning

By Larissa Lim

If you should look for this place on a
Spring Morning,
you may feel spring showers
dampen your coat
dampen your hair until curls clump
dampen your eyebrows
dampen your eyelashes until each is
coated in raindrops
dampen your boots
then dampen your socks
through cotton fibers,
The spring showers may surprisingly
permeate to your toes
These boots were made for walkin'
but they hail from a discount store in
Your Town
where the little red tag said, "I'm not
made to receive the dark, loamy earth
on which these spring showers soak!"
They surprised me with their stubborn-
ness to soak me in Salinas.

The Tor House surprised me
when I bumped my head on a stone in
the wall
and my recovering head looked up to see
a stone in the wall from an ancient
pyramid
stuck in the wall and collected from
ventures and more often, catalogs
If you should look for this place on a
Spring Morning,
look for a surprise.
We may see what we wish to see.

Pfeiffer Beach / Pete Barraza

Broken Keys / Kyla Walker

Mid-morning at Pfiefer Beach

By Benjamin Brode

Natural Beauty / Dustin Morris

First Awakenings

By Caoimhe McGurrin

As Kimi's thunderous sobs echoed through the parking lot on the night of our return, I was reminded of the old man at the Robinson Jeffers Tor House. His beard curled into a puffy cloud that his bottom lip enjoyed frolicking over as he recited endless verses about the beautiful rugged landscape. He fit into the house as perfectly as one of its many stacked stones. The only thing more thickly knit than his eyebrows was his sweater, serving him well when a conversation about Ireland ended in a fitting rainstorm that left everybody, save him, slightly cold. As I tried to comfort Kimi from her own sort of self-induced rainstorm, the same damp coldness from Tor House came over me again. On the ride home, my dad asked me how the trip was and I could barely blubber a word before the welling of water in my eyes became so heavy as to tip me onto the dashboard of the car. With my mini sobs muffled by the dashboard, my dad looked over at me and immediately understood my opinion of the trip from my "No otter place like it!" First Awakenings t-shirt. I felt as though I fit into the stories, the late nights, the poetry, the laughter, the crying, the whole experience, just as well as the stones of Tor House fit together.

The best part of the trip was watching Kimi scream poetry at the cops. That event encapsulates everything I loved most about the trip. It was the perfect mix of order and freedom. As the trip unraveled, it felt less like a school trip and more like what I want my entire life to be. The thought of hearing Gail Steinbeck talk was already exciting, but I didn't expect to be laughing hysterically from her comments about "women-loving men," or covering my tomato red face after her rendition of "happy birthday" to me when it was most certainly not my birthday. This pattern repeated itself everywhere we went (the topping expectations part- not the birthday part- although that did repeat way too many times). My imagination could never top the reality because everything that happened became more real and more awesome as the trip continued. Every field was more green than the last, every calamari appetizer better than the previous one, and every game of mafia more terrifying than the last (you think you can trust someone and then they murder you and all your friends in various types of "freak water accidents"). The freedom to explore anything and everything in a group of highly motivated funny people was amazing. The time set aside to just sit and create whatever came to mind was extraordinarily liberating. The stunning landscapes and the characters in them made me understand Steinbeck's love of place. Every new place had something to offer, whether it was the warm glow of Ed Ricketts' lab, the clicking of the shy crabs in the tide pools, or an impromptu performance at the Henry Miller Library. Even driving in the vans felt important, as staring out a window on a long drive can engender some of the best mind-wandering known to Mankind.

I hope the next SYI group finds the same motivated rhythm of our trip. You could have a conversation with anyone about anything, whether it was *East of Eden*- themed, or simply about how horrible the Filipino men's diving team was in the last Olympics. I hope the group of scholars will want to learn and have a good time in good company as much as we did. My appreciation for the adults on this trip is endless. They truly set a tone of excitement and trust that made it feel like we were one big group instead of a bunch of kids and three adults. The 'go with the flow' feel made the whole experience seem like a very meaningful 70s hippy bus road trip. Overall, this experience has been something that my cinnamon roll-craving belly and I will never forget. I hope that the thunderous sobs of returning SYI students will be heard for years to come.

Contemplation / Tom Malmgren

When we first arrived at Point Lobos, I had different expectations to what we got to explore. I took a few moments to let everyone get ahead and sat down by the rocks to attempt to write something. Instead, I put my pencil down and decided to finally let out this breath I had been holding in for so long. Nature is undefeated. There is so much out there, and being able to see and hear the ocean with no traffic around, is unmatched. I felt like nature smiled back at me during those moments.

-Darwin Luna

Feeling_1

By Darwin Luna

This ocean made me think of you,
Rich, light, blue, loud and smooth
No cars in sight, no overflow of tourists
Only the overflow of water
The craters of rock around me are quiet,
Attempting to mimic their siblings who are quite opposites.

This ocean made me think of you,
Loud, then quiet. Free, yet restricted
Never afraid to make noise,
or surprise a passerby with a memory to last a lifetime
The birds fly in. They walk, they talk
But just like you, they fly away only to never come back

This ocean made me think of you,
I was there. I saw the birds land, and I saw them go
Away, away, away
Never have I felt closer to the birds
Since you left, I've struggled
But just like the memories of the birds, I always knew you'd be back
Back for me. Today and every day of my life since your departure
Until my time at the rocks is over, and I too fly away

Time is a Strange Thing

By Kimi Holsapple

In the moment you blink your eyes you could be blind to a whole eon flitting by. While, the levity of a single word can take decades, centuries, a geological lifetime to bubble up like spring water, clawing up from the dirt, and soak back into the earth to be understood.

But at least, as insignificant as it is, we have some measure of control over time through our memories. Memories of pebbled beaches, with clumped kelp like spaghetti tangled with feathers and debris up along the wrack line, and noisy seabirds chanting in beat to the ocean smashing itself against old rocks. Good memories that rack your lungs. The ones that make your eyes water and cramp your insides with the good gut pain of laughter as you wheeze like a heavy chain smoker auditioning for the role of Carmen. Memories of friends who love you and you'd stand by them no matter what, and of the good food you shared with them, giving you that full heart and racing stomach like you're on a roller coaster.

The SYI trip is one such moment in time that will seem to live on. When I'm cold I'll touch my lips and feel their blueness, recalling the cutting wind during our poetry reading around a bonfire, and my heart will feel warm. And when I'm lonely, I'll think of the solitary sea worms burrowing in their dark undersea holes, their world so small, as I tramped over them helping Dr. Gilly (to us just "Gilly"), and how much it meant to me when Gilly helped me look for a sea cucumber. And when I'm stubborn and prideful, I'll remember Magnus and his guitar singing softly of a Lion who still rules the Barranca. And when I cry, I'll laugh at how many of us, giddy with exhaustion, could fit in a single hotel room, and how quickly we all came to inhabit the space. And when I'm angry I'll see the green hills, the *heavenly* light, and the calm faces of a dozen curious cows picking their noses with their long pink tongues. And when I feel hungry--well--that's self-explaining.

So thank you truly, and although this is no means a sum, it is an honest attempt to capture these cherished moments. My SYI family is irreplaceable, along with those kind and passionate people who touched my life during the trip--I know these will always stay with me.

Reach / Kimi Holsapple

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(see website for bios)

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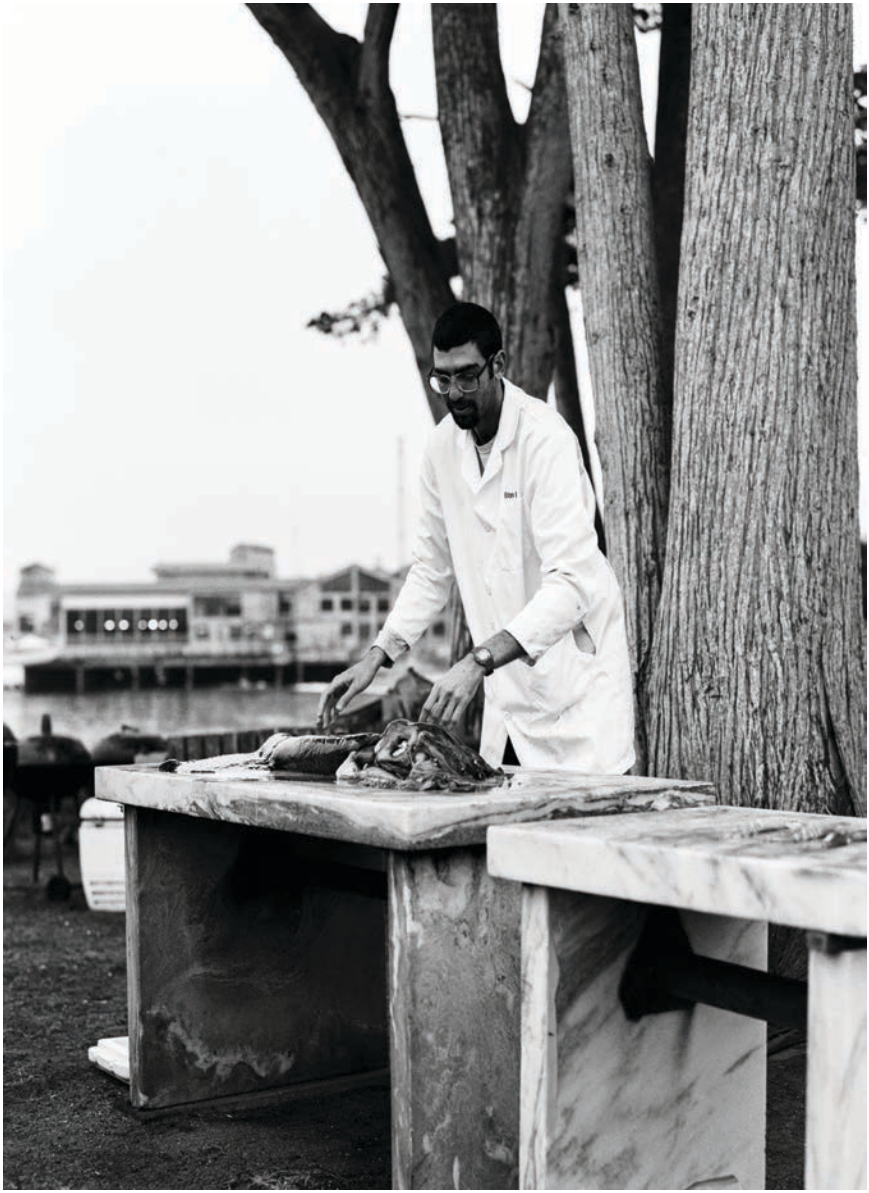

Elan / Xander Lee

Gilly's Squid / Xander Lee