



THE  
FIELDSTONE  
REVIEW

ISSUE 5, 2012



# the fieldstone review

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## Note from the Editor

Josh-Wade Ferguson

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I hope that this edition of the *Fieldstone Review* is as exciting and refreshing for you as it was for all of us here. We are particularly excited about this edition because it is both the Fieldstone's first special edition and it is also our return to print. It has been a lot of fun – mixed with serious dedication – to get this journal back on its feet. I must say, none of this would be possible if it wasn't for the wonderful effort put in by the entire editorial staff. Jon deTombe, Adar Charlton, Jon Bath, Shakti Brazier-Tompkins, and Rob Imes have more than outdone themselves. I found myself awed by their devotion and creativity each and every time that we met to put this edition together.

This edition is brimming with literary delights. The poetry section offers varying poems that move from ecological issues, identity, and place, to whimsy and – much to my delight – swashes of Saskatchewan flavour. It is my hope that the prose section will engage and entertain you with the same fervour that it has me. There is enough existential angst and country-n-western to keep me sated for a while. I was surprised and pleased by the abundance of talented submissions we have received and I hope that these chosen pieces surprise and please you too.

We are also blessed here, at the University of Saskatchewan, to have recently started an MFA program in creative writing. This past year was the first year of the program, and, from what I have heard, it has been quite successful. We are lucky that our new coordinator is an old friend of the *Fieldstone* and she was kind enough to give us a few words. I highly recommend reading Jeannette Lyne's "Musing in Work Boots." I feel that she accesses the sense of literary community that we strive for here at the *Fieldstone Review*.

This experience has been wonderful, and I hope you enjoy what we have put together here for you.

All the best,  
Josh-Wade Ferguson  
Editor in Chief

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POETRY



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### Musing in Work Boots

Jeanette Lynes

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Iconic singer-songwriter Joan Baez has said that when she writes songs, the words just “crawl down [her] sleeve and come out on the page.” In a similar vein, I’ve heard this or that fiction writer claim that once the story kicked in, it just ‘wrote itself.’ Or that the characters ran away with the story and the author became a mere conduit, a sort of secretary transcribing the movements and words of these upstarts formed from syllable and syntax, adjective, verb, and noun, who then leapt off the page. Such notions make writing sound easy and if the words slide down the songwriter’s sleeve and onto the page, I’m delighted for her as I am for *any* Fictionista whose characters step up to do the heavy lifting. For most of us, though, writing is hard work. There’s no auto-pilot, no cruise control, no real shortcut. If any of you editors, contributors, or readers of *The Fieldstone Review* has found a way for your story or essay or poem to ‘write itself,’ please Facebook me immediately. I want to know what computer program you’re using, or substance you’re smoking. If writing really, truly ‘wrote itself,’ wouldn’t there be many more writers? At the risk of coming off as gloomy, my own predisposition follows more closely along the lines of poet Louise Glück’s contention that “[t]he fundamental experience of the writer is helplessness.”

I don’t think this is as bad as it sounds. A sense of helplessness may impel us to get to work by triggering an enabling humility, a critical stance, or a feisty aggression towards the compositional task at hand. The first students in the new two-year MFA in Writing at the University of Saskatchewan are now working on the book-length projects that will be their theses in poetry, fiction, or creative non-fiction. My hunch is they won’t tell you writing is easy. Still, they write. There are stories to be told, poems to be penned, language to be mined, imagination to be tapped.

Magazines don’t ‘edit themselves,’ either. Putting together a magazine involves real labour and I commend the editors of *The Fieldstone Review* for bringing this publication back into the light again. It will provide a lovely venue for writers at the University of Saskatchewan and beyond. Writers need venues. Venues make us feel less helpless.

Notice that Louise Glück said “helplessness,” not “loneliness.” Yes, it can be lonely being a writer. But the editorial collective of *The Fieldstone Review* is an anti-lonely brigade, a community, hub, pre-emptive strike against isolation, just as being situated in a literary culture as rich and varied as Saskatchewan’s affords us an artistic home. Home is our stay against helplessness. If we have an artistic home, whether virtual, physical, metaphysical, or some combination thereof, we’re not entirely forsaken, over a literary barrel, up a compositional creek without a paddle. We share this home with others. *The Fieldstone Review* and all the intrepid writers at the University of Saskatchewan bear tangible witness to our collective labour; even as I type this, I can hear work boots thumping their determined daily paths along the floor to the writing desk.

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## Blood and Trees

Courtney Bates

I remember being told:  
 ink was once made with blood.  
 Turns out it was actually ashes,  
 but who is to decide where skin  
 ends and blood begins?  
 I can see blood oozing over bark  
 – human or tree?  
 Isn't it ironic that we preserve  
 our words in blood on the trees,  
 our trees in blood for our words.  
 What wound do words open,  
 gushing onto the page?  
 Language that both gives breath and brings death,  
 like blood.  
 Is it the tree or the blood that survives?  
 Or do they carry each other,  
 piggy-backing across fire, floods, and time.  
 Can I put my hands on this tree,  
 here,  
 and divine meaning  
 from Brailled bark,  
 fingertips catching on rough slivers,  
 leaving their blood mark.  
 Eventually, we all wish to end as trees.  
 Baucis and Philemon, dead at the same moment,  
 but living intertwined.

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## A Shining Light

Cory Baumgardner

A shining light amidst the shadow of “discovery,”  
there came on tides of blue and grey  
fresh death of stories lost to all recovery,  
veiled by “seize the day.”

Histories laid to “rest” in porcelain tombs,  
there came The Pale Hand that wrote  
*The History*, stifling colonial gaze,  
the stories of those who arrived by boat.  
“This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine.”

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## Saskatoon 2020 A.D.

Gary Chappell

my tears land  
unnoticed  
on the clean sheets  
in room three-oh-four  
I vacuum, change the towels  
disinfect the tub and sink  
new soap, glasses  
on to three-oh-six  
treadmill job, a flat in the slums  
with my two sons  
thirteen and eleven  
rooms too small to breathe  
their friends with knives  
baseball bats and no ball  
the street the only game  
where admission is free  
each morning I walk to work  
past River Landing's new art gallery  
see the Mercedes parked in front  
eight dollars to go in  
last night we saw the fireworks show  
at the river, so many colours  
no charge, everyone was welcome  
like when we go to the food bank  
sometimes I watch lazy lovers  
on the grass near the Bessborough  
they walk the river path, point at yellow  
kayaks in their whitewater heaven  
my boss lives in a condo village with a gate  
hydro-turbines in the weir  
heat the hot-tub in his back yard  
not the shower water in my flat  
mud sturgeon and suckers swim at the weir  
the fish ladder helps them climb  
out of their trap, to a better place  
where is the ladder for me?

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## The Prize Cat

Merrill Edlund

*a mash up poem inspired by E.J. Pratt*

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1973

*Analyze the poem she said*

I was an optimistic poet studying Canadian Poetry

I searched for answers in the stacks of the library periodical room

no google god would save me

I observed "*The Prize Cat demonstrates an instant reversal to primal nature in a pet that has*

*been tamed and comes from a pure blood line.*"<sup>1</sup>

Held my hand high "*The human race is primal and uses instinctive needs as well as ethics in*

*order to survive and progress.*"<sup>2</sup>

"No it's not about that!" a *sudden sharp assault.*

"Could it not also be about human relationships?" I said *gentility was in the fur.*

"Is that the best you can do?" *she gleamed.*

"*Though it pertains to a prize-tabby yet it also applies to the most cultivated of the humanspecies, male and female.*"<sup>3</sup>

"No, you are wrong!" *the jungle strains within the cells and in veins of her throat.*

"Certainly there are different levels of meaning in the poem?" I said *soft-mannered, musical in purr.*

"You are wrong! It refers to Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia just before the Second World War."

Her eyes rolled back in a trance and *caught me on the wing.*

"You. Get out!" *anger ever arched her back.* "Get out of my class!"

"*The sudden assault implies colossal powers uncontrolled and irresistible— not just out there in*

*the external world but here, close by, inside the domestic cat and within our own civilized self.*"<sup>4</sup>

From behind the desk came *the leap so furtive-wild.*

"Why don't you just go home and have babies!" she hissed.

And crying *like an Abyssinian child had cried out in the whitethroat's scream.*

That's exactly what I did.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mensch, Fred, 1972, *Aspects of Heroism and Evolution in Some Poems by E.J. Pratt*. Univ. of Lethbridge. A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts. P 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from: The Prize Cat: Annotations Box 7, no. 60. On his life and Poetry 95, [www.trentu.ca/faculty/pratt/poems/annotations/134annotations.html](http://www.trentu.ca/faculty/pratt/poems/annotations/134annotations.html) .

<sup>4</sup> MacDonald, R. D., 1995, *E.J. Pratt: Apostle of the Techno/Corporate Culture?* Canadian Poetry 37, p. 17-41. Retrieved from: <http://canadianpoetry.org/volumes/vol37/macdonald.html>.

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## Modi says Hello

Milton P. Ehrlich

Addicted to absinthe  
and hashish,  
Modigliani  
was a troubled soul.  
Impoverished in Paris  
before the war,  
he lived without running water  
and moved whenever  
the rent was due.  
He roamed the streets  
in drunken squalor,  
desperate to sell his art  
for a drink.  
He clowned around  
with razor-sharp wit,  
meningitis eyes  
and sparkling lips.  
Incensed by anti-Semitism  
in France,  
he'd take off his pants,  
and dance naked  
on caf tables to show  
he was circumcised.  
Painfully aware  
of the Royalists' role  
in the Dreyfus Affair,  
he'd gaze intently  
in to the eyes of a bourgeois  
and greet him  
with a blazing surprise:  
"Hello, I am Modigliani;  
I am a Jew."

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### Light fingered (Once a thief)

dee Hobsbawn-Smith

She reads the news online,  
the latest heists, secrecy  
liberated, documents freed  
from government vaults, seniors separated  
from savings. It sounds so effortless  
compared to an inhuman being in black balaclava waving  
a gun, running out with millions,  
bodies in his wake like jetsam. Actual  
theft, so physical,  
compared to cyber-stealing, flaming  
texts illuminating the wrong face,  
blue-bell computer screens  
broadcasting glorified gangsters,  
barracuda bugs clandestinely recording every show she watches,  
every tiptoe through the illicitness  
of chatrooms and online porn.  
The real future as a crook  
is online, look ma, no hands.  
Today she catches herself  
pouring the extra glass of wine at dinner,  
the afternoon's uncounted  
cookie and espresso, the coffee cake's last slice, accumulating,  
psychic weight made manifest.  
Her oesophagus can't contain it all, valving  
open, gas reminding her. And she remembers  
the bulge of purloined earrings  
chiming together, secreted under her narrow teenage waistband,  
past the oblivious clerk,  
remembers too the stealthy slide of surreptitious fluids  
down his thigh onto her palm,  
as she rode home late one night  
in her best friend's boyfriend's car.

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### Life Under the War Memorial Bandstand: An Amputated Labour Day Sonata

Holly Keeler

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#### *Seasonal Washrooms:*

*Open: First of May*

*Hours: 9:00am to 10:00pm*

*Closed: Labour Day Evening*

A sign with so many colons,  
I didn't know  
bathrooms existed here.  
I sit on the bandstand  
barefoot and superior  
writing poems extolling  
war dead, people peeing  
beneath me. Signs, labels  
separate the sexes.  
Men, shown with pants  
women, the dress  
Ladies to the last. Behaviour,  
curbed to suit the image.  
Latrine land for men  
means, no privacy.  
Real men have no problems  
Showing off their dicks and  
Dying for their country  
Rosie left  
to screw the nuts  
back home. Anything for the war  
effort. Death by gun  
Is now an equal opportunity,  
So, you would think  
they would put doors  
in the men's shitter,  
equality only goes so far.  
As a woman, in my enclosed  
cubical, the only blood  
I spill is when I change  
a tampon, and...*Who*  
*cleans this place anyway?*  
Tomorrow, this place will close  
But for today,  
I write a poem  
And flush a toilet.

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## The Refuge of a Hill Town

Mercedes Lawry

Drowsy men in piazzas wait for their souls  
to step forward. I come quiet as winter,  
bereft of stories and caution.  
The blue hills keep my eyes.  
I'll go nowhere for a long while.  
The arduous ways of time  
steeped in sage and warm lemon.  
The salted fish, brown potatoes,  
small cracked cup of weak tea.  
No one prays out loud. No avenue  
of birds, or lovers waiting by the gate,  
that eagerness not even a memory, or page  
in a dusty book. There must be knives,  
there are always knives when the night  
turns grim and somebody cannot bear the truth  
and so becomes the lie, as if that will change  
his bones to gold. Dinner is served  
at a regular hour under the stars,  
which even the blind can carry deep in their pockets,  
letting their fingers trace the shape  
so as not to pierce their skin,  
releasing pills of blood, startlingly red.

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## Cut

Nico Mara-McKay

Fat yellow roses  
Sip from a jar  
Baby's breath and greenery  
Accentuate golden knots  
And grape heavy heads tilt  
Toward a moment –  
When the question of god  
Becomes unnecessary

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## Brooklyn, 1952

Dave Margoshes

We board the bus together,  
me first, so I take  
the first empty seat,  
there's plenty more further back  
but that's the one she wanted.

Me 10, 11, innocent  
as a certain lamb.

I don't even notice her  
till she's pausing beside  
me, glaring down, grey-haired,  
grandmotherly. "Kike,"  
she spits, lumbers on.  
The bus trembles.

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## I spy a pair of eyes: a riddle

Cassidy McFadzean

This creature is hidden behind walls,  
concealed in confines clasped tightly shut,  
or whisked away in wheels and hutch.  
A pair of eyes inside steel slots,  
peer into mine, pupils brightened  
black as onyx, an unblinking stare.  
I touch a tuft of tangled fur,  
long hairs flecked with fleas and dirt,  
a tail flicking teeming flies  
from scuffed hooves, hard as stones.  
I see such pale nostrils flared  
smelling soured piss on matted hair,  
the grating wet with waste and gore,  
or poison methane masking air.  
Still, I discern two docked ears  
through tiny cracks carved in the wall  
and hear the moans, muffled and dull,  
the clang of cage, the cold, hard metal,  
and two dark pupils placed on me.

ANSWER: livestock in truck

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## **Pigeon on a London Street**

Charlie Peters

The bobble-headed pigeons of London  
saunter around because they own the place,  
I shuffle out of the tube and stare wrinkle-eyed  
as the collared shirts and pressed skirts  
flowing around me fold their foreheads  
at me, I see it, and know suddenly  
that I am a child to them; as are  
the children of London, I am fascinated  
by the pigeons, imitating their pecking trot  
without thinking. “Like a silly child, this foreigner”  
say the eyes of this world city  
and my colonial t-shirt gaze is ashamed  
because there are no pigeon feet on cobblestone  
in Saskatoon.

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## Heather

Hilary Sideris

Miss Mather called  
me Heather all  
first grade. My bully  
brother named me  
Floor. You dwell  
in subpar, marshy  
soil: who'd think  
your creeping  
grayish stem  
could break into  
this violet spike  
& bell-shaped *flor*?

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## Dandelion

Hilary Sideris

The jagged edges  
of your leaf explain  
your name, *dent*  
*de lion*, also known  
as Pastor's Crown,  
Swine Snout. Humid  
Indiana afternoons,  
blowing your gray seeds  
out like cake candles,  
I'd count the souls,  
like it or not, I'd bring  
into this world.

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## enough

Greg Stacey

“thin sun”  
she liked that.  
what else did I say to her,  
that I “just can’t understand the ability to become something.”  
this was my poetry teacher.  
this was a poetry class.  
ten of us  
mostly women  
from Chapters.  
and they liked mine best  
and like Charles Bukowski  
I wrote a poem about Bukowski  
and they liked that one best  
and I longed to remember why I started to drink alone, but  
no  
I ate it up; the poetry class loved it,  
the poetry class loved me.  
the attention,  
later I sent her an e-mail  
saying how much i liked  
it  
and her.  
and after, always,  
the red  
and green lights  
led me home.

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## On Writing

James Tyner

and then there was blood in her  
eyes, running over cheeks like tears.  
I'm in a stadium of twenty thousand  
praying people and this four foot  
Mexican woman is screaming now,  
grabbing Luis by the front of his robes,  
flinging him down a row of seats,  
chairs rippling over the monk.  
It's my first year in the monastery  
and I'm thinking this bitch is gonna  
get socked for throwing Friar  
Luis when this priest shows up,  
right out of the crowd. And he  
is praying, and there's a bible  
in his hands, and the words are  
flowing from English to Spanish  
to Latin. The woman seems smaller  
now, hooting, screeching, writhing  
in her seat like a snake and someone  
whispers "Exorcism." The priest  
flicks his wrist, calls me over, and I'm  
holding a bible for him now, as he reads,  
but I can tell he's not even looking at it,  
this is rhythm, this is practiced,  
and I can't wait for this to be over,  
and all the faces around me are dark,  
the stadium lights off. But it's like they  
see more than a woman with bloody  
eyes, and I keep thinking if she moves  
again I'm dropping this bible,  
and kicking her fucking ass.

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## Trace

Lesley Washington

it appears you have not noticed  
but i have disappeared  
gone from you and this house of  
bleached bone we once lived in  
together  
i watch you through the parlour window  
your mouth moves  
you make wild gestures  
i do not understand what you think you see there  
looming in front of your anger  
if i can i shall send a letter:  
*i am sorry, but you have lost me  
to pyramids, sphinx, and mummified kings  
i have picked up a handful of myself  
slipped through my own fingers  
have scattered  
and gone*

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## Learning in spite

Christine Wessel

I understand where I am in this place.  
The brown walls dripping with mediocrity,  
The incessant reminder that I am as effective as a Q-tip on an eyeball.  
I recognize that I am insignificant  
Like rain the day after a monsoon.  
Dreaded, feared, respected, unwanted.  
Sometimes there can be too much—  
In this place where the walls continue to close in  
Creeping in  
Caducity caging me in.  
It's a sin to waste this education.  
They'll gnaw off their own left legs before they listen.  
A special few will absorb as much as their pores will allow.  
Sponges who will spew out while they take more in.  
And I will be a part of this liquidity.

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## Controlling the Masses

Christine Wessel

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Sitting at a worn picnic table in a wide open field,  
The woman teaches illiterate men how to read and write.  
While she scribes for one man, the others stand to leave  
With no explanation.  
The remaining blue-eyed, dark-haired, soft-skinned man  
Instructs the woman to write his story.  
He tells of his life as a mercenary.  
He adds that he is never happy,  
He doesn't know why,  
But he cannot feel.  
The woman leans in and whispers—  
We are test subjects, we are being watched, we aren't free to be happy.  
The killing man and the teaching woman kiss.  
He doesn't like her lip gloss because it tastes like cinnamon,  
But he likes the feel of her salty skin.  
They giggle.  
She points out that he has now felt three things.  
There is a connection.  
Two scientists emerge from nowhere.  
Furious that the killing machine and educator have met.  
They weren't supposed to.  
Strength and intelligence are a threat.  
The two desire each other, but sense they cannot be together.  
Why are they here? How do they get out?  
The field is wide open.  
Few can read and write.  
They cannot be together.  
His instinct is to fight.  
Hers is to think.  
The test subjects weren't supposed to meet.  
This connection might suggest defeat.  
And freedom is too dangerous.

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## Desecration

Anne Whitehouse

I placed it like a reminder  
in the corner of my computer screen;  
all day I kept coming back to it:  
the web cam a mile underwater  
recording clouds and plumes of filth  
expelled like an explosive diarrhea  
from the bowels of the earth,  
convulsive, unstoppable,  
polluting the soft, blue-green waters  
and pure white sands  
of the warm, salt sea,  
its rich, teeming, varied life –  
dolphins playing at dawn,  
stealthy, sinuous sharks,  
fish the colours of the rainbow,  
vibrant corals and seaweeds,  
mollusks and crustaceans,  
the most magnificent birds  
and intricate shells –  
fouled and mired in the earth's shit.  
The very substance of our greed  
come back to contaminate the world,  
until the last fires of internal combustion  
are quenched.

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## **Worldly Affairs (6): Today's Special**

Changming Yuan

### **Appetite:**

North Korean pickle soup

Iranian hard nuts

Venezuelan sour coffee

### **Main Courses:**

American democracy steamed with socialism

Chinese communism fried with free market

### **Desserts:**

Sushi with Oettinger

Curry with Brigadeiros

Fortune Cookie Slip Reads: Syria

Oops, here's another hidden one: c-h-i-n-a?

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FICTION



Gray Matter

Dan Algara

and  
poems  
submitted  
online through  
the fieldstone review

There are places I can't go. Fields and ripples of something called 'grey matter' that are closed off to me since - well, I can't remember that either. I may have lost them in the pool; my mother said I was so deep that I looked like a stick in the water. Maybe it was later.

I go to school. The doctors told us it was 'against the odds' that I'd learn anything. I like it. The kids are nice, my mom says I'm pretty, and I think it helps them forget the stuff I can't do. I can do most school things like reading and math, but I can't write. I don't remember the order of the words. It's too deep. Sometimes there are things that the teachers say that sink deeper into places that I can't get to. Deeper into the grey matter, I suppose. It makes me unable to learn. I don't know why a snake hisses, or even why a cloud appears like a white ghost in the sky. I was told many times, but those things are deep. I'll never get them back. Sometimes I wonder if I could get to those places that are now bottomless pits and get back some of what the pool took, but I can't, as hard as I try.

I wonder a lot. About things like birds flying (where are they going? are they afraid?), or leaves that die and fall to the ground (why does it happen? it must hurt). I know they are simple. I've been told many times that those things that happen are natural, but natural seems like an odd way to explain what I see.

Every morning my mother makes me a waffle. I won't have anything else. It makes me feel good to see the squares full with butter and syrup. I can see the whole thing happen and it doesn't happen fast. I understand it.

"Your mother loves you," she says to me.

I respond when I can. Sometimes I ignore her. I think she knows I hear her either way. Even if I couldn't hear anything - even if the pool took my ears, too - she would still say it. Anyway, sometimes it's hard for me to put all the things I can think into what I say. I think she knows I love her back.

"I love you, Mom," I say in return, just to be sure.

She likes it when I talk. It makes her cry. Even I know there are two reasons to cry, but I can never tell which kind she does.

"Your father will be here tonight. He has had a long shift and he wants to see you. He loves you, too."

"I don't want to see him," I tell her.

"What a thing to say, Mara. He loves you."

"Not like you, Mom. You stay with me."

"Your father works very hard. He cannot be here all the time like me."

Mom has tried to tell me why he can't be here. He makes money, she says, but I cannot see how it brings the things she says it does: waffles, blankets, and the car. I know he is not here, and here means love, I think.

"Can I play outside today?" I ask.

"I don't know - last time -"

"I'll stay in the back. I like the hill. It's up high."

We live in a different house now. Our yard goes up and up to a hill that I can see the whole town from. I just sit.

My mother stares into the backyard from the kitchen window. I don't know why she does that; this house doesn't have a pool like our other one, but sometimes she looks out there like she still sees one.

"Oh, honey, maybe you can play inside today. We can call Sarah, and you can play house."

"I don't want it, Mom. I want to be alone, up high."

"Maybe I could go up the hill with you," she tells me, but I think her crying has switched to the other kind.

I hate that sort of crying and even though I wanted to be alone I say, "Alright."

There isn't much sunlight left. It is going down. It always seems to go down faster once it gets near the top of the hills.

"Do you think there's a heaven?" I say to her.

"I used to think so," Mom sighs.

"Sarah's mom says there is."

"It's a tough thing to prove."

"Maybe there's no heaven, like with harps and all happiness, but there's another place, where things are easy to understand."

"I hope so."

The sun goes down and it gets cold. Below, in the fields before the city, mist fills in the dips of the hills. Usually when I go inside it's before dark, but I want to stay.

"If there is no heaven," I say, "then there's no bad place either. So all the bad people can be bad and if they don't get caught here they don't get punished at all. That's not fair."

"I guess," she sighs again, "but what about the things that are nobody's fault?" She kind of says this to someone else, but we are alone. "Bad things happen, too many bad things."

"Good things happen too, Mom." I tell her and then think for a while. The sun is almost gone and an orange fountain springs up from behind the mountain before it disappears. "But if bad things mean there is no heaven, does it mean that good things make it real? Then it would depend on what there is more of. Is there more good or bad in the world?"

She kisses me on the head. "I don't know the answers."

"They're too far in. I can't get to them either. Too deep."

"I think your father's home. Let's go in."

My father expects a hug and I give it to him, but I don't mean it. I think he knows I don't. It makes me feel bad. I just can't think of a way that he loves me. They say that you should love everyone, especially your parents. I don't understand it. Maybe I can't understand or maybe it's not true. I'm not sure.

After all of the time is spent together, we go to bed. It's raining tonight. I want to sleep in my mom's bed, but it's different when my father is here. He's not here a lot. My mom says he fights fires, but I'm not sure. I didn't know fires could fight, and it doesn't make sense that he knew what to do after I was in the pool. Mom says he is the reason I'm alive. Water is the opposite of fire, I thought; how can he be an expert at both? She wants me to love him, but I can't.

My father leaves again after a few days, and after a few more he comes back and we do the whole thing again where we have dinner, talk, then go to bed. I don't want to sleep, so after they tuck me in, I take that I am asleep for a while then I get up to look out the window. My door creaks and someone walks in. It's my father.

"Hi," he says.

I don't feel like talking, so I return to the window.

"Your mom says you've been sitting on the hill a lot."

"I like it. It's high up. I can see things."

He sits in the chair in the corner of the room, the rocker from when I was a baby. My father always liked the chair and I noticed a long time ago that he never sits anywhere else. It bothers me that he is in here with me and for some reason I say something that I never thought of saying before.

"Did you save me from the pool?"

He doesn't answer me right away. It's a little dark and I hear him sniff before he says to me, "I did."

"Are you a water expert? Do you go to deep places when you go away?"

"I'm not an expert. I just know how to get water out of someone when they swallow too much."

"I swallowed too much?"

"Yes."

I still want to be alone, but I can't help talking to him. I look down and then there's another thing I have to say. It's like words are coming up from the places I could never get to before in my grey matter. I always wondered if the places that were too deep were blue instead of grey.

"What if I didn't want you to save me?"

My father sniffs a few more times, but doesn't say anything.

"Maybe there is more good in the world than Mom thinks and I could've gone to heaven."

"I don't know," he says, but his voice sounds higher than normal.

"Do you love me?"

"Yes."

"Will you stay?"

My father doesn't say anything. He comes to the floor and gets on his knees. He is below me and I am above him. I think he's crying in the sad way when he tells me, "I will never leave you again."

I think I understand more now.



Understanding the Limits of Limited Understanding

Michael J. Hornecki

Smell the pitch? Feet it mingling with the salty air, burning your eyes and making your nose dribble? No, no, I know, there's a deck over there, and we're on the thirty-fifth floor, but believe you me, we're also smelling the high seas. Sorry to stretch the metaphor, when this greasy multinational tireless heads out to black capital or sink the competition trying, it does its striking power not from the wind, but from the muscles of the supposedly free men chained to the own below deck.

Here, I'll show you what I mean: "Hello, Thompson." There's no need to shout or scowl. Look, I'll ferry him with a friendly pat on the back and a superficial eye job. Pat, pat, with, job. "How's the family?" and it's on to business. Note the almost-pressed odor of James Thompson's perspiration; he knows that if he doesn't row his ass off I can do what I like with him: publicly humiliate, demote, fire, or worst of all, transfer to another office; for those people, being transferred to Moore-Joe is like being sold to a master who derives a great deal of pleasure from field-testing hand-whittled sodomy devices on his servants.

"Thompson, I'm looking forward to reviewing that account this afternoon." Feet the deck will beneath your feet? Thompson asks. He knows it, and I know it, but neither of us is letting on; we are supposed to review the Carlton account Wednesday, not today (Monday). I may look fat and friendly in a sincerely business sort of way, but take my word for it: if this were a Roman ship, I'd be seven feet tall with ripped abs, holding a twelve-foot whip in the giant's hand at the end of my argument. Practitioner arm, and Thompson here would be biting down on something hard.

"Sure, it should be all ready for you this afternoon. When should I come by?"

"Didn't we decide on three?" It's now ten.

"Right, three. Sounds good, three it is."

Thompson's never been any fun. No future; not as a human, anyway - maybe he has a future in a nice home for abused animals. No disrespect to animals.

"On second thought, Thompson, wasn't our meeting supposed to be on Wednesday?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter. I can have it ready for this afternoon. It's basically done now."

He doesn't realize it yet, but our friend Thompson is now fucked. I pause for a moment to let anxiety crawl up his spine. "Well, come to think of it, I think I am quite busy this afternoon." I pause again to let a feeling of relief settle. Relief must feel warm, in a fat that appears in Thompson's cheeks, beside a repressed grin. Pause, pause, pause, pause. "See? I'm too busy to see you. It doesn't matter if things are a little rough; I don't need absolute perfection." With a superficial punch in the arm, pause as Thompson has time to soil his pants alternately, glance at my watch. "Oh, damn. On second thought, I have a meeting in fifteen. See you Wednesday, Thompson."

Thompson exits, and likely doesn't know he should feel as the deviate drops into the hands of accounts receivable, tossing his unmet needs into his mouth.

Do you see? Most of us have delusions about what we are. People in my position typically think, "Slavery ended; the world became democratic and generally tolerable at some point in the past. We, as a service people need to eat; they need to work, we give them a fat wage and basic dental." Right, sure, wonderful, all true. But to it is the whole truth? Or does this still feel like the end of the world? I know I'm a little rough, misapprehending as profound truth? Basic dental? Even Roman slaves owners tried to keep their more useful slaves healthily enough to work for the owner. It's cheaper to replace you than keep you healthy, you don't have basic dental or anything else.

I think Marx underestimated the resilience of a global capitalist market and opened the door for the communists to use, disposing people against real communists in the process. He saw capitalism as a continual revolution, which is fine, but I can give a better analogy: capitalism is a great white shark in a feeding frenzy that eats until it's full, then turns its stomach inside out, draining itself of all its contents, just so it can consume more.

Nonetheless, I can't believe that this system could last forever, and one must do what one can to bring it to a speedy end. I use my position as slave trader to denounce those poor unfortunate people under my authority, teaching them to hate the current state of affairs as much as possible - showing TPT into the fire, in the hope that there will be an explosion big enough to stifle the flames. Sure, on the day we're marched onto the stage and declared enemies of the people, I'll be remembered as executioner... but I'll have changed the world in my own little way. What have you done?

\*\*\*

A mountain of money - that's all I can think as I watch him. Mr. Claude Riche, the President and CEO of Trust Financor, who owns this building, occupies the penthouse. Rumor has it that he owns both the building and the company outright - there is no debt involved. Three floors go to JP. His business needs pay rent, but certainly does not pay expenses; that is, Riche's landlord must make money charging company-owner and/or company rent. The penthouse is almost certainly "paid for" through a complicated shell game that amounts to Riche leasing for free. That's one floor for him, three for his business: four floors out of forty-six - or is it forty-five? The occasional lack of a fifth floor confuses me, and I can't remember whether JP Financor has one. Anyway, that means he's making money by renting out the other forty-five floors. Then there's the fact his business makes him. On top of this, he (or one of his associates) can borrow a tremendous amount of money with the lowest, and/or related assets collateral. Disgracefully, wealthy people get better interest rates, incidentally, it has something to do with owning the banks.

Which him to be like with Jessica Barrows, a fellow back-slasher. I think she realizes she's a prostitute, but I don't think she realizes that the too is a slave. Everyone's subject to the same system, after all. Look at Barrows's handsome suit: branding on her breast like a vial in mating season. Hinge her head from one side to the other each time she adopts a different kind of flirtatious grin. It's impossible to differentiate her favored from natural smiles - if there's a difference, look at her long black, lustrous hair, her suggestively swollen red lips, her trim waist. If only she had a nose, an interesting brain, a philosophical disposition, or whatever it is that makes worthwhile people worthwhile. Unfortunately for her, she's won't find her soul at the end of the golden brick road she's skipping along, hand-in-hand with Riche.

But my analogy is flawed. She's not practicing her way through life. You need to realize something's missing before you seek the wizard. Jessica's utterly soulless she probably thinks she's a deeply profound soul, in the same way that a cockroach or philosophy undergraduate thinks it understands the universe when it looks at the stars, simply because it's incapable of understanding the limits of its limited understanding. Maybe I'm being too harsh - Marx was a philosophy undergraduate once, anyway, and so are most of us.

I am trying not to stare, or more accurately, not to get caught staring, because I recently became engaged. I'm not quite sure how I came to be engaged, but it is one of those things I can't really say. Her name is Sophia Zerkova. I sometimes wonder to what extent she's marrying me to get a pronounceable last name, and to what extent I've purchased her with my moderate wealth. The amusing thing about money is that, sometimes just having it gets you what you want without you even having to spend it. Don't get me wrong, I don't mean to imply Sophia is a thing I've purchased. Trust, capitalism turns all relationships into exchange relationships, and reduces all people to things, but this conversation need not necessarily be predicated on terms convenient for capitalism.

I should mention Sophia's beauty, which seems to make sense, as I'm exceedingly wonderful, yet our relationship does occasionally continue one. She has vibrant hazel eyes across which rolls a layer of mist when you don't get along in the hammock - even though this is a highly unusual act that poses a deplorable stain on her. Sophia's hair is long and dirty blonde. When Sophia keeps, she keeps all afternoon, and eventually heaves her soul out into utter despair. She manages to smile a lot, and usually means it, which beggars the mind.

But the really interesting point about Sophia is her unadmirable lifestyle. She manages to survive doing contract work as an interior decorator; she is paid by job, not by hour, and is her own boss. On top of this, she volunteers a great deal of her time and - shockingly - doesn't get paid for this at all. She even considers self-promotion petty and refuses to endorse her business in casual conversation. To put it simply, I'm not sure how she fits into a rational economic model.

First there was marriage, then more and more time was spent together. Eventually, my shifting state of infatuation turned into a permanent state of disinterested wonder. The dialectic was at its end; Sophia and I had synthesized. I didn't express my will to marry her in quite this way, and I could tell she appreciated it; she seems to prefer that I manipulate my words so they don't resemble my thoughts too precisely.

Anyway, back to Riche, one hand on his bald, painted chin, the other folded across his stomach. He's trying to appear serious as Mr. Barrows explains something he doesn't care about. I am at least fifty percent sure he's staring at her lip whenever she looks away, and about eighty percent sure the two of them have exchanged inside information. But maybe Jessica's plan to secure the best advantage requires that she not fraternize with Riche. Now forty returns to their conversation. Riche shifts onto his heels and begins smiling again. He is thin and vigorous, and can't be more than thirty-five years old. Sophia says he's revealing, but she's probably lying; after all, it's difficult to imagine a diagram comparing our relative wealth on which my net worth would be visible to the naked eye.

It's shocking, but if he wanted to, Mr. Riche could get a second house without touching any of the money he's earned from the first house. Obviously, Riche's wealth could virtually grow exponentially. I know, I know, I seem obtuse, almost too obtuse to warrant thought, but quite simply, there's only so much money in the world. When new money is printed without the old being destroyed, all the money in the system loses value. Maybe that's a better way to put it: that there's a fixed amount of money, but a fluid amount of value. The more value for the loss for everyone else. How many Mr. Riches are there in the world? Make a modest estimate.

But the part I find the most interesting is that Riche long ago delegated all his duties to others, so he really does nothing for money. Sometimes he goes to meetings and whatnot, but his presence is utterly superfluous, and I think he only does it to satisfy a morbid sociological curiosity. Do you ever kill time upon the toilet, just relaxing, and feel like you're exploiting some loophole in the wage labor system? Mr. Riche could shit all day, every day and he would make no less money.

\*\*\*

Don't you love night like tonight? Stars twinkling, a silver silver moon, and a crisp freshness in the air. It's ten, and I'm walking home from the office. My car is in the underground garage; I prefer not driving whenever I can. It's supposed to be nice again tomorrow, so I should be able to walk to work. The walk only takes fifteen minutes.

The trees are rustling from occasional gusts, and every once in a while a slight whiff of burning wood drifts into my nostrils. I'm not sure if the candle is a fire-thing or a distant forest fire. Look at this piece of wood. A man's been walking towards me for some time, but I hadn't truly noticed. He stops. I stop. A silver flash, bark and teeth, dicing the beam of streetlight. Look at how calm those hazel eyes are.

"Give me your money and your watch, fitty. I'll take the bracelet, too."

All social relationships are economically driven, and this relationship is no different from all the others.

"Hurry up, bitch."

I'm looking him in the eye as I take off my watch and pull out my wallet. I'm at least as calm as he is. Why not? It's just another transaction. I carry as well as being wicks, he wears the knife back and forth in another simulated being. So, nope.

"Would you like me to put them into the briefcase so you can carry them more easily?" It wasn't a joke. I can be very considerate.

He snatches the wallet, the watch, and then the briefcase. Here we stand.

"The pin's a 1-4-3-g, the first five digits of pi. I won't report it until morning; have a good time tonight."

His eyes are...

A blow. Another. Another.

I'm on the ground, an odd sensation vibrating in my teeth.

"Goddamned rich asshole." A kick in the ribs. Great.

He's off. Over a fence and into the shadows. Gone.

It's cold on the ground. A funny perspective from down here; this must be what the world's like for a dog.

The tremor. I can feel the deck will beneath my feet, and can almost smell the incense of only air and sunlight. But beneath that is a silver blood. The sun is warm on my back. My back... enormous with righteousness - to something of my terrifying size. There are girls in the sky, and a pleasant summer breeze blows gently. I jerk back into reality like a secondary student who drank too much, found herself in the old shower, a hot, and out-of-control.

I try to go on my right arm, but something's tearing. Nope, can't move. I'll have to wait for help. The only things, sticky pools are forming. Some clouds are moving in, kind of red. Can't move. The only thing to do is. Can't I wonder, what will, will she, how wild? I try yelling, but it hurts too, too damned. I'll push onto wait for help. Sophia's words come back to me just when I wait for someone.

But neither one of them... other... another... other... other... other...





The Only Good Indian

Will Tinkham

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Pêche kicked a rock through the Rushmore workers' parking area. She spotted Bad Glove Hand adjusting the saddle on his horse, Henry Ford. Above them, on Mount Rushmore, the faces of Presidents Washington and Jefferson loomed. "How you doin', Bad Glove?" Pêche called out.

Johnny "Bad Glove" Hand turned and smiled. "Greetings," he said, tipping the bill of his baseball cap, which kept in place his long, black hair. "Say, I looked up Pêche in a French-English dictionary. Figured you were sick of people asking you about it."

"My father, who I never met, was French and called my mother his *petite pêche* and she just passed it on to me."

"All it said was *fruit*," Bad Glove Hand went on. "I figured it meant peach, what with the spelling and folks calling you *Peaches*."

"Everybody thinks that, so I let 'em," Pêche said, playing with the horse's mane. "I like that you named him Henry Ford. It seems to fit."

Bad Glove Hand shrugged. "I figure, when horses are obsolete, or go by way of the buffalo, Henry Ford might return the favor and start naming automobiles after horses."

Pêche chuckled and waved to her husband Ernie, as he made his way down from the area on Mount Rushmore that would be Abraham Lincoln. "You know, Bad Glove, I've always wondered how you feel about working on this shrine to white men carved into an Indian mountain," she said, concentrating her attention on Henry Ford.

"An Indian mountain stolen by the wašiču of South Dakota and named after some New York lawyer who happened to be passing by at the time," Bad Glove Hand laughed without smiling.

"I haven't found anyone who can explain that one to me," Pêche admitted, then guessed: "Wašiču? White man?"

"Nothing gets by you," Bad Glove Hand chuckled. "Truth is, I'm just in it for the baseball." A Lakota Sioux and grandson to the treaty signing Bad Left Hand, Bad Glove Hand hit third in the Rushmore line-up and anyone who had seen him play first base understood the nickname. "And it's not like this Great Depression of yours doesn't affect the Indian, so I don't mind taking the wašiču money."

"I don't blame ya..." Pêche watched Ernie trudge over from the steps built into the side of Rushmore. He'd worn his dust mask all the way down the mountain, as if to prove to her he'd been using it all day. He had quit school at sixteen — often it showed — to work the monument and play shortstop for the Rushmore Memorial ballclub. He lifted up the mask and gave her a dopey, lovable grin.

"Anyway," Bad Glove Hand continued, "I'm sure there are reasons why I shouldn't have worked on Washington and Jefferson, but I'm afraid I'm gonna have to draw the line at working on Lincoln. The Great Sioux Uprising of 1862, you know."

"No... I don't," Pêche confessed.

"The Santee Sioux got fed up with reservation life over there in Minnesota." Bad Glove Hand tugged on a saddle strap. "So they went on a rampage, killing four or five hundred whites over some time — which, I'll admit, never solves anything. Anyway, your great man Lincoln takes some time off from your Civil War and hand-picks thirty-eight Santee warriors and hangs them the day after your Christmas. Largest public lynching ever, even for you guys." Bad Glove Hand seemed to pause for rebuttal and, hearing none, went on: "A week later comes that Emancipation Proclamation deal, frees your slaves to fight in your war, and — just like that — he's a big hero. He and that bastard Sherman, why that —"

"William Tecumseh Sherman?" Ernie asked to the bemusement of both Pêche and Bad Glove Hand.

"Where'd you come up with *that* name?" Pêche asked.

"School, I guess," Ernie answered with a shrug. "I liked that *Tecumseh* name."

"Yes, your man, Sherman, named for a Shawnee warrior, and later he vows to exterminate all Indians. How do you like that?" Bad Glove Hand spat on the ground. "If he'd had the gumption for politics, he could've been President and would've been a cinch for the fifth spot on this mount, too. After the Civil War, they put him in charge of cleaning up the West — cleaning out the Indians — so the railroads could come through. He started by killing off the buffalo, like he did when he scorched the earth and the crops in the South on his way to Atlanta, taking away their source of food and starving them out. He didn't care about women or children or the elders: his goal — and the government's policy — was to rid the West of all Indians, herding them off and killing as many as possible in the process. 'Only good Indian is a dead Indian' — that was one of his, Clever bastard, huh? These days, everyone's up in arms over this Hitler guy in Europe, gathering up and killing Jews for being Jews. And up in arms they should be! But where were they seventy years ago when Sherman was playing Hitler with the Indians?"

"Snakes alive! You're always coming up with this stuff," Ernie grumbled. "How do you know all this?"

Bad Glove Hand climbed atop Henry Ford and replied, "They might make us go to their wašiču schools but they can't keep us from learning." He gave the horse a little kick and Henry Ford slowly made his way down the trail.

"You're coming over for dinner, right?" Pêche called out and Bad Glove Hand gave a little wave in response.

"Wašiču? White man?" Ernie guessed.

"Nothing gets by you," Pêche giggled, slipping an arm around Ernie's waist.

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Pêche saw Bad Glove Hand coming through the yard. Entering the back door with a bottle in hand, he started pouring drinks before saying hello.

"Ernie, did you see that Borglum was already out looking for the right rock for your Roosevelt's big head?" Bad Glove Hand called out, referring to the sculptor and Rushmore creator, Gutzon Borglum. He poured a drink and raised a toast to nothing at all.

"Is that what he was doing today?" Ernie asked, entering the kitchen. "I always get scared when I see the old man swinging from a harness."

"Borglum can handle it, especially when it comes to your Rough Rider," Bad Glove Hand said, sitting at the table. "Bad Left Hand used to say: 'I was surprised by how much land they gave us back, but not surprised at all when they took it away again.' To the Lakota, Teddy was just a thief, stealing back land that had been returned to us after being stolen before. When returned they called 'em 'reservations,' and when he stole 'em back he called 'em 'National Parks.'" Bad Glove Hand paused and shrugged. "Of course, we called it sacred even though we stole it from the Cheyenne just a hundred years before that. Don't remember what they called it or who they stole it from."

"You know," Pêche said, "they talk about this being a memorial to Presidents — ignoring Susan B. Anthony, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse — but when you look at Teddy: he served twice, went for a third and lost, then went for a fourth and couldn't even get nominated. How bad must he have been that second term?"

"Rough Rider, war hero, and the Panama Canal will get you on the rock anytime," Bad Glove Hand said, slugging from his glass. "Don't hurt to be buddies with Borglum either."

"Don't hurt to be the only one of the four that anybody alive can remember," Ernie laughed and raised a toast, presumably to the mountain.

Bad Glove Hand stood and pulled a piece of paper from his pocket. "I stopped in at the library and found a Teddy quote I just had to write down. Now, before I read this, picture him up there with your great white leaders — he'll be the one with the glasses. And I quote: 'I don't go so far as to think that the only good Indians are dead Indians, but I believe nine out of ten are, and I shouldn't like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth.'"

"He said *that*?" Pêche gasped. "Sounds like he gave it a lot of thought, too."

"That was my thinking," Bad Glove Hand agreed, still looking at the quote. "Nobody says 'I shouldn't like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth' like it's a thought off the top of his head."

"When did he say this?" Pêche asked. "Was he drunk in some bar?"

"Nope, he said it in a speech in New York in 1886. Fifteen years before he became President."

"Snakes alive..." Ernie murmured.

Bad Glove Hand slammed down the remainder of his drink and poured another. "How do the French say it? *Sacre bleu?*"



CONTRIBUTORS



# Introduction

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the project's objectives, scope, and methodology. It is intended for all stakeholders involved in the project, including team members, sponsors, and external partners.

The project aims to develop a robust and scalable solution that addresses the current challenges faced by the organization. The primary goal is to enhance operational efficiency and reduce costs while maintaining high quality and customer satisfaction.

The project is organized into several key phases, each with specific deliverables and milestones. The phases are: Planning, Design, Development, Testing, and Deployment. Each phase is supported by a detailed work plan and resource allocation.

The project team consists of highly skilled professionals with extensive experience in project management and technical development. We are committed to transparency, communication, and collaboration throughout the project lifecycle.

Key risks have been identified and mitigated through proactive risk management strategies. Regular communication and reporting will ensure that any potential issues are addressed promptly and effectively.

The project is expected to be completed within the specified timeline and budget. We are confident in our ability to deliver a successful outcome that meets or exceeds the expectations of all stakeholders.

For more information, please contact the project manager at [email address]. We welcome your feedback and input throughout the project.

Thank you for your support and commitment to the project's success.

Best regards,  
[Name]

[Title]

[Contact Information]

[Date]

[Location]

[Organization]

[Address]

[City]

[State]

[Country]

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[Fax Number]

[Email Address]

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1. **Introduction**  
The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive overview of the project's objectives, scope, and deliverables. It serves as a guide for all stakeholders involved in the project.

2. **Objectives**  
The primary objectives of this project are to develop a robust system that meets the needs of our users and to ensure that the system is scalable and secure.

3. **Scope**  
The scope of the project includes the design, development, testing, and deployment of the system. It also includes the documentation of the system and the training of users.

4. **Deliverables**  
The deliverables of the project are the system software, the user manual, and the training materials. These deliverables will be provided to the client upon completion of the project.

5. **Timeline**  
The project is scheduled to start on [start date] and is expected to be completed by [end date]. The timeline is subject to change based on the progress of the project.

6. **Risks**  
There are several risks associated with this project, including the risk of scope creep, the risk of budget overruns, and the risk of delays. These risks will be monitored and managed throughout the project.

7. **Conclusion**  
This project is a critical component of our organization's strategy. We are committed to ensuring that the project is completed on time and within budget, and that the system meets the needs of our users.

