



# FreezeRay

## POETRY

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ISSUE 9 3 / 4 :  
ALIEN VS EDITOR

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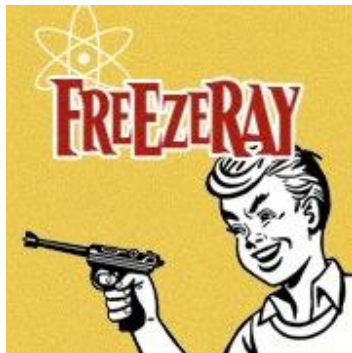
Cover art, front and back by Christine Templeton

# Editorial



I was wanting to wax poetic about this Island of Misfit Toys called the FreezeRay Family; this group of metahuman editors, these proud mutant pens, and I suspect I will and in the process use a lot of exclamation points and gifs from House Party, but we can talk about their skills in a minute. Let's talk about how well the roster works together.

In the past, I have been partially responsible for a live poetry event called Extreme Championship Poetry, which I stole from the Bay Area and their World Poetry Federation, the only poetry show that I ever took a chair shot for. The format is one-on-one slam battles, with characters and costumes and title belts and all that is the pageantry of the Squared Circle. These shows have been super fun and do not happen very often, because you have to have a dedicated ensemble of people willing to commit to a season of reading poems in a lucha mask. And the shows, then, are only as good as your ensemble. I loooooove the Nerd Slam that occurs at the National Poetry Slam every year, but I kind of wanted to hear more nerd poems than that. FreezeRay became that for me, an online poetry showcase of that intersection of poetry and pop culture. And these folks are sitting at the judges' table, having earned their place because nerd recognize nerd. Thanks to them, and our first art editor Amanda Mathews, who designed our first hella cool retro-logo. Enjoy!



--Rob Sturma,  
Head Booker



# Jason Bayani



## Portrait of Steph Curry as Mac Dre on a Mural in Oakland

*“There is no there there” — Gertrude Stein*

Maybe, Gertrude, this city was waiting to find the right music. Maybe it’s a little you rendering language by the throat. But if there is preciseness, the right tongue. Let it drop a verse and reflect back on itself in disgust. Let it be filthy and relished. Let it come at the back end of a crossed up Australian shook out of his sneakers, in a stadium where the price of tickets will never go down, in a city where the rent is always rising. When the ball hits the bottom of the net Steph Curry turns to the cameras, wearing Mac Dre’s mug on his face. Like a secret. Like the very thing white folks will trip over each other to understand.

# *Erica Bradley*



## **Which Famous Musician Who Died at the Age of 27 are you? A BuzzFeed Quiz**

You are not Amy Winehouse.  
Your hair has never looked that perfect  
a day in your damn life.  
The Dap Kings will not be your backing band.

And be honest,  
if they tried to make you go to rehab, You would punk out.  
You'd say  
yes  
yes  
yes.

You are not Jim Morrison.  
You look foolish and pork product in leather pants.  
If you went on a vision quest,  
the Mojave would spit you out that same day,  
because she has standards.

You are not Janis Joplin.  
No matter how violently you gullet the cheapest of whiskey,  
Your voice will never be her howl,

her siren,  
her wail.

You have not let them take all of the little pieces of your heart yet.

You still have reserves.

Take Comfort in that.

You are not

Jim Croce

Otis Redding

Patsy Cline

Buddy Holly

Richie Valens

Ronnie Van Zant

Those are just plane crash victims.

They didn't die at the correct age for genius.

You deserve better than that,

But, we are sorry,

You are not Jimi Hendrix.

You did not have to cross an ocean

to find a place where your other wasn't so violently other.

You did not go looking for you so deeply

that you eventually asphyxiated on yourself.

You are not Tupac Shakur or Biggie Smalls.

Both were disqualified for dying too young.

The world was in too big of a hurry to legally change their names to gunshot,

to reincarnate them as posthumous record label royalty checks.

We're Sorry,

You are not

Mia Zapata.

You are not

D. Boon.

You are not  
Brian Jones.

You are not  
Jean-Michel Basquiat,  
no matter how many darkened corners you paint yourself  
into and out of at the same time.

You are not Kurt Cobain,  
You are not the punch line to every joke involving a shotgun.  
No one will ever ask your surviving family if you  
“were too beautiful to live”.

Here are your results:

You are the perfect amount of ugly to have to keep living.  
You are the type of genius that still has to take out the trash.  
You still have to do the fucking dishes.  
You will have to suffer the indignity of aging.  
You will have to grow into the lines on your face.  
You are the song that keeps writing itself,  
no matter how out of key it gets.  
You will have to settle for coworkers and acquaintances instead of  
worshipful mourners.  
You do not get to be the butterfly pinned and mounted  
under the glass of tragic genius.

We're sorry.  
You did not gut yourself glorious in a timely enough fashion.

You did not drown in the fountain of youth.



## **POEM FOR LEMMY KILMEISTER**

1.

You said

“we want to be the band that if we moved next door to you,  
your lawn would die.”

2.

When I was 13,

I wanted you to move next door for two discernable reasons:

a) Because RAD.

b) Because less yard work.

3.

“Ace of Spades” was playing in the background  
when we pierced Julia Bullhorn’s left nipple with a safety pin  
in her parent’s kitchen on a Tuesday afternoon.

4.

There is a beauty

in being weapon grade ugly,

to turning yourself into whatever barbed wire is scared of,

to be the 180 degree bulldog stance,

to be the rusty knife that you bring to the gunfight, that makes every gun run  
away.



5.

“Ace of Spades” is playing in the background  
in every bar ever  
where you can receive questionable oral sex  
from someone with a star tattoo on their neck.

6.

There is a beauty  
in lowering the bar to where you can easily step over it.  
Or pick it up and beat a motherfucker with it.

7.

Every chord you ever played  
was in the key of FUCK YOU.

8.

From ages 18-25  
so was my every breath.

9.

“Ace of Spades” was playing on my car stereo  
when I got broadsided,  
was the perfect soundtrack to the splintering of metal  
the death throes of windshield and dashboard,  
my front two teeth becoming sad roman candles,  
my face becoming brilliant red fireworks.

10.

Now that you are dead,  
the world is prettier,  
like we needed more dumb aimless gorgeous.

11.

Some of us weren't meant to age gracefully.  
We weren't born that way.  
We were always meant to be a symphony of chipped teeth.

12.

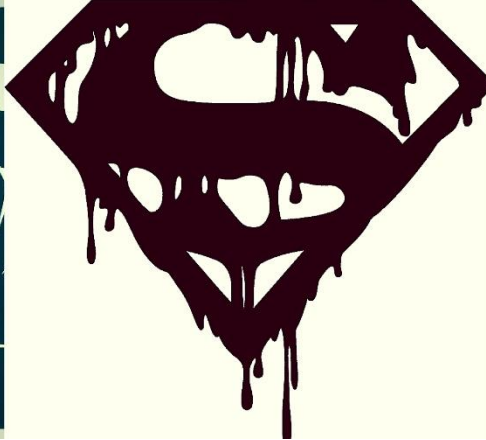
Keith Richards at 70 looks like shit.

like wilting.

like a lawn dying.

You just looked like you.

# *Lauren Bullock*



## **Comic Book Death**

*"Mutant Heaven has no pearly gates, only revolving doors."  
— Professor Charles Xavier, X-Factor #70*

Some fans will tell you it started with *The Death and Return of Superman*, how issues of mourning later readers raged at the revelation of a catatonic state, our Man of Steel less human, more Jesus with a mullet. But what can you expect when Marvel and DC envision Death as a woman you can talk to, ogle, fall in love with?

If *Marvel Zombies* and Solomon Grundy are separated from miracle by a mere degree of gutspill, then imagine I reboot Cyborg, we can't tell Spider-Man from his clone replacement, another Robin fakes again. What then? If your loved ones can always resurrect, fresh flesh, their goodness still intact, from what are they being saved?

And yet, all that waiting: every hour earthquakes clapping their jaws,

two hundred bodies burned to cinder, four more  
knot a noose, shoot, swallow something poison,  
our god and hero lying comatose in his  
Fortress, frozen as a processed meal,  
any hope of purgatorial dreams interrupted  
by the constant sound of ending.





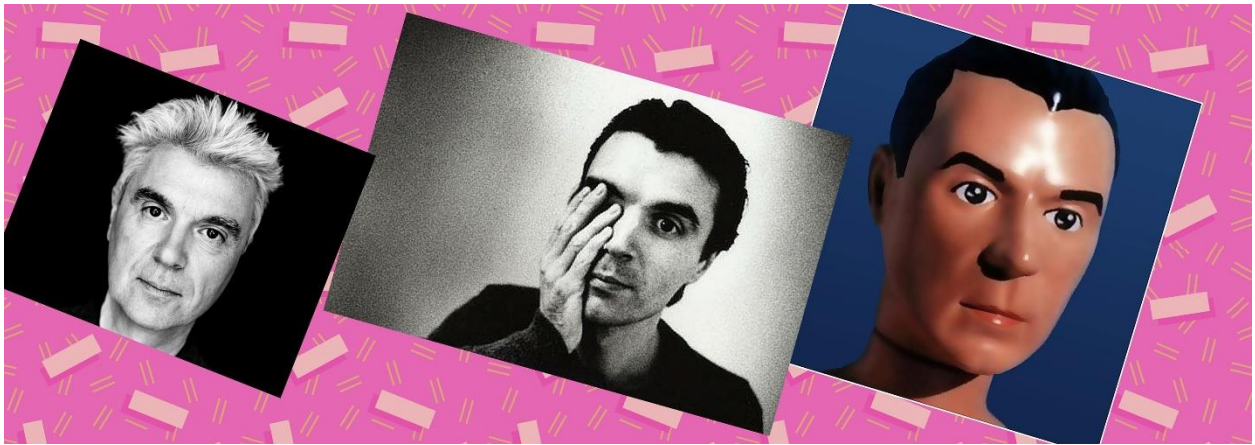
## Explaining to My Sidekick Why Superheroes Should Stay Single

Look, unless you're one of the lucky few, between preventing the plane crash and hunting down the banana-themed thief, you're gonna always say I love you too fast. Remember: it's only panic, an anarchy of chemicals battering your brain. But *no*, you won't remember. You'll mistake it for the real thing and maybe it will be for the hour before the next war, long enough for the speedster to run away with your heart. Date the genius if you wanna overthink and under feel. Think you're into the demigod? Not after having to cram that massive Messiah complex into your calendar 'cause there's too many catastrophes happening to call you first. Or maybe you're the type who goes for the guy with invisibility powers, whose transparent insecurities you won't see until his creepy ass won't stop disrespecting your boundaries like, "No, when I say I want you gone, I don't mean just the appearance of absence. *Quit following me home, Earl.*" Let's say that you never *actually* sleep with

the shapeshifter— mostly because of the whole transdimensional space battle you'll have to fight—but *you'll* know... and *she'll* know... and that'll be enough tension to drive a storyline for a few years. When the day finally comes and he stops texting back the world could be on fire, yeah, but you'd know, wouldn't you? And it won't stop there. After the break up you're gonna show up to work swearing that you're over it and he will be there, every time. It only gets better when the whole league figures it out (the same way they'll tell you that the next one is a total mortal civilian, no gadget belts or anything, then proceed to unapologetically fill you in on *all* their speculations). They'll be like, "Hey, we're grabbing drinks at headquarters, maybe play Monopoly, Arm-Fall-Off-Boy will be there—" and you'll have to be like, "Nah... I got an active volcano to thwart," which won't be a lie since you will feel *exactly* like vomiting magma straight into his stupid, smiling face. There'll be that one time the newbie sidekicks rush up to you at once wanting to know who would win in a battle, a bear or a shark, ninja or zombie, your ex or Superman and you'll have to use *every ounce* of superhumanity you have not to throw shade as far as the remains of Krypton. Word of advice: no matter how much you're "grieving" or "lonely," do *not* make out with the plasma energy being who also happens to be his teammate. Trust me: no one wants to be known as a super douche. Worse than even all of this, is the moment you realize that you've made a career of righting wrongs and your love is the one thing you

can never fix. Maybe you'll wonder about a dozen faces you've seen him with once before deciding on the one that looks least like yours, but more likely she'll be the last survivor of the plane crash you happened to be saving today. In that moment, you'll desperately unwish all your greatness at once, pray not to be burdened with a broken heart and a call to goodness or at least for the love of God not both at the same time. Remember: it's only panic. There're still entire worlds on fire out there. Don't let them burn just for this.

# *Dalton Day*



## **DAVID BYRNE WINKS AT ME & THE WORLD GOES SILENT**

Physics is slippery, too. & then  
the reflective necks of pigeons.

Fuck it, I like it here. This is  
what I'll never tell you. Who

hasn't bitten their hand off but  
has said goodbye? To the river.

To the water. What am I if I  
am not salt? I sit beside windows

& look at them, not through  
them. I am smiling! I have not

opened my mouth! I am telling  
you, you are not the one who

forgot to secure this down.  
This, being whatever is already



gone. Nothing ends up. Nothing  
just ends. It's great, really. I said

it's great, really.

# *Eric Motago*



## **YOU'RE A GOOD ZOMBIE, CHARLIE BROWN**

It started with Woodstock—some mutated strain of bird flu. His first victim, Franklin, because (let's face it) in these kind of stories the black kid

is always first to go. Next peanut down was Marcie, cleaning her glasses she never saw it coming. Upon infection she went straight for Peppermint Patty.

*You always hurt the ones you love, sir.* When they came for Charlie Brown, he thought *good grief*—wondered if MetLife had him covered as both girls

undressed the flesh from his bones. This was not the threesome he wanted. His sister, Sally, heard his screams across the hall and cried hysterically.

Cried not for herself, but because she knew who she would go to when she turned. But Linus, not wanting to go out that way, did what he must—

took his blue blanket, fashioned a noose around his neck, and hung himself from the ceiling fan. Sally scratched for days at a door to a quiet room.

Snoopy showed more courage and jumped atop his dog house to take aim at Charlie Brown's half-eaten head. Though by the time he realized

his dogfights with Red Baron were all pretend, it was too late. Blood splattered everywhere—Snoopy became invisible beside his red home.

Lucy, seeing there was money to be made in times of a zombie apocalypse increased her cost for psychiatric help to 15 cents, but

soon regretted it when a reanimated Snoopy came for her brain. She was always terrified of his kiss—more so now—tried outrunning

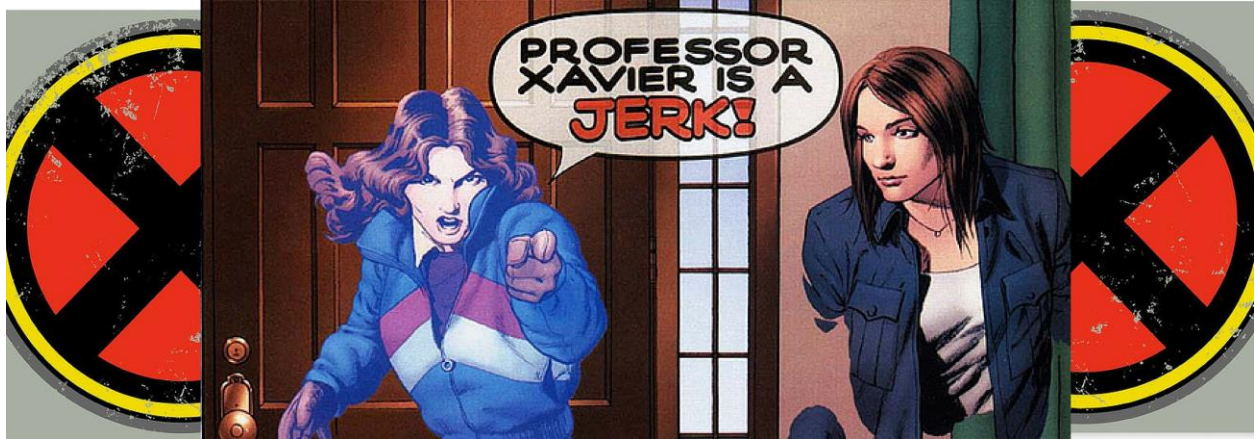
him but it wasn't long before he was lapping her cheek with his tongue, then chewing it off with his teeth. Her only consolation was that

in death she finally could have what she wanted in life—Schroeder, all to herself, away from his toy piano. She ate his fingers first, like taquitos.

Through it all he continued to play—banged his bloody stumps against the tiny ivory keys until every bit of Beethoven left his body.

The sole survivor amongst them all—Pig Pen. Camouflaged by all his dead skin cells, zombies didn't realize him alive. He spent the rest of his

years covered in filth, sad for his lost friends, but grateful to live as he had always wanted—without anyone ever telling him to bathe again.



## INTANGIBLE

I.

At twelve years old I was in love with a girl  
I could never touch.

Kitty Pryde was everything  
a nerdy preteen dreams of—  
next-door-sweetheart-sexy,  
a computer whiz, and (my mother  
would have been so proud) Jewish.

She was also a ninja with a pet purple  
dragon. I'd picture the loyal beast,  
perched, guarding over our bicycles  
outside the arcade where we'd spend  
quarters as if they were kisses—  
as if we would never run out.

Most importantly, she was an X-Man.  
A mutant. Born different. An outcast.  
What misshapen, near-sighted, metal-mouthed  
twelve-year-old boy wouldn't fall for her kind  
of special? Her power, to phase through walls

(and my heart), to walk through anything—  
be a ghost, float on air, untouchable.  
I thought, *how astonishing, such freedom.*



II.

Thirty-three and I've learned to love women  
of flesh, not fiction—

have found romance beyond the splash  
pages of comic books, and understand  
how the real thing is much better than  
any twelve-year-old boy can imagine.

(Though I still wish for a pet purple dragon.)

I know now how necessary the tactile is—  
skin to skin like rain to earth,  
heart to heart like bones to body.

III.

My love, now, is as much the sharp hard  
glass of a mirror as she is the smoke—

Our bodies can bind to the other  
the way concrete gives release  
to roots' push, and yet at times,  
my hand passes right through  
the illusion of her presence—

as if the molecules of her heart  
have acquired the talent to phase  
on command when put in danger.

As we grow in this relationship,  
as conversations turn to last name  
changes and children, I feel she is

becoming more intangible.

I saw her the other day, fading  
into an apparition, weightless,  
walking a tightrope of air,  
a foot off the ground, before  
vanishing into the wall.

There is no freedom in this.

And I wish, more than anything,  
I was twelve again, easily astonished,  
perfectly content loving that which

I could never touch.

# Julian Randall



## Kanye's Ego #1

A legion of faceless women  
press their hands up  
touch me like the god they dream  
me to be

Let me show you everything  
I've made  
to embody my own howl  
call me salvation if you please

From this high  
everything is praise  
*name one genius who ain't crazy*  
name me a god who couldn't pass  
for cursed



### **Bop: Hustler Musik**

So it's 2007 & I'm walking to school & it's winter  
and the new Lil' Wayne just dropped  
and I got all the right names  
New Era, Timberland, Makaveli, G-Unit chain  
I mean I must be the brightest thing on the whole North side  
& it's winter: so everything that shines can fall

*This be that Hustler Musik, Young Weezy got that motherfuckin' Hustler Musik*

So it's 2007 & I'm walking to school & this cop  
starts following me and the whole street is glowing  
like anything when you seeing it for the last time  
and the sun been gone since November  
but I ain't trippin  
and Wayne ain't scared of shit anyway  
and I know that like religion  
since I kneeled at his humming portrait with the volume bumpin'

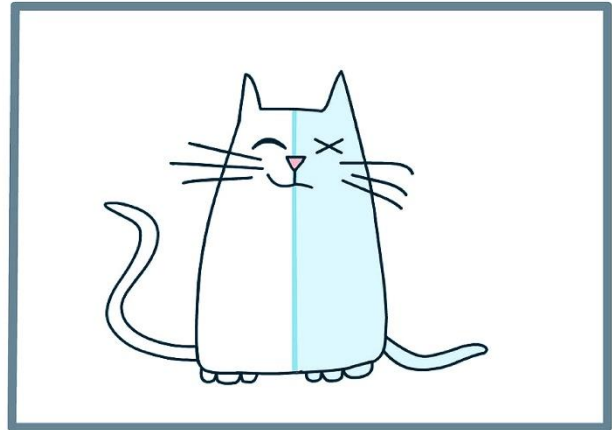
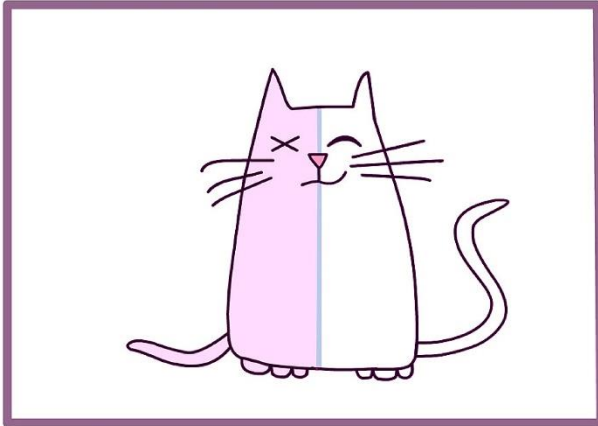
*This be that Hustler Musik, Young Weezy got that motherfuckin' Hustler Musik*



So it's 2007 & I'm walking to school & it's been 4 blocks now  
and Wayne ain't scared of shit  
but Wayne ain't here he's an idea like God or whatever  
we ask to show us how to drape ourselves in blood and call it holy  
and this cop still following me and I got all the right names  
but I'm Black, and it's 2007, and every name is still stolen

*This be that Hustler Musik, Young Weezy got that motherfuckin' Hustler Musik*

# *Grae Rose*



## **Schrodinger**

Erwin Schrodinger created his famous thought experiment in response to an article written by Einstein, Poldosky, and Rosen which implied that, on a quantum level, two potential realities collapse into one only when they are measured. In other words, if there are two possible states, they both exist simultaneously until you look to see which one happened.

In a letter written to Schrodinger, Einstein claimed, as an example, that an unstable keg of gunpowder will, after a while, contain a superposition of both exploded and unexploded states.

Schrodinger criticized this notion, countering the prevailing interpretation of quantum entanglement, and Einstein himself, with a thought experiment about a cat.

His intention was to show that if the life of the cat depended on the quantum state of an atom, to claim the atom exists simultaneously in two mutually exclusive states would also imply the cat must be both alive and dead.

He assumed this would clearly be read as impossible.

*Reductio ad absurdum.*

Ridiculous.

Walking into a darkened home

you know should not be empty  
is a chilling feeling.

It is a black box, the uncertainty of its contents hanging in the air like a poison.  
The crack of light under the bathroom door makes everything worse:

The box can be opened,  
its contents spilled,  
but at what cost?

Do you really want to know what lies on the other side?  
To be faced with the insufficiency of your care,  
the still body beneath still water,  
blooming red clouds already settled to uniform pink,  
the purest image of “too late”?

If you tarry at the door, if you refuse to discover for sure what lies on the  
other side,  
a part of your partner will always be alive.  
Just as much as a part of them will be dead.  
Not knowing holds these two possibilities in suspension,  
cradles sensibilities,  
preserves sanity.

But that isn't real. Reality doesn't change from lack of observation. Some  
things are mutually exclusive, even in a world smeared with gray. Erwin  
knew, just because you don't look doesn't mean the monsters both are and  
aren't there. A cat can't be both alive and dead. Gunpowder can't be both  
waiting to go off and already exploded.

In his words,

*There is a difference between a shaky or out-of-focus photograph  
and a snapshot of clouds and fog banks.*

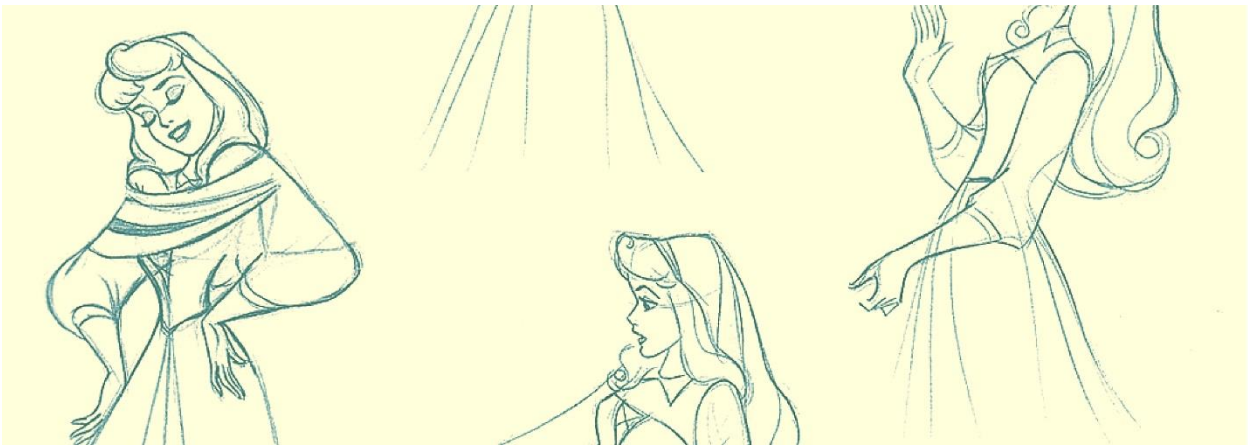
There's no reason to think reality favors clarity over shadow.

No matter how long you stand outside the bathroom door,  
you breath clinging to your throat, hoping for sounds of movement,  
it won't change what is there, just beyond your sight.  
It won't make friends of life and death, won't spark one or halt the other.

What is done is done.

This is not theoretical.  
This is not an exercise.

Your desire not to know for sure does not change what exists.  
Anything else would be ridiculous.



## **Aurora**

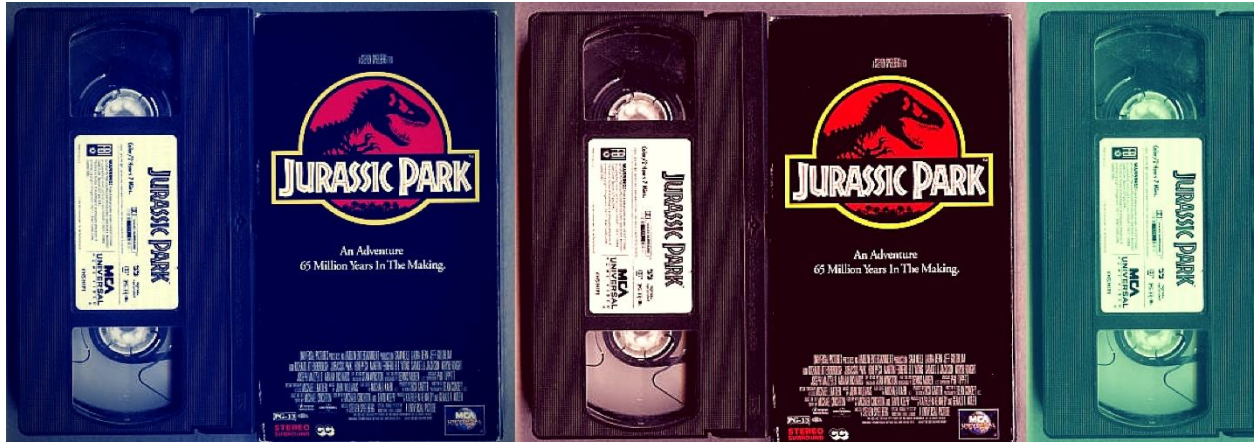
They called it “miracle.”  
When I opened my eyes from  
my hundred-year sleep,  
my kingdom woke with me,  
rejoicing at the arrival of  
our handsome young savior.  
A charming prince.  
My husband-to-be.  
How could I have told him no?  
“Meant to be” was so easy to believe.  
But fate had nothing to do with it,  
nor passion, nor love.  
Only pride.  
Only the craving for power  
that all young princes possess.  
True love is nothing but  
the desire for eternity,  
and I am empty of it.

My real life was an elaborate dream,  
full of mystery, and magic,  
and a girlish hunger for life,  
but I was forced to wake up.  
Dreams are all I know.  
They are volatile, and strange,  
and though they are not all true,  
they are always honest.

But this?  
Living in a palace,  
surrounded by servants instead of friends,  
waking to a stranger's kiss  
and told this is an act of true love,  
being with a man when I didn't even  
lay eyes on one until I was 16?  
It's a nightmare that won't end.  
I don't need "happily ever after."  
I just want to rest in peace.



# Mikkel Snyder



## The Six Year Old Me Explains Classic Cinema

I'm not sure if *Titanic* was two or twenty hours long, but I think I know I don't like the movie and I think I know dad didn't like the movie either. I sighed at the same parts he sighed at, but not the parts that mom sighed at, and I'm not sure why, but dad whispered to me and my little brother that we'd watch a real movie later and I said why we couldn't watch one now, but he said we have to watch this one for mom. Mom tapped the back of his head and patted him on the shoulder and curled into him and I decided to be quiet then sunk into my seat when the ship started to sink. My little brother was already asleep and I wondered why I wasn't sleepy while I sipped on my soda. Mom lets us have as much as we want after dark when we go to the movies and popcorn too and I love how the kernels fly out the machine. It's like when the iceberg hits the ship and the metal flies everywhere and popcorn is everywhere.

But I'm still not sure why that girl wasn't wearing any clothes or why mom or dad didn't try to cover my eyes even though they covered my little brother's. And I'm definitely not sure why the guy had to die, or why my mom was crying at the end since I don't think I've ever seen mom or dad cry. I think I know that dying is a sad thing, but they also told me that love was a happy thing and I wasn't entirely awake, but I wasn't sleeping either, but I'm almost

positive they said love a lot in that movie, like a lot a lot. And please don't tell mom and dad that I wasn't paying that much attention. When I saw the ship, I thought it was nothing compared to *Apollo 13* and I think if they can fix a ship crashing in space, you'd think they'd be able to stop a ship sinking in the water because the ocean is small or at least the sky and space is so large or maybe larger. Dad spends a lot of times on ships and he says it's because the Titanic was older and I don't know too much about science, but I say I thought being older was a good thing. Mom spends lots of time in hospitals and says some old things break more easily, but some things grow stronger and I hope I can grow stronger so I can hold on to doors floating in the water.

I know that fixing things is a good thing and that both my mom and dad fix things, although my mom fixes people and my dad fixes ships, and my mom talks about the Titanic, she says words like 'broken hearts' and I ask her if she can fix them, and she smiles and says yes and when my dad talks about *Apollo 13*, he says words like differential equations and fluid dynamics, and I'm not really sure what any of that means or if I'm saying it right, but dad says that one day, if I want to, I might learn.

Next week, we're going to see *Jurassic Park* with our new video tape player and dad says it's a pain in a word mom won't let him say to install, but we can watch movies on our little tv and I think that's really cool that we don't have to go out to see movies and that our tv doesn't just play cartoons even if I will wake up every Saturday to watch the cartoons. But when I see the dinosaurs on the screen and people getting hurt, I ask mom if she can fix them and I ask dad if he could stop the dinosaurs, but there's also this part of me that doesn't want to stop the dinosaur because they're really cool. And when mom and dad realize this, they go on a computer and they use something called the internet and find a place that has real dinosaurs, except they're not real, just robots, which makes them more awesome and it's still the coolest thing I'll ever see and they take my picture with all of the cool dinosaurs in the park and have to stop me when I try to climb them.

The week after that, my dad going to go away on a ship and he will be gone for a while, but he gives us a gift and says it was one of his favorite movies and it's called *Star Wars* and I'm hoping that there's more space, and more dinosaurs,

and my mom makes breakfast before she works in the morning, but the weekend is coming up and I show her my good grades in math and science and reading and she smiles and says okay, we'll watch one more and watch it again when dad's back, and he'll be back soon. He has to fix things with science, like mom does only different. And I can't wait till I fix things. And I'm not sure what I'll fix, but I think if I can learn to fix something, everything will be okay.



## **I Am Talking to My Mother While Binge Watching Netflix**

I'm sorry it took four years  
to set aside the time for you.

Of course, I didn't get Netflix  
until two years after you died,  
when I needed a mental anesthetic  
for the first year I lived on my own.

I hear your commentary as I drift in and out.  
What speaks to us isn't something  
we can always talk back to.  
You never taught me that exactly.  
I just got the sentiment from you.

Twenty plus years we had together,  
we watched a lot of TV.  
Especially on your deathbed.

Did you know dad still sleeps on it?  
Did you mind that the TV was your only  
companion some days?

Most everything in your room is untouched.  
It's a shrine to your memory, to the time  
when the stroke took your speech,

but your spirit could still sing psalms.

I wish *Stargate SG-1* was on here.

It felt like it was the only show we as a family could enjoy in blissful silence. I want to go back and watch all the stuff before season 6.

What adventures did you and dad see and experience without me?

Anyways, *Alias* and *Prison Break* are on my recommended queue, and I can't help but be curious what you saw in them.

I'm almost done with *Alias*.

I'm at the last episode I saw you watch.

You probably don't remember, but it was Season 5, Episode 12.

I know because in the tag,

Anna Espinosa, played by Gina Torres, a black actress is dropped into vat of red liquid and emerges as

Sydney Bristow, played by Jennifer Garner, a white actress.

I couldn't help but wince.

Did you?

*Prison Break* isn't that much better.

The series ended while you could still walk around the house.

I wish I had watched it, because I could ask if you wished the only Asian actor showed up before season 4 and didn't die, or if you fine with

Michael Scofield and Lincoln Burrows, white inmates,

getting away with minimal repercussions while

the people of color got shot, harassed, or

told to kill themselves.

I didn't think to ask about these things then.

I can't ask about them now that you're gone.

But I got questions I wish you were here to answer.  
Was *Friends* really one of your favorite shows?  
How many Filipino actors could you pick out?  
How many were whitewashed?

What did you think when your son played a Chinese henchmen in a high school musical?  
Or that I've learned more Mandarin and Cantonese than I ever did Tagalog?

Did you mind that the last movie we saw together was about Michael Cera, the whitest boy,  
chasing after a white girl, with video game and pop punk references you didn't fully understand?

I'm trying to find you in the pixels of pop culture.  
I'm trying to learn about the myths of your hometown.  
I look up the ethnicity of every actor that remotely looks like us.  
I found Dante Basco, he's a voice actor, so I am getting closer.

I need to turn in soon, but I found my Stanley Kubrick collection on DVD.  
I've been eyeing *2001: A Space Odyssey*. That movie is pretty much the earliest memory I have of you.

Let me know if I'm telling the story right:  
You finished a test early and ended up  
inadvertently chaperoning a classmate and her date  
to a matinee viewing.

You called it a great movie,  
horrible viewing experience.

I wish you were here to watch it with me.  
I just really want to know what you think.



# *Rob Sturma*



## **Hey Mathison**

Melissa,

What a life you led. You were married to Han Solo for a while and you made a boy on a bicycle fly.

When Steven Spielberg was looking to weave magic with kids who sounded like kids and acted like kids in an extraordinary situation, you were the terrestrial who got the call.

The pages you wove made Spielberg rush out and grab his camera. You set the Black Stallion loose and the silver screen ate him up.

Even the Dalai Lama gave you a thumbs up and that guy is a tough critic.

The tellers of the stories on film are often thought of as the ones behind the lens. But someone needs to whisper muse music into their ears. Someone needs to guide the ship to the destination.

Hey, Mathison. Thank you for introducing me to

The word Penis-breath,  
The single greatest kid jab of the 80's.

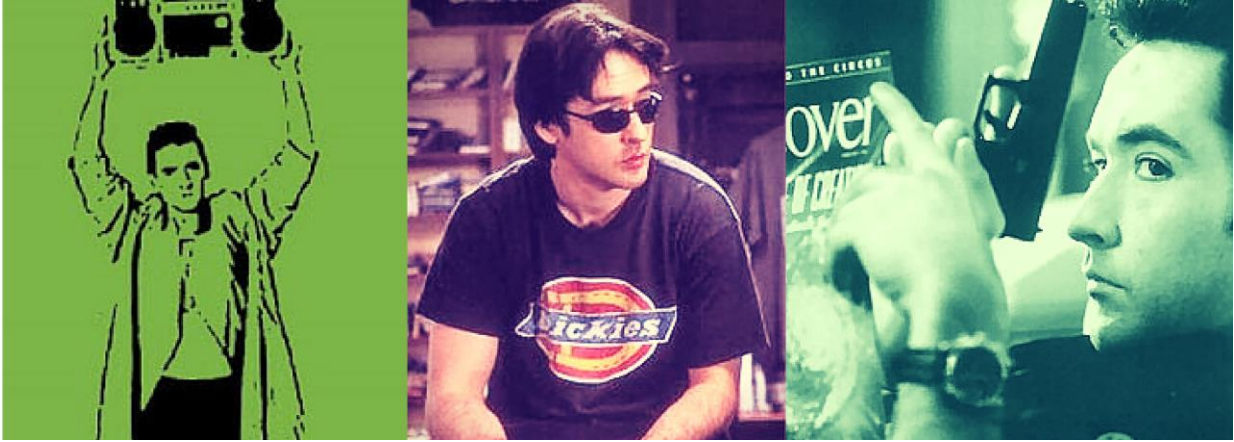
Thanks for letting kids play D&D in a movie  
and sing Elvis Costello  
and thank you for letting them show the alien  
their action figure collection.

I watch that movie  
and I know where its heartlight is.

I'm gonna look up at the moon tonight.

I know I'll see you in the basket seat on the bike,  
casting a shadow over its full belly.

You're finally going home.



### **The John Cusack Mixtape, or Cry Anything: An Emo B-Side**

Tonight I re-watched “High Fidelity” on Netflix and realized halfway in what a dick Rob Gordon was throughout most of that film.

This is not a John Cusack diss. It is not a Nick Hornby diss.

High Fidelity in all its forms was one of the cinematic bookends for my developing sensitive male soul, with “Say Anything” on the other side.

Homegrown lessons for How To Love Like A Dork.

but

Rob Gordon had two wandering eyes,

an id the size of Chicago,

and the myopic belief that two people who equally love

Elvis Costello's *Imperial Bedroom*

can weather anything. And I wanted to be him

so bad. If only for the perfect job, the good hair,

and the ability to crank out the perfect mixtape.

There is an ocean of mixtapes out in the world,  
many by my own hand.

Some of them may actually still be on cassette.

I am sorry not sorry for the overabundance of 90's R&B.

I am insanely proud that Side One ends at 44:38

And Side Two at 44:05.

The constant awareness that every one of those 90 minutes means something.

I miss the romance in that. I miss the romance of that.

I cannot rank my Top 5 Lovers the way Rob Gordon does,

The holders of my heart are not commodities.

Maybe I am more Martin "Grosse Point" Blank,  
the next evolution of the Cusack Confused Boy Club.  
Maybe I am a hired gun. Maybe I am constantly trying to get closure  
even it kills me. One of these films has to have a happy ending.  
The convertible has to be headed for greener pastures.

This part of the film:  
pouring rain and a phone booth,  
lots of quarters will be involved.  
Whatever the outcome it will have the best soundtrack ever,  
ska will definitely blast horn-heavy and taut.  
We will hold up boomboxes but not be desperate Romeos.  
We will make mixes for each other.  
We will put them on the cloud or the thumb or the eyelash  
or whatever the next evolution of romance is.  
It will be personal. It may not be pretty.

To wit:

Me, age 19, trenchcoat with rolled up sleeves--  
wide-eyed, Lloyd Dobler Say Anything fashionista.  
That kid was kind of ridiculous  
but MAN OH MAN did he believe in ska-fueled, neurotic, impossible,  
*you've just described every success story*  
TOP 5 SONGS ABOUT NEW LOVE love...

and I believe in him. Which is why it's all gonna be fine.  
Con Air is forgiven.  
Cusack be thy name.





- **COMING IN 2016:**
- **The Book of Gene**
- **Black Nerd Problems:  
Zero Year**
- **Godzilla v. Everything**
- **Lit Came from Outer  
Space!**