



The Queer Foundation Scholar

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Joe Dial, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Ray Verzasconi, Ph.D.
Editor

October 2013

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the recipients of the Queer Foundation's \$500.00 Publication Award scholarships. I hope you enjoy their essays, poetry, short prose pieces, and short stories as much as the jurors and I have.

On behalf of the recipients, I would also like to thank those individuals who have helped support these annual awards, now in their third year. I hope those of you who have helped me establish these awards will continue to contribute.

Ray Verzasconi, Ph.D., editor

Daniel A. Carriveau from Little Chute, Wisconsin, is a senior at Lakeland College in Sheboygan, WI, majoring in resort management and accounting. Upon graduation he hopes to work in the hospitality field and eventually to own his own resort.

At Lakeland College, Carriveau is very involved in a number of organizations, including Zeta Chi Fraternity, Campus Activities Board, Student Association, Habitat for Humanity, Resort Management Association, and Mortarboard. He also averages about 200 hours of community service per semester both for local and national organizations.

Two of his submissions, "Never Give Up" and "Never Quit: Hetero vs. Homo Acceptance," are found in this issue. A longer piece, "Gays in Fraternities," will appear in the April 2014 issue.

Natalie Marie Garcia grew up in a very conservative area in the northern suburbs of

Houston, TX, "where there's a church on every street corner." With no support, she experienced the negative impact upon her self-esteem suffered by many LGBTQ youth. As a result, it took time to come to terms with her sexual identity and to build her own sense of self-esteem. As a summer camp counselor and Girl Scouts of America volunteer, she hopes to become "a kind and loving mentor to young women" she teaches so that "they can all learn to be comfortable in their own sense of self." She is currently a sophomore at Colorado State University, having transferred this year from Texas' Lone Star College-North Harris. Her short story, "Girls & Girls," will appear in the January 2014 issue.

Skailer Rei Qvistgaard, a gay transgender man and a sophomore at Boston University, is a former Queer Foundation Scholar. At Boston U. he has enjoyed taking many different dance classes. He has also earned a blue belt in Shotokan

Karate. In his spare time, he volunteers with PFLAG and the Safe Schools Project to spread tolerance and awareness about LGBTQ issues. He also participated in the Massachusetts Leadership Camp as a youth counselor for the statewide GSA network. He plans to be trained as a youth hotline speaker for Fenway Health's volunteer program.

Qvistgaard has also created and maintains "Trans Today," a blog focusing on transgender issues. See, <http://queerfoundation.org/dir/index.php/blog/>).

Two of his submissions, "Wrapping Paper" and "Crashes into Space" are featured in this issue. An essay, "Beauty and the Beast: Female Freedom Examined," will be featured in our April 2014 issue.

Javon Smith, senior at DePaul University, returns for the third year with two poems in this issue, "His Story yet Unspoken/Broken Ears: My Discovery of Queer Pioneers" and "Flies don't Enter a Closed Mouth: A Compilation of Lyric and Narrative Poetry inspired by LGBTQA Activists and Authors before me." An essay, "Democracy or Phallogocracy: Marginalization, Communication, and the Misconception of Transgendered Identity," will appear in the April 2014 issue.

At DePaul University, Smith is the Head of the DePaul Gospel Choir, the Head Speech Coach of the DePaul Speech and Debate Society, and a member of the DePaul Christian Ministries Leadership Team. He is a speech coach at Thornton Township High School. He also "loves to write, sing, act, perform, and give back to the community."

From the Executive Director

Scholarships for QF Writers are made possible by our donors.¹ The October issue of *The Queer Foundation Scholar* honors their generosity.

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Never Quit – Heteros vs. Homos: Acceptance

Daniel A. Carriveau
Lakeland College

I hate how so many people just don't understand. They just do not relate and they just do not want to care. There is really nothing different between you and me. Yet it is acceptable to tear down and isolate someone from the rest of society. Is it really? A person is a person. Please understand. Gays have feelings too.

How do my actions and thoughts affect you? It is not like I am hitting on your homophobic ass. I am not even attracted to you. Just because I touch you or talk about something of my lifestyle doesn't mean that I want to ride your dick. We can sleep in the same room, I promise it won't be awkward

I don't appreciate the comments that you make. Faggot means a bundle of something. You think I am a bundle of something? Of what? Love? Aww, thanks! That is so gay. Really, a non-animate object has a sexual orientation? Why am I a piece of shit? Have you looked at yourself? How crazy are you? Just because I exist is a problem for you?

I have caused much self-harm trying to deal with the pressures and issues that I face on a daily basis because of your outrageous behavior and words. I feel like it would be too inappropriate to go into the graphic horror stories of my nightly rituals. Through it all, I am somehow still here and fighting. It really is a miracle, I wanted to just quit, but never did. Dealing with this adversity and accepting me can only develop me into a strong person and better for the future. Change and acceptance takes a peaceful fighting. It is a continual process and will not change overnight. It takes individuals to come to their own realization, in their own special ways. I want to make a difference! If I quit now, how can I make that difference?

Never Give Up

Daniel A. Carriveau
Lakeland College

You are beaten and torn,
You try and try to make an advantage,
But they only scorn,
And somehow we still manage.

Internally we are thrown,
We never really were on the beaten path.
Somehow this all makes us grown,
And we learn to deal with the wrath.

We learn and deal with the issues,
Keep fighting through all of the adversity,
Even though we may go through lots of tissues,
We make a difference in equality and diversity.

After all, isn't that our goal?
It doesn't happen if you give up.

Crashes into Space

Skailer Rei Qvistgaard
Boston University

A planet orbits a fiery ball of nuclear power,
Until a comet streaks by, pulling said planet out
of its static existence,
Sending it,
Hurling through space,
Searching for gravity,
Following the light as they go careening
through blackness,
Eventually the planet will crash desperately into
another lost celestial body,
Or will be swallowed whole by a void in the
ebony darkness,
Finding orbit again seems impossible,
Was the fleeting comet worth losing its
heliocentric world?
Will it ever have a chance to return to the
splashes of light created by the Milky Way?

Wrapping Paper

Skailer Rei Qvistgaard
Boston University

Some things in life are automatically gendered, much to my dismay. Our baby clothes, our toys, our names, and strangely enough our wrapping paper is all gendered with specific colors or images. Blue or pink? Trucks or fairies? The answers to these questions always eluded me as a transgender child. One day however, after being out as a gay transman to my family something truly amazing happened. It was my birthday, August 21st. I walked down the carpeted stairs to my dining room and found my mom, dad, and sister all waiting for me. Excited yells of “Happy Birthday!” and “I love you!” were exchanged as we all hugged each other. This birthday wasn’t special in particular. I was only turning 17. I wasn’t getting my license, like at 16, and I wasn’t an adult, like at 18. This birthday, however, would turn out to be one of the ones held most dear in my heart. The presents I was getting weren’t a surprise. My family is kind of funny in the sense that if we see something we like, we tell whoever we are with we would like it for our birthday or Christmas and there you go. It will appear on an assigned date. What was important and special about these particular presents, on this particular birthday, was the packaging. This packaging meant more to me than anything that could be held within the boxes. As my mom and dad had their hands on my shoulders and my sister looked at me expectantly, I smiled and several tears slipped down my warm cheeks. Instead of the usual pink and feminine wrapping paper that usually adorned my, and my sister’s gifts, these gifts were wrapped in a pale blue paper, covered in little yellow ducks... boy wrapping paper. My family had sent me a message loud and clear with that wrapping paper, “We love you, as our son, and brother.” As we proceeded with the birthday festivities, unknown to my family, I slipped a piece of the baby boy wrapping paper into my pocket, to keep that message close. I was accepted, I was safe, and I would always have a home with a family to return to.

Flies Don't Enter a Closed Mouth: A Compilation of Lyric and Narrative Poetry inspired by LGBTQA Activists and Authors before me

Javon Smith
DePaul University

Sunday Mornings

Written after Gloria Anzaldúa's La Frontera / Borderlands

(Son) Please, ma.

Give me a chance to speak.
I know you think it makes me weak,
But it makes me strong.
It makes me me.

God likes that.
I know, ma. Infanticide

I know your homophobia is rooted in your maternal need to protect me from social ostracism.
I know your hatred and limited theology are residual of filicidal resistance tactics in slavery.
I know your boldness is a fear tactic mechanized so that I may foresee the "Wrath of God."
I know your desire for my social assimilation is for economic security, not a spiritual one.

And, I know.

I know you know that our people have overcome a tradition of silence. Just as all minorities. The LGBTQA community included.

I know you know my cultural and religious identities would only sustain growth through my sexual one.
I know you know that the church will still be holding our community together, as always. I am included.

Ma, I'm Coming Out.
I'm Breaking Out.
I'm will not be Copping Out.

My stubborn wild tongue will continue in its inability to comply with authority. Silence is a minority thing, and God said I am the head and not the tail. Above and not beneath, so alienation and psychological conflict will not get the best of me. I will continue to internalize identification. Ma, Jesus Loves me. And I know. I know from the absolute marrow of my bones that you do, too.

Flawed Flaw

*I don't need no fixin'
It was all of that fixin'
That made me broken. (Repeat)*

His Story Yet Unspoken/Broken Ears: My Discovery of Queer Pioneers

Javon Smith

I am the son of the Daughters of Bilitis.
Phyllis Ann after she changed Ferguson.
With men, Walt Whitman's "Through me Forbidden Voices."
After trusting Bayard Rustin with my history,
His story of forced resignation forged my identity crisis.

Licensing assimilation.
Silent expression.
Violent repression.
Denial of my people.
Erasing sexuality with a heteronormative eraser;
Erasure is a means to demean gay abilities.

Milk slain;
Susan B's more butch than her surname.
Ask who's Langston Hughes?
Eleanor Roosevelt to Lorena Hickok,
Why's Locke lock-up his bed matters?
Turn Rustin into Prison #15050.
"5-0" was on to Harry Hay.

In Hay's day gays gaze wasn't as gay as it was human,
As much as it was dignified.
Lies about Dr. King's infidelity were less threatening
Than lies about Dr. King's sexuality per Hoover's maneuvers.
Henry Gerber's ambition liberated missions' missions.
Mattachine societies,
No matter the evolution or devolution.
Whether they were picketed or conversed,
Impromptu or rehearsed,
Gender roles inversed,
And homophobia was cursed to evacuate universal premises.

This was America's start.
From Ginsberg's heart to mine,
I say we are on a move.
Yvette Flunder could steal thunder and attest to that.
She could give a testimony on how denominational lines do not divide heaven from hell.
How biblical scholarship is not synonymous with anti-intellectualism.

Reconciliation of my two identities is available, I must tell myself.
I must turn inward and say, Beauty must be defined by who I am or else it is my enemy.
I say beauty must be defined by who we are or else it is our enemy.”
So, be beautifully you.

Harm Done, No Show

*I ain't nobody's victim
I ain't no damsel in distress
Don't nobody owe me nothing
I'm just me
I'm just here
I'm only me.*



Brandon Lambert, a 2010-11 QF Scholar, second from the bottom in the photo at the left, co-stars in a revised and updated version of “Plaid Tidings” from November 7 to January 12 at The Cabaret at Theatre Square in Pittsburgh, PA.

Tickets (and a synopsis of the play) at <http://trustarts.culturaldistrict.org/production/39048/plaid-tidings>

From the editor's desk

Food for the Queer Italian Soul

Guido Barilla may have done the LGBTQ community in Italy a favor when he said, during a radio show interview, that his company would never use a gay couple in its advertising.

The Barilla Group, with its main offices in Parma, came to be the largest producer of pasta and pasta sauce products in the world for several reasons, among them that as far as pasta in a box and sauce in a jar go, Barilla does have quality products. Another reason, however, is that its advertising has long sold Barilla as the defender of an “idyllic” Italian family; idyllic in the eyes of the patriarchs.

It's about *mamma* keeping an immaculate home while raising eight children and catering to the every whim of her husband and sons, including laying out a magnificent spread for *pranzo* and *cena*—all the while with a smile on her face and looking as if she just stepped out of a beauty parlor. It's also a vision of every meal being a joyous affair. It's an appealing myth in the industrialized world, including Italy, where we've been conned by the religious patriarchs into believing in the myth of the disintegration of the family. Want stories of the dysfunctional family? Read the Torah or the Old Testament.

Guido Barilla was no doubt not prepared for the backlash to his comments. The boycott of Barilla products was immediate, even before someone called for one. *Basta pasta Barilla* became an instant Italian battle cry on the social media within minutes of Barilla's radio interview.

Some American pundits doubt the boycott will last. It doesn't really matter. So far twelve other Italian companies that make pasta and/or sauces have already taken a stand against Guido Barilla's statements. He stupidly stated rather categorically that if we didn't like the fact the company would never use a gay couple in its advertising, we could eat someone else's products, and twelve Italian companies have lined up saying, “We support you. Eat ours.”

Bertoli, located in Lucca, Barilla's biggest competitor, was among the first to respond. [Bertoli

had, in fact, used a gay couple in an ad back in 2009: it was an innocent kiss on the cheek for the partner who'd prepared supper using one of Bertoli's “oven-baked” meals.] But Bertoli's post-Guido ad included a somewhat more sophisticated version of an idea also used by at least five other pasta makers.



Okay, let's use two popular pastas to convey our message. *Penne* are men; *farfalle* are women. The Bertoli ad is filled with nuances. Do the two gay men have a daughter who's old enough to be dipping her legs into the sauce? If Bertoli also makes spinach and bell pepper pasta, does their use here also suggest interracial or interethnic couples, also becoming a reality in Italy? Is there a significance in the fact that the straight couple only have a dog? A reference to the fact that among native Italians, the birth rate is below the 2.1 replacement level, and support for letting queers adopt or raise their own children? Subliminal messages. [Oh, *farfalle* are butterflies, from the Arabic. *Penne* are feathers or quills, but in these ads it's rather clear that we're being asked to make the connection between *penne* and *pene* (penis). In fact in the dialect of Lombardy and several other northern provinces, there is no distinction between single and double letters. *Nonna* is pronounced /*nona*/ and *penne* is pronounced /*pene*/.]

Althea SPA, which like Barilla has its headquarters in Parma, is a maker a variety of sauces. Like Bertoli, Althea ran a TV ad several years ago with a gay couple, only the two men kiss on the lips. While they do so, a jar of Althea pasta sauce sits inconspicuously on the table in front of them. In a subsequent frame, we see the words “Althea” and the company slogan “Amore e sughi”

(Love and sauces), also voiced by a woman. A new version adds “*Dove c’è Althea, c’è famiglia*” (Where there’s Althea, there’s family.”).



Talk about thumbing their nose at Guido Barilla, their cross-town rival!

Garofalo, a Naples-based company, used the local dialect to convey its message.



“We don’t care who you prepare it with as long as you prepare it *al dente*.” However, since the verb in both clauses is *fare*, whose principal meaning is “to do,” in reference to men at least the statement has a double meaning that really pushes the envelope.

Successful ads are those that convince us to buy what we don’t really need, or that help us change or establish brand loyalty. Although Italy may be behind Spain, Portugal, and France in terms of granting LGBTQ people equal rights, attitudes are indeed changing. At any rate, there are twelve companies so far that are betting on it. In the

process their commercials will also help change attitudes.

Do categories help or hinder us?

Vlogger Arielle Scarcella continues to stir controversy with her queer vlog, often questioning the entire concept of sexual categories and labels, while not infrequently engaging in stereotypes herself. Clearly, though, she has as many followers as she does detractors. Is the internet spawning anarchy, thereby weakening us in the face of very well organized political reactionaries? “Why do you get mad at everything said about you?,” she asks in one video. Well, it is in the nature of youth to be angry at the bullshit thrown at us. As we age, most of us learn to distinguish between those who really can hurt us and those merely seeking attention, but let youth get angry.

If you’re not familiar with Scarcella, here’s her vlog:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/ArielleIsHamming>

If Gaul was divided into three parts, the world is now divided into two parts.

While Russia and several other former Soviet Republics move backwards in time, joining most Muslim nations and an increasing number of African nations in terms of tolerance (let alone acceptance) of LGBTQ individuals, India moves slowly forward. The Indian Parliament decriminalized homosexual behavior in 2009. Slowly the queer Indian closet is disintegrating.

Studies have shown that many Indian boys, whether they are Hindu, Muslim, or Buddhist, are most likely to first engage in sex with a male friend. In fact, it appears to be something just about everyone knows, but very, very few people will talk about. Even less known, of course, is the sexual behavior of young Indian women—even though we have several beautiful Indian lesbian love stories from the present and going back more than 2,000 years.

After the 2009 legislation, gay pride parades began to appear in a number of the more liberal Indian cities. Mumbai also held a gay film festival last year that attracted several thousand people

from throughout India. Two weeks ago the first gay pride parade was held in the very conservative Gujarat State. An estimated 100 mostly young queers participated, some of them wearing masks, but as many not.

Our demand to be treated with respect, as equals, is dividing nations and the world into geographic regions. Most of the former Soviet Union (save perhaps the Czech Republic, Hungary, Eastern Germany, and maybe Poland), parts of the former Yugoslavia (and some parts not), all of the Muslim world save perhaps Turkey, and much of Africa—they're all moving toward the dark side. The rest of the world is moving toward the light. Even tiny Moldavia, seeking admission to the EU, recently rescinded its anti-gay public propaganda law.

We're also seeing growing support for LGBTQ rights in Japan, South Korea, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. And support is definitely increasing in China, where homosexuality is not illegal, but where law enforcement officers have often harassed gay men.

Ultimately, we are faced with a world in which mostly certain Christians, Jews, and Muslims consider all sexual minorities abominations and aberrations. At the moment they are having hernias trying to contend with the transgender population. Anything other than Adam and Eve subverts their view of an omnipotent god who couldn't possibly make mistakes. Of course, their god continually does make mistakes, so they explain it all away claiming that he works in mysterious ways.

Well, yes, if many ancient societies did indeed grant gay men special rights, they revered the intersexual. If the dominant ancient Hebrew sect plagiarized "Genesis," "Exodus," and the "Book of Job" from their Canaanite masters (a fact known to Biblical scholars since the 1930s), other ancient Hebrew sects preferred a vastly different creation myth: that of Mikael, an intersexual who engaged in sex with itself and gave birth to twins, one male and one female. Still leaving us with a creation based on incest. I much prefer a Sumarian creation myth, in which a god creates many men and women so the children of the gods would no longer have to work to provide food and drink for their parents. Only, alas, they bred so rapidly that they were soon at each other's throats, fighting for limited resources, so the same god destroyed them all, created a new group of humans, and then again

destroyed them for the same reason. The third time, to slow population growth, this god decreed that a third of the men and women would not at all be interested sexually in members of the opposite sex!

The Vicissitudes of Life

It's difficult enough to suffer the pains inflicted on us by our fellow human beings, but then fate or destiny or circumstances intervene to inflict greater pain.

As I wrote in the April 2013 issue, Joseph "Joe" Bell of LaGrande, Oregon, had embarked on a cross-country walking tour in memory of his son Jadin, in an effort to increase awareness of the very real and tragic consequences of bullying, and to promote acceptance of LGBTQ youth. On October 9, while walking on the shoulder of the highway near Kit Carson, Colorado, Joseph was struck and killed by a semi-truck. Based on an unofficial police statement, the truck driver may have fallen asleep at the wheel and veered off the road. Thousands of miles of road, and at that precise moment in Colorado, a truck driver falls asleep and veers off the road and kills a father mourning the death of his son.

The accident sadly occurred midway between the 15th anniversary of the day Matthew

Shepard was brutally beaten (October 6) and the day he was officially pronounced dead (October 12). Jadin, of course, hanged himself in an elementary school playground in LaGrande and just as Matthew was rushed from Laramie, Wyoming, to a hospital in Greeley, Colorado, Jadin was flown from LaGrande to Portland's Doernbecker Children's Hospital where he was taken off of life support several days later.

Speaking of Matthew Shepard, Michele Josue's documentary, *Matt Shepard Is a Friend of Mine*, opened in both California and Washington D.C. on October 4. You can find out more about the film here

<http://mattshepardisafriendofmine.com>. As expected, right-wing bigots have latched onto Stephen Jimenez' *The Book of Matt* to besmirch Matt's memory. Josue's documentary is a fitting rebuttal to a book based on hearsay, rumors, and conspiracy theories, all of them rejected by the trial of Matt's murderers.

Gay Goth Scene, a very short film by German director Kai Stäüicke, also makes a very powerful statement about the tragic consequences of bullying. It was posted on YouTube on October 4:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3Vca2JLG_o

Although filmed in Berlin, *Gay Goth Scene* was apparently first screened in Auburn, South Australia, and it was also shown in a number of middle and high schools in South Australia.

Elliot Darrow describes himself as both a Christian and heterosexual, which is infuriating Christianists. Darrow was among the finalists in this year's College Unions Poetry Slam with his "God is Gay." This video of his presentation dates from this past April, but it is now making the rounds on queer vlogs.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=V6AQyBEN5fM

No matter how small, please consider a donation to the Queer Foundation, either to support the English Essay Writing Contest scholarships (\$1,000) or the Publication Award scholarships (\$500), or both.

Even \$10.00 can help us sustain both scholarship programs. Go to www.queerfoundation.org and click on "Contribute" for more information on how you can help. Via Network for Good, you can even set up a monthly credit card charge for as little as \$5.00 – a bit more than a Starbucks latte.

Ray Verzasconi, Ph.D.

Editor, *The Queer Foundation Scholar*