Kentucky Lover
by Michel Martín del Campo

She’s smooth and fiery,
A work of labor and love
Aged in the slow
Fires of burning America.

She’s a song
Of primal desire,
A spirit of lingering sensations
And ever clear dreams.

I knew her
During those wild years,
Yet the day I kissed her fire
I knew it would not last.

One drink from her lips
Was enough to make me
Forsake every other spirit
As her warmth filled me.

Silver stars and quiet dark
Let us meet in quiet solace
As the world slept, and we let life drift away
While we lay together and showed each other
Narcotic dreams and secret love.

It ended.
Years of blindness
Found me in the humid summer sun.
I yielded to tradition and obligation
And said to the fire, “Take care of yourself.”

But not goodbye.
I will never say goodbye
To the fire.

Addiction Walks
by Jonathan Martinez

Today is my birthday; she’s outside.
Red tendrils web across the crook of her arm.
She digs with soiled nails into her left breast and grips
With hands blackened like a coal miner’s
A bowl of soggy vanilla ice cream.

When’s her birthday?
Bare soles encrusted with baked earth bear her gaunt frame.
Shuffling along under His blazing gleam, her eyes roll
Back and cracked lips part and out escapes a moan
For her “Mama.”

Or does she mean more?
Neanderthal woman plops down on a white, nylon hammock.
Heat cascades through veins as she swings to and fro,
Picking at the woe crawling under her skin.

The Women We Love” (2008) by Michel Martín del Campo (charcoal and digital media).
Six Simple Words  

by Jonathan Martinez

"Why do you want to write for? Planning to starve?" Danny said.

I inhaled on my dwindling cigarette. "I doubt I’ll starve. I’ll teach or something. Besides, I already switched majors; I’m too lazy to wait in line and change back to music."

"Moron, you just wasted six years. And why writing? Are you even good at it?"

My buddy, Danny, is lovely, isn’t he?

Despite his encouragement, I made the right decision. If this whole writing thing doesn’t work, I’ll just pull a Hemingway, minus the alcohol and Nobel Prize—I lied of course.

However, finding the energy and motivation to do anything with my life wasn’t easy. I had no place in the world of academia, no desires, no aspirations. Whether I earned a degree or not, the point of caring had long since passed. I kept enrolling to create the illusion of accomplishment. Who knew a nice, middle-aged, Laredo Community College professor would change all that.

"Aii, Ma’am!"

I looked up from my doodling. Magdalena Alexander, my ENG 1302 professor, was passing out our final exam grading our final group project: an analytical essay. I’m not sure why my young peers complained. I glanced over the assignment. I thought it seemed simple enough. But, honestly, I had no opinion about writing... the Friday before Spring Break because I remember not having class and looking forward to a long break. As I dragged myself across the cobblestone path leading to the Adkins Building, the plethora of excuses about my horrible draft—an essay about the symbolism in Oscar Wilde’s “The Canterville Ghost”—festered in my mind. Annoyingly, Mrs. Alexander wanted to look at everyone’s rough drafts. I saw him just sit watery-eyed, mark up my paper, and leave me with a dripping red mutilated essay.

Once inside the building, I strolled toward a mustard-yellow couch outside her office, AK 162, and sat next to one of my classmates already waiting. I nodded my head, saying, “Hey.”

"Hey,” he said. “You next?”

"Yeah,” I said, "I think I go after you.”

"Okay."

While waiting, I took my paper and sources and tried to put everything together. I glanced at my classmate and noticed he only had two sheets of paper per.

"Are you done with your paper?”

"Nah,” I said, "I don’t like the essays. My story was boring,” he said.

I gave him the courtesy fake laugh. "What story?”

- “The Tell-Tale Heart.”

I thought it seemed simple enough, but, honestly, I had no opinion about writing...
Ah, the first day of class. You just saunter into the classroom, find a seat, space out, maybe introduce yourself, glance at the syllabus, and go home. Who doesn’t need this sort of respite after a long, arduous vacation full of partying and other hedonism? You and your cocky attitude stroll into English 302, you smile at the hottie a few rows down, and find a cozy spot near the door so you can bolt once lecture is over. Twenty minutes into the class, all is peacily until you look at the grade percentages and reality t-bones you like a train to a Pinto. Your professor breaks the news that your ethnographic essays are worth a huge portion of your grade—manatee-esque huge. Don’t fret, however, because even though you now have multiple paper cuts from frantically flipping pages, you won’t need literal blood, sweat, and tears to write your paper. An ethnographic essay requires analysis of a certain aspect of a subculture (a group of people whose behavior and traits differ from the majority). By following a few simple guidelines, completing this assignment can be stress-free and save you on band-aids.

Picking a subculture
Leave your comfort zone and research a group you are unfamiliar with. Doing so lets you learn about other groups outside your general perspective. Anything from skateboarders who hang out at a local park on weekends to “band geeks” who know far too much about instrument reeds is fair game. These and any one of the following can be considered a subculture:
- Campus groups (sororities, fraternities,” band geeks,” jocks)
- Hobbies (extreme sports, videogames, dance, collecting)
- Community groups (volunteers, churches, teacher associations)
- Trends (punk rock, skateboarding)

Find one aspect
Now that you have an idea of what a subculture is, focus on a particular aspect of that group. What sets these people apart from the everyday norm? Is it the way they speak or dress, or do they have differences in gender roles? For instance, a group of videogame enthusiasts are common and can lead to biased writing. In other words, if you think fraternities are chauvinistic or skateboarding is a waste of time, don’t write about them. Instead, pick a subculture to which you are completely neutral towards. This will not only help you avoid a one-sided perspective, but you will also learn new things about a different sect of society.

Starting your paper
Get an early start by going out and observing your chosen subculture. Here are a few things you can do to get the most information out of a particular group:
- jot down field notes: Doing this will help you to remember not only certain specifics of a group but also any interesting details.
- Incorporate artifacts: Find the “tools” that define a group.
- Conduct interviews: Talk to the people whose lives are a part of a certain subculture.

Thesis statement
Now, it’s time to give clarity and direction to your assignment. A thesis statement tells the reader the purpose of your paper, and there are a few steps involved when writing one for this particular essay:
- Establish your culture and aspect of focus (culture: gamers; aspect: genre preferences amongst genders)
- Ask a question about that aspect (i.e. “Why do female gamers prefer story-based role-playing games as opposed to males who prefer first person shooter games?”)

Composing the draft
After observing a group, it’s time to put all of your hard work into words. There are several writing styles that work well for ethnographic essays:
- Narrative: Tell a story about your experience with your particular subculture. You can reveal it through a sequence of events or give us a view into a particular day.  
- Compare and contrast: Discuss the similarities and differences of your subculture compared to the norm.
- Question and answer: Establish a question in the introduction based on your research and methods. Remember, a question is not a thesis statement.

Empathy
If you wanted to learn about Yankees fans, would you go to a Red Sox fan and expect to hear anything kind? The same goes for all other subcultures. Strong emotions for a particular group are common and can lead to biased writing. In other words, if you think fraternities are chauvinistic or skateboarding is a waste of time, don’t write about them. Instead, pick a subculture to which you are completely neutral towards. This will not only help you avoid a one-sided perspective, but you will also learn new things about a different sector of society.

Setting
Where people live, work, and socialize play a major role in their personal development. The same can be said for subcultures. Giving some sort of backdrop paints a mental picture and helps the reader further understand a group.
- Take photos: Pictures can add interesting visuals that enhance the experience for your reader.
- Make a map: If your group is, in part, defined by their geographic location, use a map to let your reader know where they’re from.

Writing Center Mad Libs!
by Andy Benavides

The band (past tense action verb) on stage for the encore. The crowd jumped around and made the pit swell and swarm with (common noun) (present participle) in all directions. The lead singer, (First Name) (Rhyming adjective), grabbed the mike and yelled, “What do you want to hear?”

He seized the mike stand and extended it toward the audience. They chanted, “(one word song title)”!

“So that’s what you want; then that’s what you get. Hit it, Fontain,” he bellowed. The drummer, (Adjective starting with F) Fontain, counted off with the drumsticks and went into a drumroll, ending in a crash; his beat bopped in a steady pace. The bass dropped into the groove while the guitarist, (First Name with “’”) Awesome, next to the (compound adjective) amp, and screeched out feedback until he hit a resonating power chord. Eyes closed, (First Name) (Rhyming adjective) (past tense vocal action) into the mike.

The band’s leather pants and shirtless attire revealed their skinny frames and dysmorphic tattoos of (plural animal) (adjective) (body part), and crossed-out names—such as (proper noun), (proper noun), and (proper noun). They (active verb) around the stage; the singer circled around the members and stood up on the bass drum. He yelled, “One.” The band thumped, thumped their notes and paused. “Two!” The band played and paused. “Three, (onomatopoeia)!” They sailed on their instruments, and the singer belted the first verse, “Look at me. My (body part) are (adjective) from your debris—”

The crowd mumbled along.

“Follow me. I’ve seen your eternity. Set me free. (Onomatopoeia), set me free.”

The guitarist soloed with the guitar (preposition) his (body part).

The crowd raised horns and threw (adjective) bottles of water into the night sky. Fog swamped the area as (adjective) lights faded into blue.

The singer screamed, “Now I’m free.” He jumped (body part) first into the crowd and was carried off to the middle of the pit. The audience applauded as the drummer (action verb) and hit the last symbol for the night.

“Good night, my (noun), and stay (adjective),” the singer said, then nothing. The microphone (preposition) the floor. The bassist removed his (article of clothing) and dove into the crowd. The guitarist picked up his Heineken and flicked off the audience as he (past tense action verb) off stage.

(Present participle), the crowd chanted the band’s name, “Public Display! Public Display!”

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Paper Cut: Taking the Sting Out of Ethnographic Essays
by Chelsea Comer

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(Continued from page 2) covered with books and boxes. In a comer behind her desk, a thick mahogany bookshelf burst with volumes of Twain, Shakespeare, and other literary giants. Her desk was just as cluttered. Paper clips, post-its, pens, and pencils were scattered all over the surface. Next to her left arm rested a large mug of stale coffee, and a tiny heart-shaped tin of cinnamon Altoids. Mrs. Alexander pointed toward a worn chair on the left of her desk and asked me to have a seat.

“Sorry for making you wait, Jonathan. Some of the sessions went longer than I thought. I hope you don’t mind,” she said.

I handed her the paper and slouched in the chair, waiting for what I expected would be a mechanical response. During the wait, I sometimes glanced at her. She would nod her head or scribble little notes in the margins. I started rapping my fingers on the desk.

“You have a knack for writing.”

That was all she said. Up until then, no one ever praised me for my writing. Sure, I’d earned A’s, but I never figured I was any good at it. I honestly thought everyone wrote like I did. Nothing special.

“You do why you that?” I asked.

“Because, it’s true. From reading this, I can tell you enjoy writing. Your feelings and insights come across. By the way, what is your major?”

“Music…”

“Ah, you’d make a good English major.”

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(The Writers’ Forum)
Time Management
by Gladys Betances

BUZZ! BUZZ! The sloth-like body responds to the shrieking, inhuman device. Unwillingly, it slings the device across the floor and lies down again. BUZZ! BUZZ! BUZZ! The yelps keep thuddering until the body, realizing no way out, ascends. Recognize this scenario? For students, mornings are traumatic events. The desire for sleep taunts them, but many know they have no time to spare for relaxation. Despite recent technological expansions, life is not easier or even stress-free. Yet, life has increased in its trepidation. Despite all efforts to do things quickly, time eludes us, and even PDA’s, computers, cell phones, and other technological wonders professing help are useless. Going to class, studying, preparing for our days, and other commitments cloud our schedules. As students, however, the use of certain techniques alleviates the time crunch.

Prioritizing represents one time management technique. Make sure to organize both academic and social obligations, making sufficient time for all activities. How you arrange your schedule directly relates to the goals you set for yourself. Keep in mind these goals will change, so be adaptable. Divide goals into smaller, more manageable steps once you establish the big picture, preferably on paper. Thinking of your goals in small steps helps reinforce the idea of a connected path to your ultimate goal. Seeing connections helps monitor progress and detects whether you are on track or not. Once you have all major goals differentiated, estimate the importance of each and organize them by priority.

After coordinating your social and academic goals, you can plan a new schedule to follow by recognizing whatever time they have. Making goals, prioritizing, and arranging your schedule directly relates to the goals you set for yourself. Keep in mind these goals will change, so be adaptable. Keep your planner in one specific place, since it is the guide through your week. You must appraise time management with an open mind and at least partial knowledge and understanding that time is a valuable resource.

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- Keep your planner in one specific place, since organizing your time depends on always being able to easily put your hands on this guide.
- Write due dates, and then a few days before assignments are due, write yourself a reminder, especially for tasks taking more than a few hours. A properly completed planner will indicate upcoming busy periods, show availability for new tasks, and assess your progress in your goals. Even with unexpected occurrences that can impact your schedule, you assist yourself in making decisions governed by your desire to reach your goals. Without a schedule, moment-to-moment moods may govern you, leading you to make unwise decisions, detracting from your goals.
- Establishing plans will impart lucidity, alertness, and decisiveness.

“Only those who risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.”
~T. S. Eliot

From my childhood I remember the word uxorious and its definition written on a slightly tattered index card and stuck on the front side of our refrigerator door. To my mother’s amusement, my father often jokingly informed friends and co-workers that uxorious was his favorite word in the English language. Unfortunately, aside from those who came in contact with my father, the word uxorious remains quite unfamiliar to most people. It is for this reason that I take the opportunity to bring a little attention to such a uniquely descriptive word.

Uxorious [uh-kawr-e-uhh, sohr-uh, uh-gawr-uh, zohr-uh] adjective
Related forms: adv. uxoriously, noun uxoriousness
- doting upon, foolishly fond of, or affectionately submissive toward one’s wife
- excessively submissive or devoted to one’s wife

“And by the way, everything in life is writable about if you have the outgoing guts to do it, and the imagination to improvise. The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt.”
~Sylvia Plath

Due to the man’s uxorious nature, he often pondered ways to surprise his wife.

Brief Word History
The first recorded use of uxorious was in 1598. Uxorious is derived from the Latin uxor, meaning “wife.” The same things change their names at such a rate; For instance—passion in a lover’s glorious, But in a husband is pronounced uxorious.

- George Gordon Noel Byron, British poet