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On the Cover:
"Spring Cleaning" by Paul Heyer

Typographical Note
The text of The Blue and White is set in Bodoni Old Face, which was revived by Günter Gerhard Lange based on original designs by Giambattista Bodoni of Parma (active 1765–1813). The display faces are Weiss and Cantoria.
Even more enjoyable than an immoderate meal is the languorous, wine-drunk feeling of satiation that attends it. And while early May doesn’t often afford us the luxury of lingering over our meals, in a few weeks there will be many opportunities to partake of coffee as something other than a stimulant. Until then, The Blue and White presents you with a few vicarious pleasures in the pages to follow. We hope that, in reading about Pontius Palate’s foray into wine connoisseurship and Verily Veritas’s musings on Rilke and “exquisite coffee,” you will find at least temporary refuge from the indecencies of Finals Week.

Even with impending examinations, The Blue and White has done its share of tarrying in this, our “Diagnosis Columbia” issue. But rather than a good meal, our occasion for pause and reflection herein has been the conclusion of another year at Columbia—a strange and changeful year, no doubt, but a full and vital one nonetheless. So, with the term winding down, we have turned our thoughts again to our alma mater. In this issue’s Conversation, President Rupp holds forth about his time at Columbia and his plans for the future. In addition, Emily Voigt offers up Diagnosis Columbia, a look back in verse at her college peers and career. We are also excited to bring you Campus Characters, a new feature that we hope to make a recurring one.

With this installment, The Blue and White bids its faithful readers adieu for the summer. Finally, it is with considerable fondness and sadness that we bid goodbye to a remarkable group of seniors, who will soon depart for England, France, Germany, and all points on the globe. Their fellowship is something we have looked forward to with anticipation each week, and something we will look back upon in years to come with immoderate joy.
Campus Characters

You might not know the following figures—but you should. In Campus Characters, our newest feature, The Blue and White introduces you to a handful of Columbians who are up to interesting and extraordinary things, and whose stories beg to be shared. If you'd like to suggest a Campus Character, send us an e-mail at: theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

Akil Dasan Baker

“See the thing about rap—freestyle rap—is, it’s just like improv jazz. Instead of tones, you lay down rhymes. That’s why hip-hop fits with jazz so well.” A veritable rap theory rolls out of Akil Dasan Baker’s mouth, punctuated with the natural rhythms that course through his tongue, his vocal chords. His music. Maybe you’ve heard it before—on campus as he plays the guitar accompanied only by a drum set or at the Nuyorican, maybe even on the street when he passes by you spitting beats out of his lips. A blend of blues, rap, jazz, hip-hop, soul, funk, Latin, and anything else he hears, Akil’s sound embodies that jazz-hip-hop fusion buzzing on everyone’s lips.

A junior studying music and creative writing, Akil grew up in Philadelphia playing the blues. He bounced from the piano to the guitar to the drums and, ultimately, back to the guitar, all the while practicing his rhymes like scales. While he values the written word, freestyling’s always had an extra appeal to him because “that stuff comes off the top of your head.” After taking a year off two years ago to tour with his band, LMMental (www.lmmental.com), Akil came back to academia. Despite schoolwork, his performing and recording efforts haven’t slowed down: come the end of the summer, he hopes to be distributing an album he’s already recorded. Though hesitant to voice criticisms about Columbia, he admits that “the problem with the academic approach to jazz and hip-hop is that people studying this stuff aren’t always playing it.” Listening to him try to explain a haiku form of freestyling he’s been experimenting with until he gives up and articulates it more clearly with a demonstration, you can see that music isn’t something fossilized on manuscript pages to him—it’s a breathing, changing life form. Soft-spoken with Philla creeping in: “That jawn is tight!” An animated smile accompanied by swinging dreadlocks. Then, modestly, “You know?” And even if you don’t, you know he does.

Miranda Pearl Halverson

“I’ve never been in the library,” declares Miranda impishly, “except to film something or perform something.” Registering The Blue and White’s shock-ed disbelief, she lightens the claim a little: “Actually, I checked out a book once. And once we snuck in through a tunnel from Carman. But mostly it’s been, you know, mischief.”

Ironically, Butler has been the site of some of Miranda’s best performances. Many an Orgo Night has found her shouting cheeky lines from her perch atop a desk in the main reading room. The library also served as a filming location for her most recent television exploit: a CTV short entitled “The Signal Game” in which Miranda played an invisible friend.

A graduating senior, Miranda has spent four years delighting audiences on

Illustrated by Paul Heyer

Illustrated by Lara Weibgen

The Blue and White
Miranda’s mirthful behavior isn’t limited to the stage. She eats peppermint ice cream, throws pirate-themed parties, and lives in an anarchic Hogan hovel (the desk is on the windowsill) with a white mouse named Nibbles (“he’s recovering from a stroke,” she explains). Now that she has mostly finished her schoolwork, Miranda seeks out new breeds of mischief. “I’ve been praying feverishly for a warm drizzle,” she confesses, “because I’ve really wanted to start a mud-wrestling tournament in the pit outside John Jay.”

The Blue and White is keeping its eye on Miranda Pearl Halverson—whether perched on her personalized clove-smoking stoop outside Saint Paul’s, draped over the steps of Low, or dancing tap on Lerner’s ramps. Between newly orange hair and a signature pair of overalls, she is easy to spot. And if our favorite mischief-maker somehow slips our radar, we’ll just wait outside John Jay Hall until that warm rain comes.

Richard Mammana,
Just by his ever-present grin and ubiquitous presence on campus, Richard Mammana, Jr., The Blue and White’s former Editor-in-Chief, is deserving of the sobriquet “Campus Character.” Although he grew up in rural Pennsylvania, Richard’s childhood was marked by a year-long singing tour of Japan, where he picked up Japanese. He is now proficient in French, German, Latin, and Greek as well, and he is teaching himself Icelandic. Richard’s main distinction, however, is as a man of the cloth. He is in training for priesthood in the Anglican Church, in which he is currently a subdeacon, and can often be found leading services at the Church of the Resurrection on 74th and Park. On September 11th, he used his training by serving as one of two chaplains for an entire hospital on the East Side—doing pastoral work with victims and their families until late in the evening.

Richard’s religious convictions are backed by a serious scholarly interest in the nuances of Anglican theology. During his freshman year, he edited and wrote a lengthy introduction to an edition of Tracts for the Times, a collection of controversial ecclesiastical documents by Oxonians from the mid-nineteenth century published by Littlemore Press. He is currently editing a text by Isaac Williams, an Anglican poet and theologian.

Although accomplished, Richard’s notoriety on campus stems more from his booming voice, impish humor, mellifluous whistling, and knowledge of all things Columbian. A viscous prankster, he is known to shout “SILENCE!” in John Jay during dinner and to ring the bell in St. Paul’s. Richard is also an avid collector of printed antiquities; his room is strewn with nineteenth-century pamphlets about various church schisms and the cleavage under Queen Elizabeth. The Blue and White wishes Richard well as he heads off to seminary next year; sic transit gloria.

Lyndon Kennedy
You might not notice Lyndon Kennedy in the street, but you’d damn sure notice his work if you saw it. And you have seen it. In his three years at Columbia, Lyndon— a SEAS student studying Electrical Engineering— has done as much to beautify the Columbia campus as any landscaper or architect. But instead of spade or t-square,
Lyndon’s tools of trade are mouse, keyboard, and two computers (he switches between Mac and PC the way a rock star switches from electric to acoustic guitar) with 80 gigabytes of memory.

Lyndon is a designer. He’s responsible for the stunning website for Prangstgrüp (prangstgrup.com), as well as the breathtaking murals that the group advertised with earlier in the year...and which raised the bar for campus publicity several notches. Other campus organizations in the know have also beaten a path to his door in search of his services. He’s done the websites and other design work for Museo, Elementary Hip-Hop, and the Columbia Undergraduate Philosophy Review; a visit to any of these websites would have told you as much. But Lyndon’s real baby is pulsate.org, a design organization and online art gallery he’s been running for four years. The site is a gluttonous feast of good design, complete with Flash animation battles, photo collections and essays, splashes, even music. It’s also vintage Lyndon: equal parts hip-hop and death metal, classical guitar and innovative design, tinged with a distinctive, biting humor.

A self-described “Jerzee-Canadian,” Lyndon eschews pretension, preferring the simple and solid. Away from his atelier, he’s been known to enjoy the hell out of a cheesesteak and a Coke. It may be the case that Lyndon’s prodigious design ability tends to overshadow his other talents and interests, among which he counts classical guitar, physics, and “Satan.” But after viewing his work, one gets the sense that for this, Lyndon has only himself to blame.

Lang Fisher

Loulie Langhorn Fisher declares that she’s graduating next year with no plan except to try to get her foot in the door of the New York improv scene. She’s open to trying her hand at stand-up—especially because she’s sick of watching stale, self-deprecating comedienes, who invariably fall into two categories: the women that talk glibly about their sex lives, and the embittered women that talk about the sex lives of the first group. But for now, she’s more focused on working on her improv skills, which she sees as much closer to acting than stand-up. She’s even taken an acting class at the renowned Lee Strasberg Studio. Says Lang, “You have to learn how to step back and let the scene work even if it means sacrificing the laugh for yourself…”

Talking to Julia Langbein, a fellow Varsity Show cast member, it seems like Lang’s already got that down. “It’s not hard to be funny,” Julia remarks. “It’s not hard to shove a cupcake up your nose and have it come out your mouth. But it’s hard to be funny in a really giving way. Lang really listens and reacts—she doesn’t just have this schtick that wears off after you’ve seen the act a few times.”

Whether or not she has a plan, it seems like Lang can’t help but go places. President of the student body, captain of the tennis team, and editor of the student newspaper in high school, Lang—always warm and open—shows none of the signs of an annoying overachiever. When asked whether she’s always wanted to do comedy, she remembers back to Club Fair ’99; even then, she had improv on the brain, auditioning with 6 Milks and ultimately joining 2 Left Feet. Since then, Lang has lent her services to Columbia’s premier institutions of humor. She’s participated in three Varsity Shows, has been the president of 2 Left Feet, has performed in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and has become one of the most prolific campus tour guides around (“Senior citizens one day, 40 visiting Canadians the next!”). The Blue and White looks forward to enjoying Lang’s comedy for years to come—and if we get impatient, we can always drop in on one of her campus tours for a few laughs to tide us over.

- PS

Illustrated by Paul Heyer
Columbia by the Numbers

Number of steps from College Walk to Low Library front door, and vice-versa: 57
Average age of a Columbia faculty member: 47
Number of full-time faculty under age 30: 41
Price of the twelve midtown acres Columbia acquired in 1814, in dollars: 6,000
Amount the Rockefeller family paid for the same land in 1985, in dollars: 400,000,000
Columbia University endowment, in dollars: 4,300,000,000
Princeton University endowment, in dollars: 8,500,000,000
Yale University endowment, in dollars: 10,700,000,000
Harvard University endowment, in dollars: 18,300,000,000
Total assets of Columbia University in the year 2000, in dollars: 6,751,000,000
GDP of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the year 2000: 6,500,000,000
Percent growth of Columbia's total assets in the year 2000: 13
Percent growth of Bosnia-Herzegovina's GDP in the year 2000: 8
Ratio of libraries named Butler to libraries named Low at Columbia: 1:1
Ratio of undergraduates named Butler to undergraduates named Low at Columbia: 1:1
Percentage of juniors who feel there is "adequate academic advising" in their major departments: 44
Number of student tour guides: 75
Number of condoms Columbia makes available to students per year: 24,000
Approximate number of non-GS undergraduates in the university: 7,500
Number of condoms made available per non-GS undergraduate each year: 3.2
Number of voters, of 12,872 total, ranking Columbia as their favorite party school at www.partyschool.com: 0
Volumes held in all Columbia libraries: 7,266,499
Total circulation (1999-2000): 780,441
Average SAT score of accepted applicants, Columbia College: 1430
Average SAT score of accepted applicants, SEAS: 1440
Percentage of Columbia College applicants that are admitted: 12
Number of Morningside faculty members that are Native American: 1
Percentage of SEAS students that are female: 27
Rank of Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*, on Labyrinth's list of best-sellers: 13
Rank of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, on said list: 15
Number of culture/fashion shows held this academic year at Columbia: 11
Number of non-vacation, non-reading week weekends during this academic year: 24
Weight of Alma Mater, in pounds: 8000
Weight of each sheet of glass on Lerner Hall's glass front, in pounds: 800
Price of glass front of Lerner Hall, in dollars: 45,000,000
Price of Lerner Hall, in dollars, finished in 1999: 85,000,000
1999 GDP of the Mayotte, a French Territory near Madagascar, in dollars: 85,000,000
1998 GDP of the Marshall Islands, without U.S. aid, in dollars: 40,000,000

Illustrated by Paul Heyer

May 2002
AFTER EILSHEMIUS

Since I hollowed out and raced my own canoe, what’s new? The Old World kind of tragedy suffered only by hay, an impresario made from five-hand stallions and well-combed flame. See the wenches formerly in my employ carry it off on a stretcher, leaning on itself like a bow-tied tabloid baby on its mother’s golden frame, beloved in the provinces, widely anthologized on the plain. For his superior opus, Mommy and Daddy, I Just Ate Raw Grain. Later on he used a doorknob. Shoelaces, undoing, games involving hoops, the culinary arts (take one (1) haunted mountain, or fifteen (15) hillocks of ill fame, sift, remove civilization and treasure, set aside, sift again, fling mixture from town’s only steeple, apologize to cousins, gently beat archdeacon,

write treatise on quicksand, add salt and pepper to taste). Ah, absence makes the Manley’s Mighty Mart grow fonder! But what do my two brave cows have to say to one another, that only their buttocks impinge upon the scene? Give them old loggia painted grass-green, also the sun. Draw a bath, light my life, I’d like to change my racing stripe, get out of this number 45 and into a nice 51.

– Michael Paulson
IDENTITY RIDDLE LIKE DECORATIONS
FOR ARTHUR POWELL

1.
In Texas the wind blows in a new season
every week like Wallace Stevens working
at his desk—making decisions. He is thinking
in French and of a few French poets who
he never met and who are his best friends.
His basket is full of wads. His hand is water
and his suit is the shore.

“Stop writing love poems!” he shouts or “What
will you do with your islands?” It’s good advice
sometimes until he tells me that the islands and
baseball are one and I don’t know what he means
but he is the manager so I’ll do it. I ask him
how to hit a curveball and he plays
Some South Paw Pitching on a jaw harp
and leans back in his executive leather chair.

Next to his desk is a bulletin board with
some cartoons tacked to it. One is Dilbert
and the other is from the New Yorker. There
is a birthday card with a kitten on it, and also
a review from the Times panning his book.
A baseball in a Lucite cube holds down a stack
of papers on his desk. It’s signed by Stan Musial.

2.
Riddle of the phone operators: I am the sunrise at the airport,
the quiet bird, and there is one of me in the universe and two
of me in a Sony and twelve in any group of ducks. What am I?
Large or small, among railroad ties I am always missing.
Only by stepping in front of a candle could I be a crystal ball or
four legs in November. What am I? I go on two legs in the morning
and reveal my age at the station. Rain has no effect on me at all. Deep
in the crush by the tarmac—that’s where I was born like an overboard
puppy into the wide something. I taste like a green potato. I feel like
a chimney rock or a police zipper. What am I?
You are the first floor of the hospital, a jail of no purpose. I mean,
you’re a phone operator! You know the number and sometimes
the address.

—Justin Jamail

May 2002
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Diagnosis Columbia
by Emily Voigt

I.
'Tis exactly one-thousand-four-hundred days since I resolved to go live amidst wild Columbians. I embarked on my journey, unsure what I'd find, but determined to study this curious kind. My initial agenda was just to fit in—
to examine, observe, and report from within.

Oh, at first, I tried donning some leafy, green gear, putting tangles of termites and twigs in my hair, so that decked in this cunningly verdant disguise, I could seek with great stealth, and the keenest of eyes,
those Columbians doing whate'er it is that they quite commonly do in their right habitat. But each specimen I was so bold as to near fast betrayed the most horrid confusion and fear. One such student cried out in perplexed dismay as he scrambled o'er steps to get out of my way, "Is this urban anomaly just a cruel rub? Help! Unmanicured nature—good lord, it's a shrub!"

Yes, conventional camouflage clearly seemed wrong, but I couldn't imagine how best to belong to so odd an environment, largely concrete. As a stumped anthropologist, stuck on the street, I caught sight of a pole, and there ended my woes:
I'd paste fliers on me from my head to my toes!

I concede this idea was a brilliant breakthrough, for as good as invisible, I could pursue the most skittery subjects without their sure flight; I could peer o'er their shoulders all day and all night.

So with "Seeking Cat-sitter" tacked onto my shin, and "Apartment for Rent" slyly masking my grin, I quite cautiously crept towards the campus again to be met with success—scarcely a glance, except when an unruffled inquisitor paused sans alarm to scan textbooks for sale on my upper left arm.

Then I found a fine vantage point, dutifully froze, and behind, "Pool Boy Wanted," I peered through two O's.

Could I possibly share all the wonders observed—the amazing behaviors of frolicsome herds, the Columbians' habits, peculiar, abstruse, their elaborate rituals, cryptic taboos? No, I'm sorry, my students, I fear I cannot do an inkling of justice to what I've been taught by these creatures exquisite, so soft and supreme 'neath exteriors tough and too much self-esteem. But I hope I'll be able to here introduce some varieties rare, a few others diffuse.

II.
Let's begin with the breed most reclusive and tame, the shy Butleropithecus (I coined the name!)—a harmonious beast, tranquil, placid, serene, that ironically lives just on liquid caffeine. For eight hours or more, one consistently will sit quite motionless—yes, catatonically still, save sporadic leg crossings and clearings of throat, all its muscles relaxed, its expression remote.

Ah, you ask what engages this beast in stark rooms where it sits for semesters in fluorescent gloom? First, remember, 'tis science—no snickers, I trust! I conclude that the Butleropithecus must derive ecstasy, auto-erotic, intense, from its eyes' never-ending saccadic movements.

It may be that you believe each Columbian is just as docile, indulgent, and slothful as this; you are sorely mistaken, yes, wrong overall, for you haven't considered the Westenderthal.

A more likeable brute with a bulkier build, this more goal-oriented, fine animal's skilled at imbibing and dancing, with ample aplomb. Yes, in fact, the more clumsy these creatures become the more likely they are to set egos aside and flail gracelessly sans an overt lack of pride. This reverse of the Butleropithici in terms of spatial relations and brushing of skin, these Westenderthals haven't a qualm in the least about standing an inch from another strange beast; as you see, they have much more in common it seems.
with a can of terrifically pickled sardines.

Though both species I’ve mentioned are pleasant indeed,
now you mustn’t presume that they all are, I plead!
I’m afraid there are nasty varieties too,
and it wouldn’t be right not to share one with you.

A most sneaky, distracting, mischievous bird
will adopt others’ garb—its intent to disturb quiet grazing or reading or learning en masse;
without warning it bursts into song horrendous.
And what’s worse is that often this poser infests the most civil of meetings and silent of tests,
where it mocks normal patterns of standardized speech,
but in amplified tones that quite rapidly reach each Columbian in, say, a stretch of two miles—
not directly addressing a soul all the while.

How impossible trying to savor some peace amidst butchered renditions of bad Fur Elise!
Even now, as I speak, they are running amok,
these ubiquitous pests—Phono Sapiens, yuck!

So I hope these three species have taught you about the diversity...what? Oh, what’s this that you shout?

On my brave expedition I have to have met with some personal danger, some fabulous threat?
Well, it’s true, canny students, I’ve got to admit I’ve been censoring out the unpleasantest bit.
’Twas for your sake I felt I should gloss o’er my brush
with the savagest wretch, for I feared you would flush
with compassion and pity, or faint in despair of my vulnerability—valiance so rare.
But you’ve asked, and I’ll answer, though hating to vex you with tales of the dread Competasaurus Rex!

When provoked by another or just ill at ease, this despicable monster will fling its theses.
If you ever encounter this dangerous cat, you must play unambitious—be smart as a gnat.
For these predators grisly, grotesquely devour other talented students, some say one each hour.
A covert operation to export this breed to a C-Rex preserve far removed overseas has of late been embraced, touting free, sponsored trips meant to lure them there via some bold fellow’s ships.

III.

Shining students, your fabulous patience is grand,
and I’ll pause to ensure you we’re nearing the end.
See, one day I awoke and beheld in the mirror that my fliers—long shredded—had now disappered.

Rainy weather had bared my pink, genuine skin;
and moreover, I felt not an ounce of chagrin.
All approved of my presence—I wasn’t a foe;
on the street we exchanged standard greetings “Hello.”

I began to spend much greater intimate time with Columbians, ’till one May morn when a line formed mid-campus; I stood near the end, and I guessed (though I never quite got) what would happen there next.

Oh, at last I would taste the sweet fruit of my works,
after years spent sans civilization’s plush perks:
Dearest students, before me he stood—a grown male,
oh so utterly alpha from head to Quig-tale!
And moreover he seemed to be signaling me to approach him on high, which I did with great glee.

How miraculous I should be asked to partake in a ritualistic, firm, right-handed shake with the chieftain himself in a public display ’fore Columbian multitudes cheering away!
And thus, I, a young female—and foreign at that—was acknowledged, accepted, presented a plaque.
(This strange document’s worth has ignited debate: while some scholars declare it no more than dead weight, yet still others do value its Latinate scrawl.
Undecided, I’ve hung it for now on my wall.)

All this time, I’d been careful to strictly conform to elaborate social proprieties born of the feudal tradition of loyalty oaths, on which template collegiate order arose.
I’d submissively kept both my posture and gaze from conveying a challenge to hierarchies.
Yes, I’d tailored my manners so best to abet scientific analysis, posing no threat.

But that day as I stood on that stage way up high, how compelled was I then to come clean of my lie!
With my newfound friend clasping my hand in his own, looking up, I made eye-contact—lo, all was known!
Yes, a spark—nay, ’twas lighting—illumined my gaze.
For a moment he tottered, o’ercome with malaise.
What a shock! Oh, he clearly knew not what to say
to Jane Goodall’s trainee, Margaret Mead’s protégé.
He envisioned my anthropological scheme
and foresaw publications in which I’d blaspheme
this so secretive, fragile society’s ways
in a media frenzy, a national craze.

Oh, I trembled with fear of so mighty a man,
as he gazed down upon me intensely—and then
there was something redemptive he saw on that
day:
he could tell—for ’twas true!—that I wanted to stay.
You suspect that I’d surely gone mad to desire
to remain in that wasteland—that weird, swampy

...mire
of stray books, defunct languages, pre-meds, and
squirrels—
but there standing on stage, my poor mind was
awhirl
with those things that are sweet about Columbians;
sometimes furry, oft feisty, those beasts were my
friends!
I revealed these sentiments, squeezing his grip,
apprehending a twitch on the side of his lip.
Thus affronted, enlightened, he actually smiled
and then kicked me off-stage—oh, out into the
wild!

For good, inexpensive food and warm service, The Blue and White’s
culinary critic Pontius Palate highly recommends:

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May 2002
It is no mistake that Rainer Maria Rilke, in a private letter to a woman to whom he had surely made love, suggested that he could not wait till he and she had “exquisite coffee.”

Why only the word ‘exquisite’ to evoke the coffee? Concision is rarely Rilke’s method, in particular in description of his worshipped natural order. “[T]he sheltered life of the monks,” he wrote to the Countess Dietrichstein, “found its vindication in these beeches and ashes and pines and exalted itself vaingloriously and thrust up towards heaven, while the famous lime-trees (they are now in blossom) which stand over there on the convent meadow, they grew so great from centuries of tranquillity and devotion,”—and this follows on a luxurious discussion of a squirrel, “seen...as it were on your behalf,” he writes his fair correspondent, revelling at a squirrel with a dual self, who at Rilke’s feet was divided between “suspicion and bewilderment...[and] curiosity and venturesomeness.”

Rilke’s terseness cannot be explained away that coffee was not part of the natural life that he ravished with his observation. He is acolyte to all sensible experience. From Paris, 99 years ago this July, to Lou Salomé: “I was happy because somewhere at the end of the street someone was carrying something bright green, without my thinking what it could be.”

Perhaps if we summon up Latin, the close reader’s homunculus, etymology will give a solution to “exquisite coffee.” We recall that this is a coffee of intricacy and delicacy, whose aesthetic complexity is an ecstasy. Remember Rilke’s roses in 1906:

But now you know how to forget such things, for now before you stands the bowl of roses, unforgettable and wholly filled with unattainable being and promise, a gift beyond anyone’s giving, a presence that might be ours and our perfection. Think of Rilke on reading, on solitude and on togetherness, against longing yet conquered by it; observe him interpreting, relating, classifying into symbols. A startling equivalency flows from his transfigured and transfiguring senses: every experience, as much as every idea, can be apotheosized into sensuous thought, one of Nabokov’s definitions of art. It is only the constraints of Rilke’s sacerdotal rhetoric, and perhaps an old Platonic prejudice for the eye over the other organs of sense (one implicit in our language: consider only “transfiguring eye” as against “transfiguring tongue,” and stifle your chortle) that stop Rilke from elaborating on “exquisite coffee”—a phenomenon as occulted as other people, as revelatory as woman and as salving as God.

The present author, the second Verily Veritas of The Blue and White’s second century, is leaving for Berlin, as Verily Veritas did before him. Verily Veritas now issues forth from himself (like the conjoined Godhead, gentle reader, of the Kabbalah, and the avatari notions of the Rig-Veda), renewed for a third century. Particularity is an illusion at The Blue and White; Verily Veritas is Spirit, not Matter, except when it becomes necessary to settle the check at better restaurants. So it is that, trumpeting forth cherub-like from atop a crescendo of pretension, this retiring incarnation of Verily-as-Geist expects you will keep in touch. Militate against the modern, read well and eat well, dress warmly, anachronistically when possible, and never trust an undergraduate of Barnard College. (V. V. has advised as much since Virginia Gildersleeve was contributing her questionable little fictions to Morningside in 1897.) Contemplate foreign travel; never stoop to Monaco off-season; delight in Rilke’s universes within a demitasse. Think of Democritus and laugh a little. And hold fast to the spirit of youth, let years to come do as they may.

— Verily Veritas, who has been B. D. Letzler, bdll16@columbia.edu, but who is forever.
With alumni@columbia, the University’s e-mail forwarding service, you keep your Columbia e-mail address for receiving mail. E-mail is forwarded automatically to any other e-mail address you have registered, for as long as you choose. When you change jobs or Internet Service Providers, please be sure to provide us with a new forwarding address.

May 2002 graduates will be eligible to join after July 15.

To learn more, visit the development and alumni relations Web site:

www.columbia.edu/cu/alumni/forward
After having served as President for nearly a decade, Dr. George Rupp will step down from his post at the close of this year. The Blue and White recently sat down with President Rupp to discuss his time at Columbia, as well as his plans for the future. We hope you enjoy it.

bw: It's a little difficult to imagine the actual workings of the presidency. What's a typical day like?

gr: A good week, I work eighty hours a week, a bad week, ninety hours a week. I start here, I'm in the office at 7:30 in the morning and I almost never stop doing Columbia work before 10:30 at night. Seven days a week. So any given day has a rich variety of activities but it certainly is not an eight-hour-a-day job or a five-day-a-week job.

bw: Mayor Bloomberg recently commented on the difficulty he's had thus far in striking the proper balance of attending ceremonies, administrating, and agenda-setting. How have you dealt with this challenge?

gr: I think the comparison to Mayor Bloomberg is apt. Among my roles here is being the local shaman, and there are a lot of symbolic events, a lot of ritual events that I have to be present at, and some of them I enjoy, but it's an important part of what the president does. But I would say that I am more the mayor of Columbia Village than I am the CEO of Columbia Corporation.

In terms of balancing and trade-offs, I'm the only one who can play the shaman role in many occasions, but I'm also the only one who can set overall policies and establish systems that make the institution work more effectively. If I have to choose, I think the second is even more important than the first, in part because some of the shaman roles can be played by the deans of the various schools. I and my senior central administrators are much more involved in the case of the expectations of undergraduates than is the case at most of our sister institutions. That I think creates a problem. I mean, there are many cases where the deans of the College and SEAS and GS can much more appropriately be directly involved than the president and the vice president. But that is not the sense that students seem to have.

bw: You're President of the University, not just the College; how do you divide your time between the College and all of the other schools?

gr: I would say I spend most of my administrative time on policies that cut across all of the institution, and depend on the deans of the individual schools to manage the internal affairs of the schools. I spend very little time on the internal affairs of the Business School or the Law School, somewhat more in the Health Sciences, just because it is half the total budget of the university. The one part of the institution where I get involved in the internal life of the institution is the undergraduate student body, and that as a focus of attention takes more time and energy than the student life of any of the other parts of the university.

bw: Perhaps one of the most frequent and fervent criticisms made of Columbia is its perceived lack of community. Do you think that's a valid criticism to make, or does the nature of Columbia's urban atmosphere preclude certain types of community?

gr: I wrote a book once with the title Commitment and Community. Community is a very complicated word...it has complicated associations with it. I think for the most part when people use the word 'community' on campus, it's a way that is critical of Columbia, [but] they have a very definite sense of community. Sociologists would say Gemeinschaft rather than Gesellschaft. There's an interesting book—I
don't mean to throw German words at you—that a sociologist named Tönnies wrote, called *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. It lays out very clearly the fact that the roots of the sense of 'community' that most people use when they're critical of our community here—for not having it—have this sense of 'community' that has its deep grounding in these homogeneous rural communities.

I grew up in a culture where always saying positive things was not particularly valued, so I'm used to the Columbia ethos.

It's clearly a category mistake to come to a place like Columbia, and say "we not only want community, we want that kind of community." That doesn't mean we can't have a kind of community that is appropriate to what we are—a tremendously diverse and pluralistic gathering of people in a world city. We need to find a kind of community that is appropriate without beating our heads with the fact that we don't have *Gemeinschaft*.

*bw:* Perhaps there's a distinction to be made between a sense of community and a sense of pride in Columbia. Alumni giving has risen from 18% to over 30% during your tenure...

*gr:* Columbia people are feisty and critical, and self-critical. And those are all qualities that we cherish and nourish, a kind of critical intelligence that we try to cultivate. It also means that there are lots of Columbia alums that have a kind of love/hate relationship with their alma mater. But I think we're going to have much less ambivalent graduates going forward. One measure of support of how loyal alums are is the percentage that makes financial contributions, and my guess is that will continue to go up in the years ahead. But we'll see. People can find various ways of being crabby.

*bw:* How do you deal with the vocal, and often pointed, criticism Columbians have for you?

*gr:* Well, sometimes it can be demoralizing. Happily, I've never felt any great need to have someone applaud. My parents were both immigrants...I grew up in a culture where always saying positive things was not particularly valued, so I'm used to the Columbia ethos.

*bw:* Columbia has hired several big-name professors away from other schools recently, namely Jeff Sachs from Harvard and Joseph Stiglitz from Stanford. And the public and protracted Cornel West [formerly of Harvard, now of Princeton] situation has been splashed about the news lately. Have universities in general, and Columbia in particular, become more aggressive or mercenary in recruiting faculty away from other schools, or is it old hat?

*gr:* I don't think that it's a novelty at all. Universities like this one, and certainly Princeton and Harvard, have always been aggressive in identifying faculty members that they would like to recruit and then working hard to recruit them. The basic reason that people move is because of the kind of intellectual opportunity. I think Jeff Sachs is the perfect example of that. Jeff Sachs is coming to Columbia not because he's disenchanted with Harvard—he's been there since he went as a freshman and loves the place—but he became convinced that the kind of work he was increasingly doing had been institutionalized with the Earth Institute in a way that hadn't happened anywhere else. That, combined with the fact that Columbia has connections with the U.N. and is located in New York City, allows him to work with Kofi Annan in his role as Undersecretary General and Chief Advisor to Kofi Annan on economic development. It had nothing to do with the aggressiveness of financial terms or other ways of raiding faculty members.

Illustrated by Adam Wolkojf

May 2002
What accomplishments are you most proud of? And are there things you feel you've left unfinished?

To illustrate characteristic Columbia patterns, I'll start with the negative part of that question. One of the issues that I felt strongly was urgently in need of being addressed when I arrived was the "internal Balkanization" of the institution. I think we've made real progress in getting the different parts of the University to work together better than they used to.

The one place where...I just consider...that I have failed, is in getting the College in particular to work with the rest of Arts and Sciences. I felt very strongly that that was broken when I came. I attempted to address it by appointing a single person to be Dean of Columbia College and Vice-President of Arts and Sciences, so that in a sense the barriers there would get broken down, because instead of having people fighting with each other, we'd have the fights going on inside the mind of a single person. I have thought from the beginning that's a serious issue, and unfortunately, it's one I bequeath to my successor. It's simply the case that the College has withdrawn into kind of a fortress mentality that is in the long run, deeply destructive of what has to happen at Columbia, and the Arts and Sciences.

How might that be corrected?

Well, I think it will do so with a change in personnel.

And the things you're particularly proud of?

There are lots of other accomplishments...we are in much better financial shape than we were, while we also have a disciplined budgeting process in place. Fundraising is much stronger now than it was ten years ago. We have made substantial gains in enhancing the visibility of the undergraduate programs here, with the result that applications have gone way up and selectivity has increased, and the quality of students that have come as a result is also higher. We've done a good job of strengthening departments by recruiting outside faculty. I think there's almost no department that has not held its own or gotten better in the last ten years, and that's a major achievement.

Columbia has changed dramatically during your tenure. Have your goals and perceptions as president changed, as well?

I have a very simple approach to developing a strategy for any institution. It's to identify the core strengths of the institution and then to build up the comparative advantage that those strengths afford. That means making the institution more itself rather than trying to turn it into something else. I don't think the core strengths of Columbia change in the course of ten years. So I've identified those and worked hard to make us even stronger on those measures. I think that intellectual seriousness and commitment to academic quality is the first of those strengths. And then the location in New York and our global reach are the other two.

How and why did you decide to leave?

I think it's a very important requirement of the leader of an institution to identify the right time to leave. My sense was that when I announced that I was going to have this year be my last year, that we had come to a point where there really needed to be another major push forward, and either I would stay through that next push, or I would make way for someone else to lead it. And I thought the latter was the best decision to make. I said at the very beginning that this was an eight-to-ten year proposition, because given the amount of energy I think a leader ought to put into an institution, eight to ten years is about what you have in you, or I have in me, before being ready to do something else. If I had stayed an extra year, it would have meant an extra year of treading water, rather than moving vigorously ahead.

You'll be leading the International Rescue Committee, a refugee relief agency, when you leave Columbia. How and why did you become involved with the IRC?

The International Rescue Committee approached me last November, and I must say I found it extremely intriguing and attractive. I've been an activist all of my life. I was very heavily involved in the Civil Rights Movement in the
North of this country, and the South starting in the early 60s, and heavily involved in the range of movements critical of the war in Vietnam, starting in 1964, 65. I spent a year in Sri Lanka in 1969-70, and had a sense of Third World problems from a lot of travel in India, and other parts of Asia. My parents were both immigrants, so I had a sense of the immigrant experience and what it involves. The IRC offered the possibility of pulling the threads of all of that together in a way that would be exciting and would give me a chance to reconnect with parts of the world that I have not been as involved while I’ve been president. I’ve done a lot of traveling as President of Rice, as President of Columbia, but the alums that I cultivate abroad tend to be people who live in world cities, are well-to-do, and want to go to receptions in five-star hotels. So it’s going to be a very different world to look at the places that the IRC has operations, in over thirty countries, but not in five-star hotels. And I’m looking forward to that, I think it’ll be energizing, and give me a chance to contribute something that would be important to hundreds of thousands of people.

A Phonetic Translation, from Federico García Lorca

HAUGHTY DISASTER, WITH THE GUILT HORROR

Enron, red under the crushing jab, a'ways dunce sellers, trial on. Brace the car, Lay, rebrace, then scatter. Those windows the fresh air got goosed on, hero, lost many to your coffers. Soon to rifle through the storeroom: The guilt horror!

ADIVINANZA DE LA GUITARRA

En la redonda encrucijaba, seis doncellas bailan. Tres de carne y tres de plata. Los sueños de ayer las buscan, pero las tiene abrazadas un Polifemo de oro. ¡La Guitarra!

- by Dave Austerweil

May 2002
CULINARY HUMANITIES

DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES

We may debate to what degree individual taste is learned or wired at birth, but the tongue’s ability to describe its own experiences—to articulate what pleases it, what doesn’t, and why—is certainly both a teachable and immensely satisfying skill. In “Introduction to Wine-Tasting,” a mini-course offered by Ms. Natalie Berkowitz at Barnard, students have little difficulty identifying which of ten to twelve wines a night they like; but they scrunch their foreheads and gargle intensely when asked to translate their sensations of flavor into words.

Ms. Berkowitz, who has been teaching the class for about five years, seems genuinely excited by and receptive to the variety of responses each bottle receives. A graduate of Barnard College, she has contributed her expertise to The Wine Enthusiast and The Wine Spectator, as well as writing lifestyle articles for Vogue, Harper’s Bazaar, and Town and Country. Having recently completed a novel, she is currently working on a collection of interviews with international vintners, entitled The Winemaker’s Hand.

In the first of five two-hour sessions, she emphasizes the importance of form: see it, swirl it, sniff it, slurp it, then either swallow or spit it (never out of order)—and through each step, speak about it. Relying on a handy, if bizarrely comprehensive, tasting wheel, students hesitantly suggest undertones of clove, lemon, blackberry, and green olives—or on less stellar days, wet cardboard, vegemite/marmite, acetaldehyde, and tutti frutti. Surprisingly, desirable scents and flavors are not always intuitive. A top-notch Riesling, Ms. Berkowitz informs us, should have a hint of petrol in it. And don’t discount a Chardonnay that smells of cat’s pee, or a Syrah that evokes sweaty saddles (curiously, it’s not necessary to have encountered an actual sweaty saddle to be able to identify its characteristics in a wine).

The tastings are sprinkled with short lectures on topics such as the major grape-growing regions of the world, the art of fermentation, and the shift from natural to synthetic cork (a positive one, asserts the progressive aficionado!). And Ms. Berkowitz is brimming with simple, helpful tips: one should drink white wine young, but let red age; when pairing food and wine, the trick is to match them by both weight and texture. Fruity undertones, for example, complement Asian cuisines, which tend to be somewhat sweet; Chianti, perhaps rather strong on its own, can stand up to serious meats like brisket and pot roast.

Entering the classroom a month ago as a fairly illiterate wine enthusiast—a fan of White Zinfandel, which Ms. Berkowitz dubs “the training bra of wines”—I’ve gained a fascinating, friendly, and useful introduction to the major themes of the cult of vino. As Ms. Berkowitz points out, it is particularly valuable for women, who are rarely handed the wine list when dining with men, to know what they like and to feel comfortable selecting an appropriate vintage for others.

Ultimately, familiarity and comfort with wine may serve as a social skill if nothing more—especially in anticipation of the sophisticated post-graduate scene. At the very least, I’m thankful to have moved beyond my father’s abbreviated advice on the subject: smell the wine with your eyes closed, don’t taste it, and declare it “arrogant.” Everyone, he assures us, will be heartily impressed.

— Pontius Palate

The Blue and White
Towards a Campus Architecture
by Matthew Pellow

Columbia has been engaging in a number of capital improvement projects around campus of late. For our much-anticipated 250th, however, something special is called for. The Blue and White reports a few suggestions that have been circulating:

- The Circum-Campus Monorail. The monorail will take advantage of the campus’s tight organization to provide a convenient and comfortable mode of transport within campus. The track will run a course bounded by Broadway and Amsterdam, 114th and 120th Sts., with stops on the 6th floors of all buildings along its route. Campus homebodies will enjoy the illusion of big-city transit without leaving their zone of comfort. Anti-social engineers will read quietly all the way home without all the forced eye-contact of walking. Since no central administrative buildings fall along the monorail route, there will be little risk of administrators coming into contact with students. Early morning hours, with a possible future spur to the Barnard Quad, would provide a Ride of Shame alternative to hapless Columbians weary of the Walk of Shame but who—oops—did it again. University planners are already rumored to have contracted black leather monorail chairs at $900 per.

- Low Steps Renovation. If the point of the Low Steps were to allow administrators quick access to Low, then we would already have an escalator in place by now. The Steps are for sitting and watching people who are sitting and watching people. In order to obviate the awkward neck-straining required for a glimpse of that sun-soaked sweetie sitting upstairs, the Steps Renovation would rebuild the steps in amphitheater shape. No longer will mere backs be visible, but actual faces, and oh so much more.

- College Walk/South Field Zip Lines. Although densely packed, the Columbia campus features more air space than most other places in Manhattan. Space that begs to be used. The answer practically suggests itself: zip lines connecting the academic buildings on the quad. Possible zip routes include Kent to Journalism, Journalism to Hamilton, or, more ambitiously, a zip hub at the Butler Plaza, whizzing eager bookworms straight to the library. Non-polluting, and elegant in their simplicity, the zip lines will add an adventurous touch to a dreary day, as nubile young undergrads swoop directly over the sundial.

Illustrated by Craig Hollander

May 2002
DIGITALIA COLUMBIANA

These excerpts were culled from documents left on Columbia’s lab computers. We encourage our readers to submit their own digitalia finds to us, via e-mail, at theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

Don Quixote and Sancho are both crazy. That is why they can stay together. They respect each other for a certain reason.

Don Quixote and Sancho are both crazy. That is why they can stay together. They respect each other for a certain reason.

That was the day I met Glenn. I only know he was there in the bleachers because he mentioned it nine years later: my alien’s hairdo left him dumb-founded with lust.

You’re frickin’ crazy. You were jukin’ and jivin’, dishin’ and drainin’ out there. You are a one-man team. Besides, you remember our softball team in P.E. freshman year? For all intensive purposes you were our captain. You even got Stokeley to give a meaningful contribution to that team, and I have more athletic ability in my pinky than that tubby’s got in his entire body so I don’t want to hear that you don’t work well with others.

Through my experiences at the Amalgamated Transit Union 1056 office, I have gained the training needed for any type of clerical position.

The book has many beginnings the thing that ties it together is paradoxical encomium, and the creation of something out of nothing. It is impossible to write about linearly, because linearly it makes no sense. It is abundant and fragmentary and elusive, like the herring.

After all, how would one measure universal happiness? What defines friendly changes from culture to culture? Even the idea of becoming less like animals does not appeal to everyone.

It’s not that the baby is self-absorbed, it’s that as an adult your categories of how to perceive the world have undergone boxification (putting things in boxes).

Today, sex is a word extremely charged with a variety of connotations: some good; some neutral; but still more, bad. This controversy regarding the word stems from the many definitions that have been invested within it. According to the OED (online), sex was originally a noun.

The Psychology of Monsters-outline

Hmmm...so it looks like this path just leads me back to the self and the individual free will and Wittgensteinian ideas of perspectivism? (and I guess that’s kinda Nietzsche too) and the power and control of the mind, etc. But that’s not where I wanted to end up, dammit.

TRISTAN: You were the one who wanted to know, so what the hell? Do you want to see or what?

FINK: Alright, alright. Let’s get it over with.

(Tristan pulls his shorts down over his butt to reveal a two-inch tail that is taped down between his ass cheeks.)

FINK: Holy shit. No wonder you never used to shower like the rest of us after P.E. class. I never understood why you just opted to stink all day, but now I know—you’re the missing link.

It was through this continuous interaction of fungi, plant and human health as witnessed in my childhood that lead me to pursue an academic study of plants, plant disease and the control of such pathogens.

AHHHHH! I cant seem to link ANYTHING together. There is no running theme or continuity here!! WHATs a girl to do????????? Things are so close together and intermeshed that I cant separate them in a coherent manner. Do I need more stuff (because there is always more) or less stuff (but what would that leave me with)? Continuity where art thou!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The Blue and White
I am a creative, “out of the box” thinker, who enjoys working in a dynamic, creative environment. My 4-year internship experience with JP Morgan Chase & Co. has given me ample opportunities to do independent research and to contribute as a team player to the process of finding innovative solutions to approaching clients’ problems and handling legal issues.

I only ever cut once a month. OK, sometimes twice, but never more. But I’m not a freak or anything, I mean I can stop any time I want to, only, I don’t want to. Whatever, man, don’t knock it ‘til you’ve tried, isn’t that what folks say? Momma probably didn’t mean self-mutilation when she said that one, huh? But see that’s half the trouble. “Kids today” took on a whole new meaning when we were growing up, ya know? Marilyn Manson didn’t exist when Momma was a girl.

I want more detail. More, more, more. How did the other girls treat you in your Christian day school? What was it like at Hotchkiss? How did you relate to your roommates first semester at Harvard? You take us onto the psychiatric couch with you—and your descriptions of the psychiatrists were great—but you don’t tell us what happened there, what you talked about. Re-create some conversations for us. Even with the jerk at Harvard, you must have talked about something, or did you just sit there for an hour in silence?

The most evident functional and symbolic purpose of Columbia’s Morningside Heights campus between Broadway and Amsterdam and 114th and 120th is that of a modern day fortress.

[Note: The correspondents’ names, have been changed in the following epistolary romance]

Dearest Gertrude,

The mooncakes are round, have a thin brown crust and are filled with bean paste. But modernity has also caught up. Nowadays, mooncakes can be had with all kinds of flavours. We even have ice-cream mooncakes. It truly is a romantic time. I wish you were here.
All my mooncake love,
Andy

Dearest Gertrude,

No, I won’t mind your distractions. I think it will be kind of sexy if we make love during a football match. All my kisses,
Andy
P.S. I am trying out this new email account.

Dearest Gertrude,

Next time, I will buy you all the mooncakes you can eat.
All my kisses,
Andy

DON’T FORGET...SPRING 2002 CHECK-OUT

Thurs, May 18th— Non-seniors must check out by noon.
Sat, May 23rd – Seniors must check out by 4:00 p.m.

Record these dates so you can make travel plans now.
There will be no extensions.

University Residence Halls

May 2002
BLUE J

Save Biological Anthropology!

This J has always marveled at the abilities of her brethren on campus. Columbia boasts a fine flock indeed: noble, nubile, Nobel-worthy neighbors abound! Whence these gifts—do they come from frenetic activity or genetic fortuity? For Columbia's sake, let's hope it's not the latter, because if the answer lies in our evolutionary development, the phasing out of the bioanthropology department will very shortly preclude Columbia students from being able to study and learn from it.

Some history: a year ago, two biological anthropology professors, Cords and Melnick, left the anthropology department to form the new Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology department. There, they focused on not just humans and their primate relatives, but nearly every organism found in Linnaeus's notebook. The departure of Cords and Melnick left Professor Holloway as the only tenured instructor of bioanthropology at Columbia. Worse, once Holloway's long and stellar career at Columbia ends, bioanthropology will cease to exist, for there are no plans to replace him. And, as Holloway regularly acknowledges, he is no spring chicken.

It doesn't take a hawk's vision to see how this problem developed. Ten years ago, Columbia's anthropology department was pitiful. To rescue the department, the university hired away six top cultural anthropology professors from the University of Michigan. "The Big Six" have done a tremendous job, and the cultural anthropology program here is significantly stronger. Unfortunately, The Big Six's stellar scholarship has also required considerable resources, many of which have come at the expense of other sub-disciplines in the Anthropology Department. This year, cultural anthropologists are asking the administration for three additional socio-cultural tenure tracks, and one archeology track—but no bioanthropology tracks.

The success of cultural anthropology notwithstanding, many students still want their bioanthropology. Over five hundred such students recently signed a petition pledging their support for the bioanthropology sub-discipline and demanding that three additional tenured professorships be added to the program. And these professorships are sorely needed. From 1996 to 1999, there were 58 students for every one professor in the cultural anthropology program. By contrast, there were 171 students for every one professor in the bioanthropology program. As a result, on the first day of his Human Variation course, Holloway announced that he would unfortunately have to "perform triage" to cut the class down to a manageable size. Consequently, over half of the enrolled students, all of them upperclassmen, were forced to drop out of the class.

The administration requires that Columbia College students commit to one specific scientific field for two consecutive semesters of study. Several of the most popular courses that fulfill the sequence requirement are in bioanthropology field. Yet, after Holloway finally measures his last skull here, a student whose interest in the field was sparked by exposure to these courses as part of the science requirement will in the end have no opportunity to pursue that academic interest.

The Blue J understands how embarrassing this contraction will be for Columbia and why it's an issue worth squawking over. The J wonders how, when over 90% of the universities in this country have bioanthropology programs, a world-class university like Columbia could allow its program to go the way of the Dodo.
A tropical island. Dawn.

Ophelia (dressed in leather, collecting seaweed): Andrew! Oh look! A bouquet!
That’s no tourniquet.
And see what fresh coconuts we’ve got!
The whole pip-diddly lot!
Yes, it’s a bit of something or other, I believe.

Andrew (carrying a puppy):
Hush, lady. You’ll wake the chickens. It’s still early here, and so much like Texas I could hate it. It’s insuperable, this awful antiseptic heyday. Or don’t you think so?

The sun rises behind them. Andrew drops the puppy, which scampers away. Enter a Cowboy.

Cowboy (tipping his hat to Ophelia):
As a matter of matters I do, boy.
And a white Monday to you, my chew-toy!
Ophelia, you’re even lovelier than your brother.
What pornography! What absence!

He snaps a photograph of her.

Ophelia:
Well, well, Mr. President. How charming and diplomatic of you to visit us this morning! I say, I declare. Have you seen any gardens this springtime?
(Putting down her basket and giggling, she does a cartwheel.)
There! Now you’ve got one. You see, Andrew? I told you it would be morning one of these mornings, and now it is. The horoscopes never lie, I swear it. Isn’t that right, Mr. President? Tee hee.

Cowboy:
Tee hee indeed, my shiny neurosis, tee hee indeed. Terribly right. But tell me, in all honesty—have you heard any news from the Zimbabwe sisters? These days their boathouse looks like a monogram of amateurs—and here I am, stuck with the wicket!

Ophelia:
Oh, I don’t care. They said they’d be home by Thanksgiving.

The Cowboy slaps his knee and laughs.

Cowboy:
Shoelaces and moonbeams! I hadn’t thought I’d confabulate with those pretty young twinklebuds until Veteran’s Day at least!

Ophelia:
At all costs if not Saturday. (Pause.) Besides, I’m in love with you.

She searches the Cowboy for a response. He hiccupps.

Andrew:
Oh delectable panorama! Fabulous sky pancake!

Ophelia, you’re just remembered something!

All pause. Enter Chorus from the depths of the ocean.

Chorus (dressed in lavender silk):
The burlap of thought
Was resplendent with ought
And wishes and fishes
In yellows all caught.

But the yellows of May
Shall slither away
And whither we slither
There’s none left to say.

Chorus sinks back into the water. Characters resume.

Ophelia:
What, Andrew, is it snowing already?

Andrew:
You undulating suspender, that’s no bit of anything.
Ophelia (cross):
Pigsbody, the spatula. What then?

Andrew:
Just listen, I’ve come up with it.
I’ve been with schoolgirls all summer, you see,
Big bright ones like the Caribbean.
But everyone knows that the only woman I ever
really loved
Was a blueprint.
You remember her, I’m certain:
Jefferson, with the lackluster ringlets.
Oh God, just the thought of her makes my stom-
ach shimmer!

Ophelia (dryly):
Yes, I remember.

Andrew:
One box-colored day last summer I brought her
this lavender dove
(He takes the dove out of his pocket; it flies away.)
But—oh, the abnormality! I can’t bear it!
She forgot how to love me.
Instead of kissing, she recited Wordsworth in
Arabic—
As if that would make anything better!
Then she was gone and the bean crop dried up
like a paintbrush.
Now I ask you, is that justice?

Cowboy:
Justice is nothing but a girlish pickpocket. But
love, well, love...Now that’s something for
Napoleon to struggle with. It’s an incandescent
enema, to be sure, but worth every penny. Yes sir.
Yes indeed.

Ophelia (sotto voce):
So, lover, you’ve said it.
In Good Company
by Vijay Iyer

A Company of Readers: Uncollected Writings of W.H. Auden, Jacques Barzun, and Lionel Trilling from The Readers' Subscription and Mid-Century Book Clubs
Edited by Arthur Krystal

The normal consequence of having read a book with admiration and enjoyment is a desire that others should share one's feelings." W.H. Auden opens his review of Hannah Arendt's The Human Condition with this wonderful observation. Auden, along with eminent Columbia professors Lionel Trilling and Jacques Barzun, founded the Readers' Subscription in 1951 to bring the excitement of great literature to a wider audience. A Company of Readers includes forty-five of the authors' most lucid and perceptive introductory essays, on books from Saul Bellow's The Adventures of Augie March to Jane Jacobs' The Death and Life of Great American Cities. This eclectic collection of book reviews gives the modern reader the incomparable perspective of three of the intellectual giants of the 1950s writing to an urbane and sophisticated audience without scholastic pretension. The authors' commitment to the possibility of an intelligent, yet readable, academic prose is refreshing at a time when post-, meta-, and sub-(altern) studies seem to dominate the cultural scene.

Lionel Trilling, already recognized as the foremost literary critic of his time in 1951, got the idea of starting the Readers' Subscription from a former student, and recruited his friend and fellow Columbia faculty member Barzun to the task. The renowned historian and political scientist in turn enlisted the help of Auden (affectionately referred to as "Wystan"), a poet outside the professors' academic circle. Their stated objective was "to create an audience for books that the other [book] clubs considered to be too far above the public taste." Their noble purpose didn't prevent Auden from joking that, "our goal is to turn our members not into highbrows, but into intellectual dandies." The three met every four weeks to discuss the half dozen books they each had chosen, and then picked the main selections for the month. Barzun proudly affirms, "I recall no dispute, not even unpleasant vehemence. Nor was there ever a 2-to-1 decision." The example of these three accomplished intellectuals cooperating, and indeed, striving to outdo and challenge one another is inspirational, as well as instructive.

The authors abjured moralizing or overarching theories of literature, relying instead on common sense and their own gifted eye for art. With Arnoldian gusto, Barzun declares, "we were cultural critics with no need of a doctrine, for the essence of culture is inclusiveness." The diverse choices of the club reflect that philosophy. We have Auden on J.R.R. Tolkien: "no fiction I have read in the last five years has given me more joy than The Fellowship of the Ring," and Trilling on William Golding: "Lord of the Flies, long before it is a moral, social, and political parable, is a remarkable work of art." Barzun examines the more weighty Jean Santeuil of Proust, as well as The Complete Works of Montaigne—beginning his review with this marvelous opening line: "it was a hill, really, that Montaigne lived on and drew his name from; it is only the Essays that are mountainous." The authors examined works of music and of film as well, including Four Screenplays of Ingmar Bergman and Hector Berlioz's Evenings With the Orchestra, expanding the cultural scope of the literary genre.

Of course, 'serious' novels were not avoided altogether. But the reviewers maintain a modest tone, foregoing the opportunity to write prolix critiques in favor of employing a delicious wit, poking fun at the hallowed gods of literature. "The House of the Dead is not Dostoevsky's greatest work but it is, perhaps, his least irritating," writes Auden frankly. "The Slavophil and west-hating Dostoevsky has not yet appeared and there is very little of the Creeping Jesus." Trilling discloses, "I do not take [James Baldwin's] Another Country to be a fine novel. It is not a novel controlled by delicacy of perception. But I do take it to be a powerful novel,
a telling novel.” The larger goal of emphasizing the underlying brilliance of good writing is not lost in the carping, however, as a final quote from Auden demonstrates nicely: “Faulkner is no thinker—his occasional reflections on politics or the race question do not illuminate their subjects; he is no poet—his purple passages are embarrassingly bad; he is not even, in my opinion, a profound psychologist, but he is a very great magician who can make twenty years seem to the reader like twenty minutes.”

Perhaps a quote from Matthew Arnold himself best exemplifies the genius of the Readers’ Club: “They have a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best ideas of their time.” In this collection of book reviews published over thirteen years, from an idea conceived by a graduate student and financed by booksellers’ discounts, the authors reached an audience of over 40,000 subscribers. Now, A Company of Readers brings their profoundly optimistic vision to a new era of Columbians, in the hopes that a similar cultural diffusion will take place.

And Jehovah Elohim built the rib
made a woman from the rib
The LORD God fashioned into a woman
God made a woman
And the rib which the LORD God had taken from man,
[As the Lord God had made a woman from the rib]
And Jehovah God buildeth up the rib which He hath taken out of the man
and the man saith, “This [is] the [proper] step!”

- by Clare Ridley

Illustrated by Paul Heyer

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Great looking, conversation starting and health conscious gear and gifts from Go Ask Alice!, the world's most popular health Q&A website.
I came to the polis known as Baltimore in order to partake of the ceremonial rites of mallet and crab. On the road to these festivities, I came across Mullethon, who called out to me.

Wade, he said, are you going to Baltimore to partake of the ceremonial rites of mallet and crab?

Indeed I am, I replied. I hope the ceremony will be bounteous of both mallet and crab.

Shall we then walk together?

Does not the venerable poetess Bovette say, "When the mockingbird and fruit fly commingle / The flailing monkey of Aethiop melodiously / Plays upon the pipe in his gilded stew-pot" (Page 127, The Essential Bovette, Vol. II)?

It would certainly seem so, he replied. But Wade, let us fall to the topic of the proper ways in which men and women periodically disport themselves. In which of these ways can mortals best serve the ends of justice, and virtue?

Ah, I see, Mullethon, that like so many other young men of our times, you seek your solace in the temple of the goddess of the fulsome hops harvest, Persleptwithme. Well, I too am intrigued with that goddess, and the copious vomiting of her frenzied cult. But how could I, Wade, know how best to charm the Jordache off her more than ample frame? Let us together inquire into these mysteries, and in this way, might we not stumble upon the most virtuous means in which to drink beer out of a kiddie pool?

Absolutely. There can be no other way.

Well, let us first address the question, what location is most conducive to mortal pleasures? I ask you, Mullethon, in what place does the foulness of horses join with the plaintive cries of the assembled citizens?

Wade, you ask too much of my humble intellect.

I will explain it in a different way. Is not the racing of the horses a time for mortal passions to reach their logical zenith? Just as the sun finds its highest point at midday?

Why, yes, there is no rational argument with which to dispute that claim.

Then we must situate our ideal festivities at a horse race. Now then, Mullethon, when you find yourself at a horse race, where the sun is beating down upon the sodden earth, do you not partake of libations?

I have been known to shotgun various libations. Aha! It therefore follows that the most virtuous way for men and women to conduct themselves at our horse race is in a state of advanced ακησιλεψ (There is no proper English equivalent for this word; however it loosely translates into the popping bubbles invariably depicted above Andy Capp's head. cf Procrastonon, Vices IV: "get ακησιλεψ ugh!" -ed.). Only then will they be of the proper mind. Now we must turn to the question: what is the most fittingly frosty ice-cold beverage which to imbibe?

I cannot be certain Wade; and yet I sense that it must be beer.

Mullethon, you are wiser in your soul then your mind is even aware, for I feel as well that it must be beer. Now it has been said that a lone sparrow-camel is only second in stealth to numerous sparrow-camels.

By Apollo, it must be so!

Come now Mullethon, there is no reason to yell. For if it so that any one beer indeed is virtuous, would it not be true as of the sparrow camel, that many beers are more virtuous? And would not those beers have stealth in proportion to their numbers? And would not that greater stealth be yet more efficacious in pummeling the senses into moussaka?

Wade, I feel dizzy and somewhat nauseated.

Yes, as do I; it is the symptom of enlightenment. At this point, Sepinuckrates interjected: "Wade, I have heard as much of your ακησιλεψ as I can abide. You avoid the most difficult question: what is the deal with jockeys?"

-Mephiscotcheles
Her 20th–Century Art class having reached the libido jungle gym of Surrealism, Professor Rosalind Krauss favored her students with a glimpse at Max Ernst’s unsettling opus, Oedipus Rex. Regarding the literary subtext of the Freudian painting, Krauss remarked, “Oedipus Rex...a classic story of things not working out very well.” Which further proves our suspicion that Prof. Krauss has the dry cool wit of an action hero.

In her bid for a position as the Senior Class Prophet, Ginger Gentile, C ’02, rallied the Columbia Student Solidarity Network and People for Peace to her cause. “Please nominate me to speak at the senior class dinner,” Gentile exhorted the e-mail list. “i think i am the ‘prophet.’ i will say something cool if you do and i have a lot of experience speaking in public.” “Rupp knows me by name,” Gentile added, making reference to her work as a campus activist, but cautioning, “of course, don’t mention this in the nomination.” The Blue and White is impressed by Ms. Gentile’s initiative, but holds that true prophets do not “think” they are prophets—they know.

In keeping with our recent attentions to Tsars, the following footnote from Anna Karenina:

34 Komisarov: In April 1866 a certain O.I. Komisarov (1838 – 92), a peasant hatter from Kostroma, turned up by chance near the fence of the Summer Garden in Petersburg and inadvertently hindered Karakozov’s attempt to assassinate Alexander II. For that he was granted nobility and became socially fashionable for a time. He eventually drank himself into obscurity.

Sign You’re Procrastinating Again on Priceline: We’re sorry, but we couldn’t find a major airline willing to accept your offer price of $20 for tickets to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

The Blue and White would like to congratulate Professor Caroline Bynum for winning the Mark van Doren Teaching Award this year. Congratulations are also in order for Professor Nicholas Dirks, whose recent book, Castes of Mind, won the Lionel Trilling award for best book published by a faculty author. Both awards are given by a student committee.

Dean of Student Affairs Chris Colombo has recently adopted prodigious facial hair with an uncanny resemblance to that of B&W Managing Editor Daniel Immerwahr, C’02. Coincidence...or conspiracy?

According to a recent article in The Washington Post, Columbia leads the nation in percentage of applicants wait-listed. Apparently, we wait-listed 1,896 eager applicants—more than we accepted—for the Class of 2000. The author also mentions the sometimes $200 non-refundable deposit necessary to be included on the wait-list at many schools. The B&W, though more literarily than mathematically inclined, detects something funny (and six-figured) afoot!

For the few, the proud, and the restless who opted for group selection this year, the web skills of D. Jeff Soules, C ’03, were a boon. Soules, a URH employee as well as a Broadway showman...
extraordinaire, wrote a program that sorted the groups, by size, into picking order so that anxious students could see exactly how far they really were from that dream suite in Hogan. Soules has a history of applying his geek powers for good. He recently decoded the algorithm for the Wu-Name generator (www.recordstore.com/cgi-bin/wuname/-wuname.pl), thus explaining why The Blue and White’s Ben Letzler shares a Wu-Name with George Rupp, and Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta: Violent Toilet Thing.

For its bicentennial dinner celebration, the Philolexian Society scheduled as its keynote speaker Ben Stein (C’66), economist, actor, game-show host, and former Nixon speechwriter. Although initially amenable to this engagement, Stein canceled his appointment, leaving the Philos in the lurch. After Dean Austin Quigley dedicated a sober panegyric to Philolexian, poet and Yale English Professor John Hollander (C’50) delivered the keynote address in lieu of Mr. Stein. Former Philo and MTV cynosure Gideon Yago also played truant. Allen Ginsberg could not attend.

E-mail received from Ryan Miday, Housing Coordinator of Wien Hall:

“Mmmmmm! Mmm! Yeah! Mmmmm, yeah!! Mmmmmm mmmmmmmmm! Mmmm, yeah, mmm! Come Down to the EC/Wien BBQ EXTRAVAGANZA!
WHEN: Sunday, April 28th
WHERE: EC Courtyard
FREE BBQ Food, Kosher food provided Live DJ, Games, and Prizes too! Oh yeah!! Mmmmmm, that’s right! Mmmmmmmmm! Oh yeah! Mm!”

The B&W commends Mr. Miday’s enthusiasm, and eagerly awaits his next epistle.

Finally, Columbia’s literati set has a highbrow alternative to the recent Am I Hot or Not craze: Am I a Public Intellectual or Not (http://www.jerrymccusker.com/cgi-bin/punditronic.cgi). Visitors to the site can size up the scholarship of writers and pundits ranging from Bill Moyers to Bill Safire. Thus far, voters have been less than generous: Edward Said has garnered a disappointing 3.4, while Ben Stein boasts a respectable 5.5. Neither Columbian need fret about their rankings, however. Thus far, Noam Chomsky has managed only a 2.8, being upstaged by the ‘politically incontinent’ Bill Maher, who received a 3.0.

In a fittingly messy coda to what President Rupp characterized as “an exceedingly inelegant” situation, University Professor Cornel West has decided to leave Harvard for the friendlier confines of Princeton. The renowned Af-Am scholar’s decampment stems from a personal dispute with Harvard President Lawrence Summers, whom West recently termed, “the Ariel Sharon of American higher education.” No word from Dr. West as to possible nominees for Yasir Arafat’s spot.

Upon perusing the stored contents of a public terminal in Butler Library, one staffer was surprised to stumble across a file entitled “POST YOUR SEXUAL FANTASY.” Casting furtive glances about the crowded room, she double-clicked and was promptly presented with a link to “Columbia Universities [sic] Fantasies Site” and an exhortation to “POST [her] PERSONAL SEXUAL DELIGHTS AND HORNY FANTASIES.” But a visit to the site proved disappointing; nary a post was to be found. The B&W extends its sympathies to the creator of the page, and urges the Sons of Knickerbocker to shout a little louder when voicing their erotic wishes.

Seniors...they're done!