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ENGL-211

Artist’s Statement

 I entered this class in a somewhat unique position, at least among my classmates, of already being a prose writer. Writing 3,000-word chapters is fairly normal for me, and my writing has been well-received among the people who read it. I like to think I have a good grasp of storytelling and of prose writing, even though I haven’t had any formal training and English was easily my worst subject in grade school. My primary goal in taking this class was to learn where my skills actually lied and to learn the language used among professionals so I can more accurately describe the work that I do. In relation to that objective, the class was a failure, as I think was designed to give people the basic sense of good writing that I already have.

 I don’t think the class was bad overall, though. Being a pre-req for the upper-level creative writing classes aside, it’s never bad to have more tools in my toolbelt. I’m sure I’ll put this knowledge or some of the ideas people had to use somewhere down the line. It’s also the first time I received a complete analysis of something I have written – chapter reviews on FanFiction.net are almost never decent material.

 So what have I done with this writing knowledge? I like to write stories that are a mix of serious and fun. The works below, as well as ones I write on my own, try to be realistic in the sense that almost nothing is simple and most of the time has both positives and negatives. Sometimes, the story will be about action, humor, or happy times; and sometimes it will be about conflict, people’s problems, and despair. Not only do these complex examinations add depth to the world and build connection to the reader, but I think a lot of people in the world need to be able to see things from different perspectives. I also shy away from having singular main protagonists in my works for this reason, because the world does not, in fact, revolve around anyone. Even heroes make decisions that people have valid reasons not to like outside of their own personal interests.

 At the same time, knowing that people don’t see the world that way can, ironically, reduce the realism that my stories have. Some people don’t act rationally, sometimes or all the time, from charged emotions to being just not a smart person, and I fundamentally don’t understand how to write those characters. Typically, that means they don’t appear in my stories, or in the case of non-original characters, they may seem off. No one’s complained about it so far, but I’d still like to get better at it in the future. Same with cultures: I want to portray them accurately, but my exposure is limited to the pop culture versions. You’ll notice that trend in my short story below. I hope you enjoy it nonetheless, just as my readers have for my other stories.

The Price

Short Story

“If no one has any further questions, I think we ought to call it a meeting? I’m sure everyone wants to go home.”

 Jim Crimshaw looked across the table from his presentation slideshow to the man who said that. Dressed in his signature salmon dress shirt and navy slacks, Hank Herring was Jim’s one-up the corporate ladder at Naughmberz Investments, LLC. They were almost nothing alike, but perhaps that’s what made them such great friends. Jim considered himself an intellectual and an artist: he had a way with words and loved to show it. He didn’t care much for crunching numbers and sitting in meetings all day, but he was good at it, and it paid well enough to support his other hobbies.

 Hank, meanwhile, was passionate and hardworking at his job. He had most definitely earned his position as the boss, and people liked him for his eccentric personality, as demonstrated by his choice of attire. They also liked that he let everyone out early on Mondays, but that’s because they didn’t know what he did in that extra time like Jim did.

 After everyone else had left the conference room, Hank strolled over to Jim. “Excellent work as usual, Jimmy. Have you ever considered asking for a promotion from the higher brass? I think you could give me a run for my money.”

Jim shook his head. “Honestly, I prefer the remedial stuff over having to organize everyone else. Besides, you need the money more than I do. You have a family to support.”

“I sure do…” Hank responded, the smile fading from his face. “Speaking of, I think we should head over a little early tonight. Maybe grab dinner there.”

“Yeah, sure.”

Jim wished that Hank was referring to his house. A nice, homecooked dinner would have been much preferred compared to what was going to happen when they walked out of Three Kings Casino at one in the morning.

The casino shone like a beacon in contrast to the green around it. Every outline of the building was lined with lights, as if there were a halo coming from within the building at all times. Spotlights of various colors but always high intensity focused on the entrance and the flashy logo, which was also made of light-up signs. It glowed like it was daytime.

The brightness did obnoxiously good job at selling an image. Where else would one find such endless light but a paradise? It’s a good time, a good *decision*, it must be! Jim admitted that he had some fun there, but it was social fun. It was sitting around, joking it up with Hank and his buddies that they had met around a game of craps. It wasn’t staring at the slot machines or scratch-tickets waiting for the casino to decide that it wanted to give you some money. $16.8 million in revenue on every $1 million payout was the number he and Hank and cranked out.

“I can’t believe this place… the numbers were right… there! The sevens!” Hank called out, louder than he really ought to be, as they stepped through the exit doors. His dress shirt, no longer tucked in, was slovenly wrinked and had a stain from a martini. “It stopped, and then mysteriously shifted to deny me the triple! You saw it!”

“Hank, you know the slots are rigged to give you unfavorable odds. We’ve been through the numbers before, remember?”

Hank stopped where he was, nearly tripping over himself, and looked dumbly at Jim. “Look, I’m the boss man, and the boss man says, I should’ve won.”

Jim clenched his fists from within his coat pocket. Drunk and in the red was never a good combination. Every week he hoped to convince Hank to change his mind… but each one was as lost as Hank’s money.

“Excuse me, could I ask you for some help?” an older-sounding female voice asked.

The two salarymen turned to see a ragged woman, wrapped in a couple layers of dirty sweaters with an army jacket on top. While she wasn’t handicapped like many of the other less fortunate residents of this city, she didn’t look very healthy, either.

Jim stepped in front of Hank, knowing that his boss was in no condition to be talking to people in need. “I’m afraid we’re fresh out of money, ma’am.”

“Ah. Things didn’t go well at the casino for either of you?”

“I had it!” Hank yelled, earning himself a sharp glare from Jim.

“I’m the designated driver, and the designated not-gambler for that manner, so I only brought emergency money. We really must be going.”

“But you,” the woman directed at Hank, “You come here often, yes? You must have some money to spare. Please, help an old woman out.”

“Listen here, old woman, I don’t have any money. It’s all gone. You think the casino will be nice and let me have some it back? ‘Cuz it won’t.”

“But each time you go in, you have money, and you come out without it. Imagine if, instead of throwing it away, you were to donate i-Augh!”

She reeled as Hank delivered a right hook across her cheek. He looked ready to give her another one, but Jim grabbed him and pulled him back.

“What’s wrong with you? Come on, we’re going. **Now,**” Jim ordered, practically dragging Hank to the car.

When Jim returned to work on Tuesday, his boss wasn’t there. On Wednesday, he’s still nowhere to be found. On Thursday, Hank’s boss comes down.

“Hey, Jim, can I talk to you in my office for a second?” he asks.

“Yes, of course.”

The older, balding man ushers the younger professional into a decently-sized office with a solid wood desk with a black rotating chair behind it. Jim sits in a smaller chair on the near side.

“I’m assuming this is about Hank,” Jim guessed.

“Yes. It is very unusual for him to abandon his duties. If he wasn’t so passionate, and not for his frankly absurd productivity, we would have fired him the first day. As it is, we still cannot let this stand. I understand you and he are rather close, yes? Do you know where he is?”

“I know as much as you do, unfortunately. Please, don’t fire him just yet, though. I will make a concerted effort to find where he is tonight, and convince him to return to the office.”

The boss sighed. “I can give you my blessing, but I can’t make any guarantees that the board members will be on board with it. What I do know is that if he’s not back first thing tomorrow morning, he’ll for sure be terminated.”

“Understood.”

The front desk attendant waved goodbye as Jim left the Three Kings Casino once more, and he rolled his eyes where she couldn’t see them. The staff here seemed to consider him a regular, but he had never spent a dime there. *Hank must waste enough salary there for the both of us,* he thought. Strangely, that’s not what Hank was doing right now, which is what he had gone to check. Even the casino hadn’t seen him since Monday, which was highly unusual.

He was interrupted in his thoughts at the sight of a familiar old lady outside the casino. When she spotted him, she turned to leave.

“Wait, ma’am!” he called, jogging to catch her.

“I thought you were the designated *not-gambler*,” she spat.

“I still am. I seem to be the designated solve-this-guy’s-problems… er. That’s why I came back here, he’s gone missing.”

“Good riddance.”

“He- please don’t say that. I’m sorry that he punched you last week. He’s really a good guy, when he’s not caught up in his problems. He helped me out during a really tough time last year. I would be out of a job and, well… a home, without him. You understand what that’s like, don’t you?”

“Whatever,” the woman dismissed. Now that Jim had gotten closer, he could see more of her features. She had coffee-brown hair, much like his own, that looked like it would be curly if not for all the dirt caked up in it. Other than the bags under her eyes, the large bruise on her cheek courtesy of Hank, and the relative weakness with which she walked, she didn’t look to be a day over 40.

He also noticed that she was shivering. The temperature *was* over 40, which was very comfortable for him. The realization came that she really only had decaying sheets covering her equally patchwork clothing right now, not a brand-quality coat like he had. With a sigh of resignation, he unzipped the coat and draped it over her army jacket. The warm weather wouldn’t last as winter came.

To his surprise, she removed the coat immediately. “Oh… I appreciate the gesture, but please don’t cover my jacket. It’s very important to me.”

“Is that so? And… where are my manners?” He extended a hand out. “I’m Jim.”

The old lady straightened her back, grasped his hand firmly in the dirt of her own, and gave a powerful shake. “Skylar.”

“I take it that army jacket isn’t just for show?” *This country has a history of treating its veterans poorly, so it wouldn’t be a surprise,* he thought.

“Correct. Major, U.S. Army, in Vietnam.”

“Damn, you made your way up. If you don’t mind me asking, why’d you leave?”

“Same reason half the damn army left,” she laughed. “Lots of fighting, lots of death, but not a lot of progress. Not a lot of sense of it.”

“The news said the same thing. And I’m guessing you’ve been here ever since you came back?”

“Yep. They left me with nothing except this jacket. I just want to have a quiet life away from all this political nonsense.”

“That’s sad to hear. But why come here and beg instead of going to a shelter and looking for employment?”

 “That’s my day job. At night, I come here, because it’s not enough. Every day, I see people with money in their hands going into the casino and leaving with nothing left. I feel like I can talk some sense into them, you know? They lose enough money that if I were the collector, I could pay a mortgage on a cottage, easy.”

“Well, maybe you can convince my friend about something, because I sure can’t. You’re sure you haven’t seen him anywhere?”

“Yeah. Can’t guarantee he’d be here even if I did, if you catch my drift.”

Jim suppressed a frown. Another stupid decision of Hank to mess with someone who turned out to be a grizzled war veteran, but he still didn’t like people threatening his friend like that.

“Well, thanks for your time. Keep the jacket,” he finished, turning to leave.

“Thank you.”

Jim looked up at the tops of the buildings that crested his home city. He was born and raised here, in a middle-class apartment that he got to keep when his parents retired to somewhere warmer. He had never considered moving, either. It was a decently sized city with plenty of work opportunities and a lively culture, and it wasn’t in an area prone to disasters. What could one possibly want that couldn’t be experienced here? Even having lived here his whole life, he was still meeting new people and going new places each and every week. To him, that was true beauty.

He continued to walk through the park, listening to the distant sound of the river that flowed into his city. If Hank wasn’t at Three Kings, he had to be somewhere nearby, probably in between there and downtown, and Jim had been looking up and down for a few hours already. Without his coat, nighttime was getting to be very chilly, and he would have to head back soon.

Jim wasn’t sure why he was even still looking for Hank. It was disappointing, to say the least, to see Hank run away from his problems like this. When they were at work, he was always on top of issues as they came up, not letting anything ruin his motivation towards his goals. Jim highly doubted that Skylar would truly be able to make any more of an impact than he could, and part of him just wanted to write Hank off as a loss after all this effort and go home.

As he rounded the bend in the forested path he was taking, he saw a bench up ahead, underneath a street lamp. Laying on the bench was a shaggy-looking man, wearing a rumpled salmon dress shirt and dirty trousers.

“Hank, is that you?” he asked. It was more of a rhetorical question to get Hank’s attention; the man was unmistakable, even when a mess.

“Jim…?” a groggy voice answered, sitting up in a slump on the bench.

“Hank, where have you been? Everyone at work has been worried about you.”

“Have they? They shouldn’t. I’m a fucking phony, why are they worried?” Hank doubted, his voice a little slurred from alcohol.

Jim approached the bench and sat down next to Hank. His friend smelled bad, as if he hadn’t taken a shower in days.

“You’re not a phony, Hank. When Joanna kicked me out and took my artwork and everything else, you let me stay at your house and put in a good word for me at Naughmberz, remember? You didn’t hesitate to give me exactly what I needed when I needed it, even with your tight living situation.”

“I know, Jim. I know.”

“That was when I found out about the gambling, too. You have a problem. Have you seriously not been at your house this whole time, either?”

“Of course not!” he cried. “What am I gonna do, tell my kids I spent their holiday money at the casino? That I didn’t even donate it to someone in need, and punched her in the goddamn face instead?”

“What *are* you going to do, Hank?” Jim asked bluntly. “I’ve been going to that damn casino every single week to try and get you to stop. I’m trying to help you just as you helped me, but I can’t go on watching you ruin your life.”

“I know, Jim. I don’t know. Please don’t leave me.”

“Then come with me. I think I know a good place to start.”

The Three Kings Casino came into view once again. Jim felt himself warming up already just from the sheer energy output of the building’s illumination. There weren’t a lot of people around on a Thursday night, which was good; they didn’t need an audience.

Jim noticed Skylar approaching them from one of the pillars near the entrance. While she still looked exhausted, she didn’t seem as cold with his coat underneath her army jacket.

Hank shied away when he noticed her, hiding behind Jim as if the shorter man would be capable of concealing him. Skylar gave Jim a look and he shrugged, moving aside and forcing Hank to form a circle with them.

“Hank, this is Skylar,” Jim introduced. “Skylar, this is my boss, Hank.”

“Hey…” Hank greeted solemnly.

Skylar didn’t say anything. She just gave him a judgmental look as she waited for his expected sentence.

“I’m sorry for punching you… I feel bad enough about my losses in there, and you telling me about them out here got me really angry. But that’s no excuse to attack a homeless person.”

The woman sighed. “It’s not, though I suppose egging on an angry drunk guy wasn’t my smartest of moves. But if you feel so bad, why do you keep going in?”

“Because I want to support my family. Even our two-income household is struggling with rising retail rates. If I win big, just once, we’ll be set for a long time. I wouldn’t need to go back then.”

“But the more you spend *trying* to win, the less you’ll come out with when you do,” Skylar responded.

“I’ve tried explaining the numbers to him before,” Jim cut in. “We work at an investing firm, he knows all about returns and margins and all the investment strategies.”

“Jim, don’t… don’t side against me.”

“I’m not. Hank, I’m trying to help you, remember? The first step to solving this problem is acknowledgement.”

Tears were welling up in Hank’s eyes. “But you don’t understand how I feel! You’ve always been so cool and rational. I can’t explain this urge that drives me to come back here again and again. You know me, I’ve pulled off some crazy deals despite what the numbers say. That feeling tells me that this is the way.”

“Hey, man, I know what that’s like,” Skylar said. “You see this army jacket? I was deployed over in Nam. I had that same feeling, telling me that I was doing what’s right, protecting my country. I thought we would show those commies who’s boss and fix Vietnam right up. But that’s not what happened. We fought, and killed, and died, more and more with each month. Lots of families destroyed, people ruined forever just from the sight of it. We introduced bigger problems to them than we would solve with our democracy.

“I realized that winning was impossible, then. The only outcome of a fight like that is destruction. And it sounds like the same sort of fight you’re having here against Lady Luck.”

Hank began sobbing openly, and Skylar walked up and put him into a hug. Jim smiled and let them have their moment.

After around ten seconds, Hank let go and wiped his eyes. “You’re right. And that’s a beautiful story. I wish I could have given that money to you instead of throwing it away.” He paused for a moment. “Perhaps I could convince one of our clients to hire a capable veteran I know. Jim, do you have any of my business cards?”

Jim rolled his eyes. “Hank, you realize you may not even have a job for yourself after this, right? Abandoning your position is a serious offense. We can worry about job prospects later. Right now, you need to go back to your family and let them know you’re okay.”

Hank’s expression fell, but he nodded and left for somewhere. His car, presumably, wherever it was.

Jim looked to the woman next. “Skylar, come with me. You can sleep on my couch for the time being. It’s the least I can do for helping us out.”

“I appreciate that. I can return your jacket to your closet that way, too.”

“No, seriously, keep it. I don’t think I would ever be able to get the stench out of it. The first thing you’re doing when we get back is taking a shower.”

“You’re starting to sound like my old C.O.”

“Your what?”

“Commanding officer. Have you ever considered asking for a promotion?”

Grow Up, Not Out

Creative Nonfiction Essay

 Everyone remembers the bad habits they had in middle school. For a developing mind, they were the best way to express one’s preferences on people and things, but in hindsight, they make those same people cringe in disbelief at how annoying they must have been for everyone else to deal with. Some people plastered posters of the latest Disney celebrities on their walls and sung loudly their “hits” with their friends on the playground. Some would go to school wearing a red shirt, red pants, red shoes, and fake red hair extensions as if the color red would simply vanish from the universe if they didn’t show everyone how much they loved it. And don’t forget the one person that embarrassed himself or herself in front of the entire graduating class trying to impress his or her crush, though in reality no one (not even the crush) really cared that much.

 That last point is what I want to focus on. As people mature, they have a tendency to toss aside big parts of who they were because they see it, or society sees it, as childish. I certainly agree that children lack an amount of awareness of others’ feelings that can lead to them being disrespectful (and psychology seems to back this up, too), but it doesn’t mean that all children are snotty or that all adults are not. I think that people don’t know what they really want a lot of the time, and they think that exploring new perspectives necessarily requires dropping the old ones.

 I disagree with that. I’ve found that the best parts of who I am stem from who I was when I was young, and that’s because I used the insights I gained to build up those core values instead of tear them down. We’ll use my middle-school crush as an example. It all started on St. Patrick’s Day of 2011, when I was in 7th grade. This girl, her name is Grace, was an Irish step dancer. One of the school’s Spanish teachers played in a bagpipe band, so they put on a performance. Seeing Grace performing with her little sister, by themselves, in front of the entire school, almost made me cry. Not because the dance was spectacular, but because I was imagining how scared they must be to do that.

From that day forward, I wanted to get to know her, and that’s what I did that fall. The school grouped up pairs of grades, so 7th and 8th graders shared classes, and I knew I would have an opportunity to see her every day at lunch. Honestly, it was nothing short of social engineering. While doing my thing at recess, usually reading a book, I would covertly monitor where she usually hung out and, over time, integrate myself into that environment in a fashion that appeared natural. It worked, perfectly I may add, though she wasn’t interested when I eventually had the guts to ask her out (She later came out as lesbian, so I like to think it wasn’t because of me).

Is that cringy? Well, if I tried something like that today with someone, she would probably notice, and I would get charged with a Title IX case for stalking. So yeah, it was very cringy. But at the time, it was the first meaningful connection I had made in over a year (this school was small so friend groups were mostly static), and I had done it through my own actions and not a chance encounter. And since then, I’ve built on that experience to start connections more quickly and in environments where there isn’t designated free time for it.

Along with social scenarios, people also feel the need to cast aside their interests. They become too old to be in the target audience of their favorite toys and shows, so they decide to start from scratch and find something else that’s considered more appropriate for them.

Once again, I will draw from my own experience to prove it. One of my favorite games that I played a lot as a kid is *Sonic Adventure 2: Battle*, for the Nintendo GameCube. It took the combined effort of my two siblings and I to collect everything in that game, and it was a great way for us to bond. We don’t play it together anymore, not only because we discovered the mind-boggling amount of people and stuff out there in the world, but also because I’ve taken my love for the game to another level and can totally kick their asses now. The other level I speak of is speedrunning: attempting to beat the game from start to finish as quickly as possible. It pains me somewhat that we’ve lost that, but pursuing this hobby has improved my life immeasurably. Taking the game up as a challenge has led me to others who enjoy the game just as much as I do who also take that challenge. Talking to those people inspired me to start a club on my college campus to connect with similar people in real life. Running that club has grown my skills as a leader, organizer, and friend. Learning the intricacies of the game led me to start researching the physical build of the game’s code and create mods for its levels. I plan on creating games as my career, and both the club and the mods now feature prominently on my résumé.

Not bad for a game released in 2001, right? I think these inspirations exist in everyone’s childhood to some extent. Maybe those Disney celebrities overcame hardships, as their characters or as themselves, that moved the enamored fan to reach out to others in need. The bold expression of red could become a curiosity into the psychological effects of colors on the mind. Perhaps that crush secretly found the embarrassing moment to be cute, and years later finds a reason to reach out and rekindle that connection. The shells of our youth may be basic and fragile, but that does mean they are outgrown and must be replaced as a hermit crab does. Rather, they are designed to be built upon, creating a stronger foundation as we grow up like a tree from a seed.

Games and Creative Writing Essay

 Pictures are perhaps the oldest form of storytelling, dating back to cave art that likely predates any oral language. However, all stories, even cave art, requires context and structure in order to carry meaning, and sometimes that can be hard to find. This has resulted in the creation of card games that try and provide those things for fun, easy stories. I am going to examine two picture-based card games: Dixit, and The Hollow Woods. Both are based on lingual interpretation of pictures on the cards as their primary mechanic, but they do so in different ways and with different purposes and outcomes.

Dixit is a game based around audience. Each turn, one player says a word or phrase they associate with a card they play, and the other players attempt to fool people into associating the phrase with their card over the original one. The cards are all pieces of art, played anonymously and voted on once presented. The catch is that points are only awarded to the original player if only some of the other players guess it –a hint that’s too obvious or obscure will get all or none of the votes, respectively, which only rewards points to the other players.

Because of this, winning is about thinking of the right connection that some people will or will not get. While the cards allow for some creative and thought-provoking associations with the phrases, the link between the card and phrase is by itself not valuable in the game. During the playtest I had with my two group members, we didn’t have any specific references to use, so we relied on general imagery the card could be associated with. What happened was that almost all of the rounds were either too obvious or a choice between two cards, of which one voter already knew what the right one was because they played the other.

The real purpose of the clues is to work together to recall a memory – that is, a story already told. Dixit is not intended as a storytelling game, and narrative plays almost no purpose except to explain an association to the confused people who didn’t get the right answer. If it were to be changed to become about the cards and their imagery, a good way would be to have players come up with their own phrases every round. Each person would try and figure out which phrase went with which card, with points being awarded based on accuracy. It would be harder to keep specific people on the inside or outside when there are so many options for everything, and it would keep an objective scoring system over a variant that focused on the evocation. However, I think fooling and reading others is fairly central to the fun of Dixit, so it would take away a lot from its identity.

The second game, The Hollow Woods, is a lot more suited to narrative. What makes the game special is that the art on each of its cards is drawn in such a way that the edges are all identical in pattern and thus transition seamlessly into any other. This makes for variable storytelling, which is one of the game’s selling points: There’s a total of 2.432 *quintillion* unique combinations from its 20 cards. However, this number is less impressive than it looks. The combos are unique in that they’re not completely alike, but that doesn’t mean that they aren’t still very alike. The bulk of the combinations come from having the same cards in a different order, or from having different endings when the rest of the story is identical, or other minutae like that.

To an experienced writer, this wouldn’t be a problem, because there’s still so much you can do with a single character and setting within a scene. But that happens with a lot of time and thought, whereas this is a card game intended to be played in a short sitting. During our playtest, my group tried two methods of story crafting: One was taking turns improvising a story as cards are flipped over, and the second was dealing out all the cards and giving everyone a few minutes to make a story out of they had. Most of the stories we came up with were fairly short and carried the same tone, following the spooky theme of the cards even when we wanted to defy it. It was especially true during the first method. The game itself contained only a small pamphlet of suggestions on what to do with the cards, so if you’re not intentionally trying to make something out of it, I would consider it a waste of money.

I do think The Hollow Woods makes a great worldbuilding tool for those who *are* trying, though. Off the top of my head, it would be great for coming up with local folk tales to turn into quests and for planning a journey through the Feywild or other haunted woods within a medieval setting. Like with Dixit, the cards are fairly open to interpretation, usually having one or two standout nouns (creatures, places, etc.) each, which add together quickly to make a decent cast to write about. There’s nothing stopping someone from combining elements from the cards with anything else they have in mind, too.

Overall, Dixit and The Hollow Woods are not games one should look for if they want a storytelling experience. They’re both picture-based games that rely on the visuals of the cards for their fun aspects more than creating structured narratives. There’s only so much that can be done by such a game until it relies on the user’s imagination, as The Hollow Woods shows. Dixit doesn’t even try, instead using narrative links as means to another end entirely. They say a picture’s worth a thousand words; however, words without structure carry no meaning.

Structured Poems

Heroes

Throughout time, people will tell

the stories of heroes quite bold.

Exciting and frightening events unfold,

Maidens to save and monsters to fell.

Today, these stories entertain and sell.

But what we see as legends of old

used to be facts as they were told,

prescribed as history through ink well.

Throne seekers, to increase their might,

would spread word of their supposed power;

Not just a leader, no, but an awesome knight,

Wearing heaven’s shining armor to make infidels cower.

These tales did well to give people fright,

but were in reality no truer than a thirteenth hour.

Find a Book

Some night, when work and play have taken their leave, find a book, then read.

You may find it taking you in, like a fish on a hook, then read.

You may find yourself near the water, the twinkling of the stream in your eyes,

As if the words were an incantation to teleport you to that brook, then read.

You may find the characters speaking directly into your ears, their jokes and troubles

Sneaking their way out to your thoughts like a crook, then read.

You may find a fright, one that travels down your spine and along your skin,

so that you can't rest soundly until you've checked every nook, then read.

And when Somnus visits for his nightly repose, you may find it hard to oblige.

Each page makes a case for the next, onward, with each look, then read.

Univocal Lippogram

Keen eyes see every express, every etch, every tell. Sensed nerves feel the hems, sewn edges where the wheel needed help. Sleeves eject, greens shed. Red dye revels new, then felt ebbs. The self reflects, velvet peel sheen. Excellence emerges.

Found Poem

You tried to take the address of a member

function without qualifying the member

function with its class

 name

and the address-

of operator.

This error can also be

generated as a result of

compiler conformance work

that was done for

Visual C++ 2005:

enhanced pointer-to- member conformance.

 generate C3867.

Source: Microsoft documentation – Error C3867

Humument

