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James D. McIntosh Jr.
2014 Collection (Censored)

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Literature is a like a parasite that feeds on the mind of the author. It takes his memories, beliefs, desires, joys, fears, sorrows, angers, hopes, and dreams and mutates them into a work of art. It controls him while making him think he is the creator.

-James D. McIntosh Jr.

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Foreword

I know it is unusual for me to include a foreword and a table of contents or arrange my works in alphabetical order by genre, but this year's collection is different. Quite a lot happened during the year, including marriage, a sick newborn, complicated work situations, and so forth, but I did not write much about it all. I did not feel compelled to write so much this year as I have before, but I cannot explain why. I did do some more writing on one particular story, but it is special to me and I have been taking my time to touch it up. Because of that lack of writing, this collection only contains works I wrote in a Creative Writing class (although I had been planning on writing the story about time travel for some time), plus two bonus ones from 2013.

Another difference is that there is more mild and strong language than usual in my works. In January 2015, I took the time to censor/reword all of the works that required censorship. I therefore decided to release two different versions of this collection, a censored one and an uncensored one.

You will also notice that none of the poetry rhymes. Even though I personally do not like poetry that does not rhyme, we were not allowed to rhyme in the class. That does not mean, however, that the poems are not good, so please enjoy my 2014 collection.

-James D. McIntosh Jr.

Poetry

II Be Continued

Alarms!

The dreaded frequent alarms.

Again they sound.

Again I run.

Will I make it to the shelter in time?

Will it hold against the attack?

When were they spotted?

What is their path?

There is nothing I can do

Against this attack.

Feelings.

The unfortunately rational feelings.

They never leave.

Always paranoia.

They have guns and plummeting bombs.

I ration my food for the troops.

They fly over very suddenly.

I hide quick as I can.

This blasted war

Will destroy all.

Time.

The unending time.

This war is so incredibly long.

Victory is so uncertain.

One way or another this war will end,

But only time will tell who will win.

Will it be in just another week?

Or another five years?

Only one thing is certain:

The last war it is not.

Encouragement

“What do you want to be when you grow up?”

“Well, what can I be?”

“A writer, a scientist, a bus driver;

Your limit is the sky.”

“So I cannot be what I really want to:

A NASA astronaut.”

How I Feel

As the eagle that soars above the hills,

As the flower that blooms in the valley,

As the river that flows down the mountain,

So I feel.

As the dog that wags its tail for a bone,

As the kitten that pounces at a mouse,

As the bird that finds a sweet, sweet berry,

So I feel.

As the mother who holds her infant child,

As the playwright who has been inspired,

As the monk who meditates all alone,

So I feel.

So I feel.

Searching

The wind is blowing.
My vision is obscuring.
Where am I going?

Wait!
Up ahead!
Lights.
On bright, many dim.
I don't like them all,
But still I must choose.

They are far.
They are close.
I reach out for them.
Some turn to dust
And blow in the wind.

Where am I?

Finally, at last,
When all seems lost,
I reach for the brightest
And the whole world changes...

The Struggle

The pencil sped
And dust flew up.
He was on a roll.
But in the end
All was lost.
The paper turned in was blank.

What happened, man?
You were inspired.
That's how it seemed to me.
I guess not all
Is easy going
Or as it seems to be.

But that's okay!
We can fix this.
It happens to us all.
Just take a break
And then try again.
The pencil will wait for you.

More Poetry

I decided to separate these poems from the others because they are more or less unrefined. Some of them I wrote based on prompts from the professor, while others I wrote randomly in class because I did not know what else to do and was bored. I let my professor comment on most of them to see what he would say, but ultimately I decided not to include them in my peer review packets or final portfolio for several reasons. I left them alone and did not revise them.

Untitled

Life is sacred I hear.
So why does this great crowd watch this man?
They cheer.
The floor falls and the man fall through,
And I tighten around his large, warm neck.
He goes cold.
The feeling used to bother me.
It was very eerie to grip them and feel life vanish.
Not anymore.
I have been doing this a long time.
Hundreds of people of all ages get caught in my snare.
I no longer care.

Just Because

There's nothing here.
Stop looking!
Why do you read this crap?
Are you bored?
Are you dumb?
Or maybe suicidal...

The Pen

Screw the sword!

Screw the government!

Let the press live on!

They can maim,

They can suppress,

But we can change the world.



Weekend Fun

My weekend was really great!

I got a head,

Paid an arm and a leg,

Caught an eye,

Shaved a face...

Mutilation is fun!

Short Stories

Being Dead

I'm dead.

That son of a mutt, Frank, killed me. I hate him for it.

Now all I can do is float around and be invisible. Do you have any idea how freakishly annoying that is? I'm so lonely, dang it!

Of course, I can occasionally manipulate objects in your world. So I can almost communicate with you. It'd help if you were awake and talking back to the air, or me, as I typed these words. But you're a danged idiot, so you're sleeping.

Eh, I guess that's not fair of me. I mean, it is only noon. It's not like you should be eating lunch or anything important.

...

Just my luck to get stuck with the morons who do nothing with themselves. I would have been better off haunting the crazy cat lady down the street.

Hey, genius! I haunt your mom! Yeah, it's great.

Not that I have that "appendage" or anything anymore...

Why am I even wasting my time like this? Insulting you sure isn't going to help me because you are probably not only lazy, but stubborn. If your sleepy eyes even make it this far, my crude words will probably turn you away.

But you know what? Being a ghost kind of makes you jaded!

I'm sorry. Can I ask just one favor from you? If you do it right, you won't suffer. It will be an adventure. Trust me, they're fun. You need one.

Just do this one thing for me. Just this one thing.

You just need to do one little task and never think on it again. I can take care of Frank after that because he will be stuck with me.

I don't have much time left to manipulate things, so here is your mission:

Just kill Frank Sh

A Day in the Strife

It's morning. Again. Time for a class of higher education. I do wonder how many of my professors smoke weed.

Today we learn about A.A. Milne. Winnie the Pooh represents a Chinese man who likes noisy, messy butt sex. Our next session will be about feminism.

Tonight the boys and I go see *Kitchen Wars*. I have time for this? The villain dies in a convenient fryer explosion and everyone lives happily ever after.

Oh, yeah. My paper was due last week.

-- _____ --

It Was a Dark and Cliché Write

Once upon a time, there was an evil king named Andy. He was a strict and benevolent ruler, but also very cheap. Sometimes he was mean, too.

In his palace there lived a lowly servant named Jamison. Jamison was loyal and gave his blood, sweat, and tears for King Andy. He averaged ten hours of sleep a week, but still he pressed on.

One day Jamison was granted a private meeting with King Andy.

"Jaaaammisssoon," the king said. Jamison felt like he was missing something important, then completely dismissed the idea as stupid. "How aaaaarre you?"

"Fine. You?"

"Good. Good. Listen, you are...awesome. I owe so much to you. I can't thank you enoughfff.... So, I'm promoting you to Secretary of Bulls. It's very...honorary. You get your own banners with bulls on themmmm-hm-hm." He smiled wryly, almost chuckling.

Jamison gasped. "Th-thank you!"

"No, thank you. And also, I would like to invite you to come out with me and my Right Hand, Lord Asskin, to the archery range down by the Pit of Burning Oil out in the Middle Of Nowhere Land." His smile then vanished and a frown took its place. "Now get your butt back to work!"

Jamison worked harder than ever to make himself worthy of such an honor. Everybody kept yelling at him.

After months of boring stuff we won't talk about here, King Andy, Lord Asskin, and Jamison went on a field trip to the archery range. They rode the royal carriage made entirely out of cardboard that almost didn't make the trip.

While Jamison was taking in the fumes from the Pit of Burning Oil, King Andy snuck up behind him to push him into the pit. All of a sudden, an epic and convenient oil burst erupted behind Jamison and consumed King Andy. Jamison turned around to see Lord Asskin crying over the king's charred husk.

Asskin, in a fit of rage, charged at Jamison. However, tears clouded his vision and he completely missed, falling conveniently into the oil.

Jamison threw up, took a nap, went to therapy, and lived happily ever after in the service of the new King John.

The End.

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Modern Conversation

Ring Ring

"Hello?"

"Stevie, we need to talk."

Uh oh. "Oh, ok. About what?"

"About us, Stevie. About us."

...

"Stevie, do you love me?"

"Yeah, of course. You are my, um, my...summer's day...."

"Come on, Stevie! I'm serious."

"So am I, Jill! But you know me. I'm no poet. I can't say it, I just do it."

"Stevie, before we go any further in our relationship, I need to tell you something. Something important."

"Ok...."

"Stevie, I re--"

"Hello? Jill? Hello? Curse the sticks!"

Prince of Porkness

I walked back in through the double door from my break and went to the back of the kitchen.

“God gave me a vision,” I said.

“Oh, yeah?” Kelly inquired from the pizza station. “What about?”

She was beautiful. She was always so adorable. She was short, plump, and sweet.

I’d probably love her if I had time.

“Hell,” I replied. “And it looks a heck of a lot like the restaurant business.”

She laughed her cute laugh, sending her blonde curls bouncing around in her hair net.

A ticket printed through the small printer at the station. Kelly looked at it.

“Two eighteen inches,” she informed me. “Here we go again,” she said as we got to work, her hands stretching the dough. “I hope the customers are happy. We are here to give them all but our souls.”

“But we’re not here to serve them,” I said. “We’re here to serve the rich. We make the rich richer and the poor poorer.”

“Is that so?”

“Yeah. It’s economics.”

Several more tickets came in. We shut up and moved faster.

An hour passed before things sort of slowed down.

“Expecting any good mail today?” I asked. It was her birthday.

“It’s Sunday, John,” Kelly replied.

“Oh, yeah. I lose track of the days here. Our managers and customers go to church to love and worship God, but leave us in this God-forsaken place. Then they demand we serve them.”

“It must be nice to be the owner of such an upstanding establishment.”

“Yeah. They wake up in the morning, have sex, eat breakfast, read the paper, and get on with their day of making more money.”

“When do you do those things?”

“I don’t do any of those things.”

More tickets. More silence. Nothing but the loud hum of the oven and the clank of dishes.

After a few hours, we finally got a break. I just stood there staring at cheese from under my heavy eyelids.

A blasted waitress burst into the kitchen.

“Hey, peeps!” she called.

I turned slowly and stared.

"I'm about to put in a huge order, just to let you know." She left.

I looked at my watch.

"Dang it!" I cried. "We're supposed to close in two minutes!"

I turned towards Kelly. She was bent over, sleeping with her face in the pepperoni. I nudged her.

"Hey," I said softly. "We need to make more pizzas."

-- ----- --

Twice Upon a Time

I was excited when I got the offer, but nervous as well.

It was revolutionary! Sure, people have talked about it for years, but a real working theory had never been formed.

Not until that night.

It was 7 p.m. and I was browsing my H.G. Wells library. The phone rang, and I answered it.

"Hello?"

"Is this Mr. McAllister?"

"Yes, it is."

"This is Professor Sycamore from the Lloyd Institution of the Sciences and I have a proposal for you."

"Alright...."

"We have made leaps and bounds in the field of time travel, and your qualifications make you the perfect man to test out our machine. We have performed tests on certain items and animals, and it seems to be safe. Are you interested?"

I was in the lab the next day.

They had sent apples, chairs, and rats back and forth, but a human was something else entirely. They had me read the exceptionally long disclaimers and sign some waivers. I had to sit through a class several hours long and pass a fairly difficult exam. I went through physicals and got some shots.

I was not exactly filled with confidence.

When the day finally came, I walked into the lab shaking so badly that it looked like I was in a mild earthquake. My eyes searched the room for any bin I could use to vomit in if necessary.

“Don’t worry,” Sycamore said kindly. “We have done extensive research and tests. This is just another test. Everything will work out fine.” Then he got very serious. “Just remember, if you do not press the re-launch button within your six minute time window, you may be stuck in an eternal time loop.”

I nodded, but the shaking in my head increased as I did so.

Eventually, I was able to take my seat in the little time machine. The machine was shaped like a cube. It was also very cramped and full of controls, not unlike the cockpit of a space capsule. Due to the small amount of room and my constant tremors, it took me longer than it should have to buckle up and put my helmet on.

“Relax, Mr. McAlister,” came a voice over the helmet’s intercom. “You will be unable to adequately perform the necessary tasks if you do not stop trembling.”

That didn’t help. I took note of where the barf bags were.

We ran through the checks and set everything up, and then the countdown began.

“Time launch in 3...2...1...Launch!”

There was a high pitched, pulsating whizzing sound and a jolt, and everything went blurry. I got incredibly dizzy and reached for a barf bag. I raised my visor and put the bag up to my mouth.

But the feeling disappeared as suddenly as it appeared. Spots took the place of the blurriness of my vision. The whizzing sound became steady.

After a short while, everything returned to normal. I started the timer on my watch.

I had six minutes to explore whatever time period I landed in, get back to the machine, and press the re-launch button to get back home. That was the most they could give me.

I took off my helmet and unfastened my restraints. Eleven seconds with the blasted trembling. I unlatched the door, pushed it open, and stepped outside.

I was in the middle of a castle landing with a fair number of onlookers staring at me in wonder.

I was always fascinated by medieval history, and now here I was in the middle of it!

“Witchcraft!” someone screamed.

Everyone gasped and began backing away and muttering. I saw more than a few religious gestures.

I cursed under my breath. “This is going to mean trouble.”

They killed people whom they believed practiced witchcraft in these times. I was sure my futuristic appearance and my incessant shaking would not help my case with these people.

Why was I trembling so much? I had never shaken so badly before. Then again, I had never been in such a stressful situation before.

While I was lost in my considerations about what I should do, a couple of guards came up from behind the machine and grabbed me by the arms.

“Hey!” I cried out of surprise.

The guard on my right struck me across my face.

“Be silent!” he demanded.

They began dragging me away from the open machine and towards some other area. There was a burning stake there.

They took me over to it and tied me to it. People gathered around and some sort of trial seemed to start. I could not fully understand the words.

“Listen to me!” I screamed. “I’m innocent. I do not practice witchcraft! It is all science!”

People booed and began throwing things at me. They threw everything around them. I was soon covered in scrapes, bruises, and God-knows-what-else.

I was found to be guilty and they lit a torch.

“No!” I screamed. “No! You have to listen to me! I’m a scientist! It’s science! It’s science! Listen to me! It’s science!”

I was going to die in a time period I should never even have been a part of.

Fortunately, a group of rebels stormed the castle just as I was about to be torched. Everyone began running. Soldiers ran towards the mass of attackers while peasants ran away from them.

Many of the guards and soldiers were still in another area, so the sudden mass of rebels could not be repulsed. They reached the part of the courtyard I was in.

One rebel, seemingly unaware and uncaring of who I was, cut me loose and then pointed towards a castle window to get the attention of whoever was in it. It was all out of spite.

I immediately began running through the gore and metal towards where the machine was. I had to get to it on time.

When I was about halfway there, I got an unbearable pain in my left side and screamed. I collapsed against a post and looked down. I had a knife imbedded between my ribs.

I quickly looked up to see if I was being charged, but the clamor of battle was too confusing. I could not tell one man from another. If anyone had been after me directly, I would likely have been dead already.

Holding my side with my right hand, I grunted while I pushed myself off of the post. I looked at the watch on my left wrist. Five minutes, thirty-five seconds.

I took off running as fast as I could through the pain. I would live if only I could get to the machine in time.

More seconds passed. Finally I could see the machine, apparently untouched. I tried to pick up my pace, but the pain was too much. I gasped through the effort and just kept moving.

I was almost there. The machine got closer, and closer, and closer.

I made it at last. I got in and fumbled at shutting the door. I was shaking even worse now that I was injured. I did not bother with the helmet or buckles this time, I just needed to leave.

In my distress, I forgot temporarily which button I needed to press and began to panic. I looked over each button and tried to analyze them all in a single moment. But then I remembered, it was the blue on the left.

I reached for it with my right hand, grunting through the pain from the movement and fumbling further because of the trembling. But I pressed it.

I pressed it.

Again, there was the sound, the jolt, and the blurred vision. I must have made it! Everything was working normally!

But as the dizziness came this time, it felt like I passed out for a second.

When I came to, the pain was gone and I was standing in front of Professor Sycamore, still shaking.

I couldn't move myself! Any movements I made were not the ones I wanted to make.

Then I noticed that Sycamore was speaking to me. His lips were moving, and the sounds they made slowly began to make their way to my ears.

"...you may be stuck in an eternal time loop."

Victory

The time has come. I raise my axe and brace myself. The blood moon is large this year, and so will be the attacking horde.

To the east I see the silhouette of the first goblin marching over a hill. They're coming.

A noise behind. I turn. Six charge at me. They come from the west?

Battle commences. Heads roll. Blood spills. None can defeat me.

It is over, but it is only the beginning. The eastern goblins are near.

What is that at their head? No! It cannot be! I killed him myself.

A laughter and a shout ring over the field.

"It's amazing what the goblins can do when a *man* plans their battles! You will not survive the night."

A horn blows and thousands of goblins charge over the hill from the north, south, east, and west.

None can defeat me.

He reaches me and battle ensues. I waiver and he slashes my cheek. Why do I waiver!? None can defeat me!

Goblins attack me from all sides. I cut them down like wheat.

He presses me back. The stronger goblins reach me. I am now covered in cuts and blood. But they cannot defeat me.

Few of them fall. My energy is leaving me. My limbs may soon fail me.

He notices and grins.

"Tonight you fall. Tonight you die. Tonight you fail."

He sends a flurry of strokes against me that I barely parry.

"Tonight we defeat you!"

He raises his arm for a final blow. I cannot keep my axe up.

I cannot go! This cannot be happening!

I hear the calls of great eagles overhead and men drop from the sky. They attack the horde and distract him. Someone drops beside me.

It is her. I never wanted to see her again.

"You look like you could use a hand. Take a rest. We can handle it from here."

I do not need help. None can defeat me. But I am too weak to speak.

I sit, but only for a few minutes. I will be needed before long. In a little while it will be people falling instead of goblins. And I will rescue her and kill him. That will prove to them all what I am capable of.

There he is. He is charging at me. I rise and prepare myself.

His blade strikes against my axe and he twists his wrist. My axe flies away from me. His twisted grin returns.

“You are not so great. You are small. You are weak. You are defeated.”

I run after my axe, but he throws his sword and it buries itself in my side.

I fall.

His footsteps alternate with my heartbeats.

He reaches me and towers over me. He stands there and laughs.

“You are defeated.”

He reaches down and twists the blade. I scream.

...

“...Come on! Wake up! There you go. You will be alright.”

It is her sitting over me now. She is tending to my wounds.

I look to my left. There he lies, her blade through his pale body.

“I’ll have you ready to be carried off soon. We will get you back in shape. Everything is going to be alright.”

No. No, it is not.

I am defeated.

More Short Stories

The two following stories, which I think are good but am unsure if I will do any further work on or not, I did not write in 2014. I wrote them in 2013. So why are they here? I did not think they were finished at the time I released the 2013 collection.

I wrote both of the stories in November. One of them I never did finish; there is a gap in it represented by the ellipsis. The other one I wrote up in one go. I finally did some revision work on it while working on this collection (in January 2015) so that I could include it. Please enjoy them both.

Age Difference

I don't have time to stop, but I can't move fast. I trudge along, dragging my feet to wherever I've got to get to next.

I was repeating this process one day, when all of a sudden the corner of my eye caught a sight. My head turned so I could get a better view. Children had come here on a field trip. Happy children. Bounding children.

We have grown old. Our lives have But for these children, it is still sparkling. They do not understand it, but they love it nonetheless.

Good Life, Bad Mind

I've got dreams. I mean, who doesn't? And they are all supposed to come true, right?

I remember when I young, about ten or so, and I saw my first play. It was an adaptation of Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," and it was amazing. It instilled in me a love of acting. I wanted to be an actor more than anything else in the world.

I am now 25. That is still me dream.

In the movies, dreams always come true. Somebody wants to do or be something, they go on a great adventure, and they fulfill their dream. It just happens that way. That's life.

So I don't understand why that hasn't happened to me yet. It seems like I've waited long enough, but I am still only 25, which I suppose is still young. Maybe it will happen within the next couple years. But I still feel depressed. My life remains unfulfilled until then.

When I was in high school, I signed up to be on the newspaper staff. I wanted to be in the theatre, but something always seemed to get in the way. If it wasn't one thing, it was another. I don't know why it was like that.

Everybody said I was a magnificent writer. I impressed everyone who read my work. I won numerous awards.

But it wasn't what I wanted. Sure, I enjoyed it, but it wasn't my dream. I did not want to be content staying in that line of work.

When I moved to college, I decided to also work on the newspaper there just for the heck of it. I even took journalism classes to help me do better. I still amazed everyone with my writing.

However, I was not following my dream. I wanted to be in the theatre.

I tried to get into the theatre, but either did not make the cut or did not have the time. In hindsight, it was very stupid of me not to make time for what was important to me.

I did not even take any theatre classes. I wanted to get into one of the college productions first so that my performances and my classes could enhance each other.

In the end, I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism.

Now here I am stuck in this dead end newspaper job. I've already moved up to editor. There's not much where else to go. Yeah, I love it, but it's not my dream. It could have been, but it's not.

I travel a lot in this job and see many interesting things. Some stick with me more than others. For example, I was in a hotel the other day and someone had left the Gideon Bible open on a page that I scanned through. I don't know why it caught my attention like it did. It read, "For I know the plans I have for you...."

Creative Nonfiction

Confession

Hi. I'm James, and I'm a showoff.

"Hi, James." ←(That's what you say)

So, I was hanging with a bunch of peeps at camp, and a storm came, and we were stuck inside, and I... *sigh* I wanted to show off.

I...I...I did the worm. And broke my finger. And practically cried.

Thank you.

Applause ←(That's what you do)

-- _____ --

A New Perspective

No smoke. No blood. No sputtering. No shattered glass. No broken bones.

Just a miracle.

Normally when a car spins around on a greasy road, slides down an embankment, and lands on its side, there is damage. Damage, that is, besides just a broken-off mirror.

And there I was, unhurt but also unable to keep gravity from shutting the driver-side door in my face.

And the night started out so well, too. The last day of summer camp had ended and some worker buddies and I were having one last bash before school started up again. We were hanging at the rec center watching the 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony and slurping shakes.

Cool stuff. I love that Rowan Atkinson.

The night got dark and very stormy, but it let up somewhat when it was time for me to leave. However, the roads remained just as dangerous.

I hadn't told the camp director that I wasn't leaving until the next day. He thought I was gone, perhaps beyond the downpour. I could have died for all he would have known.

It happened on my way back to the camp grounds from the rec center. I was going up a hill and around a curve.

You know, it doesn't happen the way everybody says it does. Your life does not flash before your eyes. There is no time for that, although it all happens in slow motion.

The car starts spinning.

“@# \$!”

It keeps sliding.

It starts falling.

It crashes into the ground.

You just hang there. You can't believe it actually happened to you and not someone else.

What? How? It can't be.

“@# \$!”

You just keep hanging.

What do you do?

Well, I turned off the car, braced myself, unbuckled the seatbelt, and then stood on the passenger-side door. But I couldn't get out on my own.

Fortunately, the people whose yard I landed in heard their dogs barking at me and came out to help. I got a ride and some assistance. My teetering car was tipped over and driven back.

I took out my phone. I told my fiancé what happened. I told my dad what happened. I cried. I couldn't stop. I had to be alone.

Why was I not hurt? Why was my car undamaged? That embankment was crazy! I should be dead.

“Why did you save me? Why am I here?”

I'm here for a reason.

I need to change. I need to be a closer follower.

Over the summer I was incredibly stupid. I was immature.

My fiancé talked to another guy? She got a tie-dye shirt and I didn't? Blah blah blah.
Hulk out.

Get it together, man!

And now here I sit in my car the day after the accident, getting ready to go apologize to the camp director.

What do I get out of the whole ordeal?

I've probably ruined our relationship. I've lost his respect. I'll have to avoid him. It'll never be the same.

Well, that's probably not what will actually happen, but maybe.

Thank you for reading the 2014 collection of works by
James D. McIntosh Jr.

Please be sure to read the others as well.