

The EGSA Digest

Frequenter Plerumque Verum

November 1, 2018

I feel obligated to write something here, but I don't know why.

I used to vigorously oppose the playing of Christmas music any time before Thanksgiving, but higher education has gradually changed me. And by changed I mean broken. I still remain true to my convictions about the appropriate time and place for the [musically-mediocre](#) but [emotionally moving](#) tunes of Yuletide, but I no longer live out those convictions. As I sit here, typing up this Digest on the first day of November, my ears are full of Josh Groban's sonorous Christmas songifying, and they shall probably remain full of Christmas music until January.

I find that the cozy warmth evoked by the familiar melodies can distract one from the ice-cold terror of [impending deadlines](#). Like Sir Lancelot, those deadlines have come upon us with alarming and perplexing suddenness, but I'm sure we shall all fare better than that poor guard. Indeed, I am confident we shall all prevail to be as victorious as [this bird](#).

Anyhoo, I hope you'll check out the various events, victories, and reminderings below!

Sort of sincerely,

Clayton McReynolds

EGSA Secretary (a.k.a. Mister Secretary Sir, a.k.a. Minister of Misinformation)

Event Schedule: September 13-September 21

◆ **November 1-4. Waco Library Booksale. Extraco Event Center.**

Come [buy books](#) for amazingly cheap prices from helpful [librarians](#)! What's better than that? Well, a few things actually, including true love, the ultimate Form of the Good, and buying books for amazingly cheap prices from helpful librarians **with friends**! The latter of these things can be accessible to us all. Kelly Sauskojus (pronounced SOW-uhr-skood-juhms) invites any interested parties to join her on November 2 for a pre-book sale breakfast at Café Capp off of Valley Mills (1101 Richland Dr, Waco, TX 76710) at 9:00 am prior to book-saling at 10:00. Consider your calendars accordingly.

◆ **Tuesday, November 6: 3-Minute Thesis Competition. 6:00-9:00. Poage Library Graduate Research Center.**

Come out to cheer on your colleagues as they present compact versions of their thesis and dissertation research and attempt to snatch victory from the sciences! In seriousness, I know that at least Caitlin, Kelly, and Austin will be presenting some very cool ideas, and there could well be more EGSA folks going too, so check your schedules and give it a think. Remember we all have something riding on this, since if any of them win it means not only prestige but also [extra food rations](#) for all of us in the coming year!

◆ **Monday, November 12-13: John Greening Poetry Reading and Presentation.**

Two days in a row, poet and critic John Greening will share from his own poetry and will talk about poetry of the first World War. These events will occur right after Veteran's Day, which this year is the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI . On Monday, November 12th at 4 pm, John Greening will deliver the Charles G. Smith Lecture, entitled "Edmund Blunden, War Poet," in the Armstrong Browning Library's Cox Lecture Hall. The next day, Tuesday, November 13th, he will read from his own poetry at 5 pm in the Armstrong Browning Library's Hankamer Treasure Room.

◆ **Question for GSA.**

If you could ask Baylor leaders one thing, what would you ask? This could pertain to a problem, a concern, a desired change, or idle curiosity. Send your answers to Sorina Higgins at sorina_higgins@baylor.edu, who will compile your demands and objections and nail them to a door of prominence in the spirit of the season.

Accomplishments and Acclaim

- ◆ Congratulations abound around the EGSA Halloween Party. Firstly, the smashing success of the whole to-do is due to the fruitful efforts of our EGSA Social Chairs, Molly and Christina, so [bravo](#)! Secondly, this seems like an appropriate place to acknowledge the costume awards presented at that occasion. To be honest, I don't know if I remember the exact categories quite right, but here's my best shot. Mackenzie won for verisimilitude with her almost uncanny costume as [Maria Von Trapp](#)! Lajoie won the award for best representation of a pop culture icon as [Princess Buttercup](#)! And Holly won for most creative costume as the tragic figure of Persephone! Persephone gifs are in lamentably short supply, but it was awesome. Finally, Colleen Cochran won an award for coming dressed as a pumpkin whilst being greatly with child, a distinction as prestigious as it is specific!

Reminders That We're All Human as Heck

For your edification: a valuable and amusing perspective from Sorina Higgins!

◆ “PUBLISH? JUST PERISH.”

At this festive and freaky time of the year, let me terrify you with a tale of goblins, ghosts, demons, and monsters to scare the staunchest soul. Beware reading any further; the path you may tread passes by the graves of many papers and the bones of decayed essays.

It's double Fall Failure season here. It's time for Exponential Existential Autumnal Angst. Lest I forget that we are all human as heck, the universe decided to send me two article rejections this semester. Now, that's how the game is played; I've been around the block and know how to take my hard knocks. But what heckles my hackles about these is the sheer double-sidedness of the thing: the two-faced teeter-totter of our trade: the bitter bread buttered on both battered sides.

Let me illustrate for you the subjective tennis game of the peer-review process. In order to do this, I have paired quotes from rejection letters with quotes from acceptance letters (or sometimes from the editors' comments in framing the readers' reports). Note, then, that these readers are all writing about the same “author”: me. By their collective account, I am the best of writers and the worst of writers, the savviest of researchers and the most foolish of scholars. What's a body to believe?

Without further ado:

- ◆ “It is considered not to be at research level.” “This article is thoroughly researched and makes good use of the range of new materials”
- ◆ “diction is generally imprecise and clumsy, as are the way words, sentences, ideas are articulated.” “Its engagement with scholarship is complex and thorough, and its claims are lucid and persuasive.” “The essay's organization is as blocky as the paragraphs are assembled like cobblestones.” “you are to be congratulated for your in-depth research, perceptive analysis, and readable prose style.”
- ◆ “This essay promises far more than its author can hope to deliver.” “This is just the kind of thoroughly researched, insightful, and readable article that we like to showcase!”
- ◆ “I don't recommend that you spend time trying to rewrite the piece to show the writer how it might be done.” “It is well-researched, balanced in its analysis, and lucid in style, and we think it may well be the ‘signature article’ of our upcoming issue.”
- ◆ And finally: “you have hit this one out of the park!”

In short, not only am I human as heck, with my successes and failures, acceptances and rejections—but reviewers and editors are, too, with their wildly varied responses to our work. I hope this will encourage you when you receive a rejection letter: It's a subjective game, and so much depends upon whatever the reader had for lunch. Just remember: You are the best of writers, you are the worst of writers, this is an essay of wisdom, this is an essay of foolishness, these are the readers of belief, these are the readers of incredulity, this is the Editor of Light, this is the Editor of Darkness, grad school is the spring of hope, grad school is the winter of despair, we have everything before us, we have nothing before us, we are all going direct to Heaven, we are all going direct the other way—in short, academia was so far like every other broken human system, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.