



# Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

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## On Mourning Socially

By Ray Wallace

I stretched and shivered. Six hours in a convenience store will do a number on you. I count professionally, and when you spend several hours in a day staring at hundreds of pounds of dry dog food, lipstick, and toothpaste, and beating on your giant, squawking calculator to shut-up, all while walking with a slow, hunched, and sleepy gait, a forty-five minute drive home seems almost as good as a nap. Inventory auditing is not the most lovable profession.

Slumping down into my car, I shivered. Not from cold; my phone was beeping. Someone had called my while I was at work. I checked my messages with trepidation — I always approach telecommunications with a drop of fear. When someone has to share with me information so urgent that it can't wait until they see me next, I worry that I owe them money. However, like usual, this wasn't a loan shark. The message was from my sister.

"Hi, Bill<sup>1</sup>. Sorry to tell you this over the phone, but I wanted to let you know that Justin was in a motorcycle accident."

My breath caught. I had visions of one of my best friends soaring at ninety miles an hour in jeans and a t-shirt. I watched in horror as my friend coalesced with guard rails, flew into trees, and was blind sided by drunken big-rig drivers. My mouth hung open.

"He's okay," inhale, "but he broke his collar bone and his shoulder," exhale.

She gave the name and number of the hospital he was in but I had stopped listening. I had heard unnerving stories about motorcycle accidents from my father — flying into a ditch, being broad sided in an intersection — and I was flabbergasted at the concept that I had nearly lost a good friend.

Then I was relieved. My sister had left a message; no one was waiting for my timely and witty but mournful response to the news I'd just heard. I could sit and grip the steering wheel while I caught my breath and my blood cooled.

We do not always get that chance.

<sup>1</sup>My middle name is William, my father's name is Raymond. My family call's me Bill. It cuts down on confusion.

<sup>2</sup>Religious politics quite possibly. Though religious politics may actually be the same as a tragic accident, that makes neither more appealing a conversation topic.

<sup>3</sup>That's a bit of an untruth. Teenagers don't really sleep, they just dress in black and turn off the lights.

My mother called me when my (second) cousin died. I was around to take the call this time. I had already gotten the news via email from my grandmother, but hearing an actual voice speak the words, "Easton drowned," left my thoughts silent while my mouth said, "I know, it's terrible." There was no time to collapsed into my chair, no time to sit and collect a breath. I lacked the luxury to cease participating in the conversation, or the luxury to grieve. It didn't matter that every thought in my mind was about Easton or his parents; I needed to say *something*. But I didn't want to. I wanted to be shocked, afraid. Instead, I was calm and concerned.

The worst part of receiving bad news is people doing the delivery. During the social interaction between two people, it is generally expected that when one person says something, the other person says something of relevance in return. The continuation of this social tennis becomes both difficult and expletory when one of the participants reveals the demise, untimely or otherwise, of a friend, loved one, or nation-state. What could inspire the flow of the Blarney *less* that the discussion of a tragic accident?<sup>2</sup>

Mourning is an activity of remembering, wishing and grieving. It is easiest done alone. When my grandfather died, I spent three days in my basement. My father and my sister had gone to see his final hours; I stayed home with my mother, unwilling to remember him in any way but bright and lively. This might have been an ideal time to bond with my mother, but I slept<sup>3</sup> instead. I ate a few times, but mostly I lay on the spare bed in the dark. In silence, I needn't shake myself of the shock and sorrow simply to make perfunctory statements like, "I'm doing okay," and, "yes, it is sad."

It is in the moment just after we learn of tragedy that we grieve the most. Speaking becomes a task so great that we only speak to acknowledge those around us; our sole concern is growing re-acquainted with the world newly created around us. It is cruel that heart-felt messages are often so hollow, but a human delivery leaves no time to reel.

## Happy

I am happy as I am right now  
and the hurt still washes over me  
but inside I am not satisfied  
with what I have achieved

I know you think not of me  
and I try to do the same of you  
are you happy now with what has happened  
I guess I can hope for one of us has succeeded

My thoughts are always of you  
and just the good times, not the bad  
why can't you look at me  
what have *I* done to *you*?

You said it wasn't my fault  
but you imply within it was  
I guess this is how you want it to be  
you think only of yourself, not me

## My Demise

how can I trust you  
when before you have betrayed me  
how can you keep my secrets  
when before you have opened your mouth  
how valid is your honesty  
when before you have lied  
now I shall turn away from you  
you are my demise

## You

Your soft lips touch me  
And the joy makes me want to cry  
The warmth of your lips, the power  
Make me feel like I can fly

You look into my eyes  
With big brown ones like a doe  
They tell me that you love me  
And my heart confirms this so

Your hand brushes my cheek  
In a touching, loving way  
I look up at you  
'I love you' is what you say

You embrace me  
With strong and gentle arms  
The safety surrounding me  
Keeps me safe from harm

Your nose nuzzles mine  
An Eskimo kiss we share  
I tell you that I love you  
And that I'll always care

# Poetry

By Joanna Licata

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## RITMVEC Announces New Project HKNewsWire

The RIT Motor Vehicle Engineering Club (RITMVEC) would like to announce its latest project and invite any interested RIT students to join. RITMVEC is currently designing a two-seat car capable of traveling in excess of 40 mph. The car's main propulsion system will consist of the new electric hand dryers that are appearing all over campus. "Our current calculations show that two or three of them should be able to provide the power to get the car up to our specified speeds, even with two riders," says Ted Stoneman, president of RITMVEC. The new XLERator® hand dryers from Excel Dryer Inc. are popping up all over campus. "If you haven't seen them yet, just listen for it and you'll hear one," says Ted. "They're the most powerful things we've seen and once we saw them, we knew they'd be perfect for the project." The team plans on completing the car by the end of Spring Quarter in time to participate in the National Student Built Vehicle Races in July. "We believe that the amazing power of the hand dryers will give us a significant edge over the other teams using more conventional means of propulsion."



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

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