

FIG. 9. The ~~accelerating tube~~ accelerating tube is shown in cross section in this diagram.

DATE DUE			
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FICTION 2005 COMPETITION

Judged by TAYARI JONES

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WINNER

Ben Tanzer

Change of Plans

::

RUNNER-UP

John G. Wallace

The Breakfast Mute

NONFICTION 2005 COMPETITION
Judged by SUE WILLIAM SILVERMAN

::

WINNER

Rosie Molinary

Postcards to a First Love, Never Sent

::

RUNNER-UP

Cynthia Alden Smith

It's A Long Way To Akureyri

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The cover art of this book reappropriates diagrams by Burt Mader which are found in their original form in *Accelerators: Machines of Nuclear Physics*, from the Anchor/Doubleday Science Study Series, ©1960 Educational Services Incorporated, as salvaged from a library “book bin” in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, USA, the year 2002. Our condolences and best wishes are dedicated to Mr. Mader, the nuclear physics community, and all other relevant parties, known and unknown.

Cynthia Alden Smith

It's A Long Way To Akureyri

Iceland is a treeless island isolated in the mid-Atlantic. Its north coast flirts with the Arctic Circle, and the southwest coast is warmed by the Gulf Stream. Iceland sits atop the juncture where the European and American tectonic plates pull apart, rending the land like torn cloth. Volcanoes, geysers, hot springs and gasses gurgle and erupt from rifts and fissures transecting the island.

I'm here for my cousin Ben's wedding to Heida ("HAY-tha"). Ben met Heida in Massachusetts where she was working as an au pair. Now they live in Boston. Heida, a native Icelander, is so fair she's translucent. Her face falls into a smile even at rest, but her slate-green eyes reveal her steely core. Via email and phone, she's coordinated her wedding in Iceland, arranged lodging and entertainment for twenty-seven unruly American relatives and friends, and planned her honeymoon – a five-day driving and camping trip with seventeen guests.

It's early July. Today we start the two-day drive to Höfn where the wedding will take place. We are unlikely traveling companions, this group. Our ages range from 72 to six and represent three generations. My mother, brother and sister are here. My stepfather is the oldest of the group and my nephew is the youngest. Ben's father is my mother's baby brother. When I was a teenager, Ben and his siblings were little kids, insurmountably younger than me. The summer after I graduated from high school, Ben's mom hired me as the mothers' helper for her children, nieces and nephews on the coast of Maine. Now, the children I drove to sailing lessons, watched at the pool and taught camp songs are adults, here with

their spouses and friends. Heida's mother is only three years older than me. I am adrift between generations.

The drive from Reykjavík to Kirkjubaejarklaustur where we'll spend the night takes us along the south coast through landscape so unfamiliar I struggle to find a comparison. As we leave town, we stop at a volcanic field. Under a concrete sky, great slabs of lava and earth heave up at sharp angles. The black lava is coated in moss, lichens and tiny wildflowers. Against the black, the greens fluoresce in the watery light. It's amazing that this delicate beauty resulted from such a brutal thrust. We cross a glacial river running in rapids, the water clouded with silt like malted milk. Hekla, a volcanic peak, looms in the distance. We glimpse a glacier at the horizon, a strip of white porcelain glittering against the cobalt sky.

We stop for a picnic lunch at Skógafoss, seventy meters of sheer white water spilling over a parrot green cliff. Sunlight hitting the mist at the bottom throws double rainbows into the air. A muddy path runs up the side to the top of the falls. At the top I find no barrier to the wide roiling stream rushing full tilt over the edge. The water doesn't flow in an orderly stream. It plunges against the banks. Ropes of current split, twist and converge, jostling against each other like ferrets struggling to escape a canvas sack. I walk down the grassy bank until my feet tilt sharply toward the water. I fight the desire to leap in and fly down the face of the falls. There's something seductive about plummeting out of control. I wonder if the fall would kill me, or if I'd only be badly injured.

I'm four years sober after 18 years of drinking and I'm still adjusting to life without alcohol. Some people in AA say that you have no defense against the first drink, that the impulse to grab a beer could strike as naturally as breathing. I don't think it's that simple. I think it's a choice, like standing here on the bank and deciding whether or not to lose my balance. Sometimes the choice is hard, sometimes easy. There's really nothing to prevent me from

sliding back into my old life. Slipping out of sobriety would feel like stepping over the falls – exhilaration followed by humiliation and pain. I'm balanced between two worlds, and it's up to me to tip the scale towards abstinence.

The countryside on the drive to Höfn is as otherworldly as the day before. We hike in light drizzle to Svartifoss, another waterfall. Ahead of us, mountains push through the gloom, sharp and jagged like the ones children draw. Svartifoss is a narrow plume plunging into a black-rock pool. We scramble on the rocks and climb behind the falling water. Looking up I see that the action of the falls has exposed hexagonal columns of basalt – perfect geometric order arisen from tumult.

Four years ago, I had a nervous breakdown. I used to think a nervous breakdown was romantic. I clung to a vision of swooning women in gauzy white nightgowns reclining in darkened rooms. “Hush, she's had a nervous breakdown, don't trouble her with the responsibilities of life.” The reality is harsher and mundane.

After nine years of living with an increasingly distant alcoholic wife, my husband kicked me out of the marriage. My life ruptured at that moment, but I didn't roll my eyes back or throw myself down a flight of stairs. I checked into a hospital rehab, curled into a fetal ball and shook and cried uncontrollably and unceasingly for three days.

The chaos that overtook my life revealed a core of strength I didn't suspect. I found rough rock under the muck and my feet stopped slipping. I knew there was a structure on which I could build a different life. I just didn't know at the time how to make it happen.

We reach Höfn. Tonight is the rehearsal dinner at Heida's grandparents' house. We meet more Icelanders – Heida's relatives and her parents' friends. A picnic had been planned, but it is too wet so we all crowd into the house. Icelanders, like many Scandinavians,

learn English as children. What little language barrier exists is quickly erased by free-flowing beer. My six-year-old nephew and two new friends tear through the rooms, communicating in International Boy. The excited chatter of the Icelanders and Americans fills the house.

Heida's father, Sigurjón, parades into the living room with a platter of hakarl, an Icelandic delicacy. He sets it down with pomp.

"What is it?" I ask, eyeing the grayish pink cubes.

"Raw shark."

"Sushi?"

"Not really."

There is a ritual to eating hakarl. He spears a chunk with a toothpick and presents it to me with a shot glass of brennivín, a potent aquavit. I decline the liquor.

"I don't drink," I say.

Heida's father grabs my hand and pushes the glass into it. I bite down on the shark. It's as rubbery as octopus. Ammonia shoots up my sinuses and an acrid essence of fish fills my mouth. Only good manners stop me from spitting it out. I swallow it whole. Grinning, Sigurjón pantomimes knocking back the shot.

"I don't drink," I choke. "Please, water!"

Heida comes to my rescue with a soda. I gulp it down.

"What the *hell* was that?" I gasp.

"It is a traditional Icelandic food we eat at feasts, usually in the winter. It's raw shark buried in the ground for three or four months until it rots. My father thinks it is tasty." She throws a glance at Sigurjón and adds sotto voce, "I hate it."

Drinking is a participatory sport in Iceland. Iceland is so far north that the winters are as dark as the summers are light. There is little to do in winter except drink – with friends at home or in the thriving club scene. This convivial habit is practiced year round. There is no culture gap in our international crowd. The Americans

take to the local custom like fish to water and develop an immediate taste for local beer and brennivín.

I feel no small anxiety at the prospect of a week with this heavy-drinking crowd on this remote foreign island. It's as if they all belong to a club I can no longer join. My membership has expired and the renewal is too costly. My only fear is that once in their midst, my competitive drive will kick in and I'll want to drink them all under the table.

Light rain welcomes the wedding day. The tiny wood church, painted a soft grey, sits by itself in a churchyard lush with wildflowers.

Inside, the walls are painted a startling deep lavender, the white woodwork bright as clouds. Heida wears a traditional bridal costume: an open-weave homespun apron in soft browns and creams over an ankle length black skirt with a patterned belt wrapped tightly around her waist. Her black bodice is embellished with silver embroidery and filigreed closures. The tasseled end of a long black velvet cap lies draped over her shoulder. A perfect natural blush tinges her cheeks. She looks mythical, like a fairy tale maiden.

The reception is at the new senior center in Höfn, a nondescript boxy building overlooking the harbor. Everyone arrives at once and pushes into the small anteroom for cocktails. I have never seen so many blondes, strawberry blondes and redheads in one room.

I'm disoriented by the Icelandic being spoken all around me. The language sounds funny to my ear. It's full of pauses, errs, grinding starts and stops as if they're stumbling on their own words. To my right, I see my brother-in-law engrossed in conversation with an Icelandic couple. Farther into the room, my sister gesticulates as she talks, telling a funny story to an Icelander who leans in to hear her better. It seems like everyone but me is drinking and laughing. Without a drink in hand, I feel unarmed walking into the social fray.

Seating is unassigned at four long tables running the length of

the large main hall. I find myself sitting with Sigurjón's siblings from the eastern fjords.

Throughout the meal, members of Heida's family read toasts and tributes from the small stage. Between the toasts, the band plays songs and everybody puts down their forks and sings in Icelandic with gusto. Sigurjón's sister reaches over, opens a stapled packet of papers in front of me and points to number three. Oh! It's the lyrics! I flip ahead and see that a few songs have been included for the English-speakers: "My Darling, Clementine," "You Are My Sunshine," "Kumbaya" and the American favorite, "It's A Long Way to Tipperary."

After dinner, the bar moves into the dining hall closer to the drinkers. Half the long tables are carried out and the rest are shoved up against the walls. The band, which has barely taken a break, strikes up an eclectic set: waltzes, cha-cha, twist, disco and folk dances. A drunken Viking whirls me into a dance and pinches my rear. Heida flies breathlessly off the dance floor and pauses for a sip of beer. It's one in the morning and no darker than dusk outside.

I can't keep up with the manic, alcohol enhanced gaiety and leave at two for the guesthouse, the party still going full blast. When I left rehab, I stayed away from any place where drinks were being served. Now, I just avoid heavy-drinking events. I stay in on New Year's Eve, don't attend Super Bowl parties nor acknowledge St. Patrick's Day. I no longer fear that alcohol will recapture me, but worry that I will feel left out – and ultimately bored – as everyone else gets happier and louder and sillier.

The others arrive at the guesthouse several hours later, waking me from a light sleep with laughter, loud voices and much stomping around.

The older group returns to Reykjavík after the wedding, some to fly home to the States. The rest of us, seventeen siblings, cousins and friends are joining Ben and Heida on their honeymoon. The

plan is to drive roughly around the entire island in the next four days, staying overnight at campsites. We're jammed into two rented vans, towing our gear behind. Icelanders thrive on the outdoors and, Heida says, almost every town has a campsite with showers and toilets.

I'm not a camper, although I have been out in the woods once or twice. I have a flannel-lined slumber-party sleeping bag and I don't own a tent. Propane camping stoves require finicky adjustments that elude me. Dressing is tricky doubled over in a tent, and I'll be sharing one with my niece and nephew. Communal living will be a challenge.

We're camping tonight in the country's largest wooded area – a couple of acres of evergreen and birch on the shore of a long, narrow lake. We arrive, make camp, and pull out all the leftover wedding booze – scotch, vodka, gin, brandy, brennivin – for the cocktail hour. I'm feeling like odd man out, an old fuddy-duddy, cranky. After five days and a wedding in perpetual sunlight, I'm operating on a serious sleep debt.

I absent myself and find a mossy ledge on the far side of a promontory away from the campground. I'm twenty feet above the lake. Below, a small pebble beach curves around to a rocky point. The only sound is a gentle lapping of waves. The water is a milky turquoise. Across the lake, a smooth rise of farmland is backlit by the late evening light in patches of vivid green. Farmhouses, white with red roofs, are barely visible.

I live alone in Los Angeles and didn't realize how much I value my solitude. Even in a crowd, I stand a little apart, more comfortable observing than participating. I still don't know how to behave socially without a drink. My edges are rough and I feel like I snag and chafe when others get too close.

To me, people are chaos – they are the dangerous shoals, the latent volcanoes, the elements I can't trust for my safety. I hide

behind my camera, like I hid behind Scotch, recording what I'm reluctant to experience directly. I retreat, but in separating myself, I'm afraid I might miss the real joy of this trip.

En route to Lake Myvatn we stop at a geothermal field. We can smell it before we arrive. The ground is crusty with mineral deposits. Mud bubbles at the bottom of shallow craters and rock piles shoot sulfurous hot gas. The rocks are stained yellow, rusty orange, white and green. Stray off the marked path and a single step could break through the thin crust and release a scalding rush of steam.

Alcohol shielded me from my emotions, like a scab over a wound. When I tore the scab away the pain of old hurts erupted in an explosion of rage. I had insulated myself from feeling anything for so many years that encountering my own anger was terrifying. It was as if I'd entered a place overflowing with alien ferocity.

We drive north-west to Akureyri, Iceland's second largest city. Although only 60 miles south of the Arctic Circle, the weather is hot and sunny. I buy a picture book of Icelandic horses and wander down toward the edge of town. The pre-arranged meeting back at the vans is another hour or so away. I'm hungry and find an outdoor café for something to eat.

I'm flipping through my book, picking out the prettiest horses, when my youngest cousin, Lista, stops at my table.

"So, *here* you are!"

I look up, surprised. "Were you looking for me?"

"Kind-of. A bunch of us were going to get a beer, and you disappeared as soon as we got out of the van." She peers at me. "Actually, you've been keeping to yourself all week. It's almost like you don't want to be with us."

"Gee, I'm sorry. Of course I want to be here – this is a great trip." Lista seems appeased, but I'm bothered that my retreats have been noticed.

I used to live with the disquieting and distinct sense that I

didn't measure up to other people. I seemed to have an inability to form any kind of emotional attachment to anyone. It was as if I lacked some elemental function, like the ability to digest protein. In response, I felt a desperate need to be accepted and fit in, but I was so afraid of potential rejection that I simply withdrew. I'm learning how to compensate, but the feeling lingers like a cough after the flu.

On the final night of the wedding trip, we drive to Saudárkrókur, a fishing port on the shore of a northern fjord. The campground is undistinguished, sitting at the edge of town. The wind is picking up, clouds are rolling in and it looks like rain. I'm exhausted, chilly, and developing a sore throat that feels like a cold.

I go to bed shortly after dinner. I'm awakened by loud voices outside the tent. The light is so bright I think it's full morning, but my watch says 3 am. A man with an accent, two women and a couple of other men are arguing loudly. I can't make out the words and some seem to be Icelandic. I can't see anyone from the tent flap, but the voices are near. Just when the altercation seems to abate, the voices rise in intensity and volume. I begin to worry that someone will be hurt, but I'm warm and snug and fall back to sleep.

It's well past nine o'clock in the morning. I finished breakfast an hour ago and the late-night group is just beginning to stir. Slowly, they emerge from the tents, moving with groggy care, eyes not fully open, hair sticking up at odd angles. Kim mumbles something about Bruce being so drunk that Ben had to carry his friend into the tent and the story begins to unfold.

After dinner, a group had walked into town to drink at the local bar. Lista and her cousin, Lee, flirted with two local men, who followed them back to camp after the bar closed. The party continued, fueled with the last of the wedding liquor. The Icelanders became upset when asked to leave – they were expecting to spend the night. Ben and his friends rushed over to help the girls, and the shouting started.

Lee is passed out in a toilet stall where she spent the night. Two of the men drag Lista, still in her bag, out of her tent. I glance over later to see if she's moved. A lanky blonde man I don't know bends over and peers intently at her face, as if waiting to finish a conversation. Heida approaches and asks him to leave. He scowls, mutters something in Icelandic and walks away. Lista remains half-comatose on the ground.

I roll my bag and stow the tent in the trailer in a burst of energy. I hum, "It's a Long Way to Tipperary." I find the light drizzle refreshing. The skies begin to clear across the fjord to the coastal range. A mist hangs low between black peaks as the storm clouds lift. Snow-tipped mountains are knife sharp against the brightening sky.

Arlene Naganawa

S h e D e a l s

slipping the knave
from her sleeve.

He conjures a rabbit
in white-gloved air.

*This dream, they whisper,
has a trapdoor.*

*Many tricks,
old and enticing.*

Here, you can cut a life in two—
She fans open

his knife bouquet.
--or mend it.

Everything Repeated Many Times

Met a man on a downtown Biloxi bus,
his affliction some doctor must
have phrases or explanations for:
everything repeated many times.
He described his house, called his house
yellow yellow yellow just like that;
thought maybe his mind worked in threes
then he said his favorite color—red

red red red. I wasn't sorry for him
or irritated, thought how nice
having a head jabbed full of words
stripped of eloquence,
sophistry and oration tripped up:
afflicted with everything
repeated many times,
how difficult it would be to lie.

Told me his name name name—
John. I asked him again and he said
“my name name name is John.”
Leashed to description
we call and contain, trammeled by ego
we badger and bestow.
“This is my stop stop
stop stop stop” John said, “the casino

with the red red red neon swordfish.”
Someone laughed and John stepped down.
When my turn came I whispered it a block
early to see how it sounded: stop stop
stop stop stop.

Inheriting a Future

I found her by accident. See, I was looking for a psychic, but instead I found Patsy Two Feathers, Native American healer, metaphysical adviser, and spiritual intuitive counselor. And oh, she's also a pet psychic, although she doesn't like that word, psychic, because it detracts from the seriousness and sincerity of her work. On weekends, she does house blessings, drumming workshops, and communicates with abused animals. Also, did I mention, she works full time as a real estate agent in New York City?

Over the phone, I tell her I'm interested in including her in an article about psychics. She sighs. She gets this a lot. She stopped listing herself under "Psychic" in the yellow pages a few years ago, because too many people like me called with the wrong idea. She is tired of this. In one articulate breath, she says she is a divorced, 42-year-old woman, three-quarters white and one-quarter Chickahominy, although she was baptized and raised strictly Roman Catholic, and she is not Madame X the kitschy psychic or anything. I get the feeling she is used to repeating this. I tell her that actually, this situation is much more interesting than a regular old psychic, and she agrees to be interviewed.

Patsy tells me there's a special place she has in mind, where she likes to meet, a place in which she will be able to "intuitively sense my energy."

"Do you know where the Wendy's is on Fifth Avenue?" She says.

Then she decides, no, the second floor of the lobby in a nearby hotel has better energy for her. She is big on energy.

"Besides, the Wendy's is so...pedestrian," she says.

She then tells me she has long black hair, but won't describe herself further, because "when we meet, intuitively, we will know one another." She asks me to uncross my legs if they're crossed, because it blocks the chakras, and they are, because I like to sit at my desk chair with my legs crossed when I'm on the phone. She asks my permission to say a prayer before we part ways. We agree to meet the next day, where the energy is good. I say okay, and she exhales another deep breath of words.

"With the father, son, and holy spirit as my guides, let our lord Jesus Christ look down on the union of a Miss Sarah Wexler and Patsy Two Feathers today. We ask for guidance and truth in writing this article, and to be blessed by the angels, guides, and higher spirits with nothing but light and positive energy," she says.

"Amen," I say. Amen? Do you say amen to this kind of prayer? I start to ask her how to respond, but she's already hung up.

When she walks through the revolving doors of the hotel, her corporate side is showing. She wears a black and white skirted business suit and three strands of pearls, sticking out her hand and then pulling me in for a hug. Patsy sits down across from me, pulls a pick from her purse, and quickly combs her hair. Her eyes are large and blue and friendly and her teeth are straight and white. She reminds me of the Disney cartoon version of Pocahontas: tall and thin, pretty Anglo facial features capped with flowing, black hair. She is 42, but the creases in her face don't tell the same story; she looks more like 35. For someone who's just worked an eight-hour day trying to sell houses, she is bursting with energy and seems enthralled someone wants to listen to her story.

"I'll get us some coffees," she says. "My treat." But before I can tell her that actually, I don't drink coffee, she's halfway over to the bar. Patsy is a tornado of efficiency.

She returns with two small white cups and saucers. "Thank you," I say. It's too late to refuse it now. I try to think of something

to say. "That was so nice of you to pay."

"Actually, I know you're a student and everything, but I'm short two bucks," she says. I rifle through my bag for my wallet and can't help making a face when my head is under the table. When I look up, I'm totally serious.

"No problem." I hand her the last two bills in my wallet. She brings them over to the bar and then sits back down, taking a sip of her black coffee. That's better. Now she's ready to talk.

I have a list here, questions about how she got into being a psychic, what a day in the life of a psychic is all about. But before I can ask, Patsy Two Feathers starts in with a long-winded biography.

"My legal, divorced name that I use in professional settings is Patsy Beck. I was the last of nine children born to my Greek father and half-English, half-Chickahominy mother. I didn't know I was of Native American lineage until I was 37 years old, five years ago, but in my own way, I guess I always knew," she says.

So, you're only one-quarter Chickahominy? And didn't find out about it until you've lived the greater part of your life as a white woman? And now this is how you're defining your entire identity? Um, I need a whole new list of questions. I try to write a note, but she's still talking so fast, it's hard to get it all down.

"My mother, Helen, was adopted out of her Chickahominy family and raised in a white, American family as a Roman Catholic. I was raised Native by her mother in terms of respect for the earth, animals, nature, and spirituality, but not in terms of Native language, religion, or ceremonies. My mother's Chickahominy heritage was never overtly discussed in our family and certainly not discussed in the church or community."

Her words are strung together so seamlessly I wonder how many people she's already told this story to. Rehearsed, like I came in with my pre-thought list of questions, and she came in with her pre-thought list of answers, and now she's just dispensing the

goods, making her delivery. Or maybe there's a tele-prompter behind me?

"My mother never wanted anyone to know, to be looked at as 'that Indian,'" she says. And although Patsy grew up watching western movies and TV shows in which Native Americans were negatively depicted as savages, she still felt connected to them.

"I was definitely the most Indian of all my siblings. It was never verbalized that I was different, but I always just knew it."

Then she tells me that when she was only three years old, she pulled her mother into the basement, saying there were Indians down there waiting to take her home with them. She's done research on this, she says, "very credible research." She tells me she's read about other Native American children having similar visions, called "ghost sickness," a state of intense communication with deceased ancestors.

"It's a very real and credible condition," Patsy says. "Psychologists are studying the psychological ramifications of this now, and soon you're going to see it all over the news." She makes sure I accept that it's credible, and then plows ahead with such conviction that I'm not sure whether she's trying to convince me or herself.

"I felt inexplicably alienated and disconnected as a child, having been cut off from my tribe, my culture, and my religion. I mean, I have a whole family out there, a whole history I have not tapped into yet, and I knew that."

Growing up, she tells me she was torn between "glamour girl and cowgirl," and even as an adult, says "I'm the ultimate tom-girl princess." Looking at her now, across the table in the lobby of a fancy hotel, the glamour girl seems to have won—the eyeliner, the feathered hair, the crisp suit. Then she tells me she studied Forestry for a year, thinking she'd be a park ranger. A park ranger? Like, with the khaki shorts and the wide-brim hat? I can't tell whether she was a different kind of person then or if she just has no idea who she is.

“Then I became interested in travel and nightlife,” she says, which is more in accordance with how she seems now. “I got a B.S. degree in Real Estate Management,” she says. “Or was it a B.A.? I’ll have to check my diploma when I get home.” I think she realizes that this makes her sound less credible, the thing she fears most, and so she plows ahead listing all of the places she worked in the real estate industry: Vegas and Reno, Atlantic City, Miami.

“I still felt bothered and disconnected, but I just went on living life,” she says. “God, when I say it like that, it sounds terrible. I ignored my heart.”

I imagine her wandering through those 15 years, trying to figure out who she was.

“But it got to a point,” she says, all dramatic. “I knew something was wrong, that I had to blend my professional life with my spiritual life.” She got a B.S. a few years ago in Metaphysics from a “distance-learning” program, the American Institute of Holistic Theology, says it like I should know exactly what metaphysics and holistic and theology all mean together. But before I can ask, she’s onto her heritage search.

“I discovered that my mother was a ‘Lost Bird,’ separated from her tribe through adoption, which made me a confirmed Native,” she says. I want to ask her what exactly is a “heritage search”? And what desperation for an identity drove her to even try this? And if she’d discovered she was of German ancestry, would she be going around proclaiming herself with such gusto as a German healer?

But she’s going on about The Big News, and there is no interrupting her now. She gets excited just talking about it, her eyes wide and animated. Officially, she was a second generation Native American.

“I was a part of something, and it felt so right. There’s the hope of a whole new family and heritage to discover,” she says. Something to tap into, to latch onto? Patsy was no longer just a

single, middle-aged, white woman who works as a real estate agent and feels estranged from her family. Now she is Native American, a feature she's built her life around for the last five years.

"I have this whole family out there in the world," she says. "Tribal Enrollment Status is not a money thing, it's a family thing, you know? The financial benefits have nothing to do with it." If it's not the money, I wonder what, exactly, Patsy is cashing in on.

After talking about herself for almost an hour without pausing for even an *mm-hmm* from me, she stops, mid-sentence.

"I don't want you to feel like I'm being too wordy here," she says. And then keeps going right where she left off.

Patsy has applied to the Canadian government for Tribal Enrollment Status, which would entitle her to all food, housing, and education programs offered to the Chickahominy, although she claims these benefits are not what she's after. More importantly, though, it would add validity to her claim on Native American roots. She's written a children's astrology book which hasn't been published, and she feels that the Tribal Enrollment Status will add to her credibility, making her books more desirable to publishers. A Native American folktale is a lot more marketable when it's written by what's called a "card-carrying" Native American, and Patsy's experience in the world of business and sales has made her savvy. So she did the necessary research, sent off the paperwork, and waited.

It is now four years later, and I'm sitting across from Patsy in the lobby of a fancy hotel. She's still waiting. It turns out that much of the necessary paperwork for her Tribal Enrollment Status, such as the birth certificate, adoption, and foster care records of her mother, are being tied up by the state of Virginia, and probably will not be released until her mother's death. Patsy is hopeful—she lives by that word, every day, hope. But she's also tired. Tired of working full-time in a spiritually-void job to pay the bills, running her practice on nights and weekends, working so diligently to receive the tribal

status she feels she's entitled to. Four whole years she's been waiting, tired, hoping.

"I feel like I'm a senior in high school, like I've put in my four years and now if I can just hold out a little longer, I can graduate. I can get my tribal enrollment status." She says that the ability to be authentic means everything to her, and getting the government recognition would give her credibility.

"People would have to recognize then that I am an Indian woman. I mean, the Enrollment card is as valid as a driver's license, and nobody every questions that."

She's so articulate in telling me about her plight to claim the one thing she's known her whole life. She wants it so bad that I can feel the longing, palpably, weighing on the shoulders of her business suit. She tells me she wants to be recognized by the government to connect with a lost family, but she doesn't say why she hasn't contacted them in the four years she's been waiting for her card to arrive. She shakes her head and changes the subject, and I notice that along with the prim pearl necklace, she's also wearing tiny dream catcher earrings, so small I almost didn't notice.

I ask about her family, their take on her return-to-roots.

"My siblings haven't chosen to walk the native ways," she says. "My family is not really comfortable with my decision." Neither was her husband, who divorced her soon after her heritage search. In Patsy's honest attempt to discover a once-severed limb of her family tree, it seems she's strained the branches on her same stalk. But Patsy would rather not go into details—she's very specific about what to print and not to print.

"I'll tell you this off the record," she says. "Don't write this down in your little notebook," like if it's not written down, the words can just evaporate. I'm beginning to realize why Patsy needs this Enrollment card.

She also does animal communications. "I was doing this a

decade before that pet psychic on TV came along, whatever-her-name-is. But no one would accept it—I guess New York is a pretty square town and I’m just a naturally progressive person.”

Patsy is extremely comfortable talking about her interests and authenticity, but good luck with the touchy stuff.

“Has finding your heritage has been worth the trouble it’s caused with your family?” I say.

She looks panicked. She jumps up from the table.

“I’ll go refill our coffees. One moment, please,” she says, darting towards the bar, even though I’ve only managed a few sips from my cup. She says that a lot, “One moment, please,” in a situation where anyone else would go “Hmmm” or “Hang on a sec.” I can tell she is a receptionist by trade. When Patsy sits back down, she’s her usual articulate, composed self, and then she’s got a ten-minute answer for me, which she recites as though she’s been practicing it at the bar.

An hour later, I try to ask her a financial question. “Do you think you’ll ever be able to leave real estate and have the psychic and healing practice be your sole support?” Again, the panic face.

“One moment, please,” she says. She looks down, and I’m worried that she’s starting to cry. Keeping her head down, she says, “With the father, son, and holy spirit as my guides, let our lord Jesus Christ look down on Patsy Two Feathers with the guidance and truth of the higher spirits.” After a minute of silence, she looks up. “I need to go to the women’s restroom. I was told to take a few minutes to gain clarity.” She pushes her chair back and is gone. Now, I have never found clarity in the women’s restroom, but then again, I am not Patsy Two Feathers.

She walks briskly back to the table and begins the monologue.

“I’d love to have my practice be my sole job, but I won’t be able to do that for a few years.” She leans towards me across the table. “I think I can leave real estate in five years, but no one knows that and

let's keep it that way," she whispers like we're KGB spies. Then she launches into her plans for the future—hope, that persistent word.

"I want my writing, lectures, songs, and dance to bring Native American culture into mainstream America and abroad, but it's all hinging on enrollment status," she says, sighing. "I hope it's almost time for graduation," she tells me, and hugs me goodbye.

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The interviews are over. Now is the time to reflect and write, and I feel like I have a good grasp of what Patsy is all about.

I call her and say, "Thanks so much for your time. I'll send you a copy of the draft." But she can't stay away. She stops by my apartment two days in a row to drop off some information that might be helpful, although I haven't been home either time.

"How did you know where I live?" I ask when she calls to find out where I was.

"You wrote down your address on an envelope for me to mail you some research, and I figured, 'Why not stop by?'" she says. I don't tell her: because there is a fine line between being available and being a stalker.

"Why haven't you called me back?" she says. "Are your roommates erasing my messages? Let this be just a taste for you of the racism I deal with every day of my life." Racism. This coming from a woman who lived 37 years as a white person, and feels persecuted because I'm trying to tactfully stop calling her back?

For the past two weeks, when I trudge up two steep flights of stairs to my apartment, I find a large manila envelope in front of the door, covered in typed stickers that read: "PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL. TO BE OPENED BY ADDRESSEE ONLY!!!" I'm sure my neighbors think I am ordering porn. I sigh and bring it inside, one light envelope after another that are

becoming an increasingly heavy burden. My answering machine is blinking, a little red light I used to look forward to seeing. There are usually two almost-identical messages, and they go like this:

“Patsy Two Feathers calling for Sarah Z. Wexler. Sarah, please call me to confirm you received my mailing. Also, please don’t open the envelope before 7:11 pm, due to strict numerological reasons.” I sigh and hit the erase button, knowing that if I don’t call her back tonight, I’ll have two more messages and a lot of explaining to do. I think: this is worse than having an overprotective boyfriend. I think: having an overprotective boyfriend might be nice right now.

“Do you think I can come over and have an intuitive session with your cat?” Patsy says in our third phone conversation of the day.

“Well, it’s my roommate’s cat, so I don’t think...”

“Because I’m sensing some blockage. Has your cat been into any cheese lately, or the peanut butter?” she says.

“No, but you know what...Oh my god...he did eat a chicken breast off the stove last night,” I hear myself saying. I realize I’m starting to sound like the people who believe in Patsy Two Feathers, who want so desperately to believe that they can will a psychic’s words to ring true. This is bad. I put the finishing touches on my profile and send it off to my editor.

I leave for a week’s vacation, hoping the Patsy Situation will magically vanish in my absence. But when I return, there are five increasingly concerned messages from her on my machine. I’m beginning to realize there is a point where desperation becomes obsession, in which I started out as someone who listened and became, in Patsy’s mind, the only person who cared. I’m trying not to be annoyed, because this is sad in a way. In my pile of mail, mostly bills and catalogues for clothes I can’t afford, there is another large manila envelope. Patsy has edited my draft, signing her name in flowing cursive on the bottom of every single page. She

includes a letter making sure I received her phone messages from Tuesday at 12:47 pm and Thursday at 5:13 pm. She is overly professional, and I'm beginning to understand why she doesn't have any close relationships. Snuck in at the bottom of the letter, she edits:

“Please change the spelling from ‘adviser’ to ‘advisor’ in the first paragraph. This is due to my personal spiritual beliefs in Lexigrams.”

I take a deep breath and call her. I thank her and say that I met my deadline, that the article is done, that there's really no more business between us. Still, every two or three days I get another message, telling me she has urgent news updates on her story. In a way, I am more similar to Patsy Two Feathers than I'd thought. We are both waiting, every single day hoping, for some sort of graduation, for a release.

P o i s o n e d T a l e

Head squalls, an almost snow
bedding down in my skull.
Leaves reveal their contaminants.
Footage of malls and their runoff,
an epic that streams under noon sun
where dust is more adjective,
some mood for the ages.

He comes with the papers,
eyes like two padlocks,
his face a fat pyramid--
a perennial sucker for history,
when clouds shadowboxed in the meadow
and sheep actual-sized aired
those bluest of tongues.

Permits scale the trees.
This could be me they have
hung on their back.
I don't like my selves either,
but I've worked at it otherwise,
getting used to the shopping--
so let's say it's burgers tonight.

No more red-ringed receiver.
No more naps with the dead.

I will smash myself into the moon
cause your dad is a bum head.
Cause your dad's a small ant.
Unpackaged like the battle songs of old-
words often work once and that's all.

Amanda Auchter is the editor of *Pebble Lake Review* and the author of *Light Under Skin* (Finishing Line Press, 2006). She is the recipient of the 2005 Milton Kessler Memorial Poetry Prize from *Harpur Palate* and the 2005 James Wright Poetry Award from *Mid-American Review*. Her poetry appears in *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Born Magazine*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *The Florida Review*, *Smartish Pace*, and elsewhere.

Carrie Bennett is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she was a recipient of the Maytag Fellowship. She earned her BA and MA in English Florida State University. *biography of water*, her first book of poetry, won The Washington Prize and was published by Word Works. Her poetry has appeared in *So to Speak*, *88*, *Phoebe*, and *The Bellingham Review*.

Lisa Bickmore teaches writing in Salt Lake City. Her book of poems, *Haste*, was published by Signature Press.

Anthony Butts is the author of *Little Low Heaven* (New Issues, 2003), Winner of the Poetry Society of America's 2004 William Carlos Williams Award, and *Fifth Season* (New Issues, 1997). He has work forthcoming in: *Crab Orchard Review*, *Callaloo*, *Sam*, *ABZ*, *Christianity and Literature*, and *Cimarron Review*. He has been a member of the Creative Writing Faculty at Carnegie Mellon University since 2001.

Rob Cook lives in New York City where he co-edits *Skidrow Penthouse* with Stephanie Dickinson. Work has appeared in *Shampoo*, *Milk*, *The Canary*, *can we have our ball back?*, *Harvard Review*, *New Orleans Review*, *Tiferet*, *Good Foot*, *Poetry International*, *Lit*, *The Bitter Oleander*, *Mudfish*, *Southeast Review*, etc.

N.M. Courtright, an Ohio native, currently resides in Austin, Texas. His work has recently appeared in *Pebble Lake Review*, *Diagram*, and elsewhere. He apologizes for not having more or less to say.

Mark DeCarteret's work has appeared in the anthologies *American Poetry: The Next Generation* (Carnegie Mellon Press, 2000)

and *Thus Spake the Corpse: An Exquisite Corpse Reader 1988-1998* (Black Sparrow Press, 2000). His latest chapbook *The Great Apology* was published a few years back by Oyster River Press for which he also co-edited the anthology *Under the Legislature of Stars: 62 New Hampshire Poets*.

Michelle Detorie lives in Kyle, Texas, where she is the writer in residence at the Katherine Anne Porter House. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Chelsea*, *Blackbird*, *Typo*, *La Petite Zine*, *Diagram*, and *Verse Daily*. Her poem "Three Divinations" was recently nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Denise Duhamel's most recent poetry titles are *Two and Two* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), *Mille et un Sentiments* (Firewheel, 2005), and *Queen for a Day: Selected and New Poems* (Pittsburgh, 2001). She is an associate professor who teaches poetry at Florida International University in Miami.

Ryan Fox is a Henry Hoyns Fellow at the University of Virginia, and Poetry Editor of *Meridian*. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Iowa Review*, *New Orleans Review*, and *Columbia*, among others.

R. L. Futrell has published fiction and poetry in various journals such as *Virginia Adversaria*, *Zone 3*, *Harpur Palate*, *The Cresset Review*, *Flights!*, *Poetry Motel*, *Square Lake*, *The Tar Wolf Review*, and *88: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts*. He is currently at work on a collection of short fiction and a novel. He resides with his wife and children in Xenia, Ohio and teaches creative writing courses at Cedarville University.

Ian Ganassi's poetry has appeared in numerous literary magazines, including *The Paris Review*, *The Yale Review*, and *Verse*. New poetry, prose and translations appear and are forthcoming in *Octopus*, *The Journal*, *Elixir*, and *New England Review*.

Susan Grimm is a native of Cleveland, Ohio. Her poems have appeared in *West Branch*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Rattapallax*, *The Journal*, and other publications. In 1996, she was awarded an Individual

Artists Fellowship from the Ohio Arts Council. Her chapbook *Almost Home* was published by the Cleveland State University Poetry Center in 1997. In 1999, she was named Ohio Poet of the Year by the Ohio Poetry Day Association. Her new book of poems, *Lake Erie Blue*, was published in 2004 by BkMk Press.

Amber Hares is a poet and book artist, pursuing her MFA at the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, New York. Hares, originally from New Jersey, began her career in the arts as a photographer, working for a relief organization in Romania. Hares, who has always enjoyed writing, particularly prose poetry, assembled her first one-of-a-kind books in her backyard studio in 2003. Her most recent work includes video as well. Hares is a regular contributor to *Afterimage*, a journal of media arts and cultural criticism.

Dennis Hinrichsen's most recent books are *Cage of Water* from the University of Akron Press and *Message to Be Spoken into the Left Ear of God*, a chapbook from Mayapple Press. With Gerry LeFemina, he co-edits *Review Revue*, a journal dedicated to the review of contemporary poetry.

Melanie Hubbard has work out recently in *Typo* and *Swink*. Her new favorite poet is Mary Ruefle. Hubbard is working on a book about Emily Dickinson's manuscripts and milieu, for which she has just won an NEH Fellowship. She lives in Ruskin, FL, with the poet A. McA. Miller and their daughter, Kylie.

Robert Krut's poetry has been nominated for two Pushcart Prizes, and appeared in journals such as *Blackbird*, *Barrow Street*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *The Mid-American Review*, among others. Currently, he teaches at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Esther Lee's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Verse Daily*, *Salt Hill*, *GoodFoot*, *Swink*, *Runes*, *New Orleans Review*, *Eleven Eleven*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Passages North*, *Alligator Juniper*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Diner*, *LitRag*, *Folio*, *Faultline*, *Dislocate*, *Sonora Review*, *Five Fingers Review*, and *Born Magazine*. She's been awarded the 2004 Elinor Benedict Poetry Prize, nominated for a 2004

Pushcart Prize and a Ruth Lilly Fellowship, and her manuscript was selected as a “Discovery”/The Nation Award semi-finalist. She currently lives in San Francisco and teaches at New College.

Lee-Ann Liles is a native of Bermuda with her BA in Creative Nonfiction Writing at the College of Notre Dame in Maryland. She was acknowledged in the 1993 Throne Speech in Bermuda, for writing and publishing achievements at the age of 19 and has published in *Poetry Motel* and *Nanny Fanny*.

Margaret MacInnis’s work has appeared in *Crab Orchard Review*, *Potomac Review*, *Brevity* and *Literary Mama*, and is forthcoming in *Alimentum*. A recent fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center, she holds an MFA from Queens University of Charlotte.

Mary C. McCarthy has been a student of literature and a practicing registered nurse, but always a writer. She has been published in the anthologies *Sixteen Voices*, *Through a Child’s Eyes*, *Proposing on the Brooklyn Bridge* and, most recently, the journals *Tar Wolf Review* and *Earth’s Daughters*.

Rosie Molinary earned her MFA at Goddard College. Her work has been published in various book anthologies including *Waking Up American* and literary magazines including *Anthology*, *Jeopardy*, and *Snake Nation Press*. She lives in Davidson, NC where she teaches writing and creativity through her business, *Raise Your Voice*, and free-lance writes for various magazines. She is currently working on a book that explores Latina body image in America, due out in Spring 2007.

Arlene Naganawa lives in Seattle, WA. She has published in various magazines, most recently *Diner*, *Crab Orchard Review*, 88: *A Journal of Contemporary American Poetry*, and *New Delta Review*. She was nominated in 2005 for a Pushcart Prize in Poetry.

Fernand Roqueplan works as an interpreter for social services and, seasonally, as a steelhead fishing guide. His work has been

published in *Indiana Review*, *Poetry East*, *Florida Review*, *Greensboro Review*, *Pivot*, and *Many Mountains Moving*.

Mary McLaughlin Slechta's fiction and poetry have appeared in *Many Mountains Moving*, *Lynx Eye*, *The Gibon Review*, and elsewhere. *Buried Bones*, a chapbook of poems, came out in 2004 by FootHills Publishing. *Wreckage On a Watery Moon*, a first book of poems, will be released by FootHills Publishing this fall. She is also an associate editor of *The Comstock Review* in Syracuse, New York where she lives with her husband and sons.

Cynthia Alden Smith is a new writer. She spent 18 years of her professional career in the cable television industry as a sales and marketing executive. She now consults part-time and writes. Cynthia received her BA from Mount Holyoke College. She lives in Venice, California with her standard poodle and cat.

After early successes on stage (Sweeney Todd) and screen (Ghandi), and a brief run with Wham!, **Ben Tanzer** now lives in Chicago where he tends to his vineyards, shoots pool, dabbles in social work, runs, writes, and still manages to spend all sorts of time with his beautiful wife and young sons. Ben is the author of the forthcoming novel *Lucky Man* (Ore Mountain Publishing House) and has had work published in a variety of magazines and journals including *Punk Planet*, *Clamor*, *Rated Rookie*, *Midnight Mind*, *THE2NDHAND*, *Outsider Ink*, *Prose Toad*, *The Truth Magazine*, *Abroad View*, *Pow Wow Paper*, and *Chicago Parent*.

Addie Tsai holds an MFA from Warren Wilson College. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *American Letters & Commentary*, *Forklift*, *Ohio: A Journal of Poetry*, *Cooking & Light* *Industrial Safety, can we have our ball back?*, and *Born Magazine*.

Dennis Vannatta has published stories in many magazines and anthologies, including *Boulevard*, *Antioch Review*, and *Pushcart XV*, and three collections: *This time, this place* and *Prayers for the Dead*, both by White Pine Press, and *Lives of the Artists*, by Livingston Press.

John G. Wallace received his MFA in fiction from Southern Illinois University. He currently lives in Milwaukee, where he is finishing up a degree in library science. His work has appeared in *Laurel Review*, *Washington Square*, *Vermillion Literary Project*, and the *Mississippi Review*.

Sarah Zoe Wexler's writing has been published in the *Washington Post*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Pitt Med*, *Three Rivers Review*, *Presstime*, *Nidus*, *Poetry Motel*, and *Collision*, and she is a regular contributor for *Pitt Magazine* and *Pittsburghfashion.com*, where she often covers cultural and style trends. Currently an M.F.A. candidate in the University of Pittsburgh's Creative Nonfiction program, where she also she teaches creative writing; she will speak about writing pedagogy at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs conference in 2006. Her website is www.sarahzoewexler.com.

Amanda Yskamp's work has appeared in such magazines as *Threepenny Review*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *The Georgia Review* and has twice been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. She lives on the left bank of the Russian River with poet Douglas Larsen and their two children.

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--Boo.

--Arf.

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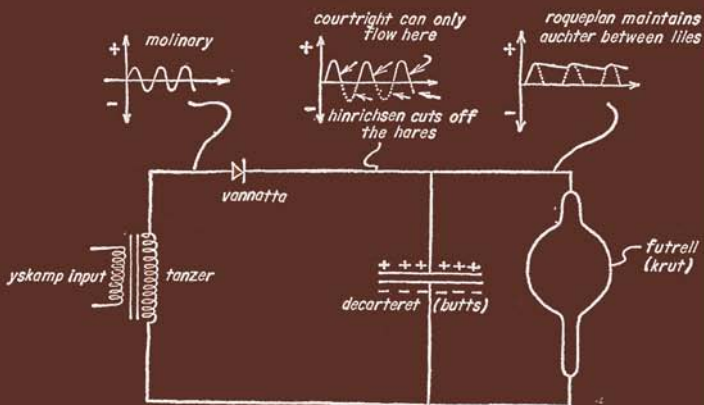


FIG. 10. Steady ~~output~~ is obtained with apparatus including a rectifier and a ~~transformer~~.

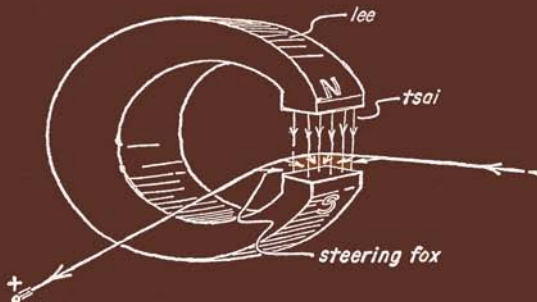


FIG. 20. This schematic diagram shows the deflection of a ~~particle~~ in a magnetic field.