

*an exhibit of Behrend students' expressive thoughts*

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## Counting Sheep

continued from the Sept. 4 Showcase

The fall air was its crisp, usual self. It brushed Elton's face as he began walking. The cool air helped his eyelids stay open—eyes that pained to be shut. Although he felt like he was getting his second wind, his muscles and head ached with fatigue. School was a few minutes' walk but to Elton it felt like he was walking on a treadmill, never getting any closer. His destination was Laurel High School: a secondary school for the conglomeration of white, middle-class teens living in the area. He had reached his destination about fifteen minutes early. Elton glanced at his watch and became conscious of the time. One of his worst fears had been realized. Time in-between classes was time he had to spend with the people around him. By no means was this a pleasant situation to Elton, so he headed to the boys' bathroom where no one needed to communicate. He sat down in a stall, locked it, and opened his book bag. In it was the solution to his problems: a bible.

He thumbed through the worn book's yellowed pages. That familiar smell of dust entered Elton's nose and he knew that he was in a safe place. He found the creased page he was looking for and began reading. Today he would start the Book of Luke, something he had already read three times over. He scrutinized the literature in front of him, looking for errors in spelling, grammar, and syntax. In the hallway the bell for classes began ringing—it seemed distant, as if it were from another world. He gathered his belongs and departed from the boys' restroom.

His first class on the day's agenda was World Histories and Cultures. Mr. Vulicken was at the chalkboard in a frenzy, spitting forth facts of civilizations long since lost and forgotten. His teaching style was interesting, often he got himself so worked up that it was only a matter of time before he would foam at the mouth and collapse. Elton's attention was slipping fast; his warm, invigorating shower could only carry him so far. If he could just tilt his head forward a bit—yes, he could hear much better. Maybe I should close my eyes to focus, he thought. He could feel it all slipping away, all the din and noise of the world was going, going—

And then a tsunami of teacherly wrath came crashing down upon poor Elton. Mr. Vulicken shook his fists wildly and screamed at the top of his lungs. The subject of the yelling was not something Elton could easily distinguish—his face and mind went to a numb, cold slate of fear. Elton was so well-behaved that he had never once had a teacher even slightly raise their voice to him. And here was Mr. Vulicken—with all the anger and fury of a million dead societies to aid him. He had threatened to call the principal but it probably wasn't necessary. The principal's office was located clear on the other side of the school and he could most likely hear every word Mr. Vulicken was saying. Elton continued to hang his head in shame. Everyone had their attention drawn to him; his cheeks started to feel hot and he began to feel dizzy. The bell to change classes cut Mr. Vulicken's caustic word-vomit short. Like a ghost, Elton vanished from his teacher's sight. After his students had left, Mr. Vulicken stood by the window for a few moments, fanning himself and checking his pulse.

His day continued with Calculus taught by Mrs. Brighton, a sweet old woman whose disposition was far less volcanic. Elton handed in his homework. Mrs. Brighton began passing back tests from the previous Friday. She handed Elton his test, with a large red "100" stamped over the top. He stuffed it in a folder with all his other perfect tests. Mrs. Brighton brushed Elton's book bag as she walked by, forcing it to spill out some of its contents, including his bible. A sweet girl with no name next to Elton bent down to help him pick up what had fallen. Elton pulled his things away from her reach and re-packed his book bag. He refused to make eye contact and stared at his desk, his face a color not unlike what it had been just fifteen moments before in Mr. Vulicken's class. The sweet girl with no name shrugged. She was only trying to be nice.

That period passed, and Elton returned to his tired stupor. He may as well have not been in the class—he had not heard a single word that had been said by Mrs. Brighton. Luckily for Elton, she was old and always had her back turned to the class. She was completely oblivious to all around her. Mrs. Brighton was the sort of teacher to keep on teaching, even after the bell had rung and the class had left. Popular theory said that she was deaf.

After that class was the lunch period, where Elton rushed back to the boys' restroom and locked himself down to begin proofreading the bible again. So far he had found a new error in every book—he was hoping for a record. All too quickly, his half hour of safety had passed. Elton's other classes passed in much the same manner that his math class did—a giant blur of words and notes that he could not grip without sleep. After the final moment of school was dead for the day, the freedom bell rang. Elton had never heard such a sweet sound in all his life.

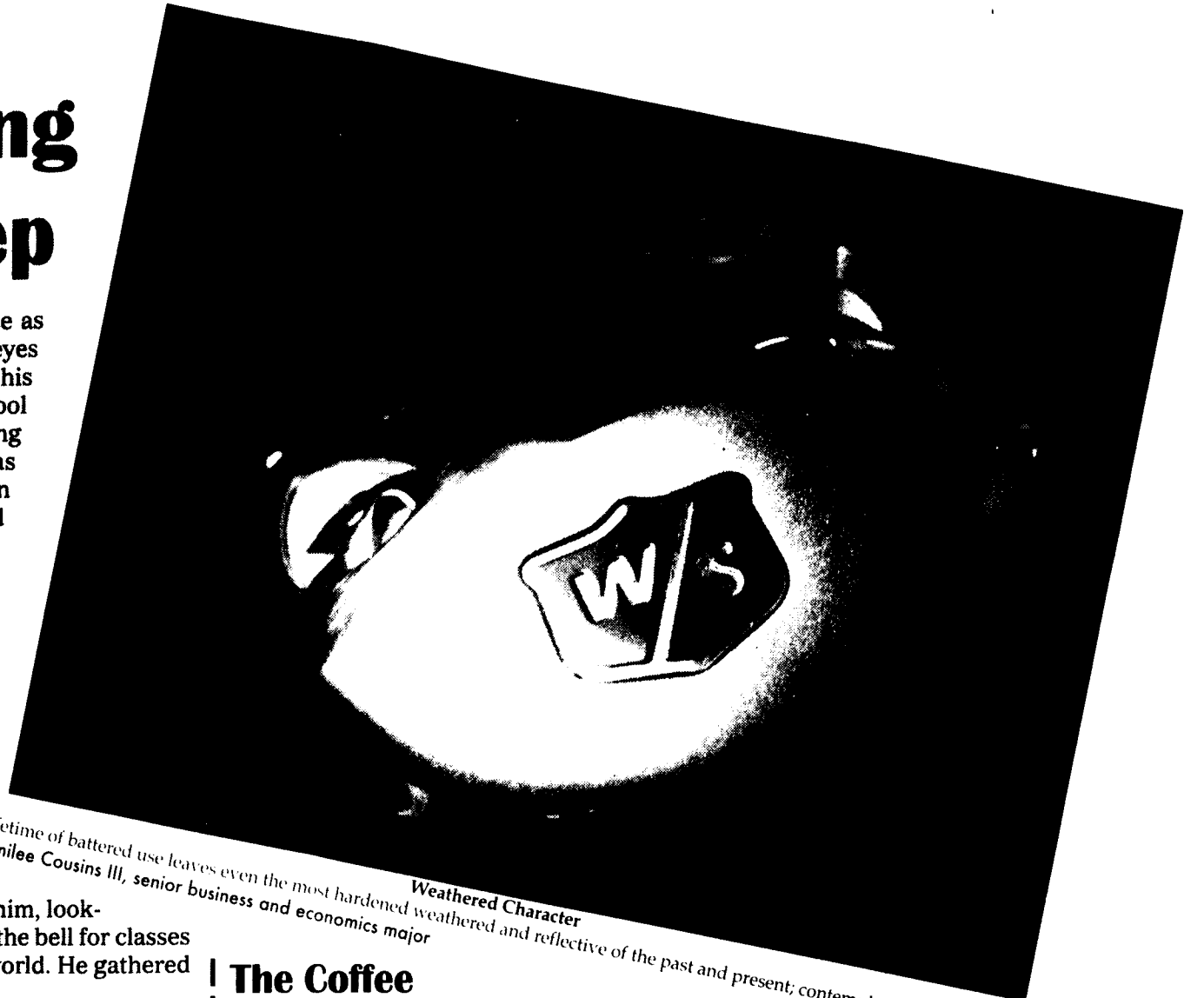
The walk home seemed to pass in an instant. He was greeted with a locked door at his home; he answered that greeting with a sad sigh and went underneath a flowerpot. Both his Aunt Mary and his uncle John were tending to their respective forty hour work weeks. His mother, a real estate agent; her caring demeanor made her customers trust her enough to buy even two or three homes from her. Her work was miserable, but pay was decent.

Morning was normal in the empty home with not a dustmite out of place. Elton walked through the kitchen, grabbed a cinnamon roll, and headed to the stairs to his room. He locked his door behind him and tossed himself to his bed while the day took its toll on him. He thought and thought to himself. If I go to sleep now, I'll be all right. I'll wake up tomorrow. He rolled out of his bed and ambled down the stairs to the living room. He sat down. It was lined with bibles. He pulled a book from the bottom of a stack and opened it. It had been holding the book inside of it was a bottle of pills. The label read, "BARROW'S TO TAKE ONCE DAILY FOR PAIN." Elton took the child-proof lid and popped two large, white pills in his mouth and swallowed. He didn't need water anymore; he was used to these sorts of things.

He took the bottle to its proper place and then opened his book. He pulled out a folded piece of newspaper. He unfolded it and read the people on its page. The ink was worn but he could still see a tall man and a beautiful woman in the pictures. He read the page, and dozed off as he did all day in school. He was sure sleep had affected him.

He woke up and a voice, and Elton's trance was destroyed. He looked at the piece of paper down on his desk and ran downstairs. The paper was faded, but the words "IN LOVING MEMORY OF ALAN BARROWS" could still be read.

Mark Medwid in the next Showcase



A lifetime of battered use leaves even the most hardened weathered and reflective of the past and present; contemplative of the future.  
Weathered Character  
Harmilee Cousins III, senior business and economics major

## The Coffee Mug Saga: part II

Coffee is an angry mans drink, bitter black and boiling it reflects the inside of his heart. With the first cup the scalding brew burns his lips and tongue with the first angry drop the jackals start circling in his head, the world loses its color and his mind's eye sees red. Every innocent face in the crowded café becomes a mask of hostility. His forearms tense at every sound louder than a hearts beat his and his hand foregoes the mug handle and grips the glazed porcelain so he can feel the heat radiating from the drink. The second cup comes after the first immediately. Still as hot as if it came directly out of the pot, his imagination has taken him to the apocalypse, to a place of crimson skies and blackened earth where he is Ares ascendant and the jackals stoop and bow before him in awe and terror. The girl at the table to his left shuffles her newspaper and brings him back to reality. In his reverie he drained his mug, the third mug is not as hot as the first two the more tolerable temperature brings out the bitterness though and the lines on his face involuntarily grow taut, his neck muscles tighten, his shoulders drop and he makes every attempt not to taste what he is pours into his throat. The bitterness bites his tongue and refuses to let go even after the last is washed down. He finishes his cup out of spite. He reaches for the coffee pot, finds it's empty and sets it back down.

Kevin Roche  
sophomore psychology major

## I'm Going To Miss You A Lot

shadows splattered on windows on walls like the bones in her thighs  
unked with summer's love and dragonflies  
five suns to lie or decide  
bleed, the way the colors combine

close your eyes  
"I'll be fine with time" she says  
but I'm still looking for a sign  
for a reason I'm here in the first place  
you taught me to sing, lips like nostalgia

turn the dial toward your wrist  
step through the shadows  
sleep when you're falling  
sleep with the sun  
into the ocean  
it's always too quiet for you

up and down you walk you  
played  
like lines from your smile  
the lines under  
my eyes  
I know how easy it was to lie through smile  
romantic  
when you're always whispering

you can't see my soul through my shirt, i  
can't see your eyes  
but i always felt your heart in my chest  
do you know we're all alone?  
don't you know we're all lovers?  
do you know you're in love with a ghost?

don't you know we're all alone?  
we are all dreamers  
brighter than the sun  
fall in love with me you can

heart  
the heart  
the heart

Jack Cavanaugh  
inter personal communication major

Her Sove<sup>nit</sup>  
Upon its discovery, I hid the conch where it lay,  
knowing it would be an everlasting sove<sup>nit</sup>

Molly Nosko, junior communications major



WANT TO SHARE YOUR CREATIONS?  
THE BEHREND BEACON  
Submit to the Behrend Showcase  
• All text should be typed on one side of the paper.  
• Entries should be double-spaced with one-inch margins.  
• All text should be in a standard font size of 12 points.  
• Do not underline or use all caps.  
• Do not use italics.  
• Do not use all caps.  
• Do not use all caps.  
Submit entries, questions, comments, and suggestions to the Showcase Editor. All text should be printed in black, and white, but word color as necessary.