

WOMEN'S STUDIES CELEBRATION
Women's History Month 2005

NOMINATION: Papers and projects done in completion of course work for Spring, Summer and Fall 2004 eligible for nomination. Students do not need to be enrolled Fall 2004 or Spring 2005 to be eligible. (Students are encouraged to identify works they would like nominated and approach their professor to initiate the process.)

Instructor: Patti See

Dept: ASC and WMNS

Course Number and Name: WMNS 210: Culture of the Third Wave

Semester completed: Summer, 2004

Title of Nominated Work: Silent Voices, Screaming Rage

CATEGORY: **Sampson:**
 Undergraduate Research Paper ___ **See** X
 Undergraduate Project ___ **Olson** ___
 Graduate ___ **Kessler** ___
 ___ **Turell** ___
 ___ **Belter** ___

STUDENT INFORMATION:

Name Elissa Shaw

Email: nyx_starlight@yahoo.com

Year/Major: Creative Writing/ WMNS minor/ graduated December 2004

Local Address: 420 S. Barstow, Apt #3 / EC, WI 54701

Local Phone: 715/ 563-0286

****WHY DO YOU, THE INSTRUCTOR, RECOMMEND THIS AS AN EXEMPLARY STUDENT PAPER/PROJECT? (Attach a separate sheet.)**

As the nominating instructor, please notify the student and ask them to turn in the paper, or attach to your nomination form.

Awards are sponsored by the UW-Eau Claire Foundation, Helen X. Sampson Fund, and by private individuals. Research involving human subjects must conform to the guidelines given by the Institutional Research Board. Contact Research Services, 836-3405, with questions.

Submission deadline is February 11, 2005.



University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

105 Garfield Avenue • P.O. Box 4004 • Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004

January 15, 2005

To: Women's History Month Awards Committee

From: Patti See *Patti See*

RE: Nomination of Elissa Shaw's poetry

I am pleased to nominate Elissa Shaw's selection of poems from her English capstone project for the Virgiline and Joseph See Poetry Award.

The motivation for her poems came from reading firsthand accounts of sexual abuse, rape and hate crimes. Using primary texts to glean ideas for poetry is an intriguing and difficult exercise for any writer. Elissa puts herself in the persona of these survivors and likewise gets under the skin of her readers. She has a creative knack for imagining what another's experience might have been like. She does an admirable job using her training in creative writing and her experiences in women's studies to create a project that is quite powerful.

The subjects in her poems are part of that anonymous group of "others" to whom awful, unspeakable things occur. Elissa gives this group of others a voice and makes their experiences not only real but haunting to the reader.

Excellence. Our measure, our motto, our goal.

Academic Skills Center • phone: (715) 836-5844 • fax: (715) 836-3418
web: www.uwec.edu/admin/ASC/ASChome/htm

Virgiline and Joseph See Poetry Award

Silent Voices, Screaming Rage

Elissa Shaw / Senior, Creative Writing and Women's Studies

Patti See, Faculty Nominator

From the author:

The following poems may not be easy to read, as the subject can be quite uncomfortable and sometimes vulgar. However, the poems are based on real accounts of sexual abuse victims. I encourage readers to look into resources, to find out what they can do to make a change. Hopefully these poems will give a voice to the crimes that happen to "other people," who are too often anonymous or unseen.

Heavenly Father

She sat across from him
hands properly folded
lying atop the plastic sea foam table
he ordered coffee-black,
read the local paper

she glanced at his index finger
wrapped in bandages
he broke it last night
after he pushed her down the stairs-
it was her fault,
she shouldn't have been there

the waitress came over,
he smiled,
said hello,
winked

Don't Get Confused When I Say NO

I was not put here
for sex.
I will not wash dishes
unless you dry
I will not be your fantasy
unless you become mine
If I show my breasts when I get dressed
It doesn't mean you can touch them
And you will not punish me
call me a slut
If I wear Red lipstick
and go to a bar
It is not an invitation to flirt
(especially if I am with my girls)
If I go to the gym, wearing spandex
you cannot slap my ass
If I walk alone at night
you do not have the right to holler
as you drive by,
yelling your phone number
I won't call

Don't get confused when I say NO.

He Said I Liked It

But I didn't
He said all fathers teach
daughters this way
He said I belonged to him,
until I turned 18
If I left, he'd find me
kill me.
He said I should relax, enjoy it-
people pay money for it
and he's giving it free
He said I should be thankful for
such a father, who cares enough
to teach me early
He told me I liked it
when he covered my mouth,
so I couldn't scream
He said soon, he'd teach my sister, too.

I Shouldn't Have Been Out After Dark,

But I needed milk for the morning
And I had to work late

I shouldn't have been smoking,
He wouldn't have asked me for a lighter
He wouldn't have approached me

I shouldn't have shaken his hand
Told him my name
Or offered him my cell phone

I shouldn't have been digging
Through my purse to find my keys
I should have been watching him

I shouldn't have been quiet
Letting him force me
Into the parking garage

I shouldn't have gone home
Showering myself with soap and tears
Wishing he killed me

I shouldn't have been out so late

Elizabeth

First she came out
to her parents
her pastor
then her friends.

Last she told
Elizabeth.
her soul mate
smart, classy, funny,
eyes of perfection, sweet, pure
Elizabeth.
she was her friend of eight years,
but *Elizabeth* had a boyfriend

he hated queers
and despised her
for falling in love with
Elizabeth.
he told *Elizabeth* to stop
calling her, meeting her
Elizabeth couldn't

One fall night she convinced
Elizabeth to come over,
watch a movie, make popcorn,
painted each others nails
and talked- like many nights before

It wasn't quite the same
When she leaned in to tell
a secret,
Elizabeth kissed her.
deep, passionate, tongue-locking
heart-racing, stomach-flipping

He had followed *Elizabeth*
glaring through the window
he quietly watched them giggle-
his girlfriend was not a dyke.

The glass shattered
he had followed *Elizabeth*
glaring through the window
he quietly watched them giggle
his girlfriend was not a dyke.
Rage and hatred tore him apart
when he saw that bitch kiss her,
his Elizabeth
he was focused as he
clicked off the safety
and aimed

Dentures

My grandson teases me
because I wear dentures.
sometimes, at lunch
my dentures fall out
he laughs

When he stays overnight,
he watches them in the glass
soaking in Sonicbrite
he pretends they belong
to Black Cave Pirates
lost in a quest for Gold.

Do they hurt, Grandpa?
How about when they fall out?
his questions make me smile-
but only when
I'm wearing my dentures

Band-Aids

My grandpa teases me
because sometimes I wear band-aids
that have glow-in-the-dark dinosaurs
I ask Grandpa
if he remembers dinosaurs.

He laughs
smoothes them down
he used to have a brontosaurus
but it had to stay on a leash
or else it would eat the neighbors' cat

Does it itch?
he stares at the red puffy skin
Does it sting?

Dentures

I got them after our 25th Anniversary
she accidentally hit my mouth
with her umbrella,
because I was teasing her
she doesn't have a sense of humor.

A day later she locked me in the guest room
afraid I'd tell Dr. Kay
what happened
she released me two days later
she handed me
a glass of water

Dr. Kay warned
I should be more careful
especially since I'm old
he thinks I'm a klutz

I love her, though,
so I let it slide

Band Aids

My mom says if I told
she'd lock me in the attic-
it's really hot in there

So I pretend my
sister was fighting with me
She's bigger anyway and
grandpa buys cool Band-Aids
to cover the bruises,
to help me forget

Grandpa says sometimes
when mom gets mad,
she takes it out on me
because she loves me the most

more than my sister
so I let it slide.

Grandpa

I started birth control
in case he came back
his musty smell
l i n g e r s

When I sleep
his yellow fingernails gnaw
at my breasts and
I feel his enormous weight
on my pillow

I could sleep:

Before Him,
Before I was scared,
Before I went on birth control

Mom slaps my face
says I'm a whore
her eyes scream with hate
but, she knows
she was fifteen,
when she started birth control

Every time I smell cigarettes
smoldering in ashtrays,
I see Him. Fat, disgusting Him
smelling like a stale, dirty
ashtray

I don't smoke at all-
now that I'm on birth control

Lucky Bastard

I shot that Bastard,
Slimy Mother Fucker
I don't regret it
asshole deserved it
knew it was longer overdue--
after all the years of hell
he put me through

A woman can take so much
before she snaps, breaks

Cocky, arrogant prick
smirking, strangling me

I fucked our granddaughter
he chuckled, taunting me
Young, virgin cunt...so tight,
so good

He winked
then slapped me

I kneed him in the balls
as hard as I could
when he bent over
to catch his breath
I ran to the closet
grabbed his shotgun
aiming it right at the
Motherfucker's head

Next I blew off his dick
so he could never hurt
no one again

He's lucky, that dead bastard
always did win
free, floatin' in
the after life

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