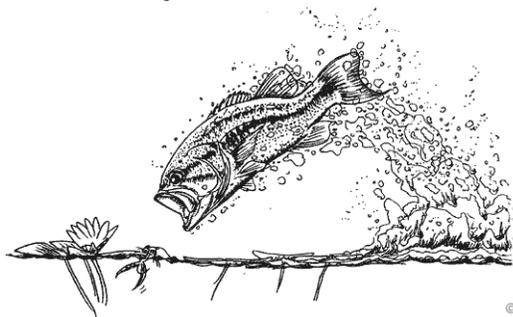


LibraryFish

Warsaw Public Library
Spring 2010 vol 1, issue 2



Welcome to the second issue of LibraryFish!

If you are holding a copy of this in your hand instead of reading it from a screen, thank the Wyoming Foundation. Funding from the Foundation has supported printing of the second issue.

Like all zines, LibraryFish reflects the interests of the authors and artists you see here. We welcome submissions from all Wyoming County teens. Visit your public library if you want to know more, or contact the Warsaw Public Library.

We hope you will find something you enjoy here and maybe you will be inspired to create something yourself.

Mary Conable
Warsaw Public Library
Children's Library Assistant

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Cover painting and sports illustrations by Margaret Gayford



The Sounds of a Band

What are the sounds of a band?
Do they make a sound like shaking a hand?

Is it a sound of a moose?
Or something very loose?

Can it be happily ever after?
Can it be the sounds of laughter?
Can it be friendly and happy?
And can it be rather wacky?

I know what the sounds of a band can be.

It's rather easy for anyone to see.

The sound of a band has flutes,
And many sounds of wakadutes.
The sounds of a band can always be heard,
Even when it as though its absurd.

A band can be loud,

Loud

Loud

Louder than a cloud.

The band marches through the streets,
Making no one stay in their seats.

These are the sounds of a band.

J. Kruppa

The following story is an imagining of the meeting of two famous literary characters, Conrad from Ordinary People and Holden from A Catcher in the Rye.

Conrad and Holden

Music, it grows in everyone. Both an escape and a trap for thousands of people. Compelling people to listen more, to feel a certain way. Music is a way of life. At least to Conrad it is. He plays his heart out almost every night now. With one album out and frequent gigs, Conrad's Band is doing well. Tonight he is playing for a lot of people in New York City. Though some may consider his music noise with a dark overtone, it is all he knows now.

Life got the better of him ever since his junior year of high school. Lazenby, his best friend, had left town and did not tell Conrad where he went. His mother still is not back and his father went to prison for a reason Conrad does not know. His girlfriend Jeanine, committed suicide in their apartment by hanging herself on the front patio. *If only she could have taken me with her,* Conrad thinks to himself.

The concert finishes and the band tries to settle down. Jason sits in a corner taking his heroin, while Mike downs his beer. Jordan sleeps quietly as people pound on the door of the room. Conrad is the only one not doing anything; he is also the only one of the band that refuses to take drugs. He believes he won't be able to control his actions if he does those things. He decides to take a walk through the park, Central Park that is.

Conrad works his way past the crowd and looks at his watch. It is three o'clock. Making his way to the park is more difficult than he thinks it should be. Not only does he have to pass through heavy traffic, he must also work

his way to where he can orient himself. This is only his second time in the big city. The first time, he found himself atop the Brooklyn Bridge with his dad. Now he is guessing where to go from that almost forgotten mental image.

He is surprised to see that some people are walking around at this hour. He is even more surprised to find out that some are older than his father is now.

Conrad finds a bench and sits down. Hoping to get all the stress off his shoulders. He thinks about how he should live going on like this. Wondering what may happen next and how to deal with it. Conrad thinks to himself that he finds things out the hard way.

As he continues to sit, he sees nothing but a dark cloud above mixed with the surrounding foliage. Central Park is one of the few places in New York City that is relatively peaceful. The only problem is that no animals are heard. Usually when he goes to parks he hears birds chirping. Sometimes he hears ducks swimming in the pond and making noises at people passing by. But maybe Central Park is not like the other parks he has visited.

Terror, tremors caused by thousands screaming, the video screen shows faces of those who have died, and those who will be next. The sky darkens as cloud cover prevails over the light. Conrad is secluded in the City, with everyone watching him. A downpour signals ultimate grief, a tempest ensues destroying nearby buildings, but leaving Conrad alone.

Someone tapping his shoulder wakes him up from this nightmare. These have been occurring much more

frequently in the past month, for what seems to be an unknown reason.

“Hello there,” an older gentleman says, “you seem to have taken a nap, and I realize you are not a homeless person.”

“Thank-you sir. My name is Conrad Jarett.”

“Holden Caulfield,” he replies. “What keeps you out this late at night Conrad?”

“I might ask you the same question,” Conrad thinks about what he said and knows he should start being more polite. “Sorry. I am, or was, just out for a walk and I guess I fell asleep. I will try not to do it again.”

“Oh, that’s alright. You are fine. I believe you would be a fool to think that you are the only one that does that.” He seems to be a pleasant person to Conrad. “You don’t look like a resident of these parts. May I ask where you are from?”

“Illinois originally, but I just came from Albany. I travel a lot. I suppose I get that from my mother.” Conrad feels stupid about talking about his past to a complete stranger.

“I come from around here. In fact, the farthest away I have ever been is California once to see my brother D.B.”

“Well, that is pretty far.” Conrad thinks about how much he should talk about to Holden. Then Holden sits down next to him.

“So Conrad, What do you do for a living?”

“I am a musician in a band.”

“Now it makes sense. You probably go places every night and play every night and play for a bunch of people. I don’t believe I could do that, but some can. I just think it is really,”

Holden chooses his words carefully, “not a correct image of who you really are.”

“I suppose you are right somewhat,” Conrad says, but does not want to believe.

“When I was a kid, lots of people were as I like to say phony because they would not accurately describe themselves through their actions or words.” Conrad thinks about why Holden is getting so interested in the subject.

Holden continues, “People, even now, do not realize how much of a fool they are being by making themselves appear to be perfect, or superior to the rest. This boy from my school, Stradlater, would always try and act real tough and be better than the rest. I never did find out what happened to him.

“Anyway, like I was saying don’t be a phony and be yourself.” With that he finishes and gives Conrad time to digest the information. *Is this guy nuts? Why does he think everyone is “phony?”* Conrad thinks to himself.

“Thank you again, sir. This conversation has been great,” Conrad lies, “We should meet again sometime.”

“Yes we should. Maybe I could help you with some of your problems. I heard you make noises in your sleep so I know something was going wrong.”

“No, I am fine, just a little stressed. It happens to everyone in this world, I have gotten used to that.”

“Don’t. I know what it is like to have problems. I ran away from school and was out on my own for a few days. I also wound up in a mental hospital. I am fine now,” great, Conrad realizes he has been talking to a mentally challenged person this entire time.

“Well, good-bye.” Holden says and walks away. Conrad watches as he stumbles out into the distance.

The evening news pops up and Conrad checks his watch, it is almost time for the show. He goes to turn off the television when the reporter says something that catches his interest.

“...Holden Caulfield, 51, was found dead this morning. A relatively happy man, he had accidentally taken more acetaminophen than he needed. His wife mourns his loss, along with his seven children and six grandchildren. Holden has been the city’s top attorney, and will be remembered. IN other news...” Everything else shuts down. Conrad could not believe that the old man he saw a month ago had died. Some of what he had said starts to make sense. The reporter had probably not cared what went on about him and was only doing her job. Conrad restrains himself from beating himself up and heads toward the door, with his guitar, hoping never to set foot in the city again.

J. Kruppa
Warsaw

WILL TURNER **Fisherman Superhero**

One time I was walking through the forest, and you won’t believe what I saw! I saw a man wearing a red and white checkerboard shirt, overalls, and a top hat. He was carrying an 8-foot-long fishing pole! He had a tiger walking beside him.

The tiger was like a giraffe: almost 10 feet tall with long fangs as sharp as a shark’s teeth, and soft blue and green-striped fur. The strange man I saw was named Will Turner. Will could turn himself into anything he wanted. He had big guns (that means big, strong arms). The huge tiger was named Cool Dude. He could turn himself into a merman any time he needed to swim.

I followed Will Turner to the Indian Ocean where a big shark was stuck in a fishing net in the middle of the ocean. Will Turner turned himself into a fish so he could swim out to save the shark. Cool Dude, who was now a merman, swam out with Will. Will talked to the shark to calm him down while Cool Dude cut the net with his sharp fangs. Then Will Turner had to turn himself into an electric eel so that shark wouldn’t eat him! The eel and the merman then swam safely back to shore.

Will Turner had super sharp hearing. When he got to shore, he heard a big SNAP coming from the middle of the forest. So he went to investigate. When he got to the middle of the forest, Will saw a bear stuck in a trap. A hunter was stuck, too. Will Turner turned himself into a bear, and told the bear that he would free him if he promised not to eat the hunter. Then Cool Dude used his

long fangs to open the trap. After the hunter and the bear were free, Will Turner turned himself into Superman so he could fly the hunter to the hospital. Cool Dude picked up the bear and rode him on his back to the veterinarian.

While Will Turner was flying the hunter to the hospital, he noticed three dolphins stuck in the mud on the shore of the Indian Ocean. So he shouted to them and told them he would be right back. He hurried the hunter to the hospital, and then he flew back as fast as an eagle to save the dolphins. He picked up the whole ocean and smacked it down against the ground. This caused a huge wave to head towards the dolphins. This gave them enough water to swim back to the middle of the ocean where their family was.

I heard that Will Turner spent 21 years saving animals and people that were in danger. Cool Dude stayed right by his side the whole 21 years. You might wonder where they are. You might wonder why you never see them. Will lives on forever as a star in the sky. He turned himself into a star so that he could watch over the universe. He will always swoop down to save whoever needs his help. Cool Dude is living in the ocean as a merman, and he comes any time Will Turner calls him.

So, the next time you are looking at the stars in the sky, look for a star that is holding a long fishing pole—that will be Will Turner watching over you.

Michael Frederick Dollas



An Exorcism

I sit by the piano, holding my head in frustration. Practice has become my own personal demon, the thing that haunts me at all hours of the day. Whenever I try to relax, a voice in my head keeps saying, “You should be practicing... you do want to get into college, don’t you?” And of course, I do, so I sigh and go back to the scales, arpeggios, and trills that torment me. My teacher says I’m making progress, but it doesn’t seem that way to me; I’m hyper-tuned to my slip-ups, and it seems like I’m getting nowhere. With a deep breath, I put away my frustrations, turn the metronome on, and begin to play Chopin’s “Nocturne, Opus 72, No. 1.”

People seem to brush off arts students as lazy, saying that they don’t do any “real work.” Well, let me tell you, I’m an arts student. I work, talk, and, most importantly, create with other arts students. Music is what I’m born to do. And let me say, it’s enormously hard work. Endless scales, runs, rhythm exercises, and composition are all parts of my daily routine, and anyone who looks closely can see that practice and performance are two of the hardest jobs someone can do. A strong work ethic, something not many students have today, is a necessity when one is

studying any aspect of the arts. This certainly applies to my life. All my life, I've been pushed by my parents, my whole family, my teachers, and anyone who knows me, to succeed, to excel, to give one hundred percent all the time. That all will culminate here, in front of the piano, playing my college audition pieces.

In order to get accepted into a collegiate music program I have to memorize and perform three or four pieces of standard repertoire in contrasting styles on the piano. Several months ago, when I first read this, my jaw dropped; how on Earth was I going to accomplish this? My heart plunged in my chest. In order to fulfill my dream of becoming a music teacher, I was going to have to push myself harder than I ever had before. But I didn't give up; I couldn't. My dreams wouldn't allow surrender. Instead, I consulted with my piano teacher, and started my practice.

It was hell the first few weeks; I had plunged from the world of musical theatre accompaniment into that of Baroque, Classical, and Romantic Era music that I had only flirted with before. A strict regimen of practice became a part of my life. In some ways, I suppose it was a wake-up call for me; this, I realized, was what all of college would be for me as a music education major. And, though I wasn't pleased at first, I began to realize that this practice was satisfying to me.

I return to the present, pulling myself out of my myriad thoughts of the past. Realizing that I have only gotten through the opening left hand triplet of the nocturne, I chastise myself for losing

my focus yet again. With new resolve, I start playing again.

About halfway through the piece, I realize that I haven't made any major mistakes; this comes as a surprise to me, because I'm used to stopping at least once during the piece. As I approach the difficult runs and arpeggios that color the third page of the piece, I can feel myself lose a little confidence, but I'm determined to beat this demon. My hand flies up and down the keyboard, and my satisfaction and determination increase even more. I lose myself in the passion of the nocturne. *This* joy is what music is all about. *This* is the joy I want to teach others to experience.

As the piece dies down and ends with its simple lonely chord, I take a deep breath, and I feel so much more confident. But now, I have no time to relax. It's on to Bach and Mozart. The music plays. Life goes on. I practice.

I. Gayford,
Warsaw



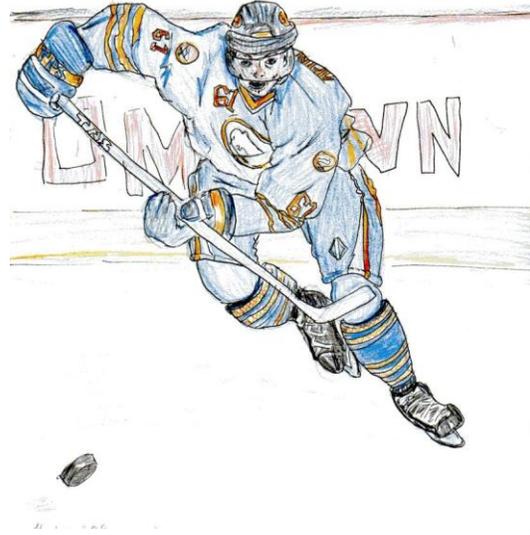
The End

The end is an automatic sadness
But has to come after a beginning,
It is the yin,
To beginning's yang.

The end is inevitable
Throughout time
To bring on a certain stillness
And a heavy sigh.

The end is impossible to escape.
Having been known by thousands of
people,
To be the forthcoming
Of the beginning.

J. Kruppa,
Warsaw



Young Guns of the National Hockey League: The Reason Hockey Will Exist For a Long Time

Young players are important to a vital organization's plans to build around and for the organization(s) to have a cornerstone that they can build from. You cannot have all older players on your team and expect to win games for a long time. Eventually those veterans will wear down and run out of steam. Fresh bodies are needed and young players can supply that along with leadership skills, finesse skills, and giving fans a thrill every time they step on the ice for the next game or even in practice! Here are some of the young guns in the National Hockey League today that make the game more thrilling to watch... I will outline twelve players that stand out from the rest of the newcomers...

Anaheim Ducks

Ryan Getzlaf -

One of the best step-up men in the NHL, Getzlaf is only 24 with a bright future ahead of him. He was taken in the 1st round, 19th overall, in the 2003 draft by the Anaheim Ducks. He is huge for an NHL player, 6 foot 4 inches and weighs 220 pounds, but uses his strength not for checking (although he can body check with the best of them if he wanted to), instead using his size and strength to stand firm in the slot and perimeter and step-up his teammates and feed them beautiful passes for them to turn into goals. He is currently having one of his best seasons to date and he is currently a co-captain for the Ducks.

Atlanta Thrashers

Ilya Kovalchuk -

One of the best goal scorers in the league, Kovalchuk finds the back of the net more often than not. He is 26 years old and was taken in the 1st round, 1st overall in the 2001 entry draft. He is really the only bright spot on a Thrashers team that is not that good. The Thrashers do have some up and coming young players though that will help Kovalchuk out when they develop into better players. Kovalchuk is a consistent 40 goal, 30 assist player with the caliber of getting close to 100 points each season. He is currently the captain of the Thrashers and excels in how he deals with the media, players, and fans. That is the main reason why he is a captain; he can handle the pressure that comes with that

responsibility and still excel on and off the ice. He stands 6 foot 2 and weighs 230 pounds and is very hard to knock off the puck.

Boston Bruins

Milan Lucic -

Age 21, he was taken in the 2nd round, 50th overall by the Bruins in the 2006 entry draft. He is not known for his scoring and finesse, rather relying on his physical and rough and tumble style of play to knock opponents off the puck. He is considered what the NHL calls an "agitator," not really wanting to fight (but he will if necessary, believe me), and trying to make the opposition take stupid penalties to set up the Bruins power play. He stands around 6 foot 4 inches, and weights in at 220 pounds and plays a physical game 110% of the time. Even though he doesn't score many goals or setup many players, he still gets plenty of ice time, logging around 15 minutes each game.

Buffalo Sabres

Tyler Meyers -

A rookie yes, but at age 19, standing in at a huge 6 foot 8 inches (the only one taller is Zdeno Chara of the Bruins who is 6 foot 9), and weighing in at 222 pounds, he is a dominant force that Buffalo's blueline had been lacking for quite a while (excluding the presence of Craig Rivet), and is a playmaker who has the potential to be a cornerstone on the Sabres for a long time. At only 19 years old, he still has his flaws but will outgrow them and I expect him to turn into a great defenseman in a couple of

years. He logs a lot of ice time, usually staying on the ice for about 25 minutes a game. He was drafted in the 1st round, 12th overall in the 2008 entry draft.

Calgary Flames

Dion Phaneuf -

A hard hitter and a great defenseman, all wrapped in one package. Phaneuf can deliver hits that rival that of Scott Stevens, one of the hardest hitters, if not the hardest ever to lace up his skates in the NHL. At age 24, Phaneuf still has plenty of potential to be better, which is a very scary thing for opponents. He was drafted in the 1st round, 9th overall in the 2003 entry draft. He stands a 6 foot 3 inches and weighs 214 pounds. He is a consistent 45-50 point producer and will be a great defenseman for years to come for the Flames. He will fight all comers as well and is not one who is easily intimidated by opponents.

Carolina Hurricanes

Eric Staal -

One of three Staal brothers currently in the NHL, he is the most talented Staal and has the ability to be a consistent 100 point producer. He is 25 years old and has the build of a goal scorer. He is 6' 4" and weighs 205 pounds and is a fairly fast skater with plenty of balance and finesse. He was taken in the 1st round, 2nd overall in the 2003 entry draft. His other brothers are Jordan, who plays for the Pittsburgh Penguins, and Mark, who plays for the New York Rangers. Staal is an average 30-

goal scorer and 70 point producer. He is currently a co-captain for the Carolina Hurricanes.

Chicago Blackhawks

Patrick Kane -

A Buffalo, NY native, Kane is a small player by NHL standards. He is only 5' 10" and weighs in around 178 pounds, but plays with the heart of a lion and the tenacity of a wolverine. He is a gifted goal scorer and a member of Team USA for the Vancouver Games. He scores on average 25 goals and averages around 45 assists for an average of 70 points. He is quick on his feet and is a very speedy skater, able to skate past many defenseman. He uses his quickness and speed to his advantage. He was selected 1st overall in the 1st round of the 2007 entry draft.

Colorado Avalanche

Paul Stastny -

Age 23, Stastny who is the son of NHL legend Peter Stastny, was drafted in the 2nd round, 44th overall, in the 2005 entry draft by the Avalanche. He is a consistent 20 goal, 40 assist player who has the potential to be a legend just like his father was. He was the right build for a hockey player at 6 feet, 2 inches and 205 pounds. He has tremendous balance and a quick shot. He currently is a co-captain for the Avalanche and is a cornerstone for the rebuilding franchise, which was shaken up at the beginning of the year with the retirement of longtime Avalanche player and longtime captain Joe Sakic. Stastny

will be a great player for years to come.

New Jersey Devils

Zach Parise -

At age 25, he is the cornerstone of the New Jersey Devils. A consistent 30 goal scorer, Parise is a hard worker and is a very consistent player for the Devils. He is good offensively as well as defensively as New Jersey is a defense first type of team. He is 5' 11" and 190 pounds with good balance and great speed to deke past defenders on his way to scoring goals, which comes easy to him. He was taken in the 1st round, 17th overall, in the 2003 entry draft. He will be a player to watch for the next couple years.

Philadelphia Flyers

Mike Richards -

A hard hitting, goal scoring, defensive minded center who is also currently serving as the Flyers captain, Richards was selected in the 1st round, 24th overall, in the 2003 entry draft. The 2003 draft had many good players, but Richards was one of the best to come out of that class. At age 24 he is already a captain of a historic Flyers team, and is an inspirational leader to his coaches and teammates alike. He is smaller in stature at 5 feet 11 inches and 195 pounds, but he plays like a pit bull, smaller in size but with a huge heart. He will be a great leader of years to come. Philly picked a great player in Richards in 2003.

Pittsburgh Penguins

Sidney Crosby -

Ranked right now as the second (some argue the best) player in the NHL, he was selected 1st overall, in the 1st round, in the 2005 entry draft. He is a constant 25 goal, 100 point scorer and is an assist machine also. He became the youngest captain in history when he was nominated for captain at age 21 years, 10 months, 5 days, passing Vincent Lecavalier of the Tampa Bay Lightning who had the honor before Crosby. Crosby stands at 5' 11" and weighs in at a solid 200 pounds. Crosby has won many trophies and awards all by the age of 22. He will be a force to be reckoned with for many, many years to come. Keep an eye out for Sid the Kid. His main rivalry is with Alexander Ovechkin of the Washington Capitals. They do not like each other.

Washington Capitals

Alexander Ovechkin

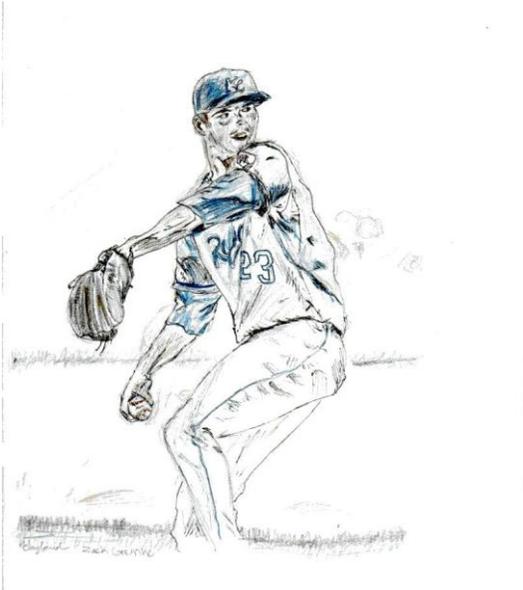
Ranked as the world's number one player in the NHL, Ovechkin, known as Alexander the Gr8t or just Ovie, has won the MVP award twice in his very young career and has plenty of other awards to go with it including the Lester B. Pearson and Art Ross trophies which go to the MVP voted by the players and highest point scorer for the season respectively. Ovechkin weighs in at 233 pounds and stands 6 feet 2 inches, but has blazing speed and great balance along with a deadly accurate slap and wrist shot. He is a constant 50 goal and 100 point scorer and is a very hard hitter as well. To celebrate his goals he often jumps and slams his body against the protective glass

that surrounds the rink. He is also considered a dirty player by some, sometimes getting cheap shots in, but some are accidental as well. He is a cornerstone for the Capitals and was taken 1st overall, in the 1st round, in the 2004 entry draft. Ovie is currently a co-captain for the Capitals and is a thrill to watch on the ice every night. Fans will be flocking to D.C. for years to come as he had signed a 13 year, \$124 million dollar deal to stay with the Capitals becoming the highest paid player ever in the NHL.

WORKS CITED

www.nhl.com

Andrew Tindell



Major League Baseball: 2009 A Year in Review

The year started with a bang with the first game of the year featuring the 2008 World Series champions Philadelphia Phillies taking on the Atlanta Braves. The Atlanta Braves won that game on Sunday, April 5, 2009.

The New York Yankees who finished with 103 wins and only 59 losses, clinched Major League Baseball's best record for the 2009 season, and the #1 seed in the American League by winning the AL East. The Los Angeles Angels won the #2 sees with an overall record of 97—65, while a 95—67 mark was enough to win the wild card for the Boston Red Sox. In the AL Central, the Minnesota Twins (with help from MVP Joe Mauer) finished off the Detroit Tigers in a one-game playoff for the division championship and the third seed. The Oakland Athletics, Kansas City Royals, and Baltimore Orioles finished last in their divisions.

The LA Dodgers had the National League's best overall record (95-67), claiming the top seed in the NL West Division. The NL East champion Philadelphia Phillies, defending their 2008 title, were the second seed, due to their 93—69 record. The St. Louis Cardinals, powered by their MVP Albert Pujols, from the NL Central, finished with a 91—71 record, and the wild card went to the Colorado Rockies from the NL West. The Arizona Diamondbacks, Washington Nationals, and Pittsburgh Pirates all finished last in their divisions.

These events then set the stage for the playoffs. The first round (Divisional Series) had the New York Yankee sweeping the Minnesota Twins. The LA Angels of Anaheim swept the Red Sox. In the National League, the LA Dodgers swept the St. Louis Cardinals and the Philadelphia Phillies won their series with the Colorado Rockies three games to one, the only team not to sweep in the first round.

The second round (also known as the League Championship Series) saw the New York Yankees defeating the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim 4 games to 2 in a hard-fought exciting series. In the National League series, the Philadelphia Phillies dominated the Los Angeles Dodgers 4 games to 1.

The World Series was a grand one. Two teams played for a piece of history and a change to rewrite the record books. The Philadelphia Phillies were playing for a chance to become the first team since the 1998-2000 New York Yankees to win back-to-back World Series championships. The Yankees won three in a row during those years. The New York Yankees were playing for their ailing owner, George Steinbrenner, and a chance to win their 27th World Series title. The Yankees won the series 4 games to 2, with the only Phillies' victories coming due to the superb pitching of Cliff Lee, who shut the Yankees down during those two games. In the end, the Yankees prevailed and took home the World Series trophy and bragging rights with their 27th world title.

Some notable milestones for the 2009 season were. . .

1. Chicago White Sox teammates Paul Konerko and Jermaine Dye both hit their 300th career home runs in back-to-back plate appearance on April 13th
2. New York Mets player Gary Sheffield reaches his 500th career home run milestone on April 17th
3. Livan Hernandez (a Met at the time) wins his 150th career game

4. Todd Helton of the Colorado Rockies, Miguel Tejada of the Houston Astros, Booby Abreu of the LA Angels of Anaheim, and Jason Kendall of the Milwaukee Brewers all reach 2,000 career hits
5. Derek Jeter of the New York Yankees reaches 2,700 career hits, 1,500 runs, and passes Lou Gehrig's previous record of 2,721 for hits by a New York Yankee. Jeter also passes Luis Aparicio for most hits by a shortstop
6. As a member of the Chicago White Sox, Jim Thome reaches 1,500 Runs Batted In and 400 Doubles
7. Boston Red Sox celebrate their 500th consecutive sellout at home at Fenway Park
8. Philadelphia Phillie Jamie Moyer pitches his 250th career win on May 31st
9. Albert Pujols of the St. Louis Cardinals reaches the 1,000 RBI and 1,000 Run mark in his young career
10. Mark Buehrle of the Chicago White Sox pitches the 16th perfect game in baseball's modern era on July 23, defeating the Tampa Bay Rays 5-0. Buehrle becomes the sixth pitcher to hurl both a no-hitter and a perfect game in his career, joining Hall of Famers Addie Joss, Cy Young, Sandy Koufax, Jim Bunning, and Randy

Johnson. Buehrle did this in the midst of setting a Major League record by retiring 45 consecutive batters over three games. It was an incredible pitching performance.

11. Alex Rodriguez of the New York Yankees reaches 2,500 Career Hits

Awards

Rookie of the Year

National League- Chris Coghlan (FLA)
American League – Andrew Bailey (OAK)

Cy Young (Best Pitcher)

National League – Tim Lincecum (SF)
American League – Zack Greinke (KC)

Manager of the Year

National League – Jim Tracy (COL)
American League – Mike Scioscia (LAA)

Most Valuable Player

National League – Albert Pujols (STL)
American League – Joe Mauer (MIN)

Andrew Tindell

My Story

Hi, my name is Peter. I'm seventeen, I'm relatively tall, I have a couple good friends, and came back from the dead-- seriously. I'm not a zombie, or ghost, or any imaginary creature. See, life does exist beyond death, or sort of. It all happened about a month ago.

I was playing hockey with my best friends, Joe, Mack, and Daniel. My little brother, Harry, was being referee. My neighborhood's urban, so there's more space on the street, usually. We'll have whole days where not one car passes our house, where you can't even hear the sound of vehicles. So, of course, we were playing in the street.

We were in the third quarter, and Mack and I were up two. It's not easy with your little brother in the way, and he'd been knocked over a couple times, but Harry's a tough little guy. I don't know, maybe it was fate, or maybe bad luck, but today was different.

Joe called a time-out, and said he'd heard something. Soon as we stopped, I heard it too. Looking down the road, I saw what was making the noise. An eighteen-wheeler was coming down the road. We quickly cleared off the road, us and our equipment. Almost all of us cleared out, that is.

Harry went to the other side of the street, which was no big deal, but

then, for some reason, he decided to cross back over the road. While the huge truck was barreling towards him. He was in the middle of the right side of the road, with us yelling at him to turn around, when I realized it wasn't going to work.

I don't know what made me do it, but the next second I knew, I ran into the road, and pushed Harry out of the way. He may have been a tough guy, but nobody was that tough. Nobody includes me, but I didn't think of that.

People tell you that at the moment of an accident, time seems to slow down. It doesn't. It just seems that way later, because all your senses go hyper, hoping to save you.

I can still remember my last second clearly; me pushing Harry out of the way, only then realizing the danger I'd put myself in. There was pure noise, the horn, the squealing of brakes, my heart, and the ringing in my ears as a bolt of ice-cold heat shot to my head and heart. And then it was over. The guy stopped too late, way too late. By the time the truck finally came to a halt, he'd passed all the way over me. I have no idea how I know that. I just do.

People say, at the moment of dying, there's a white light you can choose to head towards. That's only partially right. There is a white light, but you get no choice. You're floating in nothingness, and pulled towards it. There is no way to escape. Or maybe that only happens

if you're absolutely dead. I don't know. What I do know is that I was being pulled towards it. As soon as I hit it, there was a brilliant flash. I found myself somewhere else when the light disappeared.

It wasn't the gates of heaven, or the fires of hell, or anything you'd normally expect. Not that you would expect your body to be transported anywhere else after you die. It's just not the kind of thing you think about. Anyways, as I said, I found myself somewhere else.

It was like a forest, only it looked dead. Not as if the trees had died, only it did - sort of. I can't explain exactly what it looked like. The rest of my journey was kind of like that, too. Nothing after death can be exactly explained. Even if I drew the forest I stood in front of, I still couldn't get the whole feel of it. It looked burnt, but almost as if it was growing like that.

Another strange thing about it was the feel. I want to say it felt evil, but it didn't. The look was the only thing that insinuated that. It felt... angry, angry and sad. I mean, the whole forest felt angry, but there was something else. Like individual sad memories permeating the anger. And I felt the sadness all around me. It was like a huge invisible hand holding me.

I stood there for a while, taking everything in. I turned around, to see what was behind me, too. I don't know what I expected to see, the

same white light that had transported me here? No, instead, it was the opposite. All around me, except for the forest was a huge area of pure blackness.

I tried walking into the blackness. I'm not sure why. I told myself at the time that it was just for the heck of it, but I suspect I was really afraid of the forest. I won't lie. It scared me. It wasn't just the look; the whole forest seemed to breathe the smell of fear.

The blackness seemed solid. I mean, I'd turn around, and I'd see the forest farther away; but it felt like I was walking into a wall. I took another few steps, and stopped cold. It felt wrong; almost like I was trespassing where I shouldn't be.

I decided to be gutsy, or maybe I just didn't want to go towards the forest that much. I decided to take a few more steps. That was a bad idea. Not even two steps away from where I'd been standing, my world turned upside-down. Not that there was a world to turn upside down, but you know what I mean.

It was as if someone stabbed me through the heart. I know, sounds cliché, but it did feel like that. Remember the feeling I described right before I got hit by the truck-- the panic shock of ice-cold heat rushing to my head? Imagine that, but multiply the feeling by about ten. You don't need to be good at math for that. I ran. Ran back to the

forest, and stood there shaking. Thinking back, I know what that feeling was: terror. Right at that moment, I'd felt pure, raw terror. It was awful, but it also felt a little cool at the same time. Like when you get a high. There's the part of you that hurts, your head pounding, tingling pain all over. But it also has an attraction; the state right before the backlash; the flying-high, fuzzy feeling.

I don't know why, but I decided I wanted to try it again. This time, I went to the left, not straight. Maybe there actually was an escape. It happened again, the feeling of terror. This time I went right. Maybe I was still hoping there was a way out of here.

Part of me loved the high I got from the terror, but I shouldn't have done it. My heart was pounding out of my chest, I was shaking and shivering, my veins were standing out, and it felt like someone was sticking a million pins into me.

But despite the awful shape I was in, I decided to do it again. I did *not* want to walk through the forest. I walked the normal distance until I felt the high. But it wasn't enough. I had to walk farther, feel more, fake my way out of here maybe. I doubted it, but maybe. But as soon as I went into the darkness too far, it felt like my head exploded. I started shivering, curling up, unable to move. I don't know how long I lay there, curled up on whatever ground there was, paralyzed by the pain and

fear coursing through my body. It felt like years, but it was probably only minutes.

I finally found the strength to pull myself up. My whole body felt numb. I couldn't feel anything as I grasped the smoky ground to pull myself along. I couldn't stand; I couldn't crawl; I could barely drag myself along. It took a while for me to get far enough away for the throbbing in my head to slow. I managed to get to my knees, and crawl back to the entrance to the forest. Then, I just collapsed.

I lay there for probably the next few hours. Actually, I doubt there's time there. I don't know why, but I just *felt* like there wasn't. It felt like an in-between place, but in-between Earth and what? I didn't know, but I spent quite some time laying there thinking. Thinking about where I was, thinking about what was going to happen, thinking about what could have happened, thinking about what my family was going through right now.

I found it hard to breathe, thinking about my family, so I sat up. I wrapped my arms around my legs and sat there. It took a while for me to realize how much my head hurt, how much my heart hurt. I started crying. I'm not sure why, but I couldn't stop. Maybe it was the combination of everything, how much I hurt, how much I missed my family, how much I knew they were missing me. I'm not sure how I knew, but somehow I knew, I just

knew that this was the end; that I'd never see anybody again. I'd never see my mom, my dad, Harry, my best friends, my teachers, everybody. I tried to remember everything I could about them; the way my dad would play football with me in the backyard; the homemade meals my mom loved to cook; Harry's annoying habits, the scribbled pictures he was so proud of; everything I could possibly remember.

My head hurt, my legs felt numb, my throat felt raw, my lungs felt like they were going to give out, and still I cried. I cried so hard, my muscles gave out and I fell back to the ground. God, but it hurt. Eventually, the tears stopped coming, but I still cried. I tried to stop, but my body seemed to be against me.

It was probably a few hours of crying, but it felt like longer. I finally stopped, but it didn't help. My head was still pounding, my body still just as numb. I tried to convince myself everything was going to be okay, but my throat hurt, so I just repeated that to myself in my head. It reminded me of the way my mom used to comfort me. A whole new wave of sadness washed over me. I don't know how long I lay there, repeating the cycle.

Eventually, I stood up. I was shaky, and my legs were still numb, so it took a while to stand, but there I was; right back where I'd been hours and hours before. Only now, I felt part of the sadness. Now there

wasn't just sadness and anger emanating from the forest. Now there was also empathy. I took a step towards the forest, clumsily, as if my legs were asleep. Then I took another, and another. Before I knew it, I was walking the path that led deeper into darkness.

The trees loomed overhead, creating almost a canopy of twisted, burnt, broken fingers hanging high overhead. I felt as if someone was watching me, but I couldn't see anyone. The tunnel of wood seemed to go on forever, but as I walked, the tunnel shrank, becoming smaller and smaller, until it was just big enough for me to walk through.

I kept walking, and soon, what little light there was also disappeared. I was walking through pitch darkness. I could put out my hands to either side and feel the rough wall of the trees. Only, they didn't feel like trees anymore. The trees seemed to melt into each other, making a solid wall. Then, as I walked, the wooden wall turned into stone. I could feel the rough sandstone under my fingers as I walked.

Then, abruptly, the walls disappeared. So did the ground, and I found myself tumbling through air, grasping for anything at all to slow me down. There was nothing to grab, so I just kept falling.

Then I stopped. It wasn't like I hit something, or even slowed. I didn't

even notice I wasn't still falling. But I realized that I was now lying on something hard, like granite. If granite had little spikes, that is.

I realized my eyes were closed, and I opened them, almost groggily. Pitch blackness again, only this time, light was shining from far above me. Far, far, far, above me, that is. It wasn't strong enough to help me see anything, only strong enough to be a constant reminder.

I should have been scared. I should have been terrified, but I wasn't. It almost felt like I was watching a movie, as if my body was someone else's; that, and like I was on drugs. I couldn't think clearly. Like my brain was made of cotton, and the cotton made of lead.

Then everything exploded. There was extreme heat all around me, like I was in a volcano. I figured I was standing in fire. Or, at least, the thought registered in the back of my mind, but I don't know if I actually thought it.

Then I heard a pounding sound. Like something was coming towards me, something big. All I saw was flames for a while, while the pounding got louder. Then I saw horns. They were showing over the fire, and were very high up.

A huge figure seemed to materialize out of the fire. And I do mean huge. It was easily two stories tall, and covered in greenish-brownish-

reddish scales and spikes. It raised its arm, and next thing I knew, I was flying through the air. Then I hit something hard. It felt like hitting something soft for a moment, but then the aching feeling bit into me.

I slowly got to my feet, just in time to be hit again. I slammed against another wall, even harder. My head was stinging, so I held my hand to my forehead for a moment. When I brought my hand down again, to try to pick myself up, I saw red. My hand was covered in blood, and the blood was mine.

I heard a grating sound, like a knife being dragged through metallic Styrofoam. I looked up, and saw the creature's mouth hanging open. It took me a moment to realize that it was laughing.

Blood surged to my head, and I got up and charged it. I know it was a bad move. I found that out as I slammed against another wall. The grating sound continued. I forced myself to get up. My right arm was limp, and hanging lower than it should have been. I guessed it was dislocated, but I didn't feel much pain there; maybe because I was feeling the pain everywhere else.

I took a feeble step away from the beast, but it was fast. I heard a crack, and then I was sitting on the floor, leaning against a burning wall, away from the monster. I tried to get up again, but pain shot through my whole body. It took me a moment to realize that my

back was broken, which was why I couldn't feel my legs.

The creature advanced, and I felt a wave of hopelessness hit me. The grating sound was ringing in my ears as I tried not to look at the beast.

You know how they say your life flashes in front of your eyes when you're about to die? Well, I know I was already dead, but that happened. I got the impression that in this place, you can die many times, and live to die some more.

Then, the light far above intensified, and something hit me. I decided there was a heaven and a hell. I was most definitely in hell. But, if I was in hell, what was the light? Heaven?

That gave me a thought. My brain almost didn't register the fist aimed at my head. I sent four words with my mind, an insistent plea: *Help me God. Please.*

For a moment, time seemed to freeze. Then my body jerked as I gasped. There was an ice-cold tingling along my arms and legs. And then, I was somewhere else.

A doctor stepped away from the table I was lying on, holding those things you see in hospital shows--the electric ones, used to jump-start the heart. Sound burst into my ears a moment later. There was a humming sound, and a lot of talking. I decided the humming was an ambulance, and I was in it. My mom

was sitting there, hands over her mouth. A nurse was holding her arm, as if she was stopping mom from grabbing me.

I glanced up at the ceiling, and saw my reflection in the patterned steel. I felt like crap, and looked worse. Then, I registered someone talking.

"-one very, very lucky teenager." the doctor was saying, "You're supposed to be dead. By all signs, you were." He took a deep breath before continuing, "You got one hell of a second chance."

I almost laughed. If I had, my throat probably would have disintegrated, the way I was feeling, but I almost did anyway. That doctor had no idea how right he was.

M. Foegen