

# The Waverley

VOLUME III, ISSUE 3

DECEMBER 2011

## Abroad in London

By: Maddie Disner '12

As a latecomer to the English Department, declaring my major at the very last minute with only two courses under my belt, I figured I should immerse myself into the realm of the literarily inclined while I still had time. So, last semester, after securing my position as an office assistant and newsletter editor in the English Department, I decided to study abroad in London to see the land that inspired the literary greats, from Shakespeare to Dickens.

I attended King's College London, conveniently located right the center of London overlooking the Thames. This central

*My time there was endlessly entertaining.*

location, along with the ease of public transportation, made it possible for me to explore all the wonders of the glorious city. Between seeing plays at the Globe, studying Shakespeare with contemporary scholars, strolling through the much-referenced parks, and noting the famous landmarks of this historic time capsule, I developed a personal understanding and appreciation for the great works of British Literature.

Yet, my experience abroad extended beyond my intellectual stimulation. Living in a dorm in this bustling city gave me the opportunity to experience cultural differences first hand. Any social interaction I had would inevitably include some form of



*Disner, seeing the sights with friends*

mockery of accents or phrases. These encounters with quick and witty Brits exposed the silliness of idioms and saying that outsiders experience, while creating a built-in playful element to the mockery, or "taking the piss", as they say. My time there was endlessly entertaining.

*Cont. on p. 4*

## Life After Graduation The Solidago Riders



*The Solidago Riders*

3,518 miles. That's how far the Solidago Riders biked on their trip around the Great Lakes. The riders were comprised of five alums from the class of 2011, Tressa Versteeg (English alum), Ainsley Judge, Robin Major, Rose Holdorf, and

Jacqueline Kutvirt.

The trip was a fundraising effort for *Grand Aspirations*, a youth-led non-profit organization that supports young leaders in their endeavors to create economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable communities. It was also a learning experience about people and organizations

working around the Great Lakes to better communities. They documented their travels through blogs, videos, and photos. A complete collection of this media is accessible through their website <solidagoriders.com>.

See page two to read one of the insightful and amusing blog posts from their trip!

# On Insanity...And Possibility

A blog post from the Amazing Solidago Riders! Read more about them on page 1.



By: Rose Holdorf

Some time ago now, Tressa was reading Herman Melville's Billy Budd and shared with the other Solidagos this bit as we burrowed into our sleeping bags and bade each other goodnight:

*"For who in the rainbow can draw the line where the violet tint ends and the orange begins? Distinctly we see the difference of colors, but where exactly does the one first bledgingly enter the other? So with sanity and insanity."*

Since then, the lot of us have read a bit more literature and biked a good bounty of miles, but our Great Lakes adventure remains the fulcrum of our teetering sanity. What I mean to say is that the five of us have had a whole lot of things to take in, so much in fact, that some days we wonder when we've lost it completely.

Like those days when we force ourselves to wake up long before the sun will rise, to sit on a weathered bike seat for 8 plus hours in the hot sun, in the gusty headwind or in endless rain only to do it all again tomorrow.

There are days we wonder why we spend more time looking after our bikes' styles than we spend on our own appearances. Why we find our panniers filled with rocks, birch bark, and plant identification books even though we are supposed to pedal weightlessly. Why we are accepted into homes of strangers, only to part as lifelong

friends. There are days we laugh so hard we can barely summit the hills we climb using our 27th -lowest gear. Some days, we leap into freezing Great Lake baths or pedal 60 miles so we can hike three more into gaping sand dunes for sunset. Some days we bike 110 miles, pass over three states, or bike from one Great Lake to the next. Some days we realize we've biked 3,000 miles far.

That was Tuesday. Then we soar down a big hill gravitating toward the same lake we started from. People watch, wave and laugh—but we only have eyes for one—Lake Superior, completing our full circle bike tour.

Some strangers we've met actually tell us we're insane from the get go. "3,000 Miles?!" they'd exclaim, "ON YER BIKES?!"

I'd never do that, you gals must be crazy." We usually smile, but our eyes, hand them one of our home-made business cards and pedal off on our merry way. But, somewhere down the road, I really do wonder where the sane tint ends and the crazy one begins. I wonder whether or not a little insanity—a little extraordinary adventure—may pave new roads for new ideas and new possibilities.

Since we started our now 67 day trek, the Solidago Riders have had a lot of time for conversation and twice as much for imagination. As much as we focus on the road, we also talk

with each other about what's to come in our new lives after college. Robin and Ainsley want to run a backyard bakery when they return—it might be on Fridays. Jacque, Tressa, and I hope to build an Art Shanty this winter using found materials and replaceable magnets. We all want to host our people's festival, Solidago Bombago, again next summer.

We all want to find jobs. Both collectively and as individuals, one thing we've gained from our adventure, is a desire for imagining ways to improve and support our communities.

Roberto Mangabeira Unger writes that "If we accept that society is made and imagined then we can believe that society can be REMade and REimagined." For our sakes, acknowledging that the problems we

face in the world (like wars, economic upheavals, and institutional inequalities) are made demonstrates how we can all feel empowered to imagine and practice the solutions we hope to discover in our futures.

In our first days of biking, one friend told us that "If you fall in love with the place you live" then the things you do for your home and your community "will never feel like a sacrifice." Two months later, this notion has become somewhat of an anthem to us, as friends from around the Great Lakes region give the same advice described in different words.

However they put it, such advice always returns to our relationships—how we build

**...a little insanity, a little extraordinary adventure—may pave new roads for new ideas and new possibilities."**

connections with each other and our environments.

At the end of some days, it may be that our insanity only lies with a thought as to why the pet cactus in Tressa’s handlebar basket incessantly wilts even though she is so determined to love it unconditionally. But other days we bike away from people and places that leave us simultaneously bound to our experience with them and to the road before us. Regardless, we are constantly thinking of our project in means far greater than we expected and hope that the con-

nections made around the Great Lakes can expand the possibilities for re-imagining our communities.

And with all this it may be needless to add that we expect to be home and back in Saint Paul by sometime next week. See you soon, Minnesota!



Two Solidago Riders trekking along

## Majors Outside the Classroom

What do English Majors do when they aren’t buried in a book or writing brilliant papers?

By: David Jacobson ‘13

During my leisure time at Macalester, I can either be found chowing down with John Bennett in Café Mac (highlighted in next month’s Waverley), or working on my head-spins in the Leonard Center. I’ve enjoyed flailing my body to music since I was a kid, but it wasn’t until I came to Macalester that I started to take dance somewhat seriously.

In the fall of my freshman year, I danced with Bodacious, Macalester’s hip-hop dance student org. The following spring, my friend James “Flo” Zhou started up Visceral Breakdance Club, and

I joined. He even got school funding so we could hire local legend, Phillip Cole (aka Mr. Slim), to teach classes three times a week. The group is taking off.

On the evening of November 4, Visceral took part in “The Fall Break Off,” an annual dance event hosted by Bodacious. About a hundred break-dancers from the Twin Cities came to battle in Kagin at this event. In the world of break-dance, battling refers to dancing against an opponent(s) in a competition. Generally, whoever is more creative, or has more style and better looking moves, wins.

Several members of Visceral, including myself and co-captain Stephen

Peyton, entered into a battle with several non-Macalester dancers. We took second place. Needless to say, we were shocked!

The other shining moment of our fall semester was a performance at the Bodacious Showcase on November 12. We did a choreographed number (created by Stephen Peyton, Lydia Brosnahan and myself) to the LMFAO song “Sexy and I Know It.” You can check out a video of our performance (with bios) on Youtube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZiWRFC9y4o>.



Visceral, at the Bodacious Showcase.



David Jacobson, hot moves and hot pants.

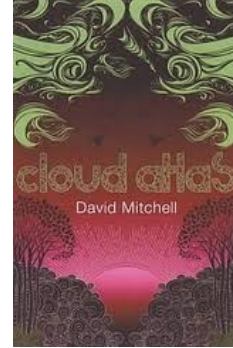
# Reading Recommendations from a Professor

## Cloud Atlas

By: David Mitchell

"I dare you not to become completely obsessed with this book. Read it before it becomes a terrible movie."

- Peter Bognanni



Maddie's convincing face  
(at the Globe Theatre)

Cont. from p. 1

Along with the value of constant British humor, I was also able to benefit from London's close proximity to other major European cities. Despite my trips to Prague, Vienna, Paris, and Berlin, my appreciation for my European "hometown" only grew stronger. By the time my residence hall threw its end-of-the-year Boat Party on the Thames, I felt a deep connection to the city and realized

just how lucky I was to have had such an amazing study abroad experience.

There are plenty of reasons to consider studying abroad, whether it is to fill major requirements, explore new places, meet new people, or even just to try something different. If any of these prospects seems appealing, make an appointment at the International Center to get tips on what program or location is

right for you. And if studying in London seems like it would suit your interests, feel free to stop by the English Department and I would be more than happy to answer any questions that I can. If I can't, I'll ramble on about how fun it was until you are convinced.

(See the picture at left for a preview)

**"...such an amazing study abroad experience"**

## T-shirt Design Contest

We are now accepting submissions for a new English Department T-shirt Design. Designs that are literary in nature are preferred, but the best design-whatever it is-will win! We'll be accepting submissions until Friday, December 9. There will be a glorious prize awarded to the creator of the winning submission.

Please send a jpeg of your design to Jan Beebe.

<jbeebe@macalester.edu>



# English Department Writing Contests

## The Academy of American Poets

\$100 prize for the three best poems by a Macalester Student

## Nick Adams Short Story Contest

\$1000 prize for best short story throughout The Associated Colleges of the Midwest

## Harry Scheuman Writing Prize for Seniors

Up to four \$250 prizes annually, awarded to the most outstanding works in the categories of literary essay, creative prose, and poetry (seniors only)

The English Department's deadline for these contests is **February 6th, 2012** so now is a good time to start working on them! Full details at [macalester.edu/english/contest](http://macalester.edu/english/contest)

## Hillman Wheeler International Prize

\$350 awarded to two students studying abroad in Fall 2012—submit the essay you wrote for application to study abroad to Jan Beebe to be considered for this award. **Deadline TBA in spring semester!**

## Birthday Babes

**Woody Allen** – December 1, 1935 – “Money is better than poverty, if only for financial reasons.”

**Ann Patchett** – December 2, 1963 – “It makes you wonder. All the brilliant things we might have done with our lives if only we suspected we knew how.”

**Joseph Conrad** – December 3, (1857 - 1924) – “We live as we dream – alone...”

**Joan Didion** – December 5, 1934 – “You have to pick the places you don't walk away from.”

**John Milton** – December 9, (1608 - 1674) – “The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.”

**Emily Dickinson** – December 10, (1830 - 1886) – “To live is so startling it leaves little time for anything else.”

**Gustave Flaubert** – December 12, (1821 – 1880) – “To be stupid, selfish, and have good health are three requirements for happiness, though if stupidity is lacking, all is lost.”

**Jane Austen** – December 16, (1775 - 1817) - “I do not want people to be very agreeable, as it saves me the trouble of liking them a great deal.”

**John Kennedy Toole** – December 17, (1937 - 1969) – “When Fortuna spins you downward, go out to a movie and get more out of life.”

**Juan Ramon Jimenez** – December 24, (1881 - 1958) – “If they give you ruled paper, write the other way.”

**Rudyard Kipling** – December 30, (1865 - 1936) – “I never made a mistake in my life; at least, never one that I couldn't explain away afterwards.”



# ENGLISH

Macalester College  
English Department  
Newsletter

Senior Editor  
Jamie Lucarelli

Editors  
Maddie Disner  
David Jacobson

## Happenings

Treat Nights on Wednesdays from 4:30-7 p.m. in the Literary Lounge

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The last Treat Night of the fall semester will be a holiday party! Come join us for cookie decorating, snacks, and games on December 7.

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The Literary Lounge will be open all day on Study Day, December 14. Coffee, tea and snacks will be available and you can print papers from the English Office. Stop by and study with us!  
(Hosted by the English Honors Society)

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The deadline for submitting T-shirt designs for our new majors shirt is December 9!



Happy Holidays,  
From the non-denominational editorial elves

