

Intertext

Volume 21
Issue 1 2013

Article 14

2013

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Recommended Citation

Gunnip, Ginger S. (2013) "Human Nature," *Intertext*. Vol. 21 : Iss. 1 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://surface.syr.edu/intertext/vol21/iss1/14>

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Human Nature

Ginger Star Gunnip

*Dandelions dance on the lawn.
Sun-rays pierce my soul; I feel whole.
God is by my side always my guide,
pushing me back on the right track.*

One deep breath unveils a unique smell from the jagged, yellow petals, as they warm in the summer sun. The odor processes in my mind where I associate the nostalgic smell with my childhood home. The inviting flower lures my attention as I stare into the golden bloom, wondering about its creation, for what seems to be an eternity. Time has stopped all around me as I lie on the corner-lawn and interact with this gorgeous phenomenon of life. I study its intricate detail; every inch that is above ground will undergo thorough analysis as my mind attempts

to define the meaning of its beauty on Earth. Color variations reflect into my eyes, revealing a densely packed, deep yellow center, like a nucleolus in the nucleus of the flower to the faint, yellow plasma membrane on the outer surface. The delicate dandelion blooms open in the day and close at night while I sleep.

My heart skips along with me throughout the grass as I gather a bouquet for my mother. Where is she? Never here, it seems. I give them to Gramma, instead; she is grateful for the gift of love. Others bash my hand-picked perfection and claim they are merely weeds. I disagree. They are youthful and free, just like me. They are my favorite flower; clear is my favorite color; air is my favorite smell; water is my favorite taste. The youth-inspired feeling of freedom subsides each time I ride in the

back seat, glaring out the window at the neighbors; mowing straight through their own, God-given spread of dandelions. I scream, “NO!” But they do not hear; “Just leave that last patch of dandelions there, please!” But I cannot save their lives. The green and yellow mulch quickly spits out the side of the mower as the human hastily pushes through each strip of their manufactured lawn and the motor slices into my innocence a bit deeper with each clatter; it cuts. No dandelion remains; the weed-eater finishes the job with nothing but sticky dandelion residue left behind.

*I slowly breathe the crisp, Wisconsin air
as wind blows my hair
Every which way, which I cannot control;
God is the keeper of this soul. I grow old.*

A child hands me a dandelion with a look of pride and overwhelming innocence in his soul. I see myself in his eyes. I do not want to touch the messy weed with its hollow, leafless flower stem (Hanrahan). Nonetheless, I am inclined to accept this compliment. He picked it for me. “Thank you.” Milky-white puss oozes from the stem and interacts with my skin cells, leaving a feeling, sticky and bitter. A pungent smell of death enters my nasal passages. I pretend that it is the most beautiful, long-stem rose, free of thorns. I over-accentuate breathing in to smell it. I caress the weed and hold it to my heart, as if it was the most precious garnet in all the Earth. He turns away from me with a

sense of satisfaction; I throw it to the ground. Dismissing the young man’s intelligence, I smile to myself, “He bought it.” Then, he lifts up the discarded dandelion and hands it to me again. “No, thank you.” I say. “It is yucky. I don’t want it. Stop handing it to me; I don’t want it.” I have become the human I despise. I push the mower. I consider the dandelion a pest.

The dandelions all spring back up from beneath the surface of the ground, despite their severed heads. The *Taraxacum officinale* was blessed with a persistent tap root. It is quite large, with numerous hairy rootlets spreading deep and wide into the ground (Hanrahan). In addition to the wind spreading its wishful seeds, it can reproduce from any part of the taproot remaining in the ground after mechanical removal—it is nearly impossible for the ignorant hand to just pluck away its pesky blooms from their lawn. Humans are forced to study the plant’s genetics to create herbicides, which can keep our unnatural lawns high-maintenance, but weed-free. Thank God for biotechnology? We shall see...

Works Cited

- Hanrahan, Clare. “Dandelion.” *Gale Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine*. 2005. Encyclopedia.com. 19 Feb. 2012. <http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

Dedicated to my grandmother, Theresa Rita Jones, who raised me like a mother and passed away last May.