

2019

# Honors Journal 2019

University of Maine at Farmington

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A photograph of a campus street scene. The street is paved and leads into the distance, flanked by trees and buildings. On the left, there are green bushes and a building with large windows. On the right, there are more trees and a brick building. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

University of Maine at  
Farmington  
**Honors Journal**

Volume 1 Spring 2019



# Honors Journal

Edited by Belanna Morales and BrookLyn Miller



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# FOREWORD

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The University of Maine at Farmington Honors Journal began with the simple idea of creating a space where students across all disciplines could display their best work. Often, classes revolve around students producing work, turning it in for a grade, and never returning to it again. In each student's work, there is so much potential to grow and so much room for interaction with the ideas of their peers. The process of creating this first edition of the Honors Journal involved a lot of questions that we would solve along the way, but from the beginning we knew we wanted to push students to think of their essays, creative works, and art as more than assignments: we wanted the University's honors students to show the campus what they are capable of.

The work presented here from our five contributors addresses the theme of the unknown, which mirrors the process of starting a journal from scratch. In this edition, reader, you will see that there is uncertainty in what lies in a relationship once financial struggles cause strain, and there is the struggle to keep knowledge alive when other forms of it have been forced onto populations. There are questions in how we cope and how we heal; there are questions regarding if we survive, or if we burn. We are very fortunate to have had the opportunity to feature the work of these students, and we thank you for witnessing their showcase.

—The Editors,

Belanna Morales

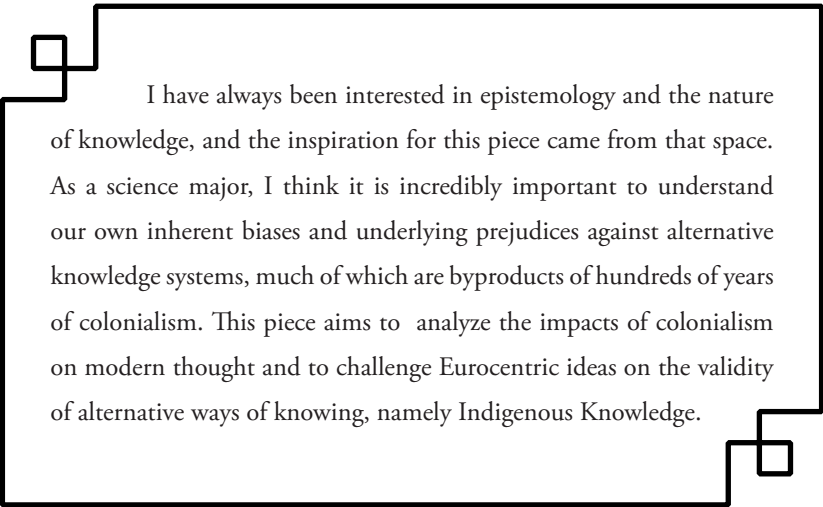
BrookLyn Miller





While coming up with ideas for “Analogous” I realized I wanted to explore the relationships behind the spreading and prevention of the black plague during the 1600s. Plague doctors wore masks filled with herbs in order to try and protect themselves from becoming sick. I wanted to work with the symbolism behind these masks, but wasn't sure how to do so. After a while I decided to bring in the rat to show the main way that the plague was spread. This helped to create a strange correlation between the mask and the rat. I used Adobe Illustrator to create this piece.





I have always been interested in epistemology and the nature of knowledge, and the inspiration for this piece came from that space. As a science major, I think it is incredibly important to understand our own inherent biases and underlying prejudices against alternative knowledge systems, much of which are byproducts of hundreds of years of colonialism. This piece aims to analyze the impacts of colonialism on modern thought and to challenge Eurocentric ideas on the validity of alternative ways of knowing, namely Indigenous Knowledge.

What is knowledge? Is it grounded in facts and reason, or is it malleable and changing? Knowledge itself is tricky to define, but the extensive acquisition of knowledge is pervasive throughout history and modern society. I am sure that many of us have heard the old adage, “knowledge is power” at some point in our lives. As a child, before I understood power structures and subjugation, I would repeat this to myself as a mantra to help further my academic success. Now, however, the insidious nature of this adage stares me in the face. Knowledge is a form of power, in that it has been defined by those in power, extracted from subjugated populations during colonization, and used against these populations for hundreds of years (Smith, 2012b, p. 58). This essay argues that knowledge is a colonized space by exploring Western colonization of knowledge, Indigenous ways of knowing, and efforts based on decolonizing knowledge through respectful collaboration.

### **Colonized Knowledges**

The world in which we live today is the product of roughly 500 years of Western imperialism and colonial expansion (Smith, 2012a, p. 21). Just as lands and resources were there to be “discovered” and extracted, so too was knowledge to be appropriated and distributed outward for Western scientific advancement under the project of modernity (Smith, 2012b, p. 58). Modernity sparked the rise of reason and rational “science,” and provided the catalyst for organizing bodies of knowledge, rational rules of law, and the pursuit of economic self-interest (Smith, 2012b, p. 59). What classifies knowledge as such, and which types of knowledges are valid? The discovery of new types of knowledges and ideas as to the nature of knowledge itself became commodities sought out, like other extractable resources (Smith, 2012b, p. 59). The classification-based ways of knowing for Western colonials exploited Indigenous peoples by labeling them as flora and fauna, non-human, or sub-human (Smith, 2012b, p. 60). Westerners labeled this practice as a type of

scientific research and saw Indigenous peoples as objects for study. Wilson (1996) points out that Western history excludes Indigenous interpretations, contributions, and perspectives (p. 23). The dehumanizing categorization of Indigenous peoples plays a role in this phenomenon, as Western scientists would not acknowledge an object of research as having any contribution to scientific thought, since objects had no life essence or humanity. As Smith (2012b) puts it, “To acknowledge their contribution would be, in terms of the rules of research practice, be as legitimate as acknowledging the contribution of a variety of plant” (p. 60). Because Indigenous peoples were not seen as fully “human,” their knowledges became “new discoveries” commodified as properties of and for the West (Smith, 2012b, p. 61).

As Western science progressed, classifications of Indigenous peoples progressed as well. Indigenous peoples were eventually seen as human through Western eyes, however, they were also seen as weak. As the survival-of-the-fittest aspects of Darwinism became more popular, it was believed that Indigenous peoples were too weak to sustain themselves in civilized society and that they would begin to die off (Smith, 2012b, p. 62). This Western belief enabled cultural “collecting” to rise, which involved stealing Indigenous cultural items under the implication that these items would decay or be lost as Indigenous tribes died out (Smith, 2012b, p. 61). The practice of “collecting” what the West labeled as cultural “artifacts” for study was actually a system of theft from Indigenous communities, many of which are still attempting to reclaim these culturally significant items (Smith, 2012b, p. 61). Another consequence of this classification of Indigenous peoples was the removal of children from families and their placement in boarding schools in order to learn Western knowledges and ways of living (Smith, 2012b, p. 64). Smith (2012b) expressed this as “positional superiority,” an attempt to remove Indigeneity and impart Western colonial knowledges on the youth for cultural eradication (p. 64). This cultural eradication included the removal of Indigenous knowledges.

A theme throughout Western colonial history of knowledge persists today: the West views itself as the creators of civilization and the source of knowledge itself. The West posits itself as having the final say on what knowledge is and what it is not and, generally, knowledges that are not grounded in quantitative data and cannot be continually reproduced or written down are not included in the West's definition of knowledge (Wilson, 1996, p. 29). Take, for example, the importance of storytelling and oral tradition in many Indigenous communities. As Wilson (1996) points out, these forms of knowledge are often dismissed by Western scientists for reasons such as "oral histories cannot be validated and are not trustworthy," or "oral accounts change with each generation" (p. 24). The Western critique that oral accounts change with new generations is interesting, as one of the most pervasive criticisms of oral traditions is that these traditions are archaic and have no place in modern science. "Tradition" in Western thought implies old and static, thus by this view, new materials are not allowed in oral accounts as it removes the "traditional" aspect (Wilson, 1996, 29). This creates a bit of a conundrum, as according to Western knowledge, oral tradition is not trustworthy as it is archaic, yet if it updates and changes with new information, it is not deemed as grounded in fact and is thus not trustworthy due to these generational changes. The Western manipulation of knowledge validity shows one way that knowledge gained through Indigenous colonization has been used, in turn, to colonize Indigenous minds, as many Indigenous scholars had to overcome the idea that their knowledge bases were not valid enough to contribute to their fields (Smith, 2012b, p. 59). Despite the effects of colonization, Indigenous peoples have held their knowledges and ways of knowing. Indigenous knowledges contrast Indigenous peoples with the West, and as Smith (2012b) expresses, it is a part of themselves that the West cannot yet decipher or control (p. 74).

### Indigenous Knowledge and TEK

What is Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)? This is a question that the West has begun to ask in light of growing environmental sustainability issues. As McGregor (2004) puts it, “although TEK is a construct of non-Indigenous origin, the knowledge or way of life to which it refers is very real and originates with Indigenous people” (p. 395). These knowledges and ways of life did not need to be defined within Indigenous communities, and thus, the definitions imposed have been almost entirely from the West, with little regard as to whether Indigenous peoples agree with the definitions (McGregor, 2004, p. 390). Western knowledge is generally able to be separated from the people – it is a noun, a thing, with which people can read in texts, learn from videos, and replicate in scientific experiments. Indigenous Knowledge, however, cannot be separated from the people and places in which it originates (McGregor, 2004, p. 390). Nadasdy (1999) calls Indigenous Knowledge a “way of life” rather than a body of knowledge, and expresses, like McGregor, that Indigenous knowledge cannot be separated out from the cultures that give them meaning (p. 5). McGregor (2004) frames Indigenous Knowledge as the knowledge and relationships with Creation and the natural world, including the relationships themselves (p. 391). “It is something one does, rather than simply something one knows” (McGregor, 2004, p. 391). TEK can be thought of as a subset of Indigenous Knowledge, by Western standards of thought.

There is a movement in the ecological and sustainability spheres to integrate TEK with Western science to create better solutions to our growing list of environmental issues. While this may seem like a step forward at first, there are a few underlying problems that need to be addressed. Nadasdy (1999) brings to light the power disparity between those who have TEK and those who want it (p. 9). Western society has had the final say on what constitutes knowledge, and



during times of disagreement, Western thought has prevailed. As described by Nadasdy (1999),

Scientists and resource managers usually do not even acknowledge, much less attempt to make use of, the stories, beliefs, and values which inform the hunters' view of the world and specify the proper relationship between themselves and the animals in question. Since these non-quantitative understandings cannot really be 'translated into the language of TEK,' they tend to 'drop out of the database.' ( p. 9)

This shows one way in which Western science holds power over Indigenous science, through what Nadasdy (1999) refers to as distillation (p. 5). In an attempt to "integrate" TEK into Western science, TEK researchers have had to distill and compartmentalize it (Nadasdy, 1999, p. 5). Distillation of TEK refers to the specific pieces of information that Western scientists attempt to collect, while ignoring seemingly "unnecessary" aspects or types of information (Nadasdy, 1999, p. 7). Information is distilled out and only that which can be worked into graphs, numbers, and other quantitative data is deemed suitable for scientific use. Compartmentalization refers to the subdivision of knowledge due to the perceived need to classify types of knowledge, which has a profound effect on the ways people can talk about knowledge (Nadasdy, 1999, p. 5). Modern science is highly compartmentalized, particularly science related to biology and life. Look at one ecosystem, such as the Sandy River, and you will find a multitude of scientists studying one small subset of the whole – geomorphologists, hydrologists, wildlife biologists, ornithologists, microbiologists, and so on. Nadasdy (1999) expresses that this compartmentalization will not work with TEK, because the whole system matters, and its individual parts cannot be separated from one another (p. 6). Integration cannot continue to focus on the separation and picking apart of

TEK, or the attempted reshaping of TEK to fit within Western science. With all of this on the table, how do we move forward together in solidarity with each other and our environment?

### **Moving Forward in Respectful Collaboration**

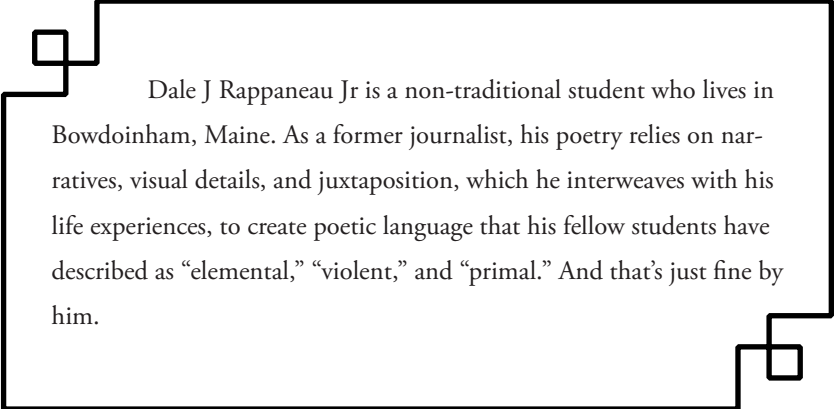
Working together to provide solutions for environmental issues does not require an integration or melding of bodies of knowledges, but rather the beginnings of decolonization of knowledge. Indigenous people need the power to decide what knowledges to share, how to share them, and with whom they share. Equal footing for Indigenous peoples is imperative in developing respectful collaboration between communities. Berkes (2010) suggests that we frame the “science versus traditional knowledge” debate as a collaborative science and traditional knowledge dialogue and partnership (p. 151). He expresses that knowledge is a dynamic process, and that Western researchers and Indigenous peoples are “co-producers of knowledge” (p. 153). I believe that the idea of co-producers of knowledge is key, as it implies a shared responsibility to one another as opposed to a power relationship. Losing the power dynamic as it relates to knowledge is possible and is happening in our time.

One case study that shows the respectful collaboration between Western science and TEK is the effort to protect Maine’s black ash trees from emerald ash borers (EAB). “In the Northeast, work is underway to involve tribes in Emergency Response Planning efforts with invasive species such as the EAB” (Voggeser et al, 2013, p. 621). Collaborative efforts have shown key areas of research and actions to be taken to ensure the survival of the black ash, which is vital to Maine Indigenous tribes (Voggeser et al, 2013, p. 621). Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) have been important in strengthening government-to-government relations and consultations in conjunction with other federal policies aimed at protecting

Indigenous rights (Voggesser et al, 2013, p. 621). Respectful federal and tribal relationships are key to engaging in collaborative efforts as co-producers of knowledge. “Collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and joint action by tribes and nontribal stakeholders can lead to more effective and sustainable planning efforts around climate change and invasive species” (Voggesser et al, 2013, p. 622). Collaborations such as these shift the paradigm and allow for the decolonization of thought and knowledges. The environmental challenges facing each of us are daunting, and ignoring the continued effects of the colonization of minds will not serve any of us well in developing solutions for a more sustainable future.

### **Conclusion**

Western colonization permeates through our history and our present. Recognizing how colonization of knowledges has taken place and how respectful collaboration can begin to decolonize our knowledges provides a path forward to a more environmentally just future. Knowledge is power, and for much of colonized history, the West has held that power unyieldingly. Not only has the West held the power in the extraction, appropriation, and assimilation of knowledge, but in the defining of knowledge itself. Indigenous knowledges, or ways of knowing, are not the West’s to define, compartmentalize, distill, or forcibly integrate into an overarching idea of a “valid” knowledge system. Respectful collaboration with Indigenous peoples is crucial in today’s climate and does not require assimilation of knowledges, but rather, a co-producing mentality that challenges colonial power dynamics and begins the decolonization of minds and knowledges across the globe.



Dale J Rappaneau Jr is a non-traditional student who lives in Bowdoinham, Maine. As a former journalist, his poetry relies on narratives, visual details, and juxtaposition, which he interweaves with his life experiences, to create poetic language that his fellow students have described as “elemental,” “violent,” and “primal.” And that’s just fine by him.

it explodes like a house cat.  
it bounces off the undercarriage  
and disappears into a dark trench  
overripe with road trash. it's the driver  
braking hard and gripping the wheel  
as if afraid it might all upside-down—  
as if god may unplug gravity  
so it all soars into space, the rocks  
and road and Nissan Altima, earth shrinking  
in the side mirror, blue into black  
—poof!—gone like the cat.  
but no—god has no hand in it.  
it's the car in reverse, the driver panicked  
rolling down a window, leaning into the night.  
it's the adrenaline afterglow of the heart,  
and the speed at which we move on:  
lurching forward, then slowly accelerating  
into tomorrow, in hopes it might not be so bad.

at the dinner party last night, near the brioche and boxed wine, it occurred to me i've never seen how a death's-head hawkmoth puts itself down a human throat. i imagine its dusted wings frantic against the flesh of an open gullet. i imagine the drool and spittle lotion slick on its thin legs. i'm sure the bug panics. i'm sure its antennae beat on the esophagus walls and when it plunges fluttering into stomach acid its abdomen explodes with juice and drab color. i imagine its thin silk layer of skin peeling away. i imagine this as the evening moved us in its mouth, or maybe in a way we forced ourselves into its dark maw. why else would we arrive so willingly, drunk on the daily honey of what it takes to deteriorate? too often i am too morose until it gets interesting. too often i am eating cheese with a side of moths, the absurdity of myself pouring forth as if from a punctured hose, drenching these wings, this party, this hole i fall into again.

Dale Rappeneau JUST ANOTHER ELEGY FOR A CHICKEN

---

my six yellow hens forage  
on the lawn. it's high noon  
of summer—black fly  
season, when insects  
swarm to the waterholes of  
horse eyes—and already i  
am drunk on the heat and  
sweat of digging post  
holes, working palms raw  
and blistered, unaware  
that my young white husky  
has already sprinted across  
the lawn and dug her teeth  
into the soft plumage of a  
buff orpington. already the  
dog is whipping the poor  
bird back and forth in  
a cloud of feathers, snapping  
the avian neck at odd  
angles. already i am  
running, even now,  
panicked at the thought of  
what mangled gore i'll find  
when i arrive, and i am  
distraught by how much i  
need this to be a metaphor  
for my sister. how i need to

write things like the *bird's*  
*lightweight wing bones*  
*snapped when the world*  
*went feral*, and not feel her  
run through me. i am tired  
of getting my metaphors  
mixed because i can't  
unmuddy this grief. i am  
sick of seeing her buried  
beneath these words. yet  
still i carry her memory as  
one carries the limp corpse  
of something bird-like and  
frail: its eyes dark as oil,  
limbs punctured  
repeatedly in some sick  
massacre of the flesh, this  
bundled sorrow again  
placed in a shallow grave  
to be unearthed at the  
faintest reminder, the  
shovel always in reach, the  
weight of it leaning into me  
as i again lean into my  
work.



it's winter over the abbagadasset river.  
from the old bridge i hear them in the smelt shack,  
voices out there on the frozen riverbend, cries  
and pleasure sighs of yes yes and yes,  
obscene in their disregard for fishing.  
and i think, yes, that's what love is:  
strangers huddled in little huts, warm  
above the glowing ice—so careful  
in how they avoid the dangling hooks—  
so belligerent in how a discarded bra hangs  
from the doorknob as if their shouts aren't enough.  
standing there, watching snowflakes tumble from gray  
clouds, i remember how my father kneeled into wet  
earth in search for nightcrawlers, his pants muddied  
from being out all night, crawling on his belly, feeling  
his way across the world as if blind. and i think, yes,  
maybe that too is love: the aching strain of joints,  
the clumsy fondling of empty holes. there is passion  
in casting lines and letting them go unanswered,  
in sinking into the mire with all intent of getting dirty.  
and maybe i'll tell you this tonight, my love. maybe i'll  
tongue the words in such a way that makes you squeal  
with understanding, naked of all ignorance,  
and blatant as a bra waving like a flag for all to see.

This piece was created using 1,000 matchsticks. I cut off the heads of the matchsticks and applied the heads to the base of the sculpture. I was then left with the wooden bodies of the matchsticks, which I used to build the structure of the flames. To achieve the singed look of the piece, I burned the remaining wooden pieces to ashes and made them into a paste that I painted onto the sculpture. I would say that I am proud of this sculpture because it was an immense amount of work to do during the short time span I was given to plan and create it. For the project, students had to create a piece using 1,000 units of an object, and I feel that I was able to use my creativity well to finish this project in a way that I was satisfied with.





This section of “You Done?” is an excerpt from the beginning of a one-act I wrote in the 2018 spring semester. This one-act follows the relationship of a young, married couple as they come to terms with the fact that their relationship may have run its course. This piece started with the simple question “you done?” and evolved from there. The goal of this piece was to create characters that felt real, spoke honestly and naturally, and, most importantly, resonated with readers in sometimes uncomfortable ways. I wanted to depict a relationship failing in which no one party is to blame. I didn’t want there to be easy answers or finger pointing, but rather a look at how two people may love each other and still simply not work out. People communicate differently, people have different needs, people are complex, and above all, people are not perfect. It’s rare for me to feel particularly fondly about anything I write, but I’m proud of this work because I feel like I achieved many of the goals that I had for it. It’s nearly a year later, and I still feel a deep love for these characters and the story that they share.

You Done?

---

Excerpt from a One Act  
Kristen Sarasin

Cast of Characters

Kara: 24. Drained, tired, agitated, and bordering on aggressive. Yet, she retains a softness and there's no doubt that she cares for her husband. Married to Ryan.

Ryan: 25. Angry, struggling, stressed. Yet, ambitious, hardworking, and hopeful that things will work out. Married to Kara.

Scene:

The living room of their apartment in Missouri.

Time:

Current day. Spring.

*Lights up on a cozy living room. It could use a day or two of tidying up, but it isn't nearly as bad as it could be. A plush couch is centered behind a wooden coffee table.*

*A bowl of pretzels rests on the table along with a half-finished beer, disarrayed papers, and a bottle opener.*

*A bookshelf is visible from behind it. The shelf is disorganized with piles of books, picture frames, and knick-knacks scattered across the shelves. The frames all contain family photos, pictures of Kara and Ryan together, or group pictures that include both of them. There are also a variety of photos of their recently deceased dog.*

*A cushioned dog bed is located near the shelf. The toys are neatly stacked in it, and a folded blanket is placed over it.*

*Ryan rigidly sits on the couch with his gaze locked on his laptop screen. In direct contrast with this, his tie is loosened and his sleeves are rolled up. A door is heard creaking open and then closed. He looks up briefly and then returns to his laptop.*



*Kara steps into the room with hesitation and a bag of Chinese takeout. A beat goes by. There's an uncomfortable air between them. Kara shifts in discomfort.*

KARA

*(with forced enthusiasm)*

Well? How'd the interview go?  
*He still doesn't look at her.*

RYAN

I couldn't really tell you.

KARA

Oh. Alright.

*Beat.*

RYAN

I just...I just don't know. I'm younger than the other candidates. Less experienced.

*Kara kicks off her shoes and crosses over to the table onto which she puts the bag of food. She doesn't sit down, but instead hovers.*

KARA

Oh c'mon, there's no way of you actually knowing that.

*It's just insecurity talking.*

RYAN

It's not exactly hard to guess. I'm a recent graduate going after a teaching position. There's hundreds of us in every state.

KARA

It's like that with every job. We're all just graduates going after things we're not qualified for.

RYAN

*(with a glance at Kara)*

Not all of us.

*Kara wilts. Irritation flickers across her face.*

KARA

*Have a little faith in yourself.*

RYAN

*I'm a weak candidate at best.*

KARA

*Fake it til you make it, though, right?*

RYAN

Yeah. I guess.

KARA

No, no guessing. Just knowing. Appearing confident is the best thing you can do.

RYAN

Funny. I thought the best thing I could do was get a job, pay for my entire half of rent, and start paying off my student loans. Who knew all I had to do was appear confident.

*The words linger for a moment.*

*Ryan fidgets.*

*With a deep breath Kara attempts to redirect the conversation.*

RYAN

/Are you ever going to actually sit down?

KARA

/I got dinner.

*She starts to unpack the bag of takeout with determination. She sits on the couch after, but doesn't angle herself towards Ryan.*

RYAN

Thanks for dinner.

KARA

Your favorite.

RYAN

Yeah, I can see that.

KARA

I even got you extra crab rangoon.

*For a moment Ryan perks up and forgets his irritation.*

RYAN

How did I get so lucky?

KARA

*(a terseness in her voice)*

You know, I wonder that too.

*A beat follows.*

*The uncomfortable air returns.*

*The food is laid out on the coffee table and they start to eat.*

*Kara picks at it while Ryan digs in.*

RYAN

Is this from the place next to Price Chopper's?

KARA

Li's? Yeah. They have better food.

RYAN

I like the place near Walmart. They give you way more.

And, they have the best crab Rangoon I've ever eaten.

The move was worth it just for that.

KARA

*(shrugging)*

Not sure I can get on board with that. Anyways, they're an extra fifteen minutes away.

RYAN

It's definitely not that far.

KARA

It is on my way back from work.

RYAN

Ah.

KARA

Plus, I really hate it there. The food's greasy and it's the only time I've ever gotten food poisoning.

RYAN

I wasn't criticizing you. I was just saying.

KARA

Right, and I'm just saying that I hate that place and I got food poisoning from them.

RYAN

It was just the stomach flu, Kara.

KARA

I didn't agree with you then, and I don't agree with

you now. It was their chicken lo mein. Not the fucking stomach flu.

*Ryan snorts.*

*Kara glares.*

*The moment lingers, but then passes. They continue eating.*

RYAN

How was work?

KARA

Another day in retail hell, another dollar.

RYAN

At least it wasn't a sale day.

KARA

Yeah, that's this weekend. Winter clearance.

RYAN

You guys have had a winter clearance sale, like, four times now.

KARA

Gotta get the inventory out somehow.

RYAN

You're gonna be the only opening cashier, aren't you?

KARA

Oooh, how'd you know. *She takes a bite of food, chews.*  
*Beat passes by.* I actually think they're going to  
move me out back. They started training me on pricing.

RYAN

I thought out back was for full time employees.

KARA

It is.

RYAN

Would be kind of difficult to balance that and vet  
school.

KARA

I hate that term. It sounds so fake. (*In a mocking  
voice*) Vet school, where I'm going so I can become a  
vet!

RYAN

That wasn't exactly my point.

KARA

I know what your point was.

RYAN

Think of how much shit you get now for the one day a  
week that you're not available.

KARA

Yes, I'm aware-

RYAN

Once you're enrolled in classes it would be downright impossible to balance the two.

KARA

Yeah. It would.

RYAN

So?

KARA

So what?

RYAN

What are you going to do? Let them make you full time and deal with it later?

KARA

Look. I... we need the money.

RYAN

*Sharply:*

Believe me Kara, I know we need the fucking money.

KARA

I can't keep getting 30 or 35 hours a week.



RYAN

Try talking to Shelley again.

KARA

That won't do shit.

RYAN

She loves you. She'd do anything to make you stay.

KARA

She might love me. But there just aren't enough hours to go around up front. She's the one who suggested that they start training me out back.

RYAN

I'm surprised. She seemed to like you up front.

KARA

Out back is the only way I'll be guaranteed hours. She's helping me out a lot by sending me there.

RYAN

So you don't think you're going out back. You know it.

KARA

Well, yeah. It's not much of a choice.

RYAN

But you can't be full time there and in school.

KARA

*Irritation growing:*

Yes. I think that's been established.

*A pause.**Kara still picks at her food.**Ryan pushes his away and turns towards Kara.*

RYAN

You've been out of undergrad for almost two years.

*Kara stiffens.*

KARA

I'm also capable of counting.

*Ryan rolls his eyes.*

RYAN

Don't get like that.

KARA

I'm not getting like anything.

RYAN

You're being snippy.

KARA

Because you're being difficult!

*He leans back into the couch and puts his hands up in a peaceful/placating gesture.*

RYAN

I just wasn't sure if you'd thought about what going full time meant. I didn't think that was being difficult.

KARA

Ryan, we need the money.

RYAN

Right, but-

KARA

You know what furthering my education would do?

RYAN

Cost money.

KARA

Exactly. Cost money. Money we don't have. And quite frankly? I don't want to ask my parents for anymore loans. It's humiliating. Plus, we both know they can't really afford it either. They struggled enough helping us move out here.

RYAN

The longer you wait, the harder it will be for you to go back to school.

KARA

Yeah, well someone needs to be able to pay the bills.

*A beat goes by.*

*Kara rubs her temples.*

*Ryan looks away.*

KARA

I'm sorry. I... I didn't mean that.

RYAN

I'm pretty sure you did.

KARA

That wasn't a fair thing to say.

RYAN

Fair never seems to matter too much though, does it?

KARA

Ryan, all I meant was that-

RYAN

This isn't me picking a fight. But you meant exactly what you said.

KARA

Ryan-

RYAN

It's not like I'm not looking for a job.

KARA

I know, I know.

RYAN

I don't think there's a high school in a thirty mile radius that I haven't applied to.

KARA

I know.

RYAN

Fuck, make that a forty-five-mile radius. (*incredulous, but not particularly heated*) "Someone needs to pay the bills"? You didn't even pay rent the first year we lived together.

KARA

It was a shitty one-bedroom apartment right off campus and you told me not to worry about it. And that was four years ago. This is now.

RYAN

Yeah. This is now.

*They shift on the couch. Unsure of what to say now or how to take back words.*

*Kara starts wiping crumbs off of the table and then glances over at Ryan. She opens her mouth and then closes it.*

*Ryan eats the last crab rangoon from the carton.*

KARA

You done?

RYAN

Yeah.

*Kara repacks the rest of the food. She stands and picks up the takeout, and then strides off stage.*

END SCENE ONE.



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