

# English III

## 2014-2015

### Promise

by Whitney Lydrickson

Pines droop while fog hovers in murky air  
like silent streams of smoke.  
Mountain bluebirds relax,  
nestled in twig houses scattered like ornaments  
through green needles far above  
the forest floor.  
Below, squirrels rush to hideouts  
carved long ago, seeking warmth  
before another January snow.  
Blazing sun  
lingers beyond dark clouds,  
assuring white flakes.

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### Patterns

by Noah Stapp

A few months ago, my progress on learning a piano piece plateaued. Instead of changing my approach, I kept trying to play the difficult sections by brute force, practicing over and over with no real improvement. I thought that I could conquer it by simply doing what I had been doing before without changing my method: I gave in to hubris. This belief that we can be successful by repeating old patterns is a common occurrence: we learn through copying others, and have difficulty changing our perspective. Humans learn to walk, talk, and do most things through imitation. However, this reliance on previous knowledge is harmful, as progress requires a new approach. Each type of music requires a fresh strategy, new movements, and new rhythms, yet we repeat methods that have worked so far: we attempt to play a Mozart symphony the same way we would perform *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*. This arrogance, revealed in the battered pages of history, expresses how countless empires and armies have fallen due to the overconfidence of historical figures.

Napoleon, the conqueror of Europe and one of the greatest military minds of history, was not immune to pride. During June of 1812, Napoleon led an army of more than half a million soldiers into Russia as retribution for Tsar Alexander's refusal to help blockade Britain. Napoleon "prophesied the war would be over in twenty days." However, this prediction would be one of the most inaccurate in history. The Russian forces simply led Napoleon's army across Russia, destroying crops and farmland as they went. The "Grande Armee" was losing thousands of men per day due to sickness, desertion, and the scorching heat of the Russian plains. When Napoleon finally reached

### Lively

by Whitney Lydrickson

Dainty violets mature on steep  
mountain slopes; snow dissolves  
like sugar in tea all around them.  
Bright green specks on nearby boulders  
become large patches within the season,  
decorating gray masses as if they were spots  
on giraffes. The thawing  
stream nearby  
trickles again;  
foggy air guides a damp rain smell into me.  
Recently-brown grass flooring of smooth  
hills  
thrives and grows lively  
as delicate flowers, dewy grass,  
intricate spider webs dangle  
from dripping leaves  
to soft grass.

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### Patience

by Ben Crogh

Three hours pass, and we are only on our second run of the day. The lift stops every forty-five seconds due to falls of my skier students. Some of the kids make it to the top, but the rest are still at the bottom with me. After getting the whole class up the hill, we call it a day. Making our way back to the lodge, Cyrus, my youngest skier, sits down. "What is going on, bud?" I ask as I sit down next to him. "I can't do it," he says. The next twenty minutes pass and we slowly creep from the cat track to the lodge. I tell Cyrus, "Great job bud! I enjoyed our day today!" Was that a lie? Did I really enjoy the day of slow skiing with my young students? Patience is a front people put on to make others feel good. In my case, it secures my job as an instructor.

As a ski instructor, I have to be patient. I come across as a very calm and enthusiastic ski coach, excited to teach. In my mind I am

Moscow in September with fewer than a third of his original forces, their numbers further reduced by the battles of Smolensk and Borodino, he discovered that the Russians had retreated. With Alexander refusing to make peace, and winter fast approaching, Napoleon had little choice but to turn back. Winter came fast and hard: thousands of men died, horses were eaten, and the Russian cavalry harassed the dying army like flies surrounding dead flesh. Without food and shelter, Napoleon's force wasted away: when he finally returned to France, he had fewer than 10,000 men remaining. This massive military blunder would later lead to his downfall and exile.

More than one hundred years after Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia, Hitler would repeat Napoleon's mistake: he would invade Russia during winter. This mind-boggling overconfidence was not at first misplaced. The beginning of the invasion went well: Hitler's tactics appeared to be working. However, Hitler had failed to learn from Napoleon's past mistakes and did not outfit his soldiers with proper winter equipment, nor did he retreat in time to avoid the deadly snow. Only a few weeks into the invasion, more than 100,000 Soviet soldiers were dead. However, the Germans had expected the Soviets to quickly collapse under their ferocious assault. They had not properly equipped their forces, and so had to wait out the deadly Soviet winter. Thousands of troops died from cold and food shortages, as had the members of the Grand Armee in 1812. The Third Reich forces began a slow retreat, in stark contrast to their original plans of sieging Moscow. Eventually, the winter ended and the Germans resumed their attacks on the Soviet Union, but they never achieved their goal of conquering Moscow. Blinded by hubris, Hitler's splitting his forces between attacking Russia and fighting the rest of the Allies would prove to be a massive mistake that ultimately cost him his empire.

I eventually learned my piano piece by slowing down and focusing on just getting the rhythm and notes right first, and then adding speed. By trying to race through the piece and solve my problem, I was not breaking down and mastering each part before uniting the sections into a cohesive whole. Rushing through the piece might make me better at one part of it, but would not make me better at playing. Additionally, by rushing through the music, I would not improve my overall playing ability, the entire point of playing pieces for practice. Albert Frantz, a professional pianist, says: "Each day, practice just one passage, and practice it extremely carefully and thoroughly. This makes for a far more efficient piano practice in the long run." <sup>2</sup> Breaking down and mastering piano pieces section by section made me a better musician overall.

Even though Hitler's invasion of Russia was extremely ill-advised, the military strategy of the Third Reich for conquering Europe during World War II was very effective, and made heavy use of the divide-and-conquer technique. Rather than attacking all of Europe head-on, a fight they could not possibly win, the Germans instead attacked and easily conquered many small European nations. By defeating the smaller countries, Hitler's forces gained more power and territory, eventually allowing them to overrun and take control of France. To solve difficult issues, people must first solve the problems that make up the larger

suffering, thinking, "Why can't these kids just learn how to ski so I can be done with this madness?" As an elite skier, I find it hard to understand how a kid can find skiing so difficult because for me, it is second nature. Anger builds when your patience is tested. The Mayo Clinic describes patience as "Suppression. This is an attempt to hold in your anger and possibly convert it into more constructive behavior."<sup>[1]</sup> Patience is a mechanism that tends to help people communicate on a more acceptable level.

Looking out into a room full of completely bored tenth graders, Mr. Pickard has to endure an hour and a half of U.S. History. Three times a day. Most of the kids fall asleep when he starts talking about the Great Depression; the couple in the back of the room will not stop staring at each other. A student asks, "What did Robin Williams do during the Great Depression?" While screaming inside, Pickard calmly says, "He was not born yet." While seen as just being teachers, instructors are mentally always learning how to be patient with certain students and how to teach others who may not understand a single word they say.

In my summer job as a bus boy at Salmon River Brewery, I spend time with many different coworkers who can range from being tolerable to being ridiculously irritating. Sometimes I cannot get mad at people for being themselves because they certainly won't change just for me. In the Huffington Post, Judith Orloff writes, "As a psychiatrist, I help others see that patience doesn't mean passivity or resignation, but power. It's an emotionally freeing practice of waiting, watching and knowing when to act."<sup>[2]</sup> When a person can be patient, he notices opportunities that might pass if he were not quiet and open minded. Being patient is the power to retain an open mind, taking in ideas without letting everyone know what you think, or directing how you want things to go. It is simply a waiting game.

Sitting at my desk, typing an essay, I overhear my parents talking in the kitchen. My mom sounds frustrated and my dad sounds confused. Mom is explaining how

whole. Playing an entire piano piece repeatedly might make one better at playing individual sections, but it will not improve overall musicianship. To break the repeating pattern of overconfidence in human history and everyday life, people must ignore human tendencies toward hubris. History is driven by egotism, a force that also weakens modern habits.

#### Endnotes

- 1 - *The Russian Campaign*. PBS. [http://www.pbs.org/empires/napoleon/n\\_war/campaign/page\\_12.html](http://www.pbs.org/empires/napoleon/n_war/campaign/page_12.html). Web.
- 2 - Frantz, Albert. *Efficient Piano Practice: 10 Expert Tips*. Key-Notes. <http://www.key-notes.com/efficient-piano-practice.html>. Web.

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## Flying

by Whitney Lydrickson

From this high above,  
I can barely see all the dots zooming  
from one place to another.  
Each so minuscule,  
possibly insignificant:  
ants busily working on little hills.  
The plane bumps and drops slowly:  
dots turn to cars,  
creating streaks of neutral colors vthat fly past my small window.  
I am no longer high above.

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## Sand Dollars

by Whitney Lydrickson

Waves crashed against drenched, darkly colored sand while the seagulls squawked and swooped in disheveled clusters nearby. It was the middle of July, yet I was still wearing an oversized, red jacket that proclaimed *Seaside, OR*. I looked up from dry mounds decorated with crusty seaweed, to see my younger cousin in an identical jacket. She bounced and ran from the frigid water tickling her toes, to dry driftwood that had been dropped off by the ocean during high tide. "I think I need to practice my tsunami running," she exclaimed, waving toward a "Tsunami Warning" sign.

Before we arrived in Seaside, my mom mentioned that we could hunt for sand dollars. It became my cousin's mission to find several. After the second day we were there, we still hadn't found a single sand dollar. We all decided to drive north along the coast to Astoria beaches to search for them. On the fourth day of scouring the cold Oregon beaches, my cousin Madison grew extremely disappointed and was ready to give up on the hunt.

Along the seashore, tangled up between souvenir shops, there was a

watching football every night gets old, as things do not get done, but my dad disagrees. He begins to rationalize how "educational" football is, and how it is his "duty" as a man to watch. Being bull-headed is common for my father; my mother has the patience to unconditionally love my old man. In the online article, *Patience: Key to a Lasting Marriage*, the article describes the essentials to a lasting relationship:

"When long-married couples are asked the recipe for marital success, many identify patience as a key ingredient. It's the indispensable virtue for living together day after day in relative peace, without constant struggles to change the other to our liking."<sup>[3]</sup>

Without patience, marriages would be practically non-existent. The glue that holds couples together, patience keeps a thriving communication open. This idea translates to high school experiences in a very positive way. Any relationship in high school can change very rapidly due to raging hormones, but having patience shows that one is willing to accept others for what they decide to be.

Today is Thursday, so my ski group arrives at the drop off for the last run of the week. After a long and laboring thirty minutes, all my students are up the hill and gathered in a cluster waiting to follow me into the forest. Coming up to the lip, Cyrus speeds ahead and soars off of the drop. After his jump, stuck upside down in the bottom of the ditch, Cyrus asks me how it looked and if he can hike up to hit it again. Patiently making him happy, looking like the good guy in front of the class, I say "Let's do it!" I act as if I am enjoying myself for the next hour while Cyrus and all of his classmates get stuck in the ditch. I endure the last class of the week. Showing that I care about the kids and what they do is a skill that makes my job so much easier and more enjoyable for everyone. We put up a front to get along with others and present ourselves as being accepting of outside ideas. This front, this hypocrisy, this patience, is my life.

#### Endnotes

- 1 - *What's the best way to handle anger?* The Mayo Clinic,

small aquarium. In the front section of the building, there was a little gift shop. There, my aunt noticed a small box of pristine sand dollars. She approached me and whispered "Distract Madison." As she purchased the shells, Madison and I watched and fed the slick seals as they tumbled through the salty-smelling water. When we were all done observing the sea animals, we decided to go to the beach. After only ten minutes had passed, I heard Madison yelling excitedly "I found a sand dollar!"

"Wow! Let me see!" my aunt acted as though she had no part in the event.

"This is the best vacation ever!" Madison proclaimed repeatedly.

The next day, we all agreed to spend part of the afternoon at the "beach" with our jackets and pants shielding us from the cool ocean breeze. Eventually, Madison found another sand dollar in perfect condition. As she safely tucked the circle into her pocket, a confused look crossed her face. "Mom, did you buy these?" Madison asked in a disappointed tone of voice. >P>"I wouldn't do that!" My aunt answered enthusiastically. Madison shrugged her shoulders, and acted more thrilled about the discovery. That night, at the condo we had rented in Cannon Beach, we all decided that we would have a full day on the beach our last day there.

The next morning, we travelled down the short walking path from our condo directly to the beach. "I'm going to drop a sand dollar, and you have to pick it up so Madison doesn't think I bought them," my aunt whispered to me on our walk. Once we reached the dry heaps of sand, my aunt lightly tossed the sand dollar. Soon after, I retrieved the white disk from the sand and told Madison about it. Not long after my discovery, Madison uncovered yet another sand dollar from the dry, fine grains of sand. This time, she jumped and gleamed with happiness.

As we sat together on the flight home, Madison talked about her sand dollars and how their new homes were going to be in a special box in her room. "This was the best vacation ever," she said quietly as she leaned her head on my shoulder. Once we landed in Boise, Idaho, we all stood in the airport giving each other goodbye hugs and talking about how fun the trip was. As Madison gave me my hug, she slipped a sand dollar in the small, unzipped front pocket on the front of my backpack, left for me to discover when I arrived home.

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www.mayoclinic.org, Apr. 13, 2014.  
2 - Orloff, Judith. *The Power of Patience*. The Huffington Post www.huffingtonpost.com, Oct. 9, 2012.  
3 - *Patience: Key to a Lasting Marriage*. For Your Marriage, www.foryourmarriage.org.

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## Loss of Control

by Vivienne Wieggers

Rain pelted against the window of the swerving car: a passenger feared she would not make it very far. She called to the driver to stop as soon as he could. She saw rest areas passing by, it seemed the driver had misunderstood.

As a large corner was nearing, the only thing she could think of was his terrible steering. Suddenly the car was veering, as the car skidded into the brown, lifeless clearing.

The car hit something, though the passenger did not know. She felt as if the world were moving in slow motion, though it probably did not show, because her face reflected pain from head to toe.

She wondered how at this time in her life she could reach her fatality. Many things she must first accomplish ran through her head, because who would do the tasks if she were dead? Then she saw something that brought her back to reality.

A boulder rested in the car's crashing path, as the car smashed against it, the passenger felt increasing amounts of pain. She tried to look at the driver and all she felt was the wrath of her mistakes. All that was left was the sound of the rain.