

Donald E. Barnett Awards for 2012-2013

Each year, the First-year Composition Program recognizes excellent writing in English 1101, 1102, and 1102M by presenting three Barnett Awards. Named in honor of Donald E. Barnett, who directed the Freshman English Program for many years, the awards consist of cash prizes and publication of the winning essays in the *First-year Composition Guide* required of all students registered in our courses and on the FYC site at: <http://www.english.uga.edu/newsite/fyc/barnett.html>.

Shandricka Flowers wrote this essay for a First-year Composition class that was organized thematically around travel literature. Even though the author felt unqualified to write about travel, she showed with this essay that traveling close to home can be as educational as a trip to a foreign country. Shandricka's piece is notable for its strong and unique authorial voice and the way in which an apparently casual story maintains unity of focus while communicating the writer's ethos or persona.

ENGL 1101

Student: Shandricka Flowers

Teacher: Megan Morgan

The Adventures of Shan and The East/West Bus

Some people plan a summer vacation to Miami, Florida or the backwoods of a foreign country almost a year in advance. They buy clothes, map out tourist destinations, and search for hotels. However, the best adventures are the ones unplanned. My adventure started out as a bus ride to satisfy my hunger that led to a journey filled with frustration, which transitioned to peace.

When I think of cruel punishment, I imagine walking around the University of Georgia's campus located in Athens, Georgia. If you look at me, it would be obvious that I am not an athlete. I am 5 feet and 9 inches, which apparently is tall for a girl. I dislike running, and my idea of exercise is climbing two flights of stairs to go to my dorm room. I am not obese, but I am somewhat fluffy. It is hot on the campus, and the humidity is thicker than the pile of unread notes from history class scattered across my desk. You can imagine the obstacles, such as the multiple hills that surround the college, that I face daily while attempting to walk to my classes. I tried to avoid this grueling task one afternoon by catching a ride on the East/West bus; sadly, I found out I was better off walking.

It was the Monday of the second week of fall semester my first year at the University of Georgia. I was exhausted, my stomach was growling, and I was in no mood to walk. My first day of First-year Odyssey class, which focused on environmental landscaping, had ended a short while ago at 4:35 p.m. The class was, honestly speaking, a waste of my time. It was two hours long, and I drew like a first grader; however, the professor assigned papers as if I were a graduate student. For my endless labor and struggle, I would only earn one credit hour for this particular class. The University of Georgia's campus was hot and humid as usual while I waited for the East/West bus to approach at a bus stop near my Odyssey class. The East/West bus was not a hoopty, but it was far from being a limousine. It was like a crowded,

free Marta bus owned by UGA. As the bus slowly arrived, I gathered my belongings.

I boarded the East/West bus with the assumption that it would lead me to Bolton, one of four dining halls located on campus. I was sitting alone, staring out the window, trying to avoid eye contact. I had already begun to map out my meals. I had created every combination from a waffle and chicken strips to a bowl of cereal with 2% milk. I had covered a majority of the food groups except fruits and vegetables, which is probably why the “Freshman fifteen” looks more factual each morning when I step on the scale. Once I stopped thinking about food, I noticed something strange. The bus passed the Snelling Dining Commons/Georgia Center/South Campus Parking Deck, Stegeman Coliseum, Carlton St. Parking Deck, Aderhold Hall, the Performing & Visual Arts Complex, and University Health Services, but the bus had yet to pass Bolton. As my hunger began to grow, I wondered, “Where the hell is Bolton?” Bolton was supposed to be the second stop.

Soon I realized I had caught the wrong bus, and I was not happy. I did not cry or plead with the bus driver to drop me off at the closest stop near my destination; however, I did what I knew how to do best: grunt and complain. Acting stubbornly, I would not get off the bus because I refused to wait for another bus or walk to Bolton. I pulled out my phone with the intention of texting Tamami, a friend who happens to attend the college, with one of my epic complaints about UGA’s buses. I would often elaborate

about how they are often crowded, late, or poorly driven. As I was about to hit “send,” the bus passed Georgia’s Art Museum.

At the next stop, I got off the bus immediately and walked to the Georgia Museum of Art. I took a right, left, and walked up thirty steep stairs to take another glance at this building, which seemed new on the outside. It was a large brick building, with no cracks or varied colors on the bricks. One-half of the art museum reminded me of a glass house because of the countless windows that covered this particular part of the structure. The grass was green, and with few trees surrounding the UGA art museum, a combination of the sun’s rays that reflected off the glass windows allowed the art museum to stand out from other surrounding buildings.

As I walked into the quiet art museum, I put my belongings into a locker and began to look around. I saw many pictures in the span of fifteen minutes, but one collection stood out amongst the other works of art: George Beattie’s Agriculture Murals. They were highly detailed, and his work told a story without words. George Beattie’s Agriculture Murals, which depicted the evolution of agriculture within the United States in chronological order, from the time before the arrival of Europeans to the Civil War, portrayed Native Americans picking corn and slaves picking cotton while being watched by overseers.

Looking at George Beattie’s Agriculture Murals reminded me of

history; when I thought about history, I thought of Coach Martian. Coach Martian, my eleventh-grade American History teacher, was one of my favorite teachers in high school. After class, we would often have disputes about history, and he would insult my writing skills. He explained how my papers were confusing. I did not learn what he meant by “confusing” until my first year of college. After receiving C’s on numerous papers and reading my professors’ comments, I learned that I had an issue with coherence. I have not talked to Coach Martian in a while or thought about high school, but looking at those paintings reminded me of memories I had forgotten.

I never did go to Bolton that day. I did eat at O-House, which is a better dining hall than Bolton and closer to my dorm. Shan and the East/West adventures have not ended with that day. For instance, stranded by the East/West bus on multiple occasions at the college’s gym, I have had to walk two miles to go back to my dorm. Once, I accidentally toured the downtown of Athens, Georgia to be led back to the same bus stop, where I finally got on the bus twenty minutes later. Even though these strange occurrences happen and I am livid just about every time they occur, I am eventually overwhelmed with peace. It was as if the East/West bus had led me to the Georgia Museum of Art on that day while I was exhausted, frustrated, and hungry. However, while peacefully staring at a collection of paintings, those emotions faded and brought forth memories of a person who had contributed to whom I am today, which made this misadventure.