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### Archiving My Experiences and Thoughts on Archiving My Own Thoughts on Archiving

Over the course of this year, I wrote my senior thesis on “equity in archiving” or the lack thereof that exists in regards to literature and works of art. In my thesis I argued that giving a fixed body of scholars with their own human biases and inclinations sole power to determine what gets canonized and thus, what gets saved and preserved is inherently and irreparably harmful. Who knows how many millions of voices were washed away or buried in the sands of time because those in power didn’t think that their works were worthy of preservation. And who are we anyway, so bogged down in the preconceived notions of our current era, to determine what future generations might find value or joy in. To that end I argued that we as a society should work to preserve and digitize and archive *everything* and then make it free for people to access. So, for my conference project, I’ve decided to put my money where my mouth is (~~on my face~~), I’ve submitted my thesis, titled: “Archiving the Popular: An Examination of Equity in Archiving Through the Lens of Richard Brautigan’s *The Abortion*” to the Brautigan Library, an online database that publishes unpublished and unpublishable works of any value, size, genre, or level of coherency.

And I gotta say, it felt pretty great. While my thesis hasn’t been added to the archive’s website yet (yep, just checked again, watch this space I suppose) the knowledge that my thesis will remain accessible and online is pretty gratifying. Doubly so because the archive is what inspired me to write my thesis on this subject to begin with, so I’m hopeful that my title will catch the librarian/archivist, John Barber’s attention and he’ll give it a read and we’ll become best friends. At the same time though, the Brautigan Library hardly represents the answer to the problems my thesis brings up. The archive is privately owned and while it is free and functional

now, there is no saying whether or not that will be the case a year or five or five hundred from now. So, will my thesis persist for all time like I've dreamed? It's impossible to say for now, but it's a step closer.

The act of submitting my thesis to be archived for the foreseeable future was so exciting to me that I decided to submit more of myself to the Library. Next up is a collection of short stories that I'd written throughout my high school and college careers titled "Lonely Man and the Games They Play" and it contains the following short stories:

"The Stranger": Who is the strange man who calls himself Captain Bill Adventure? Where did he come from? What does he want? And where does he intend to go with the crew of "likeminded men" that he hopes to assemble.

"Marvin the Immortal": Marvin Ritholtz was a very sad man... until he tried to kill himself and discovered that he was immortal. Granted a new lease on life, Marvin the Immortal strives to reinvent himself in a world that continues to move and change in ways that he cannot.

"The Life and Times of an Unquantifiably Powerful Being": Meet Joe, he's unquantifiably powerful, he sits in a room, and he has a cat.

"The Rules of the Game": Michael Shaw is a thief, it's all he knows, it's all he's good at. But what happens when he takes one too many risks? And where exactly is he going to the bathroom in the abandoned hotel he's holed up in? Rodney Vickers is also a thief and he's going to knock some sense into Michael.

I wrote these stories over a period of five years. Some of them I wrote for assignments. Some of them I wrote for fun. One of them helped me get a job. All in all they represent a period of my life that is drawing to a close as I end my college career and I can think of no better tribute

to these stories and the ways they've influenced and changed my life than to finally have them published in an archive full of lonely stories that would have never been published otherwise.

This morning (5/8/20) I decided that, while I was archiving the defining works of my college career, I should probably archive at least *part* of the creative project that has dominated my time, imagination, and hard drive space for the past four years. Towards the end of my freshman year at Queens I emailed a friend of mine some short stories that I'd written in high school. Among those stories was an essay titled "So You Want to be a Superhero, How Noble of You." The cleverly acronymed SYWTBAS,HNY was a satirical essay that aimed to teach its readers how to be a superhero. It was two pages. I wrote it for an assignment. It was published once by a now defunct creative writing magazine based in... I want to say it was Kansas? Anyway, this ended up being her favorite piece and she thought that it had the potential to be expanded into something bigger. As always, she was right and correct and very smart. And so, I launched the much easier to say [How to Hero](#), a twice weekly blog that breaks down all the ins, outs, ups, downs, and diagonals of being a superhero in an increasingly strange world. With this week's entries ("Making Deals with Demons", and "Lava Monsters"), How to Hero now has 280 entries (don't do the math, I missed a couple of days here and there over the years) dealing with everything from codenames to how to restart the universe in the event that it is destroyed. My blog has seen me grow from a dumb freshman into a dumb senior and so I thought it only made sense to submit "So You Want to be a Superhero, How Noble of You: Volume 1" containing the first How to Hero entries ("Gaining Powers" to "Child Sidekicks") to the Brautigan Library as part of one of my final college assignments. And for those keeping track at home, I'm going to be marrying that friend of mine who inspired me to start this project in a few weeks.

This thesis, and the Brautigan Library that inspired it, have allowed me to preserve so much of what has made my last four years at Queens College meaningful, and for that I am grateful. I encourage all of you to submit your thesis and all of the works that you're proud of to the Brautigan, it's honestly an exhilarating experience. In the faq section of the site, Barber describes the archiving process as an unburdening for unpublished authors, and I couldn't agree more. Now this part of my life will always be preserved, in case I ever want to come back and visit.

Here's the link if you're interested: <http://www.thebrautiganlibrary.org/submissions.html>