

CREATIVE WRITING

Hard Knock Life

By Brittany Richardson



Photos by B. Grattan

At Rise: A small one bedroom apartment in the outskirts of Manhattan. Streetlights can be seen in the distance. There is the sound of a dripping faucet and there is a bucket at center stage catching a leak. There is a desk at stage right with a chair and there is a mop leaning against it.

(Jocelyn comes running from stage left and then walks backwards slowly towards the desk. She pulls the chair out as quietly as possible, sits down, and then clasps her hand over her mouth. She is breathing heavily. There is loud knocking from stage left.)

MR. HURLEY: I know you're in there, Jocelyn! Open up! You're four months behind on your rent!

(Jocelyn remains sitting quietly with her hand over her mouth. She stares in the direction of the voice outside of the door.)

MR. HURLEY: Come on, Jocelyn! I want my money! I'm tired of waiting!

JOCELYN: Give me another month! Just one more month! I'll have your money! I swear!

MR. HURLEY: I've given you three extensions! I haven't seen a penny of my money. It's time to pay up, Jocelyn!

JOCELYN: I just need another month! Please! Once I get the lead in this play, I'll pay you all of your money.....with interest!

MR. HURLEY: You've been talking about auditions and crap for five months. You haven't been to any of them! You need to get a regular job so you can pay me.

JOCELYN: I'm gonna go to this audition! I mean it this time!

MR. HURLEY: You said that the last time! And did you go? No! I've run out of patience with you. Just gimme my money.

(Jocelyn rises from the chair and goes over to the bucket. She moves the bucket over slightly to catch another leak that has started.)

JOCELYN: I can't believe you're so upset about not having your rent right now! This place has leaks all over the place.

MR. HURLEY: Why would I worry about fixing the leaks for a tenant that doesn't pay me on time? You deserve to be in there with the leaky pipes!

(Jocelyn goes over and snatches the mop from by the desk. She begins to sing "It's a Hard Knock Life" while mopping.)

MR. HURLEY: You have until midnight tonight to get me my money or you'll be out on the street! I mean it, Jocelyn!

JOCELYN: Midnight?! How in the hell am I supposed to come up with four months of rent by midnight?

MR. HURLEY: That's your problem! You better have my money or you're on the street! *(Mr. Hurley exits. Jocelyn stops mopping and looks around at her apartment.)*

JOCELYN: *(Sighs)* Well this is just...great. I barely have enough for a decent meal! He's a loon if he thinks I'm gonna have that money by tonight. *(She goes over to the chair and sits back and leans over with her head in her hands.)*

JOCELYN: *(She jumps up out of the chair)* All I need to do is go to the audition and give them a million-dollar performance. Then I'll get the

job and give Mr. Hurley his money.

(She rummages through her desk and retrieves a paper and pen. She begins writing on the paper and then stops. She slams the pen down on the desk.)

JOCELYN: Damn it! I need a fifty-dollar audition fee. This is ridiculous! I shouldn't have to pay anything to show off my talent. *(She jumps up and puts her hands on her hips.)* This is highway robbery!!

(She begins to imitate a police officer trying to track down a criminal on the run. She makes her hands into a gun and holds it out in front of her. She walks slowly around and pretends she's talking into a walkie-talkie to another cop.)

JOCELYN: I'm in pursuit of the suspect. Over! *(She continues to walk stealthily around the apartment and then she suddenly crouches down. She whispers into the walkie-talkie.)* I've spotted the suspect, I'm going in.

(Jocelyn rolls on the floor.)
JOCELYN: *(Yelling)* Freeze, scumbag! You're under arrest for theft! *(There is a loud knock at the door that startles Jocelyn from her police hunt.)*

MR. HURLEY: What the hell are you doing in there, Jocelyn?!! *(Bangs on the door again.)*

JOCELYN: Nothing! I'm just mopping. *(Hums "It's a Hard Knock Life" loudly for him to hear.)*

MR. HURLEY: You better be figuring out how you're gonna get my money. *(Jocelyn rolls her eyes and crosses her arms.)*

JOCELYN: I hear you loud and clear, Mr. Hurley, but could you still consider the one extra month? I promise you that I'm going to the audition.

MR. HURLEY: What part of no more extensions don't you understand?! I've cut you enough slack, Ms. Doherty. What do you actors say in show biz? The.....ummmm..... final curtain call. This is the final curtain call for you! I want my rent paid.....in full.

JOCELYN: Come on, Mr. Hurley! Don't you want the chance to be able to say that you know a successful and world-renowned actress? I guarantee you'll be able to say that if you just give me this last extension. *(Mr. Hurley is quiet for a few moments.)*

MR. HURLEY: What if you don't get the part? How will I get my money then, huh? It's not gonna drop out of thin air and into my hands! I'm not taking any risks with you. I may be many things, but a fool is not one of them.

JOCELYN: Wait a minute!! What is that supposed to mean? You obviously don't know that you have the next Phylicia Rashad living in your building.

MR. HURLEY: *(Confused tone)* Who is that?
JOCELYN: *(Irritated tone)* Mrs. Huxtable from The Cosby Show. Geez, you need to watch a little television sometime.

MR. HURLEY: Whatever!! All I need to know is that your name is Jocelyn Doherty and you owe me four months of rent. And just for being a smart aleck, I'll be tacking on some interest.

JOCELYN: *(Frustrated)* That is so.....so.....so unfair!!!

MR. HURLEY: Life's not fair! So get over it! I'd rather be downstairs watching my soaps, but instead I have to hound you for money that you've owed me since March!

JOCELYN: It hasn't been that long! I've owed you since May.

MR. HURLEY: No, it's been since March! I have it all recorded in my receipt book in my apartment. You can't argue with evidence.

JOCELYN: If the evidence is false, you can!! But that's beside the point; I just want you to give me an extra month. In that one month my life is going to take a huge turn around.

MR. HURLEY: How do you think the other tenants will react if they knew how many

extensions I've given you? And now you're asking me for another one! This isn't fair to everyone else who lives here.

JOCELYN: *(Pleading)* But everyone else is not a month away from absolute success. I just need you to give me this chance. Don't take it from me, Mr. Hurley. This is my last shot at a successful career.

MR. HURLEY: *(Slightly concerned)* Why?

JOCELYN: Because.....this is the last season that the musical will be running. If I don't take this opportunity while I have it, it won't come back around again. Please, Mr. Hurley, don't take this from me. *(Mr. Hurley is quiet and closes his eyes. He sighs heavily, shakes his head, and then opens his eyes.)*

MR. HURLEY: *(Hesitantly)* Oh, all right. But I'm warning you, Ms. Doherty, if this falls through you'll be needing a new place to stay because you will no longer be welcome in my building. Understand?

JOCELYN: *(Relieved)* Oh thanks so much!! You won't regret this!
(Jocelyn spins around and jumps up and down in sheer joy. Suddenly she stops.)

(Disappointed) The audition fee!! God why me?! *(She goes over to the desk and plops down in the chair. She picks up the sheet of paper and stares at it in her hands. She begins to cry to herself and throws the paper on the floor.)*

MR. HURLEY: Jocelyn? You all right in there? Ms. Doherty? Open the door!
(Jocelyn does not respond. Mr. Hurley continues to shout. She retrieves the mop from the desk and begins to hum "It's a Hard Knock Life" while mopping and crying.)

(Lights fade to black.)

TIME from pg 7

Hunter and Shawn were positioned on the hood of the squad car so the officers could check them for drugs or weapons. While Hunter kept crying during the search, Shawn still had not shown any real emotion after getting caught by the police. When the police began to search Shawn, they found the keys to the DeLorean. When the officer pulled them out, Shawn tried to get the keys back from the officer but his face was slammed into the hood of the squad car by the officer. "Sir, are these the keys to the stolen vehicle?"

Those keys meant the world to him. They were the keys that had not only started the DeLorean but opened the doorway into a world of fantasy that Shawn was not ready to let go of. Shawn did not want to answer the officer but Hunter did it for him. "Yes, yes officer, those are the keys to the car."

Shawn could not believe that Hunter would sell him out to the cops as quick as he did. Shawn rolled his eyes at his friend as the officers placed the two of them into the back of the squad car and began the drive to the police station. Shawn looked at Hunter and elbowed him on his ribs. "You are such a Biff." That was an insult they created after the villain of the "Back to the Future" trilogy and it was as if you were giving the middle finger to the other.

For the past 10 years the life of Shawn Jacobs has been everything about the "Back to the Future" trilogy but Universal Studios took that away from him. Now the next few years of his life would be about prison and that was something that the police do not take away; it is something they give you. Keys that once meant a job and freedom to Shawn now meant a home in a cell block away from the things that he loved. When they arrived at the police station, it was then Shawn Jacobs realized that no matter how much you want to go back, the future just keeps coming.

Poetry By Gregory Spence



Gentle Soul

*Gentle Soul full of peace
You're warm in heart
Your smile so sweet
From the crown of your head to the bottom
of your feet*
UNIQUE
That's why it's hard for people to grasp your style

*Gentle Soul heart so sensitive
But sometimes your sensitivity
Is used for a mockery
And questions rise about you masculinity
But God knows your true identity*

*Gentle Soul please don't look at your life
as a catastrophe
Because soon God's gravity
Will pull everything together like a
symphony*

*Gentle Soul so rich, so pure
Yes sometimes you are manipulated
And your ability to love is often debated
Because your life's love has not been
emancipated
But don't get frustrated*

*Gentle Soul follow your goals
When people step on your toes
Or try to cramp your style
Breathe and just crack them a smile*

*Gentle Soul don't be intimidated by hatred
Because from the devil
Is where their hatred has been advocated
Sometimes drinking from the devil cup of
lust has tempted you
When it's all said and done it is God you choose*

*Gentle Soul stay in the race
Don't disgrace the human race
By trying to leave this place
Sure the fight gets rough
And the struggle gets so tough
But only God knows when you've had
enough
So press on
towards the mark
for the prize
of the high calling
Yes you may have fallen
But get up and keep ballin*

*Gentle Soul who only speaks the truth
Your words that you express are deeply within root
You are more than a conqueror
Ain't nothing stopping Soul ya
Yet humble as a grain of sand
You are Phenomenal Man
Gentle*

Poetry by Rodney Holley



A Sad Demise

*Dusk to dusk as the morning rises,
A packed and full day with no surprises
As the moon sets and a young king begets,
A decision he made he will regret
A close friend in disguise who wishes his demise,
With a sly dagger he will take his life with a smile
Then bury the body in his kingdom which
stretches a mile.
But the eventual stench will be his capture
And his cry for forgiveness will not report in his
safe departure,
And his life will not exist like the friendship with his king
Like a game of chess his strategy will lead to a draw.*

What is a Lie?

*What is a lie?
Is it a deceitful story,
Either short or long?
Is it the denial of something wrong,
Dependent on someone's morals?
Is it a misquoted truth,
Simply misremembered?
Is it just a word,
Given a definition?*

Building Brighter Futures

*Building Brighter Futures
One dream at a time
Opportunities unparalleled
The sweet taste of knowledge divine*

*Building Brighter Futures
Following the steps to success
The world is our battleground
Here is where we prepare to be the best*

*A place to grow un-timed
A place to condition our minds
A place of refuge and tranquility
Within these walls are endless possibilities*

*Building Brighter Futures
We take our scholastic altitude to higher elevation
With us we carry principles of liberation
As we prepare ourselves to impact our nation*

*Building Brighter Futures
Renewing dreams deferred
Instilling drive and determination
We travel to places unheard*

*Building on a platform that's stable
The pursuit of knowledge enables
The longer we strive, the more becomes clear
The tools we require are all earned here*

Service Beyond The Serpentine Wall

*Service beyond the serpentine wall
He shall be blessed who answers God's call
Uniting in the ministry of giving
A life that impacts others is a life worth living*

*Service beyond social expectation
Helping others with no hesitation
We see community service not as a consolation
More so as a gateway to salvation*

*We sow seeds to reap the benefits of success
We nurture them relentlessly, God will handle the rest
Investing time in brethren that's part of God's Creed
Sacrificing wants to provide others what they need*

*Serving fellow man but acknowledging God first
He is our water, the one who quenches thirst
As we prepare to embark on future endeavors
We'll know the village of Wesleyan marches forever*

NFL from pg 5

what were your thoughts on the new draft format, with the first round on Thursday, then rounds two and three on Friday, and the final four rounds on Saturday?

JOSH: I'm 50-50 on this. I love the NFL Draft. I watch it every year, so it was nice that it was in primetime. Separating the draft the way they did made it seem easier to get through. In the past I found myself fighting to get through the first few rounds because it was stacked on top of each other. I can only take so much of Chris Berman in one day. But the problem with this is it took away from all the other sports that make May so great. While being tuned in to the draft, I was missing LeBron rip through the Bulls in the NBA Playoffs and the Senators continue their march for an upset over the Penguins in the NHL Playoffs (Advisor's Note: The Pens continued their dominance, winning the series, 4-2).

JARAD: The draft does come at a time when other sports are in the midst of playoff series, which are always fun to watch. The best two words in all of sports are game seven. But as far as the draft, I like separating rounds one and two for teams to digest who is available and what deals need to get done. While no epic trade happened over night this season, I can see the separation of the two rounds having a profound effect in future drafts.

Okay, so one final note and we can put the NFL to rest until August. Give me the NFL's final four. Who plays for the AFC and NFC championships, who moves on and who brings home the Vince Lombardi trophy?

JOSH: I have a repeat of the NFC Championship game with the Saints and Vikings. I think Favre will come back, and the Vikes will beat the defending champs. In the AFC, though, I have the Ravens playing the Jets. Both teams got so much better on both sides of the ball. I think with the additions of LT and Santonio Holmes and the maturing of Mark Sanchez to go with what will be the best defense in the league, the Jets will win the Super Bowl over the Vikings. Poor Brett still doesn't get to go out on top.

JARAD: Well, I'm half with you. I'm in love with the Jets. Though I think Sanchez might hit the sophomore slump, I think they have enough surrounding him to get to the AFC championship game. As far as who they'll play, I agree with the Ravens pick. Flacco is another year better and that defense isn't getting any younger, so they know their window of opportunity to win a championship is closing. Jets move on, though, and meet the winner of Minnesota and Dallas. The Cowboys added some help on defense and gave Romo another weapon by grabbing Dez Bryant in the draft. Brett once again can't clutch in the big one and Dallas moves on. From there I want to pull the trigger on the Jets because of their defense, but I'm not sure Sanchez can get the job done in just his second season. Cowboys bring home the trophy by a late field goal. Also don't forget the Super Bowl will be played in the Cowboys stadium next year. Advantage Dallas.