

***Twin Reflection***  
***By, Owen Munkelwitz***

*19th of October, 1899*  
*Boston, Massachusetts*

**Roy Clarke:**

It was an early morning, right as the sun touched the sweet violet sky. Only a few carriages could be seen on the cobblestone tracks, serving as the foundation of Boston. As the sun began to rise, water droplets glimmered in the dense charcoal fog. As the day began to lengthen and as the sun's rays lit the mud and cobblestone roads, markets opened their doors to the bustling streets of Boston.

Roy ambled alongside the harbor as steam locomotives chugged by, transforming everything into a charcoal blur. As the glowing embers began to wither away, a storm of white snow began to form. Wafting away the dark-ebony stained steam, Roy approached a grand golden clock resting at the top of the chalk-white limestone station. Making his way inside, through the heavily reinforced wooden doors, he redirected himself toward the newspaper booth.

Buried deep in a stack of newspapers, something caught his eye.

***New Bedford Whalers Catch a 175, 895 - pound Whale off the Coast of Cape Cod***

***Crew Members are each Rewarded \$100***

“Are you interested in purchasing that?” a man from the booth asked.

Roy was startled, but proceeded to speak, “No, no, I'm just looking.”

“Alright then, but if you have any questions, I'm here to answer them,” the man announced, not expecting to get a response back.

“I do... have one question.”

“Go on,” the man said, gesturing with his hand.

“Is there any way I could exchange my checklist for payment?” Roy asked, withdrawing his completed checklist.

“You can hand it right to me.”

While the man was sorting through his register, Roy glanced back at the 5-cent newspapers.

“45 and... 46,” the man announced, gently placing the coins into the palm of Roy's hand.

“Have a nice day.”

Roy nodded and glanced down at the metallic hunk of coins, picking out a nickel.

Roy then slammed the nickel on the counter.

“You too,” Roy replied anxiously, removing the newspaper from the stack and leaving the station.

*19th of October, 1899*

*Santarém, Brazil:*

**Otto Clarke:**

As the layer of smoke that blankets the stagnant waters below began to fade, Otto dazed off into the dark and seemingly endless jungle. The ripples hit the marshy shores warping our world's glossy reflection. The tides were low, and the smokey aroma of molasses drifted through the cool morning breeze. As the CSS Viridis, Otto, and its crew navigated deeper into the Amazon's roots, the white noise of water collapsing on itself grew, and a slow growling sound could be heard as brown bubbles rose to the surface.

The crew anchored the 32-foot-long tugboat, and made their way down to the lower deck, transferring rations and supplies onto the emerald-green wooden dinghy until it was nearly full. Mark released the line plummeting the dinghy into the opaque water below.

The crew hopped aboard and traveled deeper into the Amazon until the red and white steam stack of the CSS Viridis was no longer visible. Otto couldn't help but notice streams of water trailing behind. As the trails approached the stern of the boat, the top of a black figure could be seen just under the water's surface.

Otto squinted, trying to make out what the dark figure was, but before Otto could, Willis interrupted, "Is that a..." Willis said while frantically gripping the rudder.

The dark object sped up and lifted itself up above the water's surface.

"Caiman!" Willis exclaimed.

"Rowwwww!" Willis shouted over the roaring sound of the tearing water.

The Caiman was now only a couple of feet away from the boat.

“Someone pass me a paddle!”

Willis’s heart was pounding as he held the paddle, knowing it all came down to him.

Clenching his jaw tight, he channeled all his might and slammed the paddle and dragged the Caiman into the depths below.

*20th of October, 1899*

*Boston, Massachusetts*

**Roy Clarke:**

A deafening screech echoed through the vast tunnel and a faint tan light emerged from the shadows. Folks began to look over the ledge of the siding as a prolonged whistle rang. Only now, the glossy coat of the black and emerald green locomotive was visible under the beating lamps. The sound of the surging bell ceased as the last warning whistle was rung and the puffing of chard steam settled. A crowd huddled around the locomotive as a man dressed in overalls and a checkered green vest pulled them aboard.

Roy squeezed his way to the back end of the car and sat on the feathered seat. He gazed through an elliptical punch-out into the pitch-black world but saw nothing, but a *twin* reflection of himself.

“New Bedford Station!” The same man in the emerald green checkered vest announced. The sun was making its way over the small hills of Massachusetts as Roy watched the locomotive chug its way down the East Coast. Upon arrival, Roy walked to the harbor and watched the whaling boats take off on the placid waters. As he looked away from the gradients of colors, he noticed a store with massive stained glass windows.

“New Bedford Whaling General Store,” Roy lisped to himself.

Roy smushed his face against the stained glass windows, trying to peek inside, but saw nothing, but a cloudy, rainbow of colors. Roy hesitated as he set his hand on the cold brass doorknob.

In two quick fidgety motions, he twisted the doorknob, nearly flinging the door off its hinges. Before the bell could ring, a man announced in a firm tone, “We're closed kiddo so *shoo*, *shoo!*”

As the sun peeked over the Victorian townhouses, folks began to enter and exit the shop. Roy gently set his hand on the brass doorknob and slowly creaked the door open.

“Now... how can I help you,” the man said with a hint of sarcasm.

There was a silent pause.

“Ehhhh...”

Roy glanced around the room and eyed the colored candles.

“Ohh... a, a, aaa... candle,” the man looked Roy dead in the eyes and then started to knock on the counter as his patience was running low.

Roy slowly walked toward the dull candles and gently wrapped his hand around the thin glass vase, setting it down on the counter.

“Is that all?” the man asked, going through his routine checklist of questions.

“Yes, that would be it, but... I do have one question.”

“I have been reading about the whaling industry here in New Be...” the man interrupted.

“Look...” the man paused, “If you are here, in search of a paycheck, I want you to acknowledge that whaling is bloody roulette. I was born into a whaling family and I've been a whaler all my life and when you sign that paper you are putting a price on your life.”

*19th of October, 1899*

*Santarém, Brazil:*

**Otto Clarke:**

“3,2,1 PULL!”

“Again... 3,2,1 PULL!”

Dragging their dignity onto the marshy shores, they made their way through the endless labyrinth of grasses.

“Stop” Joe whispered while gently, splitting the grass.

“See anything?” Willis whispered.

“All clear...”

They steadily slogged through the wet muck, creeping deeper into the minefield.

**6 hours pass**

*\*Crackle\*, \*Crackle\*, \*Crackle\**

Joe impaled the beheaded turkey and set it down on a pile of sticks.

“Salt, Pepper?” Joe asked while smothering the turkey with his special concoction of spices.

Joe tossed a stick into the thrashing flame.

“Do we have enough, wood?” Willis asked, attempting to peek over the flame.

Joe looked back down at their bundle of wood, “Wood...? Yes...well, for now.”

“What was my mom like?” Otto asked out of the blue.

Willis paused, he remembered her well as an unforgettable zoologist but she had died when Otto was only three.

“Well... I can start off with that she despised Mayo.” Willis said, bursting Otto into laughter.

“Did she really not like Mayo? I HATE MAYO TOO.”

“NO MAYO,” Willis said in a humorous tone.

“She also...” \*Crash\*

Birds radiated outwards as an ominous cloud of smoke speared the speckled sky.

“She also what?” Otto asked staring intently into Willis’s eyes.

“Can you hold that question for a...” Willis gasped for air while watching the billowing smoke engulf the CSS. His books, his drawings, his research, HIS HOME. GONE.

“She also what!” Otto roared.

Willis paused knowing that Otto had to know.

“YOU HAVE A TWIN BROTHER. ROY.”

Otto looked at the moonlight water and saw a twin reflection.



## ***Artist's Statement:***

My story, *Twin Reflection*, is about twin brothers, Otto and Roy, gaining knowledge of their sense of self and family through their adventures. In two vastly different regions of the world, they are so similar and yet so separate. I wanted to explore the topic of how growing up in different contexts would shape Otto and Roy. Roy, a delivery boy, seeking better pay as a whaler, and Otto, a young man who is a crew member onboard a zoology expedition that their mother worked on before her death. Throughout the story, the dramatic irony is that Otto and Roy are unaware that they are twins living in different realities.

When first drafting my ideas, I knew that I wanted to set the story during a time period of rapid industrialization. Setting the story in the 1890s definitely influenced the perspective from which the story is written. On one hand, we have Roy, who is in the midst of industrialization while on the other hand, we have Otto who is separated from society and is deep in the Amazon.

Otto and Roy both grew up without parents but Otto finds his sense of belonging among the crew of the CSS *Viridis* while Roy searches for his sense of belonging as he travels to New Bedford and seeks to become a whaler.

Throughout my story, there are several snapshots. One example is the emerald green locomotive scene. This scene was crucial to the timeline of the story, in the sense that it marked the start of a new adventure. Following this scene, Roy enters the New Bedford Whaling General Store, where he learns about the dangers of whaling through a series of conversations with a man. The man states at the very end of the conversation,

“Look...” the man paused, “If you are here, in search of a paycheck, I want you to acknowledge that whaling is bloody roulette. I was born into a whaling family and I’ve been a whaler all my life and when you sign that paper you are putting a price on your life.”

This piece of dialogue builds suspense, expressing the danger of whaling while also maintaining the drowsy tone of the man. To add to the realism of the dialogue, I prioritized expressing his personality and made him less of a “side character” and more kneaded into the story.

The recurring motif in my story is “reflection” which strongly suits the story because Roy and Otto are twins and appear to be a reflection of each other though, under the surface, their stories greatly contrast. Throughout the story, I made sure, reflection was emphasized, the reflection off the water, and the elliptical punch-out window.



