
1-1-2024

Brownstown, USA

Timothy Shea
Messiah University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://mosaic.messiah.edu/peregrinereview>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Permanent URL:

Recommended Citation

Shea, Timothy (2024) "Brownstown, USA," *The Peregrine Review*: Vol. 37, Article 59.

Available at: <https://mosaic.messiah.edu/peregrinereview/vol37/iss1/59>

Sharpening Intellect | Deepening Christian Faith | Inspiring Action

Messiah University is a Christian university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. Our mission is to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society. This content is freely provided to promote scholarship for personal study and not-for-profit educational use.

Brownstown, USA

Timothy Shea (Adjunct English Professor)

A mild October evening.
Streaks of orange and blue accent
the night sky
and the distant rhythmic tapping of
high school drums
echo on the other side of town
another iteration of a great American tradition—
the local community parade!

People of all ages meander down
the sidewalk and stake out their
prime viewing spots,
lawn chairs hoisted under their arms.

As the new kid in town, I take a look around
and wonder who my neighbors are.

Across from me is a group of moms who
obviously know each other,
perhaps from PTA or church.
They chat and banter while
their husbands hover off to the side.

A man in a wheelchair sits by himself,
grinning from ear to ear.
I wonder if he used to play in a band at
school or in the military.

Then there's the plain family with six kids,
all lined up from smallest to tallest,
clad in plaid and sporting suspenders.

Just up the street a group of
friends jive and slide to Latin music,
waiting and restless.

Me? I just watch and wonder.
What brings this diverse group of neighbors
together in this town, in this moment?
How will me and my family fit in?
Will this town become home?

Then there are the kids.
Three preschool princesses,
a young Jedi warrior and
a tottering Minion
giddily twirl and spar as the
minutes uncomfortably tick by
and the sun begins to set.

Suddenly.
a whistle screeches in the distance—
the parade has begun!

At the head of the queue is the waving
local police chief, politely
smiling and nodding.
He's followed by twirling dancers,
batons and tutus flying upward.
Behind them amble a disheveled pack of
bored cub scouts followed by
local business leaders in convertibles
and the exuberant high school band,
All flinging candy and flashing smiles and
waving like beauty queens.



Almost as soon as this local tradition has begun,
it is over and the
townsfolk make their way back to
the fire hall to
mingle and
to gather for
donuts and
hot dogs and
conversation.
I follow in anticipation
and make new friends while
finding old ones.

And so, for this one crisp Autumn evening,
the world is at peace
and everything is OK—
if only for a few brief moments in this
small town in
America—

Brownstown, USA.



ocean whispers
Rutu Amin (Nursing 2026)