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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note

The essayist Brian Doyle says that “we all churn inside.” You could say art is a history, a validation, and an expression of this churning. The churning is, of course, what it means to be a human being in a crazy, inexplicable, appalling, beautiful world. Art proves that our own churning is not something to be suppressed but explored, revered, provoked, held at gunpoint, frisked for meaning, considered calmly from a distance. In other words, our churning is not some biological footnote—it is essential to who we are.

So what is *Inscape* but a journal of student churning. We have humorous churning, tragic churning, love-struck churning, poetic, fictional, and nonfictional churning. I think a literary journal says something about our university, our students, our staff, and our writers. It shows we recognize a vital facet of life, this struggle to make sense of things through creative outlets, through art, to which *Inscape* helps give voice. It's our recognition that students at BYU are trying to figure life out in 2009. The best art expands our capacity for empathy. We're helping both writer and reader get outside themselves for a bit, giving them something they can take back on the inside and use.

There's this study of jazz musicians and what happens in their brains when they play music. Researchers hooked these

musicians up to all sorts of machines—cords and adhesives connecting the inner workings of their brains to sensors and whatnot. Wired and monitored, they were given some sheet music. They played, their brains lit up on the monitors, and the researchers found what they thought they would find: the basic neural communications involved when we execute learned motor skills. Then the sheet music was removed and they were given headphones. Researchers told the musicians to listen to the recorded jazz and improvise over it. Now their brains lit up in completely different ways.

Researchers discovered that when the musicians improvised, they accessed regions of the brain that deal with autobiographical information. They accessed the parts of themselves that were most them. They accessed identity and self. It means if you juxtaposed a musician's brain improvising with a musician's brain telling a childhood story, the same parts would illuminate on the screen.

Art is deeply connected to who we are and what we become as we express ourselves. So when you see Charlie Parker wailing on his saxophone, he's not just running through memorized scales. He's saying, this is me; this is who I am; this is Charlie Parker. That is why *Inscape* is so important. We encourage developing writers and artists in this process, and we're not just publishing words or pictures, but parts of people, which is what art has always been about.