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Laurel Alons. *Figure II*
Compressed Charcoal
Standing tall on the roof,
with a loaded skateboard and no armor,
I look down below
to the ground
like a king on his throne.
A pretty voice in the background tells me to come back, while
universal forces are pushing me forward.
With courage in one hand and stupidity in the other,
I push off.
Thrashing, crashing, burning, flying.
I hit the ground like a skydiver without his parachute.
Physically I was hurting,
but inside I was laughing.
Spilling over conversation
We wine and dine
And talk over one another
As we pass the carrots please
And we burst into jokes
And accidentally rub feet
Together under the table
A festive foreshadowing
Of an eternity to come
Erika Hydeen. Fugitive Survivors of a Celestial Conspiracy
Acrylic. Mixed Media.
Melissa Drake
Last Rites

With one-sided intent they intersect in crowded places where coffeegrounds and ashes and graded lesson-plans are dumped, the aftermath of two years, the good stuff already squeezed out.

He orders a cup of the regular, mostly for attention, and she leaves out the back door to wait (function follows form, in this case don't knock passive-aggressive) until the flame of his lighter flares against shadow and brick.

They smoke together in chit-chat charcoal silence, paying tribute to the passing of what might have been.
Andrew De Young

*If I Were Rich*

We would fly across the Atlantic and walk
in that shaded Oxford grove
where we first met,
your neck draped in something newly purchased,
my eyes blinded by its glinting.

We would cross an aged bridge and find,
in the garden beyond,
a picnic waiting.
Together, watching those maudlin spires
from across the darkening field,

we would drink a bottle of Dom Perignon
and wonder
what makes it better than the champagne
at the liquor store, then stumble back to our hotel room
in rain.

One day,
we will.
But while we wait,

let us go arm in arm, draped in moonlight,
down this side-walk promenade,
maple colonnade,
to where we will sit on a tapestry of grass,
and lean up against a frost-gilded trunk,
and make a toast to health and prosperity
and love
with sips from your water bottle,

and drink ourselves silly
with the riches that are already ours.
Rachel Palmer. *Death of Venus*
Charcoal
Brent Koops. *Long Black Train*
Linocut
Shadows of barren branches
on frost covered windows
black and white
like a silent horror film
trembling
with fear in the wind.

No flowered, yellow
Sunday morning dress
No happy birthday-in-bed-breakfast
Just handlebar tassels
blowing in the wind
A child's name
in the sidewalk cement
A school bus
that doesn't stop
An unused Cheerios box
An empty chair
at dinner time
and a child's prayer
that used to rhyme

I watched from the roof
of my car
as a tornado
danced across
the eastern sky
like an obnoxious drunk
at a disco club,
bobbing and weaving,
up and down,
side to side,
stomach rumbling and rolling.

When the lights began to fade,
the sky
sobered up,
regained its composure,
turned out the light,
and drifted off peacefully to
sleep.
Brent Koops. *Past Work*
Black and White Photography
Julie Perkins

Why Lie?

It's for
"beer"

claimed your
cardboard

sign gray wrinkled
hand

outstretched
holding

an empty styrofoam
cup.
"Susan, I want that story on my desk by five, got it?" I say. Susan and I are in my office where my newspaper is written. "We got a paper to run here, sugar, and it won't write itself. I want spice. I want flair. I want that man cooked. Write me a cooker, Susan, and don't stop until his teeth are ashes. Now get moving." I have to talk to her like that.

Susan writes for my newspaper. Susan is nice, which is why she can't write. In this world, nobody is nice, especially at my newspaper. I can't remember why I hired her. She's too nice. She's the only woman I'd ever want to marry, and every day I want to fire her.

"Yes, sir," she replies quietly, looking anywhere but my eyes. She scoots out the door of my office.

Through the window to the main room I see her blond hair just over the cubicle walls. She's too nice. I have to talk to her like that.

Once, I told her to write an article about Mario Pantelli, a.k.a. "Pants." He was in the Mafia, a made man. The thing is, he didn't like to be touched. Anyone who touched him got killed--shot them dead. The cops arrested him after he killed two men at a gay bar. Apparently, he was the looker of the crowd.

Anyway, Susan writes the article and hands it to me. The first line read, "Mario Pantelli, a.k.a. 'Pants,' is being sentenced to two consecutive life terms in a federal prison because of something he can't control: men are attracted to him."

"Susan, what is this?" I asked her.

She pouted and looked at her shoes.

"This guy was in the Mafia. The Mafia, Susan. The Mafia kills people. Susan, this man killed two innocent men in a bar. He shot them in cold blood, Susan. I can't run this on the front page. Not like this." My head hurt. I looked at the paper and then at Susan. She was fidgeting. She looked about ready to cry. I don't know why I didn't fire her then.

So I said, "Look, give Davis all your research and tell him to write a story for my front page and have it on my desk in an hour. You go help Sanchez on that dog show. You like dogs, Susan?"

She nodded. She said she had one. A Rottweiler.

"Okay, Susan, go help Sanchez."

"Yes, sir." She walked out, still looking at her shoes.

She'd make a good mother, I thought.

But I've got a newspaper to run here. Nobody wants uplifting stories. Nice doesn't sell these days. People want bizarre. They buy my newspaper to read about the scandals. If they wanted nice I'd give them nice. If nice was what they wanted, I wouldn't need to fire Susan.

It's two o'clock in the afternoon and I got a newspaper to run. People want their scandals in the morning on their doorstep. I look at my phone. No calls. Where are my reporters? My newspaper can't print anything if nobody reports. It's as if the world stopped.

Statistics show that there is a murder every seventeen minutes. There's a car crash every twenty-four minutes. And every five minutes some politician or activist or club president thinks he has something to say. So why is my phone dead?

I pick up the phone and dial Trudy, my "Food and Culture" editor. "Trudy," I say, "talk to me."

"What's there to say?" she says. "I'm working on it. Are you nervous already? You're too nervous."

"No," I say, "I'm fine. Just making sure you're working." I hang up.

I'm restless. Behind me the sun shines through my office window. I can see an old sculpture sitting in the front lawn outside, the copper statue with the name of
my newspaper carved into it. About a month ago somebody broke off one of the corners of the square base. We haven't repaired it yet. It hasn't been washed in years. The pigeons like to poop on it.

I decide that I need a walk. I get my coat and tell my secretary I'm going out. I walk down the long hallway that leads to the rotating door. As I walk through the door I am stopped by Randy. He gives me a big "Hi" and a firm hand shake. He won't let go, just keeps shaking. He's very charismatic and big. I smile, but I don't really mean it.

"Layton, long time, buddy," he says to me, "long time." He pats me on the back and then leaves his hand on my shoulder. He likes to touch people when he talks to them.

"Yeah, Randy. Sure has been a while." I wish he'd let go. "How's Sandy?" Sandy's my ex-wife, now his wife.

"Oh, you know her." He winks at me, as if he just told a joke. He gets closer to my face and laughs. I can smell the garlic potatoes he had for lunch. "She's okay. Getting' moody lately, though."

"Listen, Randy, I have things to-"

"I think she's pregnant. What a kick, huh? Wouldn't that be great, Layton, if she were pregnant?" He stops. He suddenly looks as if he remembers something. His smile fades and he looks deeply concerned. "I mean, sorry about you and Sandy not being able to have kids and all. Maybe I shouldn't have said that, huh? Sorry, Layton, I didn't mean nothing." He looks like Susan when she pouts.

Suddenly, I can't be near him any longer. I say, "I need to be somewhere, Randy." I pull my hand free and walk away. Randy says "I'm sorry," but I don't care. My wife is yesterday's news. She's a misprint on the front page of my life. For the six years we were married I might as well have been married to a refrigerator. There was nothing to her, no story.

I walk four blocks, maybe ten. I'm not counting. I know I have a newspaper to run but I can't think. I need to go where I can think. Up ahead there's a park. Some teeter-totters, a couple of rusty swings, and a slide that looks ready to give up and die. The grass might be cut, might not. A few kids are kicking around a red ball and giggling. I've never seen the park before and I've lived here almost 23 years.

I walk to a bench and sit down. I can't think, so I watch the kids play. There doesn't seem to be any rules to their game. They just kick and run and laugh and fall down. Then they get up and do it all over again.

As I'm watching, one of them kicks the ball and it rolls near me. I watch the ball stop a few feet from me. I look at the kids and they're staring at me. Like statues, these kids, they just look at me. Not one makes a move to get the ball. I must frighten them. I've heard that children can sense things that adults can't. We lose the ability as we grow. These kids must sense something bad in me because they aren't moving. And I don't feel like moving either. I feel like thinking and I feel like running my newspaper.

So there we are just staring back at each other. They don't dare move because they know I'm a grown up. Maybe even a bad grown up. I feel like the bully on the playground and I have the power. Neither side is willing to give in. Time passes as if in a dream. The sun sails by, the wind flows, the birds sing their hearts out to each other.

I just stare. They stare.

I think about my newspaper and all the people that write for it. They're all pessimistic grown ups. Well,
Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwiches
Continued

even
teen

even
teen

except Susan. She's too nice. But the rest of them, they're like me. We don't do anything but write the newspaper. It is our world, like me. We don't do anything but write the newspaper. It is our world. Everyone who is mean to us becomes mean to the world in our newspaper. Because, when you think about it, who's nice anymore?

We're all fighting to survive. Only the meanest and most severe make it to the top.

But suddenly something occurs to me. I look at these kids and I don't see it. I just don't see it. Who are they fighting? Where is Guam to them? What do they care about cancer-causing UV rays? They're just kids in a park with a ball. They eat macaroni and cheese on top of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

I bend over and pick up the ball. I hold it in my hands to feel its roundness. Just recently the kids were playing with it. I rub my hands along its curves and lightly toss it in the air and catch it again. I forget the newspaper. I forget the UV rays and take off my coat and shirt. I forget my suede shoes and walk toward the kids in the dirt.

As I walk I think, Susan. She is nice. I wonder what she would do if she were here. Walking at my side. Smiling. Laughing. I'm going to have to ask her. Maybe over a coffee.

I stop next to the kids. They're looking up at me and squinting because the sun is behind me. I hand one of them the ball and he takes it in his small hands. They regard me with their innocent eyes. Maybe they were wrong about this one?

I say, "Can I play?"
David Kreykes. *Men at Work*
Linocut
Before the cock song
the cap of golden Cherubim
must bear the Bramble Crown.

Ride on O world-poor man to reap
what they have planned, these lepers
of the Eucharistic Feat.
A rough hewn tree carved out and draped
from the Stump of Jesse

Before the cock song
the clay feet of humble man,
clamoring on in marked time.
will carry holy men astray
under sword and stay.

Before the cock song
You! mortal man must know: Thrice
You do not know him, Thrice
Your fear has swayed, Thrice
You say I Love You, Thrice
You ran away.

Co Co Rico
Erika Hydeen. *Chicago Subway*
Black and White Photography 2002

![Image of a subway station with people waiting and a train arriving.](image-url)
Julie Perkins

*Aloe*

Octopus goddess
Armed with harmless
Teeth. Tip of an arm torn
Reveals single, silk-like strands

Of salve -- soothes both yourself,
And the wound upon my hand,
With just a touch
Like any mother should.

Succulent goddess,
Bearer of many children,
Baby clumps of green
Surround you like
Calves after their mother's
Nipples. You wear your hair
Like Medusa -- firm, white-spotted snakes,
Smooth and supple.

Mysterious goddess,
Breath life into the night,
Send your invisible mists
Into my lungs,

Grow old enough
To bloom fluted orange flowers,
Lips spaced and stacked,
Singing softly to body and babies below.

Adventurous goddess,
Stretch your arms long,
Grab hold of sun's fingers --
Providers of your striking color,

Reminders of your vulnerability --
Proclaim silently
Your dependence
On one greater than you.
Laurel Alons. Manifest
Acrylic.
Timothy Muciiri. Watching Us
Lithograph
Diana Hoogerhyde  
*Something There is That Doesn't Esteem the Poet.*

It's not that the road isn't taken,  
it just sometimes feels as if "We real UNcool!"  
signs are around our necks,  
as we march half a hastily declining few onward.  
Perhaps, we should rage, rage against the dying of our appreciation,  
for there's worse labels than being a swinger  
of birches language culture philosophy;  
and we have no intention of wandering lonely as a cloud in isolation.  
But when I have fears that some have ceased to see our worth,  
as if Kubla Khan decreed a ban on all this fiddle,  
I think the world may think it's too much with us.  
Surrounded by so said somebodies we might as well go around in hushed whispers:  
"Are you a nobody? Sshhh! Not so loud - they banished our kind, you know."  
Maybe the world would be happier if we all cloistered together  
in some pretty how town community. I hear them shouting,  
"Up! Up! My friends and quit your books!,"  
and I know they snicker  
that if human voices would wake us we would drown in apathetic confusion.  
For some assert we sound like gyre and gimble paradox  
when we speak, for we think Wild Nights are spent shouting  
"Death, comma, thou shalt die" to the barren moonlit trees  
and then turn around to thank death for stopping by -  
a hearty, kind gentlemen, whom we would not stop for.  
Seen as heads glued to one binding or another, they conclude we've forgotten to eat,  
for we've started to see vegetation, perhaps a whole garden in some girl's face,  
and label it our salad days. Not usually math oriented,  
we may have trouble with the learned astronomer  
and his proofs, figures, charts, diagrams,  
and feel like we're diving into the wreck of numbers.  
Some even say we have trouble with colors,  
when we greet the Spring by saying her first hue of green is also gold.  
However, it seems others should see some truth in every shepherd's tongue,  
for all share in our joy if their heart  
or anything else leaps up when those rainbow colors sweep across the sky.  
We too sing America; but, in keeping time to our unique tune,  
such waltzing has not proved to be easy.  
But let me not admit impediments,  
for hope - feathers and all -  
has perched on a brighter future  
and will not be silent.
Editorial Statement

“I would write ads for deodorants or labels for catsup bottles if I had to. The miracle of turning inklings into thoughts and thoughts into words and words into metal and print and ink never pales for me; the technical aspects of bookmaking, from type font to binding glue, all interest me.”

- John Updike

The editorial staff has been privileged these past two years to witness the miracle of transforming others' thoughts, words and images into a tangible slice of the Dordt community. Throughout this process we've encountered a rich diversity of style, content, and experience, and it has been our goal to do justice to the artists and their work through our type fonts and binding glues.

A heaping thanks to our contributors whose submissions have kept us from having to write catsup labels and deodorant ads.

The Canon accepts works from Dordt College students, faculty and staff. Each work should reflect truth God's creation, and ultimately God himself. As one we read the creation.

In sensitivity to those who may be adversely affected by excessive violence, vulgar language, or sexually explicit content, The Canon will publish no piece containing such material, nor will it publish material that advocates illegal activities or promotes bigotry toward any race, sex, ethnic group, age group, or religion. The Canon will also refuse any factual material that slanders a member of the Dordt community or is libelous.

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