Spring 2001

The Canon, Spring 2001

Dordt College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/dordt_canon

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/dordt_canon/10

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dordt Canon by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.
Editor’s Note

Coffee has a complex character. It isn’t restrained to one role. You can get it sweet, strong, creamy, dark, light, or bitter. You can order a mocha, a cappuccino, an espresso, or just a plain old cup of joe. The literature and art in this magazine display this variety. Some of the pieces are lighthearted, some are depressing, some are deep, and some are just fun.

For our design, we decided to play off the stereotypical view of moody poets and artists in a smoke-filled coffeehouse. Coffee, poetry, and art seem to go hand-in-hand in most people’s minds—maybe it’s the caffeine rush, maybe it’s the atmosphere—but whatever it is, the ambiance is there. So, we hope you read these poems and stories and view this art, sometimes with a grain of salt, sometimes with a smile on your face, but always with an appreciation for the diversity of the craft.

Spring 2001 Staff

Editor
Lynette Bakker

Assistant Editor
Sarah Eekhoff

Staff
Matt Bakker
Laura Huiskens
Bethany Meservey
Kristi Mulder

Layout Editor
Jillian Van Doesburg

Copyright © 2001 by Canon, a publication of Dordt College.

After first publication, all rights revert to the author/artist.
The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Canon or of Dordt College.
# Table of Contents

## Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Temptation of the sprinkler above my head</td>
<td>Lynette Bakker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>Holly Meyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Closet Full of Treasures</td>
<td>Laura Husiken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>First Kiss</td>
<td>Bethany Meservey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Virtue</td>
<td>Bethany Meservey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes Prophecy</td>
<td>Holly Meyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The End of the Journey</td>
<td>Benjamin Groenewold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I Want Coffee</td>
<td>Jesse Le Sueur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Festival of Masques (Florence, Italy)</td>
<td>Laura Huisken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Elvensong from the Desert</td>
<td>Benjamin Groenewold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Whispers of the Dead</td>
<td>Lynette Bakker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>For the Disillusioned</td>
<td>Benjamin Groenewold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>GOD</td>
<td>Bethany Meservey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Sarah Eekhoff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Self-Infliction</td>
<td>Bethany Meservey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Absolved</td>
<td>Robb Keizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>God’s Clown</td>
<td>Holly Meyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Welcome to NW Iowa: Culture Shock 101</td>
<td>Heidi Karges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Pines</td>
<td>Lynette Bakker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>A Game</td>
<td>Matt Bakker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Kings of the Jungle</td>
<td>Robb Keizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>The Student’s Complaint</td>
<td>Lynette Bakker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Ice Queen</td>
<td>Sarah Eekhoff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Morning Star</td>
<td>Bethany Meservey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Plastic Jesus</td>
<td>Robb Keizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Bethany Meservey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Coming Home</td>
<td>Sarah Eekhoff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>holocaust</td>
<td>Matt Bakker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Beyond</td>
<td>Jennifer Goslinga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Looking Glass</td>
<td>Jillian Van Doesburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Waiting...</td>
<td>Jillian Van Doesburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cream</td>
<td>John Hanson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Normandy, France</td>
<td>Andrew Moody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The Era of Ella</td>
<td>John Hanson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Pitchfork</td>
<td>Laura Apol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Crisp</td>
<td>John De Jong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Winter Morning</td>
<td>Mikala Poll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Jewish Memorial in Amsterdam</td>
<td>Andrew Moody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Winter Cornfield</td>
<td>Laura Apol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dordt College Canon Spring 2001
Temptation of the sprinkler above my head

Lynette Bakker

The smooth glass surface
with a touch of red beneath
beckons me to smash it.
Within its metal prison,
it gleams with crystal fire
taunting me to extinguish the flame,
to free it from the jagged metal that encases its glow.
My finger flicks
and breaks the glass.
The water sprays out
as the alarm sounds.
Rain

Holly Meyer

Clean and fresh on my flesh
Cascading silk sheets
It smells like earth, like wind, like naps in the grass

For the child in me
God is drumming His fingers on the roof
The angels are wrestling in the clouds
The lightning is playing peekaboo

I taste the sky in every drop
Dark and rich
with just a hint of stardust
Shimmery bouquet

I am tipsy with the elixir of life
I am wrapped in a cool embrace
I am imprisoned in this battle of rhythm
I am a willing conquest

The cosmos dims
My eyelids begin to droop
while my limbs go strangely detached
I become a rag-doll
drenched in dreams
The Closet Full of Treasures
Laura Huisken

Shoes that engulf tiny feet,
paper fans to escape make-believe heat,
dresses that swallow squirming bodies whole,
leather gloves to match the "mink" stole,

Emerald earrings and diamond broaches,
bright blue eye shadow and pumpkin coaches,
rosie cheeks and scarlet lips,
large begonias to cover the rips.

The dolled up girls all in a row,
from the biggest to the littlest in tow.
With their hair done up right,
they're ready to hit the runway bright.

The teacher wearing the horn rim glasses.
The bride glows pure as she passes.
The movie star dons the dress off the shoulder.
The hippie in hues of yellow and blue, much bolder.
Beyond
Jennifer Goslinga
First Kiss
Bethany Meservey

We moved slowly towards each other and then pulled back, unsure, hesitating. My mouth was dry and my eyes were wide. He licked his lips and leaned forward. Both of us suddenly moved to each other in a rush. Our chest bones clacked, and his hands came around my waist. My hands got caught between our stomachs, and I was smushed against his chest. I closed my eyes and my dry lips scraped his chin. His breath was musky and slightly sour. His lips brushed the bridge of my nose. We pulled back, flushing, not having quite made it.
Looking Glass
Jillian Van Doesburg
Virtue

Bethany Meservey

Virtue is the harshest of taskmasters. She rules with an iron fist and a biting whip, requiring complete allegiance. Her scorn is mighty for the weak of soul. Her demands slash through the frailty of human sinew and blood. Her mouth spews forth fire of condemnation burning us down to ash, so the rebuilding can begin. Her rigorous trial is tempered with steel, and we become stones of stubborn identity.
Ecclesiastes Prophecy
Holly Meyer

When we have lived the times are coming.
The moon grows dark while constellations dim,
poor, aging eyes as epochs flee.
See Hercules is stooped and broken,
staring blankly from a shattered sky.

The doors are shut back down the hallway.
Locked. In fact, the key is cracked.
Peer through the keyhole to know your history.
The day is gone,
the candle is swallowed into darkness.

Silence thunders down the streets,
it echos in the empty alleys,
ravaging deserted ballrooms
where waltzes crouch in dusty corners.

Mourners, leave your rotting graveyards,
desert your dead.
No such pleasures as our grief.
Vapor, vapor, only vapor,
the yesterdays you banished,
the tomorrows you erased.
The End of the Journey
Benjamin Groenewold

on a night beyond hope –
that one night the clouds stand still,
and the stars break their fixed orbit,
on that night, follow the closest star home.

seas and oceans of stars wash over us,
and below in the streets we turn away,
cold, to warm ourselves in cafes,
where we talk, and eat, and laugh, and forget.

there is a place nearby where
the waiter waits on the tables of light.
out from the dark streets,
past the flickering windows,
you still flickering ones: come.

open to the street, its awning
casts the night sky’s shadow
and that shadow is light.

seas and oceans of stars cry out that brightness
to the wayfarer, wandering dark roads
between dark cliffs, searching the sky:
“Wanderer, follow
the closest star home.”

within – melody of speech begins to burn
taste of bread, taste of wine
sit within that star-heart’s stillness,
the waiter waiting on the tables of light.

eternity played on a simple scale,
seven bright stars in a child’s cry,
all the clouds are standing still –
on a night beyond hope.
Waiting...
Jillian Van Doesburg
I Want Coffee
Jesse Le Sueur

Being a single man in college, without a girlfriend, is like being a coffee addict who has been denied the opportunity of drinking any coffee, while at the same time being constantly in the presence of coffee and coffee drinkers.

First, to be a coffee addict, one must have in the past been a coffee drinker. Similarly, most young men in college have had prior experience in a romantic relationship. However, even without prior experience, college men still want to escape the constraints that come with being single, or more specifically they still crave romantic female companionship.

Our person who has been denied the privilege of drinking coffee is stripped of the benefits of coffee, like caffeine. He has also been relieved of all the pleasant labor that goes into obtaining and preparing coffee. Similarly, the single male in college is free from all the work involved in dating and courting. He does not have to worry about gifts, dinner and listening to a lot of problems and nagging that he does not fully understand. But like the coffee drinker, he is more than happy to put in the work in order to gain the benefits.

Now, the pains of caffeine addiction are augmented by being always surrounded by coffee. This is torture. The smell is constantly in your nostrils, begging you to relieve the frustration of your mind and body with the sweet, soothing stimulation that the caffeine will provide. In the same way, the single college man is constantly surrounded by what he wants. Not only is he surrounded by lots of women, but attractive, single women near his own age. Dealing with being single is hard enough, but it is made much worse when almost every time you go into a room, you feel attracted to at least one person.

Finally, the denied coffee drinker will be greatly distracted by being surrounded by people drinking coffee. He could be in an important business meeting and instead of listening to the presenter, he will be thinking, “I want a cup of coffee too. What did they do to get coffee that I didn’t?”

The people drinking coffee are couples, and the problem is made worse by couples who shamelessly, publicly display their affection. It is quite impossible to ignore this—you walk into a room, and you notice the couch behind you is moving and occasionally laughing—especially if it’s your room, and it’s your roommate’s couch.

My comparison does have one shortcoming. The solution to the coffee addict’s problem is simple—go to the store and buy some coffee. If you know a simple solution to the single college man’s problem, give me a call.
Cream
John Hansen
Hearts beating, music thumping,
Heads swimming, bodies bumping.
Wine coursing through my veins, dousing my conscience. It stirs my yearning to put on the masque and join the throng.
With this masque, that ignores my past and carries me to the present, my inhibitions vanish as do I into the mass of love makers. We move as one, caught by the magic potion that filtrates every cell of our being.
And the music! Oh, the music that is forever pounding on my eardrums, sending a constant pulse surging through my body to the souls of my feet, quickening my step.
But when my head starts to clear, only echoes remain of the midnight revelers and I,
I stand alone facing a new day rising above the Cathedrals of Florence.
I grasp for my masque as it slips from my face and shatters on the cold, stained cobblestone street. Reality strikes my flushed cheek and reminds me that she will always be there waiting for my fall.
"I stepped across a darkness cold
And knew you in the sun.
Your eyes were fire like liquid gold -
The songs the stars begun.

"The groves there danced with fire and light;
And yet their leaves would shiver;
We cooled our thirst with song that night -
With molten streams of silver.

"And there I stood as stone awhile,
As dragons flew above.
You looked and gave your oldest smile,
And frightened them with love.

"Their wings all broke like shattered stars -
You caught them in your hand;
You spoke of war and warrior Mars
and doves and desert sand."
Normandy, France
Andrew Moody
Whispers of the Dead
Lynette Bakker

As the soupy mist embraces me with icicle cold,
I feel the ghostly presence in the air.
The hairs on my arms rise stiffly to battle
as if their tender spines could protect me
from the ethereal dew. I am solitary, alive among the long dead,
the forgotten ones for whom no one is left to mourn.
I listen to their stories here in the slant light of dawn.
They whisper to me, telling tales
of lost love, broken dreams, joys, and heartache.
Each story different. Each voice unique.
I sit in their midst and wonder when I too will be with them,
a ghostly chill in the pre-dawn mist.

Spring 2001
For the Disillusioned
Benjamin Groenewold

Dream, you dreamers, for
the waking Truth shall indeed come.
cry, for this shall be your solace
while you are shattered in this world.

Diamond are the drops of
our tears and strain here.
ruby the agony of
our sweat and all our blood.

For the light shines to us
through the blood and water
of the Highly Exalted One
flowing down.

Such light kisses us like
sunshine, and kindles us to joy:
such light on our seas
leaves neither sea, nor light
merely, but gemstone and crystal.
His the reflecting, refracting,

the changing of what is
to what is to be,
gemstone to blood that blood
might be gemstone:

see the reflecting cries
of his jewels here gathered,
resonating, focused that
what is to be might soon be what is.

Dream, you dreamers,
and do not fear to cry.
your cries shall be your solace;
the waking Truth shall indeed come.
GOD
Bethany Meservey

Piercing up through the wispy entrails
Of the vapor,
Up over the frothy, foaming clouds
Man ascends above and beyond his given place.
He strains toward the stars and the heavens.
He wishes to make them his, just as he rules the earth.
But man’s mean estate is what holds him back,
And he cannot attain godhood.
God walks among the cradle of stars, moons, and suns.
He dwells where only a god could rule.
The Era of Ella
John Hansen
Untitled
Sarah Eekhoff

After my father’s accident, an

careful EMT deposited

his clothes in a black garbage bag by the deep freeze in the back porch.

I peeked inside, and saw the blood blackening into stains on the fabric of my father’s flannel shirt, slashed where the EMTs cut it off his broken body. It was crumpled on his old brown belt, worn almost through in the third hole and still hugging his work-frayed jeans.

I shut the bag quickly, realizing too late what it held.

Mom told Uncle Vern to get rid of them, and he said he burned them with the garbage.

But yesterday at my Grandma’s I was drinking soda and watching her sift through a box of memories when suddenly, from underneath my third-grade papers, fell a brown belt, worn in the third hole, with a small stain of blood near the buckle.

I gasped, the image of the black bag knifing through my mind. “Grandma, why did you keep that?”

“Sarah,” she asked me gently. “How could you throw it away?”

Spring 2001
Self-Infliction
Bethany Meservey

“Cut my life into pieces
this is my last resort.”
-Paparoach

The silver razor gleams in the darkness.
The moonlight runs the length of the blade.
The hand that holds the razor
shakes but then stiffens with grim resolve.
The razor comes down slowly on
the pale, quaking flesh; slowly, cleanly
it crosses. A thin red line follows
the cut of the razor. The razor lifts
stained in red. The blood flows the length
of the razor, stops, gathers mass, then
falls—once, twice, then three times.
Then the razor comes down again,
slicing, then slicing again. The blood
trickles over the edges of the split
skin, gathers speed, then flows.
The razor falls with a soft
Ping
on the cold cement floor.
The hand trembles, the hair rising on the
hand for a split second then falls back softly.
The heaving chest slows and the
moon disappears.
Absolved
Robb Keizer

I kneel, crouched on the floor, huddled in my darkness. I cling to myself, arms wrapped around my body like a straight jacket, palms clasped, too ashamed to be lifted up. As I huddle, a whisper escapes from my lips— to You, pleading for grace. And, before I close my mouth, You have received every dank and filthy thing from the hollow places of my hands.
The doors of the church are heavy. An old man must throw all of his weight against them and, even then, it is only by the *deus ex machina* of a torrential wind that he might inch it open to gain admittance.

The old man was wet and tired. It was a dry, hacking cough that wracked his body and threw him to his knees before the statue of the Madonna and her child. That was alright; he had intended a genuflection anyway.

A perfect silence drooped over the sanctuary until the old man spoke. “Yes, yes, I know” he acknowledged to some unuttered presence. “I am a pauper now. So poor.” He shuddered and pulled his rags closer around his shoulders. “But I used to have money.” The thought lit his face like a candle in a tomb before his eyes fell again. He pulled the pockets of his tatters inside-out to show the statue that they were empty. He then turned his palms up and shrugged his shoulders apologetically. His voice was nearly inaudible, laced with tears and defensiveness. “You see?” he whispered. “Nothing.”

He was silent for a moment, peering at the statue’s expressionless face as though it was evidence of some personal vendetta against him. He squinted his dimming eyes as if for some sign of leniency. A desperate thought flitted across his face, causing tears to spring into his eyes. “But I used to be something that would please you.” The sob rode closely behind his words, but it never touched them. He closed his eyes and sighed quietly. “Baptista fed me to attract the people to his vending stand. Oh, yes, I used to—” Here a feverish light brightened his countenance and he seemed to forget the weight that had oppressed his naked shoulders. “I used to toss eggplant and tomatoes and all manner of produce into the air like shooting stars...no—not like stars—like...like the rainbow. I did!” The old man peered earnestly into child’s unyielding stone eyes and pleaded for conviction to register in them.

“Baptista told me...‘Giovanni,’ he said.” And here the old man’s voice grew stronger and deeper in imitation. “Giovanni, my boy, you need to go and make your living. Yours is a gift of joy. The world needs joy. It will pay for joy. Spread your rainbow someplace that will help you live. Giovanni, I want you to live.’ That’s what he told me.” The old man paused and glanced up again. “So that’s what I did.” He stood and poised his hands as if he were holding a ball. “I juggled for kings and lords. Higher and higher my rainbow would spin.” His voice was rising in urgency and he cried out, “And now, the Sun of the Heavens!” The noise of his cry echoed away into the silent cathedral.

He paused as his mind returned to the child, beckoned back by the reality of the emptiness that received his voice. His hands dropped dejectedly to his sides. “They paid me to create joy,” he explained in a hollow whisper.

Another silence fell as he mulled over the implications of his confession. “I was a wealthy man because I spun happiness like a spider spins her web. Yes, I was a spider.” The whisper died away into the silence but not before the echo caught and repeated, “Spider, spider, spider, spider” for the guilty man’s benefit.
“My tricks grew old. A grown man with a painted face throwing rainbows and suns of the heavens...it wears out. They stopped paying me,” he confessed. “The joy broke, the calls stopped, the old man was forced to clean his face.”

He glanced up at the child again. Could it be? A slight glint of pity in those stoney infant eyes? “So you see, I am a pauper. I have nothing to give you.” The weight of grief pulled heavily at the old man’s words dragging his head toward his knees. “Nothing to give...nothing...nothing.”

After a silence he lifted his eyes again to the child’s face with a look of delirious hope beyond rational thought. “But I used to make people happy. It did used to make them smile.” He stood quickly. “Wait, wait!” he gestured irrelevantly for the child to sit where He was. He opened his sack clumsily and revealed six balls of varying colors, all bright and glowing in the candle light. “Let me spin joy for you!” his voice was a whisper bolstered by unknowable anticipation. A scarlet ball went up into the air followed by a violet one; then an orange, then rich green. When the royal blue ball had been added to the rainbow, and once they were all spinning madly at heights three times that of their conductor’s head, a desperately delirious voice made the walls tremor, “And now the Sun of the Heavens!” and a golden sphere spun out higher even than all the others.

“Lord Jesus, look, the Sun! The Sun!” But all at once the rainbow scattered as the old man dropped dead at the Madonna’s feet.

Slowly the sanctuary ceased ringing with the dead man’s voice and the clatter of the broken rainbow, and settled back into the accustomed silence. It was a silence as perfect as that which had reigned prior to the old man’s entrance, but different. A warmth, almost luminescent, draped itself over the structure. Yes, the sanctuary was lit. Whether that light be authored by the smile gracing the Christ-child’s lips or by the Sun of the Heavens in His baby hands, this narrator is unwilling to say. And on the dead man’s face, a look of peace, like one assured of forgiveness.
Welcome to NW Iowa: Culture Shock 101
Heidi Karges

When someone mentions Iowa, your first response probably won’t include any references to the land flowing with milk and honey — especially not after you’ve lived here for almost two school years, as I have. Corn and the smell of pig manure are the most exciting things flowing in this corner of the state. But, unlikely as it seems, it is in this mundane, obscure northwest corner of Iowa, that I received the shock — and incidentally one of the best experiences – of my life.

It all started when I decided to attend a Christian liberal arts school named — get this — Dordt College. No, not Dork-Dordt. There should have been a billboard at the state line warning, "Welcome to Dutch Reformed-dom: Culture Shock 101! Pick up your wooden shoes and Heidelberg Catechism at the next tollbooth." But maybe it’s best to approach these things without knowing what you’re getting yourself into. If I’d turned back at the state line, I would have missed this wonderful, frustrating, other-culture experience.

Somehow, in their haste to record the undergraduate ratio of men to women, the college brochures neglected to mention that 90% of the student body is Dutch. When students said, "I’m Dutch," I thought they meant what I mean when I say "I’m German": that I’m mostly German and it would take too long to list the seven other nationalities represented in my veins. But no — I soon learned that "I’m Dutch" means exactly that; every last drop of their blood is only a couple generations removed from The Netherlands. In the middle of America, where most of us speak English, I found myself submerged in another culture. I didn’t know the language, or the religion, and everyone’s assumptions almost suffocated me during the first months.

"How can you not know about oliebollen?" a student said once. "My Oma always makes it for Christmas!"

"What’s an Oma?" I asked, and then felt like an insect on the floor as she replied: "She is my grandma — what do you call your grandma?"

My grandma’s Norwegian — she wouldn’t dream of being called anything but ‘grandma,’ and she makes lefse for Christmas.

People still ask me, "What are you?" I didn’t know what they meant at first — were they having trouble deciding if I was male or female? Did they want my scientific name? Did I have purple polk-a-dots on my face? Now, I know that they are asking about my religious denomination. All you have to do is drive around town to understand their question. In Sioux Center, population 6,000, there are eight big Reformed Churches, a tiny Catholic church that meets in the library basement, an Evangelical Free that rents the high school, and a small brick structure on the edge of town called Hope Lutheran. It’s no wonder people scrutinize someone like me, who is not from a Reformed background — I’m a novelty around here.
Being a minority at Dordt has forced me to see people in a new way; I've had to reevaluate my labels and stereotypes. When a fellow student learned I attend a Baptist church at home, he said, "Man, they're really liberal, aren't they?" What did he mean by 'liberal,'? I wondered. Just the weekend before I'd seen him at a dance, which in my church is a 'liberal' activity — as is drinking, and smoking and a whole lot of other things that seem to be okay around here. What was happening to my neat classification system? I'll never forget the blank stares I got the one time I tried to tell an Ole an' Lena joke in northwest Iowa. They're a Norwegian thing; at home, Norwegians tell them because they like to laugh, and Germans tell them because they like to laugh at Norwegians. Either way, laughter's always involved — but there sure wasn't laughter here. "Now, who are Ole and Lena?" a girl asked. If I wanted to tell jokes, I'd have to find Dutch ones. I'm still working on that.

One of the greatest benefits to being surrounded by Dutch names is that I'm actually learning to pronounce them correctly. My tongue is starting to bend around Kraayenbrink and Vande Zandschulp just as easily as names like Keneshitski and Pfliger — though I think they're all pretty rough names to expect a first grader to spell.

In this little corner of Iowa, I've learned to appreciate that wooden shoes are not just a collector's item, that drinking alcohol does not guarantee a ticket to hell, that others are as proud of their heritage as I am, and that some people could be more sensitive. In short, I've felt what another culture is like, and I'd recommend the experience to anyone.
Pines

Lynette Bakker

The child's home has an old pine tree
far back where dad keeps the garden compost.
The sagging fence of the decaying pile
boosts young legs to reach the lowest branch
still high above her flaxen head.
Shorts and shirt become sticky with sap
as little hands slide down her front.

Halfway up the tree-stem splits into
one main column with two smaller offshoots
Perfect child-throne created by nature.
But the best lies yet above.
Scramble up oozing branches
to reach the severed top which sways
under the child's weight and breath of wind.
Breeze ruffles her downy head;
The world below, child soars high above.
A Game

Matthew Bakker

I was walking through the woods one day when I noticed a plump grey squirrel shoveling acorns into a hole in a tree. Naturally, I went and investigated, but the squirrel scurried away at my approach, dropping a nut in his haste. Being in good spirits, I decided to pick up the nut the little guy had wasted. I threw the acorn down the hole in the tree and was more than a little surprised to hear a muffled grunt returned to me. The hole was too high for me to look down into, so I jumped up and grabbed a branch, hoping to find a better vantage point.

The branch gave way instantly to my weight, bending down sharply right where it met the trunk, though I couldn’t detect any cracking sounds. I released the branch and it shot back to its original position with a barely-perceptible click. A section of the tree trunk began to bulge. Creaks and groans filled the air as a door formed out of the gnarled trunk and swung open.

I didn’t know quite what to think when the man stumbled out of the tree and into the sunlight that was streaming through the canopy above. He was really a very small man - not more than four feet tall, in my estimation. His beard was long and white, wrapped around his neck like a scarf, and his eyes were huge orbs set deep in a wrinkled and pale face. Something is those eyes suggested to me that the spaghetti upstairs was beginning to congeal.

The moment he looked at me he broke into a fit of childish giggling. “Tee-hee-hee. You found me! I was beginning to tee-hee wonder if you ever would. Hee-hee.” I stared at him, dumbfounded. “The squirrel told me, “ he continued, “ that you walked by here everyday, and if only tee-hee-ho-ho if only I would call out, you would find me.”

“So why didn’t you?” I replied quickly, still utterly confused.

“Oh no! Hee-hee. I could never do that. It would be tee-hee-hee cheating!”

“Cheating? In what?”

“Why hee-hee, the game of course.”

“Well, it certainly doesn’t look like much of a game to me.”

“Oh but it is. You must try it sometime, really. Hee-hee. You had no idea how close you were all these years! It was simply hee-hee tantalizing!”

“Years? How long have you been sitting in that tree?”

“I haven’t been. I was tee-hee-ho-ha-ha standing! Hee-hee-hee. Judging by thisee here piece ‘o collateral...” He stretched out his beard in front of him and eyed it quizzically. “I’d say it’s been a few days plus a couple ‘o years.”

I stared at him and couldn’t think of anything to say.

“Well, if you don’t mind, I really must hee-hee get going.” The man cocked his head slightly and dove backwards at the ground, somehow flipping over and landing on his feet.
again. Springing lightly with each step, he skipped down the path a short way before stooping to pick up an acorn. He turned towards me, squinted maliciously, and pegged me smack in the middle of the forehead with it. “Tee-hee. Fair’s fair. Hee-hee-hee.” Then he pranced off, snickering like only a man who’s been standing inside a tree for a few days plus a couple ‘o years can snicker.

I stood there for about ten minutes, my forehead throbbing, brushing my finger tips slowly across the stubble on my jaw. Back and forth. Back and forth. Only one day’s worth. One day plus a couple ‘o minutes. Back and forth. Back and forth. I walked into the tree and pulled the door shut behind me.
One prick would be fine
if it was only one tine of a single, solitary mosquito.
But no, they can’t ever be lonely, so swarms cloud
my head and cover my skin till my flesh itches and burns
with their feasting.
So I turn and I run inside, to hide in fear for my life.
The Student's Complaint

Lynette Bakker

A curse on Chaucer, Milton, and Donne
and all you other dead guys.
Why must you be so prolific?
Thousands of students throughout the world
would be spared had you just been a slackard.
Pages and pages of writing you gave us.
Well take it back, please. We'll pay the postage!
We trudge wearily on through
April showers and eyeballs on strings
learning epic, myth, and metaphysical meaning
when we'd rather be singing or playing or living.
But my final complaint for you is the big one:
You could have at least used everyday worlds
so we could understand your meanings.
Is it our fault you couldn't speak our language?

Spring 2001
Ice Queen

Sarah Eekhoff

The walk was cold, the wind
nipped our noses red and colored
our fingers purple-numb. Puffs of snow
swirled in the road and the yellow gold
streetlights scattered sparkling jewels
on snow-covered sidewalks.

The silence of the frozen night
was cracked only with the crunch of
our footfalls. I glanced at you and saw your
eyes slide shut with the pain of our
stillness as you jammed your hands
into the pockets of your blue letter jacket.

My icy hand dug into your warm coat pocket
and your fingers quickly felt for mine.
But I dropped the ring and slid away,
leaving a cold glittering stone in your open palm.

You called me an ice queen,
but I turned my face. I didn’t want
you to see my warm tears
melting paths down my cheeks.
Winter Morning
Mikala Poll
Morning Star
Bethany Meservey

O bright and powerful morning star!
Which dropped from the mighty heavens
of your father.
You left behind celestial power, and authority,
and heavenly light for the darkness and weakness
of man.
You took upon yourself the curse of Adam's race
and the cross of mortality.

The cows lowed in the dark of night and chewed their cud. The donkeys shifted and stamped their hooves on the earthen floor, quietly grinding their corn. The two goats butted horns, which made a dull, scraping sound. The giant pigs lolled about in the mud and manure, occasionally making soft, snuffling noises. A soft light glowed in the corner from the burning oil in a small, clay bowl. The cave was small and cloistered. Rats scurried across the floor littered with dung and grain seed.

It was hot and stuffy, no breath of fresh air stirred in the cave. Leather straps hung from pegs driven into the side of the rock and earth cave. Cobwebs stretched across the stalls of the animals, and the spiders hid in the darkness. The stench of the leather, sweat, animals, and fresh dung, pervaded throughout the cave. It was suffocating. The soft night sounds were broken by the gasps of a young, 15-year-old girl heavy with child. It was time for her to deliver.

The white, muslin robe was soaked with sweat, and it clung to her body. It bespoke of her peasantry. The skirt of her robe was stained with blood as she agonized to expel the child from her swollen belly. Her long hair was plastered to her forehead, and she lay on a pile of straw. The fear of uncertainty and of the unknown shone in her glazed eyes. Her young husband knelt at her side and tenderly bathed her face with tepid water. He pulled out a clean piece of cloth, readied for the delivery of this child. And then, in a final cry of pain, the child was born in a gush of blood and water.

He scooped up the child and wrapped him in the clean cloth. His strong, calloused fingers gently ran down the side of the baby's face. The tears shone in his eyes, and the fear in his heart was replaced with love for the son who was not of his loins. He handed the tiny babe wrapped in swaddling cloth to his mother, and she suckled the innocent, fragile child.

"Jesus, my son," she whispered. Her heart was overflowing. What the golden angel had said had come to pass. She, a virgin, had given birth to a son who would be called Jesus. The cattle lowed in their stalls, the donkeys brayed, the pigs grunted, and the goats joined in the choir to welcome this child into the world.
Plastic Jesus
Robb Keizer

“The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” John 1:14

You lie in a manger, face fixed in an eternal expression of joy and serenity. Fingers and hands outstretched in a welcoming, molded embrace. Perfectly painted lips that utter nothing but silence, not even an “Abba” or “It is finished.” Frozen in time, innocence captured, stolen, empty.

Where are the burbles of toddler laughter or murmurs of comfort from a full-fed stomach? Where are the flailings of baby arms finding and discovering their existence? And what of your gift and innocence lost through nails and blood?

But even these questions fall on deaf ears, lying cold and perfect in every manger.
Jewish Memorial in Amsterdam
Andrew Moody
Faith
Bethany Meservey

My faith is a putrid rag
Torn and soiled
I cannot stand to be near it
And I choke on the bile in my throat
I hold the rag in my hands
And it rots before my eyes and
With it the last vestige of my humanity
In desperation I take it and
Plaster it on my soul
I thread the silver stake
With my sinews and plunge
The stake into my soul
In, out, in, out
The blood spurts out, gushes
From the wound
It soaks the rag
And dribbles down into my being
The rag is crudely sewn to my soul
The blood slows, and stops
Coming home

Sarah Eekhoff

I.
My mother packed apples and raisins and five sandwiches wrapped in plastic, labeled with initials: PB&J for peanut butter and jelly or H&C for ham and cheese or B&H for butter and honey.

My mom, brother, sister and I mounted our bikes and pedaled the six-mile trip out of town, past the graveyard, to DenHart, where my father worked at the grain elevator.

Racing into the office, we threw our child arms around him, breathing in the corn dust and tobacco that was him.

After lunch, I led my little brother and sister outside to the black Iowa dirt, fertile for dandelions and young imaginations.

Fields of dandelions became a beauty parlor, and we tattooed my brother bright yellow. The anhydrous tank was a battle ship and the grain bins our companions as we stalked about our game of hide-and-seek.

The elevator stood as an enticing tower and when my father’s strong hands guided us up twenty flights of stairs, over piles of slippery corn, and past my mother’s warnings, I wanted to stay at the top forever.
The neighbors’ horses watched us from their side of the fence, and every afternoon we brought them cubes of sugar from my father’s coffee. He showed us how to hold our palms flat, even when the long tongues tickled our fingers.

Every day tractors rumbled down the gravel to weigh in at the scale out Dad’s window. Farmers in green John Deere sweatshirts and dusty seed corn hats rubbed our hair. “What grade are you in now?” “How tall are you?” “Do you like school?”

II.
Sometimes, on our way home we would stop at the graveyard just outside of town to look at the headstones carved like lambs, children lying under the black Iowa dirt:

*Nathan James Thompson
*September 1979 to December 1979

*Amber Rose Hansen
*July 1965 to February 1966

*Mary Beth Johnson
*January 1955 to October 1955

Nathan, Amber, and Mary slipped from our minds as soon as we pedaled out of their permanent nursery, and when we finally coasted into our driveway, we were ready for lemonade and the plastic world of hot pink Barbies.

We forgot about our father until, at five, the back door slammed and his shadow would block the sun setting red and orange on our kitchen linoleum. He was home from work.
Our ears pricked at the bang of the screen door, and from the four corners of the house we raced, tumbling over ourselves.

“Dad’s home!” we screamed. My mom would smile and reach for her kiss, we kids chattered like little birds.

“How are the horses, Dad?”
“How can I go to the top again tomorrow?”
“Dad, did Myra stop by today?”

III.
Years later I still ran to the slamming back door:
“Dad, Nate thinks I’m beautiful.”
“Mr. Roberts gave me an A on my test and I didn’t even study!”
“Coach made us run five miles today, Dad.”

One Tuesday morning Dad didn’t come home. One of Grandpa’s cousins picked me up at school and explained the accident on our way to the hospital. Trapped between the wall and wagon, Dad’s lungs had collapsed.

We spent a week in the hospital, begging for the miracle God didn’t grant.

I went back to DenHart once, with Mom. She was quiet on the six-mile drive home, Dad’s papers and wood carvings and grinning pictures of us kids between us on the seat.

I was silent, too, knowing I would wait an eternity for my father, who lay just outside of town, under the black Iowa dirt, in a quiet cemetery full of lives cut short.

He was finally home from work.
Winter Cornfield
Laura Apol
holocaust
Matt Bakker

in the tray and across
the floor lie the remnants
of some literary holocaust
ground up bones
and words and truths now lost
used once, discarded
said once, forgotten
eager to know the names and
faces behind the powder
i call up all my powers of
paleontology and reconstruct,
resurrect this valley of dry bones
but individual words are
drowned in sheer numbers
six million dead
or more
now in a little plastic baggy
i carry with me the answer
to any question
every question
slopes and secants
thermodynamics
the equation of life
i have it all and it’s just a
handful of dust
in the
end
Thanks
Special Thanks goes to:
Dr. James C. Schaap, faculty sponsor
Barb Grevengoed, Creative Services coordinator

Colophon
The 2001 Canon uses Textile, 18-point standard, for titles;
12-point Textile for author, 10-point Textile for artist credits,
10-point Textile bold for art titles, and 12-point Garamond for literature.

Correspondence
To receive a copy of the Canon via mail,
to express your opinions about this magazine,
or to make inquiries, you may write to:

Canon
c/o Dr. James C. Schaap
Dordt College
498 4th Ave NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1698

Cover Photo Credit
Sugar by Jon Hansen