Spring 1989

The Voice, Spring 1989

Dordt College

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Dordt College: Geared to the Non-CRC Student?

We talked to nine Non-CRC students on campus. Their ideas about Dordt may surprise you.

The Importance of Being Dordt College President

J.B. Hulst talks about how he is working for you and Dordt College

What You Thought You'd Never See!

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A Special Thank You to:
The Canon Staff
I walked slowly up the slope
Only the sharp crunch of fresh pine needles broke the quiet serenity of the mountain forest.
The sun slowly snuffed its way out, desperately spattering its crimson rays against the deep, still sea of the clear endless sky.
I reached the crest of the pine covered mountain.
Here nature unveiled its blanket of awesome beauty, which covered all the land as far as I could see.
For a moment . . . my heavy breathing was swept away by the cool crisp air, and I was lost in the artistry of the Creator.
The sun gently wheezed, and blew its last dazzling rays to spark a star into twinkling.
And soon, as though through some chain reaction each star had received its own sparkling garment.
The pines, now frosted with the twinkling light, swayed . . . and swayed . . . and swayed, as if Mother Nature was rocking her child to sleep, and out of her silence she softly began to sing
a sweet humming lullaby.
She sang so softly at first, and yet so beautifully.
I strained my ears to hear what she was singing.
Then contented, I lay back into the mountain moss, the misty dew of evening lightly falling on my face.
For now I knew what she was singing.
It was as still, as soft, as beautiful as before, but now I could hear her gentle voice whisper clearly . . .
A voice of all languages . . .
A voice of the trees, the sky, of everything in the night breeze.
Everyone has heard her voice but few have stopped to listen to her simple comforting words whispered in their ears . . .
Yet now I lay content to let her tell me
Over and over again . . .
She sang of a creator, and spoke of His love . . .
His endless love . . .
Love more beautiful than the forest and more endless than the mountain sky.

—Ethan Brue
Mechanical Engineering
Sophomore
From the Editor...

Setting Goals is highly emphasized at Dordt. So, in fine Dordt tradition I set a goal for this CANON. I wanted to be able to double the number of pages from the first issue. And with the submitting students' help, we accomplished that goal. In fact, we had so many submissions this semester that we sadly had to turn many away due to lack of space! A dream come true. And I hope many of you will agree with me when I say that the CANON has come a long way in the past year.

Again in this issue we have a feature article, one I hope many will find enjoyable, and perhaps informative. As you will recall, last issue focused on the former Dordt College president, Rev. B.J. Haan. In step with that trend, this issue Jean Zondervan interviewed Dr. J.B. Hulst, Dordt's current president.

I hope you enjoy this second semester CANON as much as I enjoyed putting it together—there are several fantastic stories, and John Hofland's drawings compliment them.

Please help keep up the caliber of this magazine for next year by submitting as much as you have for this one. Student submissions make the CANON a quality magazine.
Dear Editor;

The last issue of CANON featured an article on the Sioux Center movie theater controversy of the late 1940's. Much of the article was based on a review of articles appearing in Life and Time, which covered this issue back then. Unfortunately, that coverage left out key elements, which had a way of distorting the issue and gave the impression that many in Sioux Center were "backwards" and that my father, the Rev. B.J. Haan, was some kind of religious fanatic.

You see, it wasn't so much that my father was fanatically opposed to movie theaters; had an individual decided to open up a theater, he probably wouldn't have raised such a fuss. He would have continued, no doubt, to warn his parishioners against theater attendance, since the 1928 Synod of the CRC had exhorted all her leaders "to warn unceasingly against the prevailing spirit and forms of worldliness" which were being propagated in many movies.

But there was much more to it than this. What my father and many others decried was the fact that this theater was going to be funded by money raised at prayer meetings held during the Second World War for use by "the boys" when they returned home from the war. Most people saw the opening up of a theater as an inappropriate way to utilize those funds, and a vote on the matter simply confirmed this. Even so, the city council approved going ahead with the project.

Furthermore, this movie theater was to be owned and operated by the American Legion, of whom there were many young men who could not, in good conscience, involve themselves in such and endeavor, due to the CRC's position on corporate responsibility.

But, you see, when these facts are left out and the matter is reduced to simply being for or against the movie theater, all the "noise" that this issue generated can and did result in Sioux Center being presented as a "stiff-necked, legalistic Dutch community," with my father leading the way, when actually she should have been applauded for her integrity, for having been concerned about matters of principle and proper procedure.

It is not my intent in saying this to create a fuss. However, while it is true that "some details are best left forgotten," if one is going to write an article about this historical event, some details are best to be included, especially when without them, one receives a distorted picture of things. And so, it is simply for the sake of setting the record straight that I speak out, and hopefully from this additional information people will have a healthier impression of the 1940's in Sioux Center and, for that matter, of my father as a pastor during that time.

Sincerely,
Sheldon, Iowa

[Editor's note: We apologize for this oversight, which was certainly unintentional. Our sincerest apologies for any problems this may have caused; we hope that no offense was taken by any of our readers.]

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### Martin Seven Writing Contest Winners

**Fiction:**

1st Place: "Old's Married Couple"
   by Tammy Mulder

2nd Place: "Sandra"
   by Karla Kamp

3rd Place: "The Coma"
   by Dorthea Grossman

**Essay:**

1st Place: "Once upon a Christmas . . ."
   by Dawn Nykamp

2nd Place: "When I Think of the Swell Time . . ."
   by Beth Boender

3rd Place: "Hitting Home"
   by Steve Kortenhoven

**Poetry:**

1st Place: "ode to the pink-shoed girl in the library"
   by Laura Tebben

Honorable Mention: "Words of Wisdom "Churchill—Christmas, 1988"
   both by Karla Kamp

**Academic Essay:**

1st Place: "Thrasymachus and Socrates: The Difficulty of Defining Justice"
   by Paul Ipema
Ten years ago, 8.2% of Dordt's students came from a non-CRC background. This year a total of 13.8% of Dordt's population comes from churches not belonging to the Christian Reformed denomination. And the trend is continuing. What does Dordt need to do to continue the trend and keep its enrollment up? For this interview, we talked to nine students who fall into the "non-CRC" category. What they have to say may surprise you.

CANON: In what ways do you find Dordt supportive of your background, in coming from a non-CRC church?

Marcia: Dordt is more conservative than Calvin, and since the Protestant Reformed Church broke off from the Christian Reformed Church, its [CRe] is the closest to the doctrine of the Protestant Reformed Church, so I decided to come to Dordt; it's closer to my denomination than any other college.

Jonathan: With me it's different too, because the Reformed Church in the United States is a sister denomination the CRC, and as far as our creeds and confessions go, they are very similar to the CRC. But in the last 15 years, the CRC has become a bit more liberal in their teachings on Genesis and the creation of the world, and R.C.U.S. is a bit more conservative. Overall, outside of that, they [Dordt] are very supportive of my background.

Doug: For my denomination, we don't really have a specific college that we go to, because it is quite small and Dordt, like some of the other people have said, is close to it. The Christian Reformed creeds are quite close and I think with most issues we stand on the same side. There isn't really that much doctrinal differences, I don't think.

Amir: Well, I see that all Christians are one body, and we are all part of the body of Jesus Christ, so I don't think it really matters what denomination you come from. We are all Christians, and we worship the same Lord.

Kim: I agree with what Amir said about all of us being from one body. The worship practices in my church are totally different from those [in the Sioux Center churches], and I have been encouraged, especially by Mr. Van Soelen, to find a church that is as close to mine as possible to attend while I am here.

Tom: I also find it interesting to get a variety in life and not to be in the same channel all the time. If I had gone to a Lutheran school (there are many Lutheran schools around this area) I would have just relearned everything I had already known, and I think a variety and change was something that is really nice.

CANON: In what ways do you feel Dordt is unsupportive of your beliefs and background? Have you ever gotten into a discussion with a professor or a fellow student about what you believe?

Marcia: I have had many points come up that I have disagreed with as far as religion goes, but seeing that it is a Christian Reformed college, you can't say much.

Lyle: I think the pros are generally open to hearing other things and when they present an idea in class they don't just present it as the ultimate idea, and they often allow us our own ideas; they support it if we have different ideas, and support not to accept just what they say the law.

Dianna: I have had several run-ins with people. I think it is the students who really hit me the hardest because they all knew what they knew, and I was like, "Well ... I know what I know but nobody else knows." You try to explain and they are like, "No, you're wrong." What really hit me is that they kept trying to tell me that I was wrong, and I thought, "Now wait a minute, we are supposed to believe the same," but we didn't.

CANON: To further that, on which
Dianna: We don't have catechism in our church, and though I kind of knew what catechism was because one of my cousins had gone through it, I had no idea what it was like, and I had no idea what you studied. We have doctrines, but we don't study them intensely, they are there if you want to know them, and you usually learn them through the Bible and through church, and everybody else says, "We study our doctrine and we memorize these little things." We have nothing memorized to say, like the Apostles Creed. I stand there in church with the girls, and they all say it and here I stand, but I really don't feel left out, it's something they believe. I think that's fine as long as they know what they're saying it and believe it, and if they aren't just saying it because they have to, because I know a lot of people that go through Catechism and say their little piece in front of everybody, and that's it, if it's not going to be worth the teaching, then why do it?

Jonathan: I come from the opposite background. In our church, we feel that in order for someone to believe, they have to know what they believe. If someone asks you a question:

Kim Armstrong is from Clarksville, Ohio, where she attends the Solid Rock Church, (a community, non-denominational church). Kim came to Dordt "because it's a Christian college with an ag department."

"How do you feel on this point?" and if you don't know the answer, and don't know how you stand, then it's tough, but in my church, we really stress that [catechism], and that is where the CRC differs with my church, in that lately they have been taking a somewhat more liberal position on the inerrancy of scripture. They still say that it's inerrant, but some how they sidestep around certain issues, where the Bible is clear on it, but they don't like to accept it, and the R.C.U.S. feels very strongly about inerrancy and infallibility of scripture.

Amir: Like it has been mentioned before, I think the hardest thing for me was the different way of worship. Where I come from, we worship much more informally than it is with the CRC.

Barb: I think there is also a difference in the education department here. I am studying to become a secondary ed teacher. I went to a public high school, but the Christian Reformed Church definitely supports Christian education. Sometimes I feel that they put down going to a public school.

Lyle: I never really had it that any of the students or professors would contest my beliefs. The only conflict I've had was that I came from a church that was much more conservative than the Christian Reformed, especially in the use of Sunday. That's the only problem I've had so far—that the Christian Reformed Church is much more liberal in what they allow a person to do on Sunday.

CANON: If Dordt wants to increase their enrollment, they will probably have to look to other church denominations; what do you think that Dordt should be doing to attract more "other denominational" students?

Barb Van Gorp is from Sioux Center, Iowa. She attends the First Reformed Church (Reformed Church of America) and came to Dordt because "I wanted a Christian perspective college and Dordt is known for its Music department and it has a good Spanish department."

Jonathan Gross is a member of the Grace Reformed Church in Bakersville, California (Reformed Church in the United States). He came to Dordt because "it is the best place to go for a Christian education and it teaches Christian perspectives throughout all the sciences."
Doug: I think one thing they can do is just reach out to the other denominations since Dordt is a Christian Reformed college, people know about it through the church. My church has no direct connection with Dordt College. I think that going into these other denominations and making a special effort will get them [students] to come.

Marcia: I don't think that Dordt can do much as far as changing its doctrines because it is a Christian Reformed college, and like Doug said, all that they can do is go into the denominations, and try to reach more people. They came to our school, because we have a Protestant Reformed high school, and talked to people, but they didn't go to the churches.

Barb: I think maybe if Dordt wanted to attract more non-Christian Reformed denominations, maybe they could claim to be more of an all-over Christian college rather than a Christian Reformed college.

Amir: When I talked to Mr. Van Soelen, he told me that Dordt is not really a Christian Reformed college, it's just a Christian college, but it was established by Christian Reformers and therefore it just stuck with the Christian Reformers, but it is not engraved in stone that Dordt College is a Christian Reformed college.

Tom: I think that it will always be typical because you put a label on a college that you have to be Lutheran to go to a Lutheran college, you have to be Baptist to go to a Baptist college, and I think for Dordt, I don't know if there is really a lot you can do without changing the doctrines. Maybe one suggestion is to advertise in a wider area and not focus so much on Dordt as Christian Reformed, but rather more of a Christian college, so that people will not label Dordt as a Christian Reformed college, and that you have to be Christian Reformed to go to this college.

Dianna: I don't know if this would help, but I went to a public school, and it's not a big school, it's medium sized, but they had stuff in our guidance room, where you can go for college information, information about different schools, like a Baptist college was in there and there's a Christian college. Now, if they could just get information in any schools, so that it is there and people can see it, they're advertising, that's the point. In a public school even the kids I have seen, went to church-schools.

CANON: Another area of conflict on campus related to this is the ads
that they've placed on KG 95. What did you think about those? Do you think that they should be there, or should they be removed? Is it good to have them there to attract other non-CRC students like yourselves?

Tom: First of all, how many people actually went to a college because of an advertisement they heard on the radio? I went because I live in Sioux Center by the college, and you [Marcia] went here because it was between Calvin and Dordt.

Kim: I came here because of an advertisement in a magazine. So it does work.

Tom: But maybe a greater majority come because of connections. I'm sure that advertisement does work, but I wonder what percentage actually comes because of advertisements.

CANON: But don't you think that the more that you see and hear in the way of advertising, the more information you want?

Doug: I think it may work, but I also think Dordt needs to see how their money can be used in the best way. Maybe reaching out and sending the guidance counselors to more high schools would have more of an effect than a 30 second ad that someone might hear and maybe remember Dordt College, but still won't do anything about it.

Amir: Like Barb mentioned earlier, especially in the public high schools, there's a number of students in the high schools that are looking for a Christian college, and few representatives from Christian colleges go to public high schools, so they [public high school students] don't really hear much about them [Christian colleges], and the students have to go out and find their own.

Jonathan: I agree, like sending out the recruiters. The radio advertisement, I don't know how effective that is, but I know that recruiters, Mike Epema and those guys, when they come to your high school and talk to you, that's effective. They came to my high school, and they do a really good job of telling you what Dordt is all about, and I think that is, I mean if there was a choice between the two, that's the one that is more effective. That one on one contact with those guys, they do a really good job.

CANON: One time I was talking to Mike Epema, and I asked them why they didn't go into Kansas to recruit, and he said, "Well, there is not many Christian Reformed Churches there." I didn't know there had to be.

Amir: That's what is limiting them. If they say they want to expand the students to more than just CRC denomination, then they can't just limit themselves to areas with CRC high schools and/or churches.

CANON: What else comes to your minds in connection with this subject?

Amir: One thing I was going to mention was where I see Christian Reformed perspective from the Christian Reformed really stressed hard, is Theology; I'm taking it this semester. That's where they really say, "O.K., they do it this way, and they do it that way, but as Reformed Christians, we see it this way, and this is what we believe in and this is what our doctrines say." Coming in from non-CRC and taking that course, makes it much more difficult to understand. The CRC students, because a lot of them went to CRC high schools, had all this in high school, but Lutheran, Pentecostals, Baptists, or any other denomination didn't have that Reformed perspective of Christianity and so they are starting from scratch. That is where there is a hard load on them.

CANON: So do you think it should be . . .

Amir: I think it should be in a more Christian perspective, instead of getting down to the nitty gritty of the Reformed.

CANON: Do you feel like you're fighting a uphill battle in Theology 101?

Amir: It's not that big of a problem, and it can be handled, it's just...
Doug LeMahieu is a member of Ootsburg Bethel Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Ootsburg, Wisconsin. He came to Dordt because "it's a Reformed college, and I like the Christian perspective, and I also like the small college atmosphere."

that it's one of those areas where Christian Reformed is being really pushed.

Doug: I don't find it to be too oppressive in forcing it down our throats; it's acceptable. But I think non-CRC students need that extra help and maybe that should be taken into consideration, because I know of a couple students who didn't have a very good background, and they just struggled through the course, just trying to get the basic principles that CRC students knew by the time they were 5 years old and had been fed and knew it by the time they were 7.

[Non-CRC] students are struggling just to get the basic points.

CANON: There's a fine line that they walk too. The Reformed doctrine is the one Dordt supports, and the majority of students are raised in that background, so they know it. In teaching these things they can't get too elementary, yet they need to get it explained understandably to those not raised in the Reformed view. Do you think there should be another supplementary class, or some optional session, (nothing anyone should have to attend because they are non-CRC) to help explain the Reformational view?

Jonathan: That's one of the advantages of the small college— if you do have trouble, it's no problem going to the prof and talking to them one on one. That's one of the things I found; they're so good about being open.

Doug: I think too, as you said before, that Dordt still has to teach that Reformed perspective, because otherwise what are they going to teach? As a Christian college they have to have a certain position. I think that they still have to maintain that position, they just have to be a little bit more helpful. As you said, maybe they should provide some extra assistance. But I think often the professors are willing to do that if the students will seek them out.

Jonathan: If Dordt would quit teaching a Reformed perspective, it would undermine everything that the college was built on. It's one of the few Reformed, conservative colleges there are, and if they give that up then they might as well be like any other college.

Tom: I don't think you want to segregate the students either, put CRC in one group, and the rest of us in another one. I think that would defeat the whole purpose of the Bible verse that says we are all one body, and all in the same boat. It is very true, that there are some students, and maybe some students don't want to come to Dordt because they never had a Christian background. I know that I have grown up in a very religious, Christian household, so I knew all that stuff already, and I went to a public high school, and I know there are some students who probably have never gone through a confirmation class. I have spent hours studying the Bible, so that's really important to be open minded and have the profs open themselves to help these students.

Amir: That's kind of a hard subject to deal with because in one area, you don't want to take out the Christian Reformed perspective, because that's kind of the foundation of Dordt College, but you also don't want to segregate the students like Tom Overlie mentioned. That's really a tough subject to deal with.

Kim: I enjoyed my theology course when I took it last year. It was much different from the theology I had in high school. I went to an independent high school that wasn't affiliated with anything, and they tried to teach an unbiased opinion, and that was helpful. But in theology, I kind of had to take what I believe in and put it aside, in some aspects, to learn that approach; but it was interesting for me to learn about it. I probably would have benefited from sessions like you were talking about. I probably would have gone because it probably would have helped me to have that before I took Theology.

Marcia: I think the profs are really good. If I disagreed with a point, and they asked a question like that on the test, I would say, "The point you made was this, but what I believe it this," and they never took anything off, and they would maybe put a comment or something on the side.

Marcia Van Baren is a member at Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Wyoming, Michigan. She came to Dordt because "it was a choice between Calvin and Dordt; Dordt is smaller and more conservative."
They were pretty understanding.

Doug: I think that one of the main areas where Christian Reformed profs and the students can help is if they accept other people's views, not just their own as the only right view. I think lots of times, students, if you are talking to them, will say, "Oh, you're not CRC," and they will go, "WHOA!" I think that other students should accept that different denominations have different beliefs. That would also open Dordt up to other denominations. Students from other denominations think, "Well, I'm not going to go there because they are not going to listen to what I have to say." That closes Dordt off.

Amir: Some students are interested in that [being from a different denomination] and they ask more about your denomination, how you worship, what you believe, things like that.

Marcia: I think it also challenges yourself in what you believe, because you are forced to defend them [your beliefs]. I've had many late-night arguments with my roommates; I thoroughly enjoy what they have to say, and I'm able to strengthen my own beliefs.

CANON: Have all of you had at least one "late-night argument"?

Amir: What I've had is not an argument but just discussions, sharing each other's opinions and viewpoints, and we take it very openly. That's one thing I like about it, it's not a battle, it's just sharing different viewpoints and accepting them as "Fine, that's what you believe and this is what I believe."

CANON: Have you found that people are accepting your views and opinions?

Tom: It depends on how you present your opinion. I think you have to be open minded in order to have people to accept you and that you need to express your opinion realizing that they have their opinions and you can't change them. If you have that in mind, I don't think you would have too much of a problem.

CANON: Does anyone have anything more to offer to this in order to finish things up?

Jonathan: Dordt has to maintain its conservative position because there are so many colleges out there that are border line and tend towards being liberal. Even Calvin is a lot more liberal than Dordt. In order for Dordt to maintain its unique position, in order for it to benefit the conservative denominations out there, its very important that it stay a conservative college.

Amir: I think that's also what makes Dordt such a respected college, because it has a Christian foundation.

........................................................................

Rumors

A rumor is like a reflection in a fun-house mirror
distorted and false
only the pain is real.

—Lynda J. Moes
Social Work Senior
The natural thing to assume is that he spends all day in his office going over the budget. Or maybe he spends most of his time lecturing all over the United States and Canada; or maybe he really doesn't do much of anything at all!

I'm sure many students at Dordt College have wondered over the years what the dark-haired man with the suit and tie and the office plaque bearing the title "President" really does. What are the duties of a president? Well, the president of Dordt College defines his job with a single word: servanthood.

J.B. Hulst came to Dordt in 1968 as professor of Bible and campus pastor. Three years later he became the Dean of Students, which he combined with his duties of Campus Pastor. Then in 1982, he became Dordt College's second president, an office which he has held for seven years.

Hulst is a graduate of Calvin College, where he met and fell in love with his wife Louise. In 1951, he graduated from Calvin and entered the seminary in the fall. On Christmas break that same year, he and Louise were married.

In 1954, after he graduated from seminary, he entered the ministry. He served three churches before coming to Dordt: Ireton CRC, Iowa., First Church in Orange City, and Twelfth Avenue CRC in Jenison, Michigan. While in Jenison, Hulst earned his Th.M. Degree. Later, in 1976-8, he took a leave of absence to obtain his doctorate in Religion & Higher Education in Denver, Colorado.

Hulst found his work in the ministry very enjoyable. "I
really liked my work as a minister, and I still continue to enjoy preaching."

According to Hulst, working as Campus Pastor and Dean of Students was also very rewarding. "In my first fourteen years at Dordt, I had the opportunity to work very closely with the students—I knew nearly all of them personally. I received a great deal of satisfaction from that."

As president, however, Hulst must spend more time off-campus. He estimates that he spends 25-30% of his time travelling. Most of that time is spent speaking, attending committee meetings for the various boards he is on and, as well as meeting with various supporting constituents.

"I enjoy representing Dordt to its supporting constituency," said Hulst.

While on campus, Hulst spends time meeting with the academic and administrative heads of the college, as well as discussing policy with the deans of humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences divisions.

"It's important," says Hulst, "to work with the faculty and the administration in trying to realize the goals of Christian higher education."

Frequently during the school year, students will see him attending chapel, eating in the commons, or socializing in the SUB. Says Hulst, "It bothers me that I don't have as much contact with the students as I used to. I don't think they know me very well."

In his free time away from campus, Hulst enjoys boating and water skiing with his family at the lakes.

Hulst sees several challenges for Dordt in the future. First of all, he hopes that Dordt will become increasingly Reformational.

"I think to be Reformational in education is to integrate Christian faith with learning. We need to work at this continually."

Hulst also feels that Dordt must always strive to improve the quality of the academics—to strengthen the faculty and curriculum. He was especially excited about Dordt being recognized by US News and World Report for its high quality academic program.

"I want the students to take with them a high quality Christian education that above all prepares them for life in contemporary society. They also need training that will give them an international focus, one that prepares them to be citizens of the world."

President Hulst also hopes that Dordt will expand the ways in which it serves the Christian community at large, through more organizations such as KDCR, the Dordt Press, or the Stewardship Center.

According to Hulst, the presidency can be seen in two different ways: as a position of power and honor or a position of service. Hulst says the reason he considers it a privilege to be president of Dordt College is because he sees it as a way to serve the needs of the student body."

"I hope the students see me as a servant of Jesus Christ, working with them."

So next time you see the dark-haired man with the suit and tie in the SUB, grab a cup of coffee and sit down with him. After all, he's working for you!

Jean Zondervan is a Junior English major from Raymond, Minnesota.
Where were some of the prominent figures among Dordt's faculty twenty years ago? If college personnel had not been hired by Dordt, where would they be today? And how does the faculty spend their summer months? Our exclusive photo essay explores these and other provoking questions.

Koekkock and Vandyke have a discussion over coffee, way back in their college days.

James Schaap expresses himself in the 60's.

Mike Epema in his college days.

Vander Kooi before his worldview crisis.
Rick Vander Berg began his career as a concert organist, but was forced to give it up due to his uncontrollable urge to stomp on the pedals.

Van Soelen's authoritarian tendencies led him to his position at Dordt.

Excited young Norm Matheis—after meeting Shirley.

Jim Calkhoven had just perfected his new feed "Slop Helper" when he was invited to feed students at Dordt.

Continued on next page...
From previous page

"The Honeymooners"

The Hulsts star on the "Love Boat."

Kobes at the polo grounds on his European sabbatical.

Dr King in the days of his more radical views.
Reflection on Birds

It's nearly 6:00 p.m.; they should be here soon. I wait, watching and listening. It doesn't take long and I hear them, their cries breaking the silence, and soon after, I see them. They come swooping down in flocks of a hundred or more, flying first one way then the other and then back again before gently lighting in on an oak tree to rest. The tree barely moves—oblivious to the birds or maybe unwilling to disturb them, as I am. Another flock suddenly flies directly over the dorm and I unconsciously duck as the sky turns dark with the birds. I sit quietly in my room, not saying a word. If I spoke now the clam busyness of the birds would be interrupted and I can't bring myself to disrupt whatever it is they are doing. They are too busy to notice me looking out my second-story window at them, yet I feel as though I am intruding on a private ceremonial ritual. Like walking in on a wedding that I wasn't invited to, I feel intrusive but I still can't force myself to leave. So I settle down to watch some more, first opening the window just a little. I shiver at the cold October evening air but I sit close to the window anyway, listening. I'm rewarded with the chirping, chattering sounds of the birds and the sounds of wings flapping in the still evening. There are so many of them that they sound unreal, foreign. It is strange how these common birds hold me spellbound; although my homework is waiting, I am in no hurry to turn my window.

It is getting darker now and I can barely see them. They've settled into the tree tops and have quieted down. Only an occasional fluttering of wings or an outburst of chirping breaks the silence.

One of my roommates comes in muttering under her breath, the R.D.'s baby wakes up from her nap crying, and my time with the birds is gone. I'm drawn back to the reality of assignments due and tests to study for. I stand up and strain my eyes for one last look but the trees and darkness hide the birds from my view. I don't know why they come to this particular place, but as long as they do I'll continue to watch for them. I lean over and close the window. Homework won't wait any longer, but I've no doubt that tomorrow will find me here by the window: waiting, watching, and listening once again.

—Michele Cobb
Elementary Education
Sophomore
I finally persuaded Mark to take the "For Sale" sign out of the back window of the rusted-out, tank size, 1975 Oldsmobile and let me keep the car. Mark and I got married in that car, really.

Oh sure, we had a real church wedding. A little earlier than planned, but we had it. Still, I don't ever remember feeling really married, though, until the night Becky was born.

I do remember standing on the top step in my pale blue, semi-formal dress, staring at the minister's one thick eyebrow. Then I looked sideways at Mark. He was so white I thought he was going to faint. It was ninety-eight degrees that day. I asked him if he was okay, and he just snapped, "I'm fine." I stared straight ahead again and said, "Fine." It's kind of funny now when I recall the look on the minister's face. He was probably thinking, "What, in God's name, are these two doing up here." I was touchy and nervous because, among other things, I was three months pregnant. Mark didn't have that excuse. I felt like the entire congregation was looking right through me. It's a weird feeling. You catch someone sneaking looks at you, like to see if you're showing or something, and you start to feel like they must have been right there in the car with you every time it happened.

Eventually the minister says, "Do you, Mark, take Leanne..." and Mark coughs and says, "Sure." I rolled my eyes and thought, "I do, you dummy. You're supposed to say I do." Only, deep down inside, I don't think he did.

As if the whole wedding ordeal wasn't enough, try having morning sickness on your honeymoon. Breakfast in bed arrives, and Mark shovels down everything, mine included, while I'm in the bathroom hugging porcelain. I tried to make everything so romantic, you know, like in the movies. One night I turned on the portable radio Mark had insisted on bringing, even though I told him the motel would have one, and re-lit the unity candle I had secretly taken from the front of church after the wedding, and Mark and I danced in our motel room. But he started goofing around, and when he dipped me, I knocked the candle over and burned a hole in the carpet.

Even making love wasn't as smooth as it was before we were married—there's a big difference between a back seat and big double bed when you're only teenagers. A car just would've felt a little more normal to us than a motel room. Even though they were uninvited, I was almost thankful that Mark's best friends came with us. The two followed us and stayed in the Holiday Inn across the road from our Motel 6. At night after Mark thought I was asleep, he would go to the arcade and play video games with them until morning.

Every girl dreams about her wedding from age thirteen on, that only gave me three years in fantasy-land, but no one ever bothers to really think about it. So many times when Mark was working at his uncle's shoe store, I'd sit in my third-hand Boston Rocker and sing to my unborn baby. Since I didn't know any lullabies, I'd make up songs. I'd sing about how Mark laughed at me in the morning when my copper-colored hair was plastered to my head, how those darn box elder bugs just kept finding the holes in my screens, and how I hated the ugly drapes my mother-in-law gave me. I read once that it doesn't matter what you sing as long as you sing in a soothing tone. I talked more to Becky in those days than I ever did to Mark.

That's why I say I don't think we were really married. Sure, Mark came home almost every night, and he even took me along sometimes when he went to the race track to hang out with his
friends, and he made sure I was real comfortable sitting in the Olds, but there were also the nights he didn’t come home, and the nights he went to the go-cart races alone.

I remember waking up one night with really bad cramps. I was so afraid I was going to lose the baby. I reached over to wake up Mark, but there wasn’t even a dent in his pillow. I waited for him to come home, but finally I called my best friend. She drove me to the clinic, and it was nothing—but the point is Mark should’ve been there. He’d never really been one to depend on. That was obvious from the situation I was in. He had assured me he’d take precautions. Sure. The Lamaze class didn’t help matters. It was so embarrassing, sitting in the basement of the public library with a dozen other couples, Mark rubbing weird patterns on my stomach, me breathing like a tired dog. Later I found out he’d been playing the mini race car game in his watch instead of timing my breathing. Afterwards we went to Rog’s Burgers and tried to forget the whole thing. I can still see us sitting there, Mark with a cigarette in his mouth, me with food in my braces, and a big round basketball under the table. After that I went alone.

Then we got married. I mean really married—in the union, commitment sense of the word. I know it’s silly, but I almost wish every couple could go through what we did. We’d been out for pizza. We thought the mushrooms must’ve been old because neither of us felt very good. We were taking turns in the bathroom, and finally Mark went to lay on the couch. About 1:30 I was really feeling lousy, and all of a sudden the first contraction caught me by surprise. I’d been kind of worried all along that I wouldn’t know when it was time, but believe me—you know it! I was shaking and sweating, and something my grandmother said kept running through my mind, “Leanne, you’re a big girl. You’ll drop ‘em like kittens.” Comforting. Another contraction grabbed a hold, and I said out loud, almost as if I’d never thought of it before, “Leanne, you’re really gonna have this baby.” It’s strange. You know that baby’s got to come out sometime, but you carry it for so long that after awhile you start thinking it’ll never happen. Actually, it’s a darn good thing it’s a natural process, or I’d dare say there’d be a lot of pregnant women walking around.

It was 2:00. Finally I decided to get up and take a bubble bath. For some reason, I figured it would be a good idea to be clean. I was just filling the tub when Mark came in. He bent over to wash up Mark, but there wasn’t even a dent in his pillow. I waited for him to come home, but finally I called my best friend. She drove me to the clinic, and it was nothing—but the point is Mark should’ve been there. He’d never really been one to depend on. That was obvious from the situation I was in. He had assured me he’d take precautions. Sure.

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Sometimes I forget
And I think sometimes
That he is
The most important part
The one thing
In my life
Beyond everyone
Because I try to be
My own
Or belong to him.
Then something or
Someone—
You
Remind me softly that
I need you
Even more.

—Dorthea Grossmann
English
Sophomore

with gentle firmness, "Leanne, you don't have to
do it; we're going to have this baby together." We
sat there in the dark for only about thirty seconds.
Then Mark took off like a crazy man again—
seventy-five miles an hour—but a kind of peace
slowly began to take away my fear, like for those
thirty seconds we had been the only two, almost	hree, people in the world, and maybe I could
depend on Mark after all—if I had to.

The contractions were getting harder and
faster, and we were still a long ways from the
hospital. I pushed on the sides of my stomach and
begged Mark to go faster. He kept looking down
at the speedometer and up at the road and saying,
"I am! I am!"

Then it happened. There was a loud pop, and
the car started swerving all over the road. Mark
slammed on the brakes and held on to the steering
wheel. I screamed when my shoulder banged
against the door. We finally stopped. The Olds

was sitting sideways across the road. Mark
looked at me like a zombie and said, "Geez, we
must've blown a tire." He crawled out his window
(his door was always stuck) and went to check it
out.

Mark said not to worry. He'd have it changed
in no time. He helped me into the back seat to lay
down. Mark was gone for what seemed like
hours. Then he returned and informed me that the
tire was really blown to pieces, and he was going
to go down the road for help, and could I wait just
a little while. "What do you think!" I screamed.
"Don't leave me!"

Mark just took off his jacket, got in the back
seat with me, and started doing all that crazy stuff
we learned in Lamaze class. He rubbed on the
sides of my stomach and held his watch up to the
dome light, timing the contractions.

What a scene. The Olds turned out to be a
pretty good makeshift delivery room. Mark gently
laid my head on the faded, heart-shaped pillow he
kept in the back window and got out the baseball
glove he'd secretly packed in my suitcase. He said
I should punch into it whenever I had to. You
should've heard us. Me screaming, "Get it out!"
and pounding into that glove, and Mark yelling,
"Push!"

So Rebecca Eleanor was born at 4:15 a.m. on
June 4 in the back seat of the same Oldsmobile
she was conceived in, and Mark and I were
married, no church, no minister, and no pale blue
dress; only a rusty, '75 Oldsmobile, our daughter,
and a bloody car blanket. Mark came through. It
seemed to me as if he had never done anything
else.

Mark wrapped our daughter in his coat and laid
her on my stomach. He said, "I'll have to take the
baseball glove back, but that's okay, and Leanne...
I love you." Then he kissed us both and
whispered, "I do. I really do."

—Tamara Mulder
English/Secondary Education
Junior
Winner First Place
Short Story Category
Martin Seven Writing Contest
On South Dakota

No more "rolling hills"
South Dakota—no nonsense—
Practically flat.
Rugged, rusty fields
Of soybean, corn, milo
Struggle with the brush
And creep toward
Haggard houses of weathered wood
The sun hotly, harshly,
Explores every forlorn crevice
Until even the wind
Picks up to travel elsewhere.

On Iowa

Something of serenity
In these fields
In this giant sky
Of muted blue and grey
Something of joy
In the deep horizon line
Of Crimson fire
Giving Silos stark black beauty
The glow oozing over
The silent world before me.
Everything praises God
In the grandeur of His World.

Poems by Amy Tiemersma
Social Work
Senior
Sandra, yep, that's my name. My Ma, she gave me that name. Sounds sweet, don't it? Well, I ain't sweet. I know my Pa never named me that. He don't normally pay attention to me because I'm just a girl.

I have seven brothers you know. Pa likes the boys because they can do lots of hard work. But I know I can too. Pa, he don't pay no attention to me, except last week at the pond.

They boys, they do lots of hard work. We have a grand sized farm, but we don't hire no help. We ain't got the money. I know because one day this man dressed in some blue and grey striped fancy suit came here from the bank to tell Pa he wouldn't give him no more money—nope, not a cent. Pa was real upset. I could tell because his ears, they just turned all red-like, he was burning up inside. And his mouth, the corner started to twitch just so. That's when he gets real mad. And I know because after the bank man drove away, Pa and Ma started to fight, just like cats and dogs. Of course Ma hates it.

You know, we got cats here. I especially like the kittens. They have neat tongues—kind of pinky and real rough. Sometimes when I want to be all by myself, I climb to the loft and find some of them. They keep me company. I used to have a favorite one. Not no more though. She was orange and white with stripes. She had white paws though. I named her Charlett. I carried her everywhere. My brothers would always tease me. And Pa, he hates cats. He kicks them, even when they're not in his way sometimes. He says cats ain't good for nothing but eating mice. And the mice—they scare the cows. One day I found Charlett in the loft. Except, she was dead. A rope hung around her neck. I cried lots, but I didn't tell no one. They'd laugh. They think it's dumb I like cats. Ma, she thinks it's okay. She tells me she used to have cat friends when she was a girl. But I don't have a special cat no more. I don't want none to get killed.

One time I can remember when Pa, he had a real nice horse. Her name was Chestnut because she was just that color brown. Pa called her a real beauty. I wasn't allowed to go too close to her because I might just scare her. Pa, every day he'd go feed that horse and then sometimes he'd ride her if he had time. But one time I was playing with the cats in the loft and I heard him coming. He was whistling like he always does in the morning. But then he stopped. And I heard him yell at one of the boys to come quick. But no one was there except me. And I pretended like I wasn't there. It was real quiet and I peeked down to see where Chestnut was and I saw her lying down. Pa was beside her. And I couldn't hear anything, but I knew he was shaking. And Pa's horse died that day. Pa never got another one. But Ma wished he did.

One of my favorite things was to sit on Ma's lap. She'd hold me and I'd put my head against her. She's real soft. She'd stroke my hair and tell me I was beautiful. Pa, he thought it was all nonsense. And then he said I couldn't do that no more. "You're 12 years old," he says. "And no sissy girl of mine's gonna sit on her Mama's lap!"

I still did though, except not when he could see me. Ma didn't care. She liked it. She says I was special because I'd always be her little girl. But one time Pa came in. He was real mad already because the dumb cows got loose. He saw me on Ma's lap and he grabbed me and threw me against the cupboards. His ears were real red. And then he looked at Ma and he pushed he chair over. I was scared. But then he left.

Ma, she's not real strong you know. But she works real hard. She always makes bread. She has grey hair and she always has it on top of her
head. She has green eyes, though, just like me. Her's are sometimes red though. She cries a lot. I remember one time her eye was blue. She said she hit her eye on the door of the cupboard. I knew though because it looked just like my brother's eye after he got in a fight with a guy about some girl. I knew Pa hit Ma. That's why she cries lots. And one time I saw him slap her. But she does nothing. She just cries. Then Pa's ears get even redder and his mouth starts to twitch. She has pretty eyes though.

I have freckles—lots. And they're all over. Everywhere. They're on my face, eyelids, hands, arms legs, and even my toes. I hate them. I don't have red hair though. Most people I see who have lots of freckles have red hair. Not me. My hair is just brown. But in the summer it gets lots lighter because I like to go swimming in the pond by us.

Just last week I was there all by myself, but then Pa came—

I go to school. But I don't like it much. Except when I was in fourth grade. Miss Holmes was my teacher and she was real nice. We learned about Indians and got to make tipis, and eat their food—pemmican, it's called. Miss Holmes, she liked my report and I got to read it in front of the whole class. She even got mad when Bobby Jones made the class laugh because I was wearing Bo's (that's my brother) old overalls. I even brought her two arrowheads I found in the field. She liked them and wanted me to keep them. But I told her I knew where lots more were. I haven't found no more of them though. She was the best.

I'm going to be a teacher just like Miss Holmes. She's real purty too. She has long, wavy, blond hair and big blue eyes. I won't look like that, but I'd be nice to my kids, just like her. Now Mr. Matthews teaches me and he don't like my writing. He makes me practice all the time. Sometimes me and Carl Bard got to stay in at recess to practice. We'd rather play ball outside with everyone else. They let me play, even if I'm a girl, because I can throw just as hard as any boy and hit as far as anyone, except Marty Scound, but no one can hit that far. He's real big, but not smart. Sometimes he skips school. If I did that Pa'd be mad at me and I'd get a licking. But I wouldn't cry.

I only cried twice, except when I was a baby, of course. Once when Charlett died and then last Saturday. I was real scared. It was after I went to the pond to do some swimmin' and Pa came. . . . He hurt me. And I never went home until it got real dark. But Ma, she was sitting by the window when I came in. And she was crying. She saw me and she asked me what happened because I had bruises and scratches and was all dirty. I didn't tell her. I couldn't. So I told her I fell asleep in the loft and fell down. It's not real high, but you can get bruises if you fall out. She helped me get cleaned up and she cried the whole time. I did too. I was scared. I still am.

—Karla Kamp
English /History
Junior
Winner Second Place
Short Story Category
Martin Seven Writing Contest

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Trusted Suitcases

I'm afraid—
So I'll go at night
Like the curious Pharisee
Like the spies and Rahab.

I'm afraid
Yet I'll pack my suitcase
And fold my feelings neatly.
One by one, I'll take the things I need;
I'm anxious.

I'll go at night
And come to see You.
I'll travel through the darkness
Away from this uneasiness.

And when I arrive
With my suitcase,
Will You agree to see me?
Will You agree that You know me?

Can I be myself
And open my suitcase,
Slowly—
For you to see.

My hope, that You will understand,
Grows inside of me.
These garments of the soul;
Accept them for what they are,
Ragged and torn though they be.

If this comes to be,
How can I thank You—
Enough?
For You have accepted me,
You have comforted me.

You—
Have seen inside
My suitcase
And I know this meaning
Of trust.

—Diane Bakker
Music/Psychology
Freshman
When Ruthie was about five or six, she had a cat. Teddy was his name. We had to give him away, because Joanna hates cats. Teddy was about as big as Ruthie, and she used to haul him around. He had a way of making himself weigh about a ton, so you could barely lift him. Half the time when Ruthie was carrying that cat, his back feet would be dragging on the ground. Finally she would give up and drop him. Teddy never scratched or bit her though. I don't know how he put up with all the hauling.

What I was going to tell you about was the time that Teddy got bit. He must have been in the garden. That's where Joanna found him. His left front paw was all swollen up. You could even see the fang marks. We kind of thought it was a copperhead. There's always been those around here in Missouri.

I thought for sure he would die. Those snakes can kill a man with their poison, let alone a cat. I made sure that Ruthie didn't touch him. I'm sure he wouldn't have gone for that. He just lay there and licked that bite. Pretty soon he had licked it so much there wasn't even any fur left on that part of his paw.

By the next morning, he was gone. Ruthie couldn't find him anywhere in the garden, or on our yard. Joanna said he'd probably gone off somewhere to die. Ruthie immediately started wailing and carrying on. She decided we had to find him and give him a funeral.

She walked all over the farm for the whole steaming hot afternoon. I saw her down in the pasture while I was fixing a fence down there. I yelled at her not to go near the crick, that's where the copperheads and water mocassins were. Well, she didn't find Teddy, but he came home about a week later. He looked kind of skinny, but his paw was back to normal size. After a while the hair grew back, but Ruthie never forgot it.

Ruthie was always taking care of stuff. She found these baby rabbits once, without their mother. She came running to tell me, I said their mother probably just got scared away by her. She was sure they were orphans, so she gave them a home.

We had these big Nine Lives cat food boxes, so she put the three bunnies in one of those, but while she was doing something else, Teddy found the box full of rabbits, and thought they were cat food. It was funny, but Ruthie was really mad at Teddy.

I mostly meant to tell you about the accident, but I remember those things about when she was little. They kind of tell you how she was. Maybe I should tell you about Dean. Ruthie met him while she was at college. They got married even before she graduated from nursing school. She always wanted to be a nurse. Ruthie and Dean were real happy together.

I think Ruthie was kind of eager to get away from her mother. Joanna is such a worrier. She tried too hard to protect the kids. I think she still resents Dean. She thinks the accident was his fault. Even though we know it was that pickup's fault. It's funny how I can remember every little detail about when the kids were younger, but I can hardly remember what day of the week it is sometimes.
I think that Joanna really liked Dean, deep inside, but maybe she was kind of jealous of Ruthie and him. Oh, I think we were in love once. At least it seemed like we were.

Joanna is two and a half years older than me. She was really beautiful when we were young. But she had to have just the right man. That's maybe why she wasn't married yet when I met her. She was twenty-two then. I guess I just couldn't believe she wanted me.

We didn't even know each other that good when we got married. But the boys came along so fast, we just got used to each other. I was never really good enough for her either. I tried to be, Lord knows, but I could always tell she wasn't that happy. But when Ruthie was born, then she was happy. She wanted her little girl to be perfect, just like her.

Just because of all this, don't think I don't love Joanna. I do, but I also feel sorry for her. She's had a hard life. But she's never made it easy for the rest of us either.

The accident happened one night about nine o'clock. It was spring, about the middle of April. Ruthie and Dean and their two, Annie and Ross, left our place about 8:30. They headed back to St. Jo, where they were living till their new house was done. Joanna was worrying as usual. She thought the kids should have jackets on, as it was getting a bit chilly. Afterward, she said she had known something awful was going to happen. But I've heard her say that before. The phone rang at about a quarter to ten. I answered it, and just listened. The guy said he was a state patrolman. I don't remember what all he said, only that there was an accident, and Ruthie and Dean and the kids were all in the hospital. I guess I heard him tell me which hospital, because Joanna and I got in the car and headed for St. Jo.

Before we even got there, though, they were flying Ruthie in a helicopter to Kansas City. I felt so bad for her. Joanna had been mad at her and Dean before they left. She thought Ruthie should stay home with the kids, not work. Joanna was always trying to push some kind of vitamin or medicine at Ruthie, too. She thought she wasn't healthy enough, or something.

Anyway, we stayed at St. Jo hospital and checked on Ross and Annie and Dean. None of them were in very good shape, but Ruthie was the worst of them all. Joanna was almost hysterical. It seemed to me that she didn't even care about Dean and the kids. All she wanted was to get to Ruthie. She kept saying that Ruthie was going to die without her, or something like that.

We told Dean we'd call from Kansas City. He was laying there with some broken ribs and something wrong with his lung, too. He looked bad to me. I drove with Joanna to KC hospital. I don't remember much of the trip, except we really flew. I thought we'd probably get picked up by a cop.

Ruthie was scared of cops when she was little. One time I accidentally let my foot off the brake when we were coming out of a gas station and we hit this guy in a Ford. The cop came and asked her, "Are you okay, son?" She was really mad that he thought she was a boy.

I always think of these things because while Ruthie was in a coma, she would smile sometimes when I told her stories about when she was little. Either that or make faces. It was always hard to tell whether she heard you or not.

When they had her on that thing that showed her heart beat, you could see her heart beat faster when Dean or the kids came in. It even beat faster when I talked to her sometimes. Joanna was always afraid that Ruthie would die before she could have an "experience." The church she's from is different than ours. You have to have an experience, sort of be born again before you can die and go to heaven. Ruthie didn't believe in that hogwash. Neither do I. But it really upset her mother anyway.

Ruthie didn't die though. she stayed in the coma for six and a half years. After a while, they moved her to a nursing home. She wasn't on any machines or anything. For a while, Dean didn't want to bring the two little kids to see their mom like that. But they started asking about her, so he brought them in. It was pretty pitiful at first. They just didn't believe that their mom couldn't wake up. Ross would shake her hand and say her name really loud. After a while they got used to it, and they'd even talk to her like Dean and Joanna and I did.

Actually, it was kind of good. Of course they missed their mother, but when she died, they weren't that upset. She'd already been gone from them for over six years. They didn't even remember her that well. I remember her though.

I can't believe this kind of thing happened to my family. Joanna is like somebody I don't even know anymore.

—Dorthea Grossmann

English

Sophomore

Winner Third Place

Short Story Category

Martin Seven Writing Contest
The snow built up little by little upon the window sill as my mother stuffed the turkey and peeled a Dutch oven full of potatoes. By the time we returned from the Christmas church service it had blanketed the driveway and shrouded the front lawn shrubbery. Car load by car load, the guests arrived, stomping the snow from their shoes and brushing it from their shoulders and hair as they came into the entry. The crackling of the fire and hum of the wind in the chimney provided background music to the din on the family gathering.

After dinner the men retreated to the basement for football and farm talk, while the women washed dishes and distributed left-overs. The younger boys pulled out snowmobile suits, stocking caps, and moon boots and headed for the hills which lie north of our evergreens. The toddlers played for a while but eventually ended up in their mothers or fathers' laps to curl up for their usual afternoon naps. The conversations both upstairs and downstairs slowed into an uncomfortable silence. A brave man from downstairs stood up and announced it was time to round up the kids and go home to feed cattle. The ladies bundled the sleeping toddlers in damp coats while the men went out to start the frigid cars. After calling the rosy-cheeked, runny-nosed boys in from the hills, the families packed themselves into their cars and made their way down the snow-packed roads.

About 7000 miles south of this icy Minnesota holiday, at the Sacred House of Mercy Hospital in a city in Northern Brazil, a new life was being delivered into the world. Beads of sweat probably built up on the young mother's forehead as her hand clung to that of her mother's. Perhaps the doctor made his way from one bed to another in the stuffy maternity ward. December 25 was no holiday for him, just another day to bring new life into a world that seemed already over-crowded.

The nurse probably sat in a darkened corner fanning away heat and flies, waiting for her assistance to be needed. The young girl's mother may have cried softly, watching her eighteen-year-old daughter writhe as the contractions came and went.

After a few hours of labor the contractions climaxed and a five-and one-half pound baby girl was brought into the sultry heat of this city along the Amazon. I'm sure there were tears—tears of joy and pain.

The young mother took her new baby home, even though she must have known it couldn't be for long. Those few nights they shared together she probably sat with her baby in the moonlight, staring through the mist at what she could see of the Southern Cross, the only Christmas decoration in her part of town. She would probably kiss her baby's forehead and whisper in Portuguese that she would never forget her. She probably dreamt about what she would grow up to be: a nurse, a teacher, or maybe a maid like her mother. Her baby had a chance, though, and she planned to give it to her.

The Christmas of 1987 came and went in our family. It probably would have become one of the blurry holidays of our family's memory, distinguishable only by the photos in an album tucked away on a shelf in my dad's office—if a small baby born upon that day had not joined our family.

Three months later melting snow trickled through the cracks in the pavement of the airport parking lot as our clan made its way to the entrance on the Minneapolis International Airport. The fresh March breeze played upon our cheeks and reminded us that spring would soon arrive. The thousands who passed through the airport that day must have sensed that something exciting was about to happen; maybe we looked as if we still held the holiday spirit which others had packed away with the tinsel and lights. There we stood—my parents, my younger brother, and my nephew—awaiting the arrival of a new granddaughter, niece, and sister.

Our Brazilian Christmas gift arrived in the United States around twelve noon in March 15, cradled in the arms of my sister, her adopted mother. Jane Raquel Wegener, my first niece, was...
greeted by kisses, tears and a love which had built up quickly in the moments we'd waited for her. This day was the beginning of Jane's life in America. When she had arrived into the world we had been busy eating turkey and keeping tradition. On this day her two worlds came together.

My sister laid Jane in my arms and then turned to embrace their son, a three-year-old who had counted down the days until his mom and dad would return. As I held Jane, in the airport full of bustling people, surrounded by my parents, brothers and sisters, I looked down into her brown eyes. I couldn’t help but think about the eyes that she had looked back at those first few days of her life. They must have been brown like hers.

As I wiped the wetness from the corners of my own eyes I couldn’t block out the image of another young girl, somewhere, doing the same thing.

My blue-eyed mother tells me how people used to note my sister's brown eyes and dark hair and ask if she were adopted. Today my sister holds her own Brazilian daughter and some of the same people comment on the beautiful black hair of both mother and child.

—Dawn Nykamp
Communications
Sophomore
First Place Winner,
Essay Category
Martin Seven Writing Contest

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Death Walks Silently

The snow glistened,
And an old man listened
To the sound of shovel on the drive
He saw the white mount high
And thought, "I can do that, at least I'll try."
The heart strain proved too great for he
Now she wishes him alive
Death walks silently.

The captain shouts
And his troops turn about
Face, these soldiers are his fighting men.
He tosses in his bed
Visions of his dead men race through his head
He wakes up screaming violence
"Bout men he'll never see again
And Death walks on in silence.

The teen sat down
Upon his bed and frowned
At life and adults, all fakes and pretends.
His knife seeks for his breast.
His parents find him and protest
As the stereo plays relentless
"Hello darkness my old friend..."
And Death passes on in silence.

The tree was set
And the people were met
Jeering and crying to him
"Come down."
"My Father, forgive them,"
He said, and hung as a thief condemned.
He suffered and died in our defense
But He stayed not within Hell's bounds
And Death stood still—in silence.

—Sam Gesch
English/Spanish
Freshman
I bought my one-dollar ticket that Saturday night not knowing what to expect. My friend and I quickly found our seats and began skimming the program given to us. I had heard of the play before; my friends were reading it in their English class. I had studied some of the author's work in high school as well, but I literally had no idea what this play was about. Suddenly the lights began to dim. The words on the program were fading in the darkness and I hurriedly tried to finish reading them as scene one of Steinbeck’s OF MICE AND MEN began.

Two men emerged on the stage. The first was a man of normal stature, maybe even a bit short. He had a decisive, defined way about him. The second man was larger. He dragged his feet as he shuffled on stage, and he gave the impression of a huge dumb animal. As this second character, Lennie, developed in front of my eyes, I wasn’t sure if I was supposed to—or even allowed to—think of him as dumb and stupid. I felt as if I would be mocking of ridiculing him. Lennie reminded me of someone. Lennie was a human being too.

I have a 29 year-old brother at home who is mentally handicapped. His name is Dan. In the first scene George repeatedly asks Lennie if he remembers what he is supposed to do; I remember my family asking Dan the same question. Dan likes to talk (especially about himself) and he likes to walk up to anybody and everybody and shake their hand. That in itself isn’t so bad, but when he interrupts a stranger’s conversation and begins talking about "screw workshop in Pella. It’s a car that he can drive to church on Sundays and to his haircut appointments. It will give him freedom and importance. He will be able to chauffeur his little sister to town for orthodontist appointments. He'll also be able to travel to Northwest Iowa to visit his twin sister Donna and her family. It's a dream, a dream that in Dan's mind will someday come true. But it is a futile dream.

Lennie and Dan are also alike in their physical stature. They are both big and strong, or at least Dan used to be. He lost some of his massive strength when he left the farm to live in a group...
home. Lennie is so strong he doesn't know his own strength. His big clumsy hands snuffed out the life of a mouse, a puppy, and even the life of a young woman. I can remember when Dan was a brute. He would shovel silage to the cows everyday, throw heavy bales to the top of the barn and hold 100-pound pigs my other brothers were castrating. He had built up quite a bit of muscle and it was a dangerous venture if his temper flared.

One Sunday Dan got a little carried away. He was playing "Chutes and Ladders" with my older brothers, Doug and Bill. Doug, who loves to tease his family members, was cheating and making Dan very irate. Frustrated, he whined, "Douuug, do you want to play the right way?" The angrier Dan became, the more Doug and Bill laughed. Suddenly, Dan's temper hit boiling point and he chased his two brothers through the house. When they reached the porch, Doug and Bill could no longer dodge him and they began their peace talks. But this was to no avail. Soon Dan had Bill pinned to the deep freeze and was hurting his arm. Doug tried to pry them apart, but immediately Dan, like an outraged bear, turned on Doug. Doug swiftly ran into the kitchen and closed the door behind him. Suddenly a loud crash and the splintering of glass shattered the air. Then the stillness of the silence paralyzed their bodies. Pieces of glass laid on the floor as blood trickled down Dan's arm. The boys stared at the mess by their feet, contemplating the consequences. Dan was no longer angry, and fortunately no major injuries resulted.

Dan is my brother. Sometimes he frustrates me like Lennie frustrated George. George said, "When I think of the swell time I could have without you, I go nuts. I never get no peace." And yet George knows he would never leave Lennie. They need each other. Sometimes Dan's constant attempts at attention and his loving yet irritating reprimands get to me. With his head inclined toward me, he shakes an authoritative finger while his stern eyes look away from me. He says, "You really ought to listen to your mother, Beth." And then later I feel ashamed. Dan needs me. He needs my approval and understanding when it seems as if everyone is against him. He needs my praise and encouragement when "his goals are met" or his "dreams" come true. And I need Dan. He teaches me patience and gives me an experience in life few others own. I can learn a lot from you, Brother Dan. When I think of the swell time I could have without you...I think again.

—Beth Boender
Elementary Education
Freshman
Second Place Winner,
Essay Category,
Martin Seven Writing Contest

ode to the pink-shoed girl in the library

she sat
in dark colors
on the edge
of her seat
eyes slashing open
the numb, printed words
coaxing them to retaliate
and invade her mind
soaking into her memory
under the buzzing
library lights
and
her pink-shoed pendulum
rocks back and forth
as she highlights and
scribbles and
slides
down
into
the
fading
music...

—Laura Tebben
Freshman
First Place Winner,
Poetry Category,
Martin Seven Writing Contest
As I snuggle into the secure warmth of my feathery fluff blankets, I remember how it used to be. Dad would always hug Mom with his huge arms, while Mom would jokingly attempt to resist his love pecking. They would laugh together while they watched T.V., ate dinner, or washed dishes. They would never be seen apart, seemingly being joined at the hands. Dad would rush home from work with a gentle, loving look in his eyes and give us both big bear hugs—first Mom then me.

I remember how I used to run and crawl into bed with them whenever I had a nightmare—their warmth and their love would always stop my crying.

Now I lay awake at night waiting for Dad to come home, thinking about how it used to be. I don't know if I want him to come home. I'm scared—for Mom. I'm waiting for him to come home like he used to with hugs and kisses and love.

I finally see his headlights move across my room, throwing light onto Holly, my giant Panda Bear, which Dad won for me at our school's Harvest Festival. As our silver station wagon screeches to a stop in the garage, I bury my head into my pillow, trying to fall asleep before he gets in the house. My pillow doesn't muffle the sound enough as I hear the front door slam and I hear my Mom, who has been quiet all evening, start to yell. I try to scream to somehow warn my Mom, but only shivering sobs come out of my mouth. Then I hear a loud, hard slap that turns my crying into a few short gasps for air. A dull, heavy thud strikes my ears as my Mom falls to the living room floor. I scramble through my flannel sheets to hide in the farthest corner of my bed. I bury my head in my blankets and cry myself to sleep.

I wake up to see the sun slowly creep up my back wall gradually brightening Holly's face. I rub my tired eyes and squint, checking the safety of my room. I wonder if my teary eyes and wet pillow are just from another terrible nightmare.

-Dad appears in my doorway with that gentle, caring look in his pure, blue eyes. The shine in those eyes bring with them the bit of hope that I have so often searched for. I hear his comforting voice, "Honey, it's time to get up. Did you sleep good?"

Maybe it was all a bad dream. "Kelli, you're going to have to help yourself to breakfast—Mom's sick again." As he turns to leave, the hope is torn from my heart and my eyes again flood with tears. Who can I run to to stop my crying? Who can end this nightmare?

His voice again pounds forcefully through the walls, "Kelli, you better get up now or we'll be late for church."

—Ethan Brue
Mechanical Engineering
Sophomore
Winner Third Place
Essay Category
Martin Seven Writing Contest

O Lord, where can I go to escape this pit of sin?
My voice has cried out for hours . . .
but it only has echoed with the same cold emptiness.
I've looked everywhere for your presence Lord.
I've searched the deepest chasms and struggled to the
highest peaks.
No, I have not found you, Lord.
I grope with blind hands through the desolation of sin.
I walk with torn feet through the destruction of evil.
I curse the very life that was given to me in this awful world.
No, I have not found you, Lord.
Many times, Lord, I have asked the weary traveler
"Where is the Lord? Which way should I go?"
He only pauses to stare bitterly back at me with weary eyes.
No, I have not found you, Lord.
I've called a million names, knocked a million doors,
Traveled a million miles.
No, even still I have not found you, Lord.
In my bitterness I give in, my legs fall out beneath me,
My eyes close.
Lord, I have not the strength to find you . . .
Yet now you speak to me, why after all this seeking . . .
Yet you say,
"I have been seeking you too, and now I have found you."
Only then did I realize,
That in my own worthless seeking,
I was only running away.

—Steve Kortenhoeven
English Major
Sophomore
Winner Third Place
Essay Category
Martin Seven Writing Contest
Here I stand—
alone—
in front of the old white church.
Mom says
it hasn't changed much,
aside from the black railing,
accompanying the blistering grey steps.

The church is in the center.
Right between a row of white homes.
The school nestles behind,
esting in the shadows of the church.

Christmas night,
I sat in this church,
in the same creaky bench
Mom did
when she was a girl.

1946: A. Emmelkamp
gives his daughter
a stern look:
Sit still—or else.
But the fidgety,
gabby girl
slides along the seat,
drops her peppermint
on the floor.

Grabbing the girl,
Emmelkamp marches out to
the foyer;
in one motion,
he spreads his hand,
lifts his arm—
Smack—
Right on the
three-year old's derriere.

No sign of embarassment,
But a stern face and
penetrating eyes
returns Emmelkamp and
a red face,
teary eyed
girl following behind
to the bench.
She sits still.
Mom's first memory.

1962: The groom stands,
in black suit,
black narrow tie,
white shirt,
white socks,
(he is Canadian you know)
at the front of the church.

The bride comes,
eyes shining;
her thin, exquisite smile
lives the grooms face—even more.

A. Emmelkamp gives
his daughter away.

The same stern look,
yet softness
and love
in the light blue,
serene eyes.

Yet here I stand.
The blue Montana sky—
the ceiling,
The white blanketed plain—
the floor,
The mountains—
power and beauty—
the walls,
reflecting the sun’s
glorious light.

How many times
have Grandpa
or Mom
stood here?

A strand of
glimmering light—
it's the bell,
calling me to the church.

Does the bell ring today?
Funny how it grabs attention.

1908: T. Emmelkamp
on the road to Churchill.
The horses plod,
steam pouring from nostrils,
wagon in tow.

Glimmering light
shines from the wagon.
A jostling bell
clangs through the crystal air.

This bell,
suspended from
white arch,
still rings—
loud and clear—
although I've never heard it.
It has called me.

This is where
I stand.

—Karla Kamp
English/History
Junior
Winner Honorable Mention
Poetry Category
Martin Seven Writing Contest
"Well, Grandpa,
What words of wisdom
do you have for us today?"
My uncle, married into the family,
asks,
while he pulls up a chair.

Grandpa's never without
a valuable quotation:
"Go to the ant,
you sluggard.
Consider her ways
and be wise—"
That's his favorite.
His voice rises and falls.
He and Shakespeare
would have gotten along great.

But this time, Grandpa doesn't
spout one off;
He closes The Banner,
folds his calloused,
but slender,
hands,
and tilts
his silver-grey head.

His blue and white striped overalls,
His pale Yellow shirt,
His black horn-rimmed glasses—
He's always the same to me.

My uncle flicks
a piece of lint
from his navy cords,
and Grandpa has an answer.
I look up from the J.C. Penny Catalog.

But Grandpa's voice
doesn't quiver,
with preacher-like authority,
like it always does
when he recites "Casey at Bat."
He sounds
normal.

"I can say,
with David in Psalm 23,
'My cup runneth over.'"

My uncle crosses his legs,
leans forward,
rests his elbow on his knee,
expecting some sort of punchline—but it never comes.

Grandpa says,
without sadness or hesitation:
"I have been greatly blessed.
all of my family is here at Christmas.
I may see some of you again,
But never all at once.
I'm living on borrowed time."

My uncle uncrosses his legs,
squirms in his chair,
"Ah, Grandpa,
you're only seventy-eight—
and healthy—
My Mom—she's eighty-four
and still living.
You've got lots of time."

I look down at the catalog,
but don't see any of the bright colors
or slender figures.
How can Grandpa talk like that?

No answer.

The week passes.
One week to get to know Grandpa—
to listen to his stories,
to hear his laugh,
to watch "Cosby" with him,
to tease him about his long nose,
to speak louder,
after he shakes his head
and places his hand behind his ear,
in frustration.

"'My cup runneth over—'
We must mean a lot to Grandpa.
But so must the Lord,
and his promises.
"Surely goodness and mercy
Shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell
in the house of the Lord
forever."

—Karla Kamp
History/English
Junior
Winner Honorable Mention
Poetry Category
Martin Seven Writing Contest
Lisa Westerveld
Senior Art Major

Untitled
Silkscreen
Sharyl Wielard
Senior Art Major

Art Show Exhibitor

Conversation

City Streets

Watching the Parade
ONWARD WE PEDAL

Moving in dark suits
Covering laundered white shirts
Onward they pedal.

Books strapped to their bikes
Six inches high
Onward they pedal.

Young handsome men
Never questioning why
Onward they pedal.

For them it is works
To spread their beliefs
Onward they pedal.

Not fancily dressed
With one book at my side
Onward I pedal.

After questioning why
And now knowing
Onward I pedal.

Sharing comes easy
Free flowing as grace
Onward I pedal.

With promising future
Spreading the light
Onward I pedal.

—Lynn Van Heyst
English/Secondary Education
Sophomore
Invincible, Untouchable

I'm just a country boy from Nebraska—I didn't ask for this damn war. I don't want to be here anymore, crouched in this muddy foxhole while mortar rounds scream overhead and explode in the dense jungle behind me. My head feels like it's in a vice, every pounding explosion cranking it a little tighter.

* * *

I joined the marines three years ago, in 1960, when most people didn't even know that Vietnam existed. I was fresh out of high school, not ready for college, so I enlisted as an infantryman. Boot camp was tough, but I made it through and was even promoted to Private First Class. After infantry training I volunteered for Recon—the Marine Special Forces. Recon Marines are real bad-asses, or so I thought at the time. I wanted to be one of them.

Training was twice as tough as basic, but I lived for it—the long early morning runs with 40 pound packs strapped on our backs, the constant verbal abuse from the D.I.—it all made me feel very confident and alive. By the time I finished training I figured I could handle anything.

* * *

My buddy Chris suddenly opens up with his machine gun, pouring fire into the thick jungle at the edge of the clearing we are dug into. He's bent over the sights, screaming in terror, jerking violently with the recoil as he triggers a long burst. I see them now, crawling up the cleared hillside, using the short tree stumps for cover. I grab my M-16, throw it to my shoulder, and empty half a clip into a screaming Charlie that had jumped up and was charging up the hill. I no longer feel; I act, like a machine. I empty the rest of the clip into the trees, and the remaining attackers stay put.

Chris abruptly stops firing. The sharp smell of cordite hangs heavy in the hot, still air of the pit. I think Chris is just about to snap; I try to calm him but he doesn't even acknowledge that I'm there—he just keeps staring out into the jungle.

* * *

My platoon and I were shipped to Vietnam in October of 1962. I remember the touch of fear that I felt as the plane set down at an Air Force base outside Saigon. I didn't know why we were being sent there or what to expect.

We were sent to a small village to work with and train members of the South Vietnamese Army. All went well for a couple of months, then we were ordered to a secret base just outside Laos to conduct covert strikes over the border. We were supposed to locate and destroy a Vietcong weapons stash.

We were trudging up a faint trail along a ridge when we were hit by an ambush. I dove off the trail and into the trees, frantically trying to see something; anything. Bullets were cutting through the foliage all around me; I spotted a small depression in the earth and sprawled out in it, making myself as small a target as possible.

A grenade arched out the jungle on the other side of the trail and landed on the ground right in front of my face. Time was frozen; I just laid there, unable to move, waiting for it to explode and send hundreds of shards of metal into my skull. There was no feeling of my life flashing before my eyes, just a paralyzing fear and one
repeating thought—I don't want to die.

The grenade never went off. I must have laid there for a minute or more before I realized that the lieutenant was shouting at me to get up and regroup; the firefight was over. I slowly reached out my hand and picked up the grenade, then heaved it as far as I could down the slope into the trees. I just stood there, unable to believe how lucky I had been.

One guy had been wounded; a bullet had taken a chunk of muscle out of his calf. He was actually joking with the medic as he bandaged the wound. We searched the area for dead or wounded Vietcong, but found only some shell brass scattered on the jungle floor.

I remember thinking how fortunate I was. Grenades rarely fail to blow when they are supposed to. But the memory of the fear I had quickly faded into a dream, and I started to feel invincible, untouchable. I was a Recon Marine, after all. I was trained to evaluate things like this and learn from it. Next time I wouldn't wait for the grenade to go off—I would act instead, I told myself.

* * *

Chris is firing again, snapping me out of my daydreaming. The Vietcong are advancing, about ten of them crawling up the hill and closing in on our hole. I catch glimpses of them and methodically fire short, controlled bursts like I was trained to do.

Chris suddenly falls back, holding his left ear and screaming hysterically. I reach over to help him, but he shoves me away. He pulls his hand away and stares unbelievingly at the blood covering it. A bullet has grazed his skull, cutting a shallow furrow alongside his head and ripping a jagged hole in his ear.

It pushes him over the edge. He freaks out; grabbing his own M-16 he claws his way out of the hole, screaming obscenities and threats at the enemy. I don't even try to stop him; he's too far gone. He fires wildly from the hip as he charges down the hill, blood streaming down the side of his head. Three rifles open up at once from the trees: Chris jerks, stumbles, and falls heavily to the ground. I fire a few shots at the muzzle flashes, but I can't tell if I hit anything.

* * *

Two weeks after that first firefight we were sent back into Laos. An NVA arms depot had been pinpointed, and we were supposed to take it out. We were told it was located in a small peasant village about eight miles over the border.

I was excited, longing for some action so that I could prove myself—the veterans still called us new guys "fresh meat." I had all but forgotten about the incident with the grenade.
We left at dawn and reached the village around ten. It was quiet, and most of the villagers were in the surrounding rice fields working. We moved down the hill and into the village, keeping our eyes on the open doors of the straw hooches, ready for anything. We rounded up the villagers, mostly women and children and a few old men, and left them under guard while the rest of us looked for the weapons. We checked all the hooches without finding even a single rifle, then grouped at the other end to try and figure out what to do.

Suddenly a single rifle clattered in the jungle; two of the men standing right next to me cried out and fell, red stains blossoming on their backs. I dove to the ground, frantically searching the trees for the sniper. One more guy was hit as he scrambled for cover, then the shooting stopped abruptly as it began. None of us even got off a shot. It was dead quiet except for the cries of the last man hit.

Once we got over the shock of what had happened, a burning rage swept through us. We wanted blood.

We dashed back to where the villagers were gathered and lined up with our rifles leveled at them. A few of the children were crying, and the women were chattering nervously. The lieutenant knew Vietnamese, and he started yelling at an old man, asking him where are the weapons, who was in the trees? The old man yelled back at him, shaking his head and waving his arms. I could see that the lieutenant was really getting pissed.

Suddenly he stepped back, raised his rifle, and shot the old man right in the face. It started a chain reaction; someone started firing into he rest of the villagers and soon we were all shooting. I can't justify or even explain what happened, but we slaughtered the entire group.

The shooting finally stopped when our clips ran dry. I stood in disbelief, the reality of what we had done hitting me like a sledgehammer. I threw down my rifle, stumbled over the side of a hut and was sick right there. I remember wishing that I had been one of the guys that the sniper had nailed.

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I check my ammo supply. The machine gun is empty, and I have one magazine left for my M-16. I'm not concerned. I figure I can probably hold of one more assault. I could try to escape up the hill, but I wouldn't get more than a few yards before they cut me down. I sit at the bottom of the foxhole and wait.

I hardly sleep anymore; the nightmares keep me awake most of the night. I can still see those defenseless villagers lying in a bloody pile on the ground, mowed down by 15 United States Reconnaissance Marines—"the elitist of the elite." What a joke.

I slam the last magazine into the rifle, chamber a round, and begin to stand. Something flies through the air and lands with a plop in the mud at my feet.

I feel no sense of panic this time, no sudden rush of adrenaline in my chest. I sit back down, reach over and pick up the hissing grenade. It's a different kind than the first one.

I grip it tightly with both hands and set it in my lap, then tilt my head back against the soft dirt wall of the foxhole and close my eyes.

—Dale Wubben
English
Sophomore

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**The Beggar**

*The reaper comes too early
For those who have too much.
But the beggar along the worn path*
*Welcomes the chilling touch.*

* A life made out of humbleness
Wrapped in tattered lies
Sits lonely in his sectioned home
Watching time pass him by.

*He sees a better life ahead
Beyond what holds him here.
His earnest struggle to forget the present*
*Erases his doubt and fear.

*So the lonely beggar leaves this world
To find his endless dream,
Yet life again has cheated the blind*
*A broken promise, a final scene.*

—Kelly Brousseau
English
Sophomore
How Are You, James

For years my father wondered what happened to James. Now he knows. James is dead.

I don't remember meeting James face to face. When I was kindergarten, James was one of the big guys—he had to stoop down to pick his lunch tray up through the hole in the wall, I could barely peer over the red formica counter. In basketball, he was the type of guy his teammates liked because he made them look good, passing up the fifteen foot jump shot to hit a teammate cutting to the basket.

Oddly enough, he didn't dream of high school basketball like every other small town boy in Indiana. James dreamed about the long-term future. While his teammates would hit the winning shot or make the all-conference team, James would be in the stands behind the pep band. His friends would be the stars, forgotten after graduation except for a photograph in the trophy case. James would find recognition later in life, after college and graduate school. He would acquire prestige and respect, but his classmates would remember him only after looking him up in the yearbook.

My dad had him in class—James was his student. On those sticky August Saturday nights when the teachers came over for picnics at our house, stories would be spun around the fire—darling kindergartners bringing flowers to their teachers, fourth grade boys and their legendary earthworm pranks, and then, reverently, stories of James.

James was smart—smarter than the boys, smarter than the girls. His name wasn't Jim or Jimmy; it was James. While other eighth grade boys talked in the back of the team bus about what girl was blossoming, James sat behind my dad, the coach, to talk about ovulation in horses or the fallacy of spontaneous generation. James was smart. All A's on his report card wasn't cause for celebration, it was typical, assumed.

James and his two older brothers were close, close enough to throw pillows at each other during televised football games or share a seat on the bus. His brothers were all bright and easy-going, but James was smarter—that's what people said.

Photo by Mark Buss
In high school he continued his academic conquests: honor student, first place in the science fair, the scholarship winner. Then we lost track of him. He went off to college, my father moved his family to Iowa. I know my dad assumed James was pursuing a career in medicine, research, internal medicine, something in depth, important.

Two years ago, I remember my dad sitting on the cluttered kitchen desk with one foot propped on the chair, the other leg gently swaying between the opened drawers. An old Indiana friend called to say that a train was about half way through a road crossing out by the Bar H Hereford Ranch when James drove into the side of it with a garbage truck.

"What the hell was James doing driving a garbage truck?" my dad asked.

My dad looked at his birthday slippers, and then he cried. Not a loud wailing cry, but muffled tears. Tears welled up that couldn't be swallowed. My dad quickly finished the phone conversation and said he was going to bed, even though he hadn't watched the news.

I know my father couldn't believe James was dead. Before he even went to kindergarten, he read cereal boxes while his older brothers ate Cheerios and hurried to get ready for the long yellow bus. He read the papers they brought home the day before. He was really a clever guy, Dad said.

Slowly, over weeks of cold February weather, we learned more about James' post-high school days from the letters my mom's friend sent her. He went to college to become a doctor, but he fell in with the wrong crowd. He spent more time at Harry's Pub than at the library. She claimed he studied just enough to obtain a college degree, but he didn't have a chance at getting into medical school.

He did a number of manual labor jobs in the suburbs up north and married a girl who grew up on the fringe of town. His parents pleaded with him not to marry her; he did anyway. Five months later he was a father. People said that the family get-togethers were as strained a summit meetings, but James and his wife never missed one. He wouldn't let his family disown him, even though he lived like the sand dune dwellers east of town, the people with big dogs, plastic-wrapped houses, and two or three rusty cars on the front yard.

Eventually, James became a garbage collector, moving back into the family, working for his brothers. Sometimes James came to church by himself, then his wife started to accompany him. Finally, she made profession of faith, and the baby was baptized. The family ties slowly mended.

Then James hit the train.

Oddly, the change in his life made that Indiana farm community feel better about his death. It made my dad feel a little bit better, but not much. Dad could deal with a dead Christian, but not a dead genius.

About a month later my dad took our family to our old Indiana hometown. We visited friends, checked out our old house on the end of Elm Street, and relived old Little League stories. On the Saturday before we left for Iowa, we visited an old farmer my dad knew, a man who lived far back in the woods out by Interstate 65. He talked about low hog prices, his first cutting of hay, and then he started to talk about the new garbage man.

"This new guy says I have to put my garbage can at the end of my driveway," the farmer said as he pointed past the machine shed to the road. "I says to him, I says, 'Hey, you mean to tell me I have to drag my can a quarter mile to the road every Tuesday morning?' My old garbage man backed his truck all the way down my driveway and never charged me an extra dime for it." He smirked, as if he was savoring the aroma of one of his Cuban cigars. "I'm kind of old now, you know, don't get out so much anymore. The other guy, he used to tape the sermon and drop the cassette off here on Tuesday. The happiest garbage man I ever seen. Can't understand it. I'd hate the job, but he was good at it. His first name was Jim, can't remember his last name though. Had blond hair. A round face."

"The guy was a good garbage man?" my dad said.

Our grey Chrysler took us off the yard. My dad never spoke again until we were three miles down the road, just passing Kaper's Lumberyard, still there on the edge of town.

"Jim was a good kid," he said.

We never told Mom about our visit because she wouldn't understand. It was something, like whittling, that only a father and son could appreciate. On that dreary spring day so many years ago, my Dad and I discovered that James the genius lived his life to the fullest, brilliantly, as Jim the garbage man.

—Dave Tebben
English
Junior
Sandy Allspach

Fence # 1

Fence # 2

Fence # 3
Chapel Series # 1

Chapel Series # 2

A Resting Place
When I was a boy, this was all jungle, you know. All jungle from Grau Street to what is now is now 2 of May Street. That was all jungle. Why, I used to go hunting right where we're sitting. Look. All that's left is that big renaco tree over there. As a matter of fact, this used to be swamp, especially in the rainy season. The government drained all the water out so that people could live there. They left the renaco standing when they chopped down the other trees. Nobody wanted to chop it down. That was the tallest tree in the area. It's been there a long time, muchos años. My grandfather told me that it started growing 170 years ago and has grown a foot each year. That tree stood in the middle of the swamp.

Oh, those were the days. The jungle and the swamp all around. We lived off the swamp. We used to go there, to the aguajales to get the aguaje nuts off the palm trees.

I remember one time we were going looking for aguajes. We got up early, just before the sun, and paddled our dugout canoe into the swamp. It was dark inside, because the sun wasn't high enough to shine through the canopy. We paddled silently and slowly, letting our canoe drift a few feet before dipping our paddles again. I was in the front and your great-uncle Raúl was in the back. We had a long pole in the middle of the canoe for knocking the nuts out of the trees.

The aguajal was in the middle of the swamp, just beyond the renaco. We lived down where the evangelical mission church is now, so it took us about an hour to get there.

As we passed the renaco, Raúl heard an ay-ay-mama bird. He took it for an ill omen. We know, how two children lost their mother in the jungle and were turned to birds. Raúl took it for a sign that something bad was going to happen. I told him he was loco.

By mid-morning we had gathered a large load of the nuts. Our canoe had about ten inches of free-board. We planned to sell what we couldn't eat. Anyway, we decided to turn around and go back. We didn't know a lot about further in, and besides that ay-ay-mama bird was bothering Raúl. I called him a coward. He said that a witch doctor had told him that when you hear the ay-ay-mama bird early in the morning, it's a bad sign. I shut up. You can't argue with a witch doctor.

We turned around. At the edge of the aguajal, to the left of the canoe, I saw some bubbles and swirling water. A boa had just submerged. From the size of the ripples I judged it must have been about fifteen feet long. I said nothing. There was no point in further upsetting Raúl.

We were just going past the renaco when Raúl yelled, "¡Cuidado! Be careful, there's an alligator!" I turned to look and saw the head of a black alligator. The black ones are the worst, you know. It was going in the opposite direction, but the head was in line with the canoe. I turned back to the front and stared. The call of the ay-ay-mama bird echoed in my mind. The creature's tail was pointing out of the water ahead of us.

We were so scared we did what was probably
the smartest thing to do. We just sat there without moving a muscle. Then Raúl started dumping the nuts overboard to lighten the canoe so it would float higher. From the front I saw the tail swing around to my right and disappear under the muddy water. I dipped my paddle and hit something hard.

The alligator surfaced perpendicular to us. We could see his tail on our right and his head on our left. I looked back and saw Raúl. He had stopped throwing out the nuts and was just sitting, shaking and looking at the alligator. I was pretty scared, too. But I was older and didn't want Raúl to know. Suddenly I realized that the hard thing my paddle had hit was a tree root. That meant land. The water was only a meter deep. I checked the water line on my paddle. If that alligator decided to walk while he was under our canoe, we were in trouble. He was about twenty feet long, and big enough to spill us out of the dugout.

He did. At first I didn't realize what was happening. The canoe tipped a little, then more. I heard Raúl scream, and felt myself hit the water. It wasn't deep, so I quickly regained my footing on the muddy bottom. I was just getting back into the canoe when Raúl yelled, "Careful, behind you!" I saw the long black tail slash the water and then felt the giant teeth sink into my ankle and heard the bone snap.

I think I went into shock because all I remember is screaming in pain for help. Raúl handed me a machete just before I went under. I managed to get my head out of water and grabbed a sapling with my left hand. I reached as far as I could with my right and stabbed at the alligator's eyes. Raúl said I looked like a mad-man, stabbing and screaming. I don't know, all I remember is blood and pain.

The machete must have gone through the eye and into the brain because the alligator died. I lost my foot, but this necklace is his teeth.

You know, that happened right about where we're sitting. There's the renaco.

—Sam Gesch
English/Spanish
Freshman

Stillness Age

All is still
As I ponder my age.
Moments of truth
Pass by—
Like a mirror.
I see myself,
A photographic image
Shaped by ideas.
I'm in a race
Essentially keeping my stride
Events and experience
Lending themselves
To maturity.
Locked minds
Lead to a fall.
They insult a race using difference
As an advancement.
Instilling a change
As my time seems
Slipping—

—Floyd Reitsma
Communications
Sophomore

43
Searching

by Robert Van Kooten

The 1984 Ballard-Huxley game was the biggest in Pella Christian High School history. The gymnasium was supposed to hold 4,000 people, but there must have been at least 5,000, hanging from the rafters by the time we came out of the locker room. The crowd exploded when we ran out on the floor. My body tingled with excitement as we did our warm-ups. When the starting lineups were called, no one could hear the names so the starters just ran out on the floor.

Ballard came out shooting. They didn't miss inside or outside. During the first half they shot eighty percent. Finding ourselves behind by fourteen points at halftime, we were frustrated, but had confidence that we could come back. By the end of the third quarter the score was tied; however, too much energy had been spent. At the beginning of the fourth quarter Ballard nailed two three-pointers and put the game out of reach.

Greg Van Soelen, our star, collapsed when the final buzzer sounded. He scored 35 points and grabbed 15 rebounds. Benten Mulder, a former basketball star, helped him to the locker room, where everything was perfectly quiet. We sat on the benches, heads down until suddenly, Greg started to cry. He cried and cried and cried. When I saw that I couldn't stand it. I cried too. No one else did.

I couldn't understand why we lost. Why didn't God allow us to win? We had the better team and we'd played our best game of the year before Ballard. Besides, we were a Christian school. I couldn't understand it. The team had worked so hard and ever since grade school we had looked forward to a state tournament trip.

Every day that next summer I shot baskets, I jumped rope 400 times every night, and I drove to Peoria gym to practice when it was too cold outside. By the time practice rolled around, I was ready. I had worked harder for basketball that I had worked for anything else in my life. I couldn't wait for the first game.

But once the season began I hardly played at all. Halfway through the season I wanted to quit, but all my friends told me to keep trying and not give up. Then in a game against Ottumwa I got my chance. I wondered if Coach would put me in since I'd done fairly well in a blowout the game before. Just before halftime the call came: "Robert," he said "get in there." We were up by seven and wanted to use a full court press so they would use up the five seconds before the ball, and two quick passes left me one-on-one with a super-quick guard. When I jumped out to meet him, he spun, blew right by me, and made a wide open lay up just before the buzzer.

"Where's the defense?" the coach yelled across the gymnasium. I ran to the locker room trying to ignore him.

"Robert! Where did you learn to play defense like that?" the coach screamed in the locker room. "Don't you know anything? Up by seven points and now only five. If we lose this game, it's your fault. Don't you ever complain to me again that you don't play."

Right then I wanted to go outside and sit by myself. I didn't even want to go back on the floor.

Basketball had been my whole life. I wanted it so bad, and I had tried so hard. But for some reason God didn't want me to be a basketball player.

In college I began to search for something else, but I wasn't sure what I was searching for. What is there in the world that will never leave me?" I asked myself.

For most of my life I thought that if I was a good basketball player I would have everything I would have ever wanted. But that didn't last forever.

Having a girlfriend seemed next most important. But then my roommate's girlfriend broke up with him. They had been so happy together and at times it seemed like they would last forever. But she left him.

All I seemed to have left was my parents. They would always be there for me, I told myself. Then two weeks into the second semester one of my friends' fathers was killed in a car accident as he was driving home from work.

There seemed to be nothing I could count on anymore. Finally, one night I couldn't sleep. There must be something, I said to myself. I got out of bed, and I opened my bible to the book of Romans and I read these verses:

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height or depth, nor anything else in all of creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8: 38,39).

All of my life I had put my hope and trust into short term things. Now, I thought to myself, I've found the one thing that will never separate from me.

One of the reasons I chose to attend Dordt College was to see if Greg Van Soelen and Steve Vermeer's hard work would ever win the championship they'd missed—we'd missed—in high school. For three years at college they continued to lose, until their senior year when they finally won the game that sent them to the tournament.

For years I'd watched Greg and Steve lose close tournament games. Now after so many tough losses, they finally had a win. After the game I pushed my way through the cheering crowd to shake Greg's hand—four years earlier it would have been a hug. I wondered then if he remembered how we had cried in that high school locker room. But as I shook his hand, I realized it didn't really mean as much.

I guess that means I've finally found something more important than basketball.

Robert Van Kooten is a senior Communications major from Pella, Iowa.
End of the Term

Faces and places
That aren't old and familiar
but aren't new and unknown
either
I've changed and so
have they?
Experiences put down as
memories to be stored
till I return
later to retrieve
them—my friends, foes,
and miscellaneous assorted others—
and begin again where we've
Left off
not old and familiar
not new and unknown
but somewhere in between,
Put on hold for just a short
While
we pause and reflect
on the year
gone by.

—Michele Cobb
Elementary Education
Sophomore