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The sun drifted lazily into the kitchen through the open window and settled down cheerfully on the worn, bald spots of the linoleum floor. A slight breeze clutched timidly at the folds of blue and white checked gingham hanging loosely on their dull brass rod, and blew the pages of the calendar up from the wall. It annoyed her—that slight movement of air around the curtains and the calendar. Pushing, pulling, in, out. Pushing, gingham hanging loosely on their dull brass timidly at the folds of blue and white checked and then unconsciously dragging it through her mouth until all the ends started snarling and splitting. It looked downright heathenish and Jenny's mother to do just that.

And now there was Jenny. Twelve years old and laid up in bed for more than a month with a fractured leg. It had happened at school in a fall off some of the playground equipment. She remembered again how Jenny had cried and cried and said that her leg hurt so bad. Then she had come down with a fever but Doc. Nielsen had said it was just a fracture and if Jenny kept off it and rested it and stayed quiet for awhile it would soon heal. But that had been a month already and now a dark black line had started to form around Jenny's left leg and the skin had turned a bluish, motley color and when she touched it, it had felt cold, like she was touching death. It made her skin crawl just thinking about it.

At first she had tried rubbing it but Jenny said that only made it worse so finally she had sent for Doc. Nielsen again. She didn't know much about medicine but she did know that staying quiet for awhile it would soon heal. But that had been a month already and now a dark black line had started to form around Jenny's left leg and the skin had turned a bluish, motley color and when she touched it, it had felt cold, like she was touching death. It made her skin crawl just thinking about it.

The doctor was here now, examining Jenny in her bedroom, trying to determine what exactly was wrong.

“Mrs. Anton,” he called softly, “could you come here a moment?”

She came from the kitchen then, out into the hallway, where Doc. Nielsen was standing just outside Jenny's open door. She glanced inside the room briefly but apparently the doctor had give Jenny something and she appeared calm and peaceful and quite happily asleep for once.

**MIDWEEK**

It's a copout, Lord
But just for now
Please take a chair
Let's talk about the weather
And if you'd hold still
We could stop . . .

. . . Looking for rainbows
In mud puddles
and paint You
Against a backdrop
Of bleating hearts.

Ag Vander Wal

“Well,” she said, trying to be as cheerful as possible. “How bad is it?”

Doc. Nielsen looked gravely at her for a moment and then his eyes slid past her and into the next room. The silence echoed and re-echoed down the hallway and his hand twitched nervously, as he shifted his shabby, black leather bag to his other hand with a slight, jerky motion. It gave her the creeps and she felt a shudder go up and down her spine. He must have a nervous tic, she thought. She hated nervous tics. Uneasily, she stirred. What was he looking at, she wondered.

His voice startled her coming out of the dead quietness. “I'm afraid I can't give you much hope, Mrs. Anton. I don't like to say this but unless a miracle happens I don't think your daughter will ever walk again. I'm really sorry.”

“But her leg,” she asked numbly. “What's wrong with it?”

He shook his old, grey head slowly. “Can't tell you here. She could take a turn for the worse with that fever so I don't want her to know it. Can't take any chances with things like that.” He shook his head again and walked down the hallway, turning left into the kitchen.

Blindly, she followed him. He told her then about the infection in Jenny’s leg that would take her life if it was not removed. Actually, he never said it quite as nicely as that but he didn’t have much choice. He talked about gangrene and amputating Jenny's leg as soon as the fever had gone down a little bit. She couldn't even begin to imagine it, but it sounded terrible. Her daughter with a stump where her leg should be. She shuddered.

“I'm sorry,” he said again. “I've done everything I could and now all we can do is wait and see what happens. As soon as she's able that leg will have to come off.”

It was a final statement, as though he had already pronounced her dead, and the kitchen was the funeral parlor where the last rites were being said. This was something she would just have to accept—Jenny's not being able to walk again just like George's death. She must accept it, she thought, she must accept it, but she could not.

Even if a miracle did happen and Jenny got better again her leg would still be dead and useless and have to be amputated. In her heart she knew that her daughter would never again run down the long driveway to get the mail for her, or race Shep out to the pasture to get the cows for supper, or help chase the chickens in the fall that were to be butchered.
A Few Clarifications

by Nigel Weaver

The last issue of Cannon for this school year sits in front of you; the Fine Arts issue at that. But has it said and done all? What's it all about? Do you know, and more importantly does the Cannon staff know? We, well, like to think that perhaps we do know what literature and, to a lesser extent, art in general is all about. Oh, we don't claim and confess to any sort of vested absolute and infallible knowledge; just a few insights here and there. Insights that come from actually having to work with the "stuff" that comprises a literary magazine like ours. Insights that come from prayerfully struggling to determine the "religious" forces that drive and motivate a specific artist and provide the dynamic for his work. Insights also that grow out of consciously striving, in that same prayerful spirit, to produce an art that flows from our own religious heart commitment to the God of the Scriptures; a desire to be Christian artists. We also believe that insights come from having been given a specific calling to a specific area of life—the aesthetic.

We as staff are also firmly convinced that we must respond to a God-issued calling to involve ourselves in the art which helps to comprise God's creation. After all, what is art other than humanity's response to the cultural mandate expressed either obediently or disobediently throughout history? And, of course, it goes without saying that as Christians we are interested in ours being a response of obedience. Now, it is obvious that the calling we share as staff is not our primary calling. We are called at present to be students, not professional writers, art critics, or publishers; that's why Cannon is a student publication. But we are students working in areas which lend themselves to involvement in a literary magazine. Indeed, much of the material that appears in the Cannon flows directly from a course in creative writing taught here at Dordt. While it may well be that most of us will not end up as writers, we must perform this as a task that God has given us to do for the present.

As we staff are also convinced that God's guidance and according to His good-pleasure a person "grows into" the calling God has for him. This manifests itself quite obviously during our more formative years where the question of "What do you want to be?" is answered first in dreams of excitement and glamour, but ultimately in long talks with parents, guidance counselors and friends, all of which center around interests and abilities. We also believe that these interests and abilities are God-given in order that we might serve Him in specific areas throughout His creation. If you will, God has given all of us expertise to work in certain fields. It is because of this expertise that we as staff can say that we do know something about literature and art is all about. Not, as I've said, an infallible knowledge, nor a "full-blown" expertise, for this grow with time and are in a sense proportional to one's involvement in the field, which is itself a teacher.

This claim to insight, knowledge and expertise has often been misunderstood by the artist's audience and abused by the artist. This has, in the past, led to the false problem of the individual versus the community, or the artist versus the audience. As Christians writing to Christians we'd like to cut through that problem and begin to move ahead. It is with this in mind that we'd like to discuss three things with you. First, the relationship between artist and audience; second, the content and language of Christian literature; and third, literature as a structured thing. As we said before, the artist has often abused his claim to expertise by absolutizing it. He has given his work to the audience with little or no thought as to whether or not they would understand what he is trying to say; they must merely bow to his genius and accept it. When they complain or ask him to change it, he throws his hands up in disgust, calls them ignorant and sends it right off. The audience too has often acted in a wrong way by refusing to allow the artist any freedom at all and refusing his claim to expertise. The result has been a rigid and unreasonable censorship, under which the artist cannot work, since it denies him that responsibility to do what he does honestly before the face of God, in service to God. We as staff believe that you as audience must recognize the artist's expertise in his own field, and in an attitude of trusting love give him the freedom he needs to do his art. But, we are also firmly convinced that the artist has a responsibility to his audience. He may never 'damn' them for their 'ignorance', nor may he alienate himself from them. It is because we hold to these beliefs that the language of one of our short stories, which may have offended a portion of our audience, has been modified. The writer involved felt a responsibility to his audience and we feel that you, your needs, and your feelings must be taken into account, for it is anything but Christian of us to claim intellectual superiority, or to ram things down your throats.

Secondly, as we as staff are often called upon to deal with the question of how the content and language of literature reflect one's heart commitment and one's resultant world and life view. This question is not an easy answer, nor are those which stem from it. Questions like, are there topics which are less 'Christian' than others, and are there certain words that one may not use in a story as a Christian, all have to be dealt with here. As a staff we feel that this is again largely a matter between the writer and his God, but we do have some ideas on the subject. One of our stories concerns the relationship between two brothers; the language in it has been left intact, and it contains drunkenness and what may or may not be called murder. Now these things are hardly Christian and the Cannon staff does not endorse them, but in a sense they do grow out of our Christian convictions. Surely, one of the areas in which the Christian writer's convictions differ most strongly with those of his secular counterpart is the area of sin. The Christian sees sin for what it is, an open rebellion against God, and a refusal to obey His laws, both written and as they manifest themselves in the structure of the creation. The Christians also acknowledges the fall and the resulting need for salvation in Christ Jesus. There are some that say that the threefold reality of Creation, Fall, and Redemption should occur in all Christian literature, and others who say that this is too broad a task for literary forms like the short story to handle. We as a staff tend towards the second of these positions, and therefore some of the material we publish is not meant to delight or to entertain, nor to present the entire message of the Scriptures, but rather to expose sin for the death-curse-bringer that it is.

Thirdly, literature is a structured thing. There are norms for literature; God given laws that hold for it. Both the Christian and the non-Christian writer are under these structuring laws, and must obey them. For example the writer is open to choose whether he writes in first person, third person, and whether his narrator is omniscient, knows some of what's going on or knows nothing more than the reader. Once this choice has been made it acts as a limiting factor on the author, and controls what he can and cannot do. His story can compel him to say and do certain things in it because of its structural laws. Closely connected to this is the fact that the artist must be true to his art, and his integrity must be respected, not only by his audience but also by his fellow artists. Thus, one of the fine art's stories has not been published in the Cannon. The reason for this is that the particular author felt that in further modifying his story to prevent possible offense to his audience, he was failing to be true to his art and sacrificing his artistic integrity. As we staff accepted this decision with regret, but respect the author for his convictions.

Well, here we are close to the end and time for a few last statements. We as a staff are both relieved and delighted to see this fine arts issue come out, for there have been many occasions when we thought that we wouldn't be able to publish. We have spent many taxing, and soul-searching hours discussing these three things, among ourselves, with members of the board and with various committees, and have learnt much in the process. In conclusion we feel that it all boils down to the fact that the artist and the audience need each other. They must learn to respect and to trust each other, for both must work diligently at bringing literature and art under the sway of Christ's Kingly rule. The Christian writer must be true to his writing, the Christian reader at his reading; and then they must discuss and work together honestly and lovingly serving their God.

The problem of profanity in literature will probably be discussed in a special issue next year. In the mean time readers are encouraged to let us know their views. -Ed.

LEFTOVER EARTH SHOES

Fragments of a day began prematurely shuffled through my mind in threatening disarray.

Vaguely recalling challenges to work out new ideas.

But they would only be old themes rehashed, rehashed, unfinished with the glamour of false originality and lost with you, my falling freshness.

Squared soles of Earth shoes demanding

One really sell our orthogonal souls to a public that no longer cares for fallen faith.

But the image can be carried no further. It invites too many questions.

Time for a new idol, object of adolescent infatuation.

My mind is blank so happily

Many stored leftovers are a pain.
Long gangly legs stiffened and quivered at the height of an immensely satisfying stretch. Lifting his head off the grassy pillow, he sleepily scanned the horizon. Above the facade of low hills, in the distance the hoary peak of Mount McKinley impaled a hovering puff of mist. The intervening expanse of tundra was unbroken, save by an occasional grassy knoll similar to the one which now served as his bed, a brush thicket here and there, and a few struggling stands of gnarled, stunted fir trees.

As he shook his head to shoo off the mosquitoes, a light breeze skittered across one of the numerous small ponds and lakes that pocked the tundra, making the sun waltz upon the water. It was still warm, but he could feel autumn in the wind. He wanted to soak in all the warmth and sunshine he could before the long nights and cold winds crept down from the north again.

With another lazy stretch, he started to drop his head back upon the grass, but rumblings deep within him shook off his propensity for sleep and aroused another thought—an afternoon snack.

He heaved his bulking body up from the warm sod, lumbered down the west side of the tundra, and began to throw things out on the sandbar; all the while indulging in authentic sourdough swearing.

“Delta, Victor, niner, niner, four, this is McGrath control. McGrath control. Delta, Victor, niner, niner, four. Do you read me? over.”

“Yeah, McGrath. I’ve spotted one, so I’m going to swing around and land downwind on a sandbar by the river. My present position is . . . .”

Glancing up from where he ate he thought he detected a slight shift in the shadow of the silver cross as it bounced over him and skipped across the brush by the river. The steady, droning pitch had deepened a bit too. He gazed after it until it turned and was swallowed up in silence. His head bent again to his repast, disturbed only by the inevitable cloud of mosquitoes. He took no notice that the birds were gone.

Prop wind-milling slowly, the plane settled gently onto the sand. The moment the wheels touched, skidded, and began to roll, Adams cut the engine and the little silver bird coasted silently to a stop.

Reaching behind the back seat, he opened a small door and withdrew a high-powered rifle. Scarred, scuffed, and rusted here and there, it wasn’t much to look at, but in the past he had held his own in some tough spots with it. It had killed before.

He stepped down onto the sand. Standing beside the plane, rifle thrust through the crook of his hairy arm, he looked considerably smaller than the picture one might conceive by seeing him in the pilot’s seat. He was about two rifles tall, with powerfully built shoulders and arms. Flecks of gray in his beard and a slight bulge above his knees as he peered over the cowling for his lieutenant's engine.

He found it about a hundred yards from the riverbank; it was the same place he had eaten his lunch, What a land of plenty! The cloud of mosquitos around his head seemed to receive.

He started—then cocked his head to check the direction from which it was coming. It rose and fell with the breeze.

It’s a bit clearer now, he thought, but I can’t quite make out the direction yet. There. it wasn’t much to look at, but in the past he had held his own in some tough spots with it. It had killed before.

It slowly trickled down his legs and mingled with the water at his useless feet. He followed the man’s course with his ears, trying to make out every sound, every creak and whisper in the vastness of the tundra. Adams was slower and more calculated now. Each step was chosen with care and he crouched closer to the ground.

Then he saw him; bent over eating. Adams was almost startled at the sudden sight and the nonchalance with which the other ate. He stealthily traversed the remaining steps to the bush guarding the frontier of the tundra. It would be a long shot.

From the air he hadn’t looked so large. It was disconcerting to Adams, for he realized his first shot would at least have to be disabling in order to stand a chance of safely making the kill. The sweaty palms left greasy tracks on his light pants. Hands trembling, he raised the rifle slowly to his shoulder, took a deep breath and held it, as he began a slow squeeze on the trigger.

“Heeeyo! How could I forget to cock the thing?”

A shell rammed into the chamber with a rattle, click, which skittered across the moss and marsh grass to the other’s ears.

“What was that?!!

His head jerked up in wild fear and he instinctively bolted forward. The impact knocked him off his feet before the second sound recollected through his brain. He struggled to regain his footing, but only succeeded in churning up the shallow water into a murky pool. The confused glance over his shoulder was replaced by a blaze of terror at the sight of an open mouth of mangled flesh which had formerly comprised his backbone.

He knew the only sanctuary lay in the brush by the river, but it took a moment to regain his bearings. His gaze fell upon his assailant who stared back at him for an instant, rifle in his hands. Hate and rage churned within him as he lunged forward. Abruptly, Adams dropped the rifle, wheeled, and crashed through the brush toward the river.

He follows the man’s course with his ears till the urge for survival brought him to his senses. Progress toward the brush was slow. The soft tundra affording little grip, inches became eternities. The sharp knife of pain began to cut away at his nerves, and the law of inverse proportions slowly went to work—each increase in pain brought a decrease in progress.

Though only a few moments had passed, the fruitlessness of the struggle was evident. He could feel his heart pumping out his life. It slowly trickled down his legs and mingled with the water at his useless feet.

“I don’t want to die. I want to live to a ripe old age—do anything I was supposed to do and enjoying life, he thought. Again the knife thrust deep, almost causing him to collapse in the crimson water.

Why didn’t he just kill me? Doesn’t it seem weird to make me endure this?!!

Kuskokwim’s crystal clear water lapped over the little sandy walls and filled in the toe-holes carved by Adams as he ran along the river’s edge. Upon reaching the plane, he threw open the door, climbed in, and began to throw things out on the sandbar; all the while indulging in authentic sourdough swearing.
Monday He Worked

The man's fingertips ran swiftly over the surface of the bedside table, searching until they felt the small box of matches. He wriggled up in bed, his hand closing around the box as he did so. Reaching over, he pulled up the chimney of the oil lamp, struck a match, and lit it. He pushed the chimney back in place and adjusted the wick. He sat there in half-sleep, shivered, stretched once and threw off the covers. He dressed and went into the main room, carrying the lamp with him and placing it on the mantel-piece. From inside he pulled a match from his jeans pocket, struck it on the fly zipper, and lit his pipe.

He thought of the first time Ian had tried to spin it out between his fingers and slide it up the thin copper pipe. Grabbing the tank, he jiggled it away from the nipple on the back door and got into the cab.5 He took off slowly, careful to keep the wheels in the tracks that meandered down between the snowbanks and the central ridge of the driveway which scraped hard against the underbody. He turned right, along the side road, over the creek and back down again to the highway. He pushed the button over full to defrost, and turned left towards town. The bridge was pretty icy, but not bad; he crossed it and began to accelerate up the long hill, reaching down to switch on the radio as he did so.

"...expected high for today zero to five above, low tonight around the thirty-five below. The barometer is holding steady and we've had no trace of measurable precipitation in the past twenty-four hours. The present pressure, ten below."

Ian pushed his way into his mind. He turned the volume up and angrily drove on, overtaking a logging truck and a rusty blue volkswagen. Rounding a curve, he picked out the black specks a quarter-mile down the highway. He drew closer; they rose screaming as he passed. A dead farmcat lay there, a light powder of snow resting on its tawny body. He watched as the snowbanks and the central ridge of the driveway which scraped hard against the underbody. He turned right, along the side road, over the creek and back down again to the highway. He pushed the button over full to defrost, and turned left towards town. The bridge was pretty icy, but not bad; he crossed it and began to accelerate up the long hill, reaching down to switch on the radio as he did so.

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He turned into the Superior Propane yard, dropped the tailgate and backed up the loading dock. He stood the tank up by the small filling shed and rang the bell. The door opened and the kid came out with his change. He wound down the window and took it. He pulled out of the lot and, as he passed the small filling shed and rang the bell, he asked her to refill the cup, and a...
The man he reached down and grasped its wooden handle. Like the rifle, it was scarred and stood him in good stead in the past. It had been moveable, now sat in a pile, shaded by the silver wing. He rummaged through it again, but still no cartridge box turned up.

In his final search, it slowly sank in that he possessed only one thing which would do the job. He reached down and grasped its wooden handle. The rifle he turned up.

As he rose and faced the river, the sun’s reflection in the fiery eyes. They seemed to stand him in good stead in the past. It had been moveable, now sat in a pile, shaded by the silver wing. He rummaged through it again, but still no cartridge box turned up.

Having resolved himself to finish what he had started, he turned and quickly retraced his steps up the trail. On hearing the man’s return through the brush, he raised himself as tall as he could. The pain he felt was now past the point of being physically excruciating, but the fact of his existence determined to resist until the knife was thrust the final time. The soft squish under the man’s boots pounded into his brain. He lashed out before he even came within range.

Adams hesitated; he could see his reflection in the fire flies. They seemed to burn with a defiant death-wish which made him regret that all this had ever begun. He could have been lying down the plane by now. He dared not get too close, yet he wanted to be able to put enough power in the blow to finish him, or at least knock him out. On the first swing, turning the blunt side of the blade forward, he raised the axe with one hand, and waited for the proper timing. His bleached knuckles stood out against the grimy handle. The rusty blade carved a dull red arch in its descent. With muffled thud, the axe twisted out of Adams’ clenched fist and looped end over end into the bloody water. Its splash broke the eternal pause— one lashed out; the other retreated.

Darkness had almost come that time. He shook his head and his vision cleared enough to observe the uplifted axe with its cutting blade now forward. Again it descended— inching its way down. He felt the knife plunge as his head recoiled under the blow.

Once more eternity waited for the axe to complete its acrobatic attempt to bury itself in the marsh. Time returned a bit slower for Adams and he was not quite out of range when the other lunged for him. Through a blur of haze he could see the man nursing bruised ribs under his torn shirt. Then a crimson film slowly washed over his eyes. He blinked, but it only brought more.

Lord, must I leave his world blind?!

His mental scream reverberated across the heavens, but was only audible as a low moan. It jarred Adams’ attention from the growing red welt and tiny rivulet of blood making its way toward the band of his shorts.

Lord, how could I be so selfish?!

He fished around and quickly located the axe near the roots of some swaying marsh grass.

Screaming downward with the power of both burly arms, the axe passed through the point of eternity and continued on its deadly course. Hairs splintered and flew off like rays of falling cordwood; followed in instantaneous eons by tiny flecks and then scarlet tear-drops of life which bathed the axe and scattered the contorted features of Adams.

He did so. Three days; not long, not short, but long enough to know yourself. He shuffled into the bedroom, placed the lamp on the table and began to undress with the exaggerated care one always exercises when half-drunk. He went to bed and slept deeply.

He got up late the next day. It was only Sunday, and there was nothing of any real importance to be done. Monday he worked. But Tuesday, Tuesday he went out. Out the Dog Lake Road, out the hydro-line, out two hours from the bush...out...out to the balsam-lean-to.

He knew there, trying to warm the frozen body, rubbing it, rubbing it ‘til it hurt his hands. He worked his lower lip slowly between his teeth, half against the cold, and half against reality itself. He tried hard to be one of the people “who realize that a true proximity to nature presupposes an acceptance of the inevitability of death; death—stark, tragic and harsh, yet intimately necessary.”

He nudged the body to him, damming the cursed abnormality that lay cradled in his arms. An abnormality that held a man. He rocked slowly on his knees, back and forth, and back again.
THE CASTRATED CAT

Tail over nose and curled up toes
It sleeps as if naught were amiss.
An ear in the air, a bristling of hair
A look that asks, "What's this?"

A bat with the paw to the mouse made of straw
Sends it tumbling under the chair.
Then in a crouch from under the couch
Moves the hunter with a stealthy air.

Bound upon bound and bite after bite
It attacks the poor mangled mouse.
At last a shrug, a retreat to the rug,
And peace returns to the house.

-Thoughts on Apples

Apples at the store,
Come in red and yellow (yes)
Shades of wine perfection.
Take a juicy bite—
Sink those molars into cool,
Crisp,
Concrete.
Feel the crunch
On the tip of the tingle
Tongue.
The think I like best
They don't sell anymore—
Not solid gold ones at the store.
You can afford them
Only in season
Pickled in salt tears
To preserve their beauty.
An apple of gold
Grows only with rain,
And lately,
Just lately,
It's been
Pretty dry around here.

-Sandy Van Den Berg

THE PLACE OF THE SUN

(continued from page 1)

The best Jenny would ever be able to do
would be to sit around all day and do
the sewing and mending or read books and keep
up with her schooling. Really, what a waste it
was to have such a sharp, intelligent mind
and no body to keep up with it. Her daughter
would die within herself and she could do
nothing. It was no use to even pray for a
miracle. Jenny would never walk again and she
must accept it. Maybe if she kept
repeating that over and over enough times to herself
she might soon come to believe it. It was
better than nothing and at least it was
something to hang onto.

The late afternoon sun was spreading itself
out in thick, warm layers on the counter
and sliding down the drainboard into the kitchen
sink, when into the quiet stillness of the room
floated the sound of a sudden, resounding
thump. She jumped then, startled, and
rushed down the hallway and into Jenny's
room with the doctor close behind her. There
they both froze in the open doorway, like
actors watching the last half of a bitter
satirical comedy.

The bed sheets were lying in a crumpled
heap at the foot of the bed; the blankets
trailing carelessly over the side and spilled
into the floor, yet they were still tucked
snugly into the footend of the bed. Jenny was
no longer lying peacefully asleep, the way she
had seen her only a short while ago. Instead,
Jenny was sprawled on the floor alongside the
bed and was clinging desperately to the
blankets, trying to use them as a support to
raise herself. Her first thought was that Jenny
had fallen out of bed and she was going to
help her back in when all of a sudden she
stopped, and stared at her daughter. Jenny
wasn't even trying to get back into bed. She
was trying to walk. In horror she watched
Jenny struggle to an upright sitting position
and then swaying precariously, pull herself up
until she stood with both feet planted firmly
on the floor. She still clung to the blankets
lightly as if needing moral support before she
dropped them and slowly swung her left leg in
front of her right one. She watched the pain
move in sharp lines across Jenny's pale, small
face and light up her eyes with an almost
wild, fanatical gleam. What was Jenny trying
to prove, she thought helplessly.

There her daughter stood, a slight, small,
slim figure in a loose fitting red sweater and a
matching plaid bows that tied around the
waist. She stepped away from the door,
flopped the sound of a sudden, resounding
thump, right onto the floor. She still clung to the blankets
watching the last half of a bitter
satirical comedy.

THOUGHTS ON APPLES

Apples at the store,
Come in red and yellow (yes)
Shades of wine perfection.
Take a juicy bite—
Sink those molars into cool,
Crisp,
Concrete.
Feel the crunch
On the tip of the tingle
Tongue.
The think I like best
They don't sell anymore—
Not solid gold ones at the store.
You can afford them
Only in season
Pickled in salt tears
To preserve their beauty.
An apple of gold
Grows only with rain,
And lately,
Just lately,
It's been
Pretty dry around here.

-Sandy Van Den Berg

walking." Jenny's smile mingled with her
tears as she tried again to get up and walk,
but this time the blankets were two, too many
steps away to help support her now, and she
stumbled to the floor again, her left leg thrust
out at a grotesque angle.

It was like watching a tragic comedy, she
thought again, where you want to laugh and
cry, both at the same time, and you end up
doing neither, because the pain is too real,
too near, too deep, to permit you to laugh it away.
For she knew what her daughter did not know
yet. Jenny would never walk again—could
never walk again. Suddenly, it was like
something snapped in her brain and she felt
like the four walls were closing in on her, and
she saw George and Jenny both go floating by
her, hand in hand. God, she thought, was she
cracking up? She couldn't stand the pain or
accept it anymore. Her heart was too full of
pain and she had never been able to accept
pain.

Looking up through the window she could
see the sun sliding down now around the rim
of the valley they lived in and heading
towards the lowest hill to hide away behind
until the morning came again. The whole sky
seemed to be on fire, burning orange around
the edges and then before one realized, it was
gone, dying a bloody red death on the carpet
at her feet.

Blindly, she turned and rushed past old
Doc. Nielsen and out into the cool, dim
shadows of the hallway, leaving her daughter,
like Daniel, to face her lions, alone.