



Spring 1996

### The Canon, Spring 1996

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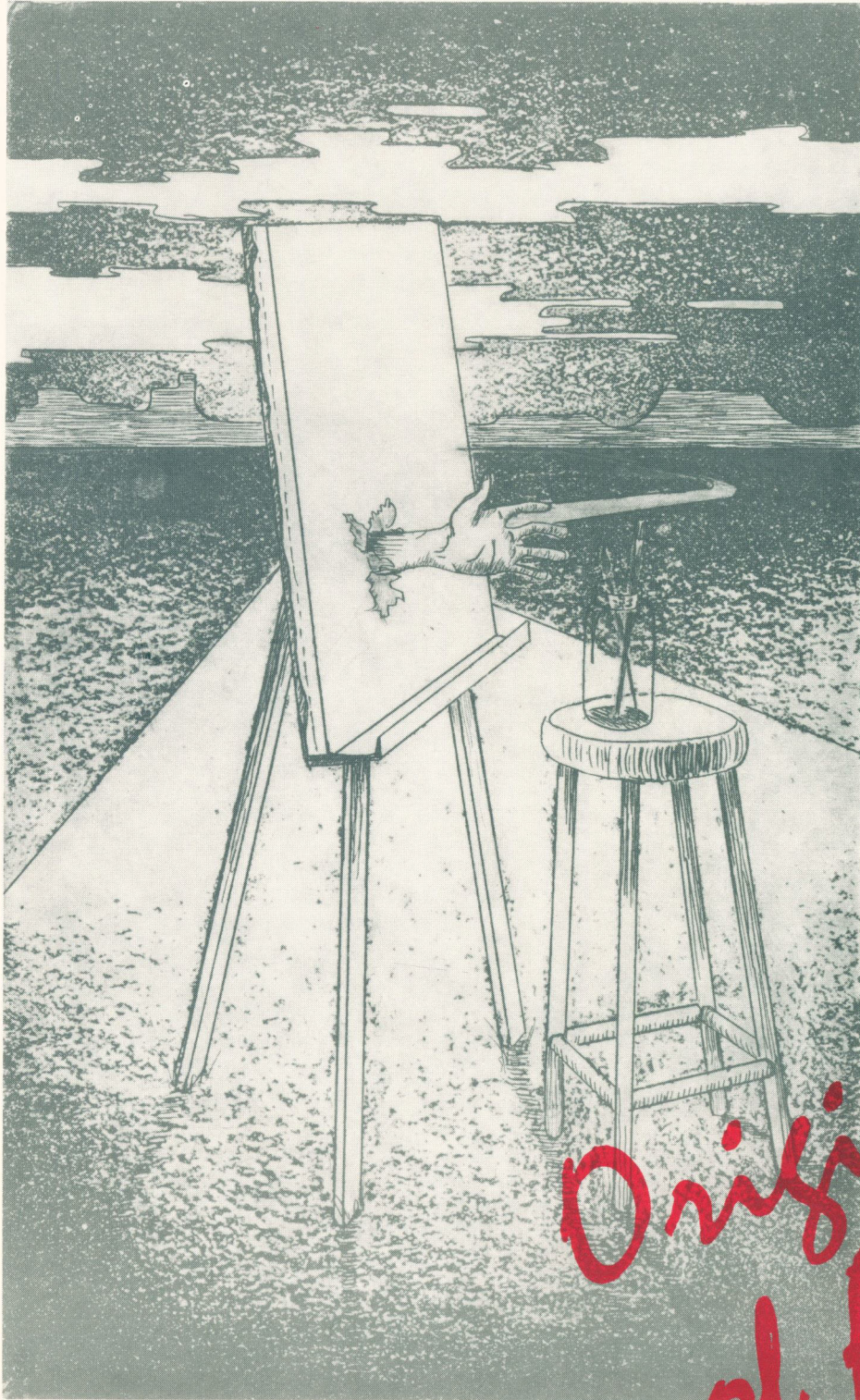
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Spring 1996

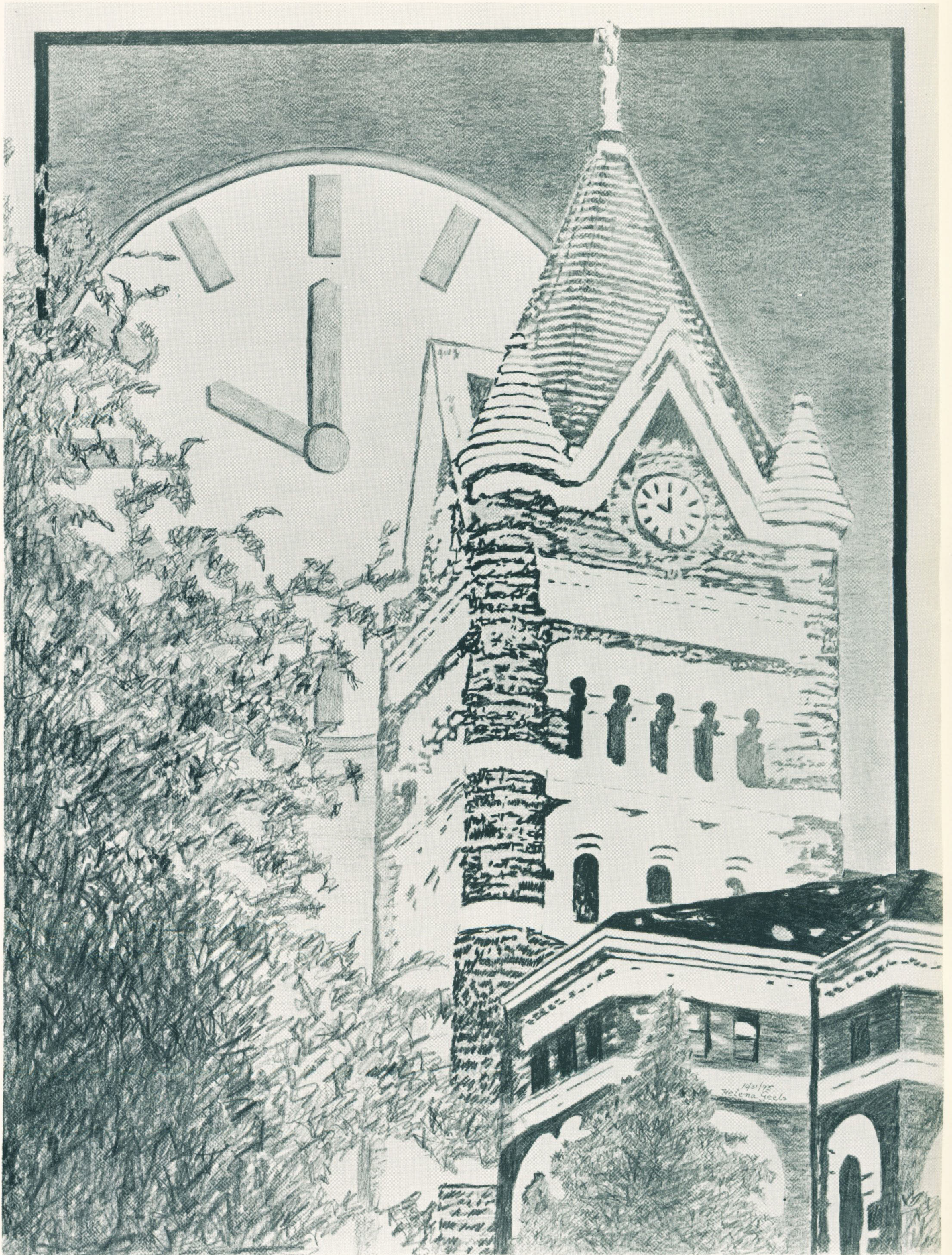
# The Canon

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*Origins  
of Art*





“Sioux County Court House”  
Orange City, IA

Helena Geels



# The Canon

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## 7, a poem in two verses

mister car wanted a fish  
mister car haunted a dish  
mister car followed a gnu  
mister car wallowed in stew

mister car became a house  
mister car ate a tufted grouse  
mister car no longer exists  
so this poem is about stanley

—Robb Vanderstoel





by Andrew Wolgen

I stand on the corner of Second and Fourth, smelling exhaust fumes and working hard to get a piece of dead toast from between my molars. Eight o'clock classes Monday to Friday are a real drag, but it's my future so it's kind of important. I'm a junior English major at Augustana College. I figure I may write someday, but God help me if it'll be at eight o'clock in the morning.

The bus whines to a stop, huffing and snorting in the morning sunshine. I step in and clink my fare through the slot. "Good morning, Frank," I say to the driver. He always reminds me of a wizened old gnome in bus driver's clothes.

He crinkles a grin at me and winks. "Mornin' John," he says, nodding.

The door squeaks shut and the bus rumbles down the street as I reach my seat. I've been riding this bus for almost three years and I've always sat in the same seat—very back, driver's side. I settle on the gray vinyl and put my knapsack beside me. The bus is always empty when I get on. I like that because then I'll be sure I'll always get my seat. I really don't know why I like it so much. It's got a big rip down the middle, bubble gum stuck in convenient places, and the initials A.T. + B.S. carved viciously into the back of the seat in front of me.

Even though I hate early mornings, the bus ride is really the highlight of my day. A kind of weird camaraderie grows between the regular passengers on a city bus. We know very little about each other, and yet we see each other every day. We're the secret neighbors to an entire spectrum of moods, conversations, and wardrobes. Noncommittal espionage.

The bus stops a few blocks down the street and a dozen Asian students get on, sitting toward the front. I crane my neck, looking toward the door, eagerly awaiting the ritual.

"Hurry up, Jake," Frank says, warningly.

"Just wait, I'm almost done," says Jake, hurriedly puffing a cigarette.

"I'm gonna leave."

"No, just wait."

"I'm closin' the door."

"WAIT!"

"Here I go."

"All right, all right," he says as he flicks the butt into the gutter. "There, it's gone—see? It's just a friggin' smoke. GEEZ!" Jake steps on board, angrily shaking his head.

This happens every morning. One of these days I think Frank will actually leave.

Jake flops down in the seat opposite mine, stretching his long legs almost across the aisle. He runs a hand through his long hair and looks over at me. "So, how you doin' college boy?" he asks, twirling the ends of his mustache.

"I'm doin' all right. You?" I always try to act as cool as I can around Jake. He's a thirty-year-old guy with tattoos, he lives in a housing project, and I'm not sure where he goes everyday, but I can watch him for hours because he never sits still. He's always doing something. I'm sure he thinks I'm a dork, but I try to pretend I'm streetwise.

"Oh, I'm just great," he says, picking at a stain on his leather jacket. "I just wish we could smoke on this bus."

"Yeah, I hear you." I've never smoked in my life. "So, did you party hardy last weekend?"

"Nah, just shot some stick, had a few beers. Pretty tame." He rubs his eyes and peers over his shoulder at the sidewalk slowly going by.

The bus begins to fill up as it turns a few corners and continues on. Bitchy Lady and Annoying Guy step up and pay the fare. They sit in front of Jake. He looks over at me and rolls his eyes.

"Well, I'm surprised we made it," says Bitchy Lady, her red hair bobbing and penciled eyebrows jumping.

"I said I was sorry. You never listen to me. Why can't you ever just stop and consider my feelings for once, huh? Why?" Annoying Guy gives her his saddest puppy dog look. I feel like beating the crap out of him. So does Jake—his fists are clenching and unclenching.

"Oh, put a sock in it," says Bitchy Lady, elbowing him sharply in the ribs. "What time is it?"

"Oh no, I forgot my watch," Annoying Guy whines, and they start all over again. Jake looks at me and shakes his head. I shrug

my shoulders and give him a half-smile. The bus stops again and Jake gets off. He gives me a nod and I flash him the "peace" sign, feeling stupid.

The Cheerful Chinaman takes Jake's seat. This guy is probably the friendliest person in the world—too bad I can't understand a word he says. He beams at me and says something in rapid-fire Chinese. I give him a wave and say, "Hi." He talks some more but I just smile, nod, and look away. For all I know, he could be calling me the stupidest jerk to ever walk the planet.

I note with interest that the fat guy three seats up is distractedly picking his nose. His finger is buried past the first knuckle when he suddenly stops and slowly draws it out. The motherlode! He glances suspiciously around and stealthily wipes it under the seat. He looks back and sees me staring. I immediately look away, biting my lip to keep from laughing.

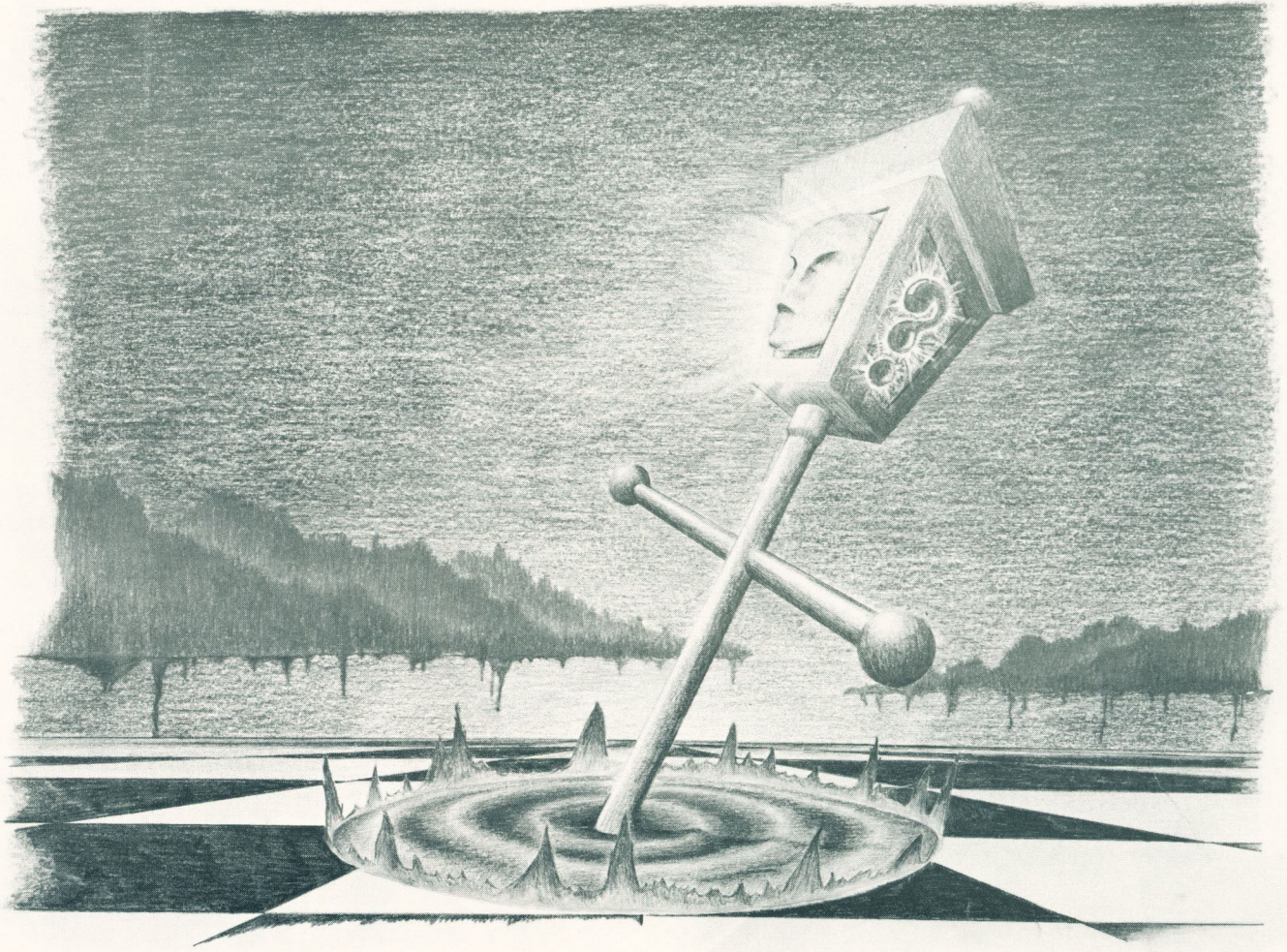
The girl in front of me starts humming "Seasons in the Sun" as she adjusts her headphones, Cheerful Chinaman throws another piece of mind-numbing wisdom my way, Bitchy Lady and Annoying Guy are embroiled in another debate—this time about how stupid Annoying Guy is, and the fat guy should have brought his mining helmet because he's deep in the other nostril. This is definitely one of the best bus rides I've ever been on!

Then I stop. I notice everyone has turned around and is staring at me. Bitchy Lady and Annoying Guy are eyeing me with wounded expressions like I've interrupted something really important, the fat guy stops in mid-pick, and even Cheerful Chinaman is giving me a quizzical look like I just gave him Einstein's Theory of Relativity.

I realize I'd been caught laughing out loud. I'd been looking around and laughing at these people. The only sound is the rumble of the bus and the distant voices of the Asian students at the front. I put my knees up on the carved initials and slouch far down in my seat. Idiot, I tell myself over and over. I get up at my stop. On the way out I hear somebody say, "Weirdo."

Oh God, I think, I've become one of them. No, says a voice in my mind, you always were.





---

Chris Tuininga



## alternative confusion

my friends are alternative  
and no one hangs around us

my music is alternative  
and everyone listens to it

my thoughts are alternative  
and no one listens to them

my clothes are alternative  
and everyone borrows them

my boyfriend is alternative  
and no one thinks he's attractive

my birth control is alternative  
and everyone uses it

my opinion on alternative  
and no one to influence it  
my gut level to alternative  
and everyone is

--Dirk Zwart



# young love

by Paula Treick

"How'd you get that bruise?"

"What bruise?" I said slowly, holding the steaming coffee pot over his cup, poised just for a second before I started to pour.

"That bruise on your arm," said the man, table three, some nameless, faceless customer on his second cup of coffee. He leaned across his \$1.99 breakfast and reached out, almost touching his index finger to my left arm.

Surprised, I saw the ugly purple-red bruise for the first time. "Oh," I said, and set the pot of coffee on the table, brushing the bruise lightly with my right hand. The outline of fingers was plain in my flesh.

"Oh, that bruise," I said, picking up the coffee pot. "I'm just a klutz, that's all." I gave the man what I hoped was a convincing smile and moved on. His gaze followed me as I swayed my hips just-so through my tables and back to the kitchen.

I didn't need high-tech fingerprinting to pinpoint the origin of my bruise. I knew those fingers, knew the powerful grip of his hand, the sudden, exploding anger that seized me and then, just as quickly, was gone. I remember him holding my arm and twisting, but the pain I felt had come from the twisting sarcasm of his words.

I set the check on the table before the man who had noticed my bruise, avoiding his eyes, ignoring his glance. At table seven I waited on a young couple who'd wandered in, holding hands; even now, menus open to the breakfast section, their pinky fingers were linked across the checkered tablecloth.

The man was gone when I returned, leaving behind the syrupy remnants of his breakfast. He left a generous tip, about fifty percent, but I shoved it in my white apron pocket, angrily. Did he think a dollar would solve the world's problems? There was a note, too, scribbled on a napkin. Dear Kate, it said. Because of course, he'd read my name on the pin dangling from my left breast pocket. Dear Kate, Here's a number just in case. And then it said Domestic Violence Hotline. A bold 800 number.

He hadn't signed it. No name, no nothing, another customer passing through, one more person who knew my weakness.

I held the napkin in my hand and stared at the number.

The young couple waved me over to their table. They were still holding hands.

He said something, just for her, and she smiled, just for him. There was something between them that I longed for, a world outside this run-down diner.

I crumpled up the napkin, tossing it into a trash bin as I approached their table.



Jonie Meinders

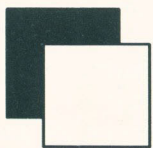
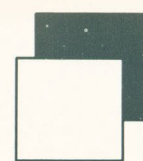
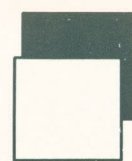
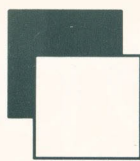
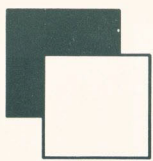
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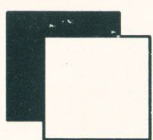
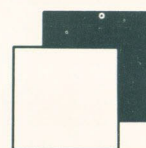


Marilyda Stel

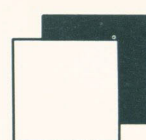




what do i do for money?  
do you know what you are asking?



I label envelopes.  
are you satisfied?



I'm not.

I look at the labels,  
imagine what their lives are like. . .

are they warm right now?  
are they colder than me right now (not very likely)?  
what did they have for dinner?  
are they asleep right now?



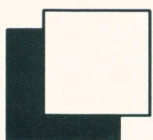
sometimes, i wish that i could live where they do.  
africa, philippines, nigeria, netherlands  
(I lied, i dont want to live there, but it is someplace that we sent mail)  
australia, new zealand, japan, russia, hong kong, ontario even. . .



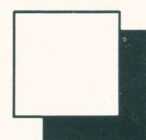
i wonder what it is like there,  
i wonder if they imagine iowa as an exotic far away place,



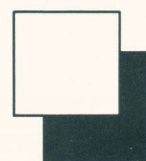
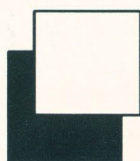
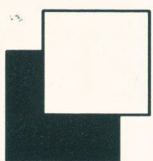
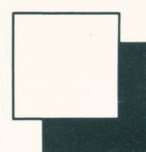
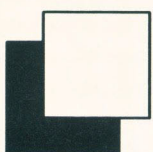
as i imagine where they are.



what do you do for money?  
I label envelopes.



--Sarah Walsh







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“Seen But Not Heard”

Jennifer Hillenga



Do not love  
little birds and butterflies  
They fly away  
leaving you alone.  
Instead, notice the  
plain rock,  
who in her ugliness  
stands firm  
and strong  
never failing  
in her love for thee.

—Sarah Bliss

Inevitable,  
the willows we would climb,  
we would sit and talk.  
RELAX. . .  
in the shade of them.

Blissful days are gone.  
The trees are gone.

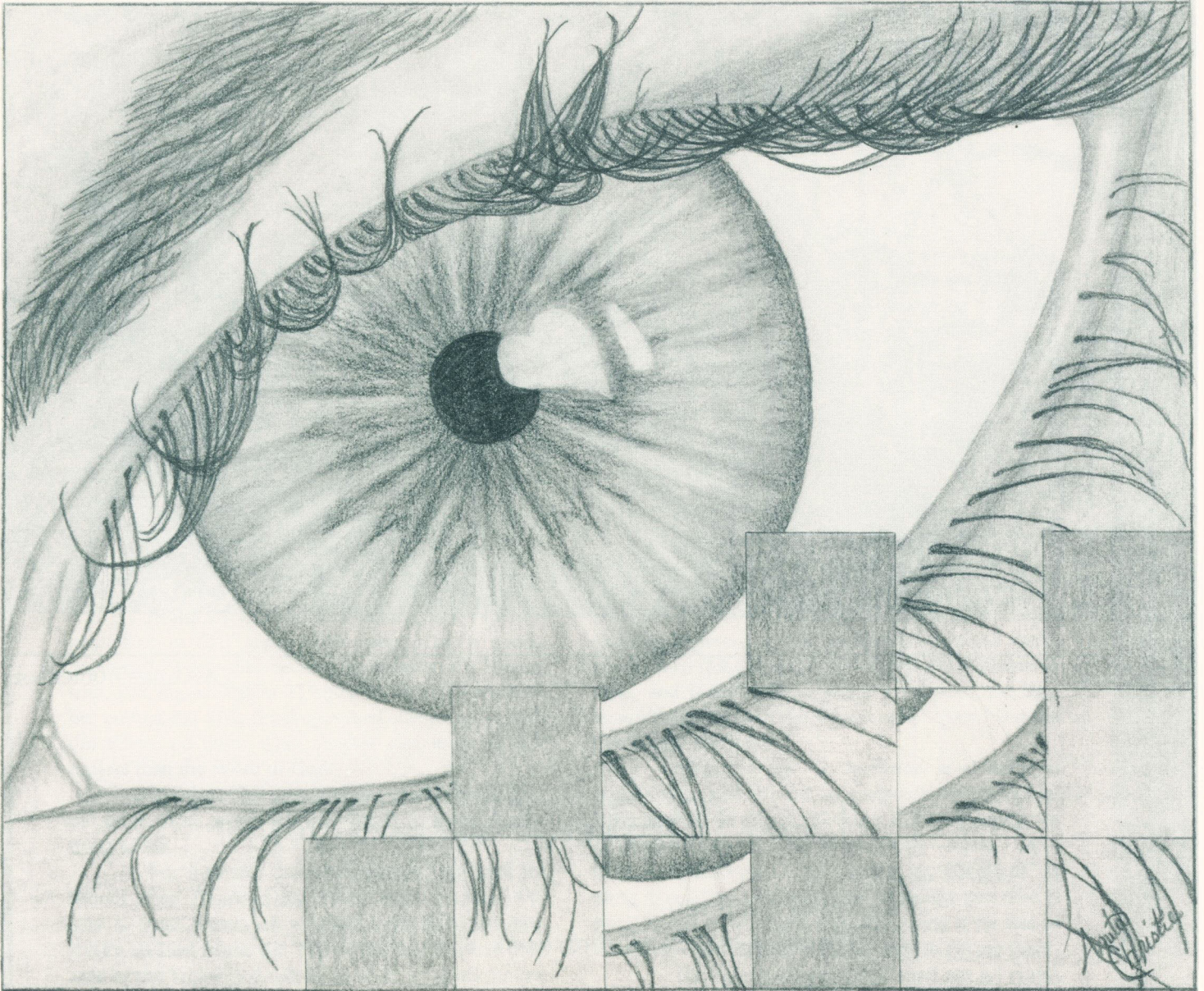
—Sarah Walsh



“The Dream”

Janeen Wassink





“Lifeless”

Anita Christie





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“Escapist”

Lee-Ann Grootenboer

## Love (Broken Perspective)

Your mind spins  
Emotions fly in all directions  
Heaven. . .

Confusion!  
We try to escape its grasp  
Ignoring the sweetness  
Turning away with hidden feelings  
Seeking elsewhere  
    The cycle begins again

—Brian Cruson



# The Lord Is My Shepherd

by Kate L. Dekker

**U**

p in front of the entire congregation, I was really nervous, but I read every word perfectly, clearly, and with just the right emphasis. "The Lord is my Shepherd. . . ." My mother sat in her seat, beaming with pride. "Perfect!" she whispered to me as I slid into

my chair after I was finished proclaiming that I would dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Yeah, sure, maybe my reading of Psalm 23 in church was well done, but that was mostly because I was practically born knowing the passage. The Lord is my shepherd. Of course he is. Everyone knows that.

Psalm 23 was just this passage that I had to memorize in first grade—like John 3:16, a good, meaningful verse that became so popular it's almost trite. I've known Psalm 23 since I was six. I remember cutting out little mimeographed sheep and gluing the verses on them. That chapter was more an art project than the Word of God.

But the older I am and the wilder things get, the more those words actually begin to mean something to me.

For instance, the roads on the way back to school after Thanksgiving break were terrible. We saw a huge pileup of wrecked cars and smashed trucks on East Route 80. The police had to close that side of the highway down for a while to clean up the mess. I wish I would have counted how many cars and trucks we saw in the ditch along West Route 80—probably 40, maybe more.

At one point, a truck cut me off and I spiraled into the ditch on the left side of the road. I tried to pull out a couple of times, but had no luck. Just as we were stepping out of the car to check out how badly we were stuck, a green Jeep Cherokee pulled up from the east and two men stepped out. They had seen us go in the ditch and turned around at the next exit to come back and help us. They pushed us out of the ditch, and we thanked them and thanked them. The

Lord is my Shepherd.

I have no idea what I'm going to do with my life. How can I even think about that? I don't even know if I'm going to make it through the rest of this *week*, so I really don't have time to think about the next 40 years. Who will I marry? Will I have any kids? And how am I going to meet anyone *to* marry if all anyone ever sees of me is this blonde blur zipping from place to place? I feel like I have no social life. But the Lord is my Shepherd.

Today I learned that I have an eight-page paper due on Friday, and besides writing five stories for spreads in the yearbook, I have to design the spreads and even get the pictures myself. I have a speech on Tuesday, and I don't know when I'm going to do it because I will be gone the entire weekend because I have to fly home for my grandparents' 40th wedding anniversary. I also have to read two entire novels for Friday, I forgot to bring my assignment to class, and I don't even want to talk about the *Diamond*. And I burned the dinner rolls. Again. But the Lord is my Shepherd.

What I mean is, Someone is actually in control here, and it's not me, which is fine with me. Someone can keep my life from wildly spinning out of control even—or maybe especially—when I can't hold on any longer. "The Lord is my Shepherd" is more than just a nice sentiment. It means that God is steering me in the right direction, even if he has to knock me over the head with his staff to get me there.

The Lord is in control, I shall not go crazy. He makes me take a break, He leads me through piles of assignments, He restores my sanity. He guides me in paths of being nice to people—even when I don't feel like it—for his Name's sake. Even though I have 8 million pages of paper to write, I will fear no deadlines, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they keep me focused. You restore my positive state of mind in the presence of that evil computer that ate my 15-page report. You anoint my head with good ideas; my mind overflows. Surely someday I will get everything done, if it takes all the days of my life, and I will rely on the guidance of the Lord forever.



# Conversations between Savior,

## Dialogue I

*“Come with me, and take this hand,  
Hear my name and take your stand.  
I come to you as Son of Light,  
And I can give you what I call mine.  
My heart, my love and liberty,  
I promise life eternally. . . a joy.”*

“I don’t know, I never thought,  
You’d be so here—and now, without a doubt.  
It seems too nice. It seems just right,  
and that is why I won’t believe my eyes.  
Make me who I want to be,  
Do me this, and then I’ll believe.”

*“I do not jump through such small hoops,  
When challenged by the Prince of **Dark**  
through you.  
I will change you, you will see,  
You will be who you wish to be.  
But you must step, your hand must reach,  
Speak my name and walk in me.”*

## Dialogue II

“What do I ask of you?  
You needn’t me obey. . .  
You may have what you may want,  
Live your life away.  
But heed not His church or name,  
and let me tell you ‘bout my game.”

“Hello again, I think I’ve seen your face,  
Because it is my own.  
I will subscribe to your house rule,  
I can live for your cause.

It’s easy now, I am in charge,  
And I depend on none.”

**“That’s right, my friend, I’ll say again,  
Don’t follow ill begotten sons.  
He’s but another bastard child,  
Of course the Son of God.  
That’s right my dear, dear friend,  
Come closer now, The End.”**

## Dialogue III

*“You will lie through white tooth sheen,  
and steal away another, again.  
But you will leave them in their mess,  
And then frustrate them, like all the rest.  
But I will conquer, and redefine,  
and take back what is rightly mine.”*

**“Back away, ye Son of Light!  
You’re terrible and blind my eyes.  
It’s too late! He belongs to me,  
and he won’t leave what he can’t see.  
I’ve made him blind, desensitized,  
Who I am before his eyes.”**

*“On the road I too will blind,  
His sores and wounds cauterize.  
And when the scales fall like rain,  
He will see and be mine again.  
So back again to your dark hole,  
Ye Prince of **Dark and lying soul.**”*

## Dialogue IV

“Oh! The pain that’s been mine since,  
When I signed on with that **Dark** prince!



# Satan, and Sinner Soon Redeemed

Where is **God** when my pain sears?  
Where is **God** when I feel fears?  
Oh! My cries go alone, unheard,  
Oh, to my womb could I only return!”

*“I stand here in wait for you,  
Not to kill but give my hand to you.  
But as you’ve seen, pain has been,  
Since Adam and the apple sour.  
But I am here, when your lips spell  
My name, yours I will retrieve from the grips  
of Hell.”*

“But I will fall, and demonstrate,  
No worth for you, because I turned away.  
When you called me I ignored You,  
So why now should you return to me again?”  
I cannot, I will not, for I don’t deserve,  
But till now I’ve known no better so to you,  
my spirit, I’ll serve. . .”

## Dialogue II

**“Why do you give up so soon?  
Your life is young and life’s for you.  
Who is He to claim your soul?  
There’s nothing wrong that dwells in you.  
Do not give up this life you chose,  
Because once you do these doors will close.”**

“But what about these things he said?  
Where will I go when I am dead?  
And until then will my life be,  
A thing to be remembered as a mediocrity?  
I do not see which path will be  
To better ends by better means.”

**“You do not need His far out claims,  
And if you did you couldn’t say.  
For your heart’s dirty, your mind unclean,  
You are not worthy for Him to redeem.  
You are not worthy, you’ve done too much,  
You must lose this fancy, JUST GIVE IT  
UP!”**

## Dialogue III

*“See how he panics here?  
He lies from frustration of losing what he  
never had.  
I am the life and he the death,  
You can never go too far to come back.  
See here my hands and side,  
For **you** I sacrificed my life.”*

“I see your hands and side,  
for you I give my life, my pride.  
You’ve followed me to the darkest cave,  
For good cause to rescue me.  
So I will try and I may fall,  
But I will depend on you for all.”

*“For your love I will reward,  
You will live with me in the eternal,  
Together we will walk beside our Father,  
and in His arms, He will hold us both to-  
gether,  
Forever and ever,  
Amen.”*

--Sean Covington





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“It Is Good”

Monique Sliedrecht





## MAKE the time.

The brevity of life, I think,  
is often on our mind.  
We work ourselves to death—  
just so we won't be caught behind.

We toil and work so long and hard—  
to show we're "on the ball";  
Bad times won't be forgotten,  
the Good? we can't recall. . .

The young ones dream of "Greatness,"  
on this their minds are set. . .  
but sin and sickness come so fast  
Souls buried, goals unmet.

We're part of God's great army,  
with swords and flags unfurled  
Yet the commander calls: "No pain inflict—  
Now go and HEAL my world!!"

I tried to say, "I have no TIME—  
there is too much to DO!"  
My tears rushed down as he replied,  
"I gave my LIFE for you."

--Brian Vos





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Dirk Zwart

## Schooled

Sometimes it seems  
that God has taken a  
sabbatical.  
Maybe it's just that we're  
all playing hooky.

—Laryn Bakker



# A CAMPUS OF LOVE?

by Mike Vande Griend

Alone. Sad. Frightened. Helpless. These are feelings that should not be felt on Dordt's campus, whose claim to fame is that it is a community of Christian love. Does Dordt College do all it can to ensure everyone feels loved?

Last year, a man shared in the *Diamond* how he was struggling with homosexuality and how he felt frightened to reveal his name. Can you blame him?

Just a few weeks ago, I was discussing racial issues at Dordt and the topic of homosexuality entered the conversation. Suddenly, people began to squirm in their chairs and their faces began to turn red. Throughout the rest of the conversation, a nervous laughter served as a release for feelings of disgust and nausea felt against homosexuals.

Jokes such as, "Have you heard the one about the three queers in the hot tub?" circulate Dordt's campus. Some Dordt students honestly think that these jokes won't offend anyone because they just don't think homosexuals attend Dordt College. While the jokes and dehumanizing remarks fly around campus, some Dordt students cry alone because to ask for help means to ask for rejection.

Before Mr. X wrote the letter last year, the word *homosexual* was taboo in the Dordt community except when used during a Gen 300 discussion. Don't think for a second that because homosexuality was rarely mentioned that it didn't exist. I have a male relative who came through Dordt College ten years ago and struggled with homosexual temptation. He didn't come out of the closet, but his close friends knew he was struggling. Unfortunately, they chose to smile and act as if he had no problems. Four years and a degree later, he was able to move to Chicago, where he found love and acceptance in the homosexual community. Why can't Christian homosexuals turn to fellow Christians to find God's love?

Last year I attended a resident assistant convention at the University of Northern Iowa. Hundreds of Midwest colleges and universities were represented. The convention consisted of workshops run by the various schools that attended the convention. I attended one of the workshops entitled, "Coming out of the Closet on your Wing." As an ice-breaker we were asked to give our sexual preference and tell about the number of homosexuals we knew at our college. I listened as people around me said they were homosexual, heterosexual, and even bisexual.

When my turn came I said, "I am a heterosexual and I don't know anyone at my college who is gay."

Hundreds of heads turned in astonishment, and

people gave me looks as if I deserved the "Ignoramus of the Year Award." Everyone else knew about several homosexuals at their campuses. Beads of nervous sweat rolled down my sides, because for the first time I knew how it felt to be the odd person within the crowd.

The Dordt community has a history of pushing the topic of homosexuality aside because no one wants to believe that Christians struggle with this sin. Various Dordt alumni have dealt with the tragic results of the disease, but the college community has taken little action in response. People struggling with homosexuality and brothers and sisters of homosexuals are left to mourn in a community that doesn't understand their pain. The Dordt community can't plead innocence, but it must plead ignorance.

Irony runs deep within the community, when the same people who condemn homosexuals are jumping from bed to bed in the residence halls. God's word condemns all forms of sexual promiscuity. This doesn't mean that God finds promiscuous sex less offensive than homosexuality, but we still push homosexuality aside as if it is an unpardonable sin. When Joe Vande Dordt jumps into bed with someone, God is hurt just as badly as when someone commits a homosexual act.

We need to become educated and our hearts need to be changed. Discussion seminars are a good way for people to openly talk about homosexuality. People who are struggling with homosexuality can attend these discussions and know that people care to understand their problem. Speakers like Sy Rogers, who is a recovering homosexual, can help us understand why people become homosexuals. Books will also give us a better understanding if we allow our lives to become changed by what we read.

Campus renewal is in the near future for Dordt. This has taken place at other colleges in the Midwest and has allowed people to come clean of their sins by confessing them to fellow students. The Holy Spirit has been there to give people strength to show love and understanding instead of hate. Dordt students have organized accountability groups where three or four students become responsible for each other's spiritual lives. This will be a key to developing a campus that loves everyone regardless of their sins.

Prayer is the most vital tool for transforming our campus. When we are all filled with the Holy Spirit's power, we will want to live and love like Christ. In the future Dordt students will no longer need to be scared and alone because homosexuality will be recognized as another sin which can be forgiven by the grace of God.



Last night I was in the Bulls' locker room, in my dream.  
Of course it wasn't the Bulls' locker room at first.  
At first it was a pet store.

Four walls of stacked fish tanks, filled with beautiful, exotic, fake, paper fish operated by strings, which, when pulled up or down, made the fish swim in very realistic, if somewhat redundant, movements.

I don't know who pulled the strings, but as I said, the fish were very convincing. For the longest time, I thought they were real. But they weren't. There was no water.

Then, suddenly, I noticed a couple other guys with me. A father and son. It was as if they had been there all along, but I don't think they really had. We went into another room—back, through a door into this very boring room, in which there was nothing worth mentioning, except for a shelf filled with trinkets and a live cockroach crawling around in a blue shoe box filled with lipstick and base and mascara.

We left that room and went into the room with the paper fish, only there weren't any paper fish now. It was at this point that it became the Bulls' locker room:

Lockers and a long bench and water on the tiled floor. All of the Bulls' uniforms were pinned up behind glass: Michael Jordan's, Scotty Pippin's, Magic Johnson's. . .

Now, you may say, "Magic Johnson doesn't play for the Bulls."  
And in real life, you'd be right. But in my dream, you'd be wrong, because he did. He played for the Bulls and he was very good, and he didn't have AIDS.

After a little while, I decided to leave. Father and son weren't around anymore. Not that they had left or anything. It was as if they had never been there. I didn't really think about it much, and I was fairly satisfied with all that had transpired, so

I stepped out and walked through the rest of the museum.

Now, you may say, "Wasn't it a locker room?"  
And I would say, "Yes. It was."

And then it wasn't.

--Luke Schelhaas





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Jennifer Hillenga





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“Haven for Wildlife”

Michael Iedema

## Speaker's Corner, London

Heavy flags that cannot fly,  
green and red and white,  
shake their pole-top fists at the sky  
and the storm clouds scurry away.  
Sweat pours like accusations  
down hot, earless faces.  
Women wrapped in shrouds  
curse Christ while licking ice cream,  
Tourists snap photos  
—THE END IS NEAR!—  
And the ludicrous hat of The Texan quivers  
as he damns passing rollerbladers to hell.

—Heather Hamilton





## *Neah Bay*

gentle waves come rushing to my feet  
reflecting shadows damp upon the shore.  
walk where ocean meets flatten rock  
and misting tide of pure tranquility.

come quickly! come again

rise up and leave me

dry upon the sand

slipping weed curl and wrap,  
sheets of salt shaping trodden path.  
quickly, erase sporadic prints pathway to  
the algae splattered reef.

come quickly! come again

rise up and leave me

wet upon the sand

remember seeping footprints deep,  
once engraved then time made blind.  
different are the currents pace  
parallel to our human time.

come quickly! come again

tide will return, yet i now

left upon the sand

lead me along the perpetual placidity. . .

--Sue Lea VanderMay



# *To Dance. . .*

To Dance. . .

To be free.

I hear the music,

It's calling me.

It's whispering softly

In my ear,

"Come, come and dance,

Lift your body,"

Floating rhythm

Lilting melody

Carries me higher

And higher.

Floating above me

Are heavenly secrets

I wish to unfold.

I Dance.

The dreams I long for

And bring me closer to

Lift me up

The wind and rhythm

I reach for them,

Though they are unseen.

—Kelly Kuipers



# Your Best, or The Best?

by Sonja Brue

**D**o your best for God.” How many times did I hear that the first week of my senior year? I had always been the type of person who tried to do what others expected of me and that year was no exception. Being a Christian, I truly wanted to serve God and do His will. When our instructors and coaches told us to do our best for God, they meant it. I listened.

My first obligation as a senior was to set the tone for the year. Our principal challenged us with this statement, “In the past, the seniors have ruined or made a year by their actions and attitudes—let’s not ruin this year.” My friends and I wanted our senior year to be a year of spiritual growth and deepening friendships. We set out to be truly Christ-like in all we said and did. We sincerely prayed that as we went to classes, played music, and participated in sports, we would allow Christ’s love to shine through us.

Being a committed Christian seemed to mean striving to be holy. Along with forty other students, I packed away my Poison and Van Halen tapes and promised to listen only to Christian music, often repeating Philippians 3:8. “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” The first word that popped into my head after someone mentioned Poison was definitely not lovely or pure.

I wanted to set a good example in the dorm and was determined that I would follow all the rules. This included required attendance at breakfast, radios off during quiet time, beds made, room clean, appliances unplugged during classes, dorm jobs (cleaning showers, toilets, etc.) done well every morning, being in the dorm by the 10:00 bell, lights out and in bed by 10:30—asleep by 10:42 at the latest. When I got my only warning that year, I wanted to write an explanation and post it on the bulletin board. “My roommate forgot to shut off the curling iron she borrowed from me.” My heart begged for forgiveness.

In academics I thought that doing my best for God meant getting a 4.0. I had a 3.0 average for my first three years of high school and quite frankly, I was ashamed. I studied harder than I ever had before. Since I wasn’t allowed to stay up later than 10:30, I would get up at 3:00 a.m. and study until breakfast. In order to do my

best for God, I would have to sacrifice some sleep. I reasoned that God sacrificed His Son, surely I could do my part.

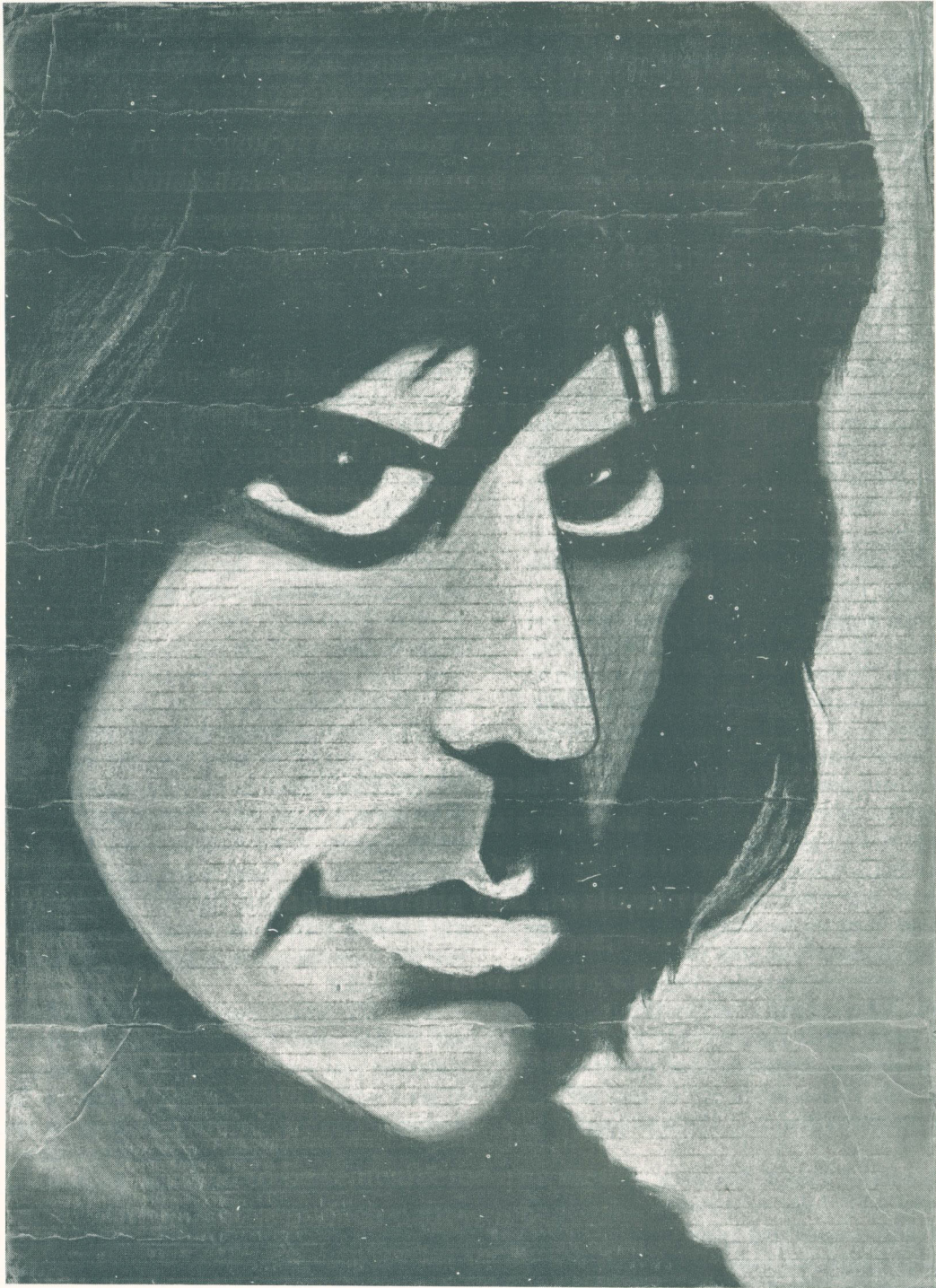
Along with my grades, I knew that taking care of my body was God’s will. Pleasing God by becoming “the body” he wanted me to be was another part of being the best for God. I swore off candy, chips, ice cream, and anything with cheese in it for the year. On the days we didn’t have cross country practice I ran eight miles to stay in shape. To be fit was God’s will. “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” I Corinthians 6:19.

I was always involved with music during high school, and although I could never be called a child prodigy, I did practice a lot. At the beginning of my senior year I was practicing two hours on flute a day and one hour on piano. I distinctly remember my band director telling me, “You will never make it unless you practice three hours a day on flute.” With cross-country practices, meets, classes from 8:00 to 4:00 and lights out at 10:30, I just didn’t think I could find another hour. I began to hate myself for not living up to what I believed were God’s expectations. I would walk up to my fourth floor room, exhausted, saying over and over again, “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”

What I took away from my senior year was a 4.0, the distinguished honor of getting the least warnings in the dorm, a couple pairs of worn-out running shoes, an eating disorder called bulimia, and a hole in my heart. For some reason I failed to see that doing **the** best was not the same as doing **my** best for God. In my mind’s eye I needed to be skinny, smart, athletic, and musically talented. I needed to live a “perfect” life in order to be a woman of God.

It’s been a long time since high school, but I still shudder when I read my journal entries from that nightmare year. I wish I had understood that my sacrifice of good works was not pleasing to God—in fact, it was detestable. Now I realize that God does not want me to sacrifice my health and happiness to please him. He wants me to humble myself before Him, knowing there is nothing good in me. He simply wants **our** best, not **the** best. Since my senior year of high school I have learned how to say, “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength,” with the emphasis not on myself, but on Christ.





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“Jeff Beck”

Jeff Gesch



# making

# soup



the last book i read said, “soup is good food,”  
and i would have to agree.

beppe made good soup and it’s all i had for years,  
but i was more accustomed to my mom’s.  
beppe would cook soup, and  
pake would tell me about the little kitty that fell in the creek.  
i built with the red and white blocks, and  
pake said, “little dirk, a building without a strong foundation  
will fall.” so i allocated sixty-two percent of the blocks for the  
foundation and decided white was better for that. then i heard,  
“pake, ontaffleupskeppen.” which i guess meant, “soup’s ready,”  
because we went to eat and i learned how to crunch my  
crackers just right.

mom’s soup was like  
grandma’s and that’s tradition.  
grandma made big pots of soup—bowls of corn—five sheets of  
tai-tai—bread from conastoga mall—cereal prizes for everyone  
and i think  
opa really doesn’t like honey combs.  
there were always lots of people there and everyone had  
headaches, so i’d go spit off the balcony. not much of  
importances was ever said, but  
grandma liked me,  
and  
opa could make me smile, even with the mennonites in st. jacobs.

i made soup today.  
just like mom’s and a bit like  
beppe’s, and while rolling the meatballs or watching the steam;  
i knew  
pake’s blocks meant that we need a strong foundation in our life,  
and  
opa knew the value of a smile,  
and  
grandma—the value of a full tummy. while crunching my crackers.  
i smiled.  
soup is good food for thought.

--Dirk Zwart





“Yucca Silhouette”

Helena Geels

# Unspoken

by Heather Hamilton

Joe sat stiffly on the wooden kitchen chair, opposite Mrs Cather. He studied intently the swirls, waves, and streams in the deeply stained table, his eyebrows squeezed together and his large lips very flat. She was staring at him, not

even glancing away as she sipped her tea, her piercing blue eyes shrewdly judging him like a used car for sale.

Joe would not meet her gaze, but sat dumbly intent on the wood grain, nervously and boyishly glancing out the window at any hint of an approaching car.

What a disaster! Three weeks ago Joe and Christine had announced their

engagement, and the very next day Christine’s grandmother called, insisting she *must* meet Joe as soon as possible. So they set this up, planning to have a Saturday afternoon lunch at Christine’s apartment. But yesterday one of the other doctors in the obstetrics ward came down with the flu, so Christine had to be on call. Joe suggested they postpone the meeting, but



she told him not to worry—that likely as not she wouldn't get called in, and even if she did, it would give him a chance to get to know Grandma better.

Well, as luck would have it, Christine got called only half an hour before Grandma was supposed to arrive.

—What do I do about lunch? Joe asked desperately as she grabbed her coat and car keys.

—Oh, she paused a second. You better not cook or she'll think you're odd. Not a good first impression.

She swung her coat around herself.

—I'll call you by 12:30, okay? If I can't get back you can take her out to eat or we'll think of something.

She kissed him quickly, but he was too distracted to respond.

Grandma arrived ten minutes early and impatiently rang the bell several times while Joe ran down two flights of stairs to let her into the building. Square-jawed, smartly dressed with a red silk scarf tied neatly around the collar of her blouse, and still nearly as tall as himself, Joe could hardly believe this woman was eighty-one years old. Reassured that she would not be boring or senile by her obvious vitality, he quickly offered his hand and a broad smile.

—I'm sorry, she cut him off brusquely. I must have rung the wrong apartment.

—Aren't you Christine's grandmother? he said, perplexed. I'm Joe Woodward.

She squinted at him.

—Call me Mrs Cather, she said, and started up the stairs ahead of him.

He opened the door and she walked right through the sunny living room full of well-padded designer chairs to the stark little kitchen lit harshly by fluorescent light because the neighboring building cast a shadow over the tiny window. There she seated herself grandly, setting her purse on the table, wordlessly handing Joe her coat, and majestically lowering herself into the hard chair as if it were a throne.

—How are you? he asked politely as he opened the closet.

—Old.

Joe, his "company's best commu-

nicator" according to his boss, the executive vice president, had no idea how to respond to her blunt reply and frigid tone.

—Where's Christine? she finally spoke again after Joe closed the closet door.

—She was called up by the hospital last minute. Hopefully she'll be calling soon to let us know what's happening.

—Hmm, she grudgingly replied. Joe shifted his weight to his other foot.

—Can I get you anything? This was ridiculous—he felt like a butler or something, waiting on her without so much as a word of thanks.

—I'll have tea—black, she said crisply.

Joe filled the shiny black tea kettle and put it on the burner. He took a cup off the rack and pulled a tea bag from the second drawer next to the refrigerator.

—Are you living together? Mrs Cather asked abruptly. Joe spun around, struck.

—No, he answered rather flustered.

—Then how did you know right where the tea was? she cross-examined.

—Well I have been here many times. Why shouldn't I know where it is?

—But you're not living together? she said skeptically.

—No, he replied impatiently. We feel that would be wrong.

Mrs Cather narrowed her eyes and then relaxed a bit.

—Well at least *some* of you still have some morals, she conceded.

Joe walked straight out of the kitchen. That probably wasn't the best way to handle the situation, he quickly decided, so he grabbed his laptop from the coffee table and returned to the interrogation chamber with his excuse. The kettle started whistling so he served Mrs Cather her tea and then sat down opposite her, popping open his computer. He stared at his files briefly before deciding to review his itinerary for next week's trip to Tokyo. After a few minutes, he accidentally erased a line when he jumped at Mrs Cather's sudden rebuke:

—That is very rude, you know. Young people now-a-days. . .

Joe closed everything up again, careful not to save changes. He set the laptop on the floor, leaning against the table leg.

\* \* \*

So there they sat, silent and almost motionless for thirty minutes. Several times Joe tried to start conversation but every comment was met by silence and each question was answered in a single word.

He looked at his watch. 12:35.

—So, are any of your other grandchildren married? asked Joe.

—Yes.

—Any great-grandchildren yet?

—Yes.

—How many?

—Two.

Since when did any grandmother not jump at the chance to talk about her grandkids? If that didn't work, would anything? Joe started thinking for topics again, but the table top failed to inspire him.

Just then in the silence, the phone rang. He jumped up and caught it at the beginning of the second ring.

It was Christine. They had things under control at the hospital and she would be coming home soon, but it was too late to start cooking lunch so they would eat out.

—How are things going between you? she asked.

Joe looked at the back of Mrs Cather's head as her bony elbow rose as she sipped her second cup of tea.

—All right, he said unconvincingly.

Christine paused.

—Well, hang in there, I'll be home in twenty minutes, okay? Love ya, Bye.

Christine burst in the door at 1:13 and greeted her grandmother with a hug, while Joe excused himself to use the washroom before they left. As soon as Mrs Cather heard the door shut, she turned to Christine and whispered harshly:

—Why didn't you warn me your fiancé is *black*?!



# Hay Bales and Acres of Sky

## I. Hay Bales

Poker chips and chess pieces, ante and a few remaining pawns:  
stopped at a stalemate, paused at an impasse;  
a moment's waiting for one god to give,  
one farmer to fold.

Checkers turned on their rigid edges,  
resting where they've rolled to in a line.

King me.

Home to crows and cover for the cows  
that move like silent, rifted, black islands  
pursuing their oblivion, balancing on the brink  
of stasis: angus ignoramus. Moving, munching, black.

## II. Acres of Sky

Seen from the air during take-off, the cows look  
as little as houses will in a moment. The world is  
being sucked and spun clockwise from under me. The world is  
patched and quilted and mainly green and black and brown.

The world is a game board ready for matched gods,  
graph paper ripe for the drafting. And at the borders  
of this concavity, this window, all the straight edges  
turn up and curve away.

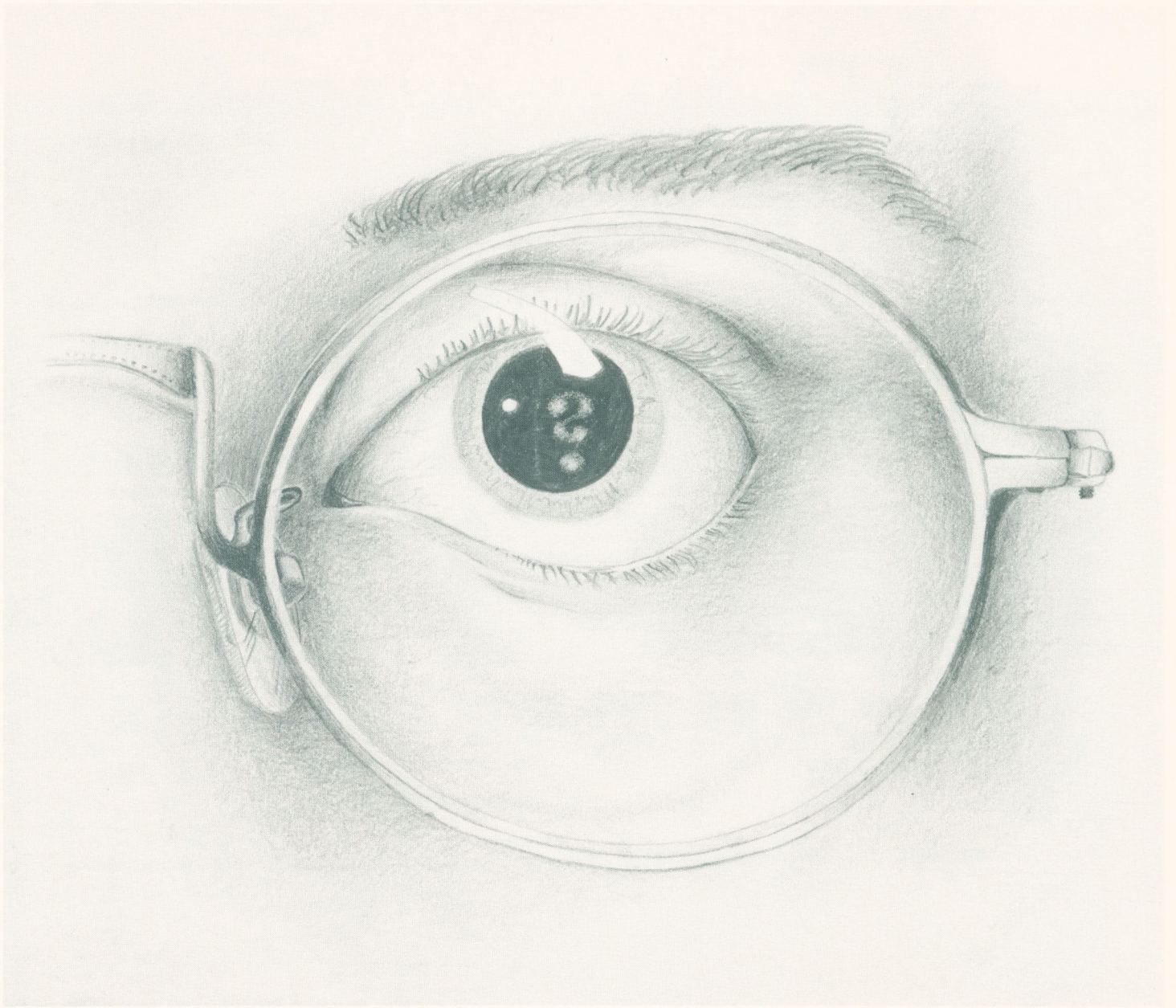
-Luke Schelhaas





Charles Van Drunen





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Chris Tuininga



# Inside the Head of a Flightless Bird

by Heidi Vanden Hoek

**Y**ou're awfully quiet today," she says above the light drone of the radio. I smile at her. I know that my silences drive her crazy and inwardly my smile has a malicious nature. My cousin frowns slightly and turns to look at the road again as the car begins to cross over the yellow dotted line. After a short pause her chatter returns, an endless stream of trivial discussion about the latest gossip. I sigh and turn to watch the roadside whip past the window. Field, fence, house, farm, tree appear and vanish in rapid succession. Waves of very black birds ebb and flow in a very blue sky.

I notice an old man walking slowly alongside the rushing traffic. He is dressed in faded black, old clothes that look as if they alone have a story to tell. His grey, once black head dips and bobs slightly. The man has a limp and I quickly turn to catch a glimpse of his face. Even as we rush by, I notice his eyes. His face is set in a determined expression, but his eyes are deep, revealing a small piece of what he feels, and what he has felt in the past. Joy I didn't experience, suffering I wouldn't understand, are mirrored in his eyes. I wonder where this man is going? Is he having a good day? Would he like someone to talk to as he steadily plods toward his destination, or would he rather be alone with his thoughts? His bulky body shrinks as we continue down the road.

I dare to voice my thoughts in the blue interior of the car, "Did you see that man?" I

ask. Her curly head swivels to look.

"What a funny looking man!" she squeals, as she once again corrects the path of the vehicle.

I wish at that moment that I was out running. When I'm running, the road and I have a silent understanding. There are no trials, no threats, none of the predators of life are with me because I can outrun them. Each stride empowers me, frees me from their pursuit. But when I can't run any longer? When my lungs burn and my legs ache, when life has caught up to me, what do I do then? I sigh at the thought and stretch out my legs in the confines of the car. I study them critically with a furrowed brow, sandaled feet connected to my body by intricate muscle and bone appendages. Knobs, bumps, and curves all concealed by a wrapping of pale skin. Glancing at my cousin's tan legs as they operate the pedals of the car, I lift my chin a little and decide that mine are longer.

Ostriches have long legs. When an ostrich is pursued by a predator, when it can't run any longer, it will resort to kicking. I flex the muscles in my legs, they swell and recede. A docile bird becomes hostile, gallant, and brave. It makes me wonder what is going on under the eyelashes, behind the eyes of this unusual bird. Does she know her limitations? Does she wish she could fly? The man trudging down the road, does he wish he could join the birds in the black ebb and flow in the sky-blue ocean above? I'm jarred into reality as the car comes to a quick stop just short of the vehicle in front of us. My cousin giggles and apologizes. I ask her what she thinks of ostriches.



## Worn Wounds



War triggers without warning.  
Wicked words weaken thoughts of worth.  
Whispery whips strike to form welts.  
What a wreck that poisons within.  
Watching weeds develop thorns as weapons.  
When does bitterness wither?

Wrestling will struggle for winning.  
Weary are those who wind up whirled.  
Who can rescue the tears that weep?  
Where hides the willing warrior?  
Wishing does not fulfill wants.  
Waiting hardens worries worst.  
Washing wounds will cleanse infectious wrongs.  
Weighing as one together—wrenched.  
Why can't harmony blend and weave?

—Brenda Nyhof





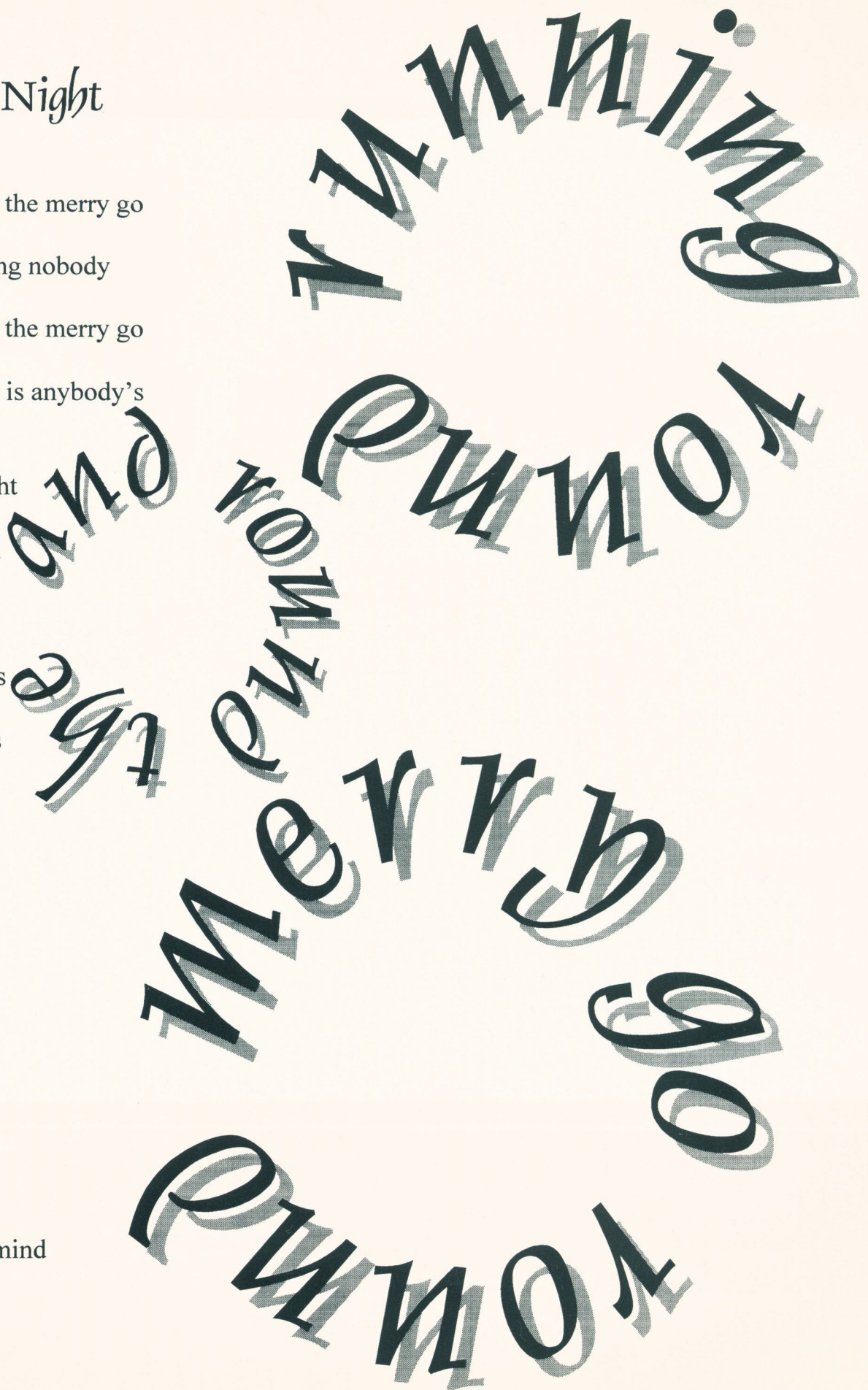
Monique Sliedrecht



## Images at Night

round and round the merry go  
round  
where we're going nobody  
knows  
round and round the merry go  
round  
where we'll stop is anybody's  
guess  
screams of joy  
screams of delight  
screams of pain  
screams of death  
Death. . .  
I'm running  
running  
through the grass  
round  
through the trees  
and  
through the corn  
round  
running  
the  
I can't stop  
merry  
can't breathe  
go  
can't think  
round  
one thought  
her life  
one image  
dripping onto  
flashes into my mind  
the ground

—Sarah Bliss







Charles Van Drunen

## shoes

This room holds approximately 7500 pairs of shoes, says our uniformed guide.

Piled from the floor to the height of my thighs, elegant evening shoes mingle with the scuffed shoes of the working man.

It's hard to understand, says the guide. It's hard to comprehend how such a thing could happen. More than six million men, women, and children were killed because they didn't fit someone's ideal. . .

Outside on the street, in the harsh glare of the sun and of the present, panhandlers line the streets. Young men shuffle by shiftless in baggy pants, crotches hanging halfway to their knees. I buy a newspaper from a toothless vender. Politics, wars, natural disasters fill the front pages. It isn't until later, in small print, that a headline catches my eye: "Teenager Killed for Shoes."

—Paula Treick

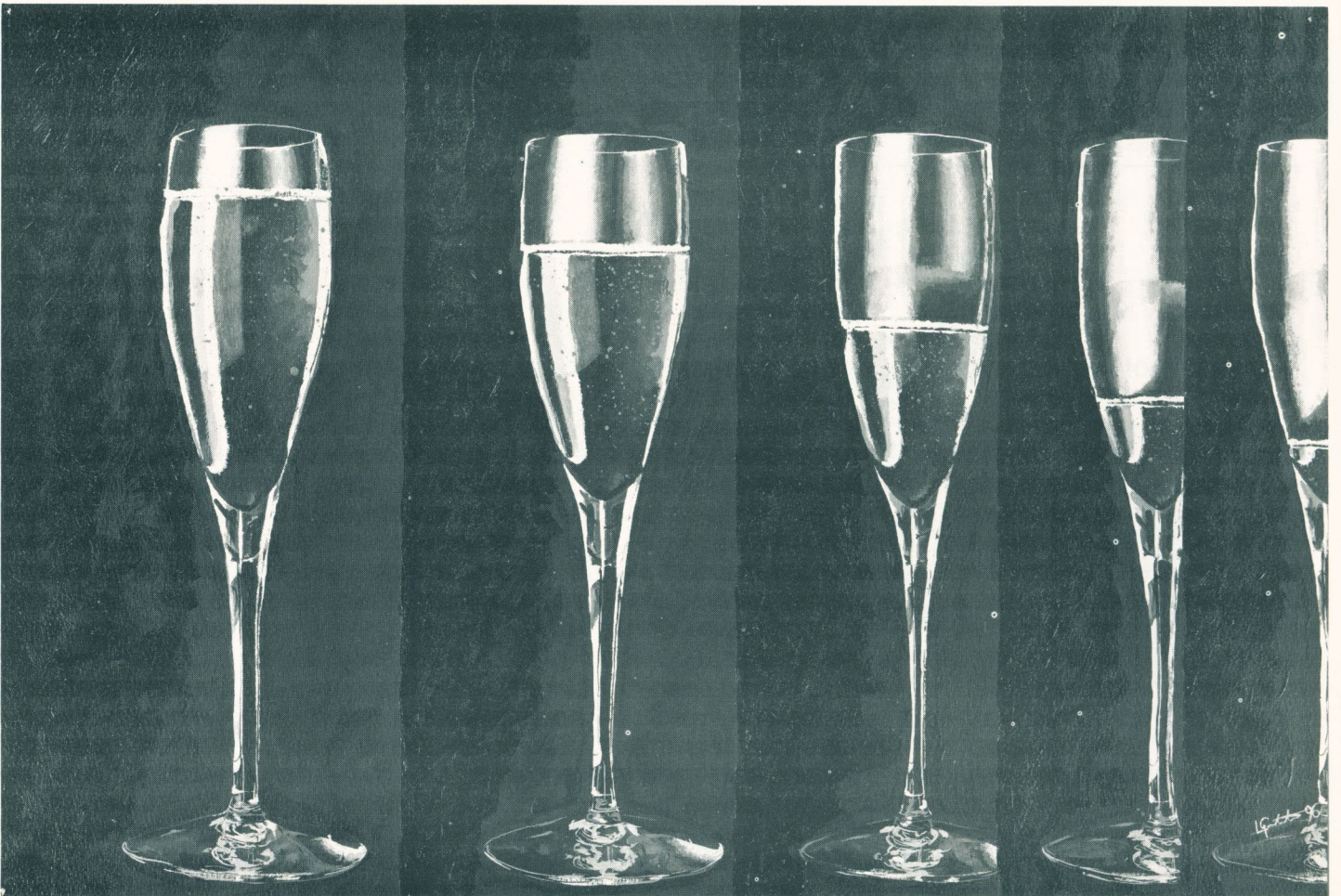


## Take, drink

Facial features dance in and  
out of black shadows,  
slurred conversations blend with raucous laughter  
and belches, encircling,  
overpowering the flickering bonfire.

Cigarettes and beer bind them  
in bastard brotherhood,  
but as I stand alone  
facing smoke and flame,  
the fumes on the breath of whomever  
is beside me reminds me of communion wine.

--Laryn Bakker





# The Day When She Killed All the Flowers

by Rod Hoekstra

A few days ago my roommates and I were finishing devotions after another wonderfully prepared meal. We have been working our way through a book called *Walking On Water*, which is about a basic, single concept: doubt. As with many devotional booklets, each meditation ends with a prayer. "Prayer," I said, and everyone bowed their heads. "Sometimes it seems that you are not there, God," I read aloud. "Or even if you are, you are silent and reproachful. What do we do then?" I paused, and concluded. "Amen."

One of the roommates' heads snapped up, "Is that it?!"

"Yeah," I said. He stood up and left the table with no further comment. As the rest of my roommates got up, started their own conversations, and began doing dishes, I just sat there and reread the prayer. "Or even if you are, you are silent and reproachful." Hmm. "What do we do then?" I began to wonder. Yeah, what *do* we do then? My thoughts were jolted back to reality as a roommate politely inquired into my plans regarding occupation of the chair for the remainder of the evening. I sighed, stood up, forgot about the devotion, and went to my room to do homework the rest of the night.

Now, when something strikes me quite deeply, I usually end up thinking about it later, and sure enough, this came back to my mind. So later I went back and looked up the scripture on which the devotional was based, Psalm 88. I read through it. What I found didn't surprise me. After having grown up in a "Christian" home in a "Christian" church and

going to a "Christian" school, I've heard enough scripture to recognize it when I see it. Psalm 88 was no different.

But later I looked at it again. And I also re-read the devotional. And I found that a section of the devotional hit me pretty hard. It speaks of a man whose final prayer to God is a birthday cake. A birthday cake he had planned to share with his now dead wife. A birthday cake that he threw at God. Now pieces of it chip off a statue of Jesus by a church on the way home from the hospital—if home could even be called that anymore.

Now maybe my roommates and I just can't relate when it comes to our spiritual lives. Maybe they've never had the kind of doubt that makes you feel as though going to church all those years has been a meaningless waste of time. Maybe they go to Praise and Worship because they like it, and it helps their spiritual lives grow. Me? I can't stand it. For me it's a purposeless activity filled with fake emotions, redeemable only by the fact that occasionally my friends are there.

But why should this be? Why am I so cynical? Why can't I understand that Praise and Worship is good for some people? Where has my spiritual life gone in the past four years? Did I ever really have a "spiritual life" to begin with? And what I really want to know is WHERE IS GOD???

"But I cry to you for help, O Lord; in the morning my prayer comes before you. Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?" Read that again: "Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?" This is scripture, people. And it's how I feel. Right now.

So I guess my prayer is the same: "Sometimes it seems you are not there, God. Or even if you are, you are silent and reproachful. What do I do then?"

Sorry roomie, I just need some reality.



# AFTERNOON MUSINGS ON EMOTIONAL CHOICES

-for Dustin Woodrow Herschel Hansen

The man implored the people  
"Commit yourselves today."  
Stand together and make it known  
That this is a change, and from this point onwards  
Things will never be the same.  
The heart is ready.

The master of his will  
Can pour his heart into it.  
This man is doubly strong  
He feels and then can do it.

A snap decision is made  
To indulge a fleeting feeling  
"I feel great. I can do this."  
The heart is ready.  
Of course, there will be no  
wrenching second thoughts  
or  
grinding, tiring effort  
before making good on the commitment.  
Anything is possible  
When the heart is ready.

The flutter in his chest  
Whether from hope or fear,  
Is harnessed by this man  
To make him persevere.

Failure hurts much more  
When loves is really there.  
"Love is a decision"  
made with the will.  
Disappointment has a permanent position  
In the lives of those  
Who remain weak,  
But the heart is still ready.

His passion for completion,  
It comes from this man's soul.  
His heart will be at rest,  
Commitments filled in full.

—Kevin Maas



Monique Sliedrecht



# Americanos

King's Day celebration, 1995  
Dominican Republic



he beat of the music  
pumps like blood through the battai.  
It pulses from every open door,  
pounds through speakers beside shops,  
and is carried on the shoulders of young men.

At this corner a crowd mills—talking,  
celebrating, drinking, and  
on this day laughing.  
Heads turn as we herd past them,  
walking close to each other  
but staring right back.

The *Americanos* are here.

Those leading us stop and we bump up to each other,  
coming to an awkward halt.  
The ice cream shop is closed.

After a moment of confusion, several of us  
break off from the pack and  
walk slowly into the next store to see  
if we can find any here.

Two ragged men come up as we talk to the owner,  
their lips pulled back in raw smiles,  
their hands extended.

*"Americanos," "Americanos"*

The words float to us on alcohol  
as the men clutch our hands  
in a grip that feels as though it will never loosen;  
a plea, an accusation,  
or a curse.

—Laryn Bakker



