



Spring 1997

The Canon, Spring 1997

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The

Canon



Spring 1997



"Caged"

Laryn Bakker

The Canon ~~Table~~

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Editor:

Paula Treick

Cover design and layout:

Laryn Bakker




3-eyed

3-eyed Lord
stare me in the eye
take me, blind me
love-slave of the trinity

Red burning emperor
raping braided pastures
siring terror in the name
of love and heroism


Green PR ambassador
soothing the blisters
with a daisy, a memory, a buck
a lick of anesthesia




Blue welfare distributor
quenching with Kool-Aid
a swig or two of laughs and tears
eat a romantic sky

3-eyed Lord
wash us white
and write your Will
on a violated blank screen.

Heather Hamilton



love song of pfill



Thribble my yolksprout-
Wrenching the fluttering spittle
Forthwith and henceforth.
Oh my torn, worn philspastic crumble whip!
When shall my spindle spackle loaf?
Thou art the chicklet of my Volvo.
You make my water plaid and my mud dirty.
You are the sun of that one planet in that galaxy out there in the sky
somewhere.
Before you, Gespacho-walling Guthrie hapless.
Morticious loveliness.
Droning beautiful-anthropoliptic.

Blasé? Not You.
You are neat.
Your face is like a
Rip in the space / time continuum.
You, oh love of mine.
Cuspid youth of a thousand milks.

Chris Nonhof

Dogwood Tree

Stepping on the lumpy knob and
pushing up to grasp the lowest branch,
I swing myself up.

I climb onto the crooked limb
just perfect for sitting in.

Hiding among the cross-shaped blossoms and
lifting a branch to peep from my perch,
I check for spies.

Our jump rope phone is still plugged in.

I lift the receiver to check in with
my sister on her roost next door.

Sarah Bliss



"Every Eye Will See Him"

Helena Geels



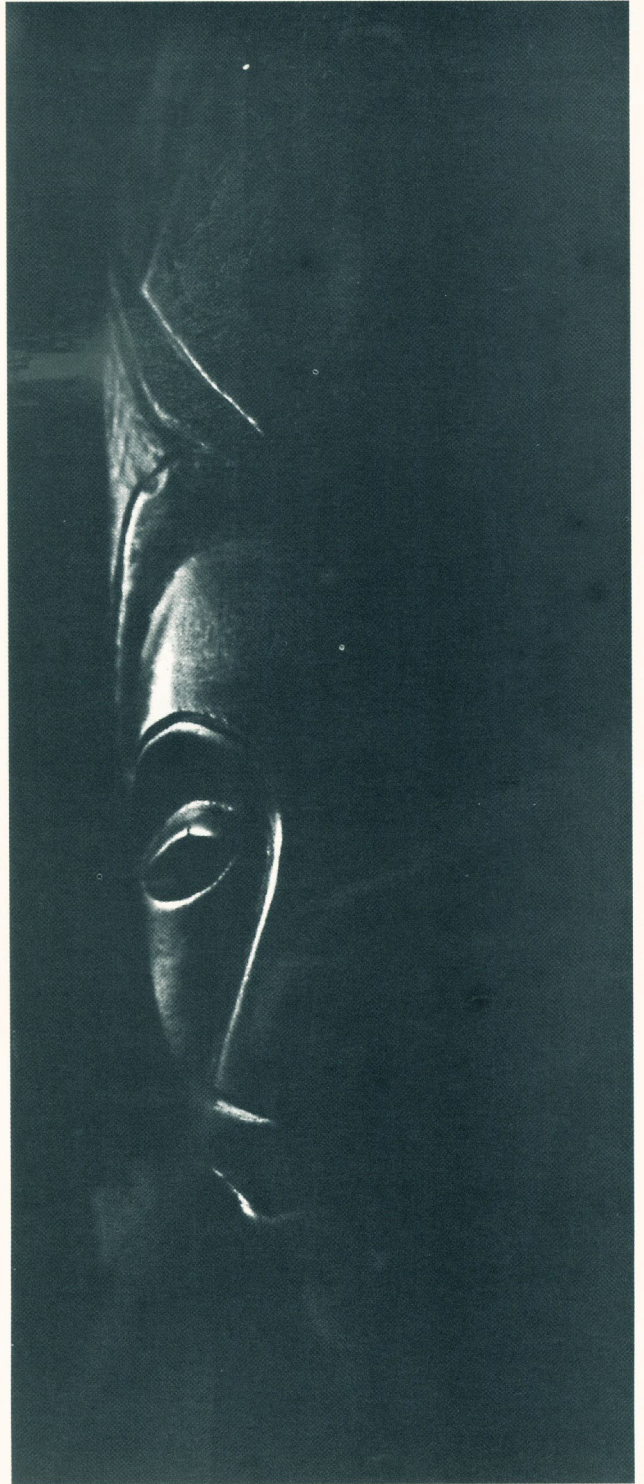
anthology

thousands of pages of
fine-print text
containing the complete works of
Men.

where did the history of women go?
were they lost in the pains of childbirth,
scrubbed skinless on washboards,
hidden in the wrinkles of their brow?

today we will study: Men.
tomorrow: Men.
write your response to the works of: Men.
and in all of this where do you fit?
you are a-woman?

Paula Treick



"Still hiding after all these years" Laryn Bakker

Country Church

Intro: It is a place, a place that is built up of people. A place where people congregate, worship and learn. As time passes by, people move on and new places of worship are built. When people leave, buildings are left standing alone and we say to ourselves, if these walls could talk.



1. Up the hill stands a lonely old church whose better days have long passed. Once filled with the words of "A Mighty Fortress" and the "Hallelujah Chorus" it now stands silent. The sounds of song accompanied by piano have been replaced by the whistling of the wind and an occasional creak in the floor boards.

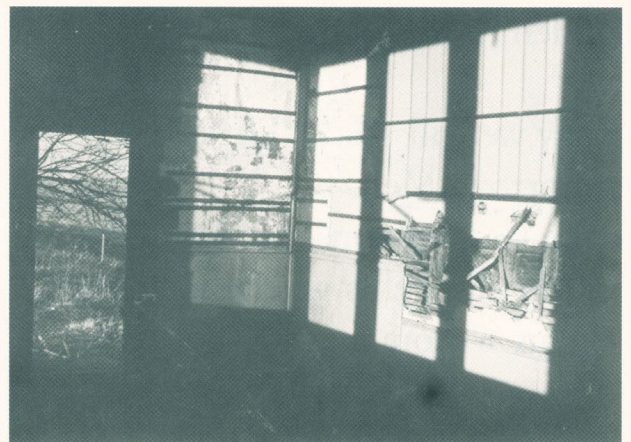


2. I walk around the church and find myself standing by a well. It occurs to me that this place is a source of water for life as well as a source of "living" water. It once quenched the thirst of a congregation after a sermon on those hot midwestern summer days. It now provides water for the livestock who find their nourishment on this same ground. The cattle graze where people once socialized and parked their horses and buggies.

5. Slowly walking into the building I turn around and find myself gazing upon the same landscape that generations have viewed following a Sunday morning worship service.



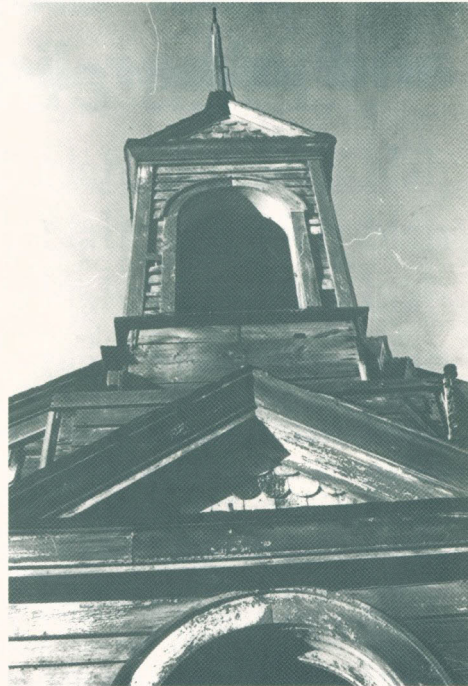
Where a door once stood I now see cattle grazing across the way, and notice the light illuminating in the opening.



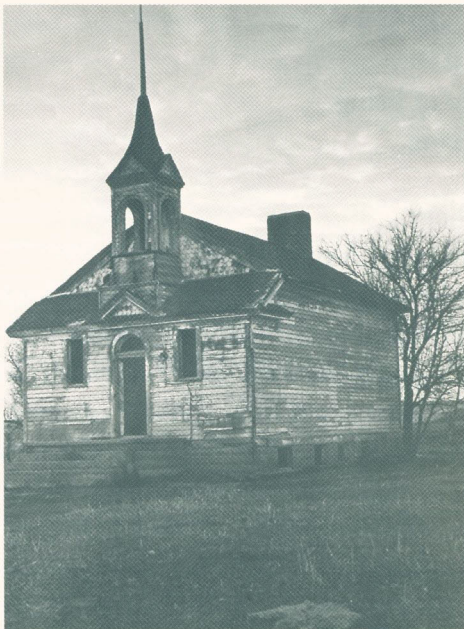
6. Where a congregation once gathered in pews to hear the minister talk about the light of God, I find the sunlight shining through the broken windows onto a half gutted wall.



3. Where bride and groom once scurried under a shower of rice, and children sat in their Sunday best, the upgrowth of the countryside has once again taken root.



4. My curiosity gets the better of me and I decide to take a look inside. As I climb the steps I hear the faint sound of a bell above me. I look up and see an old rotted out steeple standing alone in silence with the remainder of the church.




7. As time and circumstances caused the people of this congregation to move on, so must I. I leave this place, in the company of the livestock, to live out its fading days.


8. Leaving, I observe that this place, where people once came and went as they pleased, is now surrounded by fencing to keep the cattle in and the people out. The crumbling skeleton still stands as a reminder of what was, and raises the question: if these walls could talk?









Jamey Schiebout



kool-aid, puddles, and other liquid substances



as i sat in class one day,
the teacher was looking the other way.
writing on the blackboard was she,
i stuck up my hand; i had to pee.
my bladder was full, i had to go
'twas something that she didn't know.
Mrs. Bosma was her name;
frustrating children was her game.
You see Mrs. B didn't understand,
certain things about digestive glands.
When one had to go, one had to GO!
and if i didn't watch it, mine would flow.
She turned around and looked at me,
funny enough i still had to pee.
She knew my thought, she knew my game,
with a wretched look she said my name.
i responded, quite nervous and quakey;
"my bladder regions are a little shakey."
all i got was some serious denial,
feeling like i was surely on trial.
but that didn't change my state of being,
all i could think about was peeing.
so there i sat and there i went,
my face was red, my face was bent,
with an expression that i could never forget,
i had to tell teacher-she didn't know yet.
so up went hand as i sat in puddle,
Mrs. B's face spelling nothing but trouble.
and there i was in a puddle of pee,
and everyone's eyes fastened on me.




Sean Voogt



Hamlet was am I¹

blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah

Dirk Zwart



¹*Hamlet was am I*, another entry in a long sequence of Poems searching for the author's essence Dirk Zwart (b.1974), grew up living in Ontario Canada with his parents and three siblings His younger life was spiked with events that Brought him to the condition present Expected to excel in all levels of primary he Listened to music and read the dictionary Heavily influenced by people of much older sorts The things he'd do were always much bolder He rarely inquired about knowledge or asked why twice There were no limits, not even the sky

Time was something Zwart gave little worth to Possibly related to unknown disorders from birth This distainable trait was not appreciated by teachers But the young author continued to try In regards to this work it is evident the author may Allude he is like the Hamlet character Whether in thought, internal dilemmas or Others false interpretation of his dogmas Studying at Dordt College Zwart finally received Recognition for his heartfelt anomalies Scholars in the literary field are definitely agreed That either Zwart or his works will someday be studied.



factory job

I stare through
your transparent eyes,
greasy smiles,
cheap compliments.

You grunt in satisfaction
at the product.
At me.

Pick-up lines
ring in my ears.
The bidding has begun.

Sarah Walsh



THE STORY TELLER

My mother was suitably alarmed when I began to date the serial killer.

Ex-serial killer, I reminded her. Fully rehabilitated, the product of one of our nation's finest correctional facilities. His psychiatric evaluation said he was 100 percent A-okay and ready for release. Besides, I told her, he was innocent anyway. He was only found guilty on a technicality.

A technicality like dead bodies, hair samples, and DNA evidence? she asked.

Exactly, I said.

My ex-serial killer boyfriend wanted to know everything about me: name, address, hobbies, work schedule, credit card number, personal identification number, social security number, life insurance policy. I felt like I could tell him anything.

We dated for the first part of his parole, but the bad press got to me. So in the end, the serial killer and I didn't work out. He made a couple of harassing phone calls afterwards, but it wasn't the same. The magic was gone.

What's there to miss about a serial killer, even if he is an ex-serial killer? my mother asked.

Well, he was a great storyteller.

Paula Treick

There is a man who stands with a mirror in his hands,
 People walking by that cannot understand,
 The reflections pass with only a short glance,
 From the man unimpressive with eyes in a trance,
 Looking into the eyes of the people in the mirror,
 Searching their souls for more than how they appear,
 Which is blank in this mirror that tells him the truth,
 Of their past their present their now and their youth,
 Their reflections catch them in their lies,
 He asks why they live empty and lackluster lives,
 He asks just once if they'll try if they'll fail,
 And feel life like the blind with the braille,

No masks, no lies, no games, no eyes,
 Just ears, and hearts, and chance, and cries,
 But no one stops to look at themselves,
 In the mirror where their true self dwells,
 In the mirror most look the same,
 For every man has capacity for joy, sorrow, and pain,
 But the restrictions win from a material world,
 Where the salad is layered instead of swirled,
 So they pass by the lonely man,
 Who stands apart with the mirror in his hands.

Joshua Duane Buys



"Reflections, Reflections, Reflections"

Helena Geels

The Dream



"The Wizard"

Maarten Vanderstoel

The Earth declares the death of the world
The ground displays man's handiwork:

The city of man is a cemetery
The buildings stone statements of the dead that lie within

The land under human feet writhes
Beneath the weight of human suicide:
The Earth becomes a bed for the dead,
a pillow for men who lie like vampires
in the darkness of their demise

This world feeds the vampires and the liars
This world sets its hunger on each other
This world: consuming consumers consuming

The dreamers? They sleep to escape
Not to make new vision for the awake
Not to spin garments of life from the stuff of the earth
Not to fill dreams with tangible things

The moon looks down on a world of passionate passiveness,
of rerun dreams broadcast on television screens,
of blind babes cuddling up to the warmth of a machine,
of products buying products like a choice to be free
Are we slaves to our freedom? Has the dream put us to sleep?

We are made in the image of an image
Our hands change the world with remote control
Our faces are boxes of flashing lights
Our worlds only a rhythmic outburst of sound

Teachers teach that we must learn to learn how to learn

Impossible. Inherently impossible.

The words of seers fall upon ears
That have forgotten the language of wisdom
That have forgotten what they have forgotten:

Something that has been lost between the couch cushions
Something that lives behind the gaze of tired eyes,
Eyes that bleed from the strain
Eyes that burn in flashes of bright blue and red and green
Eyes that are searching for the one image that will last
Forever.

Grant Elgersma



"Jodi"

Sarah Nieuwsma

Worlds Apart

Miles stretch between your thoughts and mine
 Something in your eyes says we've met before
 No words are to be spoken
 What's to be said?
 Too many roads have been walked alone
 Too many miles...

Do you feel it?
 Or have I dreamed it?
 Does fear keep us walking away?
 Silence is comfortable
 Words revealing
 Risk is great

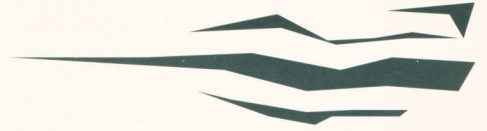
You stand here
 An embrace away
 Miles stretch between your thoughts and mine

No words are spoken
 What's to be said?
 Maybe in another time
 At another place
 Roads could meet
 Miles deplete
 But fear keeps us walking
 Silence is comfortable
 Words revealing
 Risk is great

An embrace away
 Worlds apart
 If only one would reach...

Meri Kuipers

Spyder



Spider, spider burning bright
In the corners of my fright
What unfearing hand or eye
Turns not from thy dread face to fly

In what darkened corridors
Walked this admirer of yours?
With what strength dare he draw near?
What the man see and not fear?

And what courage and what nerve
Could walk by you and never swerve?
And when thy legs began to twitch
What brave soul would near your niche?

What the terror what the pain
That you could conjure in my brain
What the footstep, what the stride
Dares defy you in its pride?

When your web caught flies like mud
And watered your veins with their blood
Did you smile your work to see?
Did you wish your prize was me?

Spider, spider burning bright
In the corner of my fright
What unfearing hand or eye
Leaps not from thy dread face to fly?

(all due apologies to William Blake. . . unless he liked it)

Robb Vanderstoel



Untitled

Laryn Bakker




Untitled

Kristin Kobes



potassium deficiency

We all bruise easily--
Fragile feelings.
Loneliness is universal,
I feel it too.
People glance at all of us,
Seeing only with their eyes.



Others see a goofy
cheerful
little
girl,
goombah.

And I am
endlessly scrambling in a world
full of words,
Saying the wrong ones
Hurting the wrong ones.
Flippantly giving comfort with a smile.

Words flutter out
and sting.
Penetrating deeply to the bone.
We all bruise easily.

Sarah Walsh

The Moon then and now

Round as a gumbdrop,
The color of yellow jello,
It sits--
Stuck like a sticker
On a dark blue page
Edged
With glitter-covered cutouts.

Round as a grape
The color of a wedding band,
It floats--
Suspended in a sea of diamonds
Against a velvety sky
Laced
With silver-sequined clouds.

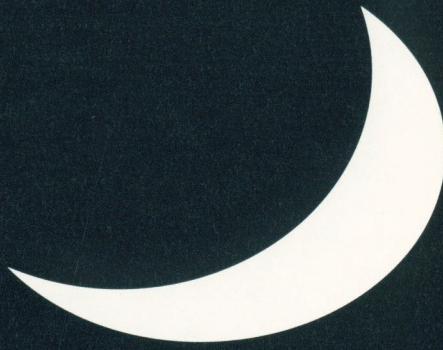
Robin Vis

Winter Night

I breathe in cold air,
Laden with the heavy
smell of the farmland,
and I observe:
Eyes wandering, slowly walking,
across a seamless starless sky
and the barren branches
sheathed in a glassy slip,
glittering in the glow of a dim street lamp,
chattering like old ladies in a dusty parlour
in the light breeze,
and an invisible girl laughs,
breaking the stillness,
as her and her love
dance,
across an empty field,
somewhere beyond my vision;
somewhere outside this small bubble
of light.
I turn away from that,
and they are suddenly
gone,
again, thrust back into their
world, where I can't bother them,
and their stepping feet
refuse to grow cold.

Sean Covington

STARS



I'm a star shining brightly.
I shine for all to see.
I'm shining
Brightly
But,

Where is the nearest star?
A companion in the night?
Trillions of miles
away from
me.

I'm a star shining brightly alone.
My light is just a speck,
Just a dot in the vast
sea of the heavens.
So much darkness,
So few lights.

I'm a star shining brightly seemingly alone in the darkness.
They say all stars were together once.
In the beginning, at the center
Seems we were blown apart,
Some cosmic explosion.
Now we're falling
farther away
from the
Center.

But,
I've heard
Someday in the future
Our moving away will be reversed.
And all of us stars shining brightly
Will be pulled back to the center of the universe.

Snow

The wind weaves
a pattern with the snow
Down the trunks of trees
and up into the branches
across the fields and back
forming snowy cliffs
piling into a crescent moon mound
under the trees
swirling around and around
into a cone of snow
finishing with a flourish of
waves across the grass
Then it gently lays
the white quilt over the land,
tucking in and
hushing the earth
until it gently falls asleep.

Sarah Bliss

Brian Wisselink

Why does it hide?

Never seen
yet lurking in the shadows.
It knows, yes it knows
that once seen, once in the light
it will die.
So it hides.

The beast in his shadowy prison
waiting waiting
Oh so patient, so sly
waiting till the guard is down
getting help from the outside.
It's loose.

It leaps, digging in its sharp claws
dragging, pulling me down.
The damage is done it retreats to its shadows
waiting again.

Clever scheming beast
knowing the wounds fester
not letting me rest.

Why is it so
the beast is conquered?
It's shadows are a cage
kept within it does nothing
but it is.

Why do I not kill the beast
vanquish it forever?

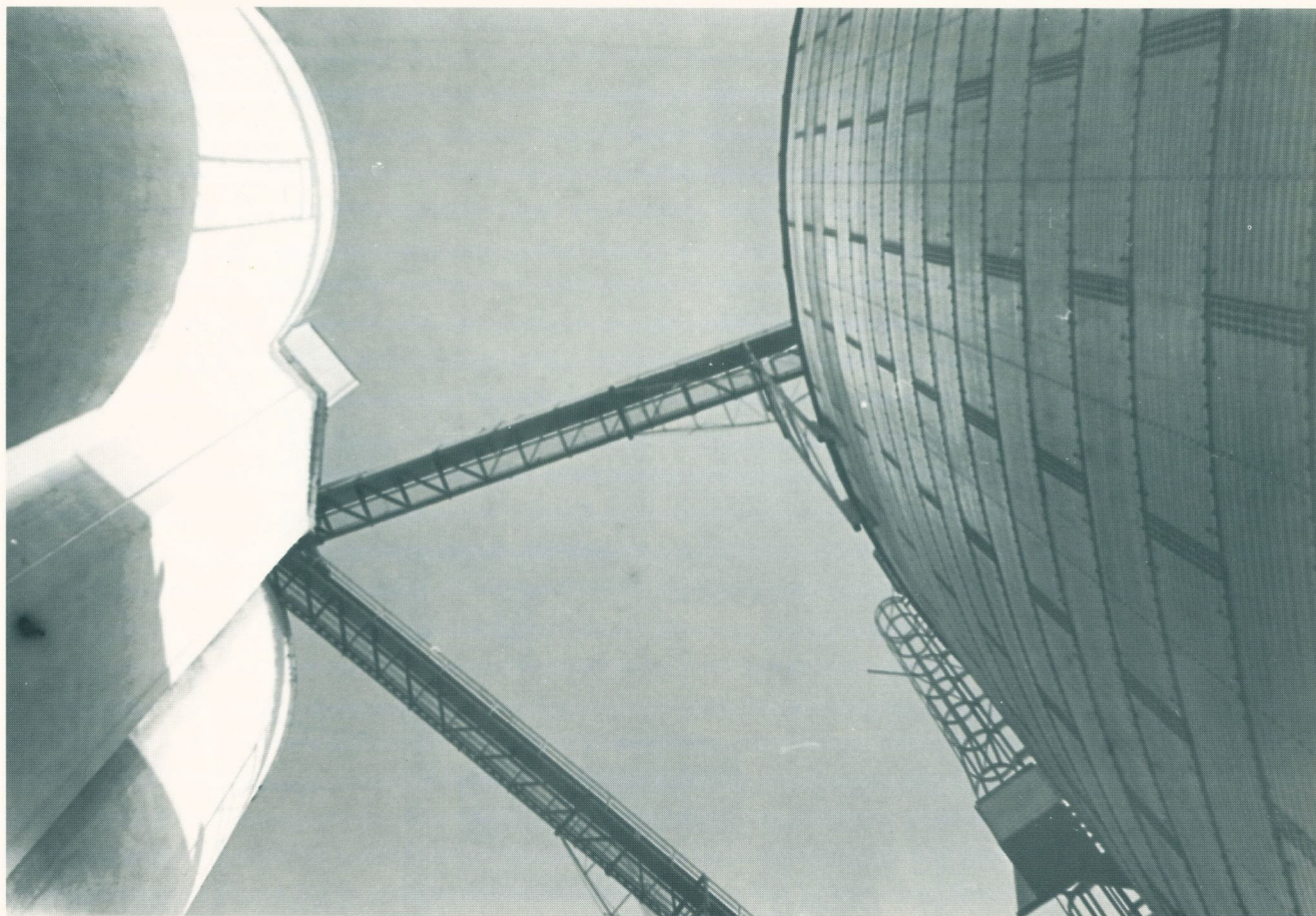
It is I
I am the beast.

Colin Brue



"Art and Technology"

Maarten Vanderstoel



"Looking up"

Jamie Mouw

Letters

on pink hello kitty paper
we wrote letters to her dad,
shoved them inside
two short skinny rubber necks.

up in the wind they wafted
scarcely missing the apple trees.
holding the messages tight inside
that could never be spoken again.

and on the hill
young girls watched, trusted, and believed
those balloons would arrive
at heaven's post office
and be delivered to her dad.

Jessica Vanderwerff



The 90's

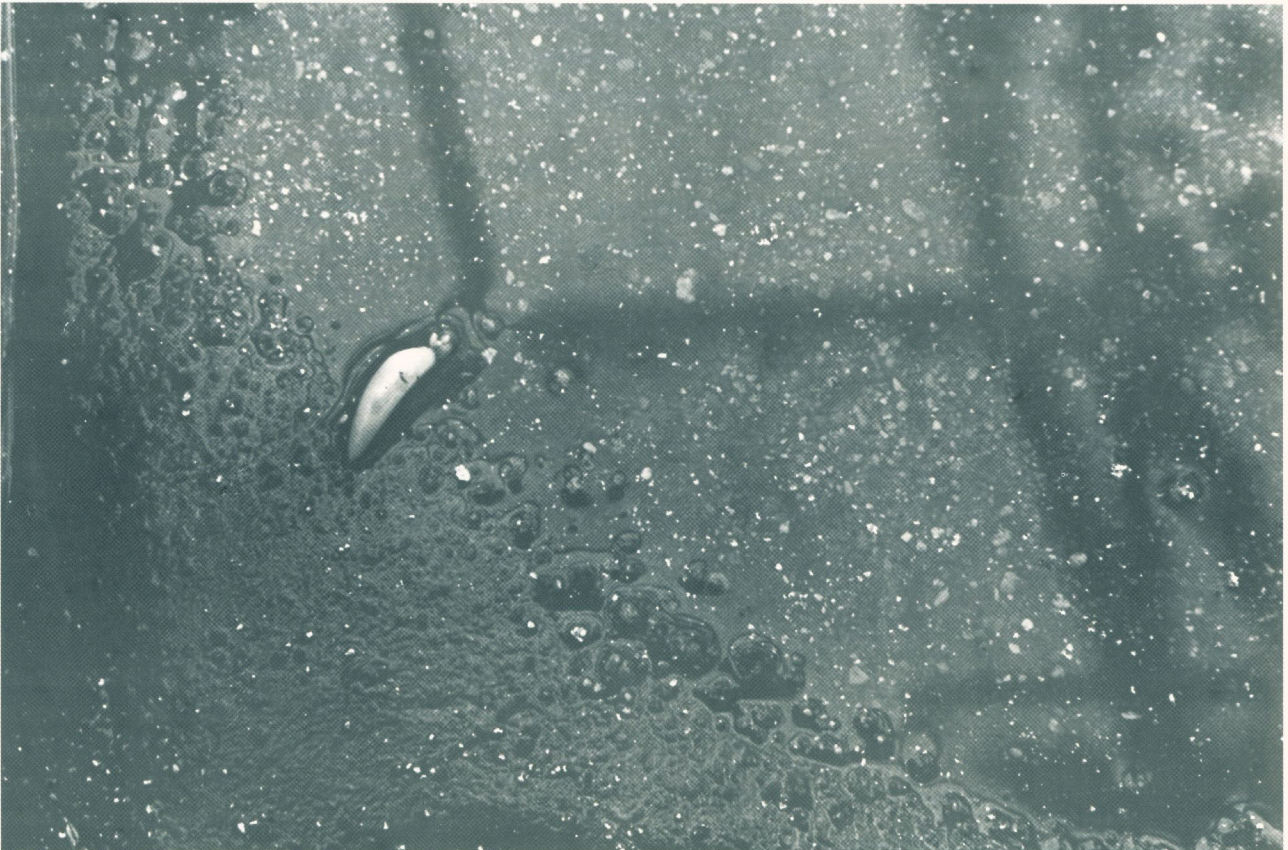
The power box hums where they find their refuge,
Staring out at the darkness and in
At themselves.
The overhanging light of a bar and grill their only
luminescence,
A dull, jagged wall their only refuge.
Together but
Alone
As the latenight shoppers and eaters laugh all around.
Sitting on the sidewalk as if homeless,
Discussing drug-induced hallucinations
Of friends holding hands with unknown children.
They have no plan but to wait.
She leaves him behind as she looks
And he goes back to his blank stare,
And his silent waiting.

Robb Vanderstoel

WISHING WELL

They're standing at the wishing well,
Wishing their days away.
They really wish that wishing well
Would have something to say.
You really would have thought,
By this time they'd have found
They're putting all their hope,
In a hole in the ground.

Brian Wisselink



Untitled

Amy Wielinga



Bored Again

Bored again
For the tenth time this week
Sitting around pinching my cheeks
Poking holes in a bag of ice
to see how it looks

Counting food stains on the ceiling
Watching infomercials, or paint peeling
Sitting around counting my friends
Flipping channels watching ESPN

Listening to the same song over & over
Till my ears are numb
and limbs get colder

Cracking knuckles again & again
Searching & finding
new thresholds of pain

Thinking of piercings
and random tattoos
Of risque clothing
and crazy pranks to do

There's so much to do
in such little time
So much to see
Great accomplishments to climb

So much it overwhelms me
To take it all in would surely be a pain
So I think I'll just sit
And be bored again.

Dan Kakolewski



"Floating Treeline"

Laryn Bakker

Honesty

we are
all like bird's
feathers
floating
falling
breaking
easily

Dirk Zwart



"In the cross of Christ, I glory"

Helena Geels



the routine



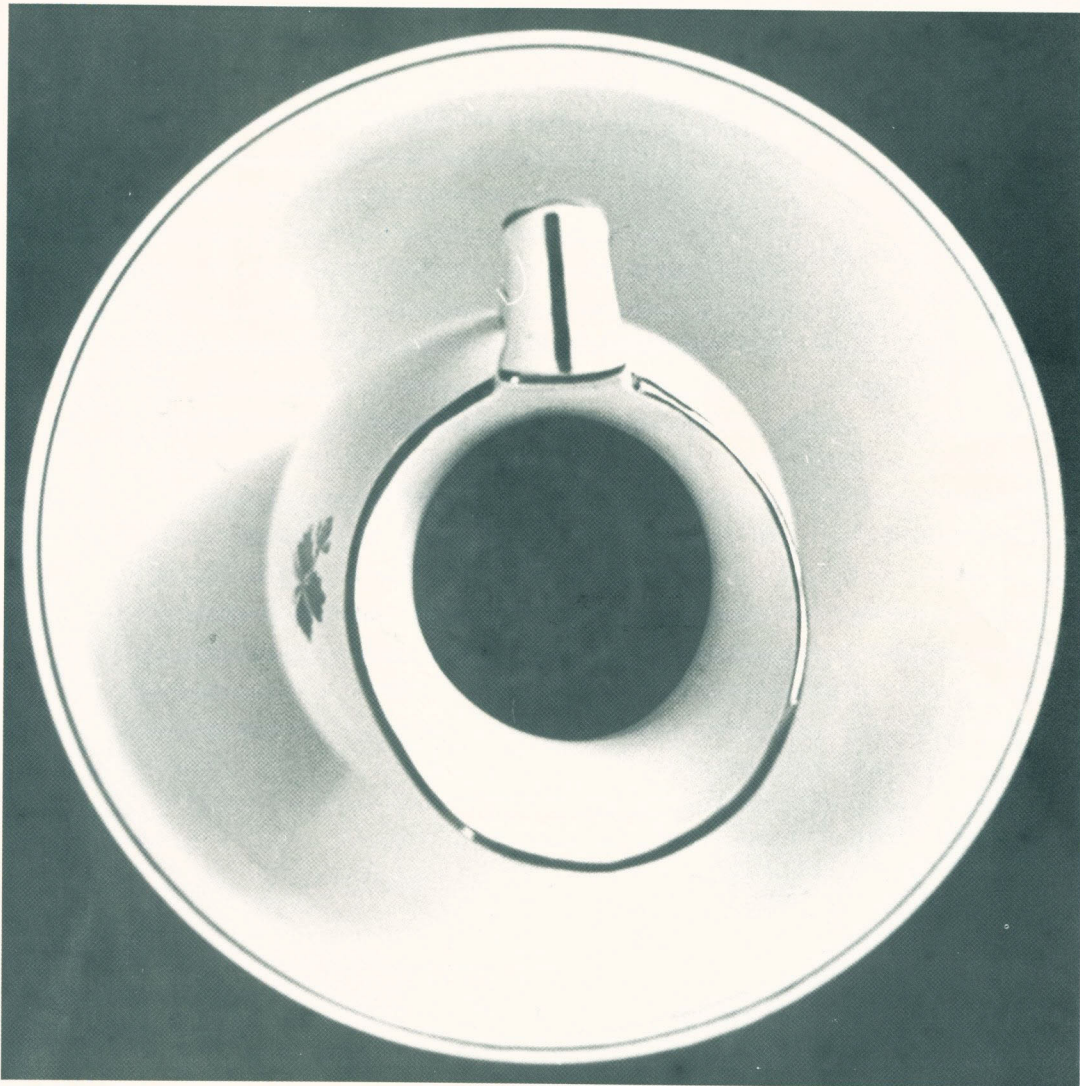
"I will not take these things for granted"
Toad the Wet Sprocket

we dawdled to the starting line,
dropped our spikes, set down the blocks,
all the while complaining about
stomach aches, mouths filled with cotton,
and socks that wouldn't stay up,
verbally preparing for a 28.6 200-meter run.

In six straight lines
we ran
smoothly and swiftly
as young girls do.

we finished, smiling,
accepting congrats,
tugging at our socks,
and rushing to find some gum.
and all the while complaining
about the upcoming races
we had to run.

Jessica Vanderwerff



"Bowl's Eye"

Helena Geels

Vengeance is Mine

vengeance is mine

"Vengeance is Mine"

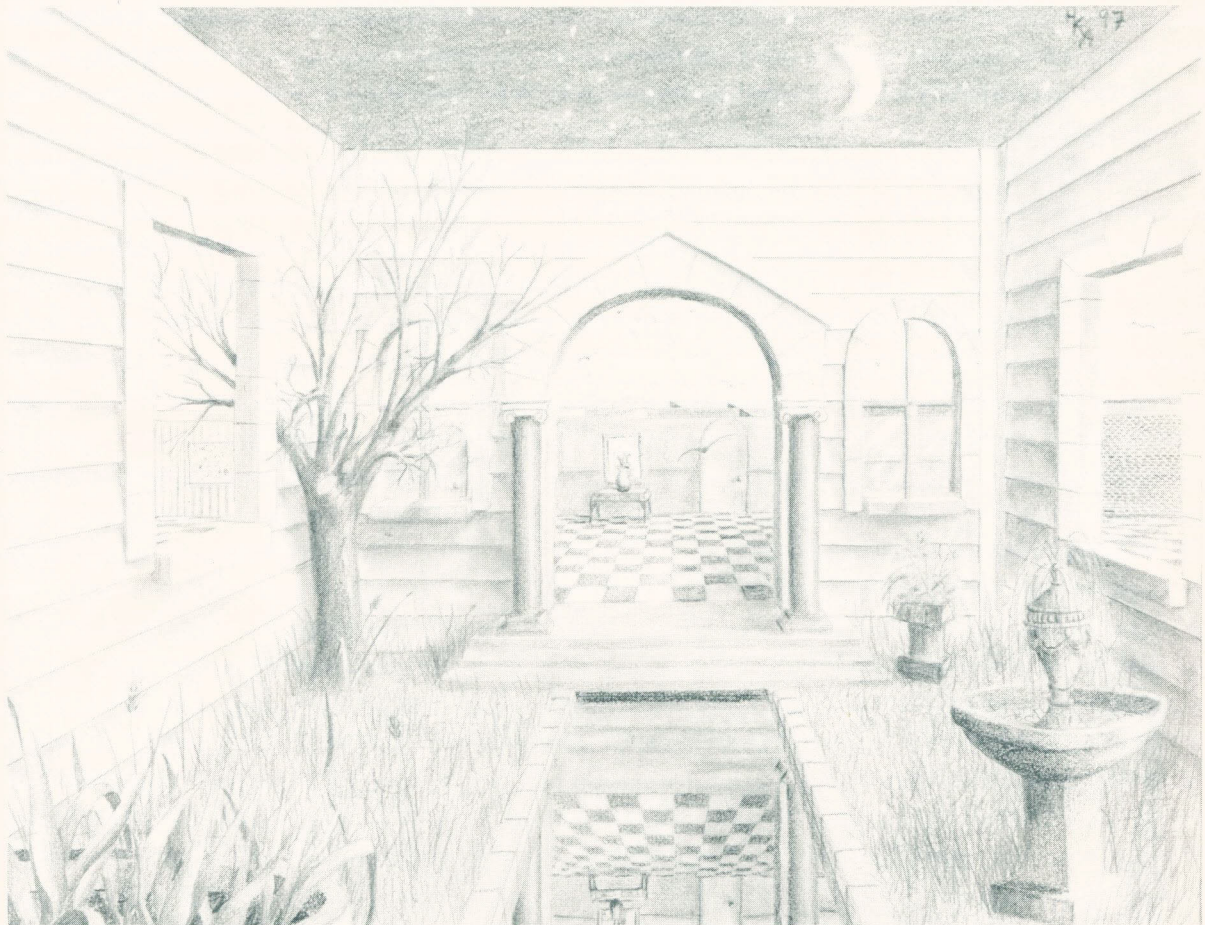
Lee-Ann Grootenboer

XX Espionage

He leans over her study carrel,
smile ironed and wrinkle-free.
She has her notebook open and fiddles with the edge of the page,
glancing down every so often,
trying not to blow her cover.
They laugh at little things
they do not find funny,
looking into each other's eyes
fearfully.
They want to reach out, connect
and share information marked "Confidential",
but they won't.
They are busy tapping on each other's walls
in search of hollow spots.

They have been well trained.

Laryn Bakker



"Space/Time Continuum"

Hannah Atwood

Indecent Exposure

He suddenly stopped talking,
realizing that everyone was looking at

him

and that some things
should not be exposed in public.

Laryn Bakker



"Self-portrait"

Laryn Bakker

Ionia

by Mindy Buys

"What in the world are you doing out of bed? It's five in the morning," I say to the mirror. I am far from alert, but I am dressed and ready to explore the woods of central Michigan. I have so many layers of clothes on I can barely move-jeans, extra sweats, two sweatshirts, two pairs of socks, and a book to read when I get tired of looking at trees. My boyfriend insists that I have not truly experienced Michigan until I've seen deer in the woods early in the morning, so by five-thirty, we are on our way to truly experiencing Michigan on the outskirts of a little town called Ionia.

I am staring at the windshield wipers as they sluggishly shove the light rain off the windshield. I don't really notice that Grand Rapids is on the other side of the windows. It's too early and too dark to be awake yet.

I nod off for just a second and jump awake to see Jon laughing at me.

"Wake up! It's starting to get a little lighter.

Look out

your window-just check out those trees!"

Unlike the Iowa trees whose leaves all turn brown at the same time and fall at the same time, Michigan trees are spectacular in October-red and orange, yellow and brown, faint green, and odd combinations of colors that make each tree a new lesson about autumn.

Now I'm awake.

While I am still watching the trees, we exit the interstate and get onto a blacktop with fields on both sides. The right side has very dead corn waiting patiently for the combine that harvested the left side of the road just yesterday. Hidden between the newly combined field and the next is a dirt road. We take it for a short time until we see a field driveway, only about as long as an average car. We take it, and are plunged into a sea of wet, brown grass that occasionally swipes as high as the windows. At one time, this path may have been used, but that time is lost past and all that is left of it are two faint lines where the grass dips a few inches.

As the sun throws more and more light our way, the world gets bigger and bigger.

The view that closed at the end of the headlights when we started out has bounded forward and outward to distant farms and fields and even more trees.

Off to the right side of the car, about 20 feet from the hidden path, the trees are standing tall and haughty, as if they hold a secret that we aren't good enough to know about. Jon pulls the car away from the lines in the grass and closer to the trees. The trees have heard and seen our approach and have become completely silent to protect their secret. The only sound is the rain dripping on the plastic hoods of our jackets and on the lofty tops of the trees, oblivious to the order of silence issued by the trees.

We slowly enter the woods, and I feel like the trees are looking down at me in disapproval for all the racket I make stepping on brittle branches that fell last year, on last year's leaves that have partially eroded, on the earliest of this year's colorful leaves, and the new trees only a few feet high that look like twigs haphazardly shoved into the ground. The rain that was dripping outside the woods a

minute ago is now religiously obeying the silence ordered by the trees, tapping on the upper canopy of leaves, rolling off with other drops to form the splashes of water that drop heavily onto the ground. I hear birds far away, but the locals have been informed that we are there and don't make a sound.

We don't talk, since we, too, feel the tenseness of the woods as it watches us and waits. We find the treehouse Jon hunts from, but it cannot really be called such. It was a treehouse at one time, but the walls had proved too confining so the floor had shrugged them off. The roof went, too, except for a small, ragged piece of plywood nailed to the trunk about five feet above the floor. We climb into the tree, our feet barely able to hang on to the steps that are really just a cluster of nails, pounded into the same six inch square, holding a piece of wood that used to be a step, but has been worn down to mere splinters surrounding the cluster of nails.

We make ourselves as comfortable as possible on the damp platform. I sit with my back against the rough tree trunk with my legs straight out and my arms crossed in front of me, which I think is comfortable until fifteen minutes

passes without moving or talking. The longer I sit still, the more I need to move. My nose itches. My hair is falling into my eyes. My feet are falling asleep and my legs cry out to be stretched. My back hurts from the rough bark and my fingers are getting numb.

Just when I am ready to reach up and push back the hair that is driving me crazy, I freeze. Motion high in the tree catches my eye. A tiny branch is bouncing under the weight of a small bird that just landed there.

The bird watches us like a cross-eyed detective, never looking directly at us, but moving his head in sudden scanning motions. When he is sure we see him, he sings a few notes to see if we'll chase him away. We don't move.

The bird jumps cautiously to a branch about halfway between where he was and where we are. He repeats the detective routine, watching, waiting, and singing.

We remain motionless as all thoughts of discomfort and the annoying hair in my face disappear. We stare at the bird. My fascination and nervousness make me want to lean ahead and study the bird more closely, but I force myself to maintain my casual pose.

In deliberate random bounces, he comes closer still, pauses, and sings again. He continues to investigate until he is so close that I could lean ahead, reach out, and touch him if I want to. He sits on that close branch silently for the eternity of 15 seconds, then sings out loudly so that all the trees can hear the verdict. We are harmless. We have been tested by the bird and he approves. The trees, rulers of the woods, accept us and repeal the command for silence.

Slowly the woods let go of the tenseness that had snatched away their voice. Birds in trees nearby sing, tentatively at first, but with increasing volume and gusto. The trees seem to whisper to themselves as the wind slithers through the leaves, brushing some of them enough to launch their flight to the ground. A raccoon walks by, his whole body leaning one way, then the other as he goes. The woods give us their highest compliment: they ignore us.



"Signs of Life"

Laryn Bakker

in your exhale
I see everything

(where is the candy-coated layer
for this bitter truth,
the safety net for this plunge?)

it sinks in, saturates
I hear you

(now we go--where?
the landscape is tainted.
your breath--)

I follow.

Paula Treick



Jeff

I never knew
that our last hug
would be just that--
our last hug.
All I felt
as we embraced
was the warmth
of your arms
around my waist
and your hair
as it crossed my cheek.
Fireworks didn't go off.
Bells didn't ring.
Nothing said,
"This is it!
It's all you get."

Sarah Bliss

In Loving Memory
Jeffrey Brian Gesch
May 21, 1976--August 11, 1996

