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CANON

Spring '99

Editorial Policy Statement

The Canon accepts works from Dordt College students, faculty, and staff.

Every published piece should reflect the author's fleshing out of his or her own Christian worldview. This does not mean, however, that the pieces should be only about God or should reflect a narrow definition of Christianity, for "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it" (Ps. 24:1)

In adhering to the broad guideline above and in sensitivity to those who may be adversely affected by excessive violence, vulgar language, or sexually explicit content, the *Canon* will publish no piece containing such material, nor will it publish material that advocates illegal activities or promotes bigotry toward any race, sex, ethnic group, age group, or religion. The *Canon* will also refuse any factual material that slanders a member of the Dordt College community or is libelous.

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Editor's Note

The *Canon* staff has chosen *stones* as this year's design concept, a unifying thread which runs throughout the magazine's pages. We hope that, as stones have preserved the thoughts and aspirations of ages past, the *Canon* can preserve, at least for a while, the ideas and ideals of the Dordt students and staff whose work it contains.

We believe that, like the poems, stories, and images in the *Canon*, stones come in all shapes and sizes, bearing silent witness to varied histories. A stone might be an Ebenezer, raised to commemorate God's faithfulness, or it might be a hiding place for a small, burrowing animal. A stone might be carved into an idol or cast at the latest adulteress, or it might serve as an altar, untouched by human hands. A stone might be any of these, but most often, it will simply be trampled underfoot. Stones form, in one stage or another of their cycle, the "stuff" of whatever road we take, be it the one more traveled or the one less traveled. Thus, they represent our potential to diverge as much as they remind us of our sure foundation.

We know that people can have stone-cold hearts, but they can also be living stones, reverberating with the sounds of the love withing them. With love, through whatever means they can, through whatever gifts God has given them, people can cry out praises to God, lest the stones themselves cry out praises to God, lest the stones themselves cry out praises in their place.

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BIG word

Grant Elgersma

If I could be a word I would not start
with simple letters. I'd begin in style.
I'd want to be the longest word so far
you've seen: from end to end, three miles.

If you ever should want to say me, you must rise
from bed quite early (I'll take most of all
your day to get pronounced). But don't let size
deceive. This word's just consonants and vowels.

Lakulaboolawoolazebbasi-
kalemaru . . . and on and on and on
until the word is through. The pow'rs that be
may say I speak the truth. But they'd be wrong

I'm just the longest word you've ever seen;
Excessively profuse, that's all I mean.

Words of Comfort

Grant Elgersma

It was dark
on his side of the room
(too late for light).

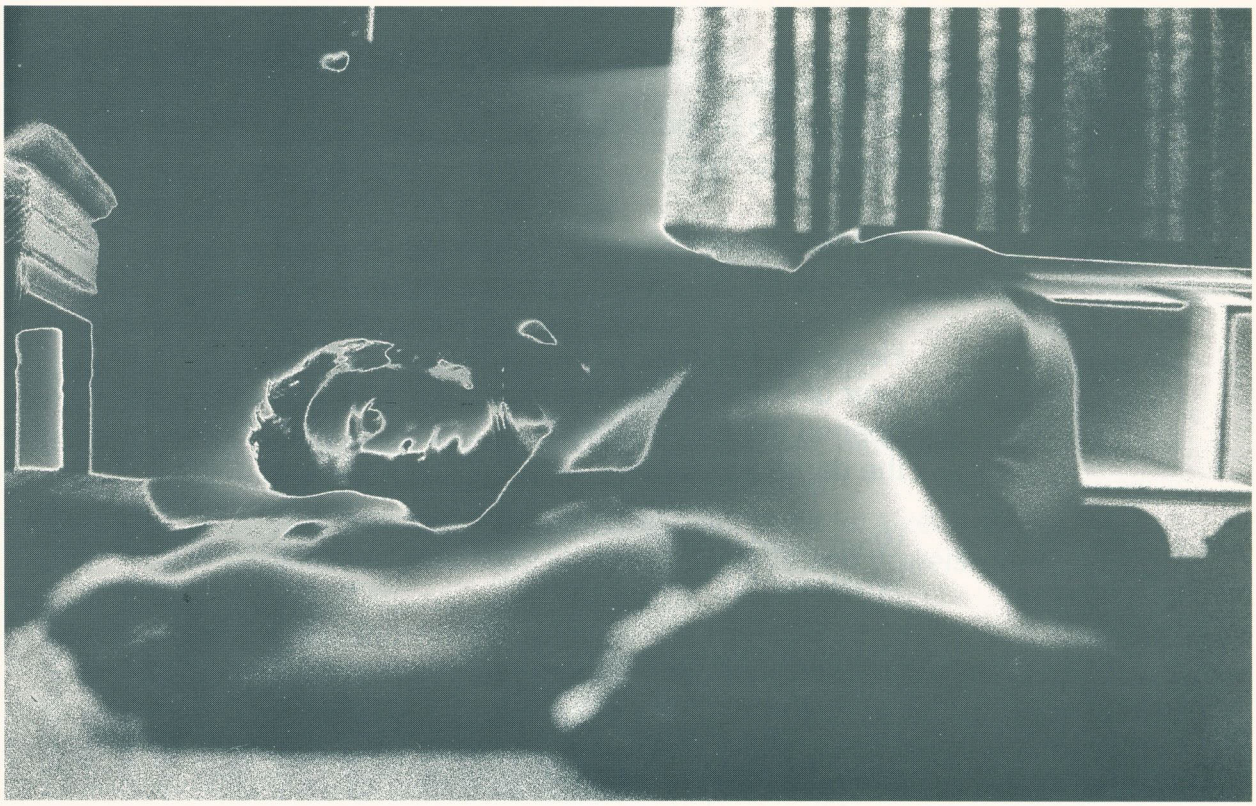
Too late for words.
Too late for words?

Henry, by his side,
over din of silent groans,
opened the book despite
the darkening room.

What words, dad?
What words?

"Comfort," he moaned.

Henry, says the nurse,
read the words,
read the words from me,
and promise not to cease
until the very end.
It may be too late
for light,
but he can still hear the words.



Person on Side in Psychedelic Shade Jennifer Tinsley

Why I Still Go to Church

Grant Elgersma

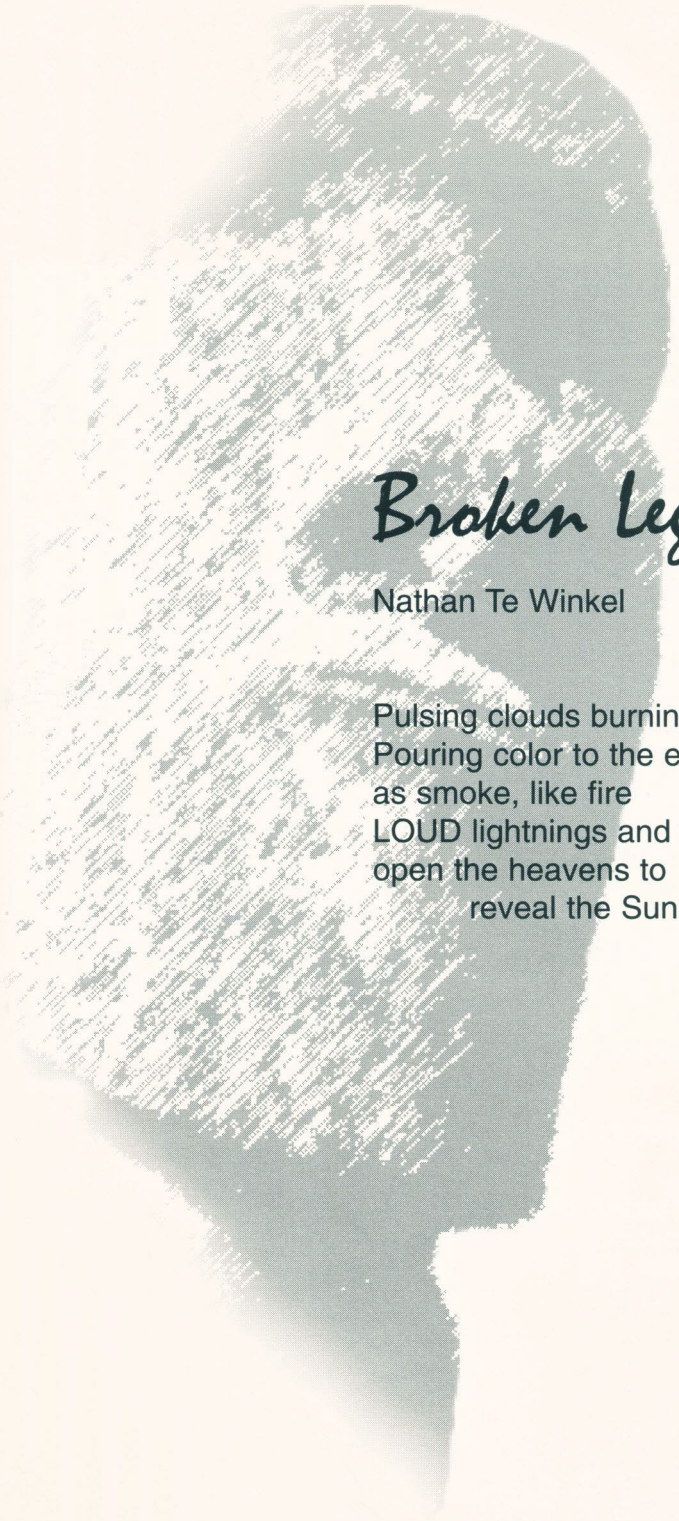
"The burning of John Wycliff's bones,
41 years after his death."

Though flesh has been forgotten to the soil
there is something here still worth burning,
I tell myself while sitting in this house of bones.

Where wind blows cold from reverend mouths
through the hollow canals that remain
to remind us of men, I was told that bones can live,
that God would cover skeletons with skin, that His hot breath
would warm us from within.

Sitting among the rattling and the chattering
souls in pews, I pray for saints with sinews
fused within the Maker's womb to come
like fire, wind and words to breathe
Spirit into flesh.

Though now it seems this breath has left us
wheezing,
there is something here still worth burning.



Broken Legs

Nathan Te Winkel

Pulsing clouds burning brightly
Pouring color to the earth
as smoke, like fire
LOUD lightnings and thin Thunders
open the heavens to
reveal the Sun on high

Jill

Kathryn J. Zwart

Lord, what is this
pain, loneliness, aching?
You can't take her—
she's too young,
too vibrant.
She has so much more to do,
doesn't she?
We can't see why, but
she's gone.
We're selfish and want her
her, now. We miss her—
miss her smile, her laugh,
her eyes, her ears.
Lord, you know best.
She was in such pain,
and you took her out of it.
Struggling to breathe,
unable to talk,
She was hardly herself.
Now she isn't herself again.
She's new, more beautiful,
vibrant, full of life.
She has so much to do—
breathe, sing, and
praise you.

This poem was written on March 1, 1998 after one of my classmates, Jill Vander Zee, was taken up to heaven shortly after her 18th birthday. She had been hospitalized with a respiratory infection of some sort. She would have been a freshman at Dordt this year.

Touch Joanne Kim

Come Back to Me

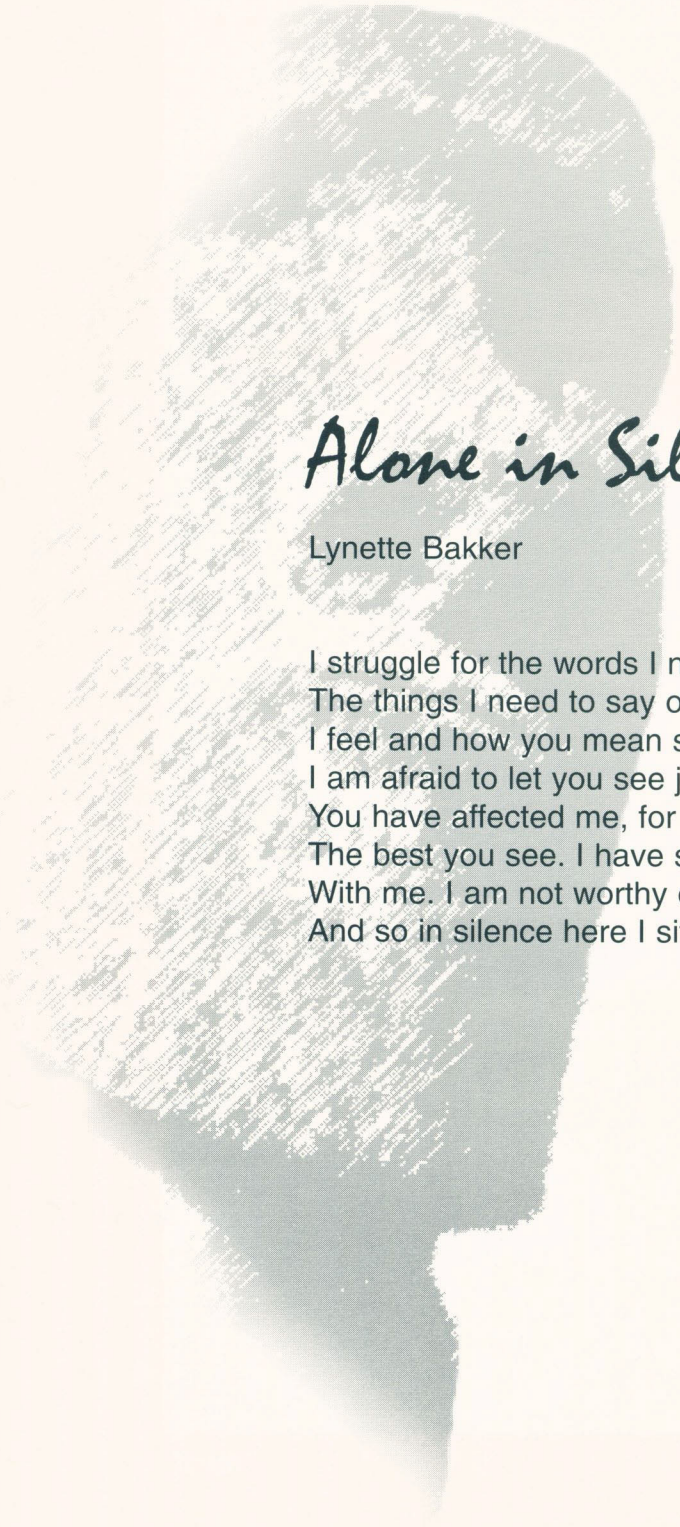
Lynette Bakker

Are you coming back, my love?
I sent you off to battle
With a smile and a wave,
A kiss so brief and tender.

You did not see my tears that day;
You do not see them now.
I know not what your fate has been
Or if I'll see you e'er again.

I've not your arms to comfort me
To draw strength and solace from,
For you have joined your countrymen
To fight in that bloody brawl.

And so I sit and wait for you.
I have no choice but this,
For you have taken my heart with you:
My love, my life, my bliss.



Alone in Silence

Lynette Bakker

I struggle for the words I need to speak
The things I need to say of how
I feel and how you mean so much to me.
I am afraid to let you see just how
You have affected me, for I am not
The best you see. I have so much that's wrong
With me. I am not worthy of your love.
And so in silence here I sit: alone.

Julia Jennifer Tinsley

Homecoming

Benjamin Groenewold

I saw it all as I drove down the road:
You had one more night and space to gather food—
A faithful father to a family
Hidden safe inside the den.
You set out as darkness fell—
Beady eyes brightening at the dusk;
A world full of wonders
Waited just outside your home.
You stepped out
Nose scenting air, eyes all alert,
Your quicksilver hands ready to fulfill
The promise in your bandit black face.
You picked your way
Past the sleeping day animals—
Blinded by the sun and too dull
To see the still beauty in the night.
Alive, you were a ringtailed wonder,
An intrepid explorer daring dangers in the night.
You roamed all the way to the highway
And the blinding light,
Your final destination.
Little masked bandit with the beady eyes,
How was it that you came in time
To greet such a late surprise?
All around the breadth of space
But for two careless spears of light
And you, breathless, lost the race.
Yet I saw you on the day-lit shoulder
A young gray-furred body curled
As if asleep inside the shelter
Of your father's home embrace.

Beside Quiet Waters

Benjamin Groenewold

Sea and sky plunged down together
Down, then lurched, staggered and
Dissolved into a livid green maelstrom

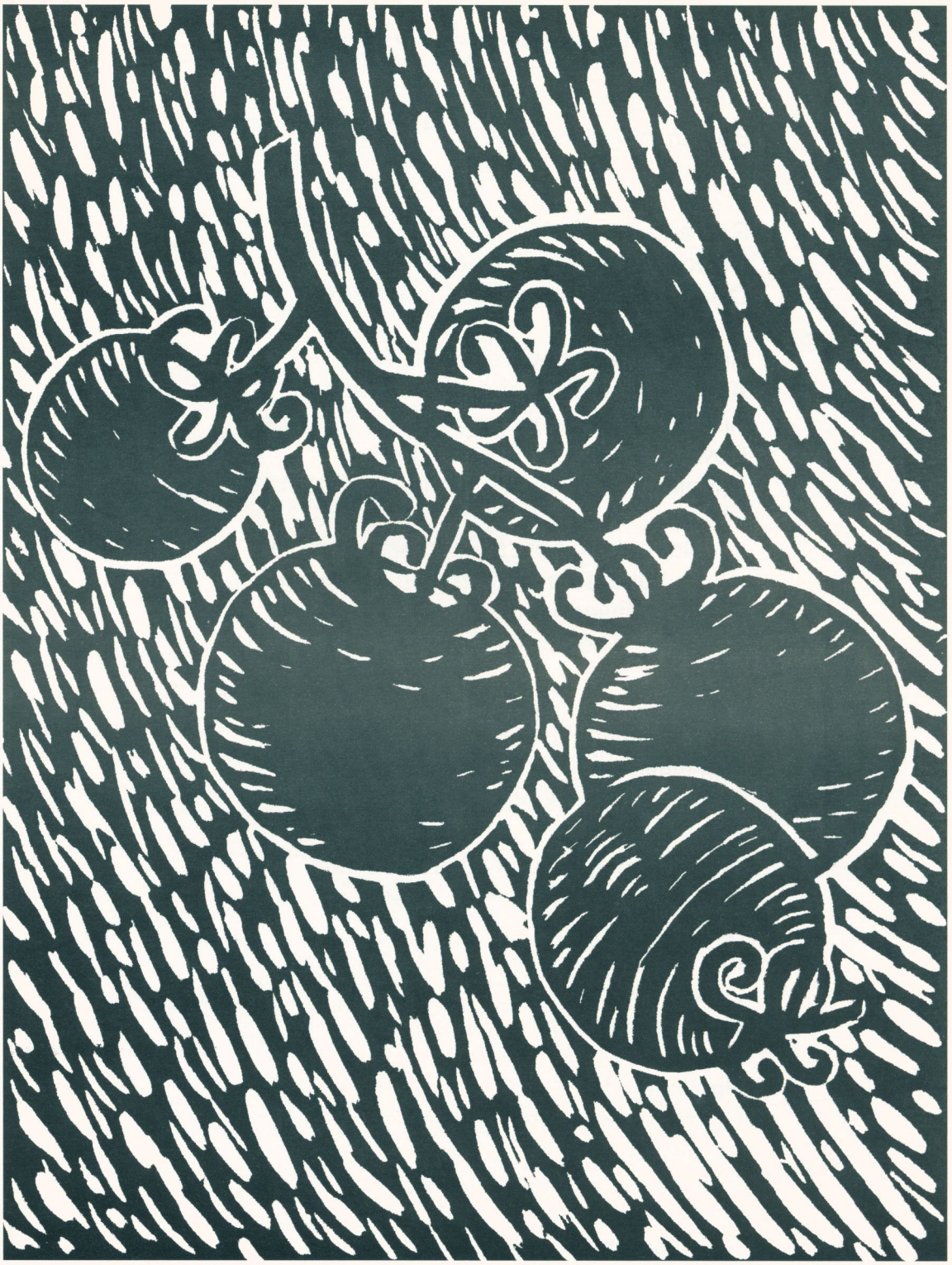
And wind hurled waves past sky—
And black voids gaped beneath sea—
And the ship shook uncontrolled as it dove
Down timbers shuddering, wind
Shrieking down into the black chasm

I could feel the boat's wood skin tremble
Like a battered animal in pain and powerless
Tossed between cruel, cold hands.
Oh terror! The breaker's hand curls over us—

It's glassy foam-flecked nails ready
To snap this boat like a rotten limb
The wave breaks it rakes the ship with
Iron-strong claws; sea and sky switch—

Am I standing? Surely this is the end
Green light black sea blue fear we
Are drowning
In a howling wave world, going down—
Down drown—
Oh Lord, save us!

He woke:
Calm as if we were on a sea of crystal;
He got up,
Saw all our frightened faces,
Then He spoke;
And everything was still.



Tomatoes Elizabeth Boerema

The King's Wood

Benjamin Groenewold

Come walk with me the silent way
Past black-lit noise and twisted speech
In silence I shall speak today.

When chaos darkens bright-lit day
Or strong words cripple once sure reach
Come walk with me the silent way.

The words of thousands soon display
A twisted wood—the hearts of each—
In silence I shall speak today.

Though forest branches black the ray
In courage tread where I will teach
Come walk with me the silent way.

Though stormy shadows round you lay
Gloom gleams clearer than brightest beach
In silence I shall speak today.

In quiet seeds I will convey
Redwoods lost by grandest speech
Come walk with me the silent way
In silence I shall speak today.

Boy with Sheet on Beach Jennifer Tinsley

Baptism

Benjamin Groenewold

I stood on the shore of an infinite sea,
Mist-wrapped and desolate, waves broke unceasing.
There, looming through the fog and shrouded in white—
Were dark standing stones gliding ghostlike through
Pale seas. Like ever-moving ships of silent stone, I saw them
Still.
And as I looked the white shroud tattered
And the wave tops tossed restless in the gloom—
Breaking on the sea-stones, falling away.
And over dark waters—rushing, tossing all around—
The ghost-rocks stood and glided
Still.
Then between the shades and shadows,
Shroud-like mists, and death cold waves
I saw the north wind's knife-edge cut
With a keening chill clean across the half-lit sea
The strange high rocks rose up unwavering—
Still.
There icy breath chilled winter winds while
The cold flew bitter hails from a frozen north-bound land.
I stood by the seashore, and I trembled
For the tide was running higher still. Icelike, it
Swelled past my ankles, yet waist-deep the rocks withstood—
Still.
The storm-tossed, steel-tipped sea was rising quick;
The wind whipped waves round the mute stones as I grew colder yet
Foam-flecked spume slashed my salt-streaked face.
Tempest-torn, I was lost under the tide, but beyond me,
Making strong breakers bow, the spectral rocks loomed solid—
Still.
Long laid beneath the waves, despairing, I lost my will.
You woke one stronger yet by silence and the chill
Dagger sharp, Your surgeon's hand cut off each ill,
Here cold drained me, then You knelt down to fill.
And in standing stones, round me stood Your Living Ones
Like Pillars in the sea—concealed till I became
Still.

My Gift

Sarah M. Eekhoff

My miracle happened on July 28, 1997. The sun had already spread its final show of red and gold before the deathly black of night had chased it from the horizon. We were in the church van, slowly wheezing our way from Matamoros, Mexico, where we had just completed a week of mission work to Britt, Iowa, a trip that took our clanking vehicle a full four days. I was lying on the front bench, my arms and legs entangled with my best friend Alison's as our cramped bodies struggled for a position that would not leave too many muscles aching. We were listening to tapes of our inspirational song leader that we had purchased earlier at his folding table set up with displays of CD's and T-shirts. I was nearly asleep when a familiar song came on, and my entire body leaped from a near-comatose sleep to full alertness.

"If you could hear your father say, 'I love you,' somehow it would heal the pain he's put you through . . . Abba loves you, he hears you when you cry."

My mind slipped back to the first time we had heard this song, only two days earlier, in a makeshift cafeteria filled with 140 folding chairs and an outdated sound system. After a message sympathizing with us, the fatherless generation, our speaker had belted out this song that he had written for the hurting orphans he worked with. His words had driven half of our youth group to tears as they contemplated the failings of their own earthly fathers and the painful sacrifice of our heavenly one.

Alison, beside me on her cool metal folding chair, had lowered her head as she remembered her verbally abusive father who had thrown her out of the house and hit her mother. Thomas thought of his emotionally distant dad who had never told Thomas that he loved him. Tracy recalled her physically abusive father and his obsessive control of her life. My friends Nathan, Natalie, and I looked back to the stiff bodies, fresh dirt, and cold headstones that were all we had left of our daddies. We had wept and shared, and that night our bleeding hearts had been painfully welded into one.

The emotions that poured through me as I listened to the words of the song were too great to contain. Under the thick blanket of night, I groped around for my notebook and a pen. I could not see anything that I was scribbling, but I felt a tremendous release as the desires and emotions welled up from the bottom of my soul and pushed their way to recognition through the frantic sweeps of my pen. I was desperate to catch and frame each thought, and my fingers began to ache from the continual flow of my heart onto the page, but I could not stop. I wrote on, the tears seeping through my eyelashes and spotting my paper. The words were capturing the deepest crevices of my heart, and if this wave was crushed or held back, I was terrified that it would never come again.

I filled four pages with fractured thoughts, run-on sentences, and fragmented words that barely closed one thought before throwing open the next. I

loved it. This was me, the very inmost, holy place of my soul, trickling out through a cheap blue pen and onto a college-ruled Mead notebook.

When we reached our destination that night, an old railroad depot remodeled into a YMCA, we gratefully stretched our legs and headed inside for the hot pepperoni pizza and lukewarm Mountain Dew that awaited us. Even through joking with my pals and a pick-up game of basketball, however, my mind clicked off from my body and continued to compose. I finally begged my excuse of exhaustion, escaped from my active friends, and found solace in a quiet corner and my notebook.

My disjointed scribbles reformed into a poem. It was a long poem, about fathers, death, and scabs ripped off of partially healed hearts. I wrote forever, until I finally obtained a perfect version. It held all of my hope that I had felt while standing by a sterile hospital bed, my tears that had dripped onto my dad's standard powder blue gown as I said my good-byes, and the hole that had gaped in my heart as I stared at the day-old black dirt behind the temporary grave marker. It was all on the page, and I had the overwhelming urge to share it with someone.

I decided to give it away. I neatly wrote, "To Natalie, who understands. Abba loves you, my sister!" and left it by her Bible.

I was terrified, suddenly, of her reaction. Would she think it was dumb? Would she throw it away, hating the memory it dragged up? I almost wished for it back, to tuck it safely into my heart and save myself the risk of possible humiliation and shame of opening up. I was scared to reveal the most sacred, vulnerable realm of my soul to a girl whose pain must have reached as deeply as my own, but whose sorrow had never been expressed to me.

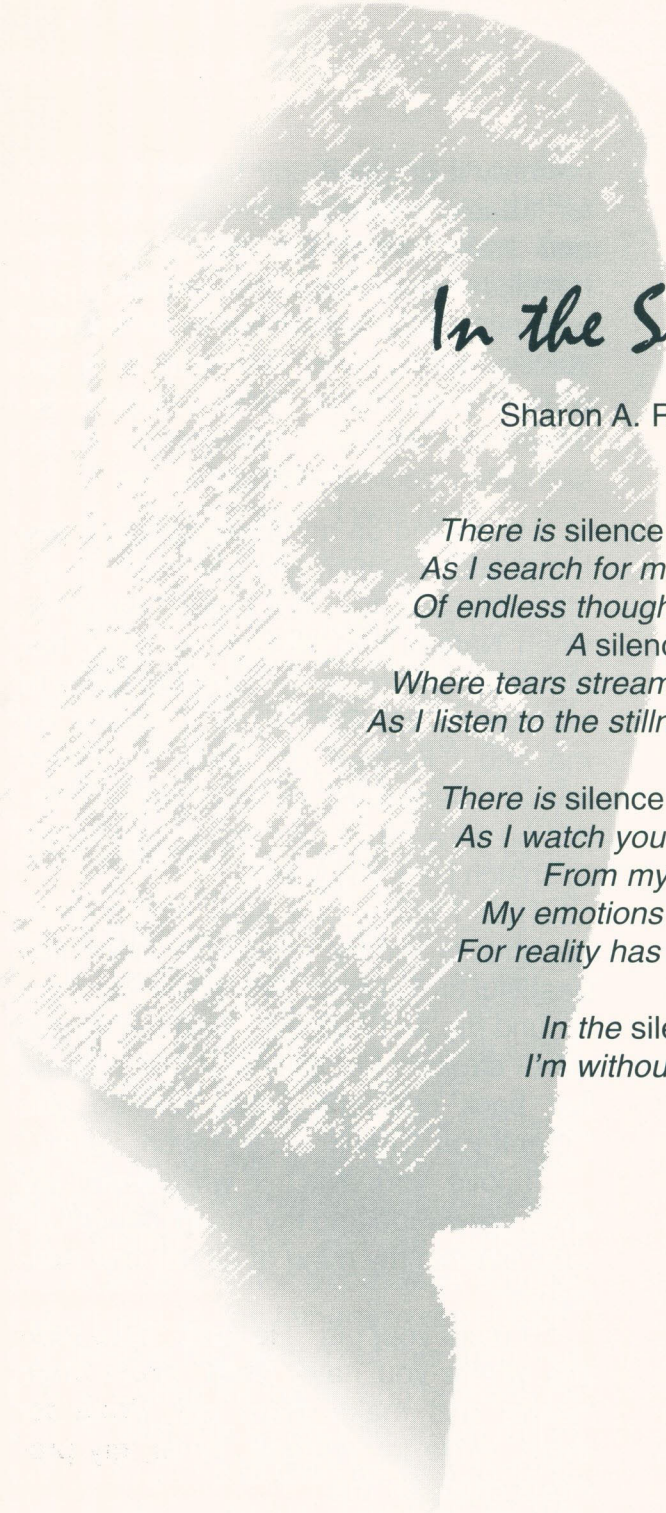
I was lying on my sleeping bag a few hours later, chatting with our youth group leader about her first-grade daughter, when Natalie tore through the door, her big eyes wild, my poem clenched tightly in her sweaty fist. She made a beeline for me and I jumped up, ready to defend myself if necessary. My brain began composing an apology, and my fingers itched to snatch back my poem.

Then I noticed the tears sliding down her cheeks and the vulnerable glint in her beautiful brown eyes. She threw her arms around me and sobbed. I held her as she cried, stroking her dark hair and rubbing her back until she finally choked out, "Thank you. Thank you so much, Sarah."

"I love you, Nat," I whispered. My eyes grew wide and my breath caught as God cleared my mind of all but one realization.

"This is your gift," He said. "Take people where you have been. Break their hearts and make them cry. Write for them. Write for yourself. Write, my precious child, for me."

"Write, therefore, what you have seen."—Revelations 1:19a NIV



In the Silence

Sharon A. Reitsma

There is silence *in my mind*
As I search for missing pieces
Of endless thoughts about you.
A silence,
Where tears stream down my soul
As I listen to the stillness of my voice.

There is silence *in my mind*
As I watch you disappear
From my life.
My emotions collapse
For reality has been torn.

In the silence
I'm without you.

Boy with Blanket in Field Jennifer Tinsley

The Tea Cozy

Cara Miedema

It hailed from a past era, when the yellows and browns that brightened sunflower gardens found their way into even the most fashionable of kitchens. Now, its bright yellow and blackish brown, hand-knitted wool slightly faded from years of keeping teapots warm, the tea cozy was the newest addition to my eclectic set of furnishings, typical of college students relying on sparse bank accounts and parents' goodwill. The knitted dome hugged a small, six-cup Royal Oak teapot, whose handle and spout poked unpretentiously through slits on either side of the cozy. (The teapot itself was evidence of a parent's generosity; Mom had received the soil brown pot as a door-prize at the Right-to-Life appreciation dinner this past Christmas.) The cozy's even-knitted lines formed two yellow and brown checkered rows at its base before rising in inch-wide, bumble-bee stripes to a gathered wool flower of yellow, tied in a simple bow of the same twisted wool.

"It's ugly!" Dave turned from the teapot and cozy resting on my kitchen counter to look at me, the playful glint in his eyes challenging me to disagree. I had no argument, for this cozy had all the elegance and sophistication of a stiff-legged, blind old mutt. Nevertheless, its image warmed my insides as much as any tea I'd ever drunk, for I could see through the steam of time that same tea cozy in a different kitchen. My younger brothers and I would hurry home from the Christian grade school on crunchy, cold afternoons, when the crisp air painted our cheeks and noses long before our snow-panted legs could carry us to 49 Woodland Drive. Mom would greet us with a hug and warm hands; then we'd snuggle under the crocheted gold afghan on our threadbare couch. We'd sip camomile tea sweetened by too much sugar and cooled by a healthy dose of milk.

Sure, the tea cozy was ugly, but it was also honest and innocent and good. Ugly is beautiful when it's a memory of home.

On the Love of Voices, or

Having Been Mesmerized on a Certain November Sunday

Matthew McNatt

I love to hear read from Sunday's pulpit
Through the reverend's rasp, some psalm of old,
A cry from the depths of a psalmist's soul:
"God, why me?" But then he trusts and remits.
I love to rise from the pews where I sit
To join the response, to feel the echo
"We have sinned. Please heal us, and make us whole.
Fill us with your peace and our sins forget."
I love when the choir bellows loud, lets
Its praise rise, and on its lips feels the coal,
With me approaches God's throne, cleansed and bold,
To bask in the Word; know, finally, we've met.
I love these voices of all different kinds,
But when reading the Word, *hers* seems divine.

Acrobat Elizabeth Boerema

Brief Candle

Matthew McNatt

slight slip,
flicker, then
flame flying
far from
wicks, working
upward, elevating,
elating, even
when caught,
captured by
breath, carried
away by
wishes, were
we wishing
still

Stone

Matthew McNatt

Long ago worn away by water,
Even now, whipped by wind and sand,

Daily chilled as darkness spreads,
I wait for dawn, enshrouded by naught.

Mesmerized by misty silence at 4:00 a.m.,
Before beggars begin to amble by,

I hear; I feel; I frame my memories
To form pictures of what I cannot see.

I've been split by an oxcart rumbling to market,
Chipped by chariots speeding to war.

Images easy to imagine when compared with
this:
Clenched tight in a firm, human fist,

I am pressed by pulsating, masculine muscles,
Shaken by steps, firm and fixed.

I am carried to town—I can tell by the noise,
The volume of voices, then a quiet withdraw.

Refined whispers of scholarly men and
A pounding, deafening, quickening pulse
Give way to wheezes, cackles, and shouts
That die down as suddenly as they arose.

Between pulses, which echo in the silence,
I catch a calm voice quietly command,

"Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

Slowly, the fingers around me recoil—then
release—
And I fall to the ground,

Where I feel methodical, departing steps
And hear a young woman's muffled cries,

Hear the soft, steady voice that subdued the
crowd
Quietly send her to sin no more, then

Stop to smooth the sand on which I lay
Waiting for morning mist, or wind or beggars,

Or waiting, simply, to be picked up again.

My Poem's Failure

Matthew McNatt

When I put this poem
On the page, something
Will be lost—my person,
Who I am, now.
Where I am, now.
Who I want to be, now.
My voice,
To some measure,
Conveys my person.
But the poem can't.
The poem won't.
It might, perchance,
Capture personality,
Get a piece of mine and
Take on one of its own.
But the *me* who writes it,
The *me* who wrote it,
Is owned by the past,
Chained to the beliefs
I once held,
But hold no longer.

Untitled #3 Christina Talstra

On My First Time in Canada

Kirstin Vander Giessen

we drive
down Larchwood
street where
the houses
seem to spit the stucco
off and
out like
chipped bits of
teeth,
where
the breakouts of the
outsides
fall frostbitten
into the
evergreens,
where there
is no American longing
to smooth grooves and
mask imperfections
with siding

These Bleeding Hills

Kirstin Vander Giessen

earth boils and
froths and folds
over millennia and
wolves and children and
homes

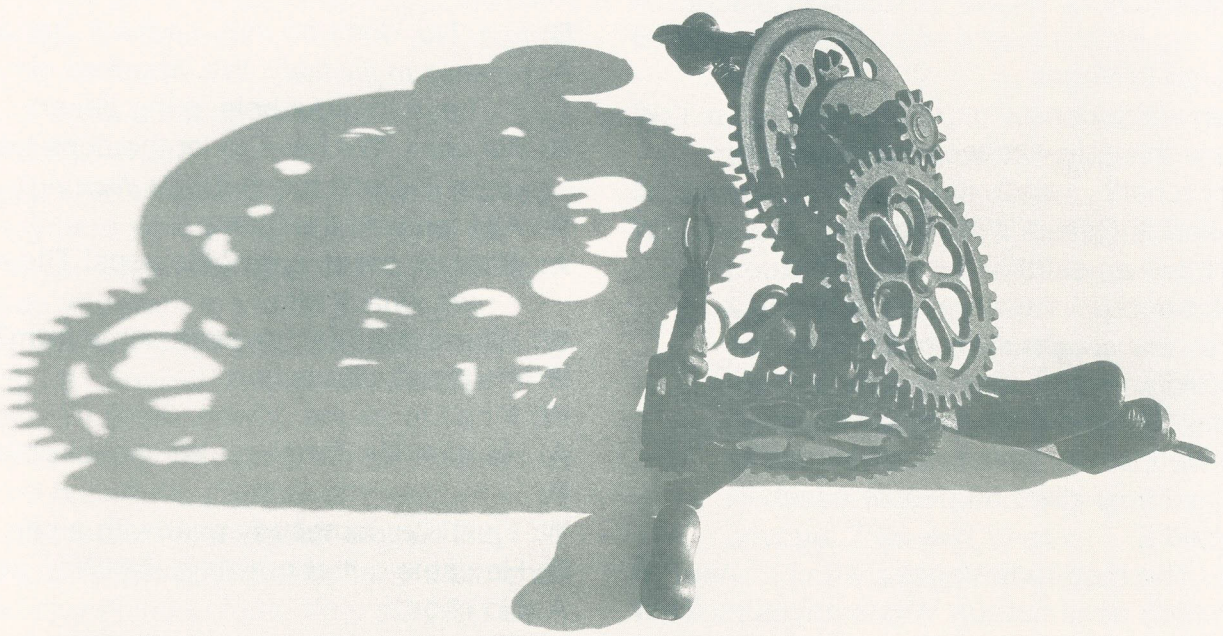
replacing the waves of ancient glacial lake (once silhouetted against a dusty antique sky)
with itself, green and brown ribbons piled against the blue,

creating an electrified still life of what used to breathe
here

and these hills bleed deep maroon flowers where autumn's drought chafes the spaces
between their knuckles, cracks them open and they bleed

scarlet life as summer drags its caked fingernails across the nervous land, searching for
one last minute to hold and they bleed

bloody omens as the highway slices to the horizon, laying earth's belly open like the tan,
bare Native once did here to the last kill of the hunt and they bleed.



Iron Shadow Helena Geels

A Hole in the Desert

David Schaap

Lights up on two men (B and A) and woman (W) standing together off to the side. A body, face down, center stage. Snow on the ground, wind howling. They are bundled up and move around a bit to keep warm.

A: Vegas.
B: Yeah.
A: Vegas, baby.
W: Brr.
A: Let's go to Vegas
B: When we're done.
A: I knew this guy who worked in Vegas.
B: Want a hat?
A: Worked at Caesar's in Vegas.
B: You have an extra?
B: I got a hood.
W: Sure. *She accepts the hat*
A: It's cold.
B: I know. Try and keep warm, K?
W: Are we the only people on this road?
A: He said they killed 50 people a year.
B: He said 5.
A: Mob. The mob runs Vegas.
W: The mob does not run Vegas anymore. That was the 70's.
A: I knew a guy once—
B: Is that a car?
A: They dug holes in the desert for the cheats.
W: *to A* Can you please be quiet? Please?
Pause.
A walks over to the body and looks down at it. B reaches in his pocket and takes out a candy bar.
B: It's too cold for this.
A leans down and gives the body a shove.
W: *to B* Can I...?
B: Oh. Yeah. *He reaches back into his pocket*
W: No, just a bite.
A continues to shove the body in a rocking motion.
B: Want to share?
W: Sure.
B passes it to W. They share it until it's gone.
W: It's too cold for this.
A has now rocked the body so that it has turned over, face up.
B: *to A* No, don't do that. Leave it alone.
A: *pointing to the body* We whacked him. We have to dig a hole in the desert.
B: We can't. We have to let the cops take care of it. Don't touch it. *He does anyway.*
W: All I felt was the thump.
A: What do mean cops? No cops! They'll know we whack him.
W: Where did this guy even come from?
B: We didn't whack him.
W: It had to be me driving, didn't it?
A: He runs the Tangiers. We whacked him.
B: *to W* How you doing?
W: I just ran somebody over with a car.
B: He came out of nowhere. Nobody saw him.
A: No cops...
W: That doesn't make it any easier.
B: Could have happened to anyone.
W: I know. It didn't, though.
A: *to body* I'll dig you a hole.
B: Well, you're handling it well.
W: I guess.
B: And you're not freaking out.
W: No, neither are you.
B: Yeah. But I wasn't the one driving.
A: We gonna run your hotel now.
W: So?
B: So...what?
W: He came out of nowhere! You said it yourself!
B: I know.
W: Then why are you laying on the guilt?!
A begins pawing with his hands in the snow

B: I'm not! I'm just saying I'm not the one who hit him. If I were, I'd be shaken up. That's all I'm saying. *to A* No. No. No, don't do that. Stop it. *A looks, stops and then sits down next to the body.* I thought maybe I'd have to calm you down, but I guess not.
W: What does that mean?
A: Bury you out here.
B: Nothing, I just don't understand.
W: Understand what?
B: Why you aren't freaking out. There's a dead body here which you hit with your car and you aren't crying or doing anything.
W: What do you want me to do?
A: *to body* We whacked you. You don't mess with us. *Pretends to shoo him with his finger*
B: We didn't whack him! *to W* I don't know what,but you're just standing there.
W: It's a bit too cold to do much of anything else. I hit this guy, it wasn't my fault, and I have nothing to hide. Why should I be freaking out?
B: You just ended this man's life!
W: It wasn't my fault.
A: Vegas, baby.
B: So what! You killed him!
W: It was an accident.
A: *points to the body* It wasn't an accident.
W: SHUT UP!
B: Forget it, Ok, let's just forget it. Let's just go, OK?
W: What about the body:
B: We'll bring it along.
W: I am not putting that thing in the car.
B: Well, we can't leave him here.
W: Why not?
A: We'll dig a hole in desert. *He begins pawing at the snow again.*
B: In the middle of the road?
W: We'll pull him off to the side.
B: And if we leave him in the ditch, he'll be covered with snow by the time someone comes back.
A: Should've dug hole before we got here.
B: Why can't you take it back? We'll put it in the trunk.
W: I'm not driving around with a body in my trunk! What if a cop stops us?
A: So many holes in the desert...
W: *goes to A* THIS IS NOT A DESERT! Look! Look! It's cold as hell! *she makes him look* What do you see? Huh? What do you see? Miles and miles of sand? Why are you wearing that stupid hat, huh? Because you're hot? Damn it! It's only snow...miles and miles of snow!!! *Pause* No holes in the sand. We didn't whack anyone. This isn't Vegas.
A: *softly* I knew a guy from Vegas...
W: Shut up.
B: Just leave him alone.
W: He's not helping any.
B: I know, I know. Let's go. Man, it's cold.
W: What are you doing?
B: I'm dragging him back to the car.
W: Oh, no, you're not.
A: The cops will get you.
W: What if a cop stops us?
B: Then we'll tell them what happened. Why wouldn't they believe us?
A: We whacked him
W: Leave him here. We'll put him off to the other side of the road, leave, and then we'll make an anonymous phone call or something. *She begins to drag him to the side, stops suddenly and then drops him. She stare at the body.*

B: Nobody will ever find him in the snow if we leave him here. *He picks him up and begins dragging it in the opposite direction* We can't just leave a body on the side— *he stops and drops the body* Where did that hole come from?

A: It wasn't an accident.

B: How did we put a hole through his chest?

A: We whacked him.

W: We didn't put a hole through his chest.

B: We ran over him.

W: But no one saw him.

B: All we heard was the thump.

W: Someone. *She looks around* Someone killed him.

A: Cold. I'm cold.

B: Yeah, I know you're cold, buddy. So am I. Just try and keep moving. *He does so* Now what are we gonna do?

W: We're gonna get the hell out of here and forget we ever saw him.

B: What?

W: We're not putting him in the trunk. There is no way anyone's gonna believe us, especially since this guy has a hole in his chest.

B: What are we gonna do then?

W: We'll let the cops look for it.

B: They'll never find it.

W: Then they'll never find him and that's fine with me.

A: Let's go. Cold cold cold.

B: What if someone reported him missing?

W: Look for his wallet. We'll bring it to the police, tell them we found it around here and then they'll search for him when the weather lets up.

B looks through his pockets. A joins him.

B: Here. *He opens it and looks through it.* Peter Malano. Las Vegas, Nevada.

A: Mob hit!

W: The mob doesn't . . .Vegas is 1500 miles from here!

B: Malano. Is that Italian?

A: A mob hit.

W: I don't know, but even if it is it doesn't mean anything. Why would someone make a hit and throw the body out in this waste land? In the middle of winter?!

B: Somebody killed this guy.

W: It can't be a mob hit. Look. It's way too sloppy. Come on. In the chest? A bullet to bring him down and then a bullet in the head. That's how it works. There's no hole in his head.

A: *he becomes scared* A mob...someone...hit him. But we killed him! We killed him!

B: Hey. Hey, we didn't kill, someone else did, OK. We didn't whack anybody.

A: Somebody did. Someone whacked him...the mob!

W: It wasn't a mob hit. Look how sloppy it was. Whoever did this was an amateur. I mean, I could have done it better than that.

B: *to A* Don't worry, don't worry. You just try and keep warm OK? You'll get sick if you're not careful.

W: Let's go. And take the wallet. *Takes the wallet from B* Whoa. Two...sixty...two hundred sixty dollars. *To A* See, the mob would have taken the money and made it look like robbery.

A: Money?

B: Two hundred sixty?

W: And credit cards.

A: I want money.

B: Hold on.

W: You can't just take it.

A: We whacked him. Make it look like a robbery.

W: Wait.

B: We didn't whack him

A: We can go to Vegas!

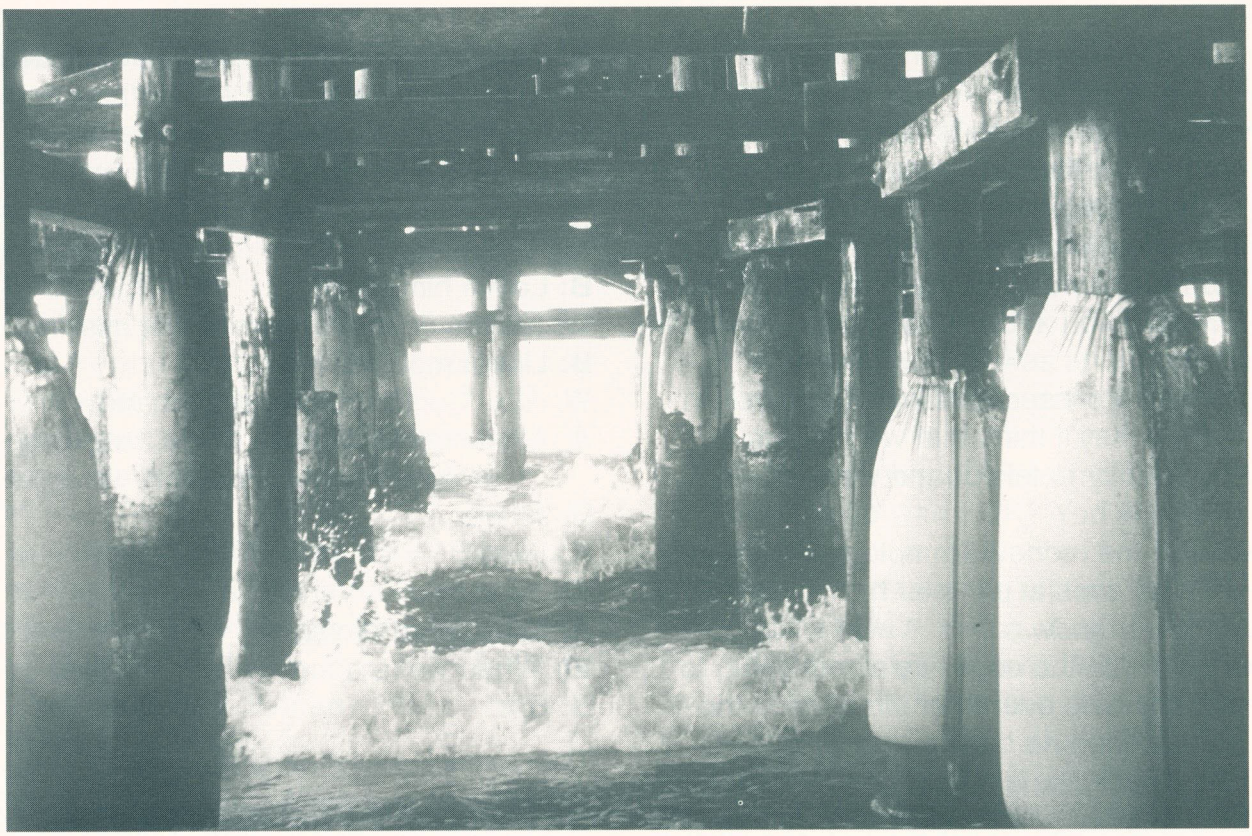
W: We can't just take it. I'm not getting involved.

B: Hold on.

W: What if this was a domestic crime? Some wife that killed her husband 'cause he was beating her. What if it wasn't robbery or a hit? The cops will figure it out and then wonder why the money is missing.

B: We won't have to get involved.
A: Take the money!
W: No way!
B: Maybe we can . . .
W: Do you know what kind of trouble we would get into?! Failure to report murder? That's aiding a nd abetting. And theft? That's five years at least!
B: Maybe we can take half.
Pause
W: Half?
B: A hundred thirty dollars is still a lot. They won't think that someone only took half of the money.
A: We can shoot craps at Caesar's!
B: We'll bring the wallet to the police. Just like you said.
W: Wait. No.
B: They'll be impressed that there is money in it, then they'll think that we had the opportunity to take it and we didn't. It'll work, OK?
W: If we take the money, I'm not going to deal with the cops at all.
B: They'll never know.
W: If we deal with the cops, we're not trying to pull anything over them. If we take the money, then no cops.
A: No cops! Look like a robbery.
Pause
B: Fine. We won't take the money. *Puts it into a pocket and starts walking.* Let's go find a phone then.
Pause
W: We'll take the money.
B: *stops* All right. Let's go with 120. Easier split three ways.
W: Take the wallet. Take all of it.
A: It looks like a robbery then.
B: We can't take all of the money, you said so yourself.
W: Take the wallet too.
B: What are we going to tell the cops then?
W: We'll hide the body. We won't tell the cops.
B: You want to leave him here?
A: Dig a hole for him!
W: If we hide him, nobody will find him until spring.
B: Leave him here?
W: Maybe nobody reported him missing.
B: Like a mob hit.
W: *to A* Come on, give me a hand.
A: A hole in the desert! *W and A start digging in the snow next to the body.*
B: A hole.
A: Vegas!
W: Yeah.
A: Let's go to Vegas.
W: When we're done.
B: Brrr.

They continue to dig while B watches. Several seconds pass and then he joins them. Lights down slowly on them covering the body.



Untitled #3 Christina Talstra

Watching the Shuttle When I was Young

Ryan Vande Kraats

remembering now—and I don't know why—that
moment, so many years ago:

sitting on the oscar-the-grouch green
shag carpet with a box of ritz crackers by my

side, crumbs on my shirt, in front of our
new color television, watching

the shuttle climb in to the blue sky, the clouds,
the sudden flash of

flames, the two plumes of smoke, and the pieces
of the future falling back to earth, where

i was

Each One That Fell: A Note to Elisha

Ryan Vande Kraats

The road wound around, and the young men sat
waiting for you with insults
on their tongues:

"Go on up, you bald head!"

You were offended
so you called down upon them a curse . . .

and behind them there was movement in the bushes

(but a sparrow shall not fall from
any tree branch, nor a
hair from my head that is not
known to Him . . .)

and two bears roared your brutal rebuttal, and
forty-two were mauled and fell
dead on the road which
you took up to Mount Carmel, and then
on to Samaria
to speak God's words.

And God knows your thinning hair; each one has been
counted in heaven. And He knew each one
that fell.

Three Killed in a Car Crash

Ryan Vande Kraats

in the top of the trees (the cars
speed down main street)
the birds will sleep tonight.

the leaves shiver, now
wrinkled and withered,
in the shushing shooshes of
midnight sighs, as memories fly

my cigarette whispers to
the misty night, and the birds I
heard have drifted into the sky

like a silent last breath, sent
from life into death; but the birds
will return, and these trees shall
see leaves again

Cactus #2

Christina Talstra

Helping the Poor

Brian Wisselink

(Thanksgiving Weekend, downtown St. Louis)

I was walking down Hawthorne Street with
The usual lack of holiday guilt when
I saw her standing behind a drum,
Pounding out beats that defied rhythm.

I regarded her sunken yellow eyes and her
Ripped coat, and I hurried past for fear
Of being asked for change or conversation.

"Hey Mister!"

I cringed and glanced over her way,
Fearing what it was she would say.

"Think about Jesus today!"

She stared back at the crowds around me,
Looking for a new target while
I laughed and walked down Hawthorne Street.

An Evaluation

Brian Wisselink

"and the death-toll rises in the aftermath of . . ."
click
" . . . this revolutionary new knife, available now in
addition to the . . ."
click
". . . keys to happiness through this twelve-step
program."
CLICK

you turn away with a blank stare, a sip of coke, a
long chew,
taking it all in.
the remote control sits less easily in my hand
but you keep telling me there's nothing to be done,
i think i'm coming 'round to that conclusion.

so God bless Our-Merry-Caca
and all of us cattle who live within it
for ours are the V-chips, the Strip-malls, and the
Pay-per-view
for whenever and whatever
Amen.

i click my finger and our world opens up again,
shiny, happy people holding hands and fighting
for their rights
to a new and better toilet, instant dinners, and the
elimination of effort.

click
"these products recommended by nine out of
ten experts in this field"
click

i find it's not so bad being one of ten
but i'd rather not be one of those digits.
i wish i was Che Gueverra,
at least that's what I tell you,
but to take up arms against what?
PR Campaigns, Fashion Mags, Cable TV?
Impossible.

"shay who?" you reply, leaking Coke from your face
and a voice screams in my head
YOUR ANGER IS A GIFT!
EVERYTHING IS WRONG!
TEAR DOWN THE WALL!

but Rebellion has been packaged
and put on a shelf in Toys-R-Us.
just t-shirt slogans and bumper stickers
among the action figures
and other plastic people.

now i am no Beckett, but I'm no Che Gueverra either,
so i just settle into my bean-bag chair
and think poisonous thoughts about the apathetic,
watching our world-in-a-box as my eyes glaze,
comforted (if only slightly) by these words:
"And all of this, too, shall pass away."
Amen

Untitled#1

Christina Talstra

Commencement

Brian Wisselink

"Most likely you'll go your own way and I'll mine."
—Bob Dylan

Father Time's an insensitive old crank.
He's got our minds in his hands,
Typing in his own commands,
Dividing memory by distance
and taking away the remainder.

So when we stand
In this place,
At this time—
All of us ready to go
Our own way—I pray
That I may save these
Four passed years on file,
And cheat Father Time by
sending you all a copy.

Thanks

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Colophon

The 1999 *Canon* uses 12-point Helvetica for literature
and 36-point Mistral for titles.
Art titles and artists are 10-point helvetica

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