



Spring 1985

The Canon, Spring 1985

Dordt College

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Cannon

Spring 1985



The Cannon, Dordt's fine arts magazine,
features the poetry, artwork, photography,
essays and short stories of Dordt
College students and staff.

This years Cannon comes out
in conjunction with Spring Thaw,
an annual arts festival which allows
students to show their talents in
theatre, literature, mime, dance and music.

Cover picture by Sandy Bohlson from
Clara City, Minnesota. Sandy is a
junior, majoring in art.

Cannon

Spring 1985

Vol. 15, No. 1

editor	Michael Peter Dykstra
editorial staff	Donald Huizinga
	Rodney Berg
production editor	Ellen Matheis
faculty advisor	Randy VanderMey

This year's Cannon does not promise to redefine art and literature. It does not have any desire to convince every biology, psychology or agriculture major that they should talk to the English department about graduation requirements.

The Cannon wishes only to display the talent Dordt students have, and often hide. While reading through this magazine you may think "I have a picture just as nice as that," or "I can write a poem that well." If you can, great, but don't hide it. Others may enjoy your work as much as you will enjoy what is collected in this edition of the Cannon.

You are not under any pressure to find sweeping themes or answers to difficult questions while reading; all you need do is sit back and enjoy.

So put on a good record or tape, find a nice, comfortable chair, pour yourself a cup of coffee, tea, coke, juice or milk (depending on the weather and your mood) and enjoy.



D. Brouwer 1983

"Shadows"

Darlene Brouwer
Jr./Art

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Flower

*Crossing currents are these wherein I flow.
Low-frequency light slows the way I grow.
Sun-snow's oblique tides leave me to glower,
To wander about the glory and power
Of life.*

*Yet I now feel a touch from the Knower
Who reigns, displays like the magic shower,
Startling my roots, Living Waterer—
No fountain of youth—just words from the Father
Of truth.*

*Living Bread, mold me as spring to flower.
Dam my wanderings. Make me a grower
In your wheat field, wholly on course, petal
To mind's chaff—unsifted—to the gold medal
Of the way.*

Wayne Spronk
Jr./Biol.

In the Van Pelt Reading Room

*You scholar, me deaf mute.
My job give card say
Me deaf mute. See cotton?
Proof no hear
If try.*

*Card show
Finger alphabet, flag U.S.A.
Scholar like for sure.
See fingers empty now.
You pay?
I throw bird
(Not on card).*

*Few weeks I come back.
You finish book maybe.
Plenty more card.
We both have job.*

Randall VanderMey
English Professor

Dawn

*Sleep-blind dawn
yawns
to stretch and shake
awake
the world
in muted tones.*

Lori Kuipers
Fr./English

Faces

*I know your face—
every line,
every curve,
gentle lips smiling,
lashes framing
hazel twinkles,
the broad planes
of smooth cheeks
haloed in gentle curls.*

*His face
is an unknown stranger,
placidly framed
by the edges of a page,
dead these forty years,
but haunting my mind
in living motion,
bringing the past to the present
reincarnated
in you
to finish the life
so brutally interrupted
halfway down the neck.*

*I know your face.
I don't know what lies behind his,
or what causes his to lurk
behind mine.
One of us must go:
will it be he?
or I?*

Ellen Matheis
Jr./History

Jackie Huizenga
Fr./Elem. Ed.



Worth

Gentle brown eyes
glazed with age and experience
glare at me calmly.

There is a touch of reproach
evident.

Not surprising,
for with those turned up hooves
the little brown pony
is
worthless.

I had neglected her.
Her rough shaggy coat is desperately in need
of brushing,
and her straggling forelock,
full of cockleburs,
tickle both eyes.

In a remittent attempt
to undo my wrong
I head for the barn today
to spend time with the old one.

Conscience time, I tell myself,
then I console my ego with the thought
that it doesn't matter.

She is just an old pony;
worthless.

I find her in her death stance;
straggled fur already matting to the earth.

The gentle brown eyes
are sunken and cold.
Worthless?

I find myself mourning
with a love I never realized I had.

Warm brown velvet no more to muzzle
in search of corn or sugar.

They say beauty is in the eye of the beholder;
Priceless!

Lori Kuipers
Fr./English

Still Life

Ginger woke easily on Saturday morning. She got up, showered, and was still easing into a pair of jeans when her mother called her from downstairs.

"Ginnie!"

"What?" she yelled, but not loud enough.

"Ginnie! Sid's here!" Her mother's voice was firm and carried like the voice of the cheerleader she'd once been.

"Yeah, Mom. Just a second!" Ginger hurried to finish dressing. If her mother shouted once more the whole family would be awake. All this noise. It was nauseating. She'd grown used to living with roommates at college who talked, not yelled. She sighed and went downstairs.

Sid was sitting in her father's easy chair, listening to her mother talk about the picnics she'd been on when she was young. Mrs. Bradney often told Ginger's friends stories about her own girlhood. Ginger supposed that her mother thought it bridged the generation gap. Maybe it did, in a way, but there was something embarrassing about your mother being so proud of the fact that she'd once been young. It was almost like admitting that you were unhappy with what you were now, Ginger thought.

Mrs. Bradney stopped her story to smile broadly at Ginger. "Good morning, dear."

"Morning, Mom. Hi," she said, turning to face Sid.

"Hi," Sid returned, with a smile that didn't show any teeth. Ginger looked at the floor.

But with her mother, at least, there weren't any awkward silences. "Ginnie," she said, "I put a few little extras in your basket. Like I was telling Sid here, it's so easy to forget the little things like salt and pepper."

"Thanks, Mom." It sounded flat, ungrateful. Sulkish. But when would she stop doing this, Ginger wondered a little wildly. It was always the same. Her mother was forever reminding her to eat right, forever doing her laundry, forever

remembering the little things. Sid wasn't lure enough to draw her back to the smells of her mother's delicious cooking, her mother's admonitions to come in early so she could get up in time for church on Sunday, her father's unquestioning belief that there was nothing she'd rather do than take her 13-year-old sister shopping. Now it was summer. She was home. That was almost the same as saying that she was someone else—her mother's daughter—for these three and a half months.

Ginger was relieved when Sid stood up and asked just where this picnic basket was. She led him to the kitchen eagerly, feeling guilty for not wanting to stay and talk with her mother.

"Where are you going, kids?" Mrs. Bradney called from the family room.

"Crag Park," Sid told her.

"Is that the place with the lake and those cute little pedal boats?"

"Yeah, Mom," Ginger said quickly, and had a sudden sickening vision of her mother asking to go along.

"Oh, that's the place over by Grandma McKay's over by Sands Village, isn't it?" It was a statement, not a question, and Ginger thought she could almost hear the little wheels of her mother's brain starting to whirl.

She motioned Sid towards the basket, which was sitting trimly on her mother's trim kitchen table. He lifted it easily with one hand. "Shall I bring this to the car?" he asked, swinging it towards the back door. She nodded, and watched his retreating figure for a moment, dreading to go back in to the family room.

"Ginnie, come here a minute."

Her mother was trying to find something on TV besides cartoons. "Ginnie," she said, flipping channels slowly, deliberately. "I think you should visit Grandma."

"Mom, I'm going out with Sid!"

"I know that, dear. But you haven't seen Grandma in a month, and today you're

going to be practically in her backyard." Mrs. Bradney decided on a talk show and stepped back from the TV.

"Mom, I'll be with Sid." Ginger couldn't think of anything else to say.

"That's why it's so perfect, dear." Mrs. Bradney settled herself on the sofa, not taking her eyes from the TV. "Grandma will love meeting one of your friends. Sid's such a nice boy."

Her mother's absent-minded tone took for granted that the subject was closed. Ginger clenched her fists and slapped them against her thighs. "Mom," she said. "Mom!"

"Oh, I'm sorry, What dear?" Mrs. Bradney reluctantly withdrew her attention from the television.

"Mom, I can see Grandma some other day. I can go with you and Dad some Sunday afternoon. But I'm not going today."

Mrs. Bradney sighed, but with determination. "I want you to go today, dear. You won't always have Grandma, you know." Warming to the subject, she continued. "Someday you're going to drive by Sands Village and just wish you had this chance." Mrs. Bradney spoke with the assurance of a fortune teller.

"But," Ginger began, and was interrupted.

"Besides, I have a plant that I'd like you to take to Grandma." Mrs. Bradney prided herself on the attention she gave her mother. When the doctors advised a rest home, she agreed, with relief, that there was no alternative. "I mean," she'd say, "Dr. Franko told me that there was just no way I could do it. He said it wouldn't be fair to Mother. We just couldn't have her at home with us." Along with her freedom, Mrs. Bradney gained a passion for plants in foil-covered pots, and dusting powder. These she was forever bringing to Sands Village.

The back door opened and shut. A moment later, Sid was in the room with them. "Just about ready to go?" he asked.

"Sid, dear," Mrs. Bradney said, "I've

just been telling Ginnie that it would be so nice for the two of you to visit her grandma. You won't mind giving up just a little of your day to do that, will you?"

Ginger winced. Her mother couldn't have made it more impossible for Sid to refuse.

"Sure, that'd be fine," Sid said with enthusiasm, as if visiting old women in old folk's homes were one of his favorite past-times. Ginger looked at him with sudden distaste. Sid really was such a nice boy.

Sands Village was the creme of the crop as far as old folk's homes went. It tried desperately to be nothing like a hospital. Ginger still found it repulsive. The smilingly attentive staff, art-deco lounge furniture, and wallpaper could not combat the smell, the distinctive rest home smell which was a hovering cloud of Pine Sol and urine, special dietary dinners and old age.

Hetty McKay was the victim of a paralyzing stroke. On some days her mental capacity was just what it had always been. On others, she got her sons and daughters mixed up and called all her grandchildren "Georgie," which was the name of her baby who died. As she and Sid walked past the display cases of crocheted and ceramic "crafts" which were supposed to give Sands Village occupants a purpose in life, Ginger hoped that Grandma wouldn't think Sid was one of the cousins. It was bad enough that he had to be here with her like this. Though they'd been going out for almost a year, Sid was nowhere near being a member of the family.

They proceeded down the hall, past a cheery bulletin board that announced the week's activities. It looked like it had been decorated for a class of second-graders, and Ginger found it insulting. But how do you decorate a rest home, she wondered? Did her grandmother ever care?"

She was sitting in bed. Or rather, Ginger thought, the bed was sitting for her. No matter how unlike a hospital the rest of

the place was, nothing could change the beds. They were ruthlessly cranked into position every day to prop up their occupants. Grandma McKay's thin frame made a flat hill beneath the gold thermal blanket. They were fully in the room before she heard them.

It was one of her good days, though. Ginger could tell, as she bent down to give her a kiss. It was always startling to kiss Grandma. The wrinkled skin felt as thin as paper beneath her lips, and the smell of old age crept even closer. Yet she always kissed her.

"Oh, how nice—it's Ginnie." Though the stroke had made talking difficult for her, Grandma's voice was still almost as strong as her daughter's. "I was just thinking how blue the sky is," she said. "I said to myself, I said, Hetty this is a day for young people to be outside. Who's your young man?"

Something within her rebelled at hearing Sid called "her young man." But all she could do was smile, and introduce him. He beamed pleasantly, like a nice young man should.

"How've you been, Grandma?" Ginger asked when Sid stopped smiling. "I brought you a plant. Mom sent it."

"Oh, thank you, dear. It's lovely. Can you put it with the rest of them?" Her eyes gestured towards a row of greenery comprised of everything from an African violet to a cactus. The new addition found a place next to a leafless poinsetta. Left over from Christmas, Ginger supposed. Any stranger walking in here could take one look at this shelf and describe Grandma's social life. She gave the new plant a little self-conscious pat and turned her back on it.

"Yes, it's a lovely day," Grandma said again. "Almost like the day I married your grandfather." Her eyes darted to Sid for a moment, then rested on Ginger, who could guess what she was thinking.

"So, how have you been?" Ginger said quickly. Did I ask this already, she wondered? She found she always had this

problem on these visits, of forgetting what she'd already said. It must be the atmosphere of the place.

"Oh, fine, fine," Grandma said. "How's school?"

Fine, fine, Ginger almost said, but caught herself. "School is getting to the point where I feel like it's useful. I'm between semesters now."

"And soon you graduate. Won't that be nice?" Grandma gave a stroke-twisted smile.

Ginger couldn't correct her. It didn't matter, really, that Grandma didn't remember she'd graduated last year. Nothing mattered. It was always like this. Ginger suddenly felt a fresh wave of resentment for her mother, whose fault it was that they were here now, exchanging nothings. She has no right, Ginger thought. No right at all to insist that I do this. Grandma couldn't possibly care. She doesn't even know me. How can she possibly care if she doesn't know me?

"This is a very nice room," Sid said. "You must have the best view of any of them." He looked around slowly, and Ginger saw him thinking that the built-in drawers were designed well, that the TV mounted close to the ceiling was a thoughtful touch. He inclined his head toward a chair covered in black vinyl. "Mind if I sit down?"

He is doing what I should try to do when I come here, Ginger thought. He is seeing nothing wrong with anything. She could never bring herself to sit in this room. She hated black vinyl. Grandma would never have had a black vinyl chair in her house. It had been awhile since Grandma had had a house, but Ginger remembered. She couldn't forget, even if Grandma could.

She looked at Grandma, who was still smiling her grimace at Sid, and tried desperately to think of something to say. Grandma's eyes shifted, and their glances met, and locked.

"So what brought you out my way?" Grandma asked.

She knows, Ginger thought. She knows that I'd never call Sid and ask him to take me here.

"We're on our way to Crag Park."

"Oh, I see." And Ginger knew that she did see.

"It does a body good to have a family that cares," Grandmas said. Her tone was more vague than before.

"Care?" Ginger repeated, before she could stop herself.

"Yes, you all are so good, so good. I've been alone for almost 20 years now, since Jake passed away. I get used to it. But it's good to see you, and nice to meet Sam. I'm glad you stopped." Her tone dismissed them. She sank back, engulfed by the pillows as if by quicksand. Her head began to move rhythmically from side to side.

"I guess we should get going," Sid said. He has a nice way of stating the obvious, Ginger thought. He sprang up from the offensive chair, and stood looking at her. Ginger turned away from her grandmother. She caught sight of the shelf of plants. "This poinsetta should really be thrown out," she said.

"Don't touch that!"

Ginger whirled around. Her grandmother was straining to lift her head away from the pillows. Eyes flashing, voice firm, young, she said again, "Don't touch that!" Then she sank back once more, murmuring "It's still alive."

They were sitting in Sid's car, which was parked in the Bradney driveway. Sid was holding her hand, rubbing it automatically, rhythmically. It was an unconscious action, like Grandma's head turning back and forth on her pillow.

"It's been a nice day, hasn't it." Sid hugged her a little closer to himself.

"Ummm." The perfect catch-all noise, Ginger thought. She closed her eyes. She couldn't forget. All day long she'd kept seeing a good-for-nothing poinsetta, and her grandmother's knowing eyes, and voice.

Grandma knows me, she thought. I didn't think so, but she does. None of us are fooling her. Ginger felt humiliated because they'd all been trying. We talk about the good care she gets and how brave she is and we shower her with plants and shallow conversation. But we aren't fooling her at all. Only ourselves. We've all been trained to be so self-sufficient, and Grandma's the worst of us.

She wasn't long in telling Sid goodbye. She let herself into the house quietly. Her parents were still up. She could hear the muted hum of voices in their bedroom. She went on tiptoe into the kitchen where dinner smells still lingered. She opened the refrigerator, squinting into its illuminated depths. A casserole covered with foil dominated the top shelf. Everything else had been pushed aside to make room for it. Ginger peeked beneath the foil. Chicken. It would be popped into the oven to bake while they were at church. She closed the refrigerator. Sunday dinner would be good.

The kitchen looked ghostlike in the dark. She could almost see Sid as he was this morning—tall, strong, and walking away from her. She went out of the kitchen and decided she'd better plan an outfit for tomorrow.

She climbed the stairs slowly, instinctively avoiding the creaky places, meticulously skirting the spots that would shatter the calm of the darkness.

Joan Mensonides
So./English

Breather

After a day's work

boots rest beside the cat

sunning on the step

Ellen Matheis
Jr./History



Steve Lesondak
Fr./Pre-Vet.

Lord of the Day

*And in the early morning light the dawn
Inspired me to write a poem to You.
When I saw the sun rise in the chifon
Clouds my problems seemed far away and few.
And in the afternoon when shadows fail
To show against the bright and sparkling earth
Even the slow path of the lowly snail
Makes me want to say thank You for my birth.
And when the setting sun reminds me of
Death, when the frogs sing their funeral dirge
I look at the silver-white moon above
And feel the promise of forever surge.
And I see throughout the glorious day
That everything is happening, Your way.*

Michael Peter Dykstra
Sr./English

The Party (View From a Small Balcony)

dusk is fallen
the willow strums her fingers
over the rippling canal
tinkling background music
to the laughter of partyers clinking glasses
one floor lower

one balcony to the left
volvos and audis chatter back and forth
amongst themselves
as they putter by

silently as dusk she arrived
black satin pantsuit
shimmering with a thousand delicate sequins
slippers making a slight rustle
on the shag carpet

now the voices are more hushed
and burbled
as she winds through guests
hesitant to call it a night
ice cubes melt
her velvet eyes glowed no dimmer
reflecting sequins glimmer in black

volkswagons have long since ceased
their tenor vibrato
the willow absent-mindedly continues
to finger out muted chords
as a woozy austin-mini
hums herself to sleep
the mallard on the bank tucks his head under a wing
away from sight

Ellen Matheis
Jr./History

Sociable Ideas

a weeks ends
i semi-dissatisfied
in solitude

a friend calls
together

i go to seek unity
what is bre(a)d
unity or disunity?

wine on
tastebuds
synthesized
relaxation
mind wanders
endlessly knotting itself

won't stop
maybe redirected
idea takes issue
issues on ideas

wheel-real
gutter-flow
all is nonsense
in the party-glow

mark-philip venema
Jr./Phil.

Hello, Cigarettes and Seventeen-Year-Old Mothers

I looked at the clock; it was 9:00. In another two hours I could justify going to bed. I reached for my pack of DuMaurier Special Milds. I unwrapped the foil from the left hand side of the pack and pulled out a cigarette. Buying this pack had been my after dinner adventure.

I looked about my apartment for something to do. There were clothes to unpack, pictures to hang and furniture to arrange. I felt I hadn't done anything yet even though I had been unpacking all day.

The clock wheezed. I got up and gave it a sharp tap with my right hand while holding it firmly against the wall with my left. The wheezing stopped, but that didn't make the clock any more attractive. It had been bought with the S&H greenstamps I had saved in college. It was made of cheap plastic that was supposed to look like wood with raised, gold Roman numerals sticking out, waiting to grab the eye, hold it down and pummel it into submission. The thing also assaulted the ears with its continual wheezing. I decided to unpack my stereo so I could drown it out.

Then the phone rang. I wasn't expecting a call of any sort so I let it ring two or three times while I lit another cigarette. I picked up the coke can I was using for an ashtray and walked to the phone.

"Yeah, hello" I said, trying to sound like someone who had been disturbed while doing something important on a Friday night.

A giddy voice smothered a giggle on the other end of the line and asked: "Hello is Mr. Wall there?"

"No, and neither is Mrs. Wall or any of the brats and I don't know what's holding up my house." I slammed down the receiver. I felt like I did in college after a heavy night of drinking; a little ashamed and a little justified.

I carried my popcan and cigarette to the box that contained my stereo. Packed in the

same box were a dozen books or so. I picked one up; it was a western—I would read that later.

I knew from experience that my response to the girl made me a challenge to her. I knew that even before I finished unpacking my stereo that same giddy voice would call back with another stupid line. And even though I resolved not to give her the satisfaction of answering, I knew that I would pick it up and be the victim of another telephone joke. I just hoped she would get more original.

Ring. There it was again. Ring. I finished plugging my speaker wires into the back of the amplifier. Ring. The stereo was plugged in and there was a buzz from the speakers which told me they were working. Ring. The clock wheezed and told me that it was 10:00. Ring. Ring. Ring. I picked up the phone.

"Yes."

"Good evening sir, this is your local telephone company. We are doing repairs on the line and ask that you refrain from answering the phone for the next ten minutes or so. Thank-You for your cooperation." A female voice giggled.

"And who fixes telephones on a Friday night?" I asked, a little too loudly, before hanging up.

Five minutes later the phone started ringing. I picked it up before the first ring had finished. The expected, high-pitched scream of a giddy voice trying to sound electrocuted came across the line. I laughed into the phone and hung it up for the third time that evening.

One cigarette later I had found a good radio station. I had expected better in a city of Toronto's size but then, when one has been raised on hick-town country music stations, any place with a rock station is bound to catch the imagination. After that I sat back and read what Louis L'amour had to say on the subject of the old west.

I was jolted back to reality by another loud ring. I was so bored that I put the book (which I had read 4 or 5 times already anyways) down and picked up the phone before the second ring. The clock asthmatically told me that it was 10:45. Besides the stereo and the clock I listened to the sounds of stifled giggling coming from the other end of the phone. A giddy voice said "Hey big boy" and then I hung up on her.

This reminded me of a night back in college, my freshman year in the dorms. My roommate answered the phone one night and started talking to a girl who had called our number at random. Apparently she was bored. My roommate was also bored so he talked to her for an hour or so. The only thing that kept this from being a fairy tale was the fact that he never got to see her, he never heard from her again and they never got married.

I had something to do with that as I hung up the phone. It was 2:30 in the morning and I was really trying to sleep. My roommate eventually forgave me, even though he was so eager to get married that a pretty girl's hello sent him running halfway to the marriage altar, but that's a different story.

My thoughts about my roommate's girl catching escapades were rudely interrupted by the phone again. Not again I thought. This time I decided to try to talk with my tormentor. "Yeah, what do you want?"

"Your body, I've been admiring you for a month now and I need you so bad it just hurts." Her voice, for all its giddiness, could convey a lot of expression. I almost believed her. "Can I come over tonight bigboy, we can talk?"

The girl didn't know much about the truth. I had been in town for only a week and in this neighbourhood for less than 24 hours. I told her this, she giggled and hung up.

Quite often when I'm bored I'll make up stories about an interesting character I've

met but don't know very well. This character I had been talking to on the phone qualified.

I imagined that she was about seventeen years old. I supplemented her giddy voice with blond hair, an attractive face with blue eyes, and a body that was attractive, and becoming more attractive.

She had been popular with both the boys and the girls and had been what is generally referred to as a pretty good kid. She had good friends, good grades and good parents. She wore fashionable clothes and went to a good school. Then one day she found herself pregnant. She didn't want to marry the father, who really didn't want to marry her either. He was twenty-two.

Now instead of going out on weekends she stayed at home. Her parents had laid a guilt trip on her, telling her that if she cared at all about life she would be careful about how she conducted herself. This included her friends, who the parents blamed for the situation in the first place. She was still a young girl and, under the morals of her parents, had become sensitive and self-conscious.

She could no longer communicate with her parents so she called people up on the phone. Over the phone no one had to know who she was, what she looked like, and what condition she was in.

After all that creative effort I felt I deserved another cigarette. I lit one up and realized that tomorrow I would have to buy another pack. I had yet to explore most of my immediate neighbourhood and buying cigarettes would give me a reason to go for a walk and look around. If I got desperate enough I would have an excuse to visit my neighbours—"can I bum a smoke please?"

I picked up my western. Tyrel Sackett was in the process of shooting some bad guys. I got up after five more pages and looked around for the box full of unread books. I had bought books indiscriminately at second-hand bookstores and garage sales while going to college; much faster than I

could possibly read them. This would be a good time to start catching up on these unread books.

The phone rang again. I wondered if it would be my seventeen year old mother. If I could become as blunt as Tyrel Sackett I would ask her. I have been more right more often than most people, including myself, would be comfortable to find out. I picked up the phone.

"Hello, is Jim Dalesa there?"

"Speaking." This was the first time since I had moved into this city that someone was actually calling me. I didn't expect much in a week, but this phone call was special.

"Jim, this is Randy. . ."

"Randy?"

"From work. I know it's eleven o'clock but I just had an idea. What are you up to tomorrow night?"

"I hate to admit it, but nothing much."

"That's what I figured: If you were home tonight you would be home tomorrow night. Anyways, do you want to do me a favour."

"Such as."

"Do you feel like going bowling—my girlfriend's cousin is down and we need another guy."

"I don't know, I had a blind date in college once and. . ."

"Oh come on, She's better looking than Kathy, my girlfriend."

"O.K., I guess so."

"We'll probably go out for a few drinks afterwards with some other people—sound o.k."

"Sure."

Randy gave me instructions as to how to find the place and when to be there. He finished by saying he had some sort of party to get back to.

I was alone again, with only my phone for company. I was in a slightly crazy mood from the promise of something to do tomorrow night that I experimented with talking to noone on the phone. It was about as in-

teresting as I'd expected.

While unpacking my books a second plan of action revealed itself. I could go around the building asking for cups of sugar; it would be an interesting experiment in psychology because people react strangely to situations they had read about, or seen but never expected to happen to them. I decided against it, it was getting late, although down the hall I detected the unmistakable sounds of a rather rowdy party. I thought about crashing it but I had given up partying after a rather disastrous semester in college and felt that I didn't need any of that stuff. It would not be good to try and sell computer systems with bloodshot eyes and a queasy stomach.

I lit up a cigarette. I had enough left to last me the morning if I felt like finishing my unpacking before going out. The phone rang again. I picked it up as if it was a long lost friend.

"Are you the one making all that noise up there?" A male voice demanded accusingly.

"No sir—I think it's the guys down the hall—I was just ready to call you myself."

"Well take this as a lesson. If you want to stay here you better not carry on like those guys do."

"Of course not. I like it here so I wouldn't do anything like that."

"Good. You know ten years ago I had no problems like this. But now anybody with any job figures he can live here."

It sounded like a 'good old days' spiel so I said I had some work to do and looked forward to meeting him in the future.

Compared to what had happened in the dorms at college the matter down the hall was minor scale, especially for a weekend.

My mind drifted off with a little story about the manager. He had some sort of a lifetime contract to run these buildings. Buildings will get older and attract a lower income group. This in turn lowers the prestige of the manager. As old men tend to be conservative he preferred to complain



Brian Dykhuizen
Sr./Art-Elem. Ed

about what was happening rather than change it.

Tonight it had happened again. One of the young renters had started a party which had gotten out of hand, attracting unfavorable attention resulting in the manager getting called out of bed.

Since I was the last one to move in the building he immediately assumed it was me. Either that or he hoped it was me and not the same bunch who had been causing problems for the last six months or so.

I was enjoying this enough to give my imagination free-rein.

The partyers were led by the son of the man who owned this complex. If the manager kicked him out he would be kicked out in turn and nothing would have been accomplished.

I was probably wrong. The party died down rather suddenly.

The phone rang again. I lit up a cigarette and wondered if my seventeen year old mother had phoned me again.

"Hello."

"Hi" a very adolescent, barely male voice said. "Can I speak to Joanne please?"

"I think you have the wrong number—besides shouldn't you be taking Joanne out on a Friday night instead of just phoning her."

"I just wanted to let her know that I made it home safe."

I wished him luck on his next dial and hung up.

I read a book until one o'clock propped up against the living-room wall with a pillow for a back rest. The only chairs I had were in the kitchen, and made for eating quick meals—not for long reading sessions. I felt that I should go to bed, but I didn't really reel like sleeping. Besides, maybe the phone would ring again. I wouldn't mind talking to that seventeen year old mother again.

I got ready for bed, making sure to brush my teeth with Topol, the smoker's toothpolish. I decided to have one last

cigarette before going to sleep. I turned the lights off and sat in the darkness watching the end of my cigarette glow. The radio station I had been listening to went off the air after a somewhat confusing rendition of Oh Canada, sung in both English and French by a troupe of fourth graders. The clock still wheezed but it didn't bother me unless I thought about it. I was too wrapped up in what was happening at the end of my cigarette. Watching the cigarette go up in literal smoke made me calculate the money I was spending, which naturally led me to think of what I could buy (new chairs and a new clock came to mind) and this led me to a vow to quit smoking for the one hundredth time since I had started smoking.

The phone rang. It rang a few times before I found the light and then the phone. I recognized the voice right away.

"Hi," she said. "Remember me?"

"How could I forget," I answered, trying, for the sake of future peaceful evenings, to hide the fact that I was happy to hear her voice again. I was tempted to ask her how old she was but to show interest would pique her interest and I could expect little in the way of mercy on future evenings. I did know one thing now, she was drunk.

"I remember you too. I'm so sorry I bugged you all night. I hope you weren't getting mad."

"Is that why you called again?"

"Nooo. I just wanted to say good night. By the way my name is Janice, Janice Tezzler."

I knew from prank calls I'd made in the past that the last thing I wanted to do was give her my name. "My name is Franklin T. Dester."

"Good night Frankie." She said.

I crawled into bed. I had nearly fallen asleep when the phone rang again. I counted ten rings. This must be important I thought. I stumbled to the phone, picking up my last cigarette on the way and answered it.

"Hello Jim, is that you." It was my mother, she was in Europe.

"Yeah it's me. What's wrong." Something had better be wrong at two o'clock in the morning.

"Why does anything have to be wrong for me to call you. I was just a little bored and I knew you were all alone in Toronto so I thought I'd call you."

I groaned. "Mom it's two o'clock in the morning. I'm not bored because I'm sleeping."

"Sorry dear."

"Well I'm up now—how's your trip going."

"Good. Your father's complaining about everything. He says he's bored but I know he's just doing it so he can worry about how much it's costing him." She went on to tell me everything that had happened to them so far, what was going to happen to them tomorrow and so on. My father merely said he could hardly wait to get back to his small town in Alberta.

After about 20 minutes my mother allowed that I should go back to bed as it was getting late. She hung up. I was left with a cold lump of black plastic in my hand. I hung it back on the receiver.

It rang almost immediately. It was Janice.

"Hi, Franklin T. Dester," she slurred, "you lied to me, I checked the phone book and you weren't in it. Then I phoned the operator and she said she didn't know you either."

"I'm sorry Janice. But I just moved in here and they probably don't have a listing yet. Why don't you go back to bed and phone me in the morning."

"You probably think I'm drunk don't you—well I'm not. I just like phoning people sometimes at night, when I'm bored."

"I'm sorry Janice."

"But you're my friend and I'm happy

now."

That she was, happy being a college euphemism for being drunk. I hoped someone was there to take care of her when she passed out.

"Janice, go to sleep. Phone me tomorrow afternoon, o.k."

"O.k., Franklin T. Dester. Good-night."

"Good night Janice."

"Can I phone you again." She asked.

"Sure."

* * * * *

She did call once again, about a month later. One Saturday night I had a few people over either complaining of burns or bragging of tans after a day at the beach. I stopped to give the clock a firm tap to get it to shut up. I had moved the old wheezer to the kitchen as soon as I had bought another clock, one I would not be ashamed of. I said to a girl who had come into the kitchen to borrow a cigarette that I would like to knock the clock into tomorrow and then see it tell the correct time. She thought that was sort of funny.

I was just lighting up a cigarette myself when the phone rang.

"Can you get that Nance. It's probably Randy wondering what's happening again."

Nancy came into the kitchen. "Who was it?" I asked.

"Wrong number. Some girl wanted to talk to a guy named Franklin T. Dester or something. Wierd."

"Like how?"

"Well she didn't say anything at first, then she asked for this Frank guy, and then, before I even said anything she hung up."

"She hung up?"

"She was crying too."

Michael Peter Dykstra
Sr./English

Dusk

*The dusk is measured and poured
into the receding wind
settling a calm peace
is reversed into smooth lines
against the snorts
of sows burrowing in cool moist black earth
caressing the aircurrents left by mourning
dove wings
and smooth black spots
on white backs of milk cows.*

*It curves over the edges of
Bijou Hills
to melt and mix
a new and different blue.*

*It slides off the edge
and drops
to dance and curtsy
to each movement of the River.*

*It swirls in the wake of
the cry of the coyote
and rises to the sky
to escape the drops of black added
like some aroma trying to escape
its origin*

*India ink swirls in the bottom
like sand startled by a fish fin
to grasp the dusk
and dim the colors of the sunset
for our human fragile eyes*

*until it's washed and peeled away
by the living renewed colors of the sunrise.*

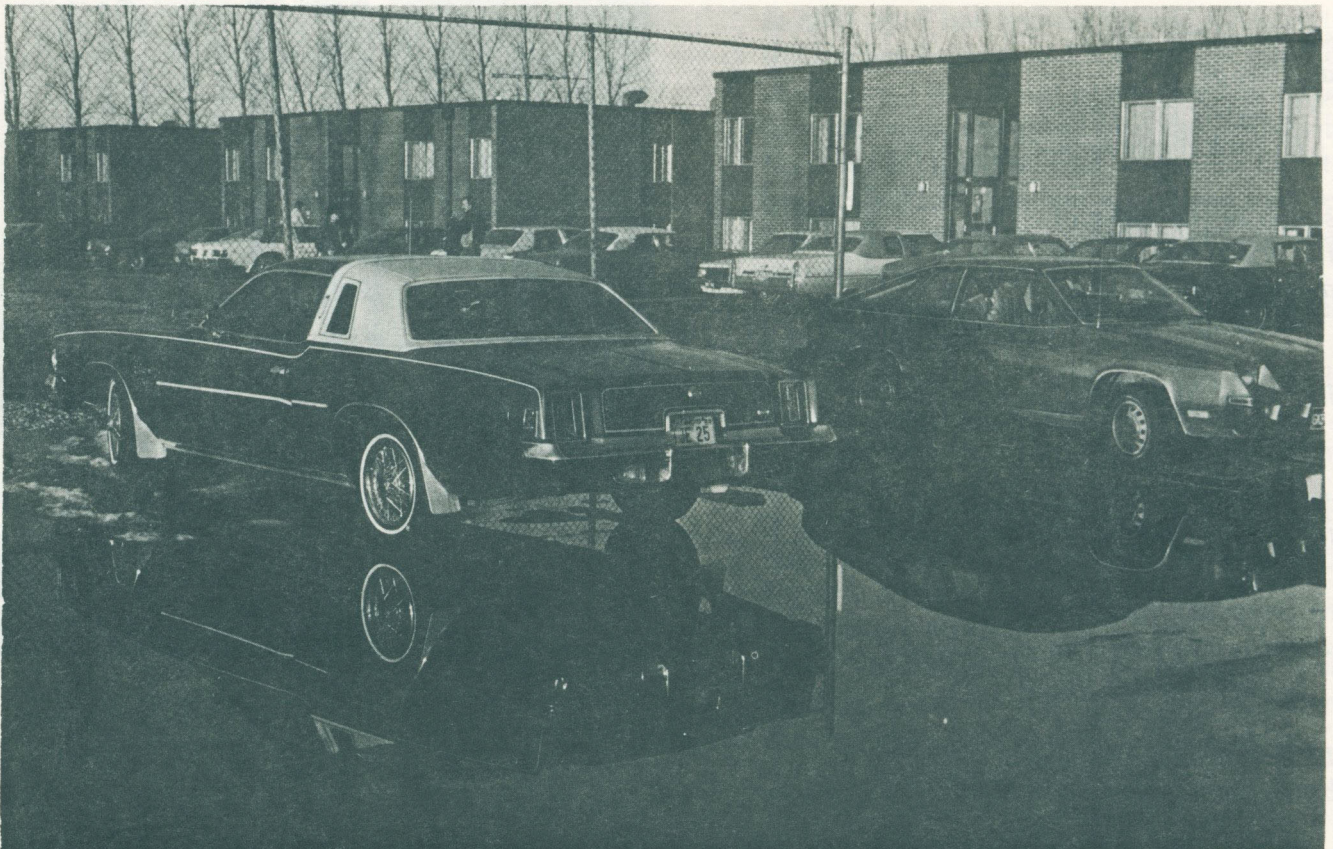


Becki Stair
Sr./Art

Lori Kuipers
Fr./English

Season for Prayer

*"Humidity is 95 percent and rising."
I'm falling
onto an ample, frosty mountain of
vanilla ice cream.
Even the basement
is a toaster
compared to the freezer
I leaned over for three minutes,
searching for delicate coolness.*



John Wesselius
Sr./History



Steve Lesondak
Fr./Pre-Vet.

*As stocky drops of
perspiration drip, drip
into the immaculately licked dish
I recall last winter
when snow dunes
bumped the kitchen window ledge,
I prayed for this.*

Angela Struyk
Fr./English

Every First Apple

I am standing in the field that was once my grandparents' house, my mother's home. The grass is tall; it sweeps along the hem of my red skirt, brushes my legs with cool damp strokes. It is autumn. The scent of ripe apples from the trees at the back of the lot fills the air as it has for so many seasons. Standing here is like relearning lines from an almost-forgotten piece of music: sometimes there are silences, spaces that cannot be easily filled; sometimes the memories rush in like the sweep of a melody, line over line.

I am tired from the drive and the afternoon sun, but the earth is warm beneath my bared feet. I travelled by car to this town—past the fields of ripe corn and the harvest of beans—but, on reaching Leota, I wanted to walk, for I knew there are those things that need to be walked, things that must be measured and paced. I wanted to fit my stride to the past, to place my feet in the track of my mother, in the steps of my grandmother.

As I stepped from the car, I slipped off my sandals and walked slowly. The bite of gravel, sharp in the warm sand, cut into the smooth soles of my feet, but I did not walk on the hard lanes pressed in the dirt of the road. Instead, I chose the loose shoulder, the part that is graded and levelled and smoothed with each changing season. My footsteps, stretching behind me, were deep and evenly spaced.

Although it had been seven years, the names had not changed. They clanged like worn bells from the grocery, the car lot, the corner cafe—Hofkamp's and De Boer's and Schaap's—the echoes of familiar strangers, people I'd known and loved but had never met.

To my left as I walked was the cemetery—a shelter of trees and a black metal fence: my first stopping place. As the gravel road narrowed, I turned on the path near the gate. It was cool under the trees, shaded from the bright September sky. At first I could not find the spot—I had not

been there since winter, January, when there was nothing to see but bareness and snow. I had driven through quickly that time, left without seeing the town, merely stayed for the funeral. Now I walked slowly but recognized nothing in the growth of eight months.

When I found it, the bare, upturned earth startled me. In the passing of months, my loss had found time to heal; yet here it was fresh again as the clods of dark soil, surprisingly new as the sharply clean cuts of his name in smooth granite. I knelt, brushed the spattered dirt from his stone with the hem of my shirt, placing my hand on the green sod beside him—a reminder of how long we'd been without Grandma—and remembered the cornfields we'd walked through each autumn, Grandpa and I. While he checked the crop, peeling the husks away from the ripe ears, I stood beside him and watched him work, noticing only that his eyes were the deep blue of the late summer sky, that his hair was as thin and soft as the silk of corn. Now I wished I could show this old farmer the drying stalks in the field and could stand once again by his side as he skillfully stripped back the husks.

Silently, as I walked back to town, the still sky turned from cobalt to pink to stone gray with the coming of darkness. In the half-light I came to this field, and now I am standing on land that was once theirs. The crickets are shrilling in the damp grass, and the night air is filled with the sweet smell of apples. To the north, the Dipper hangs low in the sky, laden with Indian Summer and the promise of autumn.

Over there, to the left was the shed, where the dip in the grass reaches out to the road. And right here, I am standing in my grandma's kitchen, with the white tiled floor that was waxed and rewaxed. "No running!"—I can hear he speak clearly, and see myself, slippered, slide from the doorway, across that linoleum, to stop near the stove. In those days I slept in the cold bedroom upstairs, the room without win-

dows; but naptimes I lay down on Grandma's bed. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"—a black square hung on the wall, and I traced the words with my fingers on the bedspread when they thought I was sleeping.

The breeze in the field has turned chilly, and I walk from the house—this soft, freshly-seeded grass—to the tall willow tree that stands in the back. Here is where we laid blankets, made grocery stores, restaurants, and homes. The branches touched the ground around us then; we parted them to enter, watched them close behind us. And Grandpa, sitting on the steps behind the house, made whistles for us—chose the pliant wood, cut and skinned and carved it smooth. Now I cannot reach the longest branches, but it doesn't matter—I have no skill at carving and no knife.

The night is getting colder. Before I go, I have one last thing to see: the apple trees. The limbs are thick and heavy with the pink fruit tinged with a darker blush of ripeness. These are the first apples of the season, sweetly sour, the kind that pull with a pleasurable pain at the soft hollows just behind the ears. Once we would have filled the wooden bushel baskets with these apples, would have carried them between us to the house. Now I reach out, stroke the smooth, tight skins, and wonder why no one has pruned and picked these trees: the fruit is nearly ready to make sauce, I hear my grandpa say.

I choose the largest apple in the darkness, for my eyes have grown accustomed to the dark, and as I walk away I rub its skin against the cotton of my skirt. I look back from the road, feel one more time the silence and the spaces, turn the apple in my hand, then bite. The polished skin is smooth against my lips. The fruit is not yet ripe; the juice is sweetly tart and, as always, makes me wince. It is everything, yet nothing, that I expected it would be: it is every first apple.



Darlene Brouwer
Jr./Art

Laura Apol Obbink
Sr./English

Hartville, Ohio

the Amish boy barefoot, but
sweating through his blue long sleeved shirt
his hair was long and banged like girls
nothing like a summer crew cut, nothing like Mickey Mantle
the Amish boy blue jeans were black and without pockets
he had a straw hat, like an old ladies?
the ones with a thin black band? that his Mom made him take off
not a baseball cap, nothing like Mickey Mantle
the Amish boy
ran his thumbs under his suspenders like his dad
but with no car keys to jingle in any pockets

I remember he would chance a good long glance
there outside into BERG'S A MILLIONS AND ONE ITEMS IN STOCK
general store
his eyes as blue and teeth as white as any of the pepsi/pepsident
generation
his toes were dirt black as the laraits licorce inside
he smelled of sour milk and manure
and had hay
hanging out of his hair
like some old barn cat

This morning on the beach

a sleeping bag a sweating rag
"nothing could cool a sun burn back no repellent would fool
a mosquito's tack" last night, duned to write

doomed by rusty swallows
of cheap canteened chablis

I

woke every hour
to track the moon
kicking and

balking

ticking and

talking

across the sky

like an unsweeping

second hand of a watch

Reins

old wire frames window panes
darkly

a rain falling

gonna harder than a prairie storm fire

harder than any asian monsoon mire

down

on children and grandmothers of freedom fighters
praying.

So long ago Liz

*the cabin shutters, painted gingerbread blue
so long ago, only the deepest grain kept the color
the pond, ambered by dozens of unseen autumns
and you,
boiling water in a night crawler coffee can
for camomile tea
with honey smoked from bees with my last pack of cigarettes
and you,
swimming more naked than we've ever been before
but you wore your glasses! Cottonmouths? in Connecticut?
I laughed, leaning on the dock*

Klick

*Kilometers used as thermometers
for what is hot and cold,
what is to be sought and retold
round a someday table for three
in Toronto with four buck bottles of beer
and Isis, Emily and Bathsheba near
just waiting for winks
our only impressive proof
of those footprints in the Himalayan snow
Sierra Madre sand or that spit in the Seine
are the postcards that we send*

No Comprende

*We shared flame in bottle
and beachwood there
south of the Tropic of Cancer
He spoke Hollywood/Pentagon pigeon English
parroting, "Reagan Grenada . . . fascist!"*

A.M. FOUR A.M.

*Static wracked radio pulls me
and this old pontiac past follow fields
past pink truck stop neon sign pounding
GO D FOOD GO D FOOD GO D FOOD GO D FOOD
GO D FOOD GO D FOOD GO D FOOD GO D FOOD
"mushroom steak on manna?" I laugh
between the lines
white and orange bright*

Ronald Thomas Nelson
Sr./Theatre Arts

A Tail of Two Pets

George comes home from a hard day driving his garbage truck. As he strolls through the door of his home, Rover, his faithful friend, is there to greet him. Tail wagging, ears flopping, Rover is George's loyal pet. He is carrying last week Friday's paper in his slobbering jaws as he rushes over to plow George into the kitchen table. But George loves Rover and Rover loves George. George has raised Rover from a small pup into the well-behaved domestic animal which he is today. They are as inseparable as two teeth in a denture. Rover is George's best friend. Certainly a man and his dog are not soon parted.

Charles, upon returning from the country club, picks up some fresh salmon at the pier for Percy, his pet Persian feline friend. When he returns home he catches a glimpse of the cat dodging out of the sitting room into the den. Charles dashes after him waving the fish in hopes of winning his attention. Percy is too quick and evidently does not notice the salmon as he slips back into the other room. Charles is hot on his heels as he pursues Percy into the pantry, Percy's favorite place. The fragrance of the salmon finally finds Percy's nostrils and lures him into a sedentary stance at the cuff of Charles' tweed trousers. Percy greedily grabs the filet and drags it off into a corner from which he warily eyes his master with a distrustful look. Charles knows better than to disturb Percy when he's eating.

There is a bond of communication between Charles and Percy. They leave each other alone unless Percy wants to eat something or to be let out for the night. Charles has a definite respect for Percy and Percy tolerates Charles. A man and his cat—living and loving together—and each his own self.

There you have it, two pets, a cat and a dog, each useful in its own way . . . except for cats. It seems that all they're able to do is ruin the furniture and smell up the house. Dogs, however, serve much more important functions; they provide companionship,

they can be trained to perform certain household chores, they protect homes from intruders, and they perform many other minute services. Have you ever heard of a seeing eye-cat? I think not. And when is the last time you heard of a dog greeting a burglar by rubbing up against his leg in a welcoming gesture? Not in our lifetimes, I'm sure.

True animal connoisseurs cannot deny that cats are self-centered elitist snobs, taking advantage of the suckers conned into owning one of them. Dogs are genuinely loyal, trustworthy, faithful, loving, compassionate animals, and, besides that, they'll fetch a ball for you. If there were some way in which all cats could be turned into dogs, this would be a much better world to live in.

Discriminate pet owners agree that animals of the canine persuasion are much easier to get along with than their feline counterparts. It's not a wonder that cats and dogs fight. I don't blame the dogs one bit and I give them all the moral support I can in their continuing fight to reduce the cat population. Dogs most certainly can hold their own against this crafty enemy. The problem lies mainly in that the cats always fight dirty. Never trust hunch-backed cats, they'd just as soon claw your eyes out as look at you.

So the next time you're in a pet shop looking for an animal to lounge about the house and yard with, don't forget to say, "No cats for me today, thank-you. How about something in a nice retriever?"

Jim Broek
Sr./Comm

History

*Knapsacks lie strewn across the table
evenly mixed with notebooks
a dash of pens
and a sprinkling of coffee cups.
A steady monotonous voice
keeps tempo to the flickering
flourescent bulbs
as the stuffy atmosphere continues baking
under the glare of the late afternoon sun
radiating through the unshuttered window.
A microprogrammed watch alarm beeps.
A cough, a scraping of chairs sliding back.
Risen members hastily putting on jackets
exit quickly
past the next batch awaiting their turn.
In the fresh cool air
they find their ways home
to digest and absorb the new data
already growing stale.*

John Wesselius
Sr./History

Ellen Matheis
Jr./History



Rec'lections

"Yeah," he said, "Oh, I was just a little one
when my folks decided to head out here.
The land was practically free, in terms a money, at least.
Didn't come askin' for much,
just land with a creek, so's horses an' cattle can graze fine.
They built 'em up a house, my folks did.
Plenty of wood then. Still is.
But all that had to be cleared, cut by hand,
hauled out by oxen.
Yeah, needed sons then, in them days.
A man can't do much, workin' alone
Needed a good woman too.
Wild land's hard on 'em though.
But, a man needs a good woman,
t' care for the house, garden, bear 'im sons.
My father, now, he had 'im four boys, 'cludin' me.
An' we worked, we did,
First clearin' the land, then plowin' it up.
seedin', threshin', all of it.
Course, we went t' school too.
Had a long ways t' walk, to a little one-roomer.
Not like them busses they got nowadays. No siree.
We walked, rain 'r shine 'r snow.
That was nice walkin', though, in good weather.
Hear the birds, leaves rustlin',
see deer sometimes, in the bush.
And o'course, checkin' trap lines,
make a couple extra, you know.
Schoolin' was all right,
but we didn't try study too much. Naw, girls did. Not us.
We had other things t' keep us busy doin'.
Life wasn't easy in them times,
an' the depression didn't help us none either.
But we kept on workin'. Nothin' else we could do.
Pray on Sundays, hope the Lord'll help us,
who're tryin' t' help ourselves.
Yessir, good people out here. Helpful,
thinkin', kind folk. Help a body out,
in hard times. I like 'em.
Guess that's why I stayed.
Coulda moved out, you know, when times got bad,
but the folks are them that you like to be with.
An' I had a decent sorta life.
Not bad, not bad a tall.
Makes a life worth livin', you know.
Yeah, a good place t' be.

Ellen Matheis
Jr./History

Test Drive

you to pass
allowing the block
break, in your
for a lane.
road Your
in the speed
lines increases
the as time
scan slips by;
frantically suddenly
as you flashing
you lights
of go on.
front Time is
in up and
looms guiltily
curve you
The scribble
your
name
on the
dotted
line.
The
stern
voice
reprimands,
"Don't
you
remember
what
you
learned?
This is
only a
warning.
I hope
you
get

the
point."

Ellen Matheis
Jr./History

toys but no tv

*you said,
just a fire place
and carved wood toys
those children played
screaming siblings with big brothers blocks*

*mother's pentecostal facade
harsh, sharp and no sorrow
tempered by burning nazi rain
no will, quiet father
though calvinistic generations
passionate amateur paintings and no acclaim*

*siblings scream with big brothers blocks
harsh swift discipline
blocks, wooden toys
burn
red and warm.*

*while you,
big brother stood
no love*

your father died

*and you big brother, my father,
shut the bedroom door
i could not touch you
yet i heard you
cried*

*screaming siblings with father fine canvas
yet you, big brother, my father, would not
tempered by burning inaffection*

*mark-philip venema
Jr./Phil.*

Irish Horses

*So strong, and sure, and swift
are those muscled steeds
of Ireland.*

*Fed on clover and magical water,
curried and brushed
by the fairy mists.*

*Lori Kuipers
Fr./English*

Superman's Day

Haying is going pretty good this year. We put up near 700 bales already. I'm not much good on the wagon because of my game hand. I just drive the tractor with the bailer. I hadn't expected it to go this good without Jim—that's my boy. He did the loft work, stacking the bales from the conveyor. He was strong, and besides, he liked being alone. He was kind of like that after he got back from Vietnam. Real quiet and loner-like. Vietnam still had a hold on him.

I was supposed to go to Korea, but I busted up my hand before I had to ship out. I didn't do it on purpose or nothing. I was just trying to fix my Ma's ringer washer and I accidentally hit the switch while I had my hand on the rollers. That machine just pulled my hand in and started rippin' off the skin and the muscle and stuff. It hurt like a bear. I let out some sounds I didn't think I was capable of. I got the thing shut off, pulled my arm loose, and took off for the Doc's office.

I was waiting for Doc in one of those examination rooms—you know, the ones that are so clean they smell. It seemed like it took him forever to get there to look at my hand. I was in pain. I wanted him there right then. Pretty soon he comes walking in, slow as you please.

"What's this using a potato peeler on your hand," he says. "Kind of a strange way to lose weight." He took this solution and cleaned all the blood off and started poking around on my arm. After a while he looks up at me and says, "This isn't good, Ed. There's a lot of damage in there."

"I got my hand caught in my Ma's ringer washer. I was trying to fix it and got my hand caught."

"I see. You've torn up a lot of ligaments and muscle here. I'll tell you now, that hand won't work the same as it did before. You've got some nerve damage too. Best you'll be able to do is bend your fingers some." He started wrapping my arm in some gauze. "I'm sorry, Ed, this means you won't be going into the army either."

I felt like I had a sack of feed dropped on me. You know how worked up you can get when you're young. I was ready to take on all those Commies by myself, and then I couldn't go. I didn't do it on purpose. I was ready. Instead, I had to stay back and help my Dad on the farm. They said I was helping the war in my own way. Heck, I would've rather been over there fighting like I was supposed to.

It took me a while to get used to the fact that I wasn't going to be able to go to Korea. It sure was a disappointment fighting weeds instead of Communists.

Staying behind wasn't all bad. I practically got my choice of girls. I started going out with Jenny a couple of months after my accident. I proposed to her after a while and we got married. She got pregnant a couple weeks later and pretty soon we had Jim. He was born with a lot of hair, which kind of surprised me. I always kind of expected him to be, well, bald. But he comes out with practically a full head of hair. I could tell he was going to be a real man's man.

I got my hand to working some after a while. I wasn't much good at carrying things cause I couldn't really close it that good. Best I could do was make it look like some kind of claw. I could use it to prop stuff up and move stuff around a little, but that was about it. It wasn't too bad though I guess. It kept me from having to do a lot of heavy work all the time. I ended up driving tractor and doing field work. I got used to it after a while. Gave me a lot of time to think. Just me and the tractor and the field I was working. That's what it's all about, digging up that ground and seeing that good black dirt churned up behind you, coloring in the gray with the black, changing the old for the new.

Jim never was much of a talker. He grew up to be kind of a quiet one, but when it came to work, he was in there hauling as hard as anyone. Why, by the time he was sixteen, he could work almost as hard and as long as anyone I knew. We never talked

much about things. We always just kind of knew what the other expected or thought. In some ways, I wish we had talked more, listened more.

Jim got his notice just a while after he graduated from high school. He couldn't understand why he had to go and fight people he'd never seen.

"It's your duty to your country," I said. I reached down and put the automatic milker on the cow I stood by. "If I could, I'd be going."

"What do I know about fighting and shooting?" Jim asked. "The only thing I know anything about is farming."

"Uncle Sam'll teach you. I've never liked fighting either, but you've got to go—I don't want it ever heard that a Murphy was afraid to fight. I couldn't go; that was bad enough."

"But what'd they ever do to me? I mean, I've never even seen them before or done anything to them."

"The President must have a good reason for wanting us to fight over there. How can we expect to live like we do if we aren't willing to fight?"

"I still don't know."

In a couple of weeks he shipped out to basic training, then to Vietnam—some place near Saigon. He wrote almost every week for a while. Then he just stopped. Not kind of a gradual thing, he just stopped. Didn't hear one thing from him for about nine months. We didn't know if the boy was dead or what. Then, out of the clear blue, he sent word that he's getting out soon. That's it. A couple of weeks later he writes that we could pick him up at the airport the next week.

Jenny and I drove out to pick him up. He came flying in on one of those big jets, a huge silver sausage with wings. And you've never seen so many people hugging and smooching in one place. I told Jenny not to carry on over Jim, because he'd be in uniform.

I saw him first, and I could see right off

he was different. He wasn't the teenage kid that had shipped out to basic over a year ago. Still, he did look kind of young with his hair all shaved short. But he really looked like something else all decked out in his uniform.

"Jim," Jenny called when she saw him. "Jim, over here." Jenny ran up and gave him a hug.

"Stop that, Jen," I said. "You'll embarrass the boy."

"It's alright, Pa," Jim said.

"How are you, Jim?" I held out my hand.

"I'm alright."

"You look so skinny. You've lost weight," Jenny said. "Hasn't he lost weight, Ed?"

"He's a lean, mean, fighting machine." I slapped Jim on the back. Women always say their kids have lost weight when they haven't seen them for a while.

Jim studied the floor of the terminal. I could see something was different about him, something about his eyes, the way he kept looking around all the time, like he was expecting something to come out of the crowd. He'd be talking and then he'd look over at something and just kind of forget we were there. Something about him, something about that look in his eyes, like he wasn't alive the same way we were.

"What do you say we go home?" I said.

"I've got your favorite for supper—roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy," Jen told him.

"What are we waiting for?" Jim swung his duffle bag over his shoulder, looked back at the crowd one more time, and followed us to the car.

After a couple of days, he started working on the farm with me and his grandpa and his uncle Hubert. He came into the barn kind of cautious for a while, but he got over that after a while and was working real hard again in no time. He didn't talk much and especially not about Vietnam. So I just left him to himself. I figured it must be

something he just couldn't talk about, something he didn't want to start rattling around in him again, or something he had to figure out for himself. I figured if he needed to, he'd talk to me about it soon enough.

After about three weeks he decided to move out and get a place of his own. There was a fairly good house standing empty about three miles from our place, a house built back in this little patch of woods. It wasn't nothing fancy, a one story place with a bedroom, a bathroom, a kitchen, and another room that passed for a living room, but it gave him plenty of room and privacy. I kind of figured he'd want some privacy. He got these pictures of jungles and stuff like that to hang on the walls. I didn't much like them. Not because they were weird or nothing, but I just like to see someone in a picture I hang on the wall. These just made me feel like someone was watching me from inside the picture.

"That what it looks like over in Nam?" I asked. I picked up his knife off the table in the living room.

"Huh? Yeah, only worse." Jim put one of his camouflage shirts on.

"How so?"

Jim mumbled something about something crawling in the trees.

"What was that? I couldn't hear you."

He let out a sigh. "Nothing." He pushed up the last corner of one of the posters. "Why don't you head back. I'll be there after a while."

I put the knife back on the table, and headed for the door. "Something wrong?"

Jim shook his head and looked into the poster. I could tell he wanted to be alone, so I left it at that.

About that time, Jim stopped coming to Mass, too. I couldn't figure out why he'd stop coming like that—it's not like it takes a whole lot of time or anything—but he wouldn't show up or go with us to church anymore. It could only help him. It couldn't really hurt him any, at least I didn't think so.

Jim and I were standing outside looking at the hay crop a couple of weeks later. It was about time to start haying again and the crop didn't look good. "Looks like we may have to buy some hay from the Wilson's this year," I told him. The Wilsons lived just a mile and half up the road from us. "This crop ain't going to amount to much."

"I can see that." Jim squatted down on his heels, and reached down for a stick.

"It's hardly worth my time to go out and cut it all down," I said. "It's awful sparse, but it'll still take me a couple of days to do it."

"We could burn it all off in a couple of hours." Jim scratched in the dirt with the stick. "I seen it done. I seen a whole village of gooks burn. Probably take an hour to do all this."

"Burn a whole village?"

"Plane comes over, drops the stuff, and poof!—no more village."

"And you want to do it to the hay?"

"Save a lot of time." Jim was drawing pictures in the dirt with the stick.

"Why would you burn a whole village?" I asked. I couldn't imagine burning a whole town.

"Had to. It was full of Cong."

I shivered at the thought of all those people. What else had he seen over there, I thought.

"Forget I mentioned it." Jim turned and headed toward the barn.

"No, Jim wait."

"Forget it." Jim kept walking.

We usually took turns, except for me, doing the different baling jobs. Usually, I just drove the bailer, because I couldn't toss the bales around. Jim started out stacking bales on the wagon, while Hubert unloaded and the neighbor kid stacked in the loft. After a couple of loads, it was his turn in the loft. Everybody else hated that job, but Jim took right into it, working like a maniac. He'd be groaning and heaving, and sweating like a bear in summer. Hay leaves would be sticking all over him—made it look like he

was sprouting moss. He wore that camouflage shirt with the sleeves cut off and a red bandana.

He came down out of the loft after a couple of loads, looking like a green swamp creature. "What do you think of my night patrol getup? Leaves'd make you fade into the jungle."

"Why would you want to cover your face, too?" Hubert took a swallow from the jug of lemonade we had put in the milkhouse.

"Cong couldn't see you. Even if they didn't see you, most of the time they'd smell you."

"Smell you?" I said. "How could they smell you?"

"Vietnamese ain't got no sweat glands. If they smelled sweat, they knew you were coming."

"How'd you keep 'em from smelling you?" the neighbor kid asked.

"You'd roll in the dirt for a while, then take some root and rub it all over, or you rub animal crap under your arms—"

He just stopped. He didn't even finish what he was talking about. He looked over at the field. He looked toward the horizon, but wasn't looking at the scenery. He was remembering something. Jim turned and headed for the loft.

"What's up, Jim?" I asked. "What's on your mind?"

Jim just kept walking. I wished I knew what made him stop talking. He sure had a way of confusing the heck out of me.

One morning, halfway through the summer, Jim came to the farm on a big Harley, one of those big hogs with the saddlebags and all. He just came flying onto the yard with no helmet on, dust clouds flying up behind.

"I thought you were going to buy a car," I said.

"I was. But something drew me to get this," Jim said as he swung his leg over the seat. "I couldn't resist it."

"You keep riding it like that, and you're

liable to get yourself hurt. Least you could do is wear a helmet."

"Takes all the thrill out of it."

"You just take it easy on that thing."

"Oh, come on. Loosen up. I'm not going to get hurt. If I didn't get nailed in Nam, I'm not going to get hurt on this thing."

I still didn't like it. I could feel the gray hairs sprouting.

Just about the time we got to working on the last crop that year, the barn conveyor started acting up. Seemed like the bales just didn't want to travel right; they'd get hung up before they dropped off. Jim usually just yelled for the guy on the wagon to shut the whole thing off because the switch was down below. Then he pulled the bales out to get the thing loosened up again. After about four or five times, he got sick of having to stop all the time, and decided to just pull them out without stopping the conveyor. The bales were high enough in the loft that he could just reach over the edge of the conveyor and pull the bales out.

"You know that that chain on that conveyor could cut you in two if it got hung up enough to snap." I was taking a break so I decided to watch him stack for a minute.

"Ain't going to happen," he said. "I'm indestructible."

"Right, and the pope is stopping by tomorrow."

"Him and Superman."

I turned and started walking down the side of the grass ramp that led up to the loft from below. I walked into the milkhouse to get the jug of lemonade we hung in the bulk milk cooler to keep it cool.

I hadn't been in the milkhouse for more than a couple of minutes when I heard the conveyor shut off and saw Hubert and the neighbor kid start running toward the ramp. I couldn't see the ramp from where I was, but I knew they wouldn't be running just for the fun of it.

I took one step out the door and saw Jim coming down the ramp, his arm held out, all blood from his elbow to his fingers. I

dropped the jug, and ran over to see what had happened.

"Ho-ly balls," I said. "What ate your arm?"

"He got it stuck under the conveyor," Hubert said. "He reached up to pull out some bales, missed the bale, and got his arm stuck under the chain when it started again. The track started running over his arm and ripping his arm to shreds because the bales were weighing down on it. He didn't yell or nothing. We just saw him walking down the ramp holding his arm. He must have just ripped his arm out from under it while it was still running."

I told Hubert to run up to the house and call the Doc while I got the car. The neighbor kid went with Hubert to get a towel for Jim's arm.

Hubert took Jim up to the house with him. Jim seemed to be in a state of shock. He just stood there, not saying a word. Jenny came outside blubbering and crying about her baby being hurt. I came around the front of the house with the car, loaded Jim in the front, and took off.

Jim stared at his arm all the way there. The towel dripping blood from his arm, and he just stared at it, not saying a word.

"You feel alright, Jim?" I asked. "Probably hurts something fierce."

He just kept staring. I would have let out a couple of good yells by this time, but he just stared at his arm, like he was trying to make it heal by looking at it.

"You'll be alright," I told him. "We'll be at the Doc's office in no time."

It took only five minutes to get to the doc's office. When we got there, a nurse took us to an examination room right away. She guided him to the table, sat him down, and took the towel off his arm. Jim hardly seemed to notice, like his arm wasn't part of him anymore. He had this glassy look in his eyes. He was looking off into space, his eyes jumping back and forth even though nothing was moving.

"Let's take a look at that arm," Doc

Sanderson said. "I'll just give you a shot to ease the pain."

Jim pulled his arm a little closer and kept looking off into space. He still wasn't saying anything.

"Hold out your other arm so I can get a vein," Doc said.

Jim never moved.

I thought he was in another world. "Come on," I said, "let him give you the shot so he can work on your arm."

"It won't hurt, son," Doc said as he moved closer.

Jim's eyes looked like a crazed bull's. A lot of white showing. He was looking down at his arm, but there was something more. He looked like he was about to blow a fuse or something.

Suddenly, Jim jumped off the table, and started winging punches. He picked up a chair and threw it into a medicine cabinet. Glass shattered and flew everywhere.

"What the heck are you doing, Jim?" I said. "He'll keep the shot if you don't want it."

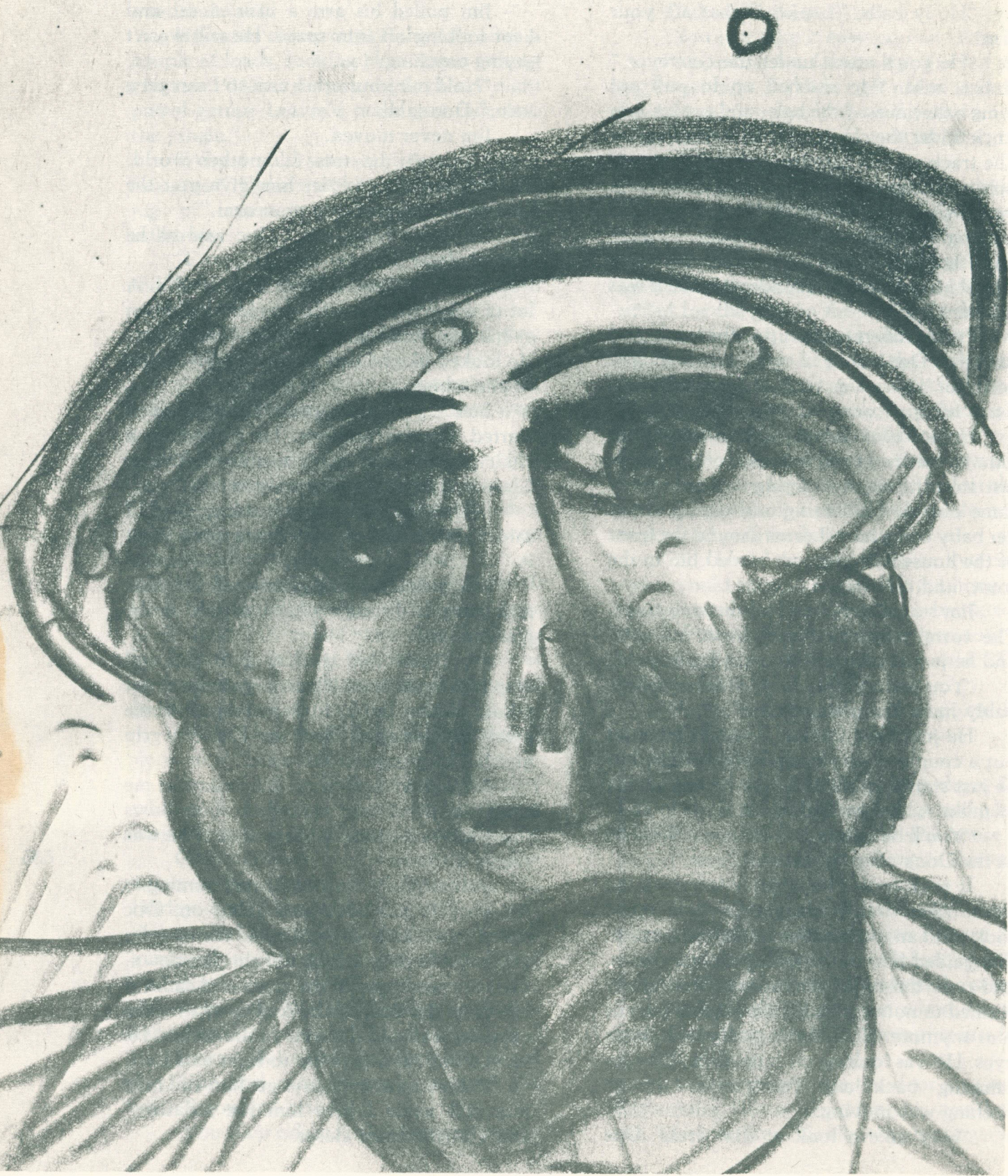
Jim picked up the phone off the desk and flung it through what was left of the glass cabinet.

I ran over and tried to grab him and stop him from breaking anything else. I got a hold of him, but he turned and pushed me away with his good hand, and I lost my grip and fell back against the wall.

He turned to face me. He looked at me as if he'd never seen me before. Like I was some kind of stranger. Almost as if he was scared of me.

A bunch of people had come running to the door to see what was going on. Doc called to a couple of guys in the doorway to give me a hand in trying to calm Jim down. Two of them came in the room and came at him from the side. Jim backed up against the opposite wall and slid over to the corner. He looked like he was ready to fight us all off.

"Okay now, you guys get him and hold him still while I give him the sedative." Doc's needle came closer.



mark-philip venema Jr./Comm.

We all moved in to try to get a hold on Jim. His eyes shifted back and forth between us as we moved in.

"It's all right, Jim," I said as I moved closer. "The doc's just trying to help you."

"You touch me, I'll kill you," Jim screamed. "I'll kill you all."

"I'm your father," I yelled.

"You're trying to trick me. It's just another trick."

The two other guys kept moving closer while I talked to Jim. They were almost close enough to grab him. Jim looked around for some kind of weapon.

Suddenly, he charged. One of the guys caught him and pushed him back against the wall. Then me and the other guy got in there to hold him so Doc could give him the shot.

"Hold one arm still so I can get the hypo in him," Doc said.

Jim was wriggling like a snake, but we had him pinned pretty good. I got hold of his good arm and held it pretty still. Doc moved in to give him the shot. The closer he got, the harder it got to hold Jim. Finally, I couldn't hold him anymore and his arm broke free. The back of Jim's hand caught Doc smack in the face. He fell back on the floor, holding his nose, groaning and swearing.

"Hold him still," Doc yelled. "I'm going to stick the needle in whatever sticks out."

Me and the two others guys moved Jim over to the table and pinned him down. Doc got beside him and stuck the needle in his hurt arm, which had started bleeding again. Jim gave out a scream like I didn't think any human could.

"I'll kill all you freakin' bastards," Jim yelled. "I'll cut out your hearts. You won't get anything out of me. Nothing. I'll die first."

"It shouldn't take long for the drug to take effect." Doc put a handkerchief up to his nose.

I couldn't believe Jim had gone off the deep end like that. He'd just gone nuts. He said he was going to kill me.

The drug was slowly taking effect. His arms and legs started to relax. He'd lost a little blood, too. His whole body started to go limp. The two other guys lifted him onto the table and held him there.

What could make him go berzerk like that, I thought. We never talked much, but he would have told me if something was bothering him that much.

The drug made his arms and legs go limp. The two let go of him and his arms hung spread eagle over the edge of the table, his head turned side to side. He still threatened us, but his lips didn't want to work right so it was slow and garbled.

"I'll . . . kill . . . you . . . all." His lips barely moved. The words came out in gasps.

The two guys who had helped corner Jim walked out, glass crunching under their feet.

"Kate, get the belts to strap him down, and get an emergency pack, stat," Doc said to his nurse. "Call the VA and tell them we're bringing this boy in when we're done. He's having hallucinations."

Doc fixed him up and sent him off to the VA hospital. They kept him strapped to the bed there until his arm healed some, then they put him in one of those straightjackets for a while so he wouldn't hurt himself, they said. Delayed stress, they called it.

We went to visit him at least once a week just to see how he was doing. He got out of the straightjacket after a couple of weeks. He had a couple of therapy sessions a day for a while. We could only visit him for a couple days a week, and even then we could only see him for a couple hours. Most of the time we'd talk about the farm or the weather. He told us that he was going to therapy to help him with his problem. The doctors thought he was getting better, but that he was still having trouble coming to grips with what he saw and did in Vietnam.

A couple of weeks after he got the jacket off, I went to visit him on a Sunday afternoon. It was warm out for October, so

we were sitting outside by a lawn table. We'd been talking about crop yields when Jim just stops and looks at me kind of curious.

"What's up, Jim?" I asked.

Jim looked down at his hands crossed on the table. "You think I'm nuts, don't you?"

"What? No, I don't," I shifted closer to the table. "Where'd you get that idea from?"

"You never asked me what I saw that made me go nuts."

"Didn't want to get you all rattled again."

"I'm over that now." Jim still looked down at his hands. His one hand was still in bandages. "Don't you want to know?"

I leaned forward and started tracing the table pattern with my finger. "Well, yeah, I guess."

I couldn't figure out what he was leading up to. He just kept looking down at his hands, waiting. Like he needed me to ask him why. "All right. What made you do that stuff?"

Jim almost looked relieved. He leaned back in his chair and looked out over the open lawn of the hospital. Then he turned back and looked straight into my eyes. It was like he saw right inside me. It made me feel uneasy.

"You'll never understand."

Jim pushed himself away. He stood up from his chair, still looking at me. Then, without saying a word, he turned and walked back to the hospital.

We've got two or three hundred more bales to put up yet. Should be done in a day or so. We had to get another kid to take Jim's spot. He's been working on getting his hand working better again. I haven't been to see him much lately because I've been so busy. Someday, when he's all cured, when he comes back, then we'll sit down and we'll talk.

Paul Van Beek
Jr./Mis-Buad

The River

*The river, constantly flowing,
Winding onward, always going.
Men try to tame and to harness
By building dams and obstructions.
Trying to hold back the waters force.
But the river remains flowing.*

*And the river never looks back,
It is always moving forward.
It seems as though it is grasping
For some unseen, far away goal.
What it has past, is forgotten
And the river remains flowing.*

*The river will never give up,
Always pressing on through rough times.
It violently smashes downward
Onto rocks, through raging rapids,
Twisting and binding as it falls.
Still the river remains flowing.*

*We mortals should heed the river.
Those who worry about the past,
And all those who fear the future.
And they who feel like giving up
When things start getting rough, should be
Like the river, always flowing.*

Mike Broersma
Fr./English



body

*hearts burst passion
knowing they exist
say,*

*we
a creaturely tree,
are*

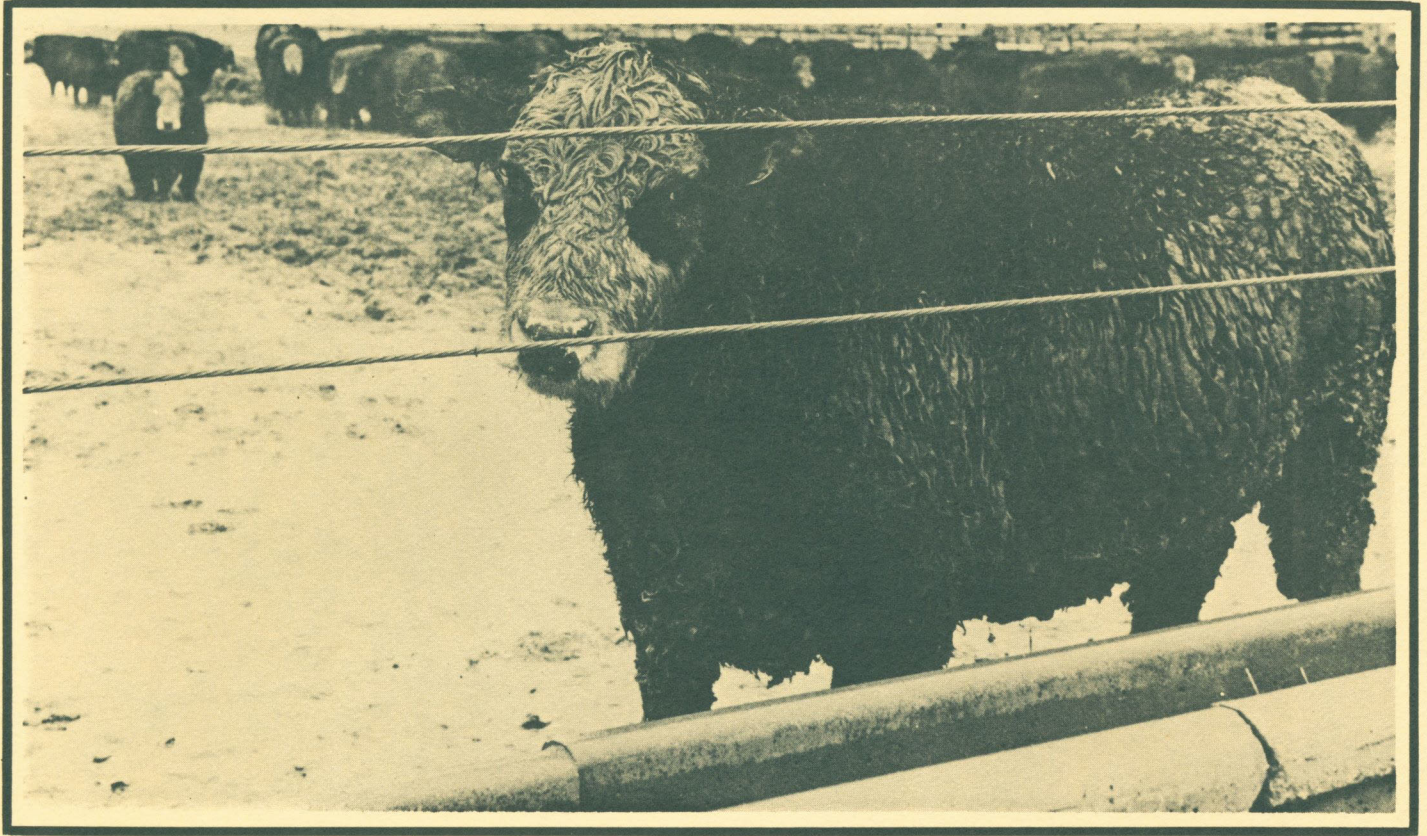
*leaves to dance wildly
our faces in the song of a gale.
roots to wriggle discovery
we imbibe goodness in apparent blackness.
branches pulling into blue fullness
the discovery dance of our blossoms
fruit crying life's celebration.*

*we are meaning
from deep, deep inside of us
our core being more powerful
than an atomic flash.*

mark-philip venema
Jr./Phil.

Words

*they appear as
mere words on a page.
but to us they are visions
of better days.
time and distance
disintegrate
into my lines of thought,
which hold no meaning
to another's eyes, but
hold endless possibilities
to the mind:
mine to yours.
memories, imaginings, dreams;
they take root and comfort
in my knowing
that another soul
reads with the mind
and heart
what my clumsy hand
has tried to say
in mere words
on a page.*



Becki Stair
Sr./Art

Well that's it. You can take your cup back into the kitchen, turn down the music and find a hard, uncomfortable chair and get back to studying, popcorn-partying or just standing around waiting for the mud to clear, with a relaxed, rested and possibly enlightened mind.
