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Short Story

FOG

by Mimi Ernest

Marilyn Varga stood squarely in her new platform shoes, zealously presenting the purposes of our group and looking, to me at least, like she had been one of the original subscribers to MS. Although she is one of my best friends, I must tell you that Marilyn is just plain heavy and looked even heavier that night on the eleven o'clock news reels. That day she wore a pair of black bells with a matching safari jacket unbuttoned in front to reveal a sleek-fitting blouse printed with black and white lions. Around her neck and beneath her one and a half chins she wore strands of delicate gold chain, given to her three Christmases ago. Her hair shone dark and rich in the early autumn sun. On my way to the grocery the day before I had seen her getting a touch-up at Marge's. As she excitedly told the reporter about the great fellowship and unity of our town, her red polished fingernails twinkled impressively on her wildly gesturing hands. She was on the second page of her typewritten spontaneous responses. This was the part where she praised the dedication of the Concerned Mothers of North Oldenfield (N.J. she added pointedly, as though there were thousands of North Oldenfields sprinkled across the country) and decried the apparent unconcern of the black students' mothers. (She had called them nigger bitches the other night but then that had been off camera.)

"We are not prejudiced against those people. Even if it were busloads of Hungarians coming into our high school we would feel the same way." She had heard that line on a NBC documentary one Sunday. Come to think of it, most of the speeches and gimmicks used that day, we girls had collected over the last few months. Remembered from a detective movie, clipped out of underground newspapers hidden in the basement by the Tide, scribbled down after chatting with the trashman, our finds were pooled for "The Day". Only a small, gnawing fear was truly our own. It seemed to us that our own familiar world had cracked ever so slightly and a delicate foreign fog was seeping in making it hard to recognize just what really was.

Perhaps it was the shuffle and nudge of the crowd or the staccato rhythm of the chant that hypnotized me. At any rate, I seemed suddenly to awake and realize that I had been staring intently at Marilyn's mouth as she finished with the reporter, dismissed him with a triumphant smile and enthusiastically assumed her role as our cheerleader. Her lips were smeared a frenzied shade of red.

It was probably Daring Lips #4. I had seen it two days before on her bureau, a newly-purchased, imitation, gold filigree tube glued to a piece of cardboard picturing a lithe, sensuous blonde. "Go ahead. Try it." Marilyn had said. The lipstick felt moist and rich on my lips and had stirred up half

dreams of elegant people, crystal halls, and hushed magic.

But now the same rich color from the same delicate tube was thick and heavy, tracing a lopsided oval on a puffy pink face. I watched the oval stretch and snap—now round and puckered, now thin and straight. The Red lips opened again and again, glistening against white teeth and exposing a cavernous mouth which seemed to grow even larger as I watched, a horribly grotesque thing like the veined and wriggling monsters' mouths that used to give me the willies on the Saturday morning cartoons.

Somehow I wove my way, stumbling slightly, to the outer edge of the crowd, farthest from Marilyn and the high school's large front doors.

It was then that I saw him, as I trudged with as much dignity as possible from the school to my own cool, silent house four blocks away. He sat on a fallen tree trunk at the edge of the small maple grove that bordered the teachers' parking lot. A moment ago I suppose he could have been walking along the trunk tightrope style, his thin arms stuck straight out on either side and jerking up and down a bit to keep his balance, his head bowed slightly, eyes gazing at his feet. Maybe he had glanced up quickly a couple times to see how close he was to the end and if, because of his skill and daring, he had gained an audience. But when I saw him he just sat on the trunk, looking my way but so deep in his dreams that he didn't see me at all. From where I stood, maybe ten yards away although I'm no judge of distance, he looked about ten years old. His feet in knotty laced sneakers dangled above the ground. The grass tained blue jeans he had on were probably the same size as my son Roy's but they were too short for him so I could see his

bony ankles poking out under soiled, white athletic socks. He wore a white tee-shirt with a face and the name "Earl the Pearl" stamped on the front of it. His dreamy eyes seemed to come from the depths of his dark face and the sun lit his nappy hair. Truthfully the very first thing that I had noticed was that he was black, in fact it had startled me, but I tried to be casual about it. Even Marilyn admits it is gauche to stare.

Anyway, as I stopped and stood there wondering why a boy his age was hanging around the high school he shook himself slightly, looked nonchalantly to the left and right, and began to slide agilely down off the trunk. But as his feet touched the ground his ankle turned suddenly and he kept right on falling. His face registered only puzzlement as his knees hit the dirt with a thud, then his hands-chest-chin. I watched as I might in a slow motion dream. I knew what had happened. I knew a little boy had hurt himself and that he was all alone but I didn't move. The boy sat up, knelt on the ground and, raising one hand, he tenderly touched his lower lip. A thread of blood, moist and thick, accentuated the edge of his mouth. That sight, morbid as it may seem, gave me a curious sense of comfort. As he stood up, he blotted his lip with the back of his hand. The light-colored palm contrasted sharply with the dark backdrop of his face. Thoroughly brushing the dust from Earl the Pearl's face, he turned and sauntered off through the parking lot. I had turned too and now walked home.

I cried that night. Me—the woman who didn't even need a tissue the second time she saw Dr. Zhivago. In the dark at home, I cried longer and harder than my son ever has, trying in vain to figure out why I just stood there. I am in a fog.



Lollipop Interview

by Becky Maatman

Avant-Garde in Sioux Center

Art is going off in the strangest directions in our day. At a zoo on the west coast, chimpanzees are making paintings which are currently fetching a fair price on the market. In Germany, a young artist thought to immortalize himself by cutting apart his body piece by piece in front of a movie camera, carrying on until he died. In many cultural centers 'happenings' have become a popular art form, which basically includes a group of people doing weird things. The rationale is that meaning can be found through this type of activity.

These avant-gardists may scoff at the more traditionally-minded majority, but they can certainly not hold Dordt in derision. Our own Prof. N. Van Til staged his own happening in front of a wide-eyed Western Civ. class. Attacking an old couch, first with a knife and then with an axe, the class undoubtedly thought that he had finally gone insane. On the contrary, taking out one's frustrations in such a manner would probably be an aid in hanging on to some sanity.

We Have Another Patient

Jerry Van Tol

Oh no! It's that nauseating stuffed-up feeling again. Another member of the **Cannon** editorial staff is sick. He has diagnosed his illness as frustration caused, not by indigestion but rather, by the digestion of too much trivia and fruitless debate.

I applauded Wally Vande Kleut's efforts to set down some general guidelines governing artistic expression in the last issue of the **Cannon**. He couldn't have said it better when he stated:

The doing of Christian art is a complex thing. It involves the particular talents of Christian artists **and** the diverse talents of Christian readers. Too often this dualness is ignored, resulting in a communal loss to the readership and personal loss to the artist.

Therefore the rationale for **FEEDBACK**. When I read this far I responded with a hearty affirmative nod of the head. Right on, Wally. But then I parted ways with him. He continues: "Yet criticism swished its sharp sword with what I feel to be a lack of understanding." Wait a minute! Let's be careful here. We have just emphasized the importance of the diverse talents of the Christian readers and now we want to chide them for a lack of understanding? If we do that, aren't we telling them that they do not know how to be **Christian** readers? It seems to me that a Christian reader must know the purpose of the Christian writer within a Christian community or he is not a Christian reader. The problem lies not in a failure to recognize the purpose of a Christian writer but in a failure to recognize **good** Christian literature.

Oh boy! Here we go—off into another lengthy harangue of aesthetic norms. No, No! Remember, I said I was frustrated with fruitless debate. Wally makes a daring, and I

think a very helpful, point when he says, "I deny **absolute** norms for artistic expression because I can't deny the diversity of a God-ordered creation." The Christian reader must realize that a good literary work does not and should not be expected to reveal the full-orbedness of creation. Any attempt to establish aesthetic norms is wasted activity.

How then does a Christian reader criticize or evaluate (criticism so often amounts to nothing more than evaluation) the Christian merit or value of a literary work? This is a question often asked of me and I must confess that it saddens me and frustrates my attempts to be a Christian writer. Do we have to establish a rating system which would succeed only in canonizing a Christian writer on the basis of popular opinion? I can see it coming. Instead of a Ten Best Seller List, we would like a Ten Most Christian List. On whose standard of judgement would we base such a list? Whose ideas for aesthetic norms would we use? The success of a novel should not be measured by its edificatory impact anymore than it should be measured by its economic impact.

I do not support any effort to evaluate a Christian literary work communally. Criticism must come from the reader and it must be individual. Ezra Pound said it so well in his essay, **What is Literature: What is Language Etc.?** "The READERS AMBITION may be mediocre, and the ambitions of no two readers will be identical." Christian artists need not fear the sharp sword of Christian criticism. A reader's "AMBITION" may be greater than his own. Thank God if it is!

I cannot accept Wally's idea that an "artist should be **reflective** of the **religious** direction

of the Christian community". If criticism cannot be communal, how can a Christian writer reflect the religious direction of the community? How can the writer understand such a thing as communal need when the only feedback he gets is individual? Is it his task to total up the individual needs and decide the communal need on a majority basis?

We must remember that the talents of Christian readers are diverse. The ambitions of no two readers are identical. Thus, the writer has no direct responsibility to the community. His responsibility is to be true to his craft and in doing so he must respond obediently to the demands of the Word of God. It is the reader's responsibility to be selective in his reading. By that I also mean that he should be careful in his criticism. Let no reader think that he has the standard of judgement to criticize a literary work in a Christian manner. Let him not think either that he has established what are God-given aesthetic norms. A Christian reader must remember that his level of appreciation may not be equal to that of another reader. He must be able to recognize when a writer is not speaking to him and if that is the case, he must not be too quick to criticize.

A writer should not limit himself to allegory because the majority of his readership demands allegory. If a reader is offended by anything other than allegory, I would advise him not to read my writing. I do not hold that against him but I feel that my creative talents lie in a different direction and that it is my duty to write for those Christian readers who demand something other than allegory. Do you get my point? I would beg of you that you do not stifle a writer's creativity with the demands of a popular consensus. Christian art is not democratic; it is an individual love response to the Word of God.

And so I would add a word of feeble advice to the struggling Christian writer. Be patient in the face of the sharp sword of criticism. Ask yourself this question: Have I been neglecting or abusing my talent in any way? If you must answer yes, then you must take your critics seriously. But if you can insist that you have been true to your craft and obedient to the Word of God, be patient with your reader and carry on with the Lord's work.

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From My Youth, And Other Inconsequential Years

by Nigel Weaver

I sat there losing myself in the gold-flecked tabletop. Fourteen hours out of Montreal, thirty since I'd slept last, and now here in White River. The waitress eased the cup onto the table, sloshing lukewarm coffee into the saucer, a moat around the dirty cup. She left without a smile, without doing anything much, except her job. I guess I didn't smile either; both of us products of a curious disinterest. I stared after her retreating figure. She turned to go back behind the counter and I saw him standing there, alone by the cash register.

He was buying gum, Juicy Fruit, I think. That put me off him even more. I mean that's always seemed to me to be a somewhat childish practice for anyone to indulge in, especially a grown man. He turned, lined me up, and walked easily toward me. He'd sat next to me from Sudbury on, but I'd managed not to have to say too much to him, and had had a reasonably enjoyable time. I never could stand people who feel some kind of an obligation to make conversation, just because you share the common misfortune to be traveling in the same direction on the same bus. At least he wasn't one of those, though several times he'd half turned to me as if he was going to say something but couldn't quite do it, or wasn't really ready. I'd hoped to escape him for a while here in the restaurant. He sat down, talking, outloud so that I could hear, yet more to himself.

"I never meant to kill him, you know. He . . . he was the last one in the world I wanted dead." I was beginning to feel a shade uneasy, wishing that there was somewhere else to go and sit, but all the other tables were empty. I sat alone except for the driver and waitress who stood talking over by the counter. Should have gone into the cafe in the Saulte like all the rest.

"And now they're going to bury her next to him. Funny when you think about it, all those years they'll be together under the earth, side by side like they belonged that way or something. Can't say as they was ever once together in life, least ways not while I lived out there.

"They say she willed the place to me, never 'a thought she'd do that. She despised me, you know. Well I guess it wasn't me so much as me dad—though I never asked him to marry her sister, now did I—so I can't see why she blamed me. But she did. Sometimes I think she must 'a really hated me—but I never wanted to be no inconvenience, not to her, not to anyone. She tried real hard to find him after me mum died. There was even that one day when she lit into the Children's Aid lady, like she was some old cow what wouldn't move backwards or forwards, but just stood there with them big stupid eyes what couldn't see for lookin'—an' all 'cause they hadn't found him yet. The Aid lady never come back out after that—'cept for that one time.

She and me uncle never had no children of their own thought. She used to think that were his fault—though from what I heard down at the Community Hall, I don't rightly see how it could'a been. I often used to try

and pick out which of them Cooper kids was me cousin, when there wasn't much else to do in the morning service, 'cept try and sit so as she couldn't jab me with her elbow. But none of them really looked like him at all—guess that was lucky for Mr. Cooper an' for his wife—not to mention me uncle.

You could hear her voice wherever you was you know. Even if you was only in the other room she went about it like you was a mile off. It wasn't loud exactly—more like shrill or something, like the only thing you could hear was her voice. It always sounded kinda burdensome and tired somehow, yet always impatient at the same time—like nothing would ever be quite right, not even with all her supervising 'cause sooner or later him, or me, or the both of us would mess it up.

'Och, will ya no go fetch the koows, Jamie," she'd keep repeating it, leaning out the window and calling—like I was slow or something, 'stead of my not much minding whether they got fetched-out or not. I mean we never could keep 'em off 'a the patch 'a land she called her garden, so why not just leave 'em in there. So what if they trodded down her flowers, they never grew anyway—not for all the water we'd put on 'em. Even in the dry years she had to have a go at it—lord, the water she made me waste on those things."

I guess I must have picked the spoon up from the saucer while he'd been talking. Perhaps subconsciously I had wanted to keep him at bay, make sure he didn't get too close.

"Sometimes me uncle'd take me along to the barn with him and we'd climb and climb into the musty coolness, and sit out on one of the crossbeams, and he'd talk to me 'bout the farm 'n stuff—couple a' times he even told

me of when he was in the war and over in Europe, but he didn't say too much 'bout that at all 'cept for them few times. We'd sit there, quiet—just the two of us—him talking, me listening, sometimes not saying anything. I guess we both liked it up there so close to her, yet far away and out of reach. We'd stay up there 'til the sun dipped below the tree tops and if'n you looked out through the boards it looked like an old rubber ball with the paint all a peelin' off, what with the lines of the branches 'n all. Then we'd climb down, slow, him first, then me a step or so later, him with his arms kinda cradled 'round my legs so as I wouldn't fall. He'd walk back to the house with me, and then I'd go in and sleep better than I usually did, and he'd go off to the shed and make sure everything were clean and ready for the morning milk.

"The day it happened, we'd gotten up early an' it were already hot and getting settled away before we even finished eating. It was the kind 'a day he liked—the kind you could make the most of if'n you know what you was about, he'd say—and he threw me into the box of the truck and took off, one arm out the window waving goodbye to her as she half stuck out the open screen door waving away like she was the Pope I'd seen in some movie giving a blessing to all and everything. I used to like that trip down to the highway and across it to the low field that hung close in against the hills. I'd lean back against the cab watching the dust that spiralled from off the wheels fade back and settle as we went along. They say them hills has all got ski runs on 'em now, but they didn't then, just had trees, 'course a lot has changed since then, it wasn't even called Thunder Bay, just Fort William and Port Arthur.

"We crossed the highway and bumped into the field. I jumped out and sat in the shade on the running board while he went over and hooked the rake up to the tractor. I hadn't been with him when he'd cut it, mostly 'cause she'd wanted me for something or other—but I was with him now, and I ran around next to him for a while, but not too close. I quit soon though, and just laid there happy watching him go round and round the field, the hay making neat lines as it rolled of a' the rakes like a wave out on the lake we'd go to some Sundays. His circles got smaller 'n smaller. I guess it was about eleven or so when he stopped 'bout opposite me and come over.

'She's comin' down,' he said, 'thought she would. Sar's almost at the highway now. Come on, your turn to drive—she don't think you can do it, you know, but we'll show her, eh?'

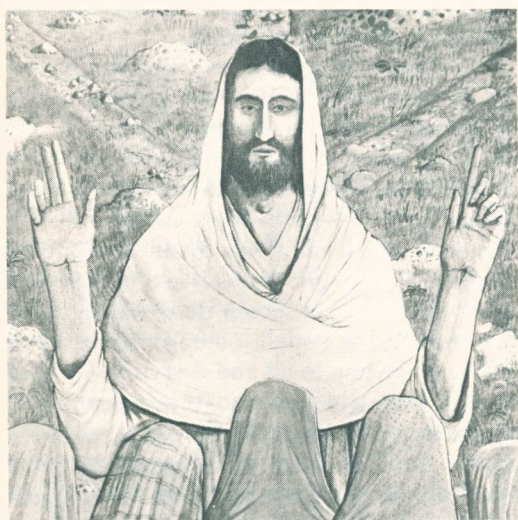
We ran over and he pushed me on up, climbing on beside me, but standing down so I was taller than him—and from a distance it must a' looked like there were only me up there. Think he was pretty near excited as me—he'd let me drive it a couple a' times up behind the shed so as I knowed how to change gears and all that. 'Just becareful down the bottom where we make the turn up the hill,

(Continued on page 6)



Art Profile

Godspell and **Jesus Christ Superstar** aren't the only recent art works dealing with the gospels, thank God. A Christian, William Kurelek, has produced a work based on the gospel of Matthew in a very unlikely medium: painting. The collection, entitled "The Passion of Christ according to St. Matthew", is comprised of 160 paintings, a verse by verse journey through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. Even though Kurelek spent three years in Israel preparing for this impressive work, "The Passion" is overshadowed by his other works, works which also bear the imprint of an intense faith in God.



But Jesus came near and spoke to them:

William Kurelek? No, he isn't very well known. Though he was once featured in *Time* magazine, his popularity is for the most part restricted to his adopted hometown: Toronto. Articles from Toronto newspapers reveal some of the tormented struggle which lies behind the almost fanatic faith of Kurelek. He spent the early years of his life on the Canadian prairies, a member of an immigrant Ukrainian family. The main concern of an immigrant family during the Depression was survival, and art was certainly not considered to be essential for survival. Refusing to suppress his talents, William became the black sheep of the family. The resultant feeling of outsidership sent him on a restless search for acceptance, finally ending in London, England. Here his depression only deepened, leading to attempted suicide and treatment in a mental hospital. What finally saved him was his conversion to the Christian faith.

A sad story with a happy ending? Its not quite that simple. His life today is dominated by a kind of apocalyptic urgency, a determination to shout out his message before it is too late. "I have this Domsday vision," he explained to an interviewer, "this intuition of hardships ahead. And I believe I have to get across this idea of disaster approaching."

This sense of urgency has created a number of problems for the artist. At times his work

The Artist as



Pot-boiler

becomes very preachy, as in a painting which shows a creek littered with garbage cans full of bloody fetuses behind a hospital, a sermon condemning abortion. The nature of art is that it hides its messages in symbols and the artist's attitude toward the materials he is working with. Kurelek is aware of this problem, but is not entirely sure of a solution. Subtlety has been one of his approaches: his painting "Toronto, Toronto" pictures downtown crowds caught up in the Christmas rush while Christ stands completely ignored on the steps of a building.

Kurelek has another problem: he wants to reach as many people as possible with his

Christian Poetry: The Lord

The question I often hear raised is, "Exactly what is the difference between the Christian poet and the non-Christian poet?" They both use the same techniques of meter, rhythm, structure, imagery, and both essentially arrive at some sort of art form.

I believe the difference lies in the perspective, or the way in which the poet sees the world around him. His content, his purpose in even writing the poem will be different because he essentially seeks to bring glory to God through the use of his writing talent. He wants to share with his reader an experience or insight by putting it under a microscope and taking a sharp, fresh look at it with the reader. Christian poetry is not a matter of writing a poem and then tacking on a little moral or plugging in some Christian symbolism. It's a matter of the heart and what you place at the center of your being or life. In other words, your basic world and life view.

But for the Christian poet it's even tougher because his poetry is picked apart either for

being too preachy or not saying anything at all about where he stands. The Christian poet may be trying to do his utmost to use the talent God has given him by putting into poetic form what he feels deeply within his soul. And more often than not, instead of appreciating such God-given talent we cut it to shreds, but then do not do anything ourselves with the talents in other areas that God may have given us to us.

Cor Barendrecht is very much one of today's contemporary Christian poets. He came as an immigrant to this country and at present writes full-time. Much of his poetry in his most recent publication, **In A Strange Land**, (1975) deals with the immigrant theme, our rootlessness and restlessness, our fast pace and the feelings of separation and loss, facing a new life and land, our lack of tradition in certain areas, and the way we constantly seek to revolutionize everything. Barendrecht is a visionary poet in a strange land—he parallels his experiences and draws an analogy to the Christian in a secular world. Or to use the title in a more specific way: How

can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? (Ps. 137)

One of his more well known poems, "A Name," (p. 29) appears in a Christian anthology, **Sightseers Into Pilgrims**, (1973) as a beautiful expression of the difference that a name will mean on the lips of a child, a prison inmate, parents at a baptismal fount, an aged woman, or a combat soldier in a foxhole. Then the name is finally given, "Jesus, the Christ," (p. 29) and the full impact of the name hits. It's a rather unique way of saying the name Jesus is at the core or center of everyone's being and "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 8) The name is also used to refer to "the Word," which is also seen in many of his other poems. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1)

We can see this even more clearly in his poem, "On the Beach." (p. 35) Here we have one of the most highly unusual accounts of the virgin birth of Christ, that has ever before appeared in poetry form. His use of vivid and

Struggling Believer

by Syd Hielema

message, but how can a prophet of doom attain popularity? He considers his solution to be somewhat of a compromise. Besides producing what he calls 'message works', he paints many scenes which reflect his everyday life, either as a painter or of his childhood. He calls these works "pot-boilers", paintings which he doesn't consider significant, but must produce because they sell well, enabling him to make a living from art.

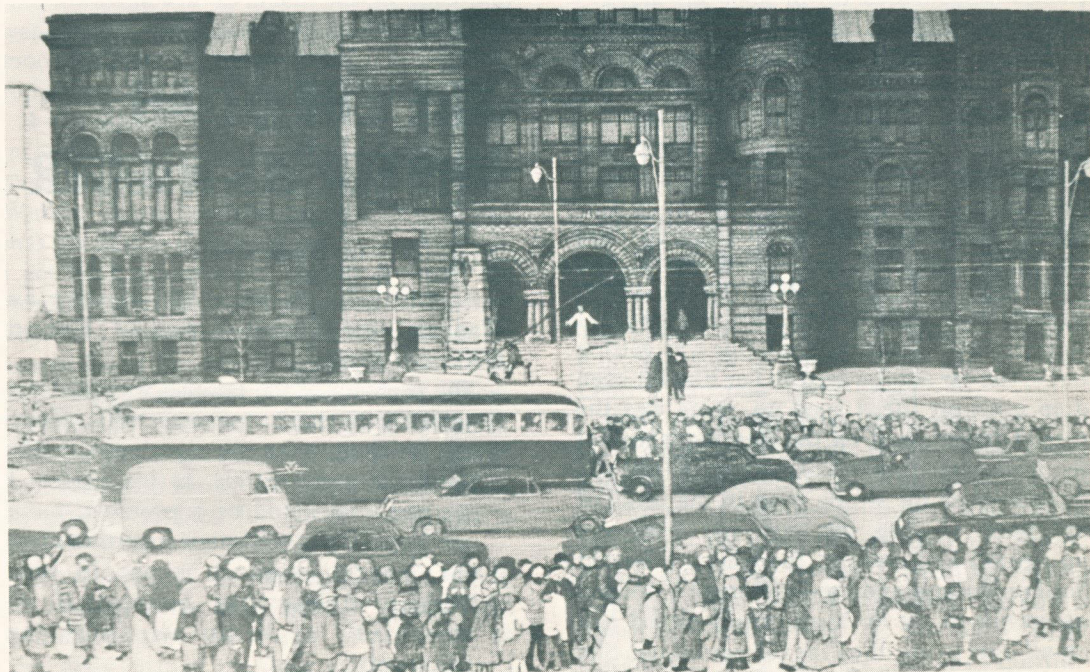
The topics of these paintings vary widely. Those dealing with his childhood, collected in a book entitled **A Prairie Boy's Winter**, either show children playing in the snow or a farm family doing the chores. The others, published in **O Toronto**, show various scenes of that city. One depicts himself and a few others busy in an art gallery workshop. Another shows the people of his own neighborhood digging themselves out after a heavy snowfall.

How much of a compromise are these "pot-boilers"? These everyday scenes are not painted nostalgically or sentimentally, but they are very human and down-to-earth. A friend of the artist has written: "For me, Kurelek is a religious painter, regardless of whether he paints Christ crucified or a simple farmscape. There is an intensity in his paintings which converts all his work into a religious act." Look at the paintings on this page. Does any one praise God more than another? True, one deals with a Biblical scene, and another is an everyday sight, but does that rate the former as "more

Christian"? Perhaps Kurelek is too disdainful of his "pot-boilers"; perhaps he doesn't realize that one's faith can also be portrayed through the simple human-ness of an everyday situation.

In spite of his recent popularity, Kurelek is still struggling. He addressed a meeting of Christians in Toronto, relating the conflicts

he has between propagandizing on the one hand and pot-boilerizing on the other. There's no happy in-between point. Perhaps both types are legitimate if they are artistically crafted. Kurelek realizes, however, that talk accomplishes little. Only through doing—and even erring—can the Christian artist learn his trade.



"Toronto, Toronto"

Song In A Strange Land

by Sandy Van Den Berg

original imagery comes out quite clearly in these lines: "a young woman in a cave/ near a sandstone inn/ dilated on dead crackling straw," which refers to Mary, or "one child God put his arm around 280 times," (p.35) which refers to the number of days during the gestation period. His last lines, "chief sinners and braves/ break out of your crust/ it is time to be born," (p.36) sums up what the Christian must be doing in this strange land.

I find great comfort in the eight poems (p.38) that deal with Elijah, because he "was a man with human frailties like our own." (James 5:17, p.38) He is contrasted as a little man who becomes big by facing what God

tells him to do, instead of running away from his responsibilities. Barendrecht challenges us when he says, "God speaks in a whisper to small ears: 'Get out of your cave!'" (p.44) Elijah: "The little man/ thinks so small/ he wishes he were dead," (p.44) is a complete opposite of the mighty Elijah who was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind. The answer is

fairly obvious. He let God take his will to be used in God's Will; he overcame his smallness to become a big man for God.

In the apologue of **In A Strange Land**, Glenn Meeter refers to this very thing and says perhaps "that is why God put us on earth, to sing His song in a strange land, and thus make it less strange." (p.13) On p. 51 in "Detroit River at Windsor" the poet says, "Our song, silenced/ by third-shift auto industry,/ echoes in our wake."

There is a repeated and urgent note throughout the book that I don't think the reader can ignore. As Christians, we have a definite responsibility to God, to the people who live around us, and to ourselves, to use whatever God has blessed us with, for His glory, and everyone else's, as well as our own edification. Barendrecht has challenged us with this message through the media of poetry, and I think anyone reading it will be not only strengthened but edified.

Being Publications should be commended for printing **In A Strange Land**. They are people with a vision, who see a need for another Christian's talent to appear in writing form, and they are willing to risk huge financial losses, knowing that the market today for poetry is very limited, let alone a Christian one. Face it. Poetry just doesn't sell today unless it's sung to the latest hit tune or rolls off the tongue of your favorite poet, or is forced down your throat in an English course. But that should not stop us. We have work to do too, like Elijah. Like Barendrecht. "Get out of your cave!" (p.44)

Saint Adolf: Adagio Funebre, Affettuoso

Anastasia.
Anastasia.

The everlasting sun warms your morning face. The Baltic sleeps with winter as you squint beneath the chill. You have been doing that all winter, my dear, my Anastasia.

Come, I want to share something with you. Oh don't be afraid! I have kept watch over you many times. When? When the snow touches your tender cheeks and the mud soils your shoes. But that doesn't matter now, does it? Come, my dear, my Anastasia.

See that fir tree over there? That is where we first met. Do you remember? Your eyes gleam with delightful memories. I knew you would not forget! Yes, the swing still lurches

in the wind. No, we can't my dear, my Anastasia.

Your father is calling for you, bless his heart. I do know that he is. He always has been, hasn't he? Let us clasp hands and fly to his comforting presence.

Oh, you tire me! And a good morning to you also, Father. To the fir tree on the hill, Father. Yes, we will, Father.

You must sit in the chair closest to the photographer my dear, my Anastasia. Sit as still as he asks you to and as long as he needs you to.

Anastasia.
Anastasia.

by Wayne Farr

Stories con't

ground's kinda soft there still,' he said. I let the clutch out slow and deliberate—it was goin' good and my line was runnin' pretty straight, least ways far as I could tell it were. I stood up and turned around. She was getting out of the car and I waved to her like I'd been doin it all my life. I sped up, there was the turn. I pulled hard on the steering wheel—I felt it slipping from out of my hands—the sky moved—then his strong push in the small of my back shoving me out and over the mudguard and clean of the wheel. I landed hard on my arm and I guess it must a' taken me awhile to get up 'cause she'd pulled just about level to me, then the car passed me. She pushed the door open and went over to him—already by him in the time I had taken to make it 'round to the other side of the tractor. His head and arms were free—but they didn't move. The machine covered the rest of him. She looked up at me. 'I'm going for the doctor,' she said. 'Stay here.'

I found out later—forget where now—that both his lungs had gotten pierced and he just kinda died there with me watching him and her gone. The next day that Children's Aid lady come out again. They talked for a while and when she left I went along with her—I didn't even get to see him buried or nothin'. They said in the letter 'bout the will 'n all that she'd moved into town soon after that—but she'd kept hold of the land and everything, never got no one to farm it though. So I guess it's mine now."

I stared down hard into the coffee lying cold and oily in the cup, not quite sure what to say or to do. My finger ran around the rim. I looked up. "So, what are you going to do now?" I asked.

"Do?" he said, a slight smile tugging at the corners of his mouth as he pushed the chair back and started to rise. "Do? Why what I always do; keep on telling stories."

I watched in silence as he buttoned his coat and turned away, unwrapping a piece of gum and folding it into his mouth as he went out through the door. I've often wished, looking back on it, that I'd called after him or

THE CHRISTIAN WRITER AS NIGGER

by Hugh Cook

At one point in her book **Mystery and Manners**, the Christian novelist Flannery O'Connor states,

The problem of the novelist who wishes to write about man's encounter with...God is how he shall make the experience...understandable and credible, to his reader. In any age, this would be a problem, but in our own, it is a well-nigh insurmountable one. Today's audience is one in which religious feeling has become, if not atrophied, at least vaporous and sentimental.

That statement expresses exactly, it seems to me, the problem facing the serious Christian writer, namely, an audience virtually estranged from Christian vision, an audience which, when it meets that vision, considers it sentimental and didactic.

I can't help but think that the Christian writer's situation is much like the black athlete's was ten or twenty years ago, a time when a black athlete had to be **twice** as good as the white athlete in order to beat him out of a job. And even now, in football, that most sacrosanct position, namely quarterback, is still virtually the exclusive domain of white athletes. Only the Rams' James Harris has broken the barrier, but he had to be good enough to be named to the Pro Bowl in order to do it.

The Christian writer faces somewhat the same dilemma, it seems to me. Let him come anywhere near a confessional statement aesthetically conveyed, and the critics are quick to level a charge of moralism or

followed, but I didn't. He wasn't in the bus when I got back on so I sat down next to an older lady. It's funny, I really wanted to talk to her to tell her things, to tell her about him, but I couldn't and she just stared out the window content to leave it that way. I turned toward her a couple of times, but she didn't seem to notice, or if she did she chose to ignore it, preferring the red leather backing of the seat in front of me.

didacticism at him, as critics have done with a host of Christian writers, including T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, Margaret Avison, and Rudy Wiebe. For example, in a review of Wiebe's second novel **First and Vital Candle**, the reviewer states,

And, for readers more devout than myself, I grant the possibility that the portrayal of the Bishops and Miss Howell, even with their stilted sermonizing, may well carry considerable impact.

That attitude, so seemingly magnanimous on the surface, is both typical and unfair. In actuality, the reviewer is admitting his total insensitivity to a Christian way of perceiving reality, and that should be **his** fault, not Wiebe's. At the end of the review, the reviewer suggests that Wiebe should cease being a moralist, and begin being one thing only: novelist.

What is disturbing, however, is that the humanist/agnostic may become very confessional, and be considered both chic and profound. Hemingway, for instance, has one of the waiters speak for him in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place":

...it was all nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada they will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada....

Does the Christian writer have to be **better** than his humanistic counterpart in order to receive a positive reaction? In our day of insensitivity towards Christian vision, it seems that way.

Is not this overt statement that life is a fat nothing (nada), that God is a fat nothing—is that not a didacticism, a moralism, of the rankest agnostic sort? Yet Hemingway is considered a giant, a genius.

MUSIC

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