

1974

The Canon, [1973-74]: Volume 4, Number 5

Dordt College

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Nowhere



Nancy Matheis

*The iron hand of wind across the face and
grabs skirts and coats above shivering knees and
freezes*

*not tears, but
joyful sorrow in faces.
We huddle against the cold under a funeral tent
to rejoice in grandfather's lost life found.*

*The scorching finger of sun presses until perspiration beads and
reddens skin of blistering shoulders and
burns*

*not tears, but
jubilant mourning on faces.
We gather against the glare under a funeral tent
to rejoice in grandmother's lost life found.*

Mary Poel

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

—John 3:16

To love
is to let
spring shine into your soul.
To dream
is to
fall flung onto the leaves
of memory; to remember
that ice cries, too,
and winter wonders about you.
To laugh
is to dance in tune
to the rhythm of a fallen moon.
To live
is to love, to laugh,
to fall, to dream, to dance,
to remember
the hope, yes, the hope
for the hope
of His Hope
is our hope of life
and life
and life
and life . . .

This May,
let the hope of love spring,
shine into your soul
musically,
as the angels sing of Him
Who makes the garden whole again.

—Sandy Van Den Berg



By BILL SIEBERSMA



"You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

CANNON STAFF

Editor-in-chief: Gary Wondergem
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 Music Editor: Syd Hielema
 Film and Drama Editor: Sandi Van Den Berg
 Creative Writing Editors: Lynne Tobak, Wally Vande Kleut
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 Advisor: Hugh Cook

TOPOGRAPHY

*Dreams we whisper
 span places unwandered,
 unforced or thought
 Between us streams
 shared suspense of unknowing
 a compact in adventure
 agreed
 not yet*

showing

*Signatures
 never wet ink
 in a glance
 Tears
 sealing bits
 of unheated wax
 From you days of seafaring
 I accept
 not to be
 threatened by
 trekking together
 instead of by map.*

Jeanie Zinkand
 Dordt College
 Fine Arts Entry

DAY ON DAY

*Yesterday was gone, today came and when
 today is gone,
 Tomorrow comes*

*What happens when today is never yesterday?
 and tomorrow never comes?*

Kathryn Feikema
 Dordt College
 Fine Arts Entry

BERRIES

"Out of many berries one wine flows."

Some

to

wⁱt^her

And

to

d e c a y,

Some

to s e e d,

Many

to

fall

prey

Others

to

grow forth and bear new

Fruit,

only to

*quiver and tremble
 under the feet
 of the*

WINE PRESSER.

Duane Plantinga
 Dordt College
 Fine Arts Entry

Of Memories and Times Past

Brian N. Vonk
Dordt College
Fine Arts Entry

It happened in a country whose laws were just but whose people were vindictive, in the days of the Tin Lizzie and Pullman, in the Fall of the year when old winds blow and life is withdrawn.

Within that country lay the smug town of Blackburn and another, not unlike the first, Salix—one hour to the east by rail. The people were of a proud, pious breed, presuming their land to be God's Country. For years they had pruned and purged to rid their society of any such persons their standards deemed undesirable. But problems were seldom solved.

Within Blackburn the plumber lived and was alone. Although frugal, a good plumber and an expert chemist, he possessed little more than his plumbing tools and decrepit Model A. Such poverty was due in part to the eight years he had spent in penniless schooling and part to the past three years when he could draw pay but could seldom find work. The whole situation had become a cascading descent into a deep pool of embroiled bitterness.

He lived along the railroad tracks at the edge of town in a quaint, brown, white trimmed house with large windows. Stretching out on three sides of the house spread a meticulously manicured yard. In the spring and throughout the summer it had been a captivating ensemble of varicolored flowers hemmed in green. Now the strips of iris and forget-me-nots lay in a withered pyre of brown stems, leaves, and faded petals. Only the singular patch of red and yellow splashed bitterroot that crowded the inside of the front windows yet thrived. Many thought it odd that a plumber would waste his time with gardening and the like even though they well knew he had nothing else to do.

Not far behind his little house in an open field of grass and weeds lay a large shallow sand pit. Some years back the city had exhausted the area of its sand supply and it had since become the public junk deposit. Throughout the past summer the plumber had carried what little trash he had over his narrow path to the pit. He need not have gone but twice a month yet often twice a week the morning found him there. Had anyone seen and asked him concerning his frequent excursions, he merely would have said that he loved the sunrise. Actually, he was searching.

By the end of the summer he had found exactly what he wanted: a small, strong, metal container. With his tools he threaded the open end and fitted it with a sturdy metal cap.

That Saturday as the sun went down gentle breezes danced through the countryside and streets of Blackburn and around the little house that stood five blocks down track from the rail station. But long before the reluctant sky released the last of its light the window of the kitchen shone brightly.

The plumber sat at his table carefully filling the container with things he had learned. At one point he stopped in amazement at himself, but then he remembered and quickly rose to pull the shades before he went on. When the

container was full, he screwed the cap back on and tightened it securely with a chain tool. From the closet he took out a new leather briefcase. After dusting it off he locked the container within it.

Inspecting the clock above the table, he realized that he must hurry. He washed, then dressed in his best suit. His mirror was broken so he merely combed his hair straight back. The key he placed in his wallet.

He reached the bright, busy station shortly before the eastbound pulled in. There were many chatting and some still waiting to buy tickets but as usual no one greeted him. Tightly clutching the bottom-bulging briefcase, he stood in line. When he had secured a ticket he quickly boarded the second car, his free hand holding his hat from the tugging gusts of the wind.

Finding an empty pair of seats halfway through the coach, he sat down. As he nudged the briefcase behind his legs, a stranger approached and kindly requested the adjacent seat. The plumber, caught quite off guard, agreed and the stranger was seated. A conductor bellowed "All aboard!" and the Pullman lurched forward.

The coach was well lit and warm. Soon the cadence of the click-clack and the side-ways rock turned to music, the hubbub to an easy hum.

As the stranger spoke the plumber turned to see to whom she was speaking. He fumbled for his hat in surprise when he saw her looking at him, waiting for an answer. Realizing she had startled him, she smiled and again softly asked,

"Are you going far?"

He glanced back at her and replied "Only to Salix," his eyes returning to the patterned leather of the seat ahead. It had been many years since someone had found the time to talk with him. And he knew not what to make of it.

"I live in Salix," she explained, "I was just spending the day in Blackburn with some friends of mine."

The plumber hesitated before he weakly questioned,

"Relation?"

"Well, almost," she said with a gentle smile, "I met them one day while I was visiting the old people's home. Actually most of my relation live in Salix. I'm Judy Danhof," she offered her hand to the plumber.

"Pleased to meet you," he could only verbalize the effete greeting as he wondered why he had never heard of any Danhofs before, then he returned, "I'm John, John Jones."

She went on, "Do you live in Salix too?"

"No, I'm a plumber in Blackburn . . . Just going to Salix to visit," he answered as he watched her. She laughed, and asked,

"Relation?"

"Oh no," he laughed a bit also then continued more slowly, "I'm just going to visit the Baptist Church there tomorrow." He lied. He seldom lied and was certainly sorry that he had to invent the untruth now.

The conversation went on to weather, then local news and national events and finally to religion. As the discussion of religion extended, Judy told the plumber of her

parents deaths, six years earlier and of the town from which she had then moved. She also spoke of her foster parents but their name was lost in the whistle and echoes of "Three minutes to Salix."

Judy restated the name: Baker—the attorney, to the plumbers now bewildered and apprehensive face. Then, realizing, though not understanding why or how, she had hurt him, she quickly added,

"I was meaning to tell you that if you like I'm sure my folks would be glad to put you up for the night."

The plumber felt himself shrink as the force drained completely from him. He mechanically thanked her for the offer and told her he had already made reservations at the motel. The whistle again blew and was followed by a slow grind to a halt. He helped her with her bag while tightly clutching his briefcase. As they stepped from the coach, she tried to persuade him but then reluctantly uttered goodbye and hoped that she would see him again. He replied simply, goodbye.

Jones remained at the station. As soon as everyone had gone, he unlocked the briefcase. Reaching inside he tried to remove the cap of the container. But it wouldn't turn and he had not taken the chain tool. Studying the clock above the depot booths he decided to shut the briefcase. He waited until the westbound came then boarded it and sat in rigid silence as he returned.

When the Pullman reached the Blackburn station, Jones leaped out and dashed home carrying the briefcase gently as he ran. The wind tugged at his coat flaps and pushed him on, tearing his eyes and mussing his straight blonde hair when he lost the hat. He disappeared into the little house.

Many heard thunder that night, but few saw it rain. For those that knew, they sat back and clucked that a plumber should neglect his own home.

WOMEN

*Women stand at
bus stops
kitchen windows
violet pots
and look over past
rolling years
Their wrinkled
hands
crow-footed
eyes
wounds from labors
in fulfillment
service*

*Children's achievements
stored in scrapbooks
encased medals
of valiant battles
won*

*faded valentine boxes
chocolate smudged
rations
for continued
livelihood*

Jeanie Zinkand
Dordt College
Fine Arts Entry

TOP HIGH SCHOOL FINE ARTS ENTRIES

DEATH

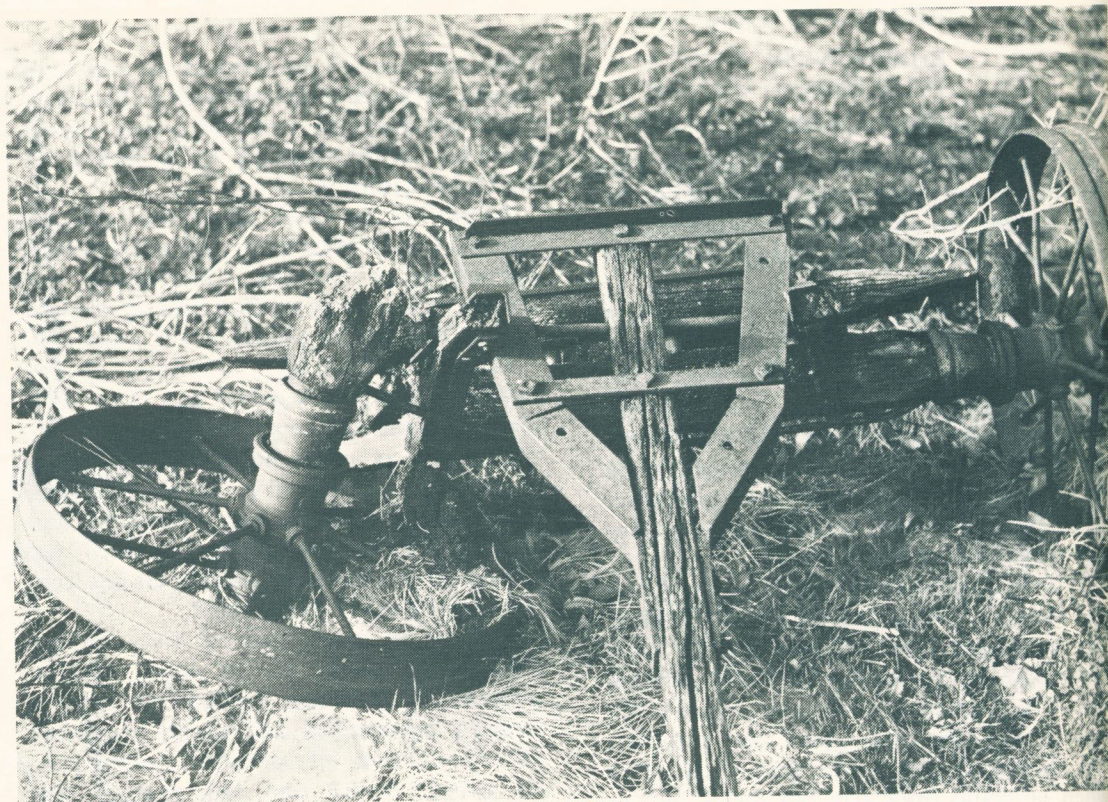
*Shimmering
the glistening dewdrop
crept*

*waveringly
unsurely
downward.*

*Lanky finger
mine
shakingly climbed
upward
and
popped
the tiny bubble.
It deflated.
Then
dried
up.*

I've never killed a real tear before.

Julie Van Holland
Western Christian



End of the Beginning

By George DeGroot
Western Christian



Nature's Back Door

By Mike Van Dyke
Western Christian

CLOUDS

*During a storm
they look like
they could come*

*d
o
w
n*

*and choke you
and smother you
and kill you!*

*On a nice summer day
They look like
angel-hair
gently sweeping the sky
making everything
alive and
beautiful*

*Passing over the moon
at night
Death's cold fingers
trying
trying
to grasp.*

Oh, Clouds, make up your mind!

Deb Horstman
Western Christian

WOOD GRINDER

*Pencil Sharpener:
grits its teeth and grinds its joints
gets across a point.*

Donna Den Ouden
Southwest Christian High

DON'T CALL ME SARAH

Marva Voetberg
Western Christian

You know where I spent last Saturday? In a parlor, just sitting there. Can you imagine, a parlor in this day and age. It looked just like you'd expect it to look, dark wood and rose colored walls.

We were sitting there in Carbondale, P.A. (that's how my family always says it) waiting for my great-aunt Sarah to arrive. The trip had been endless, winding through dull, dirty-looking coal country, with my obnoxious little brother running his mouth all the while. I hate long rides in the car; I stare out the window and think about my life. It's pretty depressing.

We all sat there saying nothing. Uncle Frank had told us that Aunt Sarah had just run out to "do her trading" (that's what my family calls grocery shopping—as if they had to pack up all their beaver pelts to get a can of beans) and would be right back. By now my father was snoring, his big stomach rising up and down in an even rhythm, broken now and then by a snort. My father's a great guy but he's so boring.

Uncle Frank was sitting right across from me on the couch next to my mother. Even looking right at him I couldn't tell if he were asleep or awake. My mother wasn't saying anything; she was saving up for Aunt Sarah.

I sat in a maroon velvet chair, the itchy kind that sags where you sag, and I watched a fly bumble and buzz around the room: it had the most active life there. You'd think I didn't have anything better to do. But then, I'm only sixteen, as my parents say, and my life is not to be considered.

In came Aunt Sarah. My stupid brother had to run to the store and get her, and she loaded him up with candy. He loves to go see Aunt Sarah because she gives him goodies, especially Welsh cookies. They aren't really cookies, more like rich, heavy tea cookies, but they are good and unusual. It's about the only food I know that's Welsh. I always wanted to have a heritage, a tradition, like the Italian and their pasta or the Poles with their Polkas or the Irish on St. Patrick's Day. But what good is it to be Welsh? Who ever heard of a Welsh wedding. The only thing anyone knows is "Welshing on a bet." What a drag.

Anyway, Aunt Sarah came in and I unfolded to go kiss her leathery old cheek. I hate it when I have to bend way over; it makes me aware of my gawky 5 feet 9 inches. I was waiting for her to tell me how much I've grown.

She didn't. She asked me how I was, as if she really cared. Then she said something about my becoming a lovely young lady; flattery, of course, but at least she didn't tell me to put some meat on my bones.

She is a funny old lady, so tiny she reminds me of Mrs. Mouse in the books I read when I was a kid. My parents said I looked like her, but I couldn't see that at all. She's wrinkled and short and her hair is set in neat white waves, like corrugated paper, only stiffer. I, of course, am skinny and have long legs and straight black hair.

Actually, my real name is Sarah, too, but I get furious when anyone calls me that. I go by the name of Sally; it seems younger and livelier, not an old lady's name.

All those old fogeys were talking in fits and starts, as if they didn't have the strength to carry on a real conversation. It must be hell being old; all they could talk about was who

died and who married whom. There was another pause, with no one able to think of anything to say. My father threw in the question he always asks in a situation like that: "How's your car running?"

Uncle Frank answered that they didn't even have a car. "Everything we need," he said, "the church, the post office, the grocery store and our children's houses are within three blocks of here. We haven't had a car for twelve years now."

I mean, it floored me! Can you imagine spending your whole life inside three blocks? I couldn't believe people fold up like that. Right then I made a vow. I may have Aunt Sarah's name, and they may say I have her looks, but I swore I would never, never have her life.

"Sarah," she said then, "would you give me a hand with dinner?" I'm always as polite as I have to be, so I didn't tell her what I thought of her name, but I felt like I was going to suffocate as I followed her out into the old fashioned kitchen, all yellow with big windows and sunlight streaming in.

"Taste the broth, Sarah. Does it need more salt?" I lifted the cover on an old cast iron pot and sampled a dark, rich-tasting stew, different from anything I had ever eaten.

"We call that leek broth," she said. "Made with leeks, of course, and mutton and carrots and potatoes. It's an old Welsh favorite, but it's hard to get mutton around here."

"Do you remember Wales?" I asked to make conversation.

"Of course, I was nearly a woman grown when we left. It's a strange, beautiful land."

I told her I knew nothing about Wales, so she bustled and talked for almost an hour while we fixed dinner. She told me about the Welsh poets and singers, and about the Maid of Cefn Ydfa, who went mad and died for love, and Awn Shon Catti, the Welsh Robin Hood, who also went by the name of Tom Jones. I never knew the real Tom Jones, the singer, was Welsh, too.

She said the Welsh were known as romantics and dreamers, as well as people with fine imagination. Other countries called them liars. She told me about Uther Pendragon, King Arthur and Percival, the Welsh bumpkin, the butt of French knights'

jokes, who was the only one of three to see his Holy Grail. Mostly she told me about Merlin, his birth, prophecies and tragic end, bewitched by love for his own spell.

Before she finished, my brain shimmered with the mysterious beauty of the old names, and she gave me a book of Dylan Thomas poetry and a huge volume about the life of Merlin. She may never leave her three blocks again, but she sure has a lot in her head.

Maybe my mind was too full of Merlin, but something strange happened just after that. I asked Aunt Sarah what the people of Wales looked like. She didn't say anything, but steered me toward a big mirror hanging over the sink, surrounded by plants; it was like looking into a woodland pool. The first thing I saw were two pair of eyes looking back at me. They were big eyes, and round and so dark they almost looked black. I didn't recognize them for a moment. I looked at the two square jaws, and the two narrow-bridged noses, and I came back to the eyes, staring out from two different faces, one young and smooth, the other dark, wrinkled and very old. Long black hair surrounded one, neat waves the other.

It seemed as if Merlin came out of his tree trunk to let me look at myself 50, 60, 70 years from now, looking back.

We stood there a long moment, in silence. I felt the pressure building up in my throat, and I panicked. I whirled to face the woman who looked over my shoulder. "It's not me," I whispered.

I didn't know what I meant myself, but she seemed to. "Of course not," she answered. "I swore when I was your age, to escape that dying Welsh mining village. You certainly don't want to end up in Carbondale. We each reach out beyond the ones that have gone before. But I hope you'll carry us with you—all of us from Merlin on down."

"I will," I said. "I will, Aunt Sarah."

She reached up and gave me a little hug and we called the others to dinner.

It was dark by the time we started home and I was sitting in the back seat, looking out the window as usual, so when I heard my mother talking about how soon Aunt Sarah was going to die, no one noticed me. I cried till we were almost home.



Ireton
Lover's
Lane

By Dean Mouw
Unity Christian



Broadjumper

By Paul Dorr
Unity Christian

*Summer starts to drop
her coat upon the floor,
but hesitates a moment more.
She sees
behind the blue-white sky
a wicked look in winter's eye
and quietly pulls her coat back on
and throws her hood about her face
and leaves without a trace.*

Bonnie Kuipers
Dakota Christian High School



By Paul Dorr
Unity Christian

MIRACLE OF SPRING

*Egg
Blue, delicate
Crackling, shaking, breaking
Nest, shell — beak, feathers
Hatching, breathing, living
Speckled, baby
Robin*

Donna Den Ouden
Southwestern Christian High

SEA SCAPE

*As I walked along
The waves whipped at my naked feet
Beggging me to join them*

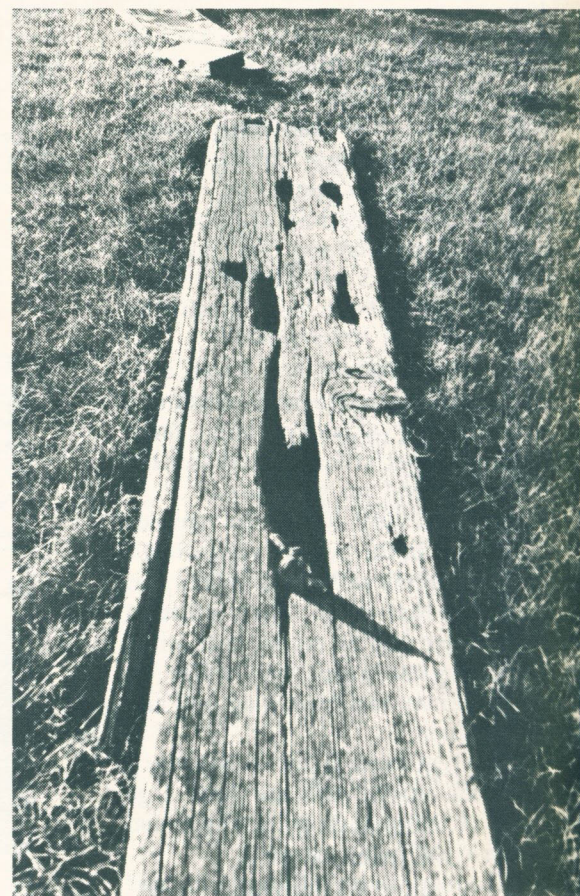
Pat DeBoom
Unity Christian High

THE CONDUCTOR

*There . . .
See it?
Behind the chair
on the music cabinet,
he's standing there
directing the
wood-carved beaver.

Same score
day and night
Hair mussed,
Coattails flying,
Arms outstretched,
working his heart out - -
Directing the
beaver.*

Janna de Groot
Unity Christian High



Faithful Dryad

By Mike Van Dyke
Western Christian

Twenty-Five Cents to Mow His Lawn

There is an empty water tank south of Mr. Slink's barn that hasn't been used for ages. It's near a large tree by the road that leads between Mr. Slink's fields. It has so much rust on it—when you touch it your hand gets all red. It has a ladder welded to it that you have to pull yourself up to before you can get a foothold.

The day after Ezra was first missing, Mr. Slink was throwing some chicken wire out in the field when he heard something over by the tank. Ezra was inside singing something weird. Mr. Slink yelled at him to come out, but he got scared and wouldn't come out for nothin'. By that time the other workers were there and Mr. Slink was saying, "He'll have to come out for food sooner or later." Six days later he was still in there and they thought he must be awful weak, or else he was gettin' out for food at night. Mr. Slink went out after dark and waited for Ezra to come out. He waited for hours, but Ezra didn't make a move or a sound. Then Mr. Slink heard heavy footsteps—someone was bringing food to Ezra!

The man had a gunny sack in his hand, but it was too dark to make out who it was. The man climbed up, handed the sack down, and lowered himself in. Mr. Slink got up and started to cuss his head off and bang on the tank with a two by four. It made quite a racket and all the farmers by us wanted to know what in the world was going on at four o'clock in the morning. I begged Grandpa to let me go along and finally he told Grandma to stay and we took off across the field.

When we got there, Mr. Slink was riling up the farmers and soon they were beating on the water tank with metal fence posts—taking swings like madmen. I knew Ezra was in there and I didn't see how he would come out of this without being deaf. 'Sides, what would Mr. Slink do to him when he came out?

Mr. Slink hollers, "Allright. Stop it! We aint's ever going to get him out like that. Riley, you get the old tractor. We'll hook the hauling chain to the ladder and pull the tank down from around the tree so's it won't fall towards the tractor. We are goin' to shake that lazy jigaboo out of there!"

I'm goin' where dey's no mo weepin',
I'm goin' to live wid de Lawd in Gloryland.
I'm goin' where dey's no mo wailin',
I'm goin' to live wid de Lawd!

came from inside, Ezra was singing again.

"Listen here, Mr. Slink. If you don't leave Ezra he's going to . . .," begged Mr. Austin.

"Mr. Austin's in there!" I yelled.

"What's the matter? Ain't city boy ever seen what we do to lazy nigger boys?" said Mr. Slink.

I was crying and eighth graders aren't supposed to. But that was Mr. Austin in there!

"You do the listening, Austin! You get blackie out of there or I'll skin you both!" Mr. Slink yelled. But they didn't say anything more or come out neither.

Mr. Slink climbed up the ladder, wrapped the chain around it, and gave the order for the tractor to go ahead. The tractor pulled the chain tight and the legs of the tank groaned. After a few of the longest minutes in my life, the tank gave way. It balanced for a second and hit the wet ground with a thud. The jostled contents lay still. No one made a sound. The slow heartbeat of the

two-cylinder tractor throbbed like a nightmare in my head. Everyone just stared. Strewn inside were candle wax, matches, some food, and a Bible. On its side, the tank looked like a bloated cow that had walked off to die of mastitis—legs sticking straight out.

Grandpa pulled Mr. Austin out onto the road. It was plain Ezra was dead.

Mr. Austin didn't wake up for two days and Grandma stayed with him and comforted his wife. I just stayed home and prayed for Mr. Austin—harder than I've ever prayed. He was my best friend.

Grandpa said I was old enough to help people, so I mowed Mr. Austin's big lawn from then on. Mr. Austin didn't mow straight anymore.

Mr. Austin was a farmer for as long as anyone around here can remember. I can still see him standing out in the field in the afternoons with his wide-brim straw hat that strained the sun into a checkerboard on his wrinkled face. He had a big nose with little rows of pits on it—his crop of blackheads he never got around to harvesting. In his right hand was a large weed killer sprayer. He used it to keep the weeds down that were growing in the irrigation ditches. To save money, he used bulk oil from the tractor instead of weed killer.

Mr. Austin was always good to me. Before I got too old to be climbing trees, he let me eat as many pecans off his trees as I wanted. I would usually eat 'til I was sick and he would bend over me and say something like, "Need a hand getting up, son?" I wasn't his son, but sometimes I wished . . . Once I pretended I had eaten too much and when he bent over to pick me up, I snapped his suspenders. He stood up real quick and surprised and chased me all over kingdom come! When he caught me, he grabbed me by the seat of my pants, held me over the water trough with one hand, and dropped me in. He was laughing so hard he was holding his knees and making gasping noises like he could hardly breathe. When I got home, Grandma wasn't even mad because he called up and told her what he did. He felt bad about it, so I mayn't say anything about it. That didn't bother me! If Grandma got wind of the whole story, I'd really catch it!

In back of Mr. Austin's house was a huge lawn. His wife made him seed the thing every year and mow it every weekend. He didn't mind though. He told me he did a lot of thinking while he was mowing. Back and forth, back and forth he'd go. I always wondered what he could have been thinking about. I used to feed hay and scrape the

waiting pen real quick on Fridays after school and go watch him from where he couldn't see me. He mowed the straightest lines you ever did see! And he never got stuck in the thicks neither. Those blades would just whirl through the grass like nothing. He let me try it once in a while, but I didn't like the slivers in the handle. 'cept for that, I liked mowing too.

Sometimes I would mow for Mr. Slink, who farmed the section across from the Austin's. I never talked much to Mr. Slink. As soon as I got my 25c I'd head for home. When I got past the grove, I would come back around so I could talk to Ezra—the black man who worked on Mr. Slink's farm. Mr. Slink said he didn't want me goin' near him because he wasn't quite right up top. Ezra used to sing those old songs for me—specially if Mr. Slink was in a bad way. He liked the songs about judgement day, like:

De worl's gettin' might troubled liddle brother,

When de people don't let you sing.

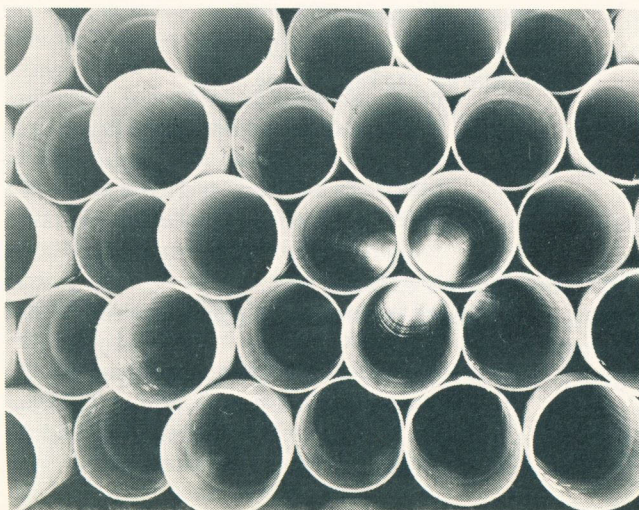
Come judge-a-ment day they'll be farther
From de Lawd then anything!

Mr. Slink never did anything for anyone—'cept if he could see something in it for himself. When my dad died and I moved to Grandpa's farm, he told me right to my face that the only reason he came to my welcome was because his wife baked a chocolate cake. He said he knew if he stayed home he'd never see the thing again, so he came and it turns out he ate five pieces! He told me he "didn't want to meet a dumb shit kid from some Hooverville who couldn't tell a bull from a heifer." He even told Ezra if he ever married he'd lose his job right quick. He didn't want to have to build extra room on for a bunch of nigger kids. He was always threatening Ezra about his job.

During the school year I used to do my thinking before I went to sleep. It worked out good because then I could listen to my grandparents talking. One night after they thought they had given me enough time to fall asleep, Grandpa says, "Bill Slink is having problems with his help again. You know that nigger working for him?"

"Don't you call 'em niggers again!" shouted Grandma in a whisper.

After a minute Grandpa said, "Well, yesterday he didn't clean the barn and this morning he didn't show up to feed grain. They never found him neither. Can't say I blame him—the way Mr. Slink treats him. Sure is a world of difference 'tween him and Mr. Austin."



By Randy Postma
Unity Christian

Rouault: A Vision of Suffering and Salvation

by William A. Dyrness,
1971, 235 pp. \$3.95

When something is rare, it attains great value. Within the Reformed community, a book such as **Rouault: A Vision of Suffering and Salvation** by William Dyrness, is rare. Of course, it shouldn't be, but it is. We are not implying that this book acquires its value and significance because of its rarity, for it has its own inherent worth—indeed, it is worth its weight in gold.

As a unique piece of good scholarship on the subject of art, Dyrness' book provides a treat not often found within this field among Reformed people. His book is well-documented, and well-organized, providing a wealth of good sources. All in all, it makes for a book that isn't skimmed over in an easy-chair: one reads, ponders, only to re-read again. There is almost a super-abundance of ideas to be reflected upon.

Already in the early pages of this study of George Rouault, we saw an author who is highly critical; not one to make hasty generalizations or super-impose preconceived notions in an attempt to prove his point and his profundity. Dyrness searches with a magnifying glass to find the real Rouault. One can just see him hunched over, scraping up the tiny tidbits of information scattered helter-skelter everywhere. And he treads carefully while engaged in his search.

In turn, the reader must be critical of Dyrness. On the one hand we must track down the false spirits with a fervor as they come in for a kill from behind or wait eagerly around the corner. Keep your eyes open. But on the other hand, don't scrutinize to the extent that you miss the grand scenery around you. And keep your eye out for the right roads to be taken. False tracks can be tiring.

As well as good scholarship, Dyrness has a firm existential awareness of the particular subject with which he is concerned. He knows that artistry isn't your regular 9-5 job that you leave behind after stepping on the subway; It's a way of life, like that of a student, or a professor, or of a farmer. You breathe art, if you're serious about it. We

also begin to discover how art is teeming with an infinite number of indescribable riches: we're left with a sense of the incompleteness of verbal description.

Most important is Dyrness' thorough analysis of Rouault: not his personality, or works, but Rouault's vision and intentions. Dyrness places his particular focus on the good elements of Rouault: no less a critical job than discovering the bad.

Without being biographical, the author begins by drawing the milieu of the artist—his family, training, influence of contemporaries: only to prove the complexity of influences, and difficulty of categorization.

We learn of a Roman Catholic artist who was lonely, who questioned, who was critical, and who tried to see the earth underneath God's clouds. We see a man who had vision and an acute sense of what's been going on after Adam.

Rouault knew suffering—he drank its cup. He saw suffering, but did not make it his own; he was so near to it but not lost in it—he had a Christian distance. His suffering was placed within the larger context of Christian hope.

Rouault, being the intensely perceptive detective of the spirits that he was, saw the result of the all-pervading evilness with its claws that keep scratching and pecking to cut all things to the quick. But although Rouault recognized suffering to be the essential condition of man, he knew that it was only temporary—for a short time.

Yes, it is true that Rouault had a very dark side to him as his major themes point out: the complacency of the rich, the hopelessness of the poor, the prostitutes, the passion of Christ, the sad clowns hiding behind their masks (aren't we all???). But though his paintings are done with the dark colors of suffering, the light of grace shines through as well—in his early as well as his later period. Rouault's vision of suffering was illuminated by the light of grace.

As a man of intense insight and artistic perception, we find a Rouault who accepts the wondrous mysteries of Christianity, rather than being lost in the confusion of modern man, or caught-up in the God-damning of a

Picasso who saw life to be a brutal absurdity which was to be ranted and raved against.

We also discover for ourselves a Rouault who knew nature, and understood that creation was and is good—a thing to be marvelled at—at one time, a great and glorious sight not blurred by tears.

Dyrness ends the book with a brief section on aesthetics. Although he may be careful in his approach, we must be as well. His contribution is meant to be heard but it can only be a small one, as it is in large part derived from the experiences of only one artist. But, then again, nobody ever said Christian aesthetics is smelted and refined over-night, ready to be displayed the next morning.

Precious as a piece of Christian scholarship, Dyrness' book is also important for the "Dutch community" in North America. Some of us will be surprised to learn that art can be Christian. Amazingly enough, Rouault has demonstrated that Christian art is possible in the twentieth century without simply imitating a Rembrandt. Others (a majority, I would say) will be shocked to discover that art isn't the stuff you decorate your walls with. It's not something to match with the wall-paper.

Maybe it's about time to recognize that there is such a thing as art and aesthetic reality. We had also better learn the seriousness of art—it can help you on your way to hell if you want it to.

Dordt students have a particular responsibility here, which, sad to say, we haven't shouldered in the past; Where's the united effort to try and establish a course in art-appreciation, art-history, and art-department? Why the lack of concern with the artistic contemporaries of George Rouault? Why haven't we learned of George Rouault before?

Dyrness must be complimented on his book. But we must go beyond him. And Rouault.

by Mark Okkema

HAIKU

*New mounds of fresh dirt,
Faded headstones, a lily
Among the bare rocks.*

*Rough fir, feverish
Men bladed down fruitlessly
To starve raging flames.*

*Deserts of reason,
The empty rattle of oars
In ships above tide.*

*Sap-filled willows spring
Forth; new shoots twisted and turned
To form a new basket.*

*Small boastings of skill,
Drops from a dripping faucet,
Gone in a moment.*

Duane Plantinga
Fine Arts Entry

THE KEEPER

*Ceaseless zephyr moving over empty darkness
Soon to bring a brightness for a land and sea,
Where greening grasses grow without, then to, the sun
Where every beast may thrive and man can move in
Harmony . . .*

*Nearly snuffed by the blasts of the hot, fierce winds
He peers, dark-eyed, at dark, weak world
Left in miasmic shrouds of the dust devil's decadence
To quiver then die and die until . . .*

*Ceaseless zephyr moving over crowded darkness
Brings a lasting brightness . . .*

Brian N. Vonk
Fine Arts Entry