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Mother Night:

What Is Life?

by Becky Maatman

Vonnegut, author of *Mother Night* asks, "What is a war criminal? Is it someone who has obeyed his conscience, perhaps doing wrong, or is it someone who obeys the commands of a higher authority, doing right but disobeying his conscience?"

Does this sound like another Mei Lai circumstance? Howard W. Campbell, "born an American citizen, a Nazi by reputation, and a nationless person by inclination," hid in a New York City attic from the Israeli government. He had been a spy for the Allies in World War II, broadcasting over the radio using a coded language. An American agent, persuading Howard Campbell to be a spy said,

You'll have to commit high treason, have to serve the enemy well. You won't ever be forgiven for that, because there isn't any legal advice by which you can be forgiven. The most that will be done for you is that your neck will be saved. But there will be no magic time when you will be cleared, when America will call you out of hiding with a cheerful: "Olly, olly-ox-in-free."

Before being recruited as an American agent, Campbell was a German playwright, married to a German actress, Helga Noth. They both kept in the social group of important Nazis. This is what qualified Campbell to be a spy for the Allies. During the war, while entertaining troupes in the Crimea, Helga was killed. After moving to New York, Helga's sister Resi Noth moved in with Campbell, and at the same time was an agent for the Russian government. She and a man named Kraft (Campbell's friend, living in the same apartment house) were supposed to lead Campbell to Moscow. But Resi couldn't betray Campbell, and persuaded Kraft to make plans for all three to escape to Mexico. Too soon, however, American G-Men raided the apartment. Resi committed suicide and the others were arrested. Campbell, soon a free man turned himself in to the Israeli government and in prison awaited trial. And that is the end (or is it the beginning—the whole novel is written as a "backflash"). You don't know if Campbell is innocent or guilty.

I guess a story like that never really has an end because it has happened all too often. Kurt Vonnegut is asking, "Why does there have to be war? Why do millions have to die?" To him, war is an insane act that stops humans from feeling and loving. People see the cold news stories and pictures taken of the war, but will never understand what hell it is unless they are in it. Photographers win prizes for photographing

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Victims of Change

Prof. James Koldenhoven

The old and the new, like jaws of a trap, have closed on the people of Tennessee Williams and John Osborne's plays, *The Glass Menagerie* and *Look Back in Anger*. Laura Wingfield is the central victim in Williams' American (U.S.A.) culture in the 1930's and 40's; Jimmy Porter is the central victim in Osborne's British culture of the 1940's and 50's. These plays, though quite dissimilar in tone and structure, provide a view of the changes taking place on both sides of the Atlantic and how the changes affected the lives of men and women. They are both social plays, with philosophical overtones, which illustrate the injury caused by being caught between what is past and what seems to be the present and immediate future. No escape and no real alternative are available to Laura and Jimmy. Laura is a misfit in a society whose values changed too rapidly and too radically; Jimmy is a misfit in a society which promised changed but never delivered.

Token reforms in British democracy produced Osborne's Jimmy Porter. Economic necessity and a war, it appeared, had reduced all Englishmen to dependence upon one another. The Labor Party, in its austerity programs, promised "equality to all." And though the Education Act of 1944 reformed the academic institutions of England, the "eleven plus" test could not promise its youth social acceptance. Many brilliant children were sent to "secondary modern" school, but many more who were understood become over-educated for a society that granted privilege and power to a pseudo-aristocracy. From the vantage point of 1960, Evelyn Waugh said, "The English aristocracy has maintained its identity to a degree that then [1944], seemed possible." Waugh's voice is much less cynical than that of Osborne, but the assessment is nearly the same. Things had not changed as much as the reform ideals had promised.

Jimmy Porter's anger as he looks back is provoked by this discrepancy between promise of change and feeling no change. He is provoked that the state church, for instance, which should show the greatest humane sense, appeals to its membership, to do all they can to assist in the manufacture of the H-Bomb." Jimmy senses keenly the discrepancy of Bishop Bromley's saying that he "denies the difference of class distinction," only to add, "This idea has been persistently and wickedly fostered by — the working class." Jimmy's lolling about the house on Sunday mornings, reading the newspapers, is his way of defying the religious establishment, his way of interrupting impolitely the proper routine.

Jimmy Porter's anger is also directed against the pretense to freedom of education which provides, instead, respectability for some and social immo-

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Victoria and Blue-Jeans

by Pat De Young

I saw Victoria Allison for the first time on satge. She walked out, long swinging steps, took the mike, and quietly announced, "I will sing a selection from *Hair*." Staring at the floor in silence, she paused. Then up came her head, kinky blond hair shaken back. Eyes closed, standing with both feet gracefully planted, she sang. No piano, no guitar, just her voice. It was not opera. But never quavering, grabbing the notes, she hit them hard, made them knives, threw them at us. Then she bowed, once more shook back the hair, replaced the mike, and left as easily as she had come on.

A dramatic monologue won the freshman-transfer-student talent competition. But I made a note of the name, "Victoria Allison."

The name came up again in Honors English class. Mrs. Lipsey tripped through the door, as always a little late, a little breathless, her short dumpty body was fuzzy gray curls bouncing with the joy in her smile. "Good morning, my dears!"

Counting out ditto sheets to be passed down rows, she explained, "This was written twenty-five years ago by one of my students, John Allison. A sharp, smart young man." Her brown eyes twinkled. "The only one of my students to beat Doc Sadler's pre-med boys for grades . . . graduated top of his class."

"I've used this poem for an example many times, but this is the first time I can say that John sent one of his children back here to school. Victoria—she's sharp and talented too. I hope you all meet her. Maybe you have already." She looked up at us and added quietly, "You know, from San Francisco to small town Southern Baptist Mississippi means . . . a difficult adjustment."

Smile wrinkles crinkling again: "Alright m'dears, I'll give you ten minutes to find, label, and be ready to explain the figures of speech the poet uses."

It was a minor challenge. Often she said, "I like to put the hurdles just a little higher than even the best of you think you can go." I attacked all challenges, big or small, excited that I might make it higher than even she thought I could. Now I think maybe none of us ever surprised her. She badgered us into surprising ourselves; then wisely, wide-eyed and smiling, she would share our pride.

I sat up front under her nose—and answered every question I could. Still, she liked me. Three weeks into the semester. Victoria transferred into our class. Mrs. Lipsey liked Victoria too, I could tell, but it seemed Victoria wouldn't respond. Time after time she slipped through the back door late to sit silently in one of the last desks, separated from the rest of us. Occasion-

ally she disagreed in discussion—too loudly in her curt, clipped Yankee accent. Having said what she wanted to say, she would give her head a toss and return to silence, eyes focused on the floor.

I began to look for Victoria on campus. I wondered who her friends were. It was then that I noticed the blue-jeans. She wore blue-jeans almost every day, either the same pair or identical pairs; baggy, faded, frayed, here-and-there patched. I remember wishing I had a pair like that.

The one time I really looked at her and saw her in class she was wearing those jeans and an army jacket. We were discussing *Oedipus Rex*: Was his punishment justified? Victoria spoke out from behind us, "Of course, it all depends on what you think of incest. In some cultures it is taboo, in others, not. For example, in some parts of the Appalachian Mountains, (by then we were all looking at her) when children reach sexual maturity, a father will sleep with his daughter and a mother with her son to give them their initial sex experience." She was staring at Mrs. Lipsey, expressionless, waiting.

Mrs. Lipsey stared back, slowly put down her book, and flatly replied, "I think you need to check your facts. Don't make an incident a generality." The room had thudded silent; her voice fell sharp and heavy into the quiet. She rose. Somewhere (the chapel lawn?) a lawnmower was whining. Grasping the back of her chair with both hands, she leaned forward and continued more quietly, "My dear, I was raised on a Louisiana farm, daughter of a Baptist preacher. I've seen the world, and what I haven't seen I've read. But there's still something in me that draws lines I don't dare cross. Your life and world has been different. I can't judge you and your generation—I must understand you. But you shouldn't judge me either; you must try to understand me and my reaction."

She stopped, waiting, I think, for Victoria to look up again. Without the twinkle, her eyes were dark. So softly that I wondered if Victoria heard, she added, "Without understanding, your freedom will hurt you."

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a card for each fact
a place for each card
a bank for each place
a thought for each bank
a zlunk for each thought
a crool for each zlunk
a gnik for schook crool
a koml bruk schook gink
sor fleem bruk schook koml.
Wally Ouwers

VICTIMS OF CHANGE
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bility for others. His outrage is directed at the example of Nigel, his brother-in-law, who represents generations of educational and political quackery. "They knew all about character building at Nigel's school," Jimmy says cynically, noting almost in the same breath, "Now Nigel is just about as vague as you can be without being actually invisible." Nigel is headed for a respectable Cabinet post, but, in Jimmy's words, he might better "seek" sanctuary in his own stupidity." Nigel is a product of the red brick school; Jimmy went to the one of white tile. Jimmy is irate at the hypocrisy of equating education with colored mas-

onry. Morality is another issue. Cliff, Jimmy's friend, seems early in the play to be more than a friend to Alison, Jimmy's wife. Cliff's affection for Alison is undeniable. Then, after the ironing board incident and after Cliff applies a bandage to Alison's arm and a kiss to her lips, Jimmy says, "Why don't you both get into bed, and have done with it." In a real sense he means what he says, for he also defies the hypocrisy of middle-class, inflexible, codified morality. Sexual fidelity or infidelity are to Jimmy not a question of morality. Morality for him is inter-dependence of people and commitment, a mixture of sensitivity and guts. He needs Alison's spiritual fidelity. Jimmy's relationship to Alison is like his relationship to the country which he will not abandon as his friend Hugh did in disgust and total disappointment, seeking a "New Millennium." Jimmy strikes out at the thing he loves. As he tries to free Alison from her non-committal attitude by tongue lashing her, so he would, if he had a way, lash out at his country to have it leave its Edwardian past with its hypocrisy and commit it to dealing honestly with the needs of today. In this larger context lies the morality of the play. Helena's sexual relationship with Jimmy is wrong for her: "you can't be happy when what you're doing is wrong." This is her inflexibility code. For Jimmy, however, morality is being flexible to change, being committed to the best interest of everyone, being genuine.

Fundamentally, Jimmy Porter's tirade is against what the English institutions have made of Englishmen whose causes have recently vanished. Alison, who resembles her father, sits "on the fence because it's comfortable and more peaceful." The Colonel had a cause in the military occupation of India, but that is now gone, and he, too, is home and complacent. Alison, like her father, can get used to anything, even Paradise, according to Jimmy. Alison's breeding derives from the intellectual set who "sit around feeling very spiritual," while Jimmy's solution lies in the brawl. "It's the only thing left I'm any good at," he says.

Osborne conceives of his Jimmy Porter in social terms, but the philosophical by-product of the play centers in the ambivalence of Jimmy Porter's position, from which there is no escape. The real Jimmy is allusive. His tweed

jacket, pipe, tea, and newspapers give him the veneer of respectability. His bad manners, however, his unorthodox view of religion and morality, and his Midland enthusiasm quite undo the appearance. He has suffered and he has seen suffering, but he makes Alison suffer intolerably. He adores Hugh's mother, "principally because she's been poor almost all her life. Such righteous sympathy might have him dubbed a knight in shining armor, as when he rescued Alison from her parents, but Alison says, "his armor didn't really shine very much." He is deeply religious in his longing for "a little ordinary human enthusiasm," but hostile towards religion. He is an intellectual egotist and vulgar, and idealist and an iconoclast. Who this Jimmy Porter is, becomes a profound question in the play. And even he does not know the answer. When Alison leaves the garret on occasion, Jimmy goes through her trunks, cases, book-cases, "To see," he says, "if there is something of me somewhere, a reference to me." He confesses later, "One of us is crazy. . . . Is it me? . . . Or is it she?" Jimmy is suspended, caught, between a vague knowledge of what a democracy ought to be and a well articulated villification of what his society is. Sometimes he is a squirrel, sometimes a bear, but either way, the garret game he and Alison play shows us trapped animals, at best a "zoo for two." Caught between the old and the promise of new, Jimmy is ambivalently lost, without identity, without a reference point.

More than the Atlantic Ocean separates the menagerie of Osborne and that of Tennessee Williams. Like Jimmy Porter, Laura in the *The Glass Menagerie* is suspended or caught in the trap of what was the past and what is the present and the inevitable future. Laura has neither the promise of change before her nor the possibility of changing things. Where Jimmy Porter is harsh and flailing, Laura Wingfield is fragile and withdrawn. Where Jimmy strikes out at promises unfulfilled, Laura has succumbed to the inevitable. The only avenue for her is retreat, and retreat she does into the world of little glass animals and music from her victrola.

The American scene which produced Laura Wingfield was not so much a matter of political and educational reform as it was a rapid change in values. Contrasted in Williams' play are the values of the Southern gentility and the industrialized North. The nineteenth-century plantation had vanished with its servants, leisure, and Protestant ethics. Capitalism and refurbished the mid-continent with machines, manufactured products, and warehouses. There are no gentlemen callers left. They have been replaced by laborers, like Jim O'Connor, who chews gum and stands in awe of the Wrigley Building and scientific progress.

Amanda Wingfield is not the direct cause of Laura's inverted personality. She is the transitional generation to a new era, trying to adapt to the new values while clutching onto remnants

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WHAT IS LIFE?
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brutality in our crazy world.

Campbell's friend, Kraft said, "All people are insane. They will do anything anytime and God help anyone who looks for reasons." Sarcastically Campbell reveals his philosophy,

"There are plenty of good reasons for fighting but no good reason ever to hate without reservation, to imagine that God Almighty Himself hates with you, too. Where's evil? It's that large part of every man that wants to hate without limit, that wants to hate with God on its side. It's that part of every man that finds all kinds of ugliness so attractive. It's that part of an imbecile that punishes and vilifies and makes war gladly."

Campbell says it is impossible to hate America, but to love it is silly. A person can only have love for another person. A man and woman can become "a nation of two" against all the other nations of the world. When his nation ceased, he became what he would always be, a stateless person. Only in his "nation of two" with his wife, Helga, was he given uncritical love. He says,

Uncritical love is what I needed. No young person on earth is so excellent in all respects as to need no uncritical love.

That is true, to some extent. Love is taking a person for what he is, and not trying to change him. But if you love someone, you will want to help them. Campbell never told his wife that he was a spy. He must have thought that her uncritical love would end, and he couldn't let that happen.

His relation to Helga was a game that kept his sanity: "Everybody is supposed to play games for mental health." In other words, man needs dreams to survive the brutal reality of the world, a game of war that nations insanely play with each other. Resi, Campbell's mistress and dead wife's sister said,

Life's been too hard for me ever to afford much guilt. A really bad conscience is as much out of my reach as a mink coat. Day-dreams were what kept me going at that machine, day after day, and I had no right to them. They were the dreams of somebody I wasn't. Living people make words, don't they?

Is that the only hope left in life—the fact that no one can take away your dreams?

Campbell asks a guard, "What is history?" He wonders why people study history—past civilizations—and don't concentrate more on the present. Everyone should know now why there is a war, rather than having to learn about some past civilization. He says,

Future generations are going to judge all men by the extent to which they've been artists. We will be judged by the quality of our own creations. Nothing else about us will matter.

This is true in that we have studied past

civilizations and looked at their creativity. We look at cave men's pictures on dirt walls. We believe that books, sculptured figures, and paintings depict the feelings of the artists of a certain era. We study wars, but the true feelings of the war aren't really preserved.

Campbell sees life as being divided into segments, each one being different. All that is needed is that you recognize what is being expected of you. That is the secret of successful living. What is life? To Campbell it was only curiosity that motivated him through the dead and pointless years. He believed that if he had a real reason to live, he could move in any direction. He couldn't die with Resi for love because he no longer believed that love is the only thing to live for, contrary to what Resi believed when she ended her life. Campbell is told by Bernard O'Hare, head of the American Legion and discoverer of Campbell's hiding place, "Just when you think there isn't any point to life, all of the sudden you realize you are being aimed right straight at something." Maybe Howard Campbell realized this when he turned himself in. Resi's life was only a dream, it had a beginning, a middle, and an end. Campbell thought that life isn't so simple; he didn't and couldn't commit suicide.

Vonnegut presents a philosophy that asks "Are we just pretending our whole lives? If so, then we must be careful about what we pretend to be." Through Campbell Vonnegut says, "Oh God, the lives people try to lead. Oh God, what a world they try to lead them in." You can't blindly accept life with the "... sweet miracle of unquestioning faith. I consider a capacity for it terrifying and absolutely vile."

There is no such thing as a free man, according to Vonnegut. He must always be under the rule of someone or something. I think Christians have a deeper understanding of a free man. Man has Christian liberty because he is in Christ, freed from man's laws. Campbell, awaiting in the Israeli jail found the prospect of freedom nauseating. He still wouldn't be able to live his life according to his own conscience, because his life has been run by others.

The title of the book is taken from a speech by Mephistopheles in *Faust* by Goeth:

I am a part that at first was all part of the darkness that gave birth to light, that light which now disputes Mother Night her ancient rank and space, and yet cannot succeed; no matter how it struggles, it sticks to matter and cannot get free. Light flows from substance, makes it beautiful; solids can check its path, so I hope it won't be long till light and the world's stuff are destroyed together.

I thank that Christians might view man as more than part of a cycle that will be destroyed anyway. True, man is constantly disputing the Creator and can't succeed without Him. The book's philosophy takes man to have no future after death; man has a beginning, a middle, and an end. It seems like a

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WHAT IS LIFE?

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fatalistic view of man—his goal in life is to simply survive—there is no real meaning in life.

Presenting this humanistic view, the book is well written in a paradox form. The plot is unimportant, the meaning instead is important. It makes one think about what life is, and what he is making of his life.

VICTORIA & BLUE JEANS

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Picking up her book, she smiled, "Page one-thirty-two. Read, please, Miss Patterson." The dead silence of the room woke to the whisper of pages flipping. By line ten Victoria was gone. I watched the altered blue-jeans out the door. It clicked shut and I tried to think Sophocles.

* * *

By then the blue-jeans were a separate entity. I respected them and I despised them; most of all, I didn't want to see them or think about them.

"Blue-jeans!" was the campus revolutionary rally-cry. Female rebels wore blue denim armbands and hung blue-jeans in their dormitory windows. Cell groups called public demonstrations; speakers jumped on patio tables, shook their fists and screamed at Administration, Women's Affairs Board, and apathetic masses who swallowed the garbage of dress rules with only a grimace.

I was Women's Affairs Board, a beginner carrying a brand-new walnut grained plastic notebook with my name inscribed above "Secretary, W.A.B." Tuesday evening at 7:30 we opened with prayer. The chairman looked at us, her board members, across the long dark oak table. Short, stocky; dark hair pulled smoothly back from a square, competent forehead, she was not beautiful, but possessed a powerful quiet dignity. "Very intelligent," I had been told, "and quite friendly . . . up to a point."

Leaning forward, her palms and elbows resting on the table, she reminded us that we could do nothing to change the rules except make recommendations to the Administration. "Officially we are strictly a judicial body," she said, "and we must make that clear to those who are demanding action from us." She spoke well. I thought, "Now she will raise her eyebrows for emphasis . . . a frown . . . now a smile for effect." Sometime I was wrong. But not often.

Our first order of business was to decide (as law interpreter) which jeans were legal, which not. It went without saying that all colors but blue were acceptable—"We've got to draw the line somewhere."

"Last year they said button instead of a zipper made blue-jeans legal—"

"Kinda hard to tell who to gibe a warning to."

"You can't give a warning to somebody for wearing a blue denim pantsuit even if it zips."

"Alright, say pantsuits are okay."

"You can tell anything a pantsuit."

"Then why not say all blue-jeans with outside seams are illegal?"

"That's stupid." I enjoyed saying it, so I said it again. "That's stupid. A girl can get kicked out of school for letting the switches that hold her pants together show."

"But we've got to draw the line somewhere."

"Why? I know you can't run a school without rules," (I said that to the chairman's eyebrows, raised and ready to pounce) "but why do you have to draw a line at blue-jeans?"

She closed the discussion. "I think I know how we all feel about the issue. Will you trust me to represent all of your views fairly when I meet with the President and Dean?" Her dark eyes questioned us intently. I couldn't say no, but I'd rather have done it myself.

A week later the Dean met with us. The chairman called the meeting to order and asked me to open with prayer. ". . . may what is done be done in Thy Will and to Thy Glory. . ." Before the chairman's report, the Dean wanted to say a few words. She lay a long finger beside a long nose as if thinking, then folded her hands in her lap and sat up straight, very poised and very tall, even sitting.

"Girls, as a Board you are doing such a fine job. I just want you to know that I certainly do appreciate dedication and your good sense." Her voice hit highs, dropped to lows, inflected and caressed us, following her smiles and the movement of her head.

"Breathy for a woman of that size," I thought. "Trying hard to be sweetly softspoken."

"I'm sure you can understand the position of the Administration. Blue-jeans or no blue-jeans is not the question. The question is: What do they stand for; what would our eliminating the rule mean?"

"The Administration feels that wearing the faded blue-jeans represents a rebellious attitude of life, an identification with an element of society which should not be represented on a Christian campus. What's more, giving in to the blue-jeans demand would be poor psychology. Next they would demand complete freedom of dress or make a moral issue of smoking and drinking rules. Saying 'no' at this point is saying in principle, 'a rule is a rule'."

Looking up from her memo, she continued, "I personally feel that a Christian young lady would not want to dress in a way that would make her seem to be any less than a Christian young lady." She smiled again and was finished.

"Thank you," nodded the chairman. Soberly counting points on her fingers, she delineated the compromise as proposed by the Administration. "First, blue-jeans may be worn weekday afternoons after one o'clock. Second, blue-jeans may not be worn to any classes at any time. Third, blue-jeans may be

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I AM NO ROMANTIC

*I have a friend
who feels like the suppleness
of a light-breathing leaf
-buttery green.*

*Streams of liquid laughter
roll from her lips
like refreshing sweet snow
melted and
sliding over moss-loving stones.*

But—

*Don't you hear leaves crashing on cracked concrete?
Don't you see black licorice-water licked up by dogs?
She won't always be so,
you know.*

Do you hear !?

Do you see !?

Do you know what I mean !?

Do you know what it is to become realistic!?

Yes; I am.

For I know

I will yet have a friend.

Mark Okkema



LITTLE WOLF'S LAMENT

Wally Ouwers

'twas in the moon of new cherries
that the horse soldiers came
they shot at my mother
and above the sof eyes
a fountain of blood rose.
with long curving knives
they ripped open my father
he sat very still then
his hands dead yet still trying
to push the white guts back in.
they rode steel-shod horses
over baby sister's face
(yes, she like laughing waters)
her eyes hung on threads
from a blood-and-brain pancake.
oh manitou, walking in thunder
hear they child, red though I am
why did you leave them . . .
and . . .
why did you spare me.
jason

POEM FOR TOMORROW

Step over the rubble of yesterday's dreams,
Broken by Satan's merciless hand.
Never look back on the venomous streams,
Which flow leaving a slow healing brand.

Looking face down at The White Horse's Pit,
Behind me are demons, all in my pursuit.
No where to go, looking up I remit;
He rescued my soul from the gallows fruit.

Aim your steps for tomorrow's joy;
Forget the real but dormant past;
Beware of powers which destroy,
And live again, at last!

Look back on dreams unfulfilled,
And there remains no room for now;
But march forward, strongly willed,
And His love will show you how.

Joy Bomer

WILES

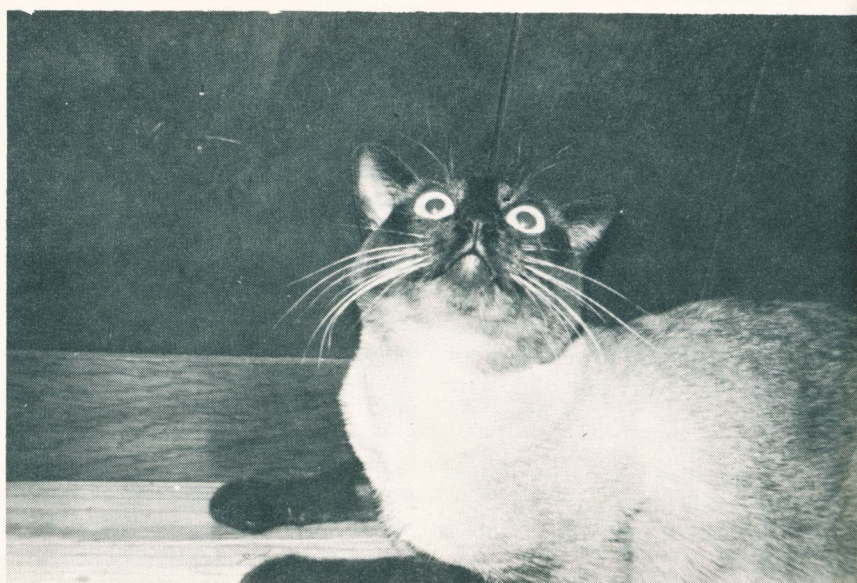
pleasure-seeking devices contrived by man
leading him urging him on
as crafty wiles are dealt
we vainly hope for a "good hand".
sinking in this depravity; so time consuming
we play
led on by the winner's ecstasy
we play
and play
sinking further as we play.
until engulfing us
we are caught in the thought
that these insensate activities are relevant
Ah! I lament for the insensitive wisdom
expounded by those of old
who knowing the plight of diversions
said DON'T
not eliciting why
for they too caught in moralism . . .
played
and sank.

Wally Vande Kleut

SADLY THE CHILDREN

Once
there was this nice old lady
in a plain brown dress
she talked to the children
told them stories
of a wonderful man
in a faraway land
a long time ago
they listened
with cookies and milk
she brought for them
but then
sadly
the children turned away
she was nice
but they wanted to play
with new plastic toys.
Wally Ouwers

street preachin' man
down the road
lives a street preachin' man
his home
just a shack
he prays for his bread
and never goes hungry
he never stops smiling
through grey rain
or angry people
his still small voice
can be drowned out.
but it always outlasts
like a statue
changless come wind or snow
except
his eyes burn.
today officials came
asking about him
it seems he won't be around very long
Wally Ouwers



Pieta

Александр

Солженицын

Den Boer, Farr, Hielema, Van Tol

"Under the Shadow of the Tsar—
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn"

The Soviet Union has always been Russia. Although it is difficult to see beyond the collective farms, the Tomb of Lenin, and the urbanization of Siberia, there remains the cathedral of St. Basil, the Graeco-Slavic language, and the stern faces of a citizenry born to Russian peasants. The Russian Revolution of 1917, alleviating the exploitation of the Russian peasants by the Western-minded nobility, severed the history of Russia from the 20th century. The Tsar was dead. Russia then turned to a German born ideal of life, based on economics. In many situations the Revolution of 1917 benefited the Russian people, give or take two decades of confusion. But the tradition of the Ivans, fathers to all Russian peoples, starved under Marxist-Leninist dreams.

After the Revolution, artists, musicians, farm managers, engineers, lawyers, et. al., looked to the New Tsar, science and technology, to throw off the cloak of Slavic-Russian identity and put on the coat of Marxist internationalism. Russia became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with a World mission rather than a people committed to a slavophile Mother Russia. As a result, Greek Orthodox churches were closed, Moussorgsky's music was not performed, reading Tolstoy was frowned upon, and artists (including architects and clothes designers) succumbed to portraying and proclaiming an economically directed life style. Officially and in practice, the Soviet Union tried to break the historical unfolding of the Russian heritage and bury the Tsar plus all he stood for once and for all. However, revolutions are never fully revolutionary. After five decades of hard-line suppression from Soviet bureaucrats, the people of the Soviet Union are searching for a revised Marxism which will transcend the cultural bareness of Leninism and Stalinism. In an outstanding article titled "A New Quest for the Old Russia" in the *Saturday Review* (12/25/71), Georgie Ann Geyer reports of the fantastic amount of public and official government support for rediscovering the heritage of Mother Russia. The onion-shaped domes of the Greek Orthodox churches now regain their shining crucifixes, frescoes of pre-Tsarist times are no longer ignored but are precious being pieced together, and, shocking to Westerners as it may seem, the summer home of Tsar Nicholas II on the Crimean Sea is fully restored. Miss Geyer noted that "This phenomenon has arisen out of what many young Russian writers and even officials acknowledge as a 'spiritual emptiness' in Soviet Life. And, although, at least at this stage, it does not point to any return to religion in

a traditional sense, it does signify a deep and profound search for values in a post-marxist, industrialized, dull, and spiritually vacuous society. . . . the younger Russians are searching in the only place open to them: their own past."

One of the most notable of the contemporary humanist-Marxists is the Russian author, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Unfortunately, in the Western world he's known for his battle with Soviet bureaucracy than for his imaginative work. But what the West has forgotten is that art has never been given freedom in Russian society. Even the "liberal" empress, Catherine the Great closed down every satirical journal which dared to venture into social and political criticism. The Shakespeare of the Russian peoples, Pushkin, spent most of his life in exile from St. Petersburg. Dostoyevsky was the victim of a mock execution, of which, at the last moment, the Tsar mitigated the punishment to hard labor. In surveying Russian history it became obvious that Russian art began under the domination of the Greek Orthodox Church, after Peter the Great was subjected to the scrutiny of the Tsar's censor, and in Soviet Russia must bow to the proletarian state. Solzhenitsyn's position is not a curiosity peculiar to the Soviet state. And neither is Solzhenitsyn important as a political pawn to be thrown about with ideological glee. He is an artist and his significance is his literary work.

Solzhenitsyn does give art a rather exalted position. In his Nobel lecture, he states that art has a special quality: ". . . the conviction carried by a genuine work of art is absolute and subdues even a resistant heart." Solzhenitsyn wonders, "Who will coordinate these scales of values, and how? Who will give mankind one single system for reading its instruments, both for wrongdoing and for doing good, for the intolerable and the tolerable as they are distinguished from each other today?" His answer is literature.

In turning away from the cultural emptiness of his society, Solzhenitsyn throws out the official Soviet writing style, Soviet Realism. He finds its "true-to-life" glorifications of proletarian life far too narrow. As a substitute he chooses the writing style of nineteenth century Russia, Russian Realism, and especially the "vast tapestry" approach of Tolstoy. Like Tolstoy, the main character in Solzhenitsyn's writing is Russian Society. Both authors introduce a multitude of characters, to portray the development of an entire society.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn's first three novels, *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, *The First Circle*, and *Cancer Ward* all have much in common. All three stress the struggles of Russian individuals against the impersonal structures of Soviet society. *A Day in the Life*, his first novel, outlines in heroic detail a typical day of Ivan Denisovich, an inmate in a Siberian Labor Camp. Solzhenitsyn emphasizes that it is a "typical" day in the life of a "typical" prisoner. He tries to do more than simply document his own experiences

in Siberia. He tries to create a character with whom every Russian can identify. The mistrust among the people in the camp, the selfishness, the cruelty of the authorities and the returned hatred of the authorities are characteristics which typify Russian society. But again, Solzhenitsyn tries to do more than document Russian society. He glorifies the invincibility of Ivan—though he gets kicked and shoved from all sides he remains a man. Though he is a "humble, utterly bewildered, plain man" (from the introduction) Solzhenitsyn makes him into a hero.

The same themes are developed in *The First Circle*. The 'Circle' refers to 'top class' political prisoners. These prisoners are largely scientists and technicians. Instead of putting in time in Siberian Labor Camps, they work in a research prison. In this novel Solzhenitsyn follows in the footsteps of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy by developing several characters rather than concentrating on one. The result is an expanded version of Ivan, the setting and the themes are almost identical. The major difference between the two is the complexity of the latter versus the simplicity of the former. For Solzhenitsyn the artist 'Circle' was much more difficult to write and it is to his credit that it is a success. To deal adequately with so many diverse characters and produce a coherent work of art at the same time is a commendable accomplishment.

The next step in Solzhenitsyn's development is *Cancer Ward*. The setting is a hospital which treats patients having various kinds of cancer. In this novel again Solzhenitsyn develops the characters of several patients, doctors, and nurses but, as the novel progresses, his attention focuses upon Oleg Kostoglov. Oleg is a patient who is convinced that he does not have cancer and should therefore be discharged. In *Cancer Ward* Solzhenitsyn goes one step further than his other novels. In the other two the prisoners are still in custody as the story ends. Toward the end of this novel Kostoglov is released from the ward to return to his native Ush-Terek in South-central Russia. The result is as if Oleg had been reborn. Solzhenitsyn writes, "It was the morning of creation. The world had been created anew for one reason only, to be given back to Oleg. 'Go out and live!' it seemed to say." Solzhenitsyn does not let the story degenerate to a romantic happy ending. As Oleg boards his homeward bound train (and the novel ends) passengers are bickering and shoving. . . . "An evil man threw tobacco in the Macaque Rhesus's Eyes. Just like that. . . ." Life may be difficult, but man can overcome it. He has the spirit and the strength to take control, to become a hero.

Solzhenitsyn's most recent work, *August 1914*, is the first volume of a trilogy which Solzhenitsyn himself describes as a 20 year project. The work describes the WWI offensive of the Russian army into the Masurian Lakes Region. Solzhenitsyn's account of the battle scenes and maneuvers place the responsibility for the defeat of General Samsonov's Second Army on the in-

competence of the Russian officers.

Amid a large cross section of characters, two main figures dominate the theme of the novel. The fictional Colonel Vorotyntsev exposes the corruption of the Tsarist system and the incompetence of the Russian officers. The end of the novel suggests that the Tsarist system is dead and a new Russia will have to be born. Only Colonel Vorotyntsev manages to escape the Tsarist system.

Solzhenitsyn sympathizes with the historic General Samsonov when he becomes trapped by staff blunders and the incompetence of his superiors. After the defeat of the Second Army at the Battle of Tannenberg, Samsonov decides that there is no reason to go on living. He kisses the Tsar's presentation sword and commits suicide. The image which flashes in his mind before his death is not a scene from his simple country childhood but the image of the "huge grim Cathedral of the Don Cossack Host, perched on a hill top, with its intricate ornamental brick work."

A minor character expresses Solzhenitsyn's feelings about the revolution "A reasonable man cannot be in favor of revolution, because revolution is a long and insane process of destruction. Above all, no revolution ever strengthens a country: it tears it apart, and for a long, long time." At another point in the novel, an aging scientist says that history is not governed by reason but has its own, perhaps incomprehensible, organic structure. An ideal social order cannot be scientifically constructed.

A hope for the future of Russia is expressed in Colonel Vorotyntsev's view of Russia as the fatherland. The idea of the fatherland meant something to Vorotyntsev but it meant little to the men of his regiment. The spiritual traditions of the Russian people are admired but Colonel Vorotyntsev refuses to appeal to God for help in a tight situation because he felt it would be blasphemous to ask God for help in defending a German town against the Germans themselves.

At the end of the novel, Vorotyntsev is dismissed from a staff conference because every Russian officer of being responsible for the history of Russia. He has a feeling of relief and freedom when he is dismissed but his future remains unclear.

So much is yet to be done in order to understand art and cultural developments in the Soviet Union. But in doing so it would be wrong to begin but putting on the glasses of political ideology. Alexander Solzhenitsyn's work appears to be a case in point.

MOUNTAIN

here
to stand breathless
for a tiny time
is the embrace of earth
the kiss of skies.

Wally Ouwers

Reflections

by Phil Stel

What can I say? I've spent almost four years at Dordt. Where do I stand?

College was a struggle and an experience, but from the first I appreciated the Christian emphasis and direction Dordt offered in its struggle with our Reformed faith, relating it to every aspect of our lives as confessing Christians. I also appreciate more the importance Dordt places on interrelating the various areas of our existence, to constantly work with other Christians in a communal effort for the Kingdom. Perhaps idealistic, but the ideas ingrained in our thoughts do have a tendency to influence and direct decisions we may make much later in life. Dordt, I feel, has helped to establish a purpose and a goal in my life as well as in the Christian community to which we belong.

From my discussion with several

transfer students from a secular university, I find that they too recognize the direction and purpose Dordt proclaims. And several students I knew personally who attended high school with me have quit university for the very reason that it divides life, giving no positive direction but rather leans toward anarchy. Many times during my college career, I felt I was taking another Mickey Mouse course. Several times I did. Nevertheless it is a great feeling to know we're struggling together.

The social life, the community, friends, fellow students, professors, college functions? Fantastic, especially in the light of my secular school upbringing. Personally, I have never encountered a place that has such a united vision. Problems, dissensions? Of course.

And college life? A chance to grow up, develop, entertain visions, establish goals, prepare for life. And an opportunity to make memories.

Thank you.



Editorial . . .

The war in Viet Nam is at an end (at least temporarily). Much has been said and much will yet be said about the justice or injustice of the whole affair. Critics are probably more in number for nearly every happening in life than many times the individuals involved in the situation.

We as humans, even as Christians, find it much more convenient to be humble to the point of claiming no talents at all for a job at the same time critical observers with a complete knowledge of everything involved than to personally accept responsibilities with little comment. In reality we are trying to show ourselves to be superior to others—superior in humanity and superior in knowledge and answers to the problems of life.

The basic activities in life often involve these principles, from conscientious objector status in war to reaction

and response to the present abortion issue; from thoughts about Christian vocational—technical training in addition to liberal arts education to even the relatively small things like involvement in the upcoming Fine Arts Festival.

What does CO stand for for me: conscientious objection or cop-out? How have I let the abortion issue go so far as it is now and what am I doing about it? Is there a need for Christian vocational and am I doing anything either for or against it? Will I be critical of Fine Arts without attempting to be a part of it or learn anything from it?

Questions such as these will get us much farther along the road to doing God's will than criticisms of others or circumstances in life, either in private or public affairs.

Wayne Brouwer



SNOW

*Scattering snow-ashes on faces
knit with the cold—
ness of a bone cut—
ting wind
and ice-sun rose red like at the burials
blessing all with frozen laughter
priest and preachers come and go
drawing crosses in the snow
snow-white and the six urns
and the dead buried the
dead
for the charming prince didn't return
as was expected
crash boom bang
dread kill hang
and reverend jones went to the toilet
it was a beautiful sight
priests and preachers come and go
drawing crosses in the snow
rusted clots of blood
petaled the ground
and the blind led the
blind
over rotten mounds
of long-gone gods
and reverend jones floundered along
it was a beautiful sight
priests and preachers come and go
drawing crosses in the snow
the dread and fears
do not go away
and salted tears
melt the snow away
so reverend jones comes and goes
drawing crosses in the snow
Mark Okkema*

C. S. LEWIS

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VICTIMS OF CHANGE

Continued from page 2

of the old. Her recall of Blue Mountain, seventeen gentlemen callers on one Sunday afternoon, and a roomful of jonquils may be romantically exaggerated, but Amanda's adaptation to the need of a livelihood are a grim reality. She sells subscriptions to *The Homemaker's Companion*, itself an amalgamation of romance and practical advice. She wants Laura to take up typing, and is concerned that Tom keeps his job in the warehouse because, as she says to her son, "you've got to look out for your sister." She clings to the Protestant ethic of Tennessee by joining the moral cause of the D.A.R., by opposing the use of intoxicating liquor, and by piously rebuking Tom for using profanity and his casual reference to "instinct" to describe man. "Instinct," she says, "belongs to animals! Christian adults don't want it!" But the practical Amanda will apply "gay deceivers" to Laura's flat chest and downright lie to Jim O'Connor about who made the dinner. The old order and the new are so mixed up in Amanda that she herself is deceived. Her question to Tom and Laura seems almost pathetic: "Why can't you and your brother be normal people?"

Tom is a victim of the changing values, but at least he can distinguish vaguely the difference between the old and the new. "Face the facts," he says to his mother, before he leaves the apartment once more to go to the movies to find adventure. He knows vaguely that the movies are a cheap escape, that "People go to the movies instead of moving!" But Tom has nowhere to move to. Even the Merchant Marines provide only an expectation of adventure, no real meaning for Tom. He can not accept Jim's values—"knowledge... Money... Power"—but he has clearly broken with the genteel values of his mother. And he leaves in the end of the play, which is all flashback, only to escape the crippling effect that would inevitably catch up with him, as it has his sister, Laura, in whom the play focuses.

Laura's limp is symbolic of the worst that can happen to those caught, young and unexpectedly, between the clash of the old and the new. Laura Wingfield is a blue rose, an abnormality. Laura can not face the commercial world of typewriters—she becomes sick to the stomach. Nor can she romanticize about the past. She had no romance. She has no future. Laura is an adult fetus, without hope of being born or aborted. In terms of the play, she is a unicorn, which is at best a figment of the imagination, at worst a freak of nature. The ephemeral sounds of the victrola and the delicate glass of the menagerie are not so much the object of Laura's fantasy as they are symbols of Laura herself. And when Jim crashes into this ephemeral world, the result is a cruel reminder that a unicorn without a horn is a horse, a horse like any other horses—it loses its identity and point of reference. It is nothing, then, a candle to be blown out, like a memory to be forgotten as soon as possible.

Look Back in Anger and The Glass

Menagerie; products of different social cultures, end in the same place. Here they are philosophically related: there is no place to go—there is no escape. The reunion of Jimmy and Alison in the end of Osborne's play may be good theatrics, but there is no affirmation. Their peace is sentimental and their attitude one of resignation. Tom's request to Laura that she blow her candles out, in the end of Williams' play, is equally sentimental and resigned. The existential by-product in these two plays lacks sufficient definition to be a creditable alternative to the trap in which the victims are caught. Without an alternative, even an affirmative to the trap in which the victims are caught. Without an alternative, even an affirmation of absurdism, these plays are resolved theatrically, but not philosophically. They stop with whispered embarrassments.

VICTORIA & BLUE JEANS

Continued from page 3

worn all day Saturday, but not at all on Sunday."

"Any questions?"

The Board had nothing to say. Somebody made a motion that we vote on the question. "All in favor of officially recommending the preceding, signify by raising your hand." I abstained. There were six in favor, three abstentions, I typed up the recommendation and put it on the Dean of Women's desk who passed it up to the Dean of Students who passed it up to the President.

As soon as the new rules were posted, the Blue-Jeans Revolution died. No more armbands or two-legged curtains. Blue-jeans were defined as "work-type, especially if faded, frayed, and/or patched." And the Board was reminded that its responsibility lay in giving warnings for rule infractions.

* * *

I began to catch myself seeing the blue-jeans first, then Victoria in them. She had not been an agitator; rule changes meant as much to her as rules. I couldn't make myself give her a warning. Not wanting to be a hypocrite, neither did I warn any other blue-jean wearer.

Once I went to visit Victoria, thinking maybe we could talk; I could explain things and at the same time do my duty. We lived in the same dorm, opposite ends, different floor. Sitting on the bed crosslegged, she looked up briefly when I stopped outside the door. "I was just passing by and thought I'd say Hi."

"Hi."

The room was neat; the floor was bare. An army blanket served as bedspread. Victoria's hair was tamed quite well—a perfect triangle except at the top where a straight part indented the points. But a circle of unruly fuzz caught the afternoon sunlight in a yellow halo.

"I think we're in English together."

"Yes," she said, nose hawklike in profile, "I think so."

In the corner stood a rolled-up sleeping bag. Black and white mood prints over her desk broke the monotony of beige cement blocks and lines.

"How do you like it here?"

She looked at me, eyes dark blue with flecks of gray, more noncommittal than shy or hostile. It's alright."

"That's good." I smiled. "Well... nice talking to you... see y'around."

"Goodbye."

I wasn't afraid of Victoria, just of the scorn, quiet behind her eyes. I couldn't see it, but it had to be there. Because walking away, I felt small and strangely ashamed.

She got her warnings anyway. The dorm president had no qualms, or if she did, she stigmatized them. And so Victoria became our first (and, as it happened, only) case of the semester.

We met around the long oak table. Opening our inscribed walnut-grained plastic notebooks, we prepared to take notes as the dorm president introduced the case. "Victoria already had two blue-jean warnings when I gave her another one about two weeks ago. I told her then that three warnings of the same nature meant she had to come before House Council. She met with us Tuesday night, and we decided that since she was new to the rules she could have another chance. Wednesday morning at 10:30—coming out of chapel—I saw her in blue-jeans again. I gave her another warning and told her it would probably mean she'd have to come before the Women's Affairs Board. House Council met again Thursday and decided to send the case up, and she was notified."

Victoria was asked to come in. She was wearing rivet-studded brown jeans. Quietly taking her seat, one of the heavy round meeting chairs pulled out a few feet from the corner of the table, she crossed her legs and folded her hands, elbows resting on the chair's curved arms. With just a hint of a smile, she looked up expectantly. She nodded as each of the Board members was introduced, and then dropped her eyes as the chairman read the changes.

Very kindly she explained, "Victoria, we're not here to decide whether or not you broke a rule, because obviously you did. We are more concerned at this point with your attitude. Because attitude is so important, we have this Board of people to make decisions about discipline instead of just a system of certain penalties for certain offenses."

"Did you realize when you wore the blue-jeans that you were breaking a rule?"

"Yes."

"Do you plan to continue to break the rule?"

"I won't plan to break the rule, but if I get up in the morning and feel like putting on blue-jeans, I will."

"But that's breaking it."

"In my mind I won't be breaking any rules."

The chairman was getting exasperated; the kindness had left her voice. She was used to winning word duels. For the moment, the rest of us were only spectators. Leaning toward Vic-

toria, she asked sharply, "Don't you believe that disobeying rules is wrong?"

Victoria just looked at her and then she looked at us. I don't know what she saw in nine pairs of eyes down the length of the dark polished table. But something shattered, leaving her sitting crumpled in the chair, head down, hands limp in her lap... crying. I looked away and heard a child sobbing, "Ever since I came here... everything I do is wrong."

Finally the chairman broke into the silence. "We're sorry you feel this way..."

"But it doesn't make any difference, does it?" Victoria spoke quickly, sharply. Her fists clenched in her lap. Straightening, she raised her head. Her face was red-blotted and teary, but she was in control. "I'm not wrong. I'm not immoral for wearing blue-jeans. Your rule is immoral."

Having nothing more to say, she was excused and we were left to decide what disciplinary action to recommend. Counseling was out, said the Dean. In earlier sessions between the two, Victoria had been polite but unreachable. And no, we couldn't send her to counsel with Mrs. Lipsey, her major department Head, because if the Dean could get no response, neither could anyone else.

Administrative Reprimand was the final decision: and official personal reprimand, a letter home to her parents, and the understanding that any further infraction would result in disciplinary probation.

I typed up the recommendation and put it on the Dean's desk. As far as I know, it went through.

Last week some of the kids on my floor wrote me and told me that Victoria wasn't back in school this semester either.

FEELING #104

They laughed again...
They laughed at me!

Why me?

Or better, why not *at me*?

Too often, I say the wrong word.
Too often, I do the wrong thing.

And what I do and say
brings laughter.

But must I always be
the one who makes them laugh?

Why me the butt

of someone else's joke?

Must I be hurt? Humiliated?

Or have I become too touchy,
too sensitive a simple soul?

Perhaps...

So if I make them laugh
by saying, by doing,

then I must not feel hurt.

Rather should I join the humor
and laugh *with* them.

Then, all can appreciate
the genius of my wit.



false problemstics

*reported to me
by him who had seen
some milky white moths had broken their bones*

so baffled was i
... my
tell me why
know they not how to fly in the sky
cried i

he wouldn't reply
so baffled was he by me

mark okkema

LOCAL-STOP GREYHOUND

*behind me
a braided cree
remembering . . .
his lines in the foothills
in the powder-snow
of a brittle cold
no steel traps
only snare and deadfall
killing quickly.
they are my brothers
he says softly.*

*across the aisle
a drunk
bragging . . .
his jail-cell overnights
the yellow vomit
in forgotten smalltowns.*

*the cree rises
to sit beside him
adding his own
on this familiar ground.*
Wally Ouwens

theseus slayed

*the empty streets meandered through a misty brain
a maze of narrow hallways
 where trains stop
and black holes and closed doors
 and all stops
dead-end*

*the yellow light drips on red cobblestones
and thought sprawl over
the screaming silence crawls up
the walls of brick and some-body's bones*

*a newspaper scraps across the street
while electric moons hum
the shoes clank the mournful beat
of dirges being sung*

*the empty streets meandered through a misty brain
a maze of narrow hallways
 where trains stop
and black holes and closed doors
 and all stops
dead-end*

mark okkema

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