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Short Story

Night at the Opry

by Otto Keyes

You ain't never seen water run down a rat-hole quicker'n I burrowed down in them sacks when the snow warned me he was comin'. I almost hollered when I seen that big shadow plump down in the puddle a' moonlight on the floor. He turned on his lantern and raised it with his huge, grisly fist to take a look around inside.

"Potverdoryy! Dem kids been messin' in de sacks again!"

He kinda puffed it out and his breath hung in the air like one a' them word clouds in the comic books. He turned out the light, put his mittens back on, and I heard a crunch, crunch, crunch-a-a-akachunk, crunch, crunch, crunch, crunch.....and he was gone.

The dark closed around me like a big old blanket when he closed the door. I's just climbin' out from under the sacks when I heard the whistle and the roar a' the engine. I started to set down right quick, but 'stead a' landin' on my butt, I felt my chin hit ever' board as I slid along the boxcar floor. Well, least I knowed for sure we was goin' the right way. I reckon as Ma'd be right handy with the willer switch when I got home (she don't take kindly to me runnin' off). Even so, I don't recollect a time when the name' a' Buttermilk, West Virginia sounded so good to me.

Looked to be a long, cold ride, so I pulled some sacks up around me an' settled back to eat a cookie. From the taste I took it to be one a' them chewy, round ones with the cherry in the middle. Reachin' down in my pocket, I jingled my change an' commenced to cogitate on the past few hours....

The light had been pretty well sucked out a' the day an' it was gettin' mighty chilly when I finally got the door a' the boxcar pried open. I figured it was high time to hop off this freight an' ketch a train goin' back south before I frosted my posterearior. It just don't do to go north in January.

Bein' as we was siftin' along at a right good pace I supposed I'd best wait a spell 'till we got to a town an' slowed down some before I hopped off. Directly the train, she commenced to ease up a bit an' I seen some house lights down the tracks a piece. The car swayed a big an' sure enough, when I looked out again, there was another set a' tracks—we was in a sidin', movin' kinda slow.

I ain't exactly lik one a' them belly dancers on my feet, so I tripped when I jumped out an' landed in the middle a' them other tracks. I didn't waste no time layin' there, though, when I felt the ground kinda rumblin' an' seen that big bright eye starin' at me. As I was diggin' my way out a' the snowdrift by the tracks, I thought about the fair young maiden in the travelin' mellerdrama show an' kinda wished I'd meet a hero who'd take me home and warm me up. North winds, snowbanks, down-south clothes, an' thin blood don't mix none too good.

Kinda hunched over an' huggin' the downwind side a' the buildin's, I headed toward what looked like the center a' town. I was sure lookin' forward to gettin' inside somewhere out a' the wind an' snow. Wasn't that it was snowin' so much, but the stuff that was already here seemed to be in a travelin' mood an' the wind kept pushin' it over the top a' my collar an' down my neck.

I was already down past the post-office an' into a bunch a' houses before I realized I'd mozeied right through the up-town section. Walkin' skrunched over an' squinty-eyed like that it's easy to miss stuff, ya' know. Anyhow, I got back up-town an' started checkin' the stores, but all of 'em was closed on the one side, so I reckoned I'd check the other. No sooner had I got across the street than these cars come a-blowin' through the snow, howlin' an' growlin'—makin' a ungodly, awful racket. They was all front down an' tail up—each with his nose under the arse a' the one ahead. Looked for all the world like a pack a' dogs after a bitch in heat.

'Bout that time the wind ketched his breath for another blow an' I spied a greasy light spillin' out on the clean white snow as somebody opened the door a' Doc's Cafe. I made a beeline for it.

You could almost hear the necks an' stools turn an' creak when I come in. They was all lookin' at me kinda suspicious-like, but cold as I was, ain't no way I was goin' back outside right then. I's always big for my age, so I just drawed myself up a bit taller, walked over to the bar, an' commenced to survey the situation. Reckon as it did the job, 'cause ever'body went back to talkin' an' I begun to relax a bit.

"What'll it be son?"

Geez! I 'bout jumped off the stool.

Now that question presented a whole 'nother problem. What is this here Doc was fixin' to drum up some more down at the cafe? An' what if when I got sick he couldn't doctor me up right, or found out I didn't have no money an' just let me kick off? Didn't know as I wanted to take a chance on that. Why cold as it was, it'd be spring before they could bury me an' who wants to spend the winter in a snowdrift?! Not me, an' besides, what can a body buy for thirty-five cents anyhow?

"I'll have a sack of tater chips an' a cup a' coffee."

Lucky I seen them in time. He looked kinda fidgity as it was an' I didn't figure it would do no good to keep him waitin'.

It shore looked good with the steam rollin' over the side a' the cup. He thumped a spoon down beside the coffee an' headed for the tater chips. I blew the steam off the top a' the cup an' seen why he brought the spoon—the stuff didn't look like it'd pour none too good.

"Can I have some cream please, mister?"

"Sure can son."

He laid the chips down, reached under the bar, pulled out a little white cup 'bout the size a' Ma's thimble, an' set it down by the chips.

"That'll be a quarter, son."

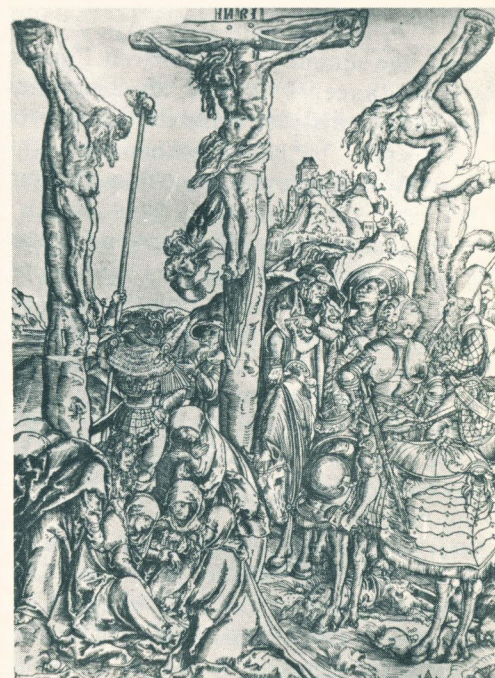
From the look in his eye, I could tell he wanted it all in cash, so I dug down in my pocket an' fetched it out. That left a dime to get all the way back to Buttermilk.

I was startin' to warm up a bit—my feet were gettin' half-way thawed out. I curled my fingers around the steamy cup an' let the heat sink in an' then put 'em up against my face, but they was still cold. Nobody was lookin', so I stuck one finger into my coffee. 'Bout the time I got two knuckles deep I knowed it was a mistake, but I had to grit my teeth an' pull it out real slow so's not to 'tract any 'ttention. Least I had one warm finger.

Well, eventually the coffee cooled down an' my fingers warmed up. By the time I had gone through the tater chips an' a refill, I was feelin' fair to middlin' an' pretty well caught up on the local news. Never heard no mention a' any reg'lar type names. Seems they was all Van den, Van der, or Van Dee; weren't a Smith or Jones in the lot. For all a' them Dutchmen, I didn't see nobody shufflin' around in them wooden gunboats.

'Parently there was some kinda Dutch school in town too—named Dork Callij or some such like. Guess that rowdy bunch in the corner was from there. Anyway, they was sayin' that a high-falutin' Opry star from New York was supposed to sing over there tonight.

(Con't p. 5)



"Kalvarienberg", a Crucifixion by the German Renaissance artist Lucas Cranach, featured in this issue's art profile.

HURRY UP, HARRY

by Syd Hielema

Call it Dutch chauvinism if you will, but I believe that we can learn a thing or two from seventeenth century Holland. At the time the dike-hoppers were a step ahead of the rest of Europe, thanks to an unhealthy mixture of Calvinism and Humanism. This age produced such renowned Dutch artists as Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals and Steen. While other Europeans were painting portraits for the upper class, or else frilly fantasies of angels and saints, the Dutchmen tried something new: capturing everyday life on the canvas. Consequently, we now have Vermeer's version of a milkmaid churning butter, the jolly family meal-time pictures of Steen, and the meditative Rembrandt's silhouetted windmills.

The Dutch people went for this new style too. In those days your house was empty if you didn't have a painting in your living room. Just the ordinary, everyday events of life were worthy of celebration for them. Simplicity was the key.

Between then and now things have changed a little. Artists got the idea that they were supposed to be weird or special. A lot of us have trouble appreciating, or even understanding the art of today, and many of us probably couldn't care less. The arts don't really play an important role in our life-style anymore.

I suppose its understandable. We've always tended to emphasize values like efficiency, productivity, and making money, and the arts don't rate too high on that kind of a scale. Besides, 'times is gettin rough', and people are more concerned about keeping their cupboards stocked. Times are so rough that even the true-blue value of justice has to bow before the deified dollar: Uncle Sam is busy

stockpiling both the Israelites and the Arabs with fireworks of different shapes and sizes. Viet Nam vets are singing on as mercenaries for the Arabs! Who would dare even mention the arts in such a climate? Hurry up and finish that bomb shelter, Harry.

No, I'm not trying to push a panic button, just a few butts. We tend to get caught up in the above-mentioned values too. Its only natural—we hear it on TV, on the radio, we see it in the lives of those all around us, and we see it in our own lives. One place I'm not so sure we can see it is in the Scriptures. Our ancestors the Israelites were even instructed to be inefficient: "Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest, nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God." (Lev. 19:9-10). Maybe that specific law doesn't apply today, but that type of thinking ought to.

What does all this have to do with the arts? The negligible position of the arts in the Christian community is largely due to the fact that we have absorbed secular values, an unhealthy process of osmosis. Goals such as efficiency tend to strip life down to the bare essentials of day-to-day living. On the other hand, goals such as developing the creation in all its fullness would promote a life-style which would be enriched by the arts. Doesn't the poetry of the psalms cut through 3,000 years and speak to us in our everyday situation today?

Yes, I know, this may sound find, but the situation isn't quite so simply solved. A lot of Christians have some difficulty appreciating

what Christian artists are producing. The problem is, we're not living in 17th century Holland anymore, artists no longer simply celebrate everyday life. A fair amount of healing is needed: a healing of criticism so that artists can know how their works are received; a healing or patience and learning so that these works can be properly appreciated.

However, talk is cheap, and so are preachy editorials. Put away your hammer, Harry, I've got a song you've got to listen to.

Lit Contest

Fine Arts is once again sponsoring a Poetry and Short Story contest for all interested Dordt students. The contest is being held in conjunction with the Fine Arts Literature weekend, coming up on April 10-11. Students are encouraged to submit all material to Mr. Cook either on or before March 19, the contest deadline. Please note following contest rules:

1. Please submit 2 copies of each work to Mr. Cook.
2. Please attach a 3" x 5" card by paper clip to each entry, giving student's name, college year, and title of work.
3. Please double space all entries.
4. Contest deadline is March 19.

Winning entries will appear in a special Fine Arts issue of **Cannon**. All material submitted will be judged and then discussed in a seminar with the students, during the Literature weekend.

PEACHES AND BEER

by Wally vandeKleut

It was the summer I was thirteen I guess. My grandparents came the summer thereafter—or did they come the summer of my fifteenth birthday? Whenever, the summer my dad's parents came from Holland wasn't the summer. Opa Van Engen's dynamic character absorbed everyone's time; he'd never allow any teenager to run around ransacking neighbors' homes. No, it definitely wasn't that summer. Nor could it have been after their three-month summer visit. The Vaughans had moved out by then, yes, the more I think of it the more I'm sure it was the summer I was thirteen. Though all things considering, I could have been twelve at the time.

Blast this seventy-year-old mind anyway! I never did have the memory Mom had. How she would remember the most insignificant details simply through association, I'll never be able to understand! A sort of grapevine memory you might say. Now that summer...just let me think a second. If I was twelve at the time I must have been in elementary school, and that just doesn't seem likely. No, not at all, but I wonder. Ach, no

matter; I was twelve or thirteen, and either way I was young.

That summer, as all of the summers of my later youth, Dad owned a six-acre fruit farm in the southern droop of Ontario. Six acres was small compared to the standard size of fruit farms in the area, but for a family of six it kept us on the move. Dad relied on his regular GM job for the major portion of his income, so for most of the picking season he worked at least seventy-five hours a week. A day starting at seven a.m. and ending at close to midnight was not unusual. It was plain to me the factory job was only his money-bringer-inner and the farm his joy.

Sour cherries, early, middle and late peaches, but mostly middle, pears and prunes; all of these were to be picked during the course of a summer. There was something fully satisfying about the ripening, and finally mature, fruit as each kind in its turn was picked. Non-farm people would rave about the beautiful blossoms during the spring, but to the farmer at heart this beauty was more realistically understood in terms of potential yield. Anticipation, worry, and much patience

filled Dad's thoughts and actions throughout the month of June, a good five weeks prior to the pink flush of the sour cherries. Ladders were mended, new baskets ordered and old ones patched, the junky Ford Ferguson rejuvenated—its hydraulic certainly needing adjustment, its stubborn straight-six again

(Con't, p. 3)

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EDITOR: SYD HIELEMA

Editorial Staff: Sandy VandenBerg, Wally vande Kleut, Peg Johnson, JoAnne Feenstra, Marianne Scholte, Jerry Van Tol, Keith Voss.

Layout Staff: Rudy deGroot, Carol Kroese, Faculty Advisor: Hugh Cook.

Peaches (con't)

coaxed to life by loving wrenches and occasional silent curses, the garage-barn cleared of winter litter, picking harnesses more often repaired than bought, fruit contracts secured, and more. Pessimistic estimates of how little fruit was on the trees were duly under-rated, and all of a sudden we would have oh so much more fruit to pick (Dad would never have made a good stock-broker, a prophet of doom maybe, but never a stock-broker!). Blessedly content, Mom would laugh; she'd known all along how much fruit there'd be. Invariably both were wrong; knowing nothing I would average Mom and Dad's estimate and usually be right. My inevitable cockiness would knit Dad's black brows and deepen Mom's already hearty laugh into a jest, "You'll make a good farmer!" But everyone knew I didn't want to be a farmer, and a defensive laugh would bring me back to my thirteen years.

Roughly the second week of July, the farmer, the farmer's wife and the farmer's kids actually got down to what it was all about. Long, hot days, ensued, punky sister cried and squirt brother goofed off, but as the oldest, I was determined to live up to being whatever it was I was supposed to live up to.

"Hey, Mom, how many baskets have you got?"

"Fifteen, Chris."

Seething silence, I would only have thirteen.

Lying, Mom would add, "But this is a really good tree."

"Yeah, it must be."

"It is no, your tree's a lot better than Mom's," interrupted my ten-year-old sister, Karen.

"Shut-up! What do you know anyway?"

"That's enough!" Mom dropped the curtain on the angry scene developing.

And so the days would pass. Some spiced with bickering, others more easy-going. The cherries would be picked and then the peaches, and later in the beginning of September, after school had begun, Mom and Dad with the help of an aunt or two, would pick the pears and prunes. Occasionally the Bartlett pears would ripen early and then the whole farmer's family would be at it again, picking furiously so as to get them all off before Dad came home from work. This youthful dream was never accomplished, but the effort did a lot towards calming Dad's unceasing worry.

The farmer's summer, though, was not all work. There was one solid week in July after the sour cherries and before the early peaches during which goofing around became legitimate. Most summers the family would make a four or five hour trip north to the Muskoka, Lakes area where we would likely vacation the entire week. Sometimes a few days longer. My thirteenth July was an exception; that summer an especially poor expected fruit crop convinced Dad that the trip would be unwise. A crown of disappointment could last for only so long, though, and within a day Karen and I were nosing around making children of ourselves.

Now our farm was adjacent to what we called the bush. It was a small, roughly eight-acre forest, mostly deciduous but some coniferous trees as well. Sixty-foot maples stood a mere ten feet away from even higher pines creating a high and full roof of leaves.

The rays of the sun just petered through to the ground level where carpeting underbrush enveloped the many dead trees. Ignoring parents' warnings about the abundant poison ivy, Karen and I would scratch our way through the bush to the odd dead giant of a tree whose wide upper branches had suspended it above ground. Here we would mount slippery trunks pretending to be anything and everything; jet pilots, rodeo cowboys, tight-rope walkers, Mt. Everest climbers; all airy occupations were explored. A typically male feat would stupidly induce me to imitate daring-doers growing in my mind. Looking the other way Karen would sensibly state, "I'm going home if you kill yourself!"

"Ah so what," I said arrogantly, but when she started to leave the coercing began. "Hey! Let's go peek at the Vaughans!"

"Mom said we can't."

"Come on, we'll be real quiet so they won't see us. Besides, if you don't tell Mom, I won't...It'll be our secret, O.K.?"

"Gracey told me they're gone for a week."

"Whadaya mean?", already plotting but not sure if the Vaughans were going or were already gone.

"She said she was gonna be gone till tomorrow."

"You sure she said Sunday?"

"Yup."

"Come on then, let's go!"

"Chris!...hey, wait for me."

"Shht!"

"Why, stupid? They're gone, and anyway I don't think we should..."

"Will you shut up!"

"I'm not going!"

"O.K., O.K., I'm sorry Karen."

As we approached the Vaughans' shed—it really was little more than a shed—walking became crawling in an attempt to be stealthy. Once again my sister'd begin an objection but a quick, harsh "shht" would gain the game temporary life. The shed, encircled by a camp of garbage, squatted in a small clearing within the bush not more than twenty yards from the edge of our farm. Torn imitation brick, cardboard windows and open doorways made up the walls. A steep, by now nearly unshingled half-roof covered the rear of the house, the front protected by a seriously sunken tar-roof. An irregular uncrowned chimney salnted its way out of one side of the half-roof.

Prior peekings had of course revealed the tired exterior, but I felt a glimpse of the interior would answer all the questions. The rumor was that old Mr. Vaughan had been one of the wealthiest farmers in the area, that is until drinking became his full-time calling. He eventually went bankrupt. Always somewhat cantankerous, he became even more so, only in the end to leave his wife and four children in search of the universal bottle. The two youngest, Gracey and Ronald were moronic, the older young men, boozingly rebellious. All of this was said to arouse some public pity, and so the next wealthiest farmer consented to let them live rent-free in a not-so-bad little house in his little bush. Well, some six or seven years after the "scandal" the Vaughans still inhabited the shed and now we were finally to find out what it was actually like.

Cautiously tip-toeing to the open doorway I spun a glance round the jamb and into the forbidden darkness. What?! Something yellow eyed back! No! They're home! "Run!

Karen you...Run!" The forlorn meow of a cat just reached my consciousness as I stumbled over Karen and hit my face on the wet ground. A cat! You've got to be kidding. Evidently my sister had heard and understood the source for alarm.

"It's just a cat, scaredy-cat," breaking out in silly laughter.

"Come on." Provoked bravery led the way as we again approached the door. Peering inside, the drab contours of a grey cat, plank table, slanted chairs, and bed could be dimly perceived. Broken glass and caked dirt lined the immediate floor of the kitchen. Hard crusts, a few dirty dishes, a balled-up rag and a pair of pants spotted the filthy, one-plank-missing table. As we ventured into the kitchen, about a half-dozen cans and a few more dishes could be seen on an otherwise almost deserted shelf. Empty beer bottles littered everywhere. "They must have moved out for good!"

Karen was equally struck, but insisted that Gracey had said they were only going to her aunt's for a week.

The two closet-sized bedrooms were pitched in a musty darkness, a sour smell adding to the general taste of the shed. Slipping voices eeked the fear of small hearts as we creeped further. "It's so dark."

"There's a door I think."

"Does it open? Try it, Chris."

The latch darkened our progress as we pushed now more out of necessity than anything else. Picking up a chair leg I declared that I would break the latch.

"But, I don't...", began Karen.

But thought went unheeded and the latch broke. Late afternoon light shafted the two rooms, cutting dull lines of day exposure onto two disarrayed sunken beds, black-stained pink-flowered papered walls, and dirt-covered floor. Empty "Blues" had been flung into the far corner, some of the bottles jagged and unmouthed. There was nothing really to see and yet everything. Our peeking had become a staring we couldn't fully comprehend or trust; time closed in.

(continued on page 6)

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

*Mary opened up herself
To Father, Son and Holy Ghost
Let Jesus come in
Even gave Him a real home, with
Food and clothes and
Enough grief to cry
Real love on a rocky hillside
Alone.
The wise men opened up themselves
To God
Let Him lead them with their gold
To kneel before our King
In a pile of hay.
I have nothing to offer
If I open up myself
Except myself, God made me
A mirror of Him
Can I give it back again?*

—Sandy Van Den Berg

Art Profile

Lucas Cranach: An Incomplete Portrait

by Mark Okkema

Name: Lucas Cranach, alias Lucas Maler, alias Lucas Sunder of Kronach in Franconia.

Time: October 4, 1472—October 16, 1553.

Setting: Wittenberg.

Lucas Cranach the Elder. I've been having difficulty in typifying this most Germanic and individualistic of Northern painters. Is he truly the founder of Protestant art? In my eagerness I formed the hasty conclusion that he was not. I thought the critics to be all wrong. But I thought I'd better give the man a chance to speak for himself. After some more reading, staring, judging, and uncomfortable, nervous pondering I came to



Judith

the following conclusion: He is not the founder of Protestant art. Truly. The critics are all wrong. Oh, I will agree that Cranach was associated with Protestantism. This 3-time burgermeister and wealthiest citizen of Wittenburg, court-painter, printer, owner of an apothecary shop, and director of a painting studio was a close and sincere friend of Luther. He went so far as to help the former monk woo Katharina von Bora, a former nun, who became Luther's wife. That's going pretty far, especially in those days. He gave refuge to Luther after the Diet of Worms. After the Treaty of Passau, Cranach, a loyal follower of John Frederick, was acknowledged as a national hero for his contribution to the over-throw of Maurice of Saxony and the surrender of Charles V to Lutheranism. After his death a gigantic alterpiece was completed in commemoration of him as a reformer of Christianity.

Its just that the idea of "Protestant art" is too confining. For Cranach didn't simply use his art to serve the cause of Luther against Tetzel and Co. The spirit in which he painted during the Reformation originated long before its rise, and without the help of Luther or Melancthon, thank-you. He painted in a spirit which was more than a shallow didacticism and a series of portraits of the Reformers.

It has been said that the early Cranach was medieval. I have difficulty accepting this thesis. Just look at **St. Jerome in Penitence** (1502) or **Christ on the Cross** (1503). Neither painting betrays a medieval, double reality. The figures may reveal a Gothic expressiveness, but, as with all post-medieval painting, they are integrated into the landscape (not through Italian perspective, but through an excellent use of blue-green atmospheric light). The stage is not other-worldly. And the figures are not expressing the spirituality of a Van der Weyden. The fluent, sinuous line in the billowy garments and clouds, drooping foliage, sublime mountains and craigs and distant buildings and strange light all contribute to the introspective, subjective character of these paintings. Nature has some animation and some horrific elementas that only became actualized later in the art of Bosch. Strange owls hide in the trees. Violence is evident in his engraving **Calvary** (1502) which is accompanied by an "ordered confusion" characteristic of early Cranach. All these factors speak of an innate power which Cranach had to release, and to the use of painting as self-expression.

Sometime between 1505 and 1510 Cranach's art changed. The expressive, violent element became controlled. Cranach began to learn how to appreciate a reality other than his subjective experiences. Ironically, in his tendency towards a more Christian appreciation of God's creation, Cranach moved away from religious subject-matter to the more "profane."

Cranach began his many, many portraits now, employing the same neutral background and objectivity as Holbein. For the first time he had the sufficient calmness to engage in a self-portrait.

One of Cranach's favorite subjects was the nude. He painted nudes under any excuse he could find, using classical or biblical themes



Jerome In Penitence

for their presence. Their youthful delicate bodies with small breasts, and emphasized outlines, are sensual and alluring. A dreamy softness envelops them, encouraged by their accompanying veils. Their round heads have



Venus mit dem Schleier

slanted eyes and seem Slavish. Adorning hats and necklaces contrast with their naked bodies. There is a celebration of the youthful, innocent and beautiful human body.

Cranach's sympathy for women is even displayed in his tender, sympathetic treatment of Judith, Salome, and Delilah, despite the moralistic use Luther had intended with these evil women. In 1530 Cranach painted **Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden**. The lavish goodness of the garden is in evidence. God is present as a wise, all-knowing, loving holy creator and father. He is very personal. In contrast to Durer's studies of Adam and Eve as examples of classical perfection and anatomical specimens, Cranach shows us two lovers who were meant for each other and who are happy in each other. **The Stag Hunt** betrays a sympathetic understanding of the plight of the hunted animals.

The Payment displays a host of common objects, all typically rich in color. I hope these examples have demonstrated the great appreciation Cranach had for God's creation. Much more could be discussed: his continuing relationships with Luther's Catholic enemies, even during the most critical of times; his individual style—the original compositions, the color, the rhythm, the picturesque; his appreciation for irony; his never-ending fascination with the horrific and ugly; and his fluctuation between good and bad art.

All in all, although Cranach may not have been the genius that Durer was, he was a fine artist. His appreciation for the multifaceted creation contributed to a style that never grew stale and always changed (to the mystification of some art historians). His paintings were much more than didactic pieces in support of the Reformation. Go view some of his paintings. Let Cranach speak for himself.

Opry (con't)

I always figured the Opry was in Nashville, but maybe New York's got one too. With somethin' like that goin' on I couldn't understand why they wasn't fixin' to go to it. Why the Opry ain't never been to Buttermilk, but then I reckon it's might smaller'n Sioux Center, Iowa. That's the name a' the town I's in—I 'member, 'cause I writ it down somewheres. Always thought them Sioux was injuns 'stead a' Dutchmen.

I kinda got the general direction a' this Dork place from the talk goin' on in Doc's, so I hopped down off the stool an' lit out. The wind had died down some, so it weren't quite so bad out. But by the time I got 'bout half a block I could fell them wet sneakers startin' to crust up on me.

Hadn't gone but a few steps more before I come upon this big yella box with a Goodwill sign on the side tellin' people to throw in their old clothes an' stuff. Well, I figured there weren't nobody around that needed a little good will a whole lot more'n I did right then, so I started to take a peek inside. I had the little door open good an' wide when the nose a' the sheriff's car poked itself around the corner. Weren't a whole lot I could do but take a dive right in the box.

Man! It was darker'n the inside of a dead cow. Lucky I landed on a big soft pile so's I didn't break my neck. Just layed real still for a bit expectin' to get hauled out, but I guess nobody seen me, so I commenced to rustle around for some warm duds.

By the time I got myself squeezed out through that little hole an' headed for the Opry, I was done up fit to kill. Traded in my soggy sneakers for army boots an' two pair of socks that had holes in different places. The suit didn't fit none too good over my other clothes, but the big old coat covered things mostly, anyhow. With all that stuff on I walked kinda waddy-like, but I was feelin' a whole lot better—'specially 'bout bein' dressed up right for the Opry. It ain't ever'day a fella gets to hear one a' them big singing stars like Loretta Lynn or Merle Haggard, or Charlie Pride.

Didn't take much walkin' to find the callij
an' I just followed the first people I seen,
hopin' they'd go to the right place.

'Bout the time I was gettin' lost wanderin' through this building, we come to a room where a bunch a' people was sittin'. All the chairs was in rows an' everything kinda sloped down to the front where this big, black, casket-lookin' box was sittin' on stilts with white, wing-things droopin' over it.

Standin' by the door on one side was a guy with a black suit an' a ruffly shirt like Ma used to wear to church. On the other side was this girl that reminded me of the bell sittin' on the nick-nack shelf at home. It's shaped like a woman wearin' a long dress, an' if ya look underneath, ya can see how her feet bang against the side of the dress to make it ring.

I couldn't see that this here girl had no feet, but since I didn't figure she'd take kindly to me checkin' further, I just asked the guy with the funny shirt whether this was where the Opry singer was. He said yes, so I commenced to make my way down to the front where I could get a good seat.

Between the army boots, coat, an' the floor
that kept droppin' off on me, I was glad to get
my crupper set down all in one piece. I begun
to wish I hadn't picked the front row when I

seen I was gonna be the only one on it. I kinda scrunched down, hopin' nobody would recognize their coat or suit.

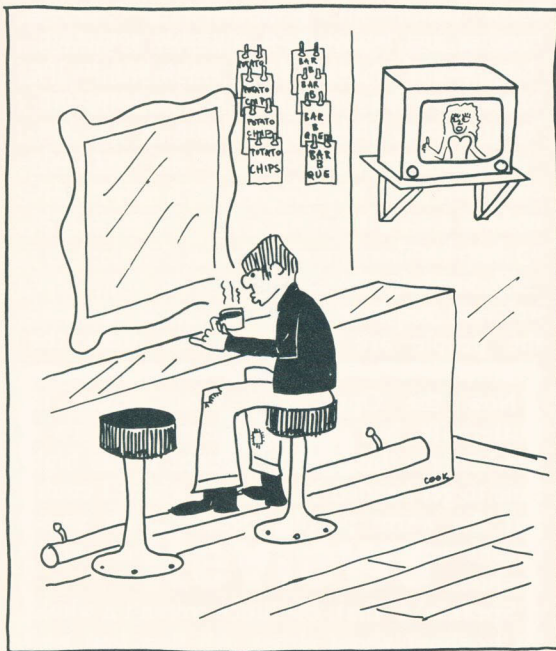
That big black box just set there with the lights shinin' on it an' everybody was kinda mumblin' an' whisperin' amongst themselves. It was lookin' more an' more like a funeral wake to me. I was tryin' to figure how to pay my respects to the deceased an' get out real quick without offendin' nobody, when this fella mosey's up to the front, clears his throat, an' everything gets real quiet.

"Ladies and Gentlemen..."

I guess he was referrin' to them older folks up in the back corner.

"...it is our great privilege to have with us here this evening, one of New York's finest operatic sopranos."

Then he goes on to innerduce Coastin' Greenspoon, the singer, who was goin' to be accompanied onto the stage by somebody named Frankenstern or somethin'. I really started gettin' excited at that, 'cause I seen the reason for the big, box. Shoot! This's gonna be like havin' one a' them old movies like I seen on the Parkins' T.V. happenin' right in front a' me.



HAVIN' A SACK A TATER CHIPS AN' A COFFEE
AT DOC'S

Then they come out.

I could tell which one was Greenspoon, 'cause she was wearin' one a' them long green dresses. In fact, the only thing that weren't green was her hands, that poked out a' kinda puffy sleeves; her head, an' the tips of her toes stickin' out a' the top an' bottom of her dress. The hanky she was carryin' wasn't green either, it was white. She was built pretty squatty an' had her hair pulled back an' piled up on her head. From the backside ya could almost mistake her for an overgrown asparagus stalk.

Behind her come this Frankenstern fella, followed by a girl with a long dress. I reckon it must be considered sinful for a girl to show her ankles in these parts. All of 'em had long dresses or long pants on. I dare say it makes more sense than wearin' one a' them short things an' gettin' frostbite on yer fanny. I never did figure out what that girl was doin' out there, though. She didn't bow or nod or nothin'—just strolled over an' set down by the black box.

Now to be real honest with ya, I was a bit disappointed in this here Frankenstein. The one on T.V. was real big, with his shoulders

kinda stuck up like his jacket was too small—which it was. There was stitchin' runnin' down the side a' his face an' plugs in his neck. His head was real big. Looked like it would a' been bigger too, but some time or other it got smashed down a bit.

Well, wouldn't you a' been disappointed if somebody with a name like that come out lookin' just plain down-home an' ordinary? He weren't so big an' didn't have no scars or plugs an' his suit weren't even too small. Exceptin' for that, he could a' been my grampa; smilin' an' noddin' while ever'budy clapped.

Course it all come to me right off how he got that name when he set down on the little bench at the tail end a' that big black box.

Miss Greenspoon meandered over to the box, laid down her hanky, an' turned to the people.

"There has been a mistake in the program. I am a dramatic alto, rather than a soprano."

I didn't know what that meant, so I didn't pay it no mind. She could a' been mellerdramatic for all I knowed.

She leaned back on the box, give a little nod to Frank, an' throwed back her head for some air. Frank fiddled with those papers in front a' him, whipped his hands up, an' thumped 'em down on this row a' black an' white things at the end a' the box.

Geez did I feel dumb! Here that thing was a piana all the time! They just laid it flat an' propped it up on legs to fool ever'body. I's just about to bust out laughin' when I realized there weren't so much as a snigger in the whole place.

“non ha i pui che te me re.....”

Singin' in tongues! Now don't that beat all. The old black preacher in the little white church in Buttermilk done a pretty fair job a' speakin', or rather shoutin' in tongues. Ya could hear him clean over to our place on a good Sunday mornin'; but this here singing' was a new one on me.

She was leanin' forward a bit with her eyes closed an' her voice took on a kind a' moanin' sound an' she begun to rock back an' forth. She'd hitch herself up an' down with the tinklin' a' the piana; puttin' on a reg'lar show. I joined in when ever'budy busted out clappin' at the end.

She smiled an' bowed at ever'b'dy and kinda waved to Frank, so I figured he was gonna be the 'terpretor. But he just nodded an'smiled, an' when the clappin' quit; turned back to the piana.

Now that was highly unregular—least accordin' to the black folks in the little white church in Buttermilk. The good book says ya ain't supposed to speak in tongues unless ya got a 'terpretor. Course, maybe that don't apply to singin'. Or maybe the 'terpretor's got to be black. Looked like there was a real shortage in this town. Maybe the niggers was outlawed along with the ankles. Either way it just didn't seem to be on the up an' up to me.

Frank struck up a few frilly notes an' she commenced again. It was the same old stuff as the last one with a different tune, an' the one followin' with another tune. Guess they had more tunes than words. This here New York Opry just ain't worth a.....

Looodee! Looks like she took on a case a' the vapors. All of a sudden she kinda hunched over, graspin' hold a' the piana. Then smunchin' up her hanky, she mashed it

(continued on page6)

"Frank and Greenie was both a-bowin' an' smilin' "

(OPRY (con't)

against her chest. Frank, he didn't even pay no mind—"ppear'd he'd keep on playin' till she up an' keeled over; then whip into a dirgo. 'Bout the time I was gonna holler for a doc, she come out of it an' warbled on for a spell.

Finally she sung some songs in American, wrote by old Frankenstein, but they didn't make a whole lot more sense than them other ones. Frank's songs was somethin' 'bout sittin' under the evenin' star talkin' 'bout not bein' able to drink forever. Well, near as I could make out, the upshot of it was that we'd best get good an' drunk while we got the chance. The last one a' Frank's bunch was: "No man is an island". Shoot! I knowed that anyhow.

When the guy stood up to announce that there was gonna be a short break, I was all set to cut out an' catch a freight headin' back south. Then he mentioned there was some kinda lunch after the show, which got my juices to runnin' a bit, so I thought I'd try an' stick it out.

I set at the back this time, just in case I couldn't take the whole thing. From the first note I knowed it was more a' the same, so I got ready to head for the door.

Thumpin' on the piana, Greenie got Frank to stop, an' then she pointed up at the guy with the ruffly shirt.

"Would you mind closing the door, please?"

A chin bobbed over the ruffled shirt....creak....thump....my fate was sealed. Ma would a' been proud a' me then. 'Bout the time she was ready to give me a lickin', she'd roll her eyes up and quote, "he who endures to the end shall be saved." I didn't have no choice in the matter, but maybe I's beginnin' to see what she was talkin' 'bout.

On an' on it went. Pure misery. Swayin' an' weavin', mashin' up her hanky, wipin' her mouth, sitkin' her hand on her hip, an' old

Frank a-whippin' his hands up an' down on the piana. She musta had a whale of a dent in her chest by the time the thing was over.

Glory be! Frank an' Greenie was both a-bowin' an' smilin'. Off they went around that droop wing-thing with the girl in the long black dress trailin' along behind. Reckoned I could head for the grub now.

Oh, blast it anyhow! Here they come back again. Looked like we was gonna get the privilege of hearin' some more.

Nope, off they went again. These folks here sure have strange manners—they just kept on clappin'. Right when Frank an' Greenie first come on they started; even before they got around to doin' anything. Guess they just don't know when to leave well enough alone.

They's out again. This time it got real quiet as Frank sat down on the bench.

Glidin' over to her singin' spot, Greenie screwed herself around real slow, slidin' her hands out along the curves a' the piana, leaned back, kinda easy-like, an' gives one a' them looks Sally Parkins used to give my big brother just before he'd mumble somethin' 'bout havin' to pitch down some hay in the barn. Then she commenced to sing somethin' 'bout amore, while I was wishin' it was less.

By the time it was over, she an' ever'body else had had enough, so they smiled an' nodded a couple a' times. Then Greenie held up her hand...

"I want to thank you all for the warm welcome you have given us. I must say that the people are much warmer than the weather."

Now the Opry ain't never come to Buttermilk, but all things considered, it's a site better'n this place. I figured it was high time to get headed back south where I could put the warm people together with some decent weather—soon as I got some grub anyhow.

Speakin' a' that, the lunch weren't a whole lot to shout about either. All they had was

cookies an' some yella stuff to drink they called punch, but it shore didn't have none. I just took a few swallows, stuck a fistful a' cookies in my pocket (well, maybe two fistfuls), an' headed back across town.

It was right peaceful out, the wind havin' moved on to other parts. The moon was up an' the stars was shinin' like so many holes poked through a felt hat. My army boots made a kinda pop-crunch in the snow ever'time they hit the ground.

Aside from the cold bitin' at my nose an' the shadows jumpin' out from behind the trees once in awhile, I was feelin' pretty good. As I crossed the tracks, I thought how good it was gonna be to get home. I stuck my hand in the pocket of the old coat for a cookie.....they was gone!

Then I felt the hole.

Chucklin' at the trick goodwill had played on me, I tore the hole open a little wider, pulled out a cookie, an' stuck it in my mouth. Ouch! I poked my finger in to see what I bit into that was so blamed hard. Lo an' behold if it weren't a nickel!

I laid out all the cookies in the snow by the grain elevator an' fished around to see what else I could find. Near as I could calculate it there in the moonlight, I come up with eighty-five or ninety cents. Weren't exactly a fortunate, but it sure beat goin' from frostbite to Buttermilk on a dime.

They was just gettin' the tail-end hooked on to that long old train, so I stuffed ever'thing back in my coat fast as I could. Appeared it was headin' south, unless they aimed to push it backwards.

When the brakeman turned, I hustled out from behind the elevator, humped myself up through the door, an' flopped down on those piles a' sacks in the corner a' the boxcar. I was just beginnin' to relax when I heard the crunch of boots on the snow.

You ain't never seen water run down a rat hole....

Peaches (con't)

"Let's get outa here!"

Stamping running shoes led us home, where of course they had to be taken off outside the back door so as not to muddy the wall-to-wall carpeting. A warm shower prefaced a typical Dutch meal—starchy, filling, but grand!—some fooling around, "Hockey Night in Canada", brushing of teeth, a pre-cautionary piss, Mom's embarrassing good-night-kiss, and then the cool white sheets of a tightly wrapped bed finished another day.

Monday morning came as Monday mornings come, for some slow, for others harried; for kids the beginning of the day. A humid sunshine aired out by a soft southwesterly wind bespoke a fine day as I went outside that morning. The Sunhaven peaches would not be ripe for another two days; time had no meaning as I drifted along the sewer-ditch leading to the road. Maybe I'd catch a frog or even a turtle. It was the right kind of day for turtles. But there was none of anything to be found, so coming up on to the road I looked around seeking a

red-tailed hawk I could pretend to rifle down. My left eye sighted Ronald Vaughan maybe four yards away, but I did not shoot. He was three years older and big; you didn't even pretend to shoot Ronald Vaughan. No way.

"I been lookin' for you, punk!"

"Hi, Ron..."

"My old lady says you been in our house...huh?"

"Nno...when? Why would I do that?"

"Shut-up!! Don't do it again, or...or I'll break down your door and stamp on your floor and break your face!"

Yes, Ronald said he would break my face. He never did get the chance but in some way he broke a lot more. After that I never looked at him with any of the former pity or curiosity. Well for a boy of thirteen, or was I twelve, I well...still wanted to change things, you know, reform! but yes, well that impulse, too, was tempered in time. You see...ach but there is no sense in talking. Would you like some coffee, or maybe a beer? A beer? Good! It gets so sticky in this old shed.

*She knows no other life
but loneliness—*

Walking the beach

day after day—

those darting eyes

searching

for something new

to add excitement

upon her wrinkles

of despair.

Her bright pink bikini,

not quite enough

to cover up

50 years

of many late nights

with scotch and water friends.

Her shoulders drawn back—

only to reveal

the falseness

of her plasticized pride.

She is not

the only

lonely creature

that has yet to shed

the dying skin of her past.

—Peggy Johnson

Walking Tall

Forgive me if I have forgotten the name of the producer and director of **Walking Tall**. On the other hand, why should I ask for forgiveness? After all, whoever the person is doesn't deserve mentioning.

Let's get a few things straight about this flick. There's nothing delightful, amusing, reflective, or redeeming about **Walking Tall**. Frankly, it is the grossest film I have ever seen, yes, including the many so-called "X-rated" films I have seen. Also, there is nothing heroic or even admirable about sheriff Buford Pusser and his obsession to erase graft from his county's boundaries (the plot of the whole thing). To say Pusser is an American hero is nonsense: He is a little Hitler madly bashing heads of a few people while ignoring the welfare of others he steps on in order to achieve his *Weltanschauung* as a county institution.

People who cheer this film seem to have forgotten that this country once had the Prohibition Amendment to "erase" the "forces" sheriff Pusser fought against. The result of that Amendment? First, it gave godfathers everything they ever asked for on a silver platter; second, grand scale graft such as the country never knew before the amendment's implementation; third, it was finally revoked because, as Iowa State University law professor Robert Clinton would point out, you can't fight social deviations with legal weapons. But who am I kidding, anyway? Are revenge and mad obsessions legal weapons? Who is the victim and who is the guilty one in **Walking Tall**? Everyone and everyone. In the mid 1930's, as many of you may know, there was a popular film circulating in Germany about a man who killed his wife because she was dying of a painful illness. The German audience was doped into believing euthanasia was a merciful duty—and in 1944, we discovered the end result of that "merciful duty."

Walking Tall doesn't, of course, cry for euthanasia. But without a doubt, it subtly rapes the audience into believing it represents "truth and justice." **Walking Tall** is propagandistic junk of the most damaging kind—revenge. Christians who might hail this as a great God-fearing film should seriously and swiftly re-evaluate their God's law and its inseparable mate, love. **Walking Tall** does not abide in law/love—it spits in God's face.

Cries and whispers

Ingmar Bergman, producer and director

Tear away the props, the decor, the setting and the film stands unharmed. To say it is a story about three sisters and their maid is a true but naive assumption—it could be about three brothers. There is a plot but it isn't important.

Ingmar Bergman's **Cries and Whispers** evokes the wide range of human emotion on film the way his fellow countryman Edvard Munch did on canvas. Bergman described **Cries and Whispers** as a dream he experienced coupled with his lifelong feeling that the human soul is a fragile, delicate red membrane—thus the red themes contrasted with white that literally saturate the hour and a half film. Inside this membrane is housed the spectrum of human personality and emotion, embodied in the four principal

Scenes from a Marriage

(American version)

Ingmar Bergman, producer and director

For three hours, Liv Ullmann and Erland Josephson swiftly scan approximately fifteen to twenty years of married life in Ingmar Bergman's latest, **Scenes From a Marriage**. If three hours devoted almost totally to people talking seems a bit mundane, even boring for Bergman, there is a reason for this. The film was originally produced in six, one-hour segments for Swedish television, not for the theatre. Bergman, in some degree, intended to film a documentary of sorts, revealing the communicative intimacies only married people can fully grasp. In this context, other members of the domestic circle, such as the couple's daughters and the time demanding grandparents, remain as only conversation topics. With these people excluded, Bergman ably depicted the inside, private, "off-stage" elements that flow between a married couple—flow, because without the subtitles to the film, you can still understand the communication between the couple. Comparably, it is like watching one of Hitler's speeches, understanding the mood and meaning of his sentences through gesture and facial movements, even though you might know absolutely nothing about the German language. And language, the non-verbal, is essentially the thread drawn throughout **Scenes From a Marriage**. Even the film's title is a double image: the amount of time aimed at the couple's marriage is minimal compared to the time the film spends when the couple meets occasionally after their separation.

As previously mentioned, **Scenes From a Marriage** resembles a documentary in some ways. But once again, the intention is a part of the elusive Bergman who resists having his films pegged as such-and-such a film. Much of the symbolish and irony familiar to other Bergman films is very much present in **Scenes From a Marriage**. Take a familiar Bergman prop, the candle: after Josephson tells Ullmann that he has fallen for another woman, Ullman clears the suppertable and blows out the candles she has set for a romantic mood: in the last scene of the film, some ten, maybe fifteen years after the separation, the two clandestinely meet in their old rustic cabin behind the backs of their current spouses. Celebrating the event, Ullmann lights candles on a cake and blows them out—except for a few, which remain lighted. Marriage, to Bergman, is from the heart and probably has nothing to do with the idea of institution of marriage. But that may be an inaccurate judgment—after all, we aren't given the opportunity to view the entire six hours of the film. I hope the opportunity will come soon; after **Cries and Whispers** and **Scenes From a Marriage**, who can imagine another Ingmar Bergman film?

Young Frankenstein

Mel Brooks, producer and director

Mel Brooks, Gene Wilder, screenwriters

A pun-throwing contest sponsored by Mel "Blazing Saddles" Brooks is now showing at neighborhood theatres. **Young Frankenstein** is its title with Gene Wilder as Victor Frankenstein's namesake, and, Madeline Kahn, Terri Garr, Cloris Leachman, Gene Hackman, and boggle-eyed Marty Feldman as the pun throwers. Filmed in 1930's black and white, **Young Frankenstein** relentlessly heaves puns into stoic faces, ranging from medicine to corpses to mystic controls over animals ("Mrs. Blucher!") and even to actor Peter Boyle whose facial peculiarities lend the first credible description on film of the Creature he naturally portrays ("Ol' zipper neck!").

Though spoofs in film history have been uproariously successful, many have neglected features of great films. Brooks, however, is not satisfied with humor alone. **Young Frankenstein** pays an enormous tribute to the long-lost talents of Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, Peter Lorre, Basil Rathbone, and other comic and horror film masters. One such tribute is the precise, deliberate eye glances that are so predominant in horror films that made Christopher Lee, Rathbone, and of course Lorre the masters of Gothic films. To be totally consistent with the film's unhalting humor, producer Brooks went so far as to utilize the actual laboratory equipment famously seen in Boris Karloff's **Frankenstein**.

Reviewing past Frankenstein flicks, both on the screen and on television, **Young Frankenstein** is probably the first film to do some justice to Mary Shelley's world renowned novel. Certainly screenwriters Brooks and Wilder didn't decide to set the record "straight in **Young Frankenstein**. But there is no doubt that Mary Shelley lies rotting in her grave, sopping wet from the biggest pun of all.

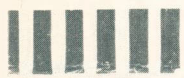
Film Reviews

by
Wayne Farr

players.

The chronological basis for the film is a family's trying moments (days? weeks? years?) while a sister slowly and painfully dies (presumably from cancer). Interspersed throughout the film are the sisters' childhood and past fears, regrets, and longings that overwhelm any affection for one another. The maid gives love and devotion to the dying and later dead sister, but even this is an illusion—love not for the terminally ill sister but for the maid's long deceased daughter.

The technical aspects and the outstanding portrayals by "Bergman's Women" are Siamese twins, presenting a masterpiece of mood and human sensitivity and insensitivity. It is, next to Stanley Kubrick's **A Clockwork Orange**, the finest film I have seen. Bergman, you have outdone Bergman.



BUGAR BABIES
DELICIOUS CARAMEL TIDBITS NET WT. 1 3/4 OZ.



*"Good morning, sunshine!"
She refers to
the shadows of day
which sit outside my window.
not me.
But
it could have been me.
I'm as much sunshine
as that is.*

*The day it snowed,
I lost my dreams.
I think
they're buried
out there somewhere.
I think
they'll freeze
before I find them.*

*What a blob.
A sugar baby.
Fool.
Don't dream—
you have everything.
So live.
God is not dead
just because
you are.*

—Marianne Scholte

*While waves slap against a rocky shore,
a small white sea-bird aviates a blue sky,
then comes plummeting downward, gathering itself up
at the final second.*

*The waves are dispersed by indomitable rocks,
forming small rivulets, receding slowly, unharmed.*

—Cal Huizenga

*Winter blasts me hard.
I gather my coat about me
And bury myself in it.
Hope is hard to come by these days.
Snow isn't.
Snow doesn't bring me any joy.
It seems to cloud my mind.*

—Marianne Scholte

FOR A FRIEND

*In spring its easy
to splash my walls with
the colors of peace
and paint the ceiling
with thoughts of you.
Then flowers search the inky sky
With open faces, and gently sigh
For the warmth of a morning sun.
And drinking new life, they live.
Thank-you for making me
beautiful.*

—Sandy Van Den Berg

*Uh,
Funky blues
Turn me on.
So does
A folk song.*

*I'm like that.
So you think
It over.*

*If you care
It don't show,
Babe, so
Let me know.*

I feel enough to want to hang on to you.

—Marianne Scholte



American Aphrodite

by Cal Meuzelaar