

1977

## The Canon, [1976-77]: Volume 7, Number 8

Dordt College

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/dordt\\_canon](https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/dordt_canon)

---

### Recommended Citation

Dordt College, "The Canon, [1976-77]: Volume 7, Number 8" (1977). *Dordt Canon*. 76.  
[https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/dordt\\_canon/76](https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/dordt_canon/76)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Dordt Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dordt Canon by an authorized administrator of Dordt Digital Collections. For more information, please contact [ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu](mailto:ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu).

# CANNON

DORDT COLLEGE, Sioux Center, Iowa

Vol. 7, No. 8

Soli Deo Gloria

## The Rebuff

Her hands pinched and pressured but the blob remained. Her hands destroyed and started again. Nothing beautiful happened.

Frustration. Clay and muck splatted over the entire kitchen table. Tiny balls of hardened clay fell off the table and ground into her bare feet. Smeary clay

by Pat Leegwater

dug into her fingernails, staining them brownish yellow. The rolling pin dried to the useless newspaper protection and her nose itched but there was nothing to scratch it with.

She didn't need another clay vase but she wanted one. She could forget it but she wouldn't. Picking up the clay glob, she stubbornly pinched again.

The doorbell's ring lurched into her ears and she tightened against it. Clutching the clay in one hand, she hopped down the back steps and opened the door.

Joanie stood there. Joanie with shiny pink rouge over flabby cheeks. Her big dark eyes hooded with moss green and black frosting. Joanie with her wispy brown hair dull and limp. Joanie with a jiggly round stomach and tired jean shorts showing thick puckly legs.

"Hey Shirley, you crazy kid!" Joanie shrieked. "How ya doin', old pal? Long time no see..."

She plowed in. Shirley shut the door gently behind her.

"Been doin' fine. And yerself?"

"Listen, man, I been havin' a blast. Haven't missed school one bit. Not missin a single thing...man, it's been a helluva year!"

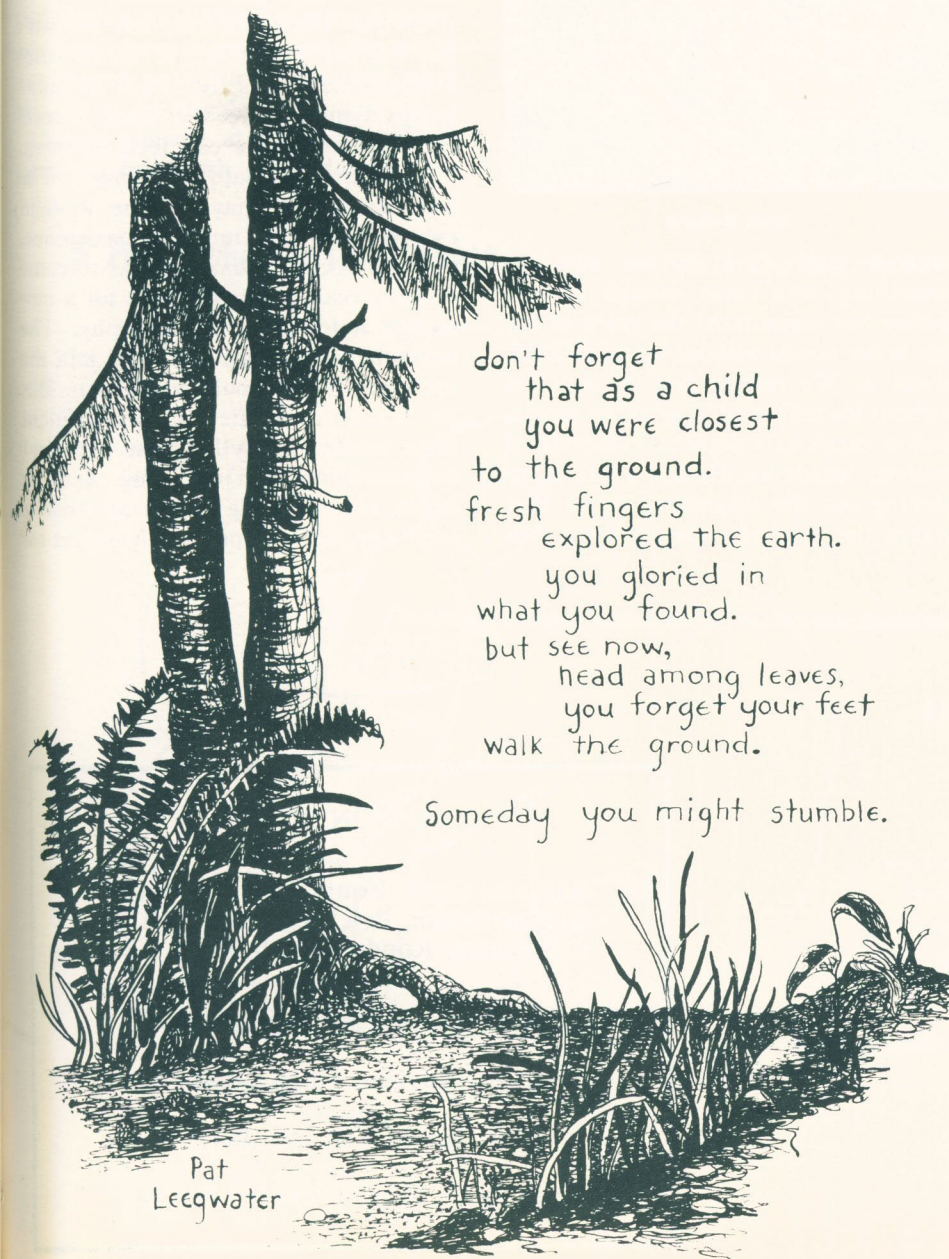
"Well, sit down and tell me."

She collapsed her broadened frame into the nearest chair and inspected the mess.

"Hey kid, you still diggin' 'round in the dirt, huh? 'Member you'n me used to have clay parties for two 'n we'd always end up pitchin' it at each other? What a gas! But I been too busy for that lately. What with the job and the guys and the parties—hmmm, too much to do."

"Yeah." Shirley pulled a bottle of homemade Rootbeer from the bridge

(Continued on page 3)



Pat  
Leegwater



# Humboldt's Gift

by Saul Bellow

reviewed by Jack Mouw

Humboldt is a drunken, half-crazed, dying poet. He represents an earlier era when the artist was still a romantic hero, and was supposed to have uncontrollable passions and gargantuan appetites. Charles Citrine was one of his disciples, then made it big with a Broadway play and, Humboldt is convinced, sold out to Wall Street. They go their separate ways: Citrine becomes a celebrity, Humboldt a derelict. This is revealed in retrospect; when the novel takes place Humboldt is dead, and Citrine has been married and divorced. At this late date Citrine realizes that Humboldt may have been right, he had sold out.

But he doesn't know where to go. He can hardly emulate Humboldt; the bohemian lifestyle is passe, and he has to make money to satisfy his ex-wife, who is suing him, and to maintain his relationship with his young girl friend, Renata, who is built like a belly-dancer and has expensive tastes. In the end it is Humboldt who relents, posthumously, by leaving Citrine in his will a movie script that is worth thousands. Citrine can now patch up old wrongs, and spend his time trying to find himself.

Saul Bellow's cosmos is a vibrant place. The almost desperate whirl of events illumines a persistent uneasiness, a feeling that this is all beyond our

## Nobel Prize Winner



Saul Bellow

control; and even if we can do something, who cares enough to try? Bellow has assimilated the spirit of the age in his novels without being didactic about it. We realize that we are lost without his telling us in so many words. Bellow excels as a detached observer of modern decadence. He has a knack for picking out the disgusting detail that makes the reader nauseous for a few

pages, and then, after fading away, leaves a film as a reminder that this is a dirty place to live.

Charles Citrine, who narrates **Humboldt's Gift**, is an intellectual. A life-long purveyor of the myth of the superiority of thinking over doing, in late middle-age he questions that assumption, and thrashes around for another escape route. For he has come to see that he is no better than anyone else, a traumatic experience for any intellectual. Observing decadence in others is comforting in a way; to see oneself as part of the decadence is a disillusion that can be fatal.

Charles Citrine is lost, but he can't get excited about it. It seems that everyone he knows feels right at home in this dying culture; they seem to revel in degradation. He can feel for them, but keeps a safe distance. The intellectual life may not be a valid escape from this mundane existence, but that doesn't mean one has to come down to reality. Citrine looks for a new escape hatch in anthroposophy. The soul must escape the body and join the universal World-Soul and all that. But his interest in mysticism is as diffident as his interest in anything else. We must do something with our time, and we might even stumble across an answer some day, but we don't really expect to.

## Voter's Lament No. 430

Picky, picky,  
Packy, snacky,  
Burble, burble,  
Bounce.

It's all so clever . . .  
Push the lever.  
Doesn't take an ounce.

'Tis deceiving,  
Here, then leaving  
With your duty done.  
But all repent,  
Last time we went  
the recoil weighed a ton.

We voted fast.  
He didn't last.  
The people didn't see.  
But this November  
Please remember—  
Vote responsibly.

-Dave Groenenboom

### CANNON STAFF

Editorial Staff: Bonnie Kuipers, Dave Groenenboom, Pat Leegwater, Neil Culbertson, Ronda Ruisch, Mary Klay

Layout Editor: Liz Esselink

Faculty Advisor: Hugh Cook

Editor: Sandy Van Den Berg

Masthead: Lugene Vanden Bosch



## The Rebuff, con't.

and fizzed it into two tall glasses. "How's the job?"

"Fantastic! I mean, I don't slave too hard...but what the heck! I work for the pay and they don't give me much. But they do give parties. That's what I like." Joanie guzzled the pop. Shirley got up and refilled her glass.

"But Shirl, I gotta tell ya about the guys. Darn, ya never saw the like. Real hunks. Not even stuck up. 'Member how we hated the guys here? But now I'm outa this rinky-dink Dutch town. Gimme some life! Look lady-o, I'm headin' a fling Saturday night. An' yer comin. There's this guy knows about ya and wants to see ya. I got it all fixed up."

"But..."

"Huh? What do ya mean? He ain't bad. He's a good friend of mine. Shirley, you don't have ta get loaded. We might get stoned outa our minds, but what you do is yer problem."

Joanie glanced at her with hooded eyes and her harsh giggle scraped the

walls. Shirley's dad turned up the Beethoven symphony playing on the living room stereo and, clomping through the kitchen, slammed the door.

"Tell ya what, Joanie. If I can make it, I'll call, 'kay?"

"Yeah, well, all right." Joanie leaned over the table. Her shirt sagged. Shirley gawked a moment at a graceless hickey glaring at her from underneath; she looked away.

"Actually Shirley." Joanie's low voice pulled her back. "Actually, it's an engagement party. I'm getting married next month."

Shirley tensed. "But---Joanie, how neat! Let me see your ring! Who's the lucky guy?"

"I can't wait, Shirl. He hasn't gotten me the ring yet. His name is Jim Roemer. You don't know him; he's not Dutch. He's divorced but I don't care. He's the greatest guy I've met...ever."

"Oh, I sure hope he is. I really hope so! You need to be happy, Joanie. I hope so!"

Joanie beamed. There was silence and Beethoven's symphony glided to a graceful halt in the background.

A flabby yellowish-white hand swung out and clapped Shirley's shoulder. "Honey, let me leave ya to yer clay and classical music. I think I'll buzz to Jimmy's before I hit home fer supper." Joanie bopped down the back steps, hips rolling like unbalanced car tires. She slammed the door against the wall and bounced along the sidewalk. "Good talkin' with ya, chick. Glad ya like college. Be seein' ya 'round, huh?"

"Joanie!" Shirley's voice was stiff with urgency. "Joanie, we want you. You with your humor and tactless way of saying what you think. We want someone to knock out our cold tradition. What I mean is...the Kingdom of Jesus wants you. Joanie?"

She'd stopped bouncing and was staring at Shirley.

She swore.

Joanie's formless figure flung around the hedge. Two minutes later a yellow Mustang fled by and was gone.

Shirley walked back into the house. Her hand stuck to the clay glob she was still clenching. Pitching the whole mess in a box, she threw it in the cupboard under the sink. Then she washed her hands.

She opened the kitchen door and shuffled into the living room. After flipping on a Cat Stevens' record, she sprawled onto the couch and picked up another novel. Yellow stained fingers turned the pages to chapter one.

## A Philosopher in Track Shoes

—Neil Culbertson



*Turkey roasting in the oven  
Ham cooking in the pot  
Aunts busy working in the kitchen  
Nine pumpkin pies just hot  
Kids come pouring in the doorway  
Sitting and waiting forced  
Grandpa acquires the place of honour  
Impromptu speech endorsed  
Vehement debates soon follow  
Ice cream tops steaming pie  
Nothing like a Thanksgiving dinner  
"Great" "Delicious" "aah" "sigh"*

—Mary Klay



Saturday,

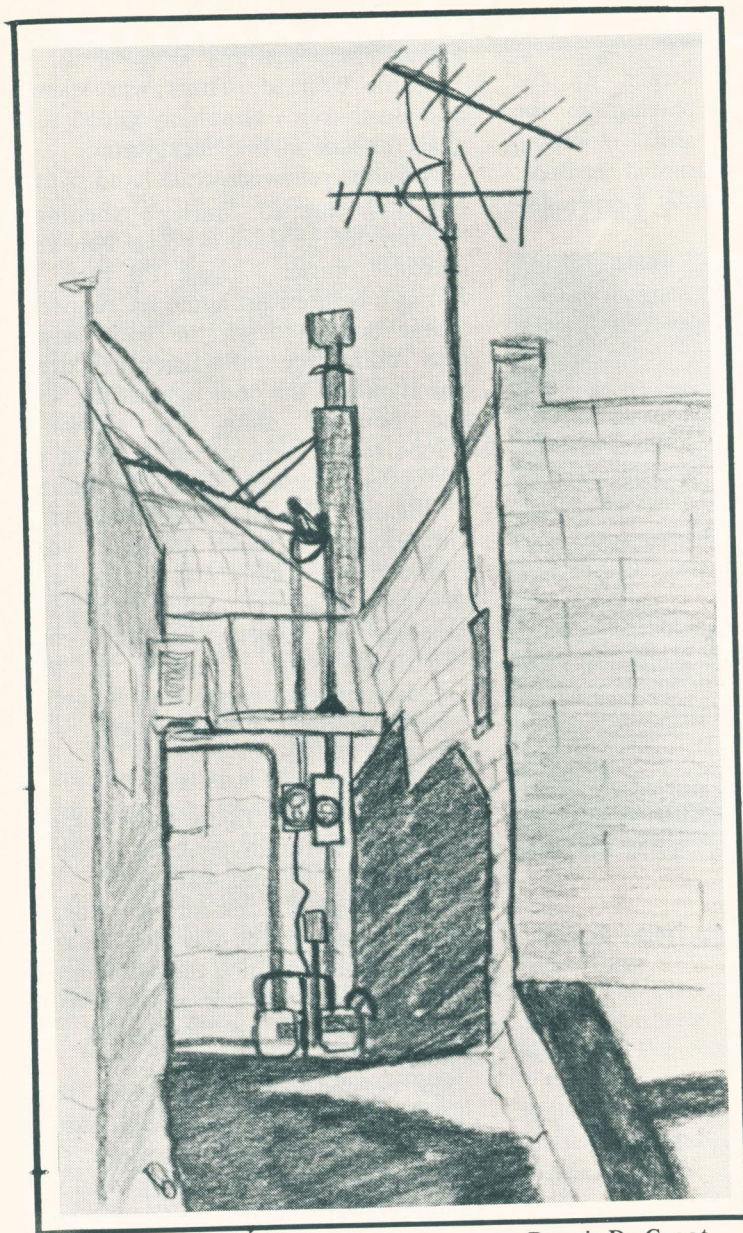
But Aunti  
chatting t  
removing th  
and shaping  
also come ou  
zipper of the  
zipper of my  
arguing so I  
be more of a  
go along wi

In a mom  
across the be  
way over my  
is the first t  
that I had

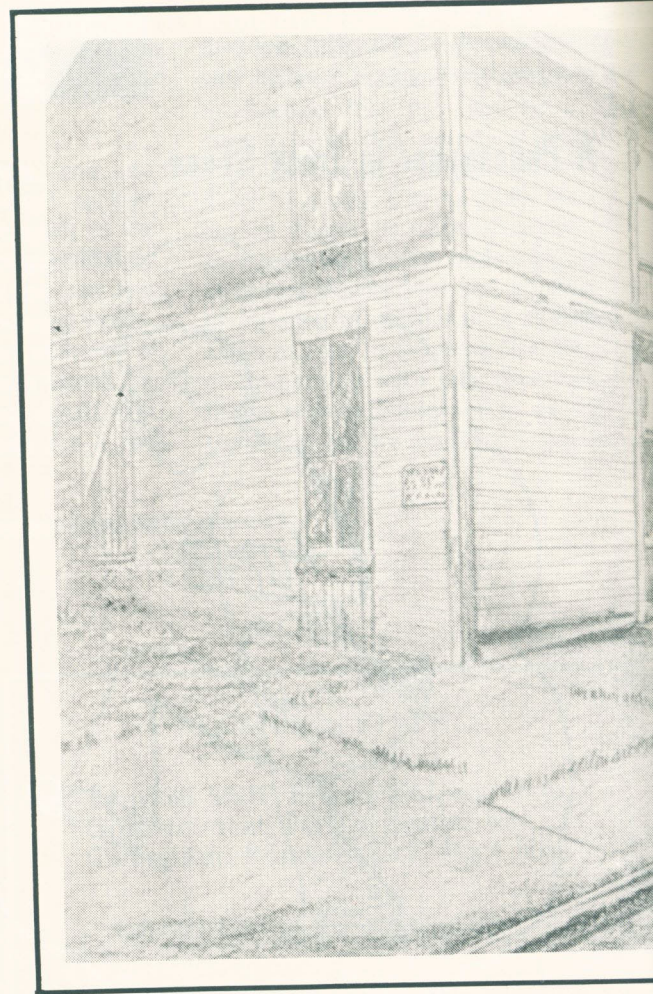
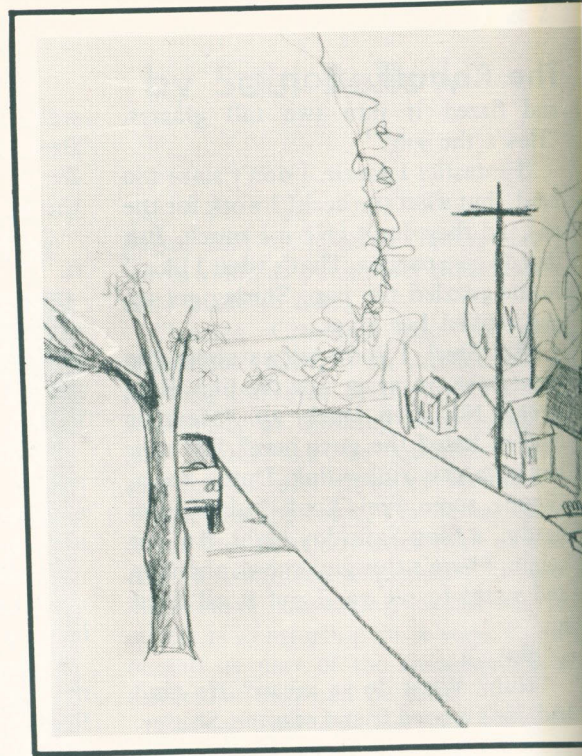
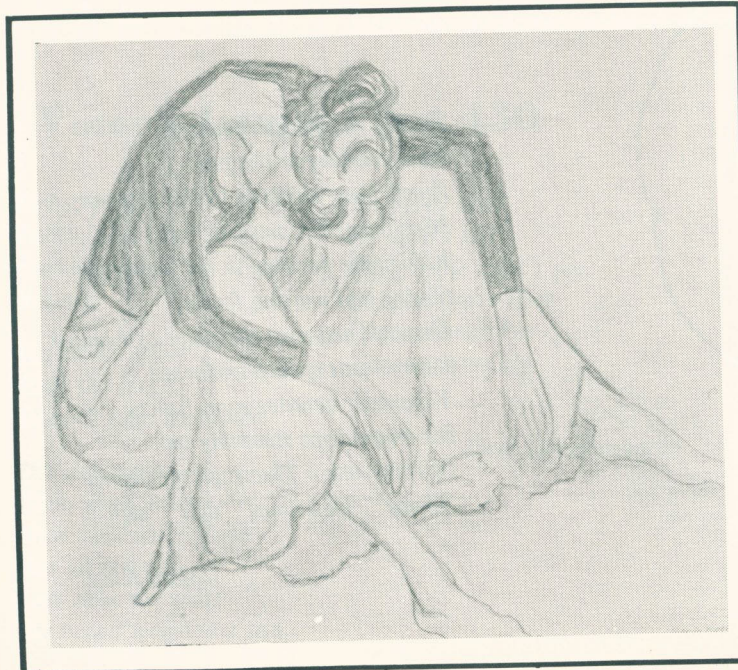
Then it w  
too short eve  
shoes and  
underneath.  
asked, "Do  
one on the

"It's kind  
understater  
phased in th  
yanking at t  
pushed my  
after a consi  
up anyway.  
more object

"How ab  
shoes." Th  
would mak  
She looked  
her face lit



Dennis De Groot



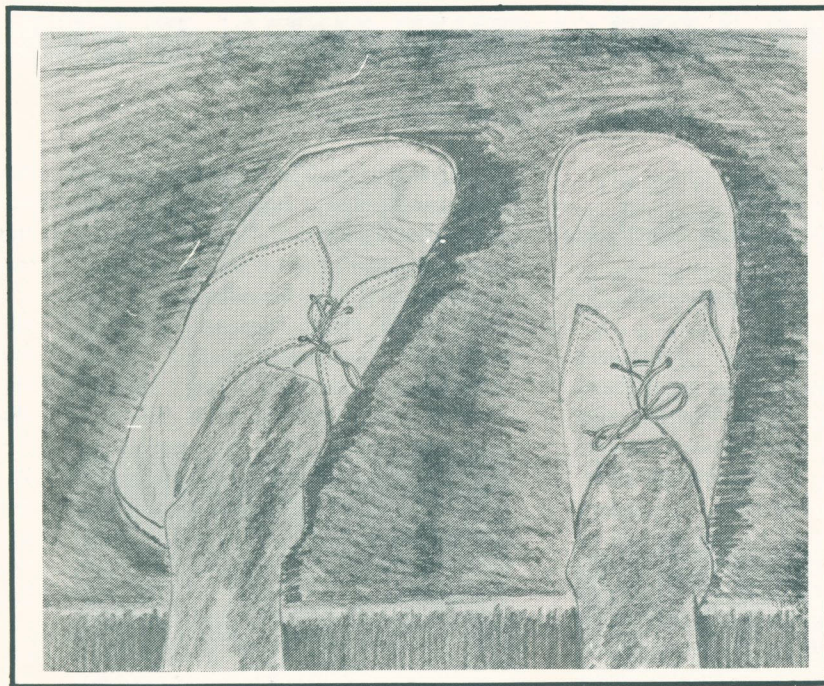
# Lines of M

Marcia Bleeker

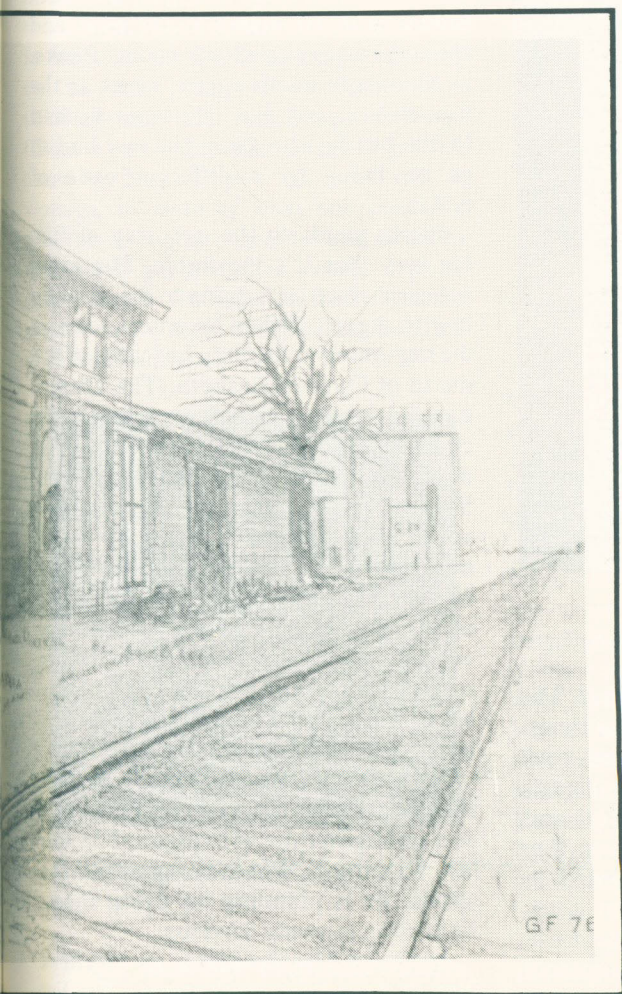




Liz Esselink



Judy Cook



Gerald Kolkerts



Charlie Claus

from art students



# NOT "ANOTHER JOHN WAYNE MOVIE"

## The Shootist

Directed by: Don Siegel

Screenplay by: Miles Hood Suarthroat  
and Scott Hale

Reviewed by: Dave Groenenboom

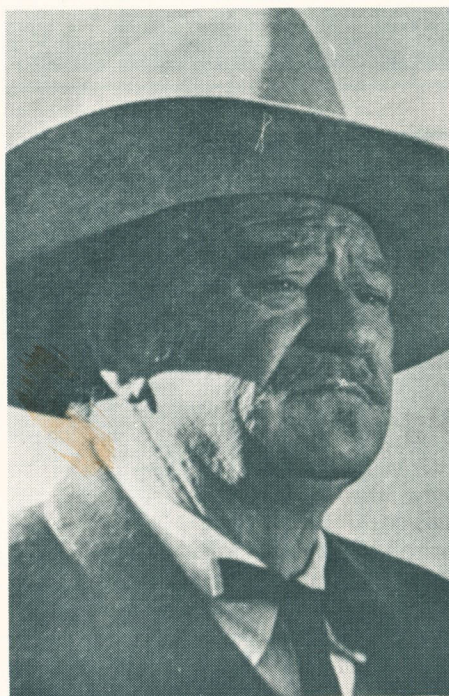
**The Shootist** is the story of the last eight days of an aging gunfighter named J. B. Books (John Wayne) who discovers that he is dying from a cancer. After discovering his death is near, Books, the last of the legendary gunfighters, prepares to die quietly in Carson City.

But he finds his celebrity has made such a death impossible. He moves into a boarding house, but the widow (Lauren Bacall); who runs it wants to evict him as soon as her son (Ron Howard) tells her of Books' past. He had, after all, killed thirty men. He is visited by the local sheriff (Harry Morgan) who first tells him to leave town, then wishes him an early demise. A former girl friend (Sheree North) visits him with a marriage proposal, so that she can cash in on his legend (**The Story of J.B. Books**, as told by his loving wife).

In time though, the boarding house widow learns to accept Books, and even begins to love him. But Books still must die. Rather than let the cancer kill him, he carefully arranges a shootout at the local saloon with three local hoods who would like to see him dead: A barroom card shark (Hugh O'Brien), a man whose brother died at the end of Books' gun (Richard Boone), and a local milk dealer whom Books had offended.

The shootout isn't your typical Western shootout: Boone drives to it in a 1901 Oldsmobile, and Books rides a horse-drawn trolley. Actually, the shootout is quite serene. It isn't really climactic, and it isn't intended to be. Books, relying on all the skills of his past, eventually kills the other three. But he doesn't escape: he is fatally wounded by the bartender, who, in turn, is killed by the widow's son, who had been outside waiting the outcome of the shootout. He walks in, sees the bartender shoot Books, grabs Books' "six-iron," and kills the bartender.

In a review of **The Shootist** in the "Saturday Review," Judith Crist wrote, the pointlessness of Siegel's film is the dominant factor. Wayne, mustachioed and chin-whiskered, is more behemoth than human; Bacall, maturely handsome, never finds coincidence between her sophisticated glance and the idiot dialogue assigned to her. The two emerge as anachronistic antiques in contrast to the 1901 Oldsmobile and the original horse-drawn trolley the set dresser came up with for atmosphere.



"How can a man . . .  
die with dignity"

But Crist only missed the point. **The Shootist** is the story of changing times. The entire film is interspersed with elements of transition, with contrasts between the ways of the Old West and the new, civilized society of Carson City in 1901. The Old West is **supposed** to look ridiculous, because the film is set in a **new time**. Books is the last of the legendary gunfighters. He doesn't belong in the twentieth century. He represents a way of life that has to end. He **has** to die—that is made obvious at the beginning of the film—just as the "rule of the gun" is no longer a valid way to live. Carson City, one of the

legendary towns of the Old West, is changing. The film isn't set in 1901 accidentally—the arrival of the first automobile, the use of horse-drawn trolleys—all these things are ushering in a new way of life. While Books is riding the trolley to the "last shootout," he has a conversation with a young girl. Books knows that he is going to die within the hour, and that the world will be left to the more civilized and genteel—like the young girl. As he gets off the trolley in front of the saloon, he smiles at the girl, and says, "I hope you find a man someday."

And after Books is shot, when he's laying on the floor oozing blood, the widow's son, who has just shot Book's murderer, stares at the gun he used, Books' gun. He stares at the gun, and then heaves it across the room. Books, in silent, pre-death agony, looks at the boy, smiles, and dies. He knew he had to die, but he also knew the boy had to go on living by a different code of ethics.

Books yields to the new way of life. He sees that it's inevitable. His main concern, since he is going to die, is to do it with dignity. When he enters town at the beginning of the film, he learns of the death of Queen Elizabeth. The Queen, he muses, was dignified right to the end. But Books' cancer rules out a dignified demise. Dr. Hostetler (Jimmy Stewart) tells him his medication—some kind of opium mixture—would help him for awhile, but that in the end he would scream in uncontrollable agony until he passed into unconsciousness. He says, in dialogue packed full of Stewartisms, "I'm not a brave man, but if I were..If I were as brave as you, I wouldn't wait for that."

And that is the whole reason for the shootout. How can a man who has lived as a gunfighter die with dignity? In one last shootout! When he goes to the saloon, he is planning on dying there. That also is made obvious.

Although **The Shootist** is an excellent film, it does have weaknesses. The list of actors and actresses reads like the cast for a television comedy special: John Wayne, Jimmy Stewart, Scatman Caruthers, Ron Howard, Richard

(Continued on page 7)



# Three Plays by Anton Chekhov

reviewed by Sandy Van Den Berg

The Dordt Thaliens once again went on stage, Oct. 14-16, this time performing three one-act plays by the Russian playwright, Anton Chekhov (1860

(1860-1904). They caught the comic tone of Chekhov's farces as they laughed, stomped, and talked their way through **The Boor**, **The Marriage Proposal**, and **The Anniversary**.

Chekhov's disgusting bitter stabs at women made me "literally" bleed to death. In **The Boor** it was the woman stupid enough to remain faithful to her dead husband, even though he had certainly not been faithful to her while living.

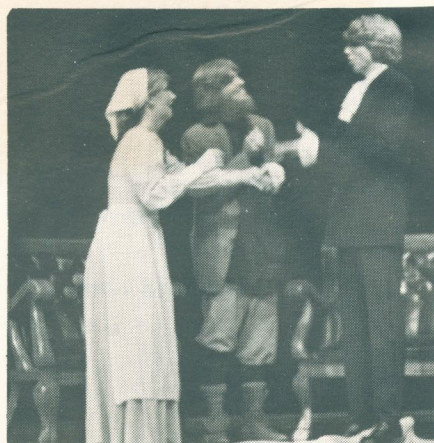
Mrs. Popov (Joanne Feenstra) imposes a seclusion upon herself akin to the self-pity she swallows daily. One has to laugh at her feeble attempts to hang on to her pride yet I found her self-imposed exile revolting. Smirnov (Everett Van Ee) did a great job of showing Mrs. Popov she was still a woman, in spite of what she said. He was the strongest character and actor in the plays performance, while Joanne and Martin Gelderman (Luka) broke character a couple of times and laughed with the audience.



"She was still a woman . . ."

In **The Marriage Proposal**, Natalya (Jaci De Jong) is the desperate unmarried woman who will settle for anyone, even if he claims he owns her family's meadows, and his dog is better than her dog. The ridiculousness of Natalya's and Lomov's (Mike Van Dyk)

discussions only accentuate the desperation of Natalya, and shatter any illusions towards romance in all its "glittering glory." Who cares whether Natalya and Lomov are compatible or not? Lomov wears pants and that's good enough for Natalya and Chubukov (Dennis De Groot), the over-anxious father.



"Oh, my put pututing heart!"

Of the three plays **The Marriage Proposal** was the strongest. The pace didn't lag and all three actors kept their characters well. Jaci De Jong's acting was spontaneous but disciplined and controlled, while Mike Van Dyke had everyone's hearts "palpitating" with him. Dennis, with a cheery grin kept the dialogue moving between the two.

Chekhov reverts to a sense of bitter humor in **The Anniversary**. Two women are shown in contrast here—the old, harpy hag and the social butterfly. Neither seem to be contented or to live very fulfilled lives. Tatiana's (Kim Venhuizen) husband Andrei (Bill Richards) is too busy trying to make and polish his name in his bank, while Kuzma, (Bruce Hibma) the contrast to Andrei, is too busy trying to get his work done.

The men work and the women interfere. The action seems confined to the hag who storms into the bank and the wife who flits from desk to desk, trying to find someone who will listen to her silly chatter. In the end one has to feel sorry for Tatiana, the wife of Andrei, rather than for the ambitious Andrei himself.

The performance of **The Anniversary** was disappointing. Madam Merchutkin (Mary Vander Ploeg) was the strongest woman actress, while Bruce Himba as Kuzma, was the strongest male actor.

As a whole the Thaliens should be commended for their performance, efforts, and enthusiasm to keep drama alive on the campus of Dordt College.

The men work . . .  
the women interfere"



SHOOTIST, continued . . .

Boone, Hugh O'Brien, Harry Morgan, and Lauren Bacall. When watching the film, it's difficult to separate the actors from the characters they represent. Wayne, himself a living legend, won a battle against cancer. His presence in the film is vital, but one gets confused. Indeed, the film begins with scenes from the life of John B. Books, scenes actually taken from old John Wayne movies. Also, everytime I see Ron Howard, I think of "Happy Days," and I still can't think of Harry Morgan apart from "Dragnet." When he walks in, badge shining, I still expect him to say, "This is the city. Los Angeles."

But these weaknesses will pass with time, and **The Shootist** may be an even better film in thirty years, when few of the characters will be entrenched in their accomplishments on television.

I hope it's still around. Maybe it will be showing with Gary Cooper in "High Noon."



## THE IDEA

Days  
 when these thoughts  
 were nurtured  
 like the soon to come child,  
 the first harbinger  
 of the future tones –

the people cared,  
 crowded around,  
 followed the progression  
 with sated smiles  
 of expectation –

in these moments  
 this child, so tight  
 so warm in my womb brain  
 kicked viciously  
 and I winced in silent pain –

false hopes,  
 rays of gold glimpsed  
 for a shriveled second –

miscarriage of the mind,  
 I know the child was to be  
 a stillborn sweep  
 of once potent force

–Bonnie Kuipers

Krack!  
 one swift blow–  
 the soft spoken “no”  
 devastates like  
 12,000 sticks of  
 dynamite.

Immersed like  
 a broken ship  
 in an unfriendly  
 sea.

Married to pity  
 fitting well with the  
 contours of my  
 spirit.

–Neil Culbertson

## FIRST SNOWFALL

Sigh watch from upstairs  
 window sigh  
 on streets whitewashed  
 children play with  
 springsummerfall smiles  
 build pure gleam  
 snowballs round circle  
 pat harden encase in  
 fingers tight wonderful  
 smack on wistful window  
 target steam mist of breath  
 on glass  
 hit hard burst smile  
 invitation  
 wistful sigh swallowed  
 into snowy whiteness  
 joyful calls of children  
 move into snowflakes.

–Bonnie Kuipers



–Phyllis Nanninga

## A PHILOSOPHER IN TRACK-SHOES

I really did it this time!  
 I must have torn  
 every ligament in my head,  
 chasing an idea  
 always that much faster than me.

Dead . . . dead . . . dead.  
 That's what it should be,  
 but there it is  
 one step ahead,  
 always that much faster  
 than me.

The idea turns  
 explaining its vision–  
 to discover the Ends of the Earth–  
 migration race  
 to its birth place.

Then my eyes stopped  
 one verse down the page,  
 The Philosopher's Stone  
 that turned my leaded-reason  
 into a swift shaft of gold:  
 “The fool's eyes are in the Ends of  
 the Earth.”

I stopped the chase,  
 Still the Idea ran;  
 its circular pace  
 never slacking,  
 ever cracking with its speed  
 the Ideological Muscle  
 of questioning men,  
 who while always learning  
 (of the Ends of the Earth)  
 never learn the Ends of Ideas,  
 the Limits of Questions  
 called by God  
 to rest  
 in His Word.

–Neil Culbertson

## HAIKU

A balloon flying.  
 A child runs, holding the string.  
 A hunched back gazes on.

Cold night settles  
 On frosted leaves, earthly stars.  
 Quick! get my coat.

A pie crust cooking.  
 I peel apples.  
 My nose tingles.

A dew filled dawn:  
 Ducks huddled beside the pond  
 Without any necks.

–Jhon Kleyn