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 rollin' down in the puddle a' moonlight on the floor. He turned on his lantern and raised it with his huge, grisly list. He turned on his comic books. He turned out the light, put his crunch, crunch, crunch-a-a-akachu nsk, crunch, mittens back on, and I heard a crunch, climbin' out from under the sacks when I blanket when he closed the door. I's just way. I reckon as Ma'd be right handy with the board as I slid along the boxcar floor. Well, I heard the whistle and the roar a' the engine. I to me.

somesacks up around me an' settled back to the middle. Reachin' down in my pocket, I freight an' ketch a train gain' back south do to go north in January.

hopped off. Directly the train, she wasin a sidin', mavin' kinda slow. outagain, there was another set a' tracks-we

when I felt the ground kinda rumblin' an' I knowed it was got two knuckles deep into the snow. 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 knewed it was a mistake, but I had to grit my teeth an' pull it out real slow so's not to 'tract any 'tention. 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 refil, 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

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? Whether the summer my dad’s parents came from Holland wasn’t the summer. Opa Van Engen’s dynamic character absorbed everyone’s time; wasn’t the summer. Opa Van Engen’s thereupon—or did they come the summer of my fifteenth birthday? Whenever, 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.

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 defiled 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.

I won’t be 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 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 of 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 vandekleef

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—it’s hydraulic certainly needing adjustment, its stubborn straight-six again (Con’t, p. 3)
peaches (con't)
coaxed to life by loving wrenches and occasional silent curses, the garage-barn cleared of winter litter, picking harnessesoccasionally silent curses, the garage-barn cleared of winter litter, picking harnesses.

occasionally silent curses, the garage-barn cleared of winter litter, picking harnesses. 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 along how much fruit there'd be.

never a 

knew I didn't want to be a farmer, and a 

Mom's already hearty laugh into a jest,

I would average Mom and Dad's estimate thirteen years.

defensive laugh would bring me back to my 

Invariably both were wrong; knowing nothing 

thirteen years. 

"Fifteen, Chris."

Seething silence, I would only have thirteen.

"Lyin', Mom would add, "This but 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, the Bartlett pears would ripen early and then the tomatoes.

September, after school had begun, Mom and Dad with the help of an aunt or two, would make up the walls. A steep, by now nearly sunken tar-roof. An irregular uncrowned curtain on the angry scene developing. Ignoring 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; every fantasy was explored. A typically male feat would suddenly 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...I'll be our secret,"

"Grace 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 saluted 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-quiet 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 ball-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 crept 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 papery 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)
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 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.

It's 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 Melanchthon, 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 Craigis and distant buildings and strange light all contribute to the introspective, subjective character of these paintings. Nature has some animation and some horrific elements 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 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 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.

Jerome In Penitence

Venus mit dem Schleier

Judith
I always figured the Opry was in Nashville, but maybe New York's got one too. With something like that ... she kind a hunched over, graspin' hold of the piano. Then smunchin' up her hanky, she mashed it (continued on page 6)

**Opry (cont)**

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 feel them wet sneakers startin' inunjuns 'stead a' Dutchmen.

So I started to take a peek insic., I had the didn't break my neck. Just layed real still for around for some warm duds.

Through this building, we come to a room where a bunch a' people was sittin'. All the black, casket-lookin' box was sittin' on stilts sloped down to the front where this big, with white, wing-things droopin' over it. With a black suit an' a ruffly shirt like Ma this girl that reminded me of the bell sittin' this 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.

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 I 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 they come out.

She smiled an' bowed at ever' body 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 piano.

Now that was highly unusual—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 last one with a girl an' the same one followin' with another tune. Guess they had more tunes than words. This here New York Opry just ain't worth a... Looorred! Likes she took on a case a' the vapors. All of a sudden she kinda hunched over, graspin' hold a' the piano. Then she'd shoo in her hanky, she dropped it (continued on page 6)
"Frank and Greenie was both a-bowin' an' smilin'"

(OPRY (con't))

against her chest. Frank, he didn't even pay no mind—he'peared he'd keep on playin' till she was an' 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 Frankenstern, 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....creek....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, stickin' 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 I'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 hands...

"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.

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 good-will 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 fortune, 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'thin' 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 husted 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 out 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 "I would you mind closing the door, please?"

A chin bobbed over the ruffled shirt....creek....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.

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"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.

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 good-will 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 fortune, 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'thin' 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 husted 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...

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
er. 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 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 grief from his county's boundaries (the plot of the whole thing). To say Pusser is an American 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 choose 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 corruption that 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 devictions 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 lapses 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 reevaluate their God's law and its imperative, love. Walking Tall does not abide in 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 mise-en-scène he housed the spectrum of human personality and emotion, embodied in the four principal 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 Young Frankenstein.

As previously mentioned, Scenes From a Marriage resembles a documentary in some ways. But that may be a part of the elusive Bergman who resists having his films pegged as such-and-such a film. Much of the symbolish and ironic familiar to other Bergman films is very much present in Scenes From a Marriage. Take a familiar Bergman prop, the candle: after Josephson tells Ulmann that he has fallen for another woman, Ulmann clears the supportable 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, Ulmann lights candles on a cake and blows them out—except for a few, which remain lighted. Marriage, to Bergman, is from the heart, 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 theaters. 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 stioic faces, ranging from medicine to corpses to mystical 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 ("O# 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 unhaling 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 reknowned 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.

Scenes from a Marriage

(An American version)

Ingmar Bergman, producer and director

For three hours, Liv Ullmann and Erland Josephson swiftly can approximate 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.

Film Reviews

by Wayne Farr

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“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

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 it’s 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

While waves slap against a rocky shore,
a small white sea bird aviates a blue sky,
them 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

American Aphrodite
by Cal Meuzelaar