The Rebuff

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

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 joggly 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)
Humboldt's Gift
reviewed by Jack Moww

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 gargantuian 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 shoes and underneath. 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 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 and smell the roaring crowd. Humboldt is a drunken, half-crazed, dying poet.

Nobel Prize Winner

Volter's Lament No. 430

Picky, picky,
Packy, snaky,
Burbble, burble,
Bounce.

It's all so clever . . .
Dash the lever.
Don't take an ounce.

To 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
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 outta 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?"

"Jeanie!" 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.

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.

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"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
march 2

Encased in liquid glass
dripped
from the sky,
Frail fern, bent bough

Saturday,

But Aunti chatting and removing th
and shaping also come on zipper of th
zipper of my arguins so I be more of a
go along wi.

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

Then it w
too short evi
shoes and unerneath.
asked, "Do on the
"It's kins
understuten phased in tl
yanking at t
pushed my
after a consi
up anyway.
more object

"How at
shoes." Th
would mak
She looked
her face lit
Liz Esselink
Gerald Kolkerts
Judy Cook
Charlie Claus

from art students
The Shootist
Directed by: Don Siegel
Screenplay by: Miles Hood Suarthout
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'Brian), 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, moustached 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.

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. 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 Stwartisms, "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.

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, Seatman, Caruthers, Ron Howard, Richard

(Continued on page 7)
Three Plays by Anton Chekhov
reviewed by Sandy Van Den Berg

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

"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 Venuhuizen) 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 Thalians 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"

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 her 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.

"She was still a woman . . ."

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 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."
Saturday,
But Aunt:
chatting to
removing th
and shaping
also come 01
zipper of th
zipper of rn
arguing so
111
peel apples.
My nose tingles.
A dew filled dawn:
Ducks huddled beside the pond
Without any necks.
-Jhon Kleyn

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

FIRST SNOWFALL

Sigh watch from upstairs window sigh
on streets whitewashed children play with
springsummerfall smiles build pure gleam
snowballs round circle pat harden enlace 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

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

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 slackling,
ever cracking with its speed
the Ideological Muscle
of questioning men,
who while always learning
(of the Ends of the Earth)
ever 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 hunches 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