

Spring 1984

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Valparaiso University

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the

Lighter

Spring 1984

Valparaiso University's

Magazine of Creative Expression

The LIGHTER **Volume 27 Number 2 Spring 1984**

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Under the direction of Prof. Richard Brauer

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Special thanks to Beth Froehlich for her constant dedication

The Lighter publishes the creative expressions of the Valparaiso University campus community. It is a student-run publication funded by the Student Senate. All members of the university are invited to submit material for publication; selections are made on the basis of quality, interest, creativity and editorial whim.

The Lighter thanks all contributors for sharing their works with the campus and invites comments and criticism on the selection and presentation of the materials.

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EDITORIAL:

Twenty-five Years of the Creative Process

Twenty-five school-years ago, in October of 1958, the first *Lighter* appeared. It has been billed as everything from "a literary-humor-variety magazine"

(1960), "Valpo's little literary magazine" (1968), "literature, lovenotes, and things visual" (1971), and "a literary and intellectual journal" (1979), to what has this year been called "VU's magazine of creative expression." Here, in the last issue of the *Lighter's* silver anniversary year, it is appropriate to look back on what the *Lighter* has been.

During its first few years the *Lighter* appeared quarterly and featured a regular editorial column, essays on campus issue and the social issues of the day, and a pictorial spread on a selected coed — the "Lighter Lovely" — as well as artistic, literary and satirical material. "The function of the magazine . . . should be to print student literary material of good collegiate quality which will appeal to the greatest number of students . . . Its pages can embody a manifestation of creative thinking on the part of the individuals who comprise Valparaiso University," said the *Lighter's* first editorial. The second issue's editorial defined as the purpose of the magazine, "to provide an outlet for the creative talents of [the] student body whether it be literary, artistic, or humorous."

As a student, Dick Lee, currently a V.U. faculty member, edited the *Lighter* in its second year. In his fourth issue he pointed out the problems which have faced every *Lighter* editor: "the lack of a tradition and a clear definition of the *Lighter's* purpose, student apathy and the dearth of willing and thoughtful contributors, an insufficient budget, [and the editor's] own lack of time and experience."

The Spring 1962 editorial indicates more particular problems: "Faculty and student . . . have objected to everything from the color of the cover to the quality of the fiction to the use of profanity to the false representation of our campus in a materialistic and cynical outlook on life."

The following year, while "aim[ing] to be an outlet and a forum for campus creativity and concern, the *Lighter* published a captioned picture of then-president of the University, O.P. Kretzman, which was considered to be libelous. That year only three issues were published. In the final issue the following defense and reaffirmation of the *Lighter's* purpose was included: "We hope that those of you who do not give us up for lost will recognize in the material presented the striving of the staff towards a magazine that has value as part of the educational process of the university."

During the next few years the *Lighter* toned down. The "Lighter Lovelies" feature was discontinued in 1963-64. After the fall issue of 1964 editorials became scarce. And in the mid-60's humor disappeared as a major offering of the magazine.

The issues of the late sixties and early seventies featured some creative approaches to the magazine, including a *Lighter* poster, a *Lighter* calendar, a non-bound issue with all the pages in a folder, a specifically Christian issue, and a *Lighter* containing no words except for "Ate Me" on the cover.

A 1976 editorial renewed the question of the *Lighter's* purposes. It states clearly what is at the same time the biggest potential problem and the biggest potential opportunity for the *Lighter*: "The Student Senate's Code on Publications is purposely vague in defining the function of the *Lighter*. According to the Code the *Lighter* is the 'literary-variety' magazine of Valparaiso University Every editor takes on the job conscious of the ultimate polarity between what students want to read in and write for the *Lighter*, and his personal ideal of the 'literary-variety' magazine."

The *Lighters* of the turn of the decade introduced an intellectual ideal of the literary-variety magazine. In 1981-82 the staff returned to the ideal of "mak[ing] the *Lighter* more representative of the student body," according to a *Torch* article.

The 1982-83 *Lighter* was caught in the Student Senate budget crunch and there was talk of discontinuing the *Lighter* as a separate university publication. The student referendum, however, revitalized it.

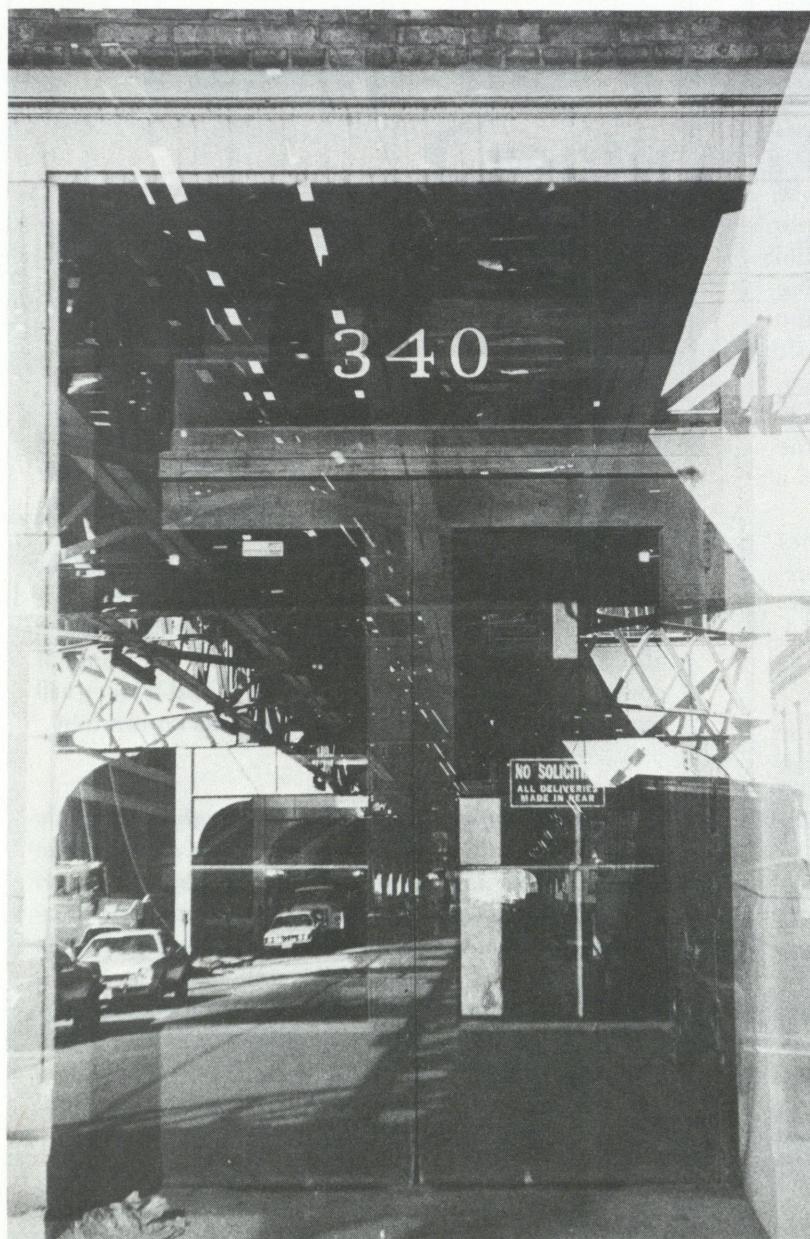
The year's *Lighter* exists quite simply as a vehicle for students' creative expressions. In publicizing our purpose of publishing students' material we have been able to get a good variety of submissions. We hope, of course, that the selection of works found herein will have a broad appeal within our campus community.

This brief look at 25 years of the *Lighter* certainly does not do it justice. Perhaps it is just as well. The identity of the *Lighter* lies within the pages of each issue. The significance is found in those who participate in both the creating and the appreciating of its works of art. The *Lighter* itself is only a vehicle. "I can only . . . state my admiration for those persons for whom the creative process continues both within and without the classroom," wrote the 1976-77 editor. It is because of those people that the *Lighter* has continued through its first 25 years.

Jonathan Krutz, Editor

EDITORIAL

Cynthia Marton
photograph



The Game

I know you
because you watch me.
It's a game we play
intimately.

Much like game,
Eyes lightly circle:
Dancers of a tune,
flighty and quick.

Then they catch,
to dart swift away,
not acknowledging
the game just played.

As I watch,
jauntily you walk
away down the street.
I smile--amused.

'Til next time,
eyes smile, still bemused:
knowing that you know
I'm watching you.

by Sue Hartman

Fear of the Very Small

by Eric Appleton

I sit in the classroom,
Getting utterly paranoid--
bile in my throat--
An ant crawls across the table,
A leaf pressed by the wind against the window,
Numbers and functions scrawled across the blackboard,
An infinite complex of infinitesimal objects...
There is chalk on the professor's hands
As he explains molecules and atoms,
Electrons and protons,
Getting smaller and smaller with every discourse.
I stare at my hand
And realize that I am nothing but empty space
Populated with tiny, unobservable spheres;
So small, and always composed of something.
Even smaller.
Where will it end?
Is there anything that is smallest of the small,
Something so basic that nothing will crack it?
Oh, they'll discover it all right,
But then they'll find something more,
Deeper and deeper,
Until they find that we really don't exist at all,
But that we're nothing but
Abstract mathematics...
My eyes roll in their sockets
as I gaze warily at the professor--
The ant crawls across my trembling hand--
Things like that make me nervous...

Morning Itch

Here we go again--
that vulnerable place between winter and spring
when everything reminds me of another time.
The birds gather on the balcony
to wake me, singing mercilessly,
as the pigeons did in Austria years ago.
There's always a terrible urgency
about their morning, an itch
that can't be calmed.
Here or there,
they're always restless for the unfamiliar,
cocking heads this way and that,
flicking wings as if debating whether
to fly or walk round the circle.
I wonder what will be enough for them.

This opening to the light is what's hard
for them,
pulling up from that perfect pool where
they've bathed in the dark.
They take the dawn in their
teeth, then wonder what to do with it.
They bury it hurriedly in my roof,
so they may sing of things they'll never see,
stuck in the morning on my balcony.

So I lay back in bed, listening
to a weird harmony.
At times I would even take
their song as my own--
dusty, scratched, and covered with feathers--
just because it seems to go on forever.

by Teresa L Muth

DECEMBER

by Amy Carlson

A tear trickles down my face
from the blustering, cold wind of the snowstorm.
Just a few short steps take me from the feel of
the bitter chill
into the artificial winter heat of my dorm lobby
as the numbness of my bright red ears
and stiff face begin to thaw.
Suddenly I am taken in by the charm
of the sound of "Joy to the World" from a distant
room
and the sight of our Christmas tree, strung
with cranberries and popcorn and twinkling
multi-colored lights
at this home-away-from-home.
After climbing two flights of stairs,
I return to my lovely little cell block,
and even though the big hand is only on the 3,
I cross off another day on my calendar.
Only twelve more un-exed days left
until I go home!
I pull a textbook from my bookshelf
and sit down to read sixty pages
for tomorrow's 8:00 class
(not to mention review for next week's final exam).
Last night I had a dream about No. 2 pencils
dancing on little manila computer cards--
darkening the appropriate boxes
in five different shades...all leaden gray.
But in twelve short days
I'll be sitting in the twill plaid seat of the
airplane,

watching the stewardess demonstrate
the use of the oxygen masks
and point to the emergency exits.
Then I'll be back to see my little, black
cuddly cockapoo
wag her tail and stand on her hind legs
in frenzied excitement to greet me
after three long months of separation.
And I can smell my mother's Christmas baking
in the kitchen,
and taste her frosted sugar cookies fresh
out of the oven
while listening to my father's smooth, low voice
tell a corny joke.
Out of the corner of my eye I see the ceramic
nativity set
that my mother made when I was little.
I listen to the thundering crescendo
of Virgil Foxe's organ playing "O Holy Night"
on one of our albums.
Then suddenly it is Christmas eve
and we're sitting around in the family room
tearing tape from festive wrapping paper
with my sister occasionally stoking the logs
of the crimson-golden flames blazing in the
fireplace.
Inevitably, we take pictures with the polaroid camera
of the dog ripping open her present
with her canine teeth.
But for now I must wake from this pleasant dream
and live contented with dorm food, no pets,
and the friendships I've made in my college campus
world.

**STOMPING THROUGH THE WOODS
ON A TUESDAY AFTERNOON**

Whose words these are I think I know,
I think that I will use them though.
He will not see me taking them—
He kicked the bucket long ago.

My publisher must think it queer—
He will not print what's written here.
He gives his pointy head a shake
To ask "Whatsa matta, you crazy or something?"¹

My words are gems, my debts are deep
And I have got no place to sleep,
So publish it, you stupid creep,
So publish it, you stupid creep.

-Jack Frost

¹ The original line may have been something kind of sort of maybe almost like this, but perhaps not. In any case, the original MS. is unclear at this point due to water damage.
(The poet drooled).



SPRING RUNOFF

Rich Jablinski
photograph

TRIO

A Short-Short by Margaret Perry
(With a nod to Gertrude Stein)

Miss Maze lived in Kalamazoo with her brother and his wife. All three lived together, together all three lived, in a frame house, a big house,

in Kalamazoo. They all lived there; Miss Maze, her brother, his wife lived there.

Miss Maze was tall, not very tall; not very tall; not very tall, just tall. And she was pretty, not too pretty, not very pretty - just pretty. She was tall and not fat, not thin, but just right: tall, nice to look at; pretty, not too pretty - just pretty. And her voice was between the flute and the viol - warm, then sharp; mostly warm, very warm, a voice that was warm; then sharp. A voice that was very warm, mostly warm, but sometimes quite sharp.

Miss Maze had always lived in Kalamazoo with her brother and then her brother and his wife. All three lived together, together all three lived, in a frame house, a big house, in Kalamazoo. They all lived there, the three of them there; Miss Maze, her brother, his wife lived there.

Miss Maze was tall, not very tall; not very tall, just tall. And she was pretty, not too pretty, not very pretty - just pretty. She was tall and not fat, not thin, but just right: tall, nice to look at; pretty, not too pretty, just pretty. And her voice was between the flute and the viol - warm, then sharp; mostly warm, very warm, a voice that was warm; then - sharp; very warm, mostly warm, but sometimes quite sharp.

Miss Maze had always lived with her brother. The house, the frame house, the big house in Kazoo, was the house of their parents and their parents before them. So Miss Maze lived there, lived with her brother, in the frame house, the big house, where she had, where he had, where they had both lived - ever since, before they were born had been there, the house.

Miss Maze now lived there with her brother; her brother, his wife and Miss Maze lived there. For years they lived there, Miss Maze and her brother, her brother, Miss Maze, and her brothers wife, in the frame house, the big house, the house in Kazoo. And Miss Maze was quite pleased, and her brother was pleased. But her brothers wife was not.

II

Her brothers wife, the wife of Miss Mazes brother, was proud. She was proud of her marriage. She was proud of her husband. She was proud of her house. She was proud of her marriage. Miss Mazes brothers wife was thin. She was thin, very thin; and the narrow line of her mouth sunk in, sunk in like a withered strip of skin. But her mouth, when it moved - and it moved and it moved - was sharp, very sharp as it snapped, and the sounds from it piercing and rapid. Her mouth sunk in, sunk in like a lemon - that is to say, a withered lemon. But when her mouth moved, it was thin and shrill, like the twang of thin wire.

Her brothers wife, the wife of Miss Mazes brother, said that Miss Maze ought to marry. All the time there she said this, in the house, the frame house, the house in Kazoo. A woman your age, without a husband...Shame to you, shame to you: **YOU OUGHT TO BE MARRIED**. And all the time (she repeated this daily), her thin mouth, that wire mouth, was moving in haste. A woman your age not married, for shame. You ought to be married, be married today! (Every day was today, when she spoke on this matter.) Get married, get married, she said to Miss Maze. But Miss Maze was quite pleased, quite pleased as she was. And Miss Mazes brother was pleased; pleased in his way; pleased with Miss Maze, that is to say.

Her brothers wife, the wife of Miss Mazes brother, was busy as she was thin; that is to say, she was a woman of extremes. There was always a meeting, a meeting somewhere - a meeting right there, in Kalamazoo. And she was there, always there, saying as my husband would say (if he were there), as my husband would say...And to the butcher: no veal. My husband hates veal. To the grocer: no cabbage. Always, right there, in Kalamazoo, My husband, My husband...In meetings, too. One reason he cant be here (right there in Kazoo) is because hes so busy, so busy with work. My husband, well - you see, one reason my husbands not here is because hes so busy, you see!

III

The brother of Miss Maze, Miss Mazes brother, was fat, rather fat, and quite short. Not too fat, not fat fat, but fat and quite short. And when he sat, and he sat most easily, he sat and gazed at the trees. The world is a tree, he would say to Miss Maze, and seldom he said much more.

Once, in a mood of great eloquence, he gazed at Miss Maze and he said as he gazed, the leaves on the trees have grown cold and quite old. Do you think this will happen again next year?

IV

Miss Maze lived in Kalamazoo with her brother. She lived with her brother and his wife. All three lived there, year after year, in the frame house, the big house, the house in Kazoo.

Miss Maze lived her days in the manner of her ways. Her ways were never the same. What she liked, she always did. But what she liked one day was not what she liked another day. That is to say that routine was her enemy. Every day she liked people; people liked her. She demanded nothing, but was not fearful to give. She read and she smoked and smoked and she worked and smoked and she wrote and she read. One day she wrote: I am contented. Another day she wrote: But what is the question?

Miss Maze had always lived with her brother, in the frame house the big house, the house in Kazoo. She thought without thought of her thought, and demanded not of her brother nor of his wife. One day as they sat, Miss Maze and her brother, he said that the leaves on the trees have grown cold and quite old. Do you think this will happen again, again, next year? She thought for a moment without thought of her thought and nodded and answered yes.

Miss Maze now lived there, in Kalamazoo. With her brother, his wife, she lived there with them, in the frame house, the big house, in Kalamazoo. For years they had lived there, Miss Maze and her brother, her brother, Miss Maze and her brothers wife. In the frame house, the big house, the house in Kazoo, Miss Maze and her brother, and his wife lived there. Miss Maze smoked there and read; she read and she smoked there, and worked there where she wrote there. One day, without thought of the thought she was writing, she wrote and then spoke that I am contented. And Miss Maze was quite pleased, and her brother was pleased. But her brothers wife was not.

END

The ground
cold, dark, dead
gives rise to a flower
One plant
bright, blue, cheery
conquering the cold
"I am"
it shouts
shoots toward the sun
The flower
sad, weary, lifeless
as the dark
impending death
falls to the ground
"I was"
whispered
returns to earth

by Ellen Stephany



JAPANESE GARDEN

Donna Bradfield
etching

I ran across the bright, crisp snow
And felt the bite of crystal air;
I saw no sign across the yard
That summer life once scurried there;

Then slowed my hasty homeward pace,
Startled by the chapel chimes,
As though I'd never heard before
Their daily singing of the times;

But it was not the march of time
Which bid the iron bells to sing,
I thought their solemn music spoke
Of deeper, more mysterious things;

I stood transfixed on frozen earth
To hear them echoing so high;
The deep staccato notes climbed up
The crystal air beyond the sky;

Then fading off to memory
(my feet led forth, I knew not where)
The melancholy music played
A little while upon the air;

I stumbled numb and frozen home;
I hadn't planned to stay so long;
The fire warmed my frozen hands
But could not melt the crystal song.

by Christine Grusak

FOR A SISTER

Mother knew
We shed our shoes that spring morning.
This was as daring
As we could be--
To test our dormant skin
On dirt, alive
With commotion,
Or hot-cold cement
That would rub callouses.

Later I snapped
A mosquito on my leg;
You were afraid
At the false start of blood.
We ran for the creek,
Wiggling our toes in mud,
To guess what was beneath us.

Until a sharp place
found your heel.
We stepped in the abandoned impressions,
Trying to match the steps.
Mother worried which wounds
She had seen before, which
She would see again.
But we didn't cry,
We knew that we'd
Go without shoes
The next day.

by Rene' Steinke



Norman Doering
painting

Spilling Poetry

*Bleed words, flow free in ink and stain
The page in blue blood,
Meaning spilled from a nether vein
Captured on flat cup
In unfocussed frame.*

*The brain, its own leech, dies and keeps
The page in blue blood.
It's smell--"yourself, reflect, define"--just reeks
In the mind's nostril.
The blood drawn from "Teach!"*

*Or "Learn!" spilling itself to freshen
The page in blue blood.
Flowing now it joins confusion,
The world in its "Ahhh,"
Glory in expression.*

*And words flow free in ink and stain
The page in blue blood,
Meaning spills from a nether vein
Captured on flat cup
The drips of the brain.*

by Sam the Tailor

childbirth

**Scream in the silent darkness
the cry of a soul in an unholy land.
Forms and convention turn Humans into anti-life.
The universe convulses as the race kills itself
...joyfully and willingly.**

by Jon Brockopp

THE WEAVER

The weaver weaves his cloth
little by little, thread by thread
he creates with colors.
 bold and mellow
 forming waves of texture
 with no distinct pattern,
weaving seemingly forever until
 the cloth is finished.

And what of life.
not unwavering in substance
it changes from day to day,
 year to year.
Happiness from sorrow as
contrasting colors accent each other
 adding beauty to the cloth
and meaning to our lifetime until
It's time to tie the end threads
 making it complete.

by Katherine Volz

Two Sides of the Same Face

The two halves are lopsided,
a perfect imbalance
with one side drooping down, the other
slanting up.

One eye's always smaller than the other.
Does this mean that one side still clings
to the earth as we grow from it,
knowing the sadness of leavings?
That the other keeps reaching even
after we've stopped growing
and circles up where we'd
really like to be?

So this is why we like the symmetry
of shapes,
the table here, the lantern there,
and light flaring off the door.
So this is why we make monuments to
perfection,
buildings with windows at just
the right angles,
reflecting the sun back to us.
It's inborn--even children
draw easy faces in clouds,
build bridges with one side
of the river for you and one
side for me.
We age, needing the symmetry
of shadows, of bodies, of rounded
rocks on the shore.

It lets us turn in to our sad and beautiful
imbalance,
the ambiguity of things,
so we may return calm,
loving the half that
never measures up,
calling it by name.

by Teresa L. Muth

Horse Sense

*Last night I was a horse on stilts
All that I call the me was there
Feeling the peasants stare and laugh
I could not move; I did not dare.*

*My muscles tense my dripping sweat
Threatened imbalance patiently.
"Lost from a circus," someone said
Another, "Quite an oddity."*

*They kept their distance out of fear
And some out of respect, perhaps.
"A miracle is here today."
Thought I, I die if I collapse.*

*Unable, as I was, to act
I listened to them speculate.
While sweat and wind tickled my back
The peasants joined in a debate.*

*"He is a sign of hope," said one,
"Rising above his fate as horse.
His destiny is being made
While we are locked in this discourse."*

*But one, "No aetherial mount is he
This foolish four-sticked sweating beast.
To hope the most of him is wrong
He measures even less than least."*

*Engrossed I soon forgot my place
As sweat and argument annoyed
Swishing my tail across my flank
Precarious balance was destroyed.*

*I know not what I am today
The finite me in empty stall
Perhaps the most perhaps the least
But of one thing I do recall.*

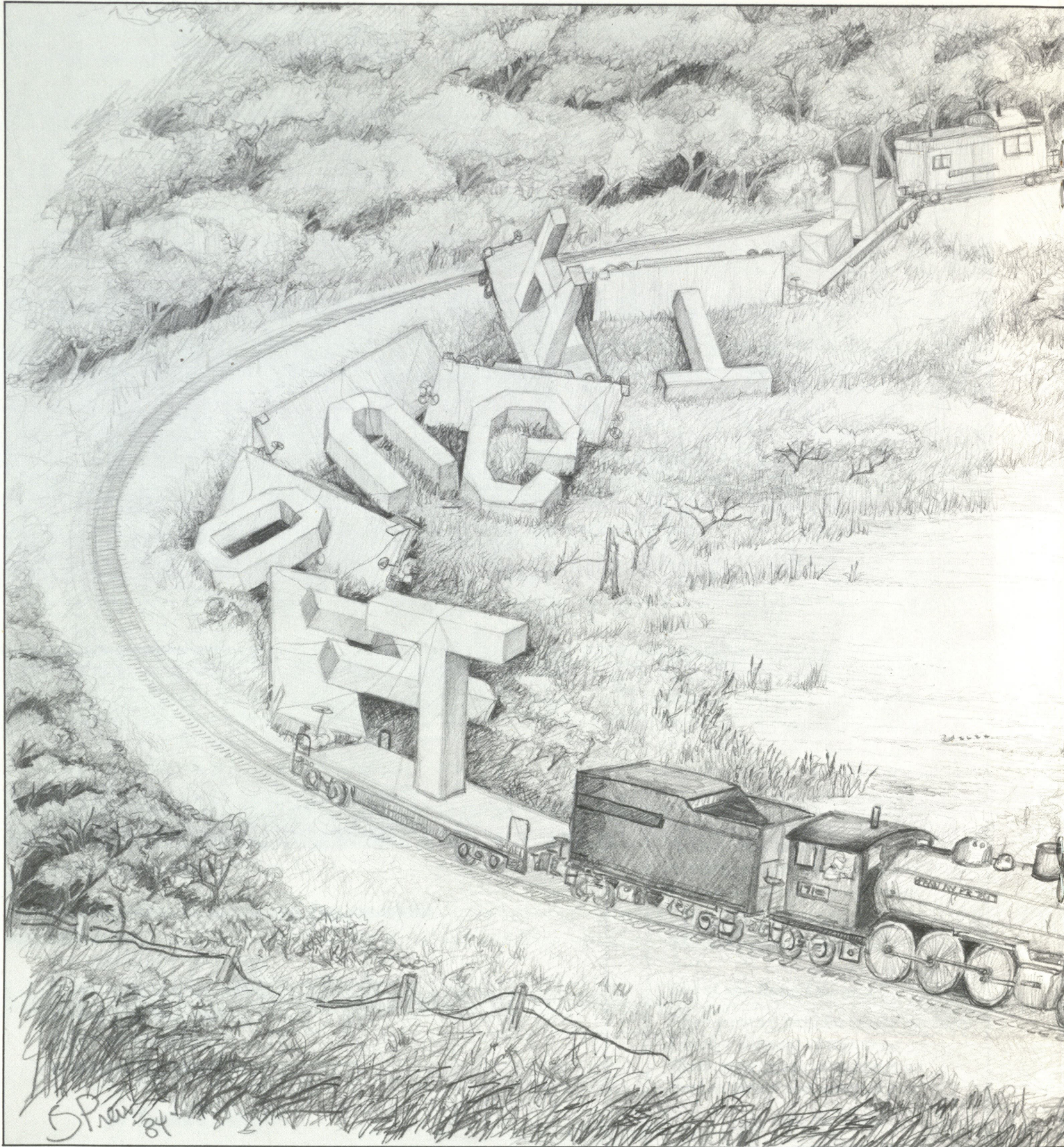
*There were no peasants round me there
I in that moment clearly knew
Those judging me were horses all
And all stilted and sweating too.*

by Sam the Tailor



PUNTS

Gary Kleinschmidt
photograph





THOUGHT
Brian Preuss
drawing

SUNDAY IN THE CITY

by Paul Clikeman

I almost didn't go to church that Sunday. The week before I had worn a new pair of shoes to church and had rubbed a painful blister on my left heel walking home. That day I was wearing the same shoes, and I could already feel my heel slipping as I walked down the alley away from my apartment. I paused when I reached the street and thought about turning back, but uncomfortable shoes didn't seem like a very good excuse, and my pride in never missing a Sunday service was stronger than my fear of another blister.

As I hopped up onto the sidewalk after crossing Lake Park Blvd., a young black man startled me by asking if I was from Chicago. "No, I'm from out of town," I called back over my shoulder without breaking stride. I was slightly annoyed that I had let such a straggly looking man approach me unnoticed. People were always warning me to be careful on the streets of Hyde Park, and I reminded myself to keep looking around as I walked.

"So am I," he answered as he caught up with me. "Can I ask you a favor?" I knew he was going to ask for a handout. I reached into my pocket for some change, but kept walking. "You don't have to do this if you don't want," he said, "I'm just asking you to help if you think you can--can I have your hat?"

His request was so unexpected that I stopped and turned to look at him. "I been sleeping in the IC (Illinois Central train) station and my head is cold," he explained.

"No, this is the only hat I have," I replied uncertainly. I had no intention of giving away my favorite snap-brim cap, yet I felt guilty as the cold wind hit my face and I looked at how poorly he was dressed.

"How about some food?" he asked. Of course I didn't have any food with me, but I pulled out the dollar bill I had brought to put in the collection plate and offered it to him. "I don't want your money, man. Don't you have any food?" I said no and put the bill in his hand, then walked away.

He caught up with me once more and asked me to show him a restaurant where he could buy coffee and something to eat. I told him I didn't have time to take him to a restaurant because I was on my way to church. I expected that that would end our conversation. Instead, he kept walking beside me, and finally he asked if he could come to church with me.

I stopped again to have another look at him. He was about 5 feet 8 inches tall and looked like he weighed about 135 pounds. He had a thin mustache and an even thinner beard that looked unintentional. He was wearing corduroy pants, rubber overshoes, and a cheap winter coat made of fake sheep skin. I guessed he was about 30 years old, but couldn't be sure. I certainly wasn't happy about taking him to church, but my conscience just wouldn't let me say no. He was a child of God. Besides, at church I could at least give him a cup of coffee and could ask the pastor what to do with him. "My name is Paul," I said. "I'm Johnny," he replied.

"Hi, my name is Michelle Denton," the greeter announced as I led Johnny into the church, "Are you visiting us today?"

"I'm Paul Clikeman," I reminded her. Michelle had met me at least half a dozen times, but she still didn't recognize me.

"Are you a visitor?" she asked again, addressing Johnny this time.

"Yes, he came with me," I answered for him, hoping to get past Michelle as quickly as possible.

"Welcome to Saint Matthews," she said with her friendliest smile. She took Johnny by the arm and began leading him toward the guest register. "Won't you please sign our guest book." I mumbled something about signing after the service, but it wasn't necessary. Michelle's smile vanished when Johnny launched into a brief account of his past and asked her for money. "You'll have to talk to the pastor about that," she said giving me a worried look. I assured her we would, and took Johnny to hang up our coats. At least she'll remember me now, I thought.

After we had hung our coats up I led Johnny into the sanctuary. We were late and the pews were almost full. I stopped at the entrance and searched the back rows, determined not to have to walk all the way to the front with Johnny. His shirt was thin and dirty, and he looked even worse than he did outside. Luckily there was room for us on the far side in the second to last pew. We squeezed into place just before the reading of the First Lesson.

The church liturgists had decided years ago that Isaiah 58: 5-9 should be read on the fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, so that was the lesson we heard. It was about making yourself a sacrifice to God by feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. I wondered if Johnny was listening, and if so, what he thought of the verses. I also wondered what God, with the help of Isaiah, was trying to set me up for.


The service continued with the Psalmology, Second Lesson, and Alleluia. I wondered if the rich

Lutheran liturgy, which I loved so well, said anything to a person like Johnny. Evidently not, because he put his head down midway through the Gospel reading, and didn't wake up until the people around us stood to take communion. I told him the service would be over in about ten minutes and then we would get some coffee.

After the Dismissal Johnny and I followed the crowd to the General Assembly room. He got a cup of coffee and we stood by ourselves in a corner while he drank it. I looked around the room for someone to talk to, but the pastor was still outside shaking hands, and although the faces around me were familiar, there wasn't anybody that I knew. Johnny also looked around the room, but he found what he was looking for--the cookies.

While Johnny was on his third or fourth trip to the cookie table, a young man who I had never met before, pointed at Johnny and asked me if I knew him. I admitted that he had come to church with me. The man said he had seen Johnny on the streets before. He gave me ten dollars and told me to make sure Johnny got something to eat. I took the money and frantically tried to think of something to say to keep the man with me until Johnny returned. He left, however, so I was alone when Johnny got back.

At that point the other people in the room began taking seats for the slide presentation that was about to begin. I decided it was time to talk to the pastor. Alan Simons, the campus minister, hadn't been at the worship service, but he was there for the slide show, so I approached him and told him my problem. I was hoping he would take Johnny off my hands, but as long as we were in church I felt responsible for Johnny, so I followed along when Alan took Johnny into his office.



"How can I help you Johnny?" Alan asked when we were in the office. Johnny began telling his story, but he kept bouncing from topic to topic as if he couldn't decide what he wanted to tell. He talked about the shelter he wanted to go to and showed us the phone number. He talked about being broke. He talked about coming to Chicago from New Orleans. He talked about the pain in his leg and rolled up his pants to prove his knee was swollen. He talked about being paroled from prison where he had served time for manslaughter. He talked about being hungry. "Tell me what you want from me," Alan broke in when Johnny started to wander.

Johnny wouldn't answer the question directly. It finally came out, however, that he wanted nineteen dollars so he could spend the night at the shelter. Nineteen dollars only allowed him to stay there twelve hours, but at least he could take a shower, sleep in a bed, and stay out of the cold. Alan opened his wallet and gave Johnny all the money he had—eleven dollars and some change. Johnny complained he needed more, but when he saw the wallet was empty he stopped asking.

"Come on Johnny. We'll get some lunch, then I'll take you to the bus stop," I said to get him out of Alan's office.

"Call me this afternoon, Paul," Alan said as we left the church.

When we were outside I started thinking about the money Johnny needed. The shelter cost nineteen dollars and he would need another dollar for the bus to get there. Since Johnny already had twelve dollars in his pocket and I had ten in mine, we had

enough money plus two left over for something to eat. My first impulse was to just give him the money and leave, but I was afraid he might use it for alcohol instead of food, so I decided to take him to a restaurant myself.

It was a long walk to Morry's Deli, which was the only place I knew where we could buy a meal for two dollars. On the way Johnny limped badly because of his swollen knee. We talked about the cold and about the cars that drove past us and a little bit about prison. And Johnny asked me again for a hat.

My intention had been to take Johnny to Morry's, buy him two dollars worth of food, give him the eight dollars change, and leave him at the bus stop. By the time we reached Morry's, however, I had been with Johnny for over two hours, and I was starting to feel more comfortable with him. As I felt comfortable with him I thought more seriously about the situation he was in. He was truly cold and hungry in addition to being confused and alone. His psychological and spiritual needs were beyond my comprehension, but his physical needs were immediate and simple. I decided to take him home with me.

I knew he would never agree, but I tried to get Johnny to wait outside anyway. I said I would only be gone five minutes and would come back with food and a hat. He argued that he had to use the bathroom and that he might be arrested if he was found loitering in the vestibule unattended. I made it clear that I was only going to give him sandwiches and a hat, and made him promise he would leave as soon as he picked them up. He agreed readily, so we went inside.

Once inside the apartment, Johnny began listing other items he would like to have. The first was a jacket or sweater. I remembered how thin his shirt was, and imagined how cold he must be, but I couldn't think of anything to give him. The only thing I had was an old Valparaiso University sweat-shirt. I never wore it outside the apartment because of a mustard stain on the front, but it still had sentimental value to me. I told him I would look in my closet while he was in the bathroom.

When Johnny came out of the bathroom I showed him the blue, knit ski hat I was planning to give him. It would be very inexpensive to replace, and would keep him warm, so I was happy to let him have it. "I don't want that," he said loudly, "I want a hat like yours!" (referring to my snap-brim cap). His reaction startled me enough that I unconsciously took a step or two backwards. I wasn't aware of my movement, but Johnny noticed it. "What are you running away for," he asked angrily, "Stay and act like a man. Act like a man."

His first words had surprised me, but the second outburst scared me. The look in his eyes and the tone of his voice reminded me that he had been convicted of manslaughter. What does manslaughter mean? I didn't even know. I hadn't thought about Johnny's history before, but suddenly it seemed very important. It also dawned on me why Alan had wanted me to call him. He didn't have anything to tell me; he wanted to know I was still alive.

"You act too nervous all the time," Johnny complained, "You act so nervous you're making me nervous." Of course it was true. I was almost visibly trembling and I didn't even want to think about what my face must have looked like the last two minutes. I gave him my Valparaiso sweatshirt to change the subject.

Johnny took the sweatshirt into the bathroom to try it in front of the mirror. I was glad because it gave me time to compose myself. "God, please be with me," I prayed. I tried to think about the situation logically. Johnny was three inches shorter and at least twenty pounds lighter than I; he had a bad leg; and he hadn't eaten or rested properly in several days. I knew my next door neighbor was home. My brain told me I wasn't in any danger, but my heart wasn't listening.

Johnny liked the sweatshirt and asked if I had any other hats. The only other hat I owned was a baseball style cap with the Kimberly Clark logo printed on the front. It wouldn't keep him very warm, but I showed it to him. He took it into the bathroom and spent five minutes looking at himself.

When he came back he asked if he could try my hat just to see how it looked. I was afraid that once he had it on his head I would never get it back, but he insisted so finally I gave it to him. He took it into the bathroom.

"You really like this hat," he said when he came back from the bathroom, "I can tell."

"Yes," I admitted, "My sister gave me that hat for Christmas and I just can't give it to you."

"That's O.K. I can tell this is your hat so I don't want it," Johnny said. He put my cap down on a chair. "I'll take the baseball hat."

With the hat issue settled, Johnny decided it was time to eat. He led the way into my kitchen. I had been planning to just give him a couple sandwiches, but Johnny insisted on something hot. We compromised by saying he could cook some hamburgers if he took them with him instead of eating in the apartment. I was determined to get rid of him as quickly as possible.

Johnny was not bashful about helping himself to whatever he wanted in the kitchen. He unwrapped a pound of hamburger and dumped it all in a two-quart saucepan, saying he could cook it faster that way than in a frying pan. He turned the burner on high and used a spoon to break the hamburger up.

After he found the hamburger buns, he started looking for seasonings. He would never tell me what he wanted, but just searched through the refrigerator and all the cabinets until he either found it or satisfied himself that I didn't have any. Ketchup, mustard, and lots of pepper went into the pan with the hamburger.

While Johnny stirred the mixture he asked many questions. He wanted to know how long I had lived in Chicago and where I worked and what foods I liked to eat. He also told me about the meals they had in prison. He said he had eaten Sugar Frosted Flakes every morning he was there. I was glad Johnny did most of the talking because I couldn't think of anything to say. I didn't want to give too much information about myself, and I didn't want to ask him any questions for fear of hitting a sensitive subject.

When it was fully cooked, Johnny began spooning the loose meat onto the hamburger buns. He made three sandwiches, but might have had a fourth if he hadn't spilled so much on the counter and floor. I smiled with relief when he wrapped the hamburgers in paper towels and put them in a bag. I put an apple in the bag with them. It was then about 1:45, and I was sure he'd be gone by 2:00.

Johnny said he wanted to wash the grease off his hands before leaving. He closed the bathroom door and stayed in there with the water running for over five minutes. When he came out he asked for a glass of milk. He said that in prison he drank milk with every meal and now that he was out he missed it. He poured himself a large glass and drank it straight down. Then he picked up an apple and said

he wanted to eat it. I reminded him he already had an apple in his bag and of his promise to leave as soon as he had the food. He ignored me, however, and sat down to eat the apple. There wasn't anything I could do except watch him eat.

He started talking about how he had learned his lesson in prison. He said he was smart. Prison was full of stupid people. It didn't take any brains to pull a knife on somebody, and he was too smart for that. He knew other ways to get money. He said you had to be good to your friends and help the people who help you. It was better to be honest and ask people for help than to try to steal from them. I told him I agreed he was smart.

When Johnny finished the apple he asked for a comb. He combed his hair in the bathroom, then said he wanted to shave. I gave him my electric razor. He must not have known how to use it because he tried for a few seconds, then quit and said it didn't work. He closed the bathroom door once again and started running the water.

I felt helpless while I waited for Johnny to finish in the bathroom. I couldn't pinpoint where I had lost control of the relationship. In the church he had followed me, but now, in my own apartment, he was telling me what to do. He had already been inside for over an hour and I worried about how much longer it would be before he agreed to leave. I convinced myself I was in no danger, and decided the only thing I could do was wait him out.

When Johnny came out of the bathroom I told him some people were waiting for me at school and I had to leave right away or I would be late. He wasn't ready to leave, though. First he asked for a bandage to wrap his knee. I spent a few minutes looking for a rag to cut into strips, but couldn't find anything that would work. When I said I didn't have a bandage, he asked for quarters for the bus. He already had enough money, so I said he would have to pay me for them. I gave him eight quarters from a box in my desk drawer, and he gave me two dollars which I carelessly left on top of the desk.

Ten minutes later I almost got him out the door, but he stalled a few minutes longer, then retreated to the bathroom.

While he was in the bathroom I seriously thought about calling the police. It would have been easy to do. I could have left the apartment, gone next door to make the call, and waited with my neighbor for the police to come and get Johnny out of the building. Johnny was getting more demanding all the time, and I couldn't think how I would ever get rid of him. I didn't call because of my earlier decision to help. I had invited Johnny in to help him, not to have him arrested, and I felt I had to follow through with that commitment.

When Johnny returned from the bathroom I pressed him more strongly with my story about needing to go to school. He sat down to read the newspaper. I told him I was already late. He said he wanted to read the Sports. I told him it was time to leave. He began the Comics.

"Johnny, we're friends aren't we?" I finally said, "I helped you but now you have to help me. If I don't leave now I'm going to be in trouble. Those people are waiting for me. You have to help me get to school. I'm leaving right now."

It took a while longer, but he finally picked up his coat and his bag. (While I wasn't looking he also picked up two dollars from my desk and ten dollars from the drawer.) By the time we got outside it was 3:30.

Johnny and I didn't speak until we reached the bus stop. I explained to him how to get downtown, but I think he already knew. He asked me to take the bus with him. He said he had some friends with money and we could have a good time together. I said no and wished him well. I started walking toward campus to be consistent with my previous story. Johnny followed. He had decided some walking would be good exercise for his knee. I wished he would leave, but I didn't mind too much that he stayed. Outside I felt safe again since I knew I could walk away any time I wanted.

Johnny asked me my last name. I lied to him. He asked me my apartment number and I lied again. I wanted to make sure he couldn't find me. We walked about half a mile together before Johnny decided to stop to eat a sandwich. I said goodbye and turned south at the next corner. Johnny didn't respond. He was eating the first time I looked back and was gone the second time.

That evening I was disgusted by the whole episode. I wanted to think I had helped an ex-convict begin a new life. I wanted to think I had taught him that church was a place where people cared about him. I wanted to think he was grateful for what I had given him. Unfortunately I didn't think any of those things were true. Instead, I felt angry that he had stolen my money. I felt annoyed that he had scared me in my own apartment. I felt guilty for not doing enough and I felt stupid for doing as much as I did.

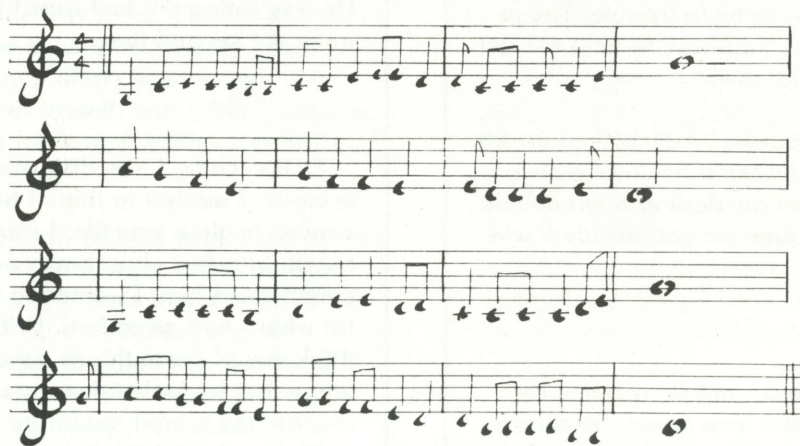
It wasn't until the next day that I thought about how needy Johnny had been. He was cold and I gave him a hat. He was hungry and I gave him food. I think that was the right thing to do regardless of the danger to me or the worthiness of Johnny. And I like to think about my Valparaiso sweatshirt keeping him warm.

The Apple of my Eye

I met a computer today, who told me of you
 She winked at me, as if to say "Hi"
 But I wasn't fooled by her output data
 Though she tried to con me with her I/O devices
 She had some nice looking disc drives, model 36-3B
 But when I reached out to touch--she was ever so cold
 What I thought might have been true love at first sight
 Was deleted by a whirr, blip, and one byte
 A nice personality, good looking and cool-- but never
 again will I play the fool
 I thought it was love, but I was only a number
 Yet never more, will I make the blunder
 Of metal above flesh, and LED before eye
 And unbeatable logic, over mouth, ear, and thigh

by Lanford Potts

THE TABLE TOP FLING



I am a Kitty-cat
 A regular sprippy-srapp
 A kippy-sprap I am me!
 I got whiskers
 I got a tail
 Between my stripes and thee,

O! I am a kitty-cat
 Not a muskrat,
 A bird or a fish in the sea!
 And if you were a kippy-sprat
 You would sure agree that
 There's nothing that you'd rather be!

Pook Monster



PASSAGE THROUGH THE ALPS

Mary Stewart
photograph

Cassini Division

the eyes of a stranger in the face of adversity
 as the buildings spike upward in a steel-square pipe organ
 throwing wild melodies of architectural magnificence to the sky--
 tread of feet on grey pavement concrete
 with small tufts of green emerging from the cracks
 to be nurtured by the warm summer rains amid the rush hour scramble;
 acrylic smiles of close-knit crowds
 and slighted hands shirking ascribed duties--
 rivers of steel in motion on the streets and avenues
 in compliment to the brightly babbling
 streams of flesh and blood on the sidewalks
 choking off traffic as it flows through the crosswalks--
 concentric orbits of pedestrian life
 pulling our grasping hands apart with a sudden wrench
 and shock as the neon tubes above our heads burst
 with a deluge of charged fragments
 hurtled into the sky and filling it with radiant power and theatre lights--
 The flavor of neon tainting the starlight--
 false-color images mistakenly intercepted and interpreted as something across the norm
 of carefully vulnerable and detached urbanity with
 no startling pioneers of emotional breakthrough;
 a voyager alone are we

by Eric Appleton

SAN JUAN IXTENCO

by Steve Thompson

The passing time is our national deception--we knot together the disparate ropes of individual days, hectic with schedule, appointment,

and commitment, and cast the whole carefully regulated construction out into space, as if we sought to gather in an objective present, a reality, in a net formed by a cogently articulated, common subjectivity. We capture time in watches that tick on, faintly, unchanging, intrepid in weighty stillness as in wild abandon of fury or ecstasy. It is our modernity.

The car moved along the narrow road, whining on the upgrades and grumbling down the hills, pursued by inconsequential ghosts of stirred-up, red dust. We were Southeast of Puebla, and time was geography, and geography a crumpled, irregular landscape. Each desolate arroyo was its own age, another layer of past penetrated--or penetrating us as we proceeded. Poor country, poor people: each kilometer--but who counted?--reified the present of another century past, and unembalmed by modern farming technology the Mexican peasants stooped a little lower over their meager crops, a little closer to the earth. We passed through, a rippling metallic bubble of unidentified, North American future, tangential to the world of those peasants, touching only in our engine's fading, changing pitch and the momentary commotion of earth behind us.

We parked in the shade of the only convenient tree: motor off, it cooled in an adagio of ticks from somewhere under the hood as we walked past maguay cactus and broken stone fence toward the relic which patiently endured the weight of its decaying link with the present: the ruin of an old Spanish church, built in 1536 and abandoned in 1593, so the guidebook said. An elderly Mexican approached us from no particular origin, and doffing his hat in a gesture that revealed his wizened, deeply furrowed Indian's face, requested five pesos from each of us as an admission price. Five pesos--about three cents--and how many visitors a day? perhaps twenty-five; yet the endless patience of his vigil transcended meaninglessness. Like the tree, he was custodian over we ghosts of modernity. As a symbol of his thoroughness, each of us got an official paper ticket riddled with the holes he punched in it to insure that it would only be used once.

That old colonial church was a wonderful place to explore. The roof must have fallen without leaving a trace, for there was no debris and the stone walls set a uniform frame to the hazy blue sky in a comfortably frank way. The floor was all sod, grass sparse and brown from the lack of rain, and the altar and baptismal font were choked with dry-weather weeds. We haunted the cool stoney smoothness: here the stone confessional where the knees of conquered Mixtecs must have pressed in ritual compliance to a half-understood, alien Christendom; here the monastic garden with its crumbling chunks of lava; here flecks of paint daubed nearly 500 years ago; here we were anomaly in the midst of a living bygone day. But best was the tower, which led to the belfry with winding stone steps feet thick, and so finely placed that I found no seam to betray the hand of friar or workman. At the top of the tower there was still an old, thick beam which once anchored a bell and through open windows all around we could look down on the dusty countryside we'd just passed over. There was the car--tiny--and

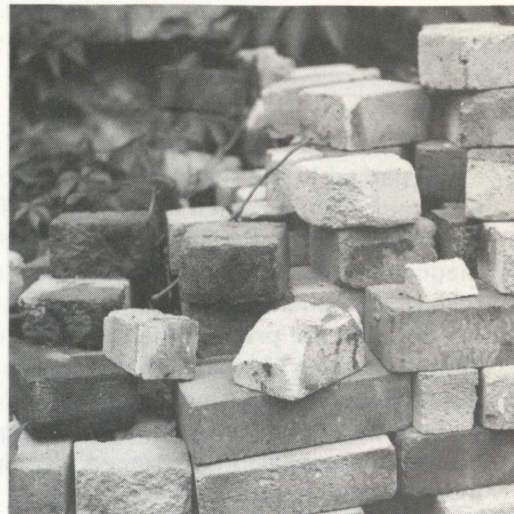
beyond the great profundity of an empty land where the memories chased each other in the wind and the timelessness of the earth's shifting face and the forever cycle of seasons and time that ebbed and flowed and was no more in response to our squinting glances, yet stretched to the limits of our horizon. We stayed there a while, and did not grow older.

I thought of my university back in the United States, which had, so the boast went, the largest undergraduate chapel in the country. The chapel bells chimed every quarter hour, and the students milled about from class to class to the fraternity houses for a weekend and up all night on a paper. I thought about that great, twentieth-century, majestic chapel presiding over the chaotic discipline with the uniform abstract din of its bells, and made a clumsy net out of the tangled ropes that tied me to that faraway society and the equally distant one stretched out before me.

God knows what I was trying to catch.

Claire D'Aoust
photograph

Jodi Medly
poem



The Tide

*The tide goes out and
The day begins as
The sun rises slowly
Over the deep blueness.*

*The path leads the way
And time goes unnoticed
The moment is now
And I follow.*

*Life is boundless
Yet I am bound
By my selfish words
And I am lost again.*

*The tide comes in
And I speechlessly watch
As the countless grains of sand
Flow between the shore and the blueness.*

by Stacey E. Groth

SUNSET

*Sunset.
Shadows
 of myself.
Mockery of my thoughts,
 my deeds.
Two-dimensioned players
 acting out
 my needs
My dreams
 on lavender
 canvas.
Cardboard characters.
The marionettes of fantasy.
Clip the strings!
 turn out
 the lights!
Night alone
 brings peace,
 darkness mocking
 shadow.*

by Christine Grusak

Sandstone

castles of broken

dreams, parched white

pumice and moss in green,

Built through years of care and

then, crushed to fine powder once again.

The elements are harsh indeed, to these stones

stacked so serene, a patterning of man in his degree.



**VENICE BEACH
AT SUNSET**

Rich Jablinski
photograph

Almost Gold

*Some shaky photographer
Should have known
That you would worry why
You kept a picture so blurred
That the shapes and scenery
Are only what you guess them to be.*

*You kept it behind
The treasures you show,
Yellowed to almost gold,
Faces flatly enshrined
Under glass sheets that gloss
The old days.*

*I see one of him in red.
Marked "1934".
You in a blush of sun,
Squinting at the shore,
Where tiny mirrors wink
With each wave, each sand crystal.*

*He couldn't afford the ring
You wear now,
That recalls in a small, valuable way
How tide water makes sand ripple.
The years have molded you to him.
Now you look at him resting,
And see the gray days
But you call them golden.*

by Rene' Steinke



Tom Burke
photograph

Crimson Vistas

A cold glass of wine
Grape flavored alcohol
With the tang yet on my tongue
The green shattered glass of a J&B bottle on the sidewalk
The yellow painted curb stretching into infinity
I see the lighted windows of the dormitory
And the overcast skies and sunbeams lifting me

Walking a small town street and still flying
The landscape slides past beneath me
A mottled array of houses and trees
Cars, people, roads and lawns,
City skyscrapers tall and grey at the horizon
Lighted beacon television antennae atop them
Coming in to settle once again on the ground

Steam rises from the sewers and clouds of exhaust from the cars
Condensing breath of pedestrians passing by
Bundled in coats and clutching packages
And a bus roars by...

And snow on the ground
People around
School buildings across the grass
Students running to classes
And life flowing fast
Flying for just a song

Mist from our nostrils and whistling breath
Smart stinging wind beating against our coats
Books and papers in hand
Nothing really changes after all
And I'm back in the city
Quick darting images fluorescent and pure
Bare skeletal trees draped with Christmas lights
A month in advance
And crowds in front of the window displays
Animated and trapped in constant motion
Soaring sculpture and people collages
Papers fluttering in the wind--

Feel the draconic beat,
Hear the tromp of pounding feet

So many people
Three million huddled into orbit
Around each other in never ending eclipses
A macrocosmic organism of separate geometries
Walking, running, riding and starting to fly
Bag lady, business man, couple in the park,
Street corner preacher, bus driver, child
See them all, feel them all...

look at them
all of them
look at them out there
they all have their stories
they all have their lives
why can't I feel them?
why can't I see them?
why is the world going by so fast?

And all I see are crimson vistas
Red brush strokes on the edge of the horizon
Where the curbs of the street meet far ahead
And with the morning I know I can look for the sun...

by Eric Appleton

Age on the outside...

wrinkles, gray hair, glasses, swollen ankles,
button-down house coat
outside...

shoveling snow, walking the dog, senior citizen
physical fitness class, going to church, knitting
sweaters, Florida, independence, get-up-and-go.

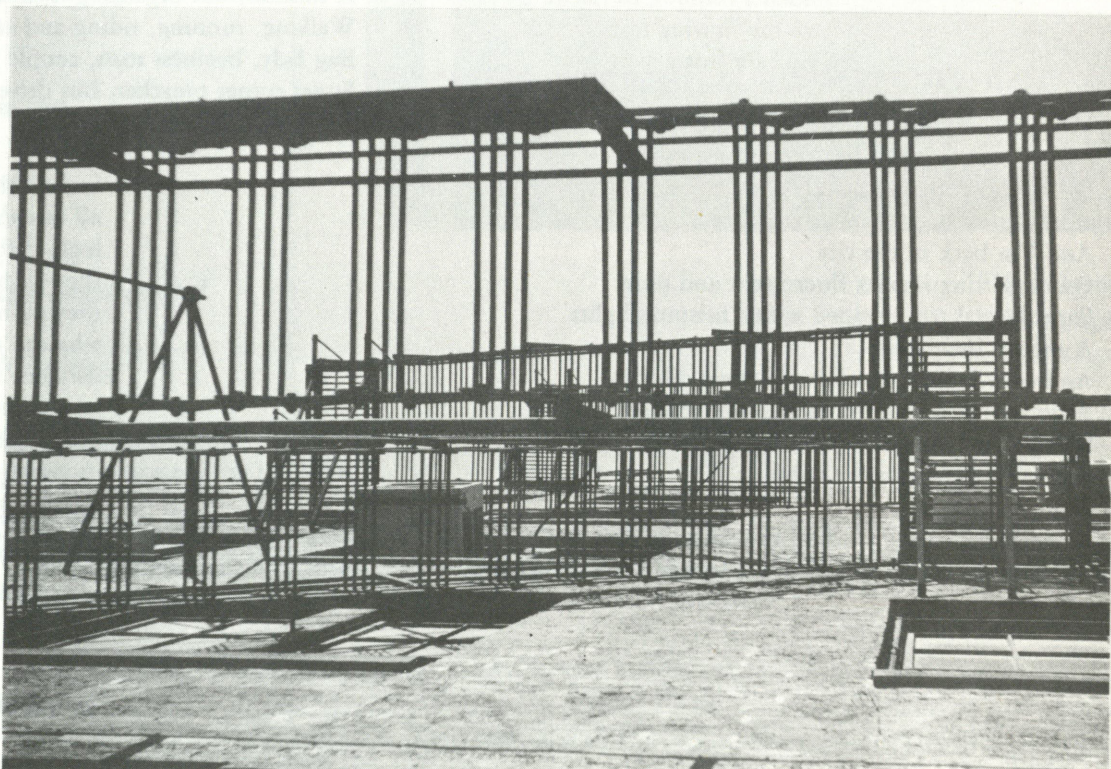
Age on the inside...

loneliness, fear, senility, no perception, loss of
muscle control, age-conscious, no self esteem
inside...

cooped up, in bed, nursing home, in the car to
the doctor-back home, watching the rain.

God
grant that I
only grow old on
the
outside

by Carole Pollitz



Cynthia Marton
photograph

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

- Eric Appleton** — is a freshman chemistry major from Chicago.
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