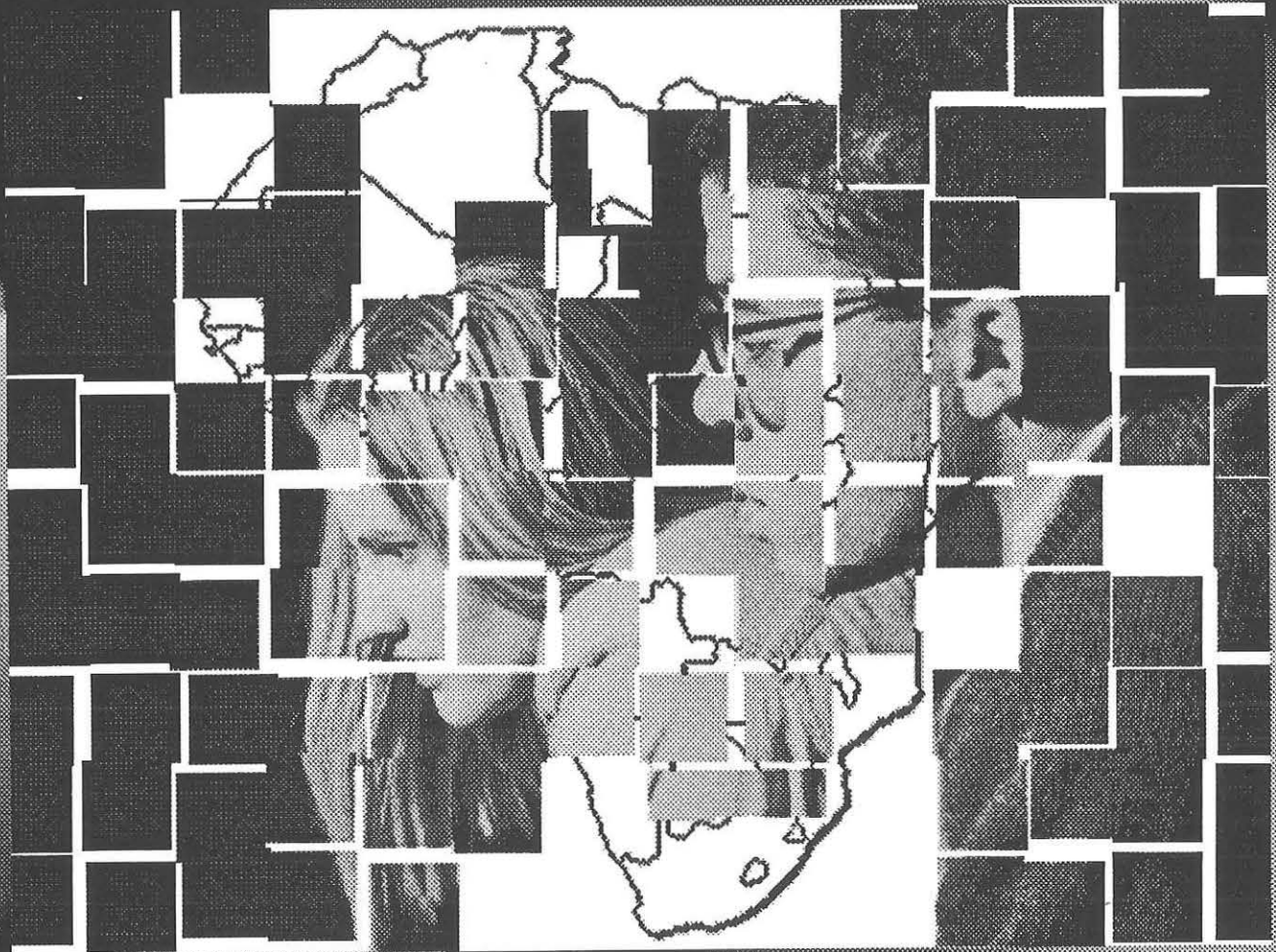


# The Promethean

A Forum for Literature and the Arts

Winter 1993



# P<sup>the</sup> Promethean

Concordia College  
2811 NE Holman  
Portland, Oregon 97211

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## *The Promethean*

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## *From the Editor...*

Here we are. The second issue is finally together, despite its lateness. Its lateness is an interesting subject, which in itself relates to what this issue encompasses at this time of publication.

During the week before finals last quarter, as we were finishing layout, Michaelangelo struck, crippling our entire system. The day was March 6th.

Michaelangelo, for those who are unfamiliar with computers, is a crippling computer virus that strikes on one day, disabling the hard drive. To top this, there was also another virus present to worsen the effect. We lost the layout due to this virus, and had to start from scratch. (I also began to be more religious about making backup copies and checking for viruses daily...)

Viruses were once simple creatures that were just an endless loop of computer pong, and easily correctable. Of course, in the wrong hands, computer viruses have become extremely lethal and deadly, causing more harm than ever thought possible.

Society in general is becoming more complex and the problems with complexity create larger and more devastating problems. Computer viruses are just one area where this is evident. We also see this at the governmental level where more bureaucracy creates more expenditures; diseases such as AIDS continue to be incurable; university departments have become more specialized; armed conflict has progressed to the point that no one knows who is on the "good" side and on the "bad" side.

Society is fragmented. There seems to

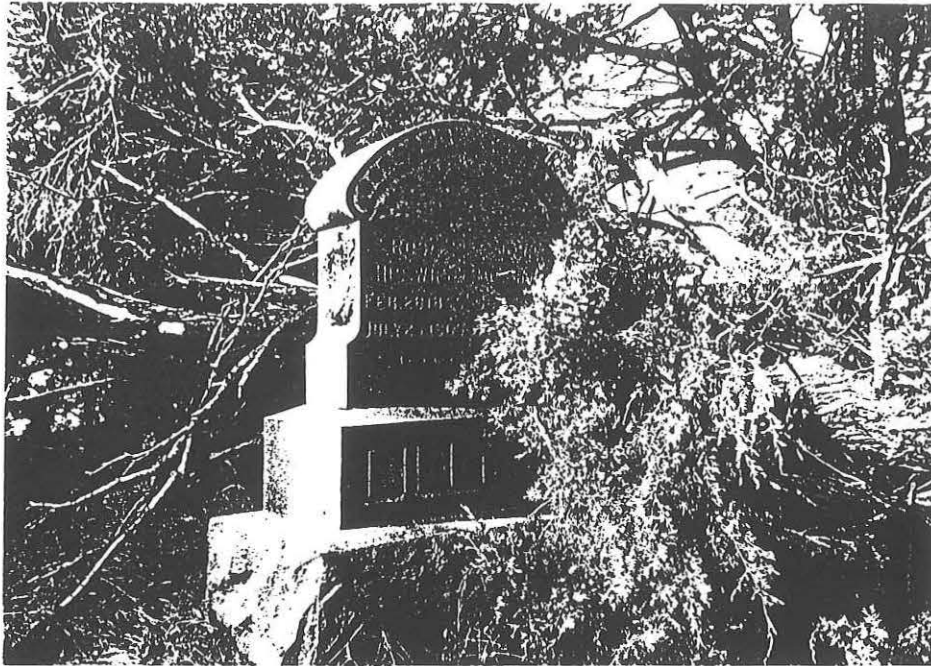
be two different views to every issue, and people seemed to be pulled into this polarization. Yet, the authors in these pages examine how to solve this split, or eliminate this split.

Winter must be the most depressing time of year, or darkest time of year, since much of what was sent to us dealt with dark, gothic issues, or dealt with issues in a gothic matter. Just take a glance at Randy Bush's "One Flesh" or Linda Pillifant's "Death By Mutual Agreement."

These are two themes that jumped out at me during my readings of the material, but it is also the last time to do so.

Since I finish my undergraduate work soon, I have opted to resign. This journal has been a vision of mine since I first came to Concordia almost two years ago. After hard work and many hours of lobbying, I was granted the chance to see a literary journal through. I hope the journal will continue to be a quality work after I am gone. Like a child, it is hard to let the journal go after seeing it begin to mature.

Enjoy this issue.



## Death By Mutual Agreement

By Linda Pillifant

The obelisk rose high from the hill. It stood alone, shunned by the other gravestones. Down the hillside, its pentagonal shadow crept as two cars raced toward it. Up from the cold soil surrounding the obelisk, electricity sparked and flashed along the edges of its dark, marble base. Power burned across the stone face, engraving the intertwined form of four roses. White light sped faster and faster through the etching. Like an unstable electron, it shot from its orbit and exploded up the alabaster pillar and burst into dozens of power veins webbing upward, converging at its pinnacle; lightning bolted free into the autumn sky. A white Mercedes screeched into the parking lot below.

The door to the Mercedes opened and a tall woman stepped out. She glared at the red BMW that pulled in after her.

A petite blonde emerged from the car. Her young face lifted toward the obelisk. She sighed. A red rose was cradled in her arms. Her back straightened and her brown eyes narrowed on the older

woman before her.

"Audette," the young woman said.

"Not 'Auntie' Audette? You little bitch! I was your Uncle's wife after all, Cassandra," the older woman said, her manicured nails running through shoulder length, honey-colored hair. A white angora sweater molded to her perfectly revealed a body that she knew would never hint at her forty-three years. "Audette, my uncle is dead. I see no reason for pretense. You do remember him? The man we've come to honor tonight. On this the anniversary of the day you sent him from us." The young woman looked past her aunt into the graveyard. The sun was beginning to set behind the large marble monument which cast its long shadow down the hill toward them.

"I sent him! You know it was a mutual agreement. Don't you dare try to lay the blame on me. Where are the others anyway? I want to get this over. I don't know why I agreed to this in the first place."

"Yes, you do. So I won't contest the will. You vowed to come to his resting place on the anniversary of his death, kiss his gravestone and place a single red rose as a token of your love and the purity of our deed."

"Well, it's damn foolishness. Isn't that your Uncle Bernard's Cadillac coming around the curve? Why he insists on driving that gross black thing is beyond me. It looks like a hearse." Audette crossed her arms. Her long fingers slid along her angora sleeves.

Cassandra glanced down the hill. "He stopped being my uncle the minute he married you sister." Her eyes darkened as they rested on Audette. Her aunt squirmed under their burning intensity.

"Well, they're here now, and I don't give a

"Well, it's damn foolishness. Isn't that your Uncle Bernard's Cadillac coming around the curve? Why he insists on driving that gross black thing is beyond me. It looks like a hearse."

damn if you call him uncle or not. Let's just get this farce over, and get the hell out of here. I have better things to do with my evenings than to hang around deserted graveyards with the demented little brat who thought this up. Besides, those are definitely thunder clouds and I have no intention of getting caught in the rain." Audette tossed her hair back from her face and looked over Cassandra's head as the first roll of thunder sounded in the distance.

"I'll be more than happy when things are taken care of. When things are put to rest as they should be. Don't forget your rose, and please make sure Bernard and Suzanne have theirs. Everything must be correct." Cassandra sniffed her long-stemmed rose and started up the hill.

"You're as crazy as the rest of your family," Audette called after her.

"Just don't forget the roses." Cassandra continued up the hill.

Audette stood arms folded, watching her sister's shapely, long legs emerge from the Cadillac. "You're late."

"I'm sorry Audette. We had an emergency at the clinic. It was one of Bernard's major contributors. We couldn't just ignore her. If we lose her and her friends, we could have a large financial loss." Suzanne nervously straightened her short nurse's uniform.

"Well, in that case I suppose it couldn't be helped. But, it shouldn't be an excuse for such a slovenly appearance. Just look at yourself. Your hair is falling out of that bun thing. And if it's necessary for professionalism to wear it like that, the stray hair ruins the effect. Haven't I always told you appearance is everything?"

"I'm sorry Audette. Of course you're right." Suzanne tucked a long auburn strand into her bun. Her large green eyes avoided her older sister's glare.

"That's better. Your looks are everything for you. Now get Bernard out here. What's he doing in there anyway? Playing in his doctor's bag? It's amazing his patients let him touch them. And have him bring the roses. You did remember the roses?"

"Oh yes, Audette, I did. Bernard, what are you doing in there? Playing with yourself? Get out here and bring the roses. Audette is in a hurry."

Another roll of thunder sounded louder than the last. A short balding man in his late fifties exited the car on the driver's side.

"Sorry, darling; I didn't want to interrupt your conversation with your sister. I have the roses right here. Hello, Audette." He waved three long-stemmed roses over his head.

"How so you live with that little weasel? His brother at least was a powerful man." Audette shook her head. "Bernard, get over here and give me my rose. Cassandra is already at the grave, and she's insistent that we follow this thing to the letter."

The three started up the slope. The wind began blowing through the trees. Leaves swirled wildly along the lawn before them. Suzanne's teet chattered as she said, "Do you think she knows something?"

Audette shot her sister a sideways glance. "What's there to know?" And before she could answer, Audette added, "Bernard, go back to the car and get Suzanne's jacket. How could you let her out of the car without it?"

"Oh, darling, you must be freezing. I'll be right back." He looked sheepishly at the sisters as he headed back down.

"Suzanne," she whispered, "be careful what you say around him. He prefers to think of the skiing incident as an accident. And that I only put the pillow on Jack's head because he was suffering too much when we took him off life support. Let's just leave it that way. We can't afford to have him whining about his guilt. And, we can't do anything more permanent about him now."

"I'm sorry. I'm just not thinking. This whole thing's creepy. Could she know something?" Lightning flashed across the sky. Suzanne shook noticeably.

"Pull yourself together." Thunder clapped loudly. "It's just this bizarre setting and Cassandra's love of melodrama. Nobody was there when I pushed Jack off the ski slope. And he never regained consciousness until we took him off life support. And I took care of that. At best she's guessing. A stab in the dark unless we give her something. So for God's sake, Suzanne, keep your wits about you."

The wind whipped through the graveyard tossing leaves in twisting rivulets.

The women's hair lashed at their faces as they met before the towering monument. Suzanne vainly tried to fasten her red tendrils in place. Audette, with one stroke of her long fingers, swept back her hair and held it in place. Cassandra didn't seem to notice and let her hair fly wildly around her face.

"Now that you have us all here, let's play your little game, Cassandra, and get out of here before the storm really breaks," Audette said.

Cassandra's dark eyes searched around and narrowed as Bernard approached the group. He placed Suzanne's jacket on her shoulders.

"This is no game, Audette. Things must be as he wanted them. But seeing that we are all here, we may proceed."

"He wanted them? What do you mean? Have you brought someone else into this?" Audette asked.

"I've brought nobody else into this." Cassandra's hair blew out from her face as though electrified. Lightning flashed. She fixed the heat of her gaze on Audette. The thunder rolled. "Shut up, and I'll

explain everything. You all should know what my Uncle Jack meant to me. He was my entire family after my mother left and my father died."

"I was there, Cassandra," Bernard said.

"You never even remembered my birthday. Uncle Jack was always there, first for my father when mother left, and then for me when Daddy died of a broken heart."

"Your father hanged himself, Cassandra. He died of a stretched neck, not a broken heart." Audette smirked.

"He died of the same affliction that seems to affect all the men in this family. Blind love for a beautiful woman." Cassandra glance at Bernard. He looked away.

"But, I digress. Why have we gathered here? That's the question. One year ago today, we all came

"Your father hanged himself, Cassandra. He died of a stretched neck, not a broken heart." Audette smirked.

to an agreement. We gathered around the bedside of Uncle Jack, much as we gather around his gravesite today. He lay helpless in his bed, kept alive by modern technology. We all agreed that Uncle Jack would not want to exist like that. He was such a vibrant man. He had often said that he would not want to live like a vegetable." Cassandra raised her voice over the wind.

"Why are you going on so, Cassandra? We all know why we agreed to turn off Jack's life support. Let's just kiss the bloody tombstone, drop the roses, and go home. I'm cold. And I at least have plans to warm up my evening," Audette said.

"Yes, but we didn't agree to murder." Cassandra paused.

"I don't know...."

"Don't bother to deny it, Audette. I know every detail. He told me everything: how you convinced him that he was ready to ski the most difficult run when you knew he wasn't." She stared directly into Audette's face. "And, your story that he got ahead of you. And skied off the trail into an area

marked 'dangerous.' All lies."

"I told you she knows." Suzanne's eyes widened and she grabbed Audette's arm. Audette pulled away and in one motion slapped her sister across the cheek.

"Jack is dead, you fool. She couldn't know anything." Audette turned from her sister, her attention fully on Cassandra. "You really are crazy. Your uncle never spoke to you before he died. Your uncle and I were the only ones at the accident. And it happened just the way I said."

"Yes, you were the only ones there, but it didn't happen the way you said. You told Uncle Jack that you had been on the run earlier and that the trail had just been cleared. You said it was an easy run and that you would race him down. You know that mountain like the back of your hand, so Uncle Jack sped off eager to impress you. You took to the right side, going faster and faster, past more warning

"He came to me the night after his murder. I awoke from a restless sleep to find him standing beside my bed. At first I thought I was dreaming, but he sat beside me on the bed as he had so many times when I woke from bad dreams. I felt his fingers gently tighten around mine."

signs, until there before you, was a sheer drop. You, of course, expected it and turned off. Uncle Jack neither had the time nor experience to do anything. That's what really happened, Audette."

"Audette!" Suzanne's voice trembled.

"I said shut up!" Audette's hand rose again. Bernard pulled it down.

"Don't hit her again," he pleaded.

She turned on him.

"Then the two of you just shut up and do as you're told." Audette spoke through clenched teeth.

"All right, Audette." He put his arm around Suzanne, and she nodded her response to Audette.

Another peal of thunder crashed. Audette controlled her voice as she spoke to her niece. "This is just insane speculation prompted by your guilt.

You've just taken bits and pieces of information and mixed them with a few half truths to fabricate a story. I don't have time for this garbage. I'm leaving."

"You're not leaving. He told me how you saw his eyes open when Bernard took him off the respirator. And the two of you watched while Audette took the pillow from behind his head and pressed down. He tried to scream, but the sound stuck in his throat. With his last bit of strength, he reached out and touched your hand, Audette. He felt your hands pushing down harder. Then everything went black."

"You're a lunatic, Cassandra." Audette's voice was low. It could hardly be heard over the rising wind. "Dead men don't speak and even if he spoke to you, his testimony wouldn't be allowed in court." A short laugh came from her pale face.

Cassandra's eyes leveled on her aunt's face. "He came to me the night after his murder. I awoke from a restless sleep to find him standing beside my bed. At first I thought I was dreaming, but he sat beside me on the bed as he had so many times when I woke from bad dreams. I felt his fingers gently tighten around mine."

A tear formed and ran down Cassandra's cheek as the rain began to fall. "'Cassie, Princess,' he said. 'Don't be afraid. There are things you must do for me. Princess, listen very closely and do exactly as I say.' He related all the facts about his murder and the details that must be followed so that I would not contest the will. His passion for you blinded him, but he was never a fool. He always knew your only obsession was for his money. So, he had me use it as a tool to get you all here tonight."

A thunderbolt exploded, shearing a nearby oak in two. Suzanne screamed.

Audette stepped forward, stopping only inches from Cassandra's face. She pointed a long finger in front of her niece's unblinking eyes. "I'm not staying here another instant. You crazy little bitch."

"I see; then you are relinquishing all rights to my uncle's inheritance?" The rain streamed down Cassandra's face and blended with the traces of her tears.

The two women stood motionless; their eyes

locked as the wind and rain swirled around them.

"All right!" Audette pushed the word through her teeth. "Bernard, get over here. Kiss the bloody tombstone. Hurry up."

"Audette, don't you think you should go first?" Bernard asked. He gazed down at the rose. He fidgeted with it in his hands.

"I think you're a cowardly little weasel. He was your brother. Now, pretend you're a man and get this thing started."

"But, I really think..."

"You haven't had an original thought in your life. Don't try starting now."

Bernard lifted his head. His mouth opened. He looked at Audette. His mouth closed. His head lowered, and he began to move slowly forward.

Rain came down in solid sheets, washing down the stone monument before him. Step by step, Bernard edged toward it. His hand reached for-

The dirt loosened around Audette's foot. Something pulled her down. She tried to pull her foot free. Something held her fast. Her eyes searched down her leg. A large chalky hand manacled her ankle.

ward. He withered to his knees at its touch; his fingers slid down its smooth surface. For a few moments he was crumpled before it, his hand still resting on its cold face. In his other hand, he held the rose. He unfolded, inch by inch. His fingers clutched the ridge of the letters chiseled deeply in its marble face. "Jonathan Creston" they read. His purple lips touched the stone as lightning flashed. Soft cold lips pressed against his; dead, dark eyes stared back at him. His brother's kiss held Bernard, stifling his scream.

Lightning flashed again. Suzanne screamed. "He's here. Oh God, he's kissing Bernard." She placed her rose to her lips, her fingers interlocking and her knuckles white. Suzanne giggled, then laughed, her body rocking back and forth. Her laughter blended with the screeching of the wind through the trees.

"You've all gone mad," Audette said. She walked to Bernard. Water ran down the gravestone and his frozen face as she thrust him aside. His ashen face looked up at her, his eyes fixed and unblinking. "You hysterical old fool, you've killed yourself. I'm not so easily frightened, Cassandra. In fact, you've rid me of quite a nuisance." Audette smirked.

Cassandra did not respond. She stood still, the rain soaking her hair to her head. She cradled her rose gently on her arm.

"One last kiss and I'm off." Audette leaned forward. "Here's your last kiss off, Jack." She laughed as she kissed the gray marble.

"Done," she said as she turned to face Cassandra. "Now don't bother me again. I've played your child's game, and your parlor tricks haven't fooled me. You've ruined an expensive angora sweater, but you've taken care of a problem for my sister and me. So, all in all, it's been a good night. Suzanne, stop that incessant laughing. It's time to go. We'll send someone to get Bernard later." Audette started toward her sister.

"The rose," Cassandra pointed to the grave.

"Oh yes, we mustn't forget the little details. Do you have another trick for me? It had better be more clever than the one that killed Bernard. Come on Suzanne. Kiss the stone and drop your rose. The night is still young and I have things to do." Audette's heel stuck in the soft ground as she turned, her rose in hand.

"Oops, I almost lost my balan--, what the hell!" The dirt loosened around Audette's foot. Something pulled her down. She tried to pull her foot free. Something held her fast. Her eyes searched down her leg. A large chalky hand manacled her ankle. The scream rushed up her leg and out of her mouth.

She tried to run forward, but her foot only slid out from under her. Her body fell hard on the wet grass. Grasping for a handhold, her right hand clutched a fist full of fabric. Audette jerked to her right. Rain ran down Bernard's bald head and dripped down her nose. She screamed.

Audette struggled to get her arms behind her. The hand crushed the bones in her ankle. Her fingers dug into the ground as she began to push up. The ground beside her cracked. A hand shot up. On one



finger was a large diamond wedding band. "Jack!" The hand and arm reached across her and dragged her down. "Oh, Jack, don't!" The hand released her ankle.

"Thank you, Jack. I knew you couldn't hurt me. Now just let go of my waist. Please." She raised her head. Rivers of rain weaved their way through the forest of black hairs on the dead arm that bound her. "You know I love you." Dirt flew across her face turning instantly to mud, as fingers closed around her throat. Her mouth opened as if to say something, then closed. The fingers of her left hand tightened on the rose, then went slack.

Suzanne laughed one last giggle, and sank to the ground. She sat crosslegged. Her nurse's uniform hiked up to her hips. With the red rose held to her nose, she breathed in deeply. "Ring around the rosy, pocket full of posies. Ashes, ashes, we all fall down," she sang, her body rocking back and forth.

Cassandra walked to the stone marker, her rose resting in her arms. The rain had stopped, but wet tendrils still curled around her calm face. Her lips gently kissed the stone. "I love you, Uncle Jack. Rest in peace."

"I love you, too, my little princess."

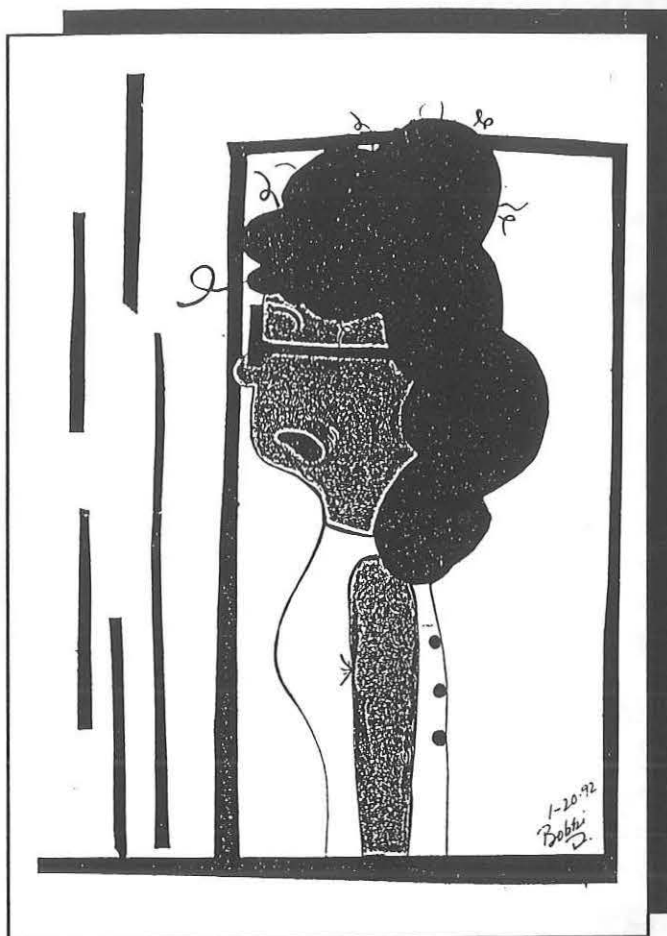
She laid the rose before the stone monolith and walked down the hill to her car and drove away.

## College Love Song

you never liked the way  
i drove  
though i got you home  
those nights we were  
too drunk  
to tell ourselves apart.

before we ever got rolling  
you would shout at me  
to slow down  
or would exaggerate  
the effects of my stops  
& turns  
to make like you came  
that close to suffering a serious  
head injury.

you were a  
chronic complainer and faker  
whose criticism didn't  
end with my driving, it merely  
mounted its attack there.  
you hated my monkish apartment  
& blasted the way  
i came dressed to your  
patently obnoxious toga party.  
the time you gave me  
an opening,  
you laughed at how i kissed you.



in your book i could never  
do anything right,  
though i never fondled you ..  
when you'd been drinking  
or went after your roommate--  
though it was you who couldn't  
tell someone that you love them.

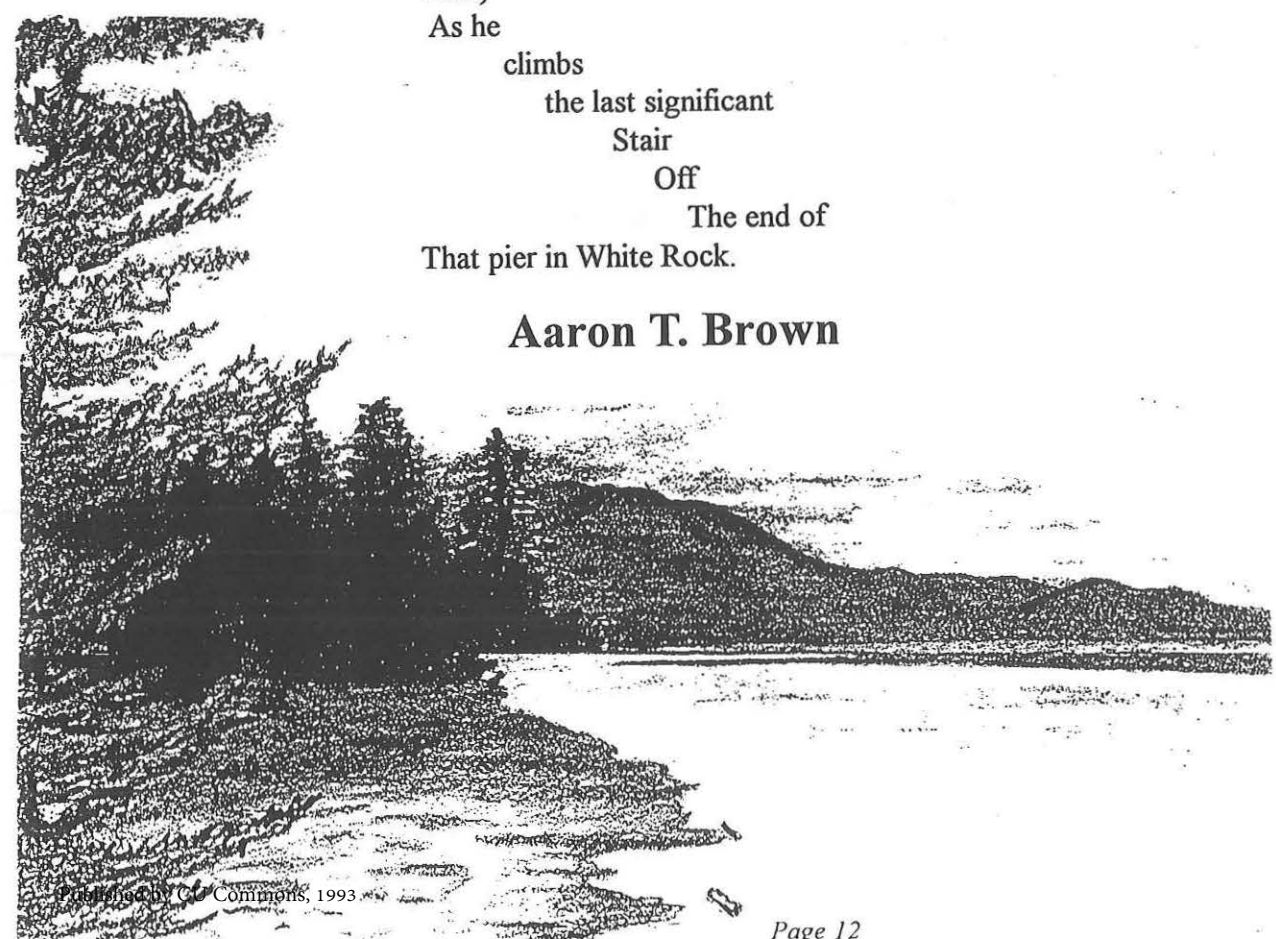
by the time you got  
around to it,  
i'd strapped a dummy  
in your place,  
compliments  
of the theatrics department,  
& you were riding  
a fellowship in Greece,  
taking the busses  
everywhere

**Paul Hadella**

# Meandering Near Merklin

Tides  
    meander through  
A particular,  
    very familiar  
Slant --  
    an ebb,  
    a flow,  
    from an  
Eternity,  
    to an  
Abyss of Happiness  
    -- or sorrow, for that matter  
    determining the Force  
    behind the Tsunami--  
Either sweeping out,  
--driving away life--  
    or crashing in,  
--bringing in the early--  
Arrival of that  
    particular white worm,  
(vacationing from its  
Lair)  
As he  
    climbs  
    the last significant  
    Stair  
    Off  
    The end of  
That pier in White Rock.

**Aaron T. Brown**



# The View From "Over There"

By Amy Westlund

A wise professor of mine once said that you can learn a lot about America by stepping outside of it -- by spending time abroad. I have certainly found this to be a truth. For twenty years, Portland, Oregon was my world. Sure, I've travelled quite a bit throughout the country and have done the "Canada and Mexico" thing (Victoria, B.C. and Tijuana, respectively); and I have read and studied enough about Europe, the third world, and the next world that I have considered myself somewhat culturally literate. I certainly have not regarded myself as sheltered in any sense.

Two months of a dazed existence in culture shock did much to dispel the myth. On my flight to Chicago from London during a brief return to the States for Christmas, I had a nice chat with the British businessman next to me. I had heard of such airplane encounters before, but this was the first time I had the pleasure of experiencing one. For seven hours we discussed society, politics, religion, and life, pausing only for meals, part of the movie, and a short nap. This passing encounter helped me crystallize many of my experiences in England thus far and pointed out that I still have far to go before I really shake my Oregonian-American world view.

It was interesting to watch the proceedings of the presidential campaign, election, and inauguration from abroad. This was my first presidential election, and it seems a strange twist of fate that I should have participated by absentee ballot. However, the experience has reinforced in me the belief that my vote is important -- not just for the interest of the United States, but for the entire world. Like the rest of my generation, I was raised on the rhetoric that America is "the most powerful and important nation in the world." As I left our shores for the Old World last fall, I was prepared to be humbled as I learned how America really fit into the global picture. To my surprise, the view is much the same on this side of the Atlantic. The election night

coverage was broadcast live, here and throughout much of the world, by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). It was of tremendous international interest to know just who next would be "the most powerful person in the world." This is not simply a grandiose catch-phrase, but rather a truth expressed about a leader and a nation to which the rest of the world is effectively hinged. Nearly everyone I ran into for the next week asked my opinion on the outcome, and some members of the upper echelon in Britain were particularly pleased since Clinton, after all, is an old Oxford chap. For myself, I resigned to "no comment."

I have also discovered that the United States is an extremely nationalistic society. I used to stand on my unworldly political soap box and scorn the French and the Germans for their often fierce displays of patriotism, blasting these as threats to global harmony, etc., etc. But, I have since realized that Americans are no better, as the most recent inaugural spectacle will attest. It was not until my third month in Britain that I walked by a barren flagpole and realized that I had not seen a single British banner flown on campus -- or anywhere else, for that matter. Truly astounded, I hastened back to my apartment ("flat") and asked one of my flatmates to explain this phenomenon to me. She replied that for many people, the Union Jack is associated with the monarchy, and it is no surprise that, lately, this may not be a source of national pride.

I since have heard other theories, including the most plausible one that the British people simply are not caught up in state glory to the extent of Americans, and given our respective backgrounds, it is not difficult to see why. America was conceived by its citizens from the beginning as the "city on a hill"; this is a theme which has remained consistent throughout our short history. Britain has been Roman, Viking, Saxon, and Norman; she has had her glory days and is now in the process of once

again altering her course by joining the larger European Community. Nevertheless, there often is an impassioned loyalty toward

*This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,  
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,  
This other Eden -- demi-paradise*

(Richard II. i. 40-42)

But this is more likely to be expressed in the more subtle forms of poetry and literature. Another flatmate confessed that she didn't regard herself as a British subject so much as "just a person." Considering the current state of European affairs, this would appear to be a healthy attitude. Perhaps the most surprising perception I have come to appreciate is just how diverse the United States

In the U.S., we take for granted that we get our OJ from Florida, our beef from Nebraska, our sugar from Hawaii, and our politicians from Arkansas.

really is. When I arrived in Birmingham, I was prepared to have to explain in rather great detail just what and where Oregon is. Within a few days I had the story down: "It's on the West Coast, just north of California." Or, if I was lucky, "you know where Seattle is? Just a three hour drive south." What I wasn't expecting was to have to use this line on other Americans I met! Of the nine students in my particular program at this university, only two of us live west of the Mississippi. One of my flatmates is "from Michigan, but I attend school in New Orleans," and we have discovered about as many differences between our respective American cultures as with our British mates.

Besides cultural diversity, America is truly rich in resources. As of January 1, citizens of the European Community (EC) can travel between member states and bring home more duty-free

goods than ever before, thanks to the latest phase of the Maastricht Treaty (that enigmatic pact which calls for European economic unity some time in the future). But certain imported goods, such as fruit juices, are still outrageously expensive: a litre of apple juice can cost up to \$1.50! In the U.S., we take for granted that we get our OJ from Florida, our beef from Nebraska, our sugar from Hawaii and our politicians from Arkansas. Even the weather in America is more sundry than here. When people talk about "the rivers" flooding in Britain, they're referring to the entire country! I still haven't grown accustomed to the European weather map used on the evening news. On the same scale as the full-screen U.S. map, the programs show all of Western Europe, and often times a single storm system will obscure the whole of Great Britain from view. Personally, I can't wait to get back to those all-American (Oregonian?) summer nights of steak and corn-on-the-cob. Yum!

Despite all the differences I have observed while overseas, it really is amazing how much our societies nevertheless are connected. As the world assumes its new post-cold war posture, the lines which distinguish people and cultures are increasingly more difficult to draw. Nowhere is this more exemplary than in the business sector. The first comfort I found in this country was the number of Ford automobiles on the roads, particularly around Birmingham. I soon learned that there is a Ford manufacturing plant right here in this city. To my own surprise, I grew very defensive when a local girl innocently referred to Ford as a British company. I sputtered, "Uh uh. Sorry. FORD: Michigan; Henry; Model T; American industrial revolution..." The poor girl didn't quite know what to do! I also saw one too many "Vauxhall" Cavaliers before it dawned on me that General Motors has plants in this country, as well, only under different names. In fact, there are so many "Britainized" American automo-

biles here that I am reminded of home more when I see the rare Toyota or Honda.

Of course, turnabout is fair play. I recently discovered, much to my dismay, that Burger King is now owned by a British corporation. Britain, in fact, "owns" more of America than Japan does, despite the popular belief to the contrary. It is increasingly difficult, anywhere in the world, to tell just where the profits are going at the end of the day. So when all this talk of business makes my head spin, and I can't be bothered to worry

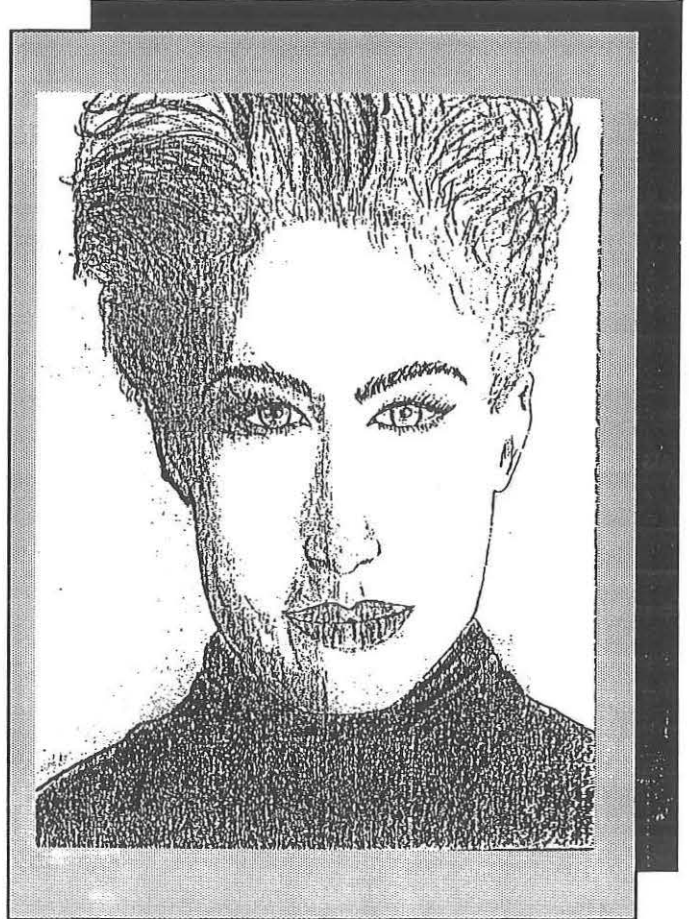
The good news is that not many things shock me anymore; the bad news is that by the time I get accustomed to this place, it will be time to uproot myself once more and return home.

about it, I simply go down to the city centre and watch the latest (Japanese-owned) Hollywood movie, a pastime as popular here as at home (although, depending on how long the film is run in America, it can be as long as a one year wait for its release in this country!)

The good news is that not many things shock me anymore; the bad news is that by the time I get accustomed to this place, it will be time to uproot myself once more and return home. I suppose there is something to be said for the free spirits of this world, i.e. those liberated souls who roam the planet unfettered by national or even personal ties to any one particular place. On the other hand, I also believe connections are healthy, and one can cultivate her branches without necessarily cutting herself off completely from the foundation. Or as my mother says, "Don't be afraid to go out on a limb--that's where the fruit is." In other words, my time in Britain has not separated me from my roots at home; on the contrary, my love for America, and particu-

larly the Northwest, has deepened. It also has matured. I have made my Galilean discovery that Portland indeed is not the centre of the universe, but it nonetheless will retain a very distinct and important role in that universe.

As for now, the fruit is ripe for the picking, and with one hand firmly grasping my support, I am assuredly reaching with the other as far as I possibly can. After all, the reward is always sweeter for those who must work the hardest to achieve it.



## Rememberville

Echo-hollow-echo.  
Inside the station  
---she pushes back her hair.

Running along the tracks,  
Sweat dripping down his back,  
He hears the crying of crickets  
---plain, like sky---  
Playing in the night.

In all this world,  
In all this place so big  
---sound forming sound  
Is caught---  
Just beneath the lid

His feet moving  
His heart saying  
"only her...  
in all this world  
Only her..."  
His mind thinking  
"Never forget..."

Echo-empty-station.  
I run my fingers  
Between the cracks  
Of the old wooden benches.  
Outside, against a lamp post  
He leans,  
His heart beating "only her,"  
His stare drifting skyward.

Past him  
Into the dark night  
I walk.

In all this world,  
In all this place so big  
I walk...

Into the smallness  
Of  
Remembering.

**David Robert Falk**

## Leda Afterwards

"She married a smaller man with a beaky nose,  
And melted away in the storm of everyday life."

Mona Van Duyn

They were his children, but he didn't help me.  
He went back to his wife, the bitch, and left me  
To fend for myself. I had to marry this man

To give my life an anchor, for I was drifting  
Out to sea and would have drowned if he had  
Not come along and taken me ashore.

He's not much to look at, but he works like an ox  
In the vineyards and returns to me with a smile  
At the end of a long day. Believe me,

That helps a lot. And he knows the babies aren't his,  
Yet he's kind to them, even when they act  
Superior to him, and demean their provider.

I don't miss that other one, that brief rush  
He gave me, it was no pleasure, and I don't wish  
Him back for all the gold and myrrh in Egypt.

Peter Huggins



# Mother Night

Mother Night crept in and swept the sky with her skirt of shadows black. Its hem of pink and golden lights skimmed from the fading day, caressed and eased out day times light, to make way for dusky night.

Night smiled down on Gabriel, who clung with all his might, to memories of his busy day, fading with the light.

He had watched the autumn leaves of red and gold and brown, tumble down from towering trees, twirling gently to the ground. He'd rolled and tumbled in the leaves and laughed til he was weak and played the games of fox and hound and tag and hide and seek.

Black puddles welled and rippled from his jumping, splashing feats of running, stomping, bright red boots upon the city streets.

A rainbow burst through grey, thick clouds and splashed the dreary sky and Gabriel's sleepy mouth and hushed the noisy daytime sounds from pressing out till dawn.

Tired stinging curious eyes had seen so many sights. Now with daytime's fading light his body settled down.

Through his bedroom window he gazed into her face, and saw a great, dark, gentle sky, Night so full of grace.

A kiss she blew to each new star, to light the clear black sky  
and bless each sacred (whispered wish as it floated by,)

The moon, a glowing pendant laid, against her deep blue breast and in lunar light he snuggled in for his nightly rest.

The silver glowing moonbeans said, "Mother Night is near."  
"Allow sweet dreams and gentle thought to enter your sweet head and know that Night surrounds you in your little bed."

Oh, Night she loved the Quiet and peacefulness of sleep and these her gifts embraced the boy in his slumber deep.

Anita Chase

# Dr. Seuss, Master Gothicist

By Dan Freeman

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Bram Stoker's Dracula are two works in the Gothic tradition by which the merits of many others are judged. Together, they are relatively good examples of the various aspects of Gothicism. When compared to these works, Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto and Matthew Lewis' The Monk are also sufficient and valuable parts of the Gothic tradition. They exhibit many of the same qualities. They include all the trappings of the Gothic tradition. They have mystical attributes, include sexual debauchery, and have blood and gore. But others have done better. Others bring literary merit by exploring the human condition along with the other trappings of Gothicism. One such author is Dr. Seuss. When compared to the masterful Gothicism of Dr. Seuss, none of the aforementioned works holds much merit.

In the area of inciting fear, Dr. Seuss far surpasses anything Walpole puts forth. Walpole tries to incite fear with a giant leg and a statue with a nosebleed. This is about as frightening as the mobile that one would hang over the bassinet of a newborn infant. In contrast, Dr. Seuss has very frightful and terrifying creations in his writings. In What was I Scared of? he creates something that would frighten even the hardiest of souls, something truly evil. He creates a pair of pale green pants, enough of a fright in themselves. But he makes them three steps more evil and horrific. They have no owner but are animated and alive just the same. These pants proceed to chase our hero on a bike and even row a boat. This is easily horrifying enough to make even Dracula turn tail and run. His other hideously evil creations include the Glunk in The Glunk That Got Thunk and a sticky, terrifying substance in Bartholomew and the Oobleck. These are fundamentally more Gothic than anything Walpole contributed to the genre.

Seuss also stylistically surpasses the works of

Walpole and Lewis. Lewis breaks away to subplots that almost become parallel plots. Aristotle would not find them relevant or necessary. They confuse the main plot and lessen the impact of those things which make the novel terrifying. Seuss rarely has more than two or three characters. Let alone subplots. His works are "complete and of a certain magnitude." Aristotle would be proud. Seuss leaves no room for confusion, thus highlighting the aspects which make his work Gothic.

Stylistically, Seuss is among the ranks of those like Shakespeare, something that Walpole and Lewis could not boast about. Most of Shakespeare's writing was lyrical in style, which is the same with Dr. Seuss. Lewis included a few scraps of meager poetry in his work, but even then it was usually another writer's work. The poetry of Seuss makes his writing interesting and more enjoyable to read; it becomes a true work of art. Another way in which Seuss can be compared to Shakespeare is language which Shakespeare employed, language that has made a vast impact on modern English. Seuss has also made contributions to our language. When Shakespeare did not find a word that suited his purposes, he made one up. Seuss does likewise. In The Glunk that Got Thunk, not one stanza goes by without introducing one word that Seuss invented. Most of his new words are onomatopoeic, and some have entered common usage.

Seuss fits the Gothic tradition better in the reversal of his characters also. In most Gothic literature, the evil is eventually conquered by good. Walpole achieves this by having Manfred commit himself to a monastery after his reversal. However, Lewis misses the mark again. Ambrosio is conquered in the end, but not by good. He is conquered by evil incarnate, Lucifer. All of Seuss' evil is conquered by good. Bartholomew conquers the Oobleck, and the king loses his desire for superhuman power. The main character of The Glunk that

got Thunk gets help, and the Glunk gets “unthunk.” The pale green pants become friends with the person they are haunting. Seuss’ habit of having good conquer evil follows the gothic tradition more closely than the others.

Dr. Seuss also far surpasses the other writers in his attention to human trials. Walpole addresses the troubles with the human desire for power above that which we can handle. This is good, but Seuss improves on this also. In Bartholomew and the Ooblec, the king wants power over the weather. He is tired of seeing the same thing come from the sky each time a season comes around. He is tired of sun

Lewis wrote against the corruptions and inconsistencies in the Roman Catholic Church. Although this was still relevant, it was hardly a new concept. People had been complaining about the church for centuries. Martin Luther stated his case and condemned the Roman Church in the early sixteenth century.

in the summer, fog in the fall, snow in the winter, and rain in the spring. He takes power that is not his. But unlike Manfred in Walpole’s work, the king does not get this power by human means. He employs the magicians to get this power. This brings the supernatural into the writing, making it a more complete example of gothicism.

Seuss was also more aware of the human condition than Matthew Lewis. Lewis wrote against the corruptions and inconsistencies in the Roman Catholic Church. Although this was still relevant, it was hardly a new concept. People had been complaining about the church for centuries. Martin Luther stated his case and condemned the Roman Church in the early sixteenth century. Lewis didn’t

write until late in the eighteenth century. His complaints about that section of humanity were almost three centuries old, which probably meant that his readers were probably as tired of that theme as Oregonians are of the Baghwan. Conversely, Seuss was ahead of his time on certain issues. He wrote The Lorax, a patently environmental piece, in 1971. This was years before the environmental movement swept the general public. In The Glunk that got Thunk, Seuss proposes that evil comes from the minds of man. The main character usually thought about warm, soft things. However, one night, she created a Glunk in her mind. This horrible, evil thing took control of her life. Her creation got out of her control. This is precisely the same concept for which Mary Shelley is praised as a socially aware novelist. Seuss’ work surpasses that of Walpole and Lewis and at least equals that of Shelley.

Dr. Seuss’ work is timeless. It will continue to speak to humanity for many years to come. It deals with problems that are human. They can never be eliminated. They can only be addressed. Dr. Seuss addresses these problems in a fundamental and simplistic way which can still be profoundly more Gothic than Lewis’ or Walpole’s work. He achieves a clear and straightforward explanation of problem and solution which speaks to humans at their most malleable state, childhood. This is why his work will remain timeless, and this proves that “all I really needed to know, I learned in kindergarten.”

# One Flesh

By Randall Brian Bush

Strange how years melt the images stored in a brain and rework them into something comfortable. In my mind, Gayle is still on our bed with moonlight lace marking her stomach and legs as the moonlight squeezes through darkness and frilly curtains. My name is moving behind her lips, ready to escape. Her book lies face-down on the nightstand, a page folded under the wrong way--typical of a carelessness that would grate on my sensitivities, were it coming from anyone else. Her face has that smile, that come-hither pout, that same seductive invitation that haunted me in 1976.

"You with us, or what?" Calfield said. Old man humor.

"Huh? What?" I asked intelligently.

"Paul?"

"I'm here."

"So? I want an opinion. What's that notorious brain of yours think about the November Plan?"

"Sorry. Guess I faded out for a second. Go over that last bit again, will you?"

"I suppose. What's the last thing you heard?"

"The Iowa thing."

"No trouble at all. Anyone mind if we repeat the last 25 minutes of the presentation for Paul?"

You see how the morning went. My head was more air than brain, and the dear old ulcer was having a go at my stomach, so I left early, around one, for the Steel Bridge. Gayle's naked ghost flashed again--enticing, troubling. I shut my mind, fixing on the car in front: I must think of other things.

At the mailbox I sorted through bills. Paragon Cable, claiming to have no record of my last two payments, was prophesying my return to commercial television.

Two willows, both ancient, one slightly withered from a bout with insects, stood guard like whispering spirits over the front of my house. Ivy had swarmed over its clapboard surface until the screen door resembled a mouth in a green face, with broken steps for teeth. The door led onto a huge

stoop, a remnant of better days when neighbors stopped to argue Woodrow Wilson's politics.

The inner door, next to the stoop's wicker swing, was buried in deep shade, though it was mid-day. The familiar dimness was no comfort today. Depressed, distracted, and urgently needing the reassurance of my own, personal stuff, I fumbled with the key.

Something felt wrong--out of place. A miserable and chilling unease settled across my shoulders, and the hair on my neck raised itself in primeval defiance. There was a smell in the air.

The door, unlocked, swung silently in at my touch. I hesitated. The shadows in the living room were deep enough to have names of their own. I felt for the lights. The switch was in the up position. And why were the blinds pulled? I opened them every morning for the plants. Always had.

Where was the dog?

"Maxie?" A soft noise from the floor. I reached down and found a cool, wet nose. "What is it boy? What's happened, Max?"

There was a sound from across the room. I sucked in and stood still as death and as quiet but for my hammering heart that demanded to be let out. There!...and there again! From across the room? No. The hallway? Someone in the bathroom or a bedroom? Should I raise the blinds? No...why silhouette myself? I crossed the living room, noiseless as an insect, and stopped at the entrance to the hall.

The dog ignored my whispered summons as he moved through a tiny beam of light from a window, momentarily visible. He wasn't following me. "Thanks a bunch, Max."

In the hall, I lost my cool and any notion of stealth. The floorboards were of the creaky persuasion, so I hugged the wall as I crept along. The mistake came in neglecting the thermostat, which jutted two inches directly out from the plaster. It had often scraped a shoulder in careless moments.

Now it met my cheekbone in the dark; not hard enough to hurt, but enough that a yelp escaped my lips. The shuffling that had been going on behind the nearest bedroom door ceased. Bedsprings sang out and then were silent.

A thousand detective, police, and gangster movies, old and new, raced through my mind, as I searched for a useful strategy. Useless. I was too frightened to think clearly. Uncharacteristic of me. Thinking was what I did best. It was acting that most often failed me. I now considered them both treasonous deserters.

Should I run for the front door or slam into the room and dive, growling, for the startled intruder's throat? I knew dogs had success with that approach, and since mine wasn't helping...

"Husband."

"Who's--who's that?" came my oddly pitched answer.

"You know."

It sounded like...her but it couldn't be. How well I knew it. I leaned hard against the wall, determined to control my breathing. I toed the door open and edged slowly around it.

On the bed was a shape, blacker than the surrounding shadows. And it was moving.

"Don't pretend you don't know me." No, the voice was different, somehow--slurred and too deep. Of course, death might do that.

"Why so dark in here?"

"I don't like bright things. Bright things bother me."

"Yeah? What about living things?"

She—It—came closer. I tried backing out the door and realized my feet were somehow locked in place.

"Oh. I'd rather you didn't leave just now, Darling" (a thoroughly troubling emphasis, I thought); "we have things to discuss."

That smell! "Why?" I pulled at my shoes. Stuck to the floor and stiff as concrete. "Who the hell are you?"

"You know."

I shook my head, slowly, back and forth, then faster. "I don't! No, no I don't." But that voice was so much like...

"It was all wrong, Pauly—"

"Don't call me that!" She was sounding just like...

"Wrong the way I died—"

"Shut up, shut up, shut up!" The way she said my name, it was just like...

"You weren't very nice, were you, watching me like that? But how you do love to observe and analyze. Well, you observed and analyzed me to death, didn't you? With your precious, deductive mind. Weighing every option, every possibility. Why are you shaking your head, Pauly? Am I upsetting you?"

"Stop!" I blasted. It was all I could think to do. I couldn't think. That voice! "Stop!"

"—sitting there like that...you just watched as I—"

She stroked my hair with goblin fingers. "Would you like me to tell you a secret, husband?" A wet gurgle. "When you make love with someone, your souls are joined."

"Why won't you shut up?" I ground at my ears, desperate for silence. My knees buckled and I fell against the door, sliding down.

"You knew it was my heart, dear one. You knew, and you chose to watch. What makes a man so coldly clinical that even his wife's dying moments become bugs for microscopic study?"

"I didn't. I didn't know anything."

"No good lying, Pauly. No one's around to hear."

I groaned. My ulcer felt diseased, cancerous. She edged closer, and her eyes took shape in the gloom. They were open wide and looked stiff. Cloudy plastic. Her mouth was moving, and I could see why she slurred. The bottom lip was strangely hung. Bent somehow. A tooth protruded through the tissue. The hands were twisted as well. Fingers and nails broken, dirt-jammed.

"You waited and watched—"

"Uh uh."

"Yes, Pauly. You waited, a minute only, and you wondered about things."

"I didn't."

"Not long. Just long enough to ask yourself if you were truly happy with me as your wife. I saw it in your eyes as I begged my heart to keep beating and begged you for help. You hesitated. My husband!"

"No!" I shoved my fist hard into my stomach to stop the thing with rat teeth from gnawing its way out.

"We were making love when I died, and you weren't even sure you wanted me?" She stroked my hair with goblin fingers. "Would you like me to tell you a secret, husband?" A wet gurgle. "When you make love with someone, your souls are joined."

"Huh?" What the heck was this about?

Somehow I had stood and was now shouting a final defense against the reality of Nightmare. "How could you know what we were doing? I was alone with her! I was making love to my wife, not to...not..." My teeth and fists were clenched. "No one but the doctor knew what we were doing! No one!" Well, no one, my cowardly mind responded,

but the doctor, and the coroner, and maybe the coroner's bowling buddies,

"It is me, Pauly."

"You, huh?" I was enraged. "Alright, so what the hell did 'we' have for breakfast that last morning?" Now that was smart—I couldn't remember, myself. I searched in the dark for something to slam into her face. The monster face. A dresser was closest and on it the outline of an antique kerosene lantern.

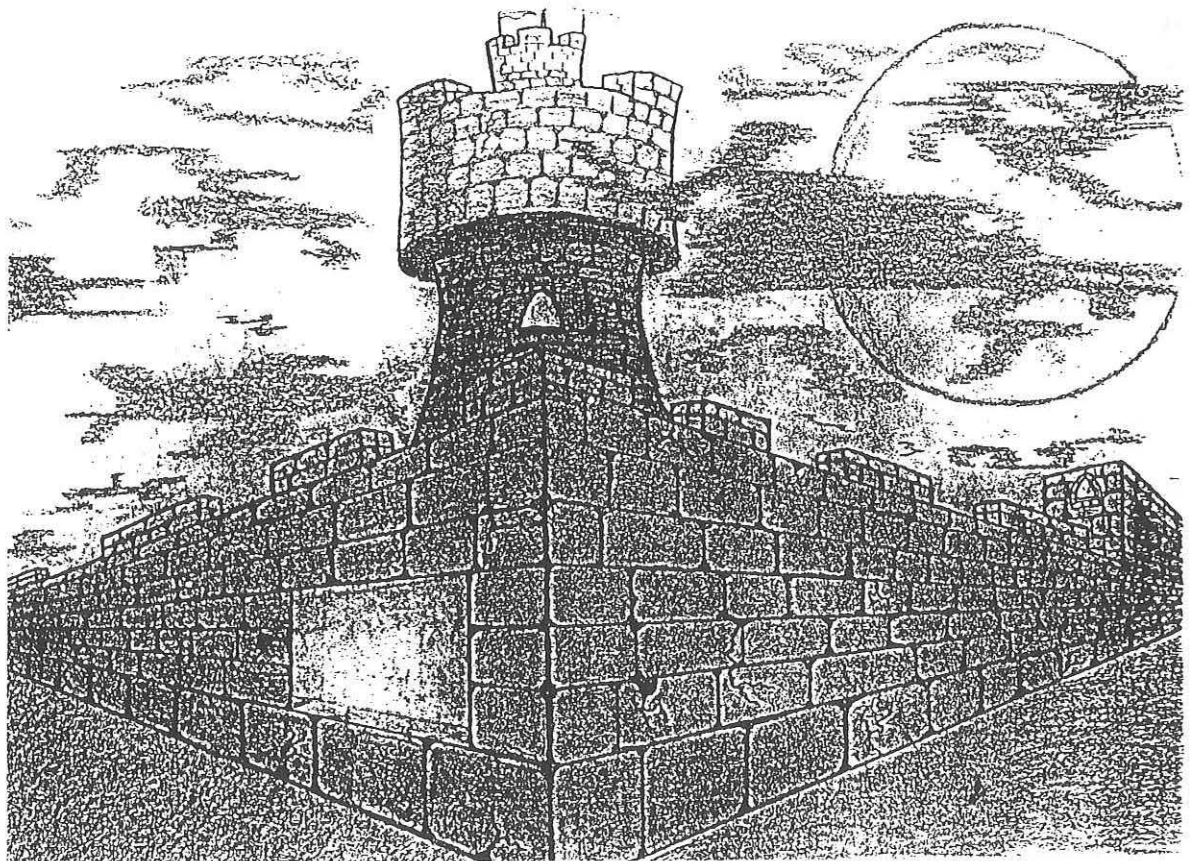
"Cold pizza."

The breath froze in my throat. What had she said? We had gone to the cinema the night before. And then out to...

"Cold pizza, Pauly. You remember."

I did. It was she. And now I badly wanted a case of terminal amnesia. Now I shut my mouth and eyes and asked God to wake me up from the worst nightmare anyone could ever have. My face and hands met in resignation.

"Why?" I asked, knowing full well why. This horror was mine, and she was right: I had earned it.



A knowledge of the empty coldness of my life spread through me, and I wanted to die.

Gayle leaned over me, clumsily. A rotting doll with hinged limbs and twisting talons. Preparing to rip the muscles from my arms and face, I thought. Only what I deserved. Let it come. Let it happen.

"Do it! Kill me, I don't care!" I wept. "Oh God, let me die!"

"You're not dying. Oh, no, you're living. We both are." As she knelt down, I inhaled the stench of her and retched.

"You'll have me again. Won't you like that? Don't you want to wrap your legs around mine and make love like newlyweds?" My head was shaking. No! No! No!--but stupidly, like a drunk's.

A revulsion was growing in the pit of my stomach that had little to do with ulcers or smells.

"Then you should be happy. This will be better than sex could ever be. This is a chance almost no one ever, ever gets."

I tried to focus. "A chance?" I was fading fast. Her face swam in my vision. "What are you saying?"

"We'll be together from now on. One. You can have me back." She ran a finger across my cheek and left a moist, reeking trail. My stomach moved.

"I don't want you back!" I sobbed. "Damn you! Let me die!"

"But I'll be fine, you'll see." Her voice was shrinking, growling, as if her dead throat was finally drying up. "And we'll be close, closer than before. One."

"What do you mean, One! One! One!?" Pictures formed in my head. Ugly pictures of sharing space in a coffin with a living corpse.

"Like before, Pauly, but even better: The two shall be made 'completely' One." And then she lunged, pantherlike. Her jelly arms were around my neck, and I inhaled the smell of the grave into my lungs. It was the last breath I took. Something else was filling my chest and stomach.

I was sucked beneath water and all became grey and silent. For a long time I hung there, still and

bloated as a dead fish. And then I was out. And things were different.

"Honey," I said, "you made me spill it! You're wandering again."

"It's not my fault." I answered. "I'm writing, and 'someone' keeps making my hand do other stuff."

"That 'someone' just wants a drink of tomato juice."

"That's what I mean: you know I hate tomato juice. And it hates my ulcer. Now we've spilled it on the notebook."

"Just drink it for me, Pauly?" I asked.

I patted my left hand and smiled dutifully into the mirror across the room.

"Yeah, okay."

The things we do for love.



## Wisteria

This tough vine cracks telephone poles,  
Abandoned bridges, and long leaf pines.

Its purple blooms scent the ripe  
Afternoon and mix, in their presence,

What I remember of you, your head bent,  
Your hair wet, your back against that fence,

The rain curling down your neck,  
Your arms and legs shaking like foals,

Getting up into they knew not what,  
Nor for how long, nor even why nor for whom.

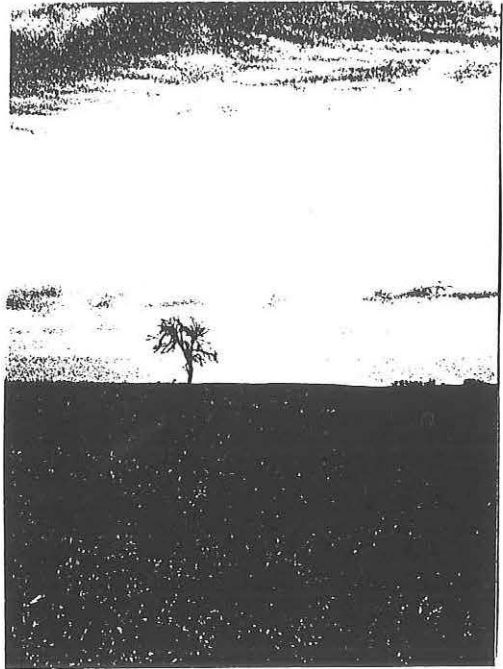
Peter Huggins



## The Flight

By Bobbi Day

It was light outside when she left the pain. She has lived this way for many years; now her escape was in motion. She weeps with resistance, as life passes by. Through this passing the color drains and fades into the morning mist. The sun has just given her a sense of peace as it rises to her honor. There is a process in this escape; it is the reality of life beyond the horizon and the death of life within the mist-filled sphere of what has passed.



## Twice She Calls

Twice she calls but  
Never is answered by the  
Vegetable lips of a red,  
Red rose held tightly to  
Her breast, wilted, since  
That night of nights when  
'He' gave it to her.

A tiny shake and  
Down the petals sail to  
Nestle like blood-drops  
Against the pale nakedness  
Of her feet.  
For love, she calls,  
For him.

**Randall Brian Bush**

## The Censor

Hands floating freely dispel the creative rage;  
the painter's stroke, the scribe's turn of page.

In the complete, the tears of an ending dwell,  
then churns the force of an outside hell.

The foreign fiends hurl their evil thoughts;  
they use their laws and creation rots.

In the artist's piece now scars a crack,  
the henchmen's depth of eye as black.

Under this rock is the child's muffled groan,  
the spirit is lost, the soul is shown.

Who once with us so shared his mind,  
the urge runs dry, intent left behind.

**Steve Jackson**

## Wind

Three straight days the wind raged,  
stirring the dead trees, shrilling  
through those thin frames, and rising,  
it fell, slowly to build once more, discovering  
every crevice of the house, setting  
one loose pane to rattle.

I stood before the bedroom window  
until I found it, looked through  
to the empty yard, the brittle grass  
and the silent trees shifting stiffly  
with the wind's random will, my own vision  
of the world trembling.

With a book I moved from  
living room, to kitchen, to study,  
but the resonance intruded  
to every place in the house, distracting  
my attention from my work to this incessant  
migration, troubling the landscape over  
the whole South. There was one  
more thing I could have done for her,  
and when I think back,  
there is always this trembling world  
that allows me no stay.

Scott Ward



# The Royal Highway

By Steve Jackson

I slumped to the floor outside my room just a moment ago. Through a haze which I welcome, a man is walking....

In a solemn pace, a ruined upright man comes my way. Please listen! Do you hear it? Can't you see the jagged grey stones fly from under his step? His boots pull the effort from his legs. I can't help him. Cold, dead leather stretches to accommodate his features so worn with defeat. Ill-strength and decay show above his eyes; they weigh down to fix his gaze into a grumbling squint. His boots keep a trudging pace as the gravel clicks and pops, stirring wispy clouds of sun-parched dust. The heat from the sun filters flowly through his dirty overalls to his yellow t-shirt where it spreads like cooking oil and soaks his skin.

"Got to get to the top of that hill. Got to keep on. Damn sun."

His tar-stained teeth run in a scramble from his jaw when he opens his mouth to smoke. Spittle-like paste forms on his otherwise dry lips. Black and white stubble pierce his hardened skin.

His boots never change pace; his right foot scrapes heel-first then rolls flatly to the toe. The left ceaselessly follows.

"Got to get to the top. Come on you old son-of-a-bitch; you ain't slowin down, are ya?"

His words barely leave his mouth then fall to the ground.

Occasionally, his right arm rises to his mouth, bringing with it a cigar. The taste of smoke and spiked coffee react harshly in his mouth.

The sun pounds down and projects a window-screen shadow on his greasy hair from his green, tattered, Skoal cap.

The road flows on and gradually climbs to a small hill. Charred yellow tufts of grass poke through the heat with rigid tenacity. From the hill, there is a good view of what appears to be a lush, green valley. Although the distance is deceiving, the effervescent

waves of heat distort what, in actuality, seems to be there. Please let it be!

Just behind and to the left, a crow chuckles and swings to the right to be rejected by a strong decision.

He is a big man, and while his right hand raises the cigar to his mouth, his left strains with the job of holding a fifty-pound bag of gravel steady on his left shoulder. The potato sack lined with a plastic sheet that is cut in a tooth-like fashion at the sewed ends absorbs the heat; and with every slight unhappy jerk of his step, it presses down on his shoulder.

"Just a few more, big boy. Don't give out on me now."

Watching his bulky outline in the distance, a long trail of gravel comes to meet bare ground in front of him. Like walking over coals, he moves slowly along, never changing pace.

Upon reaching the end, he lets his left arm hang limp and slouches his shoulder so that the bag might fall to the ground. With a slight flip, the bag rolls and slides past the tight, short sleeve of his shirt.

He takes the last drag on his cigar and flicks it to the dust where it smolders. Slowly, he bends over. With a small pocket knife, he cuts the bag open at one end. He folds the knife and places it in his pocket. He holds the end of the bag at the corners. With a steady pull and a powerless grunt, the rocks pour out dryly.

The man continues this ritual in my mind for most of the day. It is so unclear; slow, deliberate, and ceaseless.

He just won't stop! On and on, the sun, heat, and dust. To be drained in such a way....

The sun is setting. At the end of the day, the gravel road is ready. He...I...am ready. He has done his work well. Will he perform my service? Sing...for my...

"This is it. I know that I am not fit to lie before you and ask that you save me. I've never lived the

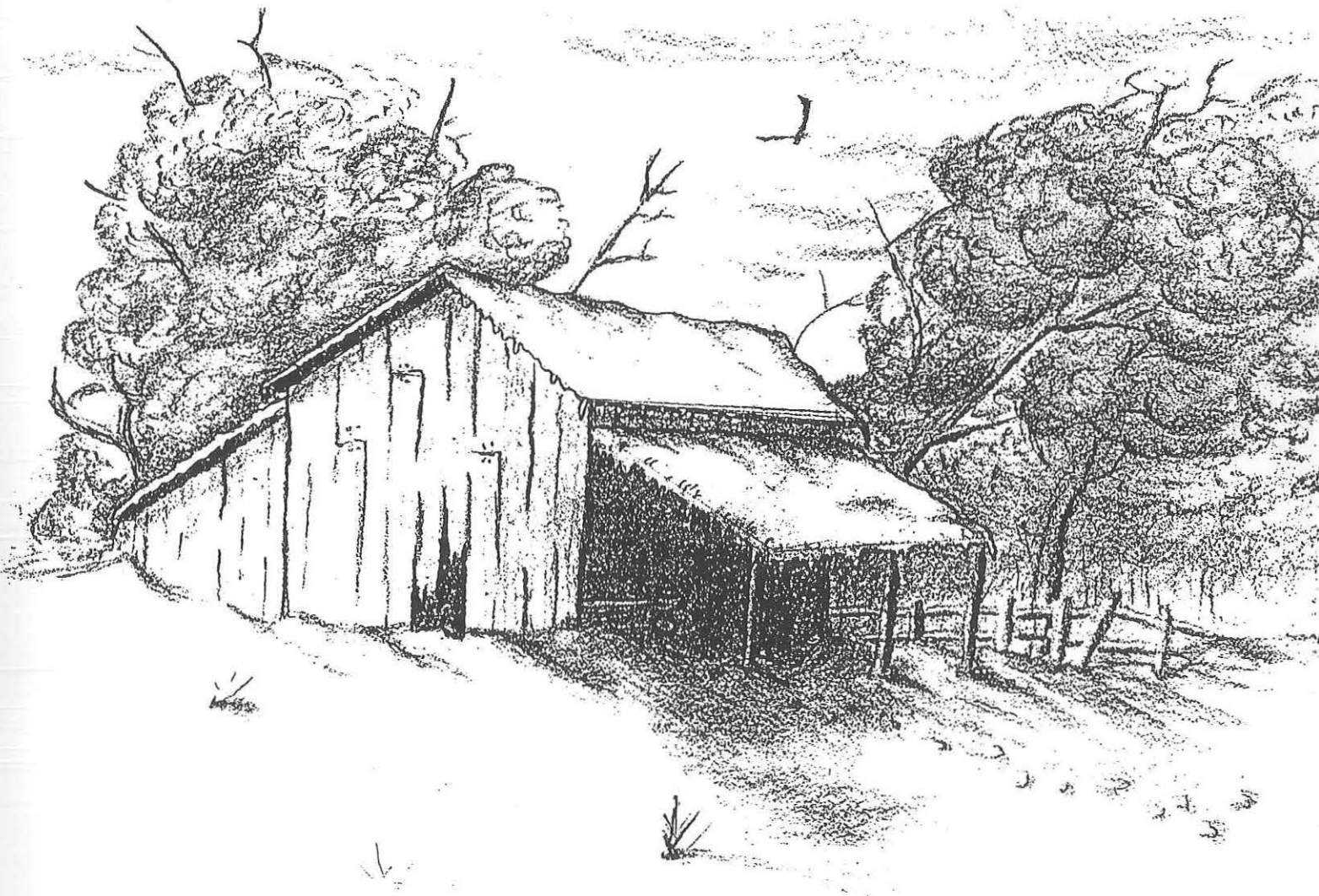
righteous life. I only ask that I can now know your glory."

With this, a man in the mind, still warm with life, dusts off his hands. He falls to the gravel-covered mound. His eyes are wide to the sun.

"I will feel no pain as I realize you love."

The heat and dryness dries his eyes, and they are useless. In darkness now, he begins to sing....

"Prepare the royal highway; the king of kings is near! Let every hill and valley a level road appear! Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story: Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's Word!"



## Orange and Red Sunset

Orange and red sunset  
The clouds look beautiful  
Like they were fingerpainted,  
and have shapes, many shapes.  
Everyone sees something different,  
the clouds form their own picture,  
Like a storybook filled with adventure  
and each page has its own meaning,  
but somehow it all ties together,  
and touches you in one way or another,  
but affects each of us differently,  
like the cloud that looks like an eagle's claw to me,  
but a dinner fork to you.

**Jennifer Mertes**



## **Bureaucracy, Deficits, and Winter.**

Winter pushes  
    onward,  
        towards  
            the house  
and those who live  
In and Around the house  
    cry  
    as it  
collapses from the weight and vastness  
    of  
    Winter.

**Aaron T. Brown**



# Lessons for the Christian Pedagogue: Paradise Regained and Milton's Rejection of the Renaissance Humanist Tradition

By Daniel L. Wright

Of his two great epics of salvation history, it may be that Milton's Paradise Regained is justly overshadowed by the artistic symmetry and lyrical facility of Paradise Lost, but it may be, too, that for all its considered weaknesses, Paradise Regained may suggest as much or more to us which is of use in understanding something of Milton's pedagogical theory during his later years than does Paradise Lost. As Howard Schultz has remarked, Milton joins with Saint Paul in denouncing the pursuit of "unsanctified learning" in both Paradise Regained and Paradise Lost "where the bare letter of his paraphrase sp[eaks] against historical Hellenism" (84).

That a rhetorical assault on "historical Hellenism" could in any way form a perspective by which one might discover the guiding principle of later Miltonic pedagogy requires recognition that to the typical seventeenth-century Renaissance humanist, all knowledge of classical origin was rather indiscriminantly revered and regarded as authoritative for a variety of disciplines. In the seventeenth century, as in the centuries preceding it, the influence of ancient Greek and Roman cultures shaped European and even religious metaphor. Milton, steeped in this educational cauldron of Hellenistic and Imperial Roman tradition, acquired a familiarity with the classical tradition which so closely compounded with his theological disposition, however, that the relationship can only be called intimate. Milton's acquaintance with the classics and the Scriptures, as well as his knowledge of the worlds in which they were produced, penetrate and inform his prose and poetry and, it would appear, form, in

his early work, the normative basis for Milton's discernment of what is the "good"--as opposed to what is merely "true." Such a conclusion is especially well-attested when we recall that Milton judged the acceptance of Copernican astronomy and Newtonian physics as "true in fact," but less than "good," because these new disciplines did not as readily accommodate themselves to the hierarchial universe of Ptolemaic cosmology which, to Milton, better supported traditional Christian concepts about the universe and its relationship to God.

Milton was also aware that the fathers and doctors of both the Eastern and Western Churches had educated themselves in the works of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Epicureans, Sophists, et al. As Martin Larson has observed, the patricians "were deeply versed in, and much influenced by, pagan philosophers . . . They [the pagans] are frequently invoked, and their ideas in regard to morality and free will were repeated in almost their exact words" (35). Milton, as a heterodox Christian, was, of course, by no means a "father of the Church," nor did he agree in all points with those so regarded, but he still inherited the same philosophical tradition as his more catholic forebearers and utilized it in the formation of his own argumentative method. One has only to examine Milton's appropriation of classical rhetorical method (exordium, propositio, narratio, confirmatio, refutatio, and peroratio) in his Areopagitica or look at the Stoic reservation of his sonnet, "When I Consider How My Light is Spent," to find confirmation of this observation. Such examples conclusively reveal the extent to which Milton was guided and influenced by classical

models and methods which, because they preceded or were ignorant of Christianity, were divorced from Christianity. Yet, it is also clear from Milton's work that he sought, at least at first, a means by which Christianity and pagan wisdom might be harmonized. As William Riley Parker has noted, in Samson Agonistes, Milton adopted the dramatic form of the Athenians as a vehicle for narrating his story of Samson, a pre-Christian hero of the faith whom he crafted as a type of Christ (33ff). And, as Matthew Arnold declared of the evident tension between Milton's theological temperament and his indebtedness to the classical tradition so revered by Renaissance man, "Milton was a humanist, but the Puritan temper mastered him" (qtd. in Fussell 3).

Milton could not utterly disparage the heritage of Renaissance humanism, however--at least not in his early life. Truth, after all, to him, was truth, regardless of who spoke it--pagan philosopher, Jacobean dramatist, or English Puritan. For early Milton, as with Bacon, "there [was] no doctrine of the double truth. A proposition [could not] be true in divinity and false in philosophy" (Schultz 35). Consequently, Milton could acknowledge his indebtedness to secular learning, but according to Larson, this acknowledgment in youth did not preclude his ultimate rejection of the values of Renaissance method and ideals, nor did it compromise his later zeal which disparaged education and learning unfounded in Christian revelation:

*The evolution of Milton's thought was, first, one of progression toward greater seriousness and profundity; and, second, a movement away from almost pure Renaissance Hellenism. . . toward the highest ideals and philosophy which Christianity is capable of exhibiting. . . The development of Milton's thought indicates a highly qualified movement toward self-abnegation and surrender to the unseen.*

(162-63)

Milton then, unlike Donne, could not "exonerate secular learning entirely" (Schultz 20); learning, according to the later Milton, was properly founded in God's revealed truth in the Bible or it was not learning at all. This devotion to revealed truth in the Scriptures, as exclusively authoritative and normative (" . . . he who receives / Light from

above. . . / No other doctrine needs. . . ") (Paradise Regained IV, 288-90) has prompted Howard Schultz to remark that, in this final disregard for knowledge which does not proceed directly from the Scriptures, "Milton strayed perhaps further from Protestant tradition than from the Bible" (119).

Milton's progression from the Renaissance humanist to Puritan zealot ("Alas! what can they [pagan philosophers] teach, and not mislead; . . . / . . . / . . . Who therefore seeks in these / True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion / Far worse, her false resemblance only meets. . . ") (Paradise Regained IV, 309, 318-20) is perhaps not *best* illustrated by Paradise Regained, but Paradise Regained--perhaps more than any other work of Miltonic verse--best articulates the writer's conviction, expressed in De Doctrina Christiana, that "obedience and love are always the best guides to knowledge" (Book I, Chapter I). It is, for example, in Paradise Regained that Christ is presented principally as a "second Adam," a man who, unlike the original Adam, does

...for Milton, the choice for wisdom is humanity's supreme possibility and sign that we are created in imago Dei.

follow the precepts of love and obedience; consequently, he is wise, and it is through the wisdom of this Christ, this second Adam of Paradise Regained, that Milton speaks. Milton identifies himself closely with this image of Christ, primarily because this Christ is the perfect type of the individual who chooses wisely, and for Milton, the choice for wisdom is humanity's supreme possibility and sign that we are created in imago Dei. Christ, therefore, as the perfect wise man, the perfect representative of God in his wisdom, love, and obedience, for God (whom Milton, of course, would never confuse with Christ) is himself obedient to his own promises, as he binds himself by covenant with his creation in order that, among his creation, perfect trust in Him may prevail; subsequently, for Milton, it should be to live in imitatio Christi, to be like Christ that all persons who would be wise ought to aspire.

Consistent with this belief, then, is Milton's



depiction, in Paradise Regained, of Christ's encounter with Satan in the wilderness: he is an "argumentative Christ" (Schultz 222), a Miltonic orator in the wasteland who summons people to him not only that he may be seen but understood. Such understanding cannot be accomplished without the light of divine wisdom, however--wisdom which, as Bishop Hall has said of Milton's convictions, cannot be imparted by the tradition of "Athens. . . but [only] by Jerusalem" (qtd. in Schultz 89).

Martin Larson makes particular note of Milton's diminished attention to the wisdom of the ancients in Milton's later work and observes his otherwise rather considerable exaltation of distinctively Christian wisdom:

*In Paradise Regained, we find . . . very little mythological allusion or pagan imagery. . . . The interest is far more in theology than metaphysics. All pagan learning and philosophy are condemned, even when the argument is drawn from such sources. The attention is centered upon human temptation and the purpose of Christ in the world. (173)*

In Paradise Regained, it is this worldly wisdom which Satan relies upon in his attempt to seduce Christ with offers of temporal power in exchange for displaced devotion, but it is the demonic character of such temptations which Christ's superior wisdom penetrates and exposes, therein confirming Satan's warranted apprehension of the young Christ, which he expresses in Book I:

*His birth to our just fear gave no small cause,  
But his growth now to youth's full flower,  
displaying  
All virtue, grace and wisdom to  
achieve  
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my  
fear. . . . (65-68)*

Therefore, according to Milton, the worthiness of instruction and guidance, in order to form right reason in the pupil, would necessarily be determined by the teacher's faithfulness in presenting the whole truth of Christ to his students. For Milton, the wise teacher, like the Wise Teacher, would nurture his intellect in the sources of revealed truth, applying this holy wisdom to his instruction in such a manner as to leave no ambiguities regarding the measure of his commitment to right reason and right religion. All reliance upon wisdom which

proceeded exclusively from pagan sources would be shunned as insufficient at least and evil at most. As Larson summarizes of the later Milton's posture on classical authority, "Nothing is to be accepted simply because it was believed in the past" (83); all is to be believed which proceeds from the mind and will of God which are manifest in revealed Truth. Hence, Milton would doubtless argue that the goal of the teacher is to fashion his mind in holy conformity with that of his Creator--a mind which, like that of Christ's in Paradise Regained, would not be informed by the misguided fancies and uncertain speculations of men. Education, for Milton, as would all the responsibilities of life, be fully in the service of Christ and his Church.

What, then, can we conclude about Milton's approach to his era and its increasingly humanistic spirit which challenged the presumptions of a more theocentric time? We can declare with confidence that Milton's methods of exposition, argument, and persuasion were characteristic of his age, but his attitude was diametrically opposed to it (Larson 247). Milton, as a poet and pedagogue of intense, Puritanical conviction, dared not compromise that which he perceived to be divine truth by mingling revelation with the worldly wisdom that he, like Saint Paul, believed to be the mere folly of men.

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# Accidentals

For Scott & Jana

In the twilight he dodged  
the mobbing crows  
over Sheboggy Road,

the barn owl my  
field guide maintained  
should not be hunting

so deep in the swamp.  
I sat under yaupon  
limbs to listen when

he settled into  
a cypress hollow  
to outwait his mockers,

and soon the low  
willowy whistle and clack  
of beak rose like

a tree diety to signal  
safety to his mate.  
With moonrise he

showed me his ghostly  
face and yellow eyes,  
then swooped off

after some shrew or  
rabbit. I wrote  
by penlight in my

notebook: "accidental,  
not indigenous, in  
spite of their great

range, Tyto alba,  
the tribe I most  
admire." Strong claws

and swivel heads, night  
vision, silent hunting  
and no waste, their

white music riven  
in distant fields.  
They mate for life.

R. T. Smith

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