



LGROSS '96

The Promethean



Spring 1998
Concordia University
Portland, Oregon

The Promethean



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Spring 1998 Dove Hotz, Editor
 Beth Balliet Concordia University
 Charlotte Evensen 2811 NE Holman
 Cindy Gardner Portland, OR 97211
 Anna-Lisa Larsen (503) 280-8680 (phone)
 Bobby Rameres (503) 280-8519 (fax)
 dhotz@cu-portland.edu

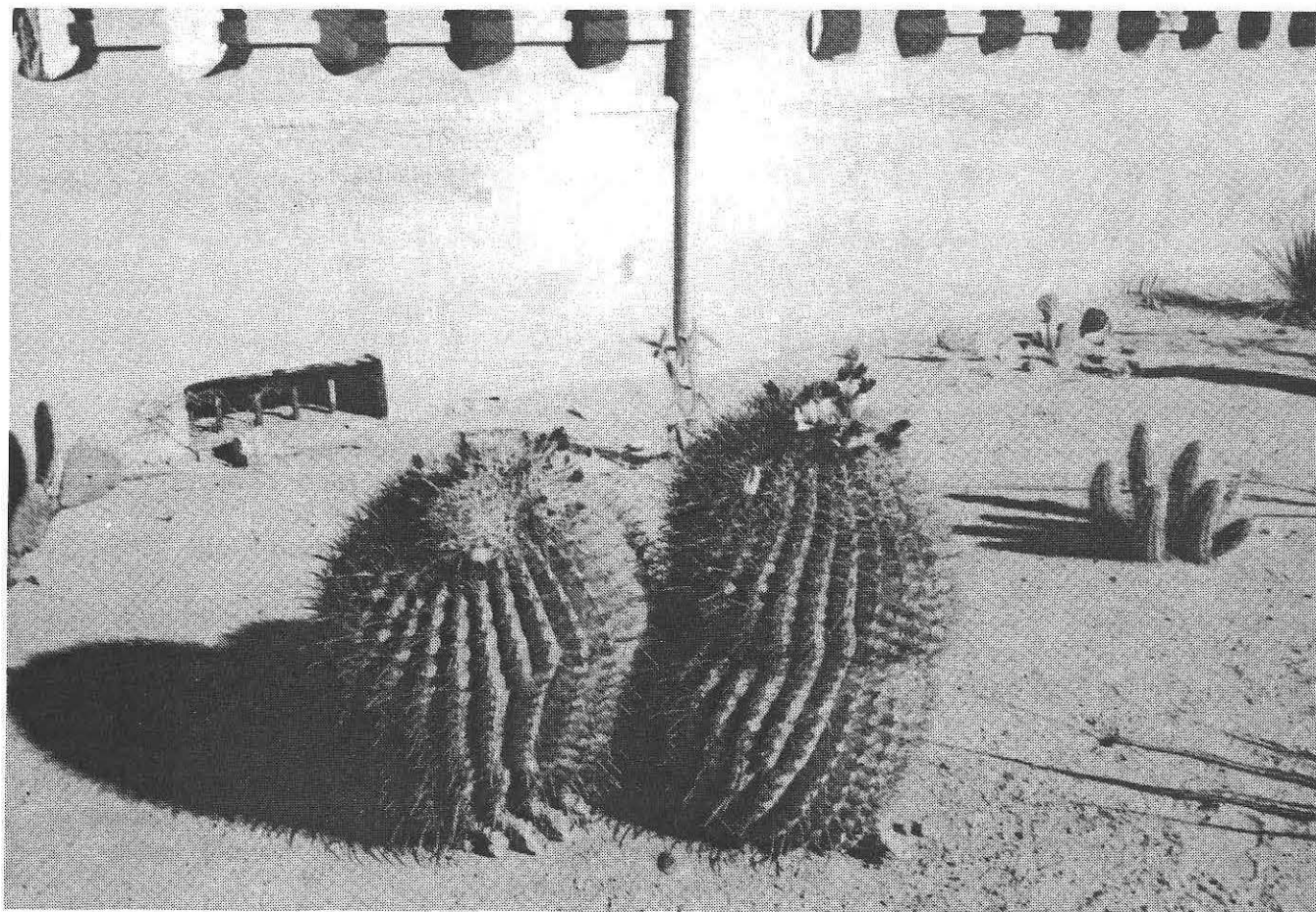
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From the Editor:

What a glorious spring! How lucky we are to live in such delightful surroundings. The Pacific Northwest is a gardener's delight, full of fertile soil and scenic beauty. Our own Concordia campus is a wonderful example of the exciting variety of blooms, blossoms, greenery, and landscaping that can be achieved here. It's such a treat to walk around campus and observe the many plants, lovingly tended by our grounds crew, all wildly blooming and sweetly scented. Your eye strays from one blossom to another...to the ivy-covered brick walls...what a

great oak tree...look, there's a daffodil next to a ...cigarette butt? Can you believe it? Somebody just threw their cigarette right there on the ground—right next to the ashtray! In fact, the whole ground here is strewn thick with cigarette butts—how gross!

We have a beautiful campus here—don't ruin it by throwing your butts or other trash on the ground. Clean up after yourself! And if you see someone littering, get right in their face and demand they clean it up. We do not have maid service at Concordia!



photography by Ayako Watanabe

[I hope you have all enjoyed the beautiful drawing that is this issue's cover. In this essay, Professor Gross explains some of the drawing's symbolism—Ed.]

A Creation Story

(for Jacqueline and Michael)

by Larry Gross

I'm not one given to explaining my art. Words don't flow like paint, they stumble out of my mouth, a line now, a sentence after the morning coffee, and they seem to fall short of the mark most of the time. An artist of words might agree. It hardly makes sense to explain a good story. Can its beauty be relived by its mere retelling? I think there are as many ways to receive an inflexion as there are those designed—or even not designed—by the storyteller. Even the parts we *haven't* planned are *in* the plan of the Maker. Maybe it's like that with preaching, though I don't have as much experience myself. Does the preacher simply *read* the sermon script? And how do we *explain* a good sermon?

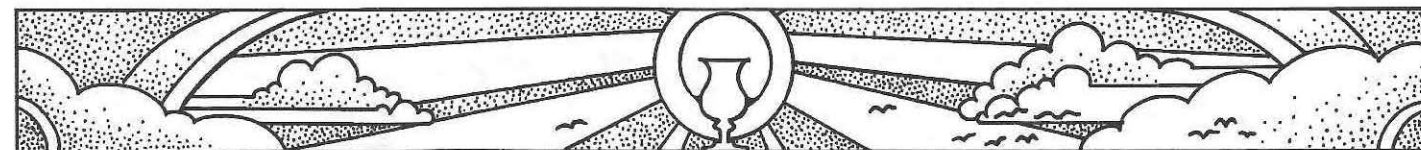
The trouble is I am enticed into explaining this unexplainable mystery, that is, the immeasurable wisdom of the Creator, whose mark of creative energy is breathed into everything. It's too amazing to explain. Indeed, it is wonderful *because* it is a mystery, a mystery that loses its impact, even causes me to sin against the first commandment, when I *learn how* to explain it. (Maybe it's like the Hebrew nation who feared the name of God.) Instead, I yearn to experience a creation infused with what is incomprehensible, that character of God eternally implanted in all things, fixed in time, *chronos* and *kairos*, everywhere and everywhen, from the first breath of creation. This wonderful story has continued since the beginning, because God's signature is made known to humanity through the whole of creation. God's creative word, spoken in the blackness, continues to sound from the throat of God, filling the universe with fertility, and endowing humanity with god-like imagination. I suggest this is an

artist's first "doctrine" of the creation story. (Genesis 1 and 2, "created in the image of God," i.e., called to be creators. You know, I think William Blake might have said "Amen" to that!)

If any of what I've just written makes sense, you will appreciate that my explanation of the painting will be a little different from when I painted it six months ago, and even more different from when I drew it in 1995. I began with Genesis 1, and I've experienced a few new twists and turns. Indulge me.

In the beginning there were Celtic knots. Here a trinity of lines, interdependently woven together, like a root system, from which each day of creation sprouts. They are painted a purposeful green. The ancient Celtic tribe was around long before the birth of Jesus, a Messianic people who readily accepted Christ as the Messiah when St. Patrick came preaching the Gospel. The knots traditionally symbolize the eternal, and the days of creation each grow from that eternal cord, suggesting that God continues to create in us, through us, by us, and in spite of us. Yes, we are part of an eternal creation story. And it is good.

The first day sprouts like a bright yellow flower against the dark purples of the mountain. There are two parts to this flower—a joyous light appearing like thin beads of light radiating from the center, and a delicate teardrop alluding to the separation of light and dark. At the end of the first day, God said, "It is good." I remember a feeling of surprise at the sight of this first day in my painting. But I like it and I understand it better today than the day that the image was born.





The second day is firmament and waters. I don't know the Hebrew words (inflexions), so I found myself depicting a tree on which the waters of earth sing in harmony with the ripples of heaven, the sky. I don't know how to explain this, but as the drawing evolved, and later the colors, the concentric "ripples" of the sky grew from the *yet uncreated flame* on top of the hill. The unexplainable Mystery is a very generous designer and teacher. Compassion is in her house (Prov. 8), and she serves up a feast to those with open hearts.

I must have been listening when I was drawing the third day. I didn't think of it that way, but the drawing *did* come automatically. It was immediately obvious how I would represent the day God created vegetation. It's a sturdy fertile tree, centered, like the tree of life in the garden of the universe. It is the *axis mundi*, life and death in one image. Its branches—intertwined with the concentric contours of heaven—reach up toward the ultimate source of life, a fertile flame on the hill. I look at the tree now and imagine a dance more wondrous than 50 sets of Celtic feet flying, and tapping in step with the eternal cadence. We are bound for that dance, and it is good.

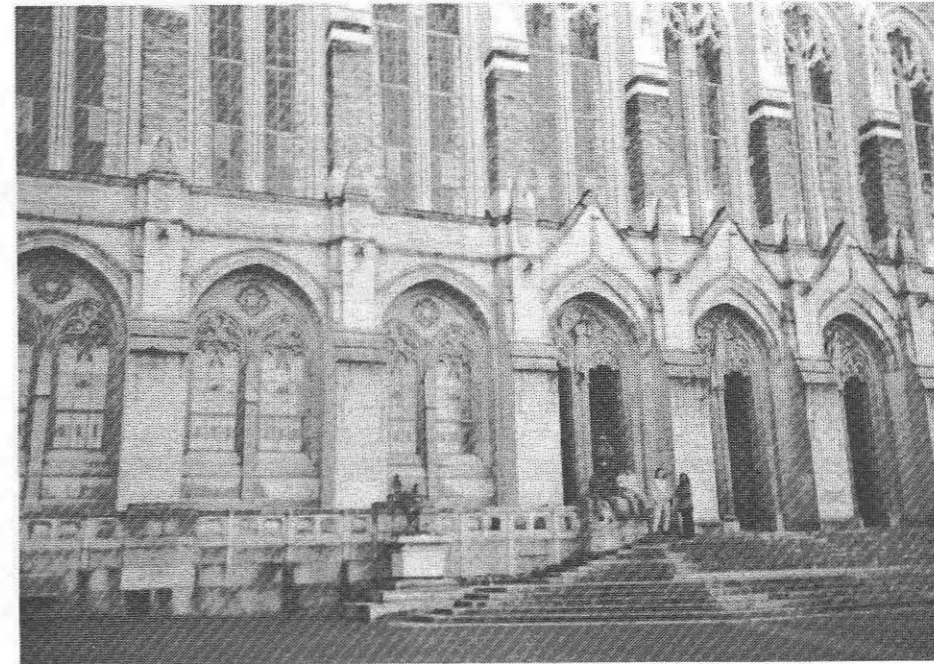
The fourth day represents our assurance that God is keeping time. Scripture reminds us to pay attention to the day and night, the sun, moon and stars, the signs and the seasons. The trunk of this tree grows like a river, meandering where it will and leaving a path for us to follow. God is not out there somewhere, but in our lives daily, showing us the signs and encouraging us to follow. We wait and we watch for our time to be taught (Ecclesiastes 3).

Fish and fowl appear in day five, nearly repeating the theme of the second day. At times it's difficult to distinguish in the picture, between birds and fish. They move together as the creatures of water and air and each assumes a unique role in the story. This too is good.

The sixth tree is nearly barren, and perhaps it should be. I hadn't intended an ecological or environmental statement, but it's worth the consideration. There are simply too many creatures to place in the sixth day, but never too many to celebrate the gifts of the designer. And doesn't it figure that the human figures are "borrowing" nearly the only leaves left on the tree. I admit this day is unfinished. Perhaps it is my prayer for a day of blessing, a day that's good beyond explanation.

And how does one picture the Eternal at rest? I decided on a sacred flame nestled at the top of a mountain, and casting a rainbow-like spectrum over all of creation. The flame is a fertile green, a reminder of spring. It yields an everlasting growth like peace that passes all understanding. That's why the story of Creation continues. God blessed the work with a signature, and it's in everything, and it's in us. We are privileged now and then to see God in that signature, and we are prompted to tell the story again, even if it is a mystery. It's how I often feel when I begin work on a blank drawing or painting. I may not understand what is about to happen, but I embrace the mystery nonetheless. The spirit of the work is alive, and I've learned to trust that the story will unfold in time. This is an incomprehensible blessing I hope I can never explain.

The (story doesn't) End.



photography by Bobby Rameres

Genius

Creative was mind,
no game was a pleasure;
his "simple" thoughts and high test scores,
no other was his measure.

Time and time again,
his answer was always right;
he wished he could be wrong
and let out a laugh of spite.

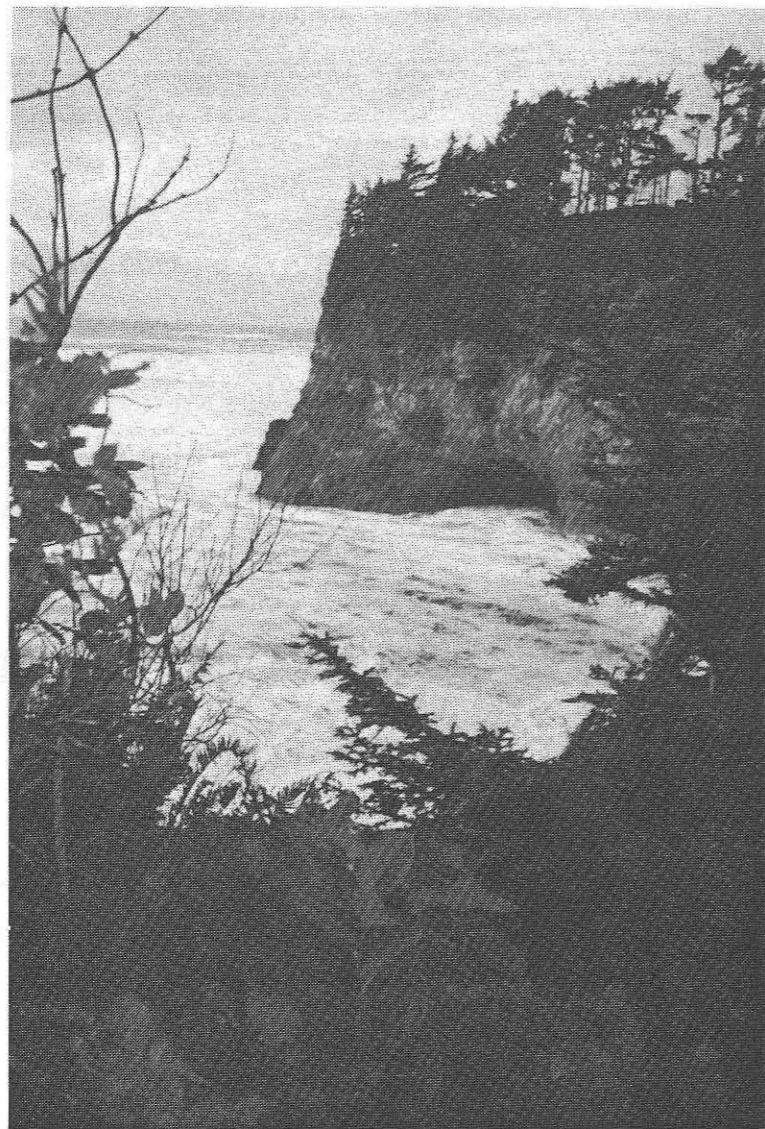
The surface smile; a decoy
inside; a mountain of hate,
not even his glorious mind
could predict this ill fate.

Countless weeks went by;
the gun raised on the mantle,
fearless, happy, and cold,
no urge he could handle.

A note left like a memoir,
a list of achievements and fame;
for once a problem he could not solve
no answer he could tame.

Chad VanDeMark





"Peace"
photography by Lindsey Heinitz

Weather Report

It rains, slow and incessant
I accept the drizzle.

It pours
rapid and vigorous
I await its end.

It storms
fierce
and
destructive
i am
thrust
downward
my heart
oppressive
my head
spinning
i cannot
confront
the storm.

There is a calm
his hand extends
There is a need
to grasp, embrace, trust
There is a child
clinging, aware, secure

I am once again reborn—once again alive
with the innocence of a child.
There is a dawn in the sky about me
It intensifies, deliberately, steadily.

Kara L. Gsell

The American Dream?

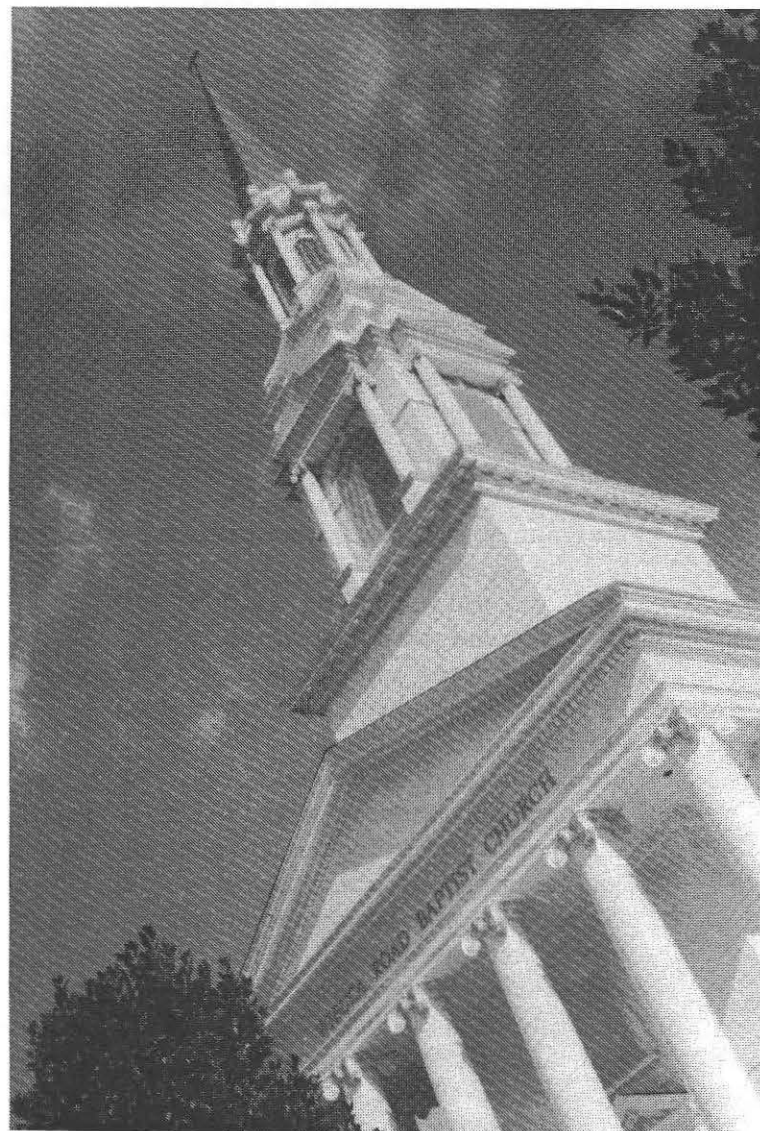
I never understood class warfare until I went overseas.
Never understood America from the outside, my perspective, and hers.
Always tried to comment on, criticize, hate, intellectualize about America.
But somehow it all rang false when still at home.
Looking inside from the outside always makes a difference
just like actually looking does for ignorance.
Maybe I always cared too much about not liking,
that in a way I did.
Except now I can't stand America.
America of politics,
not the America I call home.
The huge colossus of media and bad numbing culture.
The land we're trying to destroy from the inside.
The land we're trying to export,
to any poor sucker who will take it.
They'll take it too. That's the problem.
They want it, need it, will kill for it.
I once believed I didn't understand this land
of fast food, drive-by shootings, rap, blues, beef commercials, dogs selling beer, cars
being sold by buxom blondes and slimy bad-suited slicks, 600 channels, 500 sports,
million-dollar salaries for a president of a company where the ones who work earn
precious little, commercialized sport and sex, cigarettes, alcohol, red meat, McDonald's,
Disney, Pepsi and Coke.
But now I understand it well.
It makes sense, in a strange and twisted way.
It's easily packaged, neat little bit of pop culture,
manufactured; pasteurized and homogenized;
edited for content and suitable for all audiences.
It is so easy.
Fast money, fast cars, fast women...is this the American Dream?
It is the export.
Drink this and you will be beautiful.
Drive this and you'll look wealthy.
Wear these jeans, and members of the opposite sex will strip naked for you in public.
Play this sport and you will get rich.
Maybe I did understand it.
Maybe I understood it too well.
Maybe I had assimilated it, like all the rest of you.
We want to turn your cities into ghettos, shopping malls and basketball courts.
The countryside to tract housing, super-highways, drug abuse and social isolation.
We want you to consume our information, fed to you
by this company or that.
We want you to experience drive-by shootings, charismatic psychopaths, and gun-toting
mail carriers, heart disease, cancer and AIDS, smog, polluted rivers, and forests of
billboards where trees once stood.
And you want it too.

Tom Long

Try to Relate

HATRED IS A CURIOUS SUBJECT...
 NOT IN THE SENSE OF CHILDISH
 CURIOSITY, BUT AS A FEAR OF
 SOMETHING SO WILD AND
 MUTINOUS...
 IT TAKES A SIMPLE MAN, SCHOOL BOY,
 OR EVEN A WOMAN AND GUTS THEM
 LIKE A COD...
 WITH SUCH A MESS OF FEELINGS, IT'S
 A WONDER ANY FOCUS CAN BE
 COLLECTED FROM IT ALL...
 LOVE AND HATE SEEM TO COME
 NATURAL TO MOST PERSONS...
 YET THE LATTER DOMINATES OUR
 WORLD AND NOT THE FORMER...
 STRANGE TO THINK THAT A WORD SO
 SMALL AS hate CAN CHANGE THE
 COURSE OF HISTORY...
 ON THE OTHER HAND, LOVE CAN
 TRANSFORM AND HEAL THE WARPATH
 OF HATE...
 LOVE IS A CURIOUS SUBJECT...

Zach Davis



photography by Ayako Watanabe

Why “do we kill people who kill people....?”

by Rachele Bigger

I will never forget the fall day in 1996 when I walked into a classroom and saw red flash before my eyes. In front of me sat an innocent woman expressing her opinion in the form of a t-shirt that read “Do we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong?” Though she could not have known it, I sat behind her shaking in rage, bitter that people find it so easy to endorse trite slogans about something that affects me so deeply.

Three months earlier, on June 16, 1996 (Father’s Day), my cousin Shannon Bigger had been stripped naked, her mouth gagged, her hands tied to her bed with phone cord, stabbed five times, her neck slashed at least six times. Looking into her coffin at her mouth drooping from where the blood had flowed, I remember thinking that anyone who could do that to another human being, didn’t deserve to be treated like a person, but like the beast that they had chosen to emulate.

While the individual who killed my cousin chose to evade capital punishment by pleading guilty, it started me thinking about the death penalty in a way I had not before. I’ve tried to separate my personal feelings from rational thought, and found that impossible. I’ve asked people hard questions hoping to find answers for myself, and instead have more questions.

The reality is that I greatly value human life and abhor our society’s lack of respect for life. Strongly opposed to abortion and euthanasia, my idealism wants to draw a line and not cross it. Only God can give and take life, and we can’t live with the consequences of playing God.

But in reality, I can’t so easily draw a line with this issue. I believe there is a difference between the innocent and the guilty, a point at which humanity is lost and where we must treat the predator as the beast he/she has behaved like. While I know that all of us have a great capacity for evil, I can’t accept that brutal murderers who would desecrate lives can expect to be treated as humans, can expect

to have their lives valued. In fact, the death penalty demonstrates respect for life, in not allowing the perpetrators to have further opportunities to desecrate life.

Having expressed all that, I acknowledge that the death penalty is simply an extension of a hugely imperfect justice system. It takes too long to enact; the appeals process is lengthy and expensive. And by the time the penalty is finally accomplished, the guilty has already had a number of opportunities to murder again. Prison crime is huge, and while the victims tend to be other victimizers, there is always the possibility of a guard or someone in for a lesser crime, being the casualty.

But these flaws, and the excuse that we have killed those not guilty of the crime(s) they have been convicted of, is really a smokescreen. Human error is a possibility. But the length and arduousness of our legal system is an attempt to prevent such mistakes.

Probably more aggravating to most of us is error where sentences too lax for the crime committed often result in further crimes. Lawrence Singleton shouldn’t have been released from prison nine years after hacking Mary Vincent’s arms off with an axe, but he was and proceeded to kill again.

Christians who point to Jesus’ words in Matthew 5 as cause against the death penalty overlook a few factors. It was Jesus who said: “You have heard that it was said ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also” (Matthew 5:38-39). But the same Jesus (in the same sermon) also told us that “if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you...and if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:29-30). Have you noticed the whole Christian community jumping on the bandwagon to follow that one?

The Sermon on the Mount was spoken to those who had followed Christ to hear his words of instruction to them. These words were not spoken to societies composed largely of those who make no attempt or claim to follow Christ. Indeed the New Testament is a clear directive from God to individuals. The Old Testament is no less God's word and deals much more with civil societies. Though Christians can rejoice that they have been delivered from the penalty of God's law (eternal damnation), we still must attempt to live in a society that is tainted and imperfect. Laws are necessary, as are penalties.

Numbers 35:30 states that: "Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty" (NKJV). Scripture not only talks about the death penalty, but puts limits on it. The book of Numbers gives clear legal stipulations on the difference between murder and manslaughter. Those who committed manslaughter, while not being allowed back into society, could escape to cities of refuge and start a new life for themselves.

Nowhere does Jesus contradict the law regarding murderers that was established in the Old Testament. Instead he gives us (who are Christians) very difficult tasks. He tells us to "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:44-45 NKJV).

This is not so easy at times. In fact, without Jesus, I am convinced that it is impossible. I am personally still working through how it is possible even as a person of faith. But while God is calling me to love a person named Antonio who inflicted horrible pain on myself and my family, I am quite sure that He doesn't want Antonio to ever have the chance to murder again. No one has ever suggested that because we are Christians, my family should forgive the crime and work to put Antonio back on the streets. Indeed we have a responsi-

bility as citizens to ensure that he doesn't have that chance.

Interestingly, when the death penalty was a possibility in this case, I was actually opposed to it. I didn't know what I believed about the death penalty and more importantly, I didn't want the additional trauma of having someone else who was part of my life (as he sickeningly became from the time he murdered my cousin) to die traumatically. I just wanted the whole thing to be over. I didn't want to feel anymore pain; I wanted the quickest solution. I was relieved when he was sentenced to life imprisonment without possibility of parole. I mistakenly thought I would be able to forget about him; no waiting while he sat on death row and appealed over and over again.

I have had to face that it will never be over. He will be appealing his sentence this summer and though I could alienate myself from news of this, it wouldn't stop me from thinking about it. It wouldn't stop the fear and the loss and the empty spot at the Thanksgiving table. I am angry because I can't stop myself from thinking about him whenever I remember Shannon. And while I am still not convinced the death penalty has anything to do with healing for the families of victims, I know that I don't want any other family to have to go through what mine has experienced. Society has a responsibility to work for that and to maintain the sanctity of life. I have come to believe the death penalty at times is a valid part of that process.

I have often been asked the question if I would push the button, give the injection or whatever it takes to enact the death penalty. I acknowledge this would be unpleasant and difficult. Though the thought makes me ill, in recognition of the potential that lives might be saved, and the statement that the death penalty makes about the consequences of murder, I would probably be willing. Indeed it is rather hypocritical to back the death penalty without being accountable for the enforcement of it.

At the same time, I believe we should return to methods similar to the firing squad method. Taking life was never supposed to belong to

humans; it damages the human psyche and in an ideal world it would not be necessary. Not knowing who actually fired the fatal bullet and who was just firing blanks is a protective device that prevents the weight of such a difficult responsibility from being shouldered by an individual. If society is protecting its young and weak, then civilization should shoulder responsibility collectively.

The death penalty will not bring back past victims. It should never be a matter of personal vengeance. Relatives of victims who gnash their teeth and wait for relief when the murderer is put to death will probably never find the peace for which they are looking. We instead must work to prevent the loss of future daughters, sons, wives, husbands, grandchildren, and cousins. The death penalty must only be a means of preventing further victims and of upholding respect for life.

Interestingly, I find myself at ease with those victims of violence who find themselves opposed to the death penalty. Indeed at moments I identify with them. Members of my own

family actually became opposed to the death penalty when Antonio entered our lives. Correctly or incorrectly, knowing him gave a sense of responsibility for his evangelization. I understand this and on a personal level, admire it. And though I have discovered that I ultimately disagree with such conclusions, I can accept their positions.

But I would be surprised if anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one to violent crime would ever wear a t-shirt to remind themselves and others of their pain. Why? Not because the issue isn't valid; but because the question seems to intrinsically place importance on the victimizer rather than the victim. Read the question again: Do we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong? It's kind of difficult to replace that middle "people" with the face of someone you love and not find the very question offensive, isn't it?

[For my uncle Darold Bigger, who has been an example of honest faith to me and my family, especially since the loss of Shannon.]



*"El Dorado Hills"
photography by Lindsey Heinitz*

Grace Marie I

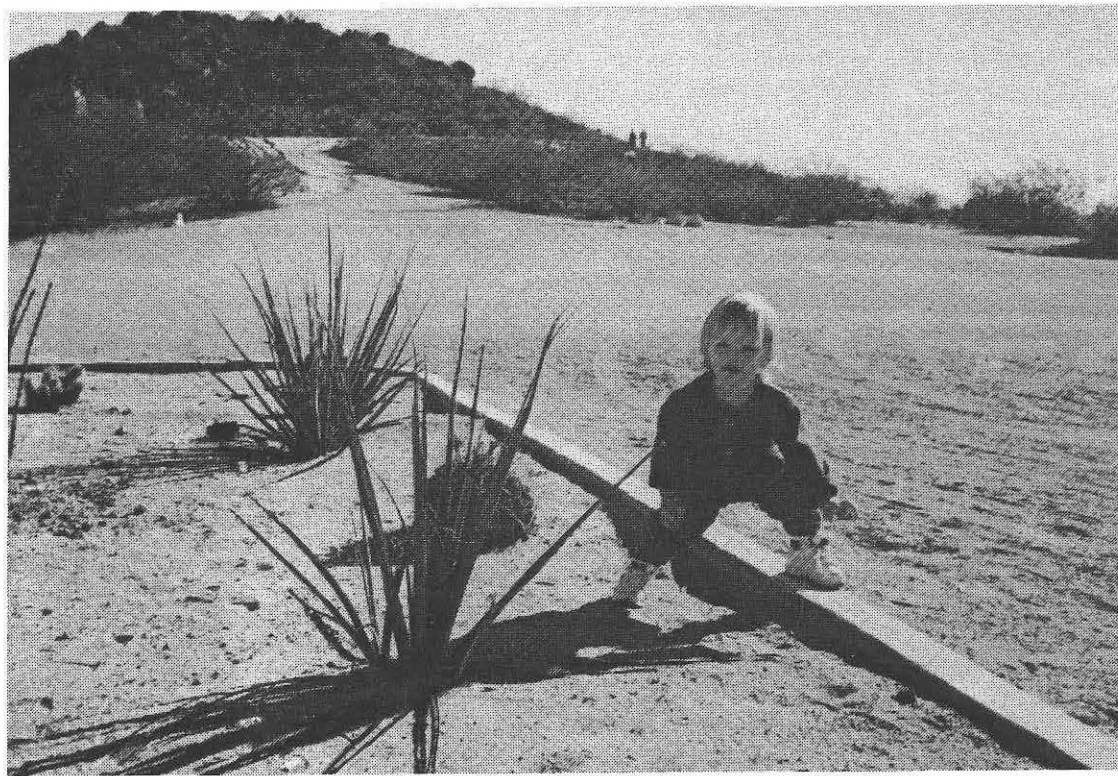
(November 5, 1941 to April 19, 1948)

Father, how we thank Thee for the comfort of Thy Word!
 Tradition's fallibility could not our spirits gird
 With such bright hope, nor could the frail philosophies of men
 Give "peace that passeth understanding" and assurance when
 Death swiftly calls, and in a fleeting moment takes away
 A lovely little part of heaven loaned us for a day.
 Not speculation, but our risen Savior's gentle tones:
 "Handle me and see, a spirit hath not flesh and bone."
 Give us the blessed confidence that when we see His face
 The resurrection bodies of those redeemed by grace
 Will not be vague, ethereal, but "we shall be like Him;"
 And though not oft', in longing, our eyes with tears are dim,
 One day the dear form and precious pixie face we see no more
 We'll see again, and know again, and cherish as before.
 And while we wait to share the Joy reunion will afford,
 We know that "absent from the body is present with the Lord;"
 And there is sweet contentment—"He doeth all things well,"
 There are no "accidents" with Him.

Dear Father, help us tell
 A dying world of Him whose death abolished death and brought
 "Life, immortality, to light," and our salvation bought!

Elsie Lillian Kunert

{Note: This poem was written upon
 the death of Mrs. Kunert's daughter,
 Grace Marie, who was killed by an
 automobile while crossing a street on
 the way home from school.}



photography by Ayako Watanabe

An Eye for an Eye: Our Nation's Blindness

by Dan Meyer

Throughout the history of our society, we have struggled to bring justice to those who break the established laws. Since the very beginning, cultures have used capital punishment as the harshest penalty for the most intolerable crimes. In earlier times, the masses felt that death was a reasonable punishment for a variety of crimes, including anything from rape to petty theft. Today, however, the public seems less sure that any judicial system should have the power to execute a human being, even for murder. Still, the majority believes that the only way justice is served is "an eye for an eye." I feel that this belief holds the needs of a few individuals above the needs of society. Punishing a murder with another murder cannot be considered a reasonable way of exacting justice. In this case, the needs of society must outweigh the needs of the individual.

The argument that a criminal who takes a life deserves to die is at the heart of the widespread support for capital punishment. It seems to be a reasonable argument at first. We all have felt on some level the need to take vengeance. We think about how we would feel to have a loved one murdered, and we decide with great conviction, "Yes, a person should die for committing such a crime." I would argue that this view does not address the larger picture of society. Our culture does not benefit from taking the life of a criminal. The consequences of the criminal's death are minor. The family of the victim feels vindicated, but the victim is not brought back. An outcry is raised for a short time about the injustice of capital punishment, but soon the crowds disperse and all is quiet again. The only lasting effect of the execution is a lingering image of the American judicial system at work. We see a group of people, no better or worse than the rest of us, make a decision to end a life. As we think of these people, we wonder, "Could they make a mistake? Could they have killed an innocent man?" The fact is that we cannot know, in a disputed case, what the truth actually is. We

know of dozens of cases where human beings were wrongly put to death. How then can we continue to exchange murder for murder?

Is it really necessary to our society that the criminal dies? Henry David Thoreau writes, "A man has not everything to do, but something; and since he cannot do everything, it is not necessary that he do something wrong." It is not necessary for our government to commit the crime of murder. Life imprisonment is enough to remove the danger from society. The only reason for a capital punishment is vengeance: vengeance for the victim's family and friends, and even for the general public. We all have seen the images on television: the angry mob outside the prison, anxiously awaiting the countdown to the death of a criminal. We see in these scenes the true reason behind capital punishment. The mob demands "an eye for an eye," so our government gives it to them.

Robert Bellah writes, "If the ideals embodied in an institution are not totally dead, they stand as a judgment against the corruption of their embodiment." Capital punishment runs directly against the ideals that our government is based on. The United States has always been a nation that considered itself a moral role model for the rest of the world. John Winthrop called it "a city set upon a hill." Yet within this great nation of morality, we see a blemish that cannot be hidden. Even as dozens of forward-moving nations around the world have abolished executions as a regrettable part of their past, the United State still clings to its immoral practice.

Capital punishment is, and will continue to be, one of the most hotly contested pieces of our judicial system. In order to change it, we must change the public perception of what it means for the government to take a life. Our society cannot become the morally enlightened society we all hope for if we continue to let morality be determined by the need for vengeance.

Stained Glass

Before the dawn,
like stained glass I stand,
waiting for the light.

An image unfinished,
a beauty not seen.

Illumination
Transformation

A mere image I am,
like stained glass I stand.

Early in the morning,
waiting for the light.

Amy Brewer

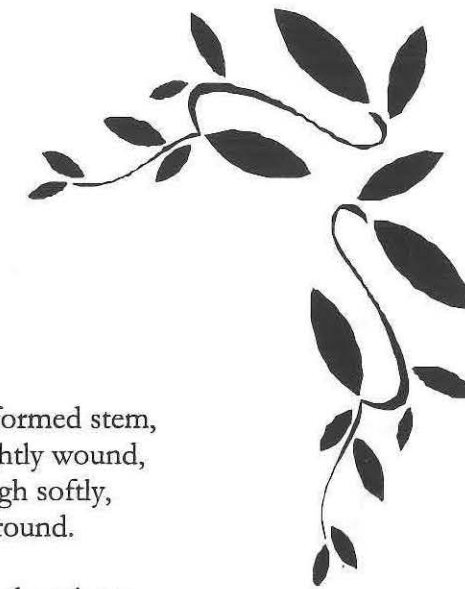
Painted-On Tears

The sky is blue with a softness
as the colors come tumbling down.
The waters are blue with a darkness,
and the children run from the clown.

His eyes increase the intensity
and rage of his years,
but the folds, wrinkles, and creases
cannot mask his tears.

There is no background to his name,
nothing in which he was born;
the lifeless recurrence of his shame—
two identities; he was torn.

Chad VanDeMark



The Seed

A seed planted in good soil,
Waiting for its day to bloom.
Singing softly in the earth
Slowly taking root.

The land above it,
Aglow with spring,
Did not hear
That sweet seed sing.

Along came summer
And the ground was dry.
"So parched," said the seed,
As it struggled by.

But on came the winds
And rainstorms of fall.
The seed did not notice
Its sprout now so tall.

And waving above
That grassy green,
Those humming roots
Remained unseen.

"Winter is upon us,
Autumn is gone."
The seed's small bud
Sang its sorrowful song.

That newly formed stem,
That bud tightly wound,
Slowly, though softly,
Fell to the ground.

But up from the winter
That new bud popped high.
For its slumbering down under
Produced a beautiful sight.

That seed was a sprout,
That sprout was a stem,
The stem that was a bud
Produced a lovely blossom.

So for all its pain
Its winter, so cold,
This flower has a moral
That is often told.

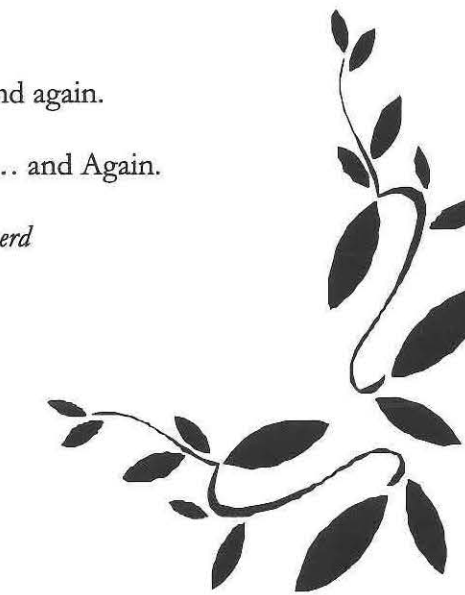
Survive the winter.
Be patient in pain,
For the harsh times make you
Blossom

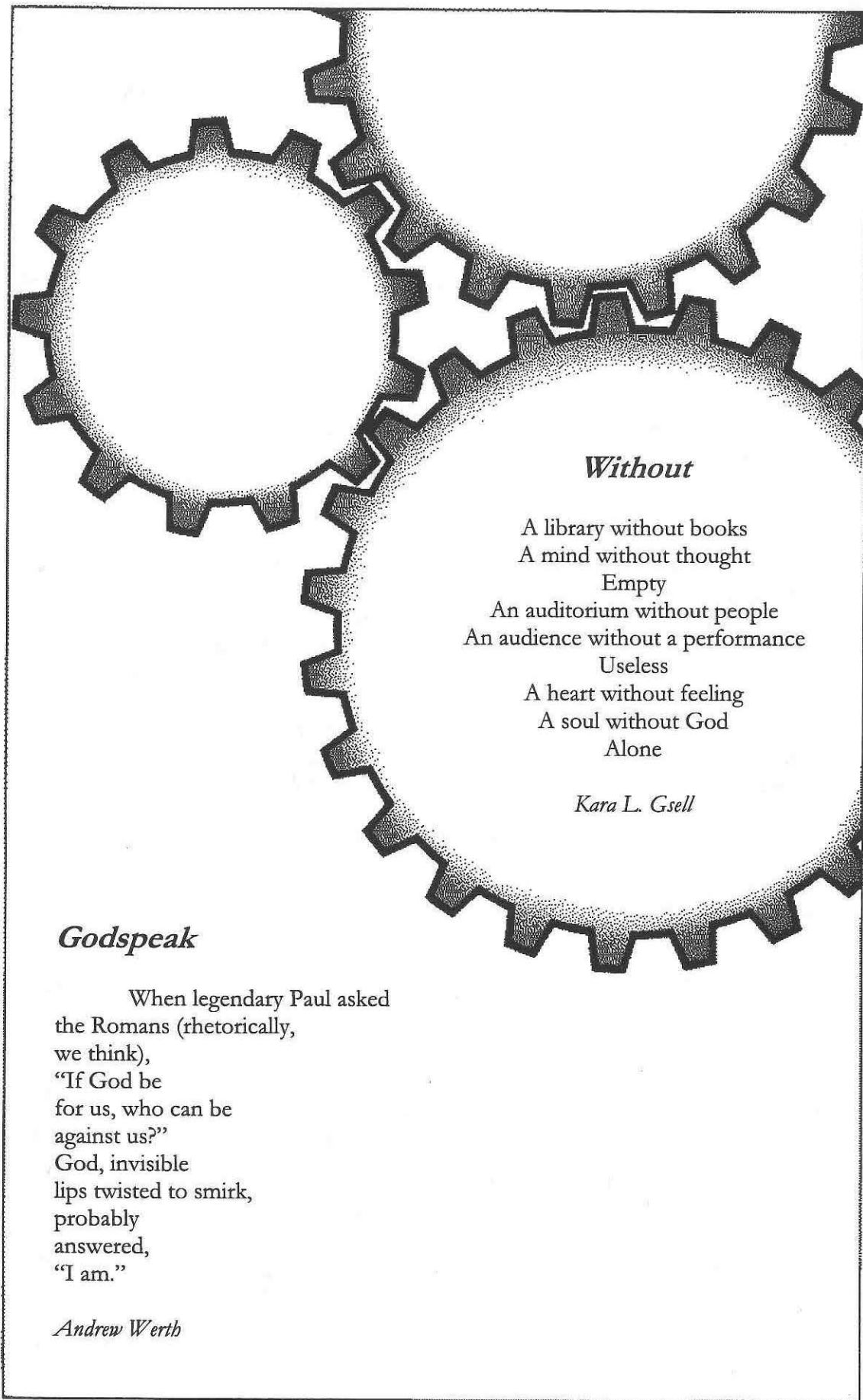
Again.

... and again.

... and Again.

Joanna Humberd





Without

A library without books
 A mind without thought
 Empty
 An auditorium without people
 An audience without a performance
 Useless
 A heart without feeling
 A soul without God
 Alone

Kara L. Gsell

Godspeak

When legendary Paul asked
 the Romans (rhetorically,
 we think),
 "If God be
 for us, who can be
 against us?"
 God, invisible
 lips twisted to smirk,
 probably
 answered,
 "I am."

Andrew Werth

Moving Forward

by Melissa Bond

I headed up the long dark stairway and almost turned back. My feet seemed deaf to the commands my brain was sending them. Move... move... move... nothing. I could take not a step. I knew that I had to continue, it was what must be done. Yet knowing this made it no easier. I looked at that closed attic door and wanted to flee for my very existence. I took a calm, soothing breath and mumbled a quick, almost indiscernible prayer. I tried again, move... move... move... Slowly my feet began to behave. The steps were slowly disappearing. Ten turned to eight, then six to four, now two, and here is the door. My cold, shaking hand remained frozen at the handle to the attic door. Another breath and I quickly turned the knob and threw the door open. Before my little bit of courage could fail me, I stepped into the dark, musty space of the attic. My hand slid along the wall searching for the light switch. The lights flicked on, and the room was cast in an eerie fluorescent glow. I walked across the expanse of the attic taking a quick mental inventory. All was there, just as I remembered it. Not a box, even a one, was out of place. The room appeared to be frozen. It was like time had stopped, but only in this one room.

It had been two years, seven months, and 26 days since anybody had been up here. Nobody had been allowed to even go near the staircase until today. And the only person I would allow that way, the only one who could, was to be me. I made my way to the misshapen stack of boxes by the far window, and with each step my misgivings grew. Was the timing right? Could I at last take the step that I had always feared? It had been a long hard road to get to this destination, and turning back held great appeal. I could turn, go down those steps, and just go on without a backward glance, but no. I had come so far. It was now; the time was right.

I dragged an empty crate over to the window and sat down with a sigh. My arms lifted to the

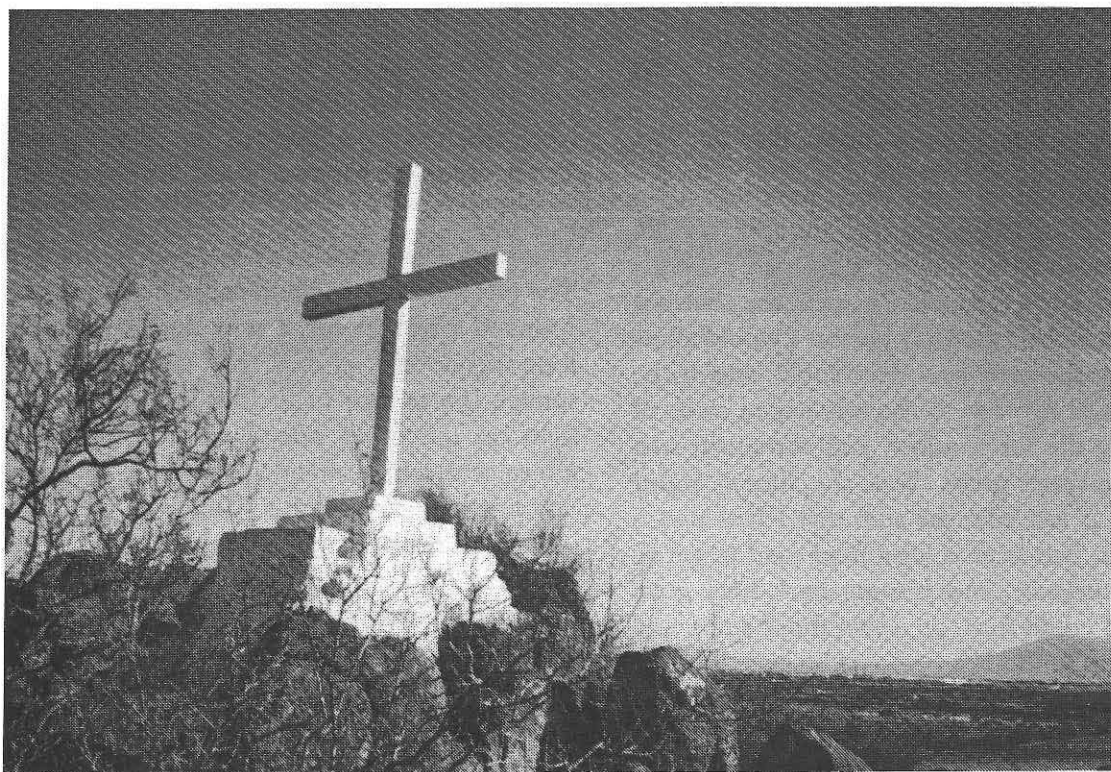
top box. I pulled off the old, slightly yellow tape and began to remove its preserved contents. My hands were shaking, and I could feel the perspiration forming on my neck. I pulled out booties, sleepers and warm blankets, tiny little shoes and unopened packages of bottles. On the bottom was a half-used container of baby wipes, the moisture long gone, and the scent old and stale. The next box held more of the same. The third was filled with pale pink teddy bears and little plastic rattles. Small fuzzy bunnies and laughing Sesame Street characters joined the ensemble. The last box held my biggest fear. I could feel the big wet tears slide down my face as I opened the remaining box. With one hand, I brushed away the unwanted tears, and with the other I slowly tore more of the aged tape away. I pulled out the only item in the large box, a photo album. I added the album to the mound that surrounded the old crate. I could hear the laughter and the giggles as if it were happening at precisely that same moment. The sounds were so alive and so real, I had to actually look around to make sure that I was alone. And I was. The sounds were from my mind. They were being replayed from happy memories. Memories that I had not let myself think of for two years, seven months, and 26 days.

The tears I let myself cry were to be the last. The pile around me could cause no more pain. I was at a new point, a new destination. The long trip down that dark road had led me to a tunnel. It was time to go through and find the light on the other side. I opened the photo album with a hint of anticipation and a heaping amount of awkwardness. Covering the pages were pictures of a smiling baby dressed in the prettiest of pinks. Assorted moments were captured. There was joy, wonder, fright and anger. Times of play followed by moments of peaceful slumber colored the pages. Page after page, the plump baby girl's face was displayed. The last page held no pictures; instead, there was a newspaper clipping folded in half, stuck under the plastic. It was a short article; the title

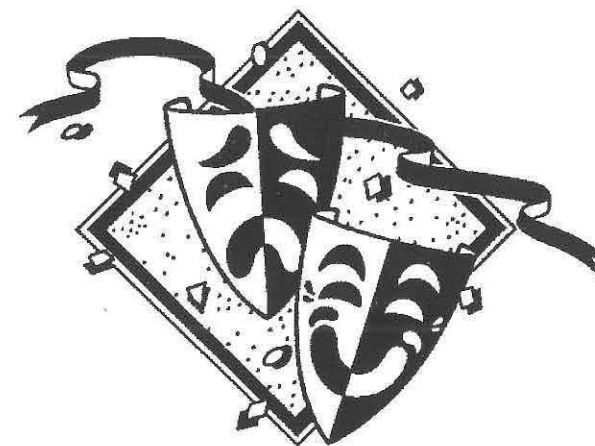
read "Husband and Infant Die, Mother Left Seriously Injured." Once again the memories assailed my senses. I could hear the squeal of the tires as the car tried to stop, and the tearing of metal when the car began to flip. Then the pain, the gut-wrenching kind that prevents all other thoughts from entering your mind, followed by the whine of the sirens. I remembered the shock at discovering I alone had survived. And I felt the sorrow that overcame me and held me a prisoner for almost three years. But no more tears fell. The pain had faded. The memories were there, but the weight of them was no longer enough to keep me down. I closed the album and set it aside. Then I began to put the tiny pieces of clothing, the toys and bottles away. Each item went to the place from whence it had come, and new tape was placed over the folds. I reached into my pocket and pulled out a black permanent marker, the kind where the fumes make you a little high, and wrote on the boxes "Goodwill."

Then I set the marker down.

I felt as if I had achieved some sort of prize. I reached my goal; the weight and burden were forever gone from my tired shoulders. I could look into the past without regret or self-pity. I could look back and smile now. I stood and began the task of removing the boxes from their resting place in the attic. Down to the car and back up again I walked. And with each heavy load my mood got brighter and my step a little lighter. The car was loaded and suddenly I stopped. I went back upstairs to the attic room and grabbed the photo album. There was no need to keep it in a box anymore. I could look at it with a clear conscience. I held the album under my arm and went to the door. I took one last look at the attic, switched off the light and headed down the stairs. But this time I walked with a smile on my face and a steady hand. I had no more to fear and much more to look forward to.



photography by Ayako Watanabe



"Godspell"

I was very excited when asked to review Concordia's spring play, *Godspell*. I enjoy drama, and it gives me a good excuse to incorporate entertainment with school. But I didn't know exactly what to expect. Many people who had already gone to see it told me it was wonderful, and I would really enjoy it. But I had a hard time guessing what it would really be about. I asked one of the stars of the play what her part was. She said there were not really specific characters and it was a bunch of skits and dancing and music. I have never heard of a play like this, but I like to try new things.

Well, the fact is I really did enjoy it. And I was right in not knowing what to expect. I have never seen anything like this before. In the opening act, the characters come dancing down the aisles dressed in bright, outrageous clothing; singing and acting just plain goofy. I have to admit, I did not know quite what to think. I was afraid it would be a bit too corny for my taste. Well, it was pretty corny. But I found myself laughing heartily and completely responding to the cast/crowd interaction.

Set in present-day times, *Godspell* is a collection of skits, interpretations, and teachings of the Gospel of Matthew. Only, let me tell you, this was not quite like church. The cast made the Gospel relevant to today's society, and it made me think about serious subjects in life—without even realizing it. The music was fun, but

Critic's Corner

by Cindy Gardner

still sounded aesthetically beautiful. It was the most creative and original production I have ever seen, and I doubt I will see anything quite like it again. Others must have agreed, because every show was sold out.

The enthusiasm of the entire cast really got me excited about the play. Every audience member felt a part of it. I was especially impressed with the performances of Gary Cadwising (John the Baptist, Judas), Sara Vickery, Jon Dressler, and Heidi Wilke. Carmela Lanza-Weil directed, and did an excellent job. The costumes, designed by Allison Arnold, were fabulous. They really brought out the mood of the play. And finally, the band—made up of Randy Hobson (piano), Rudy Grigar (percussion), Andrew Werth (bass), and Walter Karas (guitar)—created a dynamic atmosphere that made me really get into the music. On behalf of the audiences that attended, I would like to thank the Concordia University drama department for this amazing production. Hope you can compete with this next year!

My only complaint: I did not receive a program until a week after the production, when they found out I was doing a review. Please print more out next time for during the play!



choice
 lovin'
 just
 one
 i explore
 your
 mind so
 natural
 i pray
 to release
 my spirit
 deep inside
 abandoned
 orphan
 eyes
 my sister
 beautiful mexican
 features
 Jesus
 looks out
 from behind
 her
 eyes
 when
 i see her
 i see life
 i see
 easter
 sunday
 mama
 named
 her
 grace
 she is mine
 my own
 she owns me
 as the Lord
 bought my
 soul
 on sunday
 i am for her a slave

Donovan Riley

God's Tool

Woman, a broad term.
 Woman, created by God.
 But why?

A woman's comforting touch,
 A woman's soothing kiss.
 The warm compassion God sends
 That bursts from her smile.
 A woman.

Woman, man's secret holder.
 Woman, created by God.
 But why?

A woman's open ear,
 A woman's embracing arms.
 The words God sends
 That flow into her letters.
 A woman.

Woman, special tool.
 Woman, created by God.

Melissa Bond

Woman

The leadership she has within.
 The laughter and sorrow behind a grin.
 The love she holds,
 Fitting all God's molds.
 The Dream she dreams,
 The sowing of all life's seams.
 The friendship she gives,
 The life she lives.
 The touch of her hand
 As one and together walking in the sand.
 She gives all she is, all that she'll be,
 All that she'll never be.
 The Loves she had, the Loves she's lost;
 The price to pay, the high cost.
 The job she has, the one she'll never see,
 Trusting one and all three.

Nicole LaPage Schluter

Fingerprint Me, God

Draw me my life
With friends that are true.
Draw me protection
Like a hug straight from you.

Paint me, O God,
With your grace and mercy.
Paint me, O God,
With your loving care.
Paint me, O God,
With your subtle tenderness.
Paint me, O God,
Let me know you are there.

Color my heart, my Holy Lord.
Color my mind with peace.
Color my face with joy, Jehova.
Color my faith increased.

Draw me as your child, Lord,
In your blessed family.
Paint me as your servant, God,
Working on bended knee.
Color me in your masterpiece,
Helping others look and see.
Mold me in your work of art,
Letting others know they're free.

Jessi Felcher

春

Spring

春



brush painting by Ayako Watanabe

真

Truth

真

brush painting by Ayako Watanabe

A Tear for the Irish Folk

child in the street so dirty why do you weep?
IT WAS ONLY A GUNSHOT
perhaps it was someone you know?
YOUR FATHER, YOU SAY
poor girl, who has done this?
A CATHOLIC

child in the street so dirty why do you weep?
IT WAS ONLY A GUNSHOT
perhaps it was someone you know?
YOUR MOTHER, YOU SAY
poor boy, who has done this?
A PROTESTANT

Hed the children's cries, for one one wins in
their eyes—no one.

Zach Davis

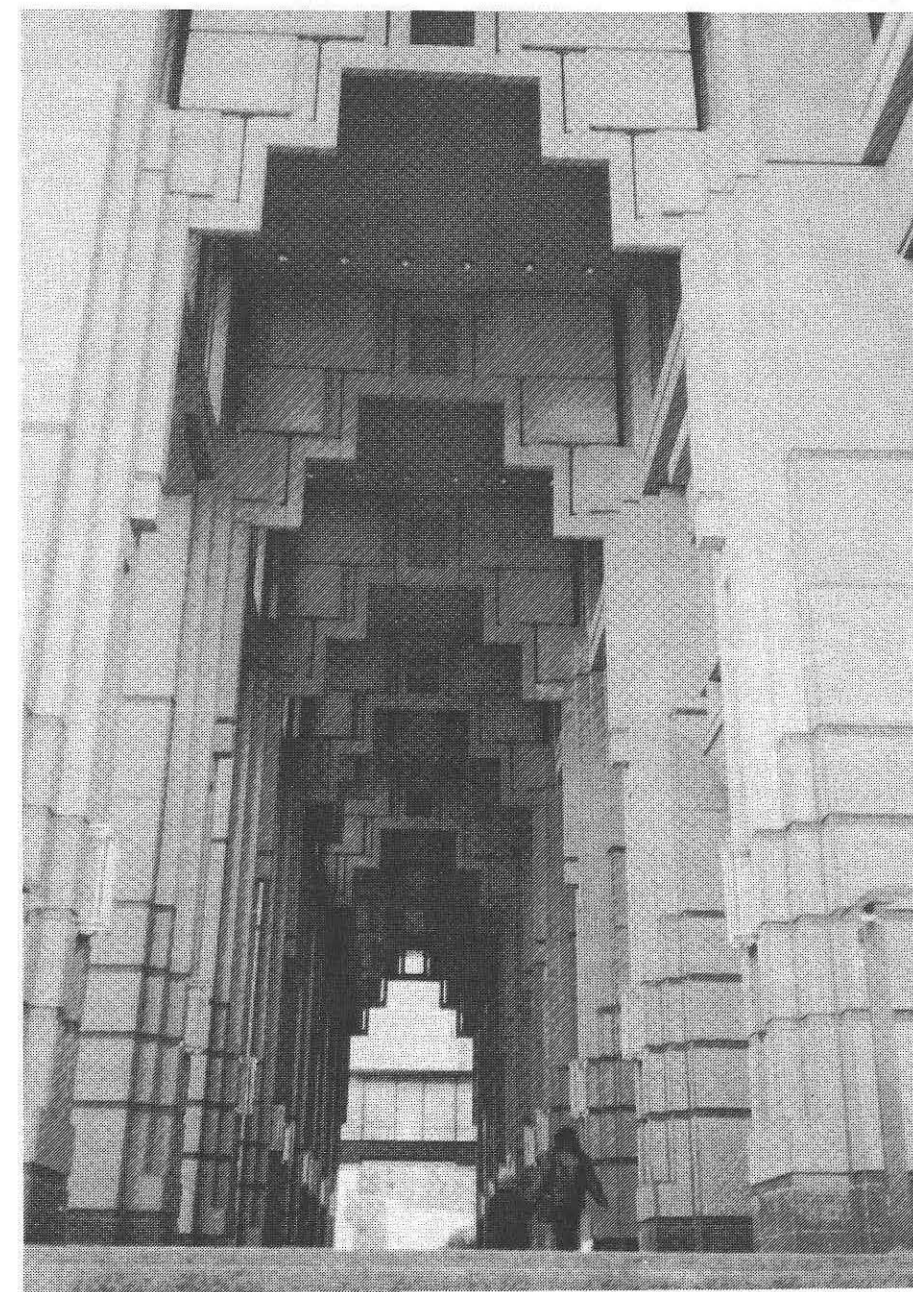
Psalm 50:11

"I know every bird in the mountains,
and the creatures of the field are mine."

"I know the Lord," says the mocking bird.
"I comfort Him with my song.
I wake up the day with His praise,
and He stays with me all day long."

"I know the Lord," says the white-tailed deer.
"I delight Him with my prance.
I bound through the field with a glad heart,
and He and I gracefully dance."

Jessi Felcher



photography by Ayako Watanabe

Brand New Skin

One boy blinking in dusky nowhere-ness,
caught between two trembling worlds
(his awakened skin stretching gently)
paused on midnight's threshold.

Silken curtains part: slender
fingers, fire-scented, unroll like
scarlet tongues of perfumed linen;
curl insidiously toward rippled wet-warmth.

And I, a low-eyed viper
desperate to exchange poisons,
And I, a lonely vapor gripping
tight this rust-salted pillar, slowly
uncoil.

Andrew Werth

Lover

Devour my soul
That essence of me which
Holds all my restrained hunger
Restore my faith in life
That verve allowing me the pain
For living each day alone
Remove from me my selfishness
Allow me the freedom
Of looking outside my desires
Enamor me with your charm
Deliver me from my despondence

Charlotte Evensen

Fiery Stone Breast

Stirred within—majestic fires suffused in shades
unexpressed by my unadorned words, consuming
determined paths. Literature, art, music striking
fires uncontrollably ablaze throughout fashions of
God's artistic hand. Heat procured unfelt by
hell's most unfathomable depths. Shakespeare's
words, Monet's canvas, Mozart's symphonies—
brilliance intensifies, the sun is shamed.

Unwillingly, fire encounters struggles—crushing
waves, beating barriers of stone, now sand
unseen on ocean floors. Heavy, forwarding
waters deny mighty glacial sources, God.
Smoldering charcoal, forgotten inferno;
Remnants awaiting an enlivening spark.

Afire again—resurgence, God's unabating creational,
presence. Glow alights my eyes, unveiling fiery breast's
secrets. World's waves ceaseless, yet failing against
eternal guardian flames, fed by God, His spirit, His
creations. Embracing works rich in spirit, as the infant
to mother's breast, suckling flowing nourishment—
emotion, experience, not mine own, yet alive in me.

Kara L. Gsell

Bound

Brown skin
drenched by savannah heat
East-african girl.
Trained by primal instincts-
Sharpened by the need for survival,
The need to escape poverty's
Suffocating prison,
East-African girl.
Elegant,
graceful in her majestic surroundings
Eloquent in the futility
of her passion-to be more than mere vessel,
more than simple carriage of
the seed.
East-African girl.

Charlotte Evensen

The Darksucker Conspiracy

by Mary Duncan

For years, the electrical utility companies have led the public to believe that they were in business to supply electricity to the consumer, a service for which they charge a substantial rate. The recent accidental acquisition of secret records from a well-known power company has led to a research campaign which positively explodes several myths and exposes the massive hoax which has been perpetrated upon the public by the power companies.

The most common hoax promoted the false concept that light bulbs emitted light; in actuality, these 'light' bulbs absorb DARK, which is then transported back to the power generation stations via wire networks. A more descriptive name now has been coined; the new scientific name for the device is DARKSUCKER.

This article introduces a brief synopsis of the darksucker theory, which proves the existence of dark and establishes the fact that dark has great mass, and, further, that the dark particle (anti-photon) is the fastest known particle in the universe. Apparently, even Dr. Albert Einstein did not suspect the truth—that just as COLD is the absence of HEAT, LIGHT is the absence of DARK. Scientists have now proven that light does not really exist!

The basis of the darksucker theory is that electric light bulbs suck dark. Take, for example, the darksuckers in the room where you are right now. There is much less dark right next to the darksuckers than there is elsewhere, demonstrating their limited range. The larger the darksucker, the greater its capacity to suck dark. Darksuckers in a parking lot or on a football field have a much greater capacity than the ones used in the home, for example.

It may come as a surprise to learn that darksuckers also operate on a celestial scale; witness the Sun. Our Sun makes use of dense dark, sucking it in from all the planets and intervening dark space. Naturally, the Sun is better able to suck dark from the planets which are situated closer to it, thus explaining why those planets appear brighter than do those which are far distant from the Sun.

Occasionally, the Sun actually oversucks; under those conditions, dark spots appear on its

surface. Scientists have long studied these 'sunspots' and are only recently beginning to realize that the dark spots represent leaks of high pressure dark because the Sun has oversucked dark to such an extent that some dark actually leaks back into space. This leakage of high pressure dark frequently causes problems with radio communications here on Earth due to collisions between the dark particles as they stream out into space at high velocity via the black 'holes' in the surface of the Sun.

As with all manmade devices, darksuckers have a finite lifetime caused by the fact that they are not 100% efficient at transmitting collected dark back to the power company via the wires from your home, causing dark to build up slowly within the device. Once they are full of accumulated dark, they can no longer suck. This condition can be observed by looking for the black spot on a full darksucker when it has reached maximum capacity of untransmitted dark—you have surely noticed that dark completely surrounds a full darksucker because it no longer has the capacity to suck any dark at all.

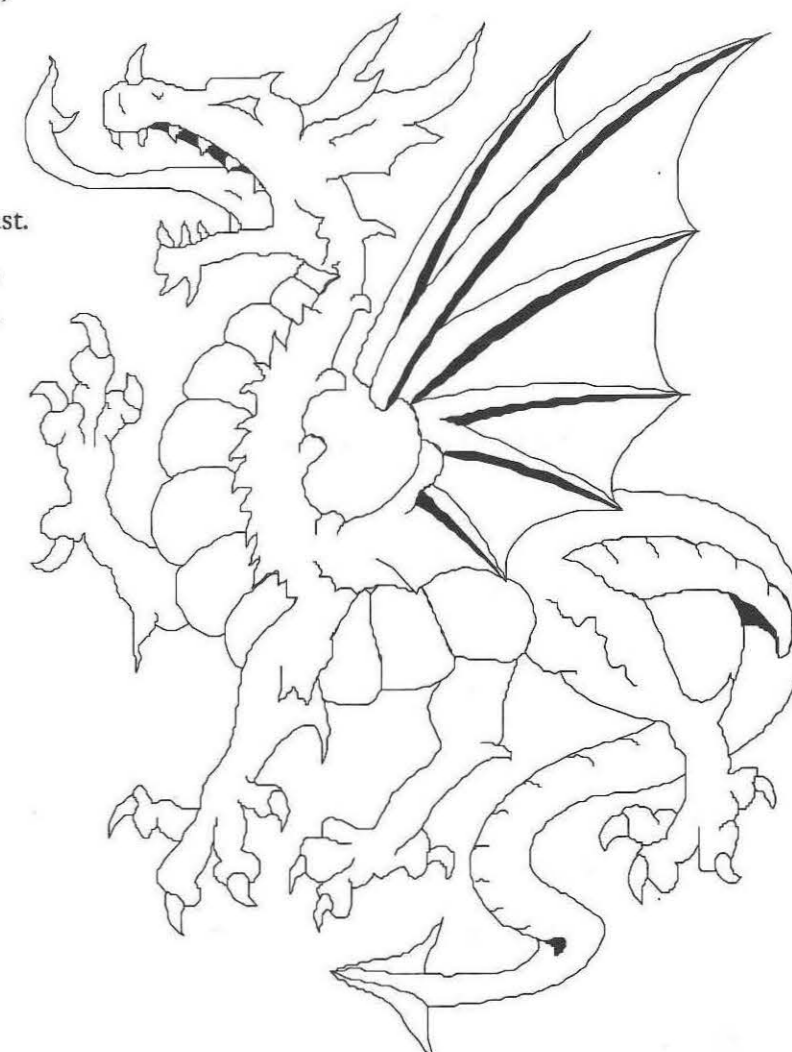
A candle is a primitive darksucker. A new candle has a white wick. After the first use, the wick turns black, representing all the dark which has been sucked into it. If you hold a pencil next to the wick of an operating candle, the tip will turn black because it got in the way of the dark flowing into the candle. It is of no use to plug a candle into an electrical outlet; it can only collect dark; it has no transmission capabilities. Unfortunately, these primitive darksuckers have a very limited range and are hazardous to operate because of the intense heat produced.

There are also portable darksuckers called flashlights. The bulbs in these devices collect dark which is passed to a dark storage unit called a battery. When the dark storage unit is full, it must be either emptied ('recharged') or replaced before the portable darksucker can continue to operate. If you break open a battery, you will find dense black dark inside, evidence that it is actually a compact dark storage unit.

The Dragon

The dragon spread its mighty wings,
 Attacked my room of all the things.
 Broke my windows, smashed the walls,
 Screamed horrendous mating calls.
 Tore up curtains, toasted chairs,
 Crushed the railing to the stairs.
 Stomped my T.V. into dust,
 Gulped down my new Shakespeare bust.
 Flamed the kitchen, burned the doors,
 Then filled the house with noisy roars.
 Scared as death, I watched him romp,
 Gulping what he couldn't stomp.
 Then, just as I overcame my fear,
 Off it flew, with all the beer.
 In fact, it took the vodka too,
 Its reason why, I never knew.
 The creature just flew higher, higher,
 Mom, HE'S the reason it's on fire.
 Don't blame me, your darling son,
 After all, I'm not the one,
 Who broke your photo of the pope,
 Who covered all the walls with soap,
 Who pulverized your china mugs,
 Who peed on both your Persian rugs,
 Who ruined your brand-new stereo,
 What else it did, I just don't know.
 It wasn't me partying, 'cause you were gone,
 All I did was homework, and watered the lawn.
 I thought that you wouldn't be back 'til December,
 But that doesn't matter, the thing to remember,
 Is when you go inside, all the damage you see,
 Is from that darn dragon mom ... not from me.

Michael Schultz



Band Tour to Venus

by Robert Brake

Mary Anderson had the look of a victim—mousy hair, unflattering glasses, the fashion sense of a twelve-year-old, and a face that telegraphed gullibility. Nevertheless, she liked to hang out with Dick, Don, Beetle, Lefty, and me—hip college sophomores who swore allegiance to 1958 jazz giants like Dizzy, Miles, and Thelonius, and peppered our conversations with words like man, cool, and funky.

Mary was square. We were spherical. She—a happy prisoner of the conventional. We—big fans of Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. A gifted gang of gagsters, we saved opportunities to put people on. One windy March day in '58, Mary provided one.

Embarking on the Gold Star Band tour, we scrambled for choice front seats on the bus and prepared for the boring, flat-road trip through North Dakota. As our old bus lumbered out of West Fargo, we passed Old Man Fradet's Fish Market, noticed messages on the ubiquitous billboards, and began making up songs to them—tossing hip phrases with abandon.

Bugged by our banter, Mary innocently blurted, "You guys act like you're from outer space." Glancing at the soon-to-be victim, Lefty looked upward, scanned us, smiled perversely, and nodded subtly—much like Perry Mason when he suddenly cracked the case. Lefty had a plan—to convince Mary we were from another planet.

After the concert in Jamestown, we gathered to plan the caper. Lefty, a psych major, Navy veteran, and natural leader, suggested we sprinkle a few facts among some plausible falsehoods to transport square Mary to the Twilight zone.

Venus was our planet of choice, since it had the kind of moonless, cloudy appearance that resembled parts of North Dakota. But how would we describe Venusians? Sci-fi buffs usually described them as short, bald, and bug-eyed, or as seedy, slimy, low-intelligence types

whose spaceships operated on giant vacuum tubes. They had parking-meter faces, long arms, short necks, and flat waists.

Dead set on maiming or killing earthlings who didn't understand them, Venusians frequently abducted female earthlings like Zsa Zsa Gabor for breeding purposes to save their dying planet. But this was too incredible—even for Mary.

Then we discussed the policemen-of-the-universe angle—seven-foot mind-readers resembling portable radios with teeth and short hair, whose lips never moved. But the interplanetary bogeyman angle wouldn't work. Bit too scary for Mary, we surmised.

And when we learned that Mary had seen *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, we rejected the klaatu, barada, nikto, peace-and-brotherhood bit.

Eventually we improvised a plausible scenario. Since Lefty looked Venusian, we would ask him to describe his translations of Venusian cryptograms—intricate philological theorems he had examined at the Venusian Institute of Technology in Toronto. The cryptograms revealed that a small number of human look-alikes were regularly visiting Earth.

Lefty told us how he had discovered a rare, out-of-print book called *Venusian Secret Science* that offered a detailed description of Venus, the Venusians, and their missions to Earth. He insisted that Venusians were not ugly, blood-curdling behemoths, but vertebrate, warm-blooded creatures who bore a striking resemblance to Teutonic earthlings—especially Scandinavians—so they could blend in while conducting their studies of our backward civilization.

These efficient human look-alikes were visiting North Dakota to study our agriculture so they could create a paradise of agricultural abundance. According to Lefty, Venusians were usually six feet tall, blond-haired, blue-eyed, and extremely intelligent—just like us.

Lefty warned us that Venusians liked to blend in among young, gullible earthlings and invade their minds while they slept. This was a steal from *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, which Mary hadn't seen.

On the third day of the tour, each of us, wearing a white tee shirt, placed a large band-aid on the lower right side of his neck, to hide a small incision made by Venusians while we slept. The incision implanted the thought-control device necessary to vacuum our brains and make us unwitting dupes. We often dropped casual asides about the Venusians—like how they spoke perfect English, but in a sing-song pattern. Naturally, we all spoke in sing-song fashion.

Since Venusians seldom displayed emotions—much like Mary—we spoke and behaved in a cool, detached demeanor. And occasionally we looked at Mary with deep, probing looks, sometimes staring at her as though we could see through her.

We told Mary, a clarinetist, that Venusians were intrigued with earth music and that, if she played concert B flat to tune up, they would be immediately attracted to her. During the next four days, none of us heard Mary tune up to concert B flat.

One day, we all wore gray clothing—the Venusians' favorite color, we suggested. Beetle, who always seemed confused about earthling fashion, somehow forgot and opted to wear his usual bizarre combination of stripes and plaids.

Sometimes we asked Lefty if he'd heard from Celeste, his blond, voluptuous accordion-playing girlfriend who played "Lady of Spain" flawlessly. References to Celeste as "one of them" seemed perfect for our story line, since she often consorted with Ross Phipps, a sycophant who liked to hang out with us and who always had a kind of spaced-out Venusian look about him.

Four days later, we had relentlessly pulled off our put-on—so well that poor Mary was convinced we were all becoming victims of thought-controlling Venusians.

The diabolical plot had its adverse effects on Mary. Her slender body became reed-like, her face was pale, and her eyes sagged from worry and lack of sleep. On the last day of the tour, Lefty debriefed innocent Mary, confessing that she was the victim of a clever ruse we should have nipped earlier to relieve her trepidation.

We'd enjoyed a good laugh at Mary's expense and brushed aside any feelings of guilt about the incident. After all, we'd done no lasting damage to Mary's psyche.

Early in September I noticed Mary on her way to home ec. class and cautiously inquired, "How you doing, Mary?" She nodded curtly and, with a hint of sadness, remarked, "Only the wearer knows how much the shoe pinches." She pivoted and briskly walked away. Although Mary continued to play in the second clarinet section of the Gold Star Concert Band, she was inexplicably absent during the annual spring tour.

Seven years later, I thought I spotted Mary in Cleveland, Ohio. But it couldn't be here, I conjectured. She seemed too perky, too fashion-conscious, too vibrant to be the victim of our Venusian caper. As we slowly approached each other, I noticed she had frosted her hair blond, wore an elegant gray suit, and sported a small band-aid on the lower right side of her neck. She nodded as we passed—saying nothing—but looked at me in a way that suggested she could see right through me.



Around Me

What are they staring at?
 What could it be?
 There's no one around except me.
 What did I do?
 What could it be?
 "It's the glow all around you.
 That's what we see."
 What... I've never noticed
 Oh could it be!
 It's God's love and protection that's all around me.

Beth Balliet

Ariel's Verse

In Shakespeare's story—"The Tempest," I mean—
 Where sprites and witches reign supreme,
 A little spirit (Ariel, by name)
 Has for his obedience and mischief won fame.

Elsie Lillian Kunert

{Note: This poem was written in 1924 when the poet was 13 years old and a student at Bethlehem Lutheran School in Detroit, Michigan. }

6:30
 in the a.m.
 prayin'
 for the people
 who know

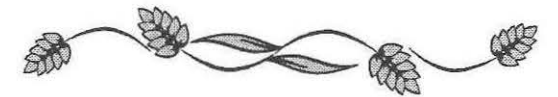
there's only one path
 & one path only
 it's the path of
 relentless
 struggle

8:00
 in the a.m.
 leavin' my home
 new day
 with the homeless
 who know

brothers & sisters
 justice is global
 there's no unity
 'til freedom is total

12:00
 in the high noon
 feelin' spiritual
 stripped sober
 fascinated
 with this satellite
 my society

blacks & whites
 paintin' inside
 the numbers
 missin' the rhythms
 the beats
 harmony



3:30
 in the p.m.
 talkin' with the takers
 little bitty greedy men
 tryin' expandin'
 pushin' my mind
 reducin' me
 producin' in me

buyin' & sellin'
 for the poor
 the benjamins
 & a dollar bill
 is a prison cell
 fences

9:00
 in the p.m.
 I'm dreamin'
 children
 most beautiful
 under wide open designs
 transformin' the lines
 tellin' landlords,
 "we won't conform
 everywhere is our home"

prophets & the profit sharers
 dig deep the dirt
 the rock you call your floor
 it's not about you
 it's about the children

of
 the Lord

12:00
 in the hush
 i kneel
 in front of the mirror
 dimly
 reflected my prayer echoes
 back at my soul
 the city

Donovan Riley

The Sign Says "Not Wanted"

by Kara L. Gsell

As someone who has always been entranced by the ability of writers to create images and invoke emotion in their readers, I have, of late, taken great interest in improving and publishing some of my own work. I am keenly aware that my writing is sorely amateur, and in my quest I am prepared to receive countless rejections. I have already braced myself against rejection of works that generate from my soul and expose my very being. However, upon embarking on this publishing mission, I am bombarded with what my mind pictures as a sign with a blinding white background and bold, red print warning, "CHRISTIANS NOT WANTED."

I recall history classes where I learned of the days of the immigrant in which signs posted on businesses clarified beyond any doubt that Irish, German, or other specified groups of workers were not welcome for employment or service. Mistakenly, our society believes that we have evolved from days filled with discrimination of this sort. However, within this contemporary mindset in which exists no right or wrong but that which one makes for oneself, publishers of writing have made the conspicuous decision that Christian writing is wrong. Apparently, our celebration of diversity does not include the religious convictions of the Christian population.

Initially, I was enthusiastic at the prospect of setting out as an independent young writer of poetry. I sought journals and reference books providing information about the "how's, where's and why's" of being published. My blaze of excitement was quickly detected and extinguished by the publishing gods. My hopes were mercilessly ripped from my heart, sure to leave an uneven scar of battle. Most simply stated, bold print informed that poetry of a religious, particularly Christian, character was not wanted. It is assumed that such writing is sweet, mushy, or preachy by nature.

For a short while, I was able to overlook the prejudice towards Christian writers because some Christian forums, although not all suited to my work, were available. However, I was entirely appalled upon discovering that a particular publication requested poetry portraying life's "ups and downs" (a rather trite phrase, I might add), but that Christian poetry would not be accepted. I was suddenly enraged. A wave of disgust at such an arrogant display of intolerance swelled through my emotions, ruthlessly washing away my preconception that I live in a society accepting of religious diversity. I immediately thought, "My life has ups and downs. The lives of people in my congregation have ups and downs. They deal with death, divorce, teen pregnancy, abuse of all kinds, and all other of life's aspects. Why should I and other Christians be excluded from submitting poetry to a publication desiring poetry reflecting exactly these topics?" Apparently, because I contemplate my creator rather than violence or death when I am faced with tumultuous times, my writing is unacceptable. Perhaps my writing is useless because I do not attribute life's "ups" to my own effort, but to the hand of God. But it is not useless. It is needed to prove the point that not all Christians are mushy writers with sing-song, Brady Bunch lives, that we are capable of writing quality verse reflective of life as it is lived by countless persons.

I want to shout to the literary world that my poetry speaks to the storms and sun breaks of daily living. It is crafted from *my* experience, the experience that God has given expressly unto me. I refuse to write to the confines of writing created by those who condemn the belief that I chose and allow to guide my life. I *will* continue to write and to let my faith penetrate that writing, because I will know that it exceeds the worldly desires for fame and is composed with integrity in order to glorify God and what he has done for us.

Another Day

I sit surrounded by darkness.
Alone with my mind,
Alone with my thoughts
Watching ideas fall down like rain.
In the warm darkness I weep.
Weep for a better time,
Weep for a better life
The tears drain into the puddle of night,
Memories once held so pure
gleam weakly in the starlight
dull and tarnished, remnants from a ruined house.
Tarnished by time,
by life,
by struggles,
by intelligence.
The darkness speaks,
whispering epics of dusty times past
the images reflected in the puddle.
Like quicksilver, memories flow
a motion picture of the past.
A crack appears in the puddle,
the silver drains away.
Daylight streams into the darkness.
Another day begins.

Tom Long

Through June 12.
Planet Trek at Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, 797-4610. To become an OMSI volunteer, call 797-4644.

Through August 8.
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May 2. Spring Commencement.

May 28-June 21.
Portland Rose Festival. 227-2681.

June 17-30. MADE for Kids camp.

August 25. Fall Semester begins.

April 29. 2:00-3:00 p.m., Promethean publication party, Luther Hall, Room 104.

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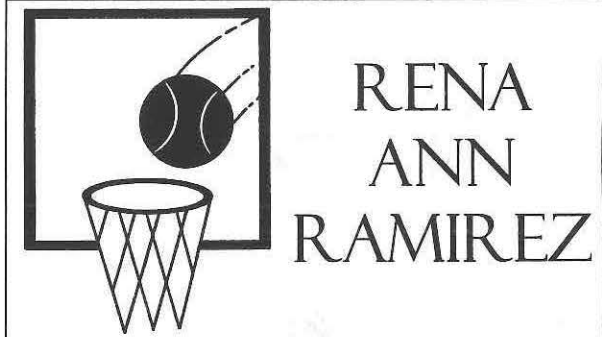
BMC CLASS #63

Business Management and Communications member **Will Glessner** would like to thank the following people. Without their presence, support, contributions, and patience, my gains would have been smaller, my experiences diminished, and my academic success much harder to obtain:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Bonnie Long | Lou Bauer |
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| Lorrie Miller | Dixie Rickman |
| Bonnie White | Susie VanBuskirk |
| Michael Jones | Rainman |

Let's get together again soon! I still have coffee left over ...

Missy, no one can compare to you! I'm glad God sent you here. Have a great Graduation. I'll miss you. Who will keep me in line? See you in Europe. I know you have a great future ahead! Love, Beth.

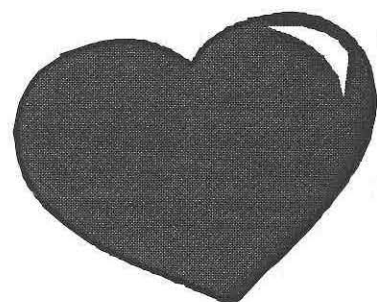


RENA ANN RAMIREZ

CONGRATULATIONS!
WE ARE VERY PROUD OF YOU.

LOVE, MOM & JIM

**Congratulations
Jen!**



*"Oh, the places you'll go!"
Mom, Dad, Larry, and
Theresa*

[for Jen Russell]

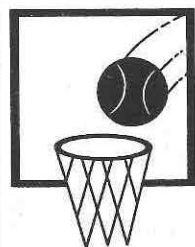
**Congratulations
Carrie —**



We're proud of you.

Love Dad, Bev, & the family.

[for Carolyn Dimon]



*Jodee
Thickins*

*We salute your tenacity
and honor your
athletic and academic
accomplishments!*

♥ *Dad, Mom,
Julee, Dan, Joel*

Melody James

*We are anxiously waiting -
please hurry!*

Your Future Students



Another goal achieved!

**Congratulations,
Alex!**

*Proudly with love,
Mom and Dad*

[for Alexander Reed]

**Cindy Gardner!
Good luck—
we'll miss you!**

The office just won't
be the same!



love, Dove and Hope

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About the Contributors

Beth Balliet is a theatre major who loves cartoons. Writing helps her to express the things she usually cannot say.

Rachelle Bigger is a CU Admissions counselor and 1996 alumna. She spends her free moments pursuing her interests in Ireland. She will be attending the American Conference of Irish Studies Spring conference in Fort Lauderdale in April.

Melissa Bond is a junior, majoring in Elementary Education (Professional Church Work) and Theatre for Youth. She loves to sing, act, and read. She also loves children. Melissa writes from the heart—which is a hard thing to share! She hopes her work is enjoyed.

Robert Brake is a freelance writer and former business professor at Concordia.

Amy Brewer is an elementary education/PCW major who graduated in 1997. She now works at St. Michael's with the After School Kids program.

Zach Davis is a theology student whose dream is to play punk rock and eat Twinkies. "Thanks Renée and to my Irish heritage! God saves cuz I can't."

Mary Duncan is a graduate of George Washington University in Washington, D.C. She works in the publishing business and is a friend of *Promethean* editorial staff member Bobby Rameres. For a copy of her underground 'zine, write to 1660 Lanier Pl. NW #519, Washington, DC 20009.

Charlotte Evensen is a junior English major. She enjoys art and drama, and has been very involved in the *Promethean* both semesters this year.

Cindy Gardner is a sophomore Health and Fitness Management major. She plays varsity soccer at Concordia University, and this is her second semester working on the *Promethean* staff.

Jessi Felcher:
"Only by the grace of God!"

Kara L. Gsell is a first-semester senior who plans to become a high school language arts teacher. It is her desire to use her passion for writing and literature in order to reach her students. Kara is the recipient of the first place *Promethean* prize for spring semester.

Lindsey Heinritz is a transfer student from California. Her major is Elementary Education and Professional Church Work.

Joanna Humberd is a senior studying elementary education at CU. She would love to go overseas and teach English as a second language. She also hopes to use writing as a ministry tool in the future. Until then, she'll just study, sleep, and study some more. ☺

Elsie Lillian Kunert is the mother of Dr. Charles Kunert, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. Now 86 years old, Elsie Kunert lives in Portland, Oregon and still enjoys writing poetry.

Tom Long is a junior Humanities major at CU. His poetry is inspired by the Beat poets of the 50's.

Dan Meyer is a sophomore Elementary Education Major at Concordia.

Donovan Riley is a pre-seminary student preparing for entrance into the seminary this summer. He hopes to work in the inner city and prepare for missionary service in the U.S. and abroad.

Nicole LaPage Schluter is an education major from Olympia, Washington.

Michael Schultz: "I am Michael, hear me roar. 19, lost in thought, couldn't escape from self-actualization, oh well...free-thinkers unite!"

Junko Takashio is an international student from Japan who is studying psychology.

Chad VanDeMark is a varsity soccer player from Shoreline, Washington. Chad is the recipient of the third place *Promethean* prize for spring semester.

Ayako Watanabe is a freshman Psychology major. She was very pleased that so many people liked her work in the last *Promethean*. She is glad to introduce Japanese calligraphy this time. Ayako is the recipient of the second place *Promethean* prize for spring semester.

Andrew Werth is a senior at Concordia who enjoys making music and writing words.



