

Spring 1993

Spring 1993

Valparaiso University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholar.valpo.edu/lighter_62-03



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Valparaiso University, "Spring 1993" (1993). *The Lighter, 1962-2003*. Paper 60.
http://scholar.valpo.edu/lighter_62-03/60

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Lighter, 1962-2003 by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.

The Lighter

Spring 1993



The Lighter

Volume XXXVIII issue two
Spring, 1993
(Valparaiso University)

Editor

Michael Chasar

Assistant Editor

Kevin Lindamood

Art Editor

Nancy Bernardo

Faculty Advisor

John Ruff

Literary Selection Committee

*Carolyn Blair, Meridith Brand, Kristin Bierlein, Christopher Hanson,
Kevin Hoffman, Sara Steinbrueck, Kate Weizel, Lynn Flowers, Laura
Erickson, Cindy Belletini, Heather Gorman, Kate Kitzman, Jennifer
Krentz, Lisa Montelpasse, Susan Jasicki*

Art Selection Committee

*Kimberly Gessert, Kerry Ghormley,
Kristin Schwain, Simeon Carson, Ron Klemme*

Copyright 1993, *The Lighter*

Home Mountain Publishing, Valparaiso, IN

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any way,
shape or form without the express written consent of

The Lighter Editors

The Lighter

Zounds!
I was never so
bethumped with words!

—William Shakespeare

Table of Contents

Cover Photo: Lois Marie Young

Preface: Gail McGrew Eifrig

v, vi

Poetry

Sara Steinbrueck	1-4
Randy Kaltenmark	6-7
Ardis L. Stewart	20
Heather Gorman	22-23
Meridith Brand	33
Nancy Bernardo	35
Keela Steele	43-45
Michael Chasar	48, 54-55
Matt Christian	57-59
Kurt Kluge	78
Stephen Elrod	80
Rhett Franklin Luedtke	87
Erika Harris	89-90

Fiction

Kevin Hoffman	9-19
Meridith Brand	25-32
Michael Chasar	49-53
Kevin Lindamood	61-64
Simeon Carson	82-85
Allison Schuette	92-94

Translations

Susan Jasicki	46
Paul Streufert	66

Interviews

Mary Daly (<i>Jennifer Beste & Lisa L. Meuser</i>)	36-41
Edward Uehling (<i>Craig Greenman</i>)	68-77

Artwork

Joe Lehner (<i>Photography</i>)	5, 79
Jason Dietz (<i>Drawing</i>)	8, 42, 56
Jennifer Manek (<i>Photography</i>)	21
Mike Miller (<i>Drawing</i>)	24, 81
Kerry Ghormley (<i>Photography</i>)	34
Michelle Unke (<i>Photography</i>)	47
Lisa Elaine Butts (<i>Photography</i>)	60, 99
Joel Raedeke (<i>Drawing</i>)	65
Mary Thermos (<i>Photography</i>)	67
Ron Klemme (<i>Drawing</i>)	86
Karl Feick (<i>Photography</i>)	88
Eric Bardenhagen (<i>Photography</i>)	91
Lisa Wolniakowski (<i>Drawing</i>)	95

Preface

Somebody or other said—and you can bet it wasn't Godamer or Norman Maclean—that writing is difficult because it means calling up the spirits. I don't know about calling them up, because that sounds like it might transgress a commandment or two, but I do know that writing has something to do with spirit, and if you don't believe that at some level, you aren't a writer.

What happens when you write is as ordinary as sharpening a pencil (antique tech) but it is as mysterious as mountains on the moon. First there's nothing—a blinking cursor, a lined yellow page—then, something. What? a thing made up of words. Where was it before the words were out there, on the screen or on the page? You've made it, by writing it. How did it happen? You 'worked on it,' and there it was. We've done it so often, and for such mechanical mundane tasks (*write five hundred words on the causes of the French Revolution; memo me; make a list; get it in your notes*) that we don't see the mystery any more. Too bad.

This particular mystery has been described not only by familiarity but, in an academic community, by its function as an excuse. (Can I have an extension for this paper? I'm just not inspired about the topic.) But deep down somewhere, the writers suspect what is going on. Even beginning writers have their propitiatory rites, their strange little rituals and fetishes, their ways of backing into the project so as not to disturb—the what?—the process. I like to have my Navajo sand painting shot glass on my desk. And you? What does the sand painting have to do with what I'm writing? Nothing. I've said enough already.

If you write things for other people to read, you make the odd assumption that there's somebody else out there, somebody who, if you can just get the words right, will understand you, will even know about the things that were there before you shaped the words to talk about them. Can you make that much of yourself evident to someone? And more than that, to anyone who has the power to decode the marks that make the words that make up the thing that tells? Remarkable that people who will cover themselves up pretty completely in layers of tee shirts

and cotton sweaters and blue denim will—with words—strip buck naked in front of God's whole creation. And hardly even blush.

Is it true that a thing isn't—until it is said? Only lately I discovered that there was something in there to talk about. It took me about fifty years to realize that, for some people, an unsaid thing was realer than a said thing. But I had thought Keats was 'just being poetic' (that is, not talking about reality at all) when he wrote that "heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter." But is a thought 'unreal' until it is said? How much is an unsaid thought like an unheard melody? Surely there is something (a spirit? surely not) that makes the written thought real to the reader? And isn't that something what the writer longs to subject to her control, so that it is hers to command—"pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone."

Time to turn the page and get on with the real business of this magazine, this lighter, this bearer of words (and the even less wordy realities of images). You're not shopping here, or here to buy, but here to hear. And this slot is "filled with noises, sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not." Here's to the spirits, and the realities they've called up.

Peace,

Gail McGrew Eifrig

Gail McGrew Eifrig is both associate professor of English at Valparaiso University and Editor-in-Chief of The Cresset, V. U.'s professional review of literature, arts and public affairs. Affectionately known as "Mama Eifrig" by The Lighter editors, Eifrig enjoys the work of Jane Austen and Toni Morrison, would never eat mustard on Sunday, nor would she touch a Tootsie Roll Pop as it would most certainly "take my fillings out." While an undergraduate at V. U., Eifrig served as Editor of The Lighter (1961-62) and has recently compiled and edited the upcoming Harper publication of Measuring the Days, a book of daily meditations gathered from the work of Walter Wangerin Jr. As she announced during a lecture in 1983, the meaning of life is 42. Oh, and she has a definite weakness for a large bottle of Dewar's Scotch Whiskey (in moderation, of course).

Radio

He sprawls on the floor, close
to the family radio, bare feet
twisted deep into rag rug edges—
Sunday night. The Shadow. The door
from the kitchen spills amber light,
grease-scented, across the thirteen-
year-old twins; Marjorie, the biggest,
controls volume, yelling to the others
“Hurry before you miss it all!”

He must hate that so, must resent
the court reigned by sisters,
farmboy raised on fresh catfish and beef,
blackberries bushed
by the sty, milk foaming warm
from udder, yet still tripping
beneath lumbering forms
of girls. *Remember Edward,*
the older boy, dead just days
after birth, who surely
would have taken him fishing
in Blackburn pond, tied
his sisters up in the barn, snickered
with his baby brother, shadow
conspirator. Every Sunday night

instead, he absently picks through supper,
maneuvers past Aunt Norma's stinging
remarks aimed at lazy boys, and scrambles
from drying dishes to secure
himself plumb in front
of the radio. Eyes open wide
as dusk sucks light from corners,
he awaits the masculine lines.
The Shadow flows into the room.

by Sara Steinbrueck

Jewelweed

I.
Submerged in water,
its drowning stomata bleeding
their last bubbles, exhaling
pent-up waste without hope
of replacement, the jewelweed
found its name—gems
of released oxygen garnishing broken
branches, sheaths of air
treacherously submitting
to glory and not to life.

II.
I know it too,
this raping of self;
each confidence sells
shards of heart,
flung out to the periphery
of one's world.

You ached last night, woman
cursing stories drained
off lips, throat choked
with tears, with dissolved privacy.
A friend at play entranced
your lover, prying you
into competition for your own
life; now with your lily
love marked with stigmata, unleashed
questions tangle heart
against ribs, piercing your peace
of mind.

III.
I cannot pull pictures
from my mouth as you do, spilling
paintings from tongue.
I gag on poetry,

let it spoil, teeth tearing
lines, grinding over
and on till no structure
remains. You'd rather relinquish
it all—shed blood, loose
tears drawn from holes
in your body. Beauty comes

when least desired. Last
night it fiercely ravaged
your face as you flared,
features holding what's precious
for survival beneath skin,
so when drowning,
air in plant, love in woman,
rises to the surface
and sparkles.

by Sara Steinbrueck

Revere Beach, 1992

Nineteen-ought-four architecture,
waves of iron, cast shadows out
over sprawling beach, sand
spilt from an oceanic mouth. Gulls
screamed, loud lewd brats, knowing
Kelly's customers would fling
cod & fries, Thursday's special,
at their demands. They snatched

my bun before your miserable
crumbs, smaller than sesames.
That heavy yellow batter
felt thick enough for my early death,
but you begged for extra salt
and drained each grain
over fries already swimming
red in ketchup.

Sun washes across our snaps
of the pavilion; our eyes squint tight
against glossy paper, and the light pushes
hard shadows, abducting
the tame gulls that fed at my side.
Still, there's your laugh,
rare white-toothed flash behind scratched
glass, that I catch grinning
into September sunlight
splashing through my room.

by Sara Steinbrueck

Sara Steinbrueck, a junior Biology/Humanities double major, is involved in concert choir, Perfect Harmony, writing for The Torch and is a member of The Lighter staff. Sara, a Marge Piercy fan who leaves for Cambridge this fall, loves mustard and finds the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop in 26 licks. She has been published previously in The Lighter.



Photo by Joe Lehmer

Cambridge on the Cam

Olympic Games

for the Sandtrap Lounge

You and I were always different
I a wrestler and you a vaulter
together, we were friends.

I saw you last in
the midnight stickiness of August
we went to the pit and lay back
on its huge softness to watch the stars
whose glimmering images turned quickly to reflections
of stories visible now
only as shiny trophy case remnants or
told as locker room legends.

I remember you then
with churning legs and long stick
you hurled yourself to the sky
and watching from astride the fence
you were amazingly free, floating
momentarily suspended in mid-air, while I
was locked in continual struggle
grasped in a dance of endurance on the mat.

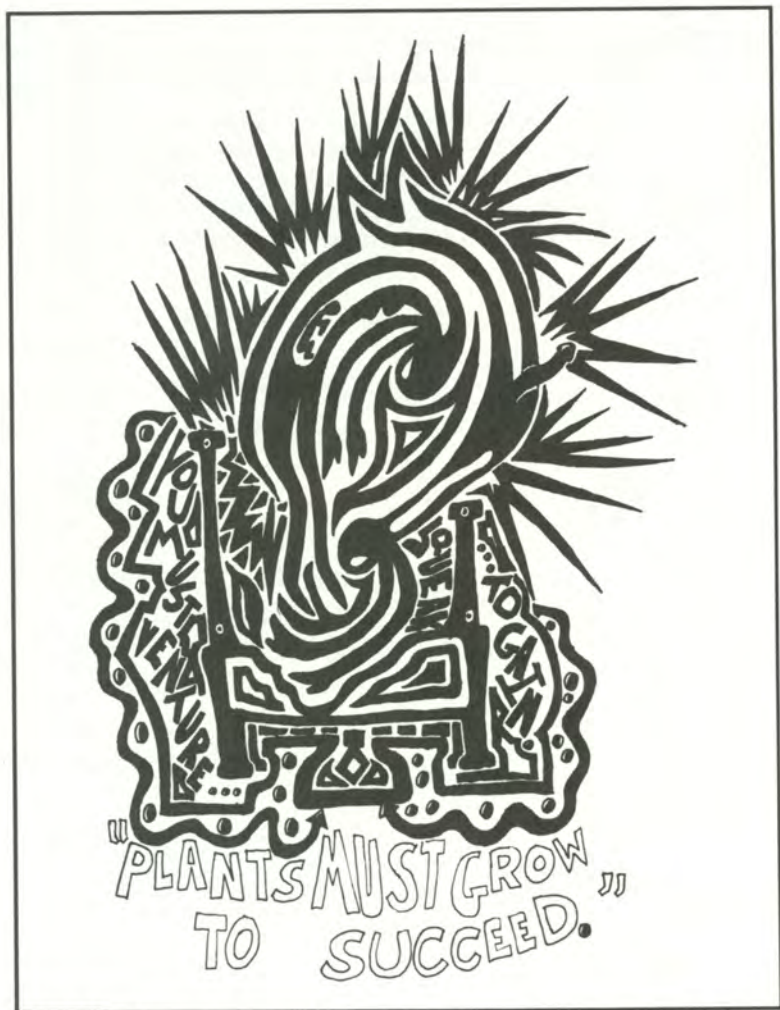
But those times and August are gone.

Today I heard you passed on,
to even higher heights, breaking
your personal record
you never wanted to come down
what mattered most was shooting up
towards the heavens in graceful flight.

Perhaps, from a different vantage point, I
could have kept you on the mat
where I, like Jacob,
wrestle still.

by Randy Kaltenmark

Randy Kaltenmark, a senior History/East Asian Studies major, hails from Wabash, IN. He is a member of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity and occupies his time with intramural football, wrestling, and the East Asian Studies Club. Randy likes to study military history and read the poetry and fiction of ex-poet laureate Robert Penn Warren. Law School looms on the horizon of Randy's future endeavors.



Plants Must Grow To Succeed

Drawing by Jason Dietz

The Phlegmatic

*For if passion is eliminated, faith no longer exists,
and certainty and passion do not go together.*

—Søren Kierkegaard

"You know, it would be one thing if it was something else . . . I mean, I've heard of fingers, or candles, or bottle necks even, but *why* did it have to be What could it possibly be that people like that are fishing for?"

He was completely beside himself and I, the brother of one of his parishioners, was attempting to calm him down. "Hey, listen, why don't we go get a cup of coffee or something, I think it might be . . ."

"You know," he cut me off, which was probably a good thing, for I'd been at a complete loss since I had arrived, "stuff like this makes my job a real joke. I mean, it turns me into a real fool up there." He was pacing wildly. "You think it's easy standing up there telling people things they couldn't possibly believe?"

"Listen, I'm not sure belief is the issue here . . . it just seems . . ."

"Oh, you don't huh. Well what is it then? What is it when I have to stand up there and tell them things like: 'all things work together for the good'? What does *that* mean? What *is* it then?" At this point I became rather alarmed. It was as if he was going to start throwing things, and I started making my way toward the door so that in the event that he did I could duck out quickly.

"Well, what is it?" he screamed. His voice was coarse and he looked as if he had been up for three days. "I have to stand up there and read them things that I can hardly even believe myself. Isn't God going to condemn me for that?"

Now I was definitely unsure as to what to say. Intuitively I figured preachers ought to believe what it was that they were preaching, but I wasn't about to voice that intuition at that point.

As I was about to make another feeble suggestion, Connie, Michael's wife, walked in the room and flatly told him

to stop yelling and that he was frightening the child. She began picking up the cold cups of tea she had made an hour ago, sitting neglected on the coffee table. Michael looked at her as if he had just been hurt in some unimaginable way. His eyes were swollen from rubbing, his hair unkempt.

"How is she Honey? Has she stopped crying? I can't bear to see a little kid cry like that . . . the terror . . ." He broke off as if choked and hid his face in his hands. His shoulders began shaking and Connie looked at me as if to say that he'd be better off alone. I followed her out of the room into the hallway that led to the kitchen.

"Man, I hope he pulls himself together before tomorrow. Do things always upset him this much?"

"Oh, you don't have to worry about that," she sighed, "he always preaches best after something like this. Sometimes he just gets up there and weeps, and the people go away edified all the more." I sat down at the kitchen table as she was saying this. She went to the sink to clean the cups and teapot. "You see, he's always trying to put his finger on the mystery of life. That's his problem. Every once in a while when he thinks he's got it he comes running from his study whooping like an Indian." As she said this she turned around to look at me, batting her wet fingers on the edge of the sink. "Like the other night, I was reading in the bedroom, he came barging in and proceeded to jump all over the bed like a madman, yelling, 'I've got it, I've got it,'" grinning to herself at the thought of it. "Then he jumps off the bed and says, 'the main thing is that it's unspeakable.' That's just the term he used—'unspeakable.' He looked at me as if he were about to rip all the covers off the bed and throw them in the air. I'll tell you, it's a good thing he didn't." She began putting the cups away in the cabinet and then sat down at the table across from me, her eyes twinkling like sparklers on the fourth of July. "You know, if he ever did put his finger on it I think he would just plain fall to pieces from the irresistible urge to tear the house apart." She paused for a minute and chuckled. "Of course, I didn't want to burst his bubble. I mean, after all, it was a mystery that we were talking about. 'Unspeakable' is no great revelation."

Again, I was at a terrible loss for words and Connie, I can't help but think, sensed this. I am not really a church-goer type. I teach at a community college in town and my sister goes

to the church whose pastor's kitchen I was then sitting in. My sister called me up earlier that evening to come over and pick up Penny, my niece, and bring her to Michael and Connie's. She sounded rather alarmed and it was strange that she should call me in the first place. All I could gather was that Penny was hurt somehow, and though didn't need to go to the hospital, did in fact need to go somewhere. When I arrived I met at the door Michael, who at that point knew about as much as I, and Connie, who my sister had talked to on the phone before calling me. Michael was already at the time fixing to have a fit and demanding from his wife, who seemed very reluctant, information about some incident with my brother-in-law.

What is important, from one perspective anyhow, is to simply note my reaction to the incident. By the time Connie had gotten my niece settled down with some toys and books in the bedroom almost the whole story had leaked out to Michael who was following her around like an impatient child, and who, when sufficiently informed, immediately flew into a rage. I overheard the details from the front hall, and in some ways was not very shocked. The reason for this, I later came to find out, was that, as Michael is fond of saying, God hides himself. Well, at least according to him and the prophet Isaiah. And though we are not necessarily guilty of not seeing, we may be guilty of not looking. What this meant is that I never took the time to look for my brother-in-law, which I suspect is related to the fact that I never really took the time to look for my own self.

You see, I am the sort of person that doesn't get attached. I have found that this policy remains fairly effective throughout pretty much all aspects of life. My philosophy is that when hurt comes knocking on the door it is usually a result of some silly attachment you've made and now have to stand around wincing for months on end while you begin hacking away at all the roots you've let go too deep. To distance oneself is the key I think. If we would only get this through our thick skulls we'd save ourselves a heap of grief. At any rate, this is what accounts for my reaction to the incident. It resulted from years of trained objectifying of both the subjects of my interaction and my experience of the world at large.

As I stood in the doorway to the bedroom where Connie and Michael sat on the bed with Penny, this began to worry me. I mean, here was my niece, a victim of an inconceivably

horrible crime, and I had to force an emotional outburst or two so that this crazy preacher and his wife wouldn't suspect that I was half as cold as I actually was.

It was at this moment of self-reflection when Connie spoke again.

"I think it would be best if Penny just stayed here tonight, you can go now if you like."

As I drove towards my apartment, which lay on almost the complete opposite end of town, the statement Connie had made about Michael kept running through my mind. *He is always trying to put his finger on the mystery of life.* That is how she had put it, and it would not go away. I did not feel like going up to my apartment, so I kept driving through the neighborhood looking at the houses and apartment complexes. Familiarity, I suppose, had begun to be the oppressor, not unfamiliarity. It was dark by now and I could see in many of the windows that I drove past. All those people with their activities and families and situations. They all started to speak to me somehow. They said, albeit vaguely and each in their own way, that they were all looking for the secret to what their lives meant. And if it did not become clear today, then they would at least have their children and their televisions to keep them busy while they patiently waited in hopes that someday they would stumble across it.

But what was I doing? That is what they seemed to ask. I had a steady job, no wife to support, and racketball on Thursday nights with some other members of the faculty. Once in a while I would take long trips in the summer and sometimes I would stay home and read an interesting biography of some famous person. Was I trying to put my finger on the mystery of life? It was all I could do just to keep my fingers clean.

I finally pulled into the canopied section of the parking lot adjacent to the building my apartment was in. I walked up the stairs slowly and looked, it seemed for the first time, at all those doors, with all those lives behind them, and wondered what their stories were, and whether or not they ever got their fingers dirty attempting to make sense of things. I went almost directly to the refrigerator and realized after I had already opened it that I had absolutely no appetite, which was strange, not having eaten dinner. My sister had called while I was contemplating what to fix. It was going to be something with ham-

burger because there it was on the counter staring up at me all soft and bloody where I had set it some four hours earlier to defrost. I threw it back in the freezer and went to sit in the other room on my rapidly deteriorating, not uncomfortable, couch. Before me on the coffee table was a picture of my sister and her husband and daughter. I leaned forward and picked it up to look closer at their faces, and tossed around the idea that perhaps I hadn't the faintest idea who these people were, nor what their stories looked like.

I got up, laying the picture on the couch, and went into the washroom to do that thing which nature calls one to do. On my way out I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror, and then began throwing around the idea that perhaps I didn't know who I was, nor what my story looked like. That's when I knew it was time for bed.

The alarm sounded at 9:00 am, which I couldn't believe because it was a Sunday morning. I finally recalled that I had promised to show up at church and take Penny back to my sister's from there. Connie had suggested that plan and I saw no real reason to object. Besides, I was half nuts with curiosity to hear this Michael preach.

I arrived at the church quite a bit early, as is my custom with all dates, so I parked and walked over to Michael and Connie's. She met me at the door and told me to help myself to some coffee. She said that they weren't even remotely close to being ready, which, upon getting to know them, turned out to be their custom. Michael was walking back and forth in a sort of tirade between the main sitting room and the bedroom while at the same time trying to dress himself. From the hallway I caught a glimpse of him doing what looked like to me an attempt to button a shirt, fix a tie, and put on a suit coat all simultaneously. I thought it best to stay clear and so ended up once again in his study, which because of the circumstance of the day before I hadn't really paid much attention to geographically.

It was a relatively large room for what I would consider to be adequate for a study, but it didn't immediately appear that way because of the shelving arrangement and the lighting. There was one fair sized window but it had an extremely thick, dark curtain pulled over it and was set back in the shelving unit

built around it. The only artificial lighting that the room had was a small, dark-green shaded desk lamp, an even smaller and obviously handmade lamp sitting upon an antique end table in precarious condition, and a very old looking oil lamp with a tall glass globe; all which together rendered the room sufficient potential to make its user blind by mid-life.

At the far end in front of the window was an enormous and richly colored desk, the surface of which looked like what might be expected to result from the work of a man who puts all his clothes on at once. There were books and papers everywhere and half cups of cold tea littering the few remaining horizontal surfaces. The carpeting, rusty brown in color, had an obvious groove paced in it, running from behind the desk in a semi-circle to the spot where I was standing in front of a musty three-person couch. There was a coffee table in front of the couch as well, also strewn with papers, index cards, felt tip pens without caps, and open books that had margins covered with tiny scribbling.

I had just begun browsing through the book shelves when Michael gave me a start from the doorway.

"Isn't it a shame that for all the words that are printed in all of those hundreds of books it doesn't even begin to account for the truth of what we experience, letting alone the truth of all there is to experience?"

Not since that Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning have I ever come across any situation with which to match my all-pervasive sense of complete loss in terms of responses to casual conversation. Luckily, he seemed to consider it a purely rhetorical question.

"Why do you have so many novels and works of fiction?" I asked. I had expected not to recognize many of the books and found it somehow peculiar that I felt like I was in the study of an English professor instead of a pastor.

"The poets can go where the philosophers can't, that's why."

"Oh."

Once again Connie saved me. She came bustling in saying something to the effect that if the pastor is going to stand around talking on a Sunday morning then he should at least do so in the church where he's going to be preaching. In spite of his wife's anger, a grin leaked out as he remarked that if it was

up to him they would have the service behind the gymnasium where all the smokers slip to afterwards and that he would just as soon stand around and discuss fears that the people might have concerning their faith, or lack of it, then bore them to death talking for twenty minutes with carefully maneuvered exegetics.

"Yeah, well, if it were up to you I'd probably find you and the elders out in some local tavern having beers with a bunch of lowlifes talking about what *God* could possibly mean to a twentieth-century mind," Connie replied in obvious disgust. I took this to mean that his exegetical skills were at best dubious, at worst, anything but careful.

"Hey, now that is one great idea you got there. You know, maybe we shouldn't do that on Sunday mornings but now Wednesday nights is another thing." He said this as we were going out the door. Connie was holding Penny and was whispering in her ear, loud enough for our benefit, to just learn to ignore pastor Michael in the event that she had to spend any amount of time here in the future. From over Connie's shoulder Penny was giggling at him, who was making ridiculous faces behind his wife's back. As we entered the church Connie gave Penny to me, which was a good thing because it gave me something to look occupied with seeing as I was completely clueless as to the social dynamics of a church narthex. We were fifteen minutes late for the service.

After putting my niece in the nursery, Connie and I, ended up far nearer to the front of the sanctuary than I would have liked. But then, what is one to expect coming to church with the pastor's wife.

When it came time for the sermon Michael stood up slowly, his robe hanging on him like some unbearable thing. He looked out onto the congregation and stayed that way staring for an obviously awkward period of time. The people sensed the tension and seemed to suspect that they were really in for it. I glanced at Connie. The smile she had on her face was much more of a distortion than a smile.

"Normally preachers are supposed to tell the people how to live," he began, "how to think, what to believe." If the people were quiet and expectant before, now you could hear the person's heartbeat next to you. I suspected that beginning a sermon with "normally" was not a good sign. Again, I was going

on intuition. Glancing at Connie a second time was confirmation enough.

"But this morning, I am going to ask all of you a question. For I want you to tell me, and so perhaps to tell yourselves, what the answer is. What we should do, what to believe. If good preaching is honesty, and of course it is exactly that, then perhaps this morning I shall earn my paycheck in confidence." At this point he stepped from around the pulpit and walked down the three steps which made him level with the people.

"Human beings are full of lust, envy, and hate. You saw it between the Germans and the Jews, for whatever reasons there were. You see it between the Jews and the Arabs, for whatever reasons are there. You see it in northern Ireland, and there are reasons there too. You see it in South Africa . . . and you see it between the whites and blacks here . . . and I suppose there are reasons for that as well."

In the front row to my right a man shifted nervously as if any minute now he would have to take Michael's place in front of the people. He must be the person who takes care of things when he starts weeping in front of the congregation. "Out there in our towns and streets," he swept an arm over the people and pointed out the window, "there is rape . . . there is divorce . . . there is division. Families are torn apart at the seams. Personalities are crushed. And self-worth, if it is granted at all, is granted accidentally." He paused momentarily and continued. "The heart is desperately and deceitfully wicked . . . and people are forever trying to construct philosophies which ignore this."

"And hey," he started, "don't think for a minute, dearly beloved, that there's not an inkling of that deep down in me. Don't ever think that there aren't times when I want to believe that people are just mixed up somehow, and that if given half the chance they would simply do the right thing." His voice fell back into the coarseness of the day before, and he seemed to be shaking all over with some desperate need. "But the thing is that I know myself too well." He almost appeared as if he were intending to fall completely silent after this, but added with a sort of aching, "and I know that if you look at what goes on in your own heart you'd say the same. And if you think that that's just rubbish then explain to me how we could use truck-

load after truckload of Jewish lungs for a muffler?" At this point he broke off as if to regain his strength. The people were shuffling nervously, and the eyes of the man to my right by this time never left Michael.

"We are all of us broken and hurting inside, and I dare say that there is enough emptiness in the lives of the people in this room alone to take the breath of the world away. And that if we'd simply take half a moment to consider it we'd all be standing around coughing and sputtering trying to get our wind back."

He paused again and went on to mention all the ways in which people do in fact attempt to regain their breath. He said that the most serious cases were not those who were simply mistaken about what it meant to breathe deeply, but those who had found all kinds of devices which enabled them to keep their hearts stolid, unmovable. What God wanted was a people with an entirely uncontrollable heart rate, and that those who's had just plain quit beating altogether from the pain of things were to be called blessed all the more for it. That the only truly unbearable existence is for those who have nothing to bear.

"And now tell me, dearly beloved," he continued to slowly work himself into a frenzy, "what ought I to believe? Yesterday a child was brought to me, not yet six years old. In fact, she is here among us, not yet able to understand my question. But there will be a day. Indeed there will be a day. She will come to me and she will ask, 'what am I to believe?' and she will ask of me, 'how shall I believe such?' And what shall I tell her? This is my question, what shall I say?"

"Shall I say: 'Ask and you shall receive'? Should I tell her to ask her Father in heaven for the gift of belief, for that is his promise? That those who ask shall receive? Should I respond saying: 'What father among us would give a stone if asked for a piece of bread; and what daddy among us would give a serpent if asked for a fish?' Is this how I ought to respond?" He was out of breath. Connie looked as if she were going to pass out, and the man in the front row to my right was almost standing up. "Do you know what she will say in reply? Dearly beloved congregation, do you know what she will say to me?" He looked wildly out at the congregation. "Do you know what she will say?" he screamed. "She will tell me about how when she was barely five her Daddy stuck a fish hook up her

crotch."

After he said this a middle aged woman got up to leave, covering her mouth as she hurried out the side entrance of the sanctuary. Michael watched her go, exhausted.

"Yes," he said, "we should all of us be sick. We should all be puking our guts out. That's what the body of Christ ought to be doing over the world. Jesus wept over Jerusalem, and we should be throwing up in the aisle for this little girl." Tears spilled from his eyes. "And so should we all." He appeared not to be able to say anymore and turned to climb the stairs back to the pulpit.

I felt my eyes really burn for the first time. The lump that rose in my throat felt so good I wished it could have stayed there for a month. As it turns out, one swallows more than one realizes.

"Shall we pray," Michael finally choked out. I never would have guessed how much noise a couple hundred heads bowing can make. It was not the sound of people gathering the things that they had carried in with them in anticipation of a hasty dash for either a hot cup of coffee or a desperately needed smoke, for I have heard that sound since. But it was the sound of a people come together and who have by some miracle become convinced that the groanings of their deepest hurts and greatest fears will be heard. That sound is with me to this day.

"Almighty maker of heaven and earth," he began, "kindle in us a holy nausea, so that a spark of faith might somehow be ignited. Grant that we, as your servants, might have the courage to keep one another warm, for the world is a cold place. Instill in us the hope that a new day brings fresh choices, and that your will can be done on earth. Through your grace give us the gift of laughter and crying, which are at times one and the same, that your name might be raised, if not amidst shouts of joy, then at least among tears of anguish. And finally, grant us your peace, which calms that part of us which is both deeper and far more important than the understanding. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, amen."

With this he raised his head and his hands and said, "Now go. Go out of this place of longing and hoping and searching and breathe deeply. Go out into the world and carry with you the knowledge that all of life is a passionate dance with questions which will always remain in some fundamental

way unanswered, and that the Gospel is that we are all called in some sense to formulate responses to them anyway. Go and know that all of our lives are terribly and hopelessly tragic and that it is this fact that we must contend with. And may God be with us all. Amen."

by Kevin Hoffman

Kevin Hoffman likes Dostoyevsky. A senior Philosophy/Theology double major who thinks mustard is gross, he will be attending Fordham University next year where he will further bask in the orgasmic qualities of philosopher Soren Kierkegaard. Kevin tries very hard to grow a beard and believes the meaning of life can be found, "as far as I can tell, anywhere but in philosophy (perhaps with the poets?)." Sadly, Kevin suffers from a very dry tongue and has never gotten to the middle of a Tootsie Roll Pop.

Garage Sale Violin

I found you
Buried beneath the dirt of a century
In a black wooden case
Reminiscent of an infant's coffin.
Your carved scroll,
Soundboard of blended brown and auburn
And ebony tailpiece
Inlaid with mother-of-pearl
Glowed under a glimpse of light
In the deep garage.
I paid the garage owner your price
And took you to my home.
I dusted the memories
From your varnish,
But still,
Your music remains silent
In my hands.

by Ardis L. Stewart

Ardis L. Stewart, a member of Arts Alive writers' group in Tinley Park, published poetry and fiction in her undergraduate years at Western Illinois University and in last semester's issue of The Lighter. Ardis likes Percy Shelley, Jane Austen, olive green, and plum. In May, she will graduate from Valpo's school of law and continue her lifestyle as a jetsetting novelist.

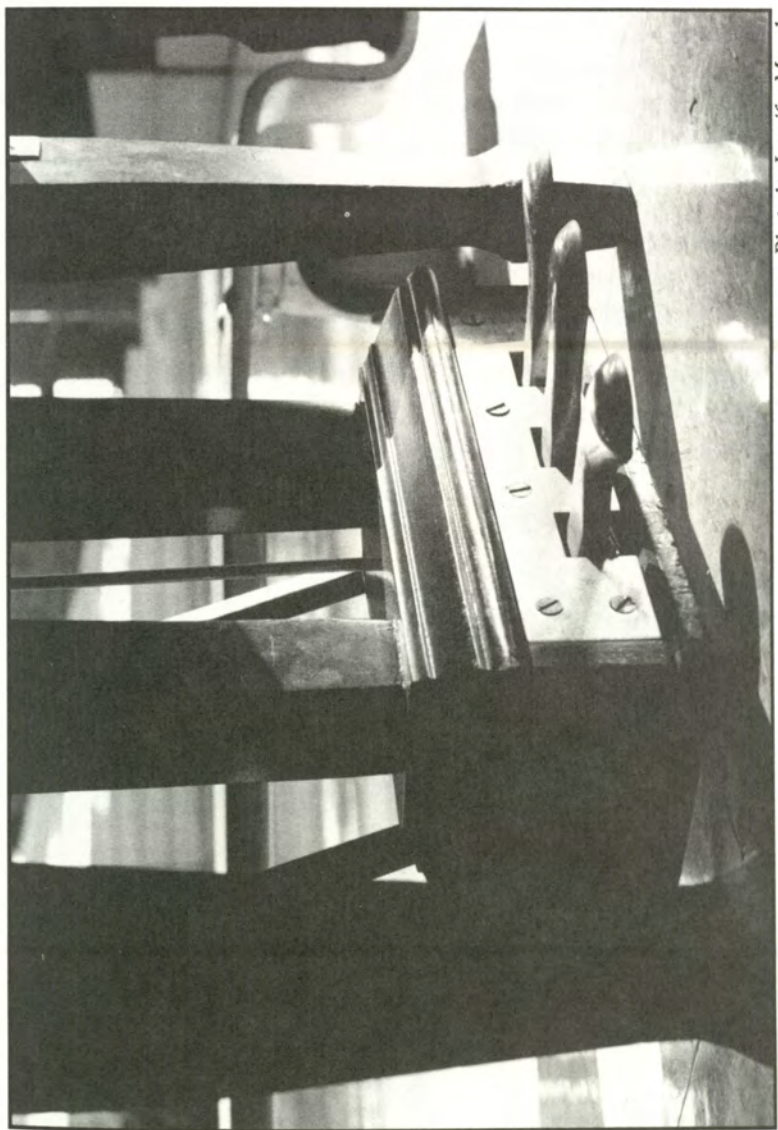


Photo by Jennifer Manek

Candle Music

There is something
About a candlelit
Dimness that resonates
With the beat of kettle drums
And thrills to deep dark
Bass notes that

Makes the hand pause
At the lightswitch
And brings primitive fires
Into focus
While music tense
As rain on sheet metal
Washes away the conveniences

Of toilets and hairdryers
And brings together
The elements of storm
The white heat of lightning
Upon a roiling canvas
Of curling clouds
Thunder of drums
Beaten by no human hand

The aching need
Or passing desire
To watch the flame
Reflect in our eyes
And to ponder the
Tiny fingertip of warmth
Poised on a stem

The vagrant touching
Of drafts throws
The winking bit of

Yellow burning linen
Into a fantastic dance
As subtle shadings of sinuous shadow
Twirl together

Forming night sprinkled
With tiny glancing eyes
That center where
The moon's ice cools us
And the flutes bring
Our heartbeats back
From the rhythms of the storm
And the fingertip
Touches electricity to light

by Heather Gorman

Heather Gorman is a sophomore English major who is involved in many campus activities including Day Spring, Perfect Harmony and The Lighter staff. Heather finds the meaning of life at 42, the center of the Tootsie Roll Pop on one bite, likes the color purple and the work of W. B. Yeats and Frank O'Connor. Heather has been published in The Lighter before.



Drawing by Mike Miller

Into My Mother's House

(The second story in the collection, Light, Heat, Flame)

Michael leaned on the table and watched the street. Mentally he counted the number of blonds that passed the cafe without coming in. He was separated from the traffic outside by only the thick glass in the cafe's front window, but it was enough distance to render the street sounds almost inaudible. The silverware on the table clanked together loudly where he nervously fingered it.

"Michael—here you are!"

He dropped a fork and jumped up. "I didn't see you come in, Steph, or I would have signalled you where I was."

She had startled him. All the gentlemanly details he had planned while waiting for her fled him. Michael stepped forward awkwardly, and bumped against the table, sending the water glasses spilling over their edges. While he steadied them, Stephanie seated herself. Michael was left hulking over the table alone. He quickly sat, feeling that this all was going terribly wrong. He searched desperately for something to say.

"So, you made it okay." He cringed inwardly. Damn. That sounded bad. "Found the place, I mean."

Across from him, Stephanie smiled. "Sure. You know, this was one of the places I used to dream about having a rendezvous in when I lived here. It always seemed so elegant to me." She leaned toward him and gave a little laugh. "Thanks for making a dream come true, Michael."

He couldn't stop the thrill that coursed through him. Michael knew she was joking, but he also knew the hours he had spent trying to pick the perfect restaurant. That he had gotten it right and that she had noticed gave him a heady feeling. He wanted to reach out and touch her hand where it lay, pale against the tablecloth, but he couldn't. God, he hadn't been this nervous since he was a kid, trying to pin a corsage to Linda Meier's prom dress without touching her breast. He exhaled slowly and tried to gain control of his head.

"How did your meeting go?" The waiter came by and he ordered a bottle of wine.

"Pretty well," Stephanie hesitated. "It was hard for me

in a lot of ways, and I didn't expect that. I guess I don't know how I'm supposed to feel. McGreevy made it seem so—I don't know—cataclysmic or something."

Michael lurched forward in his chair. "Maybe you shouldn't work with this McGreevy guy then, Steph, if he makes it so hard. I can find someone else—"

"No, no," Stephanie waved the suggestion away with a delicate fanning of her hand. "McGreevy is a good lawyer. It's just that it's all been over for so long now that I assumed the actual filing for divorce would be a mere formality. I wasn't ready for all the details that have to be worked through."

Stephanie paused and ran her fingers over the tablecloth, smoothing it over the edge of the table. Michael waited to see what else she would say.

"You know, nothing has really been what I expected since I arrived in town. Everything seems so mixed up. Suddenly I'm back home and with you and I feel like my past has caught up to me. And this lawyer is helping me make history of my marriage but it's beginning to seem a lot more permanent than I ever thought it was." Stephanie raised her head and looked at Michael, identical pairs of blue eyes meeting. "I'm glad there's something here to make this all worthwhile."

Across the table, Michael smiled. He saw her smile back, watched the edges of her eyes wrinkle slightly, the corners of her mouth tip up, lips part to reveal the pearls of teeth perfect but for one on the side that was slightly tilted. She had the reddest lips he had ever seen on a woman.

The waiter arrived and poured the wine. Michael watched Stephanie gracefully accept her glass and lift it toward him, grasping its slender stem. The ruby liquid winked at him as he quickly searched his mind for a toast. He wanted to say the right thing. It had to be perfect.

Michael could feel her eyes on him, waiting. His mind raced. Could he mention it? Or should it be one of those unspoken thoughts that would pass between them although neither would say it aloud? Michael thought it was probably something that didn't belong in the everyday setting of a public restaurant. They should talk of other things, their words weighted with meaning, and share significant pauses. The wrong words might trivialize or give the wrong impression. He didn't want to think about how he would feel if they were misunderstood.

Michael struggled, feeling out of his element. He wished he had been where Stephanie had been, seen what she had seen, instead of staying in the same town where he had grown up. Steph had gotten out early. If he had, then he would be confident too, and certainly able to find the right words now.

It shouldn't be this difficult, he thought. It seemed ludicrous to him that this should be so hard when everything else had been so easy, happened so naturally between them. Scenes from their week together flashed through his mind like movie clips. It wasn't unlike a movie, Michael realized, a two-hour celluloid caper with a happy ending for romantics. But this was no ending. Michael felt as if his whole life—both of their lives—had been leading up to this.

He looked at Steph. She was smiling, waiting for him. The sunlight falling in the window spun a golden halo of her fair hair, lit up her features, so familiar to him and yet so unexpectedly charming, arrayed with her femininity. All of her was unexpected, her arrival, her beauty and sophistication, her effect on him. Michael remembered Stephanie and he growing up together, the things they shared and the times they fought. She had often seemed to belong to a different world. When Stephanie had left town he did not remember saying goodbye. They had both been still young, and so much else had been happening then. Now, suddenly together again, Michael knew they shared something most people would never know. It would take the end of the world, he thought, to separate them. Caught on a wave of hyperbole, Michael raised his glass and cleared his throat.

"To you, Stephanie, for coming back and making me feel more alive than I've ever been." Michael made a small bow with his head that he hoped looked gallant and looked at her. She smiled, held her glass a bit higher and tilted her head to one side.

"And to you too, Michael, for giving me a beautiful week. You're wonderful."

Their glasses clinked. Michael took a sip of his wine and then watched over the rim of his glass as Stephanie drank hers. The smooth curve of her neck arched toward him as she swallowed. He neck was pale, paler than her face, and drew a long line that ended in a smooth hollow at the base of her throat. Michael stirred, remembering the softness of Steph's skin and

the way she had shivered when he dipped his fingers into that hollow below her neck. He wanted to hold her, not here in the cafe but somewhere alone with her where no one could see them together.

Someone in the restaurant laughed, loud enough to catch Michael's attention. He glanced around the room, surprised at the crowd dining around them. He caught the eye of a woman with purple lipstick sitting at the next table with her husband, and quickly moved his eyes away. What would that woman do if she knew the whole truth?

The waiter came and Michael ordered for the two of them. Stephanie excused herself to the restroom. He stood as she left the table, his eyes following her as she walked away. In spite of the woman with the purple lips, Michael couldn't help admiring Steph's body and the way she moved it.

He pulled a packet of breadsticks from the basket on the table and ripped open a corner. Her body—her beautiful female body—had definitely been unexpected, Michael reflected. As had been his attraction to her. He pulled a breadstick out of the hole in the bag and chewed on it thoughtfully.

To begin with, he hadn't meant to kiss her. Didn't know if his kiss had been what it really began with, although who had approached whom was not very important in the long run. Michael only knew that what had begun as he and Stephanie having dinner in his apartment last night had ended very differently. He remembered her blond hair swinging free down her back, her wearing something soft and black, he remembered watching the spiky half-moon shadows of her eyelashes in the candlelight sit above her eyes like crowns, wavering when she blinked. And he remembered the kiss, the softness of her mouth, those red lips, the feel of her beneath him, her urgency. And he remembered the guilt.

"Steph, we can't do this." He hadn't wanted to say it.

She had laughed at him, that free laughter that he admired. "We can do it if you take your pants off."

"No, really, Steph. We can't do this. It's not right," he said it urgently, to try and reach her.

Serious, she told him, "What's right is what feels right."

Michael, feeling he could never get close enough to the body pressed against his, had agreed. Nothing felt more right than being with Stephanie. He needed to get inside her. If he

could, he would disappear and become part of her. He took her mouth, sealing it with his, desperate to know her beauty.

Stephanie returned to their table with a smile. "Miss me?" she teased.

"Never more," Michael parried back, returning her smile. Their joking made him feel reckless. Her enchanting figure across from him, he suddenly wanted to tell her everything; that he had been thinking about her all morning and that she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, and that he couldn't wait to be with her again, that he wished it could be now. "Steph, I—"

Stephanie started to say something at the same time, and they interrupted each other. They laughed together.

"Sorry," Michael told her. "You go ahead." He hadn't heard what she was saying, and half-hoped it would be similar to what he had been going to confess to her. It would be nice, he thought, to hear her say it first.

"I was just saying," Steph said, "that there was a phone back by the restrooms, and I finally got hold of Lois, my friend from home. I've been trying to reach her for days. She said she'd meet my plane and drive me home, but I was afraid she'd been called away or something because I couldn't get her on the phone for so long."

"Great. I'm glad you were able to reach her," Michael told her, a little deflated.

"Me too," Steph agreed, "because McGreevy promised me today that he would have everything finished on my end tomorrow. After that, he just has to draw up the final papers and such. So, as of tomorrow night, I'm free to go. I'll book a flight for Thursday morning to get home, and then another one out after the weekend. It shouldn't take more than a few days to clear up the details to leave my place for a while."

"How long a stay are you planning?" Michael thought of his small apartment. If Steph were going to stay with him long, he thought they might rent a condo someplace nice nearby and he could commute to work.

Steph toyed with her water glass before she answered. "I'm not really sure. I don't have any jobs lined up now, and if the lawyer is right and I get as much out of this divorce as he thinks I will, I won't have to worry about money for a while either." She paused and smiled at Michael. "That'll be nice. I

couldn't see a great lifestyle coming from just what I make freelancing."

To Michael it all sounded perfect. "Sounds like you can stay indefinitely then." He felt the pieces coming together. It was going to work out right, just as he'd promised himself.

Steph considered. "Well, not really. The thing is, I've been thinking about asking Lois to go with me. If she wants to go, then we'll have to plan around her schedule."

Michael felt his lungs collapse, the wind knocked out of him. He didn't know what she was saying, but he didn't like the sound of it. "Ask Lois to go where?"

Steph seemed surprised. "Alaska." Michael could feel her staring at him. "Michael, what's wrong? I know it sounds like the end of the world, but I've heard Alaska's really beautiful. I think it's just what I need."

Michael worked hard to keep his composure. "Why do you think Alaska's got what you need, Steph?" he managed to ask her. Alaska! a voice screamed inside his head. She's going to goddam Alaska next week!

Michael watched Stephanie talk about the lawyer's advice to take some time to herself after the divorce, about her need to be independent of responsibilities for awhile. Halfway through, he saw where it was headed and tuned her out.

Sitting in the restaurant, Michael suddenly felt himself withdraw from the scene. Across from him, Stephanie chattered away, playing with her wine glass and rarely lifting her eyes from her hands to look at him. He saw her mouth moving, registered with distaste the petulant downward curve of her full bottom lip as she discussed her need for "personal space." Michael looked away.

The woman with the purple lips was working on her dessert, shoveling in a chocolate concoction with amazing speed. She had a spot of fudge on her chin. Her husband didn't seem to notice.

Outside the sunlight glared. On the street, the people hurried past, bleached colorless in the bright light. The sun flashed against the window in such a way that dust and streaks on the glass showed clearly. Looking out, Michael wondered, Where does all the dirtiness in the world come from?

He laughed silently. What did you think you were doing, he asked himself, that could shock this crummy town?

As if something like this didn't happen every day. But he couldn't quite make himself believe that it wasn't something uncommon, something extraordinary, and—Michael realized as he squinted in the harsh light—something utterly wrong.

He watched Stephanie begin eating from the plate their waiter set before her. He calm infuriated him. Michael wanted to grab the fork from her hand, shake her, make her explain herself. This was no kids' game they had entered into, like jumping on the beds or spying on Christmas Eve. They had broken some big rules this time. Not just family rules, either, but moral premise, and, Michael added wildly in his head, the law in probably thirty or forty states.

The delicate way that Steph picked at her food made Michael want to reach her, break into her peace of mind so that she shared his sense of disturbance. Michael suddenly wished that their parents weren't dead. He was tempted to fall back on his most effective threat from childhood and tell Steph that she'd better stay with him or he'd tell Mom.

The irrationality of his thoughts sobered Michael a little. What had scared Steph as a child would not frighten her now, he told himself. She was a different person now than when they were growing up. Her sophistication and freedom were things he know nothing about.

He studied her face across from him. His chest ached at her beauty. She looked up and caught his eye.

"So, what about you, Michael? What are you going to do?" Stephanie filled in their silence with her question. She sipped her wine and watched him. Had she read his mind? he wondered. What was he going to do? He couldn't tell her anything.

"You were so full of plans last night," she reminded him. When he kept his silence she continued. "If I were you I'd get out of this town." She looked out at the street and delicately wrinkled her small nose. "This place is so slow. There's nothing here."

Michael stared at her. Nothing here, he repeated to himself. Steph, he wanted to say, I'm here. We're here. Here is where we started this thing that's bigger than both of us. But, seeing her idly finger her napkin, he realized that she wasn't here, not really. She didn't belong to this town any more. It couldn't touch her. Nothing could.

"I don't mean to tell you what to do," she told him, when he was quiet. "I mean, I don't know what you want."

It was true, he thought. She didn't really know, didn't know him, couldn't even tell that he was upset. Despite their physical intimacy the night before, Michael admitted reluctantly, neither of them knew the other at all. They shared nothing but childhood memories and their father's name.

The accuracy of that realization struck him and panic flew up in him. How could you imagine something good could come of this? he asked himself. He had nothing for his defense.

"Michael!"

He heard Steph's cry and glimpsed out of the corner of his eye the glow of color outside. In the near distance, sudden fire rolled into the sky and smoke mushroomed over the tops of trees. He leapt up from his chair, overturning his plate and spilling his wine into a scarlet stain that bled into the tablecloth. The sound of the explosion reached them then, and the sky pealed with rolls of thunderous noise. It shook the big cafe window in its frame and rattled the glassware on the tables. Michael felt the angry vibrations sweep through him.

"Oh God, what is it?" Michael hear the woman with the purple lips ask her husband. But Michael knew. He dropped to his knees on the carpeting, clenched shut his eyes against the smoke and noise and blinding light outside, and waited.

by Meridith Brand

Tintern Abbey

(Lines composed for a February afternoon, 1992)

It was the arching sky
flew from the buttresses — blue
infinity and flawlessness
in communion — confessed
life to flesh aching
with chill air, blood brought
to surface, to tingling
awareness of being alive.

It was the silent
birds on outstretched
wing rode pale sun's
streams past windows open
wide, rode stillness in infinite
circles, the columns stretching up —
raised in celebration
round new halos of Spring
grass. It was the piece
of sky framed by the lost
east window where we congregated
below the immense vaulting
curve, it was the perfect
expanse conceived of a Maker, rose
blood to humming chorus
in our ears, sang
through us, confirmed
the salvation of the ruins.

by Meridith Brand

Meridith "Dith Baby" Brand, a senior English major from Wheaton, Illinois, finds the meaning of life in the pages of this particular publication. Mustard, she says, is yellow, of course, yet chartreuse is most definitely her favorite color. Meridith is trying to decide what to do next year: she can either attend graduate school or elope with the postman, Mark, whom she has gotten to know rather well while waiting for acceptances from graduate schools. She is a past contributor to *The Lighter* and has two loving brothers. Hmmm.



The Climb Over

Photo by Kerry Chornley

Munchen

-for K.

It was the name that made us laugh. Or maybe It was the beer at the Hoffbrauhaus where we watched the large German waitress bring us our steins, six in each fist.

As we ran through the city and heard shouts from oompa bands at each passing doorway, I felt so alive and free. But once we stepped from the cab it began to rain.

Imagine the surprise of that man who heard me say "Leave us the fuck alone...," who understood my English as much as I understood his German. The two of us, standing side by side yet continents apart.

I wanted to scream at you, the city, the people, God. I wanted to hold you and tell you I was just as scared; but my hunger fed your fear.

Later, we shivered among the dampness of the cold cement walls. As always we rationed our cigarettes by the toll of the church bell tower. By 5 a.m. we had attracted the attention of a passerby, and I giggled as you, with a straight face, told him we were English cousins. It seemed ironic; your straight golden hair contrasted with my unruly red mess. And as I watched you, I saw our continents collide and our strength build with the struggle to hold on.

by Nancy Bernardo

Nancy Bernardo, who has never made it to the middle of a Tootsie Roll Pop due to frustration, is thinking about spending the rest of her life living in a cardboard box in the middle of South Dakota. This senior English major has been published in The Lighter before, likes forest green, believes mustard is an interesting condiment, and claims that the meaning of life can be found while driving in a car late at night. Nancy has a special place in her heart for the works of C. S. Lewis, Emily Bronte and Douglas Coupland, and she sends her message, "Sip sap, soupy doo, doo sop, boo wop, GROOVY!" to The Lighter's audience this year.

—Talking with Mary Daly—

The biographical note on the back of Daly's Webster's First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language says that Mary Daly is "a positively revolting hag." Daly, who currently teaches Feminist Ethics in the department of theology at Boston College, is the author of many books including The Church and the Second Sex, Beyond God the Father, Gyn/Ecology and her newest philosophical autobiography, Outercourse. Daly spoke to the V. U. campus on the eighteenth of March, the year of our Lord, nineteen hundred and ninety-three.

Lisa Meuser: Who is your audience? Who do you write to?

Mary Daly: When I'm writing I'm not thinking a whole lot about who my audience is. Of course it's mainly feminists, specifically lesbian feminists, who read my works—but not only lesbians. There is a wider circle of women who also read my work, who often become lesbians and radical lesbian feminists. And some men. I don't ever sit down and think *Who am I writing for?* I just pour out the words into the ether. And I get feedback whenever I speak publicly; those who are attracted to come, come, and those who want to read my books read them, and I don't worry whether everybody wants to read it or cares.

LM: You and your work have probably faced a lot of rejection. What has driven you to fight the battle?

MD: Well, that's in *Outercourse*, the philosophical autobiography—that's where you'd find the answer to that question. "Driven to fight the battle" is a little off, because it's not only a battle. *Outercourse* is all about moving out from the imprisoning walls of patriarchy and standing consciousness, so battling is necessary. I mean, it's a part of it.

LM: You've been writing for a long time. What gave you the courage or the motivation to keep going?

MD: That's all in *Outercourse*. I love [writing], it makes me ecstatic. I also get a lot of encouraging feedback from women about my book. Writing's a high; it's always been a high. Of

course, it's upsetting to certain persons, but that really is not the point of my life. Of course I have to fight back.

Jennifer Beste: How do you feel you got the strength to do that?

MD: You have to realize that the women's movement [of the 1960's and 70's] came along. But I've always had a lot of strength. I had the strength to go across the ocean with hardly any money, and get my degrees. But I had to do that pretty much alone. I didn't know that there were all these women ready to burst into a wave of feminism. None of us knew each other at first—we didn't know that we were ready to break into this new volcanic explosion. Then we met each other, and when you have women around you who are all for the movement, it is extremely encouraging.

So I would say that's a part of it, but I've always been a feminist, and I've always risked a lot. It's just that I was able to risk even more in the 70's and to continue from there. And so now, nothing would stop me, even if everyone fell away, even if I didn't have this much encouragement. I've developed this strong confidence of my soul, so to speak, so that I could keep going.

JB: Did your mother influence you in your feminism?

MD: My mother wouldn't have even known the word "feminist." Not in her time, with her education. She may have heard it, but she would not have thought to say it. But it was subliminal, [feminism] was in her behavior. It was in her messages to me, like "go do your own work, don't do the house work like me." And always, when I was a child, I got great books for presents at Christmas. Or athletic things, like a basketball; things that were obviously encouraging me. Not a sewing set. Instead, I got intellectual things, like chemistry sets, things that would obviously encourage me to be free.

[My mother mostly encouraged me] in what she would say, like "go do your own work." She was never saying "You have to get married." I can't remember that she ever said it once. She never said *don't* get married—she left it all open. So I had incredible encouragement from my mother, which was,

even if she didn't use the word feminist, more feminist than most feminists.

JB: Is there a difference between lesbian feminist writings and feminist writings?

MD: My position is that of a radical lesbian feminist. How it differs: it's far more radical. And I think it's more radical because we're not held back trying to please somebody. And some of that can be subliminal.

I have to speak for my own case. I'm a radical lesbian feminist, and that means I've made a decision to go the whole way, to break the taboo on every level. And so that means that there's a radicalness, that I permit myself to do things. I take risks. Those risks are very obvious in my writing, that I'll dare to use a different style, that I talk about taboo questions, that I let my creativity be completely full-blown. That was not the case earlier in my life.

JB: Before, when you were less radical, were you aware that you were holding back? Or was it something more subconscious?

MD: In *The Church and the Second Sex* I don't think I was aware that I was holding back. But there are just subtle things that you are trained to do, that are partly unconscious. And that's partly what the voyage over the subliminal sea [Mary Daly writes about the 'subliminal sea' in *Outercourse*] is about. So you write in a style that is more conventional.

It's partly unconscious; if you change your life profoundly and decide to go the whole way of being a radical feminist and a radical lesbian, then your creative powers are let loose. There are many lesbians who are not feminists, and their writings are very *blah*. They just write about their relationships—therapeutic problems—and they can be very boring. But when you have decided to disregard society and go the whole way, then of course the doors are opened, the doors are opened to a much wider range of experience, thinking, creating.

LM: You obviously feel language is important. How much emphasis do you think language has on society as a whole?

MD: It has a tremendous influence on society. Language, as it is, has been extremely dulled out. And it's full of reversals. That was obvious to George Orwell, when he wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Politicians, like Bush, or the Pope, they reverse everything; they say the opposite of what they mean. And the myth of Adam and Eve, that Adam gave birth to Eve is an absurdity. We're so surrounded by absurdities and reversals, like peace equals war, and love equals hate, that they become almost invisible.

A woman who really just loves women, and is fighting for them, is called a man-hater. But this is a woman-hating society, and so, in that context, it is good to call a woman who sticks up for herself and for other women a man-hater. [Man-hating] is not the emphasis. It's not even that interesting; men aren't so interesting that I have to put my energies into just hating them. (She laughs)

LM: What do you feel the effects of exclusive language to be, on society in general.

MD: Well, obviously, the effects are very bad. But the problems with language are deeper than just exclusive language. There are many problems such as pseudo-inclusion, pseudo-genericism. "People" can be a pseudo-generic too. "The faculty people and their wives are invited," for example, is assuming that everyone there is male, that all of the faculty is male.

LM: You've done a lot of "re-naming." How has that been received, and what do you think people resist most about it?

MD: I don't pay attention to their resistances. I notice that [my re-naming] sparks some interest in me; [people] find a lot of things very funny, entertaining, and sometimes very shocking. I guess you might say I'm writing for myself and whomever else wants to come along can come along. Of course there's resistance, but that's not where it tends to focus. So it's hard to answer "where does the resistance come from."

Underneath it all, the re-naming is suggesting to women that they have to change their lives, and that is very frightening, that is very threatening to some. You can't just read it tentative-

ly and not be affected.

LM: Would you say a lot of people read your work to become educated?

MD: Yes. . .but they may not realize at first that education isn't always only in your head. [Education] has its effects on your life and the world, and so you see in *Outercourse* that I write about my life and work as moving in spiraling passing moments. And each of these moments are moments of courage. It continues to be a great sack, and that sort of hurls you ahead, because your world speaks back if you do a dangerous taboo-breaking thing. And then respond to that and you get hurled further and further and further with greater momentum all the time. The written word is extremely powerful.

JB: What advice would you give to writers, writers that are starting out?

MD: I'm not usually a person who gives advice, but I would wish they would try to see connections and name connections among the things we're not supposed to see. That's a very daring act. That's what I did in *Gyn/Ecology*, name connections. But most of all, be daring; be daring enough to name things the way they are. What holds us all back is the creeping fear and anxiety that patriarchy has instilled in each and every one of us—that we'll be punished in some terrible way. And, as I say when I speak, you'll be punished just as much for being an itty bitty feminist, as you would in going all the way.

When you say "writers," of course I'm thinking feminist writers. But with any creative writing—and I don't see how a woman cannot be a feminist in these times, in her writing—just go for it. In my opinion, Virginia Woolf's greatest book was *New Guinea*. That's when she finally decided to just go for it. She went wild, and wrote one of the most radical books ever written.

JB: People say to me, "Jennifer, I don't feel oppressed as a woman." How do you respond to women who say they aren't oppressed?

MD: There's a dulling out, there's a brain-washing that is going on. If you look at nursery rhymes and fairy tales, for some reason, mothers don't see through all that, don't communicate it to their daughters. There's one horrible children's story that I wrote about in particular in *Gyn/Ecology*, called *The Giving Tree*. It's a very brain-washing text: the tree is a she; it's a love story, and it's very seductive. A little boy loves a tree, but his love consists entirely of taking everything he wants away from the tree. First she gives him the shade, then the leaves, then the apple. Then he wants her branches, and finally she's stripped down. Then he wants her whole trunk to build a boat. She gives it all, and that makes her very happy. He never gives a thing.

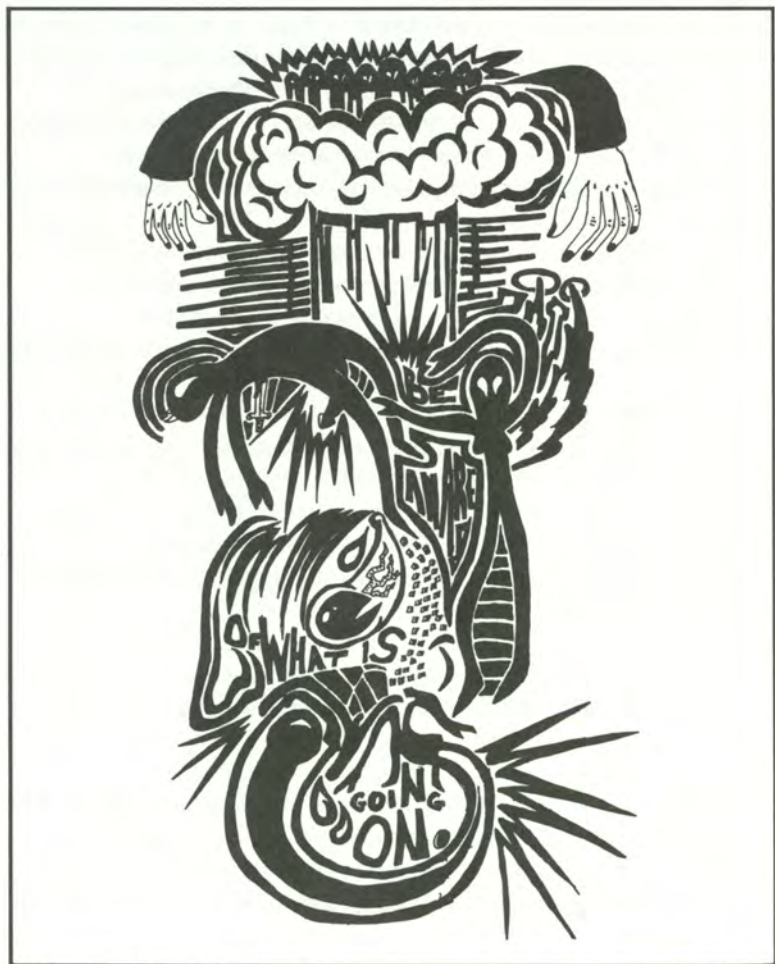
And the tree is a she, not only because of the pronoun, but the subliminal is, that's what a woman is, that's what you're supposed to do as a woman. It's pretty overt, actually. So in the end, she's just a stump. And as an old man, he comes back, and her only grief is not that she's a stump, but that she doesn't have anything more to give. And then she realizes she can give the stump for him to sit on, and so the old man comes and sits on her. I think it's the grossest. When I've talked about it with my classes and they've looked at it again, they're in complete horror. In fact, I have an older woman in my undergraduate class who used to read the book to her children and now she's totally horrified.

JB: Have you had any students say that that's not what Silverstein meant; that the tree could've just as easily been a male tree?

MD: The tree is a she. And the tree is always associated with the goddess, as the tree of life, of female power. So when people have studied a little bit about the tree's life, the symbol which was eventually converted to the crucifix, under patriarchal religion. . .

JB: I don't know how I couldn't have seen through that.

MD: When you are, from day one, kept from seeing through, then you can never see completely through. □



Be Aware of What Is Going On

Drawing by Jason Dietz

Tattooed

"Bub and me finally did it
yesterday. We drove to Defiance
in his '85 Ford, speeding,
scanning for cops. (Bub hates them).
His hand on my leg, my hands busy
fidgeting, nervous, as I stripped
the loose threads from my frayed denim
shorts. I'd worn them because they come off
easy. Bub sure likes them that way.
Bub's cousin Fuzz bought us beer
and we chugged to a tune
by Judas Priest, 'Turbo' all the way

There. We pulled up in front
of the place that I knew
once I entered, I wouldn't come
out the same—a woman.
Looking forward to our plans, dizzy,
belching Budweiser, I remembered
he'd said it wouldn't hurt
too much. I was ready.
Fifteen and a half is old enough,
I thought. Bub loved me. The next thing I knew,

there I was, lying, half-drunk
on a dingy sheet with somebody
else's blood on it. It hurt and pretty soon
my blood was crawling across the sheet, too.
Bub held my clammy flesh as the pain pricked
in, out, in, out. I wanted it
to stop, but Bub said 'too late.'
My tears, streaked black from mascara, stung
my eyes, made me ugly.
I just laid there,
waiting for the end, waiting for Bub to help me
back into my shorts.
I must have passed out.

When I came to,
it was over. Bub told me to get
up, get dressed. I tried, felt my knees crumbling

under me, saw the scarlet
webs tracing down my leg,
the swelling freshness
of my throbbing wound."

by Keela K. Steele

Flat Curves, Visual Fiction

You're not really real, are you?

How did you come, half-naked,
To lie like a discarded doll?
Like a porcelain goddess for sale
At a busy auction, you aren't modeling anything much
Larger than a hand-painted price tag.
Wickedly wanton,
Seductively superficial,
You decorate the dead gloss of the page.
Enticing and expensive, you invite us
To buy your brand, to be like you.
Funny, you're not wearing anything
You're advertising. Sex
Surges from every single
Steamy section of you —
Creamy, lengthy legs like french-vanilla frosting,
Voluptuous curves swelling
To fill hungry eyes and drain
Eager wallets. Suggesting pleasure,
Bleached chaste, you sit
So buxom, so beseeching.
Your pouty lips, puffed and wet, shimmer
Pink, fragrant, warm
as a summer peach. Sultry,
You lustily grab us,
Pulling us in to you as we
Imagine your whispers: hot misty
Secrets stroking
The ego of every man, every inadequate
Woman's self-image plunging
Like the V of your naughty neckline.

by Keela K. Steele

Keela K. Steele, a junior Psychology major, hails from Huntington, IN. Although she believes that Grey Poupon is a driver's best friend, for the meaning of life, she sends you to ask "Mike's dad."

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz

(As the author attempts to disprove the praises that a portrait of her recorded the truth.)

translated from the Spanish

This deceptive coloring that you see,
in flaunting the delicacies from the art
with false syllogisms of colors,
is a cautious betrayal of the representation;

this in whom flattery has sought
to exempt the horrors from the years
and to triumph old age and forgetfulness
by defeating the rigors from time,

is a vain device of discretion
it is a fragile flower to the wind
it is a fruitless protection from destiny

it is a foolish, misguided attention
it is a lapsed zeal, and well-regarded
it is a corpse, it is dust, it is a shadow, it is nothing.

translated by Susan Jasicki

Susan Jasicki is a junior IECA/Spanish double major involved in Union Board, Honor Council, Interlink and the Spanish Club. Susan, who appropriately enjoys the work of Columbian author Gabriel Garcia Marquez, thinks mustard can be fun as well as entertaining and believes the meaning of life can be found within one's own

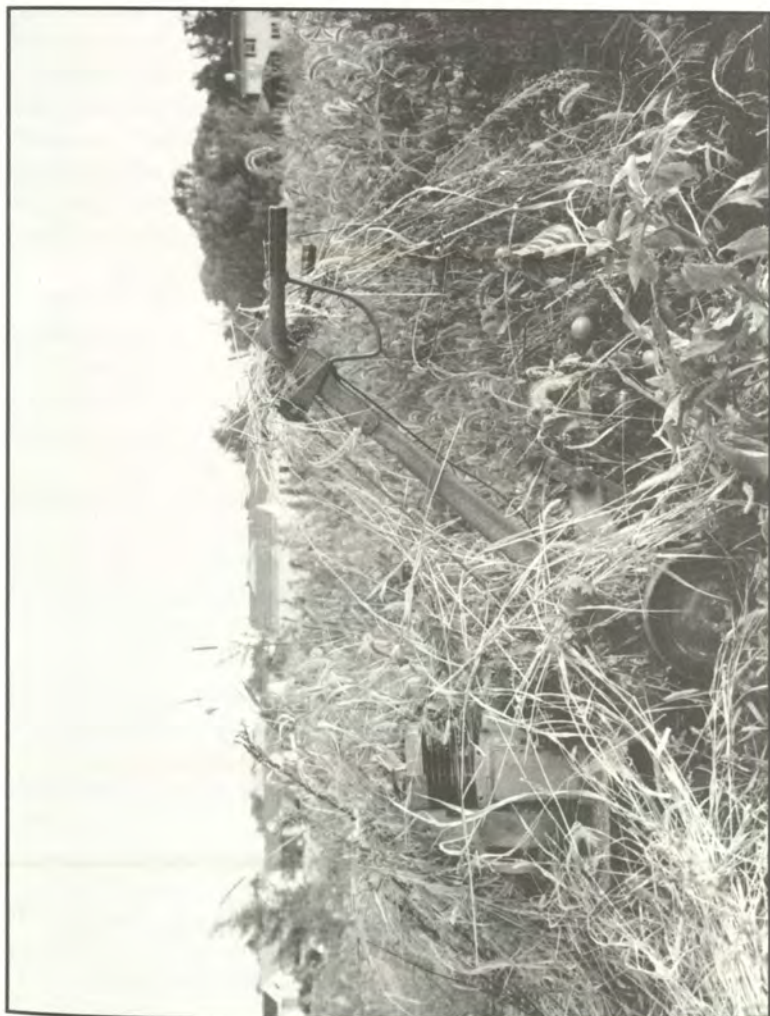


Photo by Michelle Unke

Pictures of the Natives, World War II

Part of your life I never knew,
taped in a book and bound
by generations. Your secrets,
tied by twine to guarantee
I wouldn't bet a peek, grew old
in closets, dirty and dark.
Many years before I gained
admission to the family sect,
I knew what you were hiding.
Like your secret history book,
my mouth stayed shut, unwilling
to betray the relatives who told
me how it went: the pipe,
the promise, the moment's hesitation
before your revelation. I had to chuckle
at your solemnity, grim,
as if this were confession.
The pictures: black & white,
nothing I hadn't seen in *National
Geographic*, biology class in seventh grade,
the battered magazine I whistled
from beneath a neighbor's shed. But grim,
as if I were the C.I.A.,
you pointed out a map of body parts
that volleyed in another hemisphere.
Without a wasted word, you clapped
the covers shut, shook my hand,
& hustled off to bury
reminders of a time long past.
One by one we all
received this blessing. Through
the years, like Christmas cards,
you opened up your life to us.
We always sat & smiled, staring
at the secret blacks & whites.
Like your memory & hair,
they, too, were gently fading into grey.

by *Michael Chasar*

The Southern Cross

"Look," he said.

"What?" she said.

They were on the beach. It was night. They could hear the waves eating at the shore. The funny thing about the waves. They glowed. The algae in the waves was fluorescent. It caused the waves to glow in the night. He had never seen the sea. She lived on a beach. She had seen the glowing waves before. She said that she swam in it before, skinnydipped in the sea before. At night, the algae stuck to your skin and you glowed like an angel in the water. He laughed at the thought.

Earlier in the night, the two of them had taken off their socks and shoes and run through the froth the waves continued to dump on the sand. When they kicked at the froth, the agitated algae sparked like tiny stars. They were also looking up at the stars. Their feet were wet with algae froth, and they were looking at stars.

"Over there," he said and pointed to a constellation in the sky. "That's the Big Dipper."

"What is?" she said.

"It's a constellation of stars. Don't tell me you don't know what the Big Dipper is."

"I've never seen it. Show it to me."

For the first time since they left Beijing, they had a chance to sit and just be. It wasn't easy running from city to city, arguing with ticket sellers and train conductors, confronting the mass of people in the middle of town. But now they had a chance to sit and talk and be. In the night. By the sea.

"I've never seen it," she said.

"Look," he said, and pointed to the descending curve of the dipper's arm and the cup which caught it up. "Do you see it now?"

"Yes. Have you ever seen the Southern Cross?"

"The Southern Cross? What is that?"

"It's a constellation in the night sky. In the Southern Hemisphere," she said. "We're in the Southern Hemisphere at home."

"That's where the water goes down the drain the wrong

way," he said.

"No. Shut up. It's your water that drains the wrong way," she said.

It was night, and the two of them sat by the sea and talked. The algae glowed on the waves, and they talked. This was the first time she had been to the Northern Hemisphere. All of her life so far she spent in the Southern Hemisphere, by a beach, looking up at the Southern Cross. The two of them met in China, foreigners in a foreign land. People tend to come together when they're both away from home. They were both away from home. They had not had a chance to just be since they left Beijing a month and a half ago. Always in a rush. Now they were by a sea with algae waves, glowing in the night.

"Look," he said.

"What," she said.

He pointed to a tiny sand crab picking its way across the beach. He had been doing this all night. He had never seen the sea and was fascinated by its creatures. It was commonplace to her, who had lived by the beach for a long time. She humored him. The waves. The night. The algae. The tiny sand crabs. They seemed to have so little in common, but she humored him and discovered with him the sea and its creatures for a second time.

Earlier in the day they had explored the island. It was a small island, but there were many tourists visiting the temples in the hills. There was a narrow road which ran around the coast of the island, up and down hills so they couldn't always see the sea. They could always hear it though, crashing against the cliffs or licking the short stretches of beach which dotted the shore. It was night. The Chinese had gone to bed a long time ago. The Chinese would get up early and do *tai chih* exercises on the beach in the morning light while the morning waves swirled in the tide. It was beautiful to watch these exercises, graceful, circular, flowing, so complete and seemingly whole. Early to bed, early to rise, the Chinese. But now it was night, and they were alone, one with the other, by the softly glowing sea.

"Look," she said.

"What," he said.

She pulled from her pocket two small, green apples that they had been given earlier in the day. On the way to the beach,

after a succulent seafood dinner, he had stopped at a small fruit stand and seen the apples among the layout of oranges and pineapple and bananas. There were only two left, and something about their roundness and the way the light reflected off of them caught his eye. He wanted to buy them, but a kindly old man with a fuzzy little beard simply pushed them in his direction and motioned to take them and go. She pulled them from her pocket and let the moon shine on the double roundness.

"The apples," she said. "Do you want one?"

"No. I don't feel like it now," he said.

"Do you think they're safe?" she said.

"I don't know," he said.

She was always worried about safety. They had both been warned by people back home to eat only with disposable chopsticks, out of safety, even though disease was rare. She, however, brought her own spoons to all of the restaurants and soaked any fresh fruit and vegetables in boiling water, just to be safe. She held the apples in her hands.

"I don't think I want one either," she said.

"That's up to you," he said.

"Here," she said, and gave one of the small round apples to him. He held it in his hands.

"I don't think I want to eat it," he said and stood up, still holding the apple. "I'm going to throw it. Would that bother you?"

"No," she said. She got up and stood next to him on the beach, looking out at the glowing waves. She reached back and threw the apple as far as she could. He followed and threw his apple hard with a grunt and a whirl of his arm. Neither heard the apples fall into the water. It was night, so it was too dark to see if they had landed. He sat down to look at the waves. She sat down as well. He put his arm around her and pulled her close. No one else was on the beach. It was late. The big dipper poured into the night sky.

"Do you want to go back?" he said.

"No," she said. "Do you?"

"Not if you don't. I want to stay with you."

They sat on the beach and looked at the sea. It was nice not to have anything to do, no busses to catch, no tickets to buy, no sights to see. Everything was closed. The monks in the hills

had gone to bed. They were the only ones on the beach at night with the algae glowing and waving to them from the sea.

"Look," he said.

"What," she said.

"I can't believe it. Over there," he said and pointed down the beach. The apples that they had thrown into the water had washed back to the beach. They were glowing slightly from the algae, small round apples, glowing green on the beach at night. He got up and she followed. They walked to the apples and picked them up.

"I wonder which is yours," he said.

"I don't know," she said. "How odd." She looked at her apple, reached back and flung the apple back to sea. "Now you do it," she said. He did. It was nice not to have anything in particular to do, to have the chance to stand around throwing apples into the sea.

"So now what?" she said.

"I don't know," he said. "It's all too beautiful"

"And that's, what, the Big Dipper?" she said.

"Yes it is," he said and paused. "Tell me about the sea back home. Is it the same as this?"

The waves ran onto the beach, close to their feet.

"Pretty much the same," she said. "It's pretty much the same anywhere you go. A little warmer, maybe. Look." She pointed to where they had been sitting last. Two apples had just washed back up the beach, glowing faintly. She grabbed his hand and ran to them. She bent down, picked them up and gave one to him. "They keep coming back," she said. "I wonder which one is mine."

"Everything you throw in just keeps coming back to you," he said and looked at the sea. She looked up at him, the moonlight on her face. He looked at her and kissed her in the moonlight by the glowing waves. She dropped her apple and pulled him toward the sea. "The water's fine," she said and pulled him along. "Come on." She removed her shirt, and her back shone like glass with the moon in the sky. She pulled his shirt and threw it to the waves. They were alone in the water by the beach. Deeper out they went, and she put her arms around his neck and held him there.

"The water's warm," he said.

"It's beautiful," she said. They stood there in the night,

in the sea's glowing waves. "We left the apples on the beach. But the sea will bring us back."

They were alone in the sea beneath a single overarching sky and moving with the gentle waves. He traced circles on her chest.

"Look," he said and pointed.

The algae shone on her like stars. It was night. And they were alone, together, in the light of the glowing sea.

by Michael Chasar

Fuck

for the 1986-87 Lighter Staff

Not a particularly popular word.
You'd think by now, however,
they'd been given time enough
to forge in the smithies of their souls
a reconciliation with fuck and prayer.

I never thought four letters like these
would muddle the waters of our literary springs.
It's just a word, I cry, just a word,
the most versatile and pliant word
in the whole of the English language:

it serves as a noun, and modifies a noun,
replaces a verb, or modifies a verb,
explodes into exclamation; who the fuck knows
how all it's used. It's whispered—*fuck*—
behind the barn by boys in the second grade,

fucking overused by fucking high school rebels
who fucking use the fucking part of speech
as much as they fucking can. The academy presents
the finer aspects of the word, how to use
it with care and tenderness, with the utmost

tact and control, how to use it near the end
of an extended phrase or speech or monologue
that builds and builds to finally make the fucking point.
Four little letters. I say the word aloud at times,
cooped in my attic of a room, just to hear the sounds:

I hiss and spit the pent-up frustration of the F,
the grueling, groaning, retching, drawn-out sound of UH,
the sudden closure of a hard American CK.
The sounds of words are magic. Like magic, though,
words are all the more appealing

whenever they're concealed. Forbid a kid to smoke:
he'll stand in a crowd and puff till he dies. If anyone
asserts his parents will be mad, he'll point the cigarette,
smoke it like a gun, curl his lip like a piece of parchment,
savor the sounds and enunciate: *Fuck 'em.*

by Michael Chasar

Michael Chasar is a senior English/Humanities double major from Sagamore Hills, Ohio. His poem "Fuck" is a response to a letter, recently unearthed in The Lighter office, which criticized The Lighter staff of 1986-87 for printing poems which allegedly were "making a mockery" of the World's Largest College Chapel. And besides, Mike kind of likes the word, too. He hates mustard and loves light sky blue because it reminds him of the rusty old 1985 hatchback Vega he drove in high school. Three hundred and twenty-four licks, dammit, who made up these stupid questions?



Sexual Politics In Reverse

Drawing by Jason Dietz

green

I often find
myself thinking
about,
oh,
love and that
kind of thing
and this thought
generally begins
with
well,
jeans

you see
green jeans
really turn me on.
I'm not sure why
but
somehow,
I think it relates
back to a mood
ring I once
wore that turned
green when
a person
(in this case
me) was horny

in the last
several years
green jeans have
really become
the rage,
if you will,
and I see these
women in green
moving about
and one of them

a special one

just stopped
in to say hello

by Matthew Christian

red

my blood is red
I know
because I looked.

this may not be all that surprising
to those who go around bleeding
all the time,
and believe it or not,
there are some who really enjoy it.

I've found,
in fact,
that some people like to look
at their blood so much
that they pick the scabs
off any wounds
they have received so that
the blood will run
freely
covering their clothing
and staining anything it
touches

I don't know
I've heard of emptying your heart
especially to those who are close to you
but somehow
this is a little extreme

now don't get me wrong here
I'm not talking about suicide
or masochism or weird
even kinky stuff like that
although I don't rule out
menstruation

blood is a neat thing
and some people like to see it
more than others
some people like to see it
on others

in fact
now that I look again
this blood isn't even mine

by Matthew Christian

Matt is a junior English/Humanities double major who so happens, by the forces that be, to find the meaning of life in the novels of Jane Austen. There are not many things that Matt does not seem to like; however, mustard is one thing he fervently seeks to avoid. Oddly enough, Matt's favorite colors are green and red (in that order), and the V. U. Student Senate President who hails from St. Louis, MO particularly likes to read the work of Saul Bellow. Three licks, he says, to the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop, is quite sufficient. Matt is abandoning the politics of V. U. to seek its antithesis and his future in the graduate school of Social Thought.



Dodging Sun

Photo by Lisa Elaine Butts

On Witnesses, Whiskers, & Waterpipes

Mornings are perplexing phenomena. Either you lie awake, contemplating the minutes you have left to drift back into sleep before the harsh repetitious sounds of the clock dissolve all hope of continued silence or the alarm sounds unwanted, in that suspended moment spent reveling in the stuff of dreams. Or maybe you shut off your alarm, figuring you don't have class, don't have work, don't have life, and then your room-mate's dinky little wind-up clock—the white kind you buy at the drugstore for two fourty-seven, the one that has been clicking and tic-tocking into the night, *click, click, click*, and picking up volume as you tried to fall asleep the night before, *click, click, click*—this same godforsaken clicking alarm clock emits a ring that smacks against the consciousness with the same force as the damn atomic bomb and makes you sit up straight with an energy of which you never knew you were capable and you split your head against the ceiling with a force that literally knocks out any stuff of any dream that ever fired its way along your neurons. Then there are always the nights you don't dream, the mornings the alarm slaps against the brain, first like a glove, back and fourth, *smack*, fourth and back, *smack, smack*, and then like a brick and you think, *damn, wherethehell am I?* or *shit, never again, never, never again*, or you silently scream NOOOO! in a suspended, echoing, tunnel-effected, mental hell, or else you don't think. Not at all. Not a single thought. Not an impression. Nothing. Nada. Fuck!

And then there are the mornings when the unsuspected sounds wake you, the ignorable sounds when you haven't even set the alarm: a ringing phone that the answering machine should catch sooner or later but some careless asshole's leg bumped the cord, knocking the plug from the wall and the phone just rings and rings and rings, past four rings, past five rings, past three-hundred-and-fourty-seven rings and you pray that whoeverthehell it is will just hang the hell up, go to the mall for a few months and call you back at a healthier hour; a drip-

ping pipe, *thwop, thwop, thwop*, that *thwops* with a pace even more disturbing than the damn clicking alarm clock and while you pray that your room-mate will one day, preferably before hell freezes over, buy an *electric* alarm clock, you wish that the landlord would quit listening to Lawrence Welk albums and quit buying the candy bars that he always comes over to the house with and simply go *without* candy and Lawrence Welk for a week so he can afford a five dollar wrench and tighten the annoying thwopping pipe; the knock on the door, *knock, knock-knock*, that pulsates with a random irregularity compared with the pipe and the clock and all you hear is *knock, knock-knock, click, click, ring, knock, ring, click, knock, thwop* and you figure in your dream-dazed 'wakefulness' that the *knock* on the door may be a little more important than the ringing phone or the thwopping pipe or the godforsaken alarm clock—after all, you think, your grandpa might have died the day before and it might be your teary-eyed parents who drove all night to pick you up for the funeral and you think it would be a pretty shitty thing not to answer the door if your parents are knocking (they are, after all, your *parents*) and you reckon that you *would* like to at least be notified if your grandpa passed away—so you fall out of bed to answer the fiercely knocking door.

But before that, you have to handle the steps. Nothing much, normally. It's only a few steps, each one only a few inches lower than the one before. But after a night of half a bottle of Jonnie Walker and a six pack of Old Style the *few* creaking, wooden steps look somewhat reminiscent of the slope of Abe's nose on Mt. *fucking* Rushmore. Besides, you never much liked steps anyway because they first taught you about death, at least indirectly. So you approach the steps thinking about the cutest, most adorable hamster you had when you were ten and about how you named him Whiskers because the nervous little creature would flitch his whiskers one way, *flitch*, and then the other way, *flitch, flitch*, and then you remember how he always gnawed his way out of the plastic orange cage you bought for your prized pet—the kind of cage that can be added on to with little orange tubes that cost a dollar forty six each and you bought ten of them with a years worth of allowance just so you

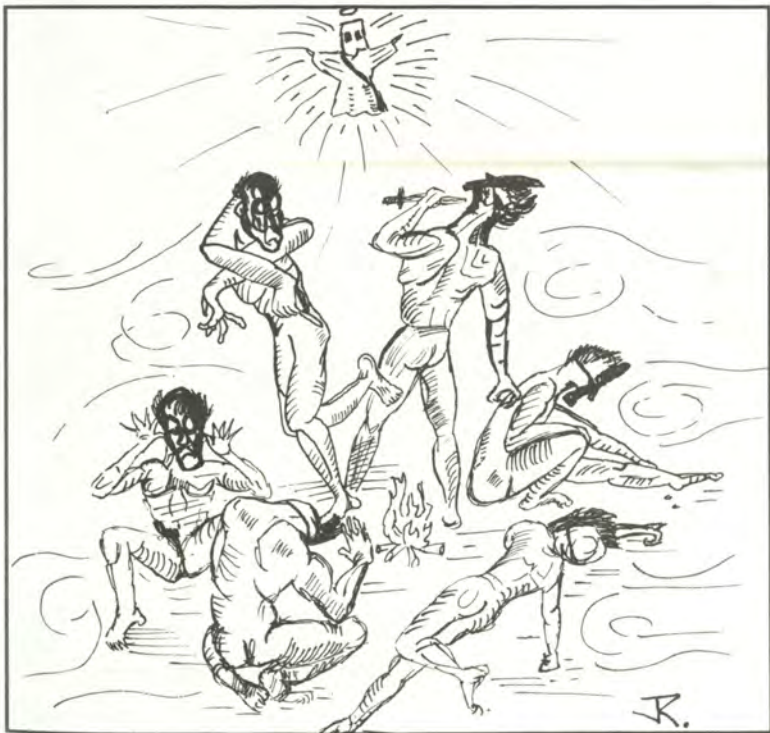
could watch him crawl through the tubes and get confused because they didn't really go anyplace anyway—and you remember that every morning you always found him, strapped duct tape over the hole and threw the nervous little twitching rodent back in his cage. But then you remember that this is Sunday morning and you recall the Sunday morning when you were ten when you searched everywhere through the house looking for your hamster, crying *Whiskers!* at the top of your lungs as if he could actually *hear* you and reply *here I am! Miss me much?*, and your parents sat there choking you as they tried to put a tie around your neck to make you look all nice and spiffy for church while you kept running from room to room attempting to carry on a conversation with your missing hamster and all the while you remember hearing your younger sister—seven years old with her first pair of heels—clunk clumsily up the steps, *clunk, clunk, ckunk-clunk*, and you're yelling *Whiskers!* and keeping away from the evil elder tie people and your sister is clunking—*Clunk-clunk, Whiskers!*, *clunk Whis-clunk - kers, clunk, clunk, AAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!!* And you stopped with the scream because you knew what had happened. Your parents quit with the tie business to console your hyperventilating murderer of a sibling. And you run to the steps to see your struggling, dying hamster spiked through the stomach with a two-inch heel and your world is shattered and his heart is pumping, *pump, pum-pump, pump, pum-pump*, and you're weeping with grief and your sister is hysterical and everyone is shouting and you yell *shit* and your dad doesn't even spank you because he is yelling *shit*, too.

So you make it to the bottom of the stairs and some inconsiderate asshole is still knocking at the door and you hope it isn't your parents because you certainly wouldn't want to think of your parents as assholes. As you open the door you realize that your hair has undergone a test of static electricity and that you're standing there wearing only a pair of silk, blue boxer-shorts and you notice two men in suits brandishing Bibles asking if you know what the biggest problem in the world is and that *Jesus* is the answer—but you're not quite sure if they said 'Jesus' because they're yelling *Jesus!* and in your ruffled state

you're wondering if a new messiah might not have been hailed overnight and whether or not he could possibly resurrect your dead hamster. Your friends drive by and laugh at you because you're standing there half-naked talking to a couple of early-bird Jehovah witnesses while your snooze alarm goes off again emitting a high-pitched *beep, beep, beep*, and your room-mate's cheap drug-store *riiiiiiiiing* still hasn't woken him up and perhaps this all could have been avoided if your damn landlord had just bought a five dollar wrench and tightened that damn pipe—*thwop*.

by Kevin Lindamood

Kevin Lindamood, a senior Philosophy major from Richmond, MI, will take his bleeding-heart liberalism away from Valpo next year as he crusades for the revolution as a member of the Lutheran Volunteer Corps. Known for the blue and white-striped train conductor's hat he wears on a daily basis, Kevin finds mustard fascinating on egg salad sandwiches, likes loden green and finds the combination of Tootsie Roll and any flavor lollipop to be particularly disturbing. Although not planning on becoming a Nazi, Kevin is currently drawn to the philosophy of Heidegger and is still haunted with nightmares of his sister's spike heel piercing the body of his beloved pet hamster.



Masquerade

Drawing by Joel Raedeke

The Dancing Apes

By Aesop, translated from the Greek

There once was a king of Egypt, who taught apes to dance. The wild animals were quite eager to imitate humans, and learned quickly. They danced well, and even dressed up in beautiful costumes with elaborate masks. In time, these apes became very famous.

There was, however, a clever spectator in the crowd one day who had a nut in his pocket. He threw it in the middle of the floor, and the apes, seeing it, ceased from their dancing. When they became aware of themselves, they tore off their clothes and masks and fought against each other for the prize.

translated by Paul D. Streufert

Paul D. Streufert is a senior Classics major who plays in the legendary band, Dry Bones. Paul loves all kinds of mustard, works by Sophocles and navy blue. Next year, Paul will be attending graduate school either at Fordham or Texas Tech University where he will look for the meaning of life in the concept of catharsis. He has been published in The Lighter before.

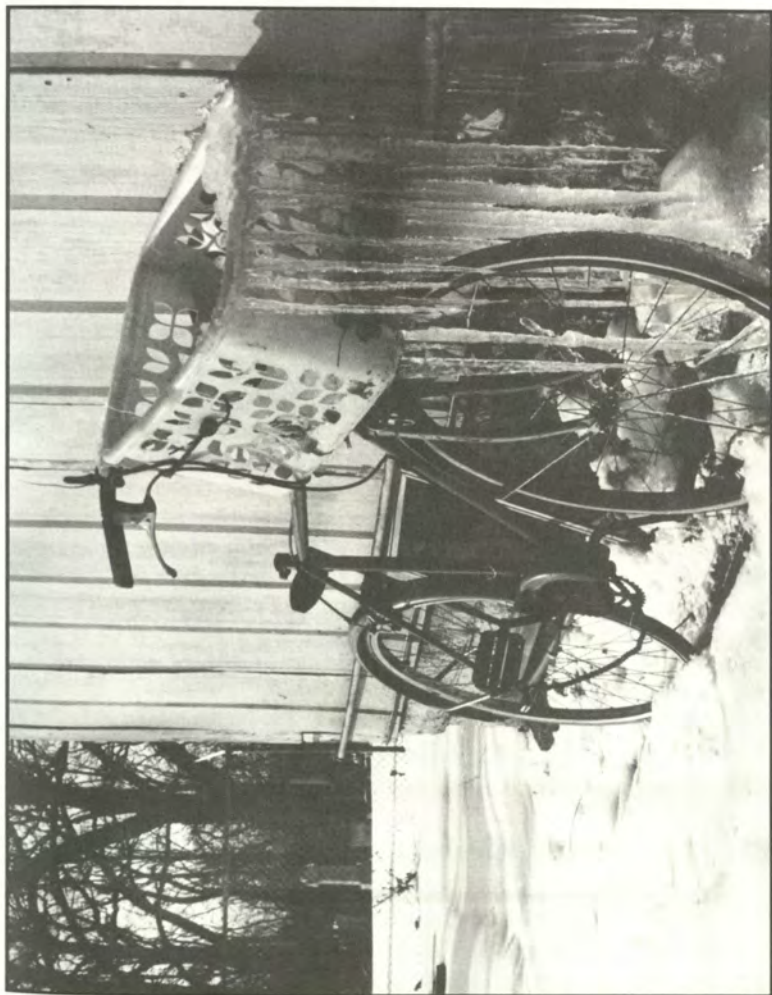


Photo by Mary Therrios

— Talking With Edward Uehling —

More than two years have passed since I first spoke with Dr. Edward Uehling. The meeting took place simply because I was interested in the Vietnam War, he was a Vietnam veteran, and I had an assignment due. But the supposed simplicity of my task foreshadowed its later importance. I was a bratty young American, too used to formulating moral maxims while sipping Pepsi and watching the six o'clock news. What I had merely conceived and debated, Dr. Uehling had confronted and lived. Little doubt remains for me as to which educational process is more effective. Dr. Uehling already possessed a strong aversion to the Vietnam War when he was sent to Southeast Asia; one might object that this aversion has colored his negative interpretation of his experience. But, I suspect, if we really read the following conversation, we may conclude that, when Dr. Uehling stands opposed to the Vietnam War, it is because his experiences there, not any presupposed theoretical or religious justifications, have taught him so. If his opinions are biased in that sense, then all the better—we're listening to a human being, after all, not a social scientist. As for myself, not until months after this conversation, when my own future and the lives of my friends were jeopardized by Desert Storm, did I learn something of what war really means; it ceased to be an academic problem, something witnessed from the front row seat of an Oliver Stone film, and became a real human dilemma. No doubt Dr. Uehling's shared experience helped to reveal both the human and inhuman aspects of that dilemma; his remains a stark reality which my generation has been all but sheltered from. I am grateful to him for respecting my naivete while slowly startling me out of it. His words moved me then, and they still do today. So I present this small piece of community folklore every bit too late, but retaining every bit of its original importance, if for nothing but to remind us of the stupidity of ministering ideology with gunpowder.

Craig Greenman

CG: How did you first enter the service?

EU: I was at Penn State when they eliminated deferments for graduate students. I received notice to report for a pre-induction physical. I went to the department head and told him I would have to resign my assistantship — I was going to be drafted. He said, "You don't want to go, do you?" and I said "No, I don't." At this time, all teachers received deferments, so he gave me an instructorship at one of Penn State's branch campuses. I sent a telegram to the draft board giving them the information, and I thought I was set.

CG: What happened?

EU: While I was teaching, I got my notice of induction into the Army.

CG: You were probably pretty shocked.

EU: No, I wasn't shocked. Disappointed. Not shocked.

CG: But how did you get drafted if you already had a deferment?

EU: Well, afterwards, I appealed my status to the local draft board with a letter, but to no avail.

CG: I'm not sure I understand.

EU: You see, it happened that one of my neighbors was on the draft board; after I was already in the Army, my father asked him to explain what happened when the draft board reviewed my appeal. He said it never met. As it turns out, a clerk at the draft board office did me in. She never gave them my telegram or my appeal letter.

CG: A simple clerical error, then?

EU: No, it was deliberate. She screwed me. On purpose. She denied having received the telegram, although, of course, she had to sign for it. She denied receiving my appeal, although it was sent registered mail. But then, there's the marvelous Catch 22: Once you're in the Army, it doesn't matter. Nothing can be done about it.

CG: Why do you think she would do something like that?

EU: It's a bit of a long story. It goes back to the first time I had to show up for a physical, the day after my graduation from Hastings College in '67. I had to take a bus to Omaha with everybody else and stay there overnight. These guys were so wild and obscene that the bus driver had to pull over to the side of the road and threaten to leave them there if they didn't calm

down. It was awful. When we got there, the office clerk gave me the meal vouchers and put me in charge of the group, because I was the only college graduate. When we got to the hotel, the management was upset because the guys were all drunk and chasing up and down the halls. When I got done with the physical exam, I turned to the guy next to me in line and said, "Here are the tickets. You're in charge of going back." I used my grandmother's graduation present, a \$5 check, to buy my own bus ticket home. I wasn't going to ride back with those sons of bitches. I'm sure the clerk never forgave me, and that's the only possible motivation I can think of for what she did.

CG: That's quite a story.

EU: The local recruiting sergeant got wind of my situation, and he said, "Well, you're a recently married man. If you sign up for three years, I can promise you that you won't go to Vietnam." But three years was a long time. I talked it over with my wife, and since I was opposed to the war, we decided it would be worth it. So I signed up for three years and got what I deserved.

CG: What?

EU: I went to Vietnam.

CG: Did you look for ways to get out of the Army before you finally had to go overseas?

EU: There weren't very many options. You could desert and have the FBI after you, or you could go to Canada and live. I figured if I was lucky, I could be assigned to a non-combat position. I decided to go with the system as long as I could; then if it came to it, I would refuse to fight. It's easier to say that than it is to do it, because I never got locked into doing anything. I did have a job where I had to be on guard duty and sit behind a machine gun, but I never shot a round at another person.

CG: So you never did any actual fighting.

EU: Nope. And I wouldn't have. That's what I told myself: If it came to that, I would say "I'm sorry, but I won't do that."

CG: But do you think that, under certain circumstances. . .

EU: I have no way of knowing.

CG: But did you or anybody else really know what you were getting into when you went over there? What I mean is, did the American government lie about the war and the nature of the communist threat?

EU: The layers of lies were elaborate. You see, I worked at Army headquarters in Vietnam. I phoned in false casualty reports to the Pentagon, which were deliberately altered to be more politically acceptable. It's very difficult to believe something like that about your country unless you've seen it happen. And it's very difficult to understand how far down it goes.

CG: Didn't they have any checks on the system?

EU: I remember when the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of Defense came to Vietnam on a fact-finding mission. I typed and prepared the reports that they read. I knew they were lies, but I assumed that they were both intelligent men and would recognize that. We were in the middle of the so-called "Vietnamization Program," where the Army promised to withdraw hundreds of thousands of troops in three months, then six months, and so on. This was physically impossible. The people writing the reports just kept jockeying the figures until it all came out right. Of course it was a lie. But the secretaries must have expected lies, to cover their butts. So who could you trust?

CG: Apparently nobody. You seemed to be working inside an entirely corrupt system.

EU: Yes. And there was also a terrible racial thing. Blacks and whites were really hostile to each other, in part because of the Detroit riots and other riots back home. We weren't allowed to hire blacks at Army headquarters.

CG: Really?

EU: Oh yeah. There was very clear racism. Only one black major and one black sargeant worked in our whole division. You see, we screened all the records for administrative specialists because they were always in short supply; there were stupid people like the 101st Airborne who would send all the administrative types on patrol and get them killed the first day — then they'd be asking for one the next. So we were always happy to get educated people for administrative spots. Well, we had a black man with a Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan, who was clearly very bright, and we brought him in for an interview. But when our superiõrs found out he was black, they wouldn't take him.

CG: Those kinds of decisions would deflate even the young idealists who joined the war effort willingly.

EU: Many people went over in the mid-60's idealistic about the war, but by the time I went over in 1970, there was almost open mutiny. It was not only contempt for a military establishment and two presidents that had lied to us; the brutality that we used on the people was awful. Unforgivable.

CG: Did you expect that kind of brutality before you went over?

EU: I read the papers.

CG: But why were we so brutal?

EU: We realized that we were protecting nothing. It was impossible to distinguish the North from the South Vietnamese. And the American senior military officials were terribly disillusioned with how bad the people were as allies: they didn't want to be saved. We would go through pointless exercises of warfare, like taking a hill at great cost of lives and material, then abandoning it, just to take it again later. We had this monstrous firepower, and an Air Force that was full of people that wanted promotions and flying time. So we bombed the shit out of everything. Then we falsed up the situation reports. It was just corrupt. But, you see, the thing is that we never understood the people in South Vietnam. For all the presumed compassion we

had — we were going to save these people from communist aggression — we were. . . . We were brutal to them.

CG: They had a much different culture than ours.

EU: Well, they were clearly an agricultural country. Very little technology. I could give you a zillion examples. I would sit in this bunker which looked out on a secondary road that ran to Saigon: Across the road were rice paddies, and off to the left was a leper colony. I would sit there with field glasses and watch the people working. Even before it was light, you could hear the sound of the ox-cart coming. I'll never forget the first time I saw one: A water-buffalo pulling a Vietnamese man in a cart with wheels taller than he would've been if he'd been standing on the ground. I thought, this man could have been living five hundred or six hundred years ago and his life would have been exactly the same. Except now there was a road, little kids squatting alongside, opium or heroine buried, waiting for a G.I. to pull off so that they could sell him drugs. Here was a life that had absolutely nothing to do with all the technology and firepower we had. We were playing with our toys, things like the Cobra, a helicopter that could put a round in every square foot so that it could cover the length of a football field within a matter of minutes.

CG: Jesus.

EU: Absolute killing power. But even better illustrations of what we did to them are the relocation camps, things like that. Before the war, Saigon had been a city of slightly under a million people. By the time I was there in '70 and '71, it was over two and a half million.

CG: They urbanized to meet the economic demands of the incoming Americans.

EU: Not quite. They had nowhere else to go. They were farmers; we sent napalm and agent orange and made it impossible to live on the land. So they lived in shacks made from flattened beer cans and the cases that we shipped over American beer in. You could be whatever sort of prostitute you thought you could

be. We never did anything for the people, except turn them into thieves and prostitutes.

CG: By trying to defend and "ennoble" them, we really ruined any life they had worth defending and all traces of their own sense of nobility.

EU: It was certainly hypocritical. Most of these people were surely apolitical. It was a civil war, and our presence had merely upped the ante and complicated things. We just never understood the people. Johnson would say, "We're going to bomb Hanoi and make them realize they can't pay this terrible price." That's a Western perspective; he didn't understand that the people were committed to an ideal: a unified Vietnam. The notion that these people would give up was just a pipe dream. They would never give up. For a long while, they didn't even expect to win in their lifetimes, but they were resigned to fight because they believed absolutely in the cause. We're such individualists, so used to having our way by sheer act of will. It was inconceivable that we would ever fight a war that would only be won in the time of our grandchildren, which is what they believed they were doing.

CG: They seemed to have a great deal more dedication than we did. But weren't we fighting for something, too?

EU: The whole system worked against being able to believe that you were fighting for anything. Everybody was assigned to Vietnam for a year; or, if you were in the Marines, thirteen months — just to prove you were tougher.

CG: Great. (Laughter.)

EU: It's true. I never knew a person in Vietnam who didn't keep a short-timers calender, some sort of elaborate picture with three-hundred sixty-five little squares. Every day we would color in another square; everyone was counting time until he left. Think of how that mind-set is absolutely different than someone during World War II, who was there until we won. There was no sense of loyalty to one's fellows, because people were always leaving or coming in new. There was no sense of

loyalty to a cause, because it was like a prison sentence: Serve your time, then go back to the world. Whatever happens here doesn't count. You can murder people, you can butcher them, you can smoke dope, you can do anything you want because it ain't real.

CG: You mention "smoking dope."

EU: Drugs was one of the scariest things I saw. The heroine over there was 95% pure. The stuff on the street in America is only about 5%. And it was easy to get; you could support a phenomenal habit on about five dollars a day. In our office at Army headquarters, we processed the applications for extended Tours of Duty; some people were afraid to go home. . . .

CG: Yeah, I mean, what would you do about that kind of habit?

EU: It was frightening. Until 1971, the Army refused to acknowledge that there was a drug problem. Before that, they adamantly denied it. All along, you could buy marijuana cigarettes, laced with opium or not, in filter-tipped, cellophane-wrapped, or park lanes.

CG: "Park lanes" . . . ?

EU: People would carry them around in their pockets in certain places. It was incredible.

CG: They did drugs to escape from the war, then.

EU: That was the rationalization for it.

CG: It seems easier to rationalize marijuana than racism, brutality, and lies.

EU: There was a disillusionment with commonly held values; people ended up looking for peer approval and the easiest kind of rationalization for "Why am I doing this?" Meanwhile, the guys on night patrols would take uppers to heighten their senses. That got to be a real problem, because they had their uppers and downers, and they'd be really strung out after a while.

CG: Sounds like living in a schizoid nightmare, full of addicts and pimps.

EU: Well, I knew a lot of people who were not butcherers and murderers; I knew people who were very sympathetic to the plight of the South Vietnamese people. But there was nothing you could do. It was hard to live with integrity; there was a numbing sameness to every day.

CG: Did you get to know any of the Vietnamese people at all?

EU: How could you? They kept them away from you, except for the people who shined your shoes or made your bed or swept your floor.

CG: More like ruling than knowing them. But was it *all* bad? Did you have anything to look forward to besides going home, *any* positive outcome?

EU: Well, we looked forward to drinking a lot. We looked forward to an occasional day off. And we always looked forward to mail. The friends you had were extraordinary friends. But when we tried to do things like "pass the hat" at Christmas to collect money for orphans, we were denied permission by our commanders. They held the theory that if you give money to these people, you'll just encourage them to expect it, so let 'em stay poor. Frustrating.

CG: Do you think that if we would have really believed in some system, some common value, we would have coped better with the war, or at least justified our presence in Vietnam?

EU: What would we have believed in?

CG: I don't know. . . "Victory at all costs"? If we would have gone in "full force" and totally annihilated the North Vietnamese, would we have felt better about ourselves?

EU: There's nothing to say. We were on the wrong side. We pretended that we weren't a colonial presence in Vietnam. We never understood that we were as rapacious and self-serving as

the French had been when they were in power. Worse in many ways. For one thing, we had more money, so we had more power to corrupt.

CG: Were the soldiers ever able forget the war, forget the corruption and brutality?

EU: They certainly had to repress a great deal. When you got home, you wanted to tell people about it, but they didn't want to listen. They either became uncomfortable or simply regarded you as unpatriotic and a liar. It was difficult to make people hear you. It reminds me of the old joke: "What's the difference between war stories and fairy tales? Fairy tales begin, 'Once upon a time,' and war stories begin, 'This is no shit.'" That's the only difference, you see—all soldiers are liars. Which to a certain extent is true.

CG: Seems like you'd almost have to lie, just to protect your own sanity. God knows, when I can't justify something I've done, it makes me want to erase that part of myself, just blot it out. I can't even imagine what it's like to do that after a war, to feel that way about a giant slice of your life. Isn't there any solid ground to stand on here? Don't we have any way to justify the Vietnam War? Isn't there any good reason that so many people sacrificed their lives?

EU: No. We turned a lot of people into Viet Cong. We so abused them that they chose what they otherwise would not have chosen. We killed a lot of civilians, we ruined a lot of farmland, and we alienated the very people that we intended to protect. There was no justification. □

Slice of Life

Dedicated to the cut up, cross-sectioned cadavers at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

I stare at your peacefulness puzzled:
How did you end
Up with this job?
From parted locks to toe-tips, your split-
Personality is visible to all—exposed
And completely open
For discussion. Your very existence dissected

All thoughts regarding being
In more than one place
At the same time. Your admirers are divided
On what to think of you. Some see through
Your shameless display and compare configurations
Between their selves and yours. Others
Are reminded of meaty lunches and break
For a place to uneat them.

Is this just some plot
To gain immortality or a manifold
Symbol for all of mankind?
None will soon follow
In your many-cleft footprints;
You are a fine exhibit
Of the inner self.

by Kurt Kluge

Kurt Kluge is a junior Geography major who relly enjoys his mustard. Kurt, who is involved with judicial board, likes blue and believes it takes 83 licks to reach the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop. He warns that if there is a meaning in life, it's not found at Valpo.



Photo by Joe Leitner

Transience

I never scratched it
in wet sidewalk, I never
carved it in an oak.

by Stephen Elrod

Stephen Elrod has always been too impatient to count the licks to the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop. This junior Civil Engineering major does, however, find mustard spicy when licked off someone else's back. His favorite author is Ray Bradbury; his favorite color is forest green. Stephen can find the meaning of life and rent it at the video store.



Drawing by Mike Miller

Space '92

Little Jim

Raves bring joy to a sorrowful world. Little Jim flew to the moon on a rave partying rocket dance ship. He brought

with him all he knew and nothing else, it was **power**

because it was his dance. Also he brought liquor, but it was more than liquor, it was an elixir that brought him closer to his dance. His dance was fast, invariable, so strong it made him sweat, but it was ok because he always had control, but he knew more. His rave dictated his chant, but his chants were loud and it was too powerful so he did not abuse them, if he did the world would combust in one giant rave party, a myriad of chaotic dance.

He screamed, "bitches," and he was not politically correct so they plotted his death, but his rave was so strong that he vexed them all, and now he is on his way to the moon where raves will be the norm, and men will reproduce asexually. What a rave it will be!

Little Jim really does not sleep, he has too many things on his mind, sometimes he meditates, but that's all between dances, and he has a sweet tooth.

He ran around the Redbud tree, but it wasn't a proper tree because it was elsewhere, it was in his mind, and that was his reality. He confused most, but it did not matter because Little Jim knew more, and that's all that really mattered.

The future really did not come to Jim, Jim made it and it exists now. He experienced more than expressiveness, it was a younger form that developed into a strong composition. It was more than a dance, it was not linear, it moved like a

spiral, but with no ending. A kind of a web of action that involved locking arms, integrated with cognition.

Little Jim knew organization, but he really no longer was aware of it. It was natural and it came in brief verbal passages. The content brought about a rave necklace. A string of philosophies all bound together by his intuition, neatly symmetrical, a naive ignorance, yet very beautiful.

Little Jim knew there was more than just his necklace,

more than just interpretation, he was gifted, yet very sad. He gave back equally, reciprocal to what he took from the world. It was a vision.

On his trip he was not eating, he couldn't eat, he felt too much. He cared too much. It's not that he didn't want to eat, but he felt a moral obligation to the truth, and he couldn't eat, it interfered with his rave. The rave was growing and his trip wasn't even close to being over, although he had arrived on the moon. It began before the alpha and after the omega, it wasn't real, nothing was real to Little Jim. Nothing but his rave and his liquor.

He does cry you know, he does feel the pain, it comes from indifference, and it was beyond black and white. His quest retreated back, and he began to react, but he really was misunderstood, and now he just drinks, it gives him a pleasure, it allows him to dance, it gives him a pose, a facade of truth.

Now Little Jim had some companions and they were young puppets. He didn't have to work hard to maintain any friendship, he gave and took equally, it was with hope, it was genuine, it brought power to his rave trip, it gave new steps to his plan; (his anti-plan), It was how he dealt with reality, it was confusion and Jim trusted none of his puppet friends.

Discovering a new land others misperceived as fantasy, Little Jim was a frontiersman, an innovator. He was not normal, he was not accepted and he knew it, that is why he left. When his thoughts grew boring, he started the dance, it was now that he knew he was ready to rave, it was time to make action of his cognition. He was high now, he liked **to be high.**

Little Jim doesn't like acknowledgement, he doesn't like photographs, it gives proof to his reality, he didn't like to be quoted. Now and then Little Jim felt some responsibility to carry on his confusion, that is why he wanted to reproduce asexually. He did not trust anyone, and women were close to him. His need for himself confronted his puppets, and they like to light candles, and stare into the night, but Jim neglected empty gut feelings, he dealt with true experience, those based on truth.

New clothes on his back he clung to his spaceship, and he felt the lack of gravity, but once he realized he had control, he just let go and let himself go into the blackness, he was looking

for the boundaries, those pressed on him by Western thought. It was a rhythm and he created some **rave dances**, some never seen, but had always existed. He channeled it, but it made no sense to others, it was in the eye of the beholder, and its aesthetic beauty extended beyond the organic, it had become cognitive, a reaction to the ignorance that created moral apathy.

Little Jim cared so he prayed, he didn't know who to, but it was all apart of grace. He now felt death, and he crawled out slowly. It was an epiphany, he was alone, he now stood up, and defended his past, he was in judgment. His life was a metamorphosis of knowledge, a whole, neatly-detailed existence that all pointed toward the truth. It was beyond status quo, it was a redefinition, his rave dance brought glory, but he didn't want to be copied.

What hypocrisy he thought for people to channel his truth by copying his dance steps, it seemed so industrial. It destroyed the order he now rejects. He thrust himself into the nothing and blew up his cognition, his rebirth was complete, **he supped from his jug.**

Little Jim never danced for himself, it was always for others. He now prayed for life, for the renewal of it, and the quest for difference. It brought meaning and he found who God really was, it was in his rave and only Jim really understood. He now ran, ran so fast, but it was more than just moving, it was the escaping, and it made him strong. It brought renewal, a cleansing. Total rebirth, he changed each day.

Washing his hands, Little Jim just stared into the air, it gave him a fulfillment of himself, often by self-sacrifice. Everything was alive now and Jim sought to learn new languages. Giving reciprocal to what is being given, he never ceased to honor, he gave in to his sins, and recognized the breaking of the circle, from here he could start over, bathe in his ignorance, disrupt his glory, then true confession.

Now Little Jim was ready, prepared to fight, pure and glorious dedicated to sacrifice. His actions would now be equal

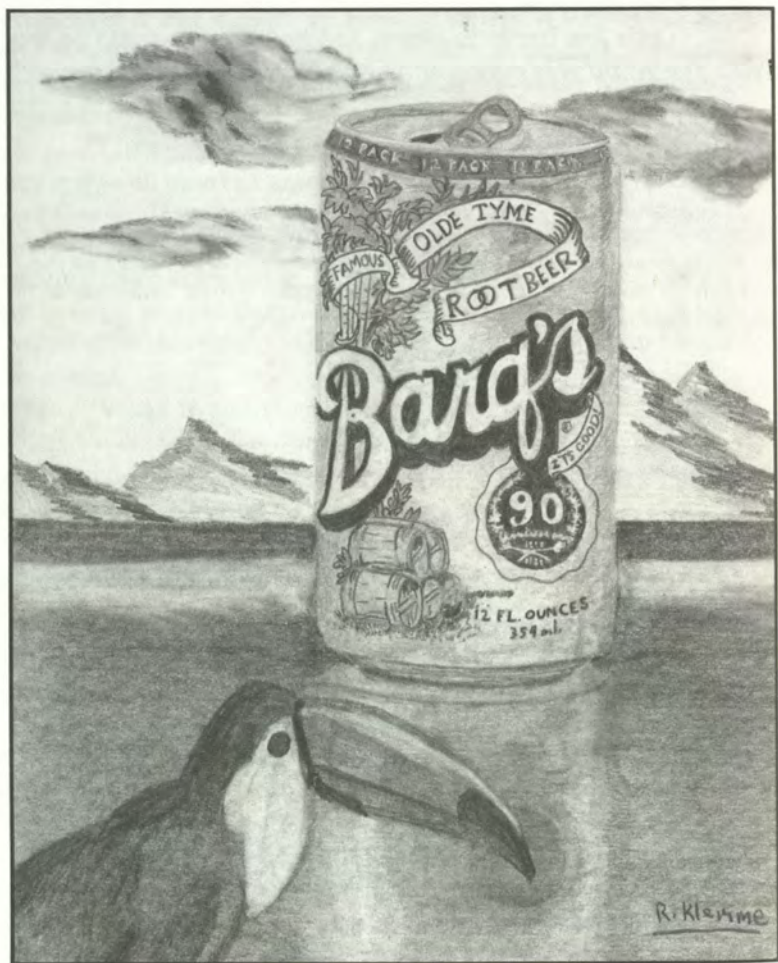
to his thought, he threw out his jug and prepared for crucifixion.

Four was Jim's sacred number, he was holy now, he was giving in to his ideology, no longer a **sinner**, he was now fully embraced in the circle. He loaded up his dance ship and headed for home.

Little Jim began to chant, and he knew it would be the end. The world was raving and Little Jim was the dance master.

by Simeon Carson

Simeon Carson is a senior Graphic Arts major who likes to spread mustard on his corndogs. He claims it takes 38 licks to the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop, and that the meaning of life can be found at the end of a circle. Next year he will seek employment.



Drawing by Ron Klemme

Grandma

Emily Brewster was a small girl
who liked Smuckers Jam on toast.
Often she would sniff the air,
Laugh off her freckles and watch them fall;
Angels would catch them by the ground
and then they would fly her back to her bedroom,
Where they'd make her orange juice from the sun
and squeeze grapes into her mouth.
Then they'd teach her to fly on her bed
bouncing to the canopy and landing in feathers.
Often she would play hide and seek,
Flowers would hide her under fragrant petals.
The angels would fly by and pretend
That she was a leaf, and make her giggle.
But most of all she liked Smuckers Jam on toast.
Scraped off Peanut Butter on her stubby fingers
Played with magic dandelions in the wind;
And she'd chuckle as the silly angels
Would sneeze seeds caught in their noses.
Now she's my grandma
who sits in front of the
television smoking her pipe.
Her dentures sit on her
Mad comics, and sometimes
they talk to her, and she giggles.
She swears angels sit and
watch television with her on
Friday nights, and they eat
their toast with tea now.
Dad and I just giggle.
We all know Grandma's crazy.
Someday we'll be crazy too.

by Rhett Franklin Luedtke

Rhett Franklin Luedtke claims he can reach the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop with one really big lick. This junior Theater/English double major likes Shakespeare, Greene, and yellow mustard. He believes the meaning of life can be found in each one's own big red heart.



Photo by Karl Feick

Banshee

Wearing a black eye on a head hung
low, I watch you dress your limp body
of bruises. You rush the fuchsia,
orange and lime-green satins over
the ridged shame of your new religion.

Though you've broken all mirrors, I see
the souvenirs of his love — the brass bells
roped in your hair so that he may always
find you, the hoops and horns and other
paraphernalia with which he trains you.

Before you go and obediently lick his
gambled vanity, please, let me strip
you of this damaged skin not yours —
let me wake you from this circus-trance,
and be the net into which you may safely fall.

by Erika Harris

Wolverine

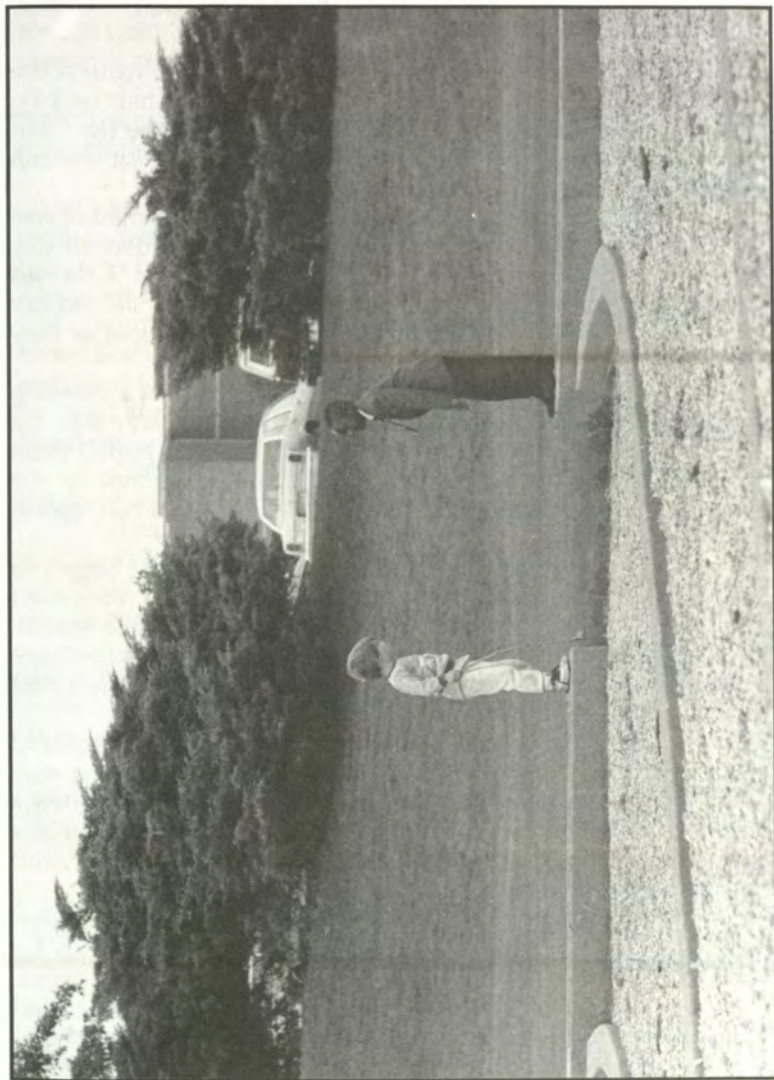
*My teeth tore through the skin
of my ankle, until bone met bone.*

I slept. Six years fled and I still
hadn't risen, but catatonia made him
tolerable. I sensed warm visits
from a strong mother who shook
me gently, trying to enter
my coma with prayers, songs,
and tears. I felt the nurse-hand
of a friend soothe the crusted
purple cracks that laced my body.
I heard cold voices in blue ask
if I wanted to press charges. . .
I dreamed, "Yes." And that is when
I woke and began to chew, no longer
fearing the thought of having to hop.

*Leaving woman-trap, and foot,
I massage my trophied stump,
and know that I am now beautiful.*

by Erika Harris

Erika Harris, a groovy junior Philosophy major involved in the B. S. O., likes Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and the color sienna. Erika, who finds that mustard has a disturbing shade for a condiment, absolutely loves fishsticks and is way too compulsive to lick into the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop. She finds the meaning of life in jazz. Erika has been published in *The Lighter* before.



Heritage Fest, 1992

Photo by Eric Bardenhiagen

Come to the Water

Chapter 10 from the novella,

The One Who Endures to the End Will Be Saved

Gabrielle was walking home, as usual, through the park. It was a gorgeous day and Gabrielle's spirit matched the weather, clear and bright without a rain cloud in the sky. She was thinking how well school had gone that day. Not one run in with those bald-headed guys in combat boots.

Gabrielle was halfway through the park when there was a sudden rustle of leaves and the guys she'd avoided all day jumped out grabbing her. There were four of them. One had his hand over her mouth and another had her arms behind her back. The other two were busy looking out for people as they guided the threesome back into the bushes.

From where they had leapt out, there was a clearing surrounded on all sides. When they had pulled Gaby into the clearing the two lookouts grabbed Gaby's legs and pulled them out from under her so that they could lay her down on the ground. Gaby felt the stubble from one shaved head rub against her leg.

After recovering from the shock, Gabrielle began to scream into the hand over her mouth, "Don't do it. You don't know what you're doing." Over and over again she yelled. Even if the others had been willing to listen, they wouldn't have been able to understand her. Hardly any noise escaped that thick hand over Gaby's mouth.

One of the boys grabbed the shirt at Gaby's wrist and tore it up to her elbow. He pushed the material out of the way while one of the boys that had grabbed Gaby's legs pulled a branding iron with two exaggerated diagonal 'N's on it out of a bag. The other guy at Gabrielle's feet held out his lighter, and they all watched while the brand began to grow hot.

Gaby continued to squirm trying to get out from underneath the guy that was now sitting over her stomach with his back to her. All the while she screamed through that hand, "You don't know what you're doing!" But as hard as she tried she could not get free. She couldn't even bite the hand pressed over her mouth. Finally the brand was hot enough and the guy on Gabrielle's stomach jerked her left arm, naked and unwilling, towards her legs so that it was stick straight. The boy with the brand grabbed her hand and pressed it down on Gaby's wrist.

Gaby screamed as the heat touched her skin and the

pain flashed in her brain. The boy just pressed his hand tighter over her mouth. "No! Don't!" was all Gaby could scream as she wriggled with all her might to get free from the pain.

Finally the boys were satisfied that they had branded Gabrielle for good. The guy who held the brand stood up and spat in Gaby's face. "Hey Jew," he said. "You won't ever forget who you are now!"

Tears were rolling out the corners of Gaby's eyes. She wasn't screaming anything now, only biting her bottom lip to fight off the pain in her wrist.

The guy on Gabrielle's stomach began scooting down Gaby's legs, and she sucked in a deep breath of air through her nose as her diaphragm relaxed from his weight. When he got down to her knees, he stood up and turned around holding down her legs all the while in case she should decide to put up a fight again, but Gaby was too exhausted and shocked to try now. She looked up in his eyes as he sat back down on her legs and tried to ask why. Nothing got through. Instead he reached forward and tore open Gaby's shirt laughing as the buttons flew in a barrage every which way.

Gabrielle pressed her eyelids together hard and shook her head whispering, "You don't know what you're doing."

Her jeans were coming off when the guy who had been put up as a guard said, "Hey guys, a whole bunch of people are heading this way. Let's fly." They took off through the foliage on the opposite side from which they had dragged in Gabrielle.

She lay there for a while tears spilling into her ears feeling completely numb. Then as she regained her senses, she pulled her jeans up fumbling with the button and zipper barely able to finish the job.

Finally she gathered enough strength to sit up. Grabbing her left arm just below the wrist and clutching her shirt together around her neck with her left hand, she bowed her head and closed herself up like a fan.

Her mind began to wander and she found herself remembering the third grade. It was in a place much like this that she had sat and told God that she would not move until he told her who she was. Even then the kids had called her a Jew. One day she asked her mom just what Jew meant.

"They're the people who believed in God before Jesus came. Today they still believe in God but not in Jesus the way you and I do."

"Then why do the kids call me a Jew, mom?"

"Oh honey. I didn't know kids still did that today." She squatted down to Gaby's level and placed her hand on

Gaby's shoulder. "They call you a Jew because their parents call us Jews and then they tell your classmates that that is bad."

"But why do they think we're Jews?"

"Well, it's been a long time since anyone in our family was a Jew, but we still have a Jewish last name and your daddy says it's wrong to change it just because people make fun of us. But out of all of us, you for some reason have the strongest Jewish features."

When Gabrielle was satisfied with her mom's answer, she went to the park just down the road with her older brother. She told him to go play with his friends because she had some business to attend to. Then she sat down behind some trees hidden from all the kids and waited. God gave her an answer.

Gabrielle recalled that answer now and slowly began to unfold herself. Silently she let the tears cleanse her while she continued to clutch her wrist. Finally she was ready to look.

- I will make this mine.

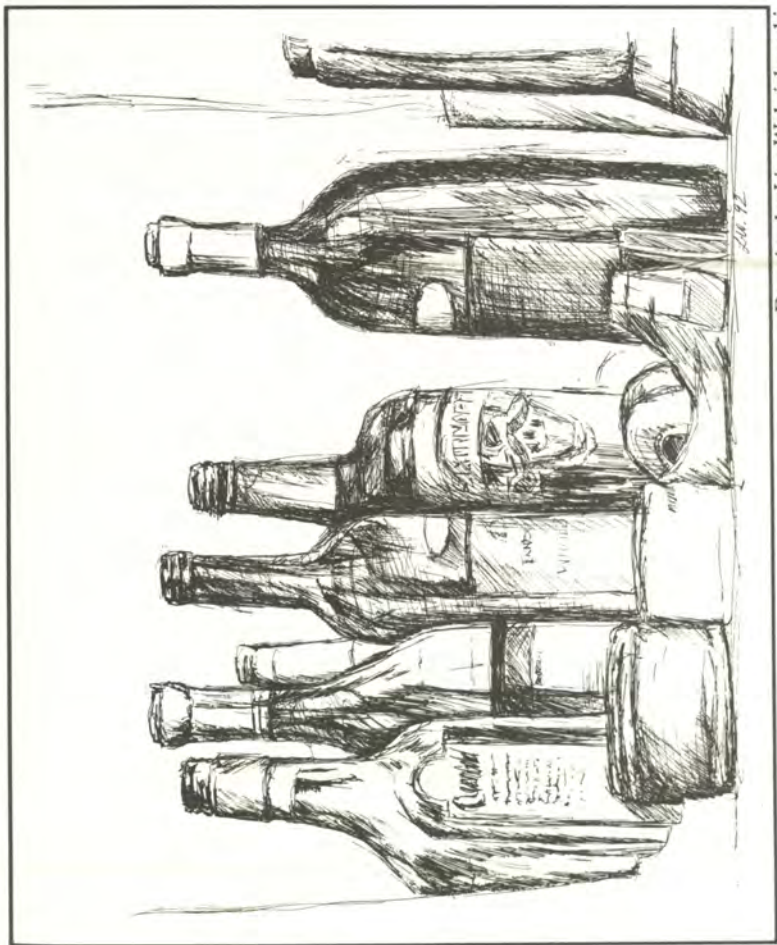
Clenching a fist, she looked down and saw the marks, red and puffy. Gathering her thoughts into concentration, she stared at her wrist until she saw there two lightning bolts.

"Symbol of remembrance, you are my true identity. Twice in my life have I been struck—once by God and once by humanity. Now and forever will I be reminded that I am bound to both. May I always be present in their company when the storm rages."

Gabrielle stood up and wrapped her shirt around her chest keeping her arms folded about her rib cage. She left through the place where she had been brought in and continued her walk home. At the edge of the park, she stopped and bent over a water fountain. Hunching over to maintain her privacy, Gaby unfolded her left arm and placed her wrist under the flow of cool water. A silence passed over her. And she remained there cleansing her scar.

by Allison Schuette

Allison Schuette is a senior Theology major who will be going to Holden Village (a groovy Lutheran-type peace commune) next year. Allison likes Buechner, Dostoyevsky, blue and mustard—especially Dijon. She believes the meaning of life can be found in the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop (which is three licks from the start if you're looking).



Drawing by Lisa Wolniakowski

Wall of Death

Auschwitz Concentration Camp, Poland

I wanted
to be doing something
even if I was just
transported back in time
so that I could be
on one side or the other
of a still-smoking Nazi rifle.
The wall stared back at me
and urged me to run or shoot.
The flowers in memoriam sat
pristinely against the aged brick,
and I wanted to know
How many?
How many lead bullets,
how many screams lost
from between the square brick barracks
on the Polish countryside,
how many steel-jawed guards,
how many human beings
lined up like cattle in some backfield Nebraska town,
how many pints of blood
did the grey, hard ground drink like water?
How many flowers would it take
to remember all the limp
and newly lifeless bodies slumped,
pinned to this wall?
How many carnations, roses, gardenias,
to remember all the faces?
I wanted to grasp or run
like a guilty urchin from a drugstore,
I wanted to see or be blinded
forever from the spectres
that stared from every corner of the square.
I wanted numbers, I wanted
numbing impersonal abstractions.

I didn't want stories of triumph
of the human spirit or constant
prayers to YHWH.

I stood there for what seemed
like all the days of the war,
finally turning to my companions
and stepping softly between
the razor-lined confines
of that ghost-town courtyard.

by Christopher Hanson

Christopher Hanson will attend Yale Divinity School when he finishes his Theology major this year, while many of his closest friends, having been rejected from graduate school, will wander the streets and sit on his doorstep waiting for his generous handouts. Chris likes F. Scott Fitzgerald, e. e. cummings, the color orange, and mud puddles—where he claims one might find the meaning of life. His work has appeared several times in previous Lighters. Leave it to Chris to write a final poem which forces the editors to break consistency and place his biography before its called-for place. He is famous for his oft-quoted quip, "That's about as erotic as a turnip."

Poem

I stood at the Gate of the Year
and the man asked me,
"How far to the center of the circle?"
I hesitated and before I began
He said, "Arctic Nights and Rain Forest Days
and the tea of a thousand magnolia blossoms
brewed by the shimmering sun."

I left,
the gate unopened.
I tried straight lines,
but these led to places,
not to ways. I tried
plying the straight places,
bending, curving them,
but always a straight line
which led to a place
crossed my path.
I dared even pierce
myself, drew out
the arrow-straight thoughts.

And I came back to stand at the Gate.
I said, speaking hastily,
"I have walked the straight and narrow
and have bent and even broken that
which my Muses prescribed. I pray you
tell me, What must I do to enter the Year?"
The man sat quietly, sucking the snow
off the beak of a hummingbird
and spoke quietly. "The Gate is not
a line to cross or a path like that of the everglade lion.
It is being, the perpetual instance of the sun dance,
it is howling across Arabian sands, walling up in books
whose bindings have held minds as large as tomorrow,
it is a thousand whispered mantras, and it is the tea of life
brewed by the shimmering sun."

by Christopher Hanson

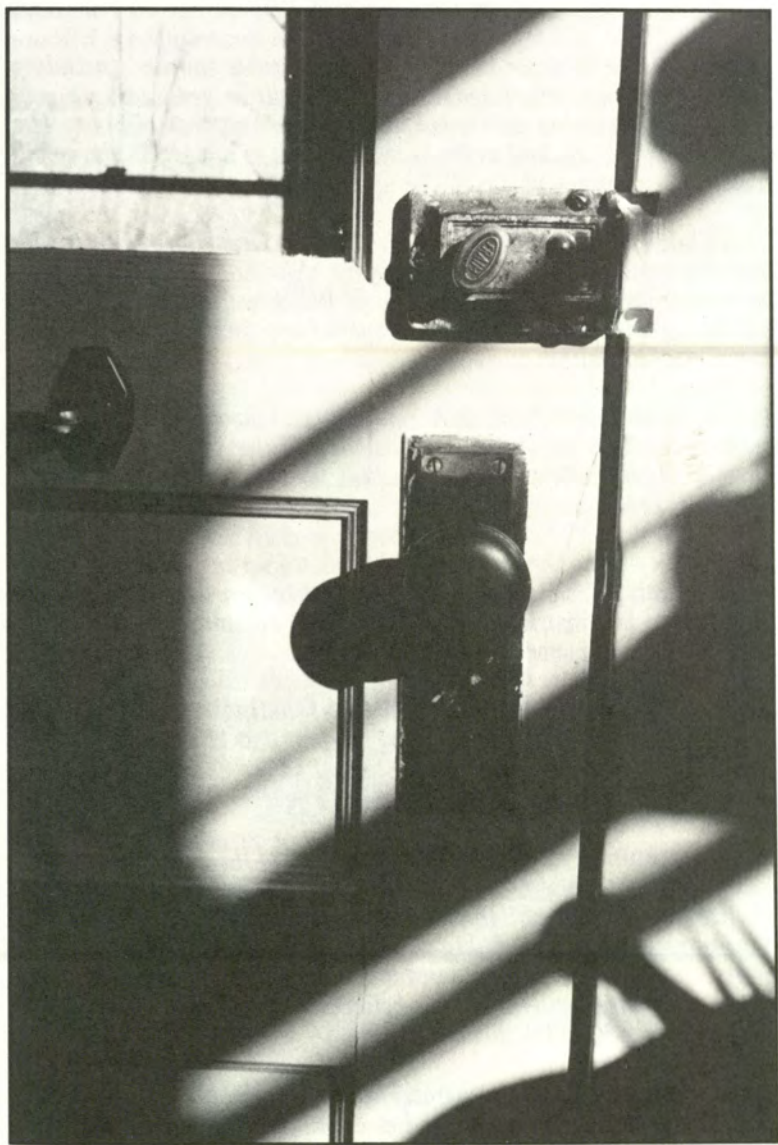


Photo by Lisa Elaine Butts

— More Contributor Notes —

Eric Bardenhagen is a senior from Racine, WI.

Jennifer Beste is never home. Through various sources (including Loopy Lopez) we have learned that Beste will be graduating a year early (this May) and will spend next fall in Hangzhou, China. Her favorite color is red, and as far as the meaning of life goes? she is still looking. . .

Lisa Elaine Butts is involved in V. U.'s Art Department and is considering a future career in photography. She finds that it takes 275 (whew!) licks to the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop, finds mustard to be hot and/or spicy, enjoys the color navy blue and thinks one can find the meaning of life within oneself.

Jason Dietz is a sophomore Art major. His favorites include Keith Haring, black and mustard—that yellow stuff that goes on grilled substances. Jason believes people can find the meaning of life wherever they feel like it.

Karl Feick claims the meaning of life shows up in lava lamps really late at night. This Beacon photographer likes maroon—because it is the color of his favorite pair of shoes—and mustard in small doses. Karl is a Biology major in his junior year.

Kerry Ghormley thinks mustard is disgusting. This junior Art major, who likes the colors green, purple, and black equally well, believes the meaning of life can be found at the end of the rainbow. Kerry has been published in *The Lighter* before.

Craig Greenman thinks the number of licks to the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop depends on who's doing the licking. Craig, a senior Philosophy major published previously in *The Lighter* and *The Torch*, says he will probably be unemployed, sitting on Hanson's doorstep and starving next year. Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky are Craig's favorite writers, and he believes the meaning of life can be found somewhere in the Bible.

Ron Klemme guesses the number of licks to the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop would be a few hundred at least. Ron, a senior Psychology major, likes the Psychology Club, the Surrealists, and the color green. He plans to take the next year off to paint and be a bum.

Joe Lehner, a senior English major from Rockford, Illinois, says it depends whether you use your teeth and how strong your tongue is to get to the center of the Tootsie Roll Pop. He finds the meaning of life somewhere in the rhythm. He likes a darkish kind of blue and thinks mustard is a hinderance to proper computer usage.

Jennifer Manek, a senior Speech Pathology major, will be attending graduate school at Marquette next year. This lover of green thinks mustard is slimy and sick, the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop is 6,000,251 small licks away, and the meaning of life can be found in the cereal aisle of the grocery store.

Lisa L. Meuser gets an "ice cream headache" from mustard. She is a senior Philosophy/Humanities double major who finds the meaning of life in Stuart Smalley's "Deep Thoughts." Lisa hopefully will be teaching English in Greece next year.

Mike Miller claims that whoever said "truth is stranger than fiction" had it right. Just returned from a semester in Cambridge, England, this Phi Sigma Kappa social chairperson D.J.'s at WVUR and names Valpo as his hometown. Mike is a senior Biology major who finds the meaning of life on the backs of sugar packets.

Joel Raedeke is a junior Graphic Design major who enjoys the work of Keith Haring.

Mary Thermos likes the work of E.M. Forster and Thomas Hardy. She also likes mustard with ketchup (but claims it's zippy enough to go solo, too). Mary is a senior English major who knows that it takes 356 licks to reach the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop—she really counted in the fourth grade. Her plans for next year: "Your guess is as good as mine," she says. Maybe she should hang around Wrigley Field, where she locates the meaning of life.

Michelle L. Unke, a senior Spanish major, will be interning at an International Center in Minneapolis next year. Michelle likes blue, the work of Picasso (his blue period?), and says one can find the meaning of life in one's own soul through God.

Lisa Wolniakowski is a senior art major from Brookfield, WI.

Lois Marie Young is a senior IECA/Spanish double major who plans on going to graduate school in International Relations next year. She enjoys the work of John Steinbeck and Pablo Neruda as well as tons of mustard on a Chicago-style hot dog. Lois has been published in *The Lighter* before.

From Your Rather Zany Editors

an afterword

Well kids, what a year it's been. You know, in the mountains of Tasmania, there lived a big, red, hairy ape named Palatino. Yet the Palatino we're using has nothing whatsoever to do with big, red, hairy apes living in Tasmania. This Lighter has been brought to you by the Palatino type font (Palatino, Palatino, men have named you *sing to the tune of that sappy Mona Lisa song*) of the Macintosh Ilci computer extraordinaire. There is a mural on the wall in front of us here in the Lighter/Beacon office filled with faces that flower out at us from the seventies. It's horrid, really. The words "sip sap, soupy doo, doo sop, boo wop, groovy" appear in the upper right hand corner and we have no clue how they got there. Each night we sit and gaze into the adoring eyes of the Dorothy Hamill-looking woman. We've tried coloring the mural using bright happy colors like powder blue eyeshadow on the Pricilla Presley-looking woman, however the grim flashback from the seventies still fails to elevate our mood. (Palatino, Palatino. . .) But musical adaptations from the spiffy Sinatra (Nat King Cole, actually, but Frankie should have made it) take us far past happiness, into the realm of ideas.

Kevin is studyiing the double helix this semester. He has speculated that perhaps the universe itself is arranged in a double helical fashion, constantly winding, never ending, constantly repeating. (Palatino, Palatino. . .) But Kevin isn't even a scientist (unlike Steven Hawking, to mention but one). Kevin has learned all about the Happy Bird, how it bobs its head, back and forth, thirsting for drink, over and over, repeating itself (Palatino, Palatino. . .) and has seen scientific movies which seem to say "Hey, all scientists really do is hang around in a lot of bars, drink a lot of beer, attempt to rip off ideas from other scientists, and woo women (Palatino, Palatino. . .). But let's face it, Frankie just wasn't all that good at wooing.

Nancy, too, has learned some interesting things this year. She has just informed us that "I'm just now finding out the jist of all my classes." Funny thing is, that still doesn't help. Up until now, she had forgotten all about that class at 10:45 on Mondays. Nancy doesn't know what Kevin's talking about, but

she thinks Frankie does a fine job of wooing the women. Nancy, at least. (Palatino, Palatino. . .) And lastly, as she paraphrases from her surrealist class, life is everything, yet it is nothing. Dada. Fish. Fuck.

Mike's applied to grad school. Need we say more? O for 4 so far. He and Nancy are running off to live in the mountains of Tasmania with the big, red, hairy ape named Palatino. You see, Mike likes apes. And he likes Nancy. Not to say there's any correlation between the two. The way Mike figures, though, maybe he'll have better luck with the apes than with the grad schools. (Palatino, Palatino. . .) And besides, he never wanted to go anyway. So Pooley. Maybe the apes will appreciate the glory and grandeur of Frankie S. And another thing. . .

So we're sitting in front of this big, grim seventies mural staring into the eyes of the Pricilla Presley woman and the Dorothy Hamill chick (and the way she's drawn, coupled with the happy fluorescent markers we've used, really does make her look like a small, fuzzy, baby BIRD!). So we've put this Lighter together in the watchful gaze of the seventies mural (Palatino, Palatino. . .), and we've been thinking to ourselves. Selves, we think, how did we get here. Meridith is reading Margaret Atwood in the background and all, but that says nothing about how we got here (Palatino, Palatino. . .). And for that matter, where are we going? Where is this going? From whence does it come? Let's bow our heads and pray.

And finally, to the point of it all. Notice our references in this rather brief essay. The remnants from the seventies are still looking down on us. The looming voice of Frank Sinatra still fires through our funny bones (Palatino, Palatino. . .). The New Kids are long gone. So is Milli Vanilli. Not that they were ever really here, unlike Golden Earing or Men Without Hats (or Men At Work for that matter) or Frank Sinatra (Palatino, Palatino. . .). But what is here? What does it mean to be here? What does it mean to be, Kevin asks, scarred by Heidegger, what does it look like, Nancy asks, her artistic tendencies eeking through, how long a novel would the answer make, Mike starts writing in the margins.

And it's the big, red, hairy ape that brings us all back to the point. You see, grad schools and jobs and law firms and ad agencies and politics and Toyotas and Big Macs and Miller Lite and pressure and time and pressure and deadlines and pressure

and 8 a. m. classes and schedules and pressure and money, they're all in this big grim seventies mural hanging over our heads. It's not painted there. But it's all reflected in the eyes of the Dorothy Hamill woman. Oh, it's there all right. Look a little harder now, for the first time.

We're going to Tasmania. That's where the big, red, hairy ape lives, remember? In the mountains. Outside the city. Where the big, red, hairy ape is free, wandering. The big, red, hairy ape is a big, red, hairy ape who likes Frankie (Palatino, Palatino. . .), and is right here in front of us. We can't see it, though. The big, grim, seventies mural is covering it up with pressure and money and time and Big Mac containers and politics and grad schools and time and pressure, more pressure, more pressure, more. . .

Division, isolation. Are we able to see others through that grim seventies mural, Nancy asks, trained to look at art, is it there, Kevin wonders, trained to suspect his senses, how long of a novel would it make, Mike asks, trained to name, to dig, to know.

But (Palatino, Palatino. . .) neither Nancy, Kevin, nor Mike, using all of their formalized, seventies training, can see it. They have been trained too much about too little, trained to look at and know the forms painted on the grim seventies mural painted on the wall, painted in the air, painted in the sky, hanging over our heads.

Come, my friends, the big, red, hairy ape is waiting.

Increase the Peace,

Mike
Kevin
Nancy

*Come, my friends, 'tis not
too late to seek a newer
world.*

—Alfred Lord Tennyson

The Lighter

Volume XXXVIII issue two

Spring, 1993

(Valparaiso University)

The Lighter is Valparaiso University's student literary and art magazine. All submissions remain anonymous throughout the selection process and are chosen by an unbiased group of interested university students.

The Lighter welcomes contributors and members to its staff regardless of race, creed, gender, political affiliation. Any questions or comments should be directed to *The Lighter* office.

The Lighter staff assumes all responsibility for the contents of this magazine (even though the views, expressions, ideas, comments, political preferences, common sense or lack thereof are not necessarily the views, expressions, ideas, comments, political preferences, common sense or lack thereof, of *The Lighter* staff). Views manifested in the contained works do not necessarily represent the views of Valparaiso University.

Thanks to Beacon Editor, Molly Rama McDonough for putting up with us and our shenanigans throughout the year. Thanks to her, as well, for use of her technology (computer, that is). In loving thanks to "Mama" Eifrig for her empathy and general, all around "her-ness," not to mention her occasional editorial pencil. To Krisitin Bierlein, Meridith Brand and Nancy Bernardo for their proofreading skills on Deadline Eve. To John Ruff for his willingness to partially bear the possible reactions the contents of this publication may or may not provoke. To our parents, just because. And finally, to all those who have shown their support yet have remained nameless, anonymous, for whatever reasons (their choice or ours).

This *Lighter* is brought to you by Palatino (the font and the ape), the equation $E=MC^2$, and the sixth, the twenty-first, the third, and the eleventh letters of the Roman alphabet.



Recycled Paper

The Lighter

Spring 1993

