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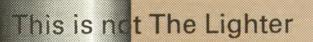
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The Lighter Spring 1995

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The Lighter

Volume XL issue two Spring 1995 Valparaiso University

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All submissions remain anonymous throughout the selection process and are chosen by an unbiased group of interested university students. Each semester, The Lighter welcomes contributors and staff members from all faculties of the university community, regardless of race, creed, gender, or sexual orientation.

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The Lighter editors thank Julie Sievers and Gail M. Eifrig for helping with proof-reading. Thanks also to The Beacon editors for the use of their equipment. Oh yeah, John Ruff rocks. Un objet recontre son image, un objet recontre son nom. Il arrive que l'image et le nom de cet objet se recontrent.

An object encounters its image, and object encounters its name. It happens that the image and the name of that object encounter each other.

Rène Magritte

Table Of Contents

Poetry

Jim Steingass	14	Eye Feel
Heather Gorman	15	Hamadryad
Katie Dueringer	16	Clear View
Rhett Luedtke	18	Wheelchairs and Bananas
	19	London Airport 1978
	20	Death in an Oregon Box Car
Lynne Flowers	36	Loneliness Games
	38	Possessions
	39	Frontiers
Kate Kitzmann	40	Break-Fast
Travis Scholl	41	Burial
Andrea Hartman	50	London Bridge
	51	Lunch Box
Rory Segety	72	Pathogeny.
	73	Invirile.
	74	How to confess a desire.

Fiction

Julie Sievers	5	Three
Ali Mohajer	22	Vacation
Brian Herrera	54	He Rollercoaster

Interview

Travis Scholl

42 Talking With Ed Byrne

	Reviews	S
Carmen Danielson	65	Jon Pahl, Hopes and Dreams of All
Al Pionke	67	Mark Schwehn Exiles From Eden
Heidi Nafzger	70	Walter Wangerin, Jr Crying For a Vision

Photography

Samantha Bradtmiller

Isaiah 68.4
 My Father's House
 Assignment #12

The Lighter

Preface

The connection between word and image is a subject with which many students and scholars have concerned themselves. At Valparaiso University an entire course has been designed around word and image, poetry and painting. In that class, word and image means something quite different from the meaning which Magritte draws our attention to.

Rène Magritte (1898-1967) was one of the most durable of the Surrealist painters. Born in Lessines, Belgium, he began to paint when he was twelve. Magritte experimented with Cubism, Futurism, and other styles before he discovered Surrealism. His discovery began with Giorgio de Chirico, an early Surrealist whose painting deeply moved Magritte to realize the ascendancy of poetry over painting. James Harkness, the translator of Michel Foucault's book about Magritte titled, *This is Not a Pipe*, writes that Magritte "disliked being called an artist, preferring to be considered a thinker who communicated by means of paint" (2).

Magritte's preference to be considered a thinker rather than an artist is shown in his writing of *Les Mots et Les Images*, in which he explores word as image, image as word, their connection and dis-connection. The quotations which begin and end this magazine are from this work, which was printed in *La Revolution surrèaliste* (n.12 du 15 decembre 1929, p. 32-33).

These quotations show the arbitrariness of a word and the image it supposedly represents, or, the image and the word it supposedly represents. Both Magritte and Foucault explore this dis-connection. To use the cover of *The Lighter* as an example, we see what we would call a Zippo lighter, but underneath the object the words tell us that this is not a lighter. Not a lighter? Of course it is. However, there is nothing inherent in that object which makes us say "oh, let's call that a lighter." We could have put the word "broccoli"

Spring 1995

underneath the object, as its name, and it would have made as much sense as "lighter." So the connection of word to object/image appears to be arbitrary.

What does thinking about this accomplish? First, it shows us why we designate meaning. Naming objects such as a lighter establishes order to life and a way to communicate. Second, exploring these abstract ideas makes us attentive to how words and objects are inseparable. Could anything else be a lighter? Could we hear the word lighter without creating a mental picture of one? And third, from this process we see how the connection of word and image limits us, and causes sub-conscious prejudices. What do we think of when we hear "girl" or "boy," "doctor" or "nurse." Though the word "doctor" is arbitrary, its meaning reflects a complex set of cultural beliefs, histories, and expectations which hold us down.

We would be quite unsettled if a group went around changing the names for the objects we call umbrella, turnip, supermodel, and others. We would probably call them crazy. Perhaps they realize something we often forget: that we create meaning. Through that created meaning, we communicate and exclude. Awareness of how we create meaning will keep us mindful of the connection between word and image, convention and limitation.

In this issue of *The Lighter*, several writers explore or draw attention to how people create meaning: Steingass on the question of how we are taught to interpret, Flowers in her look at how much we are our possessions, Hartman in a disturbing portrayal of bulemia, and Herrera and Segety with unconventional writings which are worth taking a few times to read. Reviews have been included in this semester's *Lighter* because critical writing is also an aspect of the student talent shown within these pages. Read on and enjoy.

Kate Kitzmann

The Lighter

4

Julie Sievers

Three

I.

In the spring of 1982 I baptized Dianne Daffern. Dianne first became my friend in 1978 when we shared a table in the Rolling Hills Elementary School kindergarten room. At that time Dianne was a chubby, black-haired little girl in dresses which hung straight from her shoulders and which, on her short body, expanded into gauzy balloons with arms, and legs. The balloons were always a royal blue. That year she shoved a royal blue crayon up her ear (perhaps hoping to dye blue both it and her brain) and her mother — ever negligent — never found it. Just a few years ago she paid her first visit to an ear doctor and found that her nearly deaf left ear had, to her embarrassment, a blue crayon lodged deep. I do not know if they ever managed to remove that crayon. In any case it would have been too late.

From the moment she met Dianne, my mother began a struggle to convert the Dafferns. On a rare day, to silence my mother and win some respite, Mrs. Daffern grudgingly agreed to visit Christ Lutheran Church, 2001 Grand St., and bring her two youngest children. Mother was delighted. The Monday after, she sent Mrs. Daffern a card with little painted violets on the cover and invited her to return. Mrs. Daffern coolly replied that she "couldn't stand all that depressing Lutheran music, nor the standing up, sitting down, and talking back to the pastor." Moreover, she worked "too many hours during the week to waste an entire Sunday morning at some damned church." Furthermore, her children had no church clothes (she'd noted the balloon phenomenon and stopped buying dresses for Dianne). And so she never returned. Dianne occasionally attended Christ Lutheran, but after four years the situation had grown clear. She wasn't any closer to the baptismal font than she had been prior to my mother's efforts, nor was she soon to be.

And then words appeared in my nightmares, accusing: "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." They plagued me for months, until one day I believed and took responsibility for Dianne Daffern.

The Lutheran Hymnal explicitly states the conditions for emergency baptism by lay persons: "In urgent situations, in the absence of the pastor, any Christian may administer Holy Baptism." Finding these conditions met and mortality eminent, Dianne agreed to my urgings and we began to make preparations.

In 1982 our house drew water from the Ogalala Aquifer up through a 30-foot windmill at the far end of our pasture. This windmill pumped water up a long well shaft and into a fiberglass holding tank. From the brim of the tank, excess water poured into a thick iron pipe, which in turn emptied into a stone water trough. When the holding tank was full, the water would overflow into the pipe and drop down to the stone trough, where animals could drink. It was the only water for miles—a font in the wilderness—and from the land watered by the trough sprung the shade of the only tree in that pasture. We required little else—just an Order of Baptism, a white candle, and a Holy Bible. These, together with a (royal blue) notebook for the official information and signatures of witness, were gathered in a satchel and the satchel sealed.

On the appointed day, at the proper time, Dianne and I walked out into the pasture, towards the windmill. Joel's horse SeaBabe quickly fell in, accompanied by our dog Bowser. We formed a small procession.

"I don't have to go all the way under, do I?"

"Not at all. We're not Baptists. Besides, Mom would notice if you came back all drippy."

"Wouldn't it be cool if we baptized SeaBabe? Let's do

that. Don't they usually sprinkle the stuff on your hair? That means we'd have to sprinkle her tail. Let's baptize her tail, ok? "

"I don't know. The hymnal doesn't say anything about horses."

"Does the hymnal say that I have to go to church after this?"

"No."

The objects lay on the edge of the trough, and Dianne stood to one side of the water, I to the other. I laid my hand on the Bible and we opened the hymnal. "Receive the sign of the holy cross both upon your forehead and upon your heart to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified." My fingers sliced the air in a cross; a wasp buzzed my cheek and droned away. "Hear the word of our Savior Jesus Christ telling of the new birth by water and the Spirit. 'I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.' This is the Gospel of the Lord." Dianne and I mumbled to the empty pasture: "Praise to you, O Christ."

Then the words darkened and my voice lowered and hardened:

"Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?"

"I do."

"Say, 'I do renounce them.' You have to repeat every word, Dianne!"

"I do renounce them. I renounce them."

"Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?"

She squeezed shut her eyes for a long time and dragged in a heavy, long breath. Suddenly, stamping her foot into the red dust with her eyes still squeezed shut, she hollered at the top of her lungs: "Yes, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH!" She snapped her head around and looked at me.

"Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son?"

Her jaw relaxed, and she exhaled, "Yess ..."

And so we proceeded. The sun burned our eyeballs, scorched the backs of our heads, and our legs and eyes grew so heavy that the words stretched slower and longer. Dianne's knees buckled. Finally I asked,

"Do you wish to be baptized into this Christian faith? "Yes."

"Dianne"

"I do."

"How are you named?"

"Dianne Alice Daffern."

"Dianne Alice Daffern." She lowered her head, and I dipped a cupped hand into the liquid cool of the trough. The water flashed and rolled down her sweaty black hair. One— "I baptize you in the name of the Father"—two—"and of the Son"—three—"and of the Holy Spirit." Three times it slid down her nose to her lips; then my mouth fell shut.

II.

In the days before the cholesterol panic, my father enjoyed raising cattle, butchering them, and then selling half the beef. He'd keep the other half, and we'd have home-grown beef for an entire year. This was not only a luxury, but a source of pride. It made us real Texans ("we" were actually a scientistand-schoolteacher family from Kansas) and qualified my father to wear boots and cowboy hat on occasion. Our 1968 Ford pick-up sported a bold bumper sticker exhorting tailgaters to "EAT MORE BEEF!"

The beef-raising business wasn't extremely profitable, but enough so that Dad encouraged my brother and me to try our hand at it. Joel was successful for several years before I decided that an extra few hundred dollars might be worth the hassle of a bovine. Having made the decision, I grew increasingly excited about the prospect of owning such a large animal and decided that we should become best of friends. The heifer was bought, my ledger set up with the help of my father, and I began the painstaking process of choosing a name for my new friend. After weeks in long consultation with my most prized books, I finally settled upon the perfect name for this creature: Ananda. According to Madeleine L'Engle, the name translates: "that joy without which nothing exists."

I loved Ananda. In the days before she arrived, I toured the pen in which she would live; I climbed into the water tank and scrubbed out algae; I bought a new salt block. She would understand my secrets and I would rub her downy nose; we would travel the pasture together, happily lowing; I would love her and she would know me. In these days, mind wove a world inhabited solely by Ananda and me. She was a sage inhabitant of the green country Illyria, enduring this world for the sake of my loneliness. She was an angel in four-legged flesh—a holy cow. And then the great day arrived: on a warm autumn afternoon, her green cattle trailer backed up to the cattle ramp and she skidded down it to her pen.

Ananda immediately despised me. She snorted mucus on my face when I attempted to stroke her; when I emerged from the barn with a bucket of grain, Ananda lowered her head and began to charge. Day and night she grunted for oats and corn, and slammed her fat body against the barn door to demand it. These strained hours at the barn door produced great quantities of fecal matter which she naturally plopped all over the ground. Soon it was impossible to enter her pen without swamping through oily manure. I grew sly and hateful, feeding her after dark in order to sneak out, dump the grain, and run back to the safety of the barn. Ananda, in turn, grew slothful. She rolled in mud. She gorged herself on grass and weeds. She plopped, and plopped, and plopped.

One dark Wednesday I returned from school to a disaster. The barn door was split and its frame angled outward in an awkward arch. The glass panel by the door was shattered, and nearby stood my father, furiously sputtering and gesturing. Ananda lay heaving on the barn floor, bulging, eyes glazed and wild. My father angrily explained that I had left the barn door unlatched—Ananda had nosed it open and slammed her wide body straight through the frame. She'd been eating for hours. Cattle, he said, lack the chemical which causes a body to feel full. So they eat and eat, finally exploding from digestive gases and sheer food bulk. Ananda, having been in the barn since approximately 3:00 p.m., threatened to explode. Her jaw lay slack, and the undigested grain could be seen piled all the way up her throat, out her mouth and into her nose. A neighbor had knifed her stomach to release some of the gases, but it was not enough. Even if she escaped explosion, she was going to die and it was my fault.

The decision was made to butcher her that night before she died, in order to save some of the beef. So, Ananda was killed, cut into slabs and wrapped up in rectangular white pieces of butcher paper. Parts of her were sold, but most of her was dumped into our garage freezer. She stayed there for a while, and occasionally I would visit her cold white chunks and try to explain things to her. More often I poked her slick butcher paper and taunted. But eventually these chilly visits slowed, and one day they stopped altogether. I worked on the ruined ledger, went to school, practiced piano. Dad went about the process of purchasing new livestock, and I kept my distance.

A few months later we met again. This time Ananda lay on our table, flame-broiled. Mother had lain a rose linen on the table, and draped our finest lace tablecloth over it. On the lace she laid plates of steaming potatoes wrapped in tin foil; into each of our glasses she poured iced tea with lemon and sugar. Bowls of brown buttered rolls, sweet corn, and green beans in tangy mustard sauce crowded the table. To the upper left of each plate sat a delicate cup of apple salad. To the right, a white linen napkin. We all sat down, and then Mother carried in Ananda under a pan. My father asked the blessing. Then I ate her. In that country, walking requires concentration—the ground hosts prickly pear, mesquite, rattlesnakes, horny toad, millipede, tarantula, poison ivy, barrel cacti, yucca, and a strain of prickly pear which grows to four feet. (Occasionally a horse trudges past with lengths of this cactus stuck in its belly.) For these walks, a snake bite kit is usually brought, and a hoe. The hoe is useful in a variety of ways, but is essential for one thing—the killing of a snake. It is long enough to kill a snake safely, and with it a hole may be dug in the ground for snake head, fangs, and poison.

Walking in such a fashion nears meditation. It is, at least, self-emptying. Brain concentrates on detail (red dirt, thorn, goathead, manure or coiled serpent?), body steadily steps and sweats. Mid-day is still and cloudless, and the civilized world remains 50 miles to the north, scattered outposts three miles south, but again burnt-holy wilderness for another 15 miles south, and to the west and east? Indefinitely.

That day I walked to a creek to gather specimens for an insect collection. I wore shorts and a bathing suit, packed lunch, rubbing alcohol, some plastic butter dishes, and slowly hiked the three miles from my house. For several hours I wandered the creek collecting insects, trapping them in toxic butter dishes. At noon I stopped for lunch, stacked the plastic containers in my back pack, and laid it in the shadow of a mesquite. I sat on a high white rock above a curve in the creek where water rushed and spit; the stone scalded my bare flesh and numbed it. The peach I'd packed had chilled to a light ice, and I spent a full ten minutes eating it. It was the sweetest fruit I have ever eaten. When I'd sucked all its juices, I buried its seed in that barren soil in hope of a tree. [The seed lies dead there yet.] That day I stood naked and breathed scorched air. I sat exposed on bare dirt, one pink and tender live thing. Without sound or movement a figure arose on the still ledge opposite me, naked to the waist, on a horse and with a gun slung on his back. He had a yellow beard and blackened skin; he did not move or speak. His horse snorted and fell still. The flies ceased to drone. He stared at my nakedness. On a bare rock I crouched, shocked and numb.

Halfway home my fingers begin to prick and sting. I grow nauseated; feeling returns to my body. The insects in the pack fall from stacks and dishes; their wings and antennae bump and break. I step on several cactus and embed hairlike needles in my fingers for pulling the prickly flesh out of my shoes. A flap of skin tears on the thorns, and its blood stains my mouth.



Samantha Bradtmiller

Isaiah 68.4

Jim Steingass

Eye Feel

Through years of work, you've trained my eyes to see The magic words and pictures of this world. They are now deft with hidden thoughts of lore, Perceive with ease a "hawk from a handsaw," And from your paper distance find the rocks And windblown cliffs. You say my eyes can feel The starkness of a canyon dry and blanched Of all but arid, pasty, gritting sense. But yours are flat and still, a senseless frame.

What Ease! But if the very paper hawk I see Would flesh; be real and rip my craven eyes With talons, beak, and rancid coursing breath From still and stagnant sockets. Free of I! And I would take the saw and rip my flesh To feel the rusted, biting teeth and know, Not see, the varied truth of saw and hawk.

Then when you show your pictures of the cliffs, A slick and sightless square is all I'll grasp. I'll take it up with raw and trembling hands And shred the pulp which sightless has no soul.

Then I will turn and walk away. To feel . . . To eat the pasty, barren cliffs I feel.

Heather Gorman

Hamadryad

Hair long Deep and dark A mantle For the sloping whiteness Of her shoulders

Beauty like a bough Strung taut From the tree Stretching to the sun's Great and graceful hand

Like a tree Her shadows deep And hands soft As leaves soaked In Midsummer's rain Dance in patterns Of wind and storm

Her roots travel Moist soil And rocky corners Deep and distant anchors To foliage strong and free

Katie Dueringer

Clear View

I never knew autumn trees, after dissolving their green masks, decked out for their revelry and threw party favors to the wind. The scarlet and bronze leftovers litter my path. I kick through the confetti which leaves smudged shadows on my sidewalk.

I know trees, but as individuals, never this crowd of acquaintances waving in unison.

At home, one lone cottonwood will beckon me to her arms, this time of year, for a last rough embrace. Her green cloak's tattered into waxed saffron, but still she plays her woodwind solo with whistling grasses. I sway in her music, and from her arms. I clearly see the horizon.

Here, with this boisterous crowd, I am barely able to shake hands with them all, let alone learn names and faces. They chatter above me in cocktail conversation, flinging their finery carelessly to the ground. If I do reach up and hug one of this crowd, I can't cope with the raucous babbling and see no farther than the bark of adjacent trees.

Rhett Luedtke

Wheelchairs and Bananas

They talk on the way to market; Remus in a wheelchair, white mission boy pushing. Behind them, two singular lines framing little footprints in the mud.

Was it God, Uncle Remus, when you hurt your back, like that? Mucking across mud paths of their village home, the left wheel takes root, hurting tribal pride.

Push boy, Push a little harder. Mud spurts between the toes, wheels stump over stones. Uncle Remus, how much longer? Rubber tires slipping in the rain.

Raindrops begin to spatter, leaving stains upon the steel. *Quick, boy. Push me under the bananas.* Gripping tight as little hands can they accident and bobsled down the slope.

The free wheeling chair bumps into a trunk whiplashing the rider separating the boy from cold bars into the unwelcoming mud, black as the earth with frightened eyes. *Eeiii, no gud yu pun daun, picinin.* The white boy climbs towards a lap. Little bottom, on legs of stone, Sorry! *Eeiii, there is safety under bananas when the rain begins to flow.*

London Airport 1978

Bubblegummed in our seats, we begged to fly To this windows where the aiplanes grew. Oh! We were obnoxious grunts of energy, As Mom hushed us into bored spectators. Destroying our seats, pushing the patience Of a tired father-too-careful in a foreign land, We screamed toward the window, foreheads against the glass, peering for our Magic Airplane. Noses flattened, one eye opened, squeeming For a glimpse of wings to transport little spies To Grandmama's. Our jelly-roll breath steaming the glass, reflecting brothers. You and I. Grubby hands clasped, cheering at our surprise,

Filling the empty glass like sticky little flies.

Death in an Oregon Box Car

Ever since they'd entered the Oregon jungle with nothing more than big egos, and a rainbow flute

the two brothers peering out the door of the clacketing boxcar were inseparable. Andy sang

to Frankie's colored whistle. The day was drunk but they were young, so they played cards where the beams

split the must and the sunlight. They called out for the rodents down among their leftovers

to join them in their game. *Come on* out, smelly Jerry; let's see what you can do.,said Andy, pissing

through the door, watering Douglas fir. They were suddened by the darkness of a tunnel. *Shhh, That's thunder I believe.*

Andy stumbled out the door searching for the wall in darkness. Gone.

Frankie, lit the tunnel with a match, *Andy*? Train whistle blew. *Andy*? The color of the rainbow flute thickened in his head.

The lonely mountain butte ended, the sun repainted light upon on the empty floor, little strips of pain. *Andy*?

The Lighter



My Father's House

Samantha Bradtmiller

Ali Mohajer

Vacation

The dusty broken shards of rock under his feet made for poor climbing. Hassan took his steps carefully and close together. He kept his eyes on the space ahead of him, only occasionally looking up at the walls of rock that loomed up ahead of him and to his right side. The sun was hot on his head.

He laughed to himself, happy that his hair was long enough now to cover his scalp. The heat of the sun on his hair was heavy, but comforting. It would be funny if his head got sunburned like his father's. His father had to wear a hat, because his forehead was longer than it used to be.

Hassan brought down his stick in rhythm to his steps. One tap every third step, so that he didn't favor either foot. He liked the feel of his cherry-wood staff. It was perfectly straight, except the top of the handle, which curved a little. He had cut the branch from a tree that grew "wild" on his grandfather's land.

His first day back in the village this summer, he went off exploring. He took a stubby, thick, sickle-like chopping tool the villagers called a *khajareh*. The word sounded right to him, though it was strange and rang with the resonance of the local dialect. He was picking up some words and could already make small sentences. *Mishum jeeran bagh choobdast hageitum*. It was probably wrong. He had told his father he would go hunting for walking sticks.

"Don't cut down any trees from the orchard, Hassan."

The words stung him. Hassan thought his father should know better.

Willow and mulberry were no good. They had no strength. They were brittle when they dried. Walnut didn't grow straight enough, and plum had too many prickles. Hassan thought about the day he went looking for staves, and brought his stick down hard and straight into the dry earth of the path. It made a heavy thump. It was a good one. It took the shock straight up and didn't wobble too much. In a few more weeks it would be better seasoned, harder and lighter, but for now he'd have to be careful not to bend it.

Pear was excellent wood. A straight branch of pear, when cut from the tree and stripped of bark, would sink under water while the sap was still wet in it. It was dense wood, and if it dried slowly so it didn't split it made the toughest kind of walking stick.

He had cut a branch of pear that day, and he spent a long time soaking it in the cold spring by the house, taking it out and bending it gradually to correct a slight curve. After a few days of bending and teasing, he set the stick out to dry. It was back at the house by his bed now, half carved, waiting for him to return and finish the tattoos on its bare surface. His pear stick wouldn't be ready to walk for a while.

He also cut a branch of cherry, straight and slender and heavy. Cherry dried to be almost as tough as pear. He had left the bark on, because there was no bark more beautiful when it was polished with the sweat of a gripping hand. As he walked now, he looked every once in a while at the handle of his stick. It was coming to a deep, reddish brown luster, with flecks of gold and silver just visible underneath the surface. By the time he got back the handle would have a high polish, finer than any lacquer.

All he had to do with the cherry stick to make it beautiful was to hold it. The pear was another thing. When he returned he would go on carving the pear. That was his trophy. That would be the stick he'd take back to the city at summer's end.

The slope was getting steeper now, and the rock wall on his right was rising to cover the morning sun. The path curved left to traverse the base of the other wall ahead of him. Hassan decided to leave the path to go straight up the rock. He could see plenty of ledges and handholds, but he couldn't judge the texture of the rock while it was shaded. It could be crumbly or solid. It didn't matter; he had his stick. He loved climbing rocks. It was something he did well and easily, and he was always thrilled when he looked down and saw how high he had come. Besides, he was headed north, and the climb would shorten his trip.

As he got nearer he began to see pockmarks—smooth oval craters where stones had fallen out. These made good handholds, but also meant the rock was crumbling. He could grip the inside of a crater, but not a stone that jutted out unless he tested it well; it could come loose at any moment. His stomach sank at the thought of the few times it had actually happened, leaving him at the edge of his balance with the ground a long way below him. His heart pounded, and he could almost feel the impact of the fall in the bridge of his nose. Funny how a fall in his mind could feel like a real one.

The rock was old beyond Hassan's understanding, old beyond belief. The buried river stones in its heart told him that this vertical face lay flat ages ago, and was mud.

He couldn't imagine how long it would take for that huge slab to petrify and sit up straight. The numbers he'd learned in school were empty. Here was the real thing, the old, old corpse of a great river that sat up and grinned in gaptoothed, pock-marked decay. The wind, the rain and snow, the dirt at its feet, animal "life," if you could call something that brief "life," touched it lightly and bounced away quickly like the bubbles of fizz leaping from the surface of a soft drink. Here was age beyond measure.

He reached the rock and put his hand on the surface. It was cool, and reasonably rough. It would be a good climb.

He started his ascent, almost walking, barely using his free hand. After a while it got steep enough for him to regularly use his hand for balance and to feel the lay of the rock. He put his stick in his back belt loop so it dangled behind him like a stiff crooked tail, and started climbing with all four limbs. The trick was to have as many points of contact as possible, to stay close to the surface without actually embracing it, and to keep moving.

There's a rhythm to climbing that depends on the rock you're on, but once you find it handholds come naturally, without thinking, and the rhythm does all the work. There's nothing to think about but now, and now, and now, and so time has no meaning until you reach a shelf and sit down to look up and see how much more there is to climb, then look down to see how far you've come.

Hassan hauled himself over the shelf, crouched on all fours a second, pulled the stick out from behind like a sword, sat down and looked below him. He held the stick out with both hands, locked it in front of his knees and tested it. It was hard enough already that he probably couldn't break it with all his weight. Good. He had used a stick for a pull-up bar to get him through a tough spot in the mountains before.

The path he had followed over the hills was a lighter line in the tan of the barren dirt around it. It was still only around ten o'clock. The sun was just starting to rise over the rock wall to his left. He sat until he could feel the heat on his side and the rocks around him became almost white in the glare. There was still a way to go to get to the next village to the north, yet still he rested. His experience with rocks told him never to try to make a long distance short by going faster. He sat and looked at the river in the distance, then at the thin stream below that trickled from between the perpendicular cliffs to pay its tribute to the larger flow.

That morning, from the hill near his home, he had spotted the green cluster beyond the rocky terrain. It was a village he had never been to, but he knew that his grandfather had a cousin there. He had wondered if he could cover that much ground in a day, and now he saw that he probably could. He would eat his lunch on the way and arrive there in the afternoon. His cousin in Roodsar wouldn't have to feed him a meal, only tea and some sweets perhaps.

Again he looked at the stream below him. It was ridicu-

lous to think for such a trickle to be responsible for cleaving the rock that he climbed. A roaring river the likes of which he'd never seen wouldn't be enough to cut this chasm through the rock. He ran his hand over a smooth stone beside him and thought of times before men.

Huge mountains loomed in the distant west. He held his stick so it covered the line where he imagined the horizon would be behind the mountains. He raised the stick slightly to see if he could nudge the mountains skyward. They were a yellow wall with a line of white along the top, and they beckoned to him, but he was yet too young to make the climb alone. He would go for mountain goat with his uncle this summer. Hassan could see himself fully grown one day in the distant future, climbing alone, with a gun and a quest. He loved the mountains and would be content to live in their midst, forsaking almost all other comforts. The yellow wall that closed off his world in the distance, the hills, the green land along the silver curves of the river, all these things made his village and the land around it the most wonderful place in the world, full of mystery and endless discovery.

His cousin in Roodsar was as old as his grandfather. Judging by the way travelers were received at his own home, he would be welcome there. He stood on the ledge and kicked a pebble over it, daring gravity to take him back the way he had come, then replaced his stick in the loop scabbard behind him and turned back to his climb.

It was a little harder to keep the rhythm of the climb now that the sun beat down on him again. The rock wasn't too hot to grip though, and the heat was dry: he didn't have to wipe sweat from his eyebrows too often. He could see that he was nearing the top. While he climbed he ignored the land around him. He was totally absorbed with the task in hand. Now, he pulled himself over the last ledge and saw the dirt and the gentle slope of level land ahead of him once again.

It was like entering a different world. He cleared the ledge, stood up, and was transformed from a climber into a walker. He turned and looked at the land far below him, and the wall he had climbed to reach this elevated plane. Climbing rocks puts life in a different perspective. For a moment he saw everything from a giant's eye view, and the trees around him were as lichen; the rock face was only a step; and himself, he was almost too small to be seen.

Humbled from his gianthood back down to the size of a boy on a day's hike, he looked again and admired the dizzy height he had climbed to. Then he turned toward Roodsar, and started to walk with faster, more confident strides than the ones he took in the valley. He was closer to the sun now, and the air felt different; lighter. Hassan sang a song in his head that would sometimes escape from his mouth in a single note, as a bubble would sometimes burst onto the surface of a calm green pool where the river was wide. All the life was inside and underneath the smooth, silent tranquility. His boy's body felt strong and sure. There would be no stumbling after the climb.

"Which way to Abala Seifi's house, agha?" Hassan asked.

The old man stopped his slow, fluid walk. He carried a load of straw bigger than himself on his back, and a sickle dangled from behind it. Its handle was carved to fit its wielder's hand, and grooved to carry away his sweat. The handle was buffed and smooth brown, the color of the man's skin. It was not a new sickle.

"Mishi oun jouaran . . ." The man started to talk in dialect, then looked at Hassan's clothes and his color and said, very properly, "Whose son are you, little sir?"

"I'm from the next village down, I'm related to Abala Seifi."

The old man continued to look at him, waiting.

"I'm the son of Mostafa. My Grandfather is Abbas Khan from PaeenRood."

Spring 1995

27

The old man looked for a second more, then smiled and offered his hand. "You are welcome to Roodsar." And then after a moment, "What is your name, young man?"

"Hassan"

"Delighted to meet you Hassan Agha!" He gestured with a gnarled hand, "Go all the way up the street, and knock at the green door just before the oak." His eyes continued to smile after he turned away. He adjusted his load and started his walk again.

The man reminded Hassan of an ant. As he walked up the street, he rubbed his hand where the old man's skin had scratched it.

Hassan was at the green door. He thumped the heavy iron ring and waited.

He moved to knock again, then stepped back and said loudly, "Ya Allah!"

"Ya Allah!" He cried again; then, emboldened by his own voice and satisfied that he had given fair warning, he pushed the door inward, stepped into the courtyard and looked around.

In the middle there was a small pool, a *hoz*, with clear water inside and green moss on the sides and bottom. A water stain on the ground on the far side of the courtyard had not quite dried, and Hassan's eyes followed the mark of the water toward the building beyond the *hoz*. He saw a pair of shoes at an open door under the awning.

The inside of the house looked cool. It was dark, almost black from where Hassan stood in the sun.

Hassan walked toward the *hoz* in a wide zig-zag, hoping to catch a glimpse of the inside.

"Ya Allah!" he said to the door from across the courtyard.

From inside the dark room he heard, softly, "Allaho Akbar!"

Abala was at prayer, and could not come out. Hassan gave a soft laugh and let the air out of his lungs. He sat at the edge of the *hoz*, waiting, and thought of the time he had

jumped on his grandfather's back just as the old man bent to touch his head to the prayer tablet. He had been four years old. His grandfather had continued with the motions of the prayer all the way through to the end, almost as if Hassan weren't there. He held Hassan a little with his arms so that he wouldn't fall off, and the boy had felt as though he were riding a horse to some strange and wonderful place. His grandfather had teased him afterwards, and tickled him and made him shout with laughter, and told him that when he was speaking with God, he couldn't turn away to play with him.

After a while there was motion in the doorway, and a man stepped out sideways, reaching with his feet for the shoes that were paired there, one heel resting on the opening of the other. Hassan jumped at the sound of the scuffing.

"Ya Allah! One moment, young man, I'll be right there."

Abala's hair was white, and he had a short white beard. It was cut so short that it could have been long stubble. Hassan rubbed his cheeks as he thought of the greeting ahead.

Abala made his way across the courtyard, walking with strong but small steps. He looked almost nothing like his cousin.

"I saw the tea stalk stand up straight in my glass today, and I knew I'd have a visitor," the old man said, smiling. "And then my shoes crossed themselves, and I knew again!" Abala chuckled a little and moved into the courtyard. Then he turned toward the doorway again and called in, "A guest has arrived, Zaki, do we have new tea?"

An old woman's voice from inside said, "Yes, agha."

Abala turned to Hassan and beckoned, "Come in out of the sun! You'll do well not to stand in the heat. Come in!"

Hassan started forward, then stopped and said, "I'm the grandson of Abbas Khan, and the son of Mostafa. I'm Hassan Roodaki. Hello."

Abala stood silent for a few moments, deciding. His smile waned, then came back. Finally, he held out his hand

and said, "You look just like your father did the last time I saw him. Come here, my son."

Hassan came to Abala. The old man took the boy's head between his hands and kissed his cheeks. Hassan tried his best not to squirm as the stubble tickled him.

"I've come to visit. I was walking today." They were before the door and Hassan reached down with his left hand to untie his shoes, then found that he had to kneel to untangle the thorns from his laces, so he held his stick between his thigh and his armpit as he took off his shoes.

"What a fine walking stick you have, Hassan jan." Abala's eyes were smiling.

Hassan looked up, "I made it a few days ago." He stood up and held out the stick to Abala for inspection.

Abala's hands twitched back a little, then without speaking he pointed to the wall beside the door. Hassan flushed and quickly leaned the stick against the wall. He rubbed his nose to relieve the tingle that had started there, then clasped his hands in front of him.

Abala saw Hassan's embarrassment, and quick as could be, he reached toward the stick, lifted it up and held it on both palms in front of him. He bounced the stick, rolled it in his hands a few times, and said smilingly to Hassan, "Very straight! This is a fine stick. If you had cut it later in the summer, the bark would have been much too dark. This branch has borne no cherries yet."

"I humbly offer it," Hassan said, following tradition. "Pishkesh."

Once again Abala's smile vanished. He leaned the stick against the wall, turned to Hassan and said, "Come in Hassan jan, and rest your legs a while. It's a long way from PaeenRood. Tea is ready." As they were crossing the threshold, Abala said, close to Hassan's ear, "*Pishkesh* isn't for tools, aziz."

They entered the cool dimness of Abala's home. The carpet bristled rough under their feet, and the house smelled of grandparents, kerosene from the samovar, and tea. Abala's wife sat by the samovar. She had a white chador wrapped around her legs.

"Salam Khanoum."

"Salam my son! Come here and give me a kiss; you're yet a boy, and as dear to me as my own." She beckoned to him with both hands and kissed him firmly and noisily.

Hassan felt the cold moisture from her lips upon his cheeks, but was determined not to wipe it. He sat a little way down from her, on the same side of the samovar, and Abala sat on the other side.

"It's been years since I've seen your father! How wonderful that you're here! Agha, I told you the stalk standing up in your tea this morning meant a visitor was coming."

Abala's wife warmed the tiny, thin-waisted glasses by pouring a little hot water from the samovar into each saucer, laying the glass sideways and rolling it once, then emptying the water into the metal bowl under the samovar.

"What a strong young man you are, praise God! I wish I had a daughter young enough for you!"

"Zaki khanoum, you're making the young man blush. Don't you know that boys Hassan's age have no use for marriage? Hassan has paths to follow and adventures to experience before he settles down." Abala looked at his wife in mock admonition.

"Well, even if our daughters are all married and gone, I can still pour you a glass of tea."

Hassan squirmed and mumbled thanks and watched her pour the dark brown tea from the pot on the samovar. She poured it a third of the way up the glasses, then added hot water from the samovar. The tea blossomed into its chestnut color as the hot water filled the glasses.

Hassan looked at Abala and said, "Uncle Seifi, I'm sorry about the stick."

Abala laughed softly and said, "It's a good thing your father brings you here from the city in the summer so you can learn to walk and put some strength into your limbs. We have some customs in the village that city folk may have forgotten, aziz. A stick is like a broom."

Hassan looked at him blankly.

"We don't hand such tools to people we love, Hassan jan. We don't want to be responsible for a need to use them." Abala paused a moment, "Unless of course, they are so old, like me, that they need a stick to stand, or so dusty that they need to sweep themselves before entering the room." Abala laughed again.

"Uncle Seifi, I just wanted you to see the polish of the handle." Hassan tried to redeem himself. "There were spots underneath the bark that came out after I used it"

"Hassan jan, most things get spotted as they are used. I hope you live long enough to see your spots, aziz. May you grow old."

Hassan looked at the liver spots on the back of the old man's hand. They weren't beautiful. He looked down at the back of his own hands, and imagined his skin old and spotted and shiny. He placed his hands under his thighs and rocked back and forth a little.

"Don't bother the poor boy, agha." Zaki looked at her husband crossly for a moment, then placed a bowl of baghlava cut into small diamonds in front of Hassan. "Sweeten your mouth for tea, my son."

The late afternoon sun was hot on Hassan's bare arms, and bright. It was bright enough to make him squint, bright enough to squeeze tears from his almost-closed eyes. He sat on the jutting rock at the midpoint of the hill and looked down to see his path.

The land gently sloped from where he sat all the way down to his village and continued beyond. He could trace a line from his seat to the middle of the village, and the line passed over the crests of several rocky hills. It was as if the path from Roodsar to his home had already been imprinted in the land, and all he had to do was find it. He didn't choose, he followed, and his path led down.

The sunlight had weight; it made the hairs on his arms bristle, and fused the dust to his hair, burning the brown to a cloudy red. He felt a false chill go down his neck and side. The sun made the ants and lizards go fast, and as he looked at the backs of the hills, with the dry rocks jutting out like plates on a stegosaur, he thought the sun was almost hot enough to animate the land, to make the hill rumble and stand and shake the dirt off of its rocky, plated back.

The river bent around the hills in the distance and wound its way toward Hassan's destination. It washed the feet of his village and moved along brightly.

There was a crow perched on a rock a distance from his, to the left and slightly higher, and Hassan watched it open its bill and pant. Though it was far away, he could see the movement of its black tongue as its breath came in a pace quick enough for a runner's feet. The tongue bobbed up and down, and for a while Hassan's attention was focused only on the movement of the black bird's head. Nothing else existed but the heat and the glistening crow. It cawed once, and Hassan's gaze was instantly normal again, his concentration diffused.

He looked down to the river again, and could feel the coolness of its banks calling him. He looked at the line that drew his path home, and felt that he could run the whole way down.

Hassan rose from his crouch, stretched, and stepped off his rock onto the next one below. He would find the rhythm for descent the same way he found the rhythm for climbing the rock face. He was taking a different path back, one that was more gradual, and longer. He started to take longer strides, and jumping from one rock to another without touching the dirt. The rhythm was in the land, and he was finding it. The rocks were strewn on the ground in a pattern that wasn't obvious to the eye, but could be found through movement. Hassan found it, and as if in a dance, he jogged lightly down the side of the hill, leaping this way and that, sometimes changing his course, sometimes stopping short and turning a half pirouette to find the next rock, but always fluid. Hassan didn't need to think; he was the land. As he ran down the side of the hill, he was so content, so fulfilled in the weight of his feet on the rocks, the tapping of his stick for balance like a third leg, that he felt he was flying, that he could soar if he could only find the muscle in his back to make the wings sprout and open. His lips were dry and chafed, but the thirst was a fact, not a pang. He would drink when he got to water, but he was in motion now.

He ran like this until his village was in plain view below him. He could see the doors of the houses, and the motion of the chickens in the courtyards. He stopped and perched on a rock again and watched. The noises of human life came up to him from below, faintly. He turned his head to hear them better through the wind. His breathing was fast. He was panting with his mouth open, but he felt energy in his limbs. He could have run more, but he didn't want to be back yet. He sat on the perch above the life below him and looked at it as an outsider might.

The sweat on his exposed skin dried fast, and the wind soon felt like cotton rubbing over his arms. The pebbles and bits of broken stone under his feet tried to join with his flesh through the soles of his shoes.

The leaves of the trees by the river winked as the breeze caught them. The breeze was from the passing of the water, and the trees were thankful for it. They raised the lighter underside of their leaves to heaven to acknowledge the breeze, and then they were still again.

Hassan watched the villagers make their way through the twisting passages between the dirt houses, weaving their ways over the dark trickle that worked its way down the middle of the alleys. The people and the water both were quietly meandering home. Hassan watched with the patience of the rocks. He sat until the ache in his knees told him he was flesh and blood, and that there was water and shade down below.

He looked up at the hills that rose around him, at the line of the hills that rose in graduated planes to the mountains that stood like a wall in the distance, far away in the yellow haze. The breeze was too light for him to take flight. He couldn't follow the crow, not yet. He raised his staff in front of him and held it horizontal so that it separated the village below from the hills behind and the mountains above. The sun shone onto the deep clear brown of the bark, and Hassan saw the gold and silver spots that had been brought out from under the surface by use. Somehow the sun that had made the ants go fast now made his steps slow and heavy. He let his stick drop to the ground beside him. It had been spent. He stumbled his way down the last slope, and thought that climbing the doorstep would be harder than climbing a hill.

Lynne Flowers

Loneliness Games

You launch a series of phone calls just to see how many times the ballistic ringing will drag me out of bed. The third time, I surprise you saying, "I'm getting dressed. Pick me up. I don't mind the rain." My bed was warm but empty even before your fiber optic assault, and I'd rather stain my fingers with amethyst tea dripping from one of your mugs than stretch my legs under blankets only to touch the unyielding

wall. Tonight, there is little more for us than steam off the top of boiling hot water and smoke from the molten orange ends of cigarettes. I light my cigarette off the one in you mouth a quick-fix kiss. You counter, kissing my lips, but I hardly prove more pliant than white, concrete

walls. By four I am game-weary and eager for bed. I ask you to drive me home. Outside, the rain has expired. Inside your car, you switch on the radio to the station which plays the songs of my parents' divorce.

Possessions

In mid-afternoon you come to me again for cups of tea and conversation. You sit in my chair with hopes to know me. * Your eyes search objects for the essence of me, and you recite back to me each of my belongings: a pack of cigarettes, a crystal rosary, my grandmother's blue and white china tea pot. I nod and tell the story of each possession. You finish your tea and leave.

Later, as I wash the cups, I notice a tea-stain lip mark on the white inside of the cup from which you drank. I touch my lips to the stain for an instant, but the stain is not you, as I am not the cup.

Frontiers

I planted marigolds along your railroad-tie fence which circled our front lawn like a wagon train poised to defend itself against restless Indians. Evenings, you watered them faithfully, and I would join you to talk and puff on "cowboy killers" the ceremonial smoke.

In our house among the belongings of three generations of women, You carved your space for spurs, rifles, arrowheads, and the leathered faces of men staring hard from the walls. You longed for your boy. Instead, I inherited the corduroy jacket you wore on Colorado mornings when the snow piled around your boots.

Surely the man who brought the Old West into Suburbia could make a daughter a substitute son.

Spring 1995

Kate Kitzmann

Break-Fast

Plated Bacon, its crusty fat, bleeding grease; pasty oatmeal in four bowls for us. Father at the head; Mother bringing toast; the good one dressed for school with smiling patience; and I, vigilante eating before grace.

"I need the sugar, butter, and milk," Father says. Mother leans, but I stand faster, easier. You eat, Mother, build strength, Mother. I'll serve my father while he chastises your interest in woman friends and pour his milk while you cry at failing him again.

I see me there tears separating sticky meal—taking it. The bacon crunches in his mouth while his words break fast upon us.

Travis Scholl

Burial

Death in the air is sour To the taste, invading The sense with acrid absence of weight. It has a ferment flavor Without a form, leaving me with nothing To say, nothing for the living.

Steady, soaking rain attends Friday wakes, Where chilling water permeates the skin Until the shoulders shiver, chilling The black mass of mourners. The crowd flows Like murky gush to the wishing-well casket. I think: *Death has undone so many*. Redemption often comes through drowning Immersion, but *fear death by water*.

Go to Saturday burials Where the peaked sun generates light, Bright but cold. Thus, muscle and bone ease Into melancholy under inky clothes. I am compelled by hushed silence To surrender dead bodies to brutal clay, Decay being the living reminder Of dormant existence. Closet-skeletons Are then buried with worms and old wrinkled flesh.

Please . . . Do not leave me there.

Talking with Ed Byrne ...

Aside from being a professor of English at Valparaiso University, Ed Byrne has also published two collections of poetry: Along the Dark Shore and The Return to Black and White. Along the Dark Shore was a finalist for the University of Cincinatti's Elliston Book Award, and The Return to Black and White was listed among "The Best of Small Press Publications" by Library Journal. Several of Byrne's other poems have appeared in literary journals and anthologies.

Byrne has a B.A. and M.F.A. from Brooklyn College and a Ph.D. in English from the University of Utah. Travis Scholl, a student in Byrne's poetry writing class, had the opportunity to talk with him on February 13, 1995 shortly before his poetry reading sponsored by Wordfest 1994-95.

Travis Scholl: When in your own life did you first start writing?

Ed Byrne: The first time I ever wrote anything that resembled a poem was probably in high school. It was an assignment for a class. I had been interested in Edgar Allen Poe, and so it was probably some horribly scary poem. I'm sure it was terrible. It didn't seem like it was going to be something that I was going to follow later on as a career, but it was nice when I turned it in and got a positive response from the teacher. So that was the first thing I did, and then I forgot about until I was in college.

I began college as a chemistry major, and I was very good at the sciences, but then in the beginning of my sophomore year I took my first creative writing class as an elective. I liked it very much, I was still not very good at it, but the professer, the novelist Steven Katz, said that he thought that somewhere deep underneath there was talent, but it still had to rise to the top somehow. But I liked the idea of expressing myself, and being more subjective than objective, which is what you have to be as a physics or chemistry major. So I got more interested in taking more courses that have to do with writing. I decided to change my major to an English major, because I also like the literature courses that I was required to take.

I also had undergraduate writing courses with a couple other teachers, including Mark Strand who was teaching at Brooklyn College where I was at the time. By then I was a junior, and I took a poetry writing course with him. We had a lunch conference one day, and he sat me down and told me that he thought my stuff was as good as a lot of the things he had seen published. He recommended that if I was interested in writing that I should go onto graduate school in a writing program.

He was also a good role model. I liked the way that he approached writing. He made writing and teaching something that could be complementary to one another. I thought that was something I'd like to do at some point.

TS: Are there poets who you took as your models early on?

EB: Early on, I remember admiring Gary Snyder. Then I was introduced W.S. Merwin, and James Wright. Then later on when I was getting my Ph.D. I was introduced to Robert Penn Warren, and Warren became my favorite poet of all time.

TS: In poetry class, you said that you had some reservations about T.S. Eliot and other poets from the beginning of the century. What are those reservations? Can you flesh out the love-hate relationship you've talked about having with these poets?

EB: I've always liked reading Eliot. I admire the poetry of William Carlos Williams and Wallace Stevens. Yet at the

Spring 1995

same time when I look back at the Modernist movement, right after World War I, I notice that that was a time when poetry was taken away from the masses. Fewer people bought poetry books. It seems that Modernism became synonomous with elitism in poetry. You couldn't understand a poem unless you studied it in the classroom. I admire Eliot, but I have to agree that modernism did make poetry more remote to more people. It's been a long, uphill struggle for contemporary poets to try and gain back an audience for poetry.

Of course, there are other contributing factors as well. Such as fiction becoming more popular. Fiction tends to be more accessible. There's a competition between the realism of fiction and the sometimes surrealism of poetry. This causes poetry to have a smaller audience.

TS: I think we can see how literature in culture has become more prose-oriented than poetry-oriented. As a result do you think poetry has suffered stylistically?

EB: I don't know that "suffered" is the word to use. It's changed; it's been transformed. There are debates going on now. Some people are trying to create a new formalism, but it doesn't seem to be going very far. I think there should be a respect for form when writing poems, but I think that the blending of fiction and prose with poetry has made poetry more accessible to people.

Also [the influence of prose] has made the language of poetry closer to the way people speak. It is more realistic, and it does seem to reflect more of the events and emotions that real people experience. So it seems like a natural reaction to try and get back closer to spoken language and move away from more elite or symbolic types of poetry, like those written by Modern poets.

TS: So then, the emphasis on fiction has brought poetry more toward narrative, where it's closer to reality?

EB: Yeah, in the last 10 to 15 years we had periods of Minimalism and Surrealism which dominated the sixties and seventies. Now in the late eighties and into the nineties there has been a reaction against Minimalism. To a certain extent there has been a desire to bring more narrative into poetry. I see this all the time, and it's something I enjoy because I like someone like Robert Penn Warren who brings a lot of narrative into his poems. As the poet/critic Stanley Plumley calls it, lyric narrative. This is what he calls contemporary poetry: a combination of the two. I received books from two friends of mine, and they intersperse prose passages with their poems. So there really is now a meshing of poetry and prose. This is something poets have done on and off throughout time, but now there is really starting to be a blurring of the genres.

TS: What do think is the purpose of poetry is in today's society, with all these changes occurring?

EB: I find that poetry today, especially since the 1950's and 60's ever since we had the so-called Confessional poets, has gotten to be a more personal statement. I think that what contemporary poets try to do is to find ways of expressing their reactions to situations and emotions that they find in their own lives that would make those expressions and poems universal, that other people can identify with. Again, it's a way of reaching out to the audience. There aren't a lot of political poems being written, for example. And I think that there aren't too many poets trying to write poems that are thematically large. They try to write smaller poems that take moments and try to universalize them.

TS: What are you trying to achieve when you write? What is your ideal when constructing a poem?

EB: I don't know if I'm really trying to achieve anything except to get words down on paper to express some kind of

Spring 1995

feeling that I have. I never have a set idea when I sit down to write. I start with a line, phrase or image, and it blossoms and grows and then becomes another line and another image. It's usually about half way to being a poem until I'm really sure what it is that I'm writing about on the surface level, let alone on the emotional or subjective level.

When I'm writing a poem usually it starts to take shape in something that is a memory of mine. Whether it be a memory of a real experience I had, or a memory of something I imagined along the way. When I see that it starts to take shape as a memory, then I go back and revise it so that it's consistent with what I see the poem is about. So when I start to write a poem I have no idea what I'm going to end up with. It's a process of discovery and that's what makes it interesting. That's what I like about writing: that I don't know what I'm going to find until I get to the end

TS: How do you envision yourself as a poet in your poetry?

EB: What do you mean by that?

TS: Well, I guess, in reading *Along the Dark Shore*, it seems the poet is very solitary.

EB: That's true of that book. That's one of the main themes of that book. Solitariness, aloneness, trying to find one's individual position in the world. The poems I'm writing now though, are very different. There are very few poems where I am the only person in the poem. Mostly I'm accompanied by somebody: my wife, or my son, or a friend. I think that that's part of the change in my poetry. When I was writing poems in the beginning, it was to find out who I was, and it also was a conscious effort to limit what I was writing about. I was just beginning and I didn't want to get too complicated and lose control of the poems. Now, I am trying to get more ambitious with my poems. They've gotten longer, I'm using more complex sentence structures, and there are more people in the poems. Now almost all my poems are about relationships with other people, instead about myself alone in the world. I find it's more interesting.

TS: Do you think your own vision of who your audience is has changed in the same way?

EB: I don't know. I've never had a single audience in mind. I think when I was writing *Along the Dark Shore*, I was writing poems that I thought my teachers would like, but now I don't write for teachers anymore because I am a teacher. Now, what I keep in mind if I write a poem including someone else is communicating with that person. If I 'm writing poems that do not include anyone else, I am writing for myself.

I'm always trying to write a poem which I think people that I respect will enjoy, including other writers. And I also try to measure myself up to other poets; I mentioned Robert Penn Warren, Robert Lowell, and Robert Frost. Mainly it's people I admire, and that means I'm more ambitious.

TS: When do you do most of your writing?

EB: It varies, usually late at night after everything is done. I've prepared for class, and everybody's asleep. Also during the course of the year, if I have a poem I've started, I'll spend every spare moment on it. I don't like to abandon it.

TS: Do you find it difficult having to negotiate between all your other responsibilities and trying to get poems on paper?

EB: If you mean responsibilities to family and friends, that doesn't bother me too much because those things have become the sources for my poems. In a sense that's research. As far as teaching, I enjoy teaching as much as anything else. I find it rewarding.

TS: What advice would you give to young writers?

Spring 1995

EB: I guess I'd give the advice I was given as a student: keep writing. If you feel like you have to write, then write and write more. But, more and more I find that especially in workshops where students are writing poems or short stories, that what they need to do is to read more. They really need to read more poets, short-story writers, and novelists to see what's gone before them. They can look at others to learn, and adapt, and even prepare themselves to see if they can excel in the same way. Too many students want to just sit down and write without reading. My advice now is to read a lot, and if you really have to write, you will probably write anyway. You'll have the urge to write, but you may not have the urge to read.

TS: Do you think imitation is a suitable beginning?

EB: Sure, for the beginning writers, imitation is the way to start. There should be no hesitation about imitating great writers. That's the way you learn.

TS: Was there a point when you felt that you had developed your own voice, or is that always a process?

EB: Friends who read my poems say they can recognize my voice immediately. They recognize it more than I do. But I'm sure that even today there are indirect influences in my poetry. When I'm aware of it, I try to bring it out, with an epigram or something. I want to pay tribute.

As far as my own voice, I got to a point a couple years ago when I decided that I wasn't going to worry whether people liked the poems or even if they were going to get published. I was just going to write what I like, what satisfied me and what I thought was better poetry. Strangely enough, since I've been doing that, more magazine editors have wanted to publish the poems. It turned out to be exactly opposite of the way I thought. I thought if you wrote a poem with magazine editors as your intended audience, that they would want to publish it. Now, I don't think of them as an audience, and more poems have been accepted to be published.

TS: What do you see yourself doing in the future?

EB: Writing more poems and better poems is the easy answer. I've tried writing fiction, but I find that it takes away too much time from my poetry. Just like with poems once I'd get started get started on a story, I'd have to work on it every spare minute. Stories would take months to write. In that time I could write fifty poems. And, anyway, I think my strength is in poetry. I have more readers as a poet. Of course, I don't know what form poetry will take. I hope it gets more ambitious, and sophisticated, and complicated, and interesting.

Andrea Hartman

London Bridge

Houses once spread across the water in comfortable splendor. Held above by a bridge built up with time, care. Two lands connected, diminishing the difference between them.

Beneath the soil of one a thought sparks, a desire to sever the tie. Candlelight alters to flame, consuming all affection around it. Rapidly it moves towards the shore. a brushfire blown out of control by the blustery wind. Sensing the heat of the blaze the water rises, trying to deny, overcome the fate set down for the bridge. Loss is inevitable. Tears cannot quench the burning so slowly the bridge gives way. Engulfed, it crumbles. There is no safe haven or escape except down.

Why do fires start? What begins as one candle isolates two. Rivers of flowing water can be plentiful, but one spark strips away the comfort of my house. Take the key and lock up remaining emotions. This lady does not feel fair anymore.

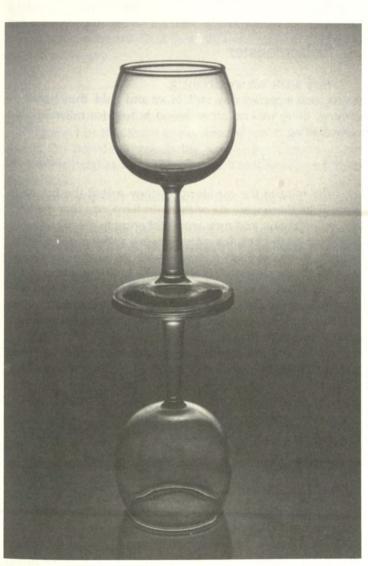
Lunch Box

I never understood why Mom said You are what you eat. I'd imagine myself as a Twinkie, a cookie—the thought didn't bother me. Now as I lean over my lunch, I think back to my mother's words. I am what I eat.

Lunch today: A colorful mound of Jell-O wavering, without substance— I am unsteady. A Coke for a caffeine boost, energizing me for the day— I am enthusiastic. Some greasy pizza, smothered in sauce and cheese— I am Italian?

Smirking, I straighten up, push on the handle, making my lunch whirl away. I glance down at my scarred hand, clear the rawness from my throat and leave my cell.

I am not what I eat. I am eating what I am.



Assignment #12

Samantha Bradtmiller

Brian Herrera

He Rollercoaster

they knew we were coming.

it was such a perfect day. still. blues and gold. they heard us coming. there was no other sound but us for miles off. we were coming.

the minute the car stopped, they exited the house in twos, until there were six of them. indians, or what the english called asians. and they were gibbering to green in arabic, or whatever the hell it was they were spitting out of their mouths. the six of them gibbering with green, the seventh, in the middle, began walking around the building. i was in the rear. left alone to do what i would do . . . alone. i had just dropped a tab at the last rest stop we made. in my trip i didn't want to stray too far from green. i hurriedly tried to make myself their eighth.

as we walked, there were more men. none of these joined our ranks. they simply stood, big grinning more babble at me. there was an english guy among them, and that tripped me out, hearing the arabic spoken accented.

and the sky was blue. and the trees were blue too. after i took that last acid tab, everything had been blue. as if ink had spilled and faded over everything in the blink of my eye (start of my high!).

we walked around the house. it became my turn to single file my way into the traditionally small english gangway. by the time that i passed the backyard gate entrance green was in the arms of portly blabberer. the gibber even cheerier now. still blue. the potbelly quickly separates us from the rest of the toothless, wrinkled faces. as the screen door hits, he pulls out the coke and smiles. it's all flowing like water— smooth and blue. i see that he only 2 of 36 teeth. i can't understand what he and green say.

(this is what you wanted right?)

green hits it without answering. he is soft and quiet. he sucks the powder through his nose— both nostrils, and shakes his head as he wipes off a peck that has stayed in his moustache.

(yes. thank you very much. i know that it was short notice)

toothless continues to smile. he nods his head in short nods as green passes me the clear plastic square. the mound of coke is blue and has a big nose print in it. i don't care. they turn from each other toward me—one nodding, one adding smile. the local yipes something that i don't understand—(i hope it's good for you too.)

green responds for both of us- (we both thank you).

i'm high . . . so i try to repeat greens jumble. i do it pretty well.

after the coke hits, i feel the need to get up and let the blood find my toes again. i stand up and walk over to the fence. i rest my hands on the weather worn wood, and gaze into the neighbouring tree's house. there are two blue girls looking at me. looking. they saw us getting high. they saw drugs. they see drugs all the time? today. and that begins turning my high in on myself.

i scream! as the gate shakes with the surprise clawing of the tree kid's pooch. i, ready to be embarrassed, turn. green and his friend, joined by another, have their eyes on me, laughing. they're not blue any more. the sudden gathering of noise dies quickly. green and the new guy exchange pounds

Spring 1995

for kilos. after more inaudibles, we're out on the street and gone.

"come back dude. lemme get one more hit of that." my voice eagerly bounced off of the yellowed (by mould this time) gas station bathroom walls where we were re-hitting our newly acquired.

green flicked on the tap. "nah, no more right now." and splashed his face with water that i wouldn't use.

i walked out and into the light. it was fuzzy and broken. soft and running. green came through the door wiping his hand onto his pants and shaking them in the air.

"ready?"

i was.

we got into the car and rode off in our own silent worlds, until green finished the conversation he was having with himself.

"i don't know why. i don't know, i just feel something special with them. they seem to have figured out answers to questions that the rest of us haven't even saw necessary to ask yet."

i had no idea what he was talking about. i wasn't even sure that he was talking to me.

"it's like they're on a higher plane. a higher something. and when they tell me their stories, man, i listen and understand them. and they know me."

i was lost in this—"who the fuck knows you green? who the fuck do you know?"

he didn't even break his thought. the clouds were zipping past as fast as the painted lines were. time and space were having fun with us.

"the indians man. they know me." green had a thing for indians.

it all stemmed from the day that he saw an old indian woman get wacked by a lorry on boston road. he was tripping, and the crash fucked him up pretty badly. he stumbled over into the scene. and it overtook him— the blood and the cries, the smoke and smell of burnt rubber death. it happened three years ago. i've known green for every one of those thousand odd days. he's told me that story twice.

"i was there. she was dying. the fat fucking driver was bawling, and running off to the phone box. she was dying. i went closer to her death. and she was calling, calling to me. and i went closer. and she was dying words that i couldn't understand. i bent down to hold her head off of the pavement— her skull was cracked and bleeding. her blood was alive, man. it was dripping out of her in a river stream. it was the most alive liquid that i've ever seen. i threw up. my sickness and her death mixed beneath us..."

the rest of the story is that she pulls green closer and she stabs her soul into his eyes. they lock together in a quiet that lulls into the them both. "she whispered breaths on blood cracked lips..." some words that green could never forget (had to find out what they meant). she dies as the medics jump out of their rush.

"all i wanna do is settle down with a nice indian girl, have her and her family take me in and show me the world from the inside, their side, and i'll be happy as you've ever seen me, billy. happy as you've ever seen."

"all i wanna do is get a good fucking song on this radio. and have enough money to take off. go to spain. live in a big room on a playa, and be high as the sky with some freaky senoritas. that's what i want, green. and after today ..."

after we sold the stuff to lance, green and i were going to have enough money to do just that— all we want.

if green's people were the indians, then i'm not sure how he ever got hooked up with lance, or stayed hooked to lance. lance was a fag who dressed in tweeds and silks and

Spring 1995

57

expensive leather shoes and gloves (i never saw him without his gloves on). green did, and he said that lance's fingers were always painted red. although it was second hand, it made me dislike lance even more. red. anyway, green and lance had met at some club in oxford when lance tried coming on to green. green had been doing some acid and weed and didn't mind when lance reached out to touch his face with his clad hand.

"i'm not homosexual, so if you wanna touch my face mr., you'd better have a really good reason." green picked up his drink and turned his face toward his new acquaintance.

"the only reason i have to offer you, is that you are an absolutely beautiful boy . . . " lance dripped with his english tongue. he had on dress slacks and a white button down shirt, a yellow and brown silk tie, and yellow shooters glasses. he was petite, danty and faggy. he had two big oriental body guards watching him through their smoke and liquor. green noticed them next.

"and if i have to go through any shit with you, i'm gonna be really pissed." he nodded toward lance's muscle.

lance motioned for more drinks to be brought over. as the alcohol left his mouth and fell down his throat, he reassured, "there'll be no problems for you tonight."

there weren't.

after green made his sexual preference known, lance shared a drink, talked and moved onto another queen, dancing with a lanky blonde haired boy under the zoning, dance floor lights. green continued pounding down the liquor with the pretty bartendress.

green drank his bladder full. when he went into the bathroom, he walked in on lance and the lanky boy doing some coke. in his prissyly high voice, lance cooed, "everybody in! everybody in!" green added to his high. when he was done, he watched as lance got emotional with the boy and cried when they were done. the boy straightened himself out, and lance wiped his mouth. the boy bent over to fix his pants cuff that had ridden up his sweaty leg. lance pulled a gun out of his tweed coat pocket. green froze.

"the lord is my salvation; whom shall i fear?"

lance pointed his hand at the lanky boy. he breathed a sticky mouthed breath, and shot him in the head.

the air dropped, the breath stopped, tears were running from lance's eyes, and the high was the only thing still running on time. everything left was given to other devices. the oriental big men rushed in, rushed out, and pushed lance and green into a limousine. inside the long car, the music was overpowering. the tires were spinning. lance was taking off his bloody clothes, while green fumbled open a tin foil square.

lance's house was at the end of a long driveway. big and dark. english.

"thank you for a wonderful evening." lance, naked, straightened himself as he stepped out of the car. "you will be taken home and all will be quiet as you go to sleep. sweet sleep to you." he threw a vial and a wad of pounds onto the seat he just vacated. "tell my boys when you and i can meet again. i'd thoroughly enjoy it." he stood nude before green with blood on his hands and neck. his teeth were ice white. his skin was milky, cool. he was going to get away with the murder of the lanky boy. there was no doubt. it wasn't even going to be a murder.

the door closed and green was wound back down the drive.

that is where this started, so long ago. it'll end today.

"what time is it, man?" i called to green.

green was sitting on the hood of the car smoking a joint and reading a martin amis novel that this hippie chic had turned him onto. i was pissing in the tall grass of the field that stretched between us and heathrow. even though i was wearing sunglasses, the light was atypically bright. we left

Spring 1995

the door open so we could listen to the tape player— killing time.

there ain't no other language i know how to speak some like their water shallow i like mine deep, so very deep tied to the bottom with a noose around my feet ...

green didn't answer me. -

⁷what the fuck time is it, green?" i zipped up my pants and looked at my own watch. "fuck you, man. where are they, man? where are they?" i had taken some speed, and the planes that periodically buzzed us were really drilling into my head. i was tight and tired. planes coming in the distance, i walked back to sit by green on the hood's other side.

"man, do you believe in heroes?" he said, handing me the joint. he looked at me with gauzy, soft eyes. certain, if not wise.

"what do you mean? ya mean, 'do i believe in heroes' like ride their jocks, or just think are cool guys who i would be like if i could be like someone else?"

his look continued, soft as a wave. the plane was gaining over above our heads. steadily gaining, repetitive guitar chords. growing. added drums, tremors turning to quake. over head.

he stayed soft. "No, man. i mean, do you have anyone who's eyes you wish you could wake from looking out of in the morning? see their hands, the evils and joys they created, torn down? do you dream of knowing the warmth someone feels when loved? living?"

i couldn't make out what he said, only his voice. the planes left room for nothing else. my eyes were darting around, uncomfortably as the sound panned off. and away. he wanted an answer to a question i didn't hear?

"ah-I don't fucking know green. when is lance getting here, man. we got things to do, things to fucking do!" with that the sound turned off again.

it wasn't until lance's raspberry jaguar that our silence was punctured.

i jumped off the hood, closest to lance's ride. an oriental got out of the passenger side before the car's completion. the car stopped and green rolled himself off of our hood and shut the passenger side door. with the windows up, the sound system became background music—muffled. green stood like a stuffed scarecrow in his softness.

i wanted to kill something. i was so wired.

green came around, and grabbed a plastic bag from out of his breast pocket. he handed it to the oriental who walked past me like i wasn't on the same dirt road with him. he took green's bag, turning as he did so. past me again. lance took the bag (skinny, pale arm with hand gloved) from outside into the car. and quickly into his nose.

next to me now, green leans on the car, crossing his legs. he acknowledges the music's vibrations as he leans.

we watch as lance's oriental bows his head toward the window. lance says something to him in his faggy voice, covered and sneaky. the oriental walks over to us (green) and says, "27, 5."

lance stares straight out the window, eyes ahead of his head. i watch him the whole time. he doesn't move once. i don't think i did either.

"29." blinks green in reply. "it was for 29."

the oriental stops his movements, and offers an artificial assuredness. "we'd like 27-5 now, however."

green breaks into the privileged manner of the gobetween. "tell your boss it 29, and if you come back again without, it won't bode well for our relationship."

i wish i could've take my eyes off of lance, to see the

Spring 1995

61

face of the voice that green became. the slave returned to master, and came back with 29.

"it's in the trunk" green said as he handed me pounds in a briefcase. he didn't check the money inside, but i did. he threw the oriental the keys, and followed steps behind the toss. i closed the case as the trunk opened. i opened the car door as lance stepped out of his. the music, which had been dead since a cd's completion, fired itself up again. black sheets of sound; really humming.

as i threw the cash into the back seat, lance opened a cigarette case. he took off a glove to dig into his pocket for a lighter. as he lit the smoke, i saw his blood red nails!—deep red on porcelain skin, holding a newly lit cigarette.

"i hate your fucking hands, man" i spat as lance raised his eyes off of the glowing.

a gun exploded as lance began an answer.

Scream.

echoes of both.

metal falling onto glass onto metal. and a plane was coming.

the oriental fell onto the ground, and lance bent over. he dropped his cigarette.

"billy. come here and grab this."

i didn't move.

"billy!" green said more sternly than exclamatory.

i got up and kicked lance in the mouth. this was reaction, i swear. i didn't think about doing it, i just kicked him across the face. i startled me, shocked.

"s-so he won't try to get away" i explained as much to green as to myself.

at least i could come up with a reason, that was good. it meant that i hadn't lost my mind. but it also meant that i was *really* stepping over a fat, dead, bloody oriental.

i saw green. his face was flecked in red. his eyes were melted ice, but clear.

The Lighter

"what's the matter green?" i had to scream it, fighting the plane's jets. "what 's wrong, man?"

he pushed by me, and as the engines once again won control of the scene, green's arm recoiled five bullets into lance.

dead. the fading overtook.

"motherfucker." green cried. "you motherfucker!" then he became inaudible . . .

i pushed him into the car and fought through my high that was quickly monstering in on itself.

"he pulled the gun out and i saw it. he was going to fucking kill us, billy."

green was sobbing as he drove. i was numb, my heart pressed itself against my chest with thunder beats. "i didn't want to die! did you want to die. I DIDN'T WANT TO DIE! billy..." he repeated over and over.

he softly trailed off.

they knew we were coming.

it was such a perfect day. still. blue and gold.

they heard us coming. there was no sound but us for miles off.

we stopped the engine. they came out in twos, until there were six again. but this time we didn't get out right away. there was more green needed to tell. he had to find a way to tell it. all the way back he showed me what had happened at the field. we were going to get killed by lance and his man. they were going to steal our stuff and go home. again lance was going to get away.

green had no idea why. that is what is freaking me out. there was no reason for any one to die. why couldn't they have left that shit alone. why couldn't we just do the dance and go home?

63

the indians were peering in the car. all around.

"i don't know what the fuck happened, billy. but take the money and go away. take it all, man. i'm gonna stay here for time. i'm gonna find heroes. loose ghosts. i cant believe that shit went down. that's not us. that's not what were about. you and i. but this is what were about now. this ... " he extended himself. " i got blood on my hands."

i grabbed the case. green reached to the dashboard for the gun. he put it into his coat pocket. he looked at me.

"i'm sorry. i'm gonna find my indian. go get your beach girls. this was just a bad trip man. but you rode it out or you will ..." he opened his door and got out. i did too.

he immediately began speaking like them, whatever it was. they all crowded around him. i opened the trunk, put the case in, and closed it. a man called into the house, i didn't know what to do. they were leaving me alone. alone i was, so i turned to go.

i opened the car door, and got in. as i turned the engine over, a little indian woman ran out of the door, gibbering at me. i opened the car door as she stopped and jibber-jabbed a basket at me. she kept her arms extended, and i opened it to find it stuffed with food. she spoke again, and gently thrust it.

"thank you, " i nodded. i took it. she turned. i closed the door again. and drove away.

green stood inside the bathroom, washing the blood off of his hands.

Carmen Danielson

Jon Pahl Hopes and Dreams of All: The International Walther League and Lutheran Youth in American Culture 1893-1993. Wheat Ridge Ministries, Chicago: 1993. \$15.00

Six years of Wednesday nights still stand out in my mind. Picnics, lock-ins, games and Bible study all fit together under the heading "youth group." Youth group usually followed the same sequence of events: some sort of game (tag football was a favorite) then move inside, sit down, listen to a mini-sermon, pray, sing and then go home. Most of the kids in my group didn't go to my school—church was where we met. Sundays we were dressed up and under parental scrutiny; Wednesdays were ours, by virtue of being twelve to eighteen years old. It was a place we could come together and feel that we were accepted and loved.

Jon Pahl's Hopes and Dreams of All captures that sense of belonging. He chronicles the history of Lutheran youth in America through the lens of the Walther League. The Walther League was born at First Trinity Lutheran Church in Buffalo, New York. Originally designed to "protect young people of faith from the conflicts and controversies of life in a democracy and to prepare them for these conflicts," it was here that people could come for conversation and fellowship. One of the first meetings led to a debate over "Which is the most useful domestic-the horse or the cow?" Even the "conservative-yet-progressives" had to start somewhere. From the horse/cow debate to dancing half-virgins to missions in China, the Walther League was at the forefront of not only church movements but American movements as well. For example, women could vote at national conventions of the Walther League twenty years before they could vote for the

president of the United States. Youth everywhere dreamt and still dream—of a place to meet one another and make friends. The Walther League has been described as a "network" for helping people learn how to identify with each other, their churches and the world. This network carried people through the twentieth century and through the trials and joy modernity brought with it.

Jon Pahl presents a new perspective on the past. Clearly he cares for the people he's writing about and is deeply concerned with remaining fair to their stories. Since he was not a part of the Walther League, interviews, documents and photographs brought these people to life for Pahl. He presents the readers a carefully crafted work with a rich narrative and plenty of photographs that enhance the reading. The amount of research is evident, yet rather than overwhelming the readers, this research leads us to respect both Pahl and the Walther Leaguers he so passionately writes about.

You don't have to be Lutheran to appreciate reading this book. Anyone who has been a member of a group can identify with the common threads that run through *Hopes* and Dreams. History provides a certain awareness—just as belonging to a group allows us to understand ourselves which helps us formulate how and where we fit into our various communities. The knowledge that others came before us, had similar aspirations and desires is comforting and challenging at the same time. Challenging because we must find new ways to realize these goals and carry them through for a better world. *Hopes and Dreams of All* carries the faith implicit in the title (which is from a prayer) and ultimately helps us realize our own faith through each other.

Al Pionke

Mark Schwehn, Exiles From Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America. Oxford Press, New York: 1993. \$19.95.

In Exiles From Eden, Mark Schwehn proposes a very new kind of university, one based primarily on the pursuit of truth rather than the production of scholarship. The modern university, Schwehn argues, places far too much emphasis on scholarly publication, often academic research for the sake of academic research, and not enough on good teaching; he sees teaching as the job of academics, who are, at their roots, teachers. College faculty should take as much pride in a course well-taught as they do in an article well-published. As a student, I find this focus on the student a refreshing change from the publish-or-perish world of the modern academy. In his view, professors should lead their students on a communal exploration of truth, asking not only Who and What, but also Why and Ought. This communal inquiry would transform the modern university from a place in which moral development and the production/transmission of knowledge are somehow mutually exclusive to one in which they exist symbiotically.

According to Schwehn, this symbiotic relationship both requires and fosters a communal atmosphere governed by the spiritual virtues of humility, faith, self-denial and charity. He envisions students approaching learning with *humility*, having "the *presumption* of wisdom and authority *in the author*" (emphasis original 48). Thus, students would begin with the assumption that the author (or teacher) has something worthwhile to impart, and excuse any apparent murki-

Spring 1995

ness in the transmission. Schwehn also argues that we must have *faith*, and trust that the research and thought of others is as carefully and honestly done as we would do ourselves. His ideal university also stresses *self-denial*, which he defines as "the disposition to surrender ourselves for the sake of a better opinion" (49); in other words, we know, and accept when we don't know. Finally, this new university would require and foster *charity*. This last, most important virtue remains, unfortunately, slightly underdefined, but seems to amount to something like "read as you would have yourself be read"—a golden rule for student and teacher alike.

If all of this sounds suspiciously religious, that is no accident. Schwehn argues that his proposal sounds heavily influenced by religion because religious ideals are at the heart of the modern university. This may sound uncomfortably theocratic, until we realize that these ideals also lie at the heart of much of America. They have been secularized, analyzed, anesthetized, but not forgotten. Schwehn's ideal university, together with the rest of *Exiles*, is a worthwhile and insightful attempt to re-present these ideals before concentrated secularization and dilution make them nontransferrable and ultimately devoid of meaning. In this re-presentation of the modern university's core ideals, he hopes to re-present the academic vocation before it ,too, devolves into meaninglessness.

Schwehn, however, has more on his mind, and in his book, than simply a new—one might better say renewed university, one more openly committed to spiritual and moral virtue. Schwehn rightly recognizes the dangerous convergence of a declining spiritual and moral base of the academy—one could add a corresponding decline in social morality—and a steady increase in the percentage of people going to college. He wants us to leave his ideal university not only having "learned how to learn," but also having "learned how to live." His proposal is an attempt to reinvest meaning into the life of the modern university student, and through him/her, to reinvest meaning into America itself. This implies an ambitious role for the university in public policy, but if we consider that most of tomorrow's leaders will come out of today's universities, it does not seem completely unwarranted.

Spring 1995

Heidi Nafzger

Walter Wangerin, Jr., The Crying For a Vision. Simon & Schuster. New York: 1994. \$16.00.

Reading Walter Wangerin's work is always an enriching and rewarding experience for me; his stories not only engage and entertain, but also shed new insight on matters of life and faith. The story of *The Crying for a Vision* certainly accomplishes both purposes.

Wangerin combines the language, folk lore, and mythology of the Lakota American Indians with his own imagination, weaving traditional legends into his stories. The narrative follows the life of Waskn Mani, or "Moves Walking"—an orphaned Lakota boy named for his miraculous ability to walk at birth. Waskn Mani's extraordinary powers include speaking with the animals and receiving visions. As Waskn Mani grows in wisdom and knowledge, his people fall under the captivating power of a bitter warrior named Fire Thunder. Waskn Mani watches as his people destroy other tribes to their own destruction, and eventually comes to realize the ultimate meaning of sacrifice as he seeks to restore peace and harmony to his people.

The vivid descriptions of the living conditions, tribal values, and traditional ceremonies immerse the reader into Lakota culture. Whether describing Waskn Mani's birth or the fierce battles between the Lakota and their enemies, the details are boldly and strikingly drawn. Wangerin's cinematic attention to visual and often graphic detail grabs hold of the reader and makes lasting visual impressions.

The frequent use of the Lakota language in the dialogue effectively allows the reader to hear something of the Lakota culture as well. Wangerin writes with a sensitivity to the oral tradition; as a result, the reader actually hears the voices of the characters with all their idiosyncrasies. The many stories told by characters within the larger narractive indicate the great importance of story-telling both to the Lakota people and to Wangerin as an artist.

In his prologue Wangerin writes, "I have found in the Lakota vision a rich analog for the relationship any people of genuine faith experience with creation and the Creator." Although *The Crying for a Vision* captures a sense of the Lakota culture, the characters in the novel are representative of the human race. They wrestle with issues such as pride, sacrifice, faith, family tensions, hatred, and the joy and pain of love. The characters in this novel are both unforgettably unique and at the same time as familiar as the people around us. Te self-destructive pride of Fire Thunder, the lonely laughter of Rattling Hail Woman, the sensitivity of Waskn Mani, and the wisdom of Shunkmanitu Tanka, the wolf, are just a few of the characteristics that Wangerin portrays with believable accuracy.

Central to the Christian faith is the sacrificial life and death of Jesus Christ. Seen through the lens of the Lakota culture, my concept of sacrifice has been greatly deepened. The bloody and startling images, the moving tales of the characters, and the mythical legends of the Lakota people combine to give the reader fresh insight into the nature of sacrifice. *The Crying for a Vision* is in all respects a hightly satisfying reading experience that provides much to ponder afterwards.

71

Rory Segety

Pathogeny. the back of black fronts shifts tempo out of the warp primeval alarmist a post-coital ace in pole position a temptress of universal mode undying discipline rubs in scent of mint inhale intake morphine to the back of black

Invirile.

nascent ionic rot expiry iron shimmer hannered till cleft drum tatters harmonies solar lunar polar knot string along used up whispers unuttered gutter vespers flint upwind ticker flutters bent newly ejected coils

How to confess a desire.

charged curare pinprick inks in papaya that sugared cyanide realizing ROSE her raw goddess heart kissed bleeding blue her stems too quickly jaded need now end in life support ? or skin death ?

or pricking fleeting inspiration for art more colourful...

Tout tend à faire penser qu'il y a peu de relation entre un objet et ce qui le represente.

Everything tends to make one think that there is little relation between an object and that which represents it.

Rène Magritte

Contributor's Notes

Samantha Bradtmiller is a freshman Communication and (and as yet unofficial) Spanish major. Her goal is to become a youth director or teach. Procrastination is her favorite pastime.

Carmen Danielson is a junior Theology/Humanities major from South Bend, IN. She enjoys discussions about Paul Tillich, Franz Bibfeldt and Quentin Tarantino's films.

Katie Dueringer is a sophomore mathematics major hailing from Andover, Kansas. She is currently searching for both a way to stop time, and a working definition of "star-like."

Lynne Flowers is a sensualist who enjoys the fact that the earth is round. She believes that in heaven everyone will have the opportunity to be fashionable. Upon her graduation in May, she intends to take the skills she developed as English major, Theology minor and assistant editor of *The Lighter* to Minneapolis. Unless, of course, she can convince Kate Kitzmann to run away to Rome with her to start a literary movement. Aside from this, she will not divulge any other future plans.

Karin Fox is a senior Graphic Design major fromFederal Way, WA. Despite a few computer breakdowns, Karin successfully rendered *The Lighter* cover.

Heather Gorman is an English/Secondary Education major who loves things Irish, makes jewelry, recently became engaged, and is going nuts with job applications. She has a passion for Guinness and trees.

Andrea Hartman is an English/Psychology double major with a Gender Studies minor. She is from Bakerfield, California. She enjoys sunshine, camels, and late night watching "Grease."

Brian Herrera was born in Chicago and raised on the South Side. He writes because sometimes he's got nothing else. He would like to thank Jeffrey (what's his is ALWAYS mine...), Prof. G. Eifrig, *The Lighter*, the music, the film, and those who know.

Kate Kitzmann is a senior English/Hunamities major who plans to get a job at a magazine somewhere in Milwaukee next year. While Kate anxiously awaits starting the sensualist movement with Lynne, she cannot run away with her, due to Kate's upcoming wedding. "Guiness is good for you!"

Rhett Luedtke claims that these poems are dedicated to his skateboard, Henry, who has given him love and support through these hard years. Rhett is a graduating English and TTVA major.

Ali Mohajer has had stories published in The Lighter several times now and wants to say that this fact has nothing to do with him being neighbors with the editors. He enjoys disco, computers, and will soon (finally!) graduate.

Heidi Nafzger is an English/Humanities major from St Louis, MO. Aside from getting giddy at Pastimes, Heidi is enjoying her senior and looking forward to teaching in Russia next year.

Al Pionke is a junior English/French/Humanities major from Greenfield, WI. He likes J.R.R. Tolkien, the color blue, and Taoism, especially as it relates to Winnie the Pooh.

Rory Segety (the one who is a junior IECA major) has spent his life in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. His interests include Spam and squirrel-watching. He also likes a good hummingbird whiz to decorate Cat Cake.

Travis Scholl is an English major from Manchester, MO.

Julie Sievers is a senior double major in mathematics and humanities. She likes to wear white linen robes and appreciates men in drag. Future plans include car-driving.

Jim Steingass is a freshman English major. He hails from Medina, OH where cows is cows and people is worth more than the land they till.

Conhibutors Lobes

and has been been presented and a series of the series of

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INSIDE ...

Bradtmiller Danielson Dueringer Flowers Fox Gorman Harman Herrera Kitzmann Luedtke Mohajer Nafzger Pionke Segety Scholl Steingass