The theme of this issue is love. The article “Of Olive Plants, Dancing, and Full Quivers” bears directly on the theme. The Frisian short story and “The Map Trap” bear indirectly on the theme and are valuable contributions. This issue also contains a poetry symposium which searches out criteria of good poetry. Another item of particular note is the nude figure study, a series of four etchings.
The Bricks of Knollcrest

Mark Borst

Architecture is an intricate expression of the human mind—of its intelligence and practical mastery, and also of its feelings and aspirations. It is a symbolic expression that speaks to generation after generation, not only in terms of form, but in terms of man's ability to think and dream. A well-designed building is an amalgam of all these things.

"Buildings," Mr. Fyfe told me, "are primarily the result of felt need." Certainly the architect considers the practical needs of his client first. But the genius of Mr. Fyfe rests in the fact that he sought to interpret the religious and psychological needs, the values and sentiments, of Calvin College, and he has given them full play in the architecture of the Knollcrest campus.

In an early memorandum to a Calvin planning associate, Fyfe wrote:

The dictum that form follows function certainly is true. Equally true, and sometimes not appreciated, is the corollary that function follows form, most ably articulated by Winston Churchill as "First we shape our buildings and they shape us."

It is true as well that function produces organic and geometric forms. Fyfe's design orientation is twofold. It includes an ideological approach (that of the "organic" school of architecture, developed by Frank Lloyd Wright, whom Fyfe knew personally) and a spiritual and psychological understanding of man's relationship to buildings. These two elements are rarely at odds in Fyfe's architecture. The result, in this case, is a campus of incredible architectural unity.

When asked about imagery and symbols in his design, Fyfe indicated that each building is its own symbol by virtue of its integrity. Does it do what it was intended to do? Does it correspond to the topography of its site? Is it well-proportioned, aesthetically satisfying? And again, Fyfe's notion of need comes into play. Lewis Mumford lucidly describes this point of view in his conception of architecture as the art of becoming human—of intensifying one's conscious humanity in terms of aesthetic form and moral character. The human dynamic that gives a building its real meaning, it is meaning that gives it its ultimate presence.

Calvin's buildings have a moral character about them, in that sense they are symbolic. They are strong but uncompromising (two priorities for Fyfe) and in that sense they shrewdly reflect and exemplify the academic stature of the college. One begins to notice, upon further study, the neat correlation between the architectural qualities of a building and ideological convictions of those who use it.

Furthermore, there is a practical relationship that develops between people and buildings. A student, for example, takes for granted that there will be a room for speech class—enough seats and no leaks in the ceiling and maybe a chalkboard for the professor to write on. But one must consider how a student relates to the building in which class is held, how he interacts with other students who are entering or exiting the building simultaneously, and so forth. Students en route to the library may welcome the covered passageway to the north door on a rainy day. An art student might tell you that studio class is depressing because there are no windows in the studio. Similarly, a Saga employee might complain that stairwells in the Commons are cramped and hamper comfortable passage between floors. Relationships develop. A building communicates inevitably with those who use it. It may promote a spirit of scholarship or camaraderie or relaxation. The student or faculty member brings his own experience to the structure, and that lends the building its true dynamic character.

At this point, the aesthetic character of the building—distinguished from its emotive and functional character—begins to diminish. There is still a responsibility on the part of the architect to engender these qualities, and the success of the building is still contingent on his ability to combine the
The Man Trap

Charles H. Fondse

A male person, I can only vaguely sense how close my maleness is to my being a person. Very close, I know. My sexuality defines me as a person; it defines me. I cannot think of myself in any other terms. . . . No one else knows me as a person except through maleness; anyone who knows me at all must know me as a male. My being a person, I sense, is more basic than my being a male. Only knows me truly unless he knows me as a person more deeply as a male. Not even God can separate my maleness from my son; yet somehow I am a person who is also a male.

—Lewis B. Smedes

The era of the sixties has come and gone like a summer rain. As it passed through the land no one could avoid it. People attempted to run from the storm, but even when they thought that they had found shelter, it was still present. Those who attempted to run looked upon the era as a disaster that they did not want to face. To others, though, the era brought much-needed rain. Now the storm is supposedly past. Regardless of how we have reacted to it, however, we have all felt the effects of that era. Either it has left a vacuum where lives and values were exposed as false, or it has left fields ready for the planting, and, hopefully, for the vesting, of more responsible living.

In the turmoil of the sixties, oppression was an issue that came to the forefront of debates concerning political and social values. It is safe to say that never before had so many special interest groups received such widespread attention and publicity as "the oppressed group." Examples abound, with some being what one might call trivial—such as the identification of the students at the University of California at Berkeley as "the oppressed" in the people park issue. More serious examples are found in the oppression of Black Americans and of those who could not morally justify their involvement in the Vietnam war. More recently, women have been identified as "the oppressed" because they are powerless in a society where male supremacy is the rule.

One group or class of people that has never been identified as "the oppressed" is the white, middle-class American male. To the contrary, white males are usually assumed to be the oppressors because they are the ones in power. While it is a fact that males fill most positions of power, and that in many cases males are oppressors, I wish to propose that males are also oppressed. Furthermore, the fact that males are often oppressors in our society stems from their being oppressed in another sense. The questions I wish to address, then, are these: If men are oppressed, what is the nature of their oppression, and how should the Christian view it?

One might ask, since males have been the dominating sex for thousands of years, why do I propose that they are actually oppressed? To answer that, we must evaluate and define
oppression. Can oppression be defined simply in terms of legal rights and powers? Is oppression changed or eliminated by the creation of new laws that remove its legality? I do not believe so. There have been numerous laws enacted to eliminate racial discrimination, but racial oppression continues. Although the laws are necessary, it seems that something more must occur before the oppression stops. What then is at the root of oppression that makes it so difficult to eliminate? As I see it, oppression, in its deepest sense, is anything that hinders one from being a complete and fulfilled person.

From a Christian perspective, personhood is partially defined as being God-related, thus responsible to Him, and consequently responsible to other people. In order to be responsible to others, one must be sensitive to their emotional as well as physical and spiritual needs and desires. The question, then, is, How is one to be sensitive to those needs and desires? Additionally, how can one be sensitive to others without first being sensitive to himself and open about his own emotional needs and desires? By advocating sensitivity to one's self, I am not proposing some sort of insulated self-awareness. Rather, I propose the continuous process by which one understands himself as both an individual and a brother to the rest of humanity.

Sensitivity, then, includes an understanding of one's emotions as well as of one's will and intellect. In the aspect of sensitivity concerned with emotions, I believe the root of male oppression can be found. Hugie Wyckoff, a leading feminist involved in psychiatric work at Berkeley, writes:

Classically, a man is "supposed to be" rational, productive and hardworking, but he is "not supposed to be" emotional, in touch with his feelings, or overtly loving. On the other hand, a woman is not supposed to think rationally, be able to balance the checkbook, or be powerful. She can supply the man she relates to with the emotional, feeling functions that are missing in him, and he can take care of business for her.

One need not look far to find examples of such an image of maleness. Simply open any Playboy magazine and you will find countless examples of this sexual stereotyping. The problems the contemporary male faces in owning up to his emotional side are compounded by the fact that emotions do not submit to scientific, empirical study. One can study their causes and effects, but the emotions themselves cannot be rationally scrutinized as if they were something objective. They can only be explored in an intuitive, subjective manner, and that means that one cannot genuinely deal with his or her emotions unless he or she is allowed to bring them out into the open. And since males are brought up in an atmosphere in which emotions are not supposed to be shown, they are never offered the opportunity to deal with them in an open manner. This reinforces an internal suppression of emotion and the resultant, often unnoticed oppression under which the males labor even as they occupy positions of power. It also perpetuates a sex-role dichotomy, and that, as Ms. Wyckoff states, is unhealthy because "gaps have been created, people which limit their potential to become whole human beings." She writes further that "Often what happens, men and women is that they feel incomplete when they lack partner of the opposite sex, so that they continually look for fulfillment in another.

This is a situation that Christians should be address more extensively. As a Christian, I believe that fulfillment should be found in my relationship to Christ. More specifically, as a Calvinist, I believe that Christ redeems a person totally, and that total redemption involves a person's intellect, feelings, and will. While I don't want to place too much emphasis on the feeling aspect, I think that too often one over-intellectualizes it, especially since the majority of Reformed Christian teachings the feeling aspect of a person has been equated with his or her prayer responsibility. I responsibility is one of meeting our neighbors' needs whether they be spiritual, physical, or emotional. I do not know how such a responsibility can be realized without an understanding of one's own total personhood, especially its emotional aspect. Thus, I believe that as a Christian, one is being completely responsible to God if he or she does attempt to better understand and deal with his or her emotional state of being.

The women's liberation movement has accomplished much to open avenues to a better understanding of personhood and interpersonal relationships. The movement I have done much to show women that they have not been allowed to be the persons that they were created to be. One possible drawback of the movement, though, is that it has attempted to establish the same concept of personhood females that males have exemplified—oppression includes. Hopefully, with the help of people such as Ms. Wyckoff, movement will come up with a definition of personhood or the one that has been prevalent in the male-dominated world. Perhaps if Christians become more involved in movement, such a change can occur along authentic Christian guidelines.

I have by no means suggested any concrete solutions to the problem of male oppression. Such a task is still in process of dialogue, and is too great a task for an essay such as this. I would suggest, however, that we, especially as Christian community, become more involved in debate, discussion, and action concerning this issue. More specifically may I suggest to the male Christian community that we open our emotional selves and that we redefine personhood terms of Christian precepts. Perhaps then we can reap the harvest of the sixties instead of sitting in the rubble of what often think was a disaster.
Seeds
from the
Woolen Blanket

Carrie hoists herself up and leans over the edge of the half door, left foot dangling, right foot secured on a hinge.

"Daddy, I'm all done. Can I come and help now?"
She lifts her empty fork in triumph; cheeks hide behind globs of toast and marmalade like blotches on an aging pumpkin.

From the patch of upturned soil by the shed I watch her bob up and down like the neighbor’s geese. "Bring your fork, Carrie, you can help in the garden."

Carrie climbs over the door bringing her blanket and fork. "Can I plant seeds, daddy?"
She makes a furrow in the soil and from her blanket plucks the specks of old wool turned hard and carefully places them in the ground. "Pass the bucket daddy, and we'll watch them grow."

I pass the water and imitate Carrie, lying on her belly, elbows secured, head held in hands, staring silently, waiting for the tiny mound to grow.

David

Wipe your stained cheek,
Heart of God
Pull your face from the dust,
King of Israel.
The bather will mend your royal cloak.

Jonathan lies slain.
Tender love lies cold
On Gilboa's rocky slope.

Sharpen the sword for slaughter,
Polish the blade to kill.
Fight the battle. Pierce the foe.
To dust destroy their gods.
Avenge the appointed's fallen sword,
Avenge the stillness of his shield.

Jonathan is gone—(To war!)
His broken body breaks the peace
And silence hears the Heart's lament:
"My son Absalom! Absalom, my son, my son!"

But blood stains the soul
And old hands never clean.

"I long for Jonathan,
Tender and strong.
My partner in youth
Still hears my harp's sad song."

Robert Holkeboer

G. Jhon Kleyn
Beach of Okracoke Ferry

as thinking how
walk slabs spill
y on
y
I spill
th on
on
and on
I looking at the sea
ne kamikaze
on the shore
ning up a beachhead
ought it all an endless war
ripple-ranged
sand between my toes
s kiss caressed
romise from the shrunken sea
ome to dote
shore again

John Suk

Apology

For all the voices
crossing on the sunken cables
I would have yours, and did;
All the money it cost—nothing
but shekels jingling,
their sound an easy trade
for the deeper echoes in my soul.
I could have simply listened
to your light breathing
on the other end.

But the weight of time and gold
broke the silences
that might have yielded perfection
and now that the call is free,
it has no weight.
Indeed, it will not wait
until there is something to say
but it echoes, no longer in the heart,
the daily conversation
tinny in the ears, annoying the brain.

I keep the weight and the blame of it
locked in the chambers
of my heart. It does not fall
on you.

Dan Hawkins

Beth Style

were slouched on a pile of bags and books
the time I reached the station.
Our train left long before.
I stared at your folded hands
thinking perhaps of how they had aged
imagining them again in mine,
I couldn’t tell.
at the window at your back
snowed that gray New York slush,
and the wind chuckled around the building
if laughing at its own sick joke.

agon, you brought your hands to your head,
your lashes lay on your cheeks
the waves frozen to the sand.
fore your eyes met mine
issed those moist, warm hands
and just for a moment
them part of my lips.
from the common traumas of Ladies' Choice and Line-up at roller skating parties, from the gossip about Dickie, the future polygamist with six going-steady rings in his desk, from the joys and anguishes of the Junior-Senior Banquet, the covenant children come Calvin College. And on Sunday morning there they are—Veenstra's Virtuous Virgins, Bennink Bunnies, Schultz Studs, Horns Heyns monks—all dressed up and rushing to a good seat at campus church. Fresh-faced, digging the chicks in CRC, the young swains lift their voices in fervent praise for the beauties of the earth. With great feeling, the maidens sing of the lovers of their souls. All hearts thrill to Jerusalem the Golden: "sweet and blessed country that eager hearts expect . . . What joys await us there . . . what bliss beyond compare!"

Such eagerness to perpetuate the CRC is indeed admirable, but what are the emotional and social consequences of the perpetual plans to perpetuate? In other words, how do two covenant olive plants, full of "strength and beauty . . . hope and promise," meet? (That's number 270 in your Psalter Hymnal, dearly beloved.) In response to Synod's recent blessing on "rhythmical movements to musical accompaniments," let us examine this matter in three sections: Tuning Up, Dancing the Dance, Paying the Piper. Tuning Up defines the terms of dating, Dancing the Dance explains the intricate processes of dating, and Paying the Piper questions the consequences and suggests alternative rules.

**Tuning Up**

(1) Why date? The first thing to remember is that dating in itself is a great thing: problems come with the rules, values and attitudes attached to it. People date to get to know each other, to have fun, to explore new dimensions of themselves, to refrain from howling at the moon, to decide whether to marry, and, if so, what type of person and which one. They also date to prove they are masculine or feminine, to find identity, to make out, to snog someone and "settle down." Notice that the second set of reasons is different from the first set only because it exploits the legitimate reasons of expanding personal identity, exploring sexuality, and considering marriage.

(2) What is a date and what does it signify? It's a date if he asks, he pays, he drives, and he plans. Dorm activities are not usually dates; they are the pre-lims. Going out to coffee is a fence-hanger. Though technically it's a date, it's also often a test to see if she is worth investing in for a whole evening. Late movie dates are casual; probably no major moves will be forthcoming. Early movie dates are normal, but she wonders what is expected, whether it be lots of coffee, coming in early, or making out. Out to dinner is serious or else he's rich. The seriousness of attending family functions is determined by two criteria—distance and family emotional climate. If the family is far away, it's probably serious. Opinion on things like weddings and holidays is strictly divided. In some families, bringing him or her is tantamount to declaring engagement. Other families are more open and easy-going and always glad to welcome any person, regardless of age, sex, eligibility, etc.

(3) Requirements. Although this restriction is loosening up (no doubt because of the uneven male/female ratio), usually participants are the same age, or he is older. He usually asks in person. If he asks a week early, either he really likes her or he's a rookie. If he asks at the last minute, he's shy, impolite, or his other date fell through. Strangers never date. If she knows the guy, she should "give him at least one chance." At least at first they both try to look good. Looking good depends on who you are. Biters like Levi Cords and sweaters. Canadians like tight jeans. Dressing up means: (a) you're going out to dinner, (b) you're trying to impress him or her, but also running the risk of scaring him off (always impresses her), (c) your mother has trained you well, or (d) you're neither a Canadian nor a Biter. So far so good, but now . . .

**Dancing the Dance**

(1) Getting noticed. Different place have different rules. Commuters (at least those who have never lived on campus) have it tougher because their hunting grounds are more limited.

(a) Class. Try to catch their eye, sit behind them, strike up a conversation in class. After class, watch where they go, be a good follower or leader. Don't trail them; if they want to talk to you, they will.

(b) Library. Go sit by them. Talk to them as much as you want. Cruise with your heart's content. Sit in the lounge. Study later—this is prime-time!

(c) Dining Hall. She shouldn't sit at a table of guys unless she's a very good friend of one of them. If he sits at a table full of girls, he's worth keeping an eye on. She shouldn't go over and talk to him unless he invites her to get to know him. The ice-cream cone machine is always a nice play for a couple, smile for two, so keep your eyes peeled for that.

(d) Dorm. (i) No open house. Talk in the outer lobby as long as and as much as you want (unless you live in a weird dorm—in which case, pause in lobby only long enough to check the mail out). Don't trail them; if they want to talk to you, they will. Open house. Sunda night is the best night for visiting unannounced. She may visit once; after that it's up to him to make a move.

Joan Huyser is a Sophomore majoring in English.
And Full Quivers

Joan Huyser

Now that the groundwork is laid, ask her out. But she must wait, could TWIRP, but that only comes a year and it's the trump card. If did get asked out once, there are irritments for getting asked again. If didn't like him, she doesn't have to gain, but she may wait till he asks again to tell him that she'd rather be friends. At the end of the night may say she really had a good time, she may not say, "Are we going out again?" How friendly or encouraging said to be taken as a sign he depends on his reactions. Be cagey. Strike the right balance between hard-to-get and you're-wonderful. Dropping hints or having ideas ask around, etc., smacks of sixth-grade, but it's often the only alternative is left with.*

Boogie fever. Boogeyin', you understand, is being used in a broader text than Synod's challenge to fulfill cultural mandate of social dancing. You really need an operational definition. Check out: (a) any inner lobby (b) Sem Pond, in the spring or fall (c) lying 101 (d) cars with steamy windows. The general rule is that he makes move, and she puts on the brakes. He plot is thickening. But is it so bad? of all it's the only plot most of us have known. And most of our parents as young olive plants and have full vegetables, in which each of us is an arrow. It's Psalm 127 in your King James, not very interesting people. So you find yourself asking yourself, "How friendly or encouraging said to be taken as a sign he depends on his reactions. Be cagey. Strike the right balance between hard-to-get and you're-wonderful. Dropping hints or having ideas ask around, etc., smacks of sixth-grade, but it's often the only alternative is left with.*

**Pay the Piper**

Interest in the opposite sex is natural. But combine current dating rules with the disproportionately high values a woman places on dating, and great harm results to her. She second-rates friendship with other women. She does not form or fails to fully develop her talents and opinions—what Simone de Beauvoir calls "self-mutilation." Therefore, she misses out on true friendships, personal fulfillment, and genuine love.

I've observed many consequences of this disproportionate valuing. One example is the unwritten rule that conversations or plans with female friends may be broken off when male friends come to talk or ask for a date. In other words, it's rather damaging to a woman's ego to go somewhere with a woman friend; they're together only because they couldn't get dates. In the dining hall Vonnie keeps her eye out for good-looking women. When two or more are in the vicinity she says, "We better get out of here; the competition is too heavy." April doesn't like Lisa because Lisa dates so often.

**Genuine love** ought to be founded on the mutual recognition of two liberties; the lovers would then experience themselves both as self and as other. Neither would give up transcendence, neither would be mutilated; together they would manifest values and aims in the world. For the one and the other, love would be revelation of self by the gift of self and enrichment of the world.

*(The Second Sex, p. 628)*

Obviously, the two major attitudinal problems here are the high value placed on dating and the idea that a woman may subtly manipulate a man, but she may not directly ask him for a date. An alternative set of dating rules could de-pressurize dating significantly.

Why has the idea that the woman must be passive persisted for so long? The man does not gain from it any more than she does. He is reduced by women...
Many women do not consider men worthwhile friends unless they are datable or unless they have datable friends. Mary cannot think of John simply as a good friend. He is a good-friend-who-might-ask-her-out. Because Mary wants John to ask her out she will use many methods of "working on him." Depending on her personality she may do anything from waiting and waiting till he happens by, to seductively brushing against him and making a fool of herself flirting. If John talks, she listens. Even if he's not making any sense, she never questions his reasoning. If he makes a joke, she laughs. In fact, she laughs at anything he says. "Please pass the salt" is enough to send her into a fit of giggles. For a while John may be naively flattered. But he soon grows disillusioned when he finds so few women who treat him with genuine respect and take him seriously.

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Men rarely feel chosen. They are not directly chosen, because the woman is passive. They cannot be confident of being indirectly chosen, because of the problem discussed earlier. John has no way to tell whether Mary is interested in him specifically as a person, or generally as an eligible male, or even as male with eligible friends. This problem persists even when a relationship is underway. The two continue to relate to each other not as persons but as role-types.

Dating is also expensive. Women expect men to take them places and do things for them which they would never consider doing for themselves. Movies, coffee dates, fancy dinners (even McDonald's soon adds up), The Green Apple, the gas to get there, Valentine's Day, birthdays, Christmas, "anniversaries," flowers for special occasions, flowers "just because I love you," long-distance phone calls, pearls, opals, diamonds, etc., cost money. How many women would be so eager to invest that much money in a relationship? Yet many women feel this expense is justified because they have to sit and wither up till they are asked out. This unbalanced burden of expense has a further consequence than impoverishment of the male: sooner or later the woman feels she owes something in return, whether it be boogeyin', time, attention, free laundry service, free typing, or whatever. Notice that by this stage, communication and thoughtfulness have been reduced to the level of barter. And the man still has no more security about being chosen.

Already, dear covenant olive plant, you have probably perceived that all that glitters is not gold—not even in Jerusalem. No doubt you can see that all these rules of dating discourage genuine person-to-person relationships. These rules also harm the self-concepts of both men and women. The rule for boogeyin' implies things that shape life-long attitudes and behaviors. In fact, all the assumptions and prejudices and communication skills learned in dating influence future actions, goals, and thinking patterns.

How can a woman dare to let her true personality show when she knows that if she blows it, this date may be the last one before another stretch of desert? How many women are going to risk being labeled aggressive females for speaking their minds, or Prudence Purehearts for disapproving poor moral standards? And how can women avoid feeling rage toward men who don't notice them? Even when the woman has a man, she often has a much greater emotional investment in him than he has in her. Since her identity is caught up in his, since he is her primary interest, she cannot understand that he does not always view her as essential. He has his vocational future to plan. Unlike her, he does not spend all his spare time thinking up thoughtful little surprises. After awhile the beautiful olive plant would like to make olive oil of the strong olive plant.

Meanwhile back in the olive orchard the strong olive plant (I wonder if that songwriter ever knew that, actual olives grow on trees, not plants) is having problems of his own. The woman wants to get married because she doesn't know when another "catch" will come along. But the man, better understanding the heavy responsibilities marriage, wants to be fairly sure of vocational choice. In marriage, just as dating, the man usually supplies all the money. When he has a family to support, he cannot switch jobs on a whim. He is often locked into a job for life. Why will be the key that loosens the artificial roles and methods of communication developed in dating? What will hit things together when he no longer buys flowers and when she no longer hangs on his every word? Soon both will feel rotten.

But you don't have to be married feel rotten. People feel rotten during dating years because they gauge se worth by how much they date (and if and how and where and when—barrarely why). They rate each other. For instance, you mention to Sue that Ann has a crush on Tim. Sue says, "Do you think Ann's aiming a little too high? I'd say he's out of her class." Go out with a jock or a fox and your reputation goes up. The important elements in ranking are looks, height, figure, age, car, who they have already gone out with. Obviously, it is senseless to try to say that people should be equally attracted to one another. We all differentiate. But there should be new standards for differentiation. We should realize the people have different interests, values, goals, and standards, and that's what divides us up. This difference, then, should be horizontal rather than vertical.

The handling of boogie fever during dating has significant implications for the future. The generally accepted rule is that the man initiates, and the woman sets the limits. Casting aside the rule we learned in church library books ("young woman should not give her kisses lightly")—(a) they didn't mean this
er she should really get into it, (b) no in her right mind is going to listen to ice like that, and (c) it just reinforces wrongheaded idea that is discussed and the parentheses), let us make lightway to the underlying assumption of such a policy. The General Rule Boogeeyin’ implies the man takes the woman gives, and that the idea standard is the way of life. Consider the attitudes that logically flow from this idea that the man takes the woman gives. For one thing, this obscuration of the fact that both of "I enjoy boogeeyin’. Assume, however, that women don’t really enjoy it, in the woman is being wronged. She defenseless, at the mercy of her man. If since she is giving and giving, he had better reciprocate with Sayfee’s, stern Floral, Jacobson’s, etc. Thus shimmersparksline is reduced to commodity exchange. (Would the Lord and the Dance have inspired the Song of Solomon if that’s all he ever intended for gift of sexuality?) Or be realistic and assume the truth: women sing in the power and howl at the moon, too. But if man must always be the initiator, in the woman could very well be ok. After all, if he has it in his head that she doesn’t much enjoy boogeeyin’ he’ll back off. And then where will he be? Goodbye smile so suffusing shouting her soaring song. This rule implies that the woman really has no rights, sires, personality, or identity of her own. The moral implications of this General Rule of Boogeeyin’ take shape in a double standard. And that is definitely wrong. It denies responsibility. It’s either honest nor fair. It creates remitment and guilt, and it infringes on pressure. I cannot see any Boogeeyin’ stipulation for this rule at all. No doubt you have noticed that paying the piper takes up much more time than tuning up and dancing the dance it together. The flats and sharps have been sounded (that is, the faults have been pointed out). Now let’s look at the advantages received from dating under the current rules. For both the man and the woman there’s the ooga-chaka of boogeeyin’. The man affirms his masculinity, knowing that he is important to someone, and he enjoys companionship. The woman affirms her femininity, has the security and pride of being chosen, a free ticket, and companionship. But too often their companionship is diminished by pressure, power-plays, and lack of communication. The idea in dating would be frank and open companionship, preservation and expansion of identity, and sharing on multiple levels of emotion, intellect, spirituality, sensuality, etc. Right dating patterns would lead to creative fidelity in marriage. In Sex for Christians, Lewis Smedes describes the necessary independence within unity: Fidelity calls for a partner to work for the other’s freedom so that he/she can be “free in Christ” for partnership. This means no one has the right to give himself unreservedly; he has an obligation to give himself to the other person’s total well-being, but not to give himself totally. Total self-giving, generous as it may seem, is destructive of marriage because it saps a partner of the creative independence he/she needs in order to give one’s self, there must be a genuine self to give. Thus the condition for self-giving is self-assertion; every partner has a duty of fidelity to himself/herself and, equally, a duty of fidelity to let the other be a real self. (p. 17) Such a pattern of fidelity does not follow naturally from the current rules based on the idea of the woman’s passivity. Therefore, we propose a new dance. The new dance is so simple: anything a man may ask, a woman may say, “I’d like to go to this movie; would you like to go, too?” meaning they’ll go dutch. Or she may say, “I’d like to take you to this movie,” meaning she’ll pay for both. When this is an accepted pattern of dating, there will be no talk of “aggressive females,” and TWIRP will be non-existent. The results will be numerous and wonderful: men will have less economic pressure; men, also, will be “chosen”; both men and women will meet more people; dating will be more low-key. Many advantages will result when dating becomes low-key. The woman won’t feel so pressured. She won’t need to scheme, manipulate or wait in passive rage; if she doesn’t get asked, she can do the asking. Dating will be more open, frank, and casual, more a meeting of persons than a struggle to meet role expectations. Best of all, when people realize that dating does not determine self-worth and identity, it won’t be such a big deal; we’ll all have more time and energy for other goals. Obviously, this system will have some problems at first. For instance, will women feel insulted if men ask them to pay their own way? Who keeps asking whom out? It seems to me that the general guideline would be to treat a dating friendship in much the same way as you would a same-sex friendship. When you’re first getting to know a person, you initiate some things and watch for them to reciprocate. You do not have to make heavy financial and emotional investments in dating. The idea throughout is “play ‘er cool.” I believe this new dance would be blessed by the Lord of the Dance. Adam didn’t greet Eve with, “Good morning, I am the boss, and these are the rules.” Instead, he said jubilantly, “You are bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh!”” Proverbs praises the woman with identity and initiative of her own. Song of Solomon shouts praises to high heaven for the gift of sexuality. Paul proclaims us all free in Christ, with mutual responsibilities to each other. The song, “Lord of the Dance” has the same tune as “Simple Gifts” (“‘tis the gift to be simple, ‘tis the gift to be free, ‘tis the gift to come down where we ought to be ...”). When the Lord of the Dance does the tuning up, dating does not require a long, involved paying of the piper. Dating is one of the simple pleasures, and, as everyone (whether a covenant olive plant or not) knows, simple pleasures are the best.
More Sonnets from the Misogynist

"Better well hung than ill wed," he said, and went alone to sleep in his own bed.
— A. W. Alabaster, Esq.

More dusks and more reflection have shattered
My presumptions without much restraining
Unwonted hopes: I'm still entertaining
Devious campaigns as if it mattered
Nothing that I always end up battered
And begging for death. I'm the reigning
King of bellicose love, my blood staining
The cracked ramparts where my flag flies tattered
And stands in ludicrous relief against
The blasted dark of an encroaching night.
Through all my nights I've always chanced
My soul's expansion on love's dynamite.
It's too late now to wonder what it's for—
I've only time to trundle back to war.

I keep breaking up monotonously
Like waves on your hard shore. You've a keene
Bite than salt in wounds, be it marine or
Lachrymal—but how different can they be?
You say that everything comes from the sea—
Which would explain my rough and saline dem—
And why the kelp seems always to be greener
In the other fellow's bed. As for me,
I've never found a pearl. Nor do I wish
To paint the walls of my life oyster drab
For such a search. You may be a starfish,
But I'd rather have Alaskan King Crab.
I'm just too tumbled by your tidal notions:
People still drown in pacific oceans.

* * *

Hello, Central: I've got problems on the line;
I'm in trouble deep and I need help from you—
The wires are crossed and I'm not getting throug
I've got to talk to that old gal of mine.
You've got to cut this static, got to twine
These broken lines together and undo
This awful disconnection. It's a new
Experience, this silence; it's a sign
Of things I don't begin to like. Where can
She be that she won't answer me at all?
It's got to where I need a repairman
Every time I want to make a call.
With that the case, it seems I might as well
Have my equipment ripped out by Ma Bell.
Come on, baby, let's get brittle, shall we?
Let's play our verbal tennis just once more.
My dim libidinal service and your
Cerebrally arctic return can be
Great invitational depravity.
We've got a love game going: you make four
Points before I ever get a chance to score . . .
And you've done it so many times, amie,
That it makes a body feel defeated
Before the contest really begins. I
Haven't a notion how I'm seeded
Among your many partners. You defy
All my game plans. Much as I love the court—
And you—perhaps I'd best give up the sport.

* * *

For much too long I've bade my fond farewells
To dear domestic loves; I've gone on chases
Elsewhere, sampled the staccato graces
Of jaunts studded with one-night cheap motels
With vermin and objectionable smells,
And side trips to populated places
All jumbles of herded, fading faces
Dotting the atlas of personal hells.
I dread the velocity of romance,
Of wine and dine and pay through the nose
For favors taken on the run, with the chance
That I won't find out where this engine goes.
There's no point in making love my way
If I can't get off this damned highway.
Nude Study of a Pregnant Woman
Once upon a time there was a skipper's daughter who fell in love with a sailor, but her Dad wouldn't allow it. He wanted her to marry a skipper's son. As so often happens, when she and her Dad locked horns once again she said, "I want him dead or alive." When she could she would take a small boat out onto the lake and meet her sailor behind some clumps of reeds, far from the prying eyes of her parents.

One night the old folks were going to go out visiting friends of theirs on another boat. The girl told her sailor the news. They thought that this would be a good chance for him to see his girl at home. But, as luck would have it, the old man heard that there were suspicious folk in the neighborhood and that...
De oude zeiler had dan net de deur van zijn netten geopend en de deurwacht opgepakt. Hij kwam de deurnaad door andertjes naar de deur en bekeek zijn netten en dacht aan zijn vader en moeder, die haden gehoord dat de jongen met het netje op zijn rooster was aangegaan. Hij had de deur eerst van binnen op slot gedaan, maar toen hij zag dat de deurwacht er was, legde hij de deurwacht op zijn rooster en liep naar de deur. Hij sloeg de deurwacht op zijn rooster en begon naar de deur te lopen. Hij vond dat het netten niet meer over het rooster kwamen. Hij liep naar de deurwacht en legde de deurwacht op het net. Hij had het netten niet meer over het rooster dat zijn vader en moeder had aangezegd. Hij vond dat het netten niet meer over het rooster kwamen en dat zijn vader en moeder het netten had aangezegd. Hij vond dat het netten niet meer over het rooster kwamen en dat zijn vader en moeder het netten had aangezegd.
under de rûchskerne bistopje. Dan koe er letter wol sjen hwat hy der fierder mei dwaen soe. Hy helle in kroade ut it lytshus en hyste it lyk der op. Doe't er tichte by de rûchskerne wie stuite it kroает-spil op in greate sek, dy't dwers oer it paed lei. De boer woe de sek fan siden smite, mar doe't er feilde hoe swier as er wie taestte hy der earst mar ris yn. De sek siet fol siden spek. Dieven hien de boer syn spekhoek neisjoen, mar se wiene forballe troch de fiskerman en hiene it spek earst mar spek litten. De boer lei it lyk oer de grouw en stûde de siden spek der foar yn 't plak yn 'e kroade. Doe strûpte er de deade de sek oer de holle en skodde him der roungear yn. Hy boun de sek wer ticht en lei him op itseide plak wer del déèr er him fouin houn. De dieven soene wol wer om it spek komme en raer op 'e noas sjen. Se soene wol noait wer in foet op syn hiem sette, tocht him. Hy kroep ut 'e wei yn 'e beamantel, en ja, in setsje letter hea-rde er fûsterjen en in pear keardels slûpten mei de sek fuort. De boer gnissde yn syn fûstje en hingyn syn siden spek wer oan 'e heakken yn 't spekhoek. Doe kroep er wer yn 't bedste en elfkes letters slepte er als in baeren.

De dieven togen de sek mei it lyk troch de lannen, oant se by in forsûl kamen dat se yn in greate reidbult makke hiene. Se hiene njonenlytens wol syn oan hwat kringe en woene it spek fuort mar elfkes aansprekke. Mar doe't se de sek op 'e kop hûlden rûgele har in deade jongkeardel foar de fuoton. Eaer woone se it op in rinnen sette, mar doe ornearr ena dat dit wol ris in stral wêze koe foar har roven en stellen. Hij koene se troch oan 'e gelge komme. Se moaien fan it lyk of. De iene oppere dit en de oare dat, en op 't lied waarden se it liens om it lyk werom to bringen déèr se it wilde hienne. Se slûpten mar wer by in iedder op en risten it lyk nei it spekhoek. Se hienne it in tou onder de earms troch bouen en dêr hongen se it mei op oan deselde heak déèr it spek ek oan hingie. Doe makken se dat se ooy de reek kamen. Dat wien ienear mar noait wer, swarden se by harsels.

Doe't de boer wekker waerd miende er earst dat er in nachtmjerie hawn hie. Hy naem in bêste klot ut 'e brandwyntlesse en soe doch mar ris sjen oft it spek der noch hinge. De rare smaek yn 'e mûle hie er mei de brandewyn net fordriuwe kinnen, dat hy woe mar in reepke spek ôfsnije. Yn 't tsujet knoffele er nei it spekhoek en gong op 'e taest op it spek of. Mei de iene hûn hîlde er it spek efter it lyk, mar doe't hy der in stik ôfsnije woe, fike er it tou troch déèr it lyk oan hingie en dat plotse boppe on him. De boer wie earst suver yn 'e sûzje, mar doe't er in eintejs kears oanstulsen hie en foar de twadde kear it lyk seach bistooar er it els hast.

Hoe't dit algeagar yn syn wurken gong, hy wîst it net, mar hy moast fan dat lyk of sjen to kommen. Hy tûge it by de treppen del en woe it yn 'e mar smite. Doe't er by 't wetter kaem seach er yn it moænnoeljocht in syloob foar de wûl liizen, dy't mei de kop fêst siet yn 't reid. Hy sette it lyk op 'e mestelbank, loek de skoat hwat oan en treau de boar de mar op. Doe't er ut it sicht wie, gong er mar wer yn 'e hûs. Hy naem him foar om syn libben te betterjen, hwant dit moast in warsköging west ha. Net mear sûpe, net mear flokke en better om in orl inke Undertusken dreaeu de boar de mar op en doe't de wyn draeide bleau er earne liizen. De fiskerman wie nei hûs gongen doe't er it lyk by de boer yn it klompehok set hie, mar sîlpe koe er net. De deade jongkeardel koe er mar net by him wej krije.

Yn 'e hûs koe er it net bankje en hy staptse mar wer yn 'e boar en sette de mar op. Sûnder it to Wollen kaem er wer by syn chair against the door and put the young sailor in it. Then I started to kick and bang on the door as if the world was abo to end. It didn't take long until he heard rumblings inside ta the dwelling. Then he shouted in a deep, snarling voice, "Sit outside here, I'm gonna beat your head in!" Now, the farm wasn't afraid of the devil himself, so he yanked the bolt ba1 anything dangerous. It wasn't necessary—when he opene the door the chair with the young sailor fell backwards into th room. When the farmer realized the sailor wasn't breathing se own heart missed a beat or two from the shock. There wasn't soul who knew about this incident and the farmer wanted it stay that way. The farmer sat with his hands in his hair for while. He thought it would be best to bury the body in the manure pile. That way he could take the time later to deci how to get rid of the corpse altogether. He got a wheelbarra from the barn and wrestled the body into it. When he got close to the manure pile the wheelbarrow wheel pumped in big bag that was lying across the path. The farmer was going to kick the bag aside until he felt how heavy it was. He thought he ought to look inside. The bag was full of sides bacon. Thieves had visited the farmer's smokehouse, b they had been surprised by the fisherman and left the ba lying for a while. The farmer dropped the corpse on the ground and put the bacon in the wheelbarrow instead. Thes he pulled the bag over the dead body and shook it into the bottom of the bag. He tied the bag shut again and laid it in the same place he'd found it. The robbers would probably con back for the bacon. Their eyebrows would probably cro their hairline if they looked in the bag. The farmer figured th he never would set foot on his land again. The farmer quieth in a hollow tree, and just as he had expected, a little while lat he heard whispering and saw two men sneaking away carr ing the bag between them. The farmer chuckled at his ow cleverness as he hung his sides of bacon back in the smokehouse. He climbed back in bed and in minutes he wa

The thieves dragged the corpse through the fields until the came to a hiding place they had made in a stack of bundle reeds. After all that work they thought they wouldn't mind chew of bacon right away. But when they held the bag upside down the dead young man rolled out in front of their feet,. first they were going to run away but then one suggested th this might be a punishment for all their robbing and stealin They could hang for this. They had to get rid of this body. T one suggested this and the other suggested that until fina they decided that they would bring the corpse back to whe they had gotten it. They climbed back out of their hole, hoist the corpse out of the hiding place and hauled it back to th smokehouse. They strung a rope around its chest and und the armpits and hung it like that on the same hook that t bacon had hung on. They hurried out of the smokehouse They swore to each other that what they'd done once they never do again.

When the farmer work up he thought at first that he had a nightmare. He took a deep swallow of gin and figured he better see if the bacon was still hanging in the smokehouse not. He still had a bad taste in his mouth that the gin could remove, so he thought that maybe a slice of bacon wou one the trick. He stumbled through the darkness on his way to th smokehouse and felt his way along the wall towards th
en hy siigde omtrint ynelkoar, doe't er by de fòkestokjesliefde er de oare boat wer los fan 'e fòkestokken en treau de mar op. Cit moast in warskouwing wèze - hy fielde er tonei in better libben lizze moast.

e boat dreau al mar fierder de mar oer en bilbènne op 't ròm de koai. Wer slòpte er op de fuotten troch it ròm, lichte it lòk op en loerde nei bòtn. Er er de meet fan 'e sylobaat seach, sloegen him de knibsp wer troch de waring nei foaren. Wilens skoude syn boat yno de waring kròpen nei de sylobaat njonken it skip, en hy slòp om de koai, hy seach syn faems antlit flak bope him. Doe sloech er de earms om har hinne en ròp: 'Afke, bist dèr doch!' Doe't de skipper seach dat it libben hader weromkaem stiek er de beide hannen foart en lòd: 'Nou is alles goed - bern, jim hawwe myn megens!' Wie alles yn oarder kommen. De dieven stielen net ar, de boer wie minke werden, de fisker koe in oar orge, de beide jongelju wiene troude en de skipper siet al hy mei in lytse pakesizzer op 'e knibbel.

baco. With one hand he felt the bacon behind the body but when he was going to hack off a piece with the other he sliced through the rope and the corpse fell on top of him. The farmer had gotten a good jolt, but when he lit a short piece of candle and saw that same corpse for the second time he just about dropped dead in his tracks.

How all this was happening he didn't know, but he absolutely had to get rid of that body. He dragged it down the steps and decided to drop it in the lake. When he came to the water he saw a sailboat in the moonlight, floating a little way from the bank. It was stuck with its nose in the reeds. He brought in the boat, set the corpse on the bench beside the mast, turned the boat around a little and aimed it for the center of the lake. When it was out of sight he trudged thoughtfully back to the house. He thought he would try to improve himself because this must have been a warning. No more guzzling, no more swearing, and he'd lend a helping hand a little more often. In the meantime the boat drifted up the lake and when the wind changed it stayed where it was.

The fisherman had gone home after he'd put the dead young man in the farmer's back kitchen, but he couldn't sleep. He couldn't get that dead young man out of his mind. He couldn't stay in the house anymore, so he stepped out into his boat and set off across the lake. Without wanting to, he came along to his nets again and when he looked up he went cold all over, even his legs, because there was that same sailboat again, stuck in his nets, and the young man was lying on the deck. Completely beside himself, he untangled the other boat and pushed it up the lake. This had to be a warning, and he felt that he should lead a better life after this.

The boat drifted farther and farther along the lake and finally ended up beside the same boat that it had parked beside earlier in the evening. The sailboat drifted in between the bank and the bigger boat. When the skipper heard something bumping against the side of the boat, his heart sank. It drove him out of bed. Again he slipped out quietly on bare feet, raised the hatch, and peered over the edge. When he saw the mast of the sailboat he swallowed hard and said, "Oh Lord, if that young fellow is still alive he can have my daughter, as far as I'm concerned." But the young sailor was dead, and the boat had to be gotten rid of. Again the skipper crawled along the gangway. In the meantime his daughter, who had heard some noise, raised the hatch and came on deck. The moon was just winking out from behind some clouds. She saw her father crawling along the gangway to the sailboat beside them and then she saw the sailor whom she was crazy about, wet and limp, propped up against its mast. She jumped on the afterdeck and flew over the hatches to the front of the boat. With a loud scream she jumped and plopped into the sailboat. From the slam he'd gotten when the girl landed on his chest, he couldn't get that dead young man out of his mind. He couldn't get that dead young man out of his mind. He couldn't get that dead young man out of his mind. He couldn't get that dead young man out of his mind. He couldn't get that dead young man out of his mind. He couldn't get that dead young man out of his mind. He couldn't get that dead young man out of his mind. He couldn't get that dead young man out of his mind. He couldn't get that dead young man out of his mind.

When the old skipper saw that the life had come back to the dead he stretched both hands out to the couple and said, "Now everything is all right kids. You have my blessing." So everything was straightened out. The thieves didn't steal anymore, the farmer was approachable, the fisherman got along with people, the young couple got married, and shortly thereafter the old skipper had a young skipper on his knee.
(Untitled)

Kathy Heerdt
What Makes it Poetry?

Four Calvin Poets Explain

Dialogue sometimes has some difficulty living up to its e. It seldom appears to serve its intended function as a munification link for the various parts of the Calvin com­munity. Communication can be a difficult process under the circumstances, however; we at Calvin don't always talk to one another, especially, it would seem, within pages. Like Blanche DuBois, Dialogue has always ended on the kindness of strangers. We can't force the dialogue, but we're happy to promote it when we can.

This year Dialogue received a letter from an anonymous student requesting some conversation. Our correspondent said, in part,

Dialogue: Any students do not understand the poetry in Dialogue or anywhere else. They do not know how to evaluate a poem or criticize it or even begin to enjoy it. You would do a real service by taking one issue and taking it apart, showing its strengths, weaknesses, symbolism, what makes it poetry (e.g., are the criteria meter and significance, or funny margins, or what?), etc.

We spent a good deal of time trying to determine how best to respond. We members of the Dialogue staff didn't feel particularly competent to attempt any exhausting criticism ourselves—we find it a difficult enough task simply to choose poems to print from among the many that are submitted. And so we decided to turn to the poets themselves for a close look at their work.

The four poets who appear below were selected because they represent some clearly different styles of poetry. We asked them to discuss briefly their conceptions of the fundamentals of good poetry and how they apply those tenets to their own work. Each was asked to explore one of his own poems in a critical way. We expected a broad range of insights—and we weren't disappointed.

Poetry, more so than many of the other fine arts, is a very personal means of expression. The explorations which our four poets make are all very personal, and interestingly distinct from one another. Sietze Buning investigates the origins of his poetic voice and the function he hopes to serve by writing; Bob Boomsma looks at the mechanics of his work—how the parts combine to make a whole; John Timmerman discusses the substance and application of a poetic form, light verse; Dan Hawkins pursues the genesis of a poem from its imagistic conception to its final, polished form.

We hope that this symposium provides the kind of dialogue that our anonymous letter writer had in mind. We hope that it will serve to clarify something of the poetry Dialogue prints, for both our readers and our poets. But let us know. We're depending on your kindness.
"Today is review
John,
What is your only comfort in life and death?"
'I wasn't the catechism lesson this week.'
"Ivan,
What do you mean by the Providence of God?"
'I can't remember.'
"Willis,
What do you mean by a holy catholic church?"
'I don't know.'
"Sietze,
What does God require in the third commandment?"
'I don't care.'
"I don't care?
Did you say I don't care?
I have bent until I can bend no more.
Nobody says I don't care in my class."

You grabbed your grubby Stetson.
You opened the door.
Pale and shaking, you yelled:
"I would rather have you say God damn than I don't care!"
You slammed the door behind you.
We laughed,
surprised at the words you knew.

It didn't occur to me until now
that God damn and I don't care
mean the same thing.
And I wish I could tell you
who must have cried Woe is me all the way home
what a good lesson that was
on the third commandment.

English poetry is at its healthiest—though not necessarily
its most intellectual or most aesthetic or most civilized—
but it is most like the Old English scop and his meadhall audience.
The scop ran his finger over his gleewood, cried Hwa and
thus made his audience fall silent with anticipation. In
the tales the scop told had all been familiar to every mem-
ber of the tribe since youth, but the heroic essence of the tale
depended on the scop for transmission. Chaucer, Shakes-
peare, Wordsworth, and Whitman all preserve, in their
spectacular relationships with their audiences, that sa-
thing—health-giving, health-receiving relationship that the scop had
with his

"Is this a good poem?" is not as important a question to the scop
and to the successors I have named as is the question "Does this poem speak for the community?" When the question "Is this a good poem?" becomes more important than relationship between poet and audience, poetry runs the risk of turning precious, arcane, and snobbish. Not that precious poetry lacks interest. I enjoy Pope an hour at a time, Tennyson an evening at a time, and, because I am so tuned to their esoterica, Auden and Eliot without limit. In fact, as SWiersma, the name I sit on to hatch into prominence and reputation, I write poems in imitation of Eliot and Auden, without much success. The market is flooded, and success in this field means being noticed by other poets.

For some time before 1970 I had become dissatisfied with the "quality" route. Around 1970 several experiences happened at once to make me take the name "Sietze Buning" and turn to ethnic poetry. Dutch friends whom I had told about growing up urged me to write down my experiences, in order to preserve what they (not I at first) regarded as a peculiarly beautiful, fragile, and funny blending of Dutchness and Americanness.

Since 1987, when I taught in Calvin's Upward Bound Pro-
gram, I had been reading Baldwin, Ellison, and Baraka reading these Black writers made me realize that any ethnic group in America is trapped in its own niggerdom, and that writers can help to set an ethnic community free. The Dutch communities in the twenties were not of a mind to be set free; they drove Felkema and DeVries into Uncle Tomism, in disguising themselves as WASPs; to the extent that they took note of the Dutch community, they satirize it from without. Until I was forty, I had always believed that anybody who wanted to write seriously needed to leave the Dutch community. Baldwin—though his relationship to his Black community had been abrasive—has never been an Uncle Tom; he interpreted the ethnic community for the sake of the ethnic community.
lo! all of us non-ethnics find ourselves listening in. By
past, the propaganda coming from the CRC, and some-
ones from the Calvin of that time, was making us look hardly
at all on the American scene, and was not getting results;
new evidence of the typical Uncle Tom syndrome which
nobody. I knew even then that Sietze would not be the
one to do for the Dutch community what Baldwin and others
or the Black. Sietze was starting at forty and didn’t have
It takes in the first place. But Sietze could demonstrate to
younger generation of writers that it would be possible to
about the Dutch community for the Dutch community.
so at about 1970 one of the best student plays ever to be
en at Calvin was submitted to me. It was set in a fishing
ge in Ireland and written in the manner of Synge’s Riders
Sea. Competent as the play was, it seemed particularly
verse for somebody who had spent his whole life in
rica and most of it in Michigan to pick Ireland to interpret
. When I tried to explain that Borculo and Graafschap are
trinsically romantic and appropriate for literary interpreta-
Irish villages—the only difference being that Yeats and
ge and O’Casey have already put the Irish villages on the
ery landscape and nobody has picked up the Dutch
igan villages yet—the student laughed in unbelief and,
know, persists in it. Ireland, for him, is worthy of literary
ation, even by people who have never been there, and
ichigan is not. Typical ethnic self-loathing is implied
attitude. Whatever can be said against Paul Schrader’s
core, I much admire that he interprets Grand Rapids in it,
turf that he knows best.
final factor: my parents died in 1970, and I perceived my
ly as much diminished without them as part of it. Particu-
, I missed their voices, not only what they said, but their
, diction, vocabulary, and syntax. Whenever I reemem-
ences they had said, those sentences had the
rances of poetry for me.
ll of these causes converging at about 1970 made me
the name of Sietze Buning and give higher priority to the
question “Does this poem speak for the ethnic community?”
than to “Is this a good poem?” Higher priority to the first
question does not mean that I ignore the second altogether. I
refuse to be Edgar Guest, to deal with sentiment and ignore
irony. I refuse to do nostalgia for its own sake. I want the
Christian Reformed community to face what is painful to face:
racism, anti-ecumenism, anti-Catholicism, anti-modernity in
the arts, and ostracism of the lame dogs in a community. The
relationship between the audience and me should be abra-
sive, and recent fan mail indicates that the abrasion is having
its effect: some from poets and scholars of the “Is-it-a-good-
poem?” school; some from those insufficiently liberated from
Dutchness, who, therefore, take offense at Dutchness; some
from conservatives who miss the forgiveness that is there
along with my bitterness; some from theologians.
In spite of criticism, crowds as large as 350 have come to
my readings. The only poet of the “Is-it-a-good-poem?”
school whom I have heard read to a larger audience is W. H.
Auden. Granted, Auden’s audience was there because of
poetry and nothing else. My audience had only a dozen in it
who were there for the poetry. The questions after Auden’s
lecture centered on his juxtaposition of southern and northern
lands; the questions after my reading centered on the
problem of dancing at Calvin College. And yet, with a piano to
serve as my gleewood for some medieval Dutch carols, and
with some stories to tell about my tribal past, I feel Sietze
Buning to be a minor, but genuine, flowering of the
tradition.
If anybody had told me at twenty that I would be cultivating
a Banner audience of fifty, I would have sold insurance for a
living. Should my Audenese sonnets suddenly break into
Poetry and the Atlantic Monthly, I could see myself abandon-
ing Sietze forever, wondering how I ever got sidetracked into
giving the priority to any other question than “Is it a good
poem?”; but for the moment Sietze is useful, not only to
myself, it seems, but to the Dutch-American community many
of us find ourselves inextricably part of.
black blur
what is it?
a bird in the road
too late to swerve
passed over in the middle
a crow in the mirror
cowled down wounded
on the wet asphalt
the car behind jerked
to the side and stopped
they must have wondered
what to do
before going on
and forgetting
coming back
no crow slow
eyes circle out the window
maybe someone stopped
but no there
in a driveway crow
against a concrete wall
huddled with rotting leaves
like an old woman stooped
against Woolworth’s window
her shopping bag tucked
into her overcoat
black
I should have hit that crow
square and even with my left front tire
when I had the chance

First of all you have to like a little garlic once in a while. Cut in half the number of granules you’d put on a casserole before a big date on a Friday night and you’ll come close to the number of poems I’ve ever written. Then take a forkful of casserole and the number of granules on that will give you some idea of the number of good poems I’ve written. Couple these facts with more: I had to look up granules and casserole in the dictionary; I’ve been called a “sensitive brute” of a poet by someone who ought to know; I have not read, written, or studied enough poems to say what I would really like to say about what makes one good. But I’m going to say what I think.

Writing about poetry has helped to define what I think about it. I know enough, for instance, to say that I don’t know much about it. I know, too, that a lot of silly things get said about poetry. Keep reading; you’ll probably read some silly things. But I might understand a little better why silly things get said especially if you don’t know much about poetry to begin with.

First of all poetry is musical. The sounds of vowels, consonants, accented and unaccented syllables; the rhythms syllables, words, and lines; the voice of the reader convey certain emotions—all these are part of the music of poetry. The poet can give you a hard-driving rhythm, wild like rock and roll, a big band sound, or a pastoral symphony. When I start writing a poem I am not concerned with the kind of music I’m going to produce. The music is already there. The mood is there. The emotions I am experiencing while I’m selecting images will produce the music. Most of the time that music has to be refined. Like a new engine, the poem will have to be tuned by the poet-mechanic. But just as an engine can’t be tuned until it has been completely put together, so it is with a poem. The poet has to build the poem first, and that means getting down all the images.

A poetic image presents the reader with a mental picture that can conjure up the experience of an event, or a sensation, or an object. It involves the five senses. The best images stir the imagination more than one sense in the reader’s mind. For better or worse, visual images are predominant in my poetry. I want the reader to see where he is before I give him a sound or a smell. But there is more to a poem than images, and more to images than stimulation of the senses. Something underlying an image or a series of images makes it poetic.

An image happens because of connections the poet makes in his own mind; but when he reads his poem somebody else, he gives the listener different pictures than the ones that he has. An image paints different pictures different minds because it has energy of its own. It does something. There is a lot of energy in a good image, and even more in a series of images. The relationship between images in a series is a part of that energy. Put two energy-packed images together—juxtapose them—and something happens that does not happen when they are separate. At least we wouldn’t notice it happening then.

Picture little lines connecting two images, alive as if they were charged with electricity. The lines from the images to the poet make up what is in his own mind; but when he reads his poem somebody else, he gives the listener different pictures than the ones that he has. An image paints different pictures different minds because it has energy of its own. It does something. There is a lot of energy in a good image, and even more in a series of images. The relationship between images in a series is a part of that energy. Put two energy-packed images together—juxtapose them—and something happens that does not happen when they are separate. At least we wouldn’t notice it happening then.

When there is a lot of energy flowing into new, undiscovered areas, then many lines become charged white hot and alive.
above, then, is a skeleton of my idea of a good poem. A poem must produce something like an electric shock—whether it be a small shock from a dry rug in winter, contact with a high-voltage line humming between power lines and metropolis. Children delight in shocks off rugs. Adult creatures require millions of volts to survive. The images of the poem must be vivid to the sensual capacity of the mind. And the music of the poem must convey the energy of the poem so that the listener sees the images in his mind.

By my criteria, I think "Hauling hardwood Saturday morning is a good poem. But that’s not to say that it doesn’t have its weaknesses. I’ve been told, for instance, that the language in it is too ordinary, too utilitarian. But for my uses, ordinary language is better than poetic language. Archaic language or something "arty" held up in shouts "Hey, this is poetry. See how the words sing to you?"

Undeniably some poems sing more than others, and we are going to sing you right back into your seat. But here song isn’t so nice anyway. This poem has the steady beat of a truck engine that develops into the drumming of the old lady. The last three lines turn into wild fingers hinging on an electric guitar without fingerpicking for chords. I think the language is too ordinary.

It has also been pointed out that the poem has no specific setting. True. The title sets the scene, but I don’t really tell you where you are. I give you a blur on the road that is a bird of a wherewith. The landscape comes into clear focus with the woman—precisely where it is most important. But before I don’t know that the picture of the place matters. We can make your own picture. We have all seen dead or dying animals along the road. You could draw your own picture of the old lady, too, except that I want to show you a picture of the little old lady that I see, so I give her a shopping bag and make her stoop over. The poem points, obviously, to crow and the old woman. If other lines light up in your mind, so much the better; but the poem is only the crow, the woman, and the driver.

One reader has said that he thinks the major weakness of the poem is the lack of a clear picture of the driver. Naturally, I think so. The poem can explain itself; it gives three clear lines of the driver: (1) he looks in his mirror after passing the crow, (2) when he returns from his delivery, he slows down and looks for the crow, and (3) when he sees the crow in his driveway, he says he wishes that he had hit it. That is all the poem has to give you. When you read the poem, you become driver, with your own picture of the landscape. You see the crow and the old woman in your own mind. And you wonder whether you should have hit the crow. These points of weakness are well taken, however, and though I think the poem stands on its own, the criticism shall be remembered for the next poems.

I think this is a good poem. I hope it punched you right in the nose—because that’s exactly what it did to me. There’s a lot of energy there. The images are easily seen, and, though powerful in themselves, take on a whole new force when put together. This poem can hook into many ideas and thoughts in a person’s head. Maybe you have felt a sympathy for an animal and have wanted to put it out of its misery. Maybe you have been mean and hit something just for the thrill of watching it die. Maybe you have felt the helplessness of seeing an animal or a person suffering. Maybe you are wondering if the poem advocates euthanasia by equating the old woman with the crow the driver wishes he had hit. Maybe you wonder if the poem means anything at all.

A poem can mean many things to many people. But my poem doesn’t mean anything by itself. It doesn’t advocate anything—it’s telling you a little story, and by doing that it lights up little lines in your head to touch other images which you alone can see. Poems are kind of mysterious in a way, because a poet usually does not sit down, intent upon saying something profound to his readers. But a poem can help you say something profound to yourself. I’m not going to try. I sat down and wrote the poem because I lived it. I struggled with the strings and they go so hot that I just had to write them down. It’s like playing hot potato. Here—quick take this poem.

I hope you let the poem do something for you. I hope you like the pictures. And just between you and me—I wouldn’t hit that crow anyway.
John H. Timmerman

Five Metas in Search of a Physic

I. Kant and the Jelly Glass
After his mind crawled inside the jelly glass
Immanuel Kant asked the glass how it felt about it all.

"About the same shape as jelly,
or last year’s pickle relish."
replied the glass.

Kant climbed back into Kant, reflecting how the mind is like a glass giving shape to the jelly of space.

The glass was well-made; solid, without dint or imperfection.
It managed well to keep the universe out.

II. Immanuel Kant in the Flower Garden
Immanuel Kant had three flowers in his garden: roses, marigolds, and daisies.

Which was fine save for the fact that he had 2 roses, 3 marigolds, and 4 daisies.

Which meant he had 9 flowers in his garden of 3.

Which was fine save for the fact that the 2 roses had 13 buds, the 3 marigolds 21 buds, the 4 daisies 19 buds.

Which drove Kent to conclude that truth was out there:
and also that he was allergic to flowers.

III. Kant on the Telephone
Looking for the a priori
Kant placed a telephone call to Alpha Centauri.

This he could do via the transcendental ego while he tapped holes in Königsberg with his walking stick.

After six years he wondered if the telephone wire were multi-filament and which would carry his call since what appeared to be one was in fact many under the black sheath that met the human eye, many little strands of red and green and undeniable blue that twisted like the mind.

After eight years Kant stayed home, lifted the receiver and learned he had dialed the wrong number.

IV. The Other Side of the Door.
Immanuel Kant one Saturday played chess on imaginary spaces in an imaginary room which he entered through a one-sided door.

There he watched his King move from space to space and not change place.
But 64 spaces changed place.
Fascinated by the living logic box Kant nearly forgot what place he was at.

Meanwhile Napoleon waged war ten miles away and hearing rumors of war burst on his door
Kant walked home by a different route content in his knowledge that however different his route the walk would be the same.
V. A Letter to Immanuel Kant

Listen.

I want to tell you a secret.

Immanuel Kant was really a madman who only thought he was Immanuel Kant.

I am the real Immanuel Kant.

Signed. F. Nietzsche.

In an imaginary dialogue played through my mind while writing "Five Metas in Search of a Physic." A voice kept asking "What do you know about Kant?" "Nothing," I would reply, and keep writing. While I don't know him as a professional philosopher, I have done a good bit of intrigued if befuddled reading of him in an amateurish fashion. Our acquaintance, you might say, is sing. If it came to a choice between curious or being professional, I would opt for the former any day.

Light verse is above all a means of piquing curiosity, in lition to pricking balloons. It is perhaps one of the least understood poetic forms. After all, isn't poetry deadly serious? Well, sometimes. Sometimes human nature is serious and light verse is heavier than hot air. Light verse sees big loons swell up with gas and it pops them. The noise is often ghtful. Light verse is one of the least understood poetic forms, I might as well make many claims for it. They are my ms. This is what light verse is for me.

Well, light verse is heavier than hot air. Light verse sees big loons swell up with gas and it pops them. The noise is often ghftful. Light verse is heavier than hot air. Light verse sees big loons swell up with gas and it pops them. The noise is often ghftful. Light verse is heavier than hot air. Light verse sees big loons swell up with gas and it pops them. The noise is often ghftful.

I wish the thing would leave me alone. But even light verse takes work. For example, I had to know in fact how long it would take to find out one had dialed a wrong number to Alpha Centauri. It would take eight years. Try it if you don't believe me. Of course, Kant didn't have a telephone, which made a problem for the poet. But, ah, he did have a Transcendental Self (Ego, here). It solved a nasty little problem for me, as it also did for Kant. After all, light verse, like philosophy, has to be consistent.

With number four, a couple of things. Who could forget the story of Kant and Napoleon? I didn't. But more fascinating to me is Kant's notion of Time-Space Intuitions. Kant severed the noumenal and phenomenal as neatly as I try to sever a line of verse. But I like to see the two conjoin—that is, the noumenal and phenomenal, as well as two lines. Also, I say that as a Christian, one who professes to be a part of the body of Christ. Sort of a noumenal and phenomenal conjoined. How about that for a problem, Kant? But Napoleon? Take a different road home and avoid him.

About number five? Well, what about Nietzsche? And then there was Zarathustra. He also spoke.

In writing poetry I am always acutely aware of formal elements, the way the poem is crafted, the length of a line, the meter, the rhyme. (I should point out, I suppose, that these poems were primarily a bit of fun and I would hate to exhibit them as samples of stylistic skill.)

Good poetry must always have rhyme and meter, especially free verse which some people mistake for avoidance of rhyme and meter. Poetry's success depends on a certain extent on a kind of formal inevitability. But yet the rhyme and meter must have an edge to it. Light verse has a kind of nervous form, the rhyme sometimes barely coming together. I don't have space—intuitive or otherwise—to comment much on the form of these. Besides, disjunctive rhyme, which I use here, isn't so important for what it is as for what it does. What it does here is give something like unity in disunity. I think that's something like life.

Well, Kant was looking for certainty, as far as I can be certain. And in epistemological matters that's not always easy to discover. Nor is it easier in poetry. But the form of poetry strips things bare. It is a compact art. And it gets rid of a lot of baggage which delays the trip to certainty. Some people are afraid to travel the path poetry provides. After all, the poet may be playing tricks on me, may be leading me on an elaborate detour, and how do I know his road is any better than mine? That's a genuine concern, I admit. But serious poets, and a good many Christian poets who know their craft at least as well as their Bible, also look for that certainty. Even through light verse. If we can make fun of Kant, we can also begin to make fun of ourselves, can we not? And divested of that ponderous seriousness with which we often take ourselves, we may begin to see things more clearly. Like our human need. Like answers to that need. Like a long distance phone call to Alpha Centauri.
Black Sleep, White Dreams

...the whole city founders readily and deep,
Sliding on all its pillows
To the thronged Atlantis of personal sleep.
—RICHARD WILBUR

The city lies on its belly in the slush.
Cars splash the sodden streets,
Shoes are heavy on the feet;
The trains have stopped sliding through mud.
Oh, but the weary townsmen roll so in their beds
and wind their sheets like shrouds,
waiting in the lily moonlight
for the dark chasm of sleep to open
(counting perhaps black sheep
leaping its brim).

Too soon they fall into the deep,
from the world’s end of flat consciousness,
and the underworld leaps into relief.
Some dream in maelstroms, some in fire-storms;
all whirl through Hyperborean snow
that blinds their vision as they go—
They belly down between blank sheets.
But these are poor protection from the morning
that comes raining through windows
all around; its clear drops pierce the bubbles
in their brains and melt the deep drifts made by night,
Winds die; men rise all shallow for the day.

Two things, I think, work together to make a good poem:
idea and craft. "No good novel," said Henry James, "will ever
proceed from a superficial mind," and the same holds true for
a good poem. Good poets have good ideas; great poets,
great ones. All of them speak to the human condition in the
most profound ways.

But a good poem does not start with statement of an idea.
W. H. Auden illustrated this most clearly with his advice to
aspiring poets. If a young man would tell him that he wanted to
be a poet "because I have something to say," Auden wouldn’t
rate the fellow’s chances very highly. But if one would tell
that it was "because I like to hang around words and
what they are saying to one another," he would be encour-
ing.

Poems are, first of all, made of words. Each one is a un-
statement of its particular theme. Poetry has survived
because it embodies great ideas—everything important
already been said in other ways, too—but because of the
it speaks about them. Because you can “say” almost anyt
in a poem, what you say is not half so important as how
say it. To be sure, the idea for a poem is present from
beginning and governs (to some extent) the work. But the
of using words governs the writing of a poem, and the craft
poetry shapes its themes. For the poet and for the reader
words should lead to the meaning.

I’ve been asked to demonstrate the relationship bet-
craft and idea by analyzing one of my own poems. I feel I’m
a doctor who must operate on his own child as I begin the
of exploratory surgery needed here; and I’m almost sure to
something seriously wrong. Whether "Black Sleep, W
Dreams" is a good poem or not is not entirely up to me, but
think that even showing its faults may, perhaps, tell us so
thing about good poetry.

A poem begins in the poet’s imagination, which contin-
works on the impressions he receives from his senses. "Bl
Sleep" began, in my mind, not surprisingly, as I was lying
bed on a sloppy winter night, after a rain had disinte-
some of the snow in the streets. As I listened to cars pass,
by, I imagined myself walking up Michigan Avenue toward
railroad tracks. And out came the first stanza.

Those four lines kept me hovering between sleep and
wakefulness just long enough to work out the title, which
suggested to me by the constant open-and-shut action of
eyes in this dream-like state. The rest of the poem came to
less easily in the following weeks, but I didn’t lose it becau-
had the first stanza to set the mood and the title to remind
of the basic theme.

As I wrote, I continued to refer back to that night in bed to
try to capture the nuances of its dreamy quality. After I
finished, however, something still bothered me; until I co-
recall Richard Wilbur’s “After the Last Bulletins,” sugges-
to me by the fifth line, and acknowledge its influence over
composition by placing a few of its lines in the epigraph.

I could not complete the poem.
I think that a good poem operates on both the level of experience and the level of art at once. Each new poem must take place in the general context of the times and of the history of poetry. It is doomed to fail if it does not admit that it does. I do not mean that this admission must be conscious—Wilbur’s poem was working in my subconscious long—though I think that in the best poets it is. Nor do I mean that a poem must have great social and historical significance all at once. What I do mean is that a poem should relate to life and the conventions of poetry.

One of the conventions of poetry is an indirect method of expression. Poets use one thing to talk about another. Aphorism perhaps is the plainest example of this method. When I say “The city lies on its belly in the slush,” I am using minimal action of a lying body to comment on and to picture city’s nighttime quietude. In another way, the actual sounds of the words in the first stanza—slush, splash, pause—suggest the sound we make when we want someone to quiet. Obviously, sleep and quiet kiss each other in the title. And sound and sense embrace in a good poem.

The text of “Black Sleep” supports this theme in a number of ways. The picture of “weary townsman” rolling and winding sheets foreshadows the restlessness that is to come. The black sheep that they are “perhaps” counting, that leap long and unaware into the void, are ominous symbols; I add here that I think they are weak and slightly corny—left them in the poem because I like the twist they give the cliche of snowy white lambs leaping over a pasture line. I chose to introduce the bizarre world of the dream as something sudden and unexpected. Though it takes three lines to do it, the poem conveys the idea through the words “Too soon” and the particularly effective phrase “leaps into relief.” And the only lines which follow a regular metric pattern—“all whirl through Hyperborean snow/that blinds their vision as they go”—manage to convey the dizzying experience of dream-filled sleep. The use of Hyperborean is a touch which suggests both wintry storms and fantasy by alluding to the mythical inhabitants of the polar regions.

By the time a reader gets to the last line, however, I hope he will realize that I have tried to talk about more than just sleep and dreams. The first hint of this comes in the second stanza, where the townsman “wind their sheets like shrouds.” Another suggestion follows immediately with the “lily moonlight,” and I am sure that any attentive reader will feel the undercurrent theme of death. I am not sure that “Black Sleep” does any more than suggest that sleep is an image of death, or that, because we are immortal creatures, our lives on earth are “shallow” compared to the depths of eternity. This unclear exposition of the major theme of the poem is probably its major weakness.

Nevertheless, I think that “Black Sleep, White Dreams” remakes the connection between death and sleep in its own way, and aims to be unique and original while it maintains its connections with the great ideas of the human race. John Calvin himself agreed that dreams are an indication that man possesses an immortal soul.

I leave the rest of the work of explication—the motif of light and darkness suggested by the title, the use of snow and rain to contrast sleeping and waking, the paradox implied in the final line, and anything else you might pick up on—to you. And you are the judge of my poem; you can determine its merits for yourself. Read other poems with the same theme, compare and contrast them with mine. I think you will learn as you go, and if you have any doubts about your ability to handle poetry, they will start to go away when you start to work on them.

For the time being, “Black Sheep,” despite its flaws, is a finished poem. And, despite its flaws, I am prepared to go on writing poems hopefully, because there are more words and infinite combinations; ultimately, as T. S. Eliot said, “every attempt/Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure/Because one has only learnt to get the better of words/For the thing one no longer has to say.” Like the struggle for life, the struggle for poetry goes on.