Dialogue

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This issue of Dialogue is devoted to Fine Artists at Calvin.
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Moon Rising over Graveled Shore

Restless,
She rose up, coyly splashed her lover's face
While he stood over
Demurely.
And together, while the aged, decrepid cuckold slept,
The lovers danced in silver-foamed embrace.
Beneath the star-pierced bridal canopy,
Light-imprisoned water spray
Lept from crest to crest.
Roll after roll of silver-laced,
Splashing, tumbling walls of blackened water
Thundered out of the light and beat the gravedled
shore in showers of spray and foam;
Edged by her lover's laughing light,
They hurled themselves
In vain against her sleeping mate—
The angry rise of innocence unfavored.
And her lover,
As his eager light
Danced its way across the scattering waves,
Shot his narrowing path of rippled light at me
Where I,
Drawn up on my seat of granite rock,
Sat and watched, a silent, guiltless voyeur.
Heedless of its playful, faithless mate
The unbreathing, black-enshrouded land behind me
Slept disquietly,
An uneasy presence,
The scars and weary filth of endless days
Half-forgotten beneath the shroud of sunless nights.
But the lake, long tired of her mate's
unwilling sleep,
Played openly, violently, with her new lover's light.
And I, land-locked, but for a moment
free to sit on gravedled shore at
edge of water chaos and delight
Watched, enthralled, as she played on
with blissful, innocence,
Innocence that I, we—the land and I—
Desired, envied, but could not embrace.

—Ed Nyman
It’s Due When?

by Richard Bingle

“Oh no! I forgot I had a test in English tomorrow, and I still have to finish my Calculus homework, and then there’s that paper I was supposed to have done tomorrow for History 211! Everything has to be done tonight, and it’s already 9:30! What am I going to do?” Such is the cry that echoes from room to room, suite to suite in the dorms. All this anxiety is due to one thing: procrastination. Why do now what you can always do later? Does college life bore you? Do what I did. Start procrastinating! Life suddenly becomes exciting when you start pushing deadlines. Why sit there doing boring, meaningless homework when you can be seeing and talking to people, going places, and doing things more fun than studying? So put those books and notes away, and follow these simple guidelines, and you will be well on your way to becoming a master procrastinator.

A good way to avoid studying is to talk to someone (other than yourself). Perhaps there is a cute girl in your Phys. Ed. class that you’ve been dying to meet. With so much work piled up on your desk, what better way to avoid it than by giving her a call? However, you have one slight problem. What are you going to say? Easy. Just ask her some irrelevant question in regard to the homework assignment due next Tuesday. Having determined that such an action would be a good idea, you walk down to the desk, look up her name, and get the needed phone number. Back in your room, you spend twenty minutes or so getting up the nerve to call, and then you are disappointed by a busy signal. Waiting another fifteen minutes, during which time you do nothing but twiddle your thumbs, you are rewarded by an answer. If all goes smoothly, you might soon be spending all your free time with her and may forget all thoughts of homework. Another possibility is simply to go across the hall and discuss weekend plans, such as going to the midnight movie on Saturday. Say you’re not the social type. What then? Well, you can always think of someplace you have to go to get or do something. Maybe you’re almost out of shampoo, soap, or soda. That’s a major catastrophe! Better run right out and get some. So what if you’re in the middle of three pages of German translation. It can wait. After all, the test isn’t until tomorrow afternoon. However, on your way to the store you decide to stop at the mall and look around, and around, and around. Suddenly you realize you have been there for two hours! Oh well, no need to fear; you can always do your translation tomorrow morning. Or possibly your floor or dorm is meeting for something or other, not really a social gathering, but a discussion of some sort. Homework can always be put off until later if there is somewhere you just have to go. So what if your work takes twice as long as you thought? Just stay up late at night to finish it.

With such recreational facilities at your fingertips, how can you sit miserably doing meaningful things like typing a paper? There are tennis matches to play, snowballs to throw, rounds of frisbee golf to shoot, basketballs to dribble. No one mentions to you that tennis matches can go on for hours or that your frisbee might get stuck in a tree for ten minutes or so. But it really doesn’t matter, because homework shouldn’t be done during the day when it’s nice and sunny outside. Homework should be saved for late at night when you’re tired and ready to go to bed, having accomplished the terrible chore of having fun. When you finally settle down to some serious studying for the evening, someone calls to invite you to go see the new movie just released last week, an opportunity you can’t afford to pass up. After all, who knows when your studies will allow you another chance to see it?

“Does college life bore you? Start procrastinating! Life suddenly becomes exciting when you start pushing deadlines.”
Science and Theology: Together at Last?

by Keith Petersen

Science and religion/theology have been in seeming conflict, especially since Darwin put forth his theory of evolution in 1859. Scientists have battled the theologians, each group extremely reluctant to give any ground to the other. "How can one be a Christian and accept the theory of evolution?" has been asked. Or even, "How can one be a Christian and accept an old age for the Earth and universe?" Recent discoveries in the sciences, particularly astronomy and physics, however, have shown that science is perhaps not in such conflict with our belief (as Christians) in a providential God after all. In fact, these discoveries may give us even more assurance that there is a God in control of our universe.

The Big Bang theory of cosmology, in one form or another, is now commonly accepted as the theory of how the universe began and, ultimately, will end, barring divine intervention. Yes, began. Many astronomers for years have searched for and clung to cosmological theories which do not demand an origin for the universe. The Steady State or Continuous Creation theory, proposed by Fred Hoyle, is the most popular of these theories. This theory holds that the universe is eternal and unchanging on the large scale: matter is being created at some point in space, constantly replenishing the universe's supply of matter. This creation has always been taking place and always will be; the universe never began and it will never end.

This theory quite nicely avoids the question of origin of the universe; it doesn't have one. However, no one seriously holds to this theory any longer—not even Hoyle, although he continues to search for some variant on it. First of all, no evidence has ever been found for a place where this continuous creation is supposed to be taking place. Second, this theory cannot explain the three-degree Kelvin microwave background radiation discovered in 1967 by Penzias and Wilson. This discovery was at the same time a death blow to the Steady State theory and a triumphant confirmation of the Big Bang theory, which holds that the universe began as a primordial fireball or "cosmic egg" that exploded, violently hurling its contents at an enormous speed, these contents over the eons growing farther and farther apart, as a whole. Small-scale aggregations, or lumps, occurred, forming what we see today: our sun and other stars, planets, and galaxies.

This cosmic egg was at an infinitely high temperature and pressure before it exploded. Over the eons, as the galaxies have grown farther and farther apart, this background radiation has grown steadily weaker, until today it is the very weak but measurable three degrees Kelvin (three degrees above absolute zero) microwave radiation which Penzias and Wilson discovered.

According to this theory, then, the universe had a definite origin in time, between fifteen and twenty billion years ago (most likely about twenty). Our planet Earth, by comparison, is a youngster, just 4.7 billion years old. Many astronomers have shied away from this theory because of its implications. If the universe had an origin, what preceded it? (Most astronomers say this question has no meaning, because time began with the universe.) And what (or who) caused the cosmic egg to explode? Science has no answer, but for a Christian these are not difficult questions.

Another development in astronomy and physics in just the past few years also brings science and theology closer together. There are certain constants in nature (fine-structure constant, gravitational constant, Planck's constant, strong-interaction constant) which are very finely tuned with the universe. Take the fine-structure constant, for
example. This constant, equal to 1/137 or .0073, governs atomic interactions. If it differed by as little as 1/1000 (i.e. if it were instead equal to 1/136 or 1/138), the stars would either have burned out very rapidly or forever remained cold and dark. In neither case would life as we know it (and as we are) be possible.

Another example is the ratio of the early expansion rate to density of the universe. If this ratio had been ever so slightly larger, the matter of the universe would have rushed apart too fast, making small-scale lumping impossible; if it had been slightly smaller, the matter would not have rushed apart fast enough. Stars and galaxies would have formed, but they would have been so close together that their gravitational attraction would soon have turned the expanding universe into a contracting one; that is, their gravitational attraction would have been strong enough to overcome the expansion of the early universe, and all matter would soon have rushed back together, coalescing into the “cosmic egg” once again. In neither case would our universe be as it is today, and neither would we be here inhabiting it.

We can see, then, from these two examples that we live in a very finely tuned universe. An effort was made just this year by a theorist (Alan Mac Robert, Sky and Telescope, March 1983) to resolve this difficulty of all of these marvelous coincidences that make life possible by postulating that somewhere in some “superspace” outside our universe there are countless other universes beginning and ending. It is theoretically possible, by the principles of quantum physics, for quantum (very small) fluctuations in space-time to “accidentally” start universes. Our universe, then, out of an infinite number of universes, is the one that just happens to be so finely tuned that life is possible.

Of course, the universe we inhabit is the only one we can see, so Mac Robert’s so-called theory (more like wishful thinking) cannot be proved or disproved. Or maybe it can. One of the principles of cosmology, which he apparently does not recognize, is that space is contained within the universe; there is no “space” as we know it outside of it. How, then, could quantum fluctuations be taking place in some “space” outside our universe? Or if there is a “superspace” (which we have no evidence for), how is it different from our space? Could these fluctuations occur in it as well?

“It is as if the universe were deliberately designed for our benefit,” says Mac Robert. Yes, indeed it has been, Mr. Mac Robert, by a providential God mightier than we could ever imagine. In the end, scientists may be forced to admit the existence of God because of what science has told them. And if Christians are willing to accept an ancient age for Earth and the rest of the universe, which in no way implies acceptance of the theory of evolution, science and theology may at least be brought together.

—Lambert VanPoolen
Une Cause Célébrée?
(a confrontation in Algiers)

by Marvin Norman

"Monsieur Francois Verlaine, I presume?" Jean asked at the door of the dark one-room flat. Francois motioned him to enter after extending his hand for the stranger to shake. "I’m Jean Stein. I’m the one who called about the interview...."

"Ah, oui, Monsieur Stein; it’s been a long time since I’ve had any dealings with the press. I consider it an honor to be interviewed by my former employers. I thought I had been all but forgotten here in dusty Algiers." Jean Stein surveyed the lines on Francois’ face. He was skeptical. He doubted the old man’s sincerity. There were rumors that he’d broken with Left wing politics in the late Sixties. There was talk that Verlaine had adopted a counter-revolutionary ideology and had even been seen consorting with Gaullists.

"But what are these posters of the people’s movement heroes doing on the walls?" Jean thought, "Why does Che Guevera stare down at me from above his small fold-out bed if he is truly a traitor?"

Verlaine wore glasses and had receding white hair. His yellow shirt was stained with red wine and food sauce. He moved slowly and smoked heavily. His stomach rumbled constantly though he ate regularly. He was a typical old man, Jean decided. There was nothing remarkable about him.

"I wish I had tea to offer you, friend, but my shipment from Marrakesh hasn’t arrived yet. I only drink tea from Marrakesh."

"Wine will be fine, Monsieur Verlaine. Oh, and some bread and cheese, if you have it."

"Ahh, you must be from Toulouse," Verlaine said removing a loaf from the cupboard.

"No, I’m originally from Lyon, but I reside in Paris now; I’ve just completed the University...."

"Isn’t that something. I have a daughter at the University de Paris," Verlaine said, cutting the cheese and preparing the wine. "But she doesn’t know me, and I’ve made no attempt to contact her. She’s in the School of Economics...."

"Oh? Then maybe I know her. What is her name?

Verlaine lit a cigarette. He inhaled deeply while looking intently at his young guest. "That, Monsieur Stein, would be telling."

"Suit yourself. I thought maybe if I knew her I’d send you news of her from time to time. But I guess you’re able to keep tabs on her even from this forsaken country."

Verlaine poured Jean a generous helping of wine. It was cheap and not meant for special occasions. "Algeria isn’t such a bad place. There’s a lot of whore-chasing, gun-running, and opium here, but I’m not interested in those juvenile sports. I lead a quiet life. I read the papers when I can get them and listen to the radio. When I get tired of that I watch the children playing in the street. Sometimes I sit in the market...." Jean was visibly irritated by the direction of the conversation. He felt he wasn’t being taken seriously.

"No offense, Monsieur, but this is all quite boring and irrelevant. I want to know why a premiere revolutionary journalist would settle for a senile existence of rocking chair meditation and bird watching in Algeria. Your former readers demand an answer; they want to know why you’ve turned your back to the Struggle."

"You mean ‘how many pieces of silver did I get?’" Verlaine said ironically. "It’s been fourteen years since the editors of Running Dog have heard from me. Why has it taken over a decade for them to finally ask me these questions?"
"Maybe they were afraid of what you would say," Jean said angrily. "Maybe they believed the rumors of your seduction...."

"And if I were seduced, what of it?" Verlaine said, looking at the young journalist with a combination of mirth and sadness on his face. His words pained Jean. It wasn’t hard to deduce that he had once been a role model of this young man. He knew Jean was waiting for words to take effect on him. He began to realize how impatient he was with old people. The elder journalist’s elusiveness was beginning to irritate him. Verlaine sensed the need to break the tension with a constructive explanation. Jean’s anger was becoming evident.

"I’ll tell you how I lost my enthusiasm for the Struggle, Jean. I’ll tell you why I don’t believe in politics anymore. My apostasy is reasonable; it was inevitable, in fact. You’ll find that I’m far more honest than those editors you work for in Paris. They can tell you the same things I’m telling you, yet they’ll continue with their vain and useless editorials...."

"I’m waiting, Monsieur Verlaine."

"We’re all waiting, Jean."  

"In ’57, I was covering the Algerian nationalist uprising from Oran. Running Dog wanted me to find and interview the movement’s leaders for propaganda purposes. Crushing the last vestiges of French colonialism had become an obsession with the editors. A worthy obsession, mind you, but an obsession nonetheless. The Stoic in me resents obsession. No cause is worth it...."

"Do you believe in anything, Verlaine?"

"Yes, but only if I’m free to forget it after believing it."

"I suspect that these nonsensical answers of yours are indicative of the explanation to follow. Continue your story; I think I can guess its ending."

"Then you’re far cleverer than I am. Maybe you should take notes just in case I say something that hasn’t occurred to you already," Verlaine said caustically. Jean resisted the temptation to further ridicule Verlaine for his sarcasm. There would be ample opportunity for dispassionate criticism of the old man in Running Dog.

"When I finally located Ahmed Jiliaun, he was recuperating from an attempt on his life by an agent of a hostile colonial power north of us. But Ahmed had blood on his hands too. He smiled a lot and vowed the blood would continue to flow from El Golea to Havre and Versailles, if necessary, to ensure Algerian independence. He was certainly bleeding the Fourth Republic dry."

But there was the problem of the 1,500,000 French settlers who didn’t want to give up their beach front property in North Africa. They were putting their hope in some general named de Gaulle. France had suffered too many humiliations in one decade, they thought, to ‘give this one up’ too. Ahmed wasn’t worried. Every young Algerian would soon be adept at killing the imperialist French. Dien Bien Phu would pale in comparison to the Battle for Algiers, he boasted. Ahmed was looking forward to many bloody Sundays to come. But the best laid plans of generals and revolutionaries often fail to materialize. In ’59, de Gaulle proposed self-determination for Algeria; Ahmed was furious. The people he was trying to kill were furious. The only thing left to do was to engage in gratuitous violence now that their causes had been taken from them. I started to detect our hollowness at that point. Our ideological stances are a mask for our ‘Will to Savagery!!’ We’re more hypocritical than the Nazis, you know...."

"I wasn’t expecting such a blatantly revisionist interpretation of the Algerian people’s revolution, Monsieur Verlaine. I can only blush from embarrassment for you after hearing the motives you’ve attributed to Ahmed Jiliaun."

Verlaine smiled discreetly. He walked over to the window and watched the children playing tag in the streets. A poster of Vladimir Lenin looked benignly over his right shoulder like a patron saint. Jean noticed a copy of Chairman Mao’s red book on the top of a bookshelf. Sensing an opportunity to explore
"Well, Monsieur Verlaine..."
"Can't you figure it out yet, Jean?" Verlaine said, snapping to attention.
"You continued to write for Running Dog despite your growing disillusionment with revolutionary struggles," Jean said, pacing the room and looking at the posters and artifacts. "But why do you retain these symbols of a lost faith, these posters...?"

"I'm already dead, Jean... In my own small way I helped give birth to this amoral generation."

Verlaine cast a sly look at his Vietnminh rice bowl on the table. The bowl had a pair of chopsticks protruding from the center. Verlaine picked them up and inspected them as if they were museum pieces. Jean lit a cigarette and watched the old man suspiciously.

"I'm a collector of people's follies, Jean. Revolutionary memorabilia is a fascinating testimony to an oppressed man's ability to delude himself. Look at the faces of these heroes. Not a single revolution led by any of these men has resulted in a more just and humane society. But in all honesty, I expected it to. The people who gave their lives for these causes expected it to. But when the Sandinistas finally roll into the capital, Somoza simply gets a new name and party."

"Now you're rambling, Verlaine. Your politics are confused. How can you confuse the right and the left?"
"Because there isn't much difference between Al-Fattah and the U.S. Marines, young man. They both have their orders. All of them follow men with vested interests. Arafat will hold up in Tripoli, endangering the lives of Palestinian peoples without so much as an apology. Two thousand innocent civilians can die and he'll still be blind to the contradictions."
"Traitor! What would Franz Fanon say to this?" Jean said, reaching for Verlaine's copy of The Wretched of the Earth. "What should I do, Verlaine? Should I apostasize like you and comment cynically on people's movements?"
"He who is without sin should throw the first stone," Verlaine said mysteriously.

"You sound like an Egyptian politician or a Lebanese Christian, Verlaine. Such blabbering isn't worthy of you. Tell me, are you working for Israel now?"
"Not as long as Argentina can buy rifles made in Jerusalem, Jean."
"So, you do draw the lines as to how far right you'll drift," Jean said optimistically. "Maybe there's still hope."
"You're an idealist, Jean. I've found that idealists are the ones who end up doing the most killing."
"You're pathetic, Verlaine."

"Everyone seems to have his own King David Hotel he wants to blow up," the elder journalist said with amusement, but there was a trace of self-mockery in his voice. "There's one more story I want to tell you, Jean, then you can leave and write your attack if you want."
"I'm listening..."
"In late '68 I was covering the latest upheaval in Italian politics for Running Dog. The editors wanted me to find and interview members of the Red Brigades who were in the planning stages of a campaign of terror the likes of which Italy had never seen. Using my contact, I was able to find the main cell of the group. I stumbled upon the plan to kidnap the five-year-old daughter of the new President. The plan succeeded. Consequently, I was faced with the ultimate dilemma. One morning I managed to be alone with one of her captors. The little girl had been bound and gagged like an animal. I pitied her, the blissfully ignorant victim of all the madness of the adult world. I shot the terrorist in the back and spirited the child to freedom. The day I pulled the trigger was the last day of my journalistic career."
"Verlaine watched the door close behind him. Standing at the window, he took a long drag on his cigarette. "You know I can't print that, Verlaine. You'd be a dead man in a matter of hours."
"I've already dead, Jean. The left bank baby boom is over. There isn't even an appeal to rational politics anymore. In my own small way I helped give birth to this amoral generation. I'm dead because my children are dead."

"In your despair, have you ever contemplated suicide, Verlaine?"
"What a strange question, Jean. After I killed Pirandello, I was overwhelmed by the knowledge of the sanctity of human life, including the lives of terrorists. I decided to return to Algeria, the scene of my first awakening, to celebrate the final severing of my ties with the French Left. For fourteen years, I've been sitting here, waiting for your questions. Now that you've come, I realize that you'll never understand me, and neither will your reading public," Verlaine said sadly. He poured a steady stream of wine into an empty glass. "I have so much to say to you people on the continent, and so little time to say it..."

Jean sighed. He put his cigarette out and stuck the butt in his pocket. He grabbed his coat and slung it over his shoulder. "Perhaps you're right, Monsieur Verlaine. There is more here than can be conveyed in one article. I'll come back tomorrow and listen to your story again. Hopefully you'll listen to mine as well," Jean headed for the door. "We have much to talk about, Monsieur Verlaine. Paris will read about you and learn from your error," Jean said, stepping into the hallway. "We are two of a kind; I want you to see that. Au revoir."

Verlaine watched the door close behind him. Standing at the window, he watched the young Parisian walk down the street into the crowd of the marketplace.

"He'll never understand," Verlaine said sadly. "He'll have to see himself...."
Apple on Chair and Tennis Shoes  Feb. 15, 1982
Uncle's Farm

Gophers? They’re pests—
Snare ’em, drown ’em,
Swing ’em by their tails
Onto fence-posts.

Crows? Shoot ’em and bag ’em,
Pepper the bag.

Wing ’em and watch ’em
Hop
Hop
Hop, and
Bang—into the dirt,
Beady eyes dusty.
Snakes wriggle
and dance,
Bloody
When little hands drop
Big rocks.

Barn-swallows
Dart and dive
Better in air than their chicks—
Flap
Paddle
Flap
Paddle—
Glurp
In water.

It’s o.k.—
Uncle says they’re
Pests.
(But don’t tell him about the Barn-swallows—
He likes ’em.)

—Phil Vriend
"My faith and art are not independent of each other; rather, my art arises from my faith. Even though I don't use explicitly Christian images or symbols, my work is still inspired by God's creation.

"Art may not be as practical as business or mechanics, but, among other things, it revitalizes, energizes, helps us to celebrate or to relax. It decorates our environments, it teaches, and gives joy.

"I realized that my art is extremely integrated with my life. I like to be surrounded by art. It is not just something I do for a certain number of hours in my studio. I create everywhere.

"I am not interested in copying nature as accurately as possible. I am not mainly interested in expressing my emotions, even though I often find artistic activity very relaxing, enjoyable, and therapeutic. I am also not mainly interested in creating objects which autonomous of me and meant exclusively for aesthetic contemplation in a museum or gallery."
by Shannon Senti VanHemert

The grandfather clock just bonged nine times. As I stare at the lights of the tree, his words echo through my brain "...liberal...liberal...."

"My, you're getting liberal."

I didn't move from the stool. What did he expect? He realized it was time for me to go, he watched me leave, and he turned back to his life. Does he expect me to come back unchanged? Again the echo:

"Better get ready for church."

"I'm not going."

"My, you're getting liberal."

Was he just waiting for something to pounce on? Watching with shrewd eyes for an indication to prove his fears? Waiting for a behavior, an opinion, or an action that he could grab, hold up, and shake? "See, see? My daughter has left my house, and this is the result. Four months gone from under my roof and see what happens? She starts to question my values! Not go to church?!"

"It's 5:10. Better get ready for church."

"I'm not going."

"My, you're getting liberal."

"Why should I go?"

"This service is to look back over the past year and thank God for the blessings He's given us."

Who does he think he's kidding? "I'm not thankful for the past year."

He sat in silence. I didn't need to explain. Oh God, can he sit in church tonight in his stiff suit, in the wooden pew, listening to the pastor, and really thank and praise You for the hell we've been living in since February? Should I put on a mask and go as a hypocrite to the Lord? Dad, Mom, and the boys are at church.

I'm in the living room waiting for midnight.

by Alan Brander

Sitting in church on a Sunday morning. Sitting and hearing the choir sing. See how we sit in military fashion, each person concentrating on his own thing. Well, here comes the minister from out of the back room. Stand, everyone, and let us sing.

All of the rituals are now finished, and we are waiting for the pastor's prayer, trying to listen to what he is saying, knowing that our hearts aren't really there.

The "amen" sounds and the sermon begins; the eerie silence now sets in. I sit in anger, glancing around me, getting upset at what I see. A Sunday morning metamorphosis: two hundred and one holy fronts. They'll change back tomorrow, just wait and see. Another metamorphosis, only this one the pastor won't see. Still I sit here and go through the motions with all these Sunday morning saints in personal devotion.

I grit my teeth in anger as tears fill my eyes. I tilt my head toward heaven and hope God hears my silent cries. But where is the problem? It's not with them. The hypocrite I hate the most in this fancy three-piece sea, the one that is tormenting me the most, is no one but me.
To a Sparrow Trapped in a Henhouse at Night

You batter your wings harshly against the dark walls, the dust a reminder of the day; the light now fresh in your eyes is strong, and you blink, with the same fear as that of a baby not yet walking. You collide with walls, silently trying to force your universe to expand. You weave through the air clumsily above the heated murmuring of the hens, and as I watch you search for the dark outside the shadows, you falter, then plunge between boards, gone but soon to come again. So in your final course of futility you find the stars and moon, framed in wire and branches, and you swoop to grasp in a second the meaning of the face that shone and frowned and disappeared.

—Dave Shaw

Palos Heights

I cannot make the subtle, slow return
From where I rest, the Palos Heights above
The dirt, the town that passes the whitest glove,
Where nothing but the leaves is let to burn,
Or fly, or die, where I can see and learn
How winds blow us who don't have plastic parts
Or guarantees, but only beating hearts
That pump this sappy red stuff. I will discern
The dirtiness of life—you'd sanitize
It if you found it in your home—while on
A branch a leaf turns brown and dies,
It's blown upon a neat, impeccable lawn
Against its will, and it doesn't realize
The wind is placing it before my eyes.

—Keith DeRose
Keith DeRose's "Found in a Vacant Lot" won third place in the Good Groceries Poetry Contest.

Found in a Vacant Lot
an old discarded drinking straw
with red and white stripes, spit
out on the path, shredded
gnarled and bit
down on, gnawed
by molars, poked
by incisors,
bleeding mud
out one end,
a crumpled up white kleenex
with splatters of dried blood, tucked
carefully under a hubcap, one corner
twisted into a ball and stuck
up a bloody nostril, used
til the outpouring
ceased, then
hid like a piece of
evidence,
a white cat with string tied around
front paws drawing blood, laid
out in the weeds, covered
by flies, neck frayed
open by a knife,
still, yet frantic,
reeking, and so
difficult
to look at . . .
a once pretty little girl
in red and white dress, draped
—Keith DeRose

Tom VanMilligen's untitled poem was awarded an honorable mention in the Good Groceries Poetry Contest.

A blue fluid stone in this midday darkness
pressed his hands over the flat nail heads
drives the thorns into his skull
and would crack his ribs were they not protected.
This stone contains me, who scowls
at the clash of blood and blues
but grins self-contentedly at the purple.
As the sun reappears, the yellow
dissolves all to transparency.
His body falls limp in death,
the arms now free to gather
me to him
do not for three days
while I think on the vacuum.
—Tom VanMilligen
The Calvin Klein Bottle Kit

by Jack Snoeyink and Pam Vermeer

A couple of the aspiring young topologists from Professor Venema's general topology class got together one day and decided that someone (we) ought to share some of our favorite quotient spaces with the rest of the student body. Notice that I did not say topography, the study and mapping of land contours. According to the college catalog, general topology covers topological spaces, separation properties and connectivity, continuous mappings, homeomorphisms. . . Don't let the technical terms scare you; I'm using a math-to-English dictionary, so this article should be readable.

The first quotient space we'd like to present is the moebius strip—a band with one side and one edge. You can even make one yourself if you cut the strips from the margins of this article and glue or tape them into one long strip by matching the A's and B's. Then give this strip a half twist and connect it so the C's and D's are matching (see fig. 1). To convince yourself that this thing has only one side, find a pencil and draw a continuous line down the middle of the band as shown in

Figure 1
Figure 2. This line covers "both sides" of the strip, so there really is only one side. One of the interesting properties of the Moebius strip can be discovered if you cut the strip in half along the line you have just drawn. If you think you now know how to make other Moebius strips, go ahead and cut this one; it will become a band with two twists rather than two separate bands.

If you take two Moebius strips, one twisted clockwise and one counterclockwise, and glue them together at the edge you will form another quotient space called a Klein bottle, a closed surface with no inside or outside. Figure 3 is an attempt at drawing a two-dimensional representation of a Klein bottle, and if you look in the showcase by the math offices you can find a three-dimensional representation. However, these representations do not do it justice. To rectify this situation, we have included a genuine Calvin Klein bottle kit; simply cut out this article and fold it so the A's, B's, C's and D's match as before.

Note: Professor Venema can supply rigorous proof that a Klein bottle cannot be embedded in $\mathbb{R}^3$.  

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Figure 2

Figure 3
Prestigious Mold
The knowledge accumulates as a pool of gold
But, as it is joylessly released, it turns to mold.
Prestige is confused with a license to destroy
As the father feeds mold to his little boy.
—David Holtrop

Waiting for the Wine
Clean the chalk board—
Get the alcohol out of the blood.
Comfort the wounded—
Drain out the flood.
Let the rain clean the street.
Let time dry the bone.
Fall in love tomorrow,
But today, you're all alone.
—David Holtrop
High Tech

I don't need electricity
(Save that which lights my light)
To help me as I write.
Paper and ink and the plinkity-plink
Of my Royal work fine; I think
"Word processors and electrics,
That's the way I go.
I've got this and I've got that;
State of the Art you know.
I can do this by pushing a key,
It even spells the words for me.
Speaking of words, I'll have you know
With this little beaut,
They just flow and flow."
I guess that I'm old-fashioned,
At least that's your reaction.
But I'll just sit and plunk,
On my old piece of junk,
And smile;
While you can't find a plug.

—Steve VanRees
Quenched

Who is this guy who waves his hands over his head, 
closes his eyes and 
sings in tongues?

Why can’t he sit on the wooden pew, 
hold a hymnal and 
bow in silence?

He might as well run through the street, 
wave his arms and 
shout “Praise God!”

Thank God he’s surrounded by this plaster Church.

—Ellen DeHaan
Trick or Treat
The beggars came tonight—
to leering faces and painted mouths,
twisting into evil grins
as small hands snatched and
clawed at my tid-bit
without a word of thanks
We sat at the table—
bored faces and closed eyes,
muttering oaths of admiration
to hurry the blessing
the food is getting cold
—Dan Lorenz

To Dave T.
The smell of dry grass
and hot summertime air
drifts past on a Sunday afternoon breeze
"Man is like grass that withers away"
the preacher said.
"To the dust he shall return."
She idly picked the grass
some green, some brown,
and toyed with it in hands
blackened by the dirt.
There was no logic,
no definite purpose, no reason
for one blade of grass to die
And not another.
"The Lord works in mysterious ways"
the preacher said.
"It is not for man to question why."
She turned her hand,
watched the grass drop and
drift past on a Sunday afternoon breeze.
—C. Bremmer
Red
Red shuffles, head bent,
He pokes at faded Hershey wrappers
With laceless shoes, then
Picks up a shard of a mirror and
Reflects the sunlight into his hand.
He closes his fist, frowns when the ray escapes.
He picks up a Coke can, drops a pebble into it,
Shakes it around and smiles emptily.
He ambles into the park,
Stoops and rescues a butt
From beneath a picnic table,
Holds it close, squints, nods, and
Lights it with shaky hands,
Closes his eyes as he inhales deeply, then
Red shuffles back to Riverside Terrace.
—Helena Klein Nibbelink

landscape
the
mountain
looms
space
to
time
coiled
tight
in
shacks
leaning
windward
while
shadow
tells
the
sun
—Lambert VanPoolen
The following statements (actually, most of them were sentence fragments when they arrived in the Dialogue office) were submitted by Professor J. H. Timmerman as answers to last month's trivia contest. Unfortunately, because some of these educated guesses were a bit off the mark, Dialogue can't award Professor Timmerman the grand prize of an all-expense-paid trip to the Northwest Territories. However, Dialogue does reward Professor Timmerman with a second-semester sabbatical for his effort.

1. Who was Jethro Tull?
   Jethro Tull was a singer, Mrs. Tull's son.
2. Why is the Chicago National League baseball team called the "Cubs"?
   The Bears were first, of course.
3. Who made a boat out of gopher wood?
   Noah did.
4. What important roles did Mickey Mouse and Rover play in World War II?
   They sold war bonds.
5. Herclitus was the ancient (about 500 B.C.) Greek philosopher who stated, "Everything is in flux." What was he lying in when he died?
   He was lying in merds (i.e. manure).
6. Why did Andrew Jackson, in 1829, spend the first night of his presidency in a hotel and not in the White House?
   He did so because his girlfriend, Polly Anna, lived there.
7. Who invented dynamite?
   Dinah Shore's midget daughter did.
8. How did President Martin VanBuren bring "O.K." into the English language?
   He didn't, but Masterson did with Wyatt Earp.
9. When and where was the Boston Cabbage Rebellion?
   This rebellion took place during the baked bean famine of 1836.
10. Which American president proclaimed, "No man should have to clean up after another man's dog"?
    Each one did, with only subtle changes.

Sue Meppelink gave the following answers to the same trivia questions. Sue also does not win the grand prize because she made up the contest questions.

1. Jethro Tull was a major 19th century innovator in Britain. It is not known whether or not he played the flute.
2. Originally, the name of the team was the White Stockings. In 1890, the Player's League was formed and many of the players on the White Sox left to join the new league. The manager, Adrian Anson, was forced to hire a bunch of inexperienced rookies who were nicknamed the colts, babes, and cubs for their lack of skill. The present-day Cubs are upholding the tradition well.
3. Noah. (Genesis 6:14, King James Version)
4. Mickey Mouse was the password for the D-Day invasion of Europe (June 6, 1944). Rover was the code name for Eleanor Roosevelt. "Rover" was in reference to her frequent traveling for the wheelchair-bound president, not her personal appearance.
5. Heracleitus was lying in a pile of dung, which was supposed to cure the disease which ailed him. Ironically, Heracleitus was nicknamed "The Weeping Philosopher" because of the hopelessness of his view of life.
6. Andrew Jackson did not spend his first night as President in the White House because his friends were the originators of the term "party hearty." They turned the inaugural party into a drunken brawl, breaking china and crystal, crashing through windows, tearing down wall hangings, and fighting. The president had to be surrounded by his friends to avoid bodily harm and escaped out the back door.
7. Alfred Nobel, of the Nobel Peace Prize, invented dynamite. He meant dynamite to be used for good and later regretted ever inventing it.
8. President VanBuren originated "O.K." by being born in Kinderhoek, New York. Subsequently, his nickname was "Old Kinderhoek" (cute huh?), which was used as a political slogan and shortened to "O.K."
9. The Rotten Cabbage Rebellion took place in 1807 at Harvard College. The revolt was in response to the administration repeatedly ignoring the students' appeals for better food in the dining hall. One day they could eat no more and, led by the wise seniors, left the hall during dinner. For this outrageous action, those who did not apologize were expelled.
10. The congenial Jerry Ford first said, "No man should have to clean up after another man's dog." The incident occurred shortly after the famous Grand Rapidian's inauguration at a family dinner in which Ford's golden retriever, Liberty, exercised her constitutional rights on the rug. As a White House steward rushed to clean up the mess, Ford grabbed a towel out of the man's hand, uttered his line, proceeded to do the task himself, and endeared himself in the hearts of waiters and maids everywhere.