Dialogue
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COVER: "Beginnings"—A Few Thoughts in Passing
Religion professor Gordon Spykman tackles the creationism vs. evolutionism debate and proposes a "timely" third way to view the beginning of our world.

FEATURE: From Hitler Youth to American Cowboy
Senior David Williams collaborates with German professor Cornelius Hegewald to describe Dr. Hegewald’s youth in Nazi Germany and his fascination with the dream that would become his home—America.

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[the athletic ladies who live in manly souls]
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It's embarrassing to be apolitical at Calvin these days. One is expected to choose the "left" side or the "right" side and vehemently defend one side or another. Straddling the fence between the two sides is regarded as an ignoble, apathetic cop-out: it's pulling an adult Charlie Brown act. To be apolitical seems as impossible and as downright damnable as being atheistic. Yet apolitical I am.

I first noticed this distressing lack of political consciousness last year on election day. Acquaintances of mine were dressed all in black; they were mourning the imminent second term of Ronald Reagan. I couldn't quite comprehend the depth of emotion behind their theatrical protest. About the same time last year, I began to hear, see, smell, and taste (even apoliticians can exaggerate) Nicaragua. When Mr. Wykstra's article concerning Nicaragua appeared in Dialogue (vol. 17 no. 2), I thought it would establish for me, unequivocably, the right way to think. Instead, it left me back at square one—undecided and perplexed. Thereafter I tried half-heartedly to keep up with the issue, but whenever I'd skim a few dry paragraphs of a Time article on Nicaragua, I'd give up and flip to the back where the book reviews are located.

Even a course in international politics mainly resulted in uncovering my already inherent pacifistic tendencies. It also taught me how vulnerable I was to allowing others—be they parents or professors—to decide political issues for me. Having developed a critical and opinionated response to literature, I know what it is to know—to begin to really understand something enough to think on one's own. My ignorance of politics exasperated me, mainly because my continual efforts to stimulate my political salivary glands always ended up in dry defeat. Finally, I admitted to an English professor that I couldn't get excited about politics at all. The professor looked at me, laughed, and in a conspiratorial voice said, "I can't either."

Happily, being apolitical does not mean being apoetical. Not that politics and poetics need be separated, but for every political poet like Allen Ginsberg there is bound to be an apolitical author like Jane Austen. Yet activists will ask, what good does the apolitical writer like me achieve, since she is not signing apartheid petitions nor picketing abortion clinics? In "Hot-blooded," a story neither explicitly political nor overtly Christian but downright pre-puberty physical, I tried to convey the something other, be it sexual or spiritual or—more likely—some mixture of the two, that lurks, unseen and almost unnoticed, in all our lives. If in my fiction writing I help readers uncover the souls in their designer-dressed bodies, I've achieved my goal. That, I confess, is my main concern, but as I write to promote something as ineffable as "soul consciousness," I promise to take time to learn about political issues and to print those articles in Dialogue which are designed to raise political consciousness. Then—who knows? If I try hard enough, I may become a flaming (expletive deleted) yet.
Shadows of Commitment
Janee Luchtenburg
Martin Luther had a feisty way with words. To the overly curious, speculative question, "And what was God doing before He began to create the world?" he responded, "Creating a hell for people who ask such questions!"

What a marvelously crass bit of holy satire! Or was it spiritual naughtiness? In self-defense, Luther would likely resort to his other shocking proverb: If you must sin, then "sin boldly!" He seldom minced his words. Withholding judgment for now on his sanctified sarcasm, what are we to make of Luther’s caustic rejoinder? Quite simply this: it was clearly to the point.

Luther Was Right

For when the Bible opens with the words, "In the beginning ..."—(see Genesis 1:1 and its parallel in John 1:1)—it means precisely what it says. This intensely abrupt lead-in signals a real and decisive starting point. It marks the very beginning of all beginnings. There is no infinite regression. This is as far back as we can go—to square one. We cannot probe the mystery which lies behind this originating Word. This point-of-departure circumscribes the horizon of all creaturely existence. To get off on the right foot, we must start where the Bible starts. There our restless, inquisitive minds must find their rest.

Luther was right. "Beginning"—this ultimate act of innovation was God’s primordial miracle. As the familiar anthem puts it:

It took a miracle to hang the world in space,
It took a miracle to set the stars in place . . .

Indeed, God is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2). But not the world. Creation is certainly "unto everlasting." But it is not "from everlasting." It has a definite beginning.

Definite Beginning

This ultimate beginning involved a radical change in divine activity.* In bringing the world into existence God was launching a totally new venture. He created "otherness." In doing so, God—the Father as Initiator, the Son as Mediator, the Spirit as Enabler—thrust himself into unprecedented outgoing relationships. He set over against himself a wholly new reality designed to image his glory. He appointed us, his crowning imagers, as his junior partners in covenant, as earth-keepers, stewards, custodians in creation, as his kingdom servants. All this was completely de novo. It has no antecedents. It is not a re-run of some earlier drama-flashback. Nothing like this had ever happened before. Nor will it ever repeated. This absolute genesis is the bottom line to a philosophical hypothesis about "the best of possible worlds." It is the only world we know. It alone is thinkable.

From the start the stakes were high—God exposed his goodwill to vulnerability. The risks were enormous—we now realize only too well. Give Christmas and Easter, the outcome now no longer in doubt. Nevertheless the awesome potentials of God’s introductory handiwork still await the final consummation. But from its inception this originating act meant things would never be the same again.

God knows all about this ultimate beginning. For He was there—I alone. And it was his doing. He alone knows "the end from the beginning For us, however, the beginning as well as the end are cloaked in mystery which only revelation can disclose. This beginning remains an undatable date. Yet this much we as Christic thinkers can say: whenever it took place, this fixed commencement to things stands forever firm as the unmovable ground and irrevocable starting-point for every learning in pulse. So, once again, Luther was right.

Creation Out of Nothing

This biblical emphasis on a definite beginning is reinforced by the idea of creatio ex nihilo (creation out of nothing). We search the Scriptures i
in for an explicit reference to this concept. Yet its truth is everywhere implied, woven integrally into the fable fabric of the biblical witness to the reaor and his creative acts. God’s world has an ineradicable starting-point. It has no pre-existence. The try thought of creatio ex nihilo is terribly baffling. It blows our minds. We simply cannot grasp the idea of something absolutely new—a reality without precursors. The more so if we resolve to conceive of something absolutely new initiating absolutely its own existence. We can only confess that the world has a relative beginning. That is, initially and ongoingly is God-related. In this sense creation as a relatively independent beginning and present status.

The doctrine of creatio ex nihilo serves as an insistent reminder that this beginning has no “before.” For before,” like “after,” is part of our me-conditioned creaturely vocabulary. Creation out of nothing is a miting concept. God’s primordial reating act has no roots that we can err out. Behind this ultimate beginning lies only the willing Word of God, given in and with and for the reaction. His fiat (“Let there be . . .”) establishes the parameters for all that is. Therein lies the boundary-line for all human inquiry. To pry further is to ransgress the law for human rationality (as Luther reminds us) or to engage in “idle speculation” (as Calvin says). His biblical “beginning” stands as an immovable “Stop” sign. Beyond it lies “no man’s land,” clearly marked “No trespassing.” Commenting on this intellectual road-block, H. Berkhof says: Here we stand before a wall. Existence cannot be traced back further . . . Out of nothing simply means: not out of anything (Christian Faith, pp. 152-154).

Creatio ex nihilo stresses the absolute sovereignty and unconditional freedom of the Creator in his relationship to all non-divine reality. He lends creation an existence distinct from his own, yet never autonomous. He grants his creatures a relative independence, yet ever dependent upon the holding and healing power of his Word. He enters into covenant, yet without infringing upon the otherness of the Creator/creature relationship. No analogia entis (analogy of being) exists between God and the world—no shared existence, whether in terms of being, time, rationality, or language. Of this creatio ex nihilo is a forceful reminder. Divine creativity stands in sharp contrast to the only kind of creativity we know, namely, creating something out of something else which is already there. We can therefore only reflect on the structures, functions, and processes of our life together in God’s world as we come to know them now. But we cannot delve into that original, ultimate act of beginning. At that point we must take Someone’s Word for it.

“Beginning” / “Beginnings”

The net effect of these reflections is not to de-emphasize the important, though limited role of human reason, but to contextualize it by re-empha-sizing the over-riding normativity of creational revelation. For revelation and rationality are not mutually exclusive. They in fact go hand in hand—the former being the very condition for the latter. Revelation is norm. Rationality is response. For rationality too is a creature. It is subject to the creation order, and accordingly incapable of transcending its creaturely limitations. Thus the biblical doctrine of creation accords reason its own uniquely proper place. This means that right thinking about origins is “at home” only within the secure environment of the creation order—that is, “reason within the bounds of revelation alone.”

The preceding discussion focused our attention on the meaning of that ultimate act of “beginning” recorded in the opening verse of Genesis—call it creatio prima (primary creation). Moving along now, we turn our attention to the follow-up drama of “beginnings” as it unfolds in the remainder of the first two chapters of Genesis—call it creatio secunda (secondary creation). The story of these “six days” has a direct bearing on the seemingly endless running encounter between creationism and evolutionism.

Creationism/Evolutionism

If only we could find a way to break this enervating deadlock! Far too many valuable human resources have been consumed by this raging conflict. The opposing camps appear to be no closer to a resolution today than when William Jennings Bryan faced Charles Darrow in the notorious 1925 “Monkey Trial.” Imagine what might...
be accomplished if the blood and sweat and tears expended in this continuing battle were devoted instead to fostering justice, peace, prosperity, and compassion in our troubled world! Could it be that both creationists and evolutionists* have locked themselves into a set of dubious assumptions, dilemmas, and methods which offer no promise of a happy outcome? For the way we address problems has a decisive impact upon the ensuing course of events. Wrong questions seldom yield right answers.

The fierce debate over origins is, of course, not insignificant. Much more is at stake than calculating the age of the earth or the length of the "days" in Genesis, looking for "missing links," reconstructing a fossil record, and ironing out scientific methods. The stalemate between evolutionism and creationism involves deeply religious choices concerning worldviews and life-vision, concerning God and man, concerning the destiny of the cosmos as well as its origin. What, for example, shall we say: "The earth is the Lord's"? Or "the earth is the lord"? How shall we account for the creation (dis)order? What does being human mean? The biblical doctrine of creation enlightens us not only about our beginnings, but also about our present calling and future hope. If we get "first things" wrong, "last things" will also turn out wrong, and our life all along the way as well.

Bible-believing Christians find their sympathies coming down quite naturally on the side of creationism. Yet a deeply disturbing feature of the creationist/evolutionist controversy is a frequent manhandling of the biblical text on both sides. Among evolutionists who reckon with Scripture this usually takes the form of accommodating the biblical message to the so-called "assured results of the scientific method." It is equally disconcerting, however, to find many defenders of the creationist position adopting similar methods. In the name of "scientific creationism" they fall into the trap of combating the opposition with its own weapons. And so the stage is set again and again for continuing confrontations between science and counter-science, evidence and counter-evidence, theory and counter-theory. In these encounters both parties often end up wrestling Scripture to their own ends. Thus the enigma thrusts itself upon us: two opposing parties, representing sharply conflicting views, yet each side seeking to bend the biblical narratives to its own advantage. At least one conclusion seems unavoidable: we are left with the hermeneutic question of how to read, understand, and interpret the Genesis record.

A Third Way
Suppose we now pronounce a plague on both these houses? Is there then an authentic third way to go? One which is not merely a blending of these two conflicting approaches, but a genuine and substantially different alternative? One which offers promise of bringing relief and healing in the midst of this agonizing dilemma? And one which shows signs of doing greater justice to the hermeneutic demands of the biblical story of origins?

To these many questions an affirmative answer is possible. It calls for a new departure.* For some time now such a proposal has been on the drawing board. In the heat of the more familiar battle, however, it has been largely overlooked. It involves a rethinking of the biblical idea of time. On this view, time functions as an integral element in the emerging creation order as recorded in the "six day" Genesis narrative. These beginnings arise not from an autonomous process of evolution, nor from a natural flow of events which God intercepts periodically by supernatural interventions. These beginnings represent an ordered succession of miraculous acts by the Creator. Running through this moving drama is a steady line of continuity and wholeness. Yet repeatedly there are also new impulses and innovative advances. Each new "day" marks the

*Overlooking for now the shades of differences within each school of thought.

*For the basic impetus leading to these reflections I am indebted to certain writings by Egbert Schuurman.
itiation of more fully opened-up sets
normed relationships for life in
od's world. As J.H. Diemer puts it:

Whatever appears in the course of
time always appears with certain
structures; potentially it already lies
enclosed within these (earlier) struc­
tures and cannot go beyond the
boundaries they set (Nature and
Miracle, p. 5).

Accordingly the "six days" of begin­
nings are not an index to spans-of­
time by which to calculate the age of
1e earth. They point rather to orche­
trated sets of developing life relation­
ships within the creation order.
The biblical view of time, as em­
odied in the Hebraic-Christian tradi­
ion, stands in sharp contrast to the
lotion of time among other ancient
peoples. Many pagan cultures held to
cyclical view of life. The world was
thought of as always there. It has no
beginning and no end. History is a
ceaseless cycle of ever-recurring
vents, an infinity of repetitions,
effecting the immutability of the
ods. In this way ancient peoples
ought to posit a certain constancy in
he menacing flux and flow of daily ex­
perience.
The biblical view is emphatically dif­
ferent. As an integral dimension of
eated reality, time too is a creature
of God's making. The movements of
time, which we measure out into
istorical periods, have a beginning
nd an ending, with countless
opping-off points along the way. It
linear and sequential. It brings with
it befores and afters. Each moment
contains something uniquely impor­tant and unrepeatable. It is prospec­
tive as well as retrospective. In the
words of Langdon Gilkey:

God, who is eternal, has created
time with a beginning and an end.
Time is thus finite, giving to each
moment the possibility of being
unique and unrepeatable. Time is,
moreover, "going somewhere":
from its beginning in creation it
moves toward its end or goal, and
its moments are meaningful because
they lead to this eternal goal (Maker
of Heaven and Earth, p. 249).

The ultimate origin of creation lies
in the "beginning" (Genesis 1:1). But
its condition then was still "waste and
void." From that point on it under­
went a process of "beginnings" (Genesis 1-2). The world-as-we-know
it emerged for the first at the close of
this creative process of "beginnings."
Then for the first, at the close of the
"six days," it appeared as a finished
product, ready to receive the divine
benediction, "Very good!" Time is an
integral concomitant of this creating
process. So what holds for the rest of
created reality also holds for time. Its
origin too lies in the "beginning." It
too underwent a process of "begin­
nings." Concurrent with all the rest,
it too is part and parcel of this un­
folding movement. It did not explode
upon the scene ready-made at the
"beginning." Rather, time as we ex­
perience it, well-ordered and fully
synchronized, also came forth for the
first at the close of the "six days."

From this point-of-view, the crucial
transition in the Genesis account from
"day six" to "day seven" serves to in­
dicate the crucial transition from time­
in-the-making to historical-time. Thus
time too has its pre-history. Time-as
we-know-it, as we mete it out on
calendars, clock-time, is of a qualita­
tively different order than that time­
in-the-making which emerged during
the era of "beginnings." What lan­
guage shall we borrow to express this
distinction? Perhaps this will do: Let
us call that primieval time creating­
time and our present time creational­
time. The former suggests how time
got to be the way it is. The latter
describes time as it now is.

Creating-time belongs to the world's
pre-history. Its movements are
measurable only by the six working
days on the divine agenda of "begin­
nings." It reflects the ordered fashion­
ing of the earth from its early "waste
and void" state to its climactic ap­
earance as a finished product,
deserving the divine stamp of ap­
proval. Time matured steadily across
that "six day" span, concurrent with
the full range of God's creating activi­
ity. During this phase of "beginnings"
it was still creating-time, not yet the
kind of calendar time by which we
now schedule our appointments and
number our years. It therefore eludes
all scientific and historical standards of
measurement. It cannot be recon­
structed into segments of creational­
time, whether long or short. For
cosmic time, temporal history as we
now reckon it, emerged fully with the
"seventh day," which is a kind of

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ongoing sabbath continuing onward into the new creation. Creating-time anticipates that creational-time which now constitutes the framework for our daily lives and scientific enterprises. But it operated on a different wavelength.

Augustine already wrestled with this mystery. Time, he says, is creaturam: it is given along with God’s creating acts. The cosmos came into being not in tempore (in time), but cum tempore (along with time). We are not to think of time as instantaneously created as the very first and fully developed reality into which God then brought forth successively all subsequent creatures. It was not an all-at-once and once-for-all-time ultraoriginal act, serving as a ready-made temporal container into which God then proceeded to deposit one new spatial creature after another. Creating-time is time-in-the-making. Like every other creature, it participated in the ordering process of “beginnings.” Creational-time came to its own on the “sixth day.”

Listen again to J.H. Diemer:

. . . The days cannot be measured by any standard. Each day is the beginning of the basic order of a new reality of creatures . . . Thus in the six days the creation order, without which a world history is impossible, is placed in time. In the account of creation this future history is anticipated (Nature and Miracle, p. 13).

Implications
The implications of this view on time are clear, though perhaps unsettling. Those accustomed to conventional methods of conducting the creationist/evolutionist debate may even find them intimidating, if not downright revolutionary. For, on this view, we now encounter a second “Stop” sign. The idea of creating-time means that for our understanding of “beginnings” we are wholly dependent upon revelation. The Genesis record is then our sole source of knowledge concerning the creating acts of God. For we have no scientific tools of analysis capable of reaching back that far. The “sixth day” marks a cut-off point for theoretical inquiry. Note once more what J.H. Diemer says:

The miracle of creation reveals itself in the spontaneity with which new types of creatures appear. We can speak of a miracle here because something new arises time and again; new structures appear which cannot be reduced to what came earlier. Scripture is our guide here. It speaks of the miraculous works of God, the great things which human thought cannot fathom (Nature and Miracle, p. 11).

Accordingly, historical and scientific methods apply only to creational-time. They cannot handle creating-time. Cosmogony (a study of the “beginnings” of the world) must then be judged a futile undertaking. But this is no great loss. We are then freed up to concentrate on cosmology (a study of the cosmos within the framework of creational-time). That gives us more than enough to go on, to live by, and to work with.

The impossibility of giving a scientific account of these “beginnings” is further reinforced by recognizing that the record of God’s creating acts is not couched in scientifically qualified language. This, it seems, is often overlooked by creationists (appealing to it as though it were) as well as evolutionists (discrediting it as though it were). Genesis is indeed a wholly trustworthy witness to real events, though cast into the practical, commonsense concepts familiar to its first recipients, the people of Israel. Yet it recounts mighty acts of God which lie outside of our time zone. It therefore precludes all scientific investigation into how things fell into place. For there are no unbroken logical (including theological) lines of analytical continuity leading back to these “beginnings,” let alone to the “beginning.” The line of demarcation between the “six days” of creating-time and the “seventh day” of ongoing creational-time stands as an unbridgeable barrier. There the principle of uniformitarianism meets its dead-end. No scientific method can circumvent this point of historical beginning. What lies beyond is accessible only by revelation. Ultimate temporal retrogression is therefore impossible.

On this view, moreover, all our probings into “the first five seconds” can only be billed as a playful and speculative enterprise. This perspective also has the effect of casting a mantle of silence over the “big bang” theory of origins. For every science,
ology too, must learn to live within a fixed horizon of creational-time. This view of created reality is not a vious maneuver concocted to escape knotty problems. Nor does it undercut the scientific enterprise. But does call for shifting some priorities om the past to the present and the future. This need not be experienced as a restriction. It can in fact have a generative effect, relieving us of the irden of an endless, obsessive pursuit of "beginnings" all the way back, that were possible, to the very beginnings." On these questions of ultimate and penultimate origins this new elicits a deeper reliance on revelation, together with a kind of rudent ignorance akin to the Biblical idea of wisdom. Instead of depleting our resources restlessly and incessantly on retrospective research, we can ren channel them more beneficially to avenues of present service.

Illustrated by Sandy Hoeks

Dialogue encourages response to Dr. spykman’s article either in a letter to the editor or a short article. Responses must be sent to the Dialogue office by January 8.
World War II never should have happened; Adolf Hitler never should have come to power. But the death of President Von Hindenburg and Hitler’s election as Chancellor in 1933 gave Hitler the opportunity to convince the Germans to give him supremacy as Fuhrer. When no one prevented Hitler from assuming this role, the world was stunned. Within the blink of an eye, Adolf Hitler, a forceful and charismatic speaker, had seized power in Germany. He now had a total and most deadly control.

These dramatic events influenced every German’s life to some degree or other. However, being so young made my experience of Hitler’s rule one of a much different depth and character.

I was four years old and loved my life at home. My family was extremely close, which influenced me greatly. The solitude of home-life, quiet music playing in the background, and the comfort of family and friends made my home environment one that I will always remember. But despite our peaceful and serene life in Leipzig during the twenties, Germany as a nation experienced tumultuous times.

Germany’s condition at this time was pathetic. The government was in chaos, and unemployment soared among the people. With over twenty-eight political parties to choose from, politics was wide open. Since education was scarce, the flashiest uniforms and loudest voices were usually the deciding factors when Germans voted for their leaders. Clearly, the misery of the nation was at an all-time high.

In 1933, the Nazi party under Hitler began to make drastic changes. Hitler decided the people had suffered enough and it was time for reform. Hitler, taking a popular stance with the people, outlawed old laws and nullified the Versailles Treaty. The Nazis constantly told and showed the people that they were “the good guys” who were going to help them. The fact is, they actually did create a better life for many Germans, which was extremely important to the people. The people had been miserable, but now Hitler had come as their savior to make their lives worth living again.

In my youth, the Wild West of America and all that it portrayed captured my imagination. My friends and I constantly played cowboys and Indians. Everything seemed so extravagant in America, and we longed to see that country someday. Despite the horrors of the years that followed, the fond memories of my youth were to linger in my mind and bring me happiness.

My first horror was an inevitable and unavoidable result of growing up under Hitler: becoming a Hitler Youth at the age of ten. It was a long process, which was portrayed as glorious, and it involved all young boys. My parents had to buy me a pair of black shorts, a black tie, and a brown shirt, and other uniforms as well. Upon being accepted, I received a little dagger with the official Swastika emblem to place on my belt. Then I was allowed to choose my military unit, and I chose the drum and bugle corps. All the activity boiled down to one thing: to “get your blood flowing” for the Nazi party.

The motto which all Hitler Youths were required to memorize went something like this: “I am nothing, but my people are every-
Individuality was minimized, and peer pressure from every direction kept you in line. We learned the philosophy of the Nazi party, sang songs, and we were made aware of famous people who were suddenly turning to Nazism. Our Saturdays were occupied with age rallies. Respected men would come in encouraging us in our activities as Hitler Youths. Rifle practice followed by arches through Leipzig completed our activities of the day. Everything was both official and authoritative. It was all so contrary to my upbringing that I despised each and every minute. My blood was flowing all right, but all in contempt of my newly disrupted life. What could I do? Even though the noises and large crowds weren't for me, fear was the deadly weapon that inculcated our hearts and minds.

Propaganda was the key. Josef Goebbels, a genius in his trade, was highly effective as Hitler's minister of propaganda. Everywhere you looked there was propaganda. Posters bounded as Goebbels used his techniques to portray exactly what Hitler wanted to portray: that nothing was going wrong. The propaganda told the people everything they wanted to hear, gave them everything they wanted to have, and showed them everything they wanted to see. It was all-out, non-stop propaganda, twenty-four hours a day!

By April of 1945 the allied armies had rossed into Germany, and I, at the age of fifteen, and Rolf, my fourteen-year-old buddy, were drafted to the Reichsarbeitsdienst, or working unit, and trained for military purposes. We were trained to use a rifle and a bazuka, and we also learned how to throw a hand grenade.
Close to the end of April, our unit was ordered
to march to Berlin to defend it against the Rus­
sian army. The weapons we received for this
task were for the most part non-functional; I ,
didn’t even receive any ammunition for my
old Belgian carabine.

Rolf and I were typical teenagers: our limbs
moved somewhat awkwardly, and we were a
bit on the skinny side. I don’t remember the,
name of the place where our basic training
camp was located, but it must have been
located straight north of Leipzig, not far away
from Wittenberg, Martin Luther’s town. The
American and Russian armies were to meet
approximately sixty miles southeast of here,
at Torgau, on April 25, 1945.

Our march toward Berlin was constantly in­
terrupted by American fighter planes. They
seemed to be everywhere. They came down
shooting and went up shooting. On one occa-
sion when the American fighters attacked, Rolf
and I were separated from our unit as we were
looking for cover. Suddenly we found
ourselves alone. When I reflect upon this time,
I wonder what made us proceed in the way
we did. We were alone in a wooded area
without weapons, food, or drink. We did not
know where we were; we had no map to
determine in which direction to turn. Some
people might say that common sense or luck
made us move on the way we did. However,
today I am sure that God guided our steps,
even though we did not know Him at that
time.

During the night we found a hospital, where
a nun opened the door and let us in. More
German soldiers came later, some of them
wounded badly. Even today after forty years,
I see those men. One being supported by tw
comrades had half his face shot off. Another
in terrible pain, was extremely thirsty, but h
was not permitted to receive any wate
because he had been shot in his stomach.

One April night in 1945 there was som
very sad music on the radio—funer
music. Then came the announcement that
Adolf Hitler had given his life as a soldier fo
his German people and his German father
land. We know today that this was a big lie
He did not die a hero’s death; he had com
mitted suicide. I don’t think this news affecte
us much. What really made us sit up and tak
note happened a little later. The radio wen
dead. Then suddenly there was the swingin
music of the big bands. How delighted w
were to hear these new sounds! Obviously th
Americans had taken over the radio station
Soon thereafter we heard that the wounded
of this hospital were to be moved to th
American lines. We found out that th
American forces were at the other side of th
Elbe river not far from us. We soon followed
the wounded, and probably just in the nick o
time. The Stalinorgans, as we called the Rus
sian rocket launchers, could clearly be hear
now. As we arrived at the embankment of th
river, we noticed across the river seemingly
hundreds of American tanks. Luckily, they
were not shooting anymore, and the American
soldiers were just standing or sitting around.

There was a huge bridge, but it was
destroyed. There seemed to be a sea of Ger
man soldiers not knowing what to do. Rolf and
I had no problem. We knew what we wanted
do—we wanted to get across to the Americans. We found that others were crossing the bridge on a narrow path which had been constructed upon the ruins of this huge bridge. We too began crossing the destroyed bridge. It was May 5, 1945, the day we would be meeting the Americans face to face. After we walked into the American camp, we were taken as prisoners of war and brought to a big open meadow interrupted here and

"Hate and destruction to our enemies; liberty, rights, and bread to our people." Hitler Youth march in the background, while a soldier fights off the four enemies of Judaism, Capitalism, Bolshevism, and Plutocracy.
Wir brechen Englands Tyrannen!

Pg.
spricht über dieses Thema am
in
mit gleichzeitiger Vorführung von

87 Lichtbildern

1941

Eintritt: Rpf. Ortgruppe der NSDAP.
There by high radio towers. There, at a former German navy radio installation, we were held as prisoners. Often people ask how the Americans treated us as prisoners of war. Basically, we did not really see all that much of our captors. The American soldiers and their officers occupied the only building on the vast radio installation. We saw them drive up in their trucks and jeeps. I think it is since that time that I have always liked jeeps. It is hard, though, to decide whether I really liked the jeeps or was impressed by the way the American soldiers were driving them. There was a great casualness about these men and their vehicles which was so completely different from the atmosphere I had been exposed to during my time in the German army. These men appeared to drive with the greatest of ease while dangling one foot outside their vehicles. They leaned back in their seats as if they were sitting in an easy chair while they controlled the steering-wheel with one hand. The other hand was busy holding a cigarette.

At first we could not figure out whether there were any ranks among these soldiers because they all seemed to wear the same uniforms. Then we found out that the little unobtrusive bars and stars on their shirt collars and helmets actually indicated rank. What a surprise! We were so used to recognizing our officers by their differently cut uniforms, which were usually trimmed and decorated with much silver, gold, and sometimes red.

The days in the camp were left to our own designs. There was no German officer visible. I liked this much better than my experience months later under English command, which left the German officers in charge. There were no problems except those of a physical nature, since I had no shelter except the water-repellent, lined winter jacket I had on. The contrast between our appearance and that of the American units must have been a striking one. They looked neat, well-fed, and clean; in fact, they looked as if a dry cleaner and laundry followed them. Later I heard that the American army provided these spirit-lifting services to their men. In pointing out this great difference between the Americans and us, I do not mean to fault my captors of the time, because they were citizens of a rich nation. They came from a different culture, and we soon became the beneficiaries of their unique machines.

We had one great enemy in this camp—lice. Most of us had been wearing our clothes for a long time. We had already worn our uniforms for months during the closing time of the war, and now, during the many weeks of our captivity, we were still wearing the same uniforms. To relieve 25,000 prisoners of war from the ugly little creatures and to prevent an epidemic from breaking out, the American forces sent their men with huge trucks loaded with TTT. We lined up and each took a turn stepping in front of the American GI’s, who with a big grin told us to open out shirts and pants. They blew powder into these places with what appeared to be an oversized bug sprayer. This took care of the lice.

This incident also concludes my account of my first encounter with the Americans. Shortly thereafter, the American armed forces had to leave this part of Germany to make room for the Russian army, as the three allies had
agreed to do at Yalta in February, 1945. All of us in the camp were transported to the city of Stade in northern Germany, where we became prisoners of war of the English armed forces.

My discharge was given to me by the American forces months later on December 8, 1945, at Marburg or Giessen in southern Germany. One of those strange red-tape agreements required that we were discharged by the forces which took us prisoners of war. After being released, I looked at my discharge papers. They were signed by 2nd Lt. Albert Rudolf of E Company 15th Inf., Eagle Disbandment Reception Center, a unit of 12 U.S. Army Group. I had received the discharge paper after stepping in front of the American officer with the upper part of my body bared. He had looked under my arm. I found out that in this way the American forces identified former SS members, who had a tattoo under their upper arm. After leaving the American camp, I was on my way home to Leipzig.

Our city of Leipzig lay in ruins, and we often wished we were back in our prisoner-of-war camps. In Leipzig, life was once again in shambles, and the oppressive communist government allowed no one to leave. Nevertheless, despite the harsh penalties and dangers, by November 1949 I was in the American sector of West Berlin to apply for an American visa.

West Berlin was an exciting place to be. When I arrived, the allied “chocolate bombers” had just broken the Russian blockade of West Berlin. From 1948 to 1949 the Russians tried to starve the population into submission by cutting off all supply routes into West Berlin. The western allies responded by sending food and other supplies into the city by airplanes. The planes had to come in very low, so low that children could stand on the mountains of rubble and wave to the crews inside. Some of the crew members would throw candy bars down to the delighted children. As a result of this, the planes were called “Schokoladen-bomber”—chocolate bombers—by many West Berliners.

One could feel a spirit of hope in West Berlin. New buildings were going up, and the Marshall Plan helped businesses begin anew with loans from America. The new currency which the Western allies introduced in 1948 their occupational zones replaced the American cigarettes, or “Amis,” as currency in West Berlin. The population of West Berlin could now work to build a future. They could buy anything they wanted to and begin to save again. They could freely elect their own government. However, during the time from 1949 to 1951, when I lived in West Berlin, I made many trips to the American consulate. I still wanted to go to America. Finally, the American consulate notified me that I could emigrate to the U.S. In October 1951, a plane touched down in Los Angeles and brought with it a new settler, an immigrant from Germany.
These poems belong to the past. *Mahler* was written during exam time last year. *Kafka* came in a productive spell near the end of summer. Wordsworth says poetry arises out of emotion recollected in tranquility. Each of these poems arose out of a particular tranquility. It is the solitude to read and write for hours on end without the threat of class next day. It is the freedom to study on one’s own and let all sorts of unrelated topics ferment haphazardly in one’s mind. It is the liberation from artificial stimulations to learn. Time and solitude (and books) are necessary conditions for my poetry. Of course, now that school has started I have little of either. And so, as I look back at these poems in a sense twice-removed (recollecting emotions recollected in tranquility), what I mainly feel is frustration at the present lack of tranquility. As a frustrated poet, I suppose the next best thing is to be a critic, even if only a self-critic. These, then, are my words.

*Mahler* and *Kafka* were written in two entirely different manners. The latter was completed in a fifteen-minute burst of inspiration after reading Franz Kafka’s letter to his father. For the most part, it has survived unchanged. Four hundred pages into the book, I became intrigued with the many references to childhood in Mahler’s music. In the third movement of the breathtaking first symphony were two of the so-called objective correlatives to his childhood. *Bruder Martin*, better known to us in French as *Frere Jacques*, is a mournful old song often sung in a round. The *Hunter’s Funeral Procession* is a woodcut found in a common Austrian book of fairy tales. Ironically, it depicts a group of animals in various stages of mourning and gaiety carrying the bier of a dead hunter. These, by their very morbidity, influenced the young Mahler, who was throughout his life both frightened of and yet attracted to death. They inspired me too, that is certain; I wrote the third movement of the poem first, and it is in my opinion the best. The second and fourth movements came soon in succession, while the first was troublesome. The first draft of the first movement I trashed at the suggestion of Writers’ Guild and rewrote entirely. I am still not satisfied. Why? Above all, the music of the first is the most impressionistic of the four movements; therefore, it is difficult to mirror in words at all. It does little good when I must explain “Wake up the Spring has come” is a horn fanfare while “Tra e la e a” and “Cuckoo” are birdsongs played on the flute and clarinet respectively. Poetry and music are united by sound, of course, but they have a deeper relation through rhythmic structure, which my first movement lacks. The question of this relationship between music and poetry has cropped up repeatedly in Writers’ Guild; it is encouraging to find so many of us there truly interested in an integration of poetry and music.

*Kafka*, like *Mahler*, came from what might be referred to as “secondhand” inspiration. Rather than implying that such writing is unimaginative or derivative, though, I say this in praise. The inspiration and instruction a writer gains from reading others is his greatest teacher. Work with traditional ideas and genres can earn a writer credentials as a genuine thinker. Personally, I hope Kafka shows some thought. The heart of the poem is taken from Kafka’s nightmarish family relations, especially with his father. The structure is based on his one-paragraph gem—“Kleine Fabel.” The rhythm of the poem is jitty; a good approximation, I hope, of a frightened mouse. The fear it embodies is that of tunnel-vision, both for self and for humanity in general: fear...
the alienating specialization already parent (at least to me as a computer science major) here in college. A vivid picture in my mind was that of behavioristic rats in mazes. The last five lines are a poke at Freudians.

The idea of a Christian poetic I struggle with even now. Many of my poems sound almost “unchristianly” pessimistic; Kafka, for one, is definitively bitter. On the other hand, Christians are often lulled into what I would Il “pietry” and not poetry: stock formulas of piety and cheap grace. In a desperate for a resolution, I look to those like C.S. Lewis and T.S. Eliot, whose quest for good art led them to Christianity. Their examples support my intuition: the Christian who first strives for good art naturally produces Christian art.

In conclusion, here are some of my random thoughts—a sort of poetic manifesto. Good poetry is succinct. It doesn’t disguise simple things in complex words; it describes complex ideas in simple words. Good poetry is more action than static image; the rare image used should be striking. Avoid the common urge to chain metaphors or miles together like a necklace; a poem should be a single crystal. Good poetry is not ashamed to use rhyme. Lost of the time, however, it speaks short, direct statements and terse biblical language. Above all else, pay attention to rhythm. Poems are fun to write. When in time all this technique becomes natural, enjoy writing poetry; you might enjoy playing or dancing, for poetry is both play and dance.

**Kafkaesque**

When Kafka the mouselet was thrown out the darkness that was his mother, his sensitive eyes saw that he was alone in the world. Neither sister nor brother were waiting for him—to guide him along the passage ahead between walls stretching forever onward, inescapably strong. Tentative forward he crawls on all fours, the walls growing narrow to shock his fur straight out with fear. Instinct is rampant; he scampers with terror, some terrible enemy near.

Walls close ever tighter, nearer, and then dead-end; with that, he turns, emits a squeak of terror, for grinning face of cat before him gapes; fangs glitter in the sun. With one swift paw and crunch of bones, his puzzle of a life is done.

“In the final analysis, much we can explain: like a mouselet mankind scurries beneath inexorable laws. Life is a race across a cat called fate from the mother’s womb to the father’s jaws.”
I. Mahler: Symphony No. 1

Langsam. Schleppend. Wie en Naturlaut

Gossamer strand
reflecting in a shimmer
sunlight streaming downward

Breezes whisper
a distant fanfare
wake up! the spring has come!

Are you sleeping?
are you sleeping?
sunlight streaming downward

Winter is over
wake up! the spring has come!
Tra e la e a, Tra e la e a, Cuckoo!

Birdfull trees by the lakeside
bloom in flowery whiteness
fragrant cherry blossoms

The web a spider wove
catched the drops of morning dew
to shine like crystal in the sun.

Wake up! the endless spring has come
squirrels chase each other, chattering
the trees are spilling music, Cuckoo! Cuckoo!

But who are you
dancing through daffodil fields,
human or Titan?

Up ahead mankind is calling
ease our suffering
please. Bells tolling

Laugh aloud, turn away, then run run run
your young heart pounding
like kettle drums.

II. Kraftig bewegt.

Striding
young and proud through the summer, owning
the whole world for the moment, whistling
a little tune for the fiddle, gazing
down from the crags of a mountain, heading
under full sail into the valley, seeking
a meal and bed for the night—

Du! wanderer
running from your fate
aimlessly looking for Eden
Come in, celebrate!

A smoky room
of crowds and confusion
the lamps on the walls
flickering intimacy,
Pretty boy! dance with me
one, two, three, step with me—that's right
wrap your arms around me tight.

Couples whirling in circles
almost rising off the floor
have a drink—just one more
Quick! you may never get the chance
to live like this again, so dance!

Blurred faces flash past
I don’t know you—nice to know you,
you know, a famous composer claimed once
—all music proceeds from the dance
ha! so I say then why compose
when two legs teach all you need to know?!
but don’t stop now, keep going!

Later in a dim halo of light:
a mug of beer, stale,
a head like lead
on the hard oak table;
the rainy-wet weary night
seeping in, dark blue from the street
and the fading strains
of a hurdy-gurdy.

Ach, du lieber Augustin
geld's weg, Madels hin,
Ach, du lieber Augustin
Alles ist hin!
Feierlich und gemessen.

Are you sleeping, are you sleeping?
sleep till dawn, sleep til dawn
Lullaby to calm you, brothers, sisters round you
ding ding dong, ding ding dong.

Through the darkness, through the forest
marching on, marching on
Rabbit’s torches swaying, muted dirges playing
somber song, tragic song.

Bear the hunter, bravest huntsman
coffin strong, coffin strong
carried on the shoulders, like a hunter’s trophy
by the fawns, gentle fawns.

Fox and otter, owls all crying
weeping on, weeping on
dig a grave to hide him, lay his gun beside him
he is gone, dead and gone.

Hares with banner, bear and wild boar
dancealong, dancealong!
kittens all are singing, badger’s bell is ringing
dingdingdong, burlesque song!

Little Gustav, wake up Gustav
sleeping long, dreaming long?
mourning bells are ringing, mourning bells are ringing
ding ding dong, ding ding dong.

IV. Sturmisch bewegt. Mit grosser Wildheit.

No!
life
will be no nightmare.
Through the flames of hell
encircle the wayfarer,
his staff, his baton
will tame the magic fire.
His wounded heart’s stormy cry,
the anguish of a Titan
will echo upward, through the ground,
through the flowers and trees of youth,
rising far above this tiny earth
in fierce energy—Driven
until it rends the deathly veil of night
to glimpse in music universal light—wordless, eternal, heaven.
The two girls walked up the hill toward Lake Michigan, between them a black inner tube frosted with sand from repeated droppings. This time Carrie’s arm drooped, and the tube scraped between them. ‘Hey.’ Lynn scooped the tube into the crook of her arm to keep it from rolling backwards. ‘We’re almost there,’ she announced. ‘I know; my arm just couldn’t stand it any longer.’ Carrie stretched her sunburnt arms in front of her. They were awfully long. ‘Anyway, I’d rather be weak and nippy than strong and fat,’ she announced. Lynn had to agree since they live in the same kind of lies, as long and white as sailboat masts. Part of their friendship centered around this—learning to live in their lies. Only last year, in sixth grade, did they suddenly realize they were wearing undershirts. They could still wear them, but now each of them had a bra. Lynn wore old one inherited from Laura, her sister. On the white tag under her left arm, the label said Lucky Start AA. Nothing much started, though, and Laura took advantage of it by leaving her 34A bra off as often as she could, which embarrassed Lynn and Carrie. They hated the pointed intrusion of nipples.

‘Ready?’ They hoisted the tube again. It banged against their legs. Beach towels dragged on the back of their necks and tangled between their awkward legs. Their rubber flip-flops slapped at the dirty sand on the sidewalk. They ink of Coppertone Suntan Lotion number 6 and sweat. ‘We haven’t seen Ted all day,’ Carrie said, the black in of her suit rippling with shimmers of light. ‘Maybe it’s his day off.’ ‘It’s Friday—I think they get Sundays off.’ ‘Maybe he’s cleaning the men’s restroom on the other side of the campground.’ ‘Shall we check?’ Yesterday they had stretched across the bed, toes dangling over the edge, and unzipped the top of the camper window just enough so their eyes could peer through the screen and feast on Ted, a tan blond with wonderfully furry legs that glittered in the sunlight like an aura. He was raking woodchips around the women’s restroom. Whenever his head turned their way, they ducked, giggling. They felt like spies—like TV detectives. Like Jim Rockford and Richie—‘what the hey’—Brockleman, Carrie announced. So that afternoon Carrie of the dark suit and hair was reborn as the cynical Rocky, and Lynn of the white suit and sandy hair became the naive Brocky. Their mission—to get as close to Ted’s golden aura as they could, and that meant finding as much about him as possible. They had already bribed his little brother Skip with Jujubes to find out how old Ted was. Twenty-one. The extra syllable stretched to infinity and made their love for him more noble—they only fell for older, more mature men. Men they could look up to.

‘He’s so tall.’ The two girls exhaled their pleasure in a sigh. Now they stepped off the sidewalk and warm sand cupped their feet. A short dune fell away in front of them. On their right two young mothers descended a wooded stairway banging aluminum lawnchairs and exclaiming at the placid, blue-eyed calm of the lake. Their kids screamed, tumbled, and slithered their way down the dune. The girls waited, condescendingly, till the last kid had reached the water’s edge. Then they made their grand entrance.

Stepping to the left above an empty spot on the beach, they stopped, locked eyes, and with a nod of the head and the swoop of four arms they shoved away their black rubber burden. The inner tube bumbled and bounced its way down, almost tripping mid-dune, then gaining speed, swirling black circles until the lake caught it and slapped it down. It nuzzled the edge of wet sand, not yet trusting itself to the full floating strength of the lake’s arms.

Lynn and Carrie adjusted their sunglasses, unwound the towels from their necks, and kicked off their flip-flops. The towels which they slung over their backs stirred up
the sand like royal robes. Then they flew, their legs kick­ing air made of sand, their terry towels floating behind them like sails billowing from the masts of their bodies. Red and orange towels blurred with black and white suits as their bodies mixed color and motion.

They stopped at the lip of the water, where the inner­tube still half-floated, waiting. Carrie dragged it from the water and flipped it over on its dry back so its wet belly could dry in the sun.

"Where do you want to go?" Carrie asked.

Lynn pointed over to the right near a sand fence and a sign in red letters that said, "White Sands Campground Beach No Pets No fires No camping on beach." Sometimes they wished to each other that they could do what that stupid sign told them not to. They didn’t see why not. They’d clean up the little turds from Lynn’s daschund and the charred driftwood from a fire, so it wasn’t like they’d mess the beach up for everyone else. And they still wanted to sleep on the beach with generations of sand beneath them and generations of stars above them, when the sand and the stars and they would be the only bits of white in the vast black prince of night.

"Carrie! Lynn!" Laura ran over to them, her red-bikinied 34A’s barely bouncing. "Lay out over here. We got tunes."

They followed Laura’s sun-and-lemon streaked blond hair to a small group of teens, the youngest being Skip, who really wasn’t even a tween yet. A radio voice screamed, "Hot blooded! Check it and see!" Mumbling waves drowned the sound, so it came through tinny and unreal unless they put their heads down close to the speaker. Carrie and Lynn spread out their towels, smoothed the lumps in cloth and underlying sand, and flopped out on their bellies. As a greeting, Carrie sang along with the radio to Skip—"Are you hot mama? You sure look that way to me."

"I’m no mama." Skip wiped a drop of sweat from the end of his sharp nose. His hair stuck up in clumps, stiff­ened by water and gritty wind. Carrie suddenly wished he were older and forgot to put on her sly Rocky dete­tive front.

"Where’s your brother Ted?"

"How should I know?"

"I don’t know—he’s your brother."

"You don’t have to tell me that." Skip flipped over on his back and sang to the sun, "I got a fevah of a hunder and three!"

Lynn’s cheek already nestled her blanket as if she were cheek-to-cheek with a baby. With every breath her stomach expanded, pushing her the slightest bit away from the sand. She thought of having a baby there; it come protruding between her and the sand. She would balance on the baby like a propellor on the end of a shaft—one shove and she’d twirl around on her roun baby stomach. Or she’d dig a hole in the sand for her melon belly, hiding it so she could flirt with boys flipp­ing frisbees and drinking Cokes . . . Her thoughts were interrupted by the tickling walk of a ladybug across her elbow. She flicked it away.

Frustrated at Skip, the inadequate Ted-replica, Carrie dug at the sand with her toes and flipped clumps of sand into the air. The sand grenades exploded over the back of her legs; she brushed the residue from her legs and lay back down. She snuggled closer, to the towel, to the sand, to everything inside and outside her. She swar in the warm red blood of her eyelids and did not sense the movement of bodies.

Laura jumped up. "I’m hot."

Opening one eye and speaking with the half of her mouth which wasn’t smushed into the beach towel, Lyn mumbled, "I’m not going in—I just got here." She closed her eye and shut Laura and everyone else from her minc

The radio blurbled on like someone who talks so much no one listens anymore: what a wonderful wonderful world this could be help I need somebody coming to you emotional rescue baby, baby. Sun glared and sweat stung newly shaved armpits. The red of Carrie’s eyelids slow­spread over the rest of her body: hot blood, cooked bloo
ked blood, boiled blood, fried blood. Ted flickered in and out of her thoughts like the star molecules shiveringross the inside of her eyelids.

Skip awoke everyone: “Here comes Ted.” After an art-I pause, right when everyone opened their eyes and gan to look around, he added—“with his girlfriend” and tossed a stone at Carrie’s rump.

Carried grumbled, her mouth full of saliva and sand eeks. “I’m up, I’m up.” Her eyelids blinked, warm red me while she slept, replaced by a bleached, bonehard hite air. Her forehead was crowned with sweat droplets. He rubbed them away as she heaved herself over, lding her long body back into its self-conscious shell and pulling her knees to her chin.

Lynn adopted the same posture. They both stared raight at the wide horizon, their eyes only squinting eward the left occasionally to take in Ted, who was pull- his laughing girlfriend into the water with him. The rls didn’t envy her; they moved into her body and held hand. With the other hand, they and she splashed im. All four dove under together but only two came up ipping. Looking at them—cool, frolicking—made other ring of sweat dot the girls’ foreheads. Carrie’s ngers crept across the blankets and jabbed Lynn in the itch. Lynn knew what that meant.

“Ready for a mission, Rocky?” Lynn asked and knew he answer.

“Yeah, come on kid, I’ll show you how we track these ind down.”

Without saying anything to the others—since pairs worked best in their line of pleasure—they jumped up and ran to Rocky’s beautiful gold Firebird, which happened to be disguised as a black innertube. They roared ut into wavy roads, their skin squealing against the mertube like protesting brakes. Churning feet gave off ubble exhaust. Quiet didn’t matter now; speed did. hey had to kick their way out to the sand bar, then lie w on the innertube and inch their way closer to theouple. What they needed was a picture for proof, proof that male-female couples were indeed different than mere friendships or mere marriages. They needed a real life moving picture romance.

Luckily, right now the couple were swimming lazily, their heads and arms above the water like paddling dogs. Lynn’s foot hit the sandbar, and she could have stood up to push the innertube, but she would have felt too exposed. So they lay low and kicked their way over the sandbar and into the deep water.

As they drew nearer to the couple, the man and the woman drew nearer to each other. Very near. Suddenly the two girls stopped thrashing the water and draped themselves over the innertube like dead fish. Nonchalant. They pressed their cheeks against the cold black rubber and pretended to sunbathe.

Over the crook of her arm, Carrie could see Ted and the girl, splashing, wrestling, trying to dunk each other. Ted lay his dripping hands squarely on the girl’s head and forced her under. She came up sputtering water and anger and infatuation. Then he kissed her as he had dunked her, squarely and with purpose. She kissed him back.

Right when things got interesting, a wave swelled up from a passing boat and upset the girls’ balance. They slipped into the lake’s arms and the hands of the waves pushed the innertube from them. They came up, wet and inelegant, naked without their circle of black tube. They shivered, and their blood felt more like cold clear Lake Michigan water than the warm pulsing they’d felt on the sandy beach. Only their faces burned as they scrambled after their tube, half walking, half paddling, barely hearing the laughter of the couple, which sparkled across to them like the trail of a sunset over water.

Illustrated by Kevin Vander Leek
swing song
front
porch
swing and the wind
are
one
when
warm airs
stroke
lover lives
when
shaking leaves
frost hasten
the pace
when
stern gales
carry the weight to
higher ground
when
wind lull
slows
the
swing
back
empty.

Lambert J. Van Pooen

[the athletic ladies who live in manly souls]

the athletic ladies who live in manly souls
are unbeautiful and have distorted brains
(also, with the amazon's muscle-blessed
dughters, unscented shapeless sapiens)
they believe in Navratilova and King, both lesbians,
are invariably interested in a strong chest—at
the present writing one still trains
in javelin woven with other personal is it goals?
perhaps. While permanent faces aspire far
beyond Mrs. N and Doctor J
... the athletic lady does not care, above
athletics if sometimes in the presence of
real men she alone not they
can open the brand new peanutbutter jar

ee goings
1984

Jason Peters
Bulletin Board
The bed is not the one from which you,
chin in small hands, watched me
primping for dates.
The walls wear your good times.
Do you wear all that fingernail polish?
Evidence of your maturing is here even as you are not.
And in your absence
I sit on your bed and the sun slides in off the field
brightening each tacked keepsake.
My eyes go over each
from left to right
and I love your happiness.

Carla Witteveen
In a small town in the Midlands, there used to be a tavern called the Golden Griffin. The town straddled the old north-south wagon road, and the Griffin received a steady stream of patrons from all parts of the kingdom. The Griffin was known throughout the Midlands for its fine ale, so that on any given night one could find a dozen or so wagon drivers celebrating, depending on their direction of travel, either the first good ale in some 300 miles or the last good ale before the southern seaports. Invariably, one would also find a number of the local farmers and tradesmen listening for news from the capital or the coast. These were practical men, for the most part, whose gods were money and trade and who distrusted anything that couldn't be grasped in their hands or sealed in their purses.

The most practical of the lot was Jack—he was a practical joker. The only magic he knew was sleight of hand, and the only art he recognized was that of making a quick goldpiece. He was always amusing himself and his friends with a variety of tricks and jokes. He was an accomplished pick-pocket, but he was not a thief. Whenever he filched something from someone's purse or pocket he would be sure to give it back—usually under circumstances which provided a good laugh for everyone. That is, he always gave his loot back except for once...

Jack was sitting at the corner table of the Golden Griffin one autumn evening showing off a number of card tricks that kept his audience alternately amused and befuddled. As he finished off a mug of the Griffin's Special Dark and shuffled the deck with his free hand, he noticed the well worn figure of an old man slip in the door. The old man, wrapped in a ragged grey robe, worked his way through the smoke and laughter to a chair by the fireplace. Jack slammed his glass down on the oak table and signalled for silence.

"Well look at that will ya. The wizard's come back to town," he said, leaning over the table like a conspirator. His teeth gleamed in the dim lamp light. The others at the table recognized that Jack's creative genius was going to work, and they smiled too.

"What do you suppose he's been up to this time?" asked one.

Jack stood up and started across the room to the fireplace. "There's only one way to find out," he said. The "wizard," as they called him, was an old hermit who lived in a small hut on the edge of the village. They called him the wizard because Ned Banks, a local farmer, claimed to have seen strange fires in the man's window one night while walking home from the Griffin. The old man, Ned also claimed to have seen a two-headed mul and a fire breathing dragon while walking home from the Griffin. And even if the man was a wizard, he wasn't of much practical use. He didn't pay any tax or help out with any of the town's problems; rather he was always going on long trips and was often seen walking in the woods mumbling to himself. Whatever he did, he at least made a living because he wasn't a beggar.

"How're you doing, old man?" asked Jack, clapping the hermit on the shoulder.

The wizard was sitting with his hands stretched towards the fire. He slowly turned to consider Jack. His pleasant face was sunk in his prodigious mane, but his eyes sparkled like gems in a cave.

Jack continued, "Getting a little cold out there, isn't it?"

The old man tugged at his beard.

"Aye, mighty cold it is... worse when you get older."

"Yes, I suppose it is. Though you don't act old. No with all your traveling. Where were you off to this time anyway?"

The hermit continued to massage his chin and turned to face the fire. His mouth formed a weary smile.

"Can't imagine why you'd take an interest in the wanderings of an old man."

Jack was getting impatient. "Why it's just that we're concerned about you. You're part of the community."

The wizard shifted his feet and stared at the fire.

"Ok, I'll tell you what my interest is," said Jack, thinking quickly. "I've got a bet going with one of those fellows over there as to what kind of adventure you've been off on. I say you're a secret counselor to the king. Everyone is waiting for your answer."

The old man glanced over at the table that Jack indicated. They were all looking at him.
See what I mean," encouraged Jack. Very well . . . I've been up in the West Wood on the
edge of the mountains. I had some business with the elves," repeated Jack, sup­
sissing a laugh. But the old man remained silent. Jack poked him on the shoulder and turned back to the table. Then he got back to his seat, the old man was gone. Jack let out a loud laugh. His friends smiled and waited for the joke.

Well," asked Tom, a wagoner on his way north with a load of silk, "what did he have to say?"

He said . . . "Jack tried to stifle his laughter, "that was up in the West Wood . . . on business with the
evil elves." "And he corner rocked with explosions of glee.

"Magic and mysteries. He's a crazy old fool!" remarked Bill the Miller. "Wizards and elves," howled Tom. "I thought you're level-headed folks."

"It doesn't surprise me none," said Ned Banks seriously. "There's mighty peculiar things going on at his house."

"You're just as crazy as he is, Ned," replied Tom, pounding on the table.

"Quiet everyone!" shouted Jack. The table fell silent. "Now we get to the fun part."

Everyone leaned forward, eagerly awaiting Jack's pronouncement.

"I grabbed this off the old man's belt," he said, leaning back against the wall and tossing a small pouch onto the table.

All eyes followed Tom as he lifted the leather bag and examined it. He opened the drawstring and sniffed the contents. He grinned.

"Smells like West County leaf. Good stuff. The old man must have made it to the West Wood after all." Then in a whisper he added, "Maybe this here is elven tobacco."

Everyone laughed and cheered.
“That’s what I said myself, Tom. Good old West County tobacco,” Jack agreed, drawing a pipe from his jacket. “So let’s enjoy a bit of it. It ain’t often we get good leaf in these parts.

The others all took out their pipes and the pouch was passed around the table. Soon they were all puffing and swapping stories about the crazy old hermit.

tastes a bit peculiar,” remarked Bill after a few minutes. “But not in a bad sort of way.”

“And look at the color of the smoke,” added Ned. “It glows kind of reddish in the firelight. I tell you, there’s something mystical about that old man. Probably put a hex on this here leaf.”

“The only mystical thing is the confounded notions you get in your head, Ned Banks,” Tom retorted. “This tobacco tastes mighty good to me.”

“Hey boys,” Jack interrupted. “What do you say we have a little smoke ring contest? I can taste some fine rings in this tobacco.”

A general consensus established that this was a fine idea.

“Tell you what,” added Tom. “I’ll give a bolt of silk to you if one of you wins, and you give a keg of this fine ale to me when I do.”

“You? Win?” scoffed Jack. “Not much chance of that, but we’ll gladly take your silk.”

“Very well, I’ll lead,” Tom agreed. He took a deep draw and sent a small ring floating toward the rough hewn rafters.

“That ain’t half bad... for a lead off,” snorted Bill. “But I can do a far sight better than that.” He sucked on his stem for a moment and then exhaled a perfect ring of incredible size. It rose over the center of the table for a moment and then dissolved.

“Big mouth, big ring,” mumbled Tom.

“Not bad,” said Ned, “unless you’ve seen something like this.” His cheeks puffed out as he inhaled and then collapsed as he sent a ring moving slowly across the table. Then, with another quick breath, he sent a second smaller ring spinning through the center of the first.

“That’s tough to beat,” observed Jack, “but I’m game for a try.” With a short burst he breathed one ring and then another. The two collided and floated upwards, locked together like a chain link.

“A pretty trick, Jack, but can you blow a smoke square?” taunted Tom.

“I can’t say I ever tried,” replied Jack, “but I doubt that you could do it.”

“And I bet I could,” said Tom, inhaling and contorting his lips. He exhaled. The smoke twisted and turned for a moment. The corners appeared. Soon a smoke square was hovering above the table.

“Well, I’ll be,” mumbled Bill. “I never thought I’d see it done.”

“It’s all in the lips,” laughed Tom.

“That one takes the prize,” said Ned. “I’m out.”

“Well, I’m not giving up so easily,” said Jack. “I believe there’s a lot more to be done with this tobacco.”

“So what are you gonna do,” demanded Tom, who thought he had a clear victory.

“I’m going to blow...” he looked around the table for inspiration, “...a beer mug.”

Another round of laughter filled the corner.

“A beer mug?” scoffed Tom. “Why don’t you just admit it when you’re beaten?”

“I’m serious. It would ruin my reputation to give to a wagon driver. And it would ruin my budget to buy you a keg of ale.”

“You’re drunk, that’s what you are.”

Jack leaned back and inhaled the rich West County smoke. The power was there. He looked at his empty mug and closed his eyes. He exhaled. He opened his eyes.

The cloud of smoke was swirling before his face. It did have a peculiar glow in the firelight. He concentrated on the image. Suddenly, there it was.

Bill’s mouth dropped open. Ned hid his face in his hands.

“Damned if he didn’t do it,” said Tom.

Jack waved his hand and the smoke mug shattered.

“Beat that, Tom,” he challenged.

“Why not?” said Tom merrily. “I’ll just do one of the barmaids.”

Jack smiled. Wagoneers were idiots. Tom would make a fool of himself.

Tom leaned back and inhaled as Jack had done. He looked at one of the bartenders. He exhaled. He could see the girl in his mind. The smoke twisted and村子 pushed by strange currents. Then, there it was, a smoke barmaid standing on the table. She was nude. Tom hadn’t particularly thought of clothes. He grinned.

Bill and Ned laughed. Jack choked on his beer.

A crowd was beginning to gather when Jack vowed to do even better.

“Clear a space there in front of the fire,” he ordered.

“I’m going to smoke up a giant.”

He filled his pipe and accumulated an enormous amount of smoke. Gathering the visage of a giant in his imagination, he constructed the misty Titan in the clearing before the hearth. The giant’s head was in the rafter.
and he grasped a club the size of a fence post in his right hand. There were gasps and cheers from the audience.

"Stop it!" cried Ned, burying his head in his arms. Jack chuckled and, with a grand sweep of his arm, dispelled the evanescent monster.

"I won't be outdone!" roared Tom, leaping into the clearing. "Watch this!"

He paced to and fro creating a huge cloud of smoke. Carefully, he directed a wisp here or trimmed a bit there according to the image in his head. Finally, he stood back and considered his creation.

With tail curled, wings soaring and neck outstretched, a terrifying dragon hovered in the air. The whole sculpture glowed red in the fire light, and the currents of air made the wings appear to flap with powerful strokes. Tom snapped his fingers and a vast miasma of smoke belched from the creature's mouth, engulfing the audience. When the smoke cleared, the dragon was gone, and Tom lay laughing on the floor.

He had barely recovered from his merriment when Jack was at work again. This time he created a long strip of smoke which hung just below the ceiling. As he puffed, a hideous face took form. Claws appeared on spidery arms, and wings like those of bats sprouted from the torso.

Jack pulled his pipe out of his mouth and pointed the stem at the monstrosity. A brilliant orange glow appeared in the eyes. A hushed murmur rose from the spectators. Jack moved his pipe and the wraith moved where it was directed. It twisted and dodged between the rafters. It swooped with outstretched wings over the audience, which ducked and screamed.

Jack laughed.

The wraith snaked down and prowled among the tables and benches. Ned looked up and screamed. The specter slithered across the bar and among the legs of the spectators. It swirled up around the body of a barmaid. Ned scrambled to his feet and ran for the door. Several others followed him.

"I think that's enough!" shouted Sam the bartender, watching his patrons disappear.

Jack shrugged and beckoned the smoky serpent. It came sliding along the floor. Jack stuck his pipe back in his mouth and nonchalantly waved his arm through its body. Nothing happened. He kicked at it, but the wraith would not be dissipated. It began winding its way up around his legs. Desperately, he beat at it. The audience was completely silent. The smoke had engulfed his shoulders now. It clutched at his face. He tried to pull it away, but it was like wrestling with a shadow. It filled his mouth and nose and pushed down his throat. His legs gave out.

"Somebody help him!" screamed someone, but the spectators remained frozen.

Then, slowly, a crack opened in the crowd, and the beak figure of the wizard made its way through.

Jack lay on his back with arms outstretched. A wisp of smoke trickled from the corner of his mouth. The wizard paused for a moment and then laid aside his staff. Lowering himself cautiously, he lay spread-eagled across the silent figure. Staring into Jack's eyes, he took a deep breath and exhaled into Jack's mouth.

A blue light covered Jack's head and began to spread down his neck. At first it moved quickly, but soon slowed as though meeting resistance. Dark streaks and whorls stained the azure power of the wizard. He continued to breathe into Jack's mouth, his muscles straining with every exhalation. A maelstrom of power and smoke seethed around the two figures.

The wizard's white mane was soaked with sweat. The crowd pressed back against the walls, too frightened to flee. The wizard's shoulders convulsed as he took another great breath and blew a stream of blue fire down Jack's throat. The azure aura blazed and a detonation rocked the tavern, throwing the two prone figures apart and the audience to its knees.

When the wizard quenched his power, Jack lay gasping for air.

"Let him breathe, give him air," someone demanded as the crowd rushed forward.

The old wizard made his way quietly through the confusion. He stopped at the corner table and picked up his tobacco pouch, thrust it into his tattered grey cloak, shook his head wearily, and slipped out into the cold autumn night.

Illustrated by Bruce Wyma
Portfolio

Krusti De Haan

Detail of Steak of the Hoof (USDA GRADE A)
Detail of Untitled work
God rest you merry, gentlemen,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
For Jesus Christ our Savior  
Was born upon this day;  
To save us all from Satan's power  
When we were gone astray.  
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Hung with frosty stars, the clear midnight sky puts me in a December mood. Two snatches of song keep running through my head: one, the ancient hymn “In Dulce Jubilo,” better known to us as “Good Christian Men Rejoice,” and the other which the first reminds me of: “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen.” The second melody, because it is in a minor mode, is much more haunting than the first. It was this melody that caught me, the words being easy to overlook in the wave of sticky-sweet nostalgia that tends to cover memories of Christmases past. Yet more than nostalgia makes one look forward to Christmas and more than nostalgia makes one sing Christmas carols. The words come back and are sung to the melody flitting through my head.

“God rest you merry, gentlemen, Let nothing you dismay.” Simple words strangely phrased in an English foreign to us, they make little sense at first, especially in the context of the beautiful minor key. However, upon a closer examination, this paradox is wholly appropriate and beautiful especially in a simple Christmas carol, for it exemplifies the Christian paradox. We rejoice in Christ’s birth, but in the midst of this joy we can also look ahead to Good Friday when He died with the sins of the world on His shoulders. Yet this painful event is reason for joy. We could not begin to pay for our own sins; only through Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection are we saved. The joy and sorrow are inextricably woven together.

So this carol combines the joy with the shadows and gives us a message of hope in this dark December several centuries later. God give you good rest, gentlefolk, do not let anything dismay you. In the midst of the busyness of our crazed race to get all of the papers done, the blue books studied for, the textbooks read, and the Christmas shopping completed, words of rest are welcome to everyone. This busyness extends to professors and parents and janitors and store clerks; only small children seem to be exempt. All can come to the source of rest, Christ Jesus, and kneel before him, not only in awe of the tiny innocent babe, but in great joy and sadness before the crucified and risen Christ our Savior and Lord.

Now to the Lord sing praises,  
All you within this place,  
And with true love and brotherhood  
Each other now embrace;  
This holy tide of Christmas  
All others doth deface.  
O tidings of comfort and joy.

—Rose Cunningham
Mary Christ Mass

from Dialogue

Mark Van Weiger
Nigeen Dev
Jiri Kolbek
Jim Brummond

Ron Shermery
Les Cunningham
Mike Rubright
Michael Harwick

Sandy Hock
Rut "Hock"a
Tom West
Amy Boerman