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—Lydia VanderLe

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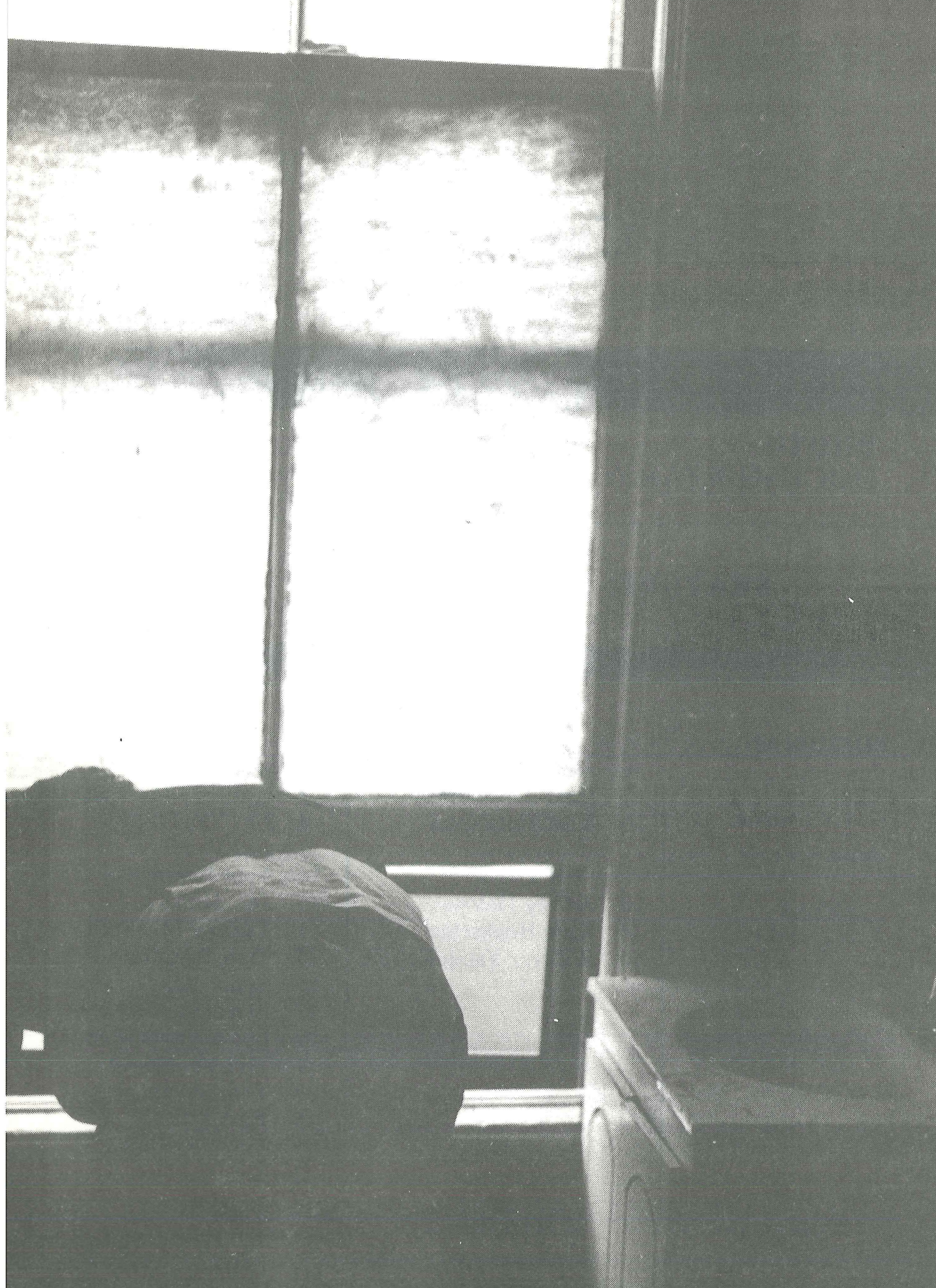
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Editorial

Editor's note: Temporarily at a loss for editorial wisdom, I present to you the words of another editor, Jonathan, of Eerdmans.

When I accepted the invitation to give this chapel talk, I nervously talked it over with a college student I know well. She asked, "What should I talk about?" "I don't know," she replied, "but I'll give you all the warm reassurance one can give for from a daughter, "but whatever you do, don't preach!" Well, I'll try not to preach. In fact, I'd like to go one better and say a few words against preaching—at least preaching understood in a certain way. But I do have a text, and it's taken from the most famous sermon ever preached—our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. Here's the message from Matthew:

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither

sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?

Be not anxious! What on earth can this mean? After all, here you are: a graduating senior and worried, deep down at some level you hardly dare to think, that you've picked the wrong major. Or you're a sophomore who can't even settle on a major in the first place, and time and college credits are flying by. Or you have a major, but now you're flunking one of its core courses.

Or you're a parent who sacrificed mightily to get your child here, and she turns out to have a consuming interest in, of all things, art! How can anyone "make it" on that? Goodbye Porsche, hello Reliant K or Subaru.

Or you're a professor, ten years into your career, buried under quizzes, and wondering whether you'll ever do your scholarly monograph or at least lure some unwary publisher with a spinoff of your rapidly aging dissertation.

I could go on. Here you are, three years into a relationship, and your girlfriend has just announced that you're missing some mysterious "X" factor. She doesn't know exactly what it is—what she does know is that its absence means you're out. (I recall this happening to a college friend of mine. His studies were shot for a semester and he sat for weeks in the library like some lonely Keatsian figure, writing bad, albeit heartfelt, poetry.) Or, finally, here you are, an outwardly buoyant freshman breaking tentatively (and maybe erratically) away from home and yet not knowing really where else you belong and even whether you can fly.

All this—and I haven't even begun to catalog the larger troubles of the world you will inherit, from wars to poverty to global injustice to AIDS—all this, and you're supposed to let yourself go, free as a bird or like some serene lily yielding to the gentle breezes of spring?

If you're a typical American, of course, or at least have drunk deeply at the well of American culture, you

know perfectly well that this command of Jesus is nonsense. One of the profoundest habits of the American heart, said a very important study published two years ago, is our belief in individualism (preferably rugged) and self-reliance. It is no coincidence that the Marlboro man still sells cigarettes. "Trust thyself," said Emerson: "Every heart vibrates to that iron string." The song we still sing best, even after all the warbling in the '60s about community, is Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself." "Pick yourself up by your own bootstraps," say the Lee Iacoca's of this world. *Make* something of yourself. And this tends to mean *work* to make something of yourself. Work makes the man (or the woman)—and so do clothes. The natural complement to work—its reward and its badge—is *lifestyle*, one of the other obsessions of our heart.

So, then, you want a secure future? Work hard, develop some smarts (and some contacts), plan ahead, think big, and count on building ever bigger barns to house your success. And if you need a little religion in the mix, remember that God helps those who help themselves. What could be more Dutch-Calvinist than that! But you know what Jesus says in the passage in Luke that parallels our text in Matthew: "Thou fool!"

And deep down in our own souls, though we may want to escape the void by retreating under our Walkman headphones or by making yet another trip to the shopping mall, or by compulsively cultivating friendships that may be less friendly than parasitic—deep down in our souls and, it seems, in the souls of many around us, is the nagging sense that these words of Jesus may possibly be right. In the U.S. alone, says Edward Hoagland in a brilliantly disturbing essay in the March issue of *Harper's*, 30,000 Americans committed suicide, some of them young, but a shocking number of them over 65. All the injunctions to "make something of

ourselves" don't in the end, or even now in the dead of the night in our dormitory bed, get us past that inconsolable sense that bigger barns aren't the answer when the treasure is wrong. I think that my friendly advisor was aware of this as well. "Whatever you do, don't preach." She meant, of course, "Don't be boring." But she also meant, I suspect, don't lay yet another do-something-with-yourself guilt trip on us. We students are anxious enough as it is.

So, then, our text: "Consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air." What can they teach us? Well they doubtless can teach us many things, but let me mention only a few:

For one thing, says the great Danish philosopher Kierkegaard, they can teach us *silence*. They in fact teach us silence by being themselves our "Silent Teachers." The flowers neither toil nor spin, and even the songs of the birds, says Kierkegaard, are part of some deep silence of a piece with the peace of nature and no disturber of it.

You and I talk too much; we certainly write too much (if I may say a word on behalf of the poor, beleaguered editor; in 1986, some 52,637 new books and new editions were published in the U.S. alone); we toil and spin, getting and spending, as the poet says, laying waste our powers. Students today impress me as buzzing around more than did students in the early '60s. For one thing, many more of you have cars. For another, college has gotten to be so expensive that you typically need to spend more time at jobs—often off campus, for which a car is handy and maybe essential. When do you take the time—indeed how much time do you have—to contemplate the long view, and instead of worrying about grade points, consider the deeper marks of education? What does it mean that intellectual clubs like Plato Club, which once thrived at Calvin as important contexts for discussion and genteel rumination about life and ideas—that such

clubs no longer are? How much do we spend, not compulsively putting on appearances by picking up all the right social signals around us or self-consciously mirroring latest fashions, but rather seeing what theologian Martin Marty called our "cores"? On the surface says novelist Peter DeVries a one of his characters, "she's found, but way down deep superficial."

Getting in touch with your means, in part, taking a long, hard look at your gifts and your callings (or callings, since a career is not only calling, and your purpose in college is to develop the mind of Christ so that it may play out all your roles as husband or wife, single person, as friend, as member of church and society). But let us now focus on career.

Again, consider the lilies. They toil not, neither do they spin: they simply *are*, and Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them. Strictly speaking, they do work—their rainment, if you will, isn't "put on"; it is the natural display of their being and gifts. The lily is anxiously toiling through courses in how to be a snapdragon. And what *joy* in the bird, excluding Kierkegaard—what joy in the lily who does not merely sing *at* work, but who's work, who's being *is* to sing? Gifts, creature, work are wonderfully of a piece.

So all of us must find that work which is for us to sing. It is no good of course, trying to sing the song of our parents and their ambition; this is not also our own song. It is not the song of our peers, nor the song we think it prestige to sing. If we have the soul of the poet and not that of the business person you are training to be. . . well, consider the lilies. If you really have the gift of business but no gift for public speaking, consider the birds of the air: the distinct possibility that you may tune from the pulpit one day may be no song for needy souls but a dull and unconvincing drone. Not on it futile to deny who we really

it is an act of profound in-
tude for the gifts we have been

is a fair question, I suspect,
her students today are given
gh time, and take enough time,
nsider what their gifts are.

yond the distractions I've al-
7 mentioned, many of you were
r pressure from parents to enter
ge with a career already firmly
ind ("We're paying big bucks
this, and you'd better know
e you're going!"). You feel
ure from parents, or peers, or a
umerist society to pick a career
offers not necessarily and pre-
ently fulfillment, but security—
e nice middle-class raiment on
backs and a few safe stocks in
portfolio. You feel pressure
the college itself (which in turn
be pressured by graduate
ols) to settle early on a major so
you can get in all the require-

ts. Some of you are in college in
irst place under pressure, when
gifts—and very real gifts they
lie elsewhere. I recall having in
rief sojourn teaching freshman
ish here, a student who wrote
stently and abysmally, but with
knowledge, about motorcycles
lear indication where his heart
God's gift to him lay.

nally, of course, we must learn
the lilies and birds our utter
ndence. It is our heavenly
ier who feeds the birds and
es the flowers of the field. He
knows what *we* need.

is actually far easier, says
logian Karl Barth, to be
ous than to trust. And do you
w why? Because in worrying
at the future we think we are
g prudent and we thereby
in—or imagine we retain—some
rol over our lives. Our anxiety
s, says Barth, on the un-
kably short-sighted notion that
can escape, by dint of his own
gth and skill, wit and wisdom,
iversal fate. But, replies Jesus,
rich of you by being anxious can
one cubit to his span of life?"
nd here we come to that great



mystery and paradox of the Chris-
tian faith and the hardest lesson we
all have to learn, in school and out:
that true freedom lies precisely in the
direction of *dependence* and *service*.
And that the truest sermon is, like
the sermon of our text, no sermon at
all, in the sense of a lifeless preach-
ment, but rather an invitation to the
dance.

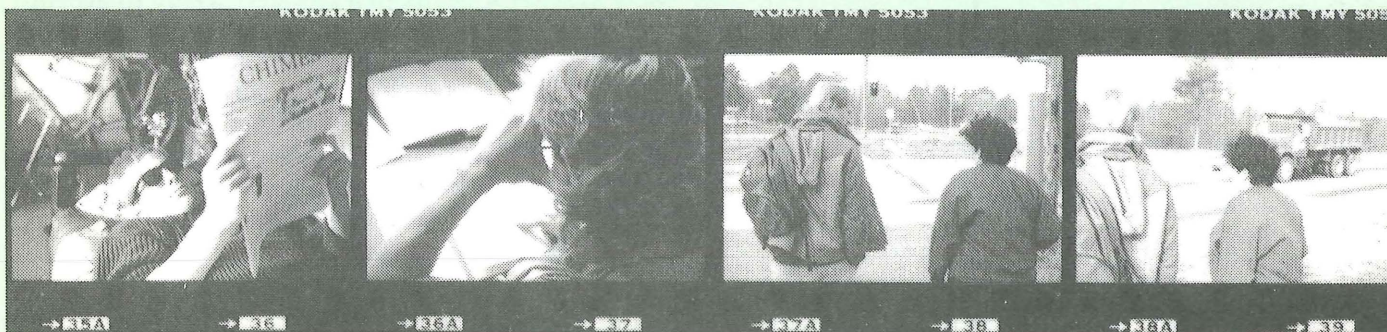
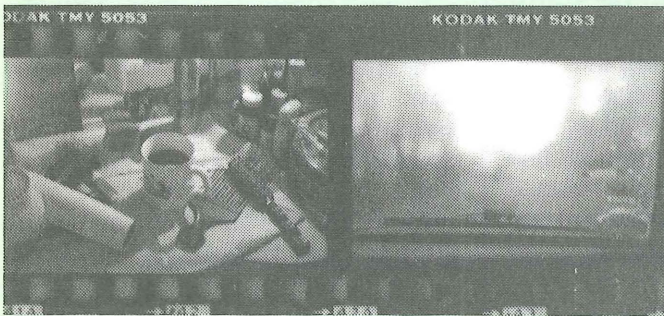
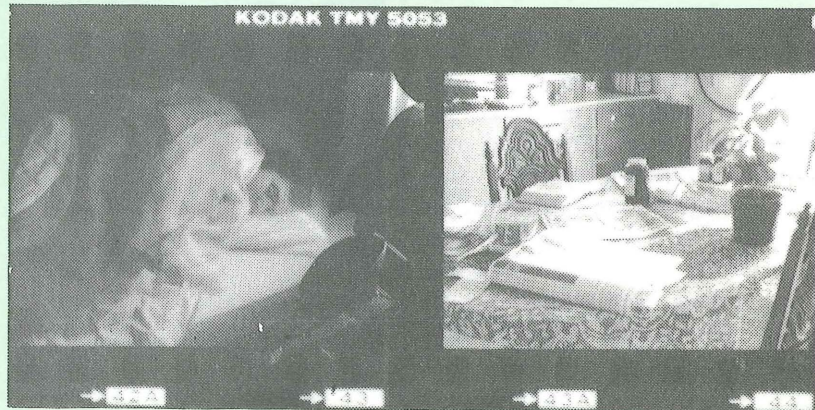
Notice that the option we are con-
fronted with at the beginning of our
passage is not the choice between
bondage and no bondage, between
serving God and being free. No,
we're stuck with service either way.
God or mammon. God—or an
academic degree, or a 4-point
average, or fame or fortune, or all
those other things toward which we
may well be pulled by that most
remorseless taskmaster of all, our
sinful pride, that iron string not
vibrating in our hearts, as Emerson
would have it, but tied cruelly about
our necks. True freedom lies in the
other bondage, where instead of
"making it" we are unmade, where
we recognize that our only comfort
lies in knowing that we are *not* our
own but belong to our faithful
Savior, Jesus Christ.

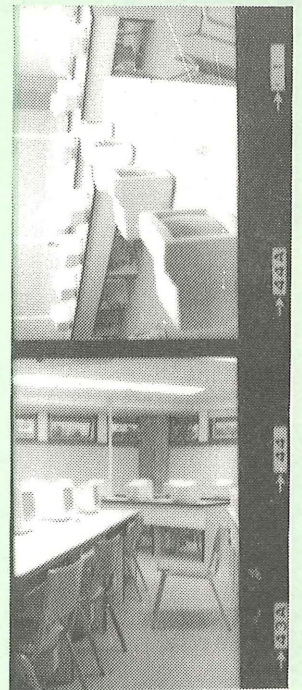
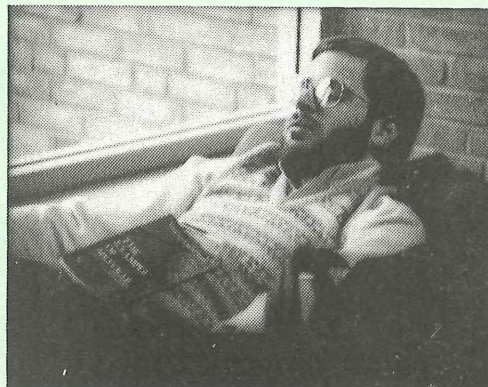
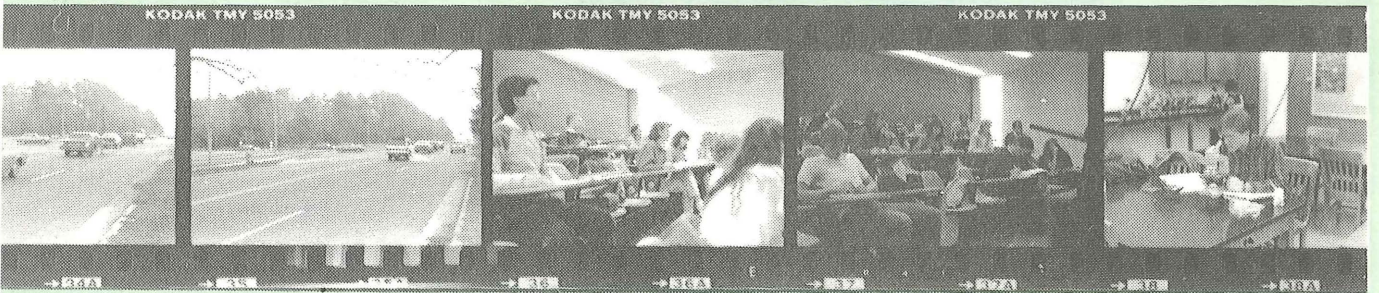
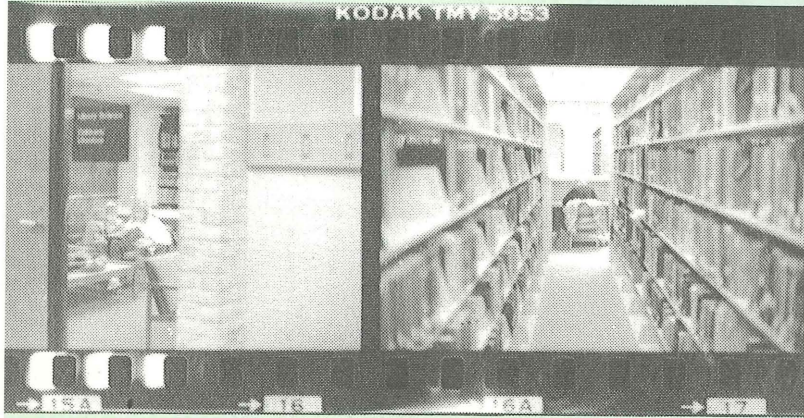
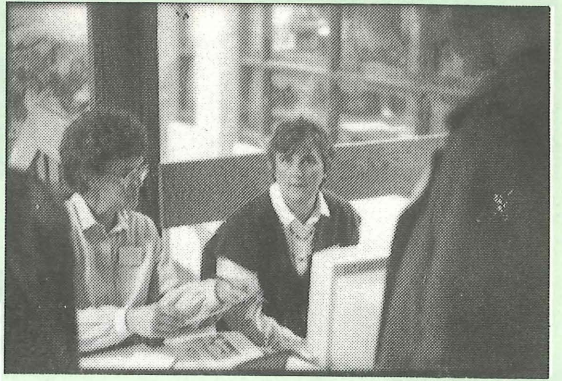
From comfort comes radiant
gladness, the gladness of work to be
done in God's kingdom here and
now—*today!* Our passage is no
invitation to sloth. The whole
context is that of God's kingdom,
which we must seek first. Be not
anxious for the morrow for *today*
there is work to be done. Some of
the work will be hard, and all of it
will need to be carried on amidst the
troubles of the day. We are not
promised a world without cares. The
lily often grows up among the
thorns.

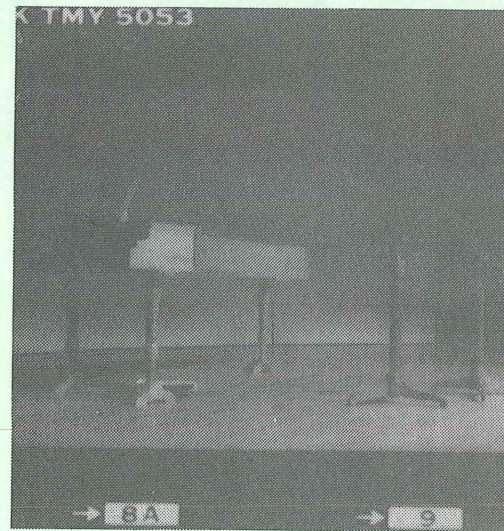
But no longer needing to work in
order to "make something out of
ourselves," but having been unmade
and remade and given back to our-
selves—because accepting God
leads in a wonderful way to accept-
ing ourselves—we can now work in
unselfconscious joy and thanks-
giving, at peace with the Lord whom
we serve is the only release from our
anxiety, and at peace with the gifts
he has given us.

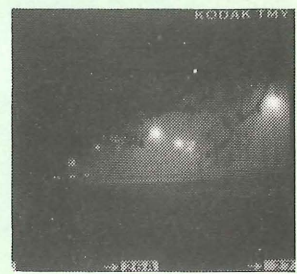
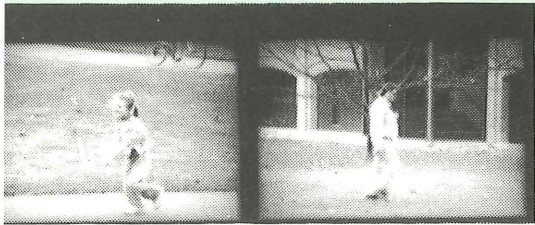
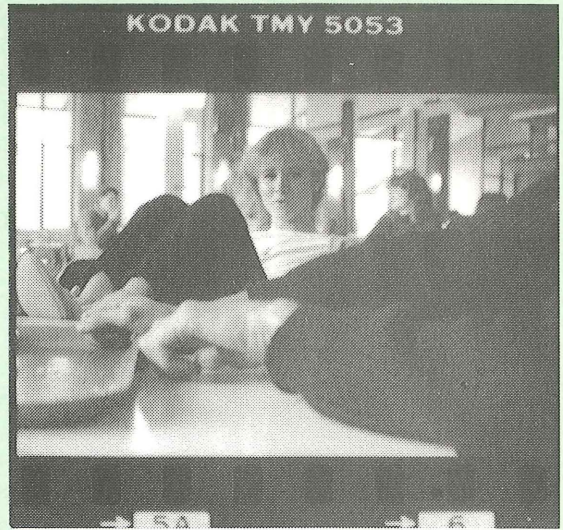
What joy in the bird, whose work
is to sing!

—Jon Pott









Subtle Sexism

by Lisa A. DeMol

Feminists today are concerned with sexism in language, as they and all women should be. The controversy over sexist language mainly concerns the use of the male forms of pronouns as generic. This, however, ignores the real sexism in language. Most linguists agree that people use language to shape reality, and that current language is formed by the attitudes and beliefs of its users. Thus, of far more importance to feminists and to women in general is the use of language by men to keep women "in their place" and to deny them equality.

First of all, it is important for women and men alike to see how language is used to create and shape the world around us, and therefore our ideas and attitudes. Language is a cyclical process, absorbing new thoughts or new meanings in its words, then perpetuating these thoughts and meanings through their constant use. According to Sally McConnell-Ginet,

language is used not just to tag experiences but to organize thought and social life in various ways. Linguistic 'codes' are constantly changing, not through legislation but through women's and men's strategic uses of them, uses embedded in society, history, and culture (7).

She reinforces this by adding that

Linguistic structures themselves are impotent: individual thought and socioculturally situated linguistic processes of production and interpretation endow them with significance and turn them into weapons—or tools (21).

Thus, the damage of language lies in the socially-accepted meanings of words, not the words themselves.

The danger, then, is the unthinking use of words and language to maintain men's and women's places in society. Since most language users do not stop to consider the exact meaning of each word that they utter, they do not realize what they are conveying. Words become automatic, habitual, and the thoughts behind them become as accepted as the words. McConnell-Ginet points out that

it is in part because the connections of language to thought and to social life are seldom explicitly recognized that language use can enter into the transmission and preservation of attitudes and values that are seldom explicitly articulated (7).

Understanding the connection between language and socio-cultural thought, then, is the base for changing language to portray and convey men and women as equal, from their present status as more and less equal.

This background on the relationship between thought and words now becomes the reference point for specific problems in the English language. As I have mentioned above, the real abuse of English goes far deeper than the use of masculine nouns and pronouns to refer to all human beings. Feminists and others have not yet concerned themselves with how women are referred to in everyday language. These subtle abuses are much more damaging to women and to the feminist cause than the use of "mankind" as a label for all humans.

For example, no one quite knows what to call people in charge anymore. "Chairman," which, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, has been in use since at least 1654, is seen as referring to men only. Even though the term "chairwoman" has been in use since at least 1699 (again according to OED), most people are not comfortable with it and seek a neuter word such as "chairperson" or "chairwoman." This is the kind of controversy which most feminists involve themselves in, but it does not go deep enough, especially since the socially-accepted, equal word has been in use for almost three centuries. They would be better off congratulating themselves that there were chairwomen "back then" and investigating how the rest of the language has changed.

For language use has changed. Word meanings, especially those concerning women, have changed for the worse, and more have been added to the list of pejorative terms for women. A case in point is the change in the word "lady" opposed to "woman." A lady used to be the female equivalent to a knight, someone with social grace and a sense of humor. Now, many women consider it an insult to be called a lady, not just because of the femininity implied, but also because of the pejorative meaning the word has acquired. "Lady" now carries connotations of "lady of the evening" or "cleaning lady," whereas "woman" has risen from its general meaning of "an adult member of the female sex" to include ideas of strength and independence.

Even more alarming than these changes in meaning are the num-

tion with women's sexuality to the exclusion of her other attributes and as evidence of widespread misogyny (6).

Although I do not feel that this evidence points to "widespread misogyny," I believe that it is a symptom of the ways and means used to "keep women in their place," and very effective, at that. How are women to become equal or even to be respected if the very language that they use is prejudiced against them? Witness the change from "suffragist" to the diminutive "suffragette" when it began to look like female activists would win women the right to vote (Miller and Swift, 120-1). Men have control over the language, and however inadvertently, perpetuate attitudes

toward women through its use.

Thus, in order to equalize the social positions of women and men, women need to assert more control over the language and protest the use of demeaning terms. Feminists and all women should be concerned about the use of language as a form of subtle power and social control. To the famous cigarette advertisement "You've come a long way, baby" women should reply "Then why are you still calling me 'baby?'"

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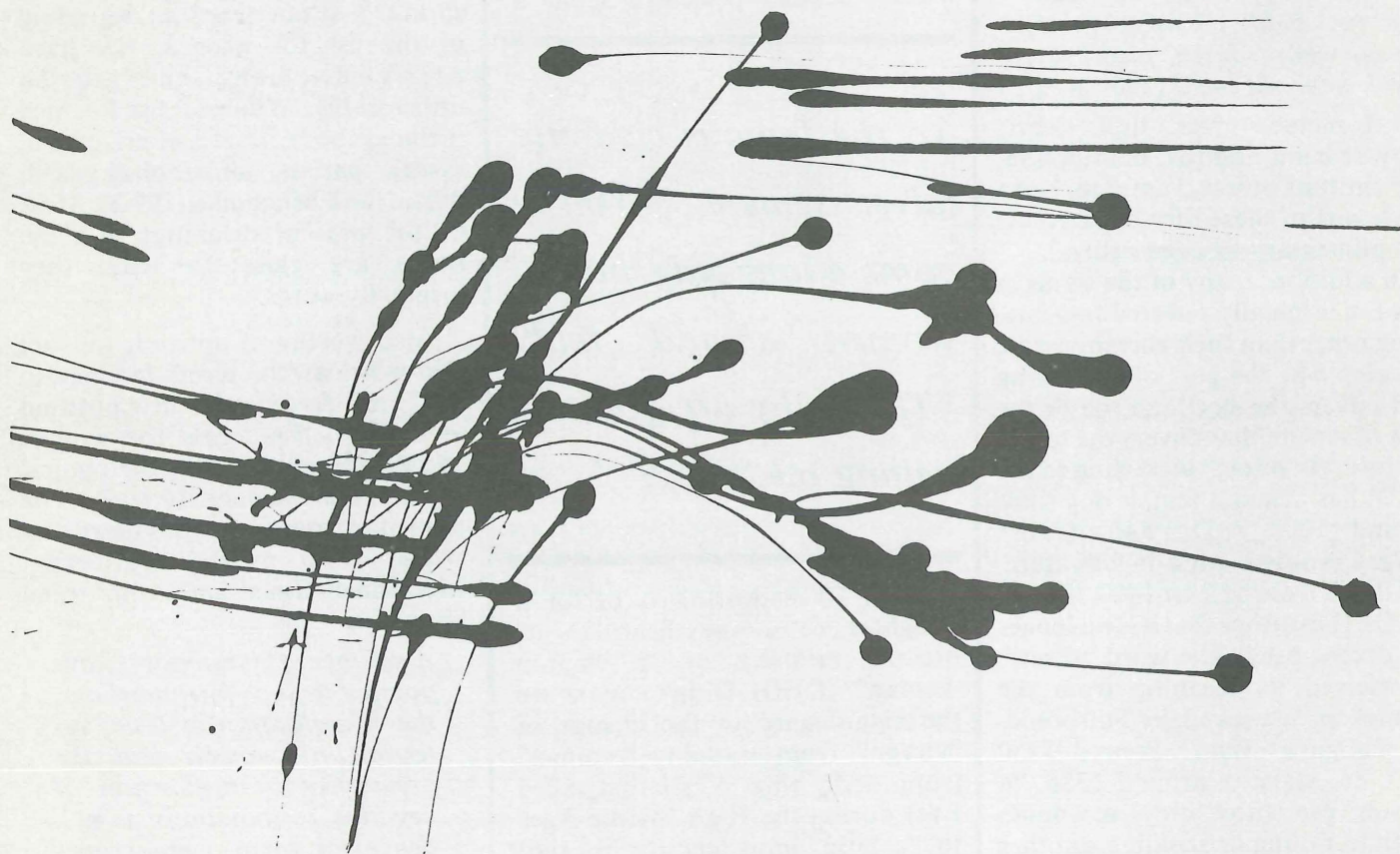
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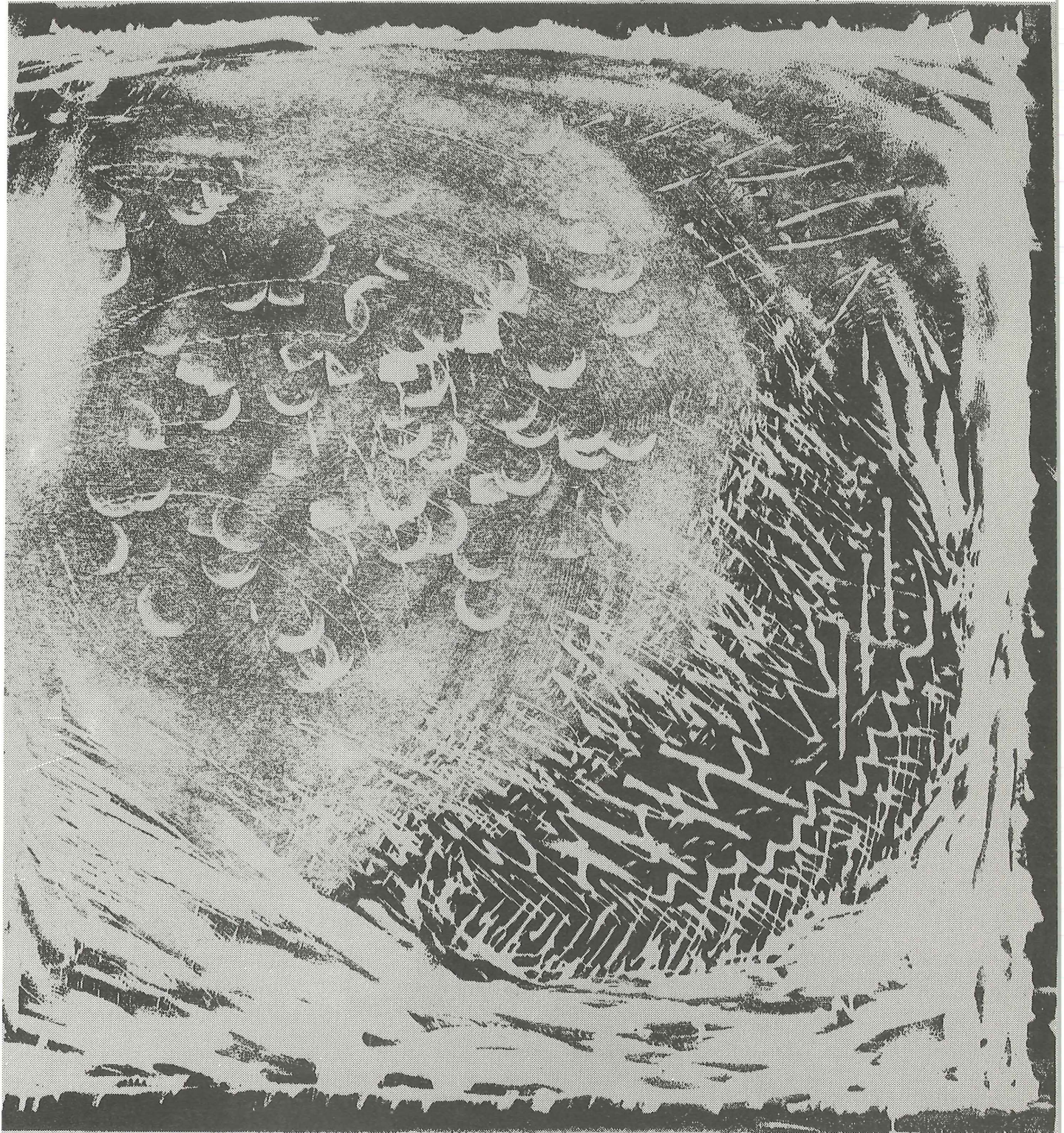
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—Tom Brya



—John Jeninga

THE CHECKERBOARD

Blue and red lights splotch the stage
But shadows deep in a corner of
the Checkerboard
Hide a man putting flask to glass to mouth
until he's stoned.

On stage, center microphone:
"Welcome to the Checkerboard. We're
the Teardrops, and we just here to play
the blues."

A guitar screams in the background
and people groove to the tune.
I sit back to watch the bobbing and swaying of

salty-wet bodies dark as Indian ink
but for a few drops of milky white.

My cigarette shoots a thin, blue trail upward
where it joins other thin, blue trails
and gathers to a haze that frustrates

the dingy light. On stage, center microphone:
"Just sit back and relax now. We're the Teardrops
and we gonna keep on all night playing
the blues."

—Jeffrey DeVries

The promise receives a smattering of applause.
I order another Miller Lite to drink away
the probing eyes of a mass that demands uniformity
and like the man drunk in the corner,
I know why they call it the blues.

—Jeffrey DeVries

No arms No legs
your eyes, coal, stare blindly
while constant smile holds
snuffed out pipe.

Your heart is ice,
you wear hat and scarf to keep the cold
in; still you smile.

Why do you smile? What pleasant
thoughts tantalize your senseless head?
How can you smile
who melts in one month?

GRADUATION DANCE

We walk to seek, and take our walking slow.
The dance of teenage dreams—girls in a line;
We face our fear, and in so doing grow.

They stand and wait, expectant in a row;
Smile, a scowl, a coy or aloof sign—
We walk to seek, and take our walking slow.

The stomach knots, the battle rages on:
Desire against the dread inside young minds.
We face our fear, and in so doing grow.

So many choices we must look upon;
The hidden path is dark and without signs.
We walk to seek, and take our walking slow.

Complacent lives, adults now: brashness gone.
But still no answers come to human kind—
We face our fear, and in so doing grow.

We must elude where we must hope to go—
The final end of all our finite time.
We walk to seek, and take our walking slow.
We face our fear, and in so doing grow.

—Steve Ondersma

FRIENDSHIP BRACELET

It has lots of pretty colors.
It's neat.
It ties on and doesn't come off.
It means a lot.
It stretches, and doesn't mean as much.
(Or it doesn't mean as much, and stretches.)
It comes off.

—Steve Ondersma



—Tammy Musbach

Carrying on: Talks for New Faculty at Calvin College

by Nicholas Wolterstorff

The substance of what follows was initially given in the form of three talks to new faculty members at Calvin College in the fall of 1987. Several persons, after hearing the talks, asked that I write them up and make them available in print. In doing this, I have not tried to obliterate the evidence that this material was indeed first presented in the form of talks.

—Advent 1987

III: OUR FUTURE

In this third part of our discussion I want to look ahead—not so as to offer predictions about our future but to lay before you some of the issues which, as I see it, we should be discussing and resolving. Naturally many of the issues that I will raise spring out of the matters discussed earlier.

I shall take for granted some very important parts of our life together. My not mentioning them should certainly not be taken as indication that I regard them as unimportant. Over the past 35 years we have been blessed with extremely skillful administration and extraordinarily solid financial planning and backing. I gratefully take that for granted here. It is my judgment that unusually skilled and concerned teaching takes place at Calvin College. I shall also gratefully take that for granted. Likewise I shall take for granted the rather large amount of high quality scholarship which is today being produced by the faculty.

If I were assigned the task of writing the history of Calvin College, I would enter the project expecting to schematize the college's history into four periods. Close contact with the fine texture of our history might make me change my mind, but that would be my initial inclination.

The first period would be the first 25 years—from 1920 to 1945. The school throughout this period remained small, never having more than 400 students; and it was not only a project of the Christian Reformed Church but remained a project for the Christian Reformed Church. No one thought that the college should be viewed as part of the denomination's service of a broader community. The school longed to acquire status

on the American academic scene; it regarded success of its graduates at the University of Michigan as the certification of such status. The controversies inside the college were mainly theological ones, spilling over from controversy in the denomination. In part, these were controversies peculiar to the Reformed tradition; in part, they were the reflection within the ethnic community supporting the college of controversies going on in American Christianity generally.

The second period would be the next 20 years—from 1945-1965. Here the basic dynamic was the attempt to keep up with the rapid numerical growth of the student body. Eventually this led to the decision to build a new campus. Though the returning veterans in the early part of this period gave a different flavor to the student body from that which it had earlier—a worldly flavor—the college was still living on the religious/intellectual capital it had inherited from the Netherlands and had developed in its own way in the preceding period. The college was oriented almost exclusively toward teaching and was still inward-looking and separatist. Early in the period there was a flurry of political controversy; an editorialist in the denomination thought that some members of the Calvin College faculty were too "leftist" in their orientation. Later in the period there was intense conflict between the Dutch version of the Kuyperian inheritance and the American version.

The next period would be the next 20 years—from 1965-1985. Here the theme would have to do with new initiatives taken in a staggeringly large number of different directions. The liberal arts component of the curriculum was revised, a good number of professional programs were added, an umbrella scheme was adopted for the curricula of the professional programs, the fine arts began to flourish, a great burst of faculty scholarship took place, the relations to the Netherlands withered away, the college entered the world of the evangelical colleges and came to be acknowledged as the leader therein, faculty members developed close Catholic and ecumenical contacts, contacts were established across the world with institutions of higher education in

ormed tradition, the Multi-Cultural Lecture-
was founded, The Calvin Center for Chris-
Scholarship was begun, a larger number of
campus programs were instituted, the
portion of CRC students to non-CRC
students began steadily to decline, the propor-
of faculty members who were not graduates
Calvin College and had never been members of
CRC began steadily to increase, many new
buildings were constructed, and so forth. The pic-
is one of rapid internal diversification, artifi-
cation, and strengthening, combined with a
id opening up and out. Looking back, it is
ur that there were no serious, threatening con-
versies. The controversies that there were fell
to the category of The Interesting.

Now we are entering a new, fourth, period. The
mood of this period at its beginning is one of con-
siderable anxiety, at least among the older faculty
members. Where will the dynamics that have
been set going to take us? What will the multipli-
cation of professional programs mean for the
quality of the liberal arts component? What will
opening up to non-CRC students and faculty
members mean for the continuance of the tradi-
tion which has undergirded the college? What
does the leaving of some prominent scholars to
pursue their calling elsewhere mean for the quali-
ty of the faculty? What does the demise of chapel
and all-college assemblies, and the disappearance
of a regular faculty gathering point, mean for our
intellectual and spiritual cohesion? Does our size
constitute an encumbrance for the implemen-
tation of our vision? These are some of
the anxious questions being raised.

The image of someone entering adulthood
comes to mind. We are an institution entering
adulthood, facing the dangers and opportunities
characteristic of that transition. Perhaps enter-
ing adulthood is, for most institutions, the most
difficult transition to make. Perhaps this is when
they are most likely to falter. The fresh
enthusiasms of infancy and puberty are gone; the
exciting lunges and explorations of adolescence
are over. Now one has to settle down and fulfill
the promise.

Let me place under three headings the chal-
lenges which I think we must address as we
anxiously enter the stage of our adulthood: chal-
lenges pertaining to our *identity*, challenges per-
taining to our *program*, and challenges pertain-
ing to our *mission*. And let me say, in advance,
that I have not here set myself the task of formu-
lating proposals for meeting these challenges; I
believe deeply that such proposals ought to
emerge from our conversations together. I have
set myself the task simply of discerning and

formulating some of the challenges.

First, then, challenges with respect to our
identity. One can think of our identity as shaped,
principally, by three factors: by the project we
have set for ourselves; by the sort of people we
have enlisted to carry out the project; and by the
extent to which those people are inspired and
energized to carry out the project.

In my preceding talks I suggested that our
identity has in great measure been determined by
the fact that we self-consciously embrace the
Kuyperian conviction that God in Jesus Christ is
Lord of all our life, including our scholarship and
teaching. It is my own deep conviction that this
should remain so—that we should remain a
college in the Reformed tradition of Christianity
and should remain a college committed to the
project of integral Christian learning. Lest there
be misunderstanding, however, let me add a point
made earlier: we in our age must appropriate our
tradition anew—highlighting some themes,
allowing others to recede into oblivion, trying
ever anew to penetrate to the inner genius of the
tradition, showing where the tradition has failed
to be faithful to its best insights and where its best
insights themselves are defective, critiquing the
tradition in the light of our understanding of the
Scriptures and our knowledge of reality,
extending the reach of the tradition into new do-
mains of thought and action and feelings.

But though our tradition has remained con-
stant amid variations in appropriation, the
character of the personnel enlisted for carrying
out our project has been changing drastically; I
feel sure that it will continue to do so. The promi-
nence of white Christian Reformed Dutch-
American males has been diminishing and will

*Now we are entering a new, fourth
period. The mood of this period at its be-
ginning is one of considerable anxiety, at
least among older faculty members.*

continue to diminish. In this change lies one of
the principal challenges facing us: How can we
preserve the identity of the tradition amid these
radical changes of personnel? How can that
which is passed on remain recognizably constant
when there is such change in those to whom it is
passed on and in those who must pass it on? In the
past, we who were white, Dutch-American
Christian Reformed males tried to assimilate
those who were not like us, in one or more of

these respects, to our own patterns of thought, feeling, and action. In my first talk I suggested that we can no longer responsibly work with the model of assimilation, but should replace it with the model of dialogue, for those new people bring something of great value to us in their persons. But to enter into genuine dialogue with someone is not to know in advance where the dialogue will take one. So here is the anxious worry: how can the tradition which has nourished this college remain constant and alive as we begin to practice dialogue rather than assimilation? Traditions are in good measure passed on through the fine texture of ordinary life. Obviously that is no longer adequate. How do we pass it on now? How do we recover important but forgotten parts of it? We must talk about this together. That is to say, we must not just ask the white Dutch-American Christian Reformed males among us how this can be done. We must *all* talk about it *together*.

We must also find new arenas in which to discuss together the vision which inspires us. In my last talk I laid out the vision in broad out-

In my first talk, I suggested that we can no longer responsibly work with the model of assimilation, but should replace it with the model of dialogue.

lines. I deliberately skirted questions which can legitimately be raised concerning various claims which go to make up the vision, and I deliberately skated over points of ambiguity. But legitimate questions there are; we must not fear or even hesitate to address them. In each generation anew we must ask what it is to be a Christian scholar and what it is to engage in Christian learning. In each generation anew we must work to deepen and correct our vision. I think that the turmoil in the fields of epistemology and philosophy of science make this a particularly propitious moment in history to address these questions with imagination and depth.

And then we must look for new ways of keeping the vision before us, new ways of remembering it, new ways of enlisting support for it; we must look for new ways of developing a common purpose, both within the faculty and within the student body. Can we recover something like all-college assemblies and chapel services? Or have

those become things of the past, never to be covered? If so, what can and should be put in place? Having strengthened the department the college enormously over the last 20 years must now work hard at collegial cohesion; we no longer take that for granted. An institution strong only when it has a unifying vision, and the members of the institution know what the vision is, and when they are committed to it see themselves as making a significant contribution to its implementation. Without such vision we perish.

My assumption in these remarks has been that our identity in the future is not to be determined by seeing to it that our faculty and student almost all Dutch-American members of the Christian Reformed Church, but is to be determined by the continuity of the Reformed tradition among us and by the continuity of the project of Christian learning. Thus it is the question arises of how the tradition and the project can be continued amidst a radical change in the character of the personnel. But let me also pick up a point from our last discussion. A relevant change in personnel is not just to be seen in the fact that many more of our faculty and students come from outside the Christian Reformed Church. There are also deep changes which have taken place in the mentality of our Christian Reformed students. Once upon a time, as I mentioned earlier, the tradition in which those students were reared took a firm stance of over-againstness toward American secular and religious culture, while at the same time itself being rough and sharp edged. I suggested that students then came to us with either a sense of estrangement from American culture or a sense of estrangement from their tradition. Either whether they were patriots or rebels, they entered their college career as a way of deepening that stance. But things have changed. The rough edges have been rubbed off the tradition and the sense of over-againstness has diminished considerably. Especially to this loss of a sense of over-againstness we must, in my judgment, address ourselves. For Christians, while indeed dwelling here, caring intensely about their dwelling here, nonetheless citizens of another nation and members of another Reign. The rules of that Reign, the Kingdom of God's shalom, are not by any means the same as the rules for life in America.

I move on now to those challenges facing us which can be put under the heading of our program. And here I want to talk first, and most of all, about curriculum.

Evangelical Christian colleges in this country—and even more clearly so, fac-

bers within these colleges—operate almost
ys with one or the other of three different
els for the curriculum. Some operate with
might be called the *Christian vocation*
el. The idea here is that the goal of the cur-
um is to equip students for performing their
pations as Christians. This model comes in
y variations. Some would limit the occupa-
in question to so-called “Kingdom work”:
gelism, ministry, Christian education, nurs-
perhaps communications. Then the goal of
college curriculum is to equip students for
e distinctively Christian occupations. Others

*to enter into genuine dialogue with
one is not to know in advance
re the dialogue will take one.*

think in terms of this model would expand
ope of occupations on which the college has
ve to the normal run of occupations. To the
tion which then arises, what it is to perform
e occupations as Christians, different
ers would be given. Some would say—I do
nvent this, I report what I was recently told
someone who believed it—that being a
stian in one’s occupation consists mainly in
g honest and using all appropriate oppor-
ies to witness to those with whom one comes
contact. On this way of seeing the matter, the
iculum of the college would be oriented
rd equipping students for holding down the
ral run of occupations and toward building
heir moral fiber and equipping them for wit-
ing.

second curricular model which one often
s on the scene today is what I have called the
Christian humanist model. Here the goal is to in-
students into humanity’s great stream of cul-
—into humanity’s art, its philosophy, its
nce, its history, etc., always struggling to
egrate” this study of culture with one’s Chris-
faith.

thirdly, one often finds the *Christian acade-
-discipline* model. Here the goal is to intro-
e students to the academic disciplines and
ip some of them to work creatively in the
iplines themselves, all the while struggling to
egrate” the discipline in question with one’s
istian faith.

These models will, in practice, display con-
erable overlap. Yet they are three quite dif-
nt ways of thinking of, and structuring, cur-

riculum. Probably the Christian vocation model
appeals most to those in professional programs,
the Christian humanist model, to those in the
humanities, and the Christian academic-
discipline model, to those in the natural and
social sciences. Yet the appeal of the models cross
over such boundaries. Of course other models are
also in principle possible; there might be a *Chris-
tian pragmatist* model, as well, perhaps as a
Christian maturationist model. But the three I
have mentioned seem to me easily the dominant
ones today.

And now to turn to Calvin College: Though
Jellema and Zylstra clearly worked with a Chris-
tian humanist model of curriculum, and though
their own teaching reflected that, they never
succeeded in getting the curriculum of Calvin
College to reflect that conviction with any con-
sistency—this in spite of the great intellectual
weight which they carried. Indeed, as I mentioned
in our last discussion, the curriculum which the
college had borrowed and adapted from the Uni-
versity of Michigan in 1920, and which over the
years it had altered in piecemeal fashion,
exhibited no clear and firm pattern whatsoever
by the ’50s. Nonetheless, it was the uniform testi-
mony of those in the natural and social science,
those in the arts, and those in professional pro-
grams, that they felt themselves to be second-
class citizens in the college.

The curricular reform which took place in the
spring of 1967, on the recommendation of the
Curriculum Revision Committee, exhibited a
clear model—namely, the Christian academic-
discipline model—and in that model, the sciences
and arts were treated with full equity. One of the
grounds which the Committee cited for its recom-
mendation of this model was that which the Re-
formed tradition has long cited for engaging in
higher learning; namely, the “cultural mandate”:
God at creation gave to humanity the mandate to
develop the potentials of creation. The develop-
ment of the academic disciplines is to be seen as
(part of) the carrying out of that mandate.

There was something more that the
Curriculum Revision Committee said, however.
It did not just propose a new model for the curri-
culum. It also argued that the ultimate goal of
Christian collegiate education was Christian life,
not just Christian thought. This is what it said in
one place:

*The aim of Christian education, then, will be
to educate the student to live the Christian
life. We shall not attempt to cultivate the
religious in the student apart from the cul-
tural, nor the cultural apart from the reli-*

gious. We shall not even attempt to cultivate the religious and the cultural side by side. The religious in and through the cultural—that is our aim. For only in and through the performance of one's cultural endeavors does the full potential of one's choice for Christ come to fruition. Whether it be recreation, or commerce, or politics, or art—all of these are to be brought within the scope of faith. And so, in the school, we shall have to pursue the implications of the biblical revelation for recreation, for commerce, for politics, for art, for every area of human life. The development of Christian culture will be our ultimate aim. Not faith added to understanding. Not just faith seeking understanding. Rather, faith seeking cultural expression.*

A rather obvious question arises here: What did the Committee see as the connection between this comprehensive, life-embracing, goal of Christian higher education, and the curricular model which it adopted; namely, the Christian academic-discipline model? Of course the Committee saw the curriculum as means to the goal. But how exactly did it see the connections as working?

The strategy of the Committee was to argue that it is important for the life of the Christian community, as a whole, that some people in the community study the academic disciplines in Christian perspective. Such study, said the Committee, would be of use not only for those individuals, but for the community as a whole as it attempted to live the Christian life in contemporary society. The Committee divided its defense of this claim into two parts:

First, it remarked

*that a great many occupations today are such that if one is to work in them successfully he must acquire a more or less thorough knowledge of the various disciplines. Traditionally this was true of those occupations known as the learned professions—law, medicine, diplomacy, the ministry. But nowadays a liberal arts education at the college level is regarded as an indispensable requirement for successful work in many more occupations, and we can expect of a Christian liberal arts education, as indeed of any other, that it will provide the necessary theoretical background for competent work in these occupations.**

The Committee went on to add, however, that “the justification of a liberal arts education in the Christian community does not rest solely on these

immediate and practical considerations, important as they are; nor should the liberal arts education of a student be slanted primarily toward his future occupation and toward practical use to which he expects to put theoretical learning.” (66) Taking this disclaimer seriously, the Committee then went on to cite more general benefits which it expected to emerge from the education it was recommending. It summarized these by saying that

*it is by developing Christian intelligence, decision, discernment, and appreciation in its students that a Christian liberal arts education, in the form we are recommending, can be of service to the Christian community in the performance of its task of making Christ Lord in all spheres of human life.**

I myself remain convinced that something along these lines is correct. But there was also a very important point which the Committee overlooked; or better, perhaps, about which it made assumptions which I now judge to be untenable. The Committee quite clearly assumed that liberal arts education, in the form it recommended, would energize a student to live the life of faith. Now it is quite true that if the Christian community as a whole is to do its work, in our knowledge-hungry world, it will be useful, if not indispensable, for a rather large proportion of its members of the community to be acquainted with the academic disciplines. But to say that is to say something quite different from saying that such acquaintance will incline, dispose, energize students so to live. Yet quite clearly the Committee assumed that the sort of curriculum it recommended would in fact contribute to the moral and spiritual formation of our students. I now regard that as an illusion. It is an illusion to suppose that inducing Christian thought in students' mind on academic matters is going to do much to shape their lives in the direction of Christian discipleship. Such thoughts may indeed be indispensable to such discipleship; they do not tend to produce it. In great measure it is a rational factors that shape our actions, factors such as discipline, modelling, and empathy—along, indeed with what may be called casuistry: reasoning from principles which the parties in the discussion share, to applications of those principles in life. But if we seriously believe, as I do and as the Curriculum Revision Committee apparently did, that the goal of Christian education is not just to equip students to live Christian lives but also to inspire and energize and dispose them to do so—that the goal is to contribute to the moral and spiritual formation—then we have

ect on how we can make responsible use of
se a rational factors, and how we can make re-
nsible use of reasoning from principles to
lications. Developing the latter would, for
e thing, require much more praxis-oriented
olarship than the academic-discipline model
ls for.

t's clear that such reflections as these take us
ond curriculum into pedagogy, about which
as a community have reflected very little. In-
d, they take us into a consideration of insti-
tional structures. For, much as we as faculty
mbers would prefer that our educative impact
confined to what we say in classrooms, the
th is that our entire comportment is educative
nd beyond that, the comportment of the
ire institution is educative. If the business
ce treats students with consideration, that
ches something.

have come to question the adequacy of the
ademic-discipline model from a second angle.
tice that both the Christian humanist model
l the Christian academic-discipline model
us entirely on culture, to the ignoring of
actual social issues which we as Christians
st all face: issues of justice and injustice, of
edom and coercion, of peace and hostility, of
bility and chaos, of poverty and wealth, of
ism and dignity. Of course, it's true that
ious of the academic disciplines focus their
dy on society. But developing social or
litical or economic theory is different from ask-
; what must be done about the ethical issues
nfronting us in society. Yet the Reformed tra-
tion has always said that it is the calling of the
dy of Christ to engage in redemptive social
ivity. With the Word of God in one hand and
equate theory in the other, we must scrutinize
society to see where it falls short of what it ought
be, must ask what, if anything, can be done to
ng it closer to what it ought to be, and must
n start doing that.

In my own reflections, I began to see that the
ounds of the world scarcely enter our curricu-
lum. We talk abstractly about justice and in-
justice; but we do not look much at concrete cases
injustice, probing their causes and asking what
n be done. Or at least, the academic-discipline
odel of curriculum does not invite us to do this.
talk only of developing culture is to talk as if
lived in a sin-free but culturally-undeveloped
uation. But of course we do not. Our calling is
t only to develop culture but to free the cap-
es. To the cultural mandate of which our tradi-
n has so often spoken we must add the libera-
n mandate.

I have frankly been offering you my own per-

sonal reflections. I have discovered, however,
that these reflections are shared by a good many
other people as well. I believe deeply that they
raise issues we must talk about together. How
can we sensitize students to the suffering of the world
and give them guidance as to what to do about
that suffering, while at the same time treasuring
humanity's cultural inheritance? How can we
make responsible use of the a rational factors
which shape us all without neglecting the rational
factors? How can we engage in responsible
praxis-oriented learning without neglecting dis-
interested learning?

Under the heading of challenges facing us con-
cerning our *program*, I have been speaking about
curricular changes. Let me close this section of
the discussion by briefly mentioning three other
issues concerning programs which I think we
must bring into open discussion.

*We shall not attempt to cultivate the reli-
gious in the student apart from the cul-
tural, nor the cultural apart from the reli-
gious. We shall not even attempt to culti-
vate the religious and the cultural side by
side. The religious in and through the
cultural—that is our aim.*

In one way or another the college, since the
mid-30s, has been discussing whether or not to
offer graduate studies. It is time that we continue
the discussion to the point of reaching a decision.
The fact that offering graduate studies would
probably enable us much better to serve the needs
of foreign students should, it seems to me, play a
significant role in our decision.

We should discuss the proper place of worship
in our community. This is something we have
never done. For most of the college's history there
were required chapel services (I assume that the
college, in laying down this requirement, was fol-
lowing the pattern of American Christian col-
leges generally); and on the old campus there was
a space designed specifically for chapel. We have
waited until just the last few years to design a
space for worship on the new campus; and in the
60s, the requirement of chapel attendance was
abolished. As a consequence, communal worship
now has only a minor role among us. Now that a
chapel is finally under construction, the time is
right for us to cease to let the matter drift and to
think seriously about the place of worship in the
program of a college which locates itself in the

Reformed tradition.

Finally, it is time for us to unify our reflections on the liberal arts component of the curriculum with our reflections on the professional programs component of the curriculum. The fact that we have at present no way of assigning priorities between professional and liberal arts education has produced considerable anxiety in many members of the faculty.

Let me turn lastly to the challenges which face us with respect to our *mission*. What I have in mind here are questions concerning the various constituencies and communities that, in one way or another, we should be serving and interacting with. Once upon a time our mission was clear: to teach 18 to 22-year old students in classrooms who came to us from the Christian Reformed Church. Things have changed dramatically, in a multiplicity of ways. The changes have the consequence that it is now unclear what our mission is. It has changed, that is clear. But what is it now? Lack of clarity on this issue makes it difficult to set priorities. We have at present a fairly clear understanding of how scholarship fits into our mission. But on many other issues we are uncertain. Let me mention just a few.

What is our role in the American evangelical community, and then, more particularly, in the community of American evangelical scholars? Currently we are prominent members of the Christian College Coalition; and currently we teach here on campus some 1500 students who are not Christian Reformed, the bulk of whom probably fit under the amorphous category of "evangelical." Are there other things we should be doing than these? Are we adequately doing these?

What is our role in the Catholic and ecumenical communities? Traditionally we have steered clear from both of these. But here too large changes have occurred. We in the philosophy department now have many close contacts with Catholic philosophers: several of us have spoken to the American Catholic Philosophical Association, our department regularly holds meetings with the philosophy department of Notre Dame, etc. Perhaps similar things are true for other departments. And many of our departments are active in the Christian academic societies which have sprung up within the last 15 years and which almost invariably have broad ecumenical memberships. Are there other things we should be doing? Are we doing well what we are doing?

Lastly, we must talk in a much more serious and sustained way than we have up to this point about our international responsibilities. A colleague and I have just returned from the con-

ference held in Lusaka, Zambia of the International Council for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education. Repeatedly persons from the so-called Third World sounded the theme: help us in the endeavor of Christian higher education. Help us train Christian leadership for our nations. Make it possible for some of our faculty members to spend sabbaticals at your institution. Make it possible for some of your faculty members to spend time with us. I am convinced that we must answer these calls for help. I am also convinced, however, that it would be a serious mistake for us to answer these calls for help without at the same time doing much more than we have to develop the international consciousness of our own students.

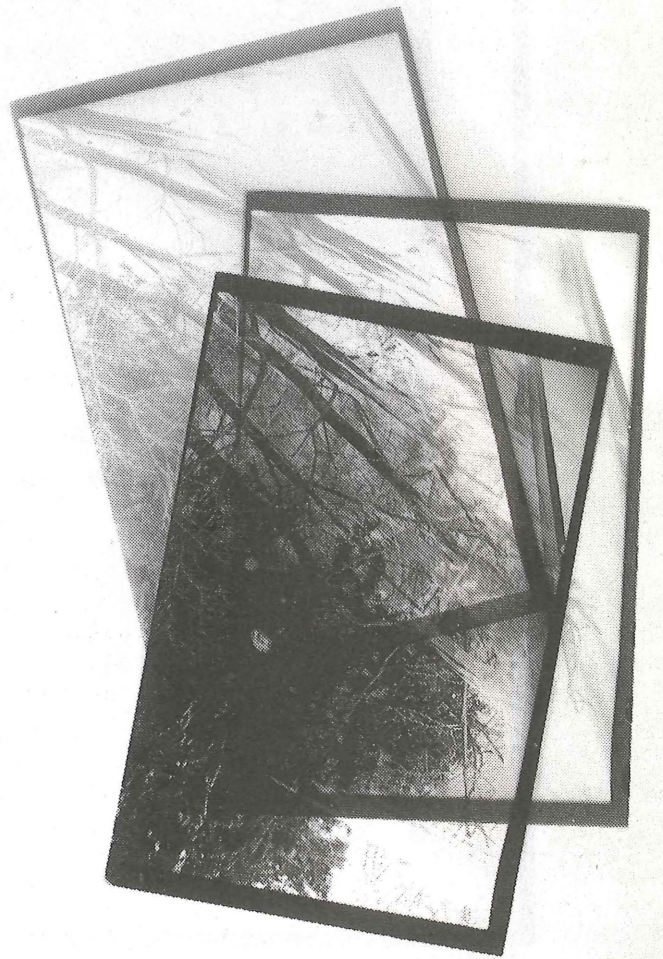
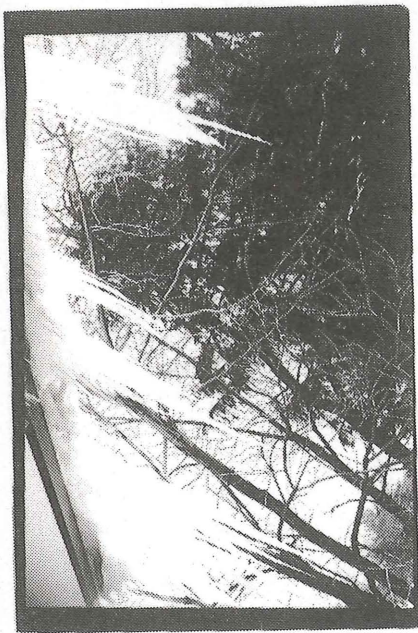
In our change from a small inward-looking ethnic college into a college which has opened out in many different directions and staked out a position of esteem and leadership for itself in many different places, we have followed our intuitions rather than first developing a comprehensive understanding of our new emerging mission. I do not regard that as a mistake. Mainly our intuitions seem to me to have been good ones: one doesn't always have to think everything through before acting. Sometimes it would be a mistake to do so. But there comes a time when it is appropriate to stand back and reflect and not just go with the flow of things. I think that time has come. It is time for us to set priorities and, instead of just responding to demands, ask whether perhaps there are important challenges and opportunities and responsibilities which we have been overlooking.

These, in my judgment, are some of the things we should be talking about. I understand the anxiety present in the faculty. We stand on a threshold and cannot see what lies beyond it. God has blessed us beyond anyone's expectations over 20 years ago. I myself feel tremendously grateful to have been part of this process whereby Calvin College, and more importantly, the Reformed tradition of Christianity, and more importantly yet, Christian learning, has made its presence felt on the American scene. But let it not be said that we showed great promise in our late adolescence only to let the promise dissipate in our adulthood. It is natural that we should feel anxious. For we face risks. The stakes are large because the opportunities are large. But we are not out on our own. In the opening words of that great catechism which comes to us from Heidelberg over Reformation times, we *belong*—belong not to ourselves but to our faithful savior Jesus Christ. In life and in death, we belong to him. Our security is deeper than our anxiety.

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—Tom Bryant





A Visit to Waldo's Pond

by Jeffrey DeVries

Having been a long-time advocate of Henry David Thoreau's individualism and economy and possessing a germ of the disease run rampant in nature buffs, I decided during my junior year of college to retreat in solitude to a pond just as Thoreau had done 142 years earlier. Like Thoreau, my purpose in going was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles.

In the beginning, I confronted several problems that Thoreau never needed to consider. First, I needed a pond. Unlike Thoreau, I had no Emerson to turn to.

By word of mouth, however, I heard of a small pond in southern Michigan which remained unpopulated. It was perfect. Nestled between fragrant pines, huge oaks, and slender white birches, the pond welcomed all of Thoreau's old companions—slime-covered muskrats, shy woodchucks, and an occasional deer. The pond held a variety of fish which encouraged the frequent visits of ducks and geese. Every morning robins swelled the air with their chirping, and every evening ticked away to the rat-tat-tat of the pond's resident woodpecker. At night crickets performed the works of their greatest composers only to be repeatedly interrupted by a pair of bullfrogs bellowing sweet love to each other. The textures, sights, sounds, smells, all echoed Thoreau. Even the pond's name, Waldo's Pond, paralleled the man and his experiment. I had named it after the only building in the vicinity, Waldo's Party Station, a small liquor store on local highway 45 and well over 1000 yards from my pond.

Having located my pond, I had to admit that I could not live there for two-and-one-half years as Thoreau had done. I needed money too badly. I know Thoreau would have accused me of falling into the same materialistic rut in which society continually spins its wheels, but then, Thoreau never had to contend with rising college tuition. I settled for the life of solitude during my two-week spring vacation.

Through my brief hiatus, I kept a journal, a record loosely modeled after Thoreau's *Walden*, in which I hoped also to shed new light on the human condition. What follows are excerpts from that journal.

April 4

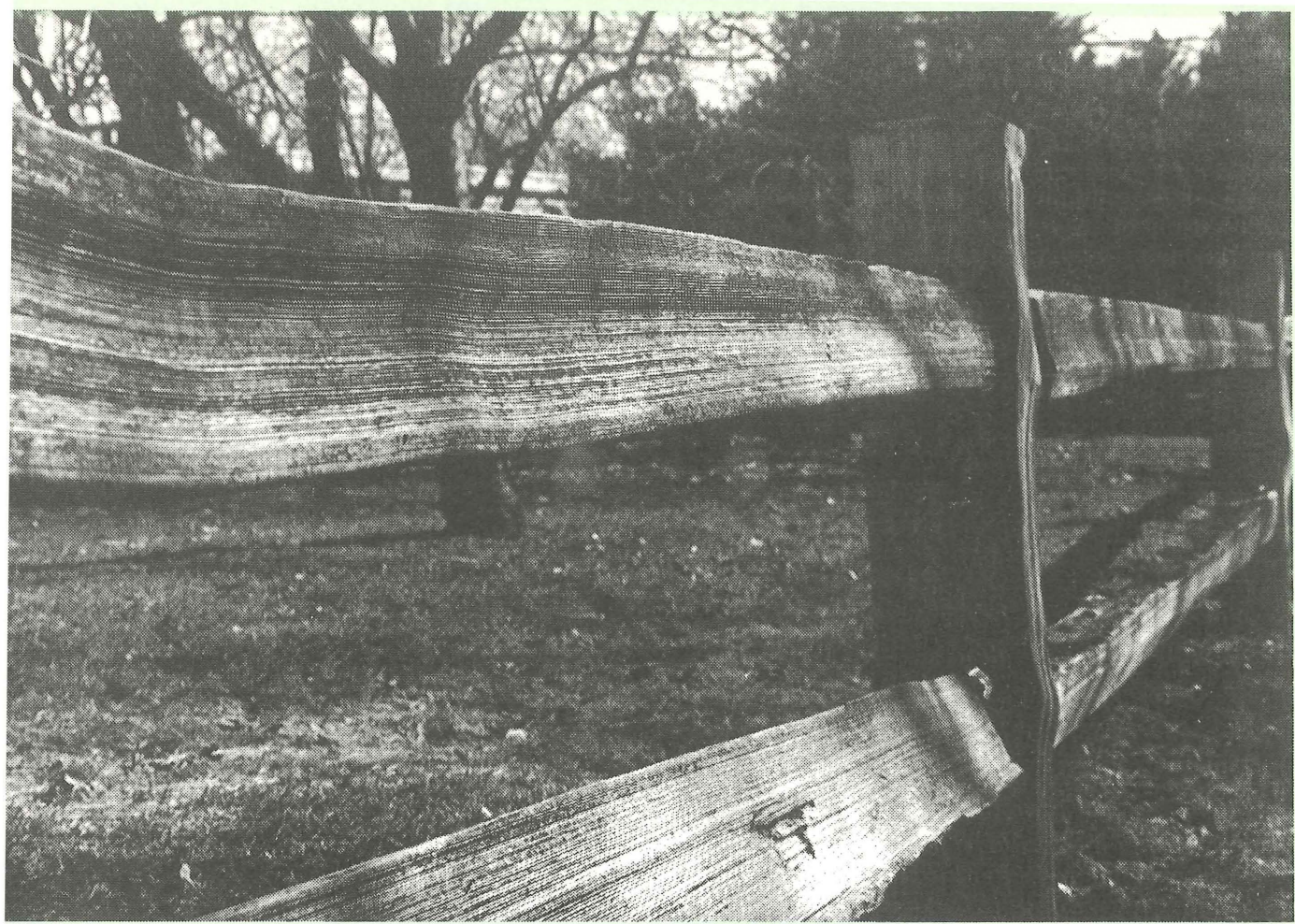
Today was my first day at Waldo's Pond. I left Grand Rapids, Michigan at 6 a.m. and began hitch-hike south. By 9:30 a.m. I had hitched a ride that took me as far as local highway 45, and from there I walked the last ten miles. Having left my watch in Grand Rapids (I refuse to let time run on me while at Waldo's), I can only guess at my arrival time, probably about 3 p.m.

Once here I searched for a spot to pitch camp. After a short while I found a clearing that extended from the pond's shore back 30 feet to a wall of pines. In the middle of the clearing stood a gnarled oak tree, probably just a young sapling when Thoreau graced Walden Pond in 1845. Its twisted old branches spread to form a canopy for my tent, protecting me from both sun and rain. The ground beneath was soft and grassy and would make a good floor. I liked my new home.

With the sun setting, I decided to collect firewood before doing anything else. While in Grand Rapids, I had borrowed a friend's hatchet for just this purpose. I had wanted to make the trip independently, but I found it difficult not to borrow anything. Perhaps I was more generous than I would have been to borrow the hatchet and let my friend have no interest in my experiment. He didn't seem to think so. He just warned me not to lose it or he would murder me. I told him not to worry; I'd return it sharper than when I borrowed it.

I left to find firewood. It was a pleasant evening at Waldo's. Somewhere on the other side of the pond a woodpecker noisily hunted for his supper. The fresh scent of pine teased my nostrils, and my boots rustled leaves and twigs beneath me. A light wind blew from the north, making me turn up my collar to the evening's coming chill and reminding me to finish my task.

I soon found a dead birch tree surrounded by its fallen appendages. I took my hatchet and hacked at the disembodied limbs until I had a pile of firewood that would last a week, maybe a week and a half. Unfortunately, on the last chop, I had an accident. Cocking the hatchet back over my shoulder, I paused and then swung down hard. Midway the hatchet became light in my hand. I missed the limb and toppled face down into the dirt. Wiping my eyes clean, I saw the hatchet



d was missing. I raked the floor of the forest in
 arch of the decapitated head, but with the sun,
 k my hope of finding it. Slightly dismayed but
 fident that the woods would provide means of
 lacing the hatchet, I returned to camp.

After lighting a small fire to provide light in the
 ing day, I erected my tent, removed twigs,
 ves, and an old Hershey's bar wrapper from
 ide, burst my lungs inflating my air mattress,
 I rolled out my sleeping bag. This done, I
 ank a beer, ate some pretzels, and listened to
 crickets, one by one, begin tuning for their
 htly performance. Overhead an owl hid
 nself deep in the branches and hooted his
 cratic wisdom to the woodland creatures.

It is now late in the night, and I am reflecting on
 day's accomplishments. I have a more or less
 terproof home, which provides me with all the
 mforts I need. Furthermore, I can compute the
 st of my small home right down to the last
 ail, an act few, if any, home-owners can do.
 e following were my costs:

- nt \$40.00
 (A two-man tent; more space than I needed.)
- flatible air mattress \$10.00
- leeping bag \$20.00
 (I bought it used.)

- Transportation \$ 0.00
 (I hitch-hiked and walked.)
 - Back Pack \$50.00
-
- In all \$120.00

This is all the material I used, except for the
 borrowed hatchet and the firewood and land,
 which I claimed by squatter's right. Thus, I have
 found that as a student, I can have shelter for a
 lifetime—at least a tent's lifetime—cheaper than
 the rent I now pay monthly.

April 5

I woke this morning to the incessant call of
 nature, so I rolled out of my sleeping bag, pulled
 on a pair of pants and boots, grabbed my coat,
 and crawled outside into the lingering cold of last
 night to use the bathroom—a large oak tree
 about sixty feet back in the woods. While I re-
 luctantly exposed my vitals to the icy fingers of
 the morning, a rather large woodchuck
 meandered up to a birch tree, stopped, and eyed
 me curiously. I stared back and then smiled at the
 thought of Thoreau eating a furry rodent like the
 one before me.

The woodchuck rolled over on its back and
 side, stretching and twisting like an acrobat

limbering up. It hopped to its feet and looked at me again. This time I noticed dabs of white around its mouth and chin, like it had finished shaving and not wiped the extra shaving cream away. By the time this observation registered in my brain, the woodchuck had charged.

Pants still unzipped, I ran back toward camp, weaving in and out of trees, leaping over fallen logs and muddy ditches, tripping through underbrush and pricker bushes, then scrambling back to my feet, the whole time with a rabid woodchuck on my heels. I reached camp first. Diving into my tent and zipping the flap closed, I beat the odds and the woodchuck by a length and a half. I lay in my tent, gasping for breath while listening to small, furious claws scratch at the canvas, and all I could think was that this homicidal woodchuck was the great, great grandson of a Thoreau dinner come to avenge his ancestor.

It's now 10 o'clock p.m. I have no more to write in my journal today because I've only been outside twice since that first trip, both times to use the bathroom. I know there's a mad woodchuck lurking in the fringes of the woods, coolly calculating his revenge.

April 6

Robins' singing woke me early this morning. I climbed out of my tent and saw the sun, a huge ball of yellow, orange, and red, peeping over the trees to the east. After an uneventful trip to the bathroom, I decided to stroll around the pond. Approaching the shore, I looked at the water and saw the sun's reflection, a sparkling golden-orange road leading to its maker. Through the mirror images of trees and clouds small minnows skipped, trying to elude their own hungry mothers and fathers. The water was clear and pure, and where it was less than six feet deep I could see old oak and birch leaves and twigs swaying gently above the rippled sand bottom.

On the pond's south side I found a large rock half in and half out of the water. It had collected the day's heat since sunrise, and now after I peeled off my coat and shirt and climbed on top, it generously shared its warmth with me. For the first time in my excursion, I began to understand what Thoreau must have found at Walden Pond. And I loved it. I passed the rest of the morning at that rock, comfortable in my surroundings like an infant in her mother's arms.

Eventually hunger pangs demanded attention, and I returned for lunch. I lit a small fire, and pulled several hot dogs out of my food bag in the tent. I then found a long stick with a sharp point, stuck both hot dogs on the sharp end, buried the

blunt end in the ground at such an angle that the hot dogs cooked at fire's edge, and walked to the pond to grab a beer. I had tied the cans to a low branch and submerged them, using the pond's cool waters for refrigeration. Returning to the fire, I sat on the ground, hugged my knees, and my mind wandered back to the rock where I'd spent the morning. The smell of roasting hot dogs filled the air, and all was still.

I suppose that now is as good a time as any to record my food expenses and show how cheaply a person can actually get by. I bought all my food before leaving for Waldo's Pond, and I expect it to last me through my two weeks here. My food expense was:

Hot Dogs	\$11.
(Oscar Mayer dogs were 20% off.)	
Potato Chips	\$4.
Pretzels	\$3.
(Cheaper than cheese curls.)	
Frozen Pizza	\$3.
(An experiment that failed.)	
Pancake Mix	\$3.
Bacon	4.
Busch Beer	24.
(Cheaper than Budweiser.)	

In all

\$54.

These being all the items I purchased, I actually spent only \$3.87 per day on food. And yet I splurged in several areas. I bought not only chips but also pretzels, though either alone could have provided enough carbohydrates. I also bought bacon for breakfasts after already purchasing a meat product—namely hot dogs. And certainly I brought more beer than I should drink. Without pretzels or bacon, and a 12-pack less of beer, I could have lived on a mere \$2.29 per day. However, my \$3.87 per day is still less than most people now spend.

When I was in the grocery store buying my food supplies, certain people asked me if I thought I could live on beer and junk food alone. Striking at the root of the matter, I answered them that I could live on door nails. If they couldn't understand that, then I figured they couldn't understand most of what I had to say.

April 7

I woke this morning to peals of thunder and the soft patter of rain on my tent. Outside, a light breeze from the east caressed the trees so that the pines and birches waltzed together while the sturdier oaks shook their heads in disapproval. The rain fell quite hard, but beneath the ancient oak, my tent received only a sprinkle. Except for the rain,

pond and forest were quiet. Squirrels did not
ge, chipmunks did not play, and the birds had
vn the coop.

stepped outside to prepare breakfast and
nd my firewood soaked. Choosing the driest
od and kindling, I tried to start a fire. I wasted
ook of matches and then quit. Frustrated, I
rned to my tent, ate a few pretzels, and waited
the storm to pass.

The storm did not pass. In fact, it got worse.
e temperature dropped, the wind shifted to the
th and blew stronger, and the rain changed to
st. The tree limbs above me creaked, and my
t's canvas flapped in the wind. The clouds
tted out the sun, casting a dark shadow across
pond. Lightning bolts greedily reached for
tops, and for the first time since my arrival,
pond bragged waves over six inches.

Within an hour, the inevitable happened: my
t blew down. Angrily, I stepped out to wage
r with the elements. The elements won. Every-
e I fixed one end of my tent, the wind would
it back down while I fixed the other end.
rthermore, the rain had created a small rivulet
the back of the clearing, and as it ran its course
the pond, it washed away the ground beneath
tent. Conceding the battle, I crawled inside
collapsed tent wet and shivering.

It is now late in the day, and it is still raining. I
ve managed to erect my tent again, but my
od, clothes, and sleeping bag are drenched. The
ell of wet canvas assaults my nose, and I think

I'm going to throw up. I hope tomorrow's a better
day.

April 8

It's still raining, and I'm cold. For the last two
days I have eaten nothing but soggy pretzels and
uncooked hot dogs. Last night I left the tent flaps
open for fresh air; the mosquitos feasted. On top
of it all, I think I have a case of dysentery. I
wonder that Mr. Thoreau never had days like
these. At least he never wrote of them in *Walden*.
Even more, I wonder why the hell I'm here.

April 9

Early this morning I heard a blue jay screech.
Excited, I crawled out of my musty tent and into
the sweet breath of a warm spring day. The clouds
of yesterday plastered the eastern sky and
darkened the sunrise, but overhead, the blue sky
promised a new beginning. Not trusting fickle
nature, I looked to the west. Not a cloud in the
sky.

I walked to the pond's edge and silently
observed the returning life about me. A lone bass
cleared water, wriggled like a madman, and dis-
appeared again with a thwump. Thirty feet down
the shore a muskrat slid into the water to fetch its
breakfast while before me a water snake cut its
winding path through my reflection. Robins,
sparrows, and thrushes, having missed several
days of practice, sang all the louder. Far above, a
lone hawk carved an arc in the sky.

Life returned to me as well. I turned and trotted
back to camp. A mother squirrel and two young
ones scampered up the oak tree as I returned,
dropping bits of pretzel they had found on the
ground. I smiled and decided to have some break-
fast myself. My pancake mix was ruined from
mud, but the bacon was okay after I washed it
in the pond. The pretzels and potato chips had
disintegrated so I dumped the mush at the base of
the tree for the squirrels to enjoy at their leisure.
Only the bacon, hot dogs, and most of the beer
had made it through the last two days.

After cleaning the bacon, I realized that I
couldn't start a fire. Only two books of matches
had remained dry through the storm, and I didn't
want to chance wasting any on waterlogged fire-
wood. Disgruntled, I grabbed a six-pack out of
the pond and left for my rock.

As I reached it, the sun burst through the last
clouds of yesterday, painting a faint rainbow in
the east. I climbed on the rock, drained a beer,
and started stripping. When I got down to my
underwear, I took the soggy clothes and laid them
to dry on the inland side of the rock. I slid to the



other end and let my feet dangle in the cold water. I knew I would have to leave Waldo's Pond earlier than planned because of the storm, but I didn't want to think about it. I laid back in the sun's warmth and fell asleep.

The sun showed high noon when I awoke. The front side of my body had burned to a light pink, and I smiled, thinking of all the college kids who went to Florida for the same results. I sat up, drank another beer, and then slid back to check my clothes. They were dry. I wanted to go for a walk, so, feeling comfortable in just my underwear, I left my clothes in the sun, put on my boots, and headed for the woods.

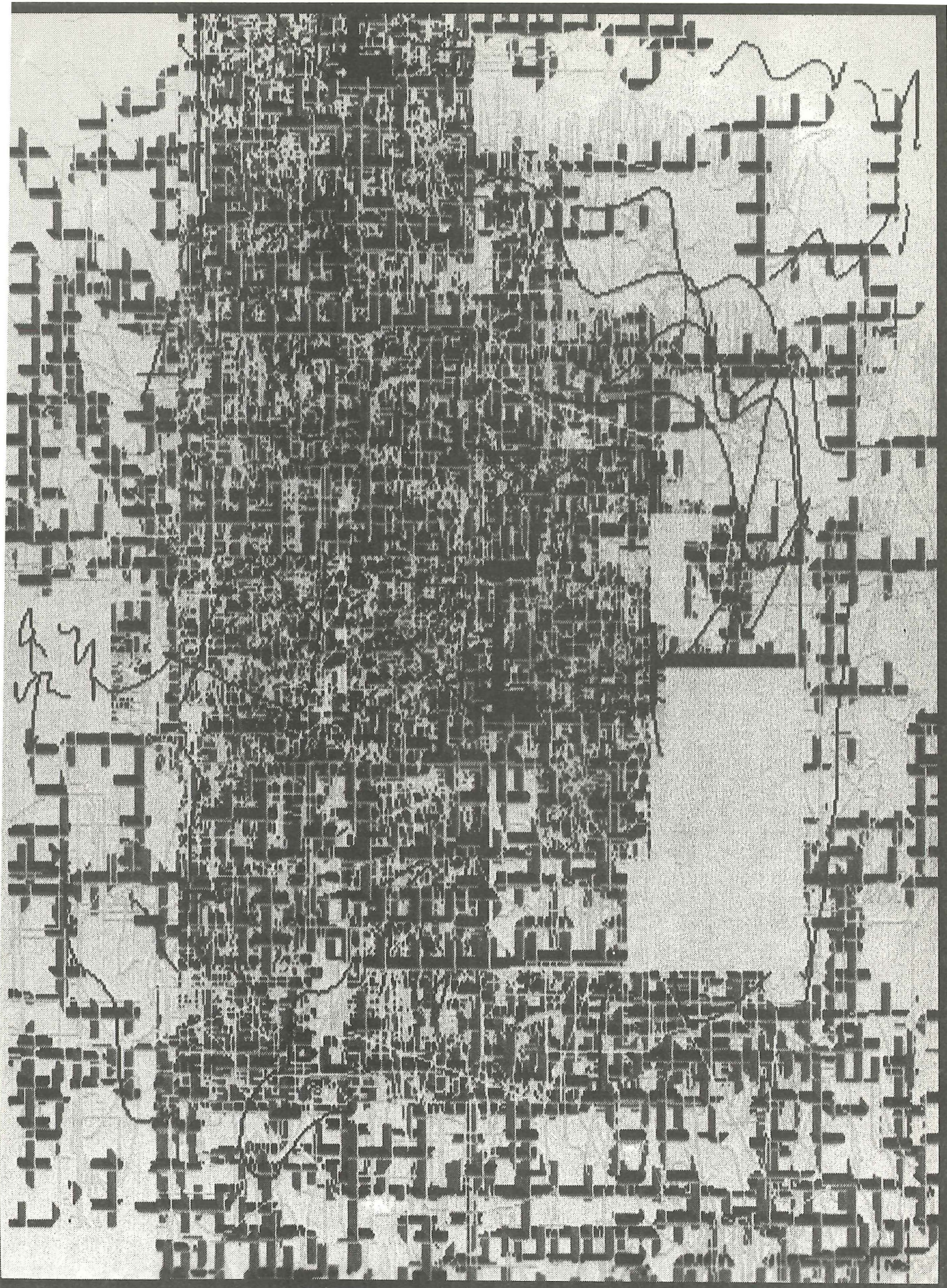
I traipsed along, following the paths carved into the soil by mother nature herself. When thick underbrush promised scratches and itches and bruises, I turned and forged off another direction. At length I came to the forest's edge and then to a meadow filled with milkweed, daisies, violets, and long green grass. In the distance a train whistle sounded, but I could see no train or track. Butterflies bobbed from flower to flower, and the breeze sent soft rippling waves through the field. The meadow before me, this was spring.

I walked a short distance into the meadow before realizing that a farmer coming out to check his pasture might not have much sympathy for a Thoreau fanatic clad only in underwear and boots. I turned back toward the pond. As I left, I glimpsed a tall, thin birch on the wood's edge, and I briefly considered climbing it and riding it back down as Frost had described in *Birches*. But I decided not to. If I had learned anything in the last two days, it was to distrust the stories of our literati.

Back at the rock, I dressed, picked up the beer cans, four full and two empty, and hiked back to camp. When I arrived, the sun was delivering its daily farewell address, the final one I would see from Waldo's Pond. I had run out of food, clean clothes, and patience. Furthermore, I wanted someone to talk with. Solitude was alright for a change, but as a rule, too much of it made me lonely. My life at Waldo's Pond had reached its end, and I had other lives to lead. It was time to go.

April 10

Before I left, I wanted to make one last entry in my journal, something that occurred to me as I packed this morning: Mr. Thoreau got it right. His whole experiment at Walden Pond was basically a crock of shit. But he got it right. He got it right.



—Tom Bryant

Amber

by Kurt Hoeksema

She lived in Biggs' thoughts now that she was dead. He hadn't visited the cemetery for two years, though he had thought of her constantly, a hovering vapor circling his memory. A broken gas pump after last fall's harvest prevented him from visiting her then, and he promised her he would not be caught unprepared again. A fortnight ago inspired by the wind and an unfocused longing, he had decided to make the trip. And with the harvest over for a month and the gas pump working, he had no excuses not to go.

The graveyard was 600 miles across the barren desert, located at the outskirts of a desolate ghost town. The town had been intended as a resort by a group of land speculators, but the war had ended their hopes and a number of their lives—two or three were in their own graveyard. Biggs had counted the stones once, recounting to make sure that there were 153. His wife was preserved in amber, and one of those marble gravestones paid her tribute. If she were buried now, he wouldn't have amber to capture her in.

He loaded up his '57 Ford pickup with a few weeks of food and an Army-issue sleeping bag, filled two gas tanks with 40 gallons of gas, and turned off the electric generator that provided his house with energy. As he pulled on to the old highway, he watched the reddish dust diffuse across his rear-view mirror until the dust cloud was all he could see.

Biggs was by no means a young man. He had stopped counting years after 75. The hair he had left was golden white. His eyes were also faded, registering only the palest blue. In his youth, he had bragged that his Roman nose was the only noble thing about him. His chin had about a week's stubble; it would be two weeks before there would be enough to be worth shaving again, and even then there was nobody to impress with a cleanshaven chin. He had been tall and lean all his life, the paunch never developing in middle age. He never had bulging muscles to speak of, but he accepted his body passively as he had accepted the loneliness of the desert after the war.

When the war had started over 30 years ago, he had moved to the desert to resume his quiet life. He had repaired the desert gas station that his father had bequeathed to him and that he now lived in. Biggs' father had built a bomb shelter under the gas station. And when Biggs had heard

the news on his old Philco radio, he shut off gas tanks and just as quietly moved into shelter and lived off canned goods and read reread dime novels that he found there. When he had reappeared three months later, he found had few customers to sell gas to. He didn't expect to live much longer.

He took swallows out of a water bottle every few miles, but the heat of the day caused both and his car to overheat, so he pulled over to side of the road in order to cool off. He wiped away the sweat from his forehead—perspiration is an indication that the atmosphere has changed since the war, he thought. Now to air dry me to stand in the middle of the desert and let water evaporate off his body. With his two handkerchiefs in his left hand, he jimmied truck door open and stepped down on to pavement.

He wrung the handkerchiefs out and watched the salty sweat puddle on the cement before appearing. After tossing the hankies back into truck from where he stood, he spread out his arms and formed a cross shape. His arms dropped when he tired of holding them up.

He forced himself to move back toward Ford, but a few steps away, he stopped and slowly crouched into a sitting position. Sweat pricked through his skin as he listened to the wind, concentrating on its wavering. Having heard that sound before, he wasn't sure if it wasn't his mind imagining the wind music. His wife had always kept a wind chime hung on the ceiling of the front porch. He remembered that white house sunbleached, vacant, confining in its thin walls. Then he heard the outbreak of gunfire, round after round, earsplitting, building to a crescendo as the noise drew closer.

His mind cleared and he slowly stood, bending his body into correct posture. Moving again toward the truck, he pulled himself in by holding the steering wheel. Start over, he thought. The door closed and he twisted the ignition, pumping the gas pedal repeatedly. The engine finally sputtered to life, and he left a wave of dust once again covering the rear horizon. He gassed the truck and in moments drifted into a deliberate subconsciousness.

Biggs had met the assistant at a travelling science side show in Santa Fe. The tent was dai



single bulb the only light except for two rents in canvas near the ceiling. Biggs said the atmosphere was perfect for a 1940s horror movie, and assistant played the part, baring his teeth and grinning hideously. The assistant then reached hand out over the counter, and Biggs shook man's hand although he had no desire to. Laughing, the assistant said, "How in the hell are you?"

Biggs didn't laugh, and he stared at the man. In dim light, he saw the assistant was over-dressed in his stained white scientist's smock over a tuxedo suit, his hair, brownish-red, long in the back. The man breathed with difficulty. His nostrils, as thick and as large as two Petri dishes, puffed his eyes into little ovals. A placard overhead read "King of the Jews." Biggs was about to ask this odd man what there was to see, but at that moment the man took his eyes off the book

that he had resumed reading and bent over to spit a mouthful of chewing tobacco into a spittoon. Biggs was close enough to barely read the faded old lettering—*The Book of Elektron*.

Biggs decided against further conversation with the man and started a tour of the displays. He started with the stuffed alligator in the corner nearest him. He spent twenty minutes wandering around the folding tables looking at the various displays of butterflies, diseased human organs including a few phalluses, and a complete collection of preserved fetuses at various stages of development, labelled by month on the jars. Behind the last folding table a path led to two curtained boxes that resembled standing coffins. An "Adults Only" sign was posted on a front panel at the top of each box. Biggs walked up to the box on the left and, pulling the curtain aside, stepped inside, the curtain falling closed behind him. His

eyes took a few seconds to adjust. He flicked a glowing light switch. In front of him, an unclothed male—Gypsy: middle 20th century—floated in liquid. He turned off the light and backed out of the booth, shaking his head.

He stepped into the adjoining box out of the momentum of curiosity and turned on the light. A disfigured male was floating in the liquid, his half-bald head slumped to the side, his face a look of agony, his body short-limbed and harsh featured as if it had weathered. Homosexual—late 20th century—read the description. Quickly backing up, he ran into a card table he hadn't remembered seeing. On observing the hundreds of insects captured in amber on the table, his fascination grew and he started to finger the amber blocks. Now what if it were possible to preserve human beings in amber, he thought. The body could be preserved for an eternity. What then if in a few billion years the body could be resurrected? Biggs continued to wonder as he walked out of the tent and into the sunlight that caused him to squint and look away.

During the next two weeks, Biggs visited the sideshow numerous times. He discovered that the assistant, always reading the same book, had a loose tongue after all. To Biggs' questioning, the assistant had laughed about the placard "King of the Jews" being an irreligious jest. "God damn anyone who can't take a little humor, not that there ever was a God," the assistant had said. "I mean, hell, who can take a supreme being seriously? I might as well be God as anybody else."

After a few visits, he had discovered the assistant knew how to make amber from reading *The Book of Elektron*. He had explained to Biggs that "Elektron" was the Greek word for amber because rubbing a rag on amber created an electrical charge. The assistant had also said, "I can make amber so well that even those scientific supply outfits can't tell the difference. For every two amber specimens you see in a museum, I made one of them. In fact, my private collection is the biggest in the world. What I have here is only a mediocre sampling." Biggs didn't know whether to believe the assistant's apparent lie, and so he asked good-naturedly if he might borrow the book. The assistant's face turned angry and he refused with such a fierce "Go to hell!" that he couldn't catch his breath. His wheezing made Biggs nervous, and after the assistant's breathing became more regular, Biggs quickly left.

One evening against all his better reason, Biggs followed the assistant home, being careful not to let the assistant see him or suspect that he was followed. A week later on a Thursday night, Biggs had decided that he must know what was in the

book despite all the danger that stealing it might entail. After midnight, Biggs entered the apartment by forcing the door. He climbed the stairs where he guessed the assistant's bedroom was. Only half way up the stairs, he could hear the man's loud, irregular snore. He walked through the open bedroom door and, with his eyes already accustomed to the dark, saw the book on the dresser. He didn't see the ashtray next to the book, though, so when he fumbled to reach for the book, he knocked the ashtray on the floor. The noise caused the assistant to turn over in sleep but didn't wake him. Biggs had trouble calming himself.

With the weekend ahead of him, Biggs figured he would need until Monday to accomplish his plan. He didn't fear getting caught by the police before then. On Friday, he called in sick to his job at the pharmacy so he could read the book in peace. His wife was concerned since he had missed a day of work in years. She asked him if he was okay, and he lied and said reading the book was important for business. He hated to lie to her and he knew she could tell when he lied, but he didn't feel like making an elaborate defense.

His wife was a strong-willed but delicate woman. When they were dating, she would wear red lipstick to tease him into trying to kiss her. She played along well enough to eventually propose to her. She was the woman he loved despite her parents' objection to their marriage. Her parents finally relented so their daughter could marry at the synagogue. As the agnostic son of an Italian father and a Polish mother, Biggs didn't see why religion had to do with their marriage, but he rode out the ordeal with the tenacity of a patient but committed lover. Only later did Biggs realize that he wasn't convinced that her parents were Jewish.

By Saturday afternoon, he had understood how to make amber, both from the notes the assistant had made in the margins and from his technical knowledge of chemistry learned from working at the drugstore.

After five years of marriage, Biggs was convinced that his wife was holding something back. Biggs considered that his wife was perhaps having an affair. But he could think of no other man than her rabbi that she saw frequently. She generally kept to herself, making intricate ceramic pots in the basement and writing a column on food preparation for their suburban newspaper. Mixed in with her cooking, she daily read the *Talmud* and the *Torah*, quoting her favorite passages of the day to him at the dinners which she prepared more often than he. Her favorites often spoke of "God's resemblance of His people" and of "Salvation coming for the

" He often found the words beautiful, even ting, but didn't understand why she liked passages best or why they even mattered to but the words comforted Biggs. He didn't bother books, but if there was to be any salvation, he figured it would come through her. When Biggs woke up mid-morning on Sunday, and his wife staring at him. He returned her taking in her large blue eyes that always reminded him of the eyes in a Flemish painter's portrait of Christ. Turning her head, she smiled though, the long, dark hair that concealed half her face, quivered her lower lip, and leaned over and planted an uncentered kiss on his lips. If only her beauty could be as immortal as your soul, he thought.

His wife had recently talked of being honest with each other, and Biggs worried that his fears over their affair were about to be confirmed. She didn't seem awkward with him and this only convinced him further that she wasn't telling him the truth.

After an afternoon of leisurely reading through newspaper and of watching Charleton Heston in *Hur*, Biggs began to prepare the batch of resin in his basement. After nightfall, he went to bed up the stairs and put a tea kettle on the stove. On Sunday evenings, he and his wife usually had a cup of Pale Blue Ocean tea before going to bed. When pouring the tea, he slipped a heavy sedative into his wife's tea. After she fell asleep at the kitchen table, he retreated down the stairs and finished mixing the large vat of amber. He carried her downstairs, fearing she might die despite the drug. He slowly submerged her in the sticky liquid, encasing his sleeping wife in amber. He put her while still in the coffin-like kiln into the kiln she used for firing her pots. He turned on the gas so the liquid could harden and went up upstairs to pack. After four hours he went down to turn off the kiln so it could cool.

He took one last look at her in the kiln before he left their white house. I have now given you immortality, he said. Your body can now match the immortality of the gods. Whatever the secret you hold from me, may it preserve your soul as well. When he walked to his car, he tried to understand what he had said.

* * *

About 100 miles from the cemetery, he saw the car, motionless from that distance, the greenery still discernable, beautiful remnants of an era that had left few memories. His stomach began to cramp. The road was as straight as the line from his eyes to the trees. He took his hands off the wheel, bending over to raid his knapsack and eat a peanut butter sandwich. In years past, he usually had jelly on his sandwiches, but now he

was lucky if he could get a few peanut plants to grow in his greenhouse.

He moved his hands back to the wheel, taking his time, eating his sandwich, and squinting in the near blinding sunlight. His sunglasses didn't help much; ritual accounted for their use, and carelessness accounted for their abuse. They had been soldered so many times that their existence, like the old man's, was an anomaly. Out of a growing reluctance to be there again, he slowed the truck's speed as he got closer to the town.

He arrived an hour before dusk, the buildings along First as he had remembered them, large, foreboding, and decayed. All of the town lay on one side of the highway because of an old territorial ruling that had used the road as a boarder. The business district had been destroyed before the war, and all that remained was Meyer's Gas. Biggs shut off his engine and coasted to a stop in front of the gas station. The pumps were old, but they had worked the last time Biggs had visited the town.

Meyer was one of the few who had survived, having died only a few years before. A short, astute man, Meyer when alive had had the wizened look of shriveled old age. His remaining hair had formed a horseshoe around his head, and looking into his black eyes was like looking in a mirror. He had been Biggs' friend, meeting Biggs the first time Biggs had come to visit his wife's gravestone a few years after the war. That had been almost thirty years ago.

The first time Meyer had met Biggs, Meyer told him, "I've survived two holocausts, despite being a Jew. It can always get worse, though. Most people forget that Hitler hated gypsies and homosexuals more than the Jews. The Jews just got the publicity." Biggs remembered thinking of Meyer as a survivor preparing for a third holocaust.

One of the last times Meyer had talked to Biggs, Meyer had asked Biggs his wife's name. Biggs had answered, "Her name was Evelyn." Meyer had smiled and said, "You haven't recognized me, but I was the rabbi she often came to see. She knew that you were always suspicious of her, though you probably thought she was committing adultery or some similarly carnal sin. It was really rather simple. She wanted to live forever, and she thought being Jewish would help. But it isn't that simple."

Biggs had found Meyer dead during his last visit two years ago. Years ago Meyer had told him to cremate his body. "I don't want to sentimentalize death," Meyer had said, "but I'd rather be a living memory than a decomposing body." So Biggs had done it, constructing a pyre of old boards Meyer had saved for the purpose.

He went over now to the side of the gas station

where he had made the fire. Only a scattering of blackened wood remained, Meyer's body now enveloped by the wind. Biggs walked back around to the gas pumps. He noticed the sun low in the sky. After filling the two tanks of his truck, a slow process with the old pumps, he climbed in and headed toward the cemetery at the east end of town.

He pulled off the highway at the gravel side road, a half mile from the gravesites, deciding he would walk the remaining distance rather than test the unpaved side road. The road to the gravesites was gravel, its surface determined by the shortage of petroleum at the time of its construction. He grabbed his coat when he got out because the sky was darkening and the wind was picking up. He kicked some of the gravel to watch it scatter and a plume of dust rise. Just as he started walking down the path, he saw the moon had come up, a reddish-yellow light casting its pallor on the surrounding clouds. He would soon pass the unfinished foundations the developers had started but never finished. Illuminated by the moon, his watch read a quarter to nine.

Scraggly grass on the side of the road indicated he was getting closer to the abandoned settlement near the graveyard. The grass was long, but it was scattered in sparse chunks and in a few more years it would be gone; a stranger not realizing grass had ever been there would deny the possibility. Within five minutes, he came to the three basements. In the half light, they looked like archaeological digs, cautiously excavated and hastily retreated from, left for silt, sand, and dust to fill. From where he stood, he could see the grove of trees and he moved toward them.

The oak grove stood in front of him like guardians to a kingdom. His mouth was dry as he surveyed the cemetery from the outskirts. A grid link fence encompassed the graveyard, so badly rusted in places that a swift kick would knock it over. Biggs walked the few yards to the gate, and twisting his ankle on a broken bottle, he misstepped and fell. When his eyes focused again, he saw a shard of a green-colored glass with blood on it near his face. He felt little pain, but he decided not to get up until he had rested awhile.

He listened to the labored breathing of the wind. He tried to calm himself while he cautiously lifted himself to his feet and moved behind an oak tree. He listened for the wind again but could only hear his heart racing.

When he approached her gravestone, he could

see it was leaning to the right. The land must be shifting, he thought. He stared at the name scribed in the marble: "Evelyn Mariya. B 1949. . .Died. . . ." Meyer had died before finished cutting it down. Biggs began to weep he bent down to touch the tombstone. Hearing the sound of troubled breathing interrupted mourning. He looked up and saw the sidesk assistant, albeit stooped and a good deal older.

"I hope you've captured a fine specimen, Mr. Biggs," said the assistant. "I've been a very patient man."

"My God, I thought you were dead," Biggs stammered.

The assistant coughed, cleared his throat, and with a theatrical flourish said, "I believe you have something of mine."

"I don't have the book. I . . . I burned it."

"The book has its importance, but I wasn't referring to it," continued the assistant, stifling a cough. "It wasn't easy pretending to be interested and basically a nice guy. I'm not either, thank you. I wanted the woman. Both Jewish and female, she will be a great addition to my private collection. Now that you've led me to the specimen, she belongs to me. I finally know which stone she's buried under. As the saying goes, 'It's been good doing business with you. Perhaps you'd like a last request?'"

Biggs watched the assistant take a pistol from the back of his pants. "You don't understand," Biggs said, almost choking on the words.

"No, you don't understand," said the assistant laughing. "You're going to die, and I'm going to have a new amber specimen. And if you do well with formaldehyde, I'll even consider keeping you."

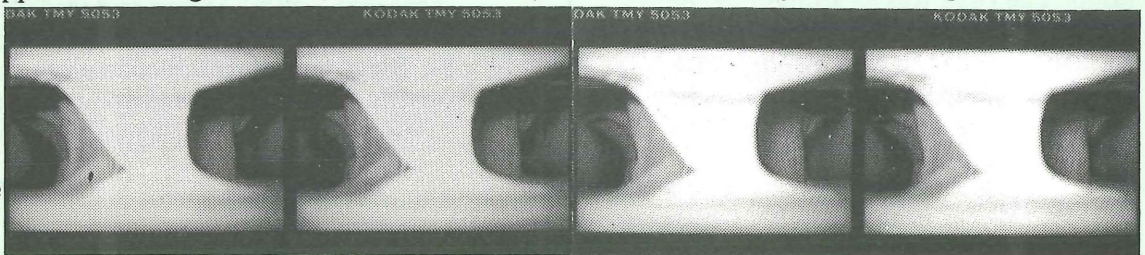
Biggs' appearance looked that of a cornered animal. Angrily he said, "But . . . but, my wife is even here. This is a big mistake. I . . . I plead guilty to encasing my wife in amber. But what your intent is ludicrous!"

"Don't exaggerate," the assistant smiled as he cocked the gun. "Still no last requests? Perhaps you'd like to quote a platitude or a favorite quote. How about one on saving yourself?"

Biggs didn't answer. His tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth, his side cramped, and his temples ached because of the pounding blood.

"Still no answer? It's just as well," said the assistant. "Hell, I'm not one to do favors."

Biggs heard the shot, and before death washed over him, he closed his eyes and saw indeed that immortality was no simple task.



OLD LOVES FOR THE OLD YEAR

Mr. Carson has gained weight
since his divorce. He learned
to cook on a grill, and now
he eats steak four times a week.
Living alone in an exclusive apartment,
he must make love to women on
this couch I sit on. Does he enjoy it?
Living alone, I mean.

Mr. Carson's daughter happens to be
my ex-girlfriend. The three of us
are here to celebrate her birthday.
Her hands fumble to open one of her
father's gifts. The yellow-specked sweater
tumbles out, and she holds it at arm's length.
Isn't it beautiful her father asks.
She answers yes but you shouldn't have bought
such an expensive one.
As I feel the sweater she has put on,
I run my hand across her back
along the lines of her bra straps.
Does she still love this?
The sweater, I mean.

Mr. Carson, his daughter, and I
sit around watching an old John
Wayne movie. Over the spatter of gunfire,
we talk about charades, dancing,
sun tans, and graduation. We avoid
the subject on all of our minds.
After midnight, Mr. Carson walks
her and me to our separate
but adjacent cars. Wishing father
and daughter well, I get into my car
and turn the ignition.
I don't want to leave.
I don't want to leave old loves, I mean.

—Kurt Hoeksema

For the Least of Them

by William J. VandeKopple

To the untrained eye, when the dun heifer with the number 000 on her ear tag clumped off the semi from the King's Crown Ranch in Montana, she would have looked about the same as the other forty-nine heifers in the load. But my eyes were hardly untrained. For almost two months I had helped my brother-in-law Bud do the chores on the feedlot he ran on the Iowa farm where I lived while on sabbatical. And besides, I had earned a Ph.D. in linguistics by being able to see and understand things that most people never even notice. So it was quite easy for me to see that Triple Zero was going to need some special attention if she was going to fight off illness and gain weight the way a young heifer should.

In her first few days on the lot, Triple Zero proved me right. We worked hard to keep those heifers happy. Unhappy calves would bawl all the time and get off their feed. Once that happened, they would almost always get sick, usually with shipping fever or something related to it. And ultimately that would cost money—to pay for a vet and to cover interest charges for every day that the cattle weren't ready for market. The faster we could fatten them up and have them butchered, the better for us.

So we thought very carefully about what kind of feed to start them on. Finally we decided against alfalfa hay and for grass cut from the ditches and waterways on the farm. This grass was the closest we could come to the grass of the range where the heifers had been born. And whenever we had the ditch grass loaded in the feed bunk, we sprinkled carefully measured amounts of Beef Booster over it. Beef Booster is a mix of protein, molasses, and terramycin, the terramycin being most important to the heifers at first since it would help them ward off shipping fever.

But Triple Zero never got her fair share of grass or Beef Booster. If she happened to be near the bunk when feeding time came, she would start to tear at sprigs of grass as we tossed the bales in, but when the other heifers would come thrusting in, she would be squeezed out.

If she wasn't near the bunk when we started loading it, she would be blocked out, of course, but she'd make a few pathetic attempts at forcing her way in. She'd drop her head between the flanks of two other heifers standing next to each other, kick her way ahead, and then try to wedge her nose up past the ribs of the others and lunge for the feed. But she never found two heifers weaker than herself. Typically, they'd rock backward and forth and throw hips into her neck, and she'd back off, panting in resignation.

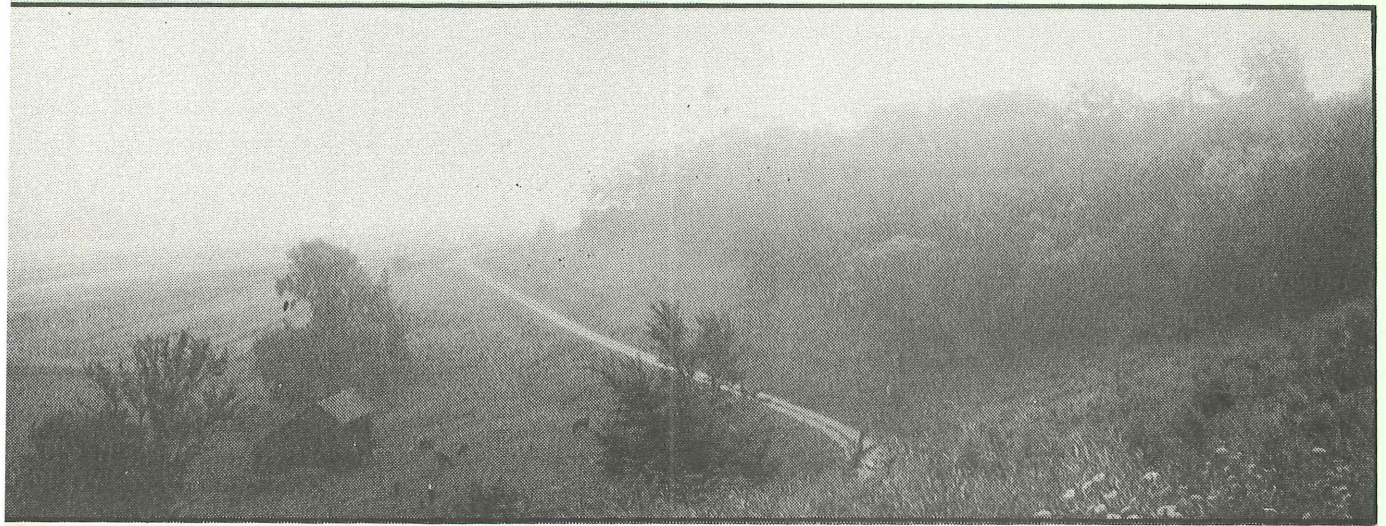
Once in a while she'd try a different tactic. She'd try to mount another heifer and then slide off next to her, all in hopes of landing closer to the bunk. But the other heifers would arch their backs, buck a little, and send Triple Zero falling off to the rear.

At feeding-time, then, someone looking from our house to the feedlot would see basically the same thing from one day to the next: forty-nine rumps in a row with Triple Zero moping around in the rear. She got to eat only if the grasses not wanted by the others were nosed from the bunk into the slop on the ground.

All this only I noticed, really. Bud never did. He'd help toss the grass and sprinkle the Beef Booster, but then he'd move quickly to his other chores. Since earlier he had shown me up by noticing when cattle were in trouble long before I did, I now felt particularly proud of myself. And I decided that I'd keep the knowledge of Triple Zero's trouble to myself and handle it on my own. I'd single her out as the object of my personal attention and save the cost of calling a vet in.

So whenever I could spare the time, I'd wait until she was near the bunk, and then I'd toss a handful of Beef Booster right in front of her. She'd learn that I had to toss the Beef Booster a certain distance and then back away smoothly and quickly. If I didn't, she would usually lick up the bits of feed before the other heifers noticed what was going on and would butt her out of the way. If I didn't, she would fix me with her moony eyes and then back away with her head down, ears wide, nose dripping.

She was definitely an unassertive heifer. B



ce very now and then I was feeding her, I assumed that she would be all right. And she seemed to be in good shape as she started her third week on the yard.

As I had learned, the third week after the heifers came off the truck would be the critical one. If shipping fever was going to set in, that was when it would. Also, during the third week, in order to boost the ratio of the heifers' weight gain per pound of feed, we would have to start mixing with the Beef Booster some ground corn.

This we had to be very careful with, since these heifers had eaten no corn before and therefore had not developed the digestive bacteria they needed for it. The heifers would be all right—if they started on corn gradually. Bud's biggest concern was that would eat more corn than they could digest and then develop digestive problems like the scours—diarrhea so severe it could kill.

But as the third week went on—and even as the weather turned much colder—the heifers seemed to be doing well. Even Triple Zero seemed fine. Whenever I remembered, of course, I continued to single her out for a handful of corn and Beef Booster. And at times I fretted that I might be giving her more corn than she could handle. But since she seemed to be suffering no digestive problems, I assumed that I was going to succeed in bringing her safely through the third week.

Until early on Monday morning, when I came around the corner of the barn and almost fell over her carcass. Bud had dragged her out of the feedlot, and now she lay on her right side, her left legs

treading a little air, her neck bend back in a gentle arc, her right nostril the source of a delicate trickle of blood that ran for a few inches before congealing in a tiny pool on the dirt.

I swallowed back the gorge rising in me and started to calculate how much money Bud had lost. Then I felt betrayed. How could a heifer I had done so much for give up and die? Then my earlier frettings returned with renewed force: maybe I had paid too much attention to her; maybe I had overfed her.

When I found Bud in the toolshed, he did nothing to allay my fears. "I just about fell over the dead heifer," I said. "What did she die of?"

"I don't know. I'm guessing she probably held her position at the bunk for a long time, pushed her nose right down into the feed, and ate way more corn than she could digest. I've just got to know, though, so I've asked the vet out to cut her open and find out."

That I wasn't going to watch. For days I had been thinking of running an errand in Hull, and that morning seemed a great time to run it. And I stayed in Hull for a few hours, most of the time idling over coffee at the Sioux Preme Cafe.

By the time I drove back onto the yard, Triple Zero had been hauled to the edge of the road for the rendering truck. I walked over for a last look. The vet had started just below her left ear and had worked his way down across her chest and abdomen toward her right leg, slicing her open in a bold diagonal.

Grandpa came up next to me. "What a waste,"



he said. "Would have been some nice steaks on her."

And then Bud came up. He was upset, his eyes showing anger, frustration, and sorrow all at the same time.

"Well," I asked, trying to get the worst out of the way from the start, "was she full of corn? Did she gorge herself to death?"

"No, no," Bud groaned. "I don't know how I could have missed it. She's the first calf I've lost in two years. I never noticed she was in trouble; I did absolutely nothing special for her. She died of pneumonia. Shipping fever first, probably, and then pneumonia. The vet couldn't find any feed in

her stomachs at all."

"None?" What had she done with all that feed had tossed to her—spit it out?

"Not a grain in her," Bud went on. "No grain, no corn, no molasses, no medicine, no nothing. The vet said she probably needed personal attention from the day she came off the truck."

"It's my fault," I sputtered. "I could have saved her."

"Saved her! Come on, Bill. Don't be so hard on yourself. Who on earth would expect a linguistics professor on sabbatical to be able to save a calf? The calf can't tell you she's dying, can it? I know."

Mutilation

itor's note: The following are excerpts from mon delivered by the Reverend Gerald C. lerDeaden at the Remarkably Righteous stian Reformed Church in Mecca, Michigan ebruary 29, 1987.

any of you out there are basking in the omic prosperity that our nation is exncing right now. Perhaps you think this ntageous situation will continue indefinitely. n't. America is doomed. Doomed, by God's command, to undergo the most painful of shments, a stock market crash. Yes, the error r ways is so great that we will not even be ed that most horrible of all calamities, that h leaves those putrid creatures whom God cursed with poverty unharmed, but which s those faithful followers whom he has given th dearly. It is a punishment that brings the eous and rich closer to the level of the ched poor, and who can conceive of anything e degrading than that?

Obviously by now you are wondering what ible sin it could be that this chosen nation of has fallen prey to. It is to something even e abominable than the Baals and Ashtaroths Israel. And to something even more igerous, because it exists all around us. And is our sin: women.

ow let me explain to you what I mean; I do mean to imply that women, in and of them- s, are evil. God created women (although as an afterthought, and then against his own r judgment, to satisfy the needs of Adam), that which God creates cannot be evil. So we l assume that in their proper place, women at least be neutral rather than evil by nature. as we shall see, the sin of America has been to w women to leave their proper place, and they e corrupted our nation just as the evil spirits ping from Pandora's box corrupted all they e in contact with.

What then are the relative places of men and en? Our text answers this question with a aphor. It states clearly that "The man is the d of the woman" (I Cor. 11:3). Let us then mine what this means.

For the sake of argument, we shall assume that 1 is ONLY the head, and that woman is the of the body. This is in no means implied by text, and indeed is very unlikely to be true.

It is enough to bring out the truth of the ter. After all, of what value is a headless y?

To understand the exact meaning of this text, must carry the analogy of man as the head of

the women further. It follows from this that a woman operating without the knowledge, supervision, and permission of a man is like a body operating without the benefit of a head. Now, a body can do several things, all of them involving physical motion or involuntary reaction. The body, by itself, can remove a hand from a scalding hot pan or shiver to generate warmth on a cold day. But without the controlling influence of the head, the human body simply is not a productive unit. Imagine trying to solve calculus problems with your hand not using your brain, or even playing baseball without being able to think what base to throw the ball to.

Likewise, a woman, unless she is under the direct command of a man, be it her father or her husband, is of little use to anyone but the devil, who loves to step into that void of authority and encourage women to defy God's plan for this world by deserting their rightful occupations of bearing children and caring for the home and going out into the man's domain in the work force, above all, into our seminaries.

Furthermore, it becomes obvious that just as a body operating without its head could be dangerous and harmful, so too can a woman who is not properly held in check by her husband. It is the women in our work force who create the problems of our nation, and God allows them to continue as long as we fail to repent from our sinful ways and return our women to their proper place. Women are the cause of unemployment; if there were no women in the work force, there would be plenty of jobs to go around for the men. Women are the cause of inflation; in their materialism and lust for earthly things they will pay whatever outrageous price the industries decide to charge, encouraging them to gouge their prices.

What can we do, you ask. First of all, we need to recognize that God meant for women to be subordinate to men, and we need to ask God to forgive us for allowing this natural order of things to become perverted. Then we must return our women to their rightful place: in the home, bearing children and making their husbands' lives more pleasant. Or, if they do not feel that marriage is for them, they should work for their sustenance in jobs which would be too demeaning for men, such as washing dishes or doing laundry, and not steal jobs from the men to whom they rightly belong. No woman should work in public; it is against nature and disgraceful, and "a disgraceful wife is like decay in her husband's bones" (Proverbs 12:4).

