CONTRIBUTORS

Andy Botts, a junior art major and the art director for Prism, likes eating pomegranates and “dancing like a fool.”

Jonathon Eiten majors in art and especially enjoys drawing the backs of peoples’ heads in church. He claims to be the fastest corn de-tasseler in central Iowa.

Dan Emshoff essentially plays blues harmonica and wears a real jeans jacket. Nonessentially, he majors in English and art, hails from Chicago, and claims to be a Calvinist with a Dooyweerdian dialect.

Jackie Frens, a senior, lived in Korea and Japan before moving to Prospect Park, New Jersey. Last year she went to Boston for the New England Saints interim.

RiRe Nakpodia grew up in Lagos, Nigeria and majors in art history and art. He has been trying to grow dreadlocks for the past two years and thinks he is finally doing it.

Boglarka Tapolayai, known as “Bogi” to her friends, is from Hungary. She spent this summer travelling through Europe.

Elaine Tolsma is an art major with an emphasis on painting. She calls Milwaukee her home and cannot paint with her shoes on.

Steve Vander Ark lives in Cutlerville with his wife, three-year-old daughter, and an overweight beagle. He is a senior education major.

M. Arie Van Kley graduated from Calvin College in 1989 and now teaches English to the faculty of a university of business and technology in Shanghai, China.

Lambert Van Poolen teaches engineering at Calvin College. This year he is a visiting scholar at Notre Dame’s Reilly Center for Science, Technology and Values.

Geoff Zylstra and Steve Lauthan collaborated to write “she being Age,” which earned Geoff an A+ on an English 200 assignment. Their poem describes the present condition of Geoff’s Volkswagen Beetle.
# C O N T E N T S

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
<th>AUTHOR(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDITORIAL</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Public Privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERVIEW</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Victoria Hardy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHORT STORY</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Steve Vander Ark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESSAY</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Jackie Frens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POETRY</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dan Emshoff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M. Arie Van Kley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M. Arie Van Kley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Dan Emshoff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Lambert Van Poolen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Lambert Van Poolen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ART</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elaine Tolsma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>RiRe Nakpodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Jonathan Eiten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Boglarka Tapolyai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Andy Botts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Jonathan Eiten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Andy Botts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FLOTSAM &amp; JETSAM</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Geoff Zylstra and Steve Lauthan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FLOTSAM & JETSAM**
she being Age

**D I A L O G U E**
Volume 24, Number 1  Sept./Oct. 1991
A commotion broke out this past summer in literary and medical circles over a new biography of Anne Sexton, the depressed housewife-turned-poet, whose emotionally raw, sexually frank verse garnered her almost instant notoriety and critical acclaim in the early 1960s before she committed suicide in 1974. The publication of *Anne Sexton* this month by Houghton Mifflin marks the first time the biography of an important American figure is based in part on material taken from the subject’s private sessions with a psychiatrist. Diane Wood Middlebrook, the author of Sexton’s biography, obtained over 300 audiotapes of such sessions as well as medical records and early unpublished poems from Dr. Martin T. Orne, the psychiatrist who treated Sexton from 1956 to 1964 and initially encouraged her to take up writing to combat her depression. The book details the poet’s professed unhappy childhood, mental breakdowns, alcoholism, extramarital affairs, and sexual abuse of her daughter.

Orne, Middlebrook, and Linda Gray Sexton, one of the poet’s two daughters who acts as her literary executor and requested Middlebrook to write her mother’s biography and approved the use of the tapes, defend their actions by saying that Sexton would not have hesitated to release the tapes, and that doing so is consistent with the way she lived her life. Sexton once claimed, “I hold nothing back,” and Orne is quoted in the *New York Times* (July 15, 1991) as saying, “I was often more concerned about her privacy than she was.”

Many in the psychiatric community have decried Orne’s action as an outrage and a breach of medical ethics, calling it a violation of a patient’s right to confidentiality. A good number of writers and scholars would judge Middlebrook’s use of the tapes as equally reprehensible. And Sexton’s sister, Blanche Harvey Taylor, is furious about the release of the tapes and the way their late father and other loved family members, dead or alive, are portrayed in the biography as malevolent contributors to a dysfunctional household.

This tangle of family members’ hurt feelings and professional indignation in psychiatric and literary communities prompts one to question how, ideally, should biographers, doctors, and literary executors perform their jobs. A biographer is confronted with the difficult and morally complex task of gleaning information and shaping it into a fair and accurate portrait as possible. It seems that an author should voraciously seek access to every resource available in order to formulate such a portrait. But should he or she stop short at a certain point, deeming some information (like medical records) not fair game? It is difficult to say whether knowing a writer’s
psychiatric history aids one in more deeply understanding that artist’s work, or whether it simply amounts to seeing that person’s “dirty laundry.” How much does a biographer have a right to know about a subject and subsequently disclose to the public, especially in an age when technology enables documentation on audio- and videotape of a person’s most intimate confessions? Doing away with or keeping from public scrutiny a prominent figure’s private conversations or papers is no longer simply a matter of burning a few letters and journals. A doctor not only nurtures and heals, but also acts as something of a responsible confidant; a patient-doctor relationship necessarily implies a certain amount of confidentiality. But does a doctor also have an obligation to supply information to a biographer who wants it for the sake of historical accuracy? The literary executor serves as an extension of the deceased in carrying out instructions regarding that person’s literary legacy. The executor legally has the right to do what he or she sees fit with manuscripts, journals, and other personal papers and does not need consent from the deceased’s other family members. Yet should a literary executor act any differently if family members feel their privacy is being invaded and reputations are being slandered?

The biographer’s difficult task of crafting a truthful and historically accurate written portrait without encroaching on the privacy of both the subject and the subject’s family reveals something of the attempt to reach the delicate balance between privacy and disclosure faced by public figures. In principle, famous people, just like anyone else, have the right to guard their secrets and make public whatever they choose. Obviously a person, willingly or not, sacrifices some of this in winning an Academy Award or Pulitzer Prize, or having a museum wing dedicated to his or her work. Anne Sexton may have courted notoriety, but not all people would share her desire. The Sexton case clearly shows the amount of confusion and conflict (especially among surviving family members) that can result from ambiguity regarding what kind of personal information should remain private or be relinquished to history. The biographer’s enterprise of documenting the life of a prominent person requires much care and attention. But it seems, too, that prominent artistic figures in this age of technology and “telling-all” must now more than ever take an active role in communicating what they want disclosed or kept private, especially with regard to what happens after their death. If not, their survivors can only guess at what they would have wanted, and the heaps of personal records and arguments over them grow larger than the artists who inspired them.
feel
the deep throated
humrumble red
brown downing
warm upon
your head

hear
the sweetest blue
grey sky kiss
of nature’s silver
cloud white lips
pressed deep fallen
warm upon
my heart

Dan Emshoff
Shortly after he was inaugurated in January, Governor John Engler sounded the death knell for government funding for the arts in Michigan. He directed the Office of Management and Budget to stop the second payments on grants to arts organizations that had already been awarded for the fiscal year 1990-91 and indicated that he planned to abolish the Michigan Council for the Arts, the Commission on Art in Public Places, and a number of other arts-related programs. Arts groups immediately protested, branding Engler with a reputation for cultural enlightenment which rivalled that of the Vandals of ancient Rome. In the thick of this battle over state funding was Victoria Hardy, who sums up the activity in the arts community over the past several months with the vast understatement, "It's been an interesting year."
Hardy has had quite a few interesting years since she began her career as a professional arts manager over fifteen years ago. During this time, she has held a remarkable variety of positions all over the country, including those of Director of Events and Services at Stanford University and Executive Director of the William Carlos Williams Center for the Arts. Currently, Hardy works as an arts consultant, advising cultural organizations about the economic and social aspects of arts-related projects. Her clients have included the Detroit Symphony and the New York City Cultural Institutions Group. Hardy currently serves as the principal consultant and manager for AMS Planning and Research's Midwest office and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Arts Foundation of Michigan and of Michigan Advocates for the Arts.

Hardy could single-handedly put to rest the stereotype of the flamboyant "arty" type. Her assertive, businesslike manner is more like what you might expect from a corporate executive than from someone whose life's work revolves around the arts. One of her favorite ways to begin a sentence is, "Quite frankly...," which tells you a good deal about her personality. Hardy says what is on her mind, and judging by how much she says, she has a lot on her mind. Replaying the tape of our conversation, I noticed that there were virtually no pauses between my questions and her answers, and my "ums" outnumbered hers by a good margin even though I managed to get in only eight questions.

I began by asking her about the recent funding controversy in Michigan. After she explained exactly what the governor had done, she went on to say, "I don't think anyone anticipated such a major change in philosophy on the state level as what happened when Governor Engler was inaugurated in January. Conversations that had taken place with Engler while he was campaigning in the fall of 1990 and with the previous governor, Blanchard, indicated strong support in both candidates' platforms for continued funding at the state level for cultural institutions. Quite frankly, it appears that the governor was not fully apprised of the implications of abolishing the state arts council. Over the years, particularly the past three, there have been concerted efforts at the National Endowment for the Arts to give more money directly to the states' arts councils and return more control of major funding to the states. At this point in time, Michigan is slated to receive $920,000 from the NEA for the coming fiscal year in grant money to be given out to arts organizations. The governor is probably not fully aware of how all those various federal funding programs work. By abolishing the state arts council, he in effect not only took out the money that the organizations would have received from the state, but also prevented Michigan from receiving any federal money."

"By abolishing the state arts council, Governor Engler not only took out the money that arts organizations would have received from the state, but also prevented Michigan from receiving any federal money."

While some basic agreements were made in recent negotiations with Engler and his staff, Hardy made it clear that "there are major philosophical differences which still stand." One thing the governor would like to see is for cultural institutions, especially those in Detroit, to become less dependent on state funding.
Hardy sees this as a good possibility. "There are a lot of alternative funding mechanisms other than general funds in taxpayer dollars that could be utilized," she said. She stressed that the important thing is that there will be a new state arts council that will combine the Commission on Art in Public Places and the Michigan Council for the Arts. Also, this organization will actually have some money with which to work: probably $6-7 million in state funds, plus almost $1 million from the NEA, bringing the total almost to the prior level of $11 million.

The current recession, however, coupled with a cutback of funds, has already taken quite a toll on the arts. "We've had 112 arts organizations that have either suspended operation or gone out of business since January 14," Hardy remarked. "We are losing people, good people, who are moving out of Michigan—artists, administrators, people who have skills that we can hardly afford to lose. That's been difficult, in the greater Grand Rapids area as much as anywhere."

When I asked her about the long-term consequences of such economic belt-tightening in Michigan, she indicated that she believed there is a current trend toward the governments getting out of funding for general operating support and focusing instead on funding for special projects. Additionally, as the economy will likely remain somewhat slower for the next few years than it was in the late eighties, the overall level of state funding will be down, and arts organizations will increasingly have to raise more of their own support. Hardy mentioned the Civic Theatre in Grand Rapids as a good example of an organization that is almost entirely self-sufficient. She emphasized, however, that "the problem is going to be the timing." She recalled a statement by one corporate representative who conceded that the governor was correct in his charge that the corporate sector should pick up the difference between what the state can afford to pay and what the organizations need, but protested, "You've given us three weeks to do it." Hardy agreed that the governor's expectations were unrealistic.

"We are losing people, good people, who are moving out of Michigan—artists, administrators, people who have skills we can hardly afford to lose."

Intrigued by her praise of the Civic Theatre's self-reliance, I asked her if she believed that arts organizations should ultimately be expected to raise all their own support. Hardy replied that "depending on the organization, in this country it has been considered a very healthy situation if sixty to seventy percent of your revenues to offset your expenses come from earned income such as ticket sales and concession sales, and the remaining thirty to forty percent is contributed by outside sources, primarily the government." She added, "What I think you're going to see is people rethinking the size of their organizations, perhaps focusing on a primary objective as opposed to two or three goals." She cited the Indianapolis Symphony as an example of an organization that reassessed its goals in this manner. Hardy said that the Indianapolis Symphony decided that it did not want to be a major symphony orchestra but would instead settle for being a major regional orchestra. "And it's worked," claimed Hardy, "very, very well.
for them. They are in good shape financially; they sell lots and lots of tickets. Because bigger is not always better. Growth, quite frankly, when you’re so dependent on audience response, can be seductive. Growth is not always the best thing for any organization, but it is particularly difficult when a substantial portion of your revenues is dependent upon contributed income. And the reason for that is that most cultural institutions feel very strongly that a certain percentage of their tickets options and operations should be available to people who can’t afford to pay the regular ticket prices—students, senior citizens, and so forth.”

According to Hardy, the areas which have been hit hardest by the recession in terms of arts programs and organizations have been the “Rust Belt” states and the Northeast. Funding for the arts in these states has decreased dramatically, Hardy said, “because these states just don’t have any money.” She continued, “It’s indicative, however, of a general trend of governments in general—federal and state—backing out of funding for cultural programs. I have some real concerns about that. There is a role for the government to play in support of a variety of things that affect the quality of life for the same reason the federal government decided we ought to have interstate highways: they generally improve the quality of life.”

I recalled that when the funding controversy first erupted a few months earlier, a spokesperson for the governor said something to the effect that during a recession, the government needs to spend money on essential things, implying that funding for the arts is hardly a necessity. Expecting swift condemnation of such barbaric thinking, I asked Hardy what she thought of this statement. Rather than launching into an impassioned speech about the need for the government to foster the cultural enrichment of its citizens, she described the arts industry as just that: a vital industry which cannot be ignored.

“There is a role for the government to play in support of [cultural programs], for the same reason the federal government decided we ought to have interstate highways: they generally improve the quality of life.”

“T’m very pragmatic,” she stated without hesitation. “Quite frankly, practically speaking, if someone had announced on January 14 that an industry in Michigan was threatening to pull out and go to Arizona, California, Texas, or Florida, or one of those other states to which we keep losing all of our businesses—an industry that employed 12,000 people full-time and another five to seven thousand part-time—I would suggest that there should have been a protracted effort to keep that industry in Michigan, with all sorts of tax incentives and everything else.” It surprised me to hear someone in Hardy’s position putting the arts community in the same category as Amway and Steelcase, but I suppose that budget-slashining bureaucrats are not terribly impressed with flowery speeches about the socially redeeming value of art.

Still hoping for an emotional defense of great art or at least a fervent denunciation of...
censorship, I asked Hardy whether she believed it was justifiable for the government to spend money on things that a large number of people find offensive or obscene. She dismissed this as an unfair question. "That's sort of a 'When do you stop beating your wife?' question," she objected. Although she admitted that many people object to the funding of certain types of activities, she insisted that there are going to be people who oppose funding for almost anything. She contended that "much of the controversy that resulted from the funding of certain things at the federal level was due to the fact that the process used to evaluate these people wasn't as clear as it should have been." Hardy conceded that she could not say whether or not these proposals would have survived a more rigorous analysis because she hadn't seen the proposals. She added, "I have, however, sat on NEA panels and numerous other evaluating panels, and typically the questions of artistic integrity arise well after you've evaluated the soundness of the organization which is applying. I look back, knowing that Stravinsky's art was condemned as pornographic because he did this very odd music that no one had heard before, and actually had ballet dancers dancing to it, and it seems to me that a lot of it has to do with the tenor of the times. I think the reason you don't see this kind of controversy on the local level and the state level is that people are closer to what's going on. What happened with the NEA campaign about supposedly funding obscene art had a great deal more to do with the political climate than it did with the artistic climate."

Hardy went on to describe the rigorous three-tiered evaluation process involving staff, peer, and council reviews which is used by the NEA and most state arts councils, prompting me to ask whether such a process might be so rigorous that someone as innovative as Stravinsky would not have a chance to obtain government funds today. She denied this and, interestingly, cited Grand Rapids' Urban Institute as an example of an organization which receives a great deal of government funding although it presents work which is new, innovative, and sometimes controversial. They succeed in this, Hardy believes, because "they know what they are doing, their plans are well made, and their financial management is very good; they've got their act together. They have a vision and they can explain it to people." It became clear during my conversation with Hardy that government funding for the arts is at a crossroads. There appears to be a definite trend toward reduced government spending for the arts, with the private sector taking up the slack. The long-term effects of this trend have yet to be seen, but for now government at both the state and federal levels will continue to play a crucial role in deciding what gets funded and what does not. So despite recent funding controversies, the current recession, and the efforts of cost-cutting politicians, struggling artists can still look to Uncle Sam for financial help. Which means that modern-day Stravinskys just might make it—as long as they stay on their toes.
CONVERSATION

He had come to the forests of the Rocky Mountains a man in need—in need of a break from an office girded with computer screens and co-workers gibbering in modern-day doublespeak he could no longer fathom or endure. A four-hour hike through scrub and foothills had delivered him to a glade ringed by trees and overarched by a patch of glorious sky. He had set up camp, eaten supper, watched the stars freckle the black overhead, and savored the thought of the days to come.

It rained in the night, but he awoke to the sun dappling the side of the tent. He slipped out and followed a whim that led him to a rocky overlook. The woods were still dripping softly to the carpet of brown leaves and needles, but the dawn was flooding the world with a melted butter glow. This was what he’d come for, and he drank it in as he walked along: the soaked earth smell, the delicate glimmer of sunlight dancing on the wet leaves, the way the world seemed to shake itself dry in a languid, luxurious stretch. A slight breeze touched the trees, and he saw above them the pirouette of a hawk on the prowl.

Somewhere at his feet the wisp of a trail veered right as the mountainside followed the curve of a stream far below. He never saw it. One moment he was contemplating the trees and the hawk; the next he was hurtling down the nearly vertical slope of the mountain, snagging himself painfully on branches and boulders, losing his hat, glasses, and one of his shoes. He thudded and crackled to a stop in the embrace of the skeleton of a dead pine, fifty feet below. Bits and pieces of the mountainside, jarred loosed by his skidding body, rattled around him for a brief moment. Then everything was still. He tried to focus the world into something recognizable, but all he saw was an onrushing blackness, and he slipped into it, unconscious.

The pain shook him awake, a fiery stabbing pain that sent shudders through...
his body. He stared blankly at the ground in front of him for an uncertain moment before the memory of his fall rushed back. He was hurt—badly hurt! He tried to step down to the path below his feet, but the attempt resulted only in a wave of agony that wrenched a moan from his lips. He wondered how far he had fallen and tried to look back up the mountainside. He saw only the blackness returning like a great, dark wave, and he passed out again.

The pain found him and dragged him back. After struggling to move his arms for a few confusing moments, the awful realization dawned on him that he was stuck—impaled, literally, on the branches of the pine tree that had broken his fall. Several jagged points of wood protruded through his tattered shirt-sleeves and bloody arms, another heavy splinter through his thigh. Blood from his wounds coursed down his torso and legs and formed a crimson pool on the ground. Suddenly another chilling realization hit him: he was going to die. There was no doubt about it; he could see his life puddling up at his feet. He was going to die!

And then he screamed a long, frantic cry that filled the air in the ravine but went nowhere. He screamed and screamed and struggled against the merciless arms that held him crucified against the mountainside. He couldn’t just give in, he cried to himself. He had to try something, and again he screamed though he knew no one could hear. And the blood flowed on and on.

When at last he gave up, exhausted, fighting the wave of blackness which was again closing in, he heard something rustle nearby. He opened his eyes. There, not ten feet away, stepping with cautious interest toward the gore-streaked ground, was a wolf. It stood some three feet high at the shoulder with a grey coat speckled white and black and an unmistakable glint in its eye. It edged back a step when it saw his eyes open.

For a moment etched in gray and crimson he stared at the wolf, unbelieving. Then he burst into life, groping blindly for a branch, anything he could use as a weapon. But his hands were stuck in place, held gruesomely fast. He wriggled harder than before, harder than he could have thought possible, ignoring the new shudders of pain and trying to tear himself free to face this new and dangerous foe. The wolf took a moment to size up the situation, then resumed its approach, sniffing the warm scent of blood heavy in the air.

He screamed again, hoping that by
some miracle the animal would be fright-
ened off, but the wolf took no notice. He
cried, he prayed, and finally he screeched,
"For God’s sake, don’t eat me!"

"First time a human ever begged me
not to eat," the wolf commented in a deep,
guttural tone, faltering for an instant.

"I’m begging you, don’t eat me!" the
man repeated in a shrill, terrified howl. Then
his voice caught in mid-cry, and he stared at
the animal.

The wolf also stopped with one paw
raised and stared back. The gray, shaggy
head tilted to one side, and the animal said,
"You hear these words, human?"

The man swallowed hard but couldn’t
squelch the thudding against his chest. "You-
you talked . . . ?" he managed faintly.

The wolf straightened its head and
answered, "Of course I talked, human. But
how can you hear me?"

The man croaked again, unbelieving,
"You talked!"

The wolf considered for a moment.
Then it seemed to come to some conclusion
and sat down, its yellow eyes fixed implac-
ably on the human’s twisted face. It spoke
again, this time slowly and patiently. "I
speak, human, and you hear. Interesting.
This is not normal."

"Not normal?!" the man sputtered,
finding his voice again. "You talked! You’re
a-a wolf, for God’s sake!"

"Yes, and you are a human. You were
created to speak, so you speak. I too speak.
You speak of God—you do not know God?"

"Know God?" He was beginning to
lose his grip on the conversation. "Yes, I
know God, yes but . . . ."

"And you did not know a wolf to
speak?" The wolf looked off into the dis-
tance then back. "In Eden, human, know
you not that animals spoke?"

"Well, I guess, yes but . . . ." He didn’t
quite remember ever reading that (except
for the serpent), but he wasn’t absolutely
sure of anything anymore.

"Animals too were created to speak to
praise the Creator."

"But animals don’t speak!" he ex-
claimed and launched into a spasmodic,
rattling cough that brought up blood.

The wolf waited politely for the spell
to end, then went on. "The Creator no
longer allows animals to speak to humans.
Since the Day of the Serpent’s Lie all animals
have spoken only to their own kind."

"Since the Day of . . . but why?"

"Instinct, human. Animals share the
instincts of the ages, the memories of our
species from the Beginning."
"From the beginning . . . of what?"
"Of all things. Of Creation. Animals remember all things. If animals spoke to humans, they could tell them the secrets of Eden." The wolf’s gray form bent forward and lapped at the edge of the pool of blood, tasting, feeding, touching the gnawing instincts to hunt, to kill, and to devour. The yellow eyes gleamed as the head slowly came back up.

The man could read the look, and fear clutched at his chest constricting his already labored breathing into a series of ragged gasps. The wolf gazed into the suffering face.

“You will end soon.” The low, rough voice held no emotion, but the shaggy head tilted to one side again. “I shall not kill you. There is no need.” The wolf lay down. “I shall wait.” And the man and the wolf gazed at each other, one hungrily waiting for the other to die.

The man suddenly noticed his shoe, the one he had lost in the fall, lying upright on the trail below his dangling feet. It was sitting there as simply as it did by his bed, normal and real and completely out of reach. He stared at it from somewhere else. Where had he left that reality? When had he entered this one? The wolf, eyes ablaze, was now reality. The man said softly, “What are the secrets of Eden?”

The wolf’s ears pricked up as if it was still surprised to hear words. “The secret of Life in the Garden. The secret of Eternal Life. These secrets are created within us, part of our instincts.” As if in afterthought the wolf added, “These are secrets which will do you no good now. You will end soon.”

The man grappled with thought, the very word Life, the sweetness of it so far from his grasp. Yet animals die. “How is it you know the secret of eternal life but must die?” he asked.

“Animals have no souls,” the wolf responded.

“If the secret of eternal life will do me no good, surely God wouldn’t care if you told it to me if I can’t do anything with it anyway . . . .” The man leaned forward, pleading, but a wave of dizziness made him close his eyes and choke for breath.

The wolf waited again, allowing the spell to pass before answering. “Humans always bargain, always grope for more. But you will not go on; you will not speak the secrets; you could not hear me speak if God did not ordain that this was true. I have
never known a human before, except as prey or enemy. I would make your end more peaceful.” The wolf rose silently and padded forward through the puddle of blood. “I will tell you the secret. You may end satisfied.”

The shaggy gray form stood on its hind legs and leaned over the man to speak, its hot breath in his face. “A secret such as this must be whispered. The secret is . . . “

Something snapped, a crack that split the air of the glade and slammed the wolf’s head viciously to the right. The animal’s lifeless body collapsed and tumbled like a dropped glove, leaving the man to gasp and blink uncomprehendingly. His head lolled to one side, and as the blackness misted his eyes he saw two men, one still holding up the rifle in case another shot was needed, scrambling down the trail toward him. Then he saw no more.

Dear Dr. Stone,

Since it was your expert first aid advice over the phone which more than anything else saved this poor man’s life, I thought it only fair to inform you of his progress.

The stranger remains in the care of my wife and is making an excellent recovery. His wounds were quite severe, and he had lost so much blood that we were certain we would lose him. If my son and I had come down that trail one moment later his doom would have been certain, for as we approached a large timber wolf was moving in for the kill. But my son is quite a marksman, and he finished off the monster in one shot straight through the head.

Although I can assure you that his physical wounds are healing, I cannot be so optimistic about his mental state. The poor fellow seems in a daze, unable to respond in any way to our efforts to communicate. He speaks to no one and makes no sound, but sits and stares out the window into the woods by the hour. My wife frets over him terribly, but I fear that such healing as he requires is beyond her powers.

I said that he makes no sound, but that is not entirely true. Yesterday, to our surprise, we heard a great commotion in his room. We all rushed upstairs to find him in his pajamas facing our family dog, who until now had been outside in her coop. The dog was beside herself trying to escape, but he kept chasing her shouting over and over, “Tell me! Tell me!!” If only we could understand what it is he wants so desperately to know . . . .
Romans 7:19, Part I

How can I turn aside the burning fiend,  
When at every shadow I stop to peer  
And uncover the treasures of beauty,  
The dark flowers that I find there?

Clothed in their resplendent shades of satin  
They draw my hand from light to dark.  
"But I will not pull them from the ground," I say  
"And I'll only stray a moment from my walk."

Romans 7:19, Part II

What am I looking for as I comb this field?  
Ask me not as I will swear I do not know  
And have no wish to search for what I seek.  
Pure streams and crystal pools I love,  
Yet they lie far down another road.  
Here I grasp and beat the dying grass  
And wonder why the sun grows warm.

M. Arie Van Kley
Faster

i’d drive myself insane
if only
i could
drive

i’d drive a fast car
faster
i’d see more
than the bear gone
over the
mountain
i’d drive over
the edge

i’d make day light
three pounds lighter
fluid to ignight
the stars
falling faster
than my car

i can
not
drive i got
no car
i got to
hitch
hike up the
moon to
night
lite
dreams
i’d drive.

Dan Emshoff
Questions from a Coffin: The Changing Definition of a Victim

The long, vented basement room of my summer workplace was somehow a coffin. Eight women and our supervisor drove there every day to breathe the dry air and “chink chink chink” of the computers. I breathed that air for three months and realized it contained particles of discontent. I nearly choked. While I knew fresh air was coming to me at the end of those three months, I wondered if my co-workers would ever escape.

Strange noises would come through the vent. No one ever questioned them. My co-workers were content without an explanation. Their questions were simply the sound of worms crawling—almost imperceptible but destructive. I soothed my questions and discontent with the knowledge that my job would soon end. I would escape. My co-workers, however, could not see an escape and their questions multiplied.

As their frustrations increased, an answer to their gnawing questions began to form. That answer took the shape of an accusation. My co-workers’ fight to escape was, in more than one sense, a fight to survive. In this struggle, they perceived themselves to be members of what is now a celebrated class: victims. Their discontent began my project to define a “real victim.”

I wasn’t aware that I had already begun to screen potential victims before awarding them my sympathies. Television definitely played a role in this process. I found myself psychoanalyzing others in a matter of two minutes and two seconds—or less. This is about the time between the commercials during “Oprah” and “LA Law.”

Tough issues require more time. After much consideration I have come to perceive three levels of victims. I list them rather hesitantly in descending order, indicating their credibility with most Americans. The “top level”—read, most credible—victims are those who have suffered a hideous crime, such as those killed by Jeffrey Dahmer, the notorious “Milwaukee murderer.” The “middle level” candidates are troubled by prejudices, particularly racism and sexism. Americans tend to study these victims much more carefully and with greater skepticism than those in the top level. The last and most populated “lower level” contains the victims of unhappy lives or a single unpleasant incident. These victims—if we may use this term—have experienced an increased scrutiny as evinced in recent articles in magazines such as *Time* and *New York*.

As I began to consider some current issues, such as the William Kennedy...
Smith rape case, I realized how messy this tri-level classification is. The lines between each level are not concrete, but blurred. With this in mind, I will try to show how Americans’ confusion among levels has stirred up controversy over two current issues: rape and racism. In the William Kennedy Smith rape case, both the alleged victim and Kennedy are lost between the top tiers of “victimhood.” Those who struggle with racial tensions in neighborhoods and at work are somewhere between the middle and lower levels. In both issues, confusion over what constitutes a victim causes us to avoid confronting the actual problems of violence, bigotry, and hatred and instead opt to circumvent responsibility.

First, let’s consider “acquaintance” or “date” rape. Unlike the woman who brought charges against William Kennedy Smith, I do not know what it is like to feel cheapened in this way. To put it mildly, it doesn’t sound like much fun. I am not even considering the public commentary on my life which would inevitably follow. Such severe public scrutiny would seem to leave the victim feeling just as defenseless as he or she did during the actual crime. Take for example one man’s reaction, as reported by Bella English in her Boston Globe column, to the sexual history of the alleged victim in the Smith case: “The girl has had three abortions, a child out of wedlock and admitted having relations with seven men . . . that’s hardly the type of person you’d have to rape.” English responds in horror, “Oh dear. What kind of person would you have to rape?”

As these statements indicate, acquaintance rape occupies the precarious position between the top and middle levels of victimhood. Many people may decide that the alleged victim has been a survivor of a horrible crime. On the other side of the issue, the above statement carries a sexist overtone. English’s irate reader and others like him may classify the Smith rape victim as a victim of sexism without giving her any more credit than that.

My heart is definitely with this alleged victim. However, in Time magazine, Nancy Gibbs notes that female jurors in rape trials “tend to be harsh judges of one another—perhaps because to find a defendant guilty is to entertain two grim realities: that anyone might be a rapist, and that every woman could find herself a victim” (50). We should all ask ourselves if our definition of a “victim” changes to salve our fears.

We can’t overlook the other potential victim in this case—William Kennedy Smith. Are Smith and other men accused of rape victims of character damage if they are innocent? In New York magazine, Eugene R. August asserts that there is an assumption in America that men are never victims. Words such as “murderer,” “crook,” “terrorist,” and even “suspect” are likely to register as males in the minds of most Americans (184). There is little argument about what gender a rapist is likely to be. It follows that men may be victims of a society which has preconceived ideas about their roles in most crimes. Does this mean that a woman should consider a man’s reputation before crying rape? According
Words such as "murderer," "crook," "terrorist," and even "suspect" are likely to register as males in the minds of most Americans. Men may be victims of a society which has preconceived ideas about their roles in most crimes.

to August, both the victim’s and the defendant’s reputations are at stake.

The controversy over the definition of rape (with or without the adjectives "acquaintance" and "date") is burning through the definition of a rape victim. People are asking if true rape victims are getting lost in the growing ranks of alleged victims. An editorial in the New York Post, cited by Gibbs in Time, recently stated:

If the sexual encounter, forced or not, has been preceded by a series of consensual activities—drinking, a trip to the man’s home, a walk on a deserted beach at 3 in the morning—the charge that’s leveled against the alleged offender should, it seems to us, be different than the one filed against, say, the youths who raped and beat the jogger [in Central Park] (55).

Essentially, the Post believes the woman raped by a casual friend or college classmate has a lower victim status than the woman raped by a perfect stranger.

This kind of attitude should be pondered most closely by college students. Gibbs observes that acquaintance rape is potentially easy on college campuses: “doors are left unlocked, visitors come and go, and female students give classmates the benefit of the doubt.” She also reveals that as reports of acquaintance rape become more numerous, most colleges like to “try to make it go away” (54).

However, both victims and accused should take note:

Representative Jim Ramstad of Minnesota filed a bill in Congress this June—the “campus sexual-assault victims’ bill of rights”—that guarantees students the right to have assaults investigated by police and to live in housing “free from sexual or physical intimidation” (55).

Representative Ramstad acknowledges that some sort of crime is occurring on campuses. Carleton College, a liberal arts school in Minnesota, has been the site of several alleged cases of acquaintance rape. The college does not call these crimes rape, but rather “sexual harassment” or “advances without sanction.” These terms are hardly fair. They are intended to circle wide around a serious confrontation of the issues. We cannot allow this controversy to bulldoze over these women’s frustrations. Are we afraid to admit acquaintance rape under the category of rape because we would, according to Gibbs, “risk stripping away its power to conjure up scenes in back alleys with knives?” (55) In other words, would we risk robbing first level victims of their credibility?

Given the calculated risks in coming forward to cry rape, I believe we should grant all alleged rape victims more credibility as top level victims. However, rape victims are facing the recent backlash against the increasing number of Americans who consider themselves victims. These new victims are people who are more likely to fall into the middle and lower levels.

Unfortunately the public finds it difficult to classify minorities, particularly racial minorities, according to these levels. We judge them to be either legitimate
victims of prejudice or dismiss them as whiners and crybabies. Often I have perceived that this distinction is influenced by how much guilt or ignorance the public retains from previous interaction with different races.

The controversial African-American essayist, Shelby Steele, recognizes this dichotomy but responds by indicting blacks for exploiting this guilt to their advantage. He claims, "[we organize] our identity around our victimization" (Taylor 33). Ironically, states Steele, victimization has become a source of power.

If, as Steele claims, victimization is an identity, must African-Americans be victims forever? Some in the black community have coined the terms "Afropeans," "Afrosaxons," and "Incognegros" to refer to other blacks who they believe express a desire to be assimilated into white culture. These terms seem to reflect the threatened security some victims of prejudice feel when they think unity among themselves is beginning to crumble. One African-American voiced his criticism of Colin Powell’s role in the Gulf War by saying it was like "the house nigger sending the field niggers to die" (Taylor 34).

Based on purely emotional comments such as this, the American public, myself included, is often tempted to ridicule African-Americans and other minorities for inviting and continuing their victimization. We lean toward classifying them as third level whiners. However, two incidents this summer caused me to examine my attitude toward this matter.

The first event occurred in my predominantly Caucasian neighborhood in New Jersey. A black boy was reprimanded by a police officer simply for playing in his neighbor’s backyard. That boy is my adopted brother. My sister objected to this treatment, and to band-aid the incident our town’s police chief invited my brother to the police station for a friendly tour. I asked myself, was my brother a victim?

In answering this question I decided that acknowledging that my brother was a victim would not necessarily mean believing he would be destined to be a victim forever. Adopting an extreme victim identity erodes community ties, polarizing the alleged victim and the accused victimizer. Initially a victim is isolated from his or her community. A healthy response to being victimized is to bridge the gap through time and forgiveness. This involves a return to society. Setting aside my hometown police department’s possible motives of self-protection, the photo of my brother grinning with the police chief was evidence that my brother’s role as a victim was not permanent.

The second incident, which initially prompted me to consider the question of what constitutes a victim, involved an African-American woman at my workplace. This woman did not get along with our white supervisor. She told me she was literally “sitting on the edge of her seat,” waiting for a serious enough conflict to give her the necessary evidence to bring to the NAACP office to use
How have we learned to protest "it’s not my fault"?
Those of us in our twenties have grown up in a decade which promised "Cosby happiness." Underneath, we know better.

in a law suit against our boss. She tried to convince me that she was being treated without respect, but I suggested that not all the disrespect was racially motivated. Our supervisor truly lacked relational skills, but so did my co-worker. The problem was that this woman saw her only source of power in proving that she was a victim of racism. She was actually avoiding a personal confrontation. Both she and my supervisor continued to alienate each other as they glared through opposite ends of a binocular lens.

With this situation in mind, I consider Steele’s words to be a warning. Prejudice, whether sexism or racism, produces a sensitivity among the potential victims that must be treated honestly. Steele’s statement is not necessarily meant to cheapen blacks’ cries of prejudice. He continues:

A politics of difference (Affirmative Action) rewards victimization. It sets up a reward system in which, in order to accept the entitlements that come to you because you are a victim, you continue to escalate your claims of victimization. You get more and more tied into a victim-focused identity, and so, even as you enjoy the benefits of society, your screams of victimization grow louder (Taylor 33).

I think Steele is challenging both blacks and whites in different ways. Blacks and other minorities are asked to reconsider their methods of fighting racism. Whites are asked to re-think the “reward system” of Affirmative Action and their resentment toward it. As a college student, preparing to become a part of the “real world,” I must ask myself how I express my attitude regarding racism and attitude toward victims in general.

If you accept the three categories I have described, you also must evaluate how you respond to each group of victims. After my experiences this summer, I discovered that there is a tremendous amount of frustration over the question of victimization that is straining ties between people. A side effect of the popularity of victim status has been that the growing ranks of lower level victims are threatening the credibility of the top and middle level victims. In New York magazine, John Taylor observes:

It’s a strange phenomenon, this growing compulsion of Americans of all creeds, colors, and incomes, of the young and the old, the infirm and the robust, the guilty as well as the innocent, to ascribe to themselves the status of victims to try to find someone or something else to blame for whatever is wrong or incomplete or just plain unpleasant about their lives (28).

How have we learned to protest “it’s not my fault”? Those of us in our twenties have grown up in a decade which promised “Cosby happiness.” Underneath, we know better. The pain of divorce, of chemical abuse, of a broken heart have been a part of our reality. We cannot help but to have found some means of surviving within this reality.
For myself, I have discovered that I have been a victim for unique reasons in many circumstances. As my co-workers toil away in their data-processing coffin in order to survive, I ask what my role is in remaining a victim. Victim status is not a life-long predicament. While on earth, our response to pain will be to gasp unbelievingly at the appalling effects of sin.

Yet, we need to remind ourselves of the nailprints on the palms of the ultimate victim, Christ. Although the marks remain, He is certainly not a victim still. What is our only comfort in life and in death? This discovery begins for me with a prayer:

But let all who take refuge in you be glad;
let them ever sing for joy.
Spread your protection over them,
that those who love your name may rejoice in you.
For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous;
you surround them with your favor
as with a shield (Psalms 5:11-12).

WORKS CITED


continuum

oh
dad
you
knew
you
knew!
caddy
chevy
clad
(I
kidded
you
laughed)
shimmered
shimmered
gold
soft
within
eyes
going
earthly
dim,
oh

Lambert Van Poolen

34
dad died
February 26, 1989

a few weeks before that happened Kay and I took him for a last doctor visit.
we had to ride through the woods around reeds lake.
he liked how smooth my 10 year old chevy ran and said so so I kidded him as to what really was the car . . .
he remarked about wishing to see spring but knew it would not be.
i think he saw a glory beyond our glory that day and as his body and mind became more earthly frail it became more eternal strong.
he moved farther along on that earth-heaven continuum that is our hope launched by faith in Him who travelled it once before.

Lambert Van Poolen
she being Age

she being Age

-old; and you
know consequently quite
time worn i was
inconsiderate of her and (having

let her
rust kicked her flat
tires realized she needs WOR.

K.) i put her in neutral rolled her

down, the driveway popped the
clutch (and then somehow there was
vivacity wee
hoo) next
minute the engine cut tried again no
dice called triple X they gave (me

a jump
oh and her gears
worn i went
from first down
to fourth into second Damn
my incompetency) just as we turned the corner of Mortal

avenue the engine knocked and the left
wheel wobbled, bad

(it
was possibly the last ride and believed i we were
overwhelmed by nostalgia right up to
the last minute coming back down by the simple country
lane i eased off the gas

the

internalexpanding
&
externalcontracting
brakes were of no use any
more

and rolled all of her smoothly
to a: dead.

stand-;
;still)

Geoff Zylstra and Steve Lauthan