Hi-Rise Campsites, Inc., has announced plans to construct a 20-story campground in downtown New Orleans...Plans for the $4 million project call for 8 lower floors of parking and 12 upper stories with 240 individual sites equipped with utility hookups for campers...[and] campsites carpeted with artificial turf, and a rooftop pool.

"This will be unique--the first of its kind anywhere," said Wesley Hurley of Hi-Rise. "It is designed for today's different kind of camping. People don't want the woodsly bit now; they want to camp in comfort near the city."  APR

[The facility was never built.]
dialogue and the Arts
A Journal of Commentary

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People see my mother as a heroic feminist for obtaining her M.A., succeeding in her career, and raising two children by herself. She just shrugs and says she did what she had to do. As a result of this background, I tend to expect others to support my non-traditional ideas about what a woman can and cannot do. This rarely happens. Few people live by my mother’s conviction that people should do what they have the talent for. Over the past four years I have lived and worked with people who hold strict ideas about the appropriate life for a woman. Their arguments and the heat of their convictions force me to grapple with how my gender fits into my career goals, dreams for a family, and present relationships—family, friends, and acquaintances. I realize now, these struggles are human issues and are not specifically connected to my gender. But tensions arise because no clear-cut roles exist anymore. Roles define how I should act and what I can expect from others. The feminist movement and the men’s movement break down society’s traditional forms, forcing us to go through the process of defining our own identities and expectations. But the process rarely runs smoothly and sometimes doesn’t even occur, leaving our friendships underdeveloped and potentially stifling.

Although some of my questions have been answered by the confident independence of Gloria Steinem and Katherine Hepburn, many still remain. The evident questions arise in casual moments such as when I enter a doorway beside a man. What message does it send if I reach and open it for him? What should I think if he holds it open for me? Or, should I pay on a date? If I do pay, is it a “date”? If the man pays, is he staking out his territory, blindly fulfilling a traditional role, or merely paying? On a more intimate level, how do I react to those who offend me as a woman? Are stereotypes concerning male and female roles logical generalizations stemming from our different basic natures? Or, are all stereotypes nurtured? How do I discover the power of myself as a woman within a dating relationship? How will I maintain my friendships with men if and when I marry? How do I help people understand my needs without wearing them like a neon button?

After pondering such questions, I have discovered that no corner exists where these issues do not arise. When I worked on a maintenance crew a few summers ago, I spent weeks hastily splattering paint in order to keep up my end of the “competition” and prove my worth despite my “demerit” of being a woman. In class, I notice how men often declare their answers and assertively ground questions while women tend to answer questions with the same intonation they ask them with.

I can appreciate aspects of the era my mother grew up in when more formal, unwritten rules existed, but I rejoice in the midst of my questions because of the lovely freedom this breakdown of traditions has given me. I have the chance to take up these issues for myself, searching with my own tools to understand myself as a woman and how that influences my friendships. Not only do I need to understand myself better and believe in my capabilities, but I need to formulate my own concept of the perfect relationship. If I never idealize and think over what the components of a bosom friendship are, I will not realize how far short of the ideal I fall and thus where to begin working. I merely plod onward, never realizing the weight of my decisions and never gaining the wisdom to change things. I surrender
my ability to improve my relationships so they are freer, more supportive, and more intimate. Having a goal in mind will help me keep my own character alive and growing so that I may become the sort of person who can maintain the friendship I desire. I hope to be worthy of the one I seek.

I will inevitably fail if I adopt either society’s traditional roles for male/female relations or those I grew up with, before working to form my own opinion. The failure lies in not living fully in the present, not wrestling with the complex issues at hand, and shirking from faith-ful acts of change. Sweat, failure, and frustration with people I have relationships with threaten me when I begin changing, but the other alternative of keeping the waters still kills the very life in me Christ came to save. Without some turbulent water, how do I discover the significance of living a life in Him?

So we ask ourselves questions, despite the risks involved. The more we come to understand ourselves, the easier it will become to express our expectations, feelings, and needs to others. We need to learn to communicate well, despite the way our words commit us to what we say, make us vulnerable, and threaten to take a bit of the mystery of the relationship away. Why waste years walking on eggshells or denying our deep wishes? We have a life to live, circuses to go to, friends to make, and families to care for.

Neither men nor women ought to live so timidly that others decide large pieces of their future. Such a blind surrender of will has resulted in many women finding themselves in hellish emotional chains as their eyes are opened by a divorce or an affair or the slow onset of silence within their relationships to men. This sacrifice of will has resulted in pain for some men, too, who find themselves swindled by women who seek only their money, who discover after many wasted years that they do not know their wives because they viewed them as “wives” or “just women” and not as total persons, or who face divorce because they never took up the challenge of learning how to express themselves.

It does not seem prudent to leave behind all traditional ways of relating, but we have a life of our own to live and blessings and gifts to discover which lie only in our path. Regardless of whether these gender struggles lead us into traditional or non-traditional ways of relating, we must keep in mind the goals of realizing our potential and forming healthy friendships. These can only happen after we grapple, idealize, and converse. God has paid and still pays a high price to give us the freedom to think, to learn, and to choose things for ourselves so that our relationship with Him contains depth and intimacy. We, too, can show love to each other by giving such gifts. We need the freedom to discover who we are, the encouragement to seek our ideals, and the support and advice to fulfill our dreams. As we grow and change, we can learn to use our imaginations and creativity to find ways of relating that enhance our own lives and those with whom we have relationships. May the increase of communication clear away the fog that accompanies the gender issue, making our friendships more intimate. Shall we proceed and grapple with these questions together? Let us tread lightly and perhaps slowly, but let us tread.
September Two

"The summer storms here are like that"

Indian summer
strong and sudden, there is no denying them
fresh
"it tastes like a new season"

How wonderful it felt
standing in the field with the rain
watching the sky and dry hills
change colors
shedding dust
"Oh, I could reach out and touch them"
almost
to be a part of it, clinging to the wind
all the spirits come home to play
"If you could turn fast enough you could catch them"

I felt

weightless

and more alive than I had any right to be

Lynelle Regnerus
As I drive the colors of the trees lining the highway catch me unaware with their vibrancy. I had not witnessed their gradual passage. Their end is nearly accomplished, their cycle complete. Soon the colors will fade and the leaves will drop in a temporal dance, and when they touch the ground they will instinctively settle themselves into the earth. I envy their purpose.

I wonder if my parents woke up this morning with any sense that today their son, silent for so many years, would roll up to their doorstep, his body weary with travel and his mouth full, for once, of things to say to them. My parents and I have not spoken in five or six years. When I think about this or voice it in conversation, I picture myself an angry and hostile man, one who resents his parents and remembers his childhood with pain. I am not this man. I am not angry or resentful or even particularly injured. I am only lost.

I was an only child, born to my mother and father when they had just come to terms with the fact that they would never have children. Our house, my childhood home and the one to which I am returning now, nestles on the outskirts of town, surrounded by fields and streams and virtual solitude. I have few memories of neighbors, really, or of any daily visitors at all besides the milkman and the paper delivery girl. Even when I began school, I rarely invited friends home. My parents distanced themselves, too, from the interactions and the profound intimacy of friendship. They were both indelibly religious people, and this spirituality, this casual disinterest in the material world always made me feel as if my parents never really existed in the earthly realm at all, but were simply passing through on their way to a more perfect place. I now wonder if my mother was often lonely, and if she was not, what kind of a person was she, so different from me; overwhelmed by loneliness, I married a woman I didn’t really love, although I have grown to.

I am composing in my head what exactly I will say to them. “I’ve done some growing up. I’d like you in my life now.” “Nothing was your fault. I want my children to know their grandparents.” Everything is too harsh. What I want to say is “I’m sorry I hurt you. Do you still love me? Did you ever stop?” but I know I can never say these things.

When I was eighteen, the summer before I left for college, I stopped believing in God. I used to think it was because of Max, but now I know he was only the catalyst. I needed to stop believing before I could start again. I can hardly explain this, especially to myself, but as surely as I once could not believe, surely will I someday start again.
A billboard catches my eye: rest stop, next exit. I merge into the right lane, craving a cup of coffee so strong that it leaves sludge in the bottom of the mug. The rest stop consists only of a rundown diner, its pathetic grunginess emphasized by the obtrusively modern sign advertising beer, wine, ice, and “Do-Nuts.” I will find my sludgy coffee here. I enter the door, stepping over a rubber mat stenciled “Welcome Friends” and the dusty darkness swallows me up. I ease myself into a green vinyl booth close to the door and hunger grabs me, as if it had been waiting under the table. A blonde waitress sidles up to me, her hair pulled into a crispy variation of a braid, and asks, “What can I getcha mister?” It seems like she was supposed to say that; somehow, in this diner off this section of the highway somewhere in Ohio, she couldn’t possibly have said anything else. I order number five from the breakfast menu, served all day. “Wouldja like orange juice with that or else you can have a grapefruit.” I decide in favor of the grapefruit.

I met Max in June when I was doing my last lab assignment for biology. I was collecting a sample of some organic thing, the genus of which I can no longer recall, on the bank of the stagnant pond in the field behind our house. In the field was an old shack that we used to play in when we were kids, but I hadn’t been in it in years—not since eighth grade when I smoked my first cigarette with Ronnie Johnson. That day, something made me go over to the shed, though, just to open the door, glance around, and see if anything had changed much. I was surprised to see a cot in the corner of the room and an orange milk crate filled with some utensils, a couple of books, a hammer, and some other junk. The cabin was dirty and smelled faintly sweet, like old socks and marijuana. In the opposite corner of the room a man sat slumped against the wall. He was wearing big boots caked with clay and a faded flannel shirt, open all the way down to his navel. I remember wondering what the hell a man was doing living in this place, but at the same time realizing that if someone had to live here this man looked like the one who should.

I thought he was sleeping and I had turned around to leave when he said, “Do you want to come in for a minute?” Which struck me as a very proper thing to say, as if I were in his parlor and he felt obligated to get me to the sitting room before we could start to talk. I paused in the doorway, unsure of whether I should go in or not, but overcome with curiosity. So I stayed. We talked for almost an hour; I must have done most of the talking, because I didn’t find out much about him. Later, when he talked, he almost always spoke in the abstract, never in the personal; he revealed truths to me about life, but stopped just short of talking about his own.

I was fascinated by him. He was young enough to be accessible, but old enough that I was not his equal.
He was the type of adult that every teenager should encounter at least once before becoming one. He was someone that I guardedly admired, wanting him to think I was smart, precocious—never wanting him to see how desperately I coveted his approval.

The waitress brings out my food on a huge round tray which is balanced precariously on her shoulder. She crouches by the edge of the table and the tray tips; the platter of eggs slides right off the edge and lands upright on the table in front of me. She looks startled, but regains her composure to deposit my toast, hash browns and grapefruit on the table in a more conventional manner. I restlessly pick at the duct tape holding my seat together while I wait for her to rearrange her apron and leave so I can eat. The eggs are hot and runny, and I mop up the excess with the toast, enjoying the feeling of food between my teeth.

My parents knew about the inhabitant of the shack long before I did, it turned out. When I mentioned it to them, my mother shot my father a sidelong glance that said volumes to him, but which I could not interpret. “Son,” my father said gravely, “that man is not someone for you to be involved with. He is a troublemaker and I don’t want you to go down there again.” Of course, this piqued my interest. Being a relatively mild-mannered and well-behaved boy, I relished the thought of vicarious delinquency. “What do you mean, Dad? How is he a troublemaker?” I asked him. I sensed some sort of mystery behind my parents’ hesitancy. “He’s suspected of murdering a man,” my father answered. “Nothing has been proven,” he assured me, for my father firmly believed in the benefit of the doubt, “but all the same, I’d rather you stayed clear of him.” That was the end of the conversation. My father would never have said, “Do you understand?” or even openly forbidden me from doing it, but his wishes were implicit in the fact that he mentioned it at all.

Until then, I was in the habit of obeying my parents, and I might have done so that time too, but my Biology assignment brought me too close to temptation to resist. I wasn’t frightened of him; I foolishly reasoned that if he had wanted to kill me, he would have done so when I met him at first, especially since I had been trespassing. When I visited him the second time he was stretched out on his cot, wearing the same clothes, boots and all, and smoking a joint. I sat on the floor cross-legged and bluntly asked him, hoping to impress him with my confidence and boldness, “Did you really murder someone?” He paused for a long time and when I thought he was ignoring me he said, “Yes. I suppose I did.” He sounded as if it had just dawned on him and I almost regretted that I had been the bearer of such an accusation. I ached for more details, but I couldn’t sacrifice my jaded pretensions even to satisfy my naive fascination. We never talked about it again.

Far from a crazed criminal, though, he was an intelligent and passionless man who dwelt in languid specu-
lation, giving the impression of both substance and transience. To me he embodied unfamiliar depths and though I approached him guardedly, he infused me with his objective distaste. I only smoked one joint with him so I know my transformation was neither stimulated nor tainted by a chemical malaise. Its causes are much less easy to identify and much harder to escape.

My parents worried about me incessantly that summer. They saw my blatant disregard first for their wishes and then for their beliefs, I know now that I have children of my own that my rebellion, intensified in its subtlety, wrenched their souls. I overheard them praying about me once that summer. “Oh Lord,” my father said, his voice lilting in the musical way it did when he prayed, “preserve our dear son. Make your presence apparent to him and keep him from paths of wickedness.” I was overcome by immense sorrow, and equally immense resentment.

I told Max about the prayer. He shook his head slowly and said, “Man, didn’t your parents lie to you about Santa Claus? Didn’t they lie about the Tooth Fairy? How do you think they aren’t lying about God? Man, your parents are full of shit. Got that? Full...of...shit.” He paused between each word and took a long drag on his cigarette. “And as soon as you start believing that stuff, you have become full of shit too.” It was one of the longest speeches he’d ever made to me and although I blanched at his disrespect for my parents, I wrestled seriously with his words.

Once I made an edited speech like his in front of my father, mostly for shock value, but partly because I had to say it out loud to someone to see if it sounded as true as it did the first time I heard it spoken. My father looked pale and whispered, “My God.” It struck me as terribly ironic.

He asked Reverend Gates to talk to me, and I will never forget as long as I live the words he spoke. Reverend Gates spoke to me not as a guiding counselor or a voice of reason, but as a friend of my father’s and as a believer maligned. “Do you think that life is so simple?” he asked angrily. “That things either are or they aren’t? Well if you do, you are wrong!” His voice lowered. “Some things are hidden. You can’t see them, though you always look for them, and sometimes it seems they are there just beyond your reach and sometimes they are not. And some things are always there, regardless of what they seem to be.” He paused and swallowed hard. “Your father is a good man, you know. And your mother a good woman. Don’t be selfish, and don’t punish them for your searching.” His speech to me was unorthodox for a minister. I want to tell him that only now am I beginning to think I know what he meant.

The waitress returns again with the bill and leaves it face up on the table. Although I haven’t handled it yet, it is smeared with grease. Now that I have finished my meal I need to leave as quickly as possible, to not notice my surroundings for fear that something will make me change my mind and go back. I leave a bill on the table
to cover the check and the tip, even though I realize things aren’t done that way in places like this. Pushing open
the door, I notice a detail, an NRA sticker plastered right above the door handle, and seeing it does not change my
mind. Relieved, I unlock my car, ease myself into my seat, and prepare for the rest of the trip home.

Driving again, I can’t stop remembering. Now that I have recalled most of the story, I cannot prevent the
remainder of it from following. One day, near the end of the summer, I went to see Max and found two police of-
ficers in the cabin. One held Max by the arm and the other furiously scribbled in a notebook. I thought I was wit-
tnessing a television show, in which case I knew that Max was the bad guy. I had always had the vague sense that
Max lived in a vacuum or a world that slipped in and out of existence. Seeing him in the context of people besides
myself was unsettling and in some strange way the oddity of the whole situation heightened my awe of him. He
seemed so out of place in that field, flanked by two ordinary
blue-clad policemen, and I was left with the sense of disorienta-
tion one always finds when observing a familiar object in unfa-
miliar surroundings. It felt like the time when I was younger and
I stumbled across the nativity scene we used for Christmas in a
box in the attic. I lifted each piece out in wonder, holding the
tiny Jesus and the little animals in my hands. I had only seen
them before on the mantel of our living room and discovering
them unexpectedly, I found them more mysterious and intriguing
than I ever would again when my mother set them out at Advent.

The officers led Max out of the shack and toward the
squad car that was parked about ten feet away, and I immediately
noticed that he was not wearing his boots. I had never seen him
without his boots on before. I can still remember his bare feet
sticking out of his ragged cuffs. He did not acknowledge me.
Suddenly, he shrugged off the officer’s grip with as little apparent
effort as he ever used and he bolted the opposite direction across
the meadow. One cop yelled “Hey!” or some other useless cry of
protest and the other one shouted, “Stop or I’ll shoot!” Inwardly I tried to tell Max to stop because I thought he
would listen to me, but somehow the message never got through, because the officer yelled again and then he raised
his pistol and shot Max right off his feet. I could tell by the way he hit the ground that he was dead because he fell
so purposefully, like his final resting place was the thing he had been seeking his entire life. I thought then that the
world was full of shit.

After his death my father and mother said a prayer for his family, to give them strength. I was sure his
family had no idea he was dead anyway and my father’s words sounded, for the first time, empty and insincere.
Two weeks later I left for college and that first year I came home once, but after that I neither spoke to nor saw my
parents until this day. I know the pain I have caused them. I have read it in my mother’s unanswered letters and heard it in one phone call I received from Reverend Gates. In my dreams, I have seen it in their faces. Until the one arbitrary moment two days ago in the kitchen when my wife swore because she burned the toast, I thought I could never face them again. But now, here I am, turning down the last blue highway before I will reach the turnoff for our county.

When I reach the house I sit in front for several minutes with the car running before I remove the keys from the ignition and climb out of the car. Nothing here seems to have changed. The same tree branch slightly obscures the kitchen window. My parents come out to me as I mount the first step to the porch. My father stands back, his face so much older and softened, while my mother clutches me in a fierce embrace. She is weeping soundlessly, controlled, and when she releases me and holds me at arms length just the way mothers do, she smiles. “I am so glad to see you,” she says simply. “I expected you today. Maureen called this morning to see if you were here. She was very worried. You must call her as soon as we get inside.” My father is quiet, but he is a quiet man, and I know that when he speaks to me the words will be of forgiveness and regret, but most of all of forgiveness, for that is what he is accustomed to. My mother guides me into the house. “Sit down, son,” she instructs. And I, her son, sit at the table looking out the window at the surrounding trees.

My father is standing in the kitchen, feet slightly apart, his hands clasped behind his back. I cannot see his face, but in his carriage I can see his aging. His fingers find his wedding ring and absent­ly twist it just below his knuckle. Other than that slight movement he is a picture of stillness. He too is looking out the window; just below the eave hangs a wind chime. When I was a child, we had one made of forks and spoons and knives that made a tinny rattling noise when the wind passed through. These chimes are different, though. Long silver tubes dangle from a piece of polished oak and they sway slightly, not quite touching.

My mother carries a platter of muffins from the counter and on her way to the table she touches my father’s arm, bringing him back from wherever he was. He looks at her with great tenderness and as he follows her to the table, the wind brushes the chimes outside. The sound is deep and gentle, fluid and melodious, and it seeps under the window pane and into the room, its notes intertwining and surrounding all the empty spaces there ever were between us.
I like the seasons here because they go BANG
(or, Life at high altitudes)

Fall
barely
has time to open its eyes
and close them again
before rims sting with cold.
eyelashes catch frost
before the tangyness is gone.

Winter
snaps
crisp with energy
desperate blue skies
take half your breath for ransom
for keeping the bitterness away
(and running everywhere, half a lung does well)

Spring
merely
is
when winter stretches out to sleep
and gets thin

Summer
the rabbit
gets to play
Lion-For-A-Day
before fall chases him
back into the ground

and blinks when he is gone.

Lynelle Regnerus
Sonnet #3

No wonder growth at times is such a strain,  
plants sprung from wintery earth must long for rain.  
Am I like these? a seedling in November  
bound blindly through the frozen crusty soil?  
In my short life the spring I scarce remember  
so vainly I convict my life to toil.  
Am I indeed an oldster as a sprout?  
(my youth seems false, a part I'm vain to play)  
Or is it vain to cast my youth in doubt  
and see cold death in every brisk spring day?  
Say, were they older who in their age heard sung  
the songs they learned from earth on her first morn?  
Or will the title 'oldest' name the young  
whose lot is life on earth whose age they scorn?  

Daniel Paul Philips
"It is said that the gods had revealed wine to the mortals, to be the greatest blessing for those who use it aright, but for those who use it without measure, the reverse. For it gives food to those that take it, and strength in mind and body.”

Wine-drinking in Ancient Greece is informative of the Greek temperament. While moderation was the norm, Greek practice required means for dealing with deviations from the norm. Moderation was clearly the prudent course, but rarely the attractive one when present at a bountiful feast. Consideration of the manner of Greek wine-drinking provides a picture of the Greeks as a people both respectful of and passionate about the good in their experience. Most Greeks knew how to drink wine well, and their lives were enriched for it.

The Greeks drank wine not merely for recreation, but for re-creation. The strain of tragedy in their literature discloses their sense of the hardness of life. A Greek life typically involved an early death. In the face of a precarious life, the Greeks did not just ‘party’. They came together to remember the good they knew, to tell the stories of their heroes, to receive restoration for the inevitable struggle ahead.

The primary source for our knowledge of Greek culinary habits is Athenaeus’s work *The Deipnosophists, or The Sophists at Dinner*. The fifteen books of Athenaeus’s work provide a baffling disarray of quite possibly all there was to know about cooking and eating in the Greek world. The book appears to have been organized by someone who spent a lot of time running around the kitchen in a dirty apron, throwing into the mixing bowl whatever was at hand. In any case, it is the oldest extant culinary book, and in spite of its organizational oddness, it displays all the delight in what is good in life that any fine culinary book should.

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1 Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists*, II. 36, 155-57 (hereafter, A). The only other Greek writer to provide similar information is the Athenian food-writer Archestratus, a contemporary of Aristotle. He is, however, so obscure his writing is not even readily available in Greek. Although never translated into English, he was known as “the Hesiod or Theognis of epicures” (A VII. 310, 393), and his culinary writing, in hexameter verse, was republished several times under various titles. Among these, Gulick mentions, *Gastronomy, High Living, Dinner Lore, and Dainty Dishes*. I bring this out to indicate the tradition of gastronomic awareness in the Greek world.

2 In his introduction, Gulick writes, “He lived in Rome at the end of the second and the beginning of the third century after Christ” (viii). In Bk. XII he mentions the Emperor Commodus as a contemporary.
In order to understand the manner of wine-drinking in Ancient Greece it will be helpful to discuss first the institution of symposium. Books II and III of The Deipnosophists (pp. 217-457) are virtually taken up with descriptions of “what fare the chef intended to provide” (II. 49, 217). From meats and seafood to vegetables and legumes to various kinds of fruit, the food was ample and, though the recipes are few, apparently prepared with an eye to pleasure. Along with the food there would be flute players and dancers, and then a time of singing by the attendants.

Of the singing, Richard Lattimore writes, “At the symposium...it was customary for the guests to sing songs, at first as a group, then individually (scolia). Sometimes the works of known poets were sung...Sometimes, again, the guests improvised, line by line or stanza by stanza, preserving the meter” (47). Of these scolia, Athenaeus mentions three types. The first type was “that which it was customary for all to sing in chorus,” while the second was “sung by all, to be sure, but in a regular succession, one taking it up after another.” And “last of all in order, was that no longer sung by all the company, but by those only who enjoyed the reputation of being specially skilled at it, and in whatever part of the room they happened to be.” The first and second were “obligatory for all” (pasin anagkaia). In regard to the third, “they thought that the beautiful song was one which seemed to contain advice and council useful for the conduct of life” (AXV. 694, 217).

The singers sang of Athens, of good counsel and camaraderie, of merriment and the good things in life, and of love, lust and loose living. Athenaeus provides a number of examples:

A) Pallas, Trito-born our Lady Athena, guide this our city and her citizens aright, thou and thy Father too, free from pains and factions and death untimely. XV. 694, 219

B) Take to heart, my friend, the story of Admetus: love the brave, but keep aloof from cowards, knowing that cowards have little favour. XV. 695, 225

3 These were not obligatory at a symposium. At Agathon’s party, Socrates asked that the flute-player be dismissed for the sake of conversation. But philosophers were known for their sometimes odd behaviour at such gatherings. The comic poet Baton wrote, “I summon hither the philosophers who are sober, who never give themselves a single good thing, who look for the wise man in their walks and talks, as for one who has run away... You are a dead loss to the community if you drink water; for you wrong the farmer and the merchant” (A IV. 163, 241).
C) Would that, to see what sort of man each is, we could open his breast and look at his mind, then locking it up once more, regard him surely as our friend.4 XV. 694, 220

D) Drink wine with me, sport with me, love with me, wear wreaths with me, rage with me when I am raging, be sober when I am sober.5 XV. 695, 227

E) To have health is mortal man’s highest boon; second is to be born handsome; third, to have honest wealth, and fourth, to enjoy youth with our friends.6 XV. 694 220

F) The sow has one acorn, but yearns to take the other; so I have but one fair maid but yearn to take the other. XV. 695, 229

Although the above is but a portion of the lyrics recorded, it is a fair representation and shows the majority to be of a moderate tone. The idea of the symposium did not involve the reckless behavior of a drunken orgy. “Seleucus maintains that in old times it was not the custom to indulge in too much wine or in any other luxury, except in honour of the gods” (A II. 40, 175). Athenaeus writes that the meaning of “bountiful feast” (diata thaleian) was attached to these early meals “because they gathered and came together to grace the gods” (ibid.).

4It is interesting to imagine how some of the attendants might have responded to such songs as this. One thinks especially of being present when Alcibiades either sang or listened to it.

5We should understand this song, I think, as more than a mere party-song; it has the air of an erotic proposition. Moreover, it is not implausible that such a proposition would in fact be given in the symposium setting.

6The songs Athenaeus conveys to us were apparently all recited at a particular symposium. After the song just listed, the following was the response:
   That fellow who composed the scolion, whoever he was, that ‘health comes first as the highest boon,’ described it correctly; but that ‘the second boon is to be handsome, whereas wealth is third,’ there, look you, he was crazy; for after health, wealth holds first place, but a handsome man, if he be hungry, is an ugly beast. XV. 694, 221-22
Meals were for refreshment and re-creation, and as such they were important to the life of the community. As Odysseus told Alkinoos, “I think there is no occasion accomplished that is more pleasant than when festivity holds sway among all the populace” (Odyssey, IX.5-6, 137).

Although the purity of their sense of a meal as divinely rendered restoration diminished over the centuries, the Greek symposiasts of later periods maintained a sense of the importance of moderation. Impious behavior was still undesirable. Moderation, then, was called for in case drunkenness produce a displaced of hubris. “For boasting, ridicule, and jests spring not from every kind of heartiness and fullness, but only from that which alters the spirit so completely that it inclines to illusion” (A II. 39, 173).

So the Greeks gave themselves warnings not to go too far, often in conjunction with what good effects the drink produces when drunk appropriately. “If a man fill himself too continually he loses thought, but if he drink moderately he becomes full of ideas” (A II. 40, 175). Of course, with practice one could find the balance between proper moderation and the degree of desired pleasure. Athenaeus conveys the words of one Alexis in this regard: “I have drunk not to the clouding of my reason, but just so much that I can still the syllables with my tongue” (ibid.).

If the desire to be pious had waned somewhat within Greek society, their writers were ready to give them additional reasons to be moderate. By the time of the Laws, Plato was writing that “the use of wine is to promote health” (quoted in A II. 60, 263). Those who failed in attempts at moderation, or who made no attempts, received stronger warnings: “In daily intercourse, to those who mix and drink it moderately, it gives good cheer; but if you overstep the bounds, it brings violence. Mix it half and half, and you get madness; unmixed, bodily collapse” (A II. 36, 157).

7 I have in mind by the term ‘pleasure’ a notion more sensual than the ‘pleasant festivity’ known in the earlier feasts. While ‘pleasant festivity’ is related more specifically to the community of attendants, ‘pleasure’ relates more to the individual. The two are not mutually exclusive, but I think it legitimate to think of ‘pleasure’ gaining priority over ‘pleasant festivity’ after the changes brought about in Greek society after the Persian Wars (490 and 480/79 BC). The Persian defeat confirmed the superiority of Greek culture, and led directly into the greatness of the Classical Period. Prior to the Persian Wars, a writer like Archestratus would have had much less to write about. The ability of the Greeks to fulfill their desires (especially the Athenians, clearly) increased significantly with the acquisition of their post-Persian Wars power and wealth.

8 Mixing wine with various other fluids was standard practice. Although the primary fluid used was fresh-water, in varying degrees depending on the strength and character of the wine (it was not simply a matter of mixing half wine and half water), the Greeks also employed sea-water (A.I. 25, 113). Athenaeus writes of the Carmani, “of whom Pseudoionius says: ‘These people, namely, eager to prove their friendship in their drinking bouts, open the veins of their forehead, and mixing the blood which streams down in their wine, they imbibe it, in the belief that to taste each other’s blood is the highest proof of friendship’” (ibid.). From this, I suppose, we may infer that the Carmani tended to have a few very close friends, none of whom needed much reassuring.
Dionysus was said to have provided, in a gentle moment, a summary of the effects of wine in terms of the number of bowls drunk. The first three bowls were mixed for the temperate, and, it was said, “when this is drunk up wise guests go home.” The following list summarizes the effects of bowls one through ten:

Each bowl is mixed in turn,

1) to health
2) to love and pleasure
3) to sleep (this is where the wise go home)
4) to violence
5) to uproar
6) to drunken revel
7) to black eyes (presumably when (6) degenerates into fighting)
8) to the policeman (hippopion)
9) to biliousness
10) to madness and hurling of furniture

Seltman actually conveys a story from the Sicilian historian Timaeus of Tauromenium, of a group of sailors who apparently reached the tenth degree. It happened in Akragas when the were

...so wild when over-heated by the liquor, that they imagined they were sailing in a trireme, and that they were in a bad storm on the seas. Finally they completely lost their senses and tossed all the furniture and bedding out of the house as though upon the waters convinced that the captain directed them to lighten the ship because of the raging storm. Well, a great crowd gathered and began to carry off the jetsam, but even then the young men did not cease from their mad actions.

(Seltman, 92)

When the police arrived the next day, the young men were “still half-seas over.” When questioned by the police the oldest member of the company responded, “Noble Tritons, I was so frightened that I threw myself into the lowest possible place in the hold and lay there” (ibid.). After this, the house was named ‘Trireme.’

As an antidote to the effects of such a severe lack of moderation, the Greeks relied primarily on boiled cabbage. In fact, boiled cabbage was the ancient ‘hangover’ remedy.9 “Yesterday you took a drop, and so to-day you’ve got a headache. Take a nap, that will stop it. Then have some boiled cabbage brought to you” (A. I. 34, 151). Theophrastas alleged that even the growing vine loathes the smell of cabbage (ibid.). Cabbage was taken so seriously

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9The Egyptians were considered wine-bibbers simply on the basis that they put boiled cabbage “first on their bill of fare at banquets” (A. I. 33, 149).
that the following juxtaposition apparently seemed reasonable: “There’s no cure for being drunk, it would seem, so potent as the blow of sudden grief. It drives drunkenness away so forcibly that cabbages seem ridiculous by comparison” (ibid.).

In spite of these examples, moderation was in fact the norm in the Heroic through the Classical Ages. It was not for the gross indulgence of extreme drunkenness that the Greeks drank wine, but for the positive sensual pleasure it provided in the face of a hard way of life. The Greeks had a ‘work hard/play hard’ culture in which the pleasures of the table figured as a means of re-creation. It was Odysseus who counselled, “[T]he one who takes his fill of food and wine before he grapples enemies full force, dawn to dusk — the heart in his chest keeps pounding fresh with courage, nor do his legs give out till all break off from battle” (Iliad, XIX. 199-202).

The Greek’s passion and appreciation for their wine was evident in Sparta, where “statues of heroes named Matton (“Kneader”) and Ceraon (“Mixer”) have been set up by certain cooks in the public mess” (A II 39, 171). Gulick opens his introduction to The Deipnosophists with the following quote:

We may live without poetry, music, and art;
We may live without conscience and live without heart;
We may live without friends; we may live without books;
But civilized man cannot live without cooks. (vii)

He is correct, of course; the Greeks ate to live, just as we do. Because of this, an appreciation of the way they approached the pleasures of the table can provide us with a glimpse of the way they approached life. ❖

For You This Nuptial Song

Who of us is brave enough to hunt for gold, leaving home
and familiar
Or wise enough to recognise a
diamond unfaceted?

Perhaps I love you because you were given with such simplicity...

As
I exist
    in this unsingular, solitary state
I can feel the burning heat of the Apotheosis-desert.

You show no fear as Darkness yields her demons.
Cool soothing water washes over my arid wounds.
    I realize you are the
    River;
    I am the
    Wasteland.
You pour yourself into my soul, healing and quenching,
Making me whole.

Divinest Fate cast us thus.
    let me offer a Word, a vow:
No matter the length or difficulty of the Tao,
You’ve said you’ll
Stay with me because of who I am.

With Love I say:
    I remain with you like a clear night mark, a quiet star

(In days these trepidations
    When most black the Night comes on wheels of flame,
    Certainty eludes eye and grip
    Amid the tumult still
    —though fiends through evil winds glide on gilded wings by
    Power of Hell—
I see the Love of God and know the Truth anew: Hold  Keep  Stay
The Love like the light of a thousand thousand giant Suns
    And know the Love
    Enough to speak It)
With salvation’s Soul I say, My Bride, I Love you because of
    Who you are...

Timothy Ladd
The Vandals took the handles
Subterranean Homestick Blues #7

By Steve Lauthan
Rush hour was in its third hour as Henry Phillips hurried across Shop&Kart's parking lot. He realized he was going to be late for his friends. Most likely, Whitey and Ted were already sitting in his kitchen drinking his father's beer. "Lazy leeches," Henry muttered as he hopped the rusting chain link fence at the end of the parking lot. He trudged across the sandlot and entered an aging alley.

The slam of a back door sent a jolt through Henry's spine. It conjured up the memory of the last time he had traveled through these alleys. A voice had resounded from some unknown vantage point in the darkness that engulfed the decrepit alley. "Boy, you in the wrong neighborhood." That was all, as though God in his invisible and immutable state had spoken. "Who said that? Where are you?" Henry wondered. His bewilderment and fear had added an extra kick to his sedated stride.

The roar of Friday night traffic brought him back. Henry crossed the busy thoroughfare and entered a wooded area, the forgotten side of Baltimore's municipal golf course. It was a stretch of woods he usually avoided. It often concealed a drunken or doped vagrant, an unnerving sight especially in the fading light. He set off at a quick pace over the well worn path dodging the mud puddles, stagnant and spawning mosquitos. He came to a hill and descended cautiously. Stubble and broken glass filled the eroded troughs which were etched into the steep decline. The refuse often spilled out onto McKnally street after a heavy rainstorm. An ancient elm tree's roots rippled the asphalt. McKnally street. He crossed the street and cut through Roger's yard which shared the back alley with his house.

His dog Lazarus ran to the faded white picket fence to greet Henry. In three years, Lazarus had managed to turn the backyard into a mud bowl. Henry kicked open the gate and jogged gingerly to his back door, his short, wiry figure awkward and unbalanced as he skirted the piles of shit. Whitey and Ted, slouching around the kitchen table with beers in hand, turned in tandem as Henry opened the door.

"We've bin waitin' so we didn't think you would mind if we had a few," Whitey uttered, grinning slyly.
"There's nothin' like a cold beer after a hot, humid Balmer day," kicked in Ted.
"Yeah, yeah, I know guys. Let's go—we're late," Henry said with a tinge of frustration.
"Hey, we could have a couple more, then the lines will be down. I mean traffic is so bad at the new ballpark. You figure, the state spends big bucks on such a monumental project—it could have planned for traffic better. And hell, with the lines down we could hop the fence or sneak in the employees entrance if it looks cool. This way, if your dad don't mind it, Henry, we could stay here for a while and put a dent in your plentiful supply of beer," Whitey spat.

"Grand ol' ideer, Rocks!" chirped Ted.
James Rocks Whitehurst II, alias Whitey, Rocks, or Jimmy, was either full of good ideas or just full of it. Henry thought about this and smiled. Henry rarely animated his face which furthered the popular idea that he was burnt out; burnt to the core in a neighborhood saturated with an abundant and varied drug supply. Occasionally, in a drunken upbeat moment, Henry inhaled something illegal—but only occasionally. Henry was quickly annoyed by the continual bleating of the dope smoker or the slithering language of the wide eyed deadhead. The epitome of the mindless drug talk came from the deluded coke fiend, always searching, always itching for coke. The neighborhood was full of lost souls, aimless except for their high. You couldn’t even drink without the conversation turning to drugs: So what if you can stay wired for forty-eight hours, Henry thought, or if cocaine rubbed on your organ of love was an excellent aphrodisiac with that girl from Dundalk.

"O.K., Whitey, let’s stay here and have a couple more. See if you can get the ballgame on the radio, if it’s a blowout at least we’ll know to skip it."

The Baltimore Orioles were in the thick of a pennant race. August’s humidity was replaced with the heat of competition. The Orioles bonded the suburbs of the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. Generally, the inner city remained apart from the positive baseball hubbub that buzzed around. Henry’s neighborhood was an exception because of its location—less than a mile from the old ballpark. It retained the brewing excitement. Neighbors talked baseball while cutting the grass or taking out the garbage. Kids engaged in fervent wiffleball games blocking up the alleys for the late afternoon and early evening. Young men like Henry, Whitey, and Ted would religiously read the box scores in the newspaper, and when their schedules permitted, get together and take in a ballgame.

"A sharply hit ball through the hole at short!" the radio announcer sounded. "Here comes Henderson around to score. It is one to one with one out in the top of the third. Lansford just went with the pitch getting the meat of the bat on it. Henderson scoring from second on the play, and here comes Jose Canseco to the plate."

The backdoor opened and in walked Henry’s father with his golf clubs clanging behind him. He was a short pudgy man with white socks pulled up to his knees. His black hair was developing a platinum tint often mistaken for grease. "Hello boys, or should I call you men, you all hold my beer bottles with such authority... Guys, look at me, I’m a poor man. You can’t be drinking my beer all the time."

"Well, Dad you’re beginning to look like a woman in her second term. Just think—we’re keepin’ you trim by drinking your beer," Henry said, feigning concern.

"Boy was it a bad day on the golf links. I really should buy a pair of golf shoes. Playin’ in these tennis shoes is about as bad as ol’ President Warren Harding and his buddies drinking and having extra marital affairs in the White House during prohibition."

"Who the heck is Warren Harding?" Ted asked.

"Don’t answer it, Dad, you’ll ramble forever. Warren Harding doesn’t mean anything, Ted. He probably never even existed. Sorry Pop, you’re on summer vacation—you don’t have to teach your history class this evening."

"Ease off kid, what’s the score?"

"One to one."
"Who's pitching?"

"Rhodes."

"Man, that guy doesn't have a brain; he'll keep trying to blow his ninety-five mile-per-hour fastball by the A's. He doesn't realize that pitchin's an art, a cat and mouse game. You just can't come in with heat all the time," Mr. Phillips proclaimed, putting his clubs down and taking a seat.

"Yeah, Rhodes is dumber than stone. When he got his first major league start in Cleveland, on arrival at the ballpark he asked what ocean that was at the sides of the stadium."

"What do you expect—he's from Texas. They don't make those boys learn anything substantial down there. Here in Baltimore, our school system might have problems. I mean, it's a damn shame that the city had to hire a private company to administrate the city school system. I hate it when these new administrator types, all prim and proper, keep sitting in on my history classes. Still though, the Maryland average SAT score to the Texan, it isn't even a contest," Mr. Phillips cited.

There was a moment of silence; everyone turned back to the radio. "And Canseco fouled another one back, the count still stands at three balls and two strikes. Rhodes keeps coming in with that fastball. He doesn't seem to have any confidence in his curve today."

"Ahh, when does he ever have confidence in it!" shouted Mr. Phillips. He grabbed the table and squeezed.

"Here is the pitch, ohh, it's a drive into the gap in right center, it's going to roll up against the wall. Here comes Lansford around to score. Two to one Athletics. Canseco was all over that pitch, a line drive double into the gap. Rhodes just couldn't fool him," the radio announcer chided.

Henry ran his fingers through his gnarled hair. He looked up. "Well at least Canseco is trying to work, as though baseball is work, shit, that just isn't right for them to be paid like that, ya know?"

"Come on, the market demands it. We the fans are as much a part of the problem as the players. We just fuel the system with our paying support," Mr. Phillips said somberly, as though he were teaching a class on the Civil War.

"Let's just enjoy the game. As though you two can do anything about the politics and bullshit behind it," Whitey declared.

Mr. Phillips sat across from Whitey, his face firm—ready to lecture. "It's that kind of attitude, Rocks, that will ruin any chance for decency. If you allow owners to door you with their nostalgia, their pure American game junk, major factors in what makes baseball sell, then they will keep getting away with more and more in your mind. These people in power, be it government or paltry baseball owners, are always going to take advantage of such apathetic approaches. You need to acknowledge the grime you are partaking of. It is the way of the sluggard to ignore, to embrace the illusion... Heck, in spring training in 1926 Babe Ruth was publicized to have had a nasty stomach flu. Really the Whammer had
come down with a nasty case of the clap, gonorrhea. So what was labelled the stomach ache heard round the world was really the result of the lecherous living of Mr. Baseball himself. Organized baseball did its best to cover it up. I mean, imagine all those kids and their families, the hardline supporters of baseball, realizing that Mr. Baseball’s idea of fun is going to the brothel instead of the ballpark. This is why you have a cover up, all in the name of profits not family values. Realize what you are being part of.”

“Why the hell should I have to know that, Mr. Phillips. I’ll believe what I want. Everybody else seems too.” Whitey’s voice rose in intensity. “No one cares besides you, and like I said what can you do about it. I’ll enjoy what I can with a beer in hand. History lessons do us no good, as if Warren Harding even existed!” Whitey reached behind Ted to open the refrigerator. “Hey, anyone need another beer? You need one Mr. Phillips, here.” He tossed a beer across the metal rimmed table.

“Yes! Yes! Alright, double play!” Henry jumped up clinching both his fists. Ignoring Henry, Mr. Phillips rolled out of the vinyl chair and lumbered through the kitchen with his clanging golf clubs in one hand and a beer in the other. He moved throughout the plainly furnished dining room and climbed the wooden stairs, his footsteps echoing throughout the house.

Henry turned to Whitey. “You really make my Pop depressed sometimes. Your ‘who gives a shit’ attitude doesn’t sit well with him. Try to be a little more considerate, avoid arguing. Smile and lie.”

Whitey shifted his chair so to prop his feet on the table. “First of all, I hate it when he calls me Rocks in his teacherly manner, all authoritative. I graduated from high school two years ago. I don’t need to feel as though I’m lazy and ignorant because of him. Shit! I’m probably one of the more creative spirits around; in fact, the ballgame is too ordinary for us boys tonight. We’re doin’ something better.”


“Well, everyday I go to work up on Joppa Road. I drive by that new McDonald’s, not the one down by Mr. Donut, the pool hall, and that gay bar, but the one across from Taco Bell and Wendy’s. Anyway, I guess they have a new promotion goin’. On the roof, they have this huge inflatable Ronald McDonald. Let’s steal it, just like that time we stole the wooden Easter bunny in front of that church. Wasn’t that a hoot, Henry! Especially when we planted it in the Brennan’s front yard.”

“Yeah, right Rocks, the cops called my house because someone got my tag number when you dumped out all the beer cans on the church lawn. I had to wiggle my way out of that one. We compromised. They accepted the fact that I didn’t do it, and I picked up the cans.” Henry gazed at the grime layered on the linoleum floor and couldn’t remember the last time it was washed. He let his head fall back and stared at the ceiling.

“Ah come on, that was a small part of that night. You didn’t get in real trouble. Let’s do it,” Whitey said in a soothing tone. A smooth voice on the radio cajoled, “Get smarter--buy A.C. Delco auto parts.” Henry continued to stare at the pale yellow ceiling. Ted tilted his head back and sucked on his beer. Whitey stood up, his bulky frame filling up the doorway between the kitchen and the dining room. His body had already matured through that young adult stage; it looked as though his...
definition were about to melt into relaxed muscle. The dread of every football player. He spoke.

"Ya know goin' to the ballgame will never match this feat. Stealing Ronald would truly be an uh... er... authentic act. You can if you want, as your father says Henry, embrace the edifying rhythms of the game. Or we can have real life fun? Let's get off our sorry asses. You guys look like ya want to read a book.” He placed his hands on either side of the doorway and tensed his muscles. The walls didn't budge. “The only good book I ever read was Morrison’s autobiography No Gets Out Of Here Alive.”

“Theodore, it's time to get a return on all those dollars you've lost. You've eaten at least five hundred Big Macs, pounds of greasy fries, and gallons of over-priced cokes. And you, Henry, you know what it's like having a service oriented job making sub after sub at Tito's. This could give the employees something to laugh about, laugh so hard that they might break a sweat in their polyester uniforms.” He paused, his face frozen in an affirming salesman grin. “Are you guys with me!”

Henry slowly shifted his gaze from the pale yellow ceiling to Whitey and spoke softly. “Oh alright, I'll admit that the idea has potential.”

"Then let's do it," confirmed Ted, slamming his drained beer bottle on the table.

"Great, I knew you guys would see the light. Okay, we need a hack saw—Ronald might be cabled in—and Henry do you think your old man will let us use the Rabbit? My... er... Duster has been acting up lately," Whitey said in a professional tone.

"Yeah, I'm sure my pop won't mind. He doesn’t even use it anymore since my sister took it this spring and followed the Grateful Dead out to Cali. Pop thinks it's been blasphemed by all the dope that's been smoked in—"

"It's nine! I think McDonald's is closed," Whitey interrupted. He ran his hands through his frazzled blonde hair parting it down the middle. “If I remember correctly, a friend at work said they shut down that area’s fastfood joints early on the weekends because of loitering and vandalism. This is pretty funny,” chuckling as he spoke. “Ya know the skateland up there beckons groups of black teenagers Friday and Saturday nights. This guy at work, Phil, he lives up there in a typical white neighborhood. Anyway, he says bunches of black teenagers had dandy times stealing napkin dispensers, spray painting the bathroom, and leaving piles of garbage in the parking lot. The cops were pretty cautious, actually afraid forty or fifty black youths might be incited to riot. So instead of confronting the problem, they advised all the fastfood joints in the area to shut down early on the weekends. Damn, those cops are so smart.”

Ted swaggered up from his chair, inspired by Whitey’s rhetoric. His long red hair swaying back and forth as though an imaginary breeze were blowing it. Whitey made a motion for the back door, the Volkswagen Rabbit was parked in the back alley.
Henry cranked the car up. The diesel engine quaked, then began its cathartic pucker. He opened the sun roof. The stifling humidity from the summer’s day had released its grip on the evening. Humidity was a fact of life, like taxes or potholes in the road. They learned to deal with the day’s sweat. Thankfully, the modern amenities of life take away much of the sting implicit in three months of 98% humidity. These modern amenities confine many to their houses. However, many hope and pray that there may come a time when the city at large can be air-conditioned enough to keep beer cold, and allow people to watch television outside instead of in. Yet, America is still in a process of becoming.

Henry’s Volkswagen Rabbit was caught in the midst of the mid-summer evening’s movements. The car radio was blaring, neutralizing the slow going pace of traffic. Henry drove with his mouth shut and eyes on the road. Ted lounged across the back seat tapping on the window, grooving to the rhythm and blues of the Rolling Stones. Whitey, attempting to sing over Mick Jagger’s voice and accentuate Keith Richard’s guitar riffs, forgot about the slow pace of traffic.

“Give it a break,” shouted Henry. “You drink too much milk—or maybe it’s those allergies, because when you bellow it sounds like you are drowning in your mucus. Besides, I like Mick and Keith, not you!” Henry’s eyes were still fixed intently on the road.

“Man, Henry, relax. It isn’t good for you to bottle up your emotions. If there is one thing my dad taught me, emotions are like letting a clutch out, especially in this crappy Rabbit. They need to be let out slowly, too quick and everything stalls and people get frustrated and pissed off…What’s wrong anyway? You look awfully perplexed, I mean, what the hell for, it’s life, we’re living,” Whitey said, with a streak of concern in his voice.

Henry swung a right onto Loch Raven Boulevard. He accelerated, the shift of the vibrating engine shaking the interior. The doors rattled, and the seats shifted in the engine’s wake. Eventually, the engine reached what Henry called “its balance,” a state when the engine persistently purred and the pucker and trauma from the accelerating diesel explosions transformed into a stable rhythm.

“Are you going to answer my question?” Whitey demanded. “There you are with your eyes either stuck on the road or the ceiling of your kitchen. You’re annoyed at me. This is the mother of all pranks! It will bury all our high school antics, smoke bombs in the bathrooms, fire crackers in the hallways. How ‘bout that time I substituted the porno tape for Mr. Poorman’s Civil War tape in history class. He was such the typical teacher, turning on the TV, pressing play, and walking out the door in the same motion. That was great.”

Henry still stared intently upon the road. Whitey chided, “You’re just ticked about the police hassle from the Easter bunny incident.”

It occurred to Henry that this was Whitey’s third attempt to connect. He turned to Whitey with a listless expression on his face—his lips glued together, his eyes vacant—and cranked up the music. This caused a twinge of discomfort in Whitey’s gut. Ted, removed from the conversation by his back seat position intuitively perceived a possible confrontation. Ted slowly moved to an upright position. He assumed his unofficial role as guardian angel, silently watching in his invisible state. If violence, verbal or
physical, broke out, he would, like most guardian angels, watch, maybe even be entertained, yet never provoked to inter­
vene.

Ted often played this role. He once witnessed Whitey and Henry beat each other to such a pulp on the sands of Ocean City that they remained swollen for several weeks. That time Henry started the inevitable fight by questioning
Whitey’s sexuality. “Them’s fightin’ words,” shouted Whitey as though he were in a Western saloon. Enraged, James
Rocks Whitehurst II lunged across the picnic table, scattering the condiments and beer bottles. Henry, who for the most
part seemed to be able to hold his beer, skillfully landed a left hook which caught Whitey’s right eye and lower portion of
his big nose. Whitey always forgot that Henry was left handed, even though they had played hours and hours of basket­
ball together. Stunned and startled, Whitey picked himself up off the sandy lot. Blood began to trickle down the flesh of
his face. Whitey charged. The blood began to stream, and Henry instinctively turned and fled. Moving with peculiar
agility over the unstable sand dunes. The two grappled it out in the tidal pools, swinging themselves into exhaustion,
eventually collapsing on the beach. Ted performing his invisible duties watched all from atop the sand dune. When it
was over, the two collapsed on the sand, Ted turned and spent the rest of the evening at a friend’s condominium. He left
the two drunken, beleaguered, and beaten men to be awoken by the rising sun. That summer they were newly gradu­
ated high school students attempting to celebrate their compliance with the Maryland public school system.

“You want to take a left up here at Loch Ness,” Whitey shouted, again trying to speak over the music. “We
can drive back into the alleys, there is a wooded area in between McDonald’s and one of the alleyways. It will keep
us out of sight giving us time to moor Ronald to the top of your car. Hopefully, we can make it back to your house
through the alleys and side streets.”

Henry make a quick left onto Loch Ness and drove past the first grouping of red bricked row houses. He
made a right into an alley. These alleyways disclosed all the secrets of Northeast Baltimore. The brick fronts all
told the same old industrial story. The blue collar working class taking their fair share of the American pie. The
backyard viewed from the alleyways told the real story. There is no telling what one can find in the small 20 ft.
by 30 ft. plots: Swimming pools, autoparts, gardens, swingsets, hot tubs, maybe even a whiskey still.

Whitey directed Henry through the maze of alleyways. They arrived at the wooded lot, and Henry
pulled the car onto the dirt embankment. The three intrepid vandals made their way through the woods.
They arrived at the rear of McDonald’s. The inflatable Ronald McDonald’s backside rose in front of them,
his arms raised high above his head, signaling a touchdown or giving a benediction for the billions and
billions of satisfied customers. The parking lot was clear and the lights were dim within the restaurant.

The three momentarily watched the traffic flow steadily in front of McDonald’s. Joppa Road,
every town has one. Traffic light after traffic light, acres and acres of car dealerships, carpet stores,
furniture wholesalers, motels, it is the concrete and neon artery keeping alive the American dream.
The three stealthily walked across the parking lot to the rear wall. A ladder went up to the roof. It
had two six foot metal slides locked over its rungs. This preventative measure caused Henry, Whitey,
and Ted to scramble. The gravel roof crushed beneath their feet.

“Those idiots are only using twine. This is going to be simple. We need a getaway plan,” Whitey
said with glee.

“Yeah, yeah, sounds like a good idea, Rocks,” jittered Ted.
“Then, what do you propose?” Henry deferred to Whitey.

“I say one of us hops back down to the parking lot—Ted that will be you. I’ll slither up and cut the first two moorings. Then Henry, you and I will cut the back ones simultaneously. We’ll pull Ronald down, drag him to the end and throw him over to Ted who shall start dragging him towards the woods.” Whitey whispered, his eyes wide, his body tense. He thrived on excitement, a parasite of sorts. Whitey crawled, his knife clasped in his mouth, a Neo-Robin Hood pillaging for the poor. He quickly cut the first mooring, then the second. Ronald teetered in the evening breeze. Whitey positioned himself at the rear mooring.

“Ready, Henry, cut it, pull the bastard down, and run like hell!” Whitey yelled.

Henry easily stroked through the string, and Ronald fell. They dragged the marketing icon of McDonald’s across the roof. His red hair, and his wide eyed joyful face, that annoying grimace, glistened in the moonlight. As they dragged Ronald, he kicked up dust and gravel, as though he didn’t want to go. Ronald knew he was being desecrated, a pig slaughtered in the synagogue. Henry and Whitey tossed Ronald over the roof. Whitey hung and dropped from the roof while Henry slid down the ladder. Catching up with Ted, they each grabbed a leg and scurried into the woods. Laughter accompanied them all as they dragged Ronald through the woods towards the car. Ronald was tied to the roof of the rabbit. Face down, torso centered on the roof, arms stretching out over the length of the hood. His legs extended two feet past the rear bumper. He was ready to be transported.

Whitey hopped up on the hood and stood between the outstretched arms of Ronald McDonald. His voice bel­lowed in the night. “Fools, friends, and businessmen!” Whitey raised his arms high above his head. “I now proclaim to you that Ronald McDonald is Dead! Yes, Ronald is Dead. It’s a damn shame you don’t know now. I’m a bit early, so be it.” Ted and Henry clapped. The neighborhood remained silent.

While getting into the car, Ted looked through the woods. “Uh, fellas...uh...there’s a cop car in McDonald’s parking lot. It just stopped at the other edge of the wood,” Ted stated in a calm tenor.

“What!” Whitey exclaimed.

“Oh shit, he is on my roof,” yelped Henry.

“We’ll lose the cops in the alleyways. Plus he has to get back on to Joppa before he can get to us.”

The car was already started before Whitey finished speaking. Henry jammed the rabbit into fist, a plume of diesel smoke riding behind them. He shifted into second. Ronald began to shake, the mounting turbulence causing Ronald to vibrate against the roof. He shifted into the third now, moving 30 mph in a tight alley without his lights on. Ronald McDonald was above them guiding the three intrepid vandals. He resembled a superhero flying through the narrow alley possibly wondering where that damsel in distress could be. Henry took a hard left on the a side street downshifting into second then back into third. He peered in the rear view mirror. Ronald’s legs blocked the periphery allowing Henry to focus quickly on the police car some four blocks behind them. “How did he get there so fast?” Henry wondered.

“Take a right into this next alley,” shouted Whitey who was firmly clasping the door handle.

Henry ripped into the alley. The white picket fence on his left hopped out
at him. He took out a few pickets. The left front fender uttered a cry of anguish. Ronald still was secured to the roof, flying 30 mph in the thick of night. Henry turned on his lights. “Saturday morning must be garbage day,” he thought after hitting two garbage bags spewing trash. Suddenly, the light of the police car flashed in his rear view mirror.

“We’re nailed. I don’t need resisting arrest tacked on my upcoming police record,” Henry lamented. He looked over at Whitey. A trickle of sweat was running down his left temple. “He’s coming to grips with the fact that we’re busted,” Henry thought.

“Hey, slow down—take an easy right into this alley up here,” Whitey murmured.

“Why?” asked Henry.

The Rabbit slowed the cop car now less than fifty yards away. It was roaring down the alley, a rabid dog. The Rabbit eased a slow right, and a large hedge towered over the passenger side of the rabbit. For an instant, the hedge blocked the cop car form view. Whitey flung the passenger door open, launching himself into the alley. Ted instinctively followed, imitating Whitey’s maneuver from the back seat. Momentarily, Whitey stumbled along side the slow moving Rabbit.

“What da hell do ya think you are doin’!” Henry screamed.

While hopping the fence at the end of the hedge he yelled, “Making memories, man, making memories.” Henry watched James Rocks Whitehurst II hop a second fence and dart behind the other side of the hedge as the cop car steamed into the alley. Henry turned to spot Ted, but he too was gone. He sat back in his seat, and realized that he was alone. The police car screeched to a halt. Henry looked through the windshield towards the sky. Ronald’s face blocked the sky. He looked down from on high saying, “I told you so, silly, don’t mess with me.” The police lights were flashing. The neighborhood seemed to be waking up, porch lights turning on, back doors opening. Henry heard the cop car door slam shut. He looked into the rear view mirror. Through the legs of the sprawled inflatable joytoy, the cop came into view. She walked with graceful authority, her hips silhouetted by the headlights.

“Please slowly exit the car with your hands in view,” sounded a calm controlling voice. “Spread your legs...Place you arms up against the side of the car,” the soothing voice added. Henry did so. He saw his reflection in the window.

“Man, my hair is a mess,” Henry thought.
Greetings from destructive and turbulent Liberia. Oct. 31, 1990

I am still alive even though life has become so difficult for me. I have not seen my parents since May. I am worrying and praying about them and I know they are too. One of the reasons why I worry is that our last name is a Mandingo (a tribe in Guinea) name and both the Prince Johnson and Charles Taylor forces are killing members of that tribe. The trials, tribulations, and sorrows are many.

I was one of those tortured on the Lutheran compound. I have moved from place to place at different times. Unfortunately, Yamah came to Monrovia shopping on July 2 from Paynesville. We both could not go across to my parents or her parents in Paynesville. For two and a half months we lived on greens, tea, and palm kernels.

When the incident occurred on the Lutheran church compound where almost six hundred persons were killed, we could hardly take in fresh air for about a month. Yes, I saw dead bodies in almost every corner of Monrovia. I saw living beings killed in my presence. Those of us that were spared and refused to take up arms were forced to bury the dead, both decayed and fresh, with our bare hands. I saw dogs eating human beings and human beings eating dogs. We slept on cool floors for one and a half months.

I lost 40 pounds due to hunger, worry, runny stomach, and constant malaria. Every home in Monrovia was burglarized; CHAL cars were taken away, along with drugs, office equipment and other items. The only things I have to my name are two trousers, three T-shirts, four underwear, and a toothbrush. Everything was taken away from me, including school documents.

Yamah and I walked from Monrovia to Kakata (70 miles) and fortunately for us we were able to locate her parents. We arrived at Phebe on Oct. 29 and through the help of Dr. G. and Mrs. M. we were able to find a place on Cuttington College campus.

While we were staying in Kakata, the peace keeping force had advanced as far as Number 15 gate—just 15 miles from Kakata—and according to reliable sources, their target is Gbargna where Charles Taylor has his headquarters.

I have no intentions of leaving Phebe presently, but in case of any attack in Gbargna, I will cross over to Danane, Ivory Coast.

The last time I saw Robert was Aug. 7 in Monrovia. I met Hawa in Paynesville last month. She told me she came with all her dependents. I have not seen Jimmy. Rev. Hall is fine. Thank you very much for your prayers and concern.

Sincerely yours, Gus.
Ten years ago I left for Liberia. I was so young when we first arrived; now I feel old with experience.

Immigration. A sea of black faces and white teeth, the result of my brother’s airsickness smelling even worse in the heat, loud voices shouting incomprehensible words, my dad tall above the oppressive crowd, my mom smiling anxiously. The heat increased by about twenty degrees inside the building.

The road from the airport to Monrovia wound past scenes that would become familiar over the years: An expanse of yellow grass bordered by tall cotton trees and bending palms (I expected a herd of elephants to come charging across at any moment), dents in the fields that collected water during the rainy season (one of which was shaped like Michigan), and endless roadside fresh fruit stands by each little village of zinc shacks surrounded by red clay. We drove through spasmodic downpours. One minute the windshield wipers couldn’t keep up with the sheets of rain and the next instant the sun blinded me. This new country confused me—the beauty inspired me, and the strangeness frightened, yet captivated me.

Our house sat next to a small village of zinc houses on Oldest Congo Town Road inside of the city of Monrovia. Across the road stretched a football (soccer) field, a swamp, and then the ocean (clearly visible from our house). Black volcanic rock encircled the orange, rocky beach; jagged and rough where the ocean hadn’t spread her fingers, smooth and shiny in the surf. Seated on the rock, I became one with the sky, the rock, and the sea. Lost in daydream, hours and minutes would go by while kairos stood still. The Atlantic symphony filled my senses: crashing waves, pounding the rocks of the beach into sand, the sound of the ocean pulling back its waves in a breath, the wind rattling the palm branches. The ocean beckoned and enchanted me, weaving an irrevocable spell that carried over distance of land and sea. The sound of the waves on the shore lulled me to sleep at night and greeted me every morning with a different song.

In the village, the girls that were my age had to help their mothers with the cooking, take care of younger siblings, and sometimes enter the secret societies. I couldn’t relate to that lifestyle when we first arrived, and I never really had close friends in the neighborhood like my younger brother and sister did. They learned Liberian English much better than I and fit into the missionary and Embassy crowd better. I’ve always regretted that, but my friendship with Gus made things a little better.

I remember the first time I saw Augustus Musah. I didn’t know him by name, but I watched him all during the choir concert at the First Baptist Church. He had a brilliant smile and a certain way of walking that made it seem like the floor was a trampoline.
A few weeks later, my mom told us that Gus was going to work for us in exchange for help with his school tuition. I remembered the smile and the bouncy step so I looked forward to meeting him. One thing about Gus was that he loved to talk—about anything. I always wanted to hear the rumors about what really happened to Tolbert during the 1980 coup, but we talked about other things too. Gus asked a lot of questions about the States: he wanted to know about everything. While he cooked our supper I'd sit with him in the kitchen and we'd discuss everything from politics to religion. Eventually, the more Gus and I talked, he became like an older brother. He was also the only Liberian near my age that I became close friends with. I often wonder if I'll ever see him again.

I found and lost many friends during those six years in Africa. The friendships were always very intense because we'd meet, get to know each other, and then, a few months or a year later, one of us would be saying goodbye forever.

In June of 1988, it was my turn to leave. Monrovia, my home for six years, faded from present reality into a past to be shelved until I could handle the grief. During those last weeks, I packed, said my goodbyes, and took exams. When it came time to depart, I tried not to feel, but the airport changed that, forcing me into reality like a slap in the face.

Shuffling shoes, officious soldiers, raucous vendors, and the conversation of friends melted into the background, overwhelmed by the loud silence within me. The plane, a physical reality: Long rows of blue seats, smiling KLM stewardesses, a pilot addressing us in three languages, crying babies, luggage squishing my feet, and siblings' elbows in my space. We flew away and left all the important things behind: Africa, friends, the ocean, and a home.

A memory for me is an echo of laughter, a pensive thought, a residual sadness.

I can never go back to the same Liberia that I left. In 1989 a terrifying civil war broke out, with no well-defined enemy. The death toll rises even today, and the prospect of peace looks bleaker as tribal rivalries increase. We have not heard from many of our friends, but the letters we do receive contain no good news except the knowledge that the writer is alive.
Waiting for Snow

I am waiting for snow
waiting
for white torn sky pieces
to fall thick through oak arms
waiting for cold silence
to muffle day’s cries
I am waiting for snow.
Weary long gray days run
with rain and cold but
not cold enough
(I am)
Waiting for snow.
And one morning I hope to find
glistening on black window glass
diamond-cut feathers and ferns
and a blanket heavy over sleeping city
making beautiful its brokenness
and peaceful its soul-
as if all the Host of Heaven
had laid themselves across the ache of earth.

Anne Rhinehardt
NURS 001 Christian Perspectives On Weaning. F, S. This course introduces the five points of Calvinism to young children before they are indoctrinated with inferior world-views and lesser biblical perspectives. During the course of the semester the class will appear on a new episode of "Romper Room With Abraham Kuiper." Morning sessions on potty training, led by Big Bird, will be followed by an afternoon with Mister Rogers on shoe-tying and sweater-buttoning etiquette. Special night sessions include lectures on how to slumber theologically. By the course's end, the first child to memorize Calvin's Institutes VI will receive a talking doll of John Calvin himself reciting the Heidelberg Catechism.

ENGL 395 Seminar: Frank Peretti.* S. An extensive study of the works of Christendom's most spiritually synchronized writer. Readings include This Present Darkness, Piercing The Darkness, and The Prophet. Students will visit Hell, Michigan, and learn firsthand the ins and outs of exorcism, starting with the town name and ending with the sheriff's dog (conveniently named Cerebus). Guest lecturers include the archangels Gabriel and Michael on how to recognize and thwart a demon should you happen to catch one trying to infiltrate your typewriter, church hymnal, or tissue box. Profiles on Wormwood and Beelzebub will be examined. Final project includes the construction of one's own shield of faith and breastplate of righteousness. Students must purchase materials.

ART 333 Attitude. F, S, core. An in-depth analysis of different approaches to thinking, talking, smiling and wearing your clothes, aimed at increasing the profundity of one's art. Emphasis placed on vagueness, eccentricity, and techniques of being socially embarrassing that can be called "passion" and "ironic sense of humour." Seminars will be held on: Shrugging Enigmatically, Giggling vs. Snickering, Weirdness: From the 60's to Today, and Aesthetic Substance Abuse. Prerequisites: a complex about your mother or a sulky, paranoid personality.

PE 500 Napping. F, S, core.

CAS 153 Looney Toones. W, EA. A broad, cultural introduction to the WarnerBrothers's cartoon environment. In order to stress the literal world of the cartoon character, students should come to class each day dressed as their favorite Looney Toones character. Scene analysis and "Looney Journals" to be handed in daily. Students will be required to memorize and play the Merry Melodies theme song on an appropriate instrument (kazoos allowed), accompanied by an interpretive dance. A large term paper will be required on the topic: "What's the deal with the Road Runner?" Prerequisite: English W15 or permission of the instructor.

HIST 396 Ice-husking Among Northeast Horizontally Challenged Icelandic Aborigines.*** F. A tracing of the founding and character of ice-husking, a sport/art/science/hobby practiced in the 15th century by the inhabitants of Northeast Glacier #337. This course will attempt to compensate for the marginalization of these Northeast Icelandic Aborigines by exploring the main currents of their civilization, as evidenced by the placement of the large blockish hunks of ice remaining on Glacier #337. The question, "How did the Industrial Revolution affect ice-husking among the Northeast Icelandic Horizontally Challenged Aborigines in the 15th Century?" will be answered during this course.

PHYS 391 Independant Study in Chaos. F, S, core. An exploration of the nature of infinite complexity. Research will consist mainly of the capture and examination of the butterflies causing the infinite complexity under the supervision of a member of the departmental staff. Students are encouraged to explore the relationship between contemporary physics and class consciousness during the Bolshevick Revolution, predestination and free will, courtly love, pre-, a- and post-millenialism, animal husbandry, the ontological problem of the soul, the spiritual problem of ontology, gender issues, trenchant narcissism, situational ethics, the semiotic versus the symbolic, and Being.

PHIL 353 Contemporary Metaphysical Mindwars. S. An analysis of some of today's greatest paradoxes in which it is found that the more things change the more the stay the same. To whit, what similarities with past paradoxes can be found in the following problems: How many angels can rap on the head of a pin? Or, could God create a rock bigger than Bill Clinton's ego? If she could, where would she put it? Finally, we will make an attempt to find a place for ourselves in a world full of paradox by playing a round-robin tournament of frisbee golf.
Edible Spirits

I.
If souls were popsicles
you and I'd be the same flavor
and they'd have to break us apart
to eat our souls.

II.
If souls were peanuts
we'd share the same shell
salted, I imagine
especially you.

III.
If souls were chocolate rabbits
You would be solid, I'd be hollow
I'd break off my ears
and give them to you.

Randall Crockett
Contributors

Ben Kroese wanders the street with a small black animal named Jones.

Stephen Louthan has got this amazing pick Jerry Garcia gave him, soon he'll be off to South East Asia to tour with Deep Purple.

Becky Gadsby says "Sometimes mood or inner feelings take over my approach. It may look like me or an expression or how I feel, I leave that to the viewer."

Sarah Taylor tells us, "The tree is me. Maybe you will understand."

Christine Byl, a short-haired Philosophy and English major, wishes the Dodgers were still in Brooklyn.

Mark Cullison majors in Philosophy and Classics. He came to Calvin in part because it had a Classics Department; he is leaving having received a worthwhile education in large part because of the Classics Department Calvin has. We think he's Sweet.

Tessica deHaan sandwiched two negatives to create the happy accident printed in this issue.

Sarah Kendall experimented with watercolor during Interim, working with the theme of fragility and strength.

Randall Crockett wins the "Poet Most Likely To Have Their Name Look Really Apt On The Cover Of A Book Of Poetry" award for this issue.

Rire Nakpodia says "Hi!" and, "I hope everyone had a good Interim break."

Julianne Doezema is known for her ubiquitous, large red hair.

Anne Rhinehardt is not actually all that elusive. She's a left-brained person who nevertheless sees the world through the eyes of Emily Dickinson and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Rachel Ippel is a junior who lives in a Whispering Way.

Timothy Ladd submitted .037 cents with his poetry this time, so that we could afford to print the "othy" in his name. [Ed.'s note: I used to file the burrs off of artificial hip joint reamers at a place named "Othy."]

Dan Philips- Bo Bib, bar pot, stop Rabbi Bob!