Story Problems for the Masses.

by Captain Insano and Captain Bizarro.

Anyone can play, even those who are not math majors. And if you are a math major, you probably won’t get these. Consider it a challenge, bucko.

1. Using the chaos theory, picture yourself in a dark alley. You are alone. Your underwear is too constraining. If you do not change your clothes in the next 24 hours, you will die. Hint: fractions.

2. At present, you are a 300 pound piece of bacon. If it takes 3 minutes to cook each pound, that’s no good. But at the center, it takes longer than 3 minutes. But not too long. Under these circumstances, how does one begin to conceive of circumference equals 2 times pi times radius squared? Yes, that is an actual “math formula.” Hint: stuff it.

3. A Boeing 747 flies up yer nostril. It’s a story; it’s a problem.

4. Keeping in mind at all times the theory of biomutation, consider the following problem. You eat 8 cans of creamed corn in one sitting. In your next sitting on the toilet, which is bound to follow shortly thereafter, precisely what percentage of your poo’s mass will be comprised of corn? Extra credit: how did it get back into whole kernels?

5. If a woman gives birth to six children and a meatloaf, where did the meatloaf come from? Hint: the meatloaf was born by Caesarian.

6. (SMOKE BREAK).

7. This problem is real hard. Not for the faint of heart or weak of bladder. I mean it, don’t piss yourself. Hint: fart!

8. If two trains are currently 2 miles apart and on the same track, headed opposite directions, oops poor planning. If said situation does exist in the temporal realm, and a camel falls from an exploded circus airplane smack in the middle of aforementioned trains, do you think the camel will die? Hint: you bet your bippy.

9. If you are as nasty as you want to be, exactly how nasty is that? Hint: do not answer this question aloud.

10. Suppose your earlobes are made of lead and your bippy is light as a feather. If I should just happen to drop you off a skyscraper, which part of your illustrious bod would hit the ground first? And where would you like to be buried? Open casket or no? Hint: double double toil and trouble.

11. “If you want something, set it free. If it comes back to you, it is yours. If it doesn’t, it was never yours to begin with.” Wow. That is just too deep to write a problem about. Oh, hell, here goes. If your significant other is a bird, but you are a human, how does that work? Hint: it was never yours to begin with.

Answers:
1. The answer is one third. 2. Meat is murder. 3. Fly up the Boeing’s nostril. 4. 50 percent and three Doogie Howzers. The answer to the extra credit is: through your body! Duh. 5. Mommy says all babies are special. 6. You’ve come a long way, baby. 7. 11.1 repeating men named Kip. 8. My bippy hurts. 9. Kiss me baby. 10. Bippy. I would like to be buried bippy-up in the ground. Only if my bippy shows. 11. Not so well. Birds have beaks.
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only a few gestures of identity continue to come easy. For instance, by the time we turn seventy or older, each of us will have signed so many checks and letters that even senility or Alzheimer's will not be able to place a glitch in the fluid illegible line we draw as a signature. But at the same time, we might be surprised by the portrait in the bathroom vanity each morning. And the problem of being able to keep a sense of self against all the forces of forgetfulness or distraction only increases in difficulty if we're trying to maintain the identity of a host of people, instead of the singular figure, for whom we can at least use the word "I."
Turning the Riq—"Harmony, like a following breeze at sea, is the exception."

But at this college, it seems that harmony has begun to become more the status quo than an exception, which seems, at first, like the grandest of blessings. However, behind the fortune of such a situation, something strange lingers and it takes a long time to realize exactly what, but here’s the secret: the only way you can foster a sustained kind of harmony in a community of this size is by directing it toward a musical unison, toward one of those refrains where everyone sings the melody.

And I’m not sure exactly how something like this happens, but I know when I started my education here people talked more about things I seldom hear mentioned now. People used to argue, for example, about how a college of Calvin's heritage proceeds at the end of twentieth century—whether we push toward diversity in a culture increasingly stratified and seamless, or whether we press toward the constancy of our creeds, which also undeniably implies a certain ethnic and socio-economical majority: the white, the upper-middle class. But it’s an argument that went mostly quiet after a time. When I think back on it now, though, it seems that it was silenced not because we landed on a resolution, but rather because we just abandoned that line of questioning. And that’s how it goes. As soon as we quit arguing over such things, the resultant silence leaves room for a kind of reconstruction, and out of our erased differences rises something that sounds like harmony, but is, on a second listening, only the matching of voices to a singular note.

And this is the transgression of such false harmony: to have grown afraid of dissonance. Of course we risk things in the departure from unison; the chance that the notes struck on the far edges of any debate will complement one another is slim. But the danger of stifling the outlying voices seems far greater, for just as we learn who we are in being pulled back and forth across our averages by rounds of questioning, when we are held in stasis, the voices on the margins of our community begin to fall off. So that, finally, the chorus directed in unison steers us toward a forgetting of our identity.

It would be dishonest for me to pretend I come at this impersonally. Actually, when I look around these days, I know that if things continue in their present direction—toward an insistence on the community’s identity as being wholly encapsulated in our collective averages, toward the insistence on the universal adoption of those averages, and toward their subtle tilting to the conservative right—I’ll be disheartened looking back ten years from now. And I know I won’t be able to say the thing I would hope to: that I chose this college sort of haphazardly, but that as things stand—as they will stand, I would choose it again, and do so deliberately the second time.

So maybe, at last, it’s a precarious time for us in a way that’s not often the case. If that is true, we’re in some kind of dubious position not because of the unfirm footing of our community, but rather because of its stability. Lately, I guess we’ve come to know ourselves not by the worst things we keep quiet and the thing we silently most hope to be, but by the bellcurve’s center, which tells us nothing of our failings and which negates our potential.

--Jane C. Knol
There I am, glancing past faces.
Not making eye-contact.
(I run from things as much as to them)
I pick my nose while nobody's watching. I smear it on the chair.
That halo; It's my head blocking the light

I want the world to be amazing as a movie,
with love interests, special effects and laugh tracks
to follow me all the days of my life.
Death sounds great because I'm lazy.
I lack patience. I forget to eat.
Lies perch on my lips. I believe.

I have masks that I have never worn, and I don't know which is talking to you now.
My face is oily with acne. I tear it apart.
like a canvas.
My hair bleached straw.
(I'm not what I think)
I want everyone to fall in love with me.
I think I love them too,
Sometimes.
I stutter.
I don't want to hurt you,
I really don't.

I don't know when I'm lying anymore.
"My words aren't ME"
(or if they are, I wish I was better than them)

Will you fill in for me?
I'm too much myself.

Overlooking history,
I smoke incessantly and chew my pens in class,
Stay quiet when I know the answer, and talk when I don't.
"He has potential but doesn't apply himself,"
said Mrs. Sanders in Kindergarten.
I've read a lot since then--understanding almost nothing.
There is something like heaven in me yet
I try to meditate
    and feel like an American.
Superficial.
I love new commercials for the VW Beetle,
anything awkward. Like pretty faces.

When people honk at me, I wave and smile
    just to piss them off.
Instead of wisdom, I settle for cleverness.
I sleep on the floor but don't wash my sheets.
My pale legs are skinny as snow
    Dark hairs stick out ot them
(TRYING TO GROW)
My penis is 8 inches when erect, 1 1/2 now.
Just to touch a person makes me tremble.
Helpless. My actions mistranslate me.
My mind works hard to justify my heart.

I love you, but I am not to be trusted
Yet.
I take pleasure and pain;
much too much to plagiarize.
I disagree. I laugh when I should cry,
    but oppose hypocrisy in general.
I want to win the lottery.
Refuse to buy a ticket.
I haven't counted the licks to the center of a Tootsie Roll Pop.

I spent 3 years
kissing
one girl
until I was done.

Since I left, I can't remember her face.

I'm sorry.

I confuse my ends with my beginnings.
You stood humbly in front of your bathroom mirror looking at your naked body, feeling each goosebump along your shoulder with an uncertain curiosity. You stood there for some time searching your dry skin. Perhaps you were searching for something internal.

Your window stood open. The morning air was quiet and hung stubbornly upon your face, turning your cheeks an empty shade of red. You liked the cold air. Outside, the streets below hummed softly. A car purred down the alley. You ran your fingers lightly through your long, rough, blonde hair, still muddled from the night before.

Suddenly the telephone rang. Startled, you covered your breasts gently with your right arm, and with your left hand you reached up for the white bathrobe hanging on the inside of the open bathroom door. A second ring. Robing yourself, you turned from the mirror and moved swiftly into the hall towards the bedroom, nearly stumbling over your shoes as you approached the doorway. A third ring. You came to the bed, glancing at the tangled mass of sheets and pillows on the mattress. A fourth ring. Then, turning away, you turned the answering machine off with apprehension as the final rings sounded.

You sat down on the floor, leaning your back against the side of the bed. You shut your eyes and let out a long hollow sigh. Gathering yourself, you shifted your weight forward and knelt. On your knees you moved slower, beginning to pick up your clothes off the cold wooden floor. First, you saw your skirt. Except for some wrinkles it looked clean. You brought it to your nose though and winced slightly, turning your face. You threw the skirt under the bed. You reached out for the other clothes thrown in a random pile on the corner of the bed. Then, stuffing yesterday's bra and panties in a crumpled, pale blue dress shirt, you tossed the ball of clothes with the rest of your dirty laundry in your closet hamper. Again you began to move quickly, almost forgetting something. Almost trying to forget.

So you moved back down the hall and into the bathroom, shutting the window and the door. You stood in front of the mirror again. This time you did not look at yourself. Instead, you fiddled with your tiny bottles of make-up on the bathroom counter next to the sink. You picked up the clear glass bottle of cover-up with your left hand and gently stroked it with your fingertips in admiration. Then you set it down lightly and began
(untitled)
Brian DeYong
oil on canvas
organizing the rest of your make-up from left to right according to size beginning with the smallest. The bottles clicked delicately in your hands. You were careful not to break them.

Having left the bottles in a straight line, you let your robe fall to the floor, sending a subtle chill up the back of your calves and thighs. Your muscles tensed quickly, but relaxed slowly, letting the cool sensation fade. Your hands turned on the shower. First, the warm water rushed out cold across your skin, helping you brace yourself for the hot water that would come. You took one last look towards the counter. And then it came out. The steam rose up, but you did not shudder.

Entering the shower slowly, one leg at a time, you stood firm with a stern smile on your face, unfazed by the burning water. Your skin turned crimson. You began scrubbing. Starting with your feet, you worked your way up holding the soap firmly in your hand, leaving imprints in the remains of the bar. You used your nails to clean your skin, which now turned a deeper hue of crimson and bled lightly.

Next, you washed your hair, your eyes open, tears streaming down your cheeks and washed away in the flood of scalding water. But you were crying even before then. You almost did not notice at first, too focused on the task before you. Finally, your pace weakened and you let the water soothe your body.

You could not stand anymore, your legs frail. So you leaned on the shower wall; the water flowing gracefully down your back as your head rested on your worn forearms. You leaned there for quite some time, no longer searching for anything.

You turned the water off and let yourself air-dry as you searched for your bottle of lotion. You looked frantic, knocking things over in the cabinet underneath the sink. You were unable to find it at first, but were relieved when you did. When you were nearly dry, you bathed yourself in lotion. Letting your head drop back slightly, you exhaled once through your nose. A cool fragrance settled upon your skin, and again you opened the window to listen to the sounds of the day. The sun swept in at once, lightening your hair.

You looked down to the street below and saw a man walking his dog. Quickly though, you turned away from the window, hearing someone come up the stairs. You listened calmly for a moment, breathing through your nose again while a slight stern smile came over your face. After a moment you resumed watching the street, this time with more patience as if you were waiting for something.

A knock came at the front door, but you did not move, staying in the bathroom. You knew the voice on the other side, although not at first, perking your ears to listen closer. You waited, and he left. Looking up to your apartment as he walked away, unable to see you in the a.m. sun, he looked confused. You smiled though and let out a slight laugh, shaking your head like you knew something he did not.
I'd walk around in a bright red dress just to get your attention. But, once I have it, I don't want it.

Love makes you restless.

We see the world like a still-life as we stand in stained glass windows, throwing rocks.

We are, we think, invincible. And nobody wants to just sit and listen anymore.

You smell of stale smoke and unwashed skin; you never look at anyone. You say things that make my eyes close. You make me starve... for peace, for calm, for perfection.

so I open my eyes And walk away.

"Throwing Rocks"

by (lauren togtman)
untitled
Aaron Schottelkorb
alabaster (maybe)
Here I am, hoping against hope,
Proclaiming what has otherwise been proclaimed,
That the fullness of time is not of the essence,
That we find Easters as we stumble through our years.

Here is the refugee,
In tears over airlifted manna and the warmth of a torn parachute.
And here you are,
Eating that chocolate Jesus under the magnolia.

Can a single breath answer for him, for you?

I know the purple of words robed and bruised,
The other's flesh beneath my nails.
And I cannot help but feel
I must take my own life
Seriously.
(untitled)
Tim Terry
oil on bowling ball
There is no doubt whatever about the influence of architecture and structure upon human character and action. We make our buildings and afterward they make us.

—Winston Churchill

What does the American Flag mean to you? Is it simply a piece of material, so brilliantly designed that the bright colors can make a person cry tears of joy and pain? Does it inspire solely through its physical presence? Or is it instead a meaningfully loaded object that recalls other ideas? Does it operate as a sign of sorts, one that brings the acculturated viewer to a posture of respect, to place his right hand across his heart, to silently say to himself “I am proud to be an American”?

Could it be that this flag, this simple piece of material, has a very specific meaning? It operates as a signifier, a visual sign that evokes other ideas. It recalls the ideas of our nation, of its people, of patriotism.

In similar ways, our architectural environment begins to carry implicit meanings. The three-part complex of the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Vietnam Memorial closely parallels the operation of the Flag as signifier. The visitor is immediately filled with respect (here we see that architecture operates on an even more basic level than the flag, being equally affective for the acculturated visitor as for the one who is unfamiliar with the historical traditions and power structures of the United States).

In that same instant, the viewer begins to make associations, whether conscious or unconscious. The Washington Monument—the birth of our nation. The Lincoln Memorial—steadfast morality in the face of even the most severe divisions. And the Vietnam Memorial—memories of all those who have died in an ambiguous and controversial war. This architectural complex acts as a signifier on a monumental scale; the effect is patriotism.

This effect of architecture is in no way limited to monuments. The example could just as well have centered on the White House, Capitol, or the Federal Reserves Building. Nor is the association necessarily positive—what does the architectural presence of a government housing project usually impress upon the viewer? What of the forbidding enclosure of the Pentagon? A particular architectural element could even operate as a signifier of two contradictory ideas at the same time. Imagine the varied and extreme responses of visitors to the Vietnam Memorial; the veteran in tears over the name of a lost friend, the pacifist quietly respecting the dead, the patriot infuriated by what he feels to be a lack of dignity warranted by a war memorial. If experience tells us anything, it is that the meaning a person associates with architectural structures is constructed through cultural, societal, and
experiential means. We cannot speak of universal truths that decode the meanings. Signifiers and their constructs are too complex for that. Too much goes into their creation. Our only hope is to study them in very particular situations, where we have some understanding of the motivations and influences that are shaping how we interpret experience.

* * * * *

The new master plan, as developed by master plan architect Frank Gorman, in close association with the administration, proposes a bridge that would link the Hekman Library to the other side of the East Beltline where the new DeVos Communication Arts and Sciences building and the Prince Convention Center are to be built. On a pragmatic level, the bridge is justified by a need to encourage and control circulation from the library to the far side of the Beltline and the new buildings. Other options were examined, from a pedestrian crossing to a tunnel, but neither was feasible. The first was rejected by the Michigan Department of Transportation and did not really resolve the circulation problem of having a constant flow of pedestrian traffic across a major automobile artery. The second was fiscally unreasonable due to the logistics of construction, and the enclosure isolates the individual in a constricting passage that limits the sense of safety. Clearly the relatively low cost and the high functionality of the bridge made it the
only logical solution to the problem. But to leave
the analysis at this point is to forget how the bridge operates
as sign; it doesn’t even ask why there is a need
to expand to the west-side of the Beltline.

To get an idea just how large an ideological
shift is entailed by crossing the Beltline, it would be
appropriate to examine previous master planning. As
envisioned by Calvin’s first master plan architect, Bill
Fyfe, the Knollcrest Campus design centers
ideologically and physically around the Commons Lawn.
As related in a summary of Calvin’s master plan by
Fyfe’s own office, the campus design should facilitate a
“community of scholars,” integrating religion and
academics in the context of a Christian liberal arts
college. The Commons symbolizes the community of
learning by creating a centralized, open mall where the
library, the chapel, and academic buildings interact. To
reinforce this central space, Fyfe consciously developed
the campus as insulated from the surrounding city/
countryside, illustrating the tension within Reformed
Christian attitudes for educational environments as
separated and enclosed communities. In a letter to a
Calvin student, he describes the conditioning
experience of entering the campus. One’s movement
in “through an open space and then passing the
containing ring of trees into a totally new experience
should need an unconfined experience away from the hustle
of the public way.” A conspicuous lack of signage for
the campus, or of any signifying structure, limited the
visibility of Calvin College in the surrounding community.

As a signifier, the Commons operates to
separate the college from the rest of the city, both
physically and emotionally—of the world and not part
of it. The cloistered campus can be variously viewed
as having a wide range of positive and negative effects.
We will present only two. On the one hand, it could be
seen as an important part of the formation of young
and aspiring Christians, providing a safe environment
for their development. In opposition, the belief that such
an artificial environment leads to a false sense of piety
that is unable to face the realities of the larger world. Is
this a safe haven, or a bubble ready to burst?

The bridge as designed under Frank Gorman
will dissolve the sense of enclosure created in the
master plan of Bill Fyfe. It becomes a signifier,
functionally bridging the gap across the Beltline, while
at the same time representing everything the decision
to bridge that gap implies. To be clear, it is not the
physical act of building a bridge that needs to be
examined. That is the job of the architect. What is
worth examining for our own benefit, and for the good
of Calvin College, is the change in ideology, the shift
from enclosure to exposure that becomes visible in the
bridge as a meaningful sign.

The visual change, one of staggering
proportions, speaks about the magnitude of the
ideological change. Imagine for a moment the
experience of driving down the Beltline five years ago,
before the signage with Calvin emblems which have
brought the college to its present and more visible state.
A car passing from north to south would have seen a
parking lot, lots of trees from which a building or two
would peek through, a level grass field where there may
have been a group of students playing ultimate Frisbee.
A glimpse of the FAC at the last possible moment, and
then just more trees, more green. The possibility was
great that the driver would not even notice the college
in his hurry to get where he was going. The insulation
had succeeded.

But now, imagine a new experience, with
complete signage, a new bridge, and a large building
in the place of the open athletic fields. No longer does
the college sit quietly on the side of the road. In triumph,
it arches over the thoroughfare. A bridge dominating
the horizon from the malls of 28th street to the woods of
Reeds Lake. Visually and physically prominent, the
architecture acts in the same way as the signage
exclaiming silently “Calvin College—my heart I offer to
you Lord, promptly and sincerely.” Not even complete
lack of actual signage adorning the architecture can limit
the ability of the bridge to operate as sign. Incridently,
there were proposals for a billboard-like display on the
bridge itself with Calvin College in gargantuan letters.
It’s a moot point; the bridge already acts as a billboard,
ultimately visible from one of the busiest highways of
Grand Rapids. It states without a single letter adorning
its span, “CALVIN COLLEGE IS HERE WEST
MICHIGAN!”

A few more examples can show how Calvin has
turned outward into the surrounding region. The new
Science addition is to be used collaboratively by the
college and Spectrum Health, in the hopes that Calvin
College will become the major center of research in
Western Michigan. The Engineering Department’s new
building will facilitate larger student projects, further
strengthening current partnerships with manufacturing
businesses, such as Vermeer and Johnson Controls
incorporated (the company formerly known as Prince).
The DeVos Communication Arts and Sciences building
will give the CAS space for new technologies, from
expanding media like the Internet to distance learning
labs. The Prince Conference Center aims to attract
important conventions from meetings of the Board of
Trustees to academic conferences, making Calvin
College the center of activity in the Christian Reformed
academic world.

Just as there were positive and negative
associations to be made with the cloistered environment
as designed under Bill Fyfe, the administration’s new
vision for the campus generates a tension that we will
not pretend to be able to resolve. Calvin’s traditional
concept of a liberal arts education is subverted by the
incorporation into an economically defined world
affected through the master plan’s contingency on
monetary support. What follows are just a few starting
points about what we feel to be an important dialogue for
Calvin College.

A regionally open campus benefits the college
as a whole. For students, bringing in outside interests
facilitates learning experience, directly applicable to the
workplace. It leads to interaction with professionals who
understand the skills needed to compete in today’s job
market and creates a learning environment that is able
to keep up with the rapid pace of changing technologies.
To put it simply, students will be better prepared for the
job market of the 21st century. Faculty are better
informed of new ideas and techniques in their fields,
keeping them both up to date and intellectually
stimulated. The external focus encourages them to
strive for academic excellence, maintaining both high
standards for teaching and creating incentive for
research. But most importantly, the opening up of Calvin
College fosters a new intellectual landscape. New ideas
are confronted, risks are taken, and if fear does not
turn into reaction, then our own convictions become
firmly rooted. This is a holistic sphere of activity, both
economic and intellectual, bursting the bubble of
enclosed college community.

These benefits lose some of their appeal in the
face of actual implementation. First, the trend towards
community involvement should be put in a national
perspective. At a recent conference in Columbus, Ohio,
the president of Ohio State University spoke of a new commitment in higher education to branch out into surrounding communities, building strong economic ties that benefit both the university and the local community. Community integration is just part of the rhetoric that justifies a corporate commitment to economic progress, narrowly defined by financial stability, corporate expansion, and active business interests. Incriminating catch phrases eerily recall exploitative policies of expansion—we have been presented with a window of opportunity, this is a providential moment. Calvin’s own president is just as culpable, his own rhetoric echoing that of the Manifest Destiny which settled the West. Is this what we meant when we said we were to be of the world but not part of it?

An immediate and inevitable effect of this type of rhetoric is to undermine the idea of education for the sake of learning. The emphasis on economic concerns reveals a shift from a traditional liberal arts focus of a broad-based education to one that is merely a means to financial ends. It undermines the very basis of an education that seeks to learn for the sake of knowledge. Once again, the trend is national one; what is more valued today’s job market, a philosopher or a computer programmer?

In current architectural planning, the two buildings currently under construction and the two slated to be built can all be unified under three related themes: business, technology and visibility. These are the values underlying the administration’s bias within the new vision. The science addition is tied to a healthcare conglomerate. The engineering building reinforces pre-existing cooperative programs with business interests in global industries. The CAS building will bring in new technology, while the Conference Center will increase Calvin’s overall visibility. These values relegate the humanities and other programs to a second tier, calling into question their worth to the academic institution. The potential stratification of the departments through the emphasis on business, technology, and visibility destroys the implied equality of educational disciplines in a liberal arts university.

In this business-like atmosphere, departments must justify that they are an integral part of the college and therefore deserving funding for departmental positions, and projects. If the money needed for internal development is not found, then begins the search for support from an exterior source. But money is never free, even from the most generous of donors. They are in danger of losing their place as part of the community symbolized by the Commons Lawn. The creation of endowments and donors further undermines the foundation of academia. In fact, the danger of falling behind the rapid pace of change in the contemporary world. As a result of the vision for materialistic progress, the education that students receive will be more applicable, and professors will keep abreast of new technologies having more incentive to strive for academic excellence. Even the business-like values could be seen to have positive effects: greater efficiency in handling financial affairs, encouraging departments in disarray to find direction, and recommitting the college to long-term planning.

The problems arrive in the unifying vision. It bases itself on a narrowly defined version of progress, one that finds meaning only in quantifiable amounts. The rhetoric surrounding these visions of progress then dismantle the structures that underlie opposing visions, namely the idea of learning for the sake of knowledge. The commitment to endowments and donors further undermines the foundation of academia. In fact, the vision is not unifying at all; it distorts the values that created Calvin College as a Christian liberal arts institution.

The details of expansion are the points that we need to address. If we have complete faith in the master planning process to create a perfect solution, we deceive ourselves. Quite simply, there are too many varying and conflicting interests, too many compromises forced by scarcity of time and money, too many unknowns both present and future. And yet, through constant dialogue, we can succeed in creating a plan for expansion of the college, a plan that is better received because of business-like exploitation. As long as we acknowledge potential problems before they get out of our control, our planning for the future won’t undermine the historical values of Calvin College.

The time has come for each individual to ask him or herself, “Is this good, or is this bad?” The administration hopes to incorporate Calvin College out into West Michigan. Through the media of architecture, they have attempted to make legible the implicit values of their decisions. But this critique by itself is clearly insufficient. The Clintonian Vision requires critiques from the differing viewpoints of those affected, or else the master planning process becomes less than democratic, less than inclusive. It is time to become engaged in the planning process, to acknowledge its importance and potential pitfalls. We need to ask questions: Does this reform fit into the traditional values of Calvin College? Is at odds with other current reforms like the revision of the core program to emphasize a liberal arts education creating virtuous students? Do the new master plans allow for the college to flexibly engage the future? To be silent now is to not cross the bridge into the 21st century.

Lest this article seem to dwell too heavily on the negative side of the current architectural expansion, it should be noted that the intentions were good. The administration’s efforts to revise the master plan renews their commitment to provide students with a quality Christian education at a reasonable price both now and in the future. Though the process of master plan development is both costly and time consuming, the rewards are well worth any and all expenses (in fact, long-term expenses and potential problems are actually reduced through master planning). Calvin’s tradition of master planning has made possible the unique campus that we have today. With similar forethought, the current administration hopes to provide future generations of students with the same excellent learning environment.

Without serious reform, Calvin leaves itself in danger of falling behind the rapid pace of change in the contemporary world. As a result of the vision for materialistic progress, the education that students receive will be more applicable, and professors will keep abreast of new technologies having more incentive to strive for academic excellence. Even the business-like values could be seen to have positive effects: greater efficiency in handling financial affairs, encouraging departments in disarray to find direction, and recommitting the college to long-term planning.

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When the Stars Come Out
Aaron B. Smith
silver gelatin print
incidents from a
life frozen stiff in
the terror of unromantic love

secrets lying in lapsed memory
living in our own world peopled
with distractions

love with brisk hands
like words flung by
full-long people

inside of windows with
reflections matted on
un-witting others in the street

wringing hands white knuckled
with wet clothing and meaningless
ambition

lucid dreaming black ink playing-cards misadventure sidewalk shows

the end draws near
with these images in mind
and there is no more movement than
when we all still tried to race
Reconstruction Project
Mike Richison
acrylic, inkjet transfers, graphite, metal rings, aluminum strips, resin
(The scene is set in a trendy coffee shop. Music plays softly in the background. It is abstract and very radio unfriendly. Depending on administering visions the shop may be filled with customers, or their presence may only be a suggested background.

There is a table set down center with two chairs, one of which is occupied by Cameron, who is scribbling diligently on a piece of paper. Art paraphernalia and drawing utensils are scattered before him on the table. Cameron is an intelligent-looking man, 28 years old. His dress and his mannerisms fit deliberately within the modern surroundings. Della is a 21 year old university student. Her dress and her mannerisms seem to segregate her from the rest of the coffee shop. However, her integrity and her insight are made evident early on in the piece.)

Della- (curiously approaching Cam’s table) What are you drawing? (No response from Cam who is scribbling diligently) What are you drawing?
Cam- Philosophy.
Della- (Interested by his response she sits down at his table guiltlessly uninvited) How do you draw philosophy?
Cam- (Without swaying his attention from his work) Won’t you sit down?
Della- How do you draw philosophy?
Cam- The same way you’d draw anything else. You watch things, observe them. Then you gather up everything you’ve seen and you put it down on paper. It sounds simple enough, but it’s a rather complex process once you get down to it.
Della- You mind if I take a look at it?
Cam- I don’t know, you wouldn’t like it. It’s kind of abstract.
Della- Are we a tad bit shy?
Cam- (Pushes his work across the table) You’re not going to understand it.
Della- You don’t know that.
Cam- Yes I do. (He waits patiently while she examines the piece; she is obviously confused by it.)
Della- What is it?
Cam- It’s a trend.
Della- People usually don’t understand your work?
Cam- No, I don’t mean your response. I was referring to the piece. The piece is a representation of a trend.
Della- (Motioning to the art) This is a representation of a trend?
Cam- Yes. By closely examining the world around me--

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The Opera
Kevin Huizenga
oil on wood
sure there's another reason for your work.
Cam- (piously) Alright, if you feel that it's necessary to burden art with pragmatics then I suppose we can consider my work as a means of personal edification.
Della- Don't you think that's rather lame?
Cam- Not at all.
Della- Why are you an artist?
Cam- Do you go to school?
Della- Yes. But answer my question.
Cam- (Skeptically) They've gotten ahold of you.
Della- What do you mean?
Cam- Tuition is only one of your expenses my friend. You're trading yourself off as well.
Della- Explain yourself.
Cam- Listen to what you're saying. Have you already lost the most sacred of all attributes? Have they stripped you of that so soon?
Della- I don't think so. That depends on who they are and what they've stripped me of. What's the most sacred of all attributes?
Cam- The system. They've gotten you through the School system. School is the establishment's hench-man. It beats your passion into a mangled mess of practicalities. So by the time you get your piece of paper all that imagination (tapping on her forehead) which transformed your free-forts into palaces and your backyards into Camelot is gone. It's not yours anymore—you aren't yours anymore.
Della- Don't you think that it's a little early in the conversation to make that kind of judgment?
Cam- Really? Then I'd probably be making another outlandish comment when I say that I think you feel the same way that I do. But there's a two-car garage, a white picket fence and 65 thousand a year that beg you to disagree with the people like me.
Della- So I suppose you're somehow exempt from the "yoke" of the middle class. You're not held accountable to food, clothing, firing, rent, taxes, respectability, or children.¹
Cam- To a certain extent, of course! But I do have a problem with tying a ball and a chain to everything I do. I don't need a red letter A written on this to feel rewarded, I don't need to pawn this off for rent money. I don't even need anyone telling me how good my work is. I'm intrinsically motivated.
Della- Yes, I understand, but intrinsically motivated to do what? You're not accomplishing anything. All you've done is painted a piece of paper the color black, stuffed it in your portfolio with all the other artwork that you'll throw into your backpack. So that later you can look through it yourself, and intrinsically pat yourself on the back.
Cam- Don't you think that it's a little early in the conversation to make that kind of judgment? Besides I showed it to you, didn't I?
Della- No, I had to practically tear it out of your hands. And then when I didn't understand it you wouldn't even explain it to me; which leads me to think that your work has no purpose at all. You sit here in a trendy little outfit in a trendy coffee shop drinking your fine grained Americano, smoking cigarettes while you top off the whole facade by intensely scribbling the color black over pages upon pages of crap.
Cam- (Haughtily slams his portfolio closed, stands to exit) It's been a pleasure, miss, but I'm afraid that it's nearly three o'clock and, despite our rich conversation, I feel oddly compelled to thrust pins and needles under my finger nails, while somebody pours hot lead on my face. Good-day.
Della- Wait a minute! I didn't mean to set you off like that. I was just having fun with you.
Cam- (Turns towards her) Fun? You were having fun—I was being ridiculed!
Della- I apologize. It's just that...I've heard all of this before. It seems to me that the way you speak is a trend. And after a while, all this existential talk loses its bite. Along with all the other "isms" that we beat like rented mules!
Cam- So you're saying that we should deal with only the new problems disregarding all the others on account of their age?
Della- Not at all, I'm say-
Cam- We're not talking about stale bread here. Show me a problem solved, and I'll talk about something else.
Della- Show me a problem.
Cam- Alright, you said you go to school right?
Della- Yes.
Cam- Now—what if I were to tell you that in a recent survey 90% of students admitted that they attend school for the primary purpose of getting a higher paying job. These same students justify their response with empty logic like "I don't want to be filthy rich, I just want to be comfortable"—or "I just want what's best for my kids." You're thinking that this isn't so tragic. But these are the same people who'll find the career that I'll have them working the long hours in servitude to the abandoned family that waits for them at home. They'll have made the cash that's brought home the bacon which sits on the kitchen table getting cold while they're working late to pay for next week's bacon. Then they'll travel west for two weeks to close some colossal deal for colossal bucks that'll ensure their kid's future while the kid tucks himself in that night! Now my dear friend you must forgive me for asking but where are your bumble bees and your apple trees now?
Della- I'm sorry. (Long Pause) What's your name?
Cam- Cameron.
Della- I'm Della. You've impressed me Cameron; I didn't think you could. Where were you born?
Cam- Columbus, Ohio.
Della- (Probing) Was it difficult growing up?...It sounds like I hit a soft spot with you, and I didn't mean to push the buttons I pushed.
Cam- (Sarcastically) Yes it was difficult, I didn't have anyone to love me, I was ignored by my parents. They gave me everything I wanted but their love and attention so now all that I cling to is this pen and this paper, and this coffee shop is the only family I have.
Della- Shut up.
Cam- Well isn't that kind of what you wanted me to say?
Della- I was trying to get to know you. For one split second you had me convinced and a wee bit interested by what you were saying.
Cam- What about now?
Della- Now I just think that you're a dime-a-dozen cynic with a backpack full of dangling insight that you can't even show anyone because you're too

¹ Major Barbara, George Bernard Shaw. "The seven deadly sins-yes, the deadly seven. Food, clothing, firing, rent, taxes, respectability, and children."
(untitled)
Lara Anderson
acrylic on paper
tangled up with your own personal edification.

Cam- So you think I'm insightful?

Della- Yes, you just made that quite apparent. But you're abusing it.

Cam- How?

Della- I've already told you... Your ideas don't go anywhere.

Cam- And I've already told you that I'm an artist. It's my job to think about the issues and inspire others to act upon them.

Della- But no one's going to act upon your ideas if they don't know what your ideas are, or what the hell you're trying to say with them. You might as well hop into a pair of hot pants and run down the street with flowers in your hair shouting gibberish at the top of your lungs until people say, "Hey you know he's right, the rich are getting richer while the poor get poorer, who'da thunk it?"

Cam- You're being ridiculous, naive, confused, and disconcerted all at once.

Della- The only thing I'm confused by is your artwork and the only thing that I'm disconcerted by is your closet revolution. And in terms of my being ridiculous and naive, I'm sure that the "establishment" will know what to do when I show up for my nine o'clock brainwashing tomorrow morning.

Cam- That's not what I'm doing. I'm not running around in hot pants like a Buffoon at all.

Della- (She retrieves the portfolio) It was an analogy—a metaphor—just like your painting.

Cam- You made a bad metaphor.

Della- (Sifting through his portfolio, torturing him) You make a bad painter.

Cam- (Tears the portfolio out of her hands and slams it on the desk) I've got to hand it to you Della, you've succeeded at unraveling me but I am getting very tired of your offensive little tactics. Why are you sitting at my table?

Della- It was the only vacant seat in the entire place.

Cam- Yes, I understand that much. Nevertheless, any other person would be quite content with a cup of coffee and a friendly conversation. But the way we've extended it, this conversation is shaping up to be anything but congenial. I mean, do you always go on this way? What is it about me that invites you to dismantle everything that I'm passionate about?

Della- I'm not trying to dismantle your passions, I'm trying to understand them. Have you ever heard the saying that "Youth is wasted on the young?"

Cam- Yeah. When I hear it I always imagine a man in the midst of a mid-life crisis driving a flashy red sports car wearing a toupee and a T-shirt that reads "TOO LEGIT TO QUIT."

Della- You know what I imagine?

Cam- What's that?

Della- (Frightened) I imagine a coffee shop filled with kids who rant and rave about all the problems of the world, making passionate leather-lunged prophecies against the "system" (gestures quotation marks). I imagine a generation of kids who swear that their ideas won't be sabotaged by Pepsi or Microsoft like the ideas of their parents were. I imagine an aspiring young politician who delivers some inaugural bohemian address only to the steaming cup of coffee in front of him. I imagine an entire generation's worth of ideas left dangling because nobody had the balls or the ambition to tie them to the ground. It's tragic that we lock ourselves into this little crevice of the city to hullabaloo about social reform, but by the time we're 35 and our cups are empty we'll become complacent about everything that we're passionate about now, and we'll let money, oil, and guns determine social reform like always.

Cam- (Pause) You're preaching against idealism?

Della- (rolls her eyes in frustration)

Cam- Yes I said "ism" (Tauntingly)... "ism! .. ism! .. ism! But listen to yourself. You're being incredibly idealistic.

Della- No I wasn't. If you'd just be patient and liste-

Cam- Where were you gonna go with what you were saying? You were spouting off about problems yourself. Just in a different context, that's all. You were being idealistic, admit it.

Della- An idea is idealistic only until it is put to use. That's what I'm trying to say.

Cam- Changing the world is a big job, how do you figure on doing it?

Della- I didn't say that I was going to change the world. But I will make it better, and you're right when you say that it's a big job so I've got to start small. I'm young so if I start now then maybe 50 years' time will show proof of my effort. Not that I need personal edification.

Cam- No, of course not.

Della- We're being dubbed as the generation that "stays in school." Why do you think that is?

Cam- You tell me.

Della- (Passionately) It's because we store all of our ideas in our backpacks. It never seems that we do anything with them, so it's only natural that we dread the idea of trading in our backpacks for briefcases. The aspirations shared by everyone in this room are far too great just to tie to our backs. Our ideas are too good to share only with the cup of coffee in front of us.

Cam- So what are you doing here in the den of the apathetic if you're so motivated otherwise?

Della- (Suddenly checks her watch) I really don't know, but I hope and pray that I've not wasted words here. Because there's a nine year old girl named Amber who would love to understand what big people like you and me talk about, but at the moment she's sitting in the library at her elementary school waiting for me to teach her that a sentence begins with a capital and ends with a period. So if you'll excuse me--

Cam- Are you going to be here again sometime?

Della- (warmed by his question) Not if I can help it...

Cam- "Walk the talk," ya' know?

Della- Yeah.

(After quickly gathering her things, she rushes off stage. Cam is left on stage. He leaves through his work expressionlessly. He then slowly stands up, gathers his things, drinks the last of his coffee, and exits the door with his portfolio in hand.)

Finis.
(untitled)
Kesa Padmos
stoneware
There are fists like stones in our chests and weeping they knock and weeping they pull and weighing they hold us still and still knock weeping holding us still.

(Some they send falling to shelter in shards of laments and some to dancing over and around its soreness, endlessly skirting and jumping).

These stones within us will pull us like time, (along wet roads, melting headlights and a sudden river), unmerged and sobbing.

_\text{Julianne Smit}_
My Love
Candice Anderson
charcoal on paper
firmly, secretly
the way he holds on to my hand.
his open palm up and down my back.
his body fire and he melts mine into his
when we embrace
we share each other, and step back
more of the other.

all done in secret. sweet hot hush.

i read his eyes.
his fingers press on my knees,
my arm stretches across where he sits
elbow accidentally brushes thigh
as he bends forward to my scent
with one breath i fill him
i am inside
and no one knows but us.

he watches my lips my mouth
i am your "hungry ravenous lover"
i whisper what i could speak out loud
so we can touch my chest pressed against his arm
my chin bumps his shoulder
his hair moves soft against my cheek
my warm breath wraps itself around his ear
he doesn't hear a word i say
i do not know what i tell him
but we both breathe
the secret in his arms and knees
in my hands and hips

just as he sits so close my jeans stuck under his leg.

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(To you.)

tina anderson